

## **Different antisemitisms**

Perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among Jews in Sweden and across Europe

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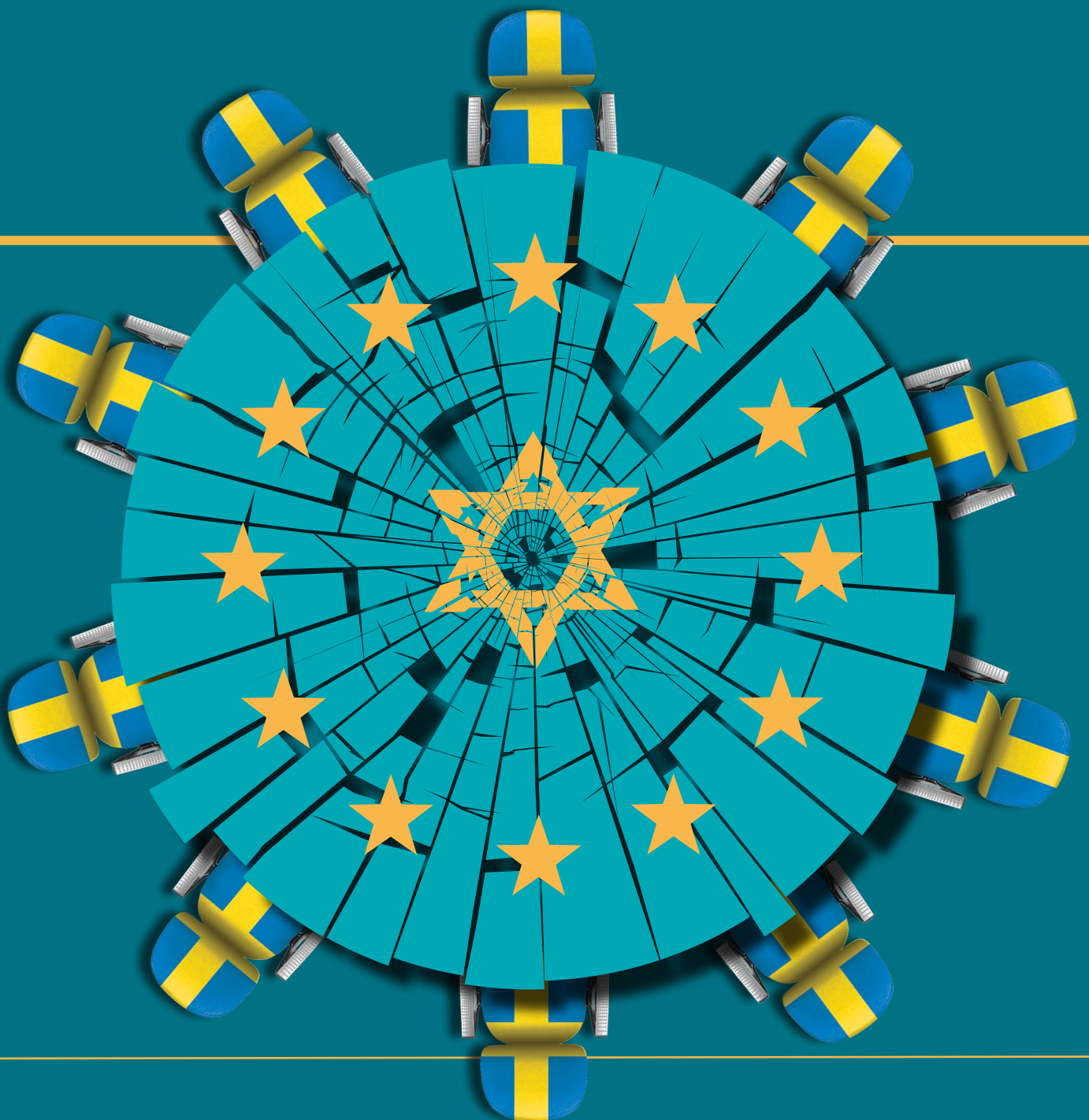
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# Different Antisemitisms

Perceptions and experiences of antisemitism among Jews  
in Sweden and across Europe

Lars Dencik and Karl Marosi



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.

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## Introduction

In this paper we combine and compare the results of two major but differently focused cross-national surveys on antisemitism.

On the one hand, we have data from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) survey of Jewish people's perceptions and experiences of antisemitism in eight EU member states – Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Sweden and the United Kingdom (FRA, 2013). This survey was carried out in the second half of 2012.

On the other hand, we use the results from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) survey of attitudes towards Jews, with representative samples of each countries' population, carried out at the end of 2013. This study covers 102 countries all over the world.<sup>1</sup> In this article we will focus only on the same eight EU countries that were included in the FRA study.

By way of conclusion, we will elaborate on some more general implications for the understanding of the character of antisemitism in contemporary Europe and on the basis of that, present some perspectives on the development of three distinct antisemitisms in contemporary Europe.

It should be noted that both of these surveys were carried out before the war in Gaza in the summer of 2014, and also before the Charlie Hebdo and Hyper Casher terrorist attacks in Paris in January 2015 and the murder of a Jewish security guard outside the synagogue of Copenhagen a month later. Consequently, they were also carried out before the major terrorist attack in central Paris on the evening of 13th November 2015.

It goes without saying that these events have most likely influenced both the attitudes and the perceptions of antisemitism on the European scene. Hence, one might think that the data we will present could be obsolete. However, the aim of this article is not merely to outline the level of antisemitism, which is either registered in the general population or perceived by the Jewish population in the respective countries. Rather, the purpose is to investigate how the level of antisemitism which is registered in national populations relates to the perception of antisemitism by the Jewish population in the same country, and also to compare how this relationship looks among the eight European countries we studied.

Another purpose of this paper is to find out the extent to which distinct aspects of antisemitism can be empirically identified. This means deconstructing the concept of antisemitism and breaking it up into – as will be shown – three kinds of *antisemitisms*, which are both empirically different from each other and composed differently. This also means working out to what extent these distinct antisemitisms are manifested in the eight countries involved in the study.

Finally, we will try to identify which groups in a given society are judged to be the main carriers of the respective antisemitisms.

1 ADL – Anti-Defamation League. (2014). ADL Global 100. An Index of Anti-Semitism. <http://global100.adl.org>

In this presentation a special focus will be on Sweden. This is partly because it is in Sweden that we have carried out most of our own empirical studies, but also because the situation in Sweden concerning antisemitism and the reaction of the Jewish population to perceived antisemitism are particularly illustrative of some of the main points we can make based on our investigations.

## The two survey studies

From July 2013 to February 2014, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) carried out a survey of attitudes towards Jews with representative samples in 102 countries around the world. The following eleven propositions about Jews were put to the respondents, who were asked to indicate whether they found the suggested proposition “probably true” or “probably false”:

- 1 Jews are more loyal to Israel than to [the country in which they live].
- 2 Jews have too much power in the business world.
- 3 Jews have too much power in international financial markets.
- 4 Jews don't care about what happens to anyone but their own kind.
- 5 Jews have too much control over global affairs.
- 6 People hate Jews because of the way Jews behave.
- 7 Jews think they are better than other people.
- 8 Jews have too much control over the United States government.
- 9 Jews have too much control over the global media.
- 10 Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust.

11 Jews are responsible for most of the world's wars.

An index was constructed by which respondents who answered that at least six out of the eleven statements were “probably true” (ie. more than half) were considered to harbour antisemitic attitudes.

It should be noted that we find the criteria used by the ADL survey for judging a respondent as antisemitic to be quite crude. On the one hand, you may, of course, be antisemitic even if you just find five or even one of the statements probably true, and on the other hand, there might be reasons other than antisemitism to find it “probably true” that, for example, “Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust.”

We also note that at least nine of the eleven items upon which the respondents are asked to take a stand are part of what could be labelled classic antisemitic stereotypes.

Nevertheless, the results of the ADL survey give some kind of indication as to how the general population in a given country regards Jews. According to the index used, the level of antisemitism in each of the eight European countries we are studying is distributed in the following figure:

Figure 1. Proportion of the population in the country harbouring antisemitic attitudes according to the ADL Index

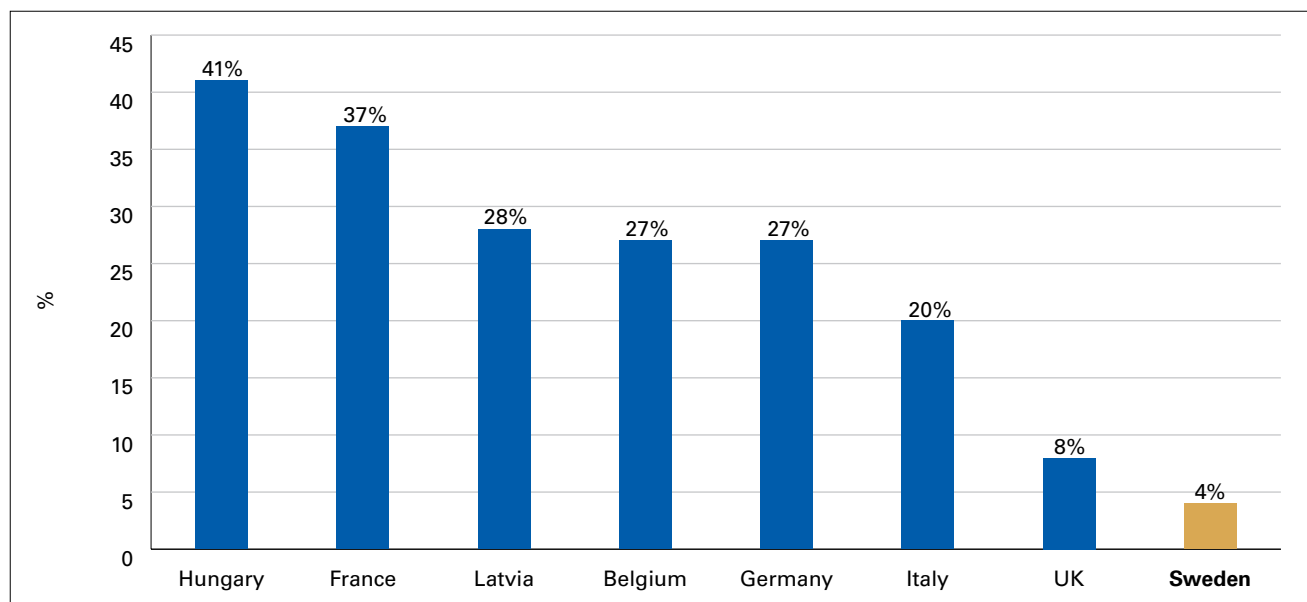
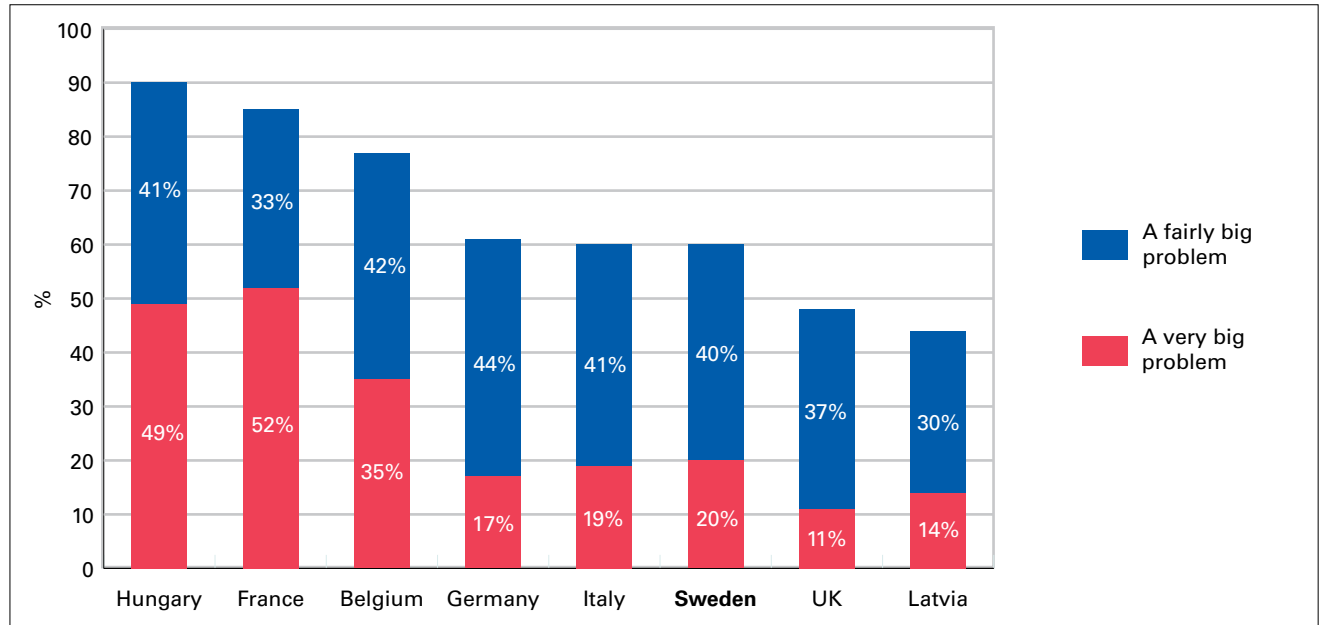


Figure 2. The FRA Survey: Proportion of Jews perceiving antisemitism as a problem in their country (n=5,846)



As can be seen, Hungary and France harbour the largest segment of what will be labelled classic antisemitism in the sequence, whereas the UK and Sweden have the smallest relative number of this kind of antisemitism. In fact, Sweden ranks number 100 out of the 102 investigated countries all over the world – only in Laos and the Philippines are there smaller proportions of the population harbouring classic antisemitic stereotypes than in Sweden, according to the ADL survey.

In contrast to the ADL survey, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) survey is directed exclusively at people in eight EU member states who regard themselves in some sense as Jewish. Those who do so are asked several different questions about their experiences of antisemitism in their country of residence and about how they, as Jews, perceive antisemitism.

To the question: “How big a problem according to you is antisemitism in your country of residence?”

these Jewish respondents answered as shown in Figure 2.

We can note that more than three quarters of the Jews in three of the countries – Hungary, France and Belgium – find antisemitism in their country to be a big or a fairly big problem. Jews in the UK and Latvia do so to a lesser extent. It is, however, noteworthy that as many as 20% of the Jewish respondents in Sweden perceive antisemitism to be a very big problem.

In this context, we should bear in mind that the city of Malmö, which is the third largest city in Sweden and harbours one of Sweden’s three Jewish communities, has become infamous worldwide for an extraordinary number of antisemitic incidents in the years preceding the present study. In further analysis, we have found that the perception of antisemitism as a very big problem in Sweden is due, to a large extent, to what has occurred in Malmö, where approximately 4% of the Jewish respondents in Sweden reside.



## Attitudes of antisemitism versus the perception of antisemitism

Is there a link between the experiences and perceptions of antisemitism amongst Jews, and the proportion of antisemites in the population of the country in which they live?

Comparing the two measures we have presented so far – namely, the level of (classic) antisemitism in the general population and the degree to which Jews in the same country perceive antisemitism as a problem in their country – we find the picture presented in Figure 3.

The most noteworthy aspects of this picture are the large discrepancies in the UK and Sweden between the proportion of the population that harbours classic antisemitic attitudes and the perceptions amongst Jews of antisemitism as a problem in the country. In the two most antisemitic countries according to the ADL measure, Hungary and France, Jews perceive antisemitism as a problem by a factor of about two, as compared to the level of antisemitism registered in the general population of the

country, whereas Jews in the UK do so by an approximate factor of six and Jews in Sweden, the country harbouring the smallest amount of classic antisemites, do so by a factor of fifteen. This may be further illustrated in Figure 4.

Based on this we ask the following question: if the presence of classic antisemitic stereotypes is not what alerts Jews in Sweden to find that antisemitism is a problem in their country, are Jews there, and in the UK, just more sensitive, paranoid or anxious about antisemitism? Or are there other elements present in these societies not measured by the ADL index, which Jews associate with antisemitism?

To find the answer, we ask whether there are any differences in how often Jews in these countries have heard a non-Jewish person in the country utter what they perceive as an antisemitic comment? If there are no significant differences between the countries in this respect, this might indicate that there are other kinds of statements

Figure 3. Proportion of the population harbouring antisemitic stereotypes compared to the proportion of Jews perceiving antisemitism as a problem in their country

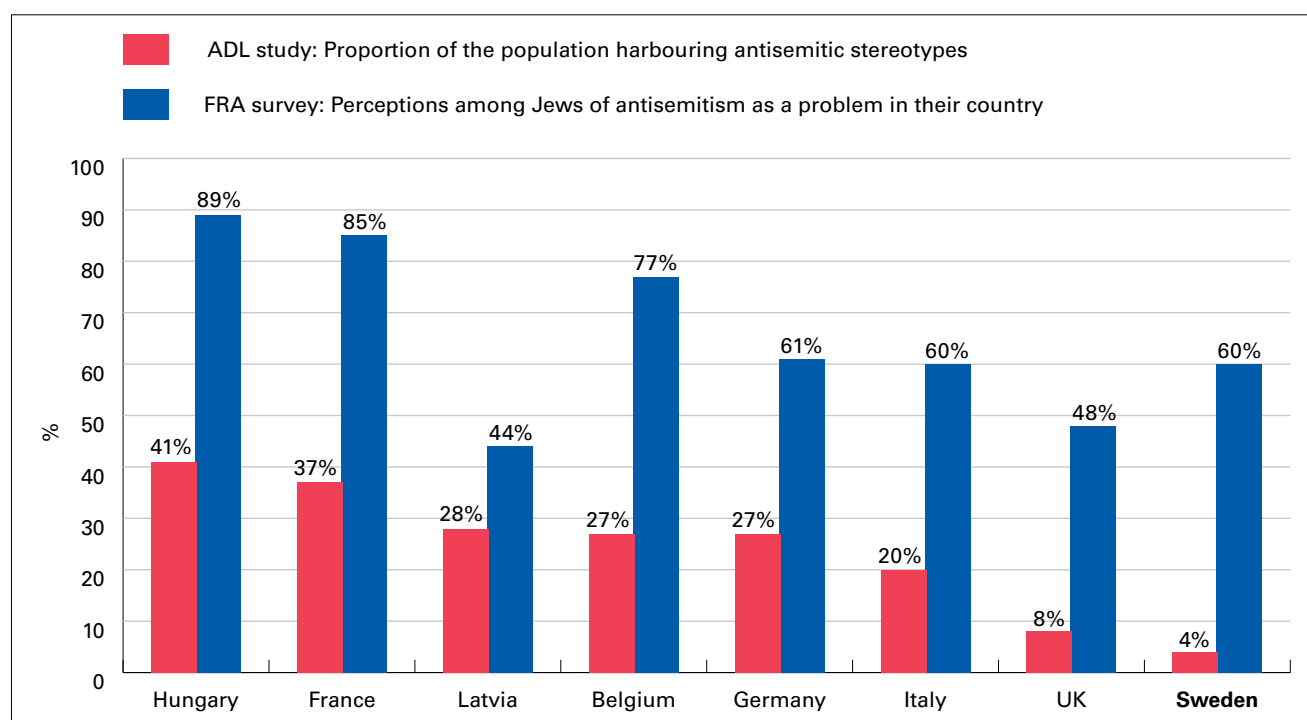


Figure 4: Proportion of the population harbouring antisemitic stereotypes, divided by the proportion of Jews experiencing antisemitism as a problem in their country.

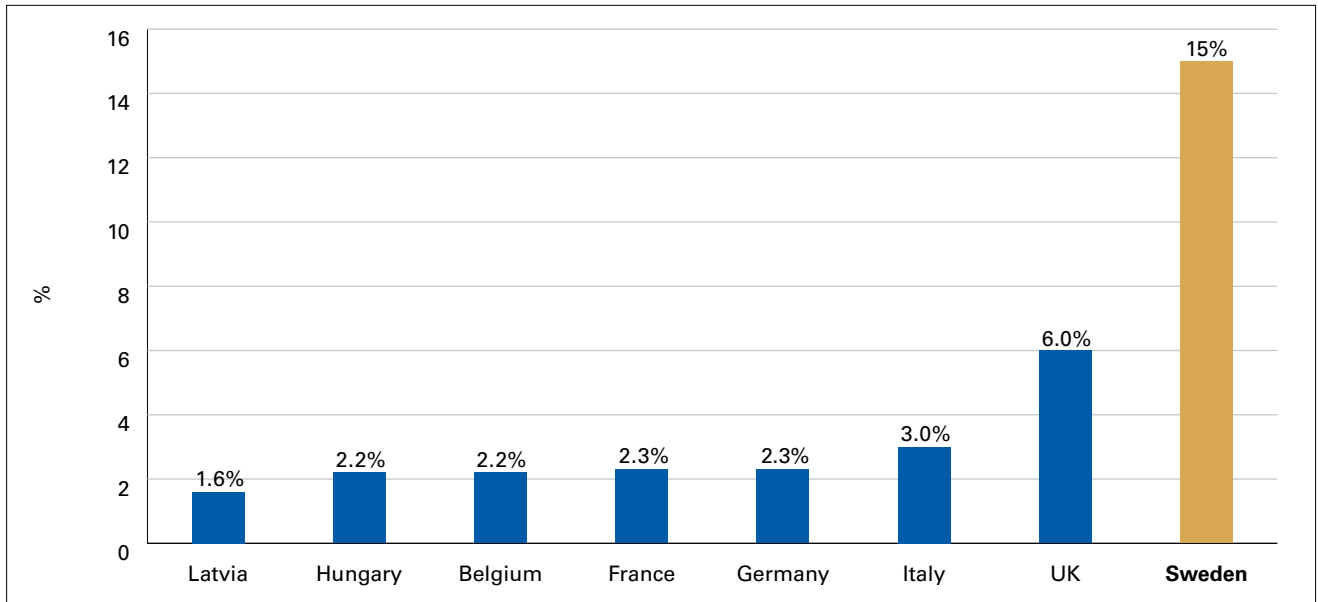
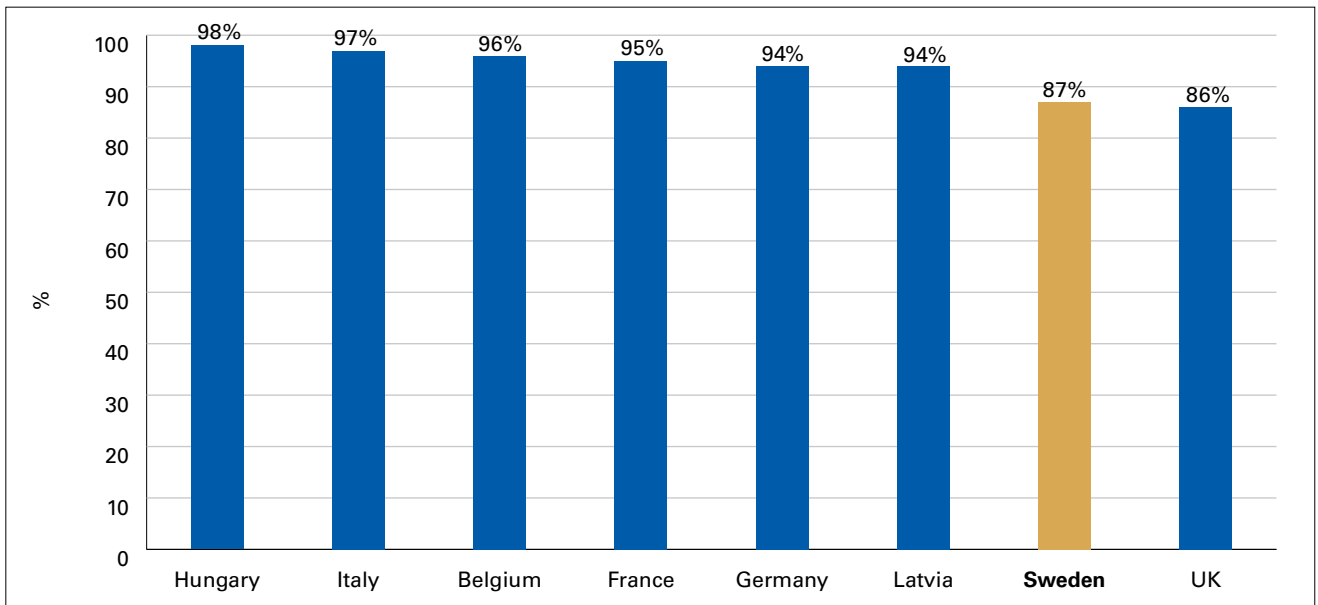


Figure 5: The FRA survey: The percentage of Jewish respondents who have personally heard a non-Jewish person utter antisemitic comments within the last 12 months (n=5,846)



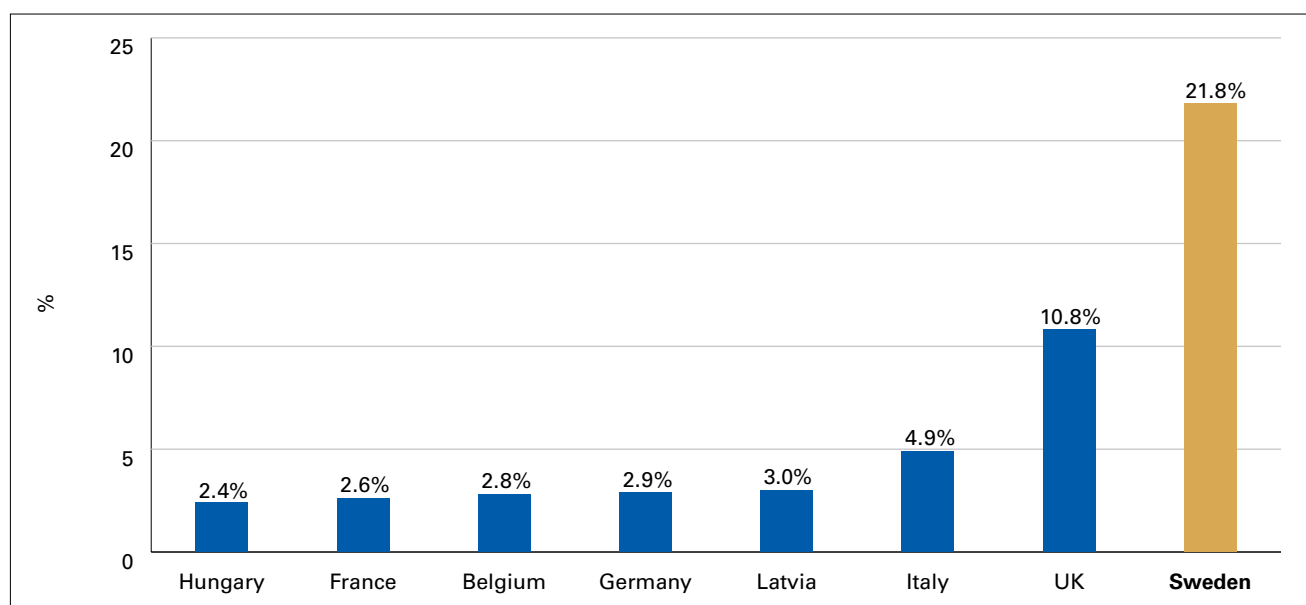
than the classic antisemitic ones that are perceived as antisemitism by the Jews in the country.

Figure 5 is a picture of the percentage of Jewish respondents in the eight investigated countries who have personally heard a non-Jewish person utter an antisemitic comment within the last twelve months.

Notable here is that within the last twelve months, more than nine out of ten of the Jewish respondents, the vast majority in all of the eight

countries, have heard an antisemitic comment. This is also true for Sweden and the UK, even if the figure in these two countries is slightly lower than in the other countries. The slight difference between the eight countries with respect to having heard an antisemitic comment is, however, very far from the vast difference between, on the one hand, the UK and Sweden, and on the other hand, the other countries investigated in this study when it comes to the proportion of antisemites in the country (cf. Figure 1). There

Figure 6: Proportion of the population harbouring antisemitic stereotypes, divided by the proportion of Jews who have heard a non-Jewish person utter antisemitic comments within the last 12 months



are two possible reasons for this. The criterion for qualifying as an “antisemite”, according to the ADL survey, is to agree to at least six of the eleven statements listed above. Thus the criterion overshadows the fact that people who score below that level, for example, by agreeing to four or five of the eleven statements, may also have uttered an antisemitic comment themselves, and hence caused the Jews around them to hear an antisemitic statement.

Another, and in a way more challenging reason, is that something other than classic antisemitism can also be perceived as antisemitism by Jews in the eight countries. It seems this may particularly be the case in the UK and especially Sweden. This is illustrated in Figure 6.

We have noted remarkable discrepancies between the registered level of classic antisemitism in the general population and the degree to which Jews in the same country perceive or experience something as antisemitic.

Are there also similar discrepancies between particular antisemitic attitudes in the general population and the degree to which Jews of the country have actually been confronted with such attitudes?

We will investigate this by scrutinising the relationship between the registered frequency

in the population of some of the individual components of classic antisemitism and the degree to which Jews in the country report that they have actually experienced them.

Thus we compare how often a Jew has heard the statement that “Jews have too much power in the country” with the degree to which people in the general population of the country find such a statement to be “probably true”. This is shown in Figure 7.

The most striking element of this picture is the *discrepancy* when it comes to Sweden and the UK between, on the one hand, the degree to which this stereotype is present in the population, and on the other hand, how often Jews in the country have heard someone utter such a statement.

The same tendency is also apparent when it comes to the proposition that “Jews exploit Holocaust victimhood for their own purposes.”

Comparing how often Jews have heard that “Jews exploit Holocaust victimhood for their own purposes” with the degree to which people in the general population of the country find it “probably true” that “Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust”, the following picture emerges.

Figure 7: FRA data on how often a Jew has heard non-Jewish people suggest that “Jews have too much power in their country”, compared to ADL data showing the degree to which the general population in the country feels that “Jews have too much power”

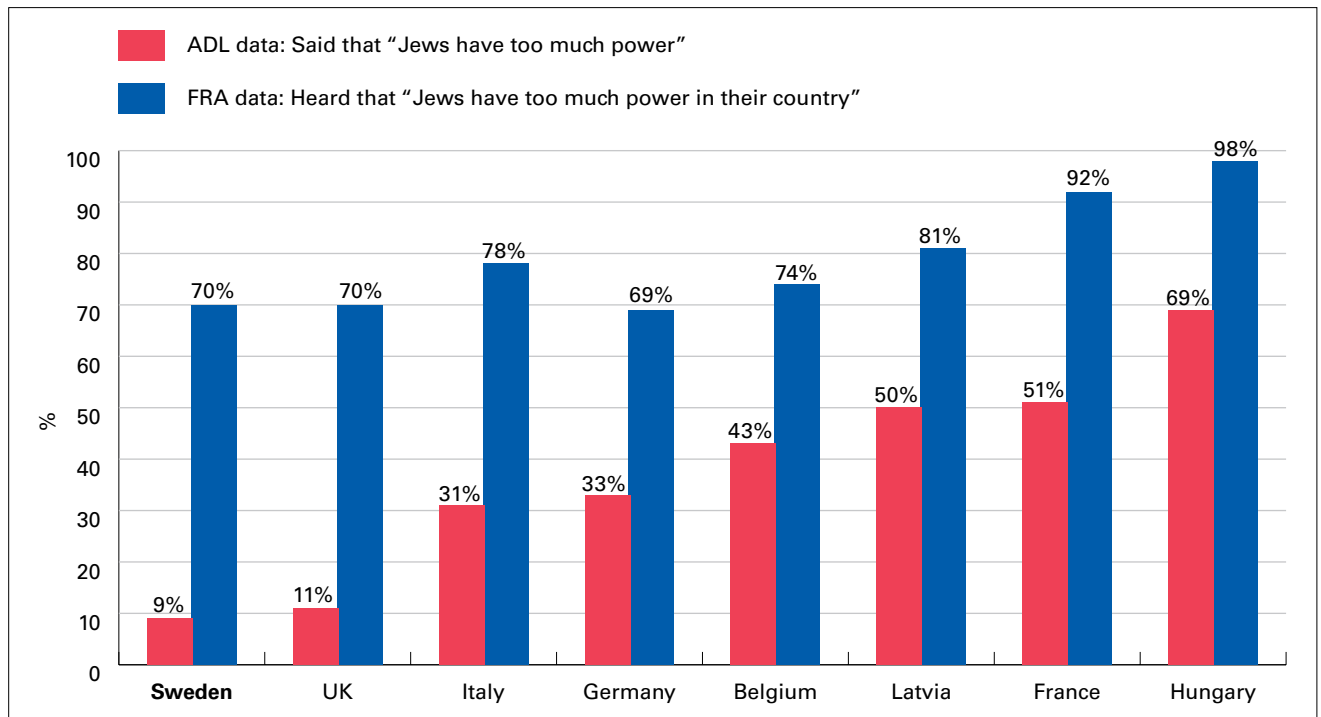
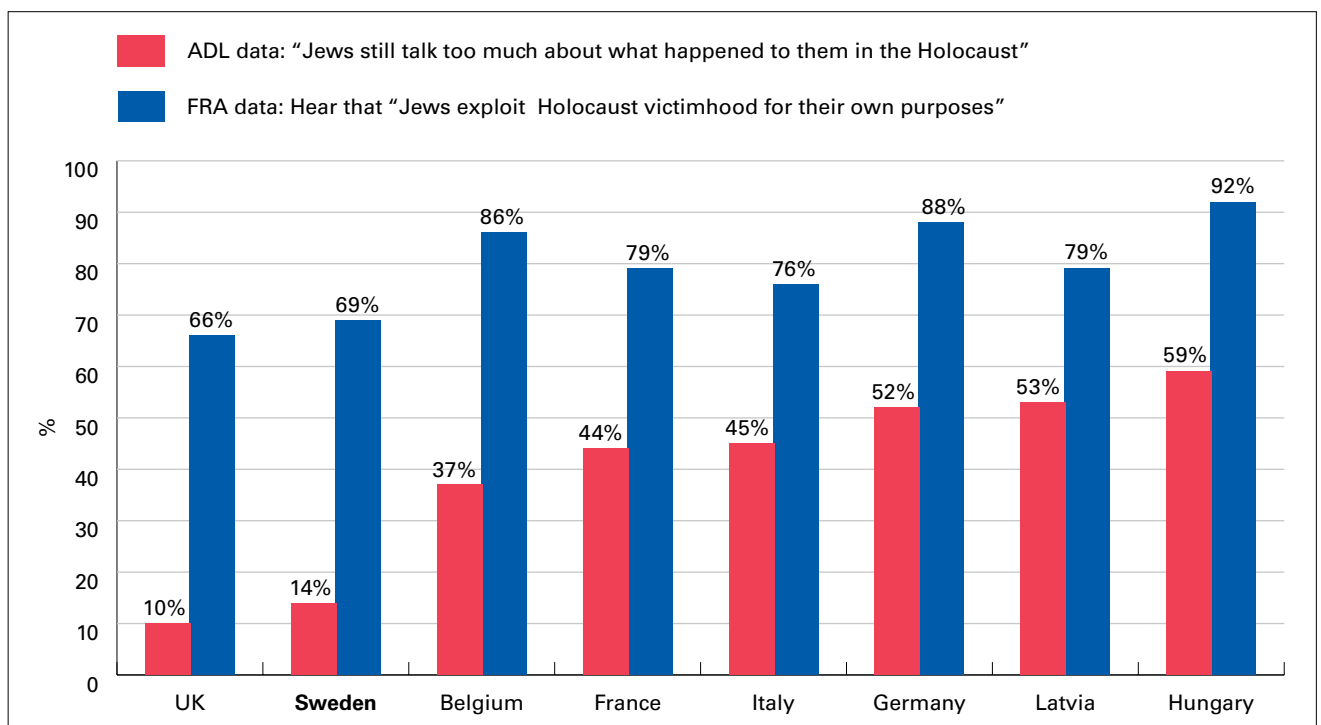


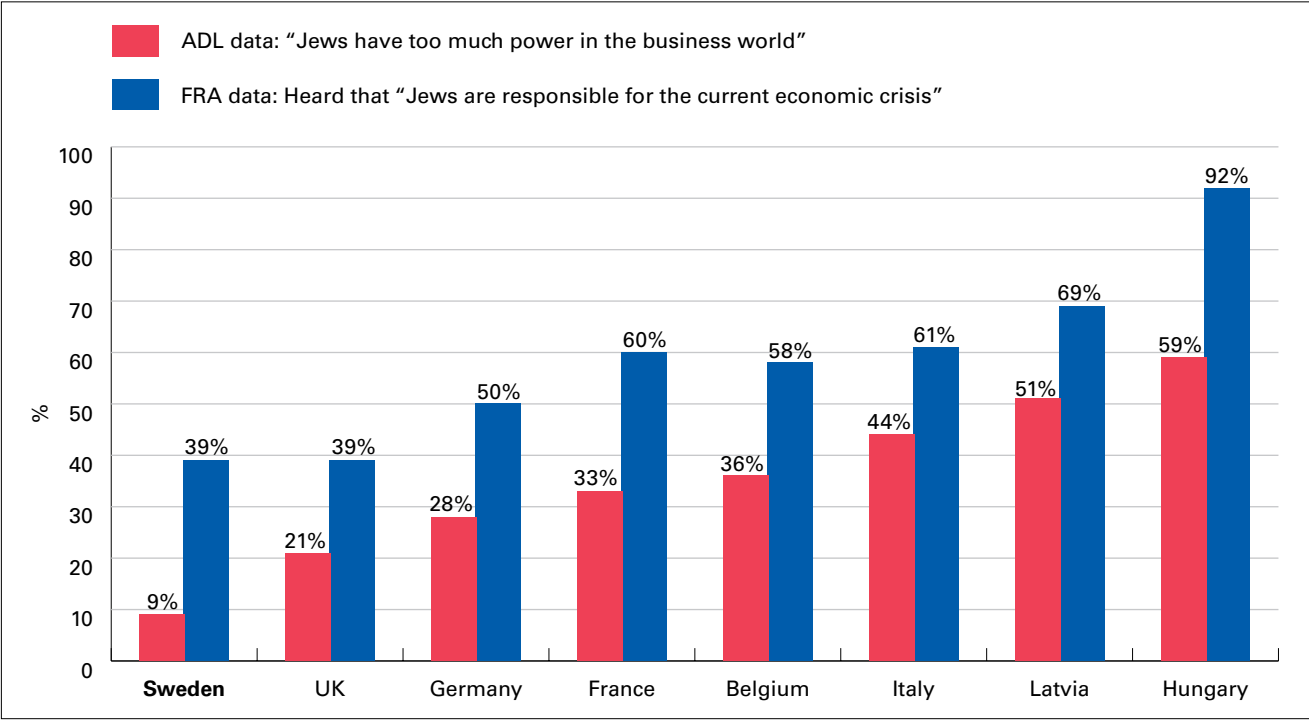
Figure 8: FRA data on how often a Jew has heard non-Jewish people suggest that “Jews exploit Holocaust victimhood”, compared to ADL data showing the degree to which the general population in the country believes that “Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust”



Again we can notice a striking discrepancy with respect to the two columns when it comes to Sweden and the UK.

One might suspect that there is a consistent pattern with respect to this. To find out about that, we look at one of the classic antisemitic items,

Figure 9: FRA data on how often a Jew has heard non-Jewish people suggest that “Jews are responsible for the current economic crisis”; compared to ADL data showing the degree to which the general population in the country believes that “Jews have too much power in the business world”.

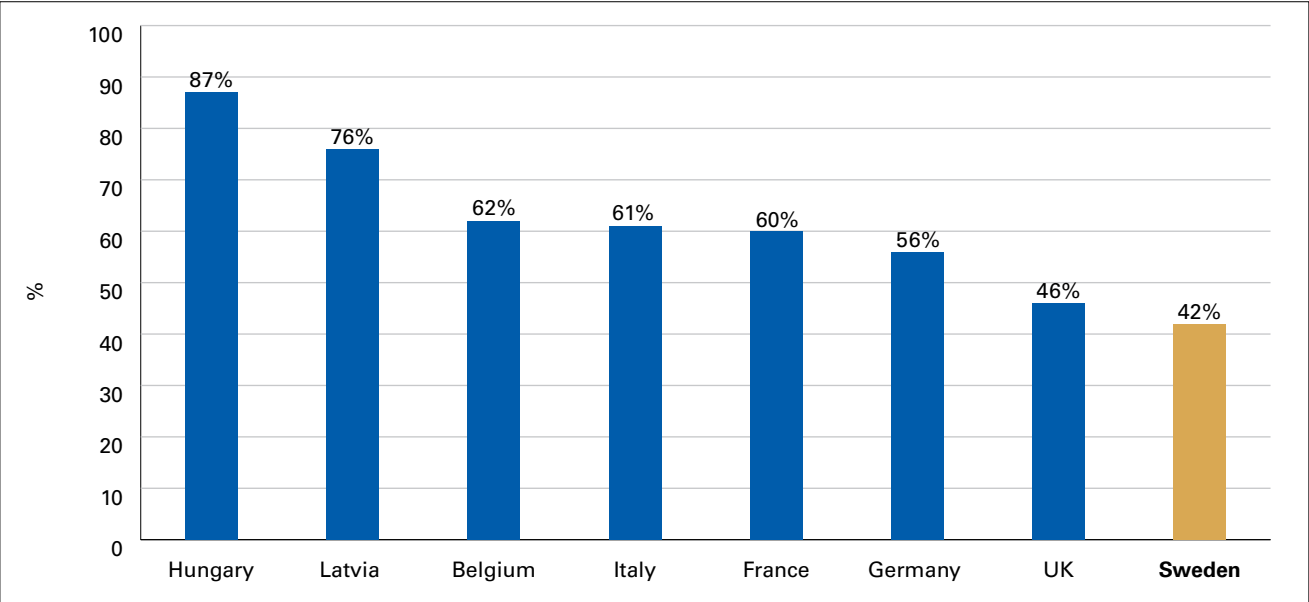


namely, that “Jews are responsible for the current economic crisis”. This is shown in Figure 9.

Comparing the subjective perceptions of Jews with the measure of the frequency of people in the

general population in the respective countries who think it is probably true that “Jews have too much power in the business world”, the same pattern of discrepancy emerges; however, the discrepancies here are less drastic. In this connection we may

Figure 10: The FRA survey: In the last 12 months, how often have you personally heard non-Jewish people in your country suggest that the Holocaust is a myth or has been exaggerated? (n=5,846)



also note that there is a correlation between the extent to which the general population in a country harbours the viewpoint that “Jews have too much power in the business world” and the proportion of Jews in the country who have heard that “Jews are responsible for the current economic crisis”. And again, Sweden deviates from this general pattern by a somewhat larger discrepancy between the two measures, mainly consisting of a considerably lower presence of this stereotype in its population (9%).

Nevertheless, four out of ten Jews in Sweden claim to have come across such an attitude within the last twelve months.

Do Jews in Sweden consistently come up against antisemitic statements to a lesser extent than Jews in other European countries?

With respect to the suggestion that “the Holocaust is a myth” – it would seem so (Figure 10). This

Figure 11: The FRA survey: In the last 12 months, how often have you personally heard non-Jewish people in your country suggest that the interests of Jews in your country are very different from the interests of the rest of the population? (n=5,846)

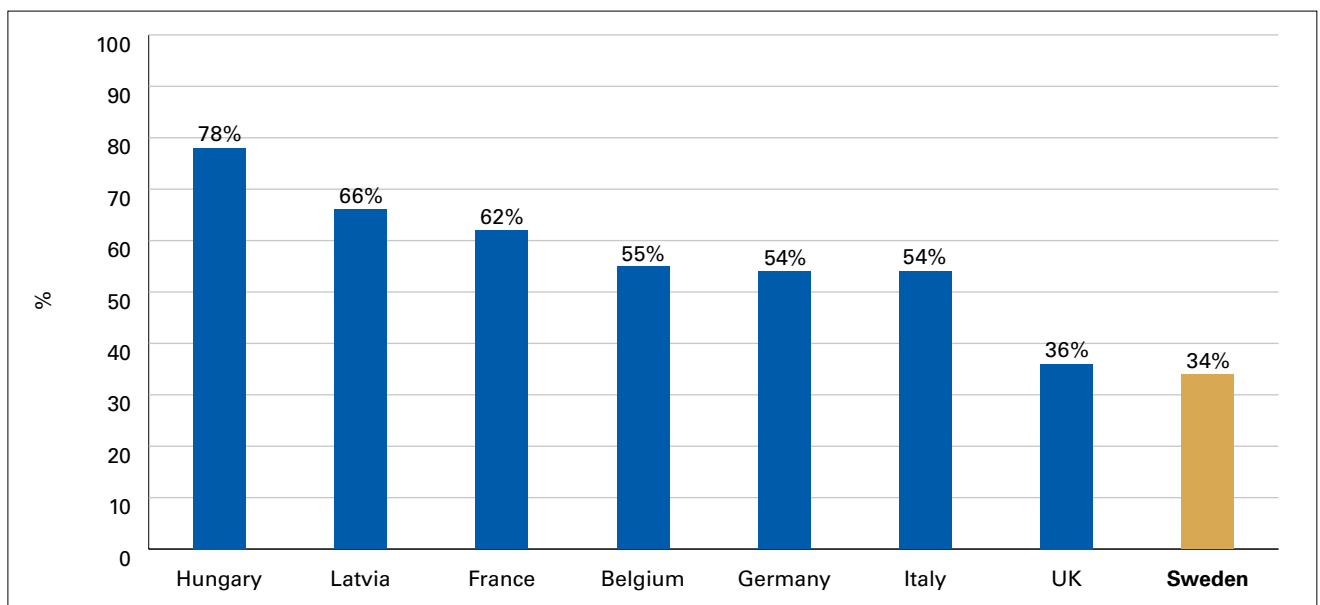
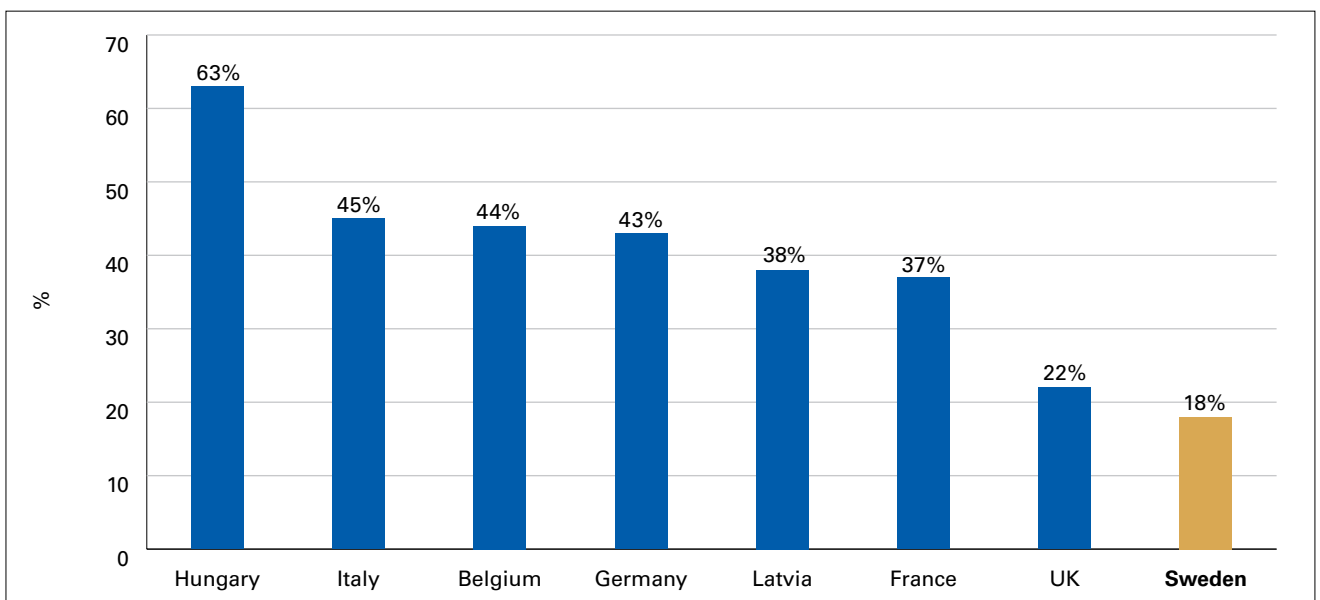


Figure 12: The FRA survey: In the last 12 months, how often have you personally heard or seen non-Jewish people in your country suggest that Jews are not capable of integrating into your society? (n=5,846)



also holds true when it comes to the proposition that “the interests of Jews in our country are very different from the interests of the rest of the population” (Figure 11), and, even more so, when the suggestion is that “Jews are not capable of integration into your society” (Figure 12).

What may explain this pattern? In order to find out, we need to investigate to what degree Jews in the respective countries feel that they belong to the country in which they live.

In so doing, we find an opposite pattern to what we have found so far. Jews in Sweden, the UK and France feel that they strongly belong to the country in which they live, whereas Jews in Germany and Latvia do so to a much lesser extent. The last observation is easily explained by the fact that a large number of Jews in these two countries, Germany and Latvia, are fairly recent immigrants from Russia. But even in Sweden, many of the Jews living there are Holocaust or post-Holocaust immigrants from central and Eastern Europe. Sweden is actually the only European country in which considerably more Jews live today than before the Holocaust. How is it that Jews in Sweden feel stronger ties to the country in

which they live than Jews in any of the other European countries?

When we take account of whether the respondents were born in the country in which they live, the picture becomes even clearer. These relationships are shown in Figure 13.

Almost one third of the Jewish respondents in Sweden were not born in the country; nevertheless, nearly 85% of them say they feel that they strongly belong to it. The same holds for France. There are, however, differing backgrounds for the sense of belonging of Jewish immigrants to France and Sweden respectively. The majority of Jewish immigrants to France came from the former French colonies in the French-speaking Maghreb. Most of them already identified as “French” while living in the Maghreb, which, of course, facilitated their feeling of belonging to France when they moved there. The Swedish case is radically different. Most Jewish immigrants to Sweden came from Eastern and Central Europe, did not speak Swedish and had not previously identified with anything Swedish. Many were Holocaust survivors; others came a little later from communist dominated countries. For both of these groups, being accepted and given living

Figure 13: The FRA survey: How many of the Jewish respondents feel that they belong to the country in which they live, compared to whether they were born in the country or not? (n=5,846)

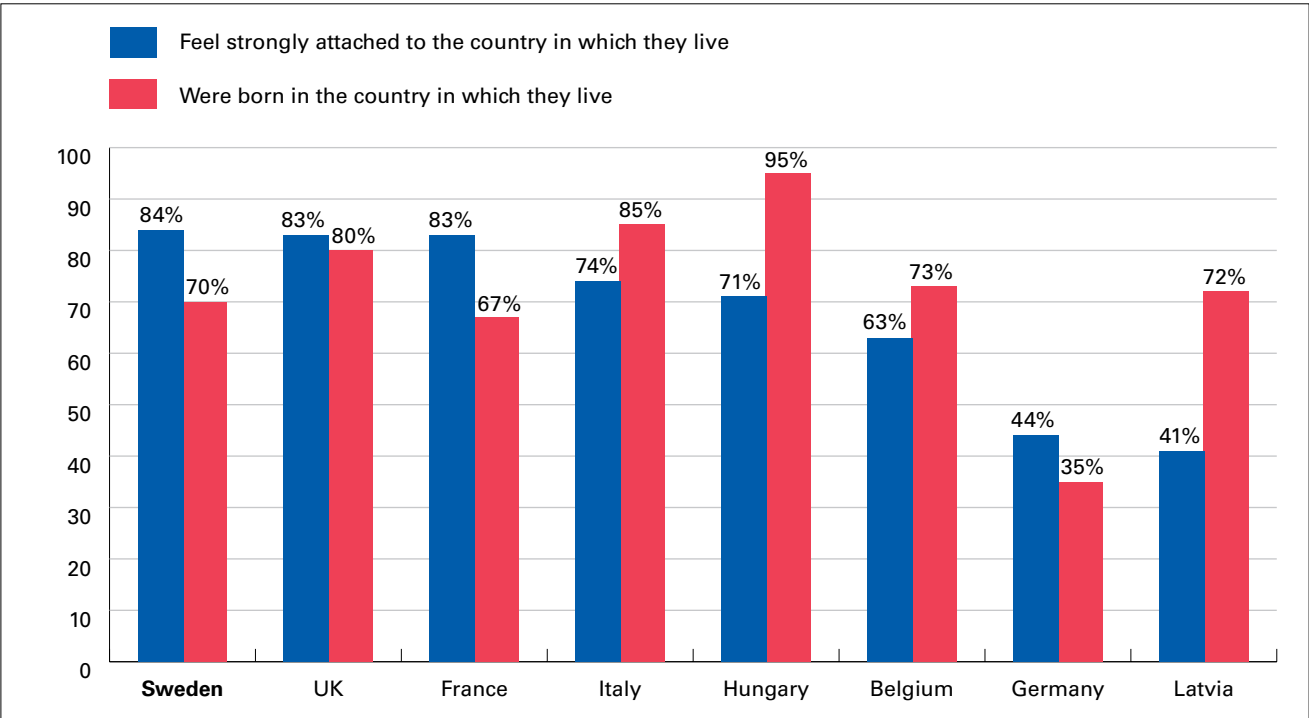
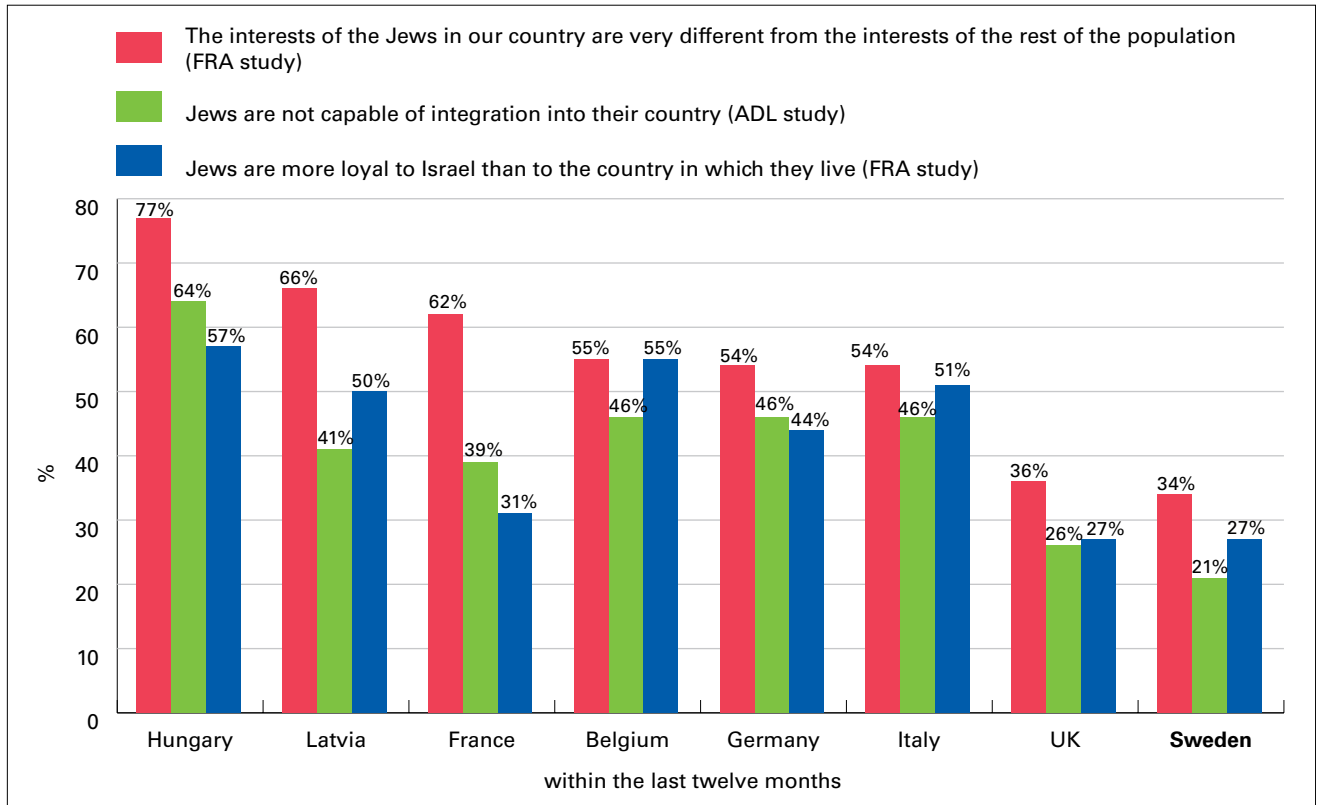


Figure 14: How “strange” are Jews perceived to be in the country in which they live? (n=5,846)



opportunities in the well-developed Swedish welfare state was a little like having reached the Promised Land. Many of them did well in Sweden and approved of identifying as Swedes.

In Hungary the relationship is reversed: there, almost all Jews, 95% of them, were born in the country, but only just over 70% feel they belong to it. Latvia is also a special case – whereas more than 70% of Jews there were born in the country, only 40% of them feel that they belong to contemporary Latvia.

If people do not feel they belong to their country of residence, this may be because the other inhabitants in the country regard them as strangers or outsiders. By combining three measures, namely, the extent to which people in the country hold the opinions that “Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the country in which they live”; “The interests of Jews are very different from the interests of the rest of the population”, and “Jews are not capable of integration into the country”, we may arrive at a picture of the extent to which Jews are perceived as strangers in the country in which they live. The picture looks like Figure 14.

We note that Hungary and Sweden are radical opposites in this respect. On all of the three measures we have included as indicators of ‘strangeness’ – whether Jews are seen as capable of integration into the country, whether they are regarded as having different interests from the general population of the country, and whether they are more loyal to Israel than to the country in which they live – the population in Hungary scores higher than in any of the other European countries, and on all of them the population in Sweden scores lower than in any of the other countries. Thus, in Hungary, where almost all Jews living there were born there, Jews are seen as strangers by approximately two-thirds of the population, whereas in Sweden, where a large proportion of Jews are immigrants or children of immigrants, they are regarded as strangers by only approximately a quarter of the Swedish population.

In this connection we can also note a correlation implying that in countries in which a relatively small part of the population holds the view that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the country in which they live, we see that Jews feel more strongly that they belong there.



## Harassment and fear

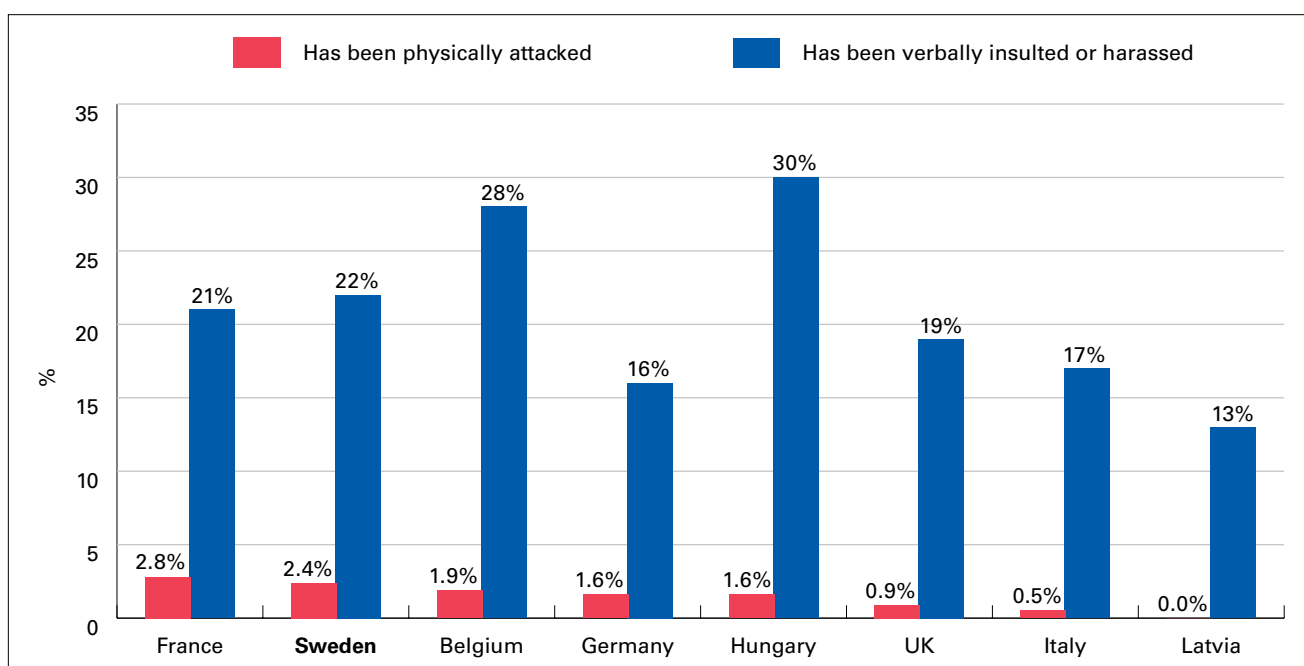
The FRA survey asked the Jewish respondents in the countries whether they had been personally verbally insulted, harassed, or physically attacked because they were Jewish in the last twelve months.

As shown in Figure 15, we found, surprisingly enough, that more Jews in Sweden and France than in any other of the European countries investigated, claim to have been physically attacked because they were Jews.

As displayed in Figure 16, this picture also holds true when the FRA asked these Jewish respondents whether they personally had witnessed anyone being attacked, physically or verbally, because he/she was Jewish.

integrated into society, they are still regarded by some as an alien element in society, which is perceived as an ambiguity among those who seek clarity and pure lines. The phenomenon of intolerance of ambiguity is well known in social psychology<sup>2</sup> and it has also been scientifically established that the perception of ambiguity triggers aggression among those for whom it is too much of a psychological challenge to harbour ambiguities.<sup>3</sup> The fact that a majority of Jews in Germany was well integrated, not to say even assimilated, into German society up until the Nazis took power in 1933 did not, as we know, prevent them from being targets firstly of harassment and then extermination. Perhaps rather the opposite is true.

Figure 15: The FRA survey: In the last 12 months, have you personally been verbally insulted, harassed, or physically attacked because you are Jewish? (n=5,846)



These findings are remarkable in light of the fact that Sweden and France are among the countries in which Jews feel that they strongly belong more than in other countries (cf. Figure 13).

How is it that there is a seemingly positive correlation between the feeling of belonging among Jews to the country and the experiences of physical attacks on Jews? One possible reason might be that although they are relatively well

2 Fränkel-Brunswick, E. 1948. Intolerance of ambiguity as an emotional and perceptual personality variable, in *Journal of Personality*, 18, pp. 108-123 and Furnham, A. & Marks, J. 2013. Tolerance of ambiguity: A review of the recent literature, in *Psychology* Vol. 4, No. 9, pp. 717-728.

3 Adorno, T.W., Fraenkel-Brunswick, E., Levinson, D.J., & Sanford, R.N. 1950. *The authoritarian personality*. New York: Harper and Row and Stone, W.F., Lederer, G., & Christie, R. 1993. *Strengths and weaknesses: The authoritarian personality today*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Figure 16: The FRA survey: In the last 12 months, have you personally witnessed anyone being verbally insulted, harassed, or physically attacked because he/she is Jewish? (n=5,846)

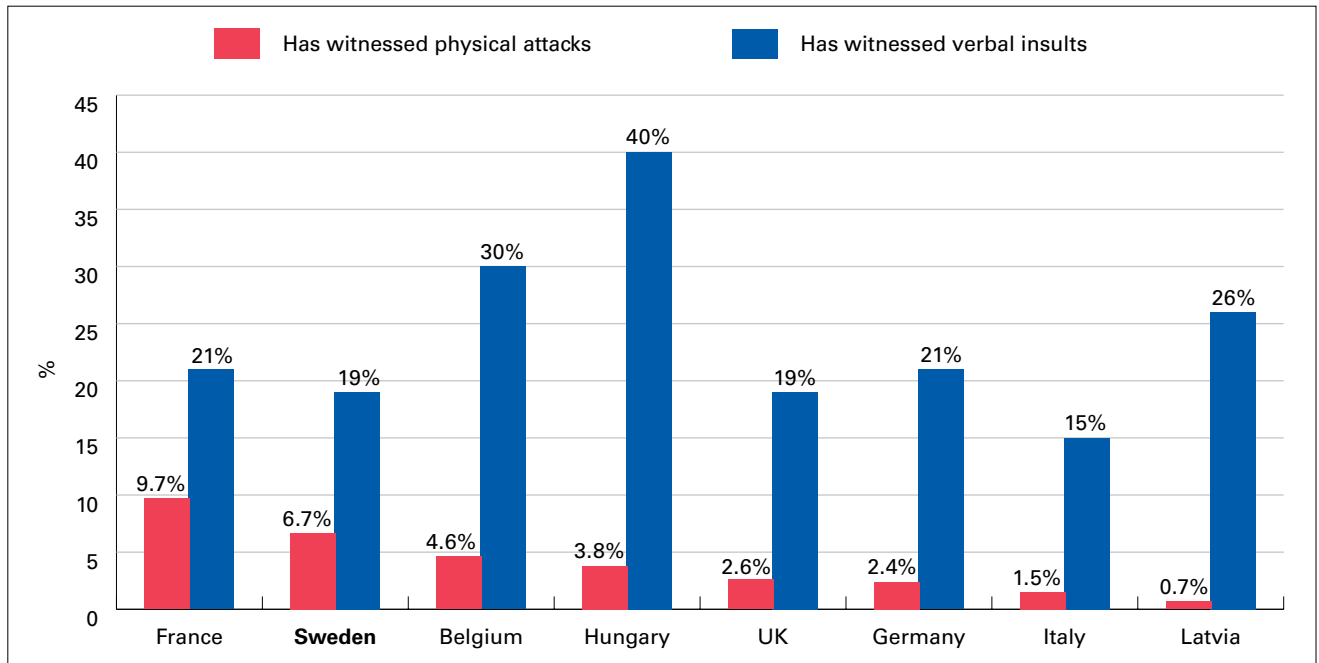
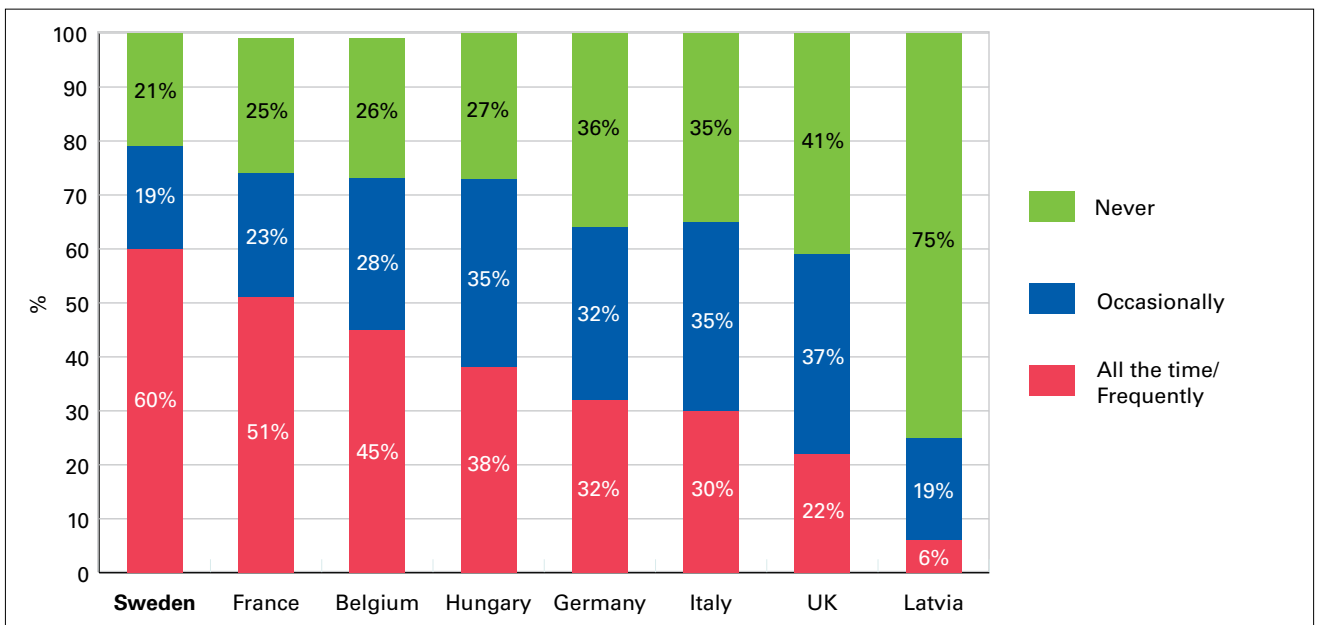


Figure 17: The FRA survey: Do you ever avoid wearing, carrying or displaying things in public that might help people recognise you as a Jew? (n=4,523)



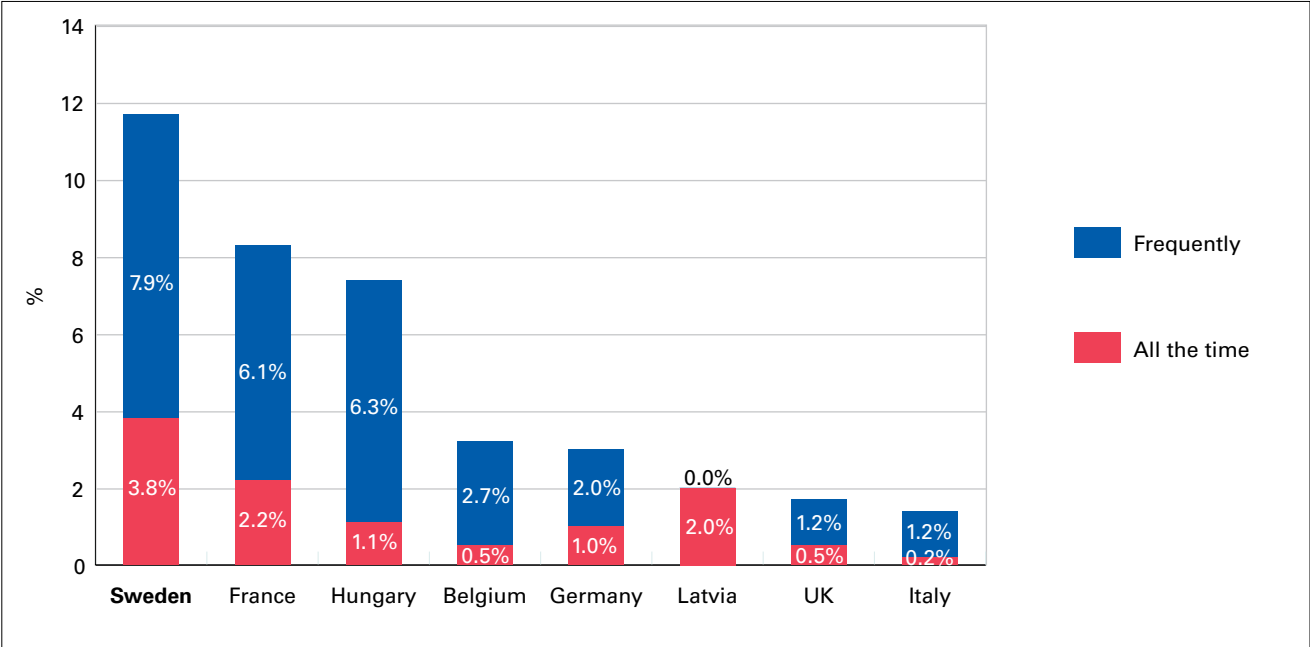
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A relevant question following the observation that Jews, particularly in Sweden and France, experience attacks because they are Jews, is how does this impact on them mentally? Are they afraid? And does this fear manifest itself by, for instance, them hiding that they are Jewish, or by

avoiding visiting Jewish sites more than Jews do in the other countries investigated?

The FRA survey asked the Jewish respondents in the countries investigated if they ever avoided wearing, carrying or displaying things in public

Figure 18: The FRA survey: How often do you avoid visiting Jewish events or sites because you do not feel safe as a Jew there, or on the way there? (n=5,846)



that might help people identify them as Jewish. The extent to which Jews in the eight countries do so is presented in Figure 17.

Corresponding with the findings concerning the experience of physical attacks, we find that, particularly in Sweden and France, more Jews avoid wearing, carrying or displaying things in public that might help people identify them as Jewish than in the other countries.

The FRA also asked “How often do you avoid visiting Jewish events or sites because you do not feel safe as a Jew there, or on the way there?” The answers are presented in Figure 18.

Unsurprisingly, the response pattern to this question is quite similar to the way in which Jews in the different countries replied to the question about hiding their Jewish symbols in public, also corresponding approximately to the degree to which they have experienced physical attacks on Jews in the respective countries.

## Assimilation and integration

In this context, we should also note that in the UK, where, similarly to Sweden and France, Jews feel that they strongly belong, they display a completely different pattern when it comes to manifesting fear.

What is striking is the contrasting pattern between Sweden and the UK. The Swedish data suggest that Swedish Jews not only feel that they belong to their country of residence more than Jews do in any of the investigated countries, but that they also avoid manifesting their Jewish identity in public more than Jews do in any of the other countries.

Jews in the UK feel that they strongly belong to the country in which they live almost to the same extent as Jews in Sweden do. But in contrast to Jews in Sweden, they do not avoid wearing things that might help people recognising them as Jews, nor do they avoid visiting Jewish sites and events because they do not feel safe as Jews there. At the same time, they report having been physically

attacked or having witnessed others being physically attacked because of their Jewishness to a lesser extent than in most of the other countries in Europe.

### Why these differences?

Perhaps an explanation can be found in the fact that until quite recently, Sweden has been a culturally and religiously very homogeneous society, whereas the UK has long been a multicultural society in which different minorities have lived in accordance with their own customs and traditions.

The different patterns concerning Jews in Sweden and the UK might be interpreted as expressions of assimilation, as opposed to integration. The Swedish data convey a picture that indicates that Jews in Sweden are subjected to a situation that triggers assimilation, whereas the British data show a picture that might be interpreted as indicating that the Jewish population there benefits from a condition that allows for integration.

## The impact of the Arab-Israel conflict: Israel-derived antisemitism

A puzzling question is why Jews in Sweden should avoid showing their Jewish identity to such a high level, when classic antisemitic attitudes are almost absent in the population, as compared to the relatively lower level of avoiding showing their Jewish identity in Hungary, where antisemitic stereotypes are much more frequent in the population than anywhere else in the investigated EU countries.

If the prevalence of classic antisemitic attitudes in the population cannot account for these differences, then one needs to ask what else could explain them? Could it, for instance, have anything to do with the impact in their respective countries of the Arab-Israel conflict? Thus the FRA asked its Jewish respondents to what extent the Arab-Israel conflict impacts on how safe they feel as a Jew in the country in which they live. The answers are presented in Figure 19.

Beside noting that Jews' sense of security is affected to a considerably larger extent by the Arab-Israel conflict in Belgium and France than in other countries, we should note that more than one third of the Jewish respondents in Sweden state that the Arab-Israel conflict affects their

sense of security "a great deal" – the third highest level after Belgium and France – whereas the figure in Hungary is considerably lower, just over 12%.

As shown in Figure 20, this discrepancy becomes even more pronounced when we focus on the tendency to blame Jews in European countries for anything done by the Israeli government.

In this context, the relatively recent concept of the '*new antisemitism*' comes to mind. This is a concept that attempts to capture a new form of antisemitism that has developed in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This kind of 'new antisemitism' manifests itself mainly as opposition to Zionism and the State of Israel. The concept generally posits that much of what purports to be criticism of Israel by various individuals and groups, is, in fact, tantamount to the demonisation of the State of Israel, and together with that go attacks on Jews and Jewish symbols beyond the Jewish State as well.

Several concerned Jewish scholars and intellectuals have launched critiques of the concept, arguing that it conflates anti-Zionism with antisemitism,

Figure 19: To what extent does the Arab-Israel conflict impact on how safe you feel as a Jewish person in your country? (n=5,846)

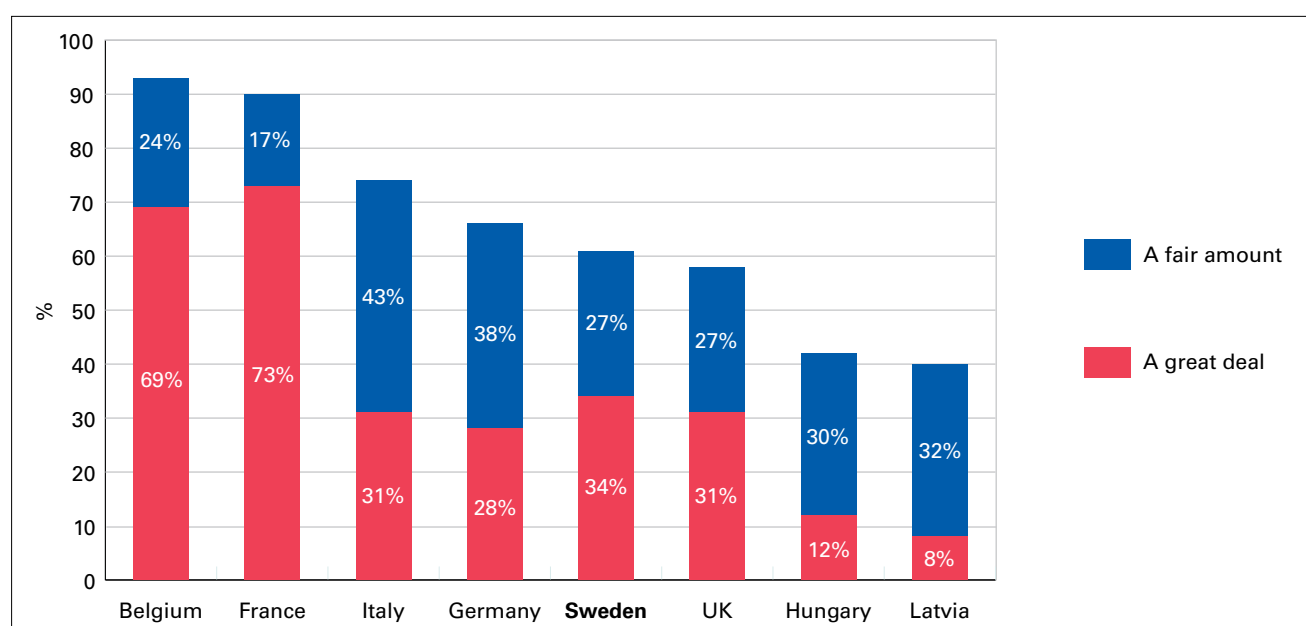
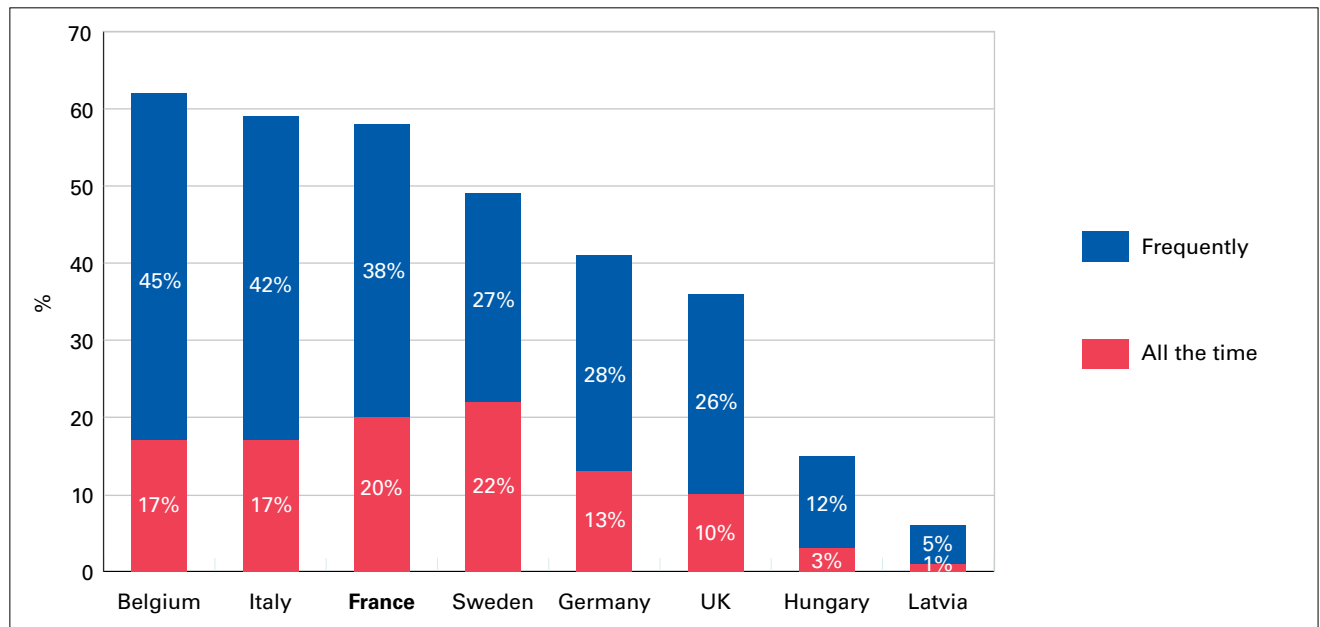


Figure 20: The FRA survey: How often do you feel that people in your country accuse or blame you for anything done by the Israeli government because you are Jewish? (n=5,846)



defines legitimate criticism of Israel too narrowly and demonisation too broadly, trivialises the meaning of antisemitism, and exploits antisemitism in order to silence political debate about Israeli actions and policies.<sup>4</sup>

Although, as we have just demonstrated, many Jews in Europe are, as a matter of fact, often blamed for “anything done by the Israeli government”, we share the critique of the concept of ‘new antisemitism’. It is too broad-based, its connotations are too wide and it comprises too much to be useful for our purpose. To capture the phenomenon we have actually observed, namely, that Jews in Europe are attacked, verbally or physically, just because they are Jews and because of how those who attack them perceive the State of Israel, we need a more precise concept – a concept that does not include criticism of Israel or of Zionism as such.

We will call this particular kind of antisemitism *Israel-derived antisemitism*.

4 Klug, B. 2004. The Myth of the New Anti-Semitism, in *The Nation*, February, Klug, B. 2012. Interrogating “New Anti-Semitism”, in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, October, Lerner, M. 2007. There is no new Antisemitism in *The Baltimore Chronicle*, 2 February and Lerman, A. 2008. Jews attacking Jews, in *Ha’aretz*, 12 September.

We notice in this context that in no other country do the Jews feel that they are blamed “all the time” for anything done by the Israeli government as frequently as in Sweden, and in no other country is the corresponding figure as low as in Hungary (except for Latvia – a special case in this study anyway).

This might indicate that there are different sources for what is perceived as “antisemitism” in the different countries, e.g. Sweden and Hungary. If what is perceived as manifestations of antisemitism differs, this may also trigger different reactions to such manifestations. What may seem surprising from one understanding of antisemitism, may well be adequate as a reaction to other manifestations of antisemitism.

For instance, Jews differ to some degree between the countries when asked: “To what extent do you find criticism of Israel antisemitic?”

Figure 21 demonstrates that, once again, Sweden differs from the other countries here too. Jews in Sweden consider it antisemitic if a non-Jew criticises Israel to a lesser extent than Jews in the other countries, particularly in France and Belgium.

Even when the question concerns support of boycotts of Israeli goods and products, the picture

Figure 21: The FRA survey: Would you consider a non-Jewish person to be antisemitic if he or she criticises Israel? (n=5,846)

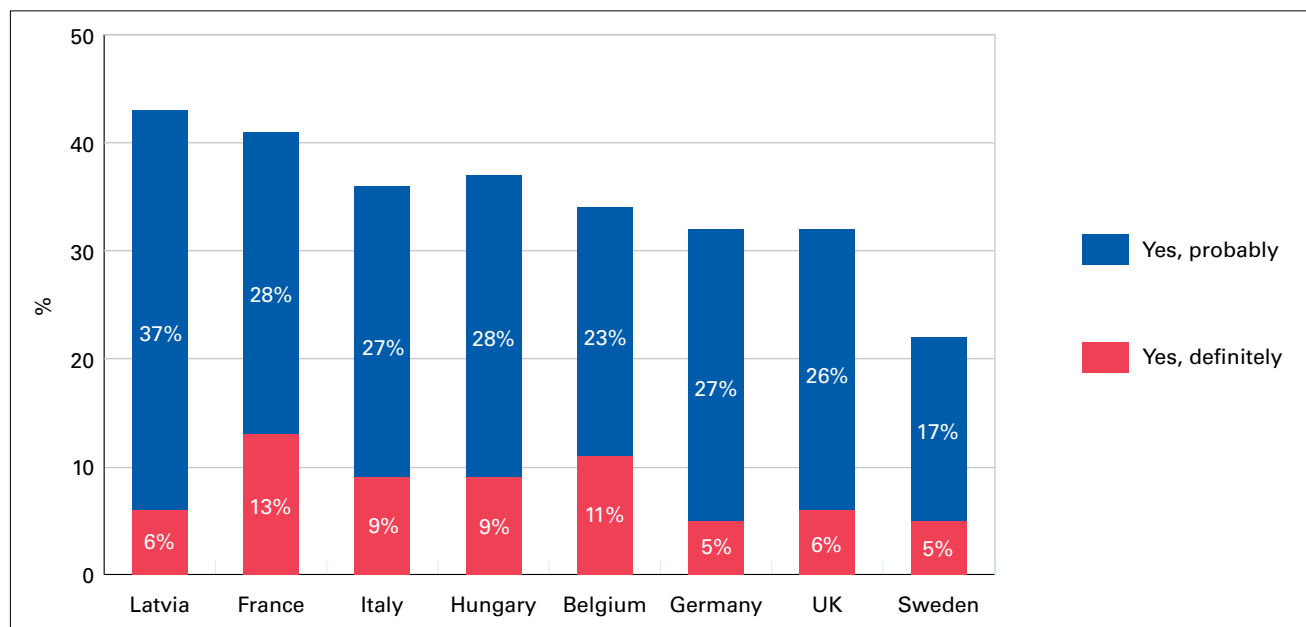
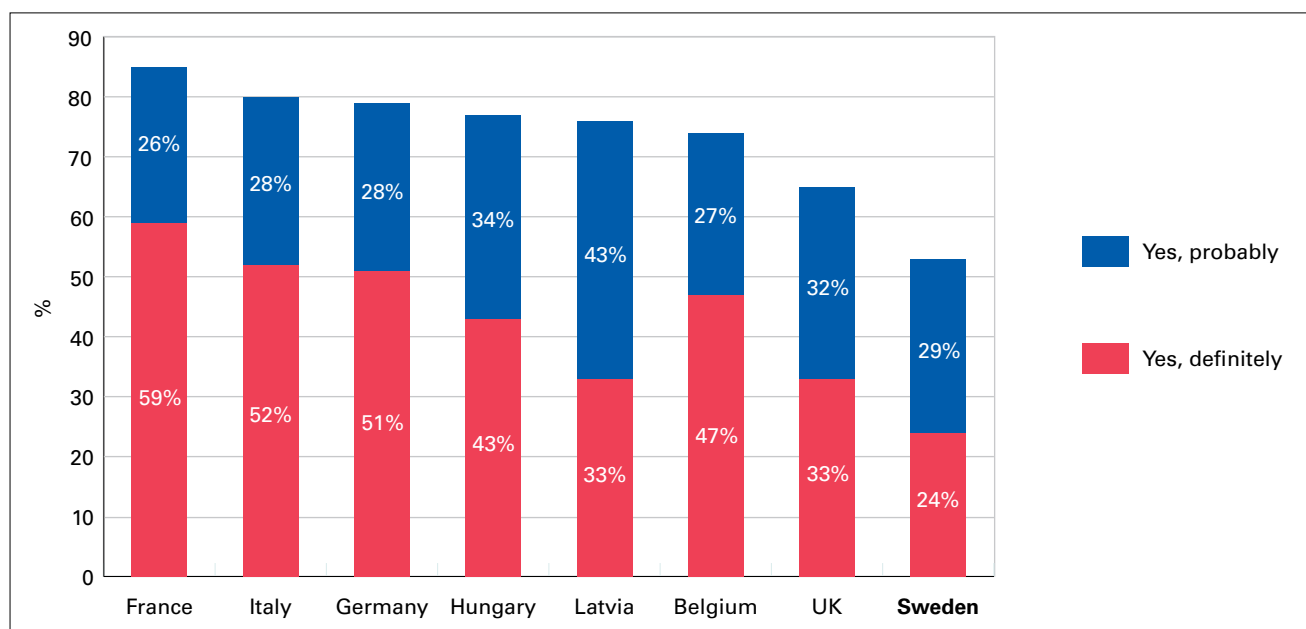


Figure 22: The FRA survey: Would you consider a non-Jewish person to be antisemitic if he or she supports boycotts of Israeli goods/products? (n=5,846)



as shown in Figure 22 remains stable. In fact, a majority of Jews in all countries would regard a non-Jew suggesting a boycott of Israeli goods to be antisemitic, but Jews in Sweden would do so to a considerably lesser extent than in the other EU countries.

One may wonder why this is so. Could it be that Jews in Sweden are more able than Jews in the other countries to distinguish anti-Zionism

from antisemitism? Or is it that Jews in Sweden have internalised the rather hegemonic and frequently voiced anti-Zionist and also anti-Israel public discourse in their country more than Jews in the other countries? Sweden is so far the only one of the eight countries that has officially acknowledged Palestine as a state and Margot Wallström, the present (2017) Swedish Foreign Minister, representing the Social Democratic Party, has publicly accused

Israel of carrying out extralegal executions of Palestinians.

In any case, there is no doubt that, regardless of their individual stand on Israel, the sense of

security and the degree of acceptance that Jews feel they have in all of the eight European countries involved in this study is affected to a considerable degree by events in and around Israel and by national and international reactions towards them.



## “Aufklärungsantisemitismus”

Whatever the reason that Jews in Sweden deviate somewhat from Jews in other European countries with regard to criticism of Israel, this is not the only aspect of anti-Jewish discourse in which the situation in Sweden differs from the general picture in Europe.

Figure 23 illustrates that suggestions to prohibit core Jewish traditions and practices, such as *brit mila* (circumcision of new-born baby boys) and *shechita* (the ritual slaughter of animals) are heard more often in Sweden, the most modernised and secularised country in this study (and perhaps in the world), than in any other country. Interestingly, in Hungary, the country in the study with the largest proportion of citizens holding classic antisemitic attitudes, these kinds of anti-Jewish suggestions are much less frequently heard than in the other countries studied.

Criticism of these core Jewish practices is not necessarily based on antisemitic sentiment. Jewish people may, however, perceive it as such, based on their historical experiences of previous antisemitic campaigns and their sense of cultural vulnerability in the society in which they live. In the contemporary world, some of this kind of criticism of significant Jewish customs appears

to be based on modern ideas of children’s rights and concern for the welfare of animals. The French-Italian historian Diana Pinto has labelled this form of anti-Jewish attitudes and criticism “*Aufklärungsantisemitismus*”, i.e. it is basically an Enlightenment-based critique of traditional Jewish practices. As shown in Figure 24, this Enlightenment-inspired attitude is most pronounced and frequent in the most clearly Protestant, modernised and secularised countries of this study: Sweden, Germany and the UK. Those who present such viewpoints are often people with liberal political viewpoints. Liberals are usually among those who most consistently defend the idea of religious freedom. In this instance, that idea comes into conflict with another idea, central to the liberal ideology: the individual’s right to decide for himself and is also reinforced by the equally liberally inspired idea of children’s rights. For some liberals, such as Bengt Westerberg, former leader of the Liberal Party and Minister of Social Affairs in Sweden, the aforementioned viewpoints apparently carry more weight than the idea of religious freedom. For other liberals the reverse is true.

Whether or not this kind of anti-Jewish standpoint, attacking customs such as *brit mila*

Figure 23: The FRA survey: In the last 12 months, have you personally heard non-Jewish people suggest that circumcision and traditional Jewish slaughter should not be allowed to take place in your country? (n=5,846)

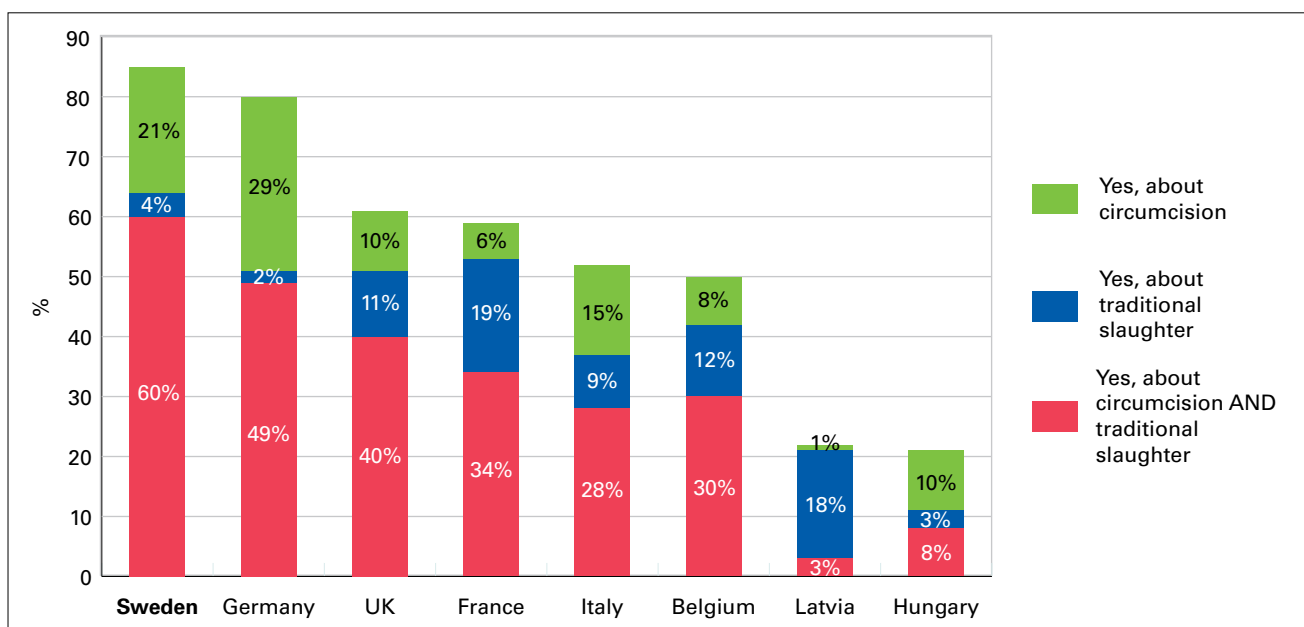
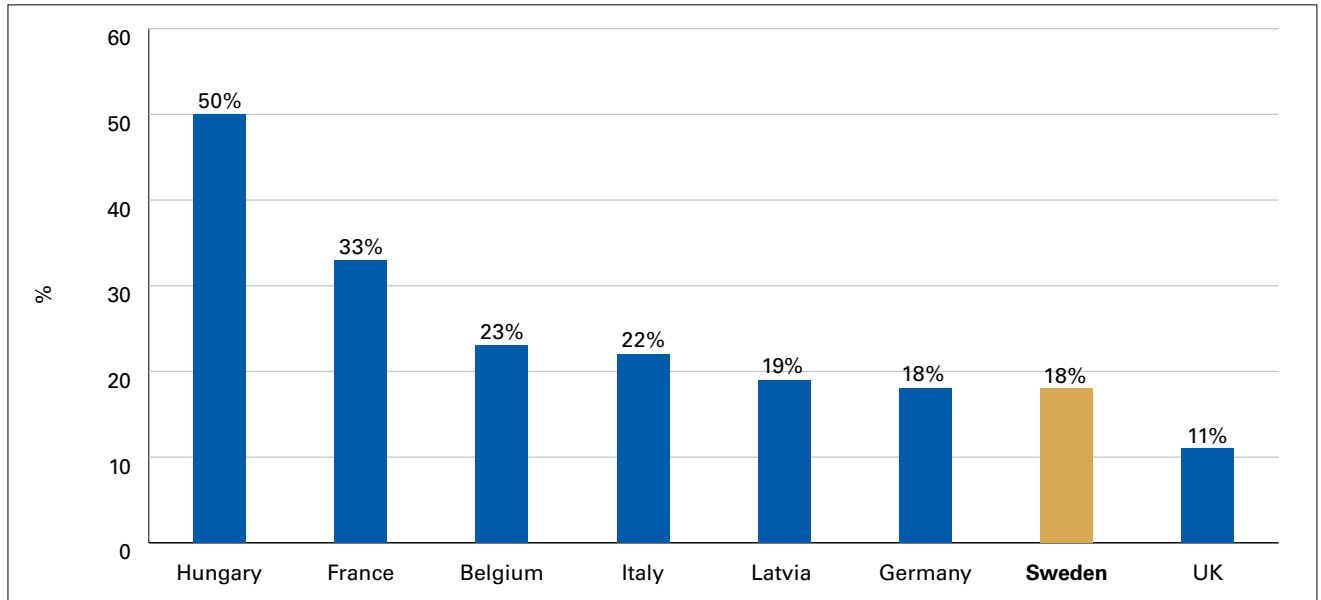


Figure 24: The FRA survey: What percentage of the Jewish population in the country has frequently heard non-Jews in the country utter classic antisemitic prejudices? (n=5,846)



and/or shechita should, in fact, be considered another kind of antisemitism or not remains to be discussed.

In relation to this, it might be relevant to reflect on the possible differences in the driving forces behind the criticism of traditional Jewish customs and holding classic antisemitic attitudes. And also, for that matter, whether attacks on Jews in

European countries, based on perceptions of the policies and actions of the State of Israel, have different driving forces from the other two sets of attitudes mentioned here. There might also be interesting and perhaps significant differences with respect to the kind of people, socially, politically, intellectually and culturally, who hold these different kinds of anti-Jewish sentiments. We will return to this question in the conclusion.

## Perpetrators of antisemitic attacks

What we have identified as classic antisemitic prejudices are shown in Figure 25 below, and are heard more frequently by Jews in Hungary than by Jews anywhere else in Europe. Statements of this kind are heard relatively rarely in the UK compared to the other investigated countries. Jews in Sweden come face-to-face with such comments slightly less often than Jews in continental Europe.

We asked our Jewish respondents how they would describe the person or group that made the antisemitic comments or attacks they had witnessed. In this connection it should be emphasised that we do not know exactly what the respondents refer to when answering that question. It is the respondent's subjective opinion of what constitutes antisemitism that counts in this context.

Jews in different countries may attribute to different groups what they have perceived as an antisemitic comment or attack. The FRA asked respondents to describe the person or group that made the antisemitic comment or act that they had recently experienced. The respondents were asked to categorise the supposed perpetrator into one of the following four groups:

- a person with right-wing political views;
- a person with left-wing political views;
- a person with Muslim views;
- a person with Christian views.

In Figure 25 we see that Jews in Hungary, where the classic form of antisemitism is most dominant, mainly find the antisemitic attackers to be political right-wingers. This is also true, albeit to a lesser extent, for Italy, but much less so in the other investigated countries, and least of all in Sweden and France.

Correspondingly, Jews in Hungary attribute the antisemitic perpetrators as coming from the left-wing of the political spectrum to a much lesser extent than Jews in the other countries. In contrast, as shown in Figure 26, a majority of Jews in France, Italy and Belgium hold that the antisemitic attacks they have experienced were carried out by people with left-wing political views.

The balance/ratio between supposedly left-wing and right-wing perpetrators naturally differs sharply between Hungary and France.

Figure 25: The FRA survey: How would you describe the people who made antisemitic comments?  
Someone with right-wing political views (n=5,384)

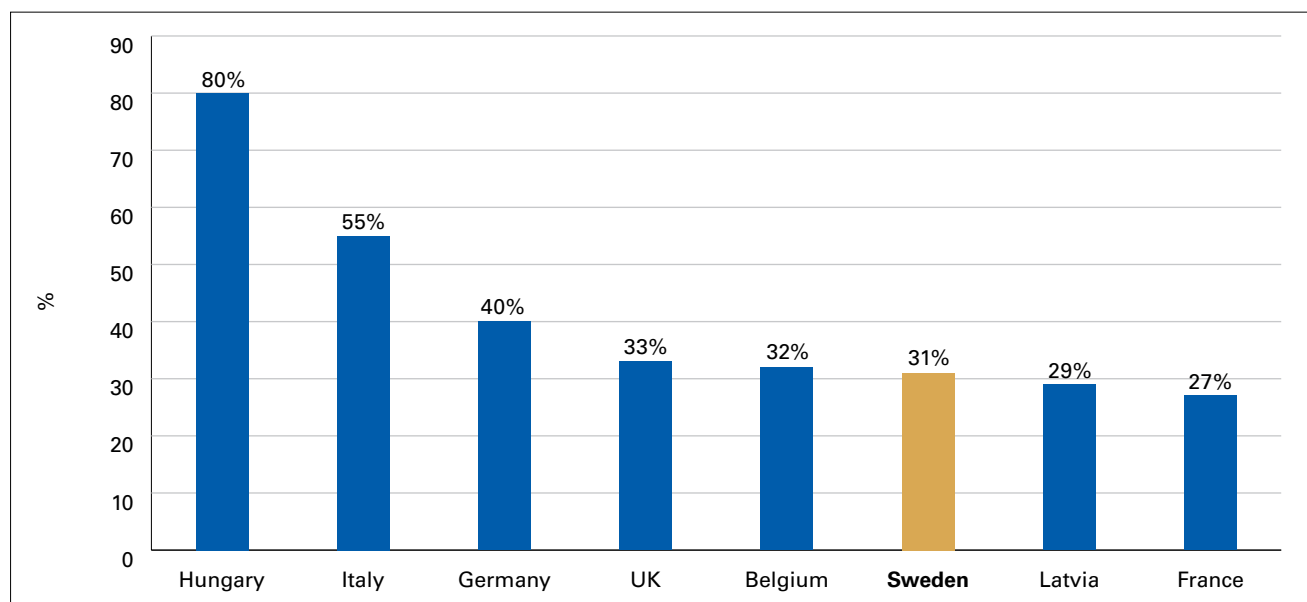


Figure 26: The FRA survey: How would you describe the people who made antisemitic comments?  
Someone with left-wing political views (n=5,384)

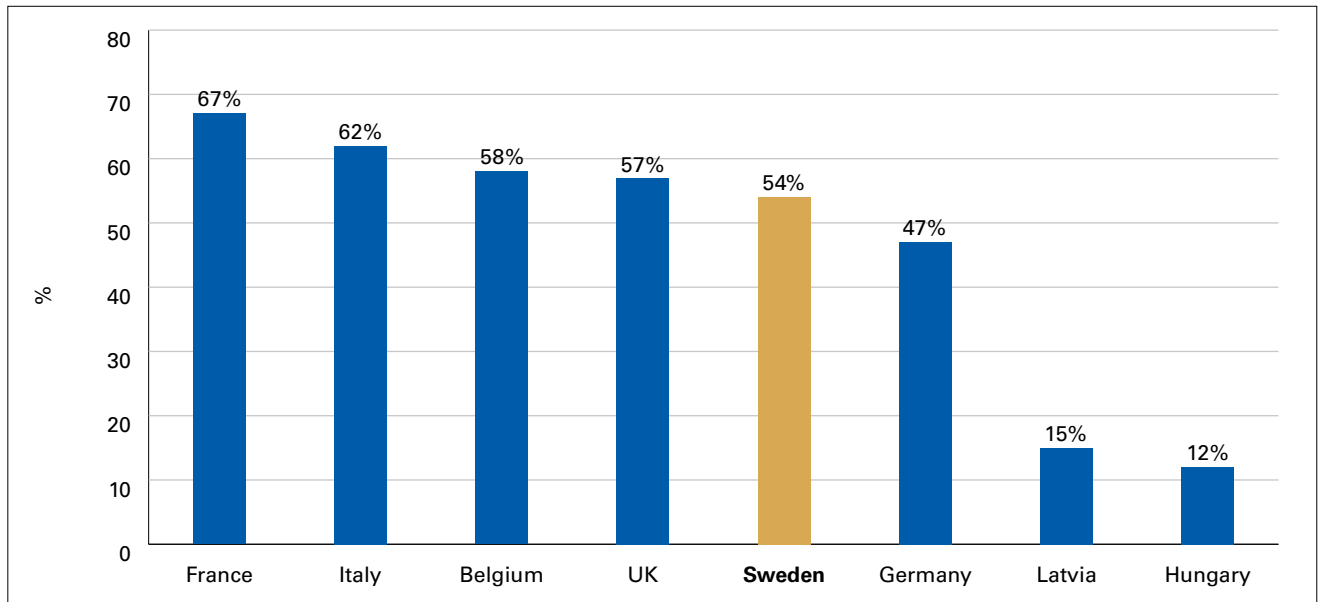


Figure 27: The FRA survey: How would you describe the people who made antisemitic comments?  
Someone with left-wing political views or right-wing political views (n=5,384)

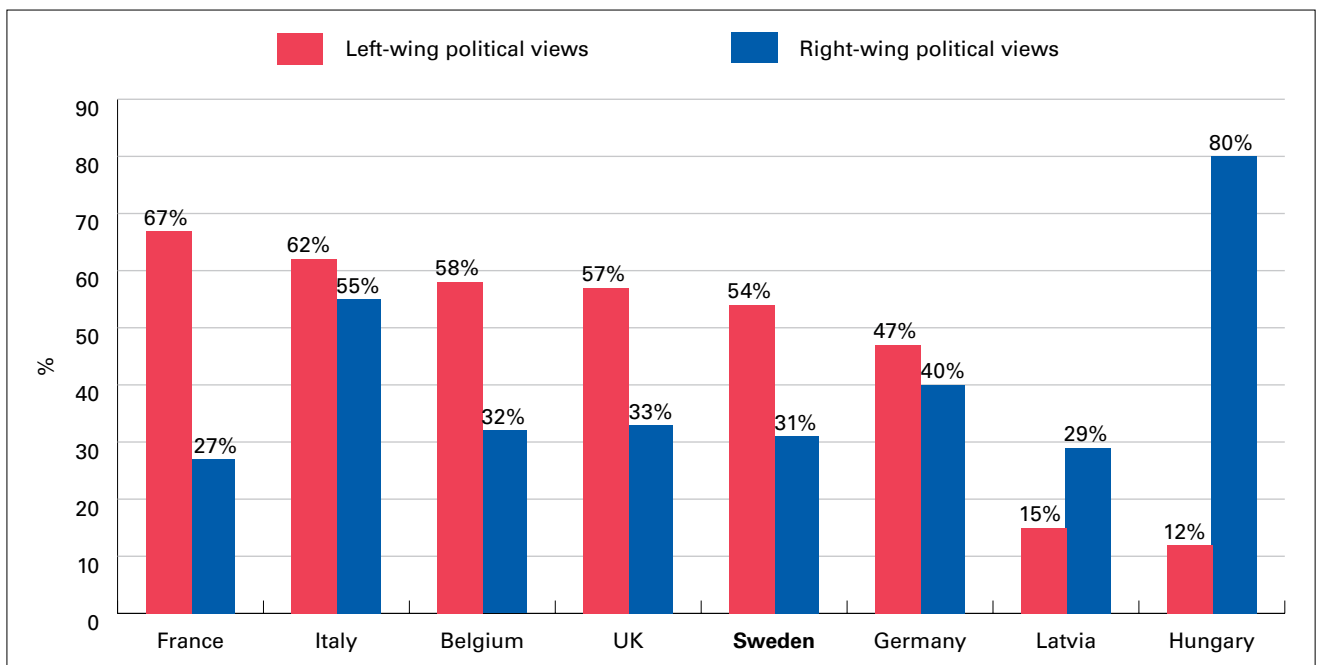


Figure 27 demonstrates that their patterns are, in fact, almost the reverse. Interestingly, the left-wing/right-wing ratio is almost identical in Sweden and the UK – the two countries in this study that resemble each other most closely in many other response patterns as well. In both countries, the Jewish respondents attribute almost 60% more antisemitic attacks to left-wingers than to right-wingers.

In the ongoing public debate, ‘Muslims’ are often targeted as perpetrators of terrorist attacks. In many cases, such attacks are openly motivated by something that has to do with Israel and actions taken by the Israeli government. Unsurprisingly, as shown in Figure 28 below, we see that many Jews, in particular in France and Belgium, where some major terrorist attacks took place shortly before our survey, attributed the antisemitic

Figure 28: The FRA survey: How would you describe the people who made antisemitic comments?  
Someone with a Muslim extremist view (n=5,384)

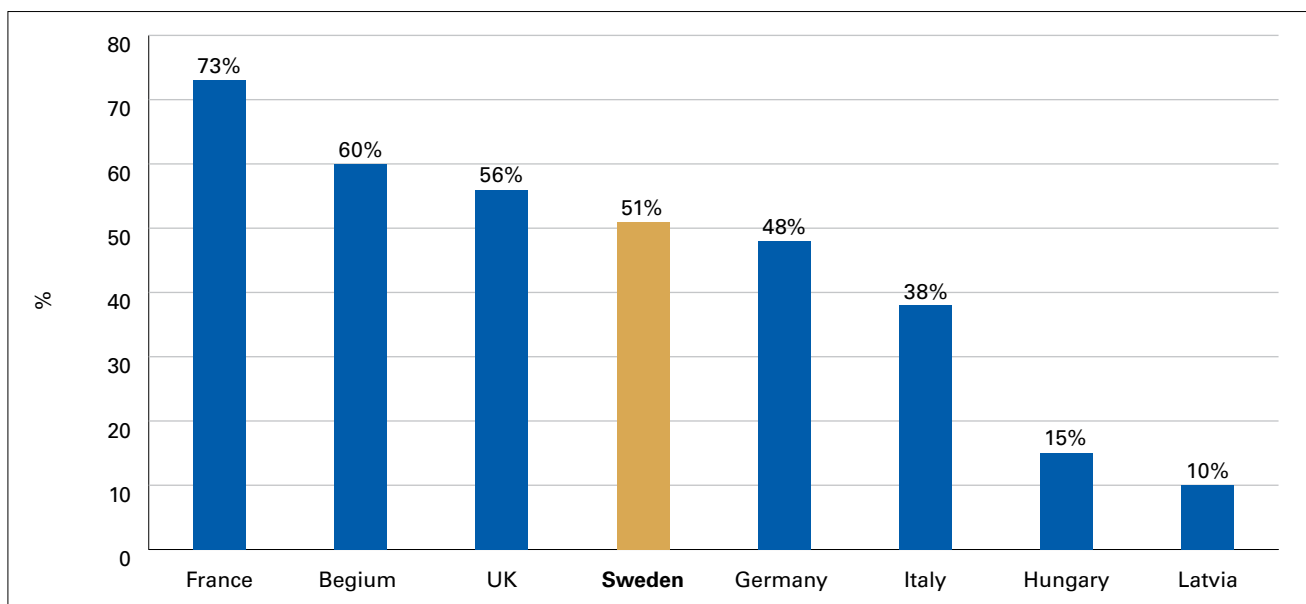
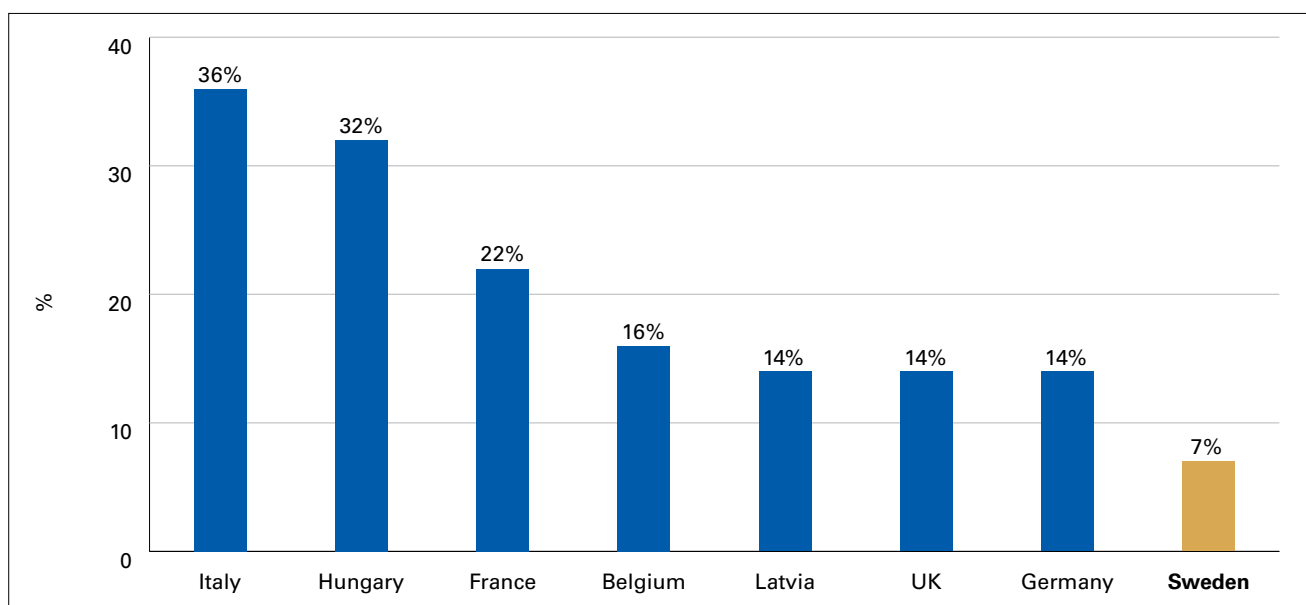


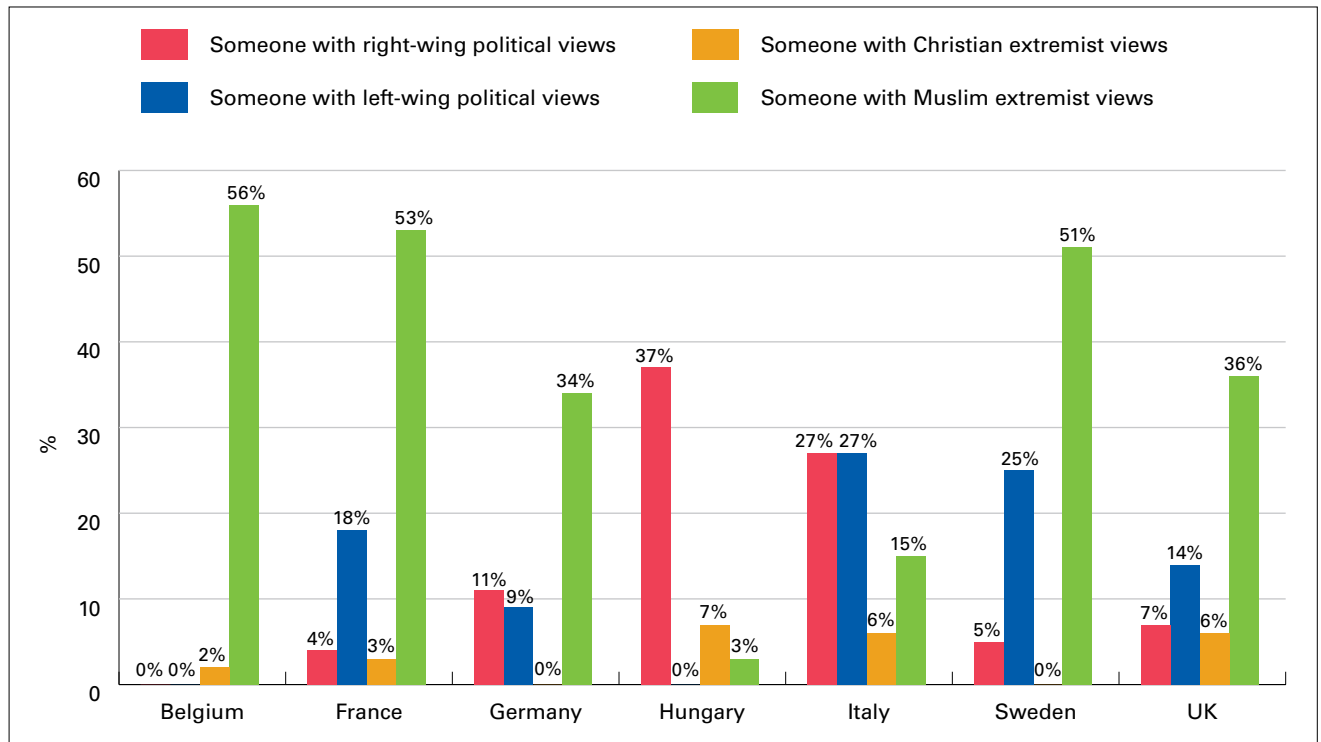
Figure 29: The FRA survey: How would you describe the people who made antisemitic comments?  
Someone with a Christian extremist view (n=5,384)



attacks to Muslims. This is also the case in the UK and Sweden, but to a lesser extent – again, on almost the same level. On 7 July 2005, some years before our study, a large-scale terrorist attack took place in London, carried out by Muslim activists. On 11 December 2010, a failed terrorist attempt, including several heavy bombs, took place in central Stockholm. The perpetrator was a Muslim activist who blew himself up, but miraculously failed to kill anyone else. It

is understandable that such major events may colour the perceptions of the Jewish population in these countries. Closer analysis shows that the Swedish figure also relates to more recent events in the city of Malmö – a relatively small city with only a tiny Jewish community but with a large population of Muslims originating from the Middle East. Malmö has become infamous for the continuous harassment of Jews in the city and for its former mayor's expressions of his tacit

Figure 30: The FRA survey: Thinking about the incident in which somebody attacked or threatened you in a way that frightened you because you are Jewish – who did this to you? (n=403)



approval of such behaviour – referring to actions taken by Israel.

If Muslims may be viewed as perpetrators of antisemitic attacks based on their opposition to Israel and its policies, Jews might perceive Christians as the source of another kind of religiously inspired anti-Jewish criticism. To some extent this seems to be the case. As shown in Figure 29, we find that in Italy and Hungary, the two most outspokenly Catholic countries included in this study, a significant proportion of what is perceived as antisemitic attacks are attributed to someone with a Christian view. However, in radically modernised and secularised Sweden, this is much less frequent than in any of the other countries.

So far, we have dealt with people whom Jewish respondents identify as those who utter the antisemitic comments they hear or read about. A different, but related question is who do they perceive to be the perpetrator(s) of physical attacks or threats they have experienced because they are Jewish. We asked those in our sample who indicated that they had experienced physical attacks or threats in the preceding

five years:<sup>5</sup> *Thinking about the incident where somebody attacked or threatened you in a way that frightened you, because you are Jewish, who did this to you?* The respondents were given an opportunity to choose between several different kinds of possible perpetrators, among them members of one of the four groups we discussed above, namely, someone with right-wing or left-wing political views, as well as someone with Christian or Muslim extremist views.<sup>6</sup> The result is shown in Figure 30.

5 The number of respondents who reported to have been victims of such attacks was around 7%. The number of people in Latvia who reported such experiences was too few to constitute a base for statistical description.

6 The list of options to choose from was: 1. Family/household member; 2. Neighbour; 3. Colleague, boss or supervisor at work; 4. Someone from school, college or university; 5. A customer, client or patient; 6. Someone with right-wing political views; 7. Someone with left-wing political views; 8. Teenager or group of teenagers; 9. Doctor or healthcare worker; 10. Police officer or border guard; 11. Public official (e.g. a civil servant); 12. Private security guard; 13. Someone with Christian extremist views; 14. Someone with Muslim extremist views; 15. Someone else (specify); Don't know.

Approximately 50% of those who identified someone

In all of the participating countries except for Hungary and Italy, the perpetrators of threatening antisemitic physical attacks are mostly identified as people or groups with Muslim extremist views. In Hungary, the group most frequently associated with antisemitic violence is the right-wing activists, and in Italy both right-wing and left-wing activists are seen more often as perpetrators of antisemitic violence than are Muslim extremists. However, it should also be noted that in all the other countries, such as Belgium, France, Germany, the UK and not least, Sweden, people with Muslim extremist views<sup>7</sup> are seen as perpetrators of antisemitic violence to a greater extent than any other of the groups on which we focused.

In this connection, it is also interesting to note the discrepancy between those who are identified as uttering antisemitic *comments* and those who are identified as perpetrators of physical antisemitic *violence and threats*. However, although when it comes to antisemitic comments, two of the groups we study here, namely, those with left-wing views and those with Muslim extremist views, are 'blamed' for being the source of such comments to more or less the same degree,<sup>8</sup> this is far from the case

when the issue is physical violence and threats. On the contrary, physical attacks and threats are much more often attributed to those with Muslim extremist views than to any of the other groups we have discussed here. Hence, even if such attacks and threats do not occur frequently, the fact that such acts, if and when they do occur, are perceived as caused by Muslim extremists, might constitute a much higher level of fear among Jews in areas where people with Muslim extremist views live (such as the city of Malmö in Sweden), than in areas where antisemitic comments are ubiquitous but where no significant numbers of people with Muslim extremist views live (such as in Hungary).

In this context, a note of caution is warranted. What was registered by the FRA study is the people/groups who were *perceived* to have uttered the antisemitic comments and/or launched the antisemitic attack or threat experienced by the Jewish respondents. Perceptions are often coloured both by rumours circulating in the public debate and by the respondents' own stereotypes and prejudices. Nevertheless, these perceptions might, of course, still be accurate and regardless of whether they are or not, they constitute a significant sociological fact in and of themselves.

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as a perpetrator identified this person or group as belonging to one of the four categories on which we have focused here.

7 We cannot know whether the person identified as such is, in fact, a Muslim extremist.

8 In most, but not all countries, left-wingers are actually somewhat more often perceived as the source of antisemitic comments than Muslim extremists, and both of these groups generally (with the exception of Hungary and Latvia) are perceived as such more often than right-wingers and much more often than Christian extremists.

## Discussion and conclusions

Our study has led us to distinguish between three different kinds of antisemitisms.

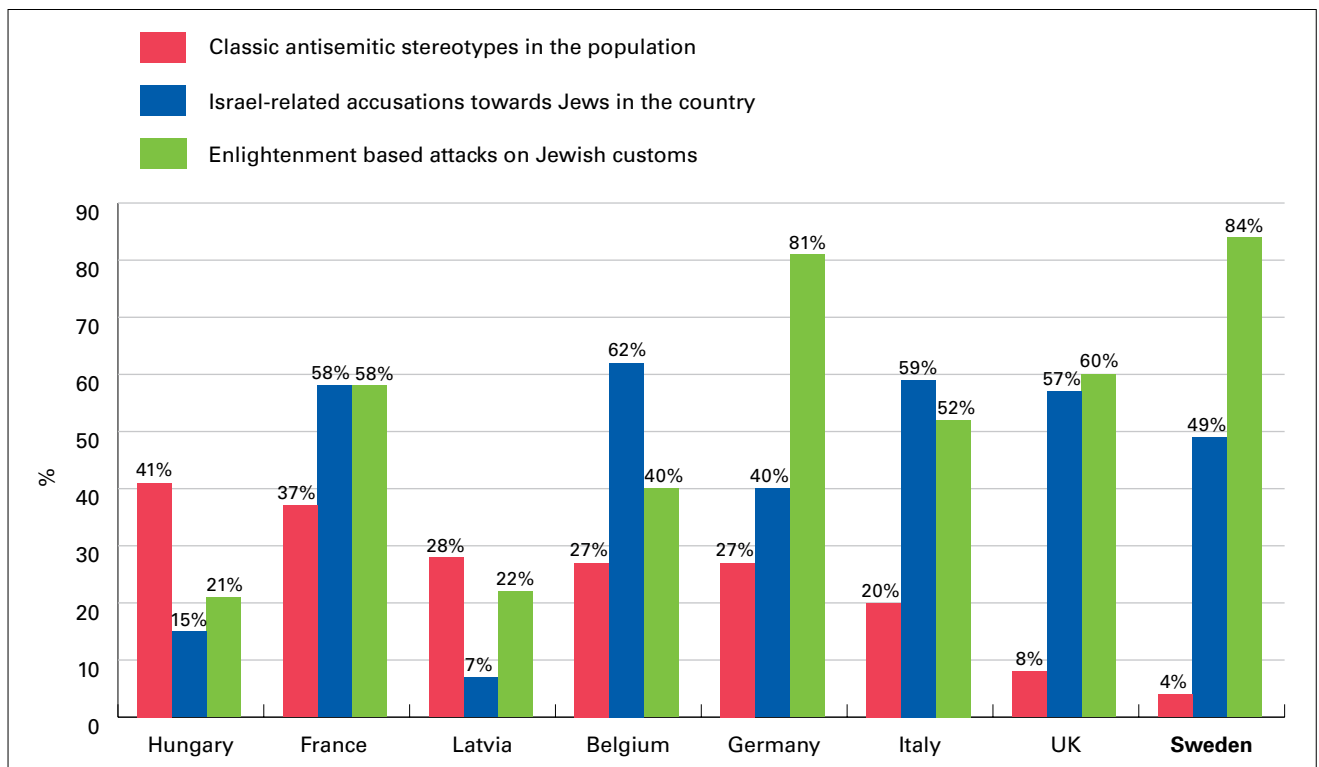
- One of them is based on classic antisemitic stereotypes. We refer to this as *Classic antisemitism*. There is a clear racist component to this kind of antisemitism, and also a strong element of conspiratorial thinking.
- Another of these antisemitisms consists of accusations and attacks on Jews because they are Jews, referring to Israel and actions taken by the Israeli state. There is a strong political component to this kind of antisemitism, and a certain degree of conspiratorial thinking is also involved here. We have labelled this kind of antisemitism *Israel-derived antisemitism*.
- A third kind of what might be perceived as antisemitism is criticism of core Jewish practices. There are often (but probably not exclusively) humanitarian concerns and liberal

ideas about the individual's right to choose for him/herself and concern for animal welfare involved in this criticism of Jewish traditions. We use the term *Aufklärungsantisemitismus* to capture this phenomenon.

Figure 31 shows the degree to which these three different antisemitisms are present in the eight countries included in this study.

Each of the three rather distinct antisemitisms we have discerned seems to be based on a particular and underlying 'philosophy'. It appears that they are also held by sociologically rather distinct types of people/persecutors. The ways these different forms of antisemitisms are manifested publicly also seem to differ significantly. It is probably not too farfetched to suppose that the psychological driving forces which trigger manifestations of these diverging antisemitic positions also differ among their respective persecutors.

Figure 31: Comparing different measures and aspects of antisemitism between and within the eight countries of the FRA study (n=5,846)





## Antisemitism and political exploitations of fear

What could explain why the Jews in the country with the lowest level of classic antisemitism in the population, namely Sweden, manifest the highest level of fear and avoidance behaviour when it comes to showing their Jewish identity in public (see also Figures 17 and 18)?

Two factors appear to be in operation here: one is the fact that Swedish Jews, just like most inhabitants in Sweden, are rather indifferent to religious practices and symbols. It is not so important for most Jews to openly manifest their Jewish identity, which is, in fact, often very strong and could be described as 'ethno-cultural' rather than 'religious'.<sup>9</sup> With very few individual exceptions, there are no openly orthodox Jews (in terms of dress code, etc.) in Sweden. Sweden is a highly secularised country and symbols and manifestations of religious belonging are not part of daily life there.

The other significant factor in this context is the fact that public criticism of Israel is almost ubiquitous in Sweden. Those groups and people who are prone to Israel-derived antisemitism might find a kind of tacit understanding – however misinterpreted – or even legitimisation of their attacks on Jews in this ubiquity. At the very least, many Jews in Sweden may harbour that fear. Perpetrators of Israel-derived antisemitic attacks might have felt that they are partly understood, if not excused, by statements by the then leading political power-holder in Malmö, Ilmar Reepalu, who represented the Social Democratic Party. In this connection, it should be noted that actions based on Israel-derived antisemitic sentiments tend to manifest themselves in violence and threats to a much greater extent than the other kinds of antisemitism. Consequently, since carrying things in public that flaunt one's Jewish identity, or visiting a synagogue is not so important for most Jews in Sweden anyway, and doing so might trigger attacks based on hostility and anger towards Israel, it might be understandable that many Jews in Sweden tend to avoid manifesting their Jewishness in public – even if, for the most

part, they have a strong Jewish identity, as we know from other studies.<sup>10</sup>

The aim of those who physically attack Jews in Europe based on their hatred of Israel is clearly to arouse fear in the Jewish group living in these countries. They actually seem to be succeeding in this. This is also the goal of ISIS (Daesh). One effect of their actions is the "destruction of the Grey Zone",<sup>11</sup> to create political polarisation and to disturb the fabric of civil life – in this case, civil Jewish life.

Even if violent attacks are not experienced frequently, the very fact that they have taken place – and that there is a constant threat that they may occur again – is enough to trigger fear. One could, to some extent, compare this to a pyromaniac operating in a residential area. Most inhabitants of the area, even those living in neighbouring areas, would be afraid that the pyromaniac might choose their house for his next attack. And they would be justified in this, even if the likelihood that this might, indeed, happen is actually low. Nevertheless, probably nobody would claim that the actions taken by the pyromaniac were only the 'tip of the iceberg' of an underlying 'pyromaniacism' in society. However, when it comes to Israel-derived antisemitic attacks on Jews, this is what certain commentators tend to do. Such attacks are often – rightly or wrongly – interpreted as signs of an underlying and widespread antisemitism in society.

This response is, of course, fully in line with the ambitions of the antisemitic perpetrators. This just makes it easier for them to exploit their attacks for their political purposes.

9 Dencik, L. (2011). The Dialectics of Diaspora. On the Art of being Jewish in the Swedish Modernity, in Schoeps, J. and Glöckner, O. (eds). *A road to Nowhere. Jewish Experience in unifying Europe*, pp. 121-150. Leiden/Boston: Brill.

10 Dencik, L. & Marosi, K. (2007). *Judiskt Liv i Sverige – identitet, levnadsvanor och attityder bland medlemmarna i de judiska församlingarna i Sverige vid ingången till 2000-talet*. Stockholm: Judiska Centralrådet i Sverige.

11 "Destroying The Grey Zone" is a concept launched by the so-called Islamic State movement ISIS in a manifesto stating the strategy behind the terrorist attacks on the Stade de France and Bataclan theatre in Paris. The idea is to attack places where "normal" people meet in order to polarise the inhabitants of a country so that even the liberal and tolerant among them start condemning the Muslims and become discriminatory and hostile towards them. By consequence, the Muslims in the country see no other option than supporting the Islamist struggle.

However, there are also other political forces that have an interest in exploiting Israel-derived antisemitic attacks, instigated by certain Arab/Muslim groups, as they have often proven to be, for their own political purposes. One such political force is the populist anti-Muslim camp in society. For them it is easy and more than tempting to generalise from the single case and to claim: “Look! That’s what they are like! We cannot have ‘these Muslims’ around in our society!”

Another political force that is also interested in generalising and exploiting fear and antisemitic attacks for their own particular political purpose is the Zionist camp: “Look! That’s how it is here (in Sweden/Europe). Antisemitism is ubiquitous in these societies. It has just manifested its ugly face again.”

The question is: Is there really an ‘iceberg of antisemitism’ underlying the violent antisemitic attacks that we can, indeed, observe? Or are we rather dealing with ‘pyromaniacs’ who are creating fear among the inhabitants, as well as certain, seemingly opposed, political forces who are successfully exploiting such fears for their particular political interests?

Either conclusion is in need of empirical evidence to back it up.

### **Distinctions between the three antisemitisms**

*Classic antisemitism*, i.e. antisemitism based on traditional antisemitic stereotypes about Jews, is most frequent in the Hungarian population, where it is also, by far, the predominant form of antisemitism. Those who manifest this kind of antisemitism are mainly identified as political right-wingers. This kind of antisemitism is primarily manifested in derogatory verbal personal or public remarks and acts of social discrimination.

As can be seen in Figure 31, this kind of antisemitism is also present to a considerable degree in the French population, but much less so in the UK and in particular, in Sweden.

*Israel-derived antisemitism*, i.e. attacks on Jews emanating from hostility towards the State of Israel and/or anger due to actions taken by the

Israeli state, is frequently perceived by Jews in Belgium, Italy, France, the UK and Sweden. Those who carry out such attacks are mainly identified as people with Muslim views and/or political left-wingers. This kind of antisemitism is quite often manifested by acts of violence towards Jewish institutions, symbols and people.

Importantly, this kind of antisemitism is much less present in the former communist East-European countries, Hungary and Latvia, than in the West-European countries that have received large numbers of Muslim immigrants in the decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

*Aufklärungsantisemitismus*, i.e. criticism of core Jewish practices and of Jewish representatives and individuals because of them, is very frequently heard in Sweden and Germany, and often, but not as intensely, in the UK and France. To some extent, this kind of criticism might actually be a disguised attack on the numerically much more significant Muslim population in the country. Both Muslims and Jews traditionally circumcise their boys – although at different stages in the boys’ development and by slightly different techniques – and slaughter animals according to similar religious rituals. Those who criticise these traditions are most often ‘progressive’, liberal and left-wing oriented people. The criticism usually takes the form of comments in public debate and sometimes also proposing a legal prohibition of the Jewish practices in question.

As can be seen in Figure 31, the three forms of antisemitism are present today to various extents in the countries included in this study. In Belgium and France, all three forms exist at a fairly high level, whereas in Sweden, Germany and the UK, the kind of anti-Jewish sentiments that dominate the picture, *Aufklärungsantisemitismus*, should not, perhaps, be counted as proper antisemitism, even if it is, of course, clearly anti-Jewish. Many of those who advocate that position do not share the values and attitudes of those who manifest the other two kinds of antisemitism.

Of course, there might be people who share all three sets of antisemitic attitudes. The popular idea that it is the same old antisemitism that pops up again and again and shows its ugly face does not, however, find support in our study. It is more likely that there are actually three

distinct antisemitisms at play. Of course, a number of people might at one and the same time hold classic antisemitic stereotypes, be hostile towards Israel and in favour of prohibiting core Jewish customs.

However, our data do not suggest that there is a significant correlation between them – rather, that they are inspired by different underlying philosophies held by different social groups, and largely manifested in different ways.

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