

Anti-Israel Sentiment Predicts Anti-Semitism In Europe: A Statistical Study

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Abstract

In the discourse surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, extreme criticisms of Israel (e.g. Israel is an apartheid state, the Israel Defense Forces deliberately target Palestinian civilians) coupled with extreme policy proposals (e.g. boycott of Israeli academics and institutions, divest from companies doing business with Israel) have sparked counter-claims that such criticisms are anti-Semitic (for only Israel is singled out). Our

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research shines a different, statistical light on this question: based on a survey of 500 citizens in each of 10 European countries (for a total sample of 5,000), we ask whether those with extreme anti-Israel views are more likely to be anti-Semitic. Even after controlling for numerous potentially confounding factors, we find that anti-Israel sentiment consistently predicts the probability that an individual is anti-Semitic, with the likelihood of measured anti-Semitism increasing with the extent of anti-Israel sentiment observed.

On April 22, 2005, the Executive Council of Britain's Association of University Teachers (AUT) voted to boycott two Israeli universities (Bar Ilan and Haifa University). The boycott was advocated "... as a contribution to the struggle to end Israel's occupation, colonization and system of apartheid" (<http://www.aut.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1182>), while the boycott's main proponent stated that this action would increase pressure on the "... illegitimate state of Israel" (<http://education.guardian.co.uk/higher/worldwide/story/0,9959,1466250,00.html>). Similarly spirited statements include London Mayor Ken Livingstone's assertion that Israeli Prime Minister "...Sharon continues to organise terror. More than three times as many Palestinians as Israelis have been killed in the present conflict" (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1430132,00.html>). Addressing suicide bombings in Is-

rael, philosopher Ted Honderich wrote that “Those Palestinians who have resorted to necessary killing have been right to try to free their people, and those who have killed themselves in the cause of their people have indeed sanctified themselves” (<http://chronicle.com/free/v50/i09/09b01201.htm>).

Many Israeli and Jewish individuals and organizations have characterized statements such as these as anti-Semitic in effect if not intent, given that Israel is singled out in the face of silence over human rights violations committed elsewhere. While there is a long and sad history of anti-Semitism in Europe and elsewhere [Almog 1988], and while the relationship between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism through modern times has been thoroughly explored [Wistrich 1990, Wistrich 2004], whether extreme criticism of Israel is *de facto* anti-Semitic remains bitterly contested, as exemplified in the recent AUT boycott debate (<http://www.liberoblog.com>).

Our research question is different. Rather than trying to demarcate when anti-Israel *statements* are anti-Semitic in either effect or intent, we ask whether individuals with strong anti-Israel views are more likely to harbor anti-Semitic attitudes than others. Certainly Bayes’ rule would suggest this to be true. Let p be the proportion of the population with anti-Semitic leanings, q be the fraction of those with anti-Semitic leanings who are anti-Israel, and r be the fraction of those not anti-Semitic who are anti-Israel. Then the fraction of those with anti-Israel

views who are also anti-Semitic, f , is given by

$$f = \frac{pq}{pq + (1 - p)r}. \quad (1)$$

Presumably those with anti-Semitic leanings would be more likely to espouse anti-Israel viewpoints than those who are not anti-Semitic (given that Israel presents itself as a Jewish state), implying that $q > r$, which in turn implies that the fraction of those with anti-Israel leanings who are anti-Semitic (f) exceeds the unconditional proportion of the population that is anti-Semitic (p).

Following the logic of equation (1), one can ask not only whether those with anti-Israel leanings are more likely to be anti-Semitic, but whether the *degree* of anti-Israel feeling differentially predicts the likelihood that one harbors anti-Semitic views. Worded differently, when confronted with anti-Israel statements such as those cited in the opening of this article, we ask “what is the probability that the person issuing these statements is anti-Semitic?” We are thus interested in the fraction of *individuals* with anti-Israel views of differing severity who also harbor anti-Semitic views, as opposed to whether the anti-Israel views themselves are (or are not) inherently anti-Semitic.

The contribution of this article is that for ten European countries, we are able to answer our research questions empirically. We next describe our data source and method of analysis, after which we present our statistical findings. Not only do we find that the extent of anti-Israel sentiment differentially predicts the likelihood of anti-Semitism among survey respondents; the predictions are sharp. Those with extreme anti-Israel sentiment are roughly six times more likely to harbor anti-Semitic views than those who do not fault Israel on the measures studied, and among those respondents deeply critical of Israel, the fraction who harbor anti-Semitic views exceeds 50%. Further, these results are robust even after controlling for numerous additional (and potentially confounding) factors both singularly and simultaneously.

Data. The Anti-Defamation League (henceforth ADL, <http://www.adl.org/>) commissioned First International Resources (<http://www.first-intl.com/default.htm>) to develop a study of attitudes towards Jews, Israel and the Palestinians [ADL 2004]. In addition to survey items probing such attitudes, questions addressed the degree of respondents' social contacts with Jews, and respondents' attitudes towards "others" (e.g. different religion, immigrants). Respondents were also asked to provide standard demographic information (e.g. age, gender, income etc.). The resulting survey was administered by Taylor Nelson Sofres (<http://www.tns->

global.com) via telephone, resulting in interviews with 500 citizens in each of 10 countries for a total sample of 5,000 (actually 5,004). No information is available regarding those contacted who refused to participate in the study, which raises an obvious statistical question regarding nonresponse bias. However, given that the goal of our analysis is to examine the relationship between anti-Semitic and anti-Israel sentiment, rather than to estimate the true prevalence of either, nonresponse becomes less of an issue. The situation is somewhat akin to epidemiological studies relating, say, the incidence of cancer to smoking behavior: there is no need for the proportion of smokers in such studies to mimic the true percentage in the population. As will be detailed below, the consistency of the relationship between anti-Semitic and anti-Israel sentiment across many different analyses makes it difficult to believe that the results obtained are somehow artifactual due to nonresponse bias.

The Anti-Semitic Index. Table 1 reports the 11 statements used in this study to measure anti-Semitism along with the number of respondents who agreed with each proposition. As in prior ADL surveys, an anti-Semitic index was defined by counting the number of statements with which a respondent agreed. Fig. 1A reports the survivor distribution for this index, which is the fraction of all respondents with index scores exceeding x for x ranging from 0 through 11. Con-

sistent with prior ADL surveys [ADL 2004], we say that a respondent harbors anti-Semitic views if (s)he agrees with more than 5 of the 11 statements in Table 1. From Fig. 1A, the overall fraction of respondents harboring anti-Semitic views equals 14%.

The Anti-Israel Index. Table 2 reports the 4 statements used in this study to ascertain anti-Israel sentiment and the number of respondents who agreed with each. We used the number of these statements agreed to by a respondent to define an anti-Israel index. The higher the value of this index, the stronger the anti-Israel sentiment expressed. Fig. 1B reports the survivor distribution for the anti-Israel index. Just under half of all respondents report anti-Israel index scores of 0, indicating no measured anti-Israel sentiment, while only 1% of respondents agreed with all 4 of the anti-Israel statements considered.

Predicting Anti-Semitism From Anti-Israel Sentiment. To see whether anti-Israel sentiment is generally predictive of anti-Semitic views among the 5,000 respondents to our survey, we examined the survivor distribution of the anti-Semitic index for each of the five levels of the anti-Israel index. The results are shown in Fig. 2A. The five curves are significantly different (Log-Rank $\chi^2 = 286$, $df = 4$, $p \approx 0$), confirming that measured anti-Semitism differs by the extent of anti-Israel sentiment. It is noteworthy that these five survivor curves *never cross*:

for *any* value x of the anti-Semitic index, the fraction of respondents who agree with *more* than x anti-Semitic statements *strictly* increases with the value of the anti-Israel index. Fig. 2B reports the fraction of respondents who agree with more than 5 of the 11 anti-Semitic statements for the different levels of the anti-Israel index. Recall that of all respondents, 14% harbor anti-Semitic views. Only 9% of those with anti-Israel index scores of 0 report harboring anti-Semitic views, but the fraction of respondents harboring anti-Semitic views grows to 12%, 22%, 35% and 56% for anti-Israel index values of 1 through 4 respectively.

Third Factor Associations. As discussed earlier, the causal link is presumably that those with anti-Semitic views are more likely to oppose a Jewish state than others; therefore, the greater the extent of anti-Israel sentiment revealed, the higher the likelihood of associated anti-Semitism via Bayes' rule. However, it is also possible that the relationship observed between anti-Israel and anti-Semitic attitudes is the result of third factor associations. For example, those who are intolerant of "others" (e.g. different religion, different country of origin) might be more likely to express both anti-Semitic and anti-Israel sentiment as a result. Does the relationship displayed in Fig. 2B survive when one controls for possible confounding factors?

Fig. 3 reports the fraction of respondents harboring anti-Semitic views

as a function of anti-Israel index levels while controlling for the levels of third factors. The most important observation from this graphical exploration is that the panels of Fig. 3 repeat the basic pattern shown in Fig. 2B for essentially all levels of all factors. Fig. 3A shows that within each of the 10 countries surveyed, the fraction of respondents harboring anti-Semitic views increases with the extent of anti-Israel sentiment measured. While there is considerable variation among these countries in measured anti-Semitism overall – ranging from 8% in Denmark and The Netherlands to 22% in Spain – the association between anti-Israel and anti-Semitic leanings appears in each country. Fig. 3B shows that for each of several different income levels (and including those who refused to divulge their income), the fraction of respondents harboring anti-Semitic views increases with the anti-Israel index. Fig. 3C considers the statement “I do not have much in common with people of other races or religions,” and shows again that whether one feels much or little in common with others (or refused to answer), the level of anti-Semitism increases with the strength of anti-Israel leanings. Similarly, when considering the statement “Illegal immigrants today are a burden on our economy because they take our jobs, housing and health care,” Fig. 3D repeats the same relation between anti-Semitism and the anti-Israel index for all attitudes towards illegal immigrants. Does the extent of contact respondents have with Jews

matter? The survey asked respondents “Approximately how often would you say that you come into contact with Jews either at work or in social occasions?” Fig. 3E reports the by now familiar relationship between anti-Semitism and the anti-Israel index for different levels of contact. Finally, Fig. 3F reports the fraction of respondents who agree with specific anti-Semitic canards (Table 1) as a function of the anti-Israel index. Whether the accusation is that “Jews have too much power in our country,” or that “Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want,” or that “Jews don’t care what happens to anyone but their own kind,” the fraction of respondents agreeing with these (and the rest of the) anti-Semitic stereotypes consistently increases as a function of the anti-Israel index.

Multifactor Model. To further explore the association between the fraction of respondents harboring anti-Semitic views and the anti-Israel index, we fit a multiple logistic regression model to the survey data. Such a model enables estimation of the level of anti-Semitism as a function of the anti-Israel index while simultaneously controlling for possible confounding factors. The model also enables estimation of the independent effects (if any) of these same factors on the fraction of respondents harboring anti-Semitic views.

Several findings emerge from the results shown in Table 3. First, even after

controlling for respondents' country of residence, age, religion, income, gender, extent of contact with Jews, attitudes towards people of other races/religions, and attitudes toward illegal immigrants, the relationship between anti-Semitism and anti-Israel attitudes remains intact. The odds ratios of the fraction of respondents harboring anti-Semitic views for anti-Israel index scores greater than 0 (relative to those with an anti-Israel index of 0) equal 1.59, 3.28, 6.51 and 10.94 for anti-Israel index scores of 1 through 4 respectively. All of these scores are significantly different from unity (which would occur if anti-Israel index levels carried no information about anti-Semitism). The mitigating effects of the possible confounds considered are minor, as the equivalent odds ratios associated with the uncontrolled results of Fig. 2B equal 1.43, 2.92, 5.45, and 12.94 for anti-Israel index scores of 1 through 4, a similar set of ratios with the same qualitative implications as the figures derived from the logistic model. Further, of all the factors considered in this model, the anti-Israel index is by far the most important, as indicated by its χ^2 of 196 at 4 degrees of freedom. The model provides an excellent fit to the data as indicated by several goodness-of-fit tests in Table 3.

While simultaneously considering the factors shown in Table 3 did not meaningfully alter the relationship between anti-Semitism and anti-Israel attitudes in the data, these other factors all tested significant in their own right, as can be

seen from their associated χ^2 statistics in Table 3. The important relationships between these factors and anti-Semitism will now be summarized. First, the fraction of respondents harboring anti-Semitic views tends to increase with age. Second, relative to Christians, Muslim respondents are much more likely to harbor anti-Semitic views (odds ratio = 7.8). There was no statistically significant difference between the fraction of anti-Semitic responses obtained from Jews, other religions, or those reporting no religion as compared to Christians, though those who refused to identify their religion were more likely to harbor anti-Semitic views. Third, the fraction of anti-Semitic responses tended to decline as income increased. Fourth, women were much less likely than men to report anti-Semitic results. Fifth, the level of contact with Jews had no statistically significant relation to anti-Semitism, except that those who did not know how much contact they had with Jews were much less likely to harbor anti-Semitic views (odds ratio = 0.34 relative to those who reported no contact with Jews). Sixth, the less one feels in common with other races/religions, the more likely one is to exhibit anti-Semitism. Seventh, the less tolerant respondents were of illegal immigrants, the more likely they were to harbor anti-Semitic views.

Conclusions. We began this article by noting that extreme anti-Israel sentiment has been interpreted by some as anti-Semitic in effect if not intent. It

is therefore important to consider the competing motivations behind such sentiment. There are certainly critics of Israel on specific policy grounds, but there are also anti-Semitic individuals for whom attacks on Israel are manifestations of prejudice. Given this mix, what is one to think when presented with accusations such as “Israel is just like apartheid South Africa,” “Israel is responsible for the violence in the Middle East,” or “Israel deliberately targets Palestinian civilians?”

Our research directly addresses this issue. From a large survey of 5,000 citizens of 10 European countries, we showed that the prevalence of those harboring (self-reported) anti-Semitic views consistently increases with respondents’ degree of anti-Israel sentiment (see Figs. 2 and 3 and Table 3), even after controlling for other factors. It is noteworthy that fewer than one-quarter of those with anti-Israel index scores of only 1 or 2 harbor anti-Semitic views (as defined by anti-Semitic index scores exceeding 5), which supports the contention that one certainly can be critical of Israeli policies without being anti-Semitic. However, among those with the most extreme anti-Israel sentiments in our survey (anti-Israel index scores of 4), 56% report anti-Semitic leanings. Based on this analysis, when an individual’s criticism of Israel becomes sufficiently severe, it does become reasonable to ask whether such criticism is a mask for underlying anti-Semitism.

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the analysis reported in this article, the views expressed are the authors' and do not represent the ADL. EHK was supported by the Yale School of Management research fund.

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Figure Legends

Figure 1: Survivor distributions reporting the fraction of survey respondents with index scores exceeding x for (A) the anti-Semitic index (x ranges from 0 through 11); and (B) the anti-Israel index (x ranges from 0 through 4).

Figure 2: (A) Survivor distributions reporting the fraction of survey respondents with index scores exceeding x for the anti-Semitic index (x ranges from 0 through 11), conditional on the anti-Israel index equaling 0 (black line), 1 (dashed red line), 2 (dashed blue line), 3 (broken green line), or 4 (solid pink line); and (B) Fraction of respondents defined as harboring anti-Semitic views (anti-Semitic index scores exceeding 5) as a function of the anti-Israel index.

Figure 3: Fraction of respondents harboring anti-Semitic views (anti-Semitic index scores exceeding 5) as a function of the anti-Israel index equaling 0 (solid black), 1 (forward slash), 2 (back slash), 3 (cross-hatch), and 4 (horizontal bar) controlling for (A) country of residence; (B) income; (C) perceived commonality with those of other races or religions (see text); (D) attitudes towards illegal immigrants (see text); and (E) frequency of contact with Jews (see text). (F) Fraction of respondents agreeing with specific anti-Semitic attitudes (see Table 1), as a function of the anti-Israel index equaling 0 (dark blue), 1 (red), 2 (yellow), 3 (light blue) or 4 (purple).

Table 1: Statements comprising the anti-Semitic index with corresponding response frequency in agreement (of $n = 5,004$).

Statement	Response Frequency
Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind.	1,052
Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want.	784
Jews are more loyal to Israel than to this country.	2,200
Jews have too much power in the business world.	1,309
Jews have lots of irritating faults.	545
Jews stick together more than other (CITIZENS OF RESPONDENT'S COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE).	2,942
Jews always like to be at the head of things.	1,150
Jews have too much power in international financial markets.	1,460
Jews have too much power in our country today.	500
Jewish business people are so shrewd that others do not have a fair chance to compete.	884
Jews are just as honest as other business people.	485*

*Frequency of respondents that disagreed with this statement.

Table 2: Statements comprising the anti-Israel index with corresponding response frequency in agreement (of $n = 5,004$).

Statement/Question	Response Frequency
The Israeli treatment of the Palestinians is similar to South Africa’s treatment of blacks during apartheid.	705 ¹
Who do you think is more responsible for the past three years of violence in Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Israelis or the Palestinians?	1,254 ²
In your opinion, during military activities inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip, do the Israeli Defense Forces intentionally target Palestinian civilians, or are civilian casualties and accidental outcome of Israel’s military response?	1,765 ³
In your opinion is there any justification for Palestinian suicide bombers that target Israeli civilians?	426 ⁴

¹Frequency of respondents that “agree a lot” with this statement.

²Frequency of respondents stating “Israelis.”

³Frequency of respondents stating that the Israeli Defense Forces “intentionally target civilians.”

⁴Frequency of respondents stating “yes.”

Table 3: Multifactor logistic model predicting the probability a respondent harbors anti-Semitic feelings from the anti-Israel index, controlling for country of residence, age, religion, income, gender, contact with Jews, commonality with other races/religions, and attitudes towards immigrants.

Logistic Regression Table: Response Variable: Anti-Semitic Index > 5

Predictor	Coef	StDev	Z	P	Odds Ratio	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Constant	-3.9080	0.3267	-11.96	0.000			
Anti-Israel Index (Relative to 0)							
1	0.4669	0.1117	4.18	0.000	1.59	1.28	1.99
2	1.1871	0.1256	9.45	0.000	3.28	2.56	4.19
3	1.8731	0.1678	11.16	0.000	6.51	4.68	9.04
4	2.3924	0.3121	7.66	0.000	10.94	5.93	20.17
Country (Relative to NL)							
AUS	1.0368	0.2312	4.48	0.000	2.82	1.79	4.44
BEL	0.8621	0.2302	3.74	0.000	2.37	1.51	3.72
DEN	0.1918	0.2582	0.74	0.458	1.21	0.73	2.01
FR	0.8336	0.2416	3.45	0.001	2.30	1.43	3.70
GER	0.9478	0.2341	4.05	0.000	2.58	1.63	4.08
IT	0.7459	0.2410	3.10	0.002	2.11	1.31	3.38
SP	1.5177	0.2292	6.62	0.000	4.56	2.91	7.15
SWI	1.1646	0.2288	5.09	0.000	3.20	2.05	5.02
UK	0.3731	0.2429	1.54	0.125	1.45	0.90	2.34
Age (Relative to 18-24)							
25-34	0.0955	0.2088	0.46	0.647	1.10	0.73	1.66
35-44	0.2220	0.1981	1.12	0.262	1.25	0.85	1.84
45-54	0.4843	0.1983	2.44	0.015	1.62	1.10	2.39
55-64	0.7098	0.1998	3.55	0.000	2.03	1.37	3.01
Refuse	-0.0213	0.6287	-0.03	0.973	0.98	0.29	3.36
Unknown	0.9614	0.1993	4.82	0.000	2.62	1.77	3.87
Religion (Relative to Christianity)							
Islam	2.0547	0.2596	7.91	0.000	7.80	4.69	12.98
Judaism	0.6118	0.5883	1.04	0.298	1.84	0.58	5.84
None	-0.0302	0.1078	-0.28	0.779	0.97	0.79	1.20
Other	0.3289	0.1975	1.67	0.096	1.39	0.94	2.05
Refuse	1.0588	0.3264	3.24	0.001	2.88	1.52	5.47
Income (Relative to < 11,000 Euros)							
11-33	-0.2821	0.1323	-2.13	0.033	0.75	0.58	0.98
33-66	-0.5837	0.1624	-3.59	0.000	0.56	0.41	0.77
66-99	-0.8517	0.2447	-3.48	0.000	0.43	0.26	0.69
99-132	-0.4311	0.3900	-1.11	0.269	0.65	0.30	1.40
Over 132	-0.7317	0.4609	-1.59	0.112	0.48	0.19	1.19
Refuse	-0.3219	0.1347	-2.39	0.017	0.72	0.56	0.94
Gender (Relative to Male)							
Female	-0.47469	0.09244	-5.14	0.000	0.62	0.52	0.75
Contact With Jews (Relative to "Never any contact")							
2	-0.2410	0.1288	-1.87	0.061	0.79	0.61	1.01
3	-0.2633	0.1336	-1.97	0.049	0.77	0.59	1.00
4	-0.2696	0.1944	-1.39	0.165	0.76	0.52	1.12
5	-0.0336	0.2281	-0.15	0.883	0.97	0.62	1.51
Refuse	-1.162	1.059	-1.10	0.273	0.31	0.04	2.49
Unknown	-1.0931	0.2460	-4.44	0.000	0.34	0.21	0.54
Not Much in Common Other Races/Religions? (Relative to Strongly Disagree)							
2	0.1785	0.1344	1.33	0.184	1.20	0.92	1.56
3	0.2260	0.1601	1.41	0.158	1.25	0.92	1.72
4	0.8452	0.1325	6.38	0.000	2.33	1.80	3.02
5	0.8019	0.1616	4.96	0.000	2.23	1.62	3.06
Refuse	0.6953	0.5544	1.25	0.210	2.00	0.68	5.94
Unknown	-0.2847	0.4013	-0.71	0.478	0.75	0.34	1.65
Immigrants Drain on Economy? (Relative to Strongly Disagree)							
2	0.3723	0.1561	2.38	0.017	1.45	1.07	1.97
3	0.3142	0.2048	1.53	0.125	1.37	0.92	2.05
4	0.7524	0.1454	5.18	0.000	2.12	1.60	2.82
5	1.3397	0.1496	8.95	0.000	3.82	2.85	5.12
Refuse	0.1892	0.6488	0.29	0.771	1.21	0.34	4.31
Unknown	0.1423	0.3747	0.38	0.704	1.15	0.55	2.40

Tests for terms with more than 1 degree of freedom:

Term	Chi-Square	DF	P
Anti-Israel	195.672	4	0.000
Country	75.220	9	0.000
Age	48.619	6	0.000
Religion	76.728	5	0.000
Income	19.728	6	0.003
Common	60.412	6	0.000
Immigran	97.499	6	0.000
Contact	23.897	6	0.001

Log-Likelihood = -1668.641

Test that all slopes are zero:

G² = 720.818, DF = 49, P-Value = 0.000

Goodness-of-Fit Tests

Method	Chi-Square	DF	P
Pearson	4668.934	4819	0.938
Deviance	3292.415	4819	1.000
Hosmer-Lemeshow	6.029	8	0.644





