

Jews and Muslims in Sarcelles

Face to Face or Side by Side?

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Following the Second Intifada in 2000 and the ensuing upsurge of antisemitic violence in France, a debate has developed about the rise of a “new” antisemitism.¹ Pierre-André Taguieff (2004) was the main theorist of this phenomenon, which he called “new judeophobia”, as it is specifically directed against Jews, not “Semites” in general as opposed to “Aryans”.² In contrast to traditional antisemitism, according to Taguieff and others, this phobia is not based on theories of racial superiority but on radical anti-Zionism. It brings together Islamist and leftist activists in a shared hate of Israel. And it has moved from the far right to the far left of the political spectrum. Tragic events such as the kidnapping and killing of a Ilan Halimi (2006), the attacks on the Ozar Hatorah Jewish school in Toulouse (2012) or on the Hyper Cacher supermarket in Paris (2015), and the murders of Sarah Halimi (2017) and Mireille Knoll, a 85-year-old Holocaust survivor (2018), keep fueling the debate. In April 2018 a virulent “Manifesto against ‘new antisemitism’” (*Le nouvel antisémitisme en France*) launched by the former executive editor of *Charlie Hebdo*, Philippe Val, and signed by personalities such as former President Nicolas Sarkozy, three former Prime Ministers, the former Mayor of Paris Bertrand Delanoë, artists, and intellectuals went a step further. It denounced an “Islamic radicalization” process, leading to a *épuration ethnique à bas bruit* (“a quiet ethnic cleansing”) in specific *banlieues* (suburbs), with the complicity of the radical left using anti-Zionism as an alibi, and the laxness of public authorities because “the Muslim vote is ten times bigger than the Jewish vote”.

However, one lacks reliable data to evaluate the importance and even the reality of this “new” antisemitism among Muslims and more particularly

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1 The survey was funded by the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (FNSP) and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) (convention NRF7S1A3A2066657).

2 «Or, à mes yeux, le terme « antisémitisme » ne symbolisait pas correctement ce qu’il se passait. La reconstitution d’une « question juive » en Europe ne se faisait pas autour du conflit racial entre Sémites et Aryens mais autour de l’opposition entre « sionistes » et « antisionistes » » (Taguieff 2017).

among “suburban Islam” (Kepel, 1987).³ Police statistics on antisemitic acts based on complaints show indeed their rise since 2000, the number of antisemitic offenses rocketing to 723 vs 82 the previous year. Ever since, the peaks of violence have followed closely the periods of escalating violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Operation Rampart in 2002, Operation Rainbow and the targeted killing of Sheikh Yassin in 2004, Cast Lead in 2009, Protective Edge in 2014, the Marches of Return in Gaza and the Kite Intifada in 2018 (CNCDH 2020: 159). Widely publicized by the media, causing hundreds of civilian deaths, Israeli military interventions function as an emotional trigger among people who, presumably because of their relationship to North African countries or their ideological leaning, identify with the Palestinian cause, turning their anger against French Jews, automatically assumed to support Israel and Zionism. Yet these actions are the doing of a small minority, and one has little information about their authors, rarely caught. Media and pundits point the finger at the Muslim minority, but this may be a prejudicial assumption.

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Meanwhile, the annual Barometer on racism of the National Consultative Commission for Human rights shows that opinions have followed the opposite trend, with a constant decline of antisemitic opinions (CNCDH, 2020: 54). However, the sample (N = 1000) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis of how Muslims perceive Jews and vice versa (this is also the case for other ethnic and religious minorities). As for surveys sampling self-identifying Muslims only, they do not allow for the possibility to measure the net impact of Islam on prejudice after controlling for the effect of other religions, origin, education, and occupation and don't even consider that North African and African migrants and their children could be atheists or belong to other religious denomination.

To overcome such pitfalls, this paper proposes to widen the perspective, placing antisemitism in the larger frame of interethnic relations. It relies on survey data collected initially to study intercultural relations in the suburban multicultural context of Sarcelles.⁴ The town is home to a large population of Muslims, from North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as a

3 The author refers to disadvantaged pluri-ethnic suburbs at the outskirts of large cities, with low-income housing projects concentrating immigrant-born populations.

4 Based on a survey representative of the resident adult population (January 2019), the project (Intercultural Relations In Sarcelles, ICRS) explores everyday relations between people of different origins, in the suburban town of Sarcelles. The town was chosen because it was one of the first large housing project in Paris suburbs, and a cultural and religious melting pot (<https://www.sciencespo.fr/centre-etudes-europeennes/sites/sciencespo.fr/centre-etudes-europeennes/files/1905%20Sarcelles.pdf>).

significant population of Sephardic Jews, whose families arrived in the 1960s in the wake of independence of the French North African colonies. Long seen as a melting pot and a model of peaceful coexistence, the city was shaken in July 2014 by violent incidents targeting Jews in the wake of a banned pro-Palestinian demonstration protesting against the Israel Defense Forces operation ‘Protective Edge’ in Gaza. Sarcelles at first sight is a magnifying glass of the tensions between Jews and Muslims and the spread of a “new” antisemitism in France. Yet the results of our survey show a more complex and nuanced relationship. After an introduction which presents our theoretical and methodological choices, the second section explores patterns of sociability in Sarcelles, how members of different groups see each other and interact in everyday life. Finally, the third section examines reactions to racist cartoons and insults and how they vary depending on which group is insulted.

1 Theoretical and Methodological Choices

Our study is structured by two contrasting hypotheses borrowed from intergroup relations research. The pioneering work of the social psychologist Gordon Allport (1954) suggests that under certain conditions (equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals, support by social and institutional authorities) contact between members of different groups can help reduce prejudice and intergroup conflict. The theory has inspired many public policies against discrimination and started a blooming field of research (see meta-analysis by Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006 and 2008; Gaertner et al., 1996; Turner; Croucher, 2017; McKeown & Dixon, 2017). It has also spurred criticism, putting forward the short-lived positive effect of contact, the possible avoidance of any contact and their possible negative impact in the long run. Challenging the contact theory, the “threat theory” posits that threat, either realistic or “symbolic”, generates anxiety, antagonism, negative stereotyping and conflicts (see Stephan and Stephan’s integrated threat theory, 1993, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tropp, 2012; Croucher 2016).

Sarcelles was selected for its high degree of cultural and religious diversity. It is a town in the disadvantaged suburbs of Paris, in the “red belt” which became an electoral stronghold of the Communist party after the war. The population of Sarcelles jumped from 8 000 in the mid-1950s to 55 000 in the mid-1970s, boosted by the industrial and demographic boom of the 1960s and successive waves of migration, generated by wars and decolonization. The first and largest of the housing projects built to accommodate the newcomers was built in Sarcelles, the “grand ensemble des Lochères” hosting up to 80%

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TABLE 8.1 Nationality and origin in Sarcelles and in France

%	Sarcelles	France
French by birth	60,3	88,5
French by acquisition	18,3	4,5
Foreigner	21,3	7
Immigrant	33	9,6

SOURCE: INSEE, 2016.

of the population some years, and now still two thirds. One third of the population are immigrants, over one fifth are foreigners (Table 8.1), coming from more than a hundred different countries, and belonging to more than a dozen religions (Jews, Muslims, Copts, Assyro-Chaldeans, Adventists, Catholics, Evangelists, etc.). There were four places of worship in 1965, by 2012 there were 22, corresponding to the successive migration waves (Vieillard-Baron, 2013).

There is already a lot of ethnographic research on life in Sarcelles (Benveniste 1999; Vieillard-Baron, 1992, 1994, 1996; Podselver, 2000; Zytnicki, 2005, Leon-Quijano, 2020) and several studies of “ethnic” voting, particularly of a potential “Jewish vote” (Strudel 1996; Fourquet et Manternach 2016), based on exit polls and analysis of aggregate results at the level of polling stations. However, there has been no large-scale survey like ours, on a sample representative of the whole adult population living there, not targeting a particular group or minority. As for the methodology, a telephone survey seemed the best way to reach a large representative sample of Sarcelles’ residents. A face-to-face survey would have been more difficult, because of the growing reluctance to open the door to strangers, even more so in the poor suburbs around Paris where insecurity is higher than average. An online survey would leave aside those who do not have regular internet access.

In order to overcome the limitations of standard surveys, we mixed several methods. Next to classical closed questions, often taken from previous surveys for comparison (CNCDH Barometer, TeO, RAPFI), it included open questions letting the person answer freely (how did they define their origins, where they came from; what languages did they speak at home?). It tested affective (positive / negative) responses to word lists. And it used randomized survey experiments (Sniderman, 1996; Mutz and Kim, 2020) assigning respondents to different versions of the same story in order to isolate the causal factor, and

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reduce a “social desirability” bias⁵ on sensitive social topics like prejudices, intergroup relations and religion.

It was a more difficult endeavour than expected. 16 606 phone numbers were randomly chosen from a base of fixed and mobile numbers, corrected by sociodemographic quotas (gender, age, occupation, education). To arrive at a total of 804 completed interviews instead of the planned 1000, all the numbers of the initial base had to be called, and the fieldwork lasted from January 15 to February 6, 2019. 57% of the numbers did not answer or rang busy, 9% were wrong numbers, 14% were off target (under 18, did not speak French, did not live in Sarcelles and 2.5 off quotas), and 14% refused the interview or hung up. The questionnaire, dealing with everyday issues (life in Sarcelles, identity, sociability, discrimination, perceptions of other groups, religious practice, views on society and politics, values) was well accepted and understood among those who responded. The final sample shows some sociodemographic biases, compared to the fixed quotas, in particular not enough respondents in the 25–34 age group (-7%) and too many with a higher education degree (+12%).

Yet, in spite of these limitations and drawbacks, the survey brings a wealth of data, reflecting well the exceptional diversity of Sarcelles’s population as well as its social deprivation. Sephardic Jews represent 10% of the sample, Muslims one quarter, Catholics, the majority religion in France, less than one third. Less than one quarter are native-born French. 80% speak at least one other language in addition to French at home, from Creole and Arabic (12.5% et 7%) to Hebrew, Bambara and Tamil. The socioeconomic status of our respondents is very low: the average monthly income (per consumption unit) is 1191 euros, below the minimum wage (in 2018, 1201 euros monthly). One third own their apartment (vs 58% in the general population), 34% can be considered as socially precarious.

2 Intergroup Perception: A First Assessment

Here we will look at the way Jews and Muslims perceive each other in Sarcelles. First, we will explain how we measure this perception. Secondly, we will propose a comparative approach to this inter-group perception and, thirdly, examine it.

5 It is the tendency of survey respondents to answer questions in a manner that will be viewed favorably by the interviewer, hiding for instance opinions not in line with social standards, particularly on sensitive issues such as racism or sex.

There are not many indicators available to measure inter-group perception. Some of the indicators that we have replicated in Sarcelles come from the CNCDH Racism Barometer, a yearly opinion poll considered to be a reference in France and in Europe regarding ethnic prejudices. This series of questions has been asked for about 20 years and covers perceptions of various groups and minorities such as Jews, Muslims, Catholics, and Africans. For each of these groups, the interviewees have to say if their supposed members constitute in their eyes “a group that stands apart in society” ,⁶ “a group open to others” or “people who do not specifically form a group”.

This battery helps to assess the degree of rejection or tolerance of minorities in the French population. The designers of the questionnaire were aware from the beginning that these questions could “essentialize” and “homogenize” communities or minorities. For example, do “Jews” form a homogeneous group, united by common features and aware of its own existence? It is well known that the word “Jew” encompasses very different religious, cultural or geographical situations and that individuals who call themselves Jews do not necessarily give the term the same meaning: some would refer to orthodox observance; others would refer to their family history for instance. Nevertheless, various studies in social psychology have shown since the 1950s that the assignment of individuals to groups is part of the way in which we think. This is called the process of “categorization” (Allport, 1958). This categorization is based on the idea that groups exist and that their members share specific traits, features, values and habits, even though this way of thinking underestimates the inner diversity of groups. Furthermore, the response modalities allow respondents to challenge the existence of each group if they wish to. Various analyses (Mayer, Michelat, Tiberj, Vitale 2020; Stimson, Tiberj, Thiébaud, 2010) show that when respondents consider that a group is “open to others” or that “these people do not specifically form a group”, their answers denote openness and tolerance. If they consider that a group stands “apart in society”, they express prejudice against this group.

This possibility given of distinguishing between two modalities (“a group open to others” or “people who do not specifically form a group”) is particularly important in the French political context. Numerous intellectuals and politicians tend to consider any particular cultural identity as a possible danger for the Republic and reject the very idea of France as a multicultural society. The response “a group standing apart in society” is clearly linked to fears

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6 The French expression, “un groupe à part”, is difficult to translate; it means the group is seen as “standing apart from the others”, an expression we prefer to “separate” or “distinctive”.

of “separatism” or “communitarianism”. By leaving the choice to respondents the CNCDH barometer gives them the possibility to consider positively specific identities. When respondents answer “a group open to others”, they recognize a specificity, based on origin, culture or religion, within, and not against, French society, in a logic of complementarity and “hyphenated” identity.

To understand how Muslims and Jews in Sarcelles perceive themselves, we need to compare them with other groups and their respective attitudes. This comparison is done in various ways.

First, we look at how Jewish and Muslim groups are perceived in comparison with other relevant groups. We know that most Muslims come from North Africa or sub-Saharan Africa. To what extent can we distinguish between a judgment based on religious factors from one based on origin? For instance, if Muslims are seen as a separate group, is it primarily because they are of North African or sub-Saharan origin? If so, this response could then come from xenophobic attitudes based on a presumption that this group is still foreign and not from a specific rejection of their religion. This refers to the debate in France about the roots of anti-Islam opinions: are they fuelled by a rejection of a religion considered gender conservative for example, or are they “regular” racist prejudices? One can also consider that there are judgments concerned with the specific practices of a religion (for instance the burqha), but if one does not control for the opinions expressed towards the groups of origin, then it is difficult to highlight this specificity. For this very reason, we have chosen to include questions about the perception of people of North African and Sub Saharan origin.

Secondly we need to compare respondents at the local level. In order to understand how Jews perceive Muslims and how Muslims perceive Jews, looking at how they differ from other minorities in Sarcelles is really important. How do Muslims in Sarcelles differ from the North Africans and Sub Saharan Africans in Sarcelles for instance? How do Jews and Muslims differ from the population of Sarcelles as a whole, and from those without foreign ancestry? If the religious factor is the issue, comparing with practicing Catholics and atheists is important too. We know, for example, that in France, practicing Catholics are more intolerant towards Muslims (Dargent, Michelat, 2015) and that atheists, notably those on the left, tend to reject all religions (Barthélémy, Michelat, 2007). Finally, at moments one needs to take the national population as a reference by comparing the responses of our sample in Sarcelles and those of the 2019 CNCDH Barometer sample, representative of the adult population living in metropolitan France, foreigners included. Then only can we integrate the local specificity of Sarcelles with its intense intercultural and interreligious contacts and are able to verify if it favours or not more tolerant answers

compared to the whole French population, including those who live very far away from the minorities.

Intergroup relations is one of the main fields of research in social psychology (Moscovici, 2000, Tajfel 2010). In particular, two biases are well-known, one favourable to the group to which one belongs, the other unfavourable to out-groups. In the logic of social categorization, one tends to consider one's own circle more favourably, and consider its members as more diverse and more individualized. Thus, not only do we privilege people seen as our own, by attributing positive traits to them, but we also perceive the differences in character, behaviour or opinions between each of them (and consider it positively). This bias leads us not only to a more favourable attitude towards our own group(s), but also to consider that this or these groups are diverse and open. On the other hand, members of out-groups are rarely seen as distinct individuals, but rather as blocks sharing a set of supposed group characteristics, because we have less contact with them, and for some not at all. Furthermore, because we do not belong to these out-groups, we tend to consider them less positively. Tajfel, in his minimum group paradigm, spotted this double phenomenon by arbitrarily creating groups during a summer camp (according to the type of shirt or according to preferred colours) and demonstrated that in a very short time the judgements of in-groups were positive, and negative with regard to the out-group.

Some results of our Sarcelles survey are therefore expected, demonstrating once again the strength of in-group bias. Members of a group systematically consider their group as "open to others": this is the case of 74% of Sarcelles' Jews and 69% of Muslims regarding their in-groups. However, they do not differ from respondents coming from North Africa and Sub Saharan Africa when judging their own group (68% and 69%). As expected, perceptions are less positive if the group tested is an out-group, and this is true for Muslims when Jews rate their openness, or for Jews when Muslims do the same: 33% of the Jews in our sample see Muslims as a group that stands apart in society (versus 8% of Muslims) and 55% of Muslim respondents see Jews as such (versus 18% of Jews).

Is this a sign of a specific tension between these two groups? The answer is not so simple. From the point of view of the Jewish community, Muslims are indeed more often perceived as a separate group than people from North Africa or sub-Saharan Africa (33% versus 21% and 22%), a sign that there may be a religious factor in their responses (because they reject some practices of behaviors from the Muslim community). However, a majority of the Jewish minority remains tolerant and considers that Muslims are "a group open to others" or "not a group". Jewish respondents judge the openness of Muslims in

TABLE 8.2 Perceived openness of groups in Sarcelles by religion and origin

Religion	Jews			Muslims			Maghrebians			Black People		
	A group closed	A group open to others	Not a group	A group closed	A group open to others	Not a group	A group closed	A group open to others	Not a group	A group closed	A group open to others	Not a group
Jews	18	74	5	33	42	14	21	50	21	22	59	14
Muslims	55	31	10	8	69	21	12	66	20	8	65	23
Origin												
Maghrebians	44	44	8	9	66	20	8	68	21	12	63	19
Sub Saharan Africans	58	23	12	19	60	18	20	56	16	8	69	20
No foreign descent	49	38	11	33	38	22	28	43	23	26	47	23
Practicing catholics	67	19	10	26	50	17	27	47	19	16	63	17
Atheists	52	31	13	32	42	21	27	45	22	23	45	25
Sarcelles (whole sample)	51	36	9	26	52	17	22	53	19	17	59	19
French population	25	33	34	38	28	28	30	31	34	15	40	41

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a similar way to the population of Sarcelles without foreign ancestry, or atheist, and are slightly less suspicious than the CNCDH survey respondents as a whole. Conversely, as might be expected, inhabitants of Sarcelles of North African or sub-Saharan origin are more positive than all others about Muslims, probably because a lot of them are Muslims themselves.

Muslims seem to be particularly inclined to consider Jews as a separate group, but they are not the only ones, nor are they the most numerous, to think so: 58% of Sarcelles' inhabitants from sub-Saharan Africa consider Jews to be a separate group, and 67% of the practicing Catholics. The groups that judge Jews most favourably are the Sarcelles inhabitants without foreign ancestry and those from North Africa (44%). In other words, one cannot consider that the Muslims of Sarcelles express here a specific rejection of the Jewish minority, they hardly differ from the rest of the sample.

The perception of the Jewish minority is very specific to Sarcelles and different from the overall French population's perception. Respondents from the CNCDH survey are twice less inclined than the Sarcelles' sample as a whole to consider that Jews form a separate group (25% against 51%). This is particularly striking since the respondents to the CNCDH survey generally perceive the other tested groups as closed, more often than Sarcelles' residents. In this regard the Sarcelles sample is in line with contact theory (Pettigrew, 1999), which states that living alongside leads to a reduction in prejudice and a better understanding of people of different origins. But the contact theory does not appear to apply to the Jewish minority for the inhabitants of Sarcelles.

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How can this discrepancy be explained? A first hypothesis would be that the Sarcelles' population expresses here specific prejudices against Jews. In the CNCDH surveys, considering a group as "standing apart" is generally the sign of an ethnocentric, antisemitic or xenophobic prejudice, depending on the group mentioned, and the three attitudes are correlated. At the national level respondents who think this way about Jews not only often also think that "Jews have too much power in France" and that "there is too much talk about the extermination of Jews", but also that there are "too many immigrants in France" and that immigration is not "a source of cultural enrichment". To what extent is this true in the very diverse the population of Sarcelles?

Another line of explanation would be the existence of a specific type of antisemitic prejudice, referred to in the public debate as "suburban antisemitism", at the heart of the "new judeophobia" or "new antisemitism" theories mentioned above (Taguieff, 2008; Trom, 2019). These authors point the finger both at the leftists, but also at the Muslims and the North Africans who are supposed to line up with the Palestinians because of their commonalities. It may be that in our survey we are finding an echo of the antisemitic acts and

aggressions that marked the city of Sarcelles in 2014 and after. A last hypothesis could be that the Jewish minority would indeed have a greater tendency to live inwardly, for reasons that may be quite legitimate in other respects: members of the Jewish community do indeed have much stronger concerns about insecurity for both themselves and their families than the rest of the sample.

3 A Logic of Prejudice?

To validate the prejudice hypothesis, we carried out logistic regression analyses (table 8.3). We took into account both the origin and the religion of the respondents (for reasons of multi-collinearity, we cannot include these two variables in the same regression) and mobilized classic socio-demographic and attitudinal variables that allow us to approach xenophobic prejudice: education, age and gender on the one hand, opinion on the reinstatement of the death penalty and on the cultural enrichment impact of immigration on the other. We compared the logics of responses for three target groups: Jews and Muslims of course, as well as respondents from North Africa.

The specificity of the answers concerning the Jewish minority is confirmed when we compare the three models. In the case of Muslims and people from North Africa, level of prejudices is a good predictor of the answers. *Ceteris paribus*, a person who agrees completely with the idea that immigration is a source of cultural enrichment is three times less likely than one who disagrees with this idea to consider that North Africans form a separate group, and two times less likely for Muslims. If she only “somewhat” agrees that immigration is a source of cultural enrichment, then she is two times less less likely to disagree in the case of North Africans and 2.5 times less likely for Muslims. This is true for most ethnic and religious groups (except when the target group is also one of the respondents’ home groups). Incidentally, we can see that prejudice is not specific to the people of Sarcelles without foreign ancestry; some members of minorities, although they are themselves racialized and discriminated against, hold such attitudes.

On the other hand, nothing of the sort occurs for the Jewish minority. Whether one considers immigration to be enriching or not, it makes no difference, even among the local population without foreign ancestry (which is not the case in the French population as a whole in the CNCDH Barometer). Even if we take an indicator of cultural liberalism, the opinion on the reinstatement of the death penalty, it induces significant variations in judging North Africans but it has no impact on the judgement for Jews. Some groups stand apart by a higher probability of considering Jews as a separate group. Regardless of all

TABLE 8.3 Logistic regression models on the feeling that Maghrebians, Jews and Muslims form "a group apart"

Models	Maghrebians			Muslims			Jews					
	A	A'	B	B'	A	A'	B	B'	A	A'	B	B'
Origin												
Maghrebians	.30***		.39**		.26***		.29***		.77		.78	
Sub Saharan	.91		1.26		.64		.67		1.28		1.31	
Africans												
Jews	.70		.63		1.07		.92		.20***		.18***	
Caribbeans	1.16		1.26		1.00		1.05		2.00***		2.02***	
Other	1.00		1.02		1.05		1.05		1.07		1.06	
sans asc. (ref)												
Religion												
Regular practicing Catholics	1.16				1.36		.80		.87		1.96**	2.01**
Irregular practicing Catholics	1.05				1.04		1.17		1.20		1.04	
Other Christians	.77				.82		.85		.86		.87	.95
Jews Muslims	.724		.63		.59*		1.08		.93		.18***	.16***
Other religion	.48**		.59*		.22***		.22***		.23***		1.02	1.06
	1.40		1.39		1.37		1.37		1.25		1.39	1.33

Restore death penalty									
Very much agree	.54***	.57**	.74	.76	.83	.86			
Somewhat agree	.89	.96	.76	.82	.96	.99			
Disagree (ref)									
Immigration cultural enrichment									
Very much agree	.38***	.39***	.54***	.58**		1.07			
Somewhat agree	.51***	.52***	.41***	.43***	1.25	1.20			
Disagree (ref)									
_cons	.31***	.35***	.67	.39**	.65	.71	.99	1.08	1.07
R2	4%	4%	8%	7%	7%	9%	6%	7%	8%

their other characteristics, Caribbeans are twice as likely as Sarcelles residents without foreign ancestry to consider Jews as a separate group. This is also the case for practicing Catholics, but not the case for Muslims nor for respondents of North Africans or African origin.

One way to explain the specificity of the relationship to the Jewish minority can be found in the difference between age-groups. Generally, age (in fact the generation to which one belongs) is a good predictor of the level of prejudice: the older a generation is, the more likely its members are to express racist opinions (for France see Tiberj, 2020). Opinions about Muslims and respondents from North Africa confirm this result. As expected, respondents aged 56 and over are twice as likely as those aged 18 to 35 to consider Muslims or North African people to be a separate group, and this is not a question of education, since it is controlled for in the model. On the other hand, these older individuals are half as likely to answer in the same way about Jews. This could illustrate the emergence of a “new” antisemitism among young people, but it should then apply to all the members of this cohort, whatever their origin or their level of education, and this is an unrealistic scenario. A possible explanation is that the memory of WWII and of the Holocaust is fading among the recent generations, and those who have a living memory of these events are slowly fading away. We propose another hypothesis: these differences of opinion by age could reflect changing ways of life in Sarcelles. Older people experienced the city at a time when communities lived together in harmony and therefore developed strong inter-religious sociability. Thus friendship ties across religions and origins may have endured and still be found among the oldest residents of Sarcelles. The youngest have grown up in a city where the Jewish community has become more religious (Strudel, 1996, Fourquet and Manternach, 2016), and tends to withdraw into its “Little Jerusalem” neighbourhood. Perhaps these young people are indeed referring to this social distance that has appeared and increased between the Jewish minority and the rest of the inhabitants of Sarcelles. This interpretation seems plausible when we analyze the social ties of Jewish respondents (see below).

Before moving on to this hypothesis, the result to remember though is that in Sarcelles neither the perceptions of Jews about people from North Africa or Muslims nor those of Muslims about Jews are characterized by a higher level of rejection compared to Sarcelles residents without foreign ancestry. In other words, our data do not identify any particular resentment between these two minorities.

4 The Hypothesis of an Endogenous Separation

When designing our survey, we decided to take into account the homophilia dimension of interpersonal networks. By homophilia, we mean the preference of individuals to favour relationships with people who are similar to them. Homophilia can be social (one associates with individuals who share similarities in terms of degree, lifestyle, occupation or income); it can also be gendered, or linked to origin or to religion. In the context of a study on diversity, however, homophilia runs the risk of being interpreted as a way of measuring the “communitarianism” or “separatism” (the expression now used by Emmanuel Macron and his government) of certain immigrants and their descendants. This would be a particularly biased reading though, since homophilia is a strong trend studied in sociology in many areas, starting with love life, residential choices (Girard, 2017), or friendship circles. To avoid this univocal and biased reading, we have maintained a multidimensional approach to homophilia on the one hand, and, on the other, added questions relating to the degree of proximity that individuals maintain to different groups or social categories: the inhabitants of Sarcelles, people of same age or of the same social class, those who share the same origins or religion.

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(See Figures 8.1 and 8.2)

When we analyze our data, particularly concerning the friends of the respondents, social homophilia dominates most of the time: respondents socialize with people from the same social milieu as themselves. This is particularly strong among atheists and Sarcelles inhabitants without foreign ancestry, but the same appears in other groups. Muslims, North Africans and Africans stand out with a gendered homophilia: having more relations with people of the same gender. On the other hand, in these three groups, religious homophilia comes way behind, in 3rd or 4th position. Only the Jewish minority effectively stands out by its religious homophilia: 46% of the Jewish respondents declare that their friends have almost all the same religious opinions as they do, compared to 29% of the Muslims, 31% of those with no foreign ancestry and 15% of the practising Catholics.

The uniqueness of the Jewish respondents is confirmed when they are asked about their closeness to various groups. 86% say they are close or very close to people of their religion, compared with 78% of practicing Catholics and 67% of Muslims. Jewish respondents are also the most inclined to say that they are close to people who share their origin: 77% declare this closeness against 68% of practicing Catholics, 67% of African born respondent, and 66% of Muslims.

However, one should be careful not to draw hasty conclusions, as many respondents from the Jewish minority or other groups also declare social or

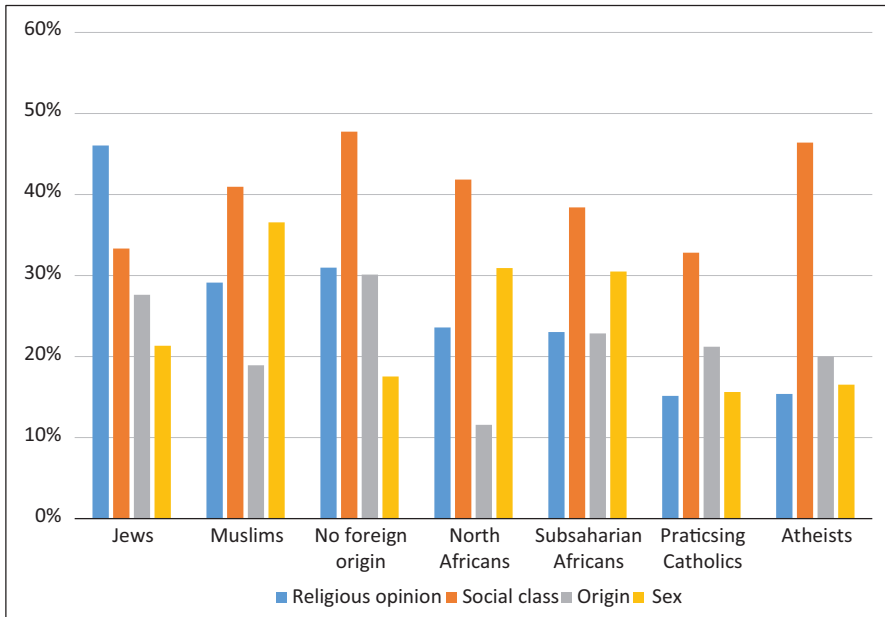


FIGURE 8.1 Homophilia in the personal networks
 MEANING: % OF RESPONDENTS WHO DECLARE THAT MOST OF MY FRIENDS
 HAVE THE SAME RELIGIOUS OPINION / SOCIAL CLASS / ORIGIN / SEX AS ME
 BY ORIGIN OR RELIGION.

AQ_19

generational proximity with the inhabitants of Sarcelles. Above all, as we were able to see in 2005 (Brouard, Tiberj, 2005), these proximities are correlated to each other and not exclusive: feeling close to one’s group of origin does not prevent one from feeling close to a social group, for example.

Taken together, these results confirm that the Jewish respondents in our survey do tend to stay together more often. In addition to this, they appear spatially segregated and have a strong preference for Jewish schools for their children,⁷ allowing the transmission of Jewish values and culture but also because some fear for their children . All this helps us understand why the Jewish community is perceived as a separate group. It is important to keep in mind that this logic of separation can also be explained by a high feeling of insecurity, bred by recognized and repeated aggressions. When one fears for oneself or

7 Half of our Jewish respondents have or would choose a Jewish school for their children (25% of the practising Catholics and 10% of the Muslims).

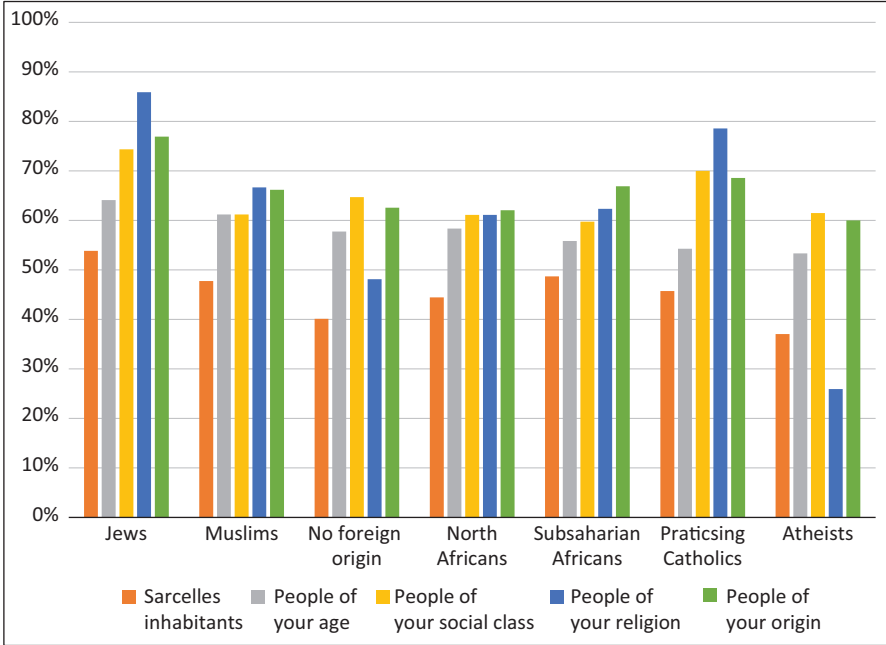


FIGURE 8.2 Sense of closeness to specific groups
 MEANING: % OF RESPONDENTS WHO FEEL CLOSED TO VARIOUS GROUPS
 DEPENDING ON THEIR ORIGIN OR RELIGION.

one’s family, it is normal to protect oneself, including by limiting contact with other residents of Sarcelles. It is a self-perpetuating process.

In short, despite everything, relations between Jews and Muslims do not show any particular tension, contrary to what comes out from the prevalent political and media debates describing the situation in the French suburbs.

5 An Experimental Approach of Cross Groups Perceptions

Surveys have their limitations. Questions can be badly worded, or misunderstood. Besides, on sensitive issues like racism or antisemitism a “social desirability” bias can occur, people may be reluctant to give their opinion if it is contrary to social norms. Survey experiments are one of the ways to reduce these biases (Mutz, 2011; Sniderman, 2018; Mutz and Kim, 2020). They combine the flexibility of a laboratory setting and the representativity and anonymity of a population-based survey. We tell little stories or vignettes, taken

from real life, but proposed in different versions according to the effect one wants to measure. Respondents from the same sample are randomly assigned to one experimental condition, the only difference between conditions being the difference in treatment. They do not know about the other conditions and are therefore cannot be influenced by them. Two of these experiments allow us to dig further into cross perceptions between members of different groups, “Racist cartoons in the classroom” and “What do the police do after a racist aggression”. Both check if the answers are the same when one varies the type of victim.

6 Racist Cartoon in the Classroom

Cartoons mocking religion are a very sensitive issue globally since the *Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons* controversy of 2005, particularly in France where the 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* terrorist attack caused the death of 12 journalists. And since our survey a teacher, Samuel Paty, was beheaded by an islamist terrorist for showing these same cartoons in his classroom. We wanted to see if the level of reprobation varied according to the religion targeted by the cartoon. The story runs this way: “Last May a student circulated cartoons in class, he was expelled. Does that seem justified or unjustified to you? ». The sample is randomly divided into 3 groups. In the first one, the cartoons concern Jews, in the second one Muslims and in the third Christians.

A strong majority considers the exclusion of the student justified, whatever the religion targeted (table 8.4). One could have expected in such a diverse environment that there would be no special sensitivity to attacks against Jews, maybe even less, keeping in mind the 2014 incidents. The results show the opposite. When Jews are the target, approval of expelling the student hits a high of 74%, 10 percentage points above the level if Muslims are mocked, and 14 points above the proportion for Christians. Antisemitism clearly is still a taboo and something that our respondents oppose strongly. When one takes into consideration the religion of the respondents, members of both minority religions appear more willing to sanction when the cartoon concerns their own faith (9 points above average among Jews, 8 points among Muslim). While this is not the case for Catholics, who probably feel more secure as members of the majority religion in France. As for the cross perceptions of Jews and Muslims, a large majority of Muslims condemn anti-Jewish cartoons, even a little more than Jews condemn anti-Muslim ones (69% and 64%), though the proportion of Jews condemning anti-Muslim cartoons is the same as in the rest of the sample (64%), while the proportion

TABLE 8.4 Approval of the exclusion of the student circulating cartoons by targeted religion (%)

% Approval	A. Jews	B. Muslims	C. Christians
Jews	83	64	77
Muslims	69	72	59
Christians	78	63	59
No religion	71	48	28
Total	74	64	60

of Muslims condemning anti-Jewish ones is a little below average (-5 points). Last, respondents with no religious affiliation, who also are more left-wing, stand clearly apart by their higher tolerance of cartoons, whatever their target. The proportion in favor of expelling the offender is 3 points below average if the cartoon is about Jews, minus 16 if it is about Muslims and minus 32 if it concerns Christians. Jews are the only group for which a clear majority of the respondents with no religious affiliation wants the student expelled (71%, vs 48% and 28%).

7 What Do the Police Do?

The other experiment is in two steps. The first step stages a verbal aggression of which four different versions are randomly proposed: « Last month in a city near Paris, a 40-year-old man was attacked by a gang of teenagers who called him a “dirty Arab” (/ “dirty black” / “dirty Jew” / “dirty French”). Do you find this behavior very serious, quite serious, not very serious, or not at all serious?». The respondents quasi unanimously condemn such acts (on average, if one pools the four subsamples, 98% find them serious, and 82% “very serious”, and whatever the target the proportion of “very serious” judgments vary between 80% if the victim is Arab, to 83,5% if she is black (table 8.5).⁸

AQ_20

AQ_21

AQ_22

8 The fact that Anti-Black attacks are slightly more often seen as serious than anti-Arab ones is in line with the results of the CNCDH Annual Barometer on racism showing that Black people have a better image nationally than people of Arab/North African origin. Racist stereotypes inherited from colonization see blacks like « big children », naïve, primitive, but not dangerous. While North Africans and Arabs are before all perceived as Muslims, and Islam has a negative image associated with terrorism and jihad (Mayer et al., 2018:133). A large

TABLE 8.5 Perception of the seriousness of the attack by religion, origin and type of victim (%)

%« ;very serious »		Dirty Arab	Dirty Black	Dirty Jew	Dirty French
<i>Religion</i>					
AQ_23	Christian	79	81	76	79
	Jewish	75	95	83	89
	Muslim	77	85	85	94
	No religion	87	87	92	65
<i>Origin</i>					
AQ_24	France	79	81	80	80
	Maghreb	71	89	85	100
	Africa	78	87	86	78
	The Caribbean	100	81	70	69
	<i>Total</i>	80	83,5	81	82

However, opinions vary according to respondents' religion and origin. People without religious affiliation are the most sensitive to antisemitic attacks, and least when the victim is targeted as "French", respectively 92% and 65% judging the behavior "very serious". Muslims and respondents from North Africa on the contrary are more reactive when French are attacked (94% and 100% see it as very serious) while Jews are more reactive to anti-Black racism (95%). Respondents of Caribbean origin are most concerned by anti-Arab racism (100%) and far less by anti-French racism (69%). But the most significant finding is that whatever the victim and whatever the origin or religion of the respondent, racist attacks are massively condemned, whether they target the ingroup or an outgroup.

The second part of the experiment asks about the expected reactions of the police: « After this incident the man filed a complaint at the police station. What do you think will happen: The police will do all it can to find the young people? It will just close the case? ». If one pools the four subsamples, half of the respondents think the police will be reactive, half that it will not be (49% vs 48%). However, there are marked differences according to who is the victim.

proportion of immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa to France are Muslims too, but not perceived as such.

Only a minority of respondents think the police will intervene if the victim is targeted as Black, Arab, or French (37%, 41% et 46%), but a majority if the attack is antisemitic (68%). This opinion is more frequently endorsed among Muslims and respondents of North African origin (respectively 77% and 74%, + 9 and + 6 points above the subsamples average), even more among those from Africa (83%), and in a large part of Jewish respondents themselves (44%) (Table 8.6).

Whatever the victim, faith in proactive policing is more frequent among men than women, among prime age individuals (35- to 60 years old), among blue collar workers, and among those with less schooling. But it is also more frequent, at the other end, among those with a higher education, and at both extremes of the political spectrum (75% on the far left, 84% on the far right). Controlling for the sociodemographic variables listed above, the antisemitic dimension – attacking a man to the cries of “dirty Jew” - is however by far the most predictive variable of the belief in the police’s reactivity.

There are several ways to explain these findings. These are similar to the previous experiment about the cartoons in the classroom, showing that anti-semitic ones are more condemned than the others. Contrary to what one often hears about the suburbs and “new antisemitism”, there is no tolerance towards anti-Jewish acts in our Sarcelles sample. Antisemitism is still seen as taboo. This would hold for the police experiment, explaining why they are expected

TABLE 8.6 Feeling that the police will do all it can by origin, religion, type of victim (%)

	Dirty Arab	Dirty Black	Dirty Jew	Dirty French
<i>Origin</i>				
France	34	34	62	29
Maghreb	46	39	74	55
Africa	59	40	83	75
Caribbean	46	39	73	50
<i>Religion</i>				
Christian	49	39	67	47
Jewish	25	47	44	21
Muslim	42	40	77	61
No religion	20	20	68	38
<i>Total</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>46</i>

AQ_25

AQ_26

to overreact when Jews are attacked. Another line of explanation would be the persistence of old stereotypes about the power and influence of Jews seen as more likely to be heard by the local authorities.⁹ Last there is the specific context of Sarcelles, where Jews are the oldest and most established community, alongside the French population with no immigrant background, of which they also are socially and politically closer than more recently arrived members of the “visible minorities” (from Maghreb, Africa and the Caribbean). Furthermore, the organized Jewish community had excellent relations with the former mayor, François Pupponi, at the time of the survey still very present in the town.

8 Conclusion

Our findings contradict the hypothesis of a new antisemitism driven by anti-Zionism developing among the Muslim population in disadvantaged suburbs. First, as shown by our experiments on the reactions to cartoons circulated in the classroom, varying their target group, antisemitic cartoons are by far the most vigorously condemned, whatever the origin or religion of the respondent. Secondly, looking at the answers to the question about the perceived degree of closeness of groups, one finds no specific rejection of Jews by Muslims or of Muslims by Jews; the proportion in each group considering the other as “standing apart in society” is close to the Sarcelles sample average. Puzzling though is the very high proportion of respondents who, in Sarcelles, have the feeling Jews form a separate group, twice as high as in the annual Barometers on racism of the CNCDH. But looking at the answers to questions about patterns of sociability in Sarcelles, Jews actually appear as the group the most closed on itself. 46% of the Jewish respondents declare that “almost all” their friends have the same religious opinions as they do (compared to some 30% of the Muslims and respondents with no foreign ancestry and 15% of practicing Catholics). And 86% say they feel “close” or “very close” to people of their religion (compared with 78% of practicing Catholics and 67% of Muslims). Findings that reflect less a form of antisemitism than the religious revival of Jews in Sarcelles since the mid 1990s, all the more visible as they are concentrated in the neighbourhood of the “Petite Jérusalem” (Strudel, 1996: 323) and

9 See the annual Barometer on racism of the CNCDH, showing one person out of five (November 2018 survey) agrees that “Jews have too much power in France” (Mayer et al., 2019).

actually living “apart”. A process reinforced by many antisemitic aggressions, fueling a massive feeling of insecurity.

Our results show a reality that is very different from what is said about relations between Jews and Muslims in public debates. But isn't this survey on Sarcelles too specific? The Jewish community of Sarcelles is indeed particular, notably because of its Tunisian origins and its socio-economic profile. This city is also very different from other urban contexts where Jews and Muslims cohabit such as Créteil or the 20th arrondissement of Paris. Consequently, we intend to extend our analysis to other places where Jews and Muslims meet and to see if our results are replicated. Nevertheless, Sarcelles is often used in debates as a paramount example of intercommunity tensions. We show that antisemitism is still fought by a large part of the ordinary citizens of Sarcelles that we interviewed, including those of foreign origin. The fight against prejudices and antisemitism is not lost; quite the contrary, including among minorities. Clearly, these inhabitants of diverse origins live side by side and not face to face. Moreover, many of them continue to say that they are happy to live in this city and do not want to leave Sarcelles.

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Author Queries

chapter 8

- AQ1: Note that no opening double quote for the closing double quote has been provided in the phrase “a “new” antisemitism”. Please check and amend necessary. 182
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