

Experience of Discrimination, Social Marginalisation and Violence among Muslim and non-Muslim Youth

Article 21 falling under the Equality Chapter of the [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#) prohibits discrimination on several grounds, including racial or ethnic origin, and religion.

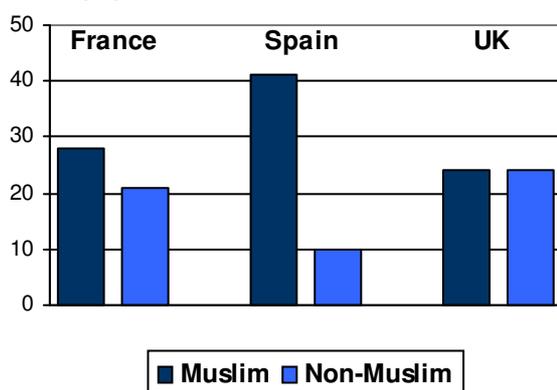
Policy context

Social marginalisation has drastic and negative consequences for any society. Marginalisation of children has even more dire effects – both for the present and the future. Negative stereotypes about people, coupled with prejudiced views concerning specific religions and their followers, can have a negative impact on community cohesion and social integration. It is essential that these stereotypes are confronted with evidence based on the actual attitudes and experiences of these groups.

Discrimination risks triggering violent behaviour

Around one in four young people – in each of the three EU Member States surveyed (France, Spain and the United Kingdom) – reported that they had (at some point) been unfairly treated or picked on. Muslim youths were significantly more likely than non-Muslims to say that this had happened to them in France and Spain; although, there was no difference between Muslim and non-Muslim youth in the United Kingdom. Young people who had experienced discrimination were less likely to respond that they felt “very happy” than others who had not experienced discrimination.

Figure 1: Experience of being unfairly picked on (%)



Many young people experience violence, ranging from bullying and other forms of emotional violence to more physical forms of aggression. It was also found that there is a strong link between being a victim and an offender.

In all three EU Member States surveyed, young people who felt socially marginalised and those who had been a victim of violence because of their cultural or religious background, skin colour or language, were more likely to use emotional violence (such as teasing or bullying) towards others than young people who did not feel socially marginalised or those who had not been victimised for the above-mentioned reasons.

Where young people had experienced discrimination, they were more likely to express feelings of social isolation and alienation from their peers. In turn, members of delinquent youth groups who have experienced discrimination are at greater risk of supporting violence and of being involved in violent behaviour.

However, across all young people surveyed, support for violence does not necessarily correspond to actual engagement in violent behaviour.

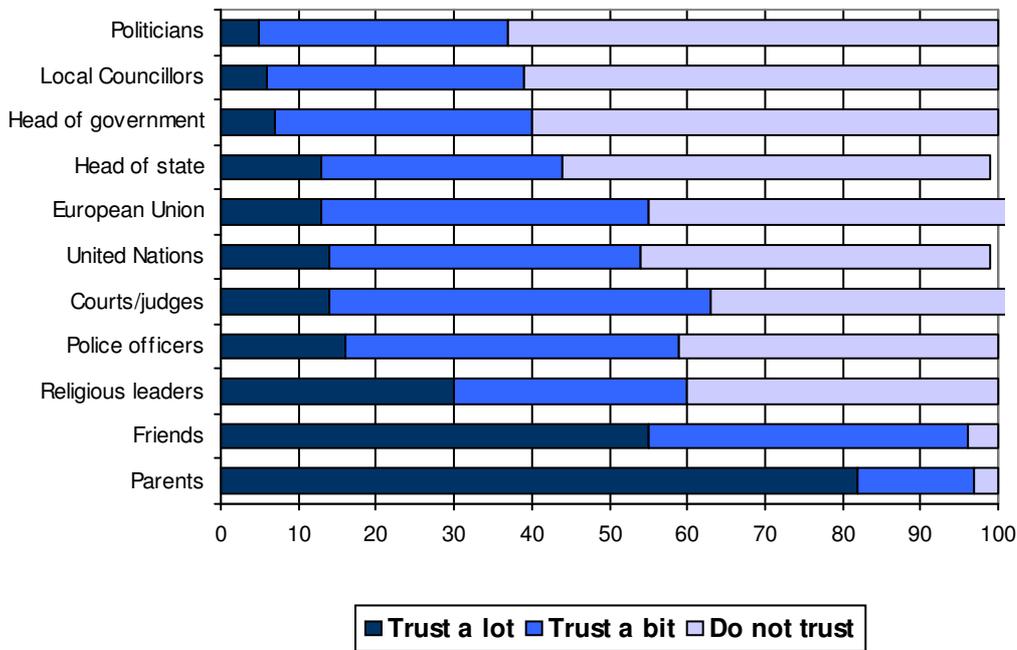
The main factors that can be associated with violent behaviour are: being male, being part of a delinquent youth group/gang, being discriminated against, and being socially marginalised. When these elements are taken into consideration, religious background/affiliation plays no part in explaining violent behaviour.

Regardless of religious background, most young people do not support violence

Young people tend not to be supportive of violence that is carried out without a “good reason”; however, they do see violence as justifiable in particular circumstances, such as self-defence or the protection of others. Support for global war and/or terrorism is very low.

Young people – regardless of religious affiliation – are concerned about the state of the world and about major social issues. There is a general lack of trust in figures of authority, especially in politicians.

Figure 2: Degree of trust in people and institutions (%)



was the case. However, this result does not equate to young people’s actual use of violent behaviour.

Addressing social marginalisation and discrimination

Social marginalisation and discrimination need to be addressed, as a priority, with respect to their impact on whether young people see violence as justifiable.

Similar reaction by Muslim youth and non-Muslim youth

There are no indications that Muslim youth are more or less likely to resort to actual violence than non-Muslims.

Discrimination and marginalisation are not restricted to Muslim youths, and religious affiliation is less important in determining young people’s actual involvement in violence than their peer group characteristics and their broader experiences and attitudes.

There is no evidence from this study to suggest that the religious background of the respondents is an indicator for actual engagement in physical violence once other aspects of discrimination and marginalisation and other features of young people’s lives had been accounted for.

Around one in five young people thought that the use of violence was justifiable if their religion had been insulted. On average, Muslim youths in all three Member States were more likely than non-Muslims to agree that this

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has published the report *Experience of Discrimination, Social Marginalisation and Violence: A comparative study of Muslim and non-Muslim Youth in three EU Member States* in October 2010.

The survey set out to explore possible relationships between young people’s experiences of discrimination and social marginalisation, including experiences of racism, and their attitudes towards and actual engagement in violent behaviours.

This report presents the findings of a research study conducted by the FRA during 2008-2009 in France, Spain and the United Kingdom. Some 1,000 children between aged between 12 and 18 years (young people) in each of the three Member States were surveyed – in total, 3,000 young people took part in the survey. The survey focused on three Member States that have experienced terrorist attacks associated with radical Islam or urban unrest related to immigrant youth with a predominantly Muslim background.

See www.fra.europa.eu