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Accounting for Contemporary Antisemitism: A Four-Dimensional Framework and a New Dataset

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ABSTRACT

Existing scholarship on contemporary antisemitism tends to sacrifice breadth for depth, typically focusing on a specific dimension of the phenomenon or a single national or ideological context. This nearsightedness threatens to limit our understanding of current antisemitism because separate parts of a complex picture are studied in isolation, and because crucial questions about temporal and cross-national variation remain understudied. To help remedy this situation, this article introduces a more comprehensive conceptual and empirical framework along with a new dataset intended to encourage the study of antisemitism as a multidimensional, cross-national, and dynamic phenomenon. The framework conceptualizes antisemitism in four core dimensions—attitudes, incidents, cultural imagery, and Jews' exposure—and specifies relevant variables and indicators, thus facilitating future research and data collection efforts. To supplement the framework, the article introduces a new dataset (DIMA—Dimensions of Antisemitism) featuring publicly available data covering three of the four dimensions: attitudes, incidents, and exposure. Based on patterns emerging from these data, hypotheses for further study are suggested. These contributions are intended to prepare the ground for a new and theoretically more ambitious research agenda in the field of contemporary antisemitism research.

Introduction

The past 20 years have witnessed increasing public concern over the rise of a revitalized antisemitism. Posing a threat to Jewish communities and a challenge to societies committed to protecting minority rights and curtailing prejudice, this development has raised serious questions about democratic societies' ability to provide a secure environment for their Jewish

minorities.¹ A large proportion of Jews have expressed doubt about their future on the European continent, as evidenced by a 2018 survey covering 16,500 respondents in 12 EU countries—among them, 38 percent said they had considered emigrating because of safety concerns.² Surveys of Jewish community leaders across Europe, the most recent published in 2021, indicate a worsening trend in which antisemitism is perceived by an increasing share of respondents as a serious threat.³ Given these circumstances, there is a strong need to understand how antisemitism in its various manifestations is developing in the 21st century and, crucially, to explain the dynamics of variation over time and between countries.

Understanding how antisemitism is developing and why it varies over time and across countries requires a perspective that takes into account several dimensions of antisemitism simultaneously and is not confined to particular national or ideological contexts. Such a bird’s eye view is lacking in the current literature: scholars and monitoring agencies tend to analyze antisemitism using particularistic frameworks, focusing on a single dimension, a single country, or a single type of ideology. In other words, current scholarship has tended to sacrifice breadth for depth. Improving our understanding of contemporary antisemitism requires a broader approach that captures the complexity of the phenomenon and enables researchers to study temporal and cross-national variation. This article aims to encourage such an approach by way of two main contributions.

The first contribution is to introduce a new conceptual and empirical framework for studying antisemitism over time and across countries. At the heart of this framework are four core dimensions: a cognitive dimension (antisemitic attitudes), a behavioral dimension (antisemitic incidents), a cultural dimension (antisemitic cultural imagery), and a “receiving-end” dimension (Jews’ exposure to antisemitism). While the first three dimensions are familiar and frequently studied by antisemitism scholars, less attention has been paid to the concept of exposure, which is of fundamental importance because it highlights how antisemitism impacts Jews and their communities. Moreover, the article introduces a distinction between objective (personal experience of antisemitic incidents) and subjective exposure (the extent to which Jews worry about antisemitism). In addition to a four-dimensional conceptualization of antisemitism, the framework specifies variables and empirical indicators for each dimension.

The second contribution is to introduce the Dimensions of Antisemitism (DIMA) dataset, a new compilation of publicly available data covering three of the framework’s four dimensions: attitudes, incidents, and Jews’ exposure. The article describes key patterns of variation

¹Jeffrey Goldberg, “Is It Time for the Jews to Leave Europe?” *The Atlantic*, April 2015, perma.cc/DH7Q-D487; Joel Kotkin, “Judenrein Europe,” *Tablet Magazine*, June 26, 2019, perma.cc/G59H-MD9Q; AFP, “Germany Warns of ‘Mass Exit’ of Jews If Anti-Semitism Persists,” *Times of Israel*, January 26, 2020, perma.cc/3UXS-C2Z6.

²FRA, “Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism: Second Survey on Discrimination and Hate Crime Against Jews in the EU” (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018).

³JDC-ICCD, “Fifth Survey of European Jewish Community Leaders and Professionals” (November 2021), <https://perma.cc/33TR-4BHZ>.

emerging from the DIMA data relating to each of the three dimensions and uses these patterns as a basis for proposing hypotheses and unresolved questions worth pursuing in future research.

The article proceeds in four parts. The first part reviews previous research and argues for the empirical and theoretical utility of a four-dimensional framework. The second part introduces the four-dimensional framework, describing its conceptual components and empirical indicators. The third part uses the DIMA dataset to describe patterns of variation for attitudes, incidents, and exposure and assesses the relationship between these dimensions. The fourth part provides some hypotheses and open questions for further research aiming to explain variation in contemporary antisemitism.

Previous research and why a more comprehensive framework is needed

Recent decades have witnessed a growing body of research on contemporary antisemitism, with sociologists, historians, political scientists and psychologists enhancing our knowledge about many aspects of the phenomenon. Within this literature, five main strands of inquiry can be identified. First, a number of studies analyze the histories and dynamics of antisemitism in particular countries.⁴ A second set of studies focuses on particular ideological or religious contexts, including right-wing, left-wing, and Islamic variants of antisemitism.⁵ A third strand of research has analyzed the prevalence and determinants of antisemitic

⁴E.g., Michel Wieviorka, *The Lure of Anti-Semitism: Hatred of Jews in Present-Day France* (Leiden: Brill, 2007); András Kovács, *The Stranger at Hand: Antisemitic Prejudices in Post-Communist Hungary* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Hermann Kurthen, Werner Bergmann, and Rainer Erb, eds., *Antisemitism and Xenophobia in Germany After Unification* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Marc Weitzmann, *Hate: The Rising Tide of Anti-Semitism in France (and What it Means for Us)* (Boston/New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019); Tony Kushner, “Anti-Semitism in Britain: Continuity and the Absence of a Resurgence?” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36, no. 3 (March 2013): 434–49; Natalia Yuhneva, “Political and Popular Antisemitism in Russia in the Period of Perestroika,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 27, no. 1 (1993): 65–70; Henrik Bachner, *Återkomsten: Antisemitism i Sverige Efter 1945* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 2004); Michael R. Marrus, Derek J. Penslar, and Janice Gross Stein, eds., *Contemporary Antisemitism: Canada and the World* (University of Toronto Press, 2005); Alexander Verkhovsky, “Who Is the Enemy Now? Islamophobia and Antisemitism Among Russian Orthodox Nationalists Before and After September 11,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 38, no. 2 (June 2004): 127–43; Zbyněk Tarant, “Antisemitism in the Czech Republic: Understanding Current Trends,” *Antisemitism Studies* 4, no. 1 (2020): 108–142.

⁵Bodo Kahmann, “‘The Most Ardent Pro-Israel Party’: Pro-Israel Attitudes and Anti-Antisemitism Among Populist Radical-Right Parties in Europe,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 51, no. 5 (2017): 396–411; Ruth Wodak, “The Radical Right and Antisemitism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, ed. Jens Rydgren (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 61–85; Jeffrey Herf, ed., *Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective: Convergence and Divergence* (London: Routledge, 2007); David Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism* (London; New York: Routledge, 2018); Günther Jikeli, *European Muslim Antisemitism: Why Young Urban Males Say They Don’t Like Jews* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2015); Juliane Wetzels, *Moderner Antisemitismus unter Muslimen in Deutschland* (Wiesbaden: Springer-Verlag, 2013); Esther Webman, “The Challenge of Assessing Arab/Islamic Antisemitism,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 5 (2010): 677–97.

attitudes and beliefs,⁶ while a fourth line on inquiry has sought to explain variation in the occurrence of antisemitic incidents.⁷ Finally, a fifth strand investigates Jews' perceptions and experiences of antisemitism.⁸

The many branches of contemporary antisemitism research share a common feature in that they tend to employ particularistic analytical frameworks. By this I mean that antisemitism is either understood narrowly, looking at a single dimension in isolation (such as attitudes or incidents), or else studied within a specific country or a particular ideological or religious context. While such accounts are valuable and necessary elements of knowledge building, their particularism entails two limitations. First, narrow frameworks fail to capture the breadth of antisemitism as a multidimensional concept. I propose that antisemitism involves four core dimensions: a cognitive dimension (attitudes and beliefs), a behavioral dimension (hostile actions), a cultural dimension (cultural imagery), and a "receiving-end" dimension (Jews' exposure to antisemitism). Understanding these dimensions and the relationship between them is an important objective for antisemitism research, but hard to achieve when studying each in isolation. Herein lies the need to integrate all four dimensions within a single conceptual framework. The second limitation is that while we have many accounts of national, ideological, or religious contexts, there is a distinct lack of studies that describe and analyze cross-national variation over time (a notable exception is the work by Jonathan Fox and Lev Topor, who explore the causes of both official and societal discrimination against Jews across a global range of countries using survey data from the Religion and State

⁶Peter Beattie, "Anti-Semitism and Opposition to Israeli Government Policies: The Roles of Prejudice and Information," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 15 (2017): 2749–67; Michal Bilewicz et al., "Harmful Ideas: The Structure and Consequences of Anti-Semitic Beliefs in Poland," *Political Psychology* 34, no. 6 (2013): 821–39; Florette Cohen et al., "Modern Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israeli Attitudes," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97, no. 2 (2009): 290–306; Edward H. Kaplan and Charles A. Small, "Anti-Israel Sentiment Predicts Anti-Semitism in Europe," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 4 (2006): 548–61; L. Daniel Staetsky, "Antisemitism in Contemporary Great Britain: A Study of Attitudes Towards Jews and Israel" (Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 2017); L. Daniel Staetsky, "Global Levels, Trends, and Correlates of Antisemitic Attitudes Through the Prism of Modernization Theory: Insights from the Pew Research Center and World Values Surveys," *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism* 2, no. 1 (July 2019); Robert Brym, "Antisemitic and Anti-Israel Actions and Attitudes in Canada and Internationally: A Research Agenda," *Patterns of Prejudice* 53, no. 4 (August 2019): 407–20; Caroline C. Kaufman et al., "Psychological Research Examining Antisemitism in the United States: A Literature Review," *Antisemitism Studies* 4, no. 2 (2020): 237–269; Eitan Hersh and Laura Royden, "Antisemitic Attitudes Across the Ideological Spectrum," 2021.

⁷Robert B. Smith, "A Globalized Conflict: European Anti-Jewish Violence During the Second Intifada," *Quality & Quantity* 42, no. 2 (2008): 135–80; Dirk Jacobs et al., "The Impact of the Conflict in Gaza on Antisemitism in Belgium," *Patterns of Prejudice* 45, no. 4 (September 2011): 341–60; Ayal Feinberg, "Explaining Ethnoreligious Minority Targeting: Variation in U.S. Anti-Semitic Incidents," *Perspectives on Politics* 18, no. 3 (September 2020): 770–87; Matteo Vergani, Dan Goodhardt, Rouven Link, Amy Adamczyk, Joshua D. Freilich, and Steven Chermak, "When and How Does Anti-Semitism Occur? The Different Trigger Mechanisms Associated with Different Types of Criminal and Non-Criminal Hate Incidents," *Deviant Behavior* (2021), 1–17.

⁸Jeffrey E. Cohen, "Generalized Discrimination Perceptions and American Jewish Perception of Antisemitism," *Contemporary Jewry* 38, no. 3 (October 2018): 405–33; Sergio DellaPergola, "Jewish Perceptions of Antisemitism in the European Union, 2018: A New Structural Look," *Analysis of Current Trends in Antisemitism - ACTA* 40, no. 2 (June 2020).

Project).⁹ The predominance of particularism can be explained partly by the fact that most antisemitism researchers are in the humanities, and partly by the lack of appropriate and available data for carrying out temporal and cross-national analysis.

Even though most scholarship on contemporary antisemitism tends towards particularism, there have been recent attempts to advance a broader perspective. One notable example is Daniel Staetsky's "elastic view" of antisemitic attitudes, which encourages studying attitudes towards Jews closely in tandem with Jews' perceptions of antisemitism. Specifically, Staetsky urges survey researchers to distinguish between the small set of people who are hard-core antisemites (people espousing many antisemitic beliefs with high intensity and openly say they dislike Jews, constituting about 2.5 percent of the population in the British case) and the considerably larger set of people (up to 30 percent in the British case) who hold a smaller number of antisemitic beliefs with less intensity, and who do not necessarily express dislike of Jews. Staetsky argues that this distinction is vital for understanding why Jews in a country such as Britain perceive antisemitism as a major problem even though surveys indicate a low and even decreasing prevalence of antisemitic attitudes in the population, the point being that the larger set of people—constituting 30 percent of the population—represents "the current level of the diffusion of antisemitic ideas in British society, and offers an indication of the likelihood of British Jews encountering such ideas."¹⁰ Another example is Günther Jikeli's study of the divergence in France between antisemitic attitudes, which have been decreasing, and antisemitic incidents, which have been increasing. Jikeli suggests two related explanations to account for this discrepancy: the content of antisemitic stereotypes may have changed (anti-Jewish feeling may have become more expressed in anti-Zionist forms), and perpetrators of antisemitic acts likely constitute a subset of the population that is too small to influence the results of attitude surveys conducted using nationally representative samples.¹¹

As the above review of the current literature suggests, research on antisemitism can benefit by breaking out of particularistic frameworks and taking multidimensionality seriously. In the following section I propose a way of doing so by introducing a new conceptual and empirical framework that breaks antisemitism down into four core dimensions, each with an associated set of variables and indicators.

⁹See Jonathan Fox and Lev Topor, *Why Do People Discriminate against Jews?* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2021). The data underlying this study is available at the Religion and State Project website, see <http://www.religionandstate.org/> (viewed 10 June 2022).

¹⁰Staetsky, "Antisemitism in Contemporary Great Britain," 3–4. See also Werner Bergmann, "Counting Antisemites versus Measuring Antisemitism: An 'Elastic View' of Antisemitism", in *The Shifting Boundaries of Prejudice*, by Christhard Hoffmann and Vibeke Moe (Universitetsforlaget, 2020), 155–186.

¹¹Günther Jikeli, "Explaining the Discrepancy of Antisemitic Acts and Attitudes in 21st Century France," *Contemporary Jewry* 37, no. 2 (July 2017): 264–67.

A four-dimensional framework: attitudes, incidents, cultural imagery, and Jews' exposure

The framework proposed here (see Table 1) is a conceptual and empirical one, intended as a tool for disaggregating and operationalizing the concept of antisemitism. Specifically, the framework defines four constituent dimensions of antisemitism (attitudes, incidents, cultural imagery, and Jews' exposure), identifies variables representing each dimension along with relevant indicators, and provides reference to available data. Note that this is not a theoretical framework; its purpose is not to integrate existing theories or to explain variation. Rather, its purpose is to encourage and facilitate a broader approach to researching antisemitism that can account for both multidimensionality and variation across time and space. I would argue that only when such a multidimensional account has been established empirically can we begin to develop a truly integrated theoretical framework aiming to explain the development and dynamics of contemporary antisemitism. The present framework, then, is intended as a first step in preparing the empirical basis for a more ambitious theoretical research program. In the following, I describe each dimension and briefly discuss available sources of data for studying them.

Table 1: Antisemitism: a conceptual and empirical framework in four dimensions

<i>Dimensions</i>	Attitudes			Incidents	Cultural imagery	Jews' exposure		
Variables	Favorability	Social distance	Prejudicial beliefs	Number of antisemitic incidents	Type of content, prevalence	Objective exposure	Subjective exposure	
Indicators	Favorability ratings	Rejection of Jews as neighbors	Agreement with stereotypes	Incident counts	Dispersion of texts, memes, images, hashtags	Experience of antisemitic violence/harassment	Worry about becoming a victim of antisemitism	Actions taken in response to safety concerns
Data sources	Pew Global Attitudes surveys (1991–)	W/EVS surveys (1990–)	ADL Global 100 surveys (2014–)	CSCEJ/Kantor Center; national-level reporting (1990–)	Born-digital content; digitized print media	FRA antisemitism survey items (2012–)	FRA antisemitism survey items (2012–)	FRA antisemitism survey items (2012–)

The cognitive dimension: Antisemitic attitudes

The most common understanding of antisemitism refers to a particular set of negative or hostile attitudes towards Jews. Such attitudes can be represented by three different variables: favorability, social distance, and prejudicial beliefs.

Favorability is simply the extent to which people say they like or dislike Jews, with favorability

ratings being the key indicator. The *Pew Global Attitudes surveys* constitute the key data source for tracking favorability over time and across a global range of countries. In nationally representative samples covering the years from 1991 to the present and spanning 24 countries, these surveys usually include a favorability rating of Jews (i.e., respondents were asked whether they had a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Jews).¹²

Another variable representing antisemitic attitudes is social distance to Jews, which can be measured by asking people whether they would like to have Jews as neighbors. The main source for cross-national data on this indicator is the *World/European Values Survey* (W/EVS), which has been conducted in several waves beginning in 1981 and includes an item measuring social distance to Jews in this way. The W/EVS surveys including this item cover 55 countries, with measurements spread across three decades from 1990 to 2020.¹³

A third variable under the attitude dimension is prejudicial beliefs. The key indicator representing this variable is the extent to which people agree with statements deemed to reflect antisemitic prejudice. For purposes of cross-national analysis, the *ADL Global 100* surveys, conducted in 2014, 2015, and 2019, constitute the most important data source, even though the longitudinal dimension is limited. The ADL surveys present respondents with a set of 11 statements designed to reflect antisemitic beliefs and the choice to rate each statement as “probably true” or “probably false.” Respondents answering “probably true” to 6 or more of the statements are considered to harbor antisemitic attitudes, and the share of such respondents becomes the index score for each country.¹⁴

While accounting for antisemitic attitudes is important, the prevalence of negative stereotypes or unfavorable opinions about Jews essentially only tells us something about what people think (or what they feel it is acceptable to say when filling out a questionnaire or talking to an interviewer). While antisemitic attitudes are properties of people’s minds, their wider impact largely depends on the extent to which they are translated into actual behavior.

The behavioral dimension: Antisemitic incidents

Antisemitic incidents in which Jews and Jewish institutions are deliberately targeted in acts of violence, harassment, or vandalism constitute a core aspect of antisemitism. Given the major impact such incidents can have on the basic safety and well-being of individuals

¹²See Pew’s public repository at pewresearch.org/global/datasets/ (viewed 28 April 2021).

¹³See EVS, “European Values Study Longitudinal Data File 1981-2008 (EVS 1981-2008),” *GESIS Data Archive, Cologne, Za4804 Data File Version 3.0.0*, 2015; EVS, “European Values Study 2017: Integrated Dataset (EVS 2017),” *GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. Za7500 Data File Version 4.0.0*, 2020; WVS, “World Value Survey 1981-2014 Official Aggregate v.20150418, 2015,” *World Values Survey Association* (www.worldvaluessurvey.org). *Aggregate File Producer: JDSystems, Madrid*, 2015; and WVS, “World Values Survey: Round Seven-Pooled Datafile,” ed. C. Haerper et al., *Madrid & Vienna: JD Systems Institute & WVSA Secretariat*, 2021.

¹⁴See the ADL Global 100 website at global100.adl.org/map (viewed 7 May 2021).

and communities, understanding why they vary across time and space is a crucial task for antisemitism research, and one that requires analyzing incident data.

The Tel Aviv-based Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry (CSCEJ, formerly known as the Kantor Center) has long been the established curator of antisemitic incident data on the global level. Based on data collected from about 40 countries worldwide since 1989, the CSCEJ annual reports provide counts of the overall level of recorded antisemitic incidents (prior to 2009, the reports were published under the Stephen Roth Institute). Their reports also feature country breakdowns. The CSCEJ incident counts are being used as a basis for research,¹⁵ and frequently feature in the media. On the face of it, these data appear to be well suited for purposes of cross-national and temporal analysis. However, closer inspection reveals major methodological problems.

To make sense of incident data and use them for analysis, researchers need to know the precise criteria for including and categorizing incidents. However, the CSCEJ’s inclusion criteria and recording practices appear to be unclear and inconsistent. The reports for 2000–2008 contain the following methodological note: “[T]he data presented in the appendices include only violent attacks intended to cause loss of life and cases of actual damage to property.”¹⁶ However, according to the appendices of these same reports, the incident data include two categories: (1) “major attacks,” including “arson, firebombs, shootings, etc.,” and (2) “major violent incidents,” including “harassment, vandalism of Jewish property and sites [...] and street violence not involving the use of a weapon”.¹⁷ Clearly, acts of harassment do not constitute a violent attempt at someone’s life or damage to property. Adding to the confusion, beginning in 2008 the reports no longer refer to the distinction between “major attacks” and “major violent incidents,” but simply state that the counts “reflect only major violent acts (such as arson, weapon attacks, weaponless attacks, harassment, and vandalism or desecration)”.¹⁸ Thus, researchers have no way of ascertaining which types of incidents are in fact included in the count for a given country-year.

Another problem with the CSCEJ counts is that their figures sometimes diverge sharply from independent national-level reporting. One significant example pertains to the case of France in the years 2016–2020, for which the CSCEJ reports record a total of 103 incidents (which, according to their stated methodology, should include violence, vandalism/desecration, and harassment). However, the main French agency monitoring antisemitic incidents, the SPCJ,

¹⁵E.g., András Kovács and György Fischer, “Antisemitic Prejudices in Europe” (Budapest: Ipsos SA/Inspira LTD Hungary, 2021); Scott N. Siegel, “A New Exodus? Explaining Jewish Migration from Europe after the Cold War,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 17, no. 4 (October 2018): 416–33.

¹⁶See, for instance, the preface/foreword of the reports covering 2000, 2006, and 2008, available from https://en-humanities.tau.ac.il/kantor/rerearch/annual_reports (viewed 13 January 2022).

¹⁷Dina Porat and Roni Stauber (eds.), *Antisemitism Worldwide 2000/1* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 317.

¹⁸Dina Porat et al. (eds.), *Antisemitism Worldwide 2008/9* (Tel Aviv: The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism, 2010), 309.

recorded a total of 255 incidents in the category of physical violence only (i.e., not including vandalism or harassment).¹⁹ The cause of such major discrepancies is unclear.²⁰

Until such time as the CSCEJ clarifies their methodology, sorts out inconsistencies, and increases transparency about inclusion criteria and the process by which an event ends up being counted in their database, researchers should approach the CSCEJ data with caution. In the meantime, the obvious alternative is to consult independent incident reporting by national-level monitoring agencies, Jewish organizations, or official bodies.

The cultural dimension: Antisemitic imagery

Antisemitism involves cultural imagery: texts, images, memes, hashtags, and other artefacts carrying antisemitic meaning. It might be argued that this is not a separate dimension, but merely a sub-dimension of attitudes in the sense that people’s antisemitic thoughts are what causes them to produce and distribute antisemitic cultural imagery. Yet texts and images that enter the cultural sphere take on a concrete physical existence in a way that attitudes do not. Moreover, cultural artefacts will often begin to “lead a life of their own,” becoming detached from the context of their original creation, and as such no longer dependent on the attitudinal motivations of their original creator. For these reasons, cultural imagery should be regarded as a dimension of its own.

How, then, can cultural imagery be measured? Is it possible to track this dimension over time and across space? Traditionally, cultural imagery has been studied within humanist, interpretative frameworks by historians, literary scholars, and anthropologists.²¹ Recent work on visual antisemitism in Central Europe demonstrate the continued value of such approaches.²² However, qualitative approaches alone are unable to account for larger data patterns. This is where the advent of digital (or computational) humanities comes in. By using Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques and other computational methods to analyze large amounts of textual (or visual) data, researchers are now engaging in new forms of “cultural cartography”.²³ This makes it possible to begin quantifying the propagation

¹⁹The SPCJ reports can be downloaded from <https://www.antisemitisme.fr/> (viewed 13 January 2022).

²⁰The author has reached out to the CSCEJ/Kantor Center director by e-mail twice in an attempt to clarify these methodological issues. On the first occasion, a reply was received, but follow-up questions were not replied to. On the second occasion (June 2022), no reply was received.

²¹The literature on cultural imagery, of course, constitutes an important part of the scholarship on historical and current antisemitism. See, for instance, Pamela Berger, “The Roots of Anti-Semitism in Medieval Visual Imagery: An Overview,” *Religion and the Arts* 4, no. 1 (January 2000): 4–42; Mitchell Merback (ed.), *Beyond the Yellow Badge: Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in Medieval and Early Modern Visual Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London: Serif, 2006); Jakub Hauser and Eva Janáčová (eds.), *Visual Antisemitism in Central Europe: Imagery of Hatred* (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2021); Judith Vogt, “Old images in Soviet anti-Zionist cartoons,” *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 5, no. 1 (1975): 20–38.

²²See Hauser and Janáčová (eds.), *Visual Antisemitism in Central Europe*; Zbyněk Tarant, “1989–2020: New Forms of Anti-Jewish Prejudice,” in *Images of Malice: Visual Representations of Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism in the Bohemian Lands*, ed. Eva Janáčová (Prague: Karolinum, 2022), 327–58.

²³On recent advances in computational text analysis with relevance for the humanities, see, for instance,

of antisemitic cultural imagery over time and across space. Research along these lines is currently emerging, with projects such as “Antisemitism in the World Wide Web” and “Decoding Antisemitism” studying how antisemitic content is communicated in comments fields and other online spaces.²⁴ While these emerging studies tend to focus on online-generated content, similar methods may be applied to analyze non-online, printed texts and images as well (given, of course, that they are digitized).

The new cultural cartography of antisemitism is still in its infancy. Unlike in the case of attitudes or incidents, there are currently no publicly available datasets that enable researchers to track the dispersion and evolution of antisemitic cultural imagery online or elsewhere. Building and analyzing such datasets, then, should be a task for future antisemitism research. The sources of such data are practically endless. They include not only online-generated content of all kinds, but also, for historians and others interested in longer timeframes, print materials from libraries and archives across the world, which are being digitized to an increasing extent. Given these circumstances, I believe the field of antisemitism studies will have much to gain by integrating computational methods for analyzing texts and imagery, either by learning to apply those techniques or by engaging seriously in collaborative projects with those who specialize in them. This, of course, does not imply abandoning traditional interpretative and qualitative approaches; the message is rather that we should expand our methodological toolbox.

The receiving end: Jews’ exposure

While the three preceding dimensions reflect what is thought or felt about, done onto, or imagined about Jews by others, exposure taps into “the receiving end” of antisemitism—Jews’ experiences and perceptions of antisemitism. This fourth dimension can be represented by two variables: objective and subjective exposure. Key indicators of objective exposure include the share of Jews who have experienced incidents involving antisemitic harassment or violence as well as the share having personally witnessed such incidents. Subjective exposure can be quantified by way of indicators such as the proportion of Jews worrying about becoming a victim of antisemitic incidents, the extent to which Jews feel compelled to

Omri Suissa, Avshalom Elmalech and Maayan Zhitomirsky-Geffet, “Text Analysis Using Deep Neural Networks in Digital Humanities and Information Science,” *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 73, no. 2 (2022): 268–87; Dustin S. Stoltz and Marshall A. Taylor, “Cultural Cartography with Word Embeddings,” *Poetics*, no. 88 (2021).

²⁴Monika Schwarz-Friesel, “Antisemitism 2.0 and the Cyberculture of Hate” (Technical University of Berlin, 2018), perma.cc/AD2G-W4SJ; Matthias J. Becker and Daniel Allington, “Decoding Antisemitism: An AI-driven Study on Hate Speech and Imagery Online” (Center for Research on Antisemitism (ZfA), 2021), perma.cc/8A6X-UFQV. See also Joel Finkelstein et al., “Antisemitic Disinformation: A Study of the Online Dissemination of Anti-Jewish Conspiracy Theories” (Network Contagion Research Institute, 2020); Günther Jikeli, Damir Cavar, and Daniel Miehl, “Annotating Antisemitic Online Content. Towards an Applicable Definition of Antisemitism” (Unpublished Paper, October 2019); Savvas Zannettou et al., “A Quantitative Approach to Understanding Online Antisemitism,” *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media* 14 (May 2020): 786–97.

conceal their identity in public, and the proportion of Jews considering emigrating because of safety concerns.

The key data source for such exposure indicators is the European Union’s Fundamental Rights Agency’s (FRA) major surveys of Jewish communities across Europe from 2012 (eight countries, $n = 5,847$) and 2018 (twelve countries, $n = 16,395$) (new waves of this survey are expected in the future).²⁵ A similar survey was also carried out in Russia in 2018.²⁶ Unlike in the case of attitude surveys, which use nationally representative samples, the 2012 and 2018 FRA surveys were opt-in online ones (i.e., convenience samples). This method can be vulnerable to volunteer bias, by which people with strong opinions about antisemitism would be more likely to participate than people who do not care much about the question. This should be kept in mind when working with these data. Another issue is that the samples underrepresent the younger segments of the Jewish population as well as the communally unaffiliated segment. However, a study using benchmark data to weight the 2012 survey results to adjust for these discrepancies found that the weighting produced no significant change, suggesting that the survey results do provide a reliable picture of Jews’ perceptions and experiences of antisemitism despite these sampling biases.²⁷

The DIMA dataset: patterns and trends relating to attitudes, incidents, and exposure

DIMA (*Dimensions of Antisemitism*) is a new dataset compiled by the author based on a range of publicly available sources. DIMA complements the four-dimensional framework by providing longitudinal (from 1990 onwards) and cross-national data that measure indicators relating to three of the framework’s four dimensions (attitudes, incidents, and Jews’ exposure). The DIMA dataset is made available to the research community and will be hosted by the Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX) at the University of Oslo. DIMA will be updated regularly, absorbing new data emerging from international attitude surveys, incident monitoring, and victimization surveys to extend the respective time series. Details about the dataset, including variable information and data sources, will be found at the DIMA website.²⁸ In the following, I describe some key patterns of variation emerging from these data and investigate how the three dimensions relate to each other.

²⁵See FRA, “2012 Antisemitism Survey”; FRA, “Survey on Discrimination and Hate Crime against Jews in the EU 2018” (GESIS Data Archive / ZA7491, 2019).

²⁶“Antisemitism as perceived by the Jewish population of Russia,” Levada Center/Russian Jewish Congress (Moscow, 2018), perma.cc/9WY6-2VL3.

²⁷See L. Daniel Staetsky, “Can Convenience Samples Be Trusted? Lessons From the Survey of Jews in Europe, 2012,” *Contemporary Jewry* 39, no. 1 (March 2019): 115–53. The 2018 survey results, according to the study’s author, appear to be similarly reliable. E-mail correspondence with Daniel Staetsky, 20 December 2019, author’s archive.

²⁸The website will be set up by the end of 2022. Inquiries can be directed to the author at j.d.enstad@socialresearch.no.

Data on antisemitic attitudes

How have antisemitic attitudes developed over time and across countries? According to our framework, attitudes can be represented by three different variables: favorability, social distance, and prejudicial beliefs. The framework also specifies one observable indicator for each of these variables, namely favorability ratings, rejection of Jews as neighbors, and agreement with antisemitic stereotypes. The DIMA dataset includes data measuring each of these indicators.

Figure 1 presents favorability ratings of Jews as reflected in three decades of Pew Global Attitudes surveys across 24 countries (i.e., all countries for which this survey item has been included), grouped by region. Scores were calculated by subtracting the share of negative answers (very/mostly/somewhat unfavorable opinion of Jews) from the share of positive ones (very/mostly/somewhat favorable opinion) to indicate the net level of favorability in each country.²⁹

Most people say they view Jews favorably in most of the 24 countries included in the surveys, with a positive trend visible in many cases. However, there are also some clear divergences across the regions. Favorability ratings in Western Europe and the US have grown more positive over time, with current net levels approaching 90. The trend of increasingly favorable attitudes towards Jews in Western countries has been confirmed in several national surveys.³⁰ The second cluster includes countries in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe as well as the two post-Soviet states of Russia and Ukraine. For this group of countries, the overall trend is less clear. The regional mean has fluctuated between 0 and 50, with 2019 ratings ranging from 13 (Greece) to 70 (Ukraine). It is notable that in Ukraine, a country often thought of as a traditional hot spot of antisemitism, Jews in 2019 appeared to be more favorably looked upon than in most of East-Central and Southern Europe. The third cluster consists of seven countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia with Muslim-majority populations that diverge markedly from the other countries in the sample. These are the only countries with consistently and highly negative favorability levels, ranging from about -95 to -70 in the most recent surveys (data is missing for the years after 2011 as the Pew Global Attitudes surveys no longer included this item for this group of countries).

Data from the World/European Values Survey (W/EVS), as visualized in Figure 2, reveal a similar pattern. In Western Europe and North America between 1 and 10 percent say

²⁹The share of “don’t know/refused” varied from zero to 34 percent (average 12 percent, median 13 percent).

³⁰Cohen, “From Antisemitism to Philosemitism?”; Günther Jikeli, “Explaining the Discrepancy of Antisemitic Acts and Attitudes in 21st Century France,” *Contemporary Jewry* 37, no. 2 (July 2017): 264–67; Unabhängiger Expertenkreis Antisemitismus, “Antisemitismus in Deutschland aktuelle Entwicklungen” (Berlin: Bundesministerium des Innern, 2018), 59–60; HL-senteret, “Antisemitic Attitudes in the Population Are Decreasing,” *Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities* (perma.cc/HHA9-B3J9, December 5, 2017); Staetsky, “Antisemitism in Contemporary Great Britain.”

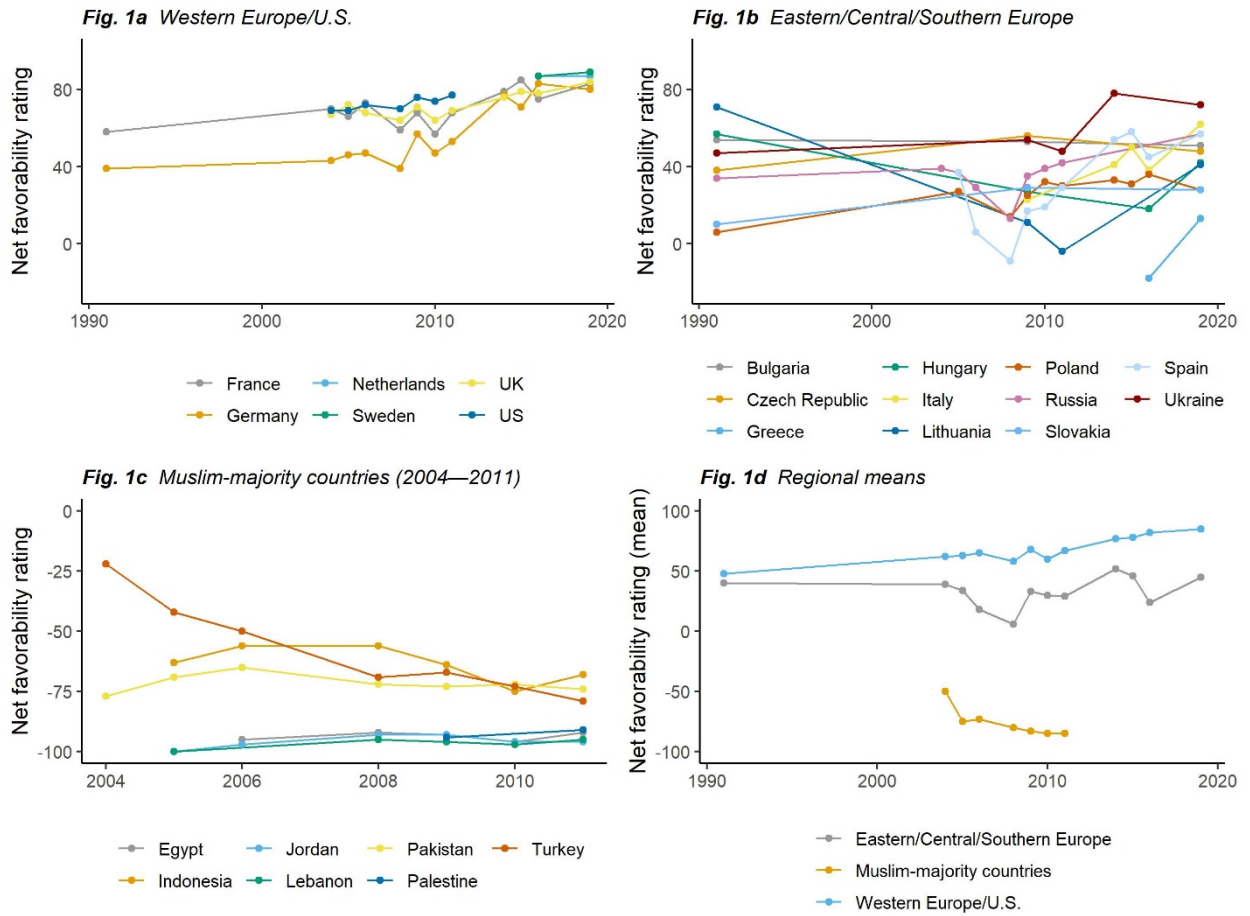


Figure 1: Favorability ratings of Jews (1991–2019). Percent “favorable” minus percent “unfavorable.” Data source: DIMA/Pew Research Center

they would reject Jews as neighbors; in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe rejection rates range from 5 to 40 percent, while in the rest of the world they range from 20 percent (Bangladesh, 2002) to 96 percent (Iraq, 2006). Even though certain countries display large fluctuations (in some cases by as much as 30 percentage points from one survey wave to another), the rates appear stable overall, fluctuating within a limited range over time.

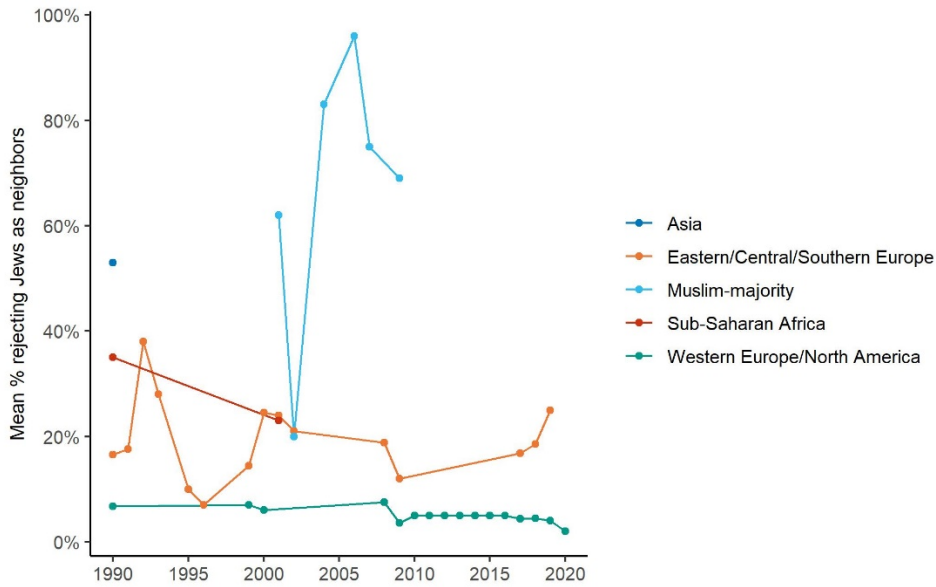


Figure 2: Rejection of Jews as neighbors, regional means (1990–2020). Data source: DIMA/WVS-EVS

The ADL Global 100 surveys, fielded in 2014, 2015, and 2019, do not permit the same longitudinal view as provided by the Pew and W/EVS data. However, the results of the 2014 survey, carried out across 101 countries, provide further confirmation of the overall picture in which levels of antisemitism are lowest in the U.S. and Western Europe, higher in Eastern, Central, and Southern Europe, and considerably higher in Middle Eastern and North African countries.³¹

When considering these three different indicators of antisemitic attitudes, we may wish to know the extent to which they are correlated. The strength of their correlation would tell us something about the validity of these indicators, i.e., whether they seem to be measuring the same thing. Table 2 presents correlation coefficients based on the raw data. Because of missing data due to different surveys being carried out in different years for different countries, the number of paired observations is small (it is zero for the ADL index–Neighbor

³¹See <https://global100.adl.org/map> (accessed 5 March 2022).

rejection case). To maximize the number of paired observations, some of the survey years were grouped, which resulted in higher coefficients (see Table 3). The correlations are quite strong and in the expected directions (i.e., higher ADL scores are associated with lower favorability and higher rates of rejecting Jews as neighbors), which suggests that the indicators are tapping into the same underlying phenomenon.

Table 2: Correlations between three indicators of antisemitic attitudes

	<i>ADL index</i>	<i>Favorability ratings</i>	<i>Neighbor rejection</i>
<i>ADL index</i>		-0.69 (n=18)	NA
<i>Favorability ratings</i>	-0.69 (n=18)		-0.43 (n=13)
<i>Neighbor rejection</i>	NA	-0.43 (n=13)	

Spearman correlations.

Table 3: Correlations between three indicators of antisemitic attitudes (grouped years)

	<i>ADL index</i>	<i>Favorability ratings</i>	<i>Neighbor rejection</i>
<i>ADL index</i>		-0.81 (n=22)	0.94 (n=11)
<i>Favorability ratings</i>	-0.81 (n=22)		-0.58 (n=31)
<i>Neighbor rejection</i>	0.94 (n=11)	-0.58 (n=31)	

Spearman correlations.
Groups created for the years 1990–1991, 2001–2004, 2014–2016, and 2017–2019.

Notably, country-level averages do not reveal within-country variation in antisemitic attitudes, which can be significant. When studying antisemitism in a cross-national perspective, the potential relevance of subgroup antisemitism should not be overlooked. It bears mentioning that, at least for Western Europe and North America, surveys carried out in recent decades have repeatedly confirmed that three subsets of the population tend to stand out. First, those who identify with the far right of the political spectrum typically display elevated levels of antisemitism.³² Second, such attitudes are consistently found to be more prevalent among Muslims than among non-Muslims, and especially among religious fundamentalists.³³

³²Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, “Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1996,” in *Deutsche und Ausländer: Freunde, Fremde oder Feinde?*, ed. Richard Goldstein, Peter Schmidt, and Martina Wasmer (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2000), 416; Nonna Mayer, “Transformations in French Anti-Semitism,” *International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCV)* 1, no. 1 (January 2007): 57; Dominique Reynié, “Anti-Semitic Attitudes in France: New Insights” (AJC Paris/Fondapol, 2014), 17; Christhard Hoffmann and Vibeke Moe, eds., *Attitudes Towards Jews and Muslims in Norway, 2017: Population Survey and Minority Study* (Oslo: Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2017), 96; Staetsky, “Antisemitism in Contemporary Great Britain,” 45; L. Daniel Staetsky, “The Left, the Right, Christians, Muslims and Detractors of Israel: Who Is Antisemitic in Great Britain in the Early 21st Century?” *Contemporary Jewry* 40, no. 2 (June 2020): 259–92.

³³Ruud Koopmans, “Religious Fundamentalism and Hostility Against Out-Groups: A Comparison of Muslims and Christians in Western Europe,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41, no. 1 (January 2015): 33–57; Günther Jikeli, “Antisemitic Attitudes Among Muslims in Europe: A Survey Review” (Institute

Third, anti-Jewish attitudes tend to be more prevalent among those reporting a high degree of hostility toward Israel (these sets clearly overlap to some degree).³⁴

Data on antisemitic incidents

What do we know about the development of antisemitic incidents cross-nationally and over time? The DIMA dataset currently includes incident counts generated by monitoring agencies across 15 countries, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and the US—together representing about 90 percent of the world’s Jewish population outside of Israel.³⁵ DIMA includes counts for two categories of incidents: violence and vandalism. These categories were selected because they have been similarly defined and consistently used over time across monitoring agencies. The violence category involves physical violence against persons as well as attacks on buildings involving arson, firebombing, or explosives; vandalism refers to acts in which property belonging to Jews or Jewish institutions is damaged or desecrated. Other categories of incidents (e.g., harassment) were excluded because they were found to be ambiguously defined and/or inconsistently employed across countries. The longitudinal coverage of the data varies: a few countries have counts going back to the early 1990s, while most have more recent start dates.

Figure 3 displays the counts of incidents in the violence category. The result is a patchy and incomplete picture, but it is as good as it gets given currently available data. There appears to be no uniform pattern over time. For the UK, Germany, and the US, the data indicate increasing trends, while for most other countries, trends appear stable or decreasing.

Using these data as a basis for comparing incident levels between countries is problematic, for two reasons: there may be significant cross-national differences in victims’ propensity to report incidents, and registration/categorization regimes vary among the organizations that monitor, record, and publish reports about incidents. However, longitudinal variation within each country still provides useful information. For instance, these data enable researchers to assess the impact of various factors (e.g., flare-ups in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) on

for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy, May 2015); Hoffmann and Moe, *Attitudes Towards Jews and Muslims in Norway, 2017*; Staetsky, “The Left, the Right, Christians, Muslims and Detractors of Israel.” For US figures showing the same pattern, see JTA, “14 Percent of Americans Hold Anti-Semitic Views, 52 Percent Concerned about Violence Against Jews, ADL Polls Find,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)*, April 6, 2017, perma.cc/5GKQ-JT5F; András Kovács and György Fischer, “Antisemitic Prejudices in Europe” (Budapest: Ipsos SA/Inspira LTD Hungary, 2021). Note that some of these surveys categorized respondents as Muslim based on their country background (e.g., Koopmans), while others categorized them based on self-identification as Muslim.

³⁴Kaplan and Small, “Anti-Israel Sentiment Predicts Anti-Semitism in Europe”; Cohen et al., “Modern Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israeli Attitudes”; Hoffmann and Moe, *Attitudes Towards Jews and Muslims in Norway, 2017*, 11; Staetsky, “Antisemitism in Contemporary Great Britain,” 49–50; Staetsky, “The Left, the Right, Christians, Muslims and Detractors of Israel.”

³⁵See Sergio DellaPergola, “World Jewish Population, 2018,” in *American Jewish Year Book 2018*, ed. A. Dashefsky and I. Sheskin (Cham: Springer, 2019).

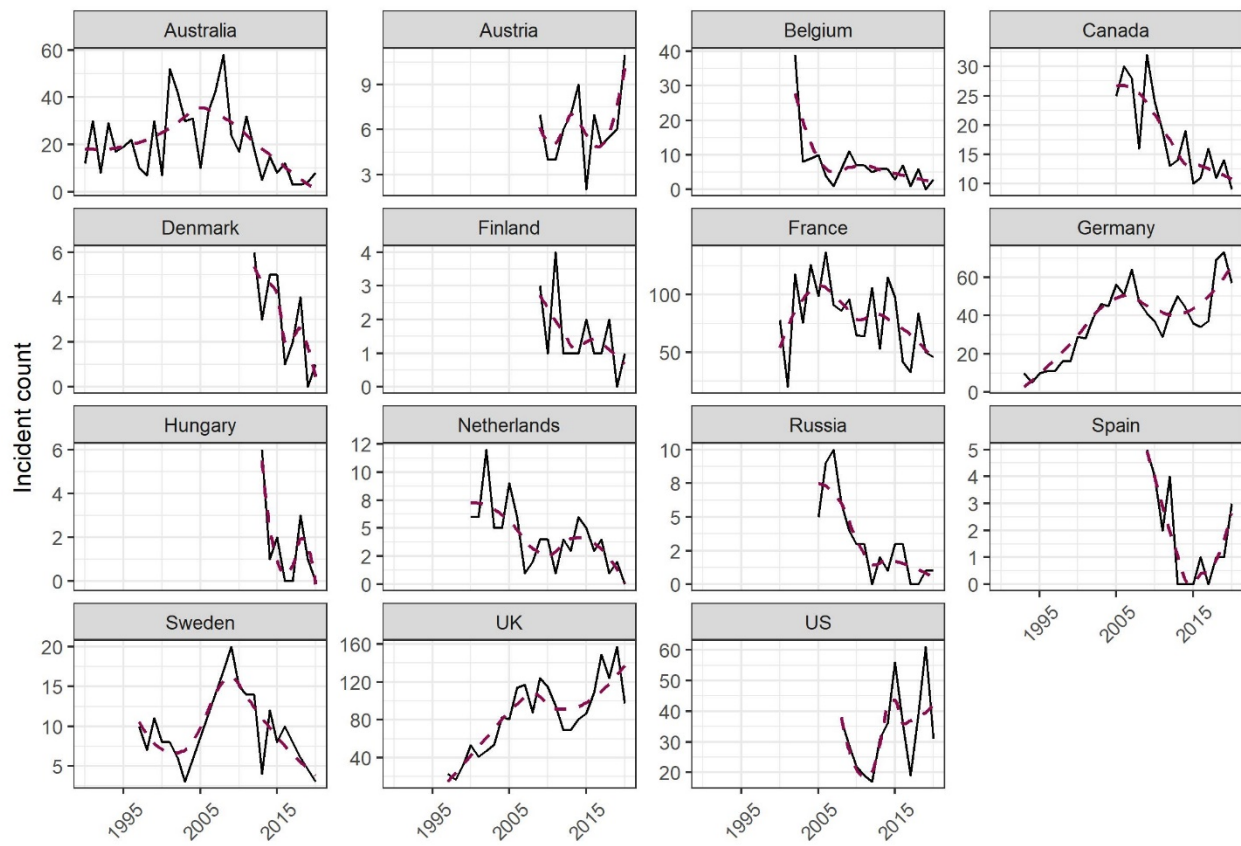


Figure 3: Recorded incidents of antisemitic violence in 15 countries, 1990–2020. Data source: DIMA

the incident counts in various countries by using suitable statistical techniques (such as fixed-effects models).

For every incident, there is one or more perpetrators. Who are they? The 2012 and 2018 FRA surveys of Jewish populations included items asking those who said they had experienced antisemitic violence to characterize the perpetrator(s) of the most serious incident.³⁶ This, of course, is a highly subjective measurement, and victims' perceptions are not necessarily accurate. However, they provide a useful indication of how the landscape looks from the victims' point of view. As the response patterns indicate (Figure 4), no particular group has a monopoly on antisemitic misdeeds. However, some groups stand out. Across the whole European sample, "someone with a Muslim extremist view" was the most frequently selected category of perpetrator, followed by "someone else" who did not fit any of the available categories. "Left-wing" perpetrators were mentioned somewhat more frequently than "right-wing" ones.³⁷

Data on Jews' exposure to antisemitism

The DIMA dataset contains data compiled from the 2012 and 2018 FRA surveys (as well as from a 2018 survey of Russian Jews modeled on the FRA surveys) that measure several indicators of Jews' objective and subjective exposure to antisemitism.³⁸ To reiterate, by *objective exposure* I mean the extent to which Jews are subjected to antisemitic incidents involving violence or harassment in a given time period, and *subjective exposure* refers to the extent to which Jews worry about antisemitism and fear for their safety.

Objective exposure

In the 2012 and 2018 FRA surveys, between 0 and 4 percent of respondents (depending on the country and year) indicated having personally experienced one or more incidents of antisemitic violence in the past year. These small percentages are not very meaningful,

³⁶For 2012, perpetrator perceptions for violent incidents are reported in FRA, "2012 Antisemitism Survey," 47-48. For 2018, these figures can be drawn from the original dataset. See FRA, "Survey on Discrimination and Hate Crime against Jews in the EU 2018" (GESIS Data Archive / ZA7491, 2019).

³⁷Similar patterns were found in a German survey fielded in 2016. See Andreas Zick et al., "Jüdische Perspektiven auf Antisemitismus in Deutschland: Ein Studienbericht für den Expertenrat Antisemitismus" (Bielefeld: University of Bielefeld, 2017), 21. Notably, in the case of Germany, police statistics provide an altogether different picture of the perpetrator landscape in which some 90 percent of recorded incidents are categorized as having a "right-wing" motivation. Yet these figures are based on 1000 to 2000 incidents, most of which are less serious "propaganda misdemeanors" and internet postings, and of which only a few involve physical violence. Moreover, evidence has emerged indicating that the German categorization regime sorts antisemitic incidents as "right-wing" by default even when there is no evidence of such motivation. See Ansgar Graw, "Wenn die Hisbollah in Statistiken als rechtsextrem auftaucht", *Die Welt*, 8 September 2017, perma.cc/2NA9-3EMH.

³⁸The American Jewish Committee (AJC) has carried out surveys of the U.S. Jewish population in recent years, featuring several questions about exposure to antisemitism. However, as few of the AJC survey items are directly comparable to the ones included in the FRA surveys, these data have not been included in the DIMA dataset.

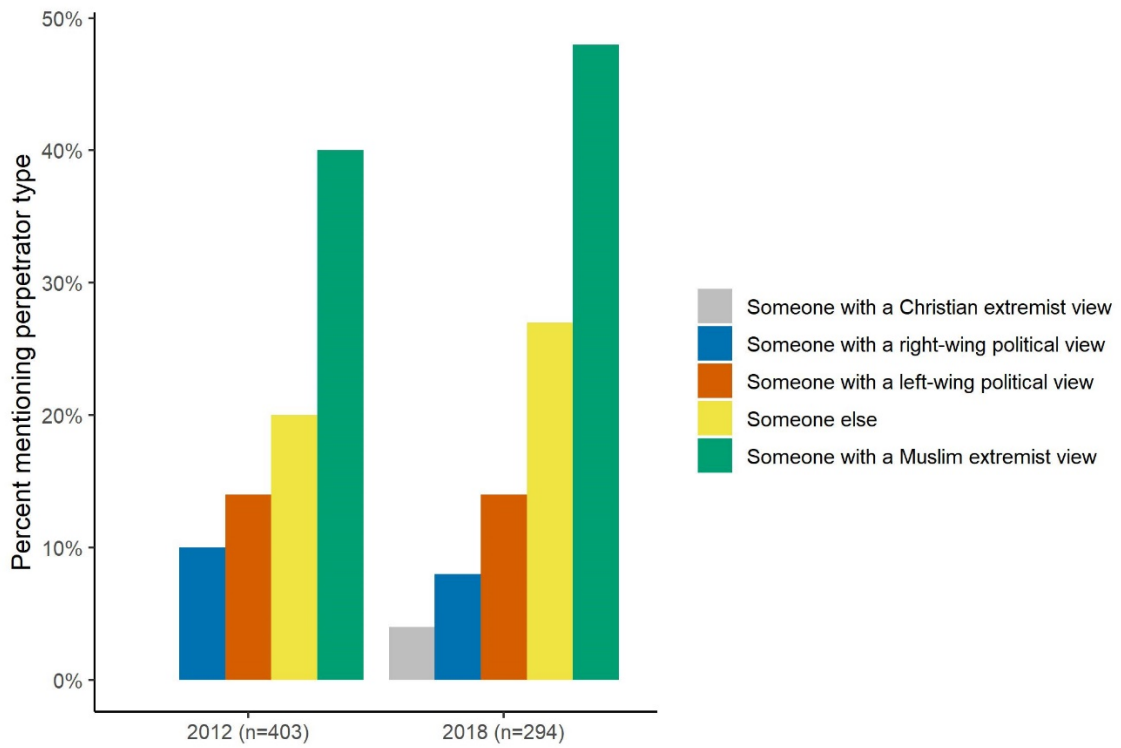


Figure 4: Victims' perceptions of perpetrator(s) in the most serious incident of antisemitic violence in the past 5 years (2012 and 2018). Data source: DIMA/FRA

given margins of error of 2 to 4 percent. Experiences of harassment, however, were far more common. As the data suggest (Figure 5a), about one in four respondents became victims of antisemitic harassment in the year preceding the two surveys. With regard to trends, such incidents appear to have decreased in Hungary from 2012 to 2018, while increasing in Sweden and Germany. A third measure of objective exposure is the share of respondents who have personally witnessed other Jews being verbally harassed and/or physically attacked because of being Jews in the year preceding the survey. As Figure 5b indicates, levels hover around 20 to 30 percent, with no clear overall trend discernible.

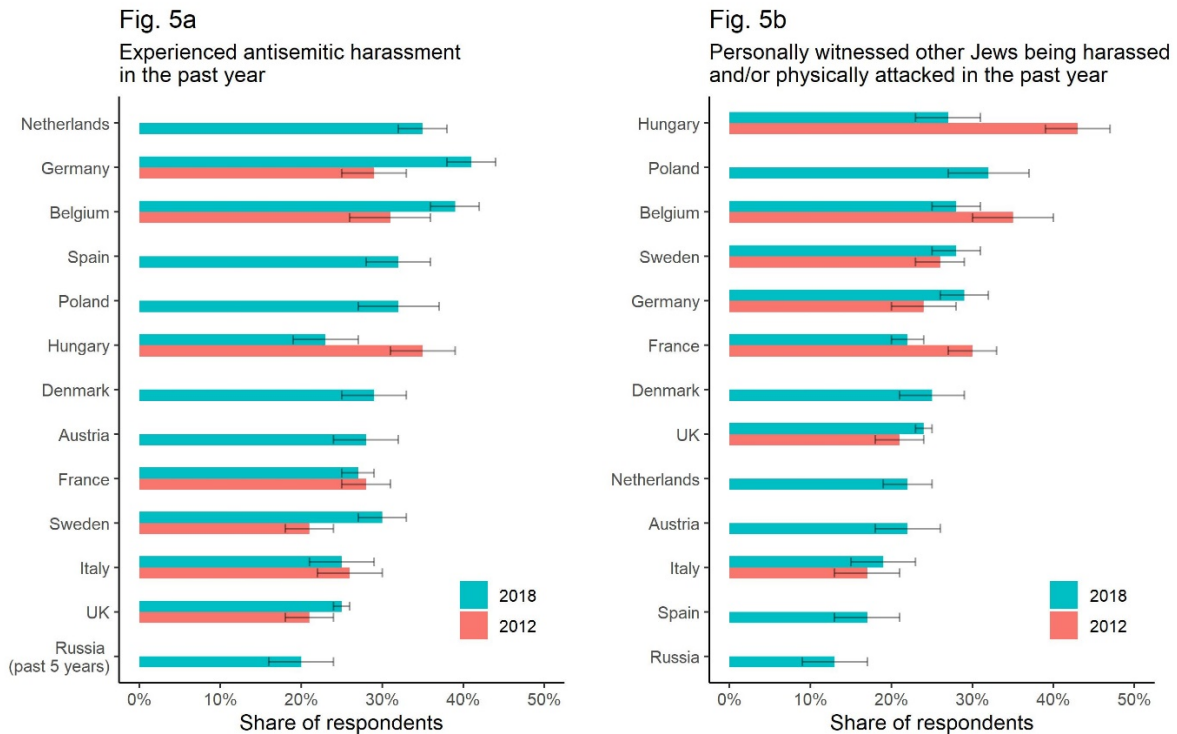


Figure 5: Two indicators of Jews’ objective exposure to antisemitism (2012 and 2018). Data source: DIMA/FRA

How can we interpret the observed overall levels of Jews’ objective exposure to antisemitism? Are these levels high, low, or somewhere in the middle? In order to answer this question, we need a benchmark against which Jews’ levels of exposure to antisemitism can be compared. Such a benchmark can be found in the European Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS), a major FRA survey on migrants and minorities in the European Union.³⁹ The

³⁹When comparing results from the EU-MIDIS survey with those of the antisemitism survey, keep in mind the different methodologies. While the EU-MIDIS survey used randomly selected population samples and face-to-face interviews, the antisemitism surveys relied on convenience samples.

latest wave of EU-MIDIS (2017) surveyed 25,515 respondents from a variety of backgrounds across all 28 EU member states about their experiences of hate crimes and related issues. On average, 24 percent of respondents said they had experienced hate-motivated harassment in the preceding year.⁴⁰ Among Muslims, this figure was 27 percent, the same as for Jews.⁴¹ Three percent of all respondents said they had experienced a hate-motivated physical attack in the past year,⁴² while for Muslims this figure was two percent, again the same as for Jews.⁴³ Judging by these data, European Jews' overall objective exposure to antisemitic harassment and violence appears roughly similar to the experience of Muslims and other ethnic/religious minority groups.

Subjective exposure

To what extent do Jews in Europe worry about antisemitism, and how much do they fear for their safety? In the 2012 and 2018 FRA surveys, an average 47 percent said they worried about being verbally insulted or harassed because of being Jewish in the coming year, while an average 33 percent (2012) and 40 percent (2018) said they worried about becoming a victim of antisemitic violence. Looking at the country breakdowns (Figures 6a and 6b), France, Germany, and Belgium displayed particularly high levels of worry both in 2012 and 2018. Hungary, notably, stands out: the share of Hungarian Jews worrying about becoming a victim of antisemitic harassment dropped from 57 percent in 2012 to 24 percent in 2018, while the share worrying about violence dropped from 33 percent to 13 percent.

A strong measure of subjective exposure is provided in Figure 6c, which indicates that as many as 25 to 30 percent of Jews in Denmark, France, Sweden, Germany, and Belgium say safety concerns prompt them to *never* display signs of their Jewish identity in public. In Hungary, Italy, and the UK, however, just 7 to 10 percent say this. Finally, Figure 6d provides yet another measure, indicating the extent to which European Jews have considered emigrating because of not feeling safe as a Jew in their country. Notably, the share saying they had considered emigrating increased significantly in Germany and Sweden from 2012 to 2018. For subjective exposure, comparable data have not been found for other European minority populations.

Relationship between the dimensions

The relationship between antisemitic attitudes, antisemitic incidents, and Jews' objective and subjective exposure to antisemitism appears less straightforward than what one might

⁴⁰FRA, "Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Main Results" (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2017), 58.

⁴¹FRA, "Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey: Muslims, Selected Findings" (Luxembourg: Publications Offices of the European Union, 2017), 42.

⁴²FRA, "EU-MIDIS II (Main Results)," 64.

⁴³FRA, "EU-MIDIS II (Muslims, Selected Findings)," 46.

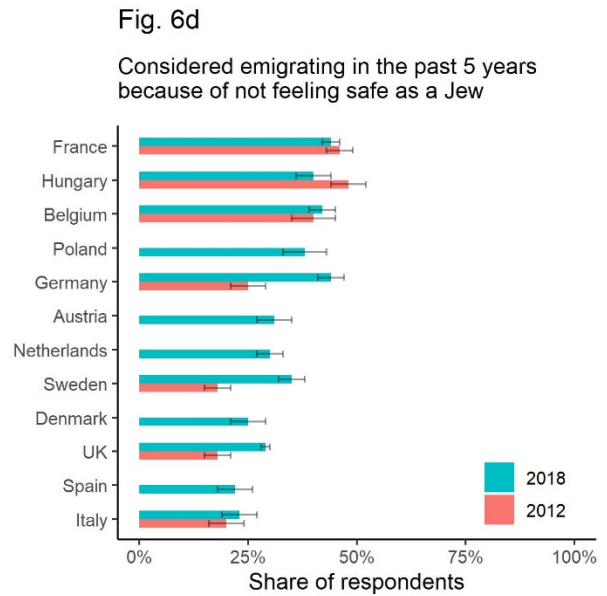
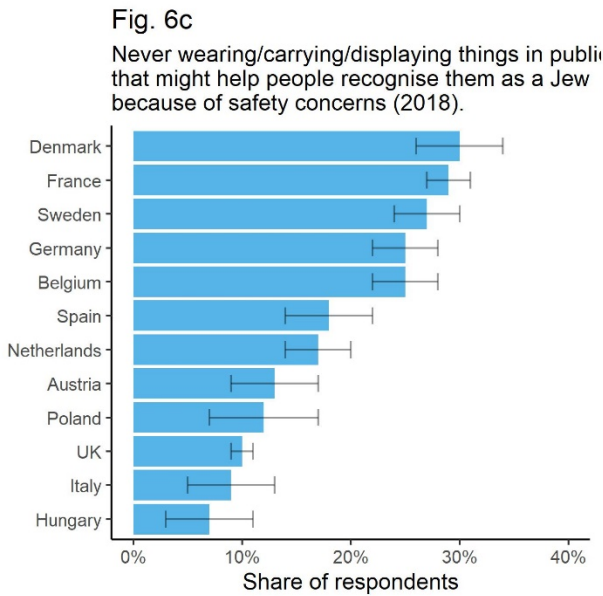
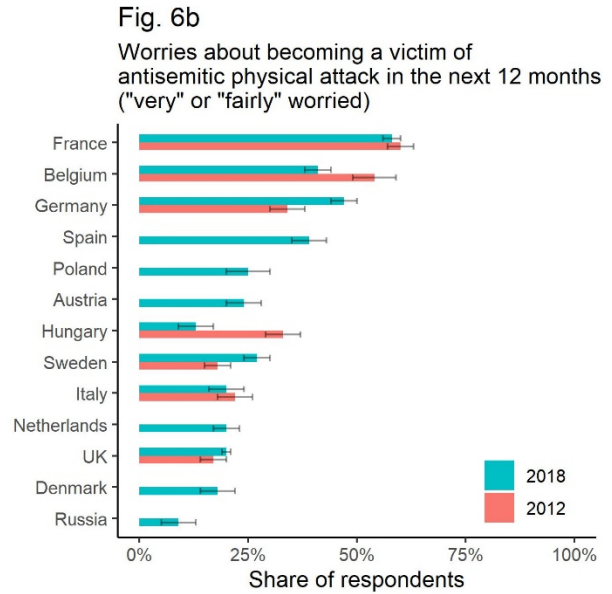
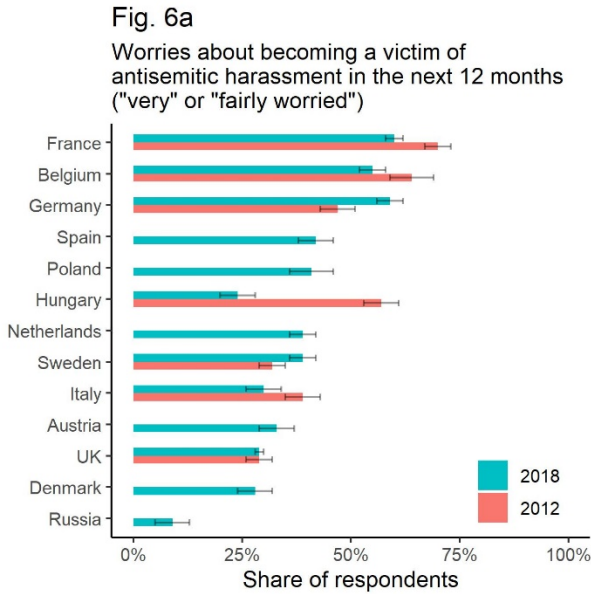


Figure 6: Four indicators of Jews' subjective exposure to antisemitism (2012 and 2018).
 Data source: DIMA/FRA

expect. For instance, France and Germany display some of the highest levels of favorability towards Jews, but also high levels of exposure to antisemitic violence and harassment and the largest share of Jews considering emigration because of safety concerns. On the other hand, a country such as Russia has higher levels of antisemitic attitudes, but few incidents and the lowest levels of objective and subjective exposure to antisemitism. In fact, as shown in Figure 7, across the 12 countries for which DIMA has data there appears to be no statistically significant ($p < .01$) correlation between attitude scores (the ADL index), indices of objective and subjective exposure (the indices were computed by averaging values for the exposure variables), and the average annual number of recorded incidents per 1000 Jews. If anything, there appears to be a *negative* relationship between attitudes and incidents, meaning that countries with higher levels of antisemitic attitudes tend to record fewer violent incidents per 1000 Jews.

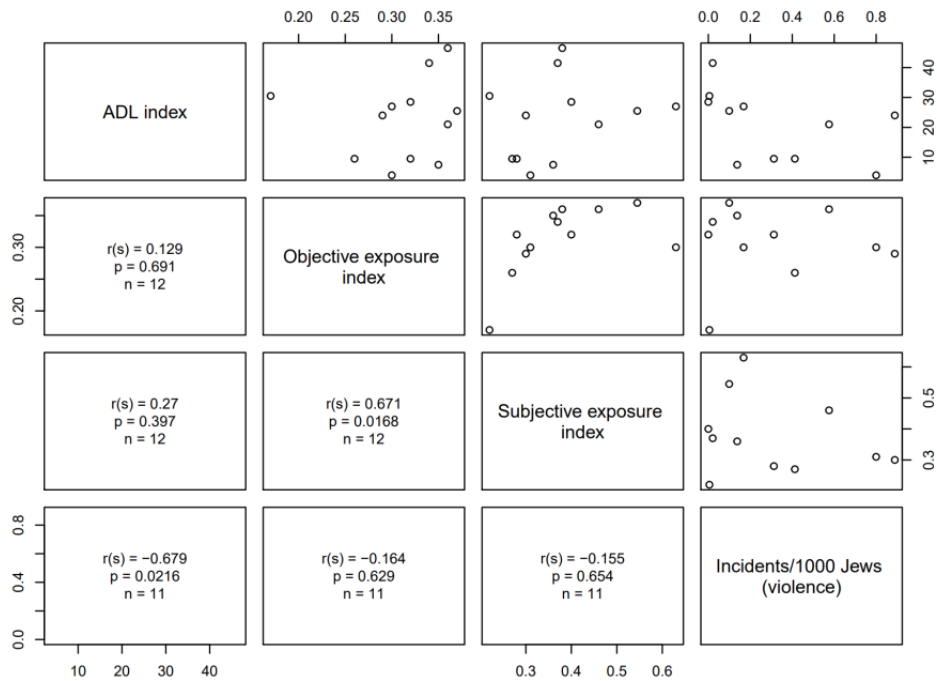


Figure 7: Scatterplots and Spearman correlations between the ADL index, exposure indices, and the average annual count of violent incidents per 1000 Jews. Data source: DIMA

The lack of a positive relationship between attitudes on the one hand and levels of violent incidents and Jews' exposure on the other should not be too surprising. This means that even societies with a broad social consensus against antisemitism may harbor small yet strongly antisemitic sub-groups that can do much harm to Jewish communities and their sense of safety. In countries such as France, Belgium, and Sweden, all of which have low antisemitic attitudes overall, we know that antisemitic violence and harassment often comes

from distinct sub-groups (see Figure 4 above for an overview of perpetrators as perceived by Jewish victims). Perhaps more puzzling at first sight is the lack of a relationship between the number of recorded incidents and exposure levels. Severity is likely to help explain this: the incident counts treat each violent incident as equal to the next, but a single severe and spectacular incident (e.g., the 2012 attack on Jewish schoolchildren in Toulouse) can impact Jews' sense of security much more strongly than a larger number of less severe incidents. The data compiled in the DIMA dataset currently do not reflect such differences.

Accounting for the development of contemporary antisemitism requires understanding each constituent dimension on its own terms. The DIMA dataset is an attempt to advance such an understanding by providing a shared empirical foundation upon which further research can be built. DIMA is not set in stone and will be developed further in the future. For instance, the attitude dimension can be enhanced by including cross-national indicators of Israel-related antisemitism.⁴⁴ Moreover, the dimension of cultural imagery is currently unaccounted for. As research on the cultural cartography of antisemitism advances, it will likely become possible to develop indicators and collect data measuring this dimension in a cross-national and longitudinal perspective.

Towards understanding variation: Hypotheses and unresolved questions

The patterns of variation emerging from the DIMA dataset give rise to a set of overarching questions: Why are antisemitic attitudes part of majority opinion in some countries but rare in others? How can we explain the dynamics of antisemitic incidents? Why do Jews in some countries report greater levels of objective and subjective exposure to antisemitism than in others? Systematically addressing such questions is a fundamental task for research on contemporary antisemitism to which too little attention has been devoted. In the following I indicate some directions for further work in this vein, suggesting hypotheses and unresolved questions derived from the observations made in the previous section and informed by current research on antisemitism and prejudice in general.

Diverging attitudes

As shown above, antisemitic attitudes vary strongly between countries. A research agenda aiming to explain this variation should consider the impact of at least four factors: anti-racism norms, hostility to Israel and Zionism, general intolerance of outgroups, and religion.

⁴⁴For recent examples of how Israel-derived antisemitism can be measured, see Kovács and Fischer, "Antisemitic Prejudices in Europe," 49 and Allington, Hirsh, and Katz, "The Generalised Antisemitism (GeAs) Scale."

A strong anti-racism norm has existed for decades in Western societies and has likely grown stronger over time.⁴⁵ This does not mean that racial/ethnic bias has disappeared, but openly expressing such biases has become socially discouraged, and this likely explains at least part of the decline over time in antisemitic attitudes as expressed in survey responses in Western countries (see Figures 1 and 2 above). Conversely, the lack (or relative weakness) of such a norm in other parts of the world may help explain more widespread antisemitic opinion. Moreover, it is possible that antisemitic sentiment is more widespread in Western countries than what conventional survey questions reveal. This could be tested by running survey experiments designed to elicit socially undesirable opinions (i.e., antisemitic ones) that people would not share when questioned directly.⁴⁶

Survey experiments could also be designed to test the hypothesis that antisemitic sentiment in the West today often takes the shape not of classical anti-Jewish beliefs but rather of what Lars Dencik and Karl Marosi have termed “Israel-derived antisemitism”,⁴⁷ meaning that it is expressed under the more socially acceptable cover of hostility to Israel and Zionism. Notably, recent research has proposed a new scale for measuring anti-Zionist antisemitism,⁴⁸ which might be a useful tool for exploring such a hypothesis empirically.

Outgroup intolerance is another important factor that needs to be accounted for. In their classical study of authoritarianism, Adorno and colleagues found that antisemitism tended to go hand in hand with general outgroup intolerance.⁴⁹ This relationship has been confirmed repeatedly by evidence from survey research in multiple countries.⁵⁰ Thus, we should expect

⁴⁵Elisabeth Ivarsflaten, Scott Blinder, and Robert Ford, “The Anti-Racism Norm in Western European Immigration Politics: Why we Need to Consider it and How to Measure it,” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 20, no. 4 (2010): 421–45; Scott Blinder, Robert Ford, and Elisabeth Ivarsflaten, “The Better Angels of Our Nature: How the Antiprejudice Norm Affects Policy and Party Preferences in Great Britain and Germany,” *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 4 (2013): 841–57.

⁴⁶See Heiko Beyer and Ulf Liebe, “Three Experimental Approaches to Measure the Social Context Dependence of Prejudice Communication and Discriminatory Behavior,” *Social Science Research* 49 (2015): 343–55; Heiko Beyer and Ulf Liebe, “Antisemitismus heute: Zur Messung aktueller Erscheinungsformen von Judenfeindlichkeit mithilfe des faktoriellen Surveys,” *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 42, no. 3 (2013): 186–200.

⁴⁷Lars Dencik and Karl Marosi, “Different Antisemitisms: On Three Distinct Forms of Antisemitism in Contemporary Europe - With a Special Focus on Sweden” (Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, 2016).

⁴⁸See Daniel Allington, David Hirsh, and Louise Katz, “The Generalised Antisemitism (GeAs) Scale: A Questionnaire Instrument for Measuring Antisemitism as Expressed in Relation Both to Jews and to Israel,” *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism* 5, no. 1 (2021).

⁴⁹T. W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Norton, 1950).

⁵⁰E.g., Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb, “Anti-Semitism in the Late 1990s,” in *Germans or Foreigners? Attitudes Toward Ethnic Minorities in Post-Reunification Germany*, ed. Richard Alba, Peter Schmidt, and Martina Wasmer, Europe in Transition: The NYU European Studies Series (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 163–86; Andreas Zick et al., “The Syndrome of Group-Focused Enmity: The Interrelation of Prejudices Tested with Multiple Cross-Sectional and Panel Data,” *Journal of Social Issues* 64, no. 2 (2008): 363–83; Peter Nannestad, “Frø Af Ugræs? Antijødiske Holdninger i Fem Ikke-Vestlige Innvandregrupper i Danmark,” in *Danmark Og de Fremmede: Om Mødet Med Den Arabisk-Muslimske Verden*, ed. Tonny B. Knudsen, Jørgen E. Pedersen, and Georg Sørensen (Århus: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2009), 43–61; Vibeke Moe, ed., *Antisemitism in Norway? The Attitudes of the Norwegian Population Towards Jews and Other Minorities* (Oslo: Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities, 2012); Hoffmann and Moe, *Attitudes Towards Jews and Muslims in Norway, 2017*.

antisemitic attitudes to be more prevalent in countries that display higher levels of general outgroup intolerance, something that may be investigated using W/EVS data.

Religion also appears to matter.⁵¹ The survey data compiled in the DIMA dataset demonstrate a wide attitude gap between Muslim-majority countries and the rest, and a less pronounced but still clear difference between mainly Protestant nations and mainly Catholic or Orthodox ones. However, it is not clear to what extent Islamic/Catholic/Orthodox beliefs in and of themselves generate antisemitism, or whether it has more to do with a fundamentalist *style* of belief. Previous research has found a strong link between religious fundamentalism (among both Christians and Muslims) and outgroup intolerance on the individual level,⁵² but other studies have found that the content of belief rather than the style is the prime mover.⁵³ Future research may employ W/EVS survey items that tap into fundamentalism to explore this question further in a cross-national context.

Ebb and flow of antisemitic incidents

When considering the data on antisemitic incidents, the key question is how to explain fluctuations over time. Peaks in recorded incidents have commonly been explained with reference to flare-ups in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It seems clear that events in the Middle East have sometimes functioned as “trigger events” influencing the levels of antisemitic incidents in Europe.⁵⁴ Yet the connection between events in the Middle East and antisemitic violence in Europe has not always been clear.⁵⁵ In other cases, major antisemitic attacks in Europe appear to have had a similar trigger effect, suggesting a possible “social contagion of violence” mechanism.⁵⁶

Few attempts have been made at closer analysis of the ebb and flow of incidents within countries, but two recent studies are worth mentioning. First, Ayal Feinberg sought to explain variation in antisemitic incidents in the United States as a result of four mechanisms (target group concentration, target group visibility, trigger events, and hate group quantity).⁵⁷ Second, Matteo Vergani and colleagues built a unique incident database using data from an Australian monitoring organization to analyze the association between different types of

⁵¹Recent research has discussed the persistence of religious factors in motivating anti-Jewish prejudice. See Günther Jikeli, ed., *The Return of Religious Antisemitism* (Basel: MDPI, 2021).

⁵²Koopmans, “Religious Fundamentalism and Hostility Against Out-Groups.”

⁵³Mark J. Brandt and Daryl R. Van Tongeren, “People both high and low on religious fundamentalism are prejudiced toward dissimilar groups,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 112, no. 1 (2017): 76–97.

⁵⁴CST, “Antisemitic Incidents: Report 2017” (Community Security Trust, 2018), 4.

⁵⁵Jacobs et al., “The Impact of the Conflict in Gaza on Antisemitism in Belgium.”

⁵⁶Sarah Leduc, “France Sees ‘Shocking Surge’ in Anti-Semitic Violence,” *France 24*, June 6, 2012, perma.cc/E2N4-Z2BJ; Jeffrey Fagan, Deanna L. Wilkinson, and Garth Davies, “Social Contagion of Violence,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Violent Behavior and Aggression* (New York, NY, US: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 688–723.

⁵⁷Feinberg, “Explaining Ethnoreligious Minority Targeting.”

trigger mechanisms and different types of incidents.⁵⁸ Future research should explore the applicability of these frameworks in a cross-national context, for which the incident data compiled in the DIMA dataset may serve as a useful point of departure.

Varying degrees of exposure to antisemitism

In terms of objective and subjective exposure to antisemitism among European Jews, overall levels were largely similar in 2012 and 2018. However, the exploration of these data also revealed three interesting patterns of variation that merit closer study.

First, significantly fewer Hungarian respondents said they had experienced antisemitic harassment in 2018 compared to 2012. An even larger reduction occurred in the share of Hungarian respondents worrying about being attacked verbally or physically because of being Jews. This appears somewhat puzzling given the widespread concern over authoritarian developments and accusations of state-sponsored antisemitism in Hungary.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the share of respondents who said they had considered emigrating because of safety concerns remained substantial (at 40 percent in 2018). Qualitative work is required to move beyond these numbers and study the development closer in the context of Jews' experiences and changes in Hungarian society over the past decade.

A second interesting pattern is the sharp increase from 2012 to 2018 in the share of German and Swedish respondents who said they had considered emigrating because of not feeling safe as a Jew (by 17 and 19 percentage points). The share indicating they had experienced antisemitic harassment in the past year also increased in both countries (by 12 and 9 percentage points). What explains these changes? One possible factor is the impact of the so-called migration crisis in 2015. Germany and Sweden both received a large number of asylum seekers, largely from Middle Eastern countries where antisemitic attitudes are widespread, leading to concerns in the German public over "imported antisemitism."⁶⁰ Non-representative and qualitative studies suggest that antisemitism was indeed widespread among immigrants arriving in Germany in 2015,⁶¹ and a 2017 survey among German Jews

⁵⁸Vergani et al., "When and How Does Anti-Semitism Occur?"

⁵⁹Marton Dunai, "Anti-Semitism Taboo Under Threat in Hungary," *Reuters*, May 21, 2014, perma.cc/NCX4-6GCG; BBC, "Hungary Vilifies Financier Soros with Crude Poster Campaign," *BBC News*, July 10, 2017, perma.cc/7D2P-SXEV; Péter Krekó and Zsolt Enyedi, "Explaining Eastern Europe: Orbán's Laboratory of Illiberalism," *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 3 (2018): 39–51; Ivan Kalmar, "Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism: The Case of Hungary and the 'Soros Plot'," *Patterns of Prejudice* 54, no. 1-2 (March 2020): 182–98.

⁶⁰Mathias Berek, "Importierter Antisemitismus? Zum Zusammenhang von Migration, Islam und Antisemitismus in Deutschland," *Jahrbuch Für Antisemitismusforschung*, no. 26 (2017): 327–60; Andreas Schnadwinkel, "Präsident Des Zentralrats Der Juden in Deutschland Warnt Vor Importiertem Antisemitismus," *Westfalen-Blatt*, January 26, 2018, perma.cc/ET9G-F3YP.

⁶¹Sonja Haug et al., *Asylsuchende in Bayern: eine quantitative und qualitative Studie* (Munich: Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, 2017), 68; Günther Jikeli, "Einstellungen von Geflüchteten aus Syrien und dem Irak zu Integration, Identität, Juden und Shoah" (Berlin: American Jewish Committee Berlin, 2017); Sina Arnold and Jana König, "'One Million Antisemites?' Attitudes toward Jews, the Holocaust, and Israel: An

found that 70 percent of the respondents feared a rise in antisemitism as a result of the influx of refugees.⁶² At the same time, however, another study found no clear connection between the 2015 spike in immigration and levels of recorded antisemitic incidents in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK.⁶³ In the case of Sweden, the 2017 firebombing of a Gothenburg synagogue carried out by recent immigrants from Syria and Palestine may have increased perceptions among Swedish Jews of a new antisemitic threat.⁶⁴ Another likely source of increased exposure in both countries is the rise in extreme-right activism following the surge of asylum seekers. Such activism has directly targeted Jews on several occasions, even leading to the shutting down of a Jewish community center in northern Sweden.⁶⁵ In any case, the developments in Germany and Sweden call for further study.

A third pattern worth highlighting is the significant cross-national differences in the share of 2018 respondents who indicated that safety concerns prompted them to *never* display signs of their Jewish identity in public, ranging from 7-10 percent in Hungary, Italy, and the UK to 25-30 percent in Denmark, France, Sweden, Germany, and Belgium. The causes of these discrepancies should be investigated in more depth.

Conclusion: a new research agenda

In this article I have proposed a new conceptual and empirical framework for analyzing contemporary antisemitism as a multidimensional phenomenon that varies over time and across countries. The framework conceptualizes antisemitism as consisting of four core dimensions—attitudes, incidents, cultural imagery, and Jews’ exposure—and specifies variables and empirical indicators for studying them. To complement this framework, I have introduced DIMA, a new dataset that compiles longitudinal and cross-national data from a range of publicly available sources pertaining to attitudes, incidents, and exposure. Finally, based on these data I have described some key patterns of variation and suggested several hypotheses and open questions worth exploring in future research. The purpose of these contributions is not just to enable more fine-grained descriptions of how antisemitism is developing. More fundamentally, it is to lay the conceptual and empirical foundation for

Anthropological Study of Refugees in Contemporary Germany,” *Antisemitism Studies* 3, no. 1 (2019): 4–44. For an Austrian report with similar results, see Ednan Aslan, “Religiöse Und Ethnische Orientierungen von Muslimischen Flüchtlingen in Graz” (Vienna: University of Vienna/Institute for Islamic-Theological Studies, 2017).

⁶²Zick et al., “Jüdische Perspektiven auf Antisemitismus in Deutschland.”

⁶³David Feldman, *Antisemitism and Immigration in Western Europe Today: Is There a Connection? : Findings and Recommendations from a Five-Nation Study* (London: Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism, 2018).

⁶⁴Anders Abrahamsson, “Domen efter attacken mot synagogan,” *GP.se*, June 25, 2018, perma.cc/R3FG-V9WR.

⁶⁵BBC, “Neo-Nazi Threats Force Jewish Group in Sweden to Close,” *BBC News*, April 3, 2017, perma.cc/Q2TS-46MN; Deutsche Welle, “Jewish Restaurant Attacked During Chemnitz Protests,” *Deutsche Welle*, September 8, 2018, p.dw.com/p/34Woe.

a new and theoretically more ambitious research agenda in the study of contemporary antisemitism.

As a multidisciplinary endeavour with branches extending in different directions and a predominance of particularistic frameworks, antisemitism research has been noted for its “bewildering plethora” of theses and explanations.⁶⁶ We lack efforts to develop and integrate theory on a more general level. Hence, the aim of a new research agenda should be to develop theory, i.e., to generate and systematically test hypotheses about why the various dimensions of contemporary antisemitism vary over time and across countries, and to integrate these hypotheses into a larger explanatory framework. Ideally, such hypothesis testing should involve collaborative efforts bringing together quantitative and qualitative scholars, from the social sciences as well as the humanities.

When thinking about theory development in the context of contemporary antisemitism, the concept of *middle-range theory* is a useful guide. As conceived by Robert K. Merton, middle-range theory aims to develop explanatory frameworks that are neither too abstract and universalist (as in “grand theory”) nor too concrete and particularistic, but rather deal with a limited range of phenomena appearing across multiple contexts within a given timeframe.⁶⁷ A key purpose of middle-range theorizing, as Merton put it, is to pull together disparate avenues of inquiry, to “consolidate otherwise segregated hypotheses and empirical uniformities.”⁶⁸ In a field such as antisemitism studies, characterized by a multiplicity of approaches that do not always speak to each other, middle-range theorizing offers a way to integrate hypotheses and insights from various sub-fields and disciplines.

Finally, beyond the field of antisemitism studies, the four-dimensional framework proposed here could be fruitfully applied in the study of other types of prejudice. Any form of group-based hostility, be it racism, islamophobia, or prejudice towards sexual and gender minorities, will involve attitudes towards that group, incidents targeting members of the group, cultural imagery, and objective/subjective exposure to such prejudice on the part of the group’s members. For scholars and monitoring agencies interested in empirically and comprehensively mapping the terrain of a given form of prejudice over time and space, the framework can serve as a useful roadmap for developing measures, collecting data, and analyzing patterns and trends for each dimension as well as the interplay between them.

⁶⁶Christoph Nonn, *Antisemitismus* (Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges 2008), 16.

⁶⁷Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 39-72.

⁶⁸Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 334.