The Relationship between Populist Attitudes and Antisemitism

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1. Introduction

Are populist preferences associated with antisemitic attitudes? Despite the bourgeoning research on populism – especially their right-wing manifestations – very few studies examine the relationship between antisemitism and populist attitudes. This is a surprising gap because many of the characteristics typically associated with populist orientations – e.g., far-right ideology, anti-immigration, and economic discontents – are also correlated with antisemitic attitudes. For example, individuals with lower education and economic fears disproportionately endorse antisemitic views (Bergmann 1988; Kurthen et al. 1997); the very same demographic traits often correlate with populist orientations (Akkerman et al. 2017; Canovan 1999; Mudde 2004; Schedler 1996). Moreover, Schmitt-Beck's (2017) authoritative analysis of the surging electoral support for the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), found it was motivated early on by the Euro crisis and the economy but transitioned to xenophobia and anti-immigration attitudes – traits that also underlie antisemitic attitudes. Thus, we argue that it is hardly a coincidence that populist parties – especially right-wing ones – and antisemitic parties tend to fish in the same pool of voters. Despite this general convergence in party type and voter pool, however, we could not find a single empirical study that examines the connection between populism and antisemitism in Germany or elsewhere. This chapter begins to fill this gap.

Just how these two orientations are related in Germany is an important question, given the horrific legacy of antisemitism and the government's persistent efforts to eradicate it in the postwar era. With the recent entry of the AfD, a right-wing newcomer to Germany's party system (Schmitt-Beck 2017), the question of whether populism is connected to antisemitism in Germany takes on increased urgency. The Pew Research Center reports that hate crimes against Jews, attacks on synagogues, and skepticism about the Holocaust are on the increase in Germany and elsewhere in Europe and

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the Americas.[1] To illustrate, the 2022 Documenta affair, where a group of artists mostly from the Global South exhibited crass, antisemitic pictures of Jews, suggests that even officials in charge of one of the "art world's most important events"[2] may be partially responsible for normalizing antisemitic sentiments. The connection between antisemitism and populism – if it exists – must be documented and understood.

In this chapter, with the aid of a representative March 2020 German Ipsos survey, we first examine the degree to which partisans in Germany, who feel close to either the AfD or one of six other political parties, express acceptance of antisemitism, measured with a standard battery of survey questions. To anticipate the paper's findings, we first note that the level of support for antisemitism is unquestionably and unsurprisingly highest among AfD voters. However, it is also not universally rejected by other, more mainstream partisan groups. Given these unsettling findings, we next investigate: to what degree is endorsement of antisemitic beliefs due to Germans' support for populist attitudes?

To study this question, we interviewed about 2,760 respondents in the Ipsos survey (described in appendix table A1), with equal numbers of the sample recruited from residents in the former East and West Germany to examine potential East-West differences in the relationship between populism and antisemitism. Our findings are striking. Populism accounts for the largest share of variance in antisemitism and its differential support among partisan groups. But why? We test three very different types of explanations: demographic characteristics (e.g., education, income), social and political orientations and, finally, economic and performance assessments. Crucially, the analyses show that the connection between populism and antisemitism goes beyond common explanations based on demographic and socio-political views as the link remains strong *after* we control for common predictors of both concepts, including individuals' partisanship, ideology, and authoritarian predispositions. We therefore speculate, in a final section, why citizens with populist preferences display a high degree of antisemitism regardless of other factors, paying close attention to the way Germany's established elites have attempted to tamp down antisemitic attitudes in postwar decades – the very same elites that populists denounce.

1 https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/03/17/anti-jewish-harassment-occurred-in-94-countries-in-2020-up-from-earlier-years/ft_23-03-17_harassment-jewish-people_01/.

2 New York Times "Documenta Takes Down Art After Antisemitism Accusations," June 21, 2022 (accessed July 1, 2022).

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Our study has important implications for the populism and antisemitism literatures because it sheds light on the democratic character of the populist phenomenon, and it illuminates how populism may help to revitalize antisemitic orientations. To be sure, populist parties can play a beneficial role in the democratic process (Canovan 1999; Mudde 2004) because they address topics mainstream parties neglect. Others are more skeptical, however, viewing populists as undemocratic sui generis (Caramani/Manucci 2019; Urbinati 2019; Müller 2016) because they derive much of their popularity from the same forces as Europe's fascist past. Resolution of this controversy is beyond the scope of our chapter. But our findings underscore concerns about the undemocratic character of populist citizens who tend to hold stereotypes about Jews. Thus, any beneficial by-product of populism comes with a steep cost of mass appeals – direct, indirect or subliminal – to antisemitism, an appeal that extends to supporters of left-wing as well as right-wing parties.

To show how we arrived at these conclusions, and to theorize why the association exists, we begin by discussing the conceptual reasons for examining the relationship between populism and antisemitism, after which we present the analyses. We then discuss why further research is needed as well as the broader implications of our study. Importantly, we make no assumption about populism causing antisemitism, or vice versa. It is the disturbingly large association between the two orientations that concerns us here. As we will discuss in the conclusion, we will speculate about the reasons for this linkage which will have to be investigated further in future research.

2. The Relationship between Antisemitism and Populism

Prior research on populism and antisemitism points to the overlap of their cultural foundations. To show this, we consider each concept in turn.

2.1 Understanding Populism

Populism is typically defined as a "thin ideology" (Mudde 2004) where anti-establishment and anti-elite orientations coincide with an emphasis on the greater articulation of the "people's" interests. Populist parties, such as the National Rally – previously Front National – in France (Mayer

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2018), the PVV in the Netherlands (Rooduijn/Akkerman 2017), and the AfD in Germany (Schmitt-Beck 2017; Arzheimer/Berning 2019) have used the populist frame to attract substantial segments of voters who often share the anti-establishment message of these parties. Beyond the anti-party and anti-establishment character, recent research in Europe and the Americas consistently points to cultural orientations as the major reason why we observe the growing support for these leaders, parties and movements in the last decades – a pattern of explanations that bears a remarkable resemblance to models of antisemitism (more on this below). In the U.S., for example, Mutz (2018a, 2018b) demonstrates in detailed and comprehensive analyses that Donald Trump's election to the presidency in 2016 was clearly due to the cultural, not the economic, considerations of his supporters. Likewise, Stenner and Haidt (2018) found that support for Trump in the U.S. and the National Rally in France were based, in large part, on authoritarian attitudes, with economic concerns carrying relatively little weight. Similarly, in Europe, economic considerations only have a moderate influence on voters' reasons for supporting populist parties, whereas cultural issues – like objections to immigration or national-ethnic considerations – typically raise individuals' support for these parties (Ivarsflaten 2008; Pardos-Prado 2015; Rooduijn 2018). This has become perhaps most visible in the Brexit referendum where post-referendum studies point to cultural issues as the primary reason why the referendum succeeded (Evans/Mellon 2019; Hobolt 2016) whereas, again, economic factors played a secondary role. In Germany, Schmitt-Beck's (2017: 125) meticulous analysis of the rise of support for the right-wing populist party, the AfD, in Germany's 2013 and 2014 elections, shows that initially the AfD was a single-issue party "criticizing the ... federal government ... on the Euro crisis", with economic and conservative market ideology driving its support. The transformation in the AfD's rhetoric and support base to a right-wing xenophobic party motivated by immigration issues by 2017 was first noted by Schmitt-Beck and has been fully documented by more recent studies. For example, Arzheimer and Berning (2019: 1-2) conclude that "[t]he AfD's support now resembles the image of European radical right voters" motivated by the party's "focus on immigration, refugees, and Islam as their new core issues."

All told, most analyses for Germany and the broader comparative context point to cultural predispositions as the chief reason populist parties gained enough support to win elections in the 2014 election to the European parliament in 2014 and thereafter. Anti-immigration attitudes are particularly important in these studies as well as xenophobic nationalism, along with

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authoritarian predispositions. In contrast, economic considerations play a distinctly secondary role in explaining the rise of populist attitudes. While this brief summary cannot do justice to the nuances of populism, it does point to the emergence of right-wing populism and its distinctly cultural roots in Germany as well as other European countries.

2.2 Understanding Antisemitism

While antisemitism can be defined and measured in a variety of ways, we adopt a minimalist definition appropriate for survey research as *the acceptance of negative stereotypes and attitudes toward Jews as a group of people*, leaving to others the important topics of hate crimes, hate speech and other expressions of antisemitism (e.g., Waxman et al 2022). Defining antisemitism in this way, we note there has been a steady supply of antisemitic attitudes in Germany since scientific public opinion polls were employed after the second World War until the present. Silberman and Sallen (1976: 720) concluded their 1973-1975 West German study by noting that about "15 to 20% hold well-developed antisemitic prejudices." But they also argued that antisemitism exists "latently" for an additional 30 percent. This latent group with ambivalent attitudes about Jews is crucially important because many of these individuals could be mobilized by political elites to greater antisemitism under the right conditions. Thus, by the mid-1970s, nearly three decades after the end of the second World War, the authors concluded that almost 50 percent of the West German public could be loosely characterized as antisemitic (see also Bergmann 1988; Kurthen et al. 1997: 212). Remarkably, a recent study by Decker et al. (2018: 212) reaches similar conclusions: "10% [of the German public] in the recent authoritarianism study explicitly support antisemitic statements; and the proportion increases to over 50% when latent agreement is included." Furthermore, the American Jewish Committee, based on a 2022 Allensbach survey, also asserts that nearly one fifth of the German public believes that Jews have too much influence in the economy (American Jewish Congress 2022: 15). Although studies provide a range of estimates of the level of antisemitism among the German public, they tend to conclude that up to 50 percent of the German public endorses some negative stereotypes of Jews.

Who supports antisemitic views? Ample research in Germany and elsewhere reveals that the profile of antisemites resembles that of right-wing authoritarians: less educated men are more likely to endorse antisemitism;

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the economically vulnerable are more susceptible to it; and authoritarian predispositions increase the odds of endorsing antisemitic attitudes (Bergmann 1988; Kurthen et al. 1997; Silberman 1976). This literature echoes the findings from Adorno et al.'s (1950) seminal study, *The Authoritarian Personality,* which more than any other study is identified with the exploration of the dispositional roots of antisemitism. Adorno and his collaborators viewed antisemitism as part of an expansive form of ethnocentrism rooted in the "fascist" personality, a disposition they knew only too well as Jews who fled the Frankfurt School to the U.S. to escape Hitler and the Nazis.

The original study, along with the F ("fascist")-scale used to measure authoritarianism and its psychoanalytic roots, were eventually buried in an avalanche of criticism. At the same time, however, social scientists have largely validated Adorno et al.'s original thesis that, when appropriately measured, authoritarians express prejudice, intolerance and hostility toward a range of outgroups with widely varying characteristics – Jews, Blacks, Asians, Latinos, Muslims, immigrants and LGBTQ (Stenner 2003). As conceptualized by Feldman and Stenner (1997) and Hetherington and Weiler (2009; 2018), authoritarianism is defined by a need to maintain order and conformity. Because authoritarians tend to view the world in more concrete, black and white terms, they adopt a more rigid separation of "us" versus "them" and an aggressive intolerance toward groups that they view as a threat to their normative order. In short, despite the limitations of the original study, the basic insight of Adorno that authoritarianism and ethnocentrism lead to antisemitism and other forms of intolerance has found consistent empirical support over the years (e.g., Sniderman/Piazza 1993.).

In addition to authoritarianism, scholars have identified several other orientations that give rise to exclusionary views of social groups in Europe and the Americas, and by extension, antisemitism. Narrow, ethnocultural views of what constitutes "true" nationals, for example, draw an exclusionary boundary between "us," the dominant ethnic ingroup, and "them," ethnic and religious minorities not considered true nationals (e.g., Muslims, immigrants, Blacks and Jews) (e.g., Citrin/Wright 2009; Pehrson et al. 2009). Such views are associated with the far right in many countries (e.g., Semyonov et al. 2006; Talshir 2005). To illustrate, in Germany, antisemitism is likely to be fueled by the belief that being "truly German" is defined, in part, by being a Christian and being born in Germany.

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2.3 Linking Populism and Antisemitism

In light of these accounts of the nature and sources of populism and antisemitism, we note at least three distinct parallels. First, there is considerable convergence in conceptual characteristics: populists often reject liberal-democratic rights and minority protections; in fact, they often consider any minorities to be cultural outsiders. Immigrants fit this bill, of course, but so do Muslims and Jews in a Christian-dominated society. Put this way, right-wing populism in many ways appears like a version of antisemitism. Second, attitudes about populism and antisemitism often coalesce with other attitudes in the cultural domain (about immigration and lifestyles, for example) that typically do not align neatly with left-right welfare preferences. In other words, populist and antisemitic orientations are only weakly constrained by economic considerations, and thus are likely to be activated in response to identity issues raised by elites across the party spectrum (Lavine et al. 2012). Third, populist orientations and antisemitic attitudes are concentrated at the right-extreme end of the ideological spectrum which emphasize culturally conservative issues. Federico and Malka's (2018, Malka et al. 2022) comprehensive review of research on ideology and mass belief systems in western countries argues that more attention should be focused on social instead of economic considerations as the primary drivers of ideological orientations like populism and, presumably, antisemitism. Furthermore, Dalton's recent longitudinal study (2018) of cultural and economic conflicts shows that the salience of culture has increased whereas the relevance of economic concerns has remained largely steady or perhaps even decreased. In short, both antisemitism and populism are likely driven by the same culture war issues dividing both political elites and the public these days.

For all these reasons, right-wing populism and antisemitism are likely to be highly related in Germany and elsewhere. As populist parties like the AfD transition to far-right parties whose activists and leaders espouse either blatant or subtle forms of antisemitism, their followers may also rely on populist and antisemitic orientations to inform their political views and voting behavior. In addition, far-right populist parties traffic in rabid anti-elitism as well as xenophobia, ethnocentrism, and authoritarian worldviews. Thus, their followers may also place more weight on the predispositions that provide the psychological constraint or glue binding together strains of populism and antisemitism. One important question below is

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whether the hypothesized linkage emerges primarily among supporters of the AfD or whether we can find it across the partisan spectrum.

Our discussion suggests a straightforward hypothesis which we will test in the next section:

> Hypothesis 1: Populist orientations are related to antisemitic views even when controlling for a range of individual-level predispositions and socio-demographic traits.

We first describe our measures of antisemitism and populism. We then turn to voters' partisanship, demographic, and social orientations along with economic considerations (all measures are described in appendix table A2).

3. Measuring Antisemitism

We follow many other studies by using four survey items from the much longer 11-item index of antisemitism developed for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which was first used in the U.S. to measure antisemitic attitudes in 1964 and then in 2014 in over 100 countries, with three follow up comparative surveys thereafter. Our survey asked German respondents the extent to which they think each of the four statements is "definitely false, probably false, neither true nor false, probably true or definitely true." [3]

Figure 1 collapses the probably and definitely false (or true) to show the percentage of respondents rated the statements as False, Neither true nor false, or True. The second and fourth statements tap traditional and some would say ancient, negative stereotypes or grievances against Jews being too influential in the business world and international financial markets. Surprisingly, approximately one-fifth of the German public endorses each statement, expressing sentiments that have evolved over centuries, harking back to the way pecuniary laws developed during the medieval ages (Becker/Pascali 2019). And a bit over a third of all responses select the middle category. Thus, clear non-stereotypic views of Jews still constitute a minority in Germany to this day!

3 The order of statements was randomized.

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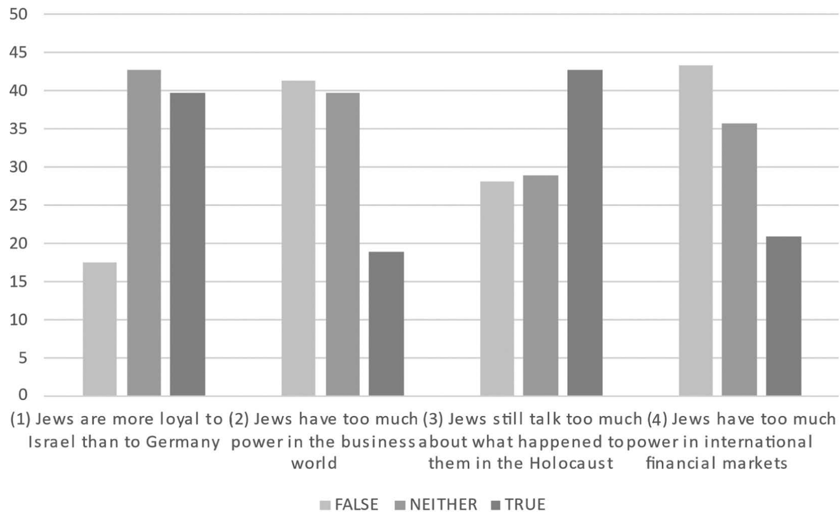
Figure 1: Responses to Antisemitism Indicators, Germany 2020



The other two statements expressing complaints about Jews' loyalty to Germany and talking "too much about the Holocaust" have been labeled "indirect" antisemitism (Decker et al. 2022: 134) because instead of describing ancient stereotypical traits, they refer to how these issues play out in contemporary political debates. The first indicator, for example, claims Jews are more loyal to Israel than Germany, thus questioning Jews' willingness to be a fully integrated member of the community in Germany and, in effect, insinuating that Jews are outsiders. The third indicator faults Jews for talking too much about the Holocaust, as if one of the most horrific, organized genocides in history is better forgotten. In other words, these two "secondary" indicators provide antisemites with an ulterior motive for expressing negative views about Jews. Twice as many respondents, about 40 percent, find statements one and three probably or definitely true, compared to statements two and four.

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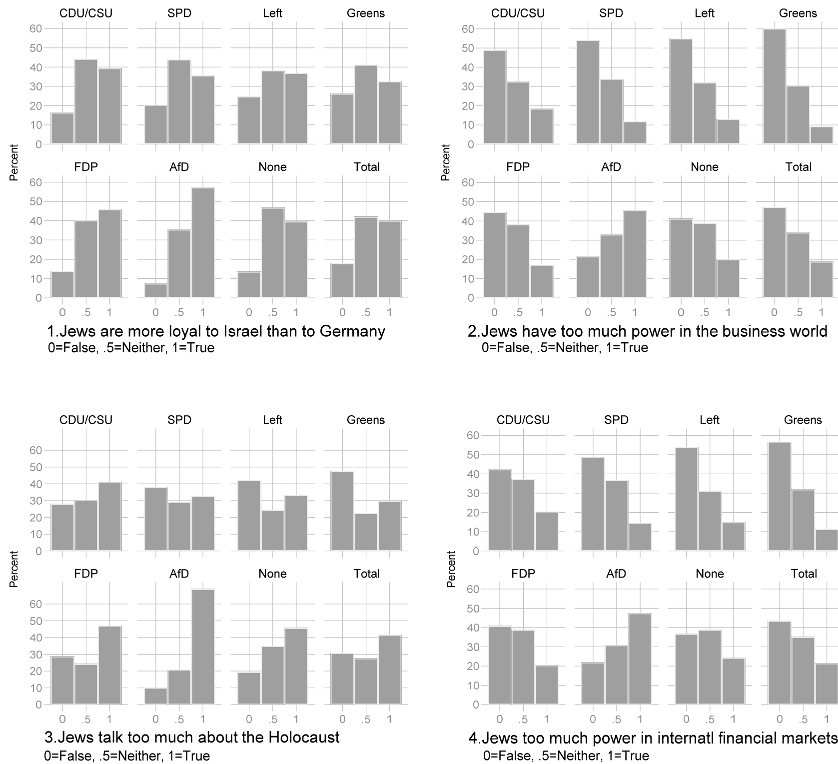
Figure 2: Public Support for Antisemitic Statements, by Partisan Support



Note: The figure shows the percentage of respondents who rated the statements as (definitely or probably) False (0), Neither true nor false (.5), or (definitely or probably) True (1). The "Total" category represents responses of the entire sample; the partisan supporter group denotes respondents who identify with a party; the "None" category contains respondents without a partisan identity.

How are antisemitic views as measured by each statement distributed across partisan groups on the right and left? In Figure 2 we display the distribution of partisan responses to each of the items, along with a bottom-right panel for the pooled sample. Within partisan groups, by far the highest concentration of antisemitic stereotypes on all four items emerges within the AfD. For the two traditional antisemitic stereotypes, over half of AfD supporters believe it is probably or definitely true that Jews have too much power in the business world (51 percent); and Jews influence financial markets too much (54 percent). At the other end of the spectrum, only around 10

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percent of Green partisans endorse the notion of Jews having too much influence in the business world or that Jews are too influential in financial markets (11 percent). The remaining partisan supporters fall in-between these two extremes, located near the distribution for the totals, with about 20 percent endorsing these traditional antisemitic stereotypes. For the two indirect or secondary antisemitism indicators, a majority of AfD supporters believe Jews are more loyal to Israel (60 percent) and "talk too much about the Holocaust" (69 percent). Importantly, one third of Green supporters believe Jews are more loyal to Israel (37 percent), while nearly a third is critical of Jews talking about the Holocaust (31 percent). Thus, even in the most liberal corners of German society, a nontrivial portion of the public agrees with secondary, antisemitic stereotypes.

We summed the responses to the four items to form the Antisemitism Index (alpha=.82). After recoding it to a 0-1 scale, higher values indicate greater antisemitism (mean = .47, sd=.24). We present in Figure 3 a summary comparison of the average antisemitism score across the partisan groups. The size of the circles in the figure represents the proportion of the partisan group in the pooled sample. Unsurprisingly, the average antisemitism score for AfD partisans is about three quarters of a standard deviation (.24) above the average for the pooled sample.[4]

4 For partisan supporters, the index obtains the expected frequency patterns we observed for the individual items. For the AfD, about 70 percent of partisans obtain values greater than .5, meaning that over two thirds of AfD supporters openly hold some or even strong antisemitic views. Only 19 percent of AfD supporters fall below the value of .5 where respondents on balance hold weaker or no antisemitic views; and about 10 percent fall right at the mid-point (.5). At the other end of the spectrum, about 65 percent of Green supporters fall below the midpoint suggesting little or no sympathies for antisemitic statements, eleven percent are located right at the middle, and about 24 percent endorse antisemitic sentiments to some degree. The other parties more closely approximate the patterns for the population: CDU/CSU (45 percent below the midpoint; 16 at the midpoint; and about 39 percent in the antisemitism range above the midpoint); FDP (46 percent below the midpoint, eight percent at the midpoint, and 46 percent in the antisemitism range above the midpoint); the SPD (55 percent below the midpoint, 14 percent at the midpoint, and 31 percent in the antisemitism range above the midpoint; Die Linke with 57 percent below the midpoint, 13 percent at the midpoint, and about 30 percent above the midpoint in the antisemitism range.

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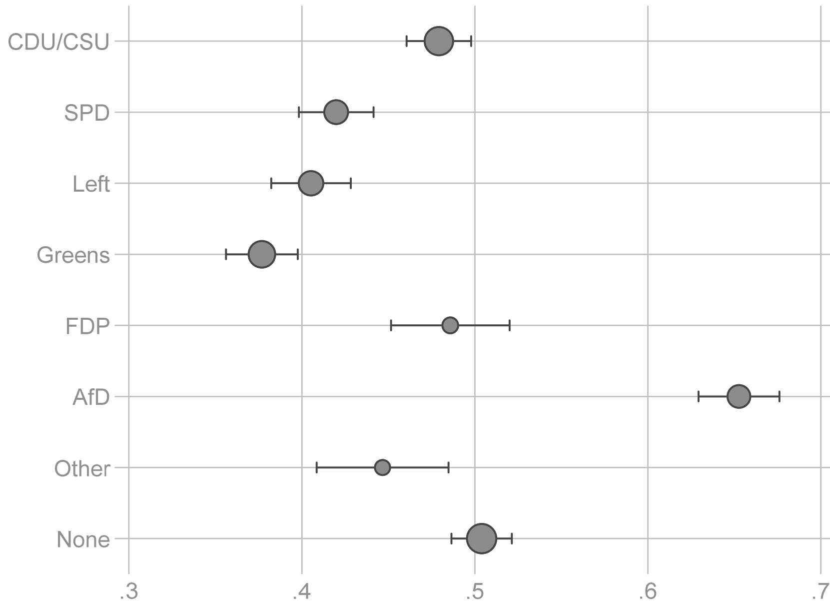
Figure 3: Mean Level of Antisemitism among Partisans



Note: Antisemitism ranges from 0 to 1.0. Size of circles is proportional to party support in the full sample. Tails are 95% confidence intervals. Overall mean = .47, sd = .24.

All told, our data confirm that there remains a substantial segment among the German public that holds antisemitic beliefs.

4. Measuring populism

Turning our attention to measuring populist attitudes, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following five statements presented in randomized order:

(1) What people call "compromise" in politics is really just selling out on one's principles.
(2) Politicians always end up agreeing when it comes to protecting their own privileges.
(3) The politicians in the German Bundestag must always follow the will of the people.

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(4) Germany needs a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament.
(5) When it comes to making policy decisions, ordinary people should be trusted more than so-called experts.

The items gauge different aspects of the populism concept. Indicator one taps a manichean aspect, whereas indicators three and five assess respondents' views about the relative influence of elites and ordinary citizens in politics. Question two gauges the public's distrust in political elites; and indicator four stresses a preference for a strong executive over the checks and balances of liberal democracies. Like other studies using similar items, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) finds that a one-dimensional solution underlies individual responses (Akkerman et al. 2014; Geurkink et al. 2020). In addition, we also show that the populism indicators form a separate dimension apart from responses to the antisemitism indicators (see the online appendix table A3).

We therefore created a Populism Index of the five indicators (alpha=.75) and recoded it to range from zero (low populist preferences) to one (high populism preferences). Scores on the Populism Index are almost normally distributed with a slight skew towards the populism side of the index (data not shown). Figure 4 shows the mean scores, by partisan group, of the populism index. We clearly see that AfD partisans are much more likely to hold populist orientations than any other partisan group. However, we also note that most partisan groups fall around the mid-point of the index (.5) and thus suggest that populist orientations are widely present in most partisan groups. Moreover, although antisemitism and populism constitute separate constructs, individuals scoring higher on the populism scale are far more likely to endorse antisemitic statements (Pearson's r=.49). The degree of overlap between the two measures is staggering and requires investigation which we will turn to next.

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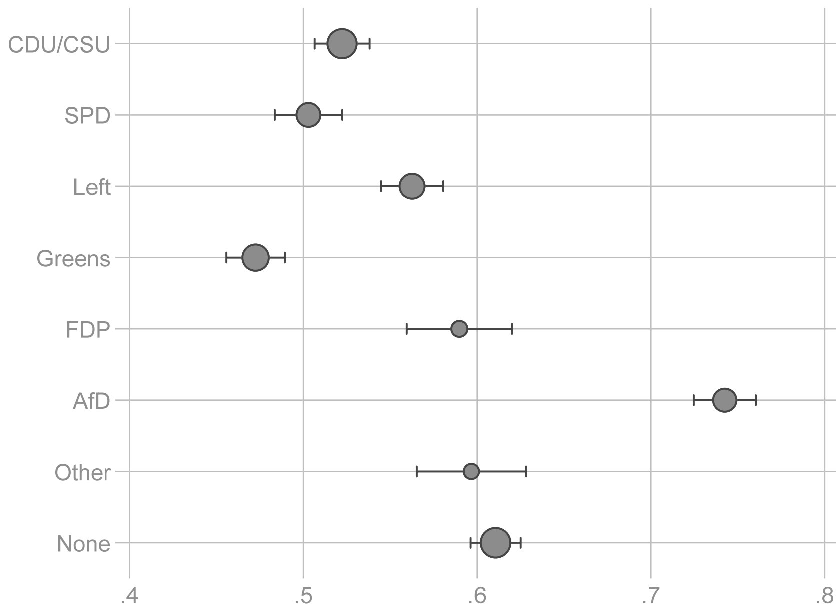
Figure 4: Mean Level of Populism among Partisans



Note: Populist Attitudes range from 0 to 1.0. Size of circles is proportional to party support in the full sample. Tails are 95% confidence intervals. Overall mean = .57, sd = .19.

5. Multivariate Analyses

What explains the substantial relationship between antisemitism and populism? And to what extent can populist attitudes account for the different concentrations of antisemitism among German partisans and among the sample as a whole? To answer these questions, we estimate four equations predicting antisemitism. Model 1 predicts antisemitism using respondents' partisanship. The results serve as a baseline showing the bivariate support of a partisan group for the antisemitism index. Model 2 adds the populism index in order to test how much of the populism index explains in antisemitic attitudes net of individuals' partisanship. Model 3 adds to model 2 demographic variables in order to evaluate whether the effects of populism are mainly due to these characteristics, as lower education is associated with both greater antisemitism and populism, along with the sex

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of respondents (Silbermann/Sallen 1976; Lubbers/Coenders 2017; Urbinati 2018).

Model 4 adds a host of social and political variables as well as economic perceptions. We include the standard left-right ideological self-placement indicator. Populism and right-wing orientations often coincide; and prior research has provided ample evidence that antisemitism is concentrated among right-wing parties (Cohen 2018). We also know that authoritarian attitudes relate to antisemitism and populism; this is a staple finding of research in Germany (Kurthen et al. 1997) and elsewhere (Adorno et al. 1950; Cohen 2018). We further consider the influence of national identity and immigration attitudes. An ethno-nationalist identity stresses cultural and genealogical ties to a mystic German people that likely relate to antisemitism and populism (Lindstam et al. 2019). This ethnic identity brings about negative views about immigrants (Ivarsflaten 2008); and it fuels support for the AfD (Arzheimer/Berning 2019) and other radical-right parties (Downes/Loveless 2018; Pardos-Prado 2015). We also include a variable measuring the democratic value orientations of mass publics, on the grounds that individuals who do not appreciate democracy are more likely to express populist and antisemitic views (Norris/Inglehart 2019; Welzel 2020). Additionally, we include a measure of how much individuals value the protection of minority rights since both antisemitism and populism reject such protection elements (Müller 2016). Finally, model 4 includes perceptions of economic and governing performance because antisemitism and populism both may reflect individuals' disappointment with their personal circumstances or the national economy (Georgiadou et al. 2018) even though economic perception seem only tenuously related to populist party support (Arzheimer 2009; Rooduijn 2018: 361). We include a measure of the perceived performance of the federal government in order to control for the possibility that disgruntled individuals use antisemitism as a scapegoat for their unhappiness with the national government (Cohen 2018), just as populists believe that established elites ignore their interests (Kriesi 2014). We finally included an East-West dummy, on the grounds that eastern Germans may have learned to avoid giving an antisemitic response as a result of their socialist regime experience; and because the economic context is shakier than in the West.

All told, this group of controls includes many cultural and psychological predictors of both populism and antisemitism. The goal is to assess how much the association between populism and antisemitism exists independently of these predictors.

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5.1 Measuring controls

The indicators for each control variable are recoded to a 0 to 1 scale to make the coefficients easier to interpret. Left-Right self-placement ranges from 0 (Left) to 10 (Right). Authoritarianism is assessed by asking respondents to select from a series of four paired qualities "the one you think is more important for a child to have": "Independence or Respect for elders," "Obedience or Self-reliance" (reflected), "Curiosity or Good manners," and "Being considerate or Being well-behaved," with the initial scale ranging from 0 to 4. True German Ethnonationalism is based on the degree to which respondents rated "how important on a scale from "Not at all important" (1) to "Very important" (4) "you think each is for being *truly German*: "To be born in Germany," "To have German ancestors," and "To be a Christian," with the initial scale ranging from 3 to 12. Attitudes toward Immigrants consists of three items rating how immigration impacts Germany: "Cultural life is undermined" (0) to "Cultural life is enriched" (10), "Bad for Germany's economy" (0) to "Good for Germany's economy" (10), [making Germany] a "Worse place to live" (0) to "a Better place to live" (10). Support for Democracy is measured by agreement with two statements: "Democracy is preferred to any other system," and "The existing democracy in Germany is the best system." Support for Minority Rights is assessed by agreement from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) scale with the statement, "People in the minority should be free to try to win majority support for their opinions." To measure retrospective economic performance judgments, respondents were asked to: "rate the general economic situation in Germany over the last twelve months (National Economic Judgments) and their "personal economic situation over the last twelve months" (Personal Economic Judgments) on 5-point scales ranging from "much worse" (1) to "much better" (5). Performance judgments of "The Federal Government" were rated from "Completely satisfied" (0) to "Completely dissatisfied" (10). Again, all variables were recoded to a 0 to 1 scale.

5.2 Results

Table 1 presents the OLS results. In model 1, antisemitism is predicted solely by partisanship, where each party is a dummy variable compared to the AfD, the excluded reference category. As expected, antisemitism is

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significantly lower among all the partisan groups, compared to the AfD, with the Greens, the Left and the SPD, in that order, producing the largest differences in antisemitism to partisans of the AfD. Clearly, the AfD fits the template of a right-wing European party in terms of the relatively high level of antisemitism among its supporters.

To what extent can these party differences be statistically explained by populist attitudes? To answer this question, we add the populism index in model 2, where we see, first, the large coefficient (b=.54) associated with populism, meaning that, independently of partisanship, higher levels of populism are *strongly* associated with antisemitism. This clearly indicates that partisanship alone does not absorb the importance of populist preferences; to the contrary: compared to the zero-order correlation between populism and antisemitism (Pearson's r=.49), the populism coefficient is largely unchanged. Remarkably, regardless of respondents' partisanship, supporters across parties evidently exhibit a propensity to relate their populist preferences to antisemitic orientations. Given the considerable support for both antisemitism and populism within various partisan groups (figures 3 and 4), this finding is disconcerting as it suggests that the link emerges in multiple partisan constituencies and not just among AfD partisans. Additionally, we also note that by adding populist attitudes, the differences between partisan groups and the AfD shrink by about half. This means that the relationship between partisanship and antisemitism is to a significant degree based on voters' populist preferences—confirming general commentators who identified the dramatic transformation of the AfD from a mostly Euro-skeptic party to a right-wing ethno-nationalist party (Schmitt-Beck 2017).

To what degree is the relationship between populism and antisemitism (and the partisan differences in antisemitism) due to shared socio-demographic characteristics? Model 3 adds respondents' demographic characteristics. The coefficients show that while education and age are significant, they neither explain a substantial portion of party differences nor the linkage between populism and antisemitism. To be sure, being less educated, older, male, and growing up in the former West versus the East, makes one appear more antisemitic, even after controlling for the effects of populism and partisanship. In contrast, the coefficient for family income is both small and insignificant. Overall, however, adding demographic variables has only a marginal impact in reducing the coefficient between populist attitudes and antisemitism; and it increases the explained variance by a modest 4 percent.

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Table 1: Predicting Antisemitism from Partisanship, Populism & Controls

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Antisemitism		**Antisemitism**		**Antisemitism**		**Antisemitism**	
Populism	---		.54**	(.02)	.47**	(.02)	.35**	(.02)
Party (v AfD)								
CDU/CSU	-.17**	(.02)	-.06**	(.02)	-.07**	(.02)	-.01	(.02)
SPD	-.23**	(.02)	-.11**	(.02)	-.13**	(.02)	-.04*	(.02)
Left	-.25**	(.02)	-.15**	(.02)	-.15**	(.02)	-.04*	(.02)
Greens	-.28**	(.02)	-.14**	(.02)	-.14**	(.02)	-.03	(.02)
FDP	-.15**	(.02)	-.07**	(.02)	-.06**	(.02)	-.00	(.02)
Other	-.21**	(.02)	-.14**	(.02)	-.12**	(.02)	-.05*	(.02)
None	-.16**	(.02)	-.10**	(.02)	-.10**	(.02)	-.03*	(.02)
Demographic								
Education					-.12**	(.01)	-.08**	(.01)
Age					.07**	(.01)	.07**	(.01)
Female					-.02**	(.01)	-.03**	(.01)
Income					-.02	(.02)	-.02	(.02)
East					-.02*	(.01)	-.02*	(.01)
Soc-Pol Att								
Left-Right							.08**	(.02)
Authoritarian							.03*	(.02)
True German							.13**	(.01)
Immigrants							-.10**	(.02)
Democracy							-.03*	(.01)
Min Rights							-.07**	(.02)
Perform-Econ								
Dissatis Gov							-.01	(.02)
Nat Econ							-.01	(.02)
Pers Econ							-.01	(.02)
Constant	.67**	(.01)	.27**	(.02)	.38**	(.03)	.38**	(.04)
N	2639		2639		2639		2639	
Adj-R2	.10		.27		.31		.37	

Standard errors in parentheses * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$. All variables coded to a 0-1 scale (see appendix Table A2).

Model 4 adds more general social and political orientations as well as performance and economic assessments to explain antisemitism. First, social and political orientations account for much of the remaining party differences and a good deal of the covariance between populism and antisemitism: model 4 explains six percent of the variance more than model 3. Also, the populism coefficient is significantly lower than in model 3. In short, some of the association between populism and antisemitism flow through various ideological and social attitudes. Among them, the coefficient for holding an ethno-nationalist identity of a "true" German is the strongest (b=.13), which expectedly shows that a blood and soil conception of Germanness shapes antisemitism. Another relevant predictor

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is holding a preference for minority protection (b=-.07) as is a rightist ideology (b=.08). However, we also note that the populism coefficient remains the largest coefficient by far (b=.35), attesting to its explanatory power. Finally, note that performance and economic assessments have no effect on antisemitism or explaining the covariation, and this remains true regardless of what order these variables are included.

All told, despite support for the hypothesized predictors, there remains a strong covariation between populism and antisemitism. A key question, thus, is: what explains this relationship? Why are populists so much more likely to provide an antisemitic response after controlling for a host of known correlates of antisemitism and populism? We speculate about the likely mechanisms in the conclusion next.

5. Conclusion

The intriguing result of our study is that over half the original covariance between populism and antisemitism remains unexplained by the fully specified model that includes many established predictors of antisemitism. What might account for the association? Of course, by definition, we do not know for sure, but it is well worth speculating about the source of this surprisingly persistent covariation. We offer two related explanations. One focuses on elite opinion leadership of rank-and-file supporters of far-right populist parties. Opinions expressed by far-right populist leaders and activists in both legacy and social media communicate a clear hostility toward a variety of outgroups as well as established political elites who defend protections for minorities. We know, for example, that anti-foreigner sentiment is more pronounced in European countries with greater support for right-wing extreme parties (e.g., Semyonov et al. 2006). And panel analysis shows that exposure to right-wing populists' Facebook posts in Germany (the AfD) and Austria (the FPÖ) in 2017 "fueled anti-immigrant attitudes…and anti-elitist attitudes and anxiety" (Heiss/Matthes 2020: 303). This opinion leadership perspective, as applied to Germany, pins special importance to the transformation of the AfD into a clear far-right antisemitic party (Schmitt-Beck 2017; Arzheimer/Berning 2019), leading rank-and-file followers to also express such beliefs. In short, there is a clear explanation for populists' antisemitic orientations among AfD supporters.

But this does not adequately explain why populism and antisemitism are strongly connected beyond the AfD and its supporters. After all, AfD

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partisans constitute only about 11 percent of our sample. Our study therefore suggests a darker possibility: People with antisemitic sentiments – even while denying more blatant antisemitic statements – may feel more comfortable expressing antisemitic views when they are wrapped in a populist, anti-elite veneer. Two arguments support the logic of this conjecture. First, antisemites share with populists a deep hostility toward elites and minorities. For example, rejection of a financial (read Jewish) elite—one measure of antisemitism—comes precipitously close to expressing the view that a "selfish elite" ignores the preferences of the people—a measure of populism. Relatedly, populism contains a clear majoritarian (anti-minority) element as it rejects a canon of liberal-democratic rights that protects minorities (a Jewish minority, for instance). Both elements—the anti-elitist and anti-minority thrust of populism—doubtless create an affinity between populism and antisemitism that exists among average citizens outside the AfD. Thus, individuals may express populist orientations *because of* their antisemitic views since it is more socially acceptable to be a populist than an antisemite.

A second, related possibility is that populism is critical of the very elites – i.e., the mainstream elites in the mass media, political parties, and the economy – who have strongly and consistently advocated that the country and its citizens acknowledge Germany's responsibility for the atrocities perpetrated during the second World War. In other words, mainstream elites have repeatedly argued that Germany must remain accountable and mindful of the horrors committed during the Third Reich. Populism is critical of precisely these mainstream elites. Thus, questioning Jews' loyalty to Germany and preferring to downplay the Holocaust may be rationalized as pushing back against the exhortations of mainstream elites instead of acknowledging one's antisemitic bias.

Of course, more research is needed to assess these conjectures. At a minimum, however, we have demonstrated the strong relationship between antisemitism and populism among populist, radical-right partisans but also those of many everyday German citizens. More research is required to determine how Germany's historical experience may have contributed to the rise of populism – and the way antisemitism has become revitalized by it.

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