

Antisemitism in Poland: Psychological, Religious, and Historical Aspects

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The article discusses the phenomenon of antisemitic prejudice in Poland after 1989. The comparative cross-national data suggests that prejudice against Jewish people remains visible in Poland independent of the difficult history of Polish-Jewish relations. The studies reviewed in this article present potential causes and mechanisms of anti-Jewish attitudes in Poland, such as relative deprivation, victimhood-based national identity, and authoritarian political attitudes. The role of Catholic clergy and the relative decline of traditional religious antisemitic beliefs are also considered, as well as the contrast presented by political antisemitism, which has remained unchanged for the past two decades.

Key Words: Antisemitism, Authoritarianism, Jewish, National Identity, Polish, Victimhood

PROBLEMS IN POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS

Ethnic Poles and Polish Jews shared the same space for about one thousand years. This cohabitation was devastated not only by the Holocaust, but also by serious waves of antisemitic pogroms that occurred during World War II and right after its end (Gross, 2001, 2006). The difficult past of postwar pogroms, antisemitic discrimination in prewar Poland, and unacknowledged history of the Holocaust (Steinlauf, 1997), as well as the involvement of some Jewish people in the Communist regime (Schatz, 1991), created very fragile ground for Polish-Jewish relations in a democratic country established after the systemic transition from communism to capitalism beginning in 1989. One of the largest East European countries with a tiny Jewish minority entered its democratic period with a burden of unresolved historical issues and several new problems of religious, economic, and psychological character.

Jews as a Collective Scapegoat of Economic Transition

Before World War II, Jews were the second largest ethnic minority in Poland (population of above 3 million), while after the war, the Holocaust survivors and Jewish repatriates from Soviet Union formed only a small percentage of the postwar population of the country. Finally, after three major emigration waves—in the first postwar years, after the political events of 1956, and as part of the antisemitic purge in 1968—the Jewish population of Poland decreased to 5,000-15,000 people. In the beginning of the systemic transition in 1989, the Jewish minority population was virtually non-existent (only 1,100 people declared Jewish identity in the Polish nationwide census of 2002, although these results raised some doubts among sociologists; see Datner, 2003). With the end of the communist era and newly regained freedoms, antisemitic ideologies resurfaced; with an almost vanished Jewish population, these ideologies lost a lot of their validity, but their influence in society, especially during first post-transition decade, remained significant. In post-transition Poland, several mainstream politicians tended to use antisemitic slogans or at least relate to such concepts—e.g., President Lech Wałęsa and his declaration about “true Polish origins” in the second term of 1990 elections. Extreme right-wing parties openly using antisemitic rhetoric were present in the Polish parliament (e.g., the extremist party Prawica Narodowa co-formed Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność in the elections of 1997). Although open anti-Jewish ideas and statements are no longer accepted in mainstream politics, there are still some noticeable traces of it. Some politicians who have a history of antisemitic excesses or of referring to prewar antisemitic ideologies changed their affiliations and are still present in Polish politics (e.g., Marcin Libicki, formerly allied with Prawica Narodowa, later a member of the ruling party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość and a member of the European Parliament, 2004-2009¹). Although contemporary conventional politics seems to be substantially less imbued with open antisemitism than a decade ago, on the more informal level of public discourse the situation is different. Antisemitic rhetoric is frequently used during protests, demonstrations, football games, or even on national holiday celebrations (e.g., 2011 Independence Day celebrations in Warsaw). Extremist groups use antisemitic slogans or banners proclaiming racist and Nazi ideologies.

1. His case, as are several other examples of antisemitic figures in Polish political life, is well depicted in the annual country reports of the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism, Tel-Aviv University, 1997-2007.

Another venue of expression, and probably most influential source of these ideologies, is a private (owned by a church-related foundation) media group consisting of a nationwide radio station, a newspaper, and satellite television. Weak penalization of those excesses by state institutions, accompanied by silent acquiescence of those incidents by a large part of the political scene, seems to be a dominant problem (Otwarta Rzeczpospolita, 2011). This issue is frequently raised by organizations monitoring racism and antisemitism in Poland (Kornak, 2011). It seems that while antisemitism is not politically profitable, mainstream right-wing parties do not want to spoil the potential political power of the extremist groups.

Two main themes can be seen in post-transition antisemitic rhetoric. The first theme is related to the Jew as an alien—the most noticeable example is accusing opponents of having Jewish origins, usually indicating some mysterious alien control or loyalty to other countries or organizations. The second theme is related to the economy: accusing foreign (Jewish) capital of taking over key businesses in Poland and fear of the claims of prewar property owners. Typically, these themes are accompanied by the attribution of bad intentions to Jews: blaming Jews for exploiting or conspiring to take control over the country. Both of these themes are rooted in prewar ideologies that are strongly related to conspiracy thinking (Kofta & Sedek, 2005) and useful for identifying scapegoats who are responsible for the poor economical situation, lack of control, and general feeling of deprivation.

The Holocaust Debate in Poland

One of the most important aspects of Polish-Jewish relations after 1989 is the newly discovered history of crimes committed by Poles during the Nazi German occupation of Poland and in the first years after the Second World War. Researchers dealing with antisemitism in contemporary Poland trace the roots of antisemitic resentments to the victimhood competition between Poles and Jews after the Holocaust (Bilewicz & Stefaniak, in press; Krzemiński, 1996) or to the silenced memory of bystanders after the genocide (Steinlauf, 1997). This silence had already ended before the fall of communism, following the famous essay by Jan Blonski (1990) in the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*. In the essay, Blonsky draws the reader's attention to the problem of Polish passivity during the Holocaust. The essay led to continuous debate in the weekly and in the public opinion in general, revealing strong opposition to commemorating the "dark sides" of the history of Polish Catholic–Polish Jewish relations. In the early 1990s, Poland faced several other such debates: about killings of Polish Jews by Polish Catholic insurgents during the Warsaw uprising (Cichy, 1994) and about

the presence of Catholic religious symbols on the grounds of the Auschwitz concentration camp (Kuleta, 2001). The conflict over crosses in Auschwitz led to severe tension between right-wing political forces, which treated crosses as symbols of the unique suffering of ethnic Poles in Auschwitz, versus that of religious Jews—e.g., Rabbi Avi Weiss, who openly stressed the blasphemous character of Christian religious symbols on places related to Jewish martyrdom. In a qualitative study of Polish high school students that we conducted in the early 2000s, we found that the competition over the status of Auschwitz was still vivid (Bilewicz, 2008). When students were asked to list the most important issues they would like to discuss with Jewish peers, they often came up with questions and statements such as: “Why do you think that only Jews suffered during the war? Don’t you know that Poles also were killed in camps . . .”; “Some of you say that Poles killed you in death camps, but we were also killed there”; or “Why did Jews not protest when crosses were erected in Auschwitz? It is our country and our Auschwitz!” (p. 32). These questions and the ensuing discussions show how the problem was represented among broader public after being exposed for years to the “conflict-over-crosses.”

The most animated of the public disputes about the history occurred after the publication of Jan Tomasz Gross’s books *Neighbors* (2001), *Fear* (2006), and to lesser extent *Golden Harvest* (2012). *Neighbors* presented the history of a small town in Eastern Poland where Polish Catholic inhabitants killed their Polish Jewish neighbors in a massive pogrom in 1941, after Soviet occupants left the town and before Nazi authority in the region was established. The history of this self-organized ethnic cleansing, Jedwabne, contradicted the dominant perception of Poles as virtuous victims of the wartime period (Krzemiński, 1993). The most pronounced reaction to the publication of this book was denial and biased explanations of the history; most of the Polish public perceived the Jedwabne crime as caused by Germans or at least by some marginal groups not representative of the nation as a whole (Bilewicz, 2004).

The second book in this series, *Fear*, touched on the question of post-Holocaust pogroms and expressions of violent antisemitism in Poland in late 1940s. The book provoked intensive—and mostly negatively intended—media coverage, with several journalists and public figures expressing their opinions before even reading the book.

In the most recent of these books, *Golden Harvest*, Gross presented the history of robberies, looting, and other crimes of property theft perpetrated against Jews during the Holocaust. Although reaction to this book was mostly calm, there were still several attempts to deny historical facts by questioning the evidence and materials Gross described.

These debates are also very much reflected in public opinion. The dominant category of the qualitative study of high-school students' opinions dealt with the unwelcome anticipation of being blamed for collaboration with the Nazis in the destruction of Polish Jewry (e.g., "Why do Jews think that we allowed and helped Germans to build Auschwitz?"; "Why do you still blame Poles for the Holocaust?"; "They say that Auschwitz is a Polish deed, but these were Germans who burned Jews!" (Bilewicz, 2008, p. 31). This topic has been also frequently studied in survey studies.

Antisemitism and the Catholic Church

Catholic teaching about Jews and Judaism after 1965 went through the dramatic changes introduced by the Second Vatican Council's declaration *Nostra Aetate*. In Poland, this new teaching was reported by some of the Catholic press as early as the '70s and '80s. It was acknowledged by the publications' readers and the elite, intelligentsia circles of the wire editors.² On the official level, though, the Catholic Church in Poland started to discuss issues of Jews, Judaism, and antisemitism only in the last 15 years or so of the 20th century, when the Polish bishop's Sub-Commission for Dialogue with Judaism was established.³

The most noticeable and outspoken form of antisemitism present in Catholic circles in Poland is focused less on the religious notions (deicide, broken covenant, blood libel) than on what arose from the nationalistic discourse; this aspect of antisemitism refers to conspiracy theories and victimhood competition.⁴ Preaching from pulpits and the Catholic media have been often used to nourish fears of Jews' reclaiming their property (\$60 billion of claims, announced by Radio Maryja⁵ *et consortes*); speculations about the alleged Jewish descent of disfavored politicians or public figures

2. It was presented in periodicals such as *Znak*, *Więź*, and *Tygodnik Powszechny*, e.g., *Znak* (2-3), 1983.

3. The commission was followed by the collapse of communism, with several initiatives on informing theologians about the new Catholic teaching and by organizing conferences and publishing books. What was already important in 1990 was the publication of a collection of translated Catholic Church documents and John Paul II's teachings about Jews and Judaism from 1965 to 1990. It was a crucial event, as it enabled broader access to the further texts (Chrostowski & Rubinkiewicz, 1990).

4. As an example, Rev. Henryk Jankowski, in his sermon on October 26, 1997, noted: "[A] Jewish minority in the government should not be tolerated. The nation is afraid of it."

5. Stanisław Michalkiewicz broadcasted on Radio Maryja March 29, 2006.

have been present even in the sermons of the leading bishops.⁶ Such manifestations reflect the sympathies of the Catholic clergy toward right-wing beliefs of conservative and nationalistic parties formed after 1989. This political outlook has been more vocal than the expression of religious views against Jews (Michlic, 2004). At the same time, however, political antisemitism is often assisted by religious anti-Jewish expression. For example, when referring to the contemporary debate about Jan Gross's book *The Neighbors*, Rev. Henryk Jankowski used in the Easter decoration (the so-called Lord's thumb) the slogan directly referring to the traditional, anti-Jewish deicide accusation.⁷

Certainly, there are many positive initiatives for learning about Judaism that have appeared during the last twenty years in the Catholic Church in Poland.⁸ Most of the people who started these initiatives were deeply inspired by the actions and words of the late pope John Paul II; referring to these words and actions is still the strongest argument they can use to justify their involvement. Unfortunately, those are rather rare events, still rarely attended by the local clergy and seminarians, and the new Catholic teaching is not incorporated into regular curricula of seminaries and theological faculties. Therefore, interest in Christian-Jewish relations and awareness of anti-Judaism in Catholic tradition is a sideline rather than an intrinsic part of the regular theological education. What is more, the priests who are the most active in Christian-Jewish dialogue and the most vocal about antisemitism are often criticized by their supervisors and colleagues.

When it comes to the Catholic doctrine and religious practice, there remain a number of things that need simple correction but nevertheless have been overlooked. For example, there are still titles in the Polish edition of the Bible and texts in the Holy Friday Liturgy of the Hours that are influenced by the older theology (see Weksler-Waszkinel, 2011). Another case

6. Cardinal Józef Glemp in 1990 claimed that antisemitism in Poland is a myth created by the enemies of Poland or a statement of Bishop Józef Michalik, who said before the elections: "A Catholic should vote for a Catholic, a Muslim for a Muslim, a Jew for a Jew, a Freemason for a Freemason and a Communist for a Communist." The most recent of such statements was an interview of Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek in *pontifex.roma* (2010), in which he described the Holocaust as a "Jewish invention" and spread the conspiracy theory of a Jewish lobby in the media.

7. Rev. Jankowski's decoration included a replica of the charred barn of Jedwabne and an inscription: "The Jews killed Jesus and the prophets, and they persecuted us as well." See Michlic, 2002, 19.

8. In 1998, the Polish Episcopate introduced the annual celebration of the Day of Judaism in the Catholic Church in Poland to commemorate the Jewish roots of Christianity. This initiative is continuously implemented by a few dioceses, and its central ceremonies are held every year in a different city.

reveals that for many years in the prayer for the Jews, included into the Good Friday liturgy, there was a mistake in translation. This mistake, in fact, had been introduced before the Second Vatican Council theological meaning; it had not been intended by the Latin original.⁹ The fact that for many years those revealing mistakes were not corrected shows ignorance and negligence of the issues concerning Jews and Judaism.

On November 30, 1990, the Polish Episcopate issued the pastoral letter on Catholic-Jewish relations for the 25th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate* declaration. The letter, which included a condemnation of antisemitism and highlighted the importance of developing better Christian-Jewish relations, was read in all the churches across Poland only on January 20, 1991. Despite the availability of the letter, the leaders of the Church postponed its publication. All this occurred while antisemitic arguments were being used in the campaign before the first free presidential elections in Poland (Gebert, 2010). This was to become symptomatic for the years to come: the Catholic church in Poland officially expresses positive attitudes toward Judaism and condemns antisemitism, but its leaders do not care about educating the clergy about those issues and rarely condemn antisemitism when it happens in the Catholic Church.

The Polish Situation vis-à-vis Other Nations

The level of anti-Jewish resentments in several European countries was often compared. Many of these comparisons indicated the highest levels of antisemitism in post-communist East European countries, Poland among them. The most recent social-psychological comparison of eight European countries (Zick, Küpper, & Hövermann, 2011) found the highest extent of antisemitism in Poland and Hungary—and the level of antisemitism in these two countries was significantly higher than in other European countries. This comparison found that 49.9% of Poles agree with the statement “Jews have too much influence in our country” (compared to 5.6% in the Netherlands, 13.9% in Great Britain, and 19.9% in Portugal) and that 56.9% agree with the statement “Jews in general do not care about anything or anyone but their own kind” (compared to 20.4% in the Netherlands, 22.5% in Great Britain, and 54.2% in Portugal).

In addition, the opinion polls systematically conducted by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) show that the expression of antisemitism in Poland is among the highest in contemporary Europe. In 2007, 2009, and

9. The words “*populus prioris acquisitionis*” (people of the first choice) was translated as “people formerly chosen,” which echoed the pre-Vatican Council theology of supercession.

2012, the ADL surveyed several European countries, including Poland. One of the indices used to assess anti-Jewish attitudes was agreement (indicating “probably true”) to at least three of the following four stereotypical antisemitic statements: “Jews are more loyal to Israel than to this country”; “Jews have too much power in the business world”; “Jews have too much power in international financial markets”; and “Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust.” In 2007, Poland was the second highest, with a 45% rate of agreement, right after Spain (47%), and way above Germany (20%) and France (22%). Similar results were obtained in 2009, when the agreement rate in Poland was similar to that in France (48%) and right after Hungary¹⁰ (47%), and substantially above the agreement level in the UK (10%), Germany (20%), and France (20%). Most recent polls in 10 countries show similar results for Poland (48%), but there is a large change for Hungary (an increase to 63%) and Spain (53%), while the UK (17%) and the Netherlands (10%) remain the least antisemitic in their responses of the studied European countries.

In 2005, another multinational survey on attitudes toward the Holocaust and Jews was conducted for the American Jewish Committee (AJC). Several questions concerned excessive Jewish control: the exact statement used in the questionnaire was: “Now, as in the past, Jews exert too much influence on world events.” Out of the seven countries included in the survey, the highest agreement rate was in Poland (56% agree and somewhat agree with this statement, while 38% disagree). The second country with the highest agreement and lowest disagreement was Austria (45% and 50%, respectively).

Another aspect compared in cross-European studies was attitudes toward the State of Israel. In 2005 and 2007 studies for the ADL, only Spain’s unfavorable attitudes toward Israel exceeded positive ones (31% to 19% in 2005, and 30% to 18% in 2007). In general, attitudes in Poland toward Israel were positive: 23% favorable to 16% unfavorable (25% to 16% in 2005 and 2007, respectively). A similar pattern could be seen in the results of the survey for the AJC: the percentage of people declaring positive (positive and somewhat positive) feelings toward Israel in Poland exceeded those who declared negative feelings for 20%. The difference between positive over negative feelings toward Israel was 7% in Austria and 2% in Sweden.

While acknowledging these differences, it is important to note that comparisons and inferences based on the presented results could be misleading or incorrect for two main reasons. First, any direct comparison

10. Hungary and the UK were included in 2009, and the Netherlands was included in the 2012 study conducted by ADL.

between different countries, cultures, and languages has to be done with great care because of cultural differences—i.e., answers to such questions can be influenced not only by a measured construct but also by characteristic functioning of theoretical construct and interactions with other constructs within every culture (Maehr, 1974). Second, in every one of the cited multinational surveys different countries were selected. For example, the inclusion of Spain and Hungary in the ADL survey project and the omission of those countries in the AJC survey project changes the perceived situation of Poland in such comparisons—from the highest level of antisemitism to the third highest.¹¹

There is considerable diversity in the questions used by different polling agencies to tap the same sector of antisemitic beliefs. A good example of this diversity is the wording of a question measuring traditional antisemitism: ADL surveys ask people “Do you think that Jews are responsible for the death of Christ?,” while other polling agencies in Poland tend to ask “Do modern Jews bear responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?” or “Do you believe that God punishes Jews for killing Jesus?” Based on the wording of the question, different polling agencies estimate the number of traditional antisemites in Poland from 15% (OBOP research institute data) to 46% (ADL) (Winiewski & Bilewicz, in press). Even such a seemingly insignificant issue as the grammatical form of ethnicity used in the study (the adjective “Jewish” vs. the noun “Jews”) significantly affects results obtained in public opinion polls (Graf, Bilewicz, Geschke, & Finell, in press).

Aside from these limitations, the results of the presented studies indicate a stable pattern of relatively high (in comparison to other European countries) social acceptance of antisemitic statements in Poland and relatively positive attitudes toward the State of Israel.

ANTISEMITIC BELIEFS IN POLAND: RESULTS OF SURVEYS

After 1989, several opinion polls, surveys, and longitudinal study projects about antisemitism were introduced. The recent comparison of these empirical studies, performed by Antoni Sulek (2012), showed that there is a positive shift in attitudes toward Jews: after 1989, the number of Poles declaring positive attitudes toward Jews systematically increased. Below, we focus on the specific components of antisemitic beliefs in order to describe the current state of antisemitism in Poland and assess economic and psychological sources of antisemitic biases in Poland.

11. For a detailed review of the limitations of survey methodology, see Smith (1993) and Winiewski and Bilewicz (in press).

Traditional and Modern Forms of Antisemitism in Poland

Polish sociologists in their quantitative research usually distinguish between two basic forms of antisemitic attitudes: traditional and modern antisemitism (Datner-Śpiewak, 1996; Krzemiński, 1996). Traditional antisemitism, or anti-Judaism, is strongly rooted in religious background, related to such concepts as deicide and blood libel. Modern antisemitism has a secular character and is embedded in prewar political ideologies, putting antisemitism within a context of economical struggle and general worldviews. An important element of modern antisemitism is the belief in a Jewish conspiracy (Kofta & Sędek, 2005), which suggests that Jews hold secret agendas, have too much influence over some aspects of life, and work collectively to achieve their goals. This type of thinking can be traced to the 19th century, as in the antisemitic hoax *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

In 2009, the Center for Research on Prejudice at the University of Warsaw conducted a survey on a national representative sample consisting of measures of both of these types of antisemitism (Bilewicz, Winiewski, Kofta, & Wójcik, in press). Factor analyses proved the distinctiveness of these two forms of prejudicial beliefs about Jews. It turned out that traditional antisemitism is currently shared by only a small part of Polish society. Most respondents disagreed with traditionally antisemitic statements: 78.5% participants placed themselves below the midpoint of the averaged 7-point scale (where 1 meant “definitely disagree” and 7 “definitely agree” with a given statement)—meaning that the vast majority of Polish society disagrees with traditionally antisemitic statements. Figure 1 presents percentages of responses to the two statements indicating traditional antisemitism. It is worth noting that although the majority of respondents definitely disagree with these statements, there is still a large part of the population that does not provide any answer.

Contrary to traditional forms of antisemitic attitudes, a belief in Jewish conspiracy appears to be much more widespread in Polish society. In the same study, almost two thirds (64.6%) of participants placed themselves above the midpoint of the belief in Jewish conspiracy scale (consisting of several statements), therefore agreeing at least to some extent with most of the concepts. Figure 2 presents three questions as an illustration of conspiracy theory, which ascribes to Jews collective goals, secret actions, and a high degree of group egoism and solidarity (Kofta & Sedek, 2005).

Most of the results show that traditional forms of antisemitism are clearly relics of the past. Superstitions concerning blood libel and deicide are shared by only a small percent of the Polish population—mostly the ones living outside of big cities and who are less educated and older.

FIGURE 1
 TRADITIONAL ANTISEMITISM.
 RESULTS OF NATIONWIDE STUDY OF 997 ADULT POLES
 Center for Research on Prejudice, 2009

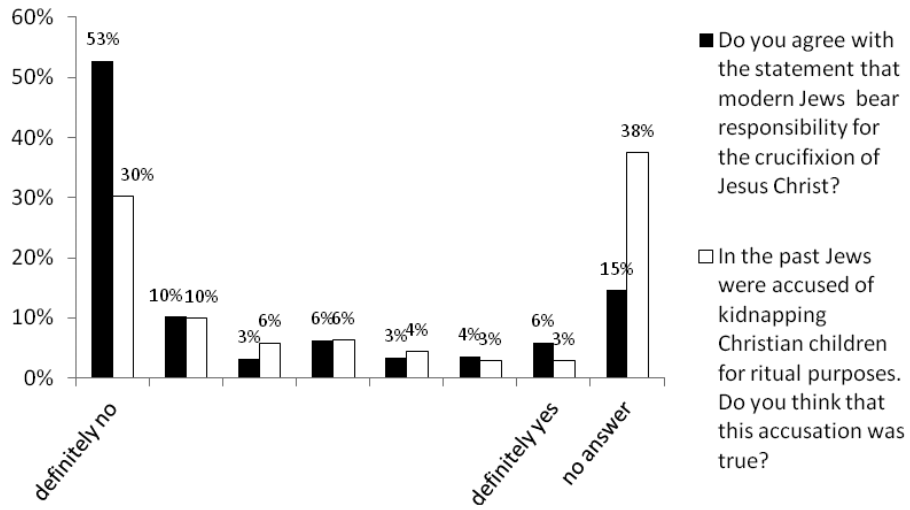
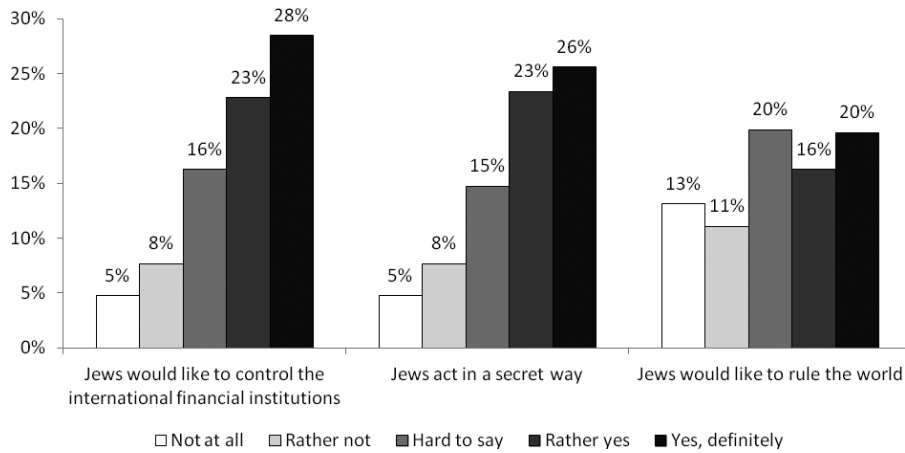


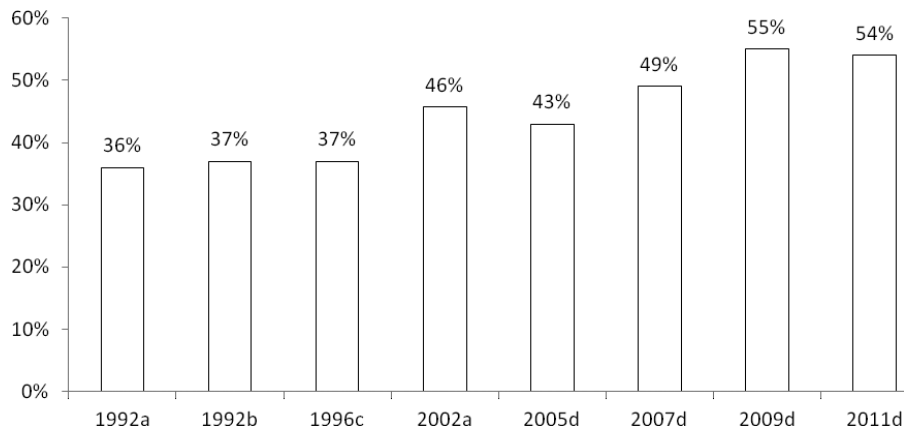
FIGURE 2
 MODERN ANTISEMITISM.
 BELIEF IN JEWISH CONSPIRACY—SELECTED ITEMS
 RESULTS OF A NATIONWIDE STUDY OF 997 ADULT POLES
 Center for Research on Prejudice, 2009



Anthropologists studying these people report that the remnants of such antisemitic imageries still exist—especially in the rural southern and eastern regions of the country (Tokarska-Bakir, 2008), while historical research suggests that in the early postwar years such imageries were even more common (Zaremba, 2007, 2012). On the contrary; opinion poll results show that modern, political antisemitism is still gaining popularity in contemporary Poland. Figure 3 shows this growing trend in its comparison of the results of several studies conducted by sociologists and by public opinion monitoring institutions.

FIGURE 3
COMPARATIVE RESULTS OF SEVERAL NATIONWIDE SURVEYS
CONCERNING PERCEIVED JEWISH INFLUENCE

Do you agree or disagree that Jews in our country have too much influence over economy / Jews have too much power in the business world (AGREE)



Note: a—studies conducted by PBS for Ireneusz Krzemiński; b—study conducted by Demoskop for AJC; c—study conducted by CBOS; d—studies conducted by OBOP for ADL.

The results show that since the time of the system transition at the beginning of the 1990s, there is a stable and growing trend in support of the theory of the excessive influence of Jews in Poland.

Post-Holocaust Antisemitism

Holocaust-related forms of antisemitism have been extensively studied in Poland. On the one hand, debates about the Holocaust, Polish complicity, and crimes against Jews have obviously changed social consciousness. Sur-

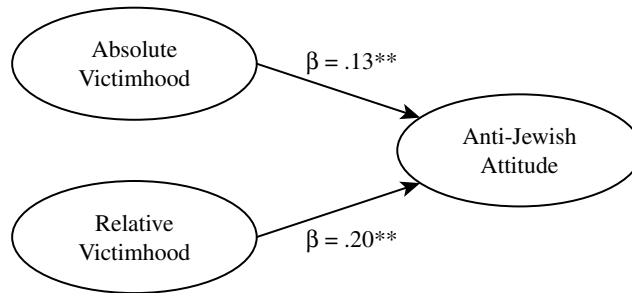
vey results show a slightly delayed increase of knowledge about crimes committed by Poles on Jews—after dominant denial (observed immediately after the publication of books by Jan T. Gross) comes the acknowledgement. This effect resembles the widely known “*sleeper effect*”: with the passage of time, people remember the content of a given message while forgetting about the source that they perceived initially as not credible (Hovland, Lumsdaine, & Sheffield, 1949; Kumkale & Albarracín, 2004).

On the other hand, knowledge about Holocaust history is not increasing. Our recent comparison of survey results after 1989 (Winiewski & Bilewicz, *in press*) showed that the number of Poles who acknowledge Jews as the highest number of victims of the wartime period systematically decreases (46% in 1992, 38% in 2002, and 28% in 2010), while the number of Poles who think that ethnic Poles were the highest number of victims of the wartime period increases (6% in 1992, 9% in 2002, 15% in 2010). This mounting ignorance could possibly be attributed to the demographic process: the generation of people who remember the Nazi occupation of Poland is disappearing from Polish society.

At the same time, this new “*victimhood competition*” seems to fuel antisemitic resentments. It is widely known in psychology that competitive victimhood is often used as the justification for ethnic conflict and animosities. Competitive victimhood reduces trust and empathy toward outgroup members (Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008); our recent analysis, based on a nationwide study of Polish adult citizens from 2002, confirmed that prediction (Bilewicz & Stefaniak, *in press*). Poles who consider their nation an eternal victim of aggression from other nations more often share antisemitic attitudes. What is more important—even controlling for such absolute sense of victimhood—is that relative victimhood (the perception that Poles were more victimized in the past than the Jews) also significantly predicts anti-Jewish attitudes (see Figure 4).

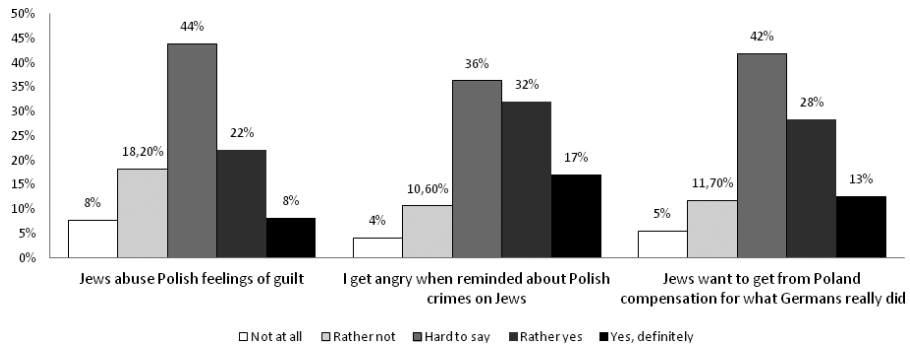
Another aspect of history-related anti-Jewish prejudice is the idea of secondary antisemitism (Bergmann, 2006; Imhoff & Banse, 2009). This notion, adapted from German sociological and social psychological literature, explains the most subtle and “*politically correct*” version of antisemitism, one that focuses on denial of antisemitism and negating the historical significance of the Holocaust. Secondary antisemites are willing to forget about the Holocaust and actively oppose any compensations or restitution to the victims. In a recent study of a large sample of young Poles (Figure 5), we found that more participants agreed with the statements belonging to the secondary antisemitism scale than disagreed with them. More than 30% of young Poles think that Jews abuse Polish feelings of guilt and more than 40% believe that Jews would like to receive a compensation from Poland

FIGURE 4
 ABSOLUTE VICTIMHOOD (POLES AS UNIQUE VICTIMS) AND RELATIVE
 VICTIMHOOD (POLES MORE VICTIMIZED THAN JEWS) AS
 PREDICTORS OF ANTI-JEWISH ATTITUDES



From a nationwide representative sample study in 2002. Linear regression. $R^2 = .06$, $p < .01$ (Bilewicz & Stefaniak, in press).

FIGURE 5
 POST-HOLOCAUST ANTISEMITISM
 NATIONWIDE STUDY OF N566 YOUNG POLES (AGES 15-35)
 Center for Research on Prejudice, 2011



for the Nazi atrocities. This historical fear is closely linked to negative, discriminatory intentions toward Jews.

An additional aspect of postwar antisemitism is an appreciation of the fact that the Holocaust ended the thousand-year existence of a large Jewish community in Poland. In a recent survey (Kucia, 2010), conducted on a nationwide representative sample of adult Poles, 19.6% of the respondents agreed with the following statement: “Although the Holocaust was a great tragedy, one good thing about it is that there are no more Jews living cur-

rently in Poland.” This shows that not only the Holocaust denial, but also the specific evaluation of the Holocaust, might be used as a tool to communicate antisemitic beliefs or attitudes.

How Economic Deprivation Affects Antisemitic Beliefs in Poland

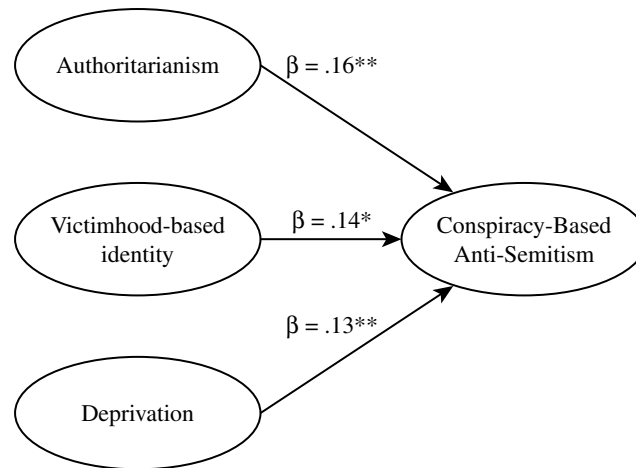
The idea that prejudice is caused by shared economic frustration or deprivation can be traced back to the classic formulations of a scapegoat theory of prejudice, built predominantly on psychoanalytic and frustration-aggression theories (Glick, 2002; Zawadzki, 1948). The interest in this concept was recently revived by social psychologists seeking an explanation for such diverse crimes as gay bashing in the United States and prewar antisemitic acts in the Weimar Republic (Glick, 2002; Green, Glaser, & Rich, 1998). According to the ideological model of prejudice Glick proposed, widespread frustration motivates people to seek an explanation. Antisemitic ideology provides such an explanation and becomes particularly attractive in times of economic crisis. Finally, in order to restore control and economic power, the deprived majority groups engage in acts of cruelty and discrimination against a minority that is depicted as highly competent and lacking any warmth or morality. Taking historical situations into account, researchers observed that the economic crises creating a shared feeling of deprivation finally led to acts of genocide, mainly because peoples' basic needs were being frustrated (Glick, 2002).

The ideological model of antisemitism creates a plausible explanation for numerous historical situations in which Jews were blamed for the majority group's failures. On the other hand, several studies found that the situational factors, such as economic crises, are much weaker predictors of antisemitism than the personality factors, such as authoritarianism or nationalism (Bergmann, 2008). Archival material studies on the hate crimes in New York City found no evidence for the link between poor economic conditions and prejudicial behavior (Green et al., 1998), and none in which the socially shared economic frustration in post-Soviet Russia did not result with the rise of antisemitic attitudes or incidents, as one could suppose on the basis of the scapegoat theory of prejudice (Gibson & Howard, 2007). The economic deprivation after the systemic transition in Eastern Europe did not increase the belief in Jewish control in Ukraine, although it increased beliefs in Jewish control in Poland (Bilewicz & Krzemiński, 2010).

In a survey from 2009 (Figure 6) conducted by the Center for Research on Prejudice (Bilewicz et al., in press) all those predictors were measured, as well as several measures of antisemitic attitudes. The results of regression analyses showed that a prejudiced personality (authoritarianism), an

identity related to victimization, and a sense of economic deprivation are three independent and significant predictors of developing a conspiracy stereotype of Jews.

FIGURE 6
AUTHORITARIANISM, DEPRIVATION, VICTIMHOOD, AND
CONSPIRATORIAL ANTISEMITISM



Result of multiple linear regression, $R^2 = .09$, $p < .01$.

This analysis suggests that in order to explain contemporary forms of antisemitism in Poland, one has to consider both psychological factors (such as authoritarian forms of personality or victimhood-based identity), and economic causes (such as difficult life conditions that lead to a sense of relative deprivation). Most such analyses suggest that the stereotype of Jews as conspiring against Poland serves as a scapegoat-defining ideology in post-1989 Poland.

SUMMARY: THE FUTURE OF ANTISEMITISM IN POLAND?

Overall, the case of Poland is an example of the endurance of antisemitism without Jews—or at least with a scant Jewish population (Lendvai, 1971). This leads to an interesting question about the psychological reasons of such long-enduring prejudice without an object. Based on the research and observation of political and social life in Poland, one could say that antisemitism plays several important functions in contemporary Polish society: it is one of the informal tenets of religiosity in current Poland; it defines a scapegoat for the problems and troubles of the post-transition

period; it allows the denial of responsibility for historical crimes toward Jews; and it supports perceiving the ingroup as the main victim of the Nazi occupation. These functions clearly allow antisemitism to exist—even without any significant Jewish presence in the country. At the same time, however, there is no link between such antisemitism and attitudes toward contemporary Israel. In this case, Polish society is far less anti-Jewish than many other European societies; in addition, the political representation of antisemitic prejudice is very limited—most politicians who were actively using antisemitic rhetoric are currently out of political life or at the margins of mainstream political debate.

The future of antisemitism in Poland could be severely affected by the development of any difficult economic or political situation in the country. Acknowledging the deprivation as one of the key predictors of antisemitism in Poland, one could suppose that any potential future economic crisis could reinforce antisemitic prejudice and put it in the focus of country's political life. Otherwise, without such a precipitating condition as an economic or political crisis, the antisemitic resentments might disappear, as most forms of anti-Jewish attitudes are negatively correlated with age—younger and more educated people cease to believe in their parents' and grandparents' stereotypical narratives about Jews being responsible for economic problems, politics, or even deicide. Thus, the development of antisemitism in Poland is critically dependent on the future of the Polish economy and of Polish politics.

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