The Antisemitism Measurement Project: Creating a Unitary and Standardized Tool

Panel at the 6th Global Forum For Combating Antisemitism

Jerusalem
21 March 2018, 5 Nisan 5778
11:00 – 12:30

Evaluating Contemporary Antisemitism:
Framing Collaborative Conceptualization, Measurement and Action
PANEL: 6th GLOBAL FORUM FOR COMBATTING ANTISEMITISM – 2018

One purpose of this panel is to present a draft unifying framework for collating what we know – and do not know – about contemporary antisemitism. The panel will address the lack of consistent terminology and focus; the need for a forward-leaning, policy-oriented posture to guide information gathering by illuminating what we still must learn; enhanced participation by more communities potentially under threat; and the need to unify, organize and disseminate the findings of those working in these fields. Current assessment of antisemitic acts and speech is a patchwork even within single states. There is need for collaboration, wide-spread engagement and the ability to be mutually supportive to integrate and leverage available knowledge. The panel will include the principal authors of a draft document proposing such a framework as well as panelists who will address gaps and potential additions and modifications.

A second purpose is to stimulate a process through which a truly collaborative global effort by scholars, researchers, community leaders and both national and international authorities may design and implement the outlined approach and begin to reap its benefits. The panel will address the practical steps for moving forward more broadly with an active agenda for wide collaboration.

- Moderator: **Charles Small**
- Panelist 1: **Steven W. Popper**: "Toward a Unified Approach for Assessing and Resisting Antisemitism: Roadmap for Action"
  Abstract. What is required for an effective approach to understanding and confronting modern antisemitism? This talk presents some of the problems we currently face, particularly the disjointedness between knowledge gathering and policy needs. It will then outline a five-task enterprise for achieving better collaboration, more effective use of existing knowledge, wider engagement, closer collaboration in determining and gathering what further data are needed, and placing the knowledge creation effort more firmly in synchrony with the needs of communities and policy makers.

- Panelist 2: **Dan A. Shalmon**: "Organizing and Populating a Matrix for Collating Knowledge of Antisemitism"
  Abstract. This presentation provides an overview of the knowledge structure for framing a wide-spread effort in aggregating and leveraging knowledge about antisemitism. It addresses some of the practical issues of data gathering, collation, data base structure and access.

- Panelist 3: **Sergio DellaPergola**, "What Does the Matrix Get Right – and Wrong?"
  Abstract. Are the structure and process being proposed sufficient for the purpose? How can it be better framed to take into account existing effort, present obstacles and future needs?

- Panelist 4: **Yogev Karasenty**: "Next Steps: A Work Plan"
  Abstract. This provided a policy maker's view of what needs to be done and in what manner it should be carried out, not only to realize the vision outlined in the prior talks, but to make the results accessible and of value to those who most need the information.

2

Executive Summary

If rising antisemitism has become a serious problem for Jewish communities, then it deserves to be taken seriously.

This may appear a curious statement. There are academics and organizations working to record, deter and help prepare for antisemitic acts and speech. Some of their efforts are localized while others have a wider geographic spread. Their annual reports, specific studies and programs of education and outreach are often of excellent quality and represent most of what we know of current antisemitism.

The core paper in this collection and the individual contributions found in its appendix are not launching yet another measurement initiative. Rather, current efforts should not only continue but be strengthened. This collection discusses how this might be achieved.

What we lack is a unifying framework for assessing what we know collectively (and what we don't know.) We lack **consistent terminology** and focus; a forward-leaning, **policy-oriented** posture to guide information gathering by illuminating what we still need to learn; **greater participation** by more communities potentially under threat; and a means to **unify, organize and disseminate** the work of those working in these fields. As a result, our assessment of antisemitic words and acts is a patchwork even within single countries.

What is required is collaboration, wide-spread engagement and the ability to be mutually supportive and leverage the knowledge that we gain. Surely, the internationalization of antisemitic discourse and instigation itself would be reason enough to do so. But such wide-ranging collaboration would also reflect similar phenomena of global collaboration in other disciplines as well. As in such instances, our call is not to create a monolith or monopolization of measurement activity but rather for a framework that will amplify, unify and disseminate the work of diverse contributors to a common goal: the better understanding and resisting of antisemitism in its modern forms.

An Agenda for Analyzing and Resisting Antisemitism

The core paper seeks to make two contributions toward more useful and effective understanding of and posture toward antisemitism. The first of these is to offer a draft of a consistent framework for categorization of the knowledge we possess in all forms and to characterize its empirical bases as well as potential value. Among other things, doing so also would clarify what knowledge we lack and why it would be valuable to collect and assess.

We argue the need for explicit discussion of what we wish to know and why. Rather than measuring that which is relatively easy to measure, we advocate discussions designed to determine from a strategic and policy-oriented perspective what we ought to be seeking to measure. State leaders, such as in France,[1] have come to recognize in antisemitism a threat to their entire society through its effects on Jewish communities. The phenomenon of antisemitism is not unrelated to the general rise in racism, bias and radicalized violence. But within its microcosm, the fundamental interests threatened include:

- Physical security of Jews as individuals;
- Physical security of Jewish communities;
- Ability to exercise individual rights of citizenship such as freedom of movement and an absence of other *de jure* or *de facto* restrictions;
- Ability to communicate political beliefs and engage in political activities;

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[1] https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/01/french-prime-minister-warns-if-jews-flee-the-republic-will-be-judged-a-failure/384410/

- Ability to establish and maintain Jewish communal institutions;
- Ability to engage freely in legal economic activities;
- Ability to engage in Jewish religious rites and practices.
- For those interested, the right to engage in nurturing and preserving Jewish national sovereignty as expressed through the State of Israel.

From these specific values under threat we derive a framework for measurement with four main components. The first two include measures of antisemitic **attitudes** and antisemitic **actions**, currently the most common focus for measurement of antisemitic incidents and phenomena. To this we add a third component, measuring **direct effects** on Jewish individuals and communities. The final component is seeking to measure potentially powerful effects on the **attitudes and sense of well-being** of Jews.

The parallelism among these four sets of phenomena is purposeful. "Balancing the books" provides cross-checks as well as indications of what important bodies of data or reporting are being missed and so is a guard against the common trap of analyzing only what is most readily measured – looking for the proverbial lost keys under the lamppost -- and not what a consideration of community interests would suggest <u>ought</u> to be measured.

MAIN ELEMENTS OF MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK			Measures	Publication	Definition	How derived?	Regularity of appearance	Localities covered
1. Antisemitic Attitudes								
	General sentiment							
	Specific ideas about Jews							
	Characteristics of respondents:							
2. Antisemitic Acts								
Expression								
	Local target audience							
	Narrow-focused audience							
	Broad target audience							
Vandalism								
	Graffiti in a public place							
	Graffiti on a Jewish property							
	Damage to a Jewish property							
	Arson							
Physical contact with persons								
	Physical harassment							
	Physical injury							
	Murder							
Political								
	Political demonstrations							
	Exclusionary practices and policies							
3. Effects on Jewish Communities								
	Behavioral effect of intimidation and exclusions							
	Property damage							
Direct and indirect	Indirect economic effect / loss of opportunity							
	Cost of physical injury							
	Indirect costs of health consequences							
	Deaths							
	Reports to civil authorities							
Reactions	Direct countering actions							
	Political and legislative initiatives							
4. Jewish Community Attitudes and Affect								
	Perception of manifestations of anti-Semitism							
	Sense of safety and security							
	Effect on 2nd & 3rd gen. Shoah survivors							
	Experience of violence against Jews							
	Experiences of discrimination							
	Rights awareness							
	Comfort with Jewish identification							
	Happiness and sense of personal efficacy							

The figure above is a conceptualization of a framework for measurement that proceeds from policy considerations but also incorporates needs and concerns of researchers as well as needs of governmental bodies and law enforcement authorities that represent and protect Jewish communities.[2] Within the four main categories appear both those factors we would ideally wish to measure as well as those direct measures and proxies that are actually utilized, or may be utilized, to do so. In generating these lists, the holes in the resulting matrix are at least as important as those measures that placed within the cells of the matrix that are already in practice.

Who is measuring is at least as an important consideration as what is being measured. We lack consistency allowing comparisons between data collected in different countries, sometimes in comparing results obtained by the same organization in different years. But another vexing problem is the lack of information from many Jewish communities currently or potentially at most risk. The framework may therefore be also seen as a guide, if not to best practice, than of the range of opportunities for measurement that may be potentially available to such communities. The existence of a cross-national collaboration engaging in the practicalities of measurement may serve as a catalyst for broadening the geographic scope of measurement activities.

Roadmap for Action

The core paper outlines how we might provide ourselves with better short-term and longitudinal information on antisemitism, find ways to align and standardize information and data collection as well as leverage best practices in some countries to push others, and ground measurement activities the better to engage governments and policy actors in proper data collection and partnering with Jewish communities on security.

The second intention of the core paper is in many ways more challenging. That is to spur a collaborative effort of building a meaningful, expansive and dynamic knowledge base of service to all. We see five different projects for engaging diverse contributors.

Framing and Conceptualization

As with any other policy issue, effort spent in framing the context is rarely time wasted. We see three principal tasks for working groups to pursue.

Definitions. How do definitions differ among countries, within international organizations and in key cultural institutions such as universities, media and so forth? A common taxonomy could make cross-country and multi-year comparisons more meaningful but is not easy to address. This is one of the most crucial tasks for a framing project.

Perspectives. Framing around too narrow a perspective may be to turn a blind eye to the importance of antisemitism's consequences. What, for example, do we need to understand about "antisemitism without Jews" in the worlds' most dynamic region, East Asia? What are the implications of recrudescent antisemitism for non-Jews? Such questions widen the scope but also provide a more comprehensive lens and potentially broaden the base for collaborative effort.

Dynamics. A conceptual framework must take cognizance that the relationships between different categories are not static and insulated but rather dynamic and interconnected. When do antisemitic

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[2] The full discussion may be found in S. Popper, D. Shalon, C. A. Small, M. Tabory, T. Wolfson, "Evaluating Contemporary Antisemitism: A Framework for Collaborative Conceptualization, Measurement and Assessment", Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy working paper, (March 2018). This notional structure would also add further columns reporting metadata associated with any given measure as well as numerous rows with each listed measure appearing separately underneath the relevant heading shown in the first column.

attitudes become precursors of antisemitic acts? To think in terms of dynamics, transitions and lines of mutual influence is to prepare the way for policy thinking.

Measurement Design

A team of experts representing the communities of research, governance and practice should produce a detailed structure of measures within the draft framework to guide those who contribute to and make use of such information. This may proceed in a manner combining the best aspects of top-down and bottom-up design by proceeding from the end backwards: initially identify questions and actions we wish to inform. Objectives, rather than availability of data or ease in construction of indicators should guide the design. Attention should also be directed towards framing best standards for practice in the design and administration of different instruments such as surveys and focus groups, data and reporting lags and other key issues.

Data Collation and Database Design

Our research community needs infrastructure: data repositories, data-sharing tools and a set of standards for database design. Data collectors and analysts should have common identifiers for geographic units, formats for dates and times, file formats, etc. Choices must be made for data warehousing. A collective commitment to identifying and pursuing sufficient funding to maintain a data collation and access system will be needed.

New Data Acquisition, Characterization and Analysis

Of the five projects, this is the most advanced, widely conducted and requires the least agenda-setting and integration. Yet, the other four projects create the potential for mutual awareness and visibility on how individual research and data collection efforts might interact. Greater visibility could bring new researchers and organizations into the field. The value and importance of this joint enterprise would be made more palpable. Finally, the increased visibility and credibility derived from interdisciplinary and international coordination might also enhance support for specific projects.

Building a Community of Practice

A principal objective should be to encourage and support greater engagement within and by communities. Only a handful of countries monitor and collect data at a national level or publish such information. It should be a goal to expand the scope of measurement practice already performed in the US, France and the UK and improve practice in Jewish communities (Germany, Hungary, Ukraine, etc.) where monitoring is more intermittent. It will take skill and forethought to create such community efforts.

Next Steps: A Work Plan

Where and how to begin? We propose a work plan for the initial stages of the effort. It would involve first gathering a relatively small, representative group of researchers but would have as one of its objectives the expansion of this core group as early and as rapidly as feasible.

Task 1: Consultation defining first set of measures. The projects of **Framing and Conceptualization** and **Measurement Design** should involve active circulation of drafts to potentially interested parties, publication, workshops and briefings to collect a diversity of input and reactions at an early stage.

Task 2: Test application of measures against available data. Populate the emerging framework with data collected in test cases to inventory what is available, demonstrate the framework, and identify how to improve analysis.

6

Task 3: Select indicators and recommend applications. The first two tasks will have developed only the raw material for research and policy analytical tool-building. One of its uses may be to select from among the measures a few that may be designated as indicators—those data series that may convey important information on current and emerging trends. Creating a dashboard would bridge the realm of analysis with that of application which the proposed effort is intended to enable.

This core paper is by no means the last word. It is intended as the beginning of a process that would prove both broad and deep.

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