

## **Cultural Roots of Negative Outgroup Attitudes: Theory and Evidence from the Reactivation of Antisemitic Stereotypes in Germany**

(joined work with Eylem Kanol, WZB)

Negative outgroup attitudes are frequently attributed to perceptions of competition or threat. We identify an alternative source: cultural scripts---interconnected networks of meanings linking particular group identities to negatively-connoted phenomena. Empirical evidence comes from three studies on the reactivation of the cultural script of traditional antisemitism in Germany. We isolate the script through automated analysis of a corpus of antisemitic texts (n=172). Using survey data (n=17,800) collected during the Covid-19 pandemic, we document an increase in antisemitism, but only among Christian believers. We argue that this is because the pandemic activated the cultural script, which links Judaism to the spread of disease, among this group only. Using a concept association task (n=2,000), we demonstrate the presence of the cultural script in the minds of Christian believers. We rule out alternative explanations, especially right-wing ideology. Our work demonstrates the deep cultural roots of negative outgroup attitudes and the mechanisms behind their activation.