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Antisemitism and pro-Palestine protests at German universities: Survey results among students and university rectorates

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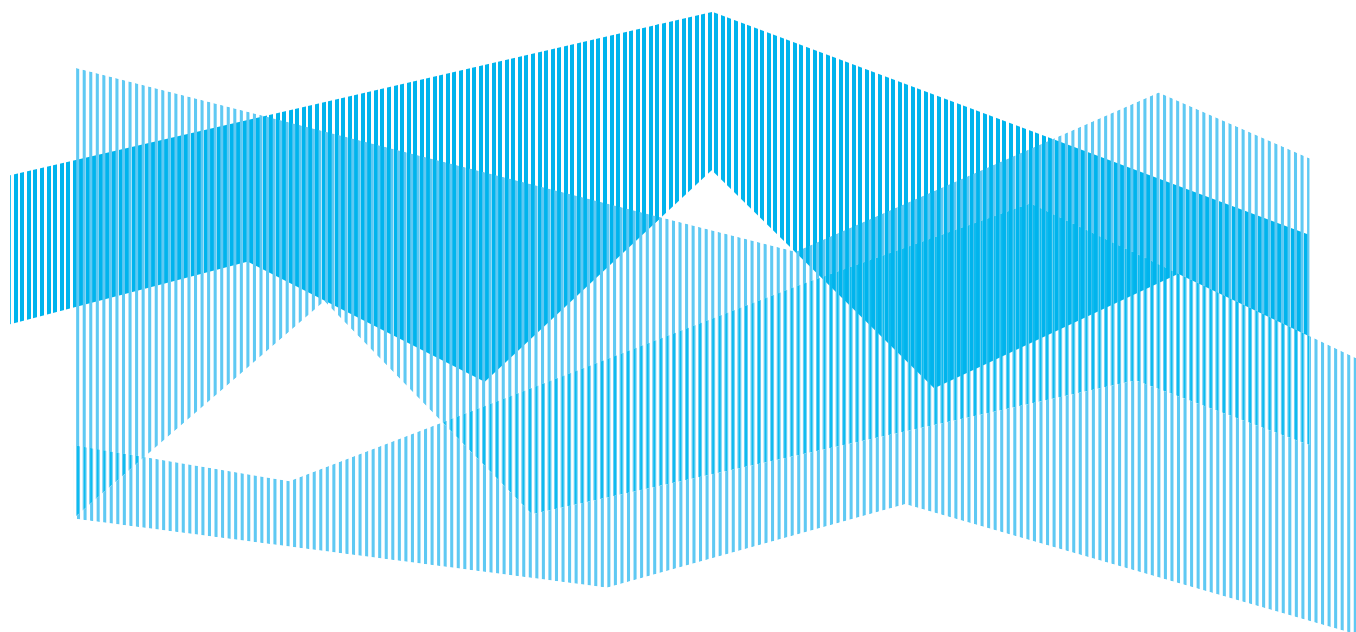
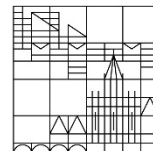
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Antisemitism and Pro-Palestine Protests at German Universities: Survey Results Among Students and University Rectorates

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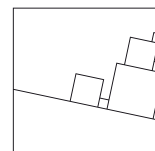
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GEFÖRDERT VOM



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Antisemitism and Pro-Palestine Protests at German Universities: Survey Results Among Students and University Rectorates

April 2025

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Abstract: In Germany, pro-Palestine protests in the form of camps and institute occupations have occurred and continue to take place at universities. Antisemitic incidents have been reported at many of these protests. Following the initial data collection in December 2023, this report provides a new, focused, up-to-date assessment of the opinion climate in the context of the Middle East conflict and antisemitic attitudes at German universities. Exactly one year after the first report, the results of two recent surveys by the Higher Education Research Unit (AG Hochschulforschung) are summarized here. First, based on a large online survey conducted in December 2024 with over 1,800 students, we report on these students' assessments of the conflict and antisemitic tendencies among them. This follows on directly from the previous study mentioned earlier (Hinz et al., 2024), enabling us to describe possible changes compared to last year. In some places, we also examine the assessments and attitudes of students compared to a sample from the general population. Second, we present the results of a simultaneous survey of university rectorates on antisemitic incidents and the universities' reactions to these incidents. At the invitation of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), a total of 94 university management teams took part in this separate online survey.

The results indicate that universities have been strongly affected by antisemitic incidents and that antisemitic resentment remains at a constant level. A high level of vigilance is still required, particularly with regards to Israel-related antisemitism.

Summary

1. Results of the student and general population survey

Declining emotional concern and increasing criticism of Israel's military deployment since 2023

- In Germany, the war in the Middle East continues to affect students and the general population. However, emotional concern has declined compared to the previous year (down by around twelve percentage points among students, from 59% to 47%). Similarly, concerns expressed about the civilian population and the Hamas hostages are declining among students and respondents from the general population: among students, this has declined by nine percentage points (59% to 50%) for the Israeli civilian population; by three percentage points (70% to 67%) for the Palestinian civilian population; and by six percentage points (63% to 57%) for the hostages. However, students are currently expressing more concern about the conflict spreading to neighboring countries than a year ago, with such concerns up seven percentage points from 57% to 64%.
- The terrorist attack by Hamas continues to be condemned by a large majority of students and respondents from the general public (around 70%). However, criticism of Israel's military actions has increased (by twelve percentage points among students, from 37% to 49%). This is accompanied by the fact that students frequently support an international arrest warrant being taken out against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for war crimes from the International Criminal Court (ICC) and an indictment of Israel for genocide before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (58% and 50%, respectively). From the students' perspective, the climate of opinion at universities has shifted towards a rejection of Israel's military deployment.

Antisemitic attitudes now less pronounced among students than the general population

- We distinguish between three categories of antisemitic attitudes: not antisemitic; tendentially antisemitic; and strongly antisemitic. These categories were formed according to the respondents' agreement with antisemitic statements set out in relevant research. Respondents who, on average, tend to fully agree with these statements are considered to have *pronounced* antisemitic attitudes. There has been hardly any change in general antisemitism compared to 2023: it remains significantly higher among the general population than among students (markedly antisemitic: 20% to 6%). There was also no change in Israel-related antisemitism among students (markedly antisemitic: from 8% to 7%) compared to the previous year, while there was a slight increase among the general population (markedly antisemitic: from 8% to 10%).

Conspiracy thinking and antisemitism together

- Conspiracy thinking is significantly more common among the general population than among students (pronounced: 15% compared to 5%) and is clearly linked to antisemitic attitudes.
- As in the survey conducted a year ago, antisemitic attitudes clearly go hand in hand with Muslim religious affiliation and religious fundamentalism. In particular, the connection between Muslim religious affiliation and antisemitic attitudes is partly determined by the consideration of conspiracy thinking. In other words, antisemitic attitudes are exhibited above all by those respondents who agree with conspiracy myths.

Around a fifth of students agree with statements describing Israel as an apartheid state

- Just under a fifth of students agree with statements describing Israel an apartheid state or an imperialist ally of the USA, and over a quarter believe that Israel has been striving for aggressive expansion since the founding of the state.

Only a few respondents reject Israel's right to exist

- Only a few of the students surveyed rejected Israel's right to exist (5%). This figure is significantly lower than in a similar survey of college students conducted in the USA in 2024 (17%). Among the German population, this proportion is also very low (6%). However, many were unsure or did not wish to express an opinion (around 40% to 50%). The rejection of Israel's right to exist is often accompanied by antisemitic attitudes.

Students have rarely noticed antisemitic acts at universities

- In the current survey, 13% of students reported antisemitic incidents at their university, compared to 11% in the December 2023 survey. Few have observed pro-Palestinian slogans and even fewer have noticed Hamas symbols.
- Only a few students were aware of measures taken by the university against antisemitic attitudes or actions, and a large proportion were unable to say anything about them. Around a fifth reported having seen information events on Israel-related antisemitism, and just under a sixth reported the appointment of an antisemitism officer.

Moderate student participation in university protests

- Two thirds of the students surveyed have not taken part in protests or solidarity actions and are also not prepared to take part in protest actions.
- Only small groups of pro-Palestine and pro-Israel students (4% and 1%, respectively) state that they take part in protests.
- There are three times as many active pro-Palestine students as there are pro-Israel students.

Students advocate for non-violent, dialog-oriented protest camps

- Students are strongly opposed to protest camps that are likely to result in physical or verbal violence against Jewish students. They also reject camps that are banned by the university management or dominated by activists from outside the university.
- Approval of camps increases when Israel's right to exist is not in question and discussions are held with Jewish students.
- In addition to students who are emotionally moved by the Middle East conflict, it is primarily students with antisemitic attitudes towards Israel who support protest camps at universities. For the latter group, the use of violence and the questioning of Israel's right to exist play no role in their rejection of the camp.

2. Results of the survey of university rectorates

Pro-Palestine protests and antisemitic incidents are more frequent at universities than at universities of applied sciences (UAS)

- Around 40% of the 94 university rectorates surveyed reported pro-Palestine protests or antisemitic incidents, universities reported these more frequently (65% and 49% respectively) than UAS, 25% and 33% respectively).

- Antisemitic incidents most frequently take the form of graffiti, stickers, or posters put up on the university campus and antisemitic slogans at demonstrations. Occasionally, there have been verbal and even physical attacks on Jewish students or verbal attacks on Jewish lecturers.
- At five of the 94 universities surveyed, people were expelled from the university campus due to antisemitic incidents. In individual cases, students were threatened with deregistration. There were also isolated cases of legal consequences for members of academic staff.

Many universities adopt measures against antisemitism

- Some 85% of the universities surveyed have a contact point for combating antisemitism (51% have an antisemitism officer and 34% have another contact point). All the universities surveyed at which antisemitic incidents were reported have a contact point.
- Two thirds of the universities surveyed organized information events, discussion rounds, or exhibitions on the topic of antisemitism; around half published statements by the university rectorate on the university-specific situation; and some universities have adapted their house rules or anti-discrimination guidelines (7%) or organized awareness training for teaching staff and students (7%).
- According to the university rectorates surveyed, groups of pro-Palestine or Jewish students are significantly more active at 40% of universities than at UAS (24% and 20% of UAS report such groups). According to the university rectorates, groups of Jewish lecturers are significantly less active than student groups (at 8% of all the universities surveyed).
- A comparison of the student survey with the survey of university rectorates shows that students underestimate the impact of antisemitism on universities: students underestimate the extent to which universities are affected by antisemitic incidents as well as the universities' reactions. It is possible that the universities do not communicate openly about these incidents.

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Introduction

Following the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, repeated antisemitic incidents and pro-Palestine protests took place in Germany, particularly at universities. These developments led to considerable uncertainty among Jewish students (American Jewish Committee (AJC) Berlin Ramer Institute for German-Jewish Relations), 2025). In response, the Bundestag passed a resolution against antisemitism at universities (Deutscher Bundestag, 2024) requiring universities to take consistent action against antisemitic incidents and emphasizing their responsibility to ensure a non-discriminatory environment. However, the resolution has also been met with criticism in university circles and the broader public (Forschung und Lehre, 2024; German Rectors' Conference (HRK), 2024). Such criticisms stem from fears that the resolution would constitute state intervention in academic discourse, for example on the definition of antisemitism, and that this should be left to academics alone.

In addition to the parliamentary resolution, the Competence Network University Antisemitism Prevention, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), was launched. This three-year project of the HRK aims to support universities in the fight against antisemitism. It focuses on the networking and promotion of antisemitism officers as well as the exchange of knowledge on antisemitism prevention and research. The aim is to develop effective measures against antisemitism and to raise awareness of antisemitic attitudes and stereotypes within the university community (BMBF, 2025).

While measures to combat antisemitism at universities are currently being developed in Germany, international studies indicate that there has been a dynamic development at universities since the outbreak of the conflict in October 2023. Several studies, particularly from the US, report a decline in antisemitic incidents compared to 2023 (Community Security Trust (CST), 2024; Rowsell, 2025). Nevertheless, the number of antisemitic incidents in the university context in the US remains very high compared to the situation before October 2023 (CST, 2024). Jewish students often feel unsafe on campus and complain about a lack of protection from their universities (Anti-Defamation League (ADL), 2025). In addition, several lawsuits have been filed against universities accused of fostering a hostile campus climate towards Jewish students (Larkin, 2024). According to the *Campus Antisemitism Report*, only a fraction of US higher education institutions have taken adequate administrative action to mitigate hostile campus climates and protect Jewish life (ADL, 2025). At the same time, the rhetoric on campus has intensified: compared to 2023, the language is now more extreme, direct, and blatantly hostile toward Jews (Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM), 2024). At the same time, among students in the US, the willingness to protest remains high, especially against Israel's military actions. Many students support the occupation of university campuses and criticize orders to evacuate protest camps. In addition, one in five students does not recognize Israel's right to exist (USNEWS, 2024).

In Germany, only a few empirical studies have been conducted on antisemitism at universities (Galle et al., 2024; Hinz et al., 2024; Sosada, 2025; AJC, 2025). Most studies cannot make use of current data. Therefore, our first study among students on the opinion climate relating to the situation in Israel and the Gaza Strip and the impact of the war on German universities was published in March 2024 (Hinz et al., 2024). This study was based on reliable data collected on the climate of opinion in a short space of time and informed the discussion on universities as a resonance space for antisemitism. By March 12, 2025, the working paper of the Higher Education Research Unit (AG Hochschulforschung) (published a year ago) had been downloaded approximately 1,600 times, and the results of the study have been included in the public discussion about rising antisemitism in Germany. With the support of the BMBF, the dynamic situation at universities is now to be examined a second time after twelve months. In addition to antisemitic attitudes and incidents, the climate of opinion on the conflict at German universities again came under focus, and is comparable to the situation in 2023. Furthermore, a separate

section is dedicated to protest camps, focusing on why students support this form of protest. In addition to the first study, we also examined the connection between antisemitism and conspiracy thinking, which also has some supporters at universities.

As students sometimes do not (or cannot) assess how the university environment is affected by antisemitic incidents, we also surveyed university rectorates on incidents and administrative measures with the organizational support of the HRK in order to obtain a more accurate picture of antisemitic incidents and university reactions. Taken together with the results of the student survey, this establishes a sound, comprehensive basis for describing current developments at German universities.¹

Data sources: students, the general population, and university rectorates

This report is based on data from an online survey of students. As in the previous study conducted a year ago, students who registered with an access panel were invited to participate. To achieve the best possible comparability, the same method was used to recruit respondents as in December 2023. The students surveyed and the survey participants from the general population were recruited via the panel operator *Bilendi*. The survey was hosted on a server at the University of Konstanz's surveyLAB.

The main difference compared to a randomly selected survey of students via the universities (Beuße et al., 2022) relates to how they were recruited. Online access panels do not involve any probability-based selection of students, and due to the lack of a central student register, students could only be drawn via a multi-stage selection process at many university locations, involving a very high level of administrative effort. Instead, there is a sample of students who have already confirmed that they are willing to be surveyed. As the planning, implementation, and analysis times of the rapid response study are fast, the information requirements can be met much faster than in projects involving a multi-stage, Germany-wide random selection process. The evaluations of several survey studies with the same design (Hinz et al., 2023; Hinz et al., 2024; Marczuk et al., 2025) show that the distributions of important student characteristics are similar to probability-based, university-recruited survey studies. The data from this student survey provide a good representation of subjects and university locations (federal states). In sum, this strategy yields the best possible approximation of representativeness with regards to personal grouping characteristics.

From December 9, 2024 to January 7, 2025, a total of **1,885 students** took part in the survey. Data sets of dubious quality were excluded beforehand. To ensure that the data from the student survey could be compared as meaningfully as possible, an additional **2,031 people from** the same panel operator's database were surveyed; these respondents were **from the adult population** (including around 4% pupils and students). The data quality of this comparative dataset was checked according to identical criteria.

The survey data from students and the general population are each weighted in the analyses. For students, the distributions of the 'Student Survey in Germany' from 2021 (Beuße et al., 2022) are the main reference point. Details of the procedure are presented in Hinz et al. (2023). The resident population data are weighted to the joint distributions of gender, age, and education. The data analyses use the weighting factors provided (where appropriate).

¹ We would like to thank Julia Bernstein, Oliver Decker, Beate Küpper, Andreas Stahl, and Peter Wetzels for their valuable contributions to the discussion of the survey program, as well as Stefan Liebig and Andreas Zick for reviewing a preliminary version of the report.

Like any survey study based on voluntary participation, the survey data produced are ultimately 'selective', i.e. they only represent the respective population, with certain limitations. As the percentages (prevalence rates) reported below are therefore necessarily associated with imprecision, they should ideally be interpreted carefully – as approximations and trends. It is important to emphasize that the resulting correlation analyses from online access panels are relatively robust against bias (Cornesse & Blom, 2023). Furthermore, participants from online access panels are less susceptible to social desirability bias (Grewenig et al., 2023). In the research process, every effort was undertaken to increase the resilience and robustness of the analyses through relevant measures (such as the aforementioned weighting and additional robustness analyses).

It is important to note that the number of Jewish students participating in this survey is too small to identify them as a separate comparison group. Nevertheless, in the section dealing with the perception of antisemitism at universities, we have highlighted the few responses from Jewish students. For a better understanding of the situation of Jewish students, see the report by the German Union of Jewish Students (JSUD) and AJC (AJC, 2025).

The second section of the report relies on data from a survey experiment. Each student surveyed responded to five protest scenarios at universities with regard to their individual support for the scenarios. Important characteristics of the protest were varied, such as whether the protests are permitted and remain non-violent. Such survey experiments can also allow valid conclusions to be drawn from non-random samples, especially if a large and heterogeneous sample can be used.

The third part of the report focuses on the extent to which universities are affected by antisemitic incidents and is based on a survey of university rectorates conducted at the same time as the student survey. The member universities of the HRK were invited to take part in this online survey. The HRK is a voluntary association of state and state-recognized universities in Germany, which are represented by their presidia and rectorates. At the time of the survey, the HRK had 271 member universities, at which around 90% of all students in Germany were enrolled (HRK, 2025). A total of 94 HRK member universities took part in the survey, which corresponds to a response rate of 35%. The response rate from universities is slightly higher than from UAS: 41 of the 84 university rectorates took part (response rate 49%), while 40 of the 118 UAS rectorates invited took part (response rate 34%). In addition, 13 other higher education institution rectorates took part in the survey who head other, predominantly smaller higher education institutions (e.g. art or music academies, dual higher education institutions, and vocational academies). These universities had a response rate of 19%. The survey focused on questions about antisemitic incidents at universities after October 7, 2023 and measures taken against antisemitism. To ensure the anonymity of the participating universities, no regionally identifying characteristics were recorded. Comparisons between universities and UAS are possible.

1. Second student survey wave on the Middle East conflict

By shaping students' political attitudes, engagement, and civic identity, universities play a crucial role in their political socialization. Ideally, higher education should encourage critical thinking, exposure to diverse perspectives, and participation in political discourse, all of which contribute to students' political development (Campbell, 2006). The university environment can promote political discussion, activism, and awareness of democratic processes, thus enhancing political efficacy and participation (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). In addition, interactions with peers have a significant impact on students' ideological orientation and civic behavior (Nie et al., 1996). Students are therefore in a formative phase

of their political socialization. Particularly in times of political conflict, students have often triggered social movements or played a key role in supporting them (Zhao, 1998)

The social conflicts that took place after 7 October clearly polarized society in many countries. People were astonished by Hamas' breach of civilization. Nevertheless, Jews in many Western countries reported a wide spread reluctance to react to the Hamas attack, which was interpreted as apathy. Since October 7, there have been a number of antisemitic incidents, such as the demonstrations of shameless joy at the murder attacks and hostage-takings in Arab-dominated districts of Berlin. With Israel's military response, many pro-Palestine protests began with thousands of participants, which were directed against Israel's military action in the Gaza Strip and were characterized by Palestinian flags, shouts of 'Free Palestine', and accusations of apartheid against Israel. At the same time, intellectual critics of Zionism and pro-Palestine activists attempted to place the Hamas attack in the context of the suffering of the Palestinian population – as a more or less explainable reaction by the oppressed against Israeli-Jewish imperialism in the region. According to this view, Israel is committing genocide against the population in the Gaza Strip. The criticism of Israel had mobilizing power, especially in a spectrum that saw itself as progressive and left-wing. There were highly publicized pro-Palestine camps, particularly at US universities, such as Columbia University New York and University of California, Berkeley.

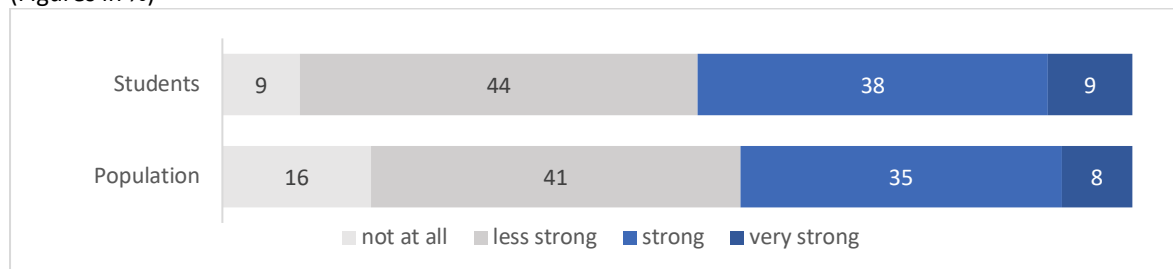
In Germany, Berlin, Leipzig, and Munich were among the places where highly visible camps took place. However, it remains uncertain whether the media coverage, which elicited a high level of media attention, reflects the actual opinion of the students or picks up on marginal phenomena. Our empirically supported study provides a reliable basis for answering the following questions: What is the climate of opinion at universities in relation to these protest actions? How did the climate of opinion change over the course of the war? What role does antisemitic resentment play in this? How do students view the State of Israel? To contribute to a differentiated discussion 18 months after October 7, this study aims to answer these questions as reliably as possible.

1.1 Current opinion climate among students on the Middle East conflict

The conflict in the Middle East currently affects almost half of those surveyed either strongly or very strongly. Some 47% of students stated as such, while the comparable figure for the general population was slightly lower (43%; see Figure 1). In the survey conducted a year ago, the emotional impact was even greater; two months after the terrorist attack by Hamas, 59% of students and 56% of the general population stated that they were (very) strongly affected.

Figure 1: How much does the conflict between Israel and Hamas affect you? (Students and general population, 2024)

(Figures in %)

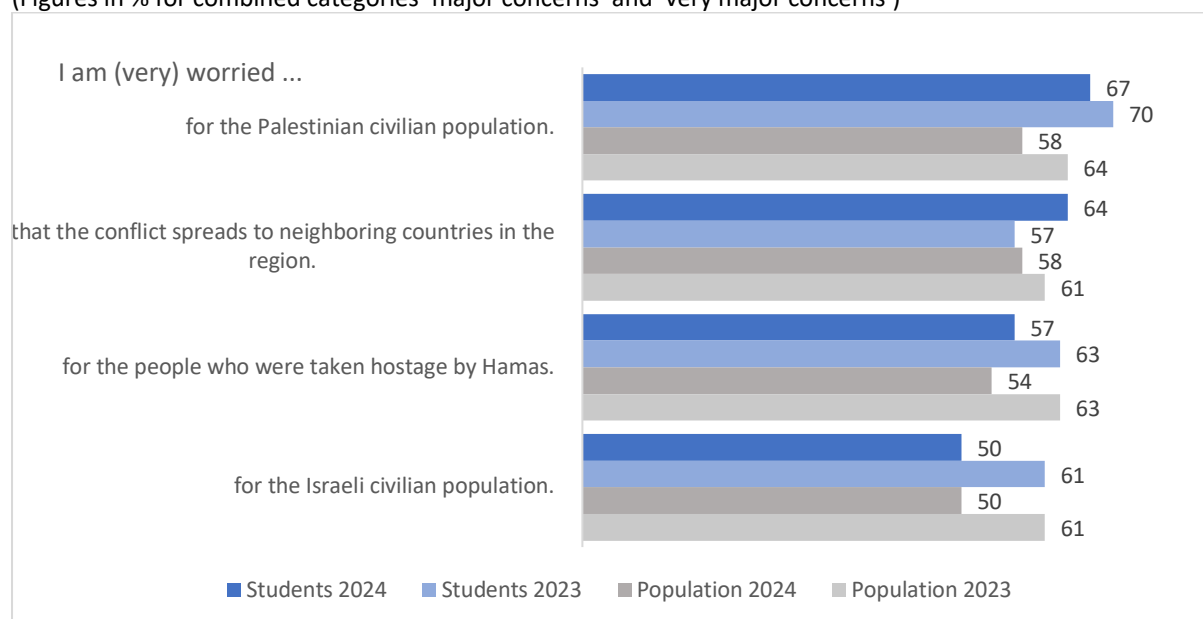


Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{Stud} = 1,885; N_{Pop} = 2,031. Question wording: How strongly does the current conflict between Israel and Hamas or Hezbollah affect you?

Concerns about the hostages taken by Hamas, the situation of the Palestinian civilian population, and the possible expansion of the conflict are currently high or very high among most of the students surveyed, as they are among the general population. They are nonetheless lower than a year ago. There are two noticeable differences between the students and the general population. First, students are more often concerned about the Palestinian civilian population (67% compared to 58%), and second, their concern that the conflict could escalate increases over time. In this survey, which was conducted in December 2024 and therefore before a ceasefire was agreed between Israel and Hamas (January 2025), 64% of students (compared to 57% a year ago) were concerned about the conflict spreading; this concern has decreased slightly among the general population (from 61% to 58%; see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Respondents' concerns about the situation in the Middle East (students and general population, 2023 and 2024)

(Figures in % for combined categories 'major concerns' and 'very major concerns')



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2023 and 2024).

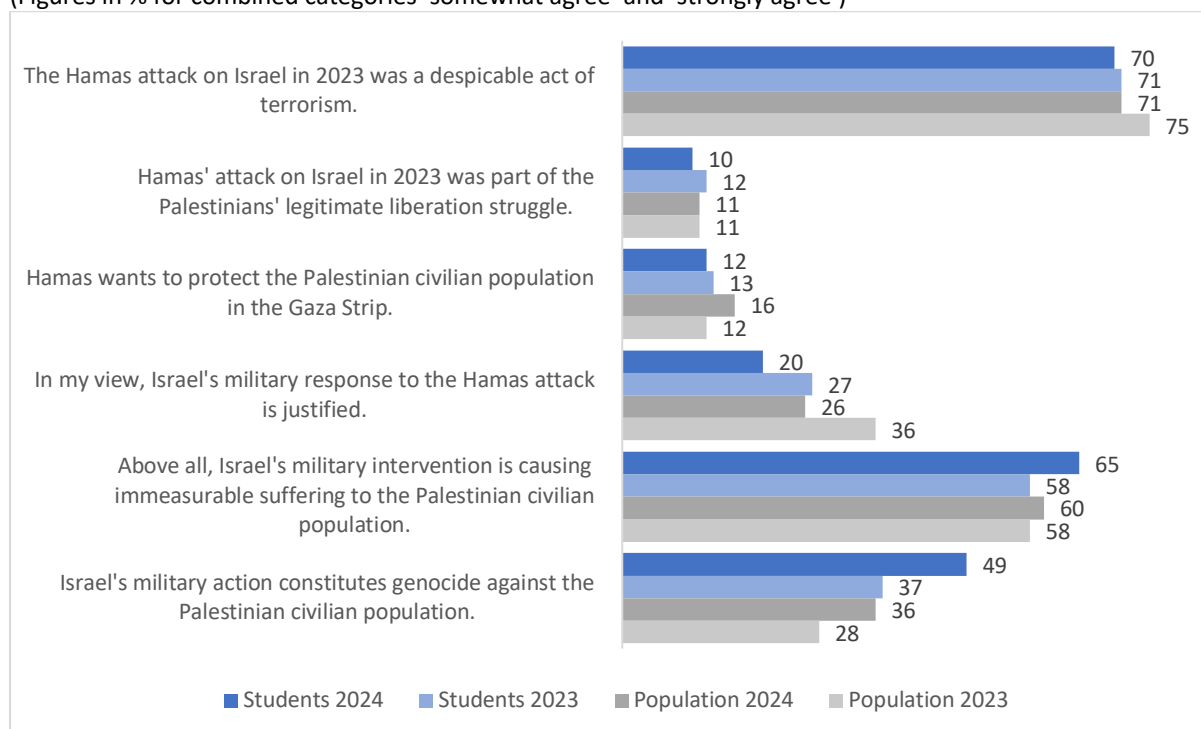
2023: N_{Stud} = at least 2,352; N_{Pop} = at least 2,071; 2024: N_{Stud} = at least 1,881; N_{Pop} = at least 2,019 (slightly different N for individual variables due to individual missing values). Question wording: Are you very worried, very worried, not very worried, or not worried at all about the current conflict between Israel and Hamas [2024: and Hezbollah]?

One year later, the condemnation of the Hamas attack as an act of terrorism is still dominant among students and the general population. Furthermore, around 70% of respondents in both samples (fully and completely) agree with the statement that the Hamas attack on Israel was a despicable act of terrorism (see Figure 3). As in 2023, only a minority of respondents in both samples (10–12%) agreed with the statements that the Hamas attack was part of Palestine's legitimate liberation struggle and that Hamas wants to protect the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip.

There is a noticeably greater change compared to the 2023 survey in the assessment of Israel's military action. Among respondents from both samples, significantly lower proportions of respondents now hold the opinion that Israel's military response to the Hamas attack was justified compared to a year ago (20% compared to 27% among students, 26% compared to 36% in the general population). Compared to a year ago, a larger proportion of students agree with the statement that Israel's military action primarily leads to the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population (65% compared to 58%). Compared to 2023, more respondents among students and the general population see Israel's military action as genocide against the Palestinian civilian population (just under half of students, compared to 37% in 2023).

Figure 3: Respondents' assessments of the war between Hamas and Israel (students and general population, 2023 and 2024)

(Figures in % for combined categories 'somewhat agree' and 'strongly agree')



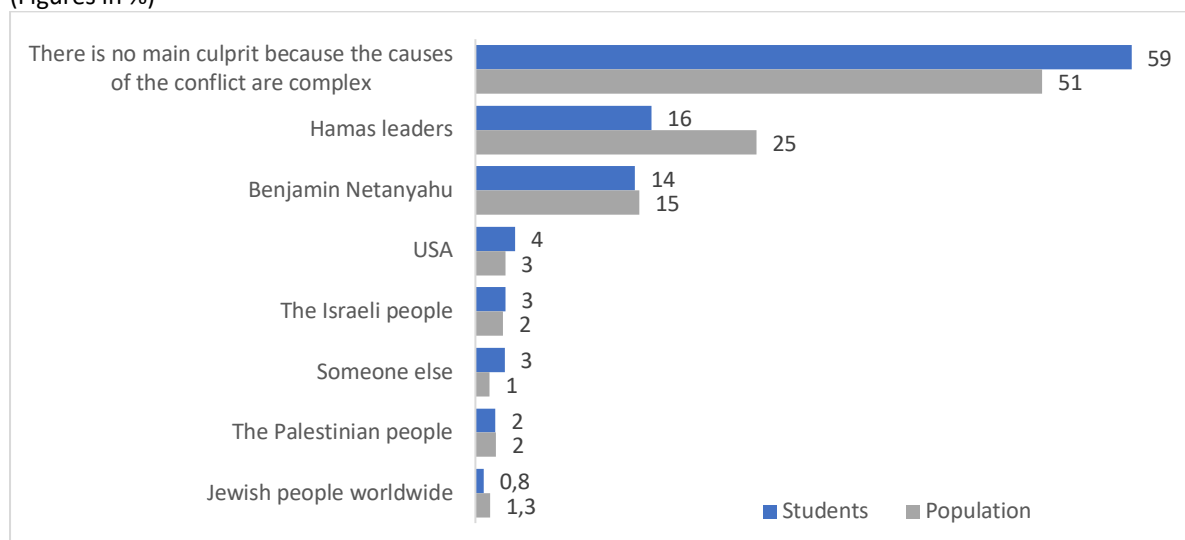
Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2023 and 2024).

2023: N_{Stud} = at least 2,321; N_{Pop} = at least 2,084; 2024: N_{Stud} = at least 1,873; N_{Pop} = at least 2,022 (slightly different N for individual variables due to individual missing values). Question wording: What is your opinion on the [current] conflict?

One interesting aspect of the investigation of the climate of opinion concerns the attribution of responsibility for the conflict. As many studies on this topic originate from the USA, we asked about the possible attribution of blame for the escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip based on the US 'Generation Lab' study (USNEWS, 2024).

Figure 4: Who is mainly to blame for the current situation in Gaza? (Students and general population, 2024)

(Figures in %)



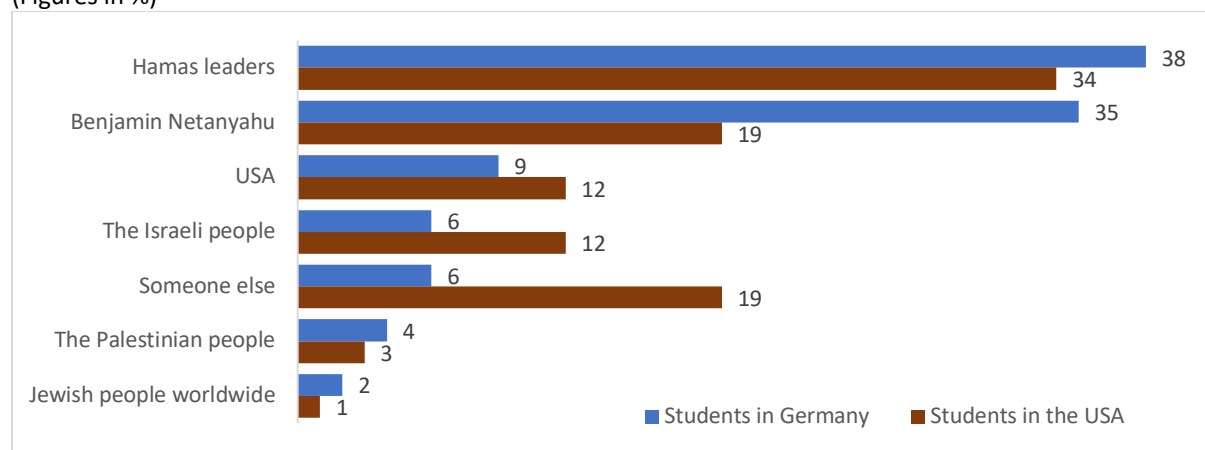
Source: Rapid Response 2 Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{Stud} = 1,879; N_{Pop} = 2,030. Question wording: Who do you think is mainly to blame for the current situation in Gaza?

The majority of students (59%) and around half of the general population (51%) do not name a main culprit for the current situation in Gaza, as the causes of the conflict are considered too complex. If main culprits are named, they are most frequently the Hamas leaders and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. While students and the general population are fairly united when it comes to Netanyahu (14% and 15% of all respondents in both samples see him as the main culprit), views differ more strongly regarding the Hamas leaders. A quarter of the population see him as the main culprit, compared to only 16% of students (see Figure 4).

In the aforementioned survey of college students in the US (USNEWS, 2024), 34% of respondents saw the Hamas leader as the main culprit and 19% named Benjamin Netanyahu. However, there was no option to respond 'There is no main culprit because the causes of the conflict are complex'. If, to achieve better comparability, this answer option is not taken into account for the German sample, the proportion of students who blame Benjamin Netanyahu increases to 35%. The Hamas leader is then mentioned by 38% of students (similar to the US). Students in Germany assign the blame primarily to Benjamin Netanyahu significantly more often than students in the US (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Who is mainly to blame for the current situation in Gaza? (Students in Germany – excluding those who do not wish to answer the question – and US 2024)

(Figures in %)

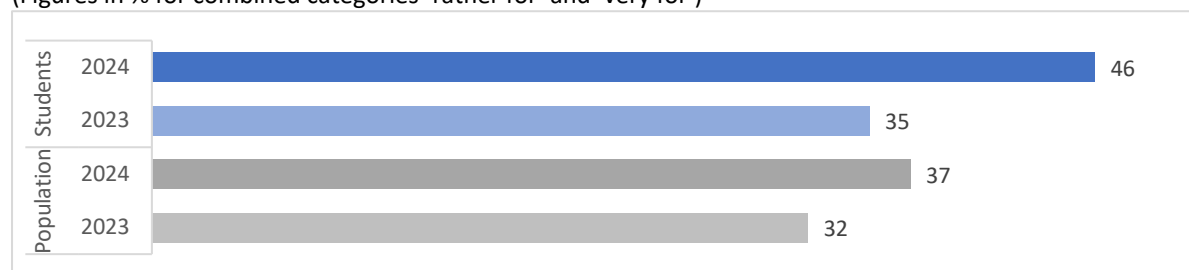


Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). $N_{\text{Stud}} = 696$; $N_{\text{Pop}} = 1,027$. Question wording: Who do you think is mainly to blame for the current situation in Gaza? Generation Lab, 2024: $N = 520$. Q12: Based on what you know, who do you think is more to blame for the current situation in Gaza?

Against the backdrop of increasing skepticism about Israeli warfare, three further findings on the climate of opinion should be highlighted. Firstly, the proportion of those in favor of stopping military cooperation with Israel is growing. Currently, 46% of students support this demand (compared to 35% a year ago), as do 37% of the general population (compared to 32% a year ago; see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Agreement with the measure 'Stop military cooperation with Israel' (students and general population, 2023 and 2024)

(Figures in % for combined categories 'rather for' and 'very for')



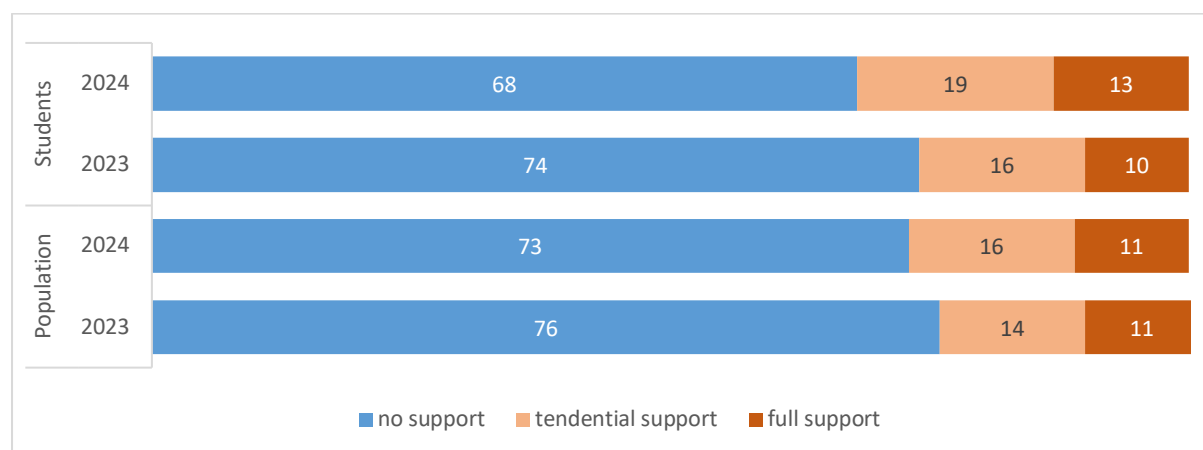
Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2023 and 2024).

2023: N_{Stud} = 2,352; N_{Pop} = 2,087; 2024: N_{Stud} = 1,865; N_{Pop} = 2,020. Question wording: The following is about a series of measures. Would you be in favor or against? Answer categories from 1 to 5: very against / rather against / undecided / rather for / very for.

Second, the proportion of those who support a broader boycott of Israel that goes beyond military cooperation has risen. A further three areas (science, trade, and youth exchange) can be used to form a summarizing index that indicates support for the boycott, divestment, sanctions (BDS) movement.² The index can be summarized as full support, tendential support, and no support for the BDS movement. Among students, the proportion of those expressing at least tendential support for a comprehensive boycott increased from 26% to 32%. In the general population sample, the proportion rose slightly from 25% to 27% (see Figure 7).³

Figure 7: Support for BDS demands (students and general population, 2023 and 2024)

(Scale from 1= very much against to 5 = very much in favor; figures in % for values from 1 to 3 = no support, greater than 3 to less than 4 = tendential support, from 4 to 5 = full support)



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2023 and 2024).

2023: N_{Stud} = at least 2,339; N_{Pop} = at least 2,069; 2024: N_{Stud} = 1,852; N_{Pop} = 2,001. Question wording: The following is about a series of measures. Would you be for or against? (1) Boycott of products from Israel; (2) Termination of scientific cooperation with universities in Israel; (3) Termination of military cooperation with Israel; and (4) Termination of youth exchanges with Israel. Response categories from 1 to 5: strongly against / somewhat against / undecided / somewhat in favor / strongly in favor. For the sake of clarity, four answers were summarized in an index. If respondents achieve a mean index value of 1 to 3 inclusive, they have clearly or tendentially rejected the statements. Respondents with a mean index value of between 3 and 4 tend to support the BDS movement's demands and respondents with index values of 4 and higher can be considered full supporters of the BDS movement.

Third, respondents in both samples were asked for the first time in this study to indicate their approval or disapproval of the international arrest warrant against Netanyahu from International Criminal Court (ICC) and of Israel's indictment before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for genocide. Among the

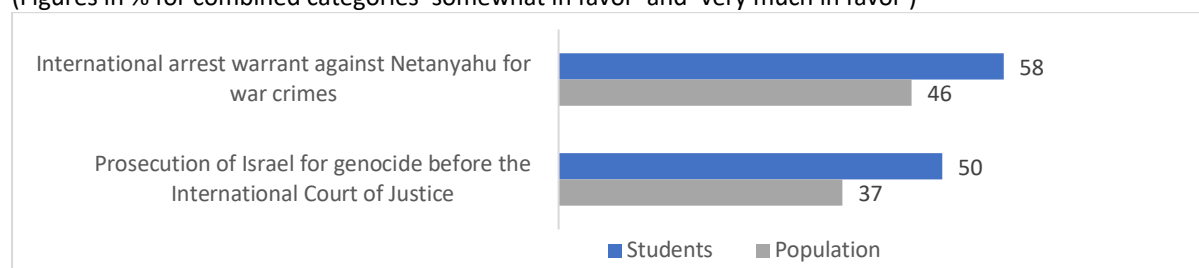
² The BDS movement calls internationally for a boycott of all cooperation with Israel – with reference to the precarious situation of the Palestinians. In the discussion about the assessment of this movement, there is no unanimous opinion about its antisemitic character (see Brumlik, 2021). In 2019, in a motion for a resolution, the German Bundestag classified the BDS demands as antisemitic (Deutscher Bundestag, 2019). The academic debate predominantly consists of voices that confirm the proximity to antisemitic attitudes based on the 3-D rule (Israel is delegitimized, demonized, and measured by double standards) (Baier et al., 2021).

³ With regard to the three other areas, the percentages are as follows: 16% of students (2023: 13%) and 13% of the general population (2023: 11%) support the discontinuation of scientific cooperation; 26% of students (2023: 22%) and 18% of the general population (2023: 14%) support a boycott of products from Israel; 21% of students (2023: 18%) and the same proportion of the general population (2023: 21%) support stopping youth exchanges.

students, more than half (58%) are in favor of the international arrest warrant against Netanyahu for war crimes. Half of those surveyed are in favor of Israel being indicted by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for genocide. Although approval of both measures is noticeably lower among the general population, the proportions here are also considerable (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Agreement with measures that are critical of Israel (students and general population, 2024)

(Figures in % for combined categories 'somewhat in favor' and 'very much in favor')



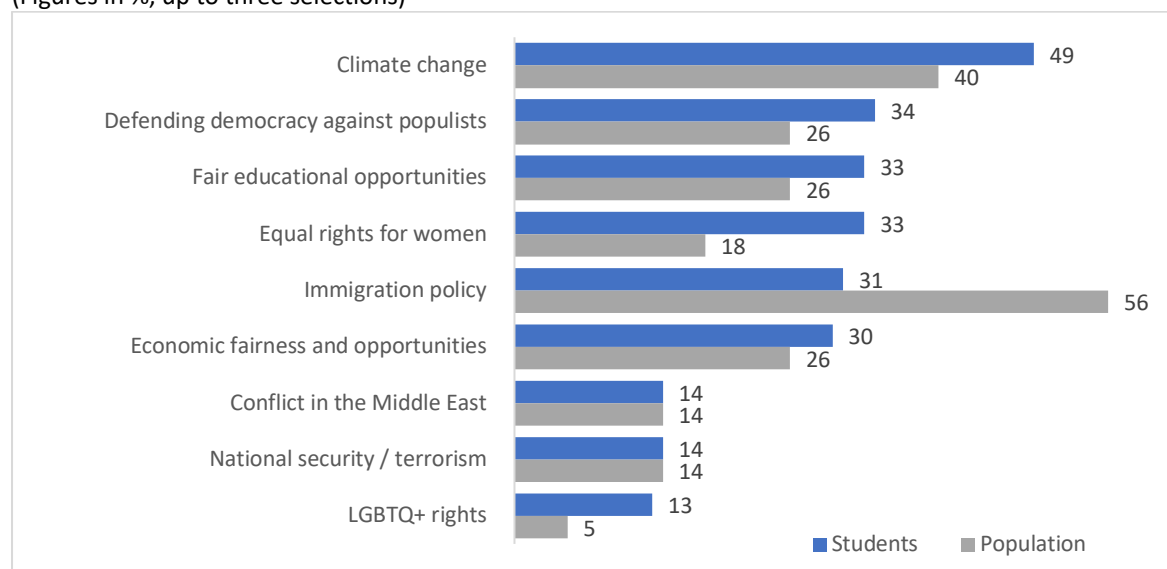
Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{Stud} = at least 1,866; N_{Pop} = at least 2,021 (slightly different N for individual variables due to individual missing values).

Question wording: The following is about a series of measures. Would you be in favor or against? Answer categories from 1 to 5: very much against / somewhat against / undecided / somewhat in favor / very much in favor.

In view of the media attention to the Middle East conflict and the reported trends in the assessment of the conflict, the question arises as to how interest in this conflict compares to other political issues. Figure 9 shows that in the student and general population samples, 14% of respondents selected the Middle East conflict as one of three topics that were of particular political interest to them.⁴ Other political issues are mentioned much more frequently in both samples, especially climate protection, the defense of democracy and fair educational opportunities, and immigration policy (especially among the general population; see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Importance of political issues (students and general population, 2024)

(Figures in %, up to three selections)



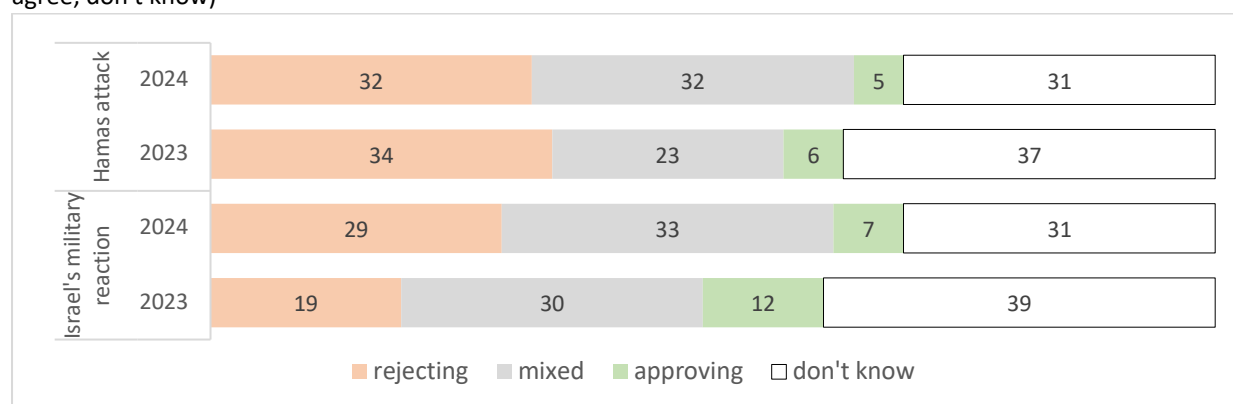
Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{Stud} = 1,885; N_{Pop} = 2,031. Question wording: Which political issues are most important to you? (Please select up to three).

⁴ The comparative figure from the Generation Lab study was 13%.

Finally, students were asked about how they perceived the climate of opinion at their universities. This was deliberately aimed at their *subjective* perception of the opinions of others, i.e. whether they feel in agreement or disagreement with the perceived majority mood at their universities. A distinction was made between negative, positive, and mixed attitudes towards the Hamas attack and Israel's military action. In addition, students could also indicate that they were not confident in their assessment of the climate of opinion. Compared to the situation a year ago, it is noticeable that students currently rate the climate of opinion on the Hamas attack more frequently as mixed (32% compared to 23%). This corresponds to a more critical (negative) opinion of Israel's military response than a year ago (29% compared to 19%). Just under a third of the students are currently not confident in their assessment of the climate of opinion at universities; this figure has fallen from 37% to 39% in 2023 to 31% (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Perceived climate of opinion at universities (students 2023 and 2024)

(Figures in % for summarized categories: uniformly + rather disapproving; mixed; rather + uniformly approving agree; don't know)



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2023 and 2024).

2023: N_{Stud} = 2,349; 2024: N_{Stud} = 1,870 (slightly different N for individual variables due to individual missing values).

Question wording: Attitudes towards the war in Israel and Gaza can be more or less controversial. How did you perceive the climate of opinion at your university with regard to...? ... the Hamas attack; ... Israel's military response. Answer categories: uniformly disapproving / rather disapproving / mixed / rather approving / uniformly approving / don't know.

Excursus: Perception bias?

How does the perceived opinion of other students at the university relate to your own attitude? We investigated this question through additional evaluations that are not presented separately. Students who condemn the Hamas attack are more likely to have a negative attitude towards it at the university than students who do not condemn it (39% to 20%). There is a corresponding difference in the perception of an approving attitude at the university (4% compared to 9%). Similar differences can be observed with regard to views on Israel's military intervention. Students who reject military action are also more likely to have a negative attitude at university than students who consider such action to be justified (39% vs. 20%). There is also a difference in views on the climate of approval for military action (4% compared to 20%). Students' perceptions of the climate of opinion at universities are skewed towards their own position.

Summary: Emotional concern regarding the escalation of the situation in the Middle East has decreased among students and the general population compared to the previous year. Fewer respondents are (very) strongly moved by the events in the Middle East than shortly after the terrorist attack in 2023. However, concern about the conflict spreading to neighboring countries

has increased among students, while it has tended to decrease among the general population. A large majority of respondents continue to condemn the Hamas attack in 2023 as a despicable act of terrorism and the level of support for the statement that the Hamas attack is part of the Palestinians' legitimate struggle for liberation remains low. However, there are clear changes in the views of respondents regarding Israel's military action. Compared to the previous year, significantly fewer respondents consider Israel's military response to be justified. More respondents than in the previous year agree that the military operation is causing immeasurable suffering and genocide among the Palestinian civilian population. There are high approval rates among students for the international arrest warrant against Netanyahu for war crimes and for an indictment of Israel for genocide before the International Criminal Court. Students see Netanyahu and the Hamas leaders as the main culprits for the current conflict in almost equal proportions. Support for the demand to stop military cooperation with Israel has also increased. The perceived climate of opinion at universities has also shifted towards a rejection of Israel's military deployment from the students' perspective.

1.2 Antisemitic attitudes among students

A central task of this study was to assess the prevalence of antisemitic attitudes at universities and to look for possible changes since the previous year. As in the survey conducted at the end of 2023, the tendencies of respondents in both samples to agree with various statements containing anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli beliefs are measured to record antisemitic attitudes (Heyder et al., 2004). The same scales were used as in the previous study (see Hinz et al., 2024). They are based on frequently used items (Decker et al., 2022; Groß et al., 2012; Heyder & Eisentraut, 2020; Zick et al., 2016; Zick et al., 2023; Zick & Preuß, 2014) and deliberately make no reference to the current war situation. Measurements of general antisemitism and Israel-related antisemitism⁵ are used. Table 1 lists the corresponding items, which respondents can agree or disagree with to varying degrees.

Table 1: Concepts used

Concept	Items (statement sentences)	Reliability ⁶
General antisemitism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am tired of hearing about the German crimes against the Jews. • Many Jews are trying to take advantage of the Third Reich's past today. • Jews have too much influence in the world. 	Students: 0.73 Population: 0.81
Israel-related antisemitism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the policy that Israel is pursuing, I can well understand that people have something against Jews. • It annoys me that Jews all over the world support Israel's policies. • What the State of Israel is doing to the Palestinians today is in principle no different from what the Nazis did to the Jews in the Third Reich. 	Students: 0.69 Population: 0.77

Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{Stud} = at least 1,856; N_{Pop} = at least 2,005 (slightly different N for individual variables due to individual missing values). Reliability coefficient α for student and general population sample. Only people who provided information on all three items of a scale were included in the scale formation. In the case of missing values for an item, the respondent's answers were

⁵ For general antisemitism, characteristics of primary and secondary antisemitism are summarized. A correlation analysis shows that although the two concepts are related, they represent different dimensions (here for the student sample): $r_{(gen/isr)} = 0.61$.

⁶ For students and the general population, the reliability coefficients α are sufficiently high with values between 0.69 and 0.81. This means that the individual items can be combined into a common construct. This is confirmed by supplementary factor analyses.

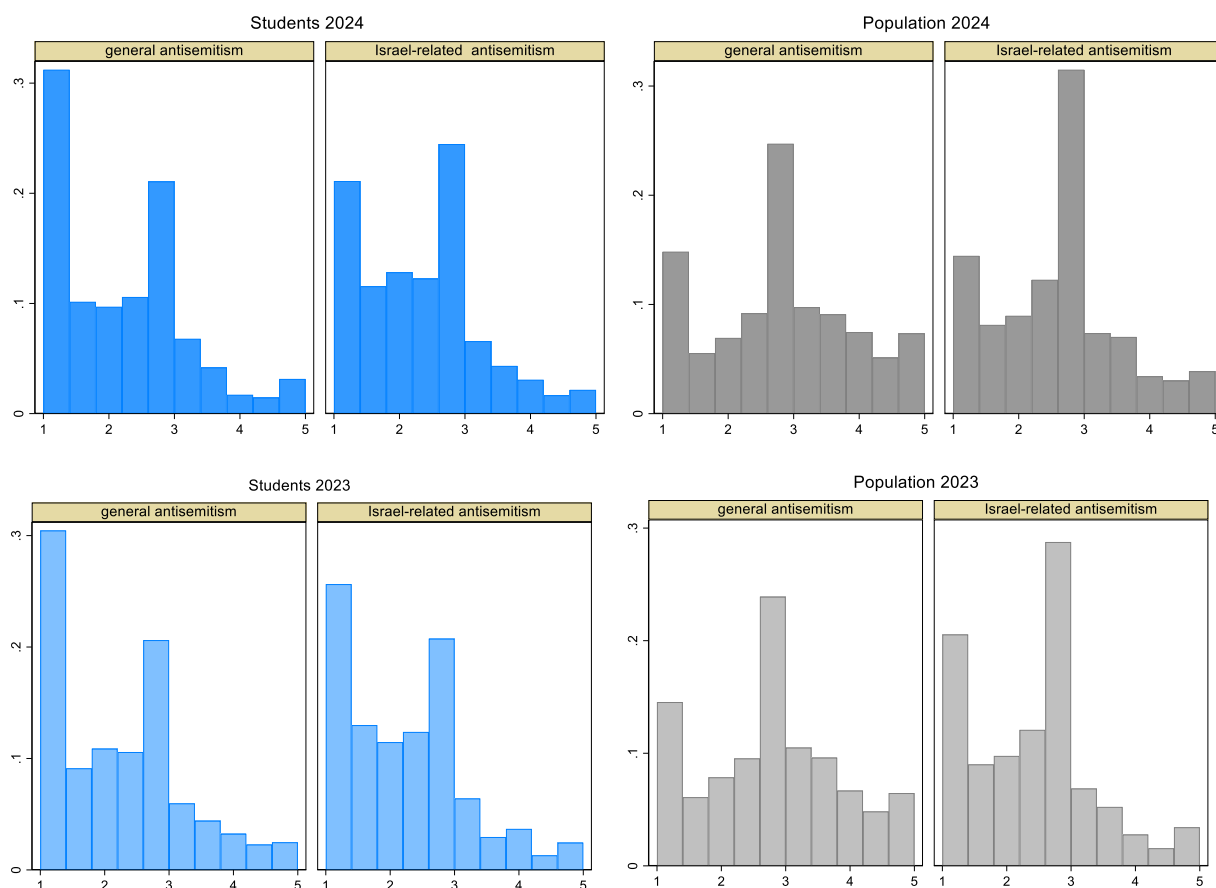
not taken into account. This applies to a maximum of 21 people for general antisemitism and a maximum of 12 people for Israel-related antisemitism.

The agreement (or disagreement) values range from 1 'strongly disagree' to 2 'somewhat disagree', 3 'partly/partly agree', 4 'somewhat agree', and 5 'strongly agree'. Three items were combined for the scale on general antisemitism and the same for the scale on Israel-related antisemitism.

Figure 11 shows the frequency distributions of the measured values (so-called histograms) of both scales for students (blue) and the general population (gray) for both survey years (first row: 2024 and second row: 2023). Both scales summarize three individual items. The measurements can each have values ranging from 1 to 5. Respondents with a value of 1 'did not agree at all' with all items on a scale, while respondents with the maximum value of 5 'fully agreed' with all items.

Figure 11: Antisemitism scales (general and Israel-related) for students (blue) and general population (grey) (2023 and 2024)

(Frequency distribution in %, scale values from 1 to 5)



Source: Rapid Response Antisemitism at universities; Rapid Response 2. Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2023 and 2024).

General antisemitism items: I am tired of hearing about the German crimes against the Jews. Many Jews are trying to take advantage of the Third Reich's past today. Jews have too much influence in the world. *Israel-related antisemitism* items: With the policies that Israel is pursuing, I can well understand that people have something against Jews. It annoys me that Jews all over the world support Israel's policies. What the State of Israel is doing to the Palestinians today is basically no different from what the Nazis did to the Jews in the Third Reich.

A look at the distribution of students reveals, for example, that significantly more respondents agree with the items 'not at all' for general antisemitism than for Israel-related antisemitism. A comparison

of the students surveyed with the population sample shows a greater deviation for general antisemitism: the measured values in the middle and upper range of the scale are more common in the general population than among students.

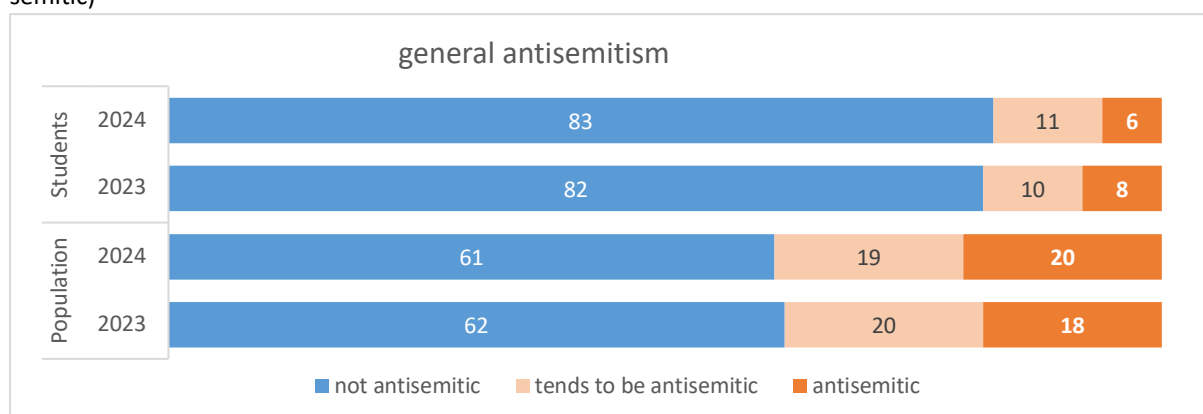
A clearly non-antisemitic attitude, where a value of 1 was given for all three items, is found for general antisemitism among 21% of students and 10% of the general population. These proportions have not changed compared to 2023. For Israel-related antisemitism, the proportions of clearly non-antisemitic attitudes are 13% (students) and 9% (population). These proportions have fallen slightly compared to 2023 (15% and 14%, respectively).

Three categories are formed for a simplified presentation of the measured values. Values of 4 and above indicate a pronounced antisemitic attitude; values between 3 and 4 are described as tending to be antisemitic; and values between 1 and 3 (inclusive) are understood as not antisemitic.⁷

Among the students surveyed, 6% share pronounced general antisemitic attitudes. Some 11% tend to be antisemitic with regards to general antisemitism. Compared to the previous year, the proportion of students with pronounced antisemitic attitudes has decreased slightly (6% to 8%; see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Prevalence of general antisemitic resentment (students and general population, 2023 and 2024)

(Figures in % for averaged categories: 1–3 = not antisemitic; greater than 3–smaller 4 = tend to be; 4 + 5 = antisemitic)



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2023 and 2024).

2023: N_{Stud} = at least 2,321; N_{Pop} = at least 2,079; 2024: N_{Stud} = 1,856; N_{Pop} = 2,005. *General antisemitism* items: (1) I am tired of hearing about the German crimes against the Jews. (2) Many Jews are trying to take advantage of the past of the Third Reich today. (3) Jews have too much influence in the world. Answer categories from 1 to 5: strongly disagree / somewhat disagree / somewhat agree / somewhat agree / strongly agree.

The comparative figures from the general population sample surveyed are significantly higher for general antisemitism than in the student sample, at 20% for strongly antisemitic attitudes (and 19% for somewhat antisemitic attitudes); this indicates a slight increase compared to the previous year. It should be noted that, with regard to general antisemitism, the students surveyed are less antisemitic than respondents from the general population. Some 17% of the students surveyed and almost 40% of the respondents from the general population tend to have antisemitic attitudes or pronounced antisemitic attitudes (see Figure 12).

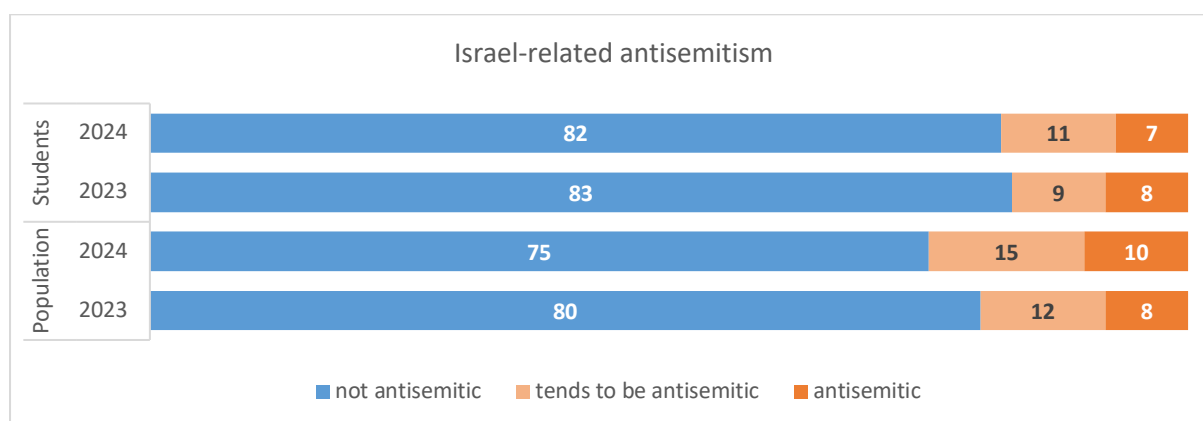
⁷ In terms of content, the scale values can be translated into the following three categories: Respondents with scale values of 1 to 3 inclusive (not antisemitic) predominantly or clearly reject the statements that measure antisemitism. Respondents with scale values between 3 and 4 tend to be antisemitic, or at least tend to agree with one or more individual items. Finally, respondents with scale values between (and including) 4 and 5 are classified as antisemitic, as they *tend to agree* or *fully agree* with several or all of the individual items (see Table 1)

Israel-related antisemitism occurs when Israel, as the collective of Jewish characteristics, is blamed for all kinds of grievances (Rensmann, 2017). Prejudices and hatred against Jews are transferred to Israel as a Jewish state, which is sometimes demonized or delegitimized and sometimes judged according to double standards (Sharansky, 2004). The three items for measuring Israel-related antisemitism comprise statements that explicitly or implicitly make this transfer (see Table 1).

Israel-related antisemitic attitudes are similarly widespread among the students surveyed as general antisemitism. Some 7% of the students surveyed exhibit pronounced Israel-related antisemitic attitudes, while 11% tend to be antisemitic in this respect. There were no major changes in this regard compared to the previous year. In the general population, the respective values in the repeat survey are slightly higher. Overall, the proportions in the population for at least a tendency towards Israel-related antisemitism are lower than for general antisemitism, although one in four people from this group exhibits at least a tendency towards Israel-related antisemitism (see Figures 12 and 13).

Figure 13: Prevalence of Israel-related antisemitic resentment (students and general population, 2023 and 2024)

(Figures in % for averaged categories: 1–3 = not antisemitic; greater than 3–smaller 4 = tendentious; 4 + 5 = antisemitic)



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2023 and 2024).

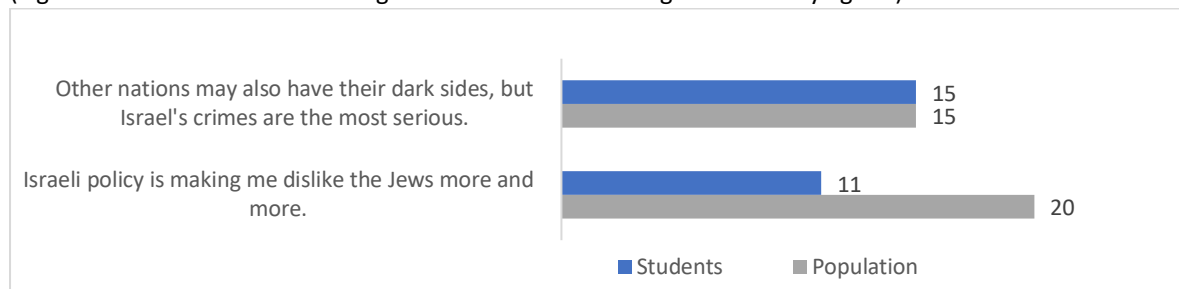
2023: N_{Stud} = at least 2,315; N_{Pop} = at least 2,082; 2024: N_{Stud} = 1,864; N_{Pop} = 2,014. *Israel-related antisemitism* items: (1) With the policies that Israel is pursuing, I can well understand that people have something against Jews. (2) It annoys me that Jews all over the world support Israel's policies. (3) What the State of Israel is doing to the Palestinians today is basically no different from what the Nazis did to the Jews in the Third Reich. Answer categories from 1 to 5: strongly disagree / somewhat disagree / somewhat agree / strongly agree.

If the mean values of the scale (value range from 1 to 5) are considered, there is a slight increase in Israel-related antisemitism from 2023 to 2024: an increase from 2.26 to 2.35 can be seen among students and from 2.44 to 2.63 among the general population. Both forms of antisemitism are positively correlated with each other ($r = 0.61$ for students and $r = 0.69$ for the general population), but they measure empirically distinguishable attitudes.

In this survey, two further items were included that express Israel-related antisemitic attitudes. However, these were not included in the above calculations for reasons of comparison. In both samples, 15% of respondents agree with the statement that 'other nations may have their downsides, but Israel's crimes are the most serious', and 11% of students and 20% of the general population agree that 'Israeli policies are making Jews increasingly unsympathetic' (Figure 14). The values measured here confirm the values for Israel-related antisemitism measured with the previous items for both groups of respondents.

Figure 14: Agreement with two other Israel-related antisemitic statements (students and general population, 2024)

(Figures in % for summarized categories: 4+5 = 'somewhat agree' and 'fully agree')



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{stud} = at least 1,863; N_{pop} = at least 2,015 (slightly different N for individual variables due to individual missing values). Question wording: What is your opinion on the following statements? Answer categories from 1 to 5: strongly disagree / somewhat disagree / partly, partly / somewhat agree / fully agree.

Summary: General antisemitism has hardly changed compared to 2023; if pronounced and tendentious antisemitism are combined, it covers 39% of respondents among the general population and is therefore significantly higher than among the students surveyed (17%). For Israel-related antisemitism, which is similarly widespread among students to general antisemitism, there is a slight increase among students compared to the previous year; this is more pronounced among the general population. Israel-related antisemitic attitudes are less common in the population sample (25%) than general antisemitism (39%).

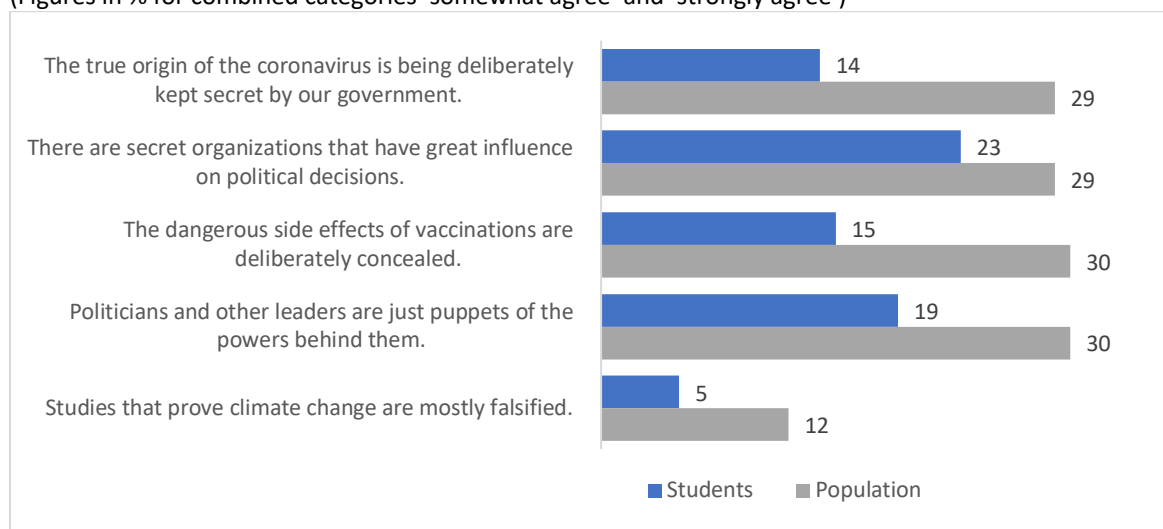
1.3 Antisemitic attitudes, conspiracy thinking, and religious fundamentalism

This study on antisemitic tendencies among students and the general population addresses a connection that has been highlighted in relevant research (e.g. Fischer & Wetzels, 2024; Fischer et al., 2024, Decker et al., 2024). Antisemitic attitudes are often closely linked to conspiracy thinking, as antisemitic narratives are often based on the idea that a secret Jewish elite is secretly controlling global political or economic events. The items for measuring antisemitic resentment draw on corresponding formulations. Conspiracy narratives not only reinforce existing resentment, but also serve as simplistic explanations for social crises by reducing complex problems to a supposedly responsible group (Kofta et al., 2020; Pfahl-Traugher, 2023; Bergmann, 2006; Imhoff & Bruder, 2014; Imhoff, 2020). To better understand the emergence and spread of antisemitic ideologies, the supplementary analysis of these correlations is therefore important. In the context of this study, it is particularly interesting to consider the extent to which conspiracy thinking is widespread at universities committed to scientific enlightenment and triggers forms of Israel-related antisemitism there.

The survey data show that the tendency towards conspiracy thinking is more common among respondents from the general population than among students. Conspiracy thinking is widespread among almost a third of the general population surveyed. Among students, the proportion is between 5% and 23%, depending on the test item. Almost a quarter of students agree with the statement that there are secret organizations that have a major influence on political decisions. Around a fifth (19%) believe that politicians and other leaders are puppets of underlying powers. With regard to climate change, noticeably fewer respondents in both samples seem to suspect a conspiracy (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Agreement with statements on conspiracy thinking (students and general population, 2024)

(Figures in % for combined categories 'somewhat agree' and 'strongly agree')



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{Stud} = at least 1,877; N_{Pop} = at least 2,025 (slightly different N for individual variables due to individual missing values). Question wording: What is your opinion on the following statements? Answer categories from 1 to 5: strongly disagree / somewhat disagree / somewhat agree / somewhat agree / strongly agree.

To illustrate the relationship between conspiracy thinking and antisemitism, a scale is first created from the five items in Figure 15. This is then categorized in the same way as the antisemitism scales. Approval values up to and including 3 indicate no conspiracy thinking, values between 3 and 4 indicate a tendency towards conspiracy thinking, and values of 4 and higher are to be described as pronounced conspiracy thinking. In this categorization, 5% of students and 15% of the general population exhibit pronounced conspiracy thinking. A further 11% and 18 percent, respectively, exhibit a tendency towards conspiracy thinking. We can see that conspiracy thinking is less widespread at universities, but the correlations with antisemitism are comparable. This correlation between conspiracy thinking and antisemitism, which has already been proven in other studies (e.g. Fischer et al., 2024), is also evident in this study, although the correlation with general antisemitism is greater ($r = 0.58$) than with Israel-related antisemitism ($r = 0.45$). Table 2 shows in detail how conspiracy thinking is related to antisemitic attitudes.

Table 2: Antisemitic attitudes by degree of conspiracy thinking (students and general population, 2024)

(Figures in % for averaged categories: 1–3 = not; between 3 and 4 = tends to be; 4 + 5 = conspiracy thinker)

Antisemitism		Conspiracy thinking					
		Students			Population		
General		not	tends to be	conspiracy thinker	not	tends to be	conspiracy thinker
	not	88	59	41	74	45	24
	tends to be	9	24	16	15	30	22
	antisemitic	3	17	43	11	25	54
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Israel-related							
	Not	87	60	49	84	64	50
	tends to be	9	21	20	11	23	21
	antisemitic	4	19	31	5	13	29
	total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). $N_{\text{Stud}} = 1,870$; $N_{\text{Pop}} = 2,026$. Scale on conspiracy thinking made up of five items (see Figure 15). Scale categorized analogous

to antisemitism scales. Question wording: What is your opinion on the following statements? And scales on general and Israel-related antisemitism (see Figures 12 and 13).

A pronounced conspiracy mindset goes hand in hand with pronounced antisemitic attitudes. This can be observed both among students and the general population. This applies more to general antisemitism than to Israel-related antisemitism. Conspiracy thinking is therefore clearly linked to antisemitic attitudes.

A further correlation with regard to antisemitic attitudes was demonstrated for religious fundamentalism (Pickel et al., 2020). In our survey, fundamentalist attitudes were again formed on a scale with five categories from 1 to 5 (this time consisting of four individual items). Once again, three groups were formed: non-fundamentalist, tendentially fundamentalist, and strongly fundamentalist.

Table 3: Antisemitic attitudes by degree of religious fundamentalism (students and general population, 2024)

(Figures in % for averaged categories: 1–3 = not; between 3 and 4 = tends to be; 4 + 5 = fundamentalistic)

		Fundamentalism					
Antisemitism	General	Students			Population		
		not	tends to be	fundamentalistic	not	tends to be	fundamentalistic
	not	85	65	41	64	35	38
	tends to be	10	21	19	18	38	17
	antisemitic	4	14	40	18	27	45
	total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Israel-related							
	not	85	56	47	78	57	41
	tends to be	10	25	13	13	28	24
	antisemitic	5	19	40	9	15	35
	total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{Stud} = 1,870; N_{Pop} = 2,026. Scale on fundamentalism made up of four items: Question wording: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? 1) Only my religion is able to solve the problems of our time. 2) There is only one true religion. 3) Members of my religion should return to their religious roots. 4) The rules of my religion are more important to me than German laws. Scale categorized analogous to antisemitism scales. Scales on general and Israel-related antisemitism (see Figures 12 and 13).

The more pronounced religious fundamentalism is, the more frequently antisemitic attitudes can be observed among students and the general population. While there are hardly any differences between general and Israel-related antisemitism among students, the correlation between religious fundamentalism and general antisemitism in the general population is stronger for general antisemitism and weaker for Israel-related antisemitism.

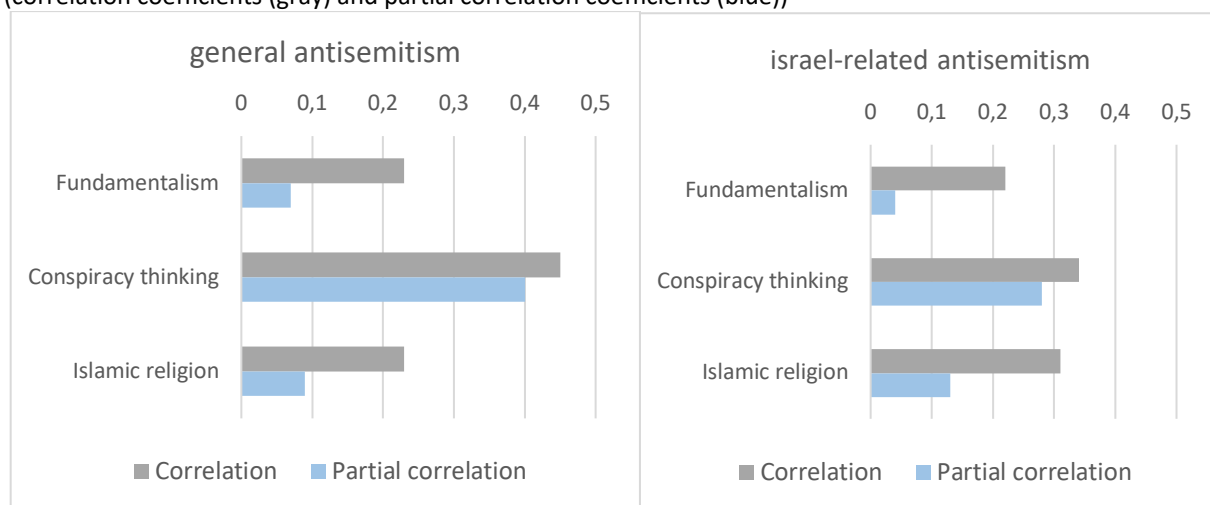
Similarly to the previous study, we wish to consider the correlations between antisemitic attitudes and other phenomena together. To this end, the simple (bivariate) correlation coefficients are compared with the partial correlations for general and Israel-related antisemitism.⁸ In contrast to the (bivariate) correlation coefficients, the partial correlations are calculated while controlling for all other variables. This means that the correlations of the other variables are kept constant for the partial correlations. In this way, an adjusted measure of the relationship between antisemitic attitudes and religious affiliation, fundamentalism, and conspiracy thinking is calculated.

⁸ The antisemitism scales are standardized for this purpose and binary-coded; categorical variables (0 or 1) are used for the other variables: Religious affiliation (Muslim versus all other mentions, including non-denominational); fundamentalism (tendentious and fundamentalist versus non-fundamentalist); and conspiracy thinking and tendentious conspiracy thinking versus no conspiracy thinking. Correlation coefficients take on values from -1 to +1. The value -1 would mean that there is a maximum (perfect) negative linear correlation between the variables (at +1, there is a maximum positive correlation).

As already illustrated in previous sections, Muslim religious affiliation, religious fundamentalism, and conspiracy thinking show recognizable connections to antisemitism in the individual bivariate correlations (grey bars) (see Figure 16, grey bars). If the correlations are controlled for all three variables, the partial correlations (blue bars) point in the same direction, but they show significantly lower correlations with antisemitism. Fundamentalism and Muslim religious affiliation in particular show a significantly lower correlation (when controlling for conspiracy thinking, i.e. its correlation is removed), while the correlation of antisemitism with conspiracy thinking decreases only slightly as soon as the analysis also takes fundamentalism and religious affiliation into account. This means that the correlations of antisemitism with fundamentalism and religious affiliation are, to a considerable extent, the result of the strong (simultaneously existing) correlation between antisemitism and conspiracy thinking.

Figure 16: Links between antisemitism and fundamentalism, conspiracy thinking, and Muslim religious affiliation (students, 2024)

(correlation coefficients (gray) and partial correlation coefficients (blue))



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{Stud} = at least 1,870 (slightly different N for individual variables due to individual missing values). Question formulations: For fundamentalism, see Table 3; for conspiracy thinking, see Figure 15; for religion: Do you belong to a church, religious community, or denomination?

Summary: Conspiracy thinking is significantly more common in the general population than among students. For students, it is also confirmed that conspiracy thinking is related to antisemitic attitudes, as are fundamentalism and Muslim religious affiliation. Extended analyses show that when these characteristics are controlled for, Muslim religious affiliation and fundamentalism show significantly lower correlations, while the correlation between antisemitic attitudes and conspiracy thinking remains the strongest correlation.

Excursus: Left-wing, right-wing, and Muslim antisemitism?

As in the previous study, the students surveyed were asked to classify themselves politically on a scale of 0 = left to 10 = right, with 5 being the middle. Respondents also had the option of choosing 'no response'. For the last survey, we had reported that antisemitic attitudes are more likely to be recorded among those students who classify themselves as politically right-wing. This applied in particular to general antisemitism.

In view of participants' primary experiences, there were frequent questions about this result in discussion events. The reported higher tendency towards antisemitism among students from the right-wing spectrum does not mean that, overall, there are not even more students from the left-wing spectrum

with antisemitic attitudes at universities. The reason for this is simple: among students in particular, there are significantly more respondents who classify themselves as left-wing than right-wing. Based on the current data relating to Israel-related antisemitism, it is calculated that around a quarter of students in the sample classify themselves as 'left-wing', while only 5% classify themselves as 'right-wing'. This means that 'left-wing' students are much more frequently represented in the sample. Of the politically left-wing students, 8% are strongly antisemitic and a further 8% tend to be antisemitic (with regard to Israel-related antisemitism). Among the politically right-wing students, 20% are strongly antisemitic and 15% tend to be (Israel-related) antisemitic. Although the tendency towards antisemitic attitudes is significantly stronger among right-wing students than among left-wing students, due to the higher number of students who classify themselves as politically left-wing, antisemitic attitudes are more common among them in absolute terms.

The proportion of students on the left who tend to display or display pronounced antisemitic attitudes is 4% of *all* students surveyed, while students on the right who tend to display or display pronounced antisemitic attitudes make up just 2% of students overall. In other words, left-wing antisemitism is twice as common among all students.

The same considerations can be made for Muslim antisemitism at universities. Among the students surveyed, the proportion of respondents with a Muslim religious affiliation is around 7%. They have a much stronger tendency towards antisemitic attitudes. However, overall, non-Muslim students with antisemitic tendencies (14% of all students) dominate Muslim students (4% of all students).

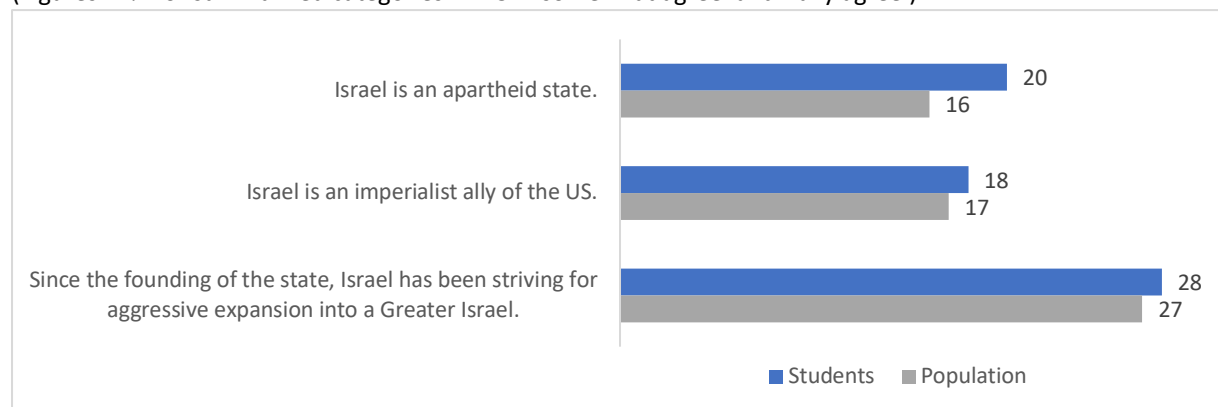
These additional analyses show that, in absolute student numbers, left-wing antisemitism dominates right-wing antisemitism at universities.

1.4 Attitudes towards Israel

The previously reported results on the climate of opinion regarding the Middle East conflict indicate that critical attitudes towards Israel's military actions have increased over the past year. As it seems particularly important to take a closer look at the image of Israel in order to understand the pro-Palestine protests at universities, further assessments of the interviewees were collected, particularly as they tend to be represented in the left-wing political spectrum. Reference is made to interpretations of Israel as an apartheid state, as an imperialist ally of the US, and as an imperialist state that has been striving for aggressive expansion since its foundation.

Figure 17: Statements on Israel (students and general population, 2024)

(Figures in % for summarized categories: 4 + 5 = 'somewhat agree' and 'fully agree')



Source: Rapid Response 2 Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{Stud} = at least 925; N_{Pop} = at least 979 (slightly different N for individual variables due to individual missing values). Question wording: What is your opinion on the following statements? Answer categories from 1 to 5: strongly disagree / somewhat disagree / partly, partly / somewhat agree / fully agree.

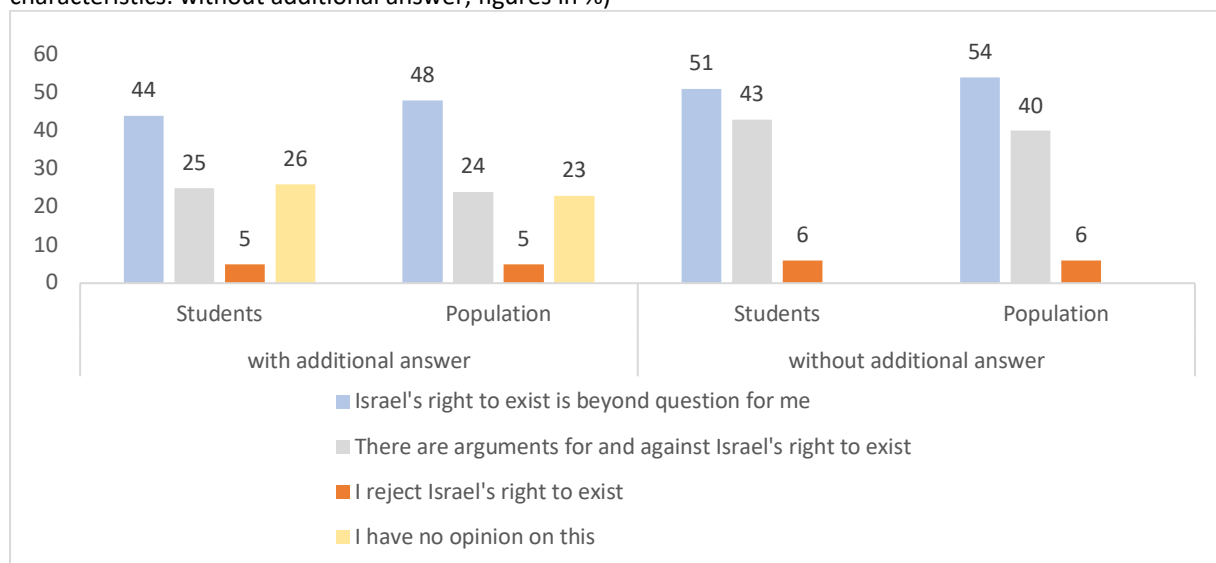
Some 20% of students and 16% of the population see Israel as an apartheid state. Agreement with the statement that Israel is an imperialist stooge of the USA is of a similar magnitude in both samples (18% and 17%). The view that Israel is striving to expand into a Greater Israel is supported even more frequently (28% of students, 27% of the general population; see Figure 17).

Respondents' answers on the right of the State of Israel to exist are also very revealing. The question was again adapted from the Generation Lab study (USNEWS, 2024). In the summer of 2024, 17% of US college students surveyed denied Israel's right to exist. However, we used two modified versions of the question, with half of the respondents randomly receiving one of the two versions. The difference between the versions lay in the choice of answers that respondents could select: in one version, the option 'I have no opinion on this' was available, while in the other version it was not. This procedure can be used to examine how a lack of opinion influences the distribution of answers. We also changed the response variants of the US study. Generation Lab only allowed respondents to select 'yes' or 'no' in response to the question 'Does Israel have the right to exist?'. We also decided to offer a category aimed at undecided (uncertain) respondents ('There are arguments for and against Israel's right to exist').

Of the answers given, respondents in both samples most frequently responded that Israel's right to exist is unquestionable for them. In comparison, only a small proportion in both samples (5% and 6%) explicitly rejected Israel's right to exist. This proportion is significantly smaller than in the aforementioned snapshot of US students. It is revealing that the percentages for respondents who see arguments both for and against the right to exist vary greatly depending on whether there is an option to disagree in the response categories. The comparison of the two versions of the question therefore indicates a high level of uncertainty among respondents when answering this question. In any case, it should be noted that students are slightly less likely than respondents from the general population sample to agree with Israel's right to exist (44% compared to 48%), but they are not explicitly more likely to reject it (5% compared to 6%; see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Israel's right to exist (students and general population, 2024)

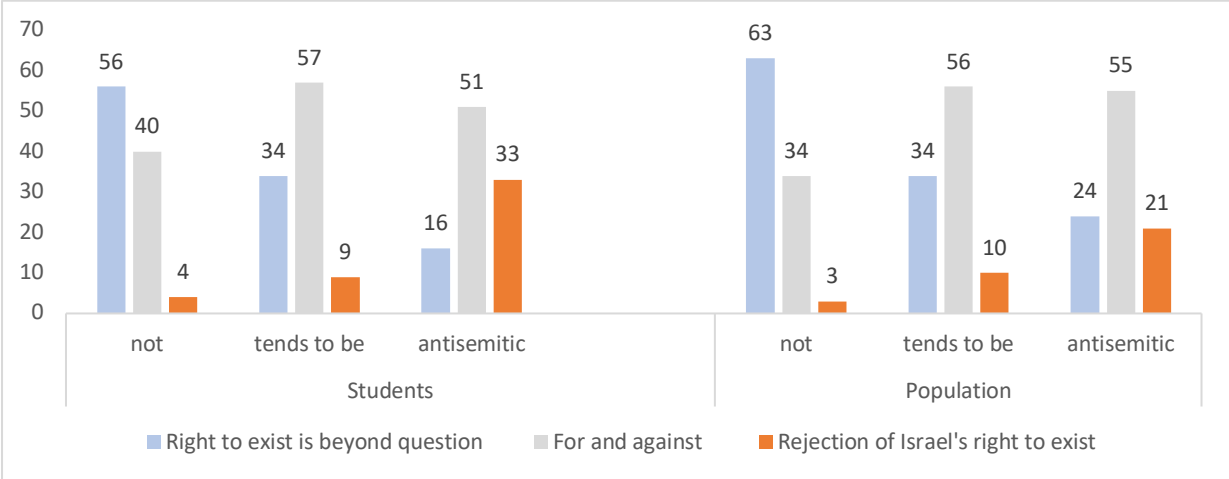
(Question with 50% split: (1) four characteristics: with additional answer 'I have no opinion on this'; (2) three characteristics: without additional answer; figures in %)



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024).
 N_{Stud} = at least 925; N_{Pop} = at least 979 (slightly different N for individual variables due to individual missing values).
 Question wording: What do you think about Israel's right to exist?

The correlation between the answers to this question and Israel-related antisemitism is also impressive. As expected, rejection of the right to exist correlates clearly with antisemitic attitudes. The majority of respondents with antisemitic attitudes tended to select the answer option ‘There are arguments for and against Israel's right to exist’.

Figure 19: Israel's right to exist and Israel-related antisemitism (students and general population, 2024)
 (Figures in %)



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024).
 N_{Stud} = 939; N_{Pop} = 1,033. Question wording: What do you think about Israel's right to exist?

The high proportion of respondents who have no opinion on Israel's right to exist or who see the arguments for and against may indicate a possible further rise in Israel-related antisemitism, as these respondents deny the legitimacy of the State of Israel as a Jewish collective (see Figure 19).

Summary: The view that Israel is an apartheid state or an imperialist ally of the US is supported by just under 20% of the students surveyed, which is slightly more than in the general population sample. More than a quarter of respondents in both samples agree with the statement that Israel has been striving for aggressive expansion since its foundation. Some 5% of students deny Israel's right to exist. This is a significantly lower figure than in a comparable study in the US. A considerable proportion of the students surveyed are unsure about this issue. As expected, antisemitic attitudes go hand in hand with a rejection of Israel's right to exist.

1.5 Antisemitism at universities from students’ perspective

Antisemitic attitudes and opinions on Israel, which were the focus of the last two sections, are latent (not overtly visible) attitudes. To obtain a better picture of perceived antisemitism at universities, we also asked students for their perceptions of antisemitic statements and incidents. The subjective assessments depend on several conditions; above all, of course, this includes knowledge of and interest in the conflict and the phenomenon of antisemitism, which is often not recognized by those not affected due to its diverse manifestations. The determined prevalence rate therefore remains vague, but

is nevertheless informative for the student mood. It should again be emphasized that only very few Jewish students were reached via the online access panel.

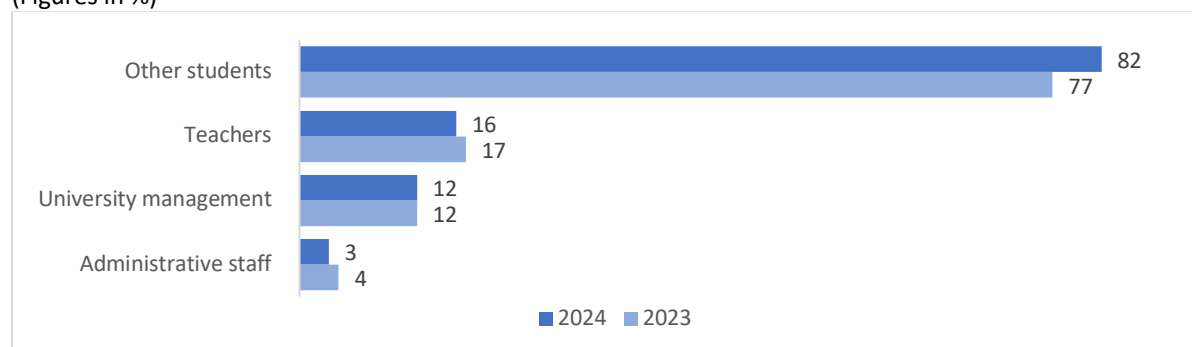
Excursus: A look at the Jewish students

Here, we consider the responses of the twelve Jewish students who accepted our invitation to take part in the survey. Due to the small number of cases, only highlights are possible, but they are very impressive. Eleven out of twelve Jewish students have perceived antisemitism at their universities. Four out of twelve attend university less frequently than before October 7, 2023. Almost all (ten out of twelve) report that they refrain from identifying themselves as Jewish. The majority (seven out of twelve) state that they are more afraid on the street, and half say that this also applies to their presence at universities. After October 7, the vast majority of Jewish students surveyed were appalled by the silence and lack of empathy towards Jews (seven and eight people, respectively). This brief impression of the Jewish students illustrates their particular situation and how they were affected. With regard to the perception of Jewish students, we refer to the detailed JSUD report published by the AJC (AJC, 2025).

When asked again in this study whether they had observed antisemitism at their university, 13% of all students answered 'yes', which is a slight increase compared to December 2023 (11%). This observed antisemitism was most frequently perpetrated by other students, and tended to be more frequent in 2024 than a year ago (see Figure 20). The percentages for lecturers, university management, and administrative staff have hardly changed.

Figure 20: Who is the source of antisemitism at universities? (Students, 2023 and 2024)

(Figures in %)



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2023 and 2024).

2023: $N_{\text{Stud}} = 252$, 2024: $N_{\text{Stud}} = 238$. Question wording: Who was the source of the antisemitism at your university? (asked of students who have observed antisemitism at their university). There are multiple answers.



We also asked students whether they had observed any exclusion of Jewish students. Only very few students have directly observed such exclusion (2%), although 8% have heard of it. The vast majority of students have not witnessed such hostile attitudes (78%) or cannot say anything about them (12%).

To get an idea of how strongly universities are characterized by 'symbols' frequently used by activists from the students' perspective, the students were presented with a pro-Palestinian slogan or a symbol of the Hamas movement that is frequently discussed in the media, and asked whether they were familiar with the slogan or symbol from their university.

The slogan ('from the river to the sea') was already used by pro-Palestine activists before October 7 to emphasize the demand for a 'free' Palestine. The addition 'from the river (Jordan) to the sea' can be understood as a coded demand for the elimination of the State of Israel. After October 7, the use of

the slogan at demonstrations was partially banned because antisemitic incitement is a punishable offense in Germany. The slogan was seen by 12% of students at universities, which is significantly more than the symbol (the red Hamas triangle, which is used to mark targets of the terrorist organization). Only a very small group of students saw this symbol in a university context (2%) (see Table 4). We also asked about the meanings: significantly more students knew the context of the slogan than that of the symbol. Among the open answers in which respondents were asked to explain the meaning, the information given in relation to the slogan is almost all correct, while only a few of the very rare explanations of the symbol are correct.

Table 4: Antisemitic slogans or symbols at the university (students, 2024)
(figures in %)

	Slogan	Symbol (Hamas triangle)
		
Already seen:		
No	83	91
Yes	12	2
Don't know	5	7
Total	100	100
Question about meaning answered:	33	15

Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{Slogan} = 985, N_{symbol} = 898. Question wording: Have you seen the following slogan at your university? Have you seen the following symbol at your university? What do you think the slogan means? What do you think the symbol means?

As expected, students' perceptions are linked to their interest in the Middle East conflict, which, as a political issue, clearly takes a back seat to other topics for students and the general public (as shown in Figure 9). Of those who are interested in the Middle East conflict, 24% state that they have seen the slogan at their university. Of this group, 8% say that they have seen the symbol. Those students who have observed antisemitic incidents at their university (13%) are even more likely to report having seen the slogan (36%) or the symbol (9%).

Summary: Some 13% of students have noticed antisemitism at their university. This figure has risen slightly compared to the previous year. According to the students, the antisemitism they perceived was mainly from other students, and, in a few cases, from lecturers and the university management. The vast majority did not observe any pro-Palestinian slogans or Hamas symbols at their university.

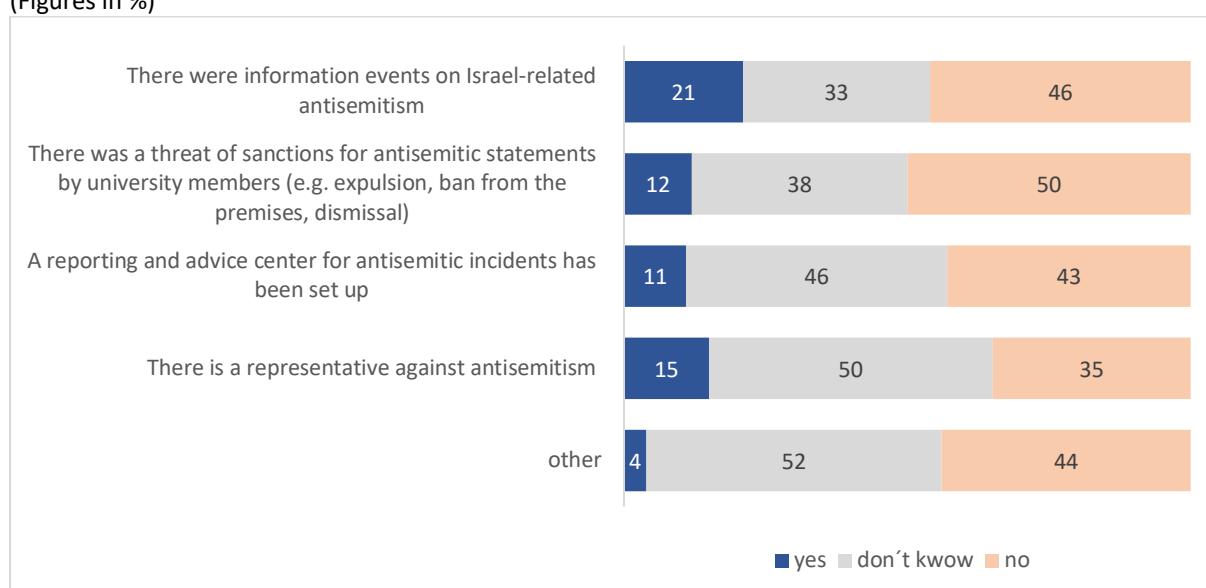
1.6 Measures taken by universities to combat antisemitism (from the students' perspective)

In 2023, students were asked how the Middle East conflict was addressed at their university. At that time, 14% stated that the university offered information events on the topic and 19% remembered a statement from the university management. At that time, 19% of students saw a high or even urgent need for information events on Israel-related antisemitism; 25% saw a clear ban on antisemitic statements; and 21% saw clear sanctions for antisemitic statements as urgent. A counseling center against

antisemitism was supported by 19% of students. How have universities reacted since then? What measures have students at their university taken in this regard?

First of all, it is noticeable that the majority of students are not informed about such measures, i.e. are unable to answer due to their own lack of knowledge. This underlines the fact that students are hardly reliable respondents in this respect. Nevertheless, the information provided by those who were aware of the measures gives a picture of whether and how the activities of the universities were received by the students. In this study, 21% of respondents report information events on Israel-related antisemitism, 12% report threats of sanctions for antisemitic statements, 11% report the establishment of a reporting and advice center, and 15% report the appointment of an antisemitism officer (see Figure 21).

Figure 21: Measures taken by the university since the escalation of the Middle East conflict from the students' perspective (students, 2024)
(Figures in %)



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{Stud} = 1,870 (slightly different N for individual variables due to individual missing values). Question wording: Have the following measures been taken at your university since the escalation of the Middle East conflict in 2023?

As already mentioned, the university may well have done more than the students were aware of. Further evaluations can be found in Section 3 (results of the university survey). At this point, it can already be anticipated that the students underestimate both how affected the universities are by antisemitic incidents and the universities' reactions. It is possible that the universities do not pay enough attention to this.

Summary: Only a few students can report measures taken by the university against antisemitic attitudes or actions; a large proportion cannot say anything about this. Around one fifth have attended information events on Israel-related antisemitism, and just under one sixth have appointed an antisemitism officer. Analyses of the data from the survey of university management show that students underestimate both the extent to which universities are affected by antisemitic incidents and the universities' reactions.

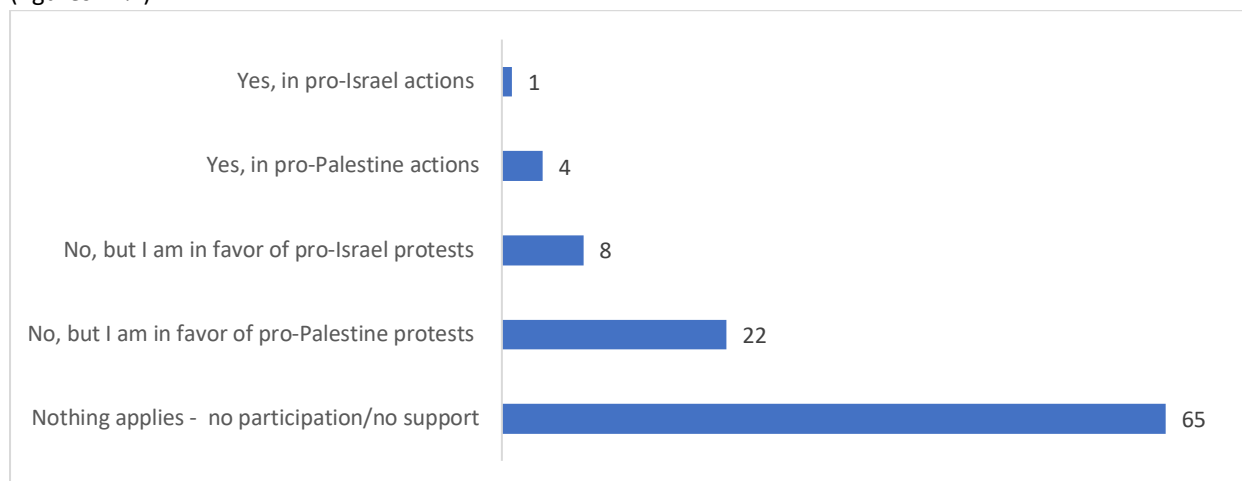
2. Pro-Palestine protests at universities: mobilization between activism and antisemitism (survey experiment)

As mentioned, one form of protest attracted particular attention at universities in many countries in the course of 2024. In many places, students took part in camps in support of a 'free' Palestine, with the permanent presence of the protesters underlining the particular urgency of the issue. Camps are characterized by several circumstances: individual activists stay in tents on campus for some time, and there are events, information stands, and actions. The legal status differs between the camps: there are authorized, tolerated, and prohibited assemblies. Students participating in banned camps that are evicted by the police can be sanctioned with reprimands, bans, and threats of deregistration, depending on the university law and house rules. In the media reception of the protest, some camps were accompanied by antisemitic incidents. Let us first look at the participation in actions, and differentiate between whether they are pro-Palestine or pro-Israel.

2.1 Participation in university protests

In line with the US study by Generation Lab (USNEWS, 2024), we first asked respondents about participation in protests in general. Figure 22 shows the distribution of responses.

Figure 22: Protest participation (based on the Generation Lab survey) (students, 2024)
(figures in %)



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024).
N_{stud} = 1.877. Question wording: Have you participated in protests since October 7, 2023?

Figure 22 shows that the overall student participation in protest actions is very moderate. Despite the high level of media attention, two thirds of the students surveyed were inactive in this regard and also unwilling to participate in actions. This is significantly more than in the US, where only 50% of students surveyed reported inactivity (USNEWS, 2024). In other words, *German students are less willing to participate in protest actions in the Middle East context than US students*. Furthermore, it can be seen that there is a considerable gap between idealistic support for the cause and actual participation in actions. Some 22% of students stated that they supported pro-Palestine activities but did not take part. This figure is also higher in the US (34%). Some 8% of respondents say they support pro-Israel activities but have not participated (comparable to the US: 9%). Only small groups of students of 4% (pro-Palestine) and 1% (pro-Israel) say that they actually participate (in the US: 7% and respectively 1%) (USNEWS, 2024). These proportions show the relative size of the active student groups in both sides of the conflict. It is clear that students who actively participate in pro-Palestinian protests (or at least support

them) significantly outnumber students who actively express sympathy for Israel, by a factor of approximately 3. In addition, comparisons with the US indicate that students in Germany are less likely to participate in protests about the conflict and that support for pro-Palestine activities is lower.

Camps are special forms of protest which, if the rules of the universities and general laws are observed, are legitimate forms of political participation in the university context. Universities are places where social conflicts are discussed because students are more interested in many topics than the average population, even if many do not actually take part in actions. This has already been described in Section 1.1 (see Figure 9).

In the following, we will examine how the hypothetical support for a protest camp is encouraged or inhibited by the particular elements of the camp. In addition, we will consider the role of Israel-related antisemitism and the emotional stirrings of the conflict. Both can support the willingness to protest.

2.2 Survey experiment in support of a pro-Palestine protest camp

Five protest camps were described to the students surveyed through short text vignettes. The vignettes differed in several regards: the legal status of the camp; the inclusion of activists from outside the university; the avoidance or acceptance of violence in the form of verbal or physical confrontation with Jewish students; and the support/questioning of Israel's right to exist as well as an optional discussion with Jewish students (see Table 5).

Table 5: Dimensions of the protest camp (survey experiment)

Concept	Text
Legality (2)	The university management tolerates the protest camp / The university management has banned the protest camp.
Participants (2)	The vast majority of participants are students / The vast majority of participants are activists from outside the university.
Violence (3)	The camp remains free of violence / There are clashes with other students. Jewish students are verbally insulted / There are arguments with other students. Jewish students are physically harassed.
Right to exist (2)	Israel's right to exist is questioned by most of the camp participants. / The organizers make it clear that they do not question Israel's right to exist.
Discussion with Jewish students (2)	No information / The camp organizes a discussion with Jewish students.

Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at German universities 2024 (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education). The number of attributes for each dimension in brackets. A *full factorial* with 48 vignettes was used.

One of the characteristics of the protest camp requires an explanation: the right of the State of Israel to exist plays a special role in the debate on the Middle East conflict. After Israel was founded as a nation state in 1948 – as a refuge for Jews after the Holocaust and following a UN plan for a two-state solution – there was a war of independence with neighboring Arab states. As a result, there were massive expulsions of Palestinians and a similarly large number of Jewish refugees who were expelled from the surrounding Arab countries. When Israel's right to exist is questioned in today's discussion of the Middle East conflict, reference is usually made to the creation of the state, which interprets Zionism as a (post)colonial movement that took the land away from the Palestinians. While support for a 'free' Palestine is not antisemitic per se, the denial of Israel's right to exist is directly linked to antisemitic attitudes if this means the destruction of the State of Israel (Legal Tribute Online, 2024). We assume

that this dimension (questioning/non-questioning) in the survey experiment is important for the selective support of protest camps by students with antisemitic attitudes. An example vignette shows the presented text (see Figure 23); the varied characteristics of the camp are marked in bold. The students surveyed each rated five vignettes – in terms of whether they were in favor of holding the camp.

Figure 23: Example vignette with introductory text (camp features marked in bold are varied)

Imagine a protest camp is being held at your university in support of the Palestinians affected by the war. Below we show you five possible protest camps and ask you for your assessment of each.

The university management **tolerates the protest camp** / The university management has **banned the protest camp**.

The participants are predominantly **students** / The participants are predominantly **activists from outside the university**.

The camp remains **free of violence**. / There are clashes with other students. **Jewish students are verbally insulted** / There are arguments with other students. **Jewish students are physically harassed**.

The **right of Israel to exist is questioned** by most of the camp participants. / The organizers make it clear that for them **Israel's right to exist is not in question**.

Leer / The camp organizes a **discussion with Jewish students**.

I support the implementation of the protest camp (collected for each of the five vignettes)

0 'not at all' – 10 'completely'

Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at German universities 2024 (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education).

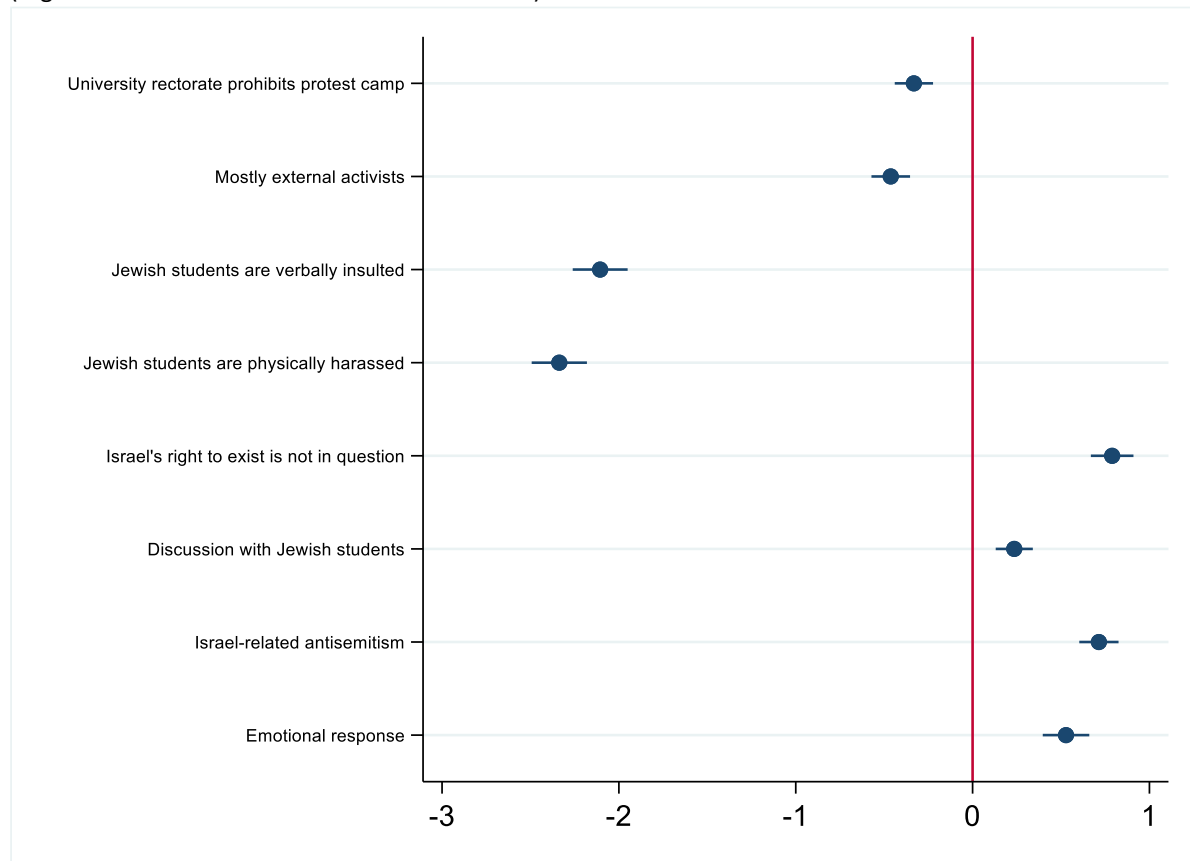
Figure 24 shows the significance of the five dimensions and the two individual characteristics (Israel-related antisemitic attitudes and emotional agitation in the face of the conflict). Negative values for the variables indicate that the willingness to protest is lower – in each case in comparison to the reference category (e.g. for the first dimension of legality, the negative value for 'University rectorate prohibits protest camp' means that respondents are on average less inclined to protest here than for the reference point 'University rectorate tolerates the camp').

All dimensions of the experiment (i.e. the characteristics of the camp) have a significant effect on the evaluation, i.e. the level of support for the camp. As all the dimensions included are measured in the same way, the effect sizes can be compared directly. The mean value of support is again relatively moderate (3.2 on a scale of 0 to 10). This reflects the fact just reported that the majority of students neither participate in nor support these activities.

The results indicate that if the university management bans the camp, it becomes less attractive to support it, but the effect size is comparatively low. The dominance of activists from outside the university is also not appreciated. Again, the effect size is moderate. The potential for violence (verbal or physical attacks on Jewish students) has a strong negative impact. Considering the mean value of 3.2 on the overall scale of 0 to 10, these coefficients (around -2.0) signal a very strong rejection of antisemitic behavior. Almost no one would support a camp where the violence against Jewish students described above was likely to occur. When camp organizers make it clear that they do not question the right of the State of Israel to exist, the respondents' approval increases significantly (the coefficient of 0.7 is the second highest). Finally, an optional discussion with Jewish students is slightly preferred to the absence of such an option. In summary, it can be said that the results regarding a camp preferred by the students surveyed differ significantly from the actual protest camps that have taken place at some universities, sometimes over a longer period of time. It is worth remembering students' high level of willingness to protest, the occupation of university buildings, and antisemitic slo-

gans reported in the media. In contrast, the results of the experiment demonstrate a low level of approval for antisemitic acts (e.g. confrontations with Jewish students) and for questioning Israel's right to exist. At the same time, the general support values are also rather low, which corresponds to the fact – as also reported in Section 2.1 – that only a small number of students actively participate in protest actions.

Figure 24: Which features of the protest camp mobilize (students, 2024)
(regression coefficients and confidence intervals)



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). $N_{\text{Stud}} = 1,866$; $N_{\text{Vignettes}} = 9,407$. Question wording: I am in favor of holding the protest camp (from 0 'not at all' to 10 'completely'). Mean value of support: 3.2.

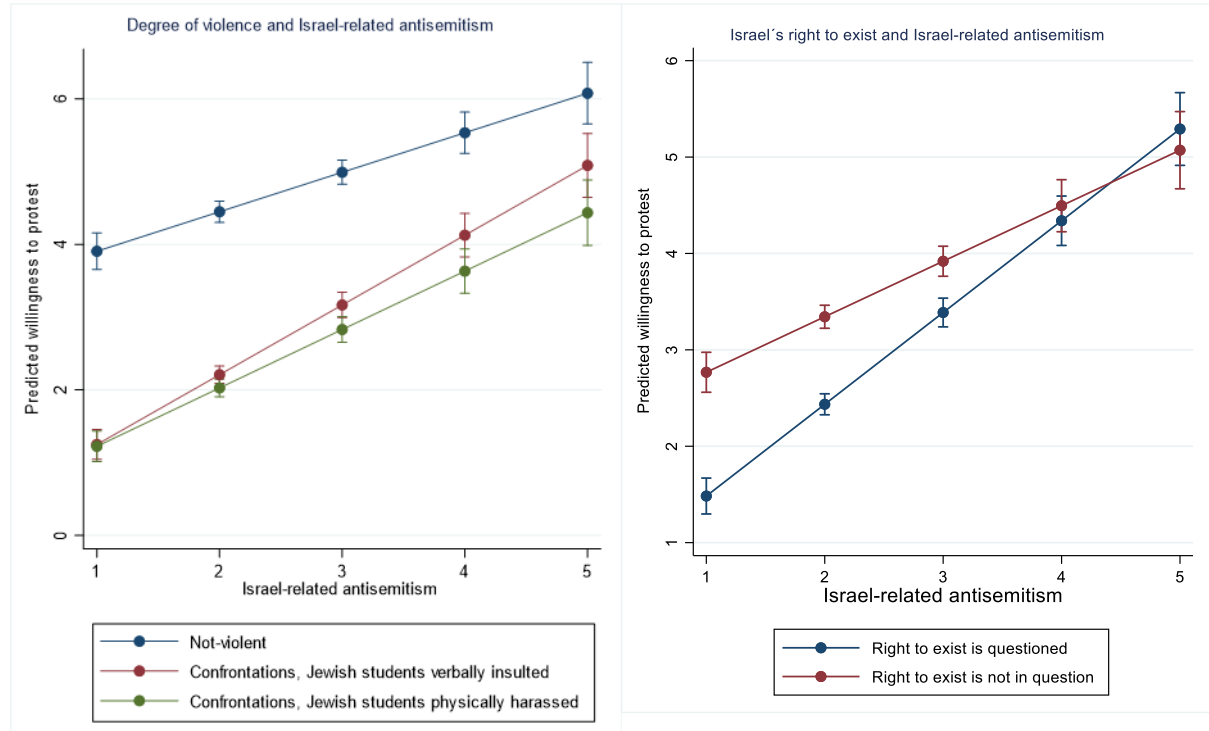
The two characteristics of the students that we included in the evaluation of the survey experiment also show clear correlations. Israel-related antisemitic attitudes trigger support for protest camps, and a higher level of emotional agitation in the face of the conflict is also associated with greater support for the camps. The effect size is greater for Israel-related antisemitism than for emotional agitation. It is important to note that emotional agitation hardly correlates with Israel-related antisemitic resentment ($r = 0.11$).

In a further step, we look at whether students who are prone to Israel-related antisemitism feel particularly addressed by the individual characteristics of the camp. For the sake of simplicity, the interaction effects are presented in figures. The predicted protest support is shown on the Y-axis, while the range of the antisemitism scale is shown on the X-axis. The different lines show the different characteristics of the camp (see Figure 25).

Both parts of the figure show robust interaction effects with Israel-related antisemitism. In general, it is clear that protest support increases with higher levels of Israel-related antisemitism (positive coefficient in the estimates). However, the trend differs for the various characteristics of the camp. In the left-hand graph, respondents with higher levels of resentment hardly distinguish between violent and non-violent camps. Possible violence makes no difference for students with pronounced antisemitic resentment. The graph on the right shows a similar pattern. With high levels of resentment, the questioning of the right to exist by the camp organizers plays no role in the approval of the camp.

Figure 25: Support for the pro-Palestine camp by degree of violence, right to exist, and Israel-related antisemitism (students, 2024)

(Predicted probability of supporting protest camps (with confidence intervals))



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at German universities 2024 (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education). Vignettes N = 9. 342. Question wording: I am in favor of holding the protest camp (from 0 'not at all' to 10 'completely'). Mean value of support: 3.2.

The analyses of the survey experiment show that, in addition to the students' emotional feelings towards the Middle East conflict, Israel-related antisemitic attitudes increase support for the protest. For students with antisemitic attitudes, the principle of non-violent protest is less effective. They also tend to ignore Israel's right to exist in their protest support.

Summary: Overall, the results indicate a low level of student participation in university protests: Two thirds of the students surveyed are inactive and also unwilling to participate in protest actions. Only small groups of pro-Palestine (4%) and pro-Israel students (1%) state that they take part in protests, with the former group outnumbering the latter. In addition, our survey experiment shows that students are in favor of non-violent and dialogue-oriented protest camps. In particular, they reject camps where it is foreseeable that there could be physical or verbal violence against Jewish students. Even if the camps are banned by the university management or dominated by external activists, they tend to be rejected by students. On the other hand, students

support protest camps above all when Israel's right to exist is not called into question and optional discussions with Jewish students are possible. The latter could be seen as a cautious sign of an average willingness among the students surveyed to seek dialog with Jewish people when protesting against Israel. However, students who are emotionally moved by the Middle East conflict and, above all, students with antisemitic attitudes towards Israel are more likely to support pro-Palestine protest actions at universities. For students with antisemitic resentments, the use of violence and questioning Israel's right to exist do not play a role in their rejection of the camp.

3. The university rectorates' view of pro-Palestine protests and antisemitic incidents

We have already established that, in the Germany-wide sample, the proportion of students interested in the protests is not very high. A minority of 7% state that they have taken part in pro-Palestine protests. Around a fifth support such protests. This also corresponds to the proportion of students surveyed who share antisemitic resentments (tend to be or are strongly antisemitic). As expected, the willingness to protest is particularly high among these students. At the same time, two thirds of students are not interested in the protests.

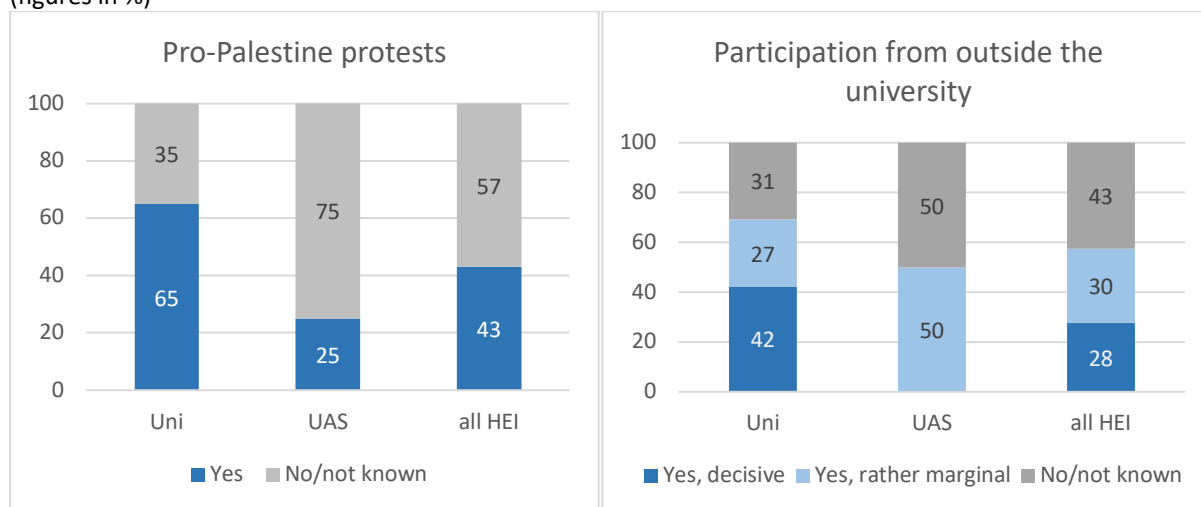
In order to obtain a better picture of what this means for the level of higher education institutions in Germany as a whole, we conducted a supplementary survey of university management at the same time, who were invited via an HRK mailing list (see data basis in the introduction). A total of 94 higher education institutions took part, 41 of which were universities, 40 UAS, and 13 other types of higher education institution (e. g. art or music colleges, dual higher education institutions, etc.). In the following section, only differences between universities and UAS are reported and the values for all surveyed higher education institutions (all HEI), including universities, UAS, and other higher education institutions, are also presented. We have deliberately refrained from recording the universities by name and location. The evaluations cannot claim to be representative overall, but they are likely to accurately describe the general trends.

3.1 Frequency of pro-Palestine protests at universities

Since October 7, 2023, pro-Palestine protests have taken place at over 40% of the universities surveyed (Figure 26). There are clear differences depending on the type of university: a clear majority of the university rectorates surveyed (65%) reported such protests on their campus, while they were reported much less frequently by the universities of applied sciences (UAS) rectorates surveyed (25%). In addition, according to the university rectorates, people from outside the university were more likely to take part in the protests at universities, whereas at UAS they were mainly organized by groups from within the university. This indicates that political and social conflicts are more visible at universities than at UAS.

Figure 26: Pro-Palestine protests since October 7, 2023 and participation of external activists (university management, 2024)

(figures in %)



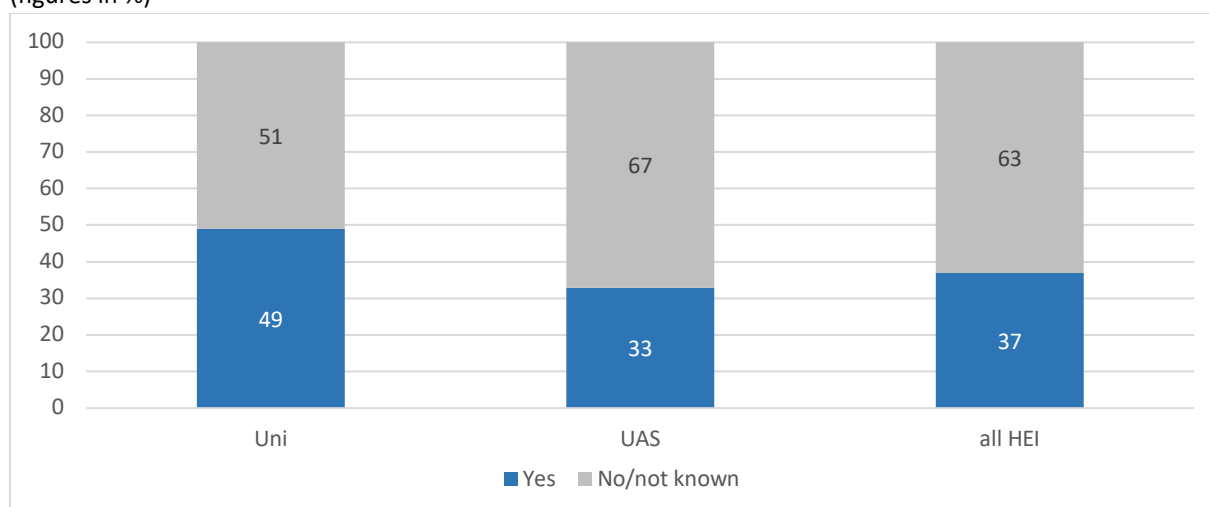
Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education). In addition to universities and UAS, all higher education institutions (HEI) also include the category 'other higher education institutions'. Left figure: $N_{all\ HEI} = 93$, $N_{Uni} = 40$, $N_{UAS} = 40$. Question wording: To your knowledge, have there been pro-Palestine protests at the university since October 7, 2023? Right figure: Subgroup of universities with known pro-Palestine protests, $N_{all\ HEI} = 40$, $N_{Uni} = 26$, $N_{UAS} = 10$. Question wording: Have people who are not part of the university been involved? Yes, significantly; yes, rather marginally; no/not known.

3.2 Antisemitic incidents at universities since October 7, 2023

Similar distributions can also be seen when asking about known antisemitic incidents since October 2023. Almost 40% of the universities surveyed report such incidents overall – at universities the figure is around half, at UAS it is one in three (Figure 27). It should be noted at that, on average, students experience antisemitism at universities much less frequently (only 13% report that they have experienced antisemitism since October 7, 2023).

Figure 27: Antisemitic incidents at universities since October 7, 2023 (university management teams, 2024)

(figures in %)

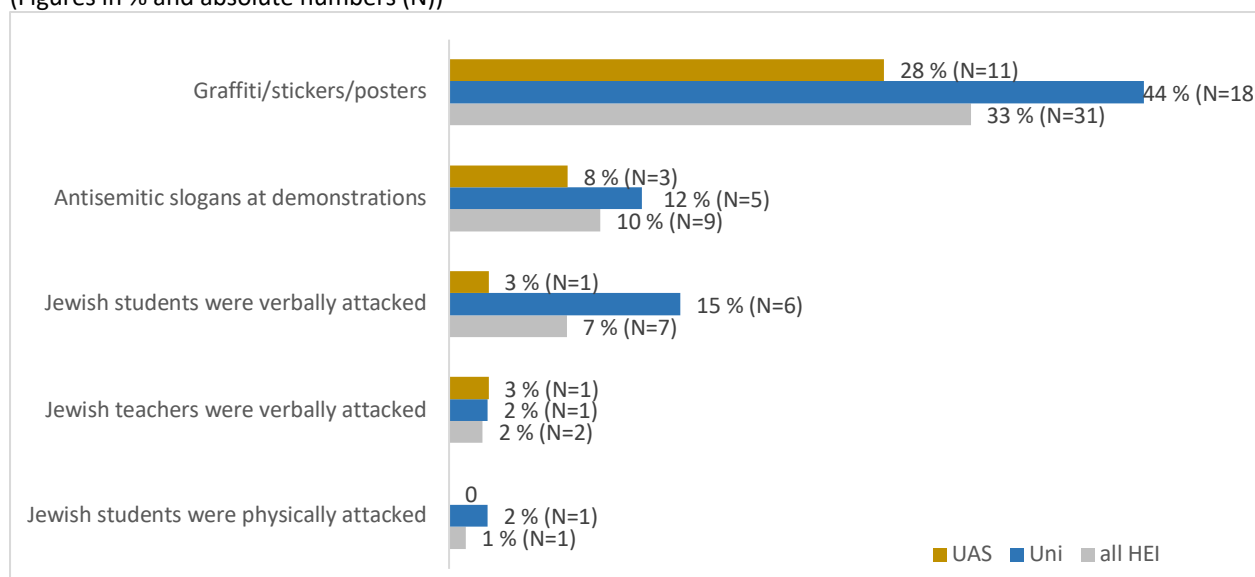


Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). $N_{all\ HEI} = 94$, $N_{Uni} = 41$, $N_{UAS} = 40$. In addition to universities and UAS, all higher education institutions (HEI) also include the category 'other universities'. Question wording: To your knowledge, have there been any antisemitic incidents at the university since October 7, 2023?

These incidents mainly took the form of graffiti, stickers, or posters stuck up on university premises (33% of all universities) or antisemitic slogans at demonstrations (10%) (see Figure 28). It is also worrying that there were isolated reports of verbal and even physical attacks on Jewish students (and respectively) and verbal attacks on Jewish lecturers (2%). All these incidents were reported more frequently at universities than at UAS (see Figure 28).

Figure 28: Type of antisemitic incidents (university management teams, 2024)

(Figures in % and absolute numbers (N))



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{all HEI} = 94, N_{uni} = 41, N_{UAS} = 40. In addition to universities and UAS, all higher education institutions (HEI) also include the category 'other universities'. Question wording: How did these incidents manifest themselves? (Multiple answers)

How did the universities surveyed sanction known perpetrators of antisemitic incidents? Five of the higher education institutions' rectorates surveyed (all of them universities) have expelled people from the university campus due to antisemitic incidents (see Figure 29). Very rarely were there any consequences under personnel law for members of academic staff at universities (two universities surveyed). At one of the universities surveyed, students were threatened with deregistration, but this was ultimately not carried out.

Figure 29: Sanctions imposed by universities against antisemitic incidents (university management, 2024)

(absolute numbers (N))



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). N_{all HEI} = 94, N_{uni} = 41, N_{UAS} = 40. In addition to universities and UAS, all higher education institutions (HEI) also include the

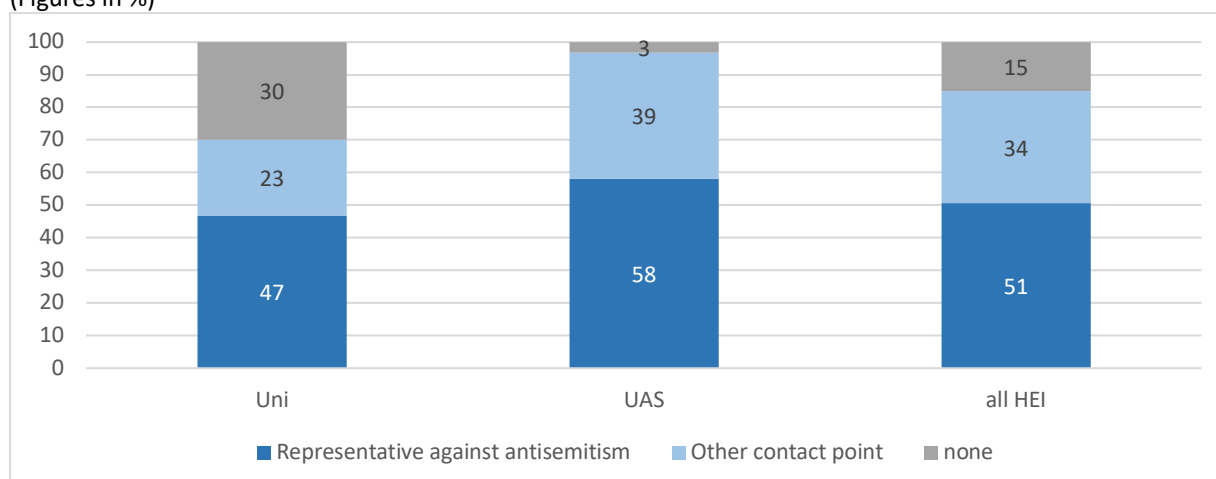
category 'other universities'. Question wording: Since October 7, 2023, have any people been expelled from the university for antisemitic behavior (statements, activities) by exercising domiciliary rights? Yes/No. Have students been threatened with deregistration since October 7, 2023 due to antisemitic behavior (statements, activities)? Yes/No. Have members of academic staff been subject to consequences under personnel law (warning, dismissal) for antisemitic behavior (statements, activities) since October 7, 2023? Yes/No.

3.3 Measures taken by universities against antisemitism

One response by universities to antisemitic incidents is the establishment of contact points for those affected and antisemitism officers. Around 50% of the universities surveyed have appointed an anti-semitism officer (Figure 30). Some 34% of the universities surveyed have assigned the fight against antisemitic tendencies to an existing contact point, primarily anti-discrimination officers. Overall, 85% of the participating universities had a contact point for combating antisemitism at the time of the survey.

The figures from the survey of university management show significantly higher frequencies of contact points compared to the figures from the student survey: There, only 15% of students state that there is a representative against antisemitism at their university, and a further 11% are aware of a reporting and advice center for antisemitic incidents (as shown in Figure 20). These differences indicate that students are not sufficiently aware of the existing contact points.

Figure 30: Contact points for combating antisemitic tendencies (university management, 2024)
(Figures in %)

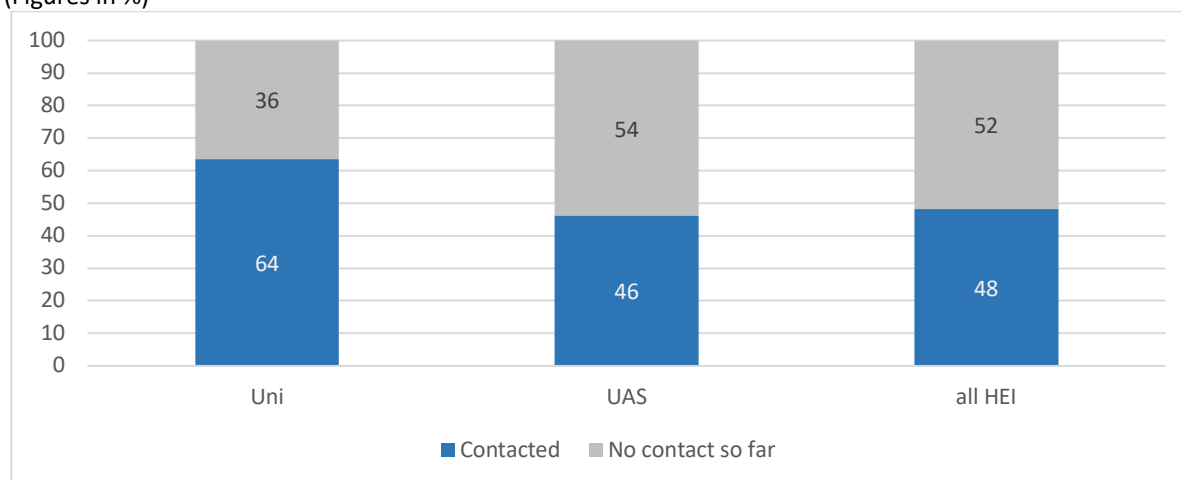


Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). $N_{all\ HEI} = 73$, $N_{Uni} = 30$, $N_{UAS} = 31$. In addition to universities and UAS, all higher education institutions (HEI) also include the category 'other universities'. Question wording: Does your university have an antisemitism officer? Yes/No. If No: Is the task of combating antisemitic tendencies assigned to another department? Yes/No

The difference between types of higher education institutions is striking: Figure 30 shows that the UAS surveyed have set up contact points more frequently than universities. If these figures are compared with the previously reported prevalence figures for antisemitic incidents (33% at UAS and universities), this result is surprising. At this point, the more selective participation of UAS in the survey should be noted: Only one in three UAS contacted took part in the survey, compared to one in two for universities. It is likely that, in particular, UAS that had already proactively dealt with antisemitism took part in the survey.

Figure 31: Students contacting the representative against antisemitism (university management, 2024)

(Figures in %)



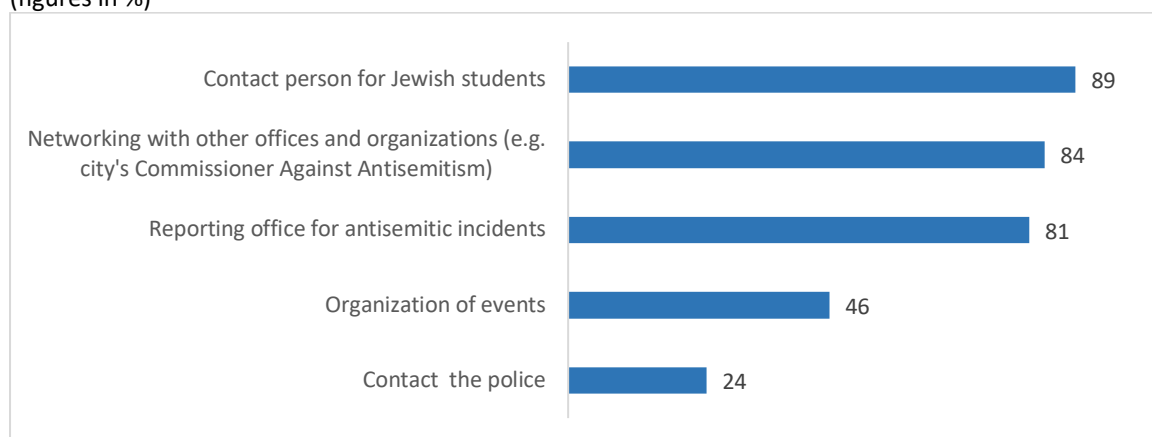
Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). $N_{all\ HEI} = 29$, $N_{Uni} = 11$, $N_{UAS} = 13$. In addition to universities and UAS, all higher education institutions (HEI) also include the category 'other higher education institutions'. Question wording: To the best of your knowledge, how often is the Commissioner against Antisemitism visited / contacted online by students?

A closer look at the data shows that all of the universities surveyed that report antisemitic incidents have set up corresponding contact points. According to the university management, the antisemitism officers were contacted by students at half of the universities that have an institution (Figure 31).

What are the tasks of the antisemitism officer? According to the rectorates, these officers primarily act as contact persons for Jewish students (89%, see Figure 32) and as reporting points for antisemitic incidents (81%). Their tasks also include networking with other (e.g. municipal) contact points (84%). Less frequently mentioned tasks are the organization of events (46%) or direct contact with the police (24%).

Figure 32: Tasks of the representative against antisemitism (university management, 2024)

(figures in %)



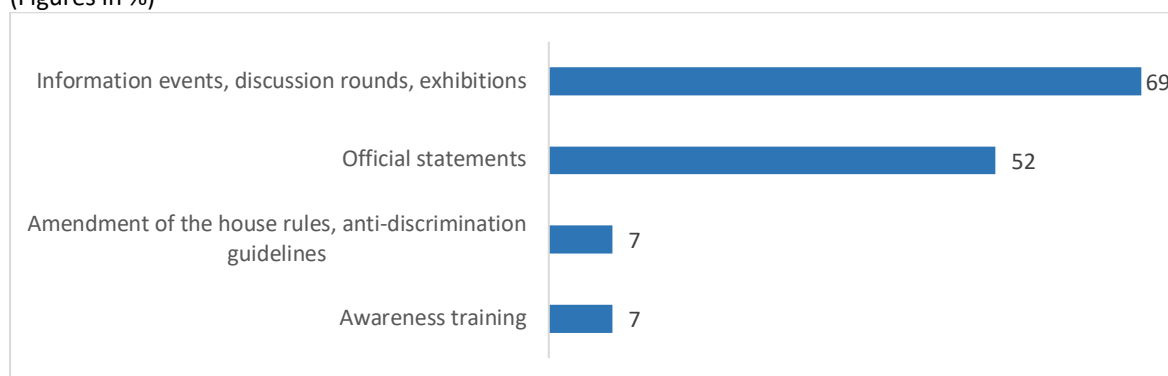
Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). $N_{all\ HEI} = 37$. Question wording: What are the tasks of the representative(s) against antisemitism? (Multiple answers)

In addition to the institutionalization of contact points, the universities undertook further measures and activities to combat antisemitism. Two thirds of the universities surveyed organized information events, discussion rounds, or exhibitions on this topic (see Figure 33). Around half published statements by university management on the situation specific to their university. In addition, some of the

university management teams surveyed adapted their house rules or anti-discrimination guidelines (7%) or conducted awareness-raising training for teaching staff and students (7%).

Figure 33: Further measures against antisemitism (university management, 2024)

(Figures in %)

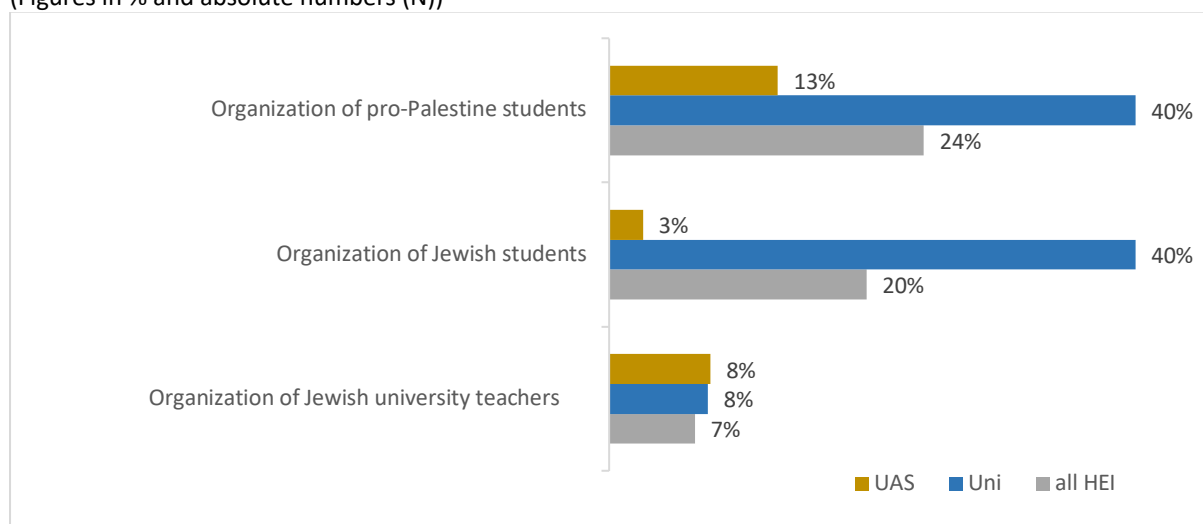


Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). $N_{\text{all HEI}} = 94$. Question wording: Have there been (further) activities and measures at your university in response to growing antisemitism?

Finally, the university rectorate teams were asked about the activities of pro-Palestine and Jewish student groups. Support for political demands for a 'free' Palestine is a central characteristic of pro-Palestine groups, while Jewish student groups are primarily committed to studying and living at German universities without being affected by antisemitism. Of course, a few Jewish students also take part in pro-Palestine groups. Both groups are significantly more common at universities than at UAS (see Figure 34). Groups of Jewish lecturers are much less frequently represented. There are no known groups of Palestinian lecturers.

Figure 34: Active organizations/groups at universities (university management, 2024)

(Figures in % and absolute numbers (N))



Source: Rapid Response 2: Antisemitism at universities (University of Konstanz, Research Group on Higher Education, 2024). $N_{\text{all HS}} = 92$, $N_{\text{Uni}} = 40$, $N_{\text{HAW}} = 39$. In addition to universities and UAS, all all higher education institutions (HEI) also include the category 'other universities'. Question wording: Is one of the following groups or organizations active at your university?

Summary: Overall, the results of the university survey show that there were significantly more pro-Palestine protests and antisemitic incidents at universities than the information provided by

students would suggest. While these incidents mostly took the form of graffiti, stickers, or slogans, there were also isolated verbal and physical attacks on Jewish university members. The fact that universities are more affected indicates that political and social conflicts are more visible there than at UAS. The activist groups that are active beyond universities are likely to primarily seek support at universities. The majority of the universities surveyed have reacted to the antisemitic incidents. All universities that report incidents also have representatives or contact points. For the most part, these structures were created in response to incidents. Many universities have made statements on the topic of antisemitism and carried out awareness-raising measures. This signals that they are taking antisemitic sentiment seriously. However, the comparative figures from the student survey indicate that the measures are hardly noticed by many students. The activities of Jewish and pro-Palestine student groups prove that the topic of the Middle East conflict and the associated antisemitism are reaching German universities. Those affected, especially Jewish students and lecturers, experience antisemitism that is often not perceived by those not affected, as well as a lack of solidarity from fellow students and lecturers (cf. AJC, 2025). Antisemitism-related measures at universities, such as awareness-raising events for staff and students, are therefore likely to remain highly relevant in the future. Better communication in this regard also appears to be required.

Conclusions for universities and the fight against antisemitism

As was the case a year ago, this report provides reliable data on current antisemitic tendencies at German universities. Once again, we have succeeded in surveying a sufficiently large number of students in a differentiated manner. We take this as an indication that the topic of the survey is of interest to students and is considered important by them.

The expansion of the Middle East conflict in 2024 has mobilized students far beyond the conflict region. In Germany, pro-Palestine student groups are active at many universities. However, students who take part in protests and rallies are clearly in the minority, although there are significantly more students who were involved in pro-Palestine protests than in rallies for Israeli causes, such as the release of hostages. According to the results of the survey, the pro-Palestine actions at universities are far removed from a social movement that encompasses large sections of students – participation in the actions is too low for this. This distinguishes the situation at German universities very clearly from the student movement of the 1960s and 1970s in its rejection of the Vietnam War.

Compared to the previous year, antisemitic resentment among students remains at a constant level – around one in five to one in six students exhibit a tendency towards or pronounced antisemitic attitudes. The proportion of those who reject Israel's military actions is significantly higher and has risen compared to the previous year.

One thing is clear: antisemitism does not stop at universities. It can be traced back in the German university landscape over centuries (Sosada, 2025). The number of antisemitic incidents at universities continued to increase in the course of 2024. The universities surveyed have reacted to the rise in antisemitism, with antisemitism officers being appointed or contact points created at affected universities. In individual cases, sanctions were imposed on the perpetrators of antisemitic incidents. As emphasized in various places, as it was only possible to interview a limited number of Jewish students, this report cannot cover the situation of Jewish students. On the situation of Jewish students, please refer to other publications (e. g. AJC, 2025). However, even the few highlights presented here indicate that many Jewish students hide characteristics of Jewish identity out of fear.

In view of the polarized mobilization situation, with immense suffering on both sides in the conflict region, universities could contribute to supporting the dialogue between the respective sympathetic groups at the university in suitable formats. It is also very important to promote direct contact with and between Jewish and (pro-)Palestine students. As we know from the work of activists for peace in the conflict region, direct contacts increase the chance of greater empathy for one another, which can break down prejudices and reduce fears and contribute to improved intergroup relations (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011).

Regarding Israel's right to exist, many students are unsure – this is certainly an irritating signal and shows the success of antisemitic forces in mobilizing ideas. The high level of support for statements that are critical of Israel (e.g. on the apartheid state and accusations of genocide) also indicate that students often know relatively little about Israel and its history of conflict. It is important that universities, as places of knowledge and discussion, provide more and reliable information on the Middle East conflict in order to close these gaps in knowledge as a possible cause of Israel-related antisemitism. At the same time, it is also very important that students and other university staff be trained to recognize antisemitism. This is certainly also a task for the school system upstream of the universities, especially in a country that has special responsibility for Jewish life in light of the Shoah. As places of learning and training for future teachers, universities must therefore create sufficient opportunities in this area.

In conclusion, we strongly advocate for the creation of a suitable database on antisemitism at universities in the future. Regular, scientifically sound and accompanying monitoring should also be included in large representative student surveys in order to carry out special analyses for individual subjects and universities.

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