

ANTISEMITISM ON CAMPUS

# Understanding Hostility to Jews and Israel

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**Brandeis**

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The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS), founded in 1980, is dedicated to providing independent, high-quality research on issues related to contemporary Jewish life.

The Cohen Center is also the home of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI). Established in 2005, SSRI uses innovative research methods to collect and analyze sociodemographic data on the Jewish community.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Our gratitude to our colleagues and funders notwithstanding, the authors take full responsibility for the design, conduct, analysis, and interpretation of the study. We have tried our best to use cutting-edge tools of contemporary survey design and analysis to provide an evidence-based description of the climate on college campuses and, in particular, the factors that contribute to hostility toward Jewish students and Israel.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, loud but often small groups of students have framed the conversation and defined the environment on US college campuses. A crucial challenge that university leaders have faced as they dealt with protests surrounding the Israel-Hamas war on campus is an insufficient understanding of the perspectives of both Jewish and non-Jewish students. Our program of research, focused on understanding the thinking and motivations of college students since the beginning of the war, aims to remedy this deficit and provide systematic data about the views of all students on campus and to identify strategies to address contemporary antisemitism.

The study focuses on how non-Jewish students think about Jews and Israel and how these views relate to their other beliefs. The data for the study were collected in the spring semester of 2024 from undergraduate students at 60 schools with large Jewish student bodies. A total of 4,123 undergraduate students from the panel created by College Pulse (including 313 Jewish students) responded. This study builds on our prior research, which explored the perspectives of Jewish students at many of the universities included in the present study. That research found considerable variability across campuses in the level of hostility Jewish students have faced in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war, with hostility substantially higher at some campuses than others.

In this study, we assessed the reactions of non-Jewish students to nine explicitly negative beliefs about Jews and Israel. We selected beliefs that our prior research indicated most Jewish students considered to be antisemitic, or which could contribute to a campus climate where Jews are discriminated against, harassed, or excluded. Multivariate statistical analyses found that, with respect to these beliefs, non-Jewish students fell into one of four groups:

- **66% of non-Jewish students did not display any hostility toward Jews or Israel** and their views were not likely to threaten their relationship with their Jewish peers. These students might have contentious disagreements with certain supporters of Israel about the situation in Israel and Gaza, but they did not express hostility to Jews, and their views on Israel were shared by many Jewish students.
- **15% of non-Jewish students were extremely hostile toward Israel but did not express explicitly negative views about Jews.** Most of these students felt that Israel does not have a right to exist (a statement that over 90% of Jewish students found antisemitic). They also did not want to be friends with other students who support Israel's existence, effectively ostracizing nearly all of their Jewish peers. At the same time, these students rejected explicitly anti-Jewish stereotypes and did not express positive views of Hamas or its actions. These students were found almost exclusively on the political left, and their criticism of Israel and support of narratives about "decolonization" were in line with their political orientation.
- **16% of non-Jewish students endorsed at least one explicitly anti-Jewish belief but did not express intense criticism of Israel.** These students agreed with traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes like "Jews have too much power in America." Although they were not especially critical of Israel's government, they were attracted to anti-Israel rhetoric (such as the claim that "supporters of Israel control the media") that correspond

to traditional anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. Their political views did not differ significantly from the 66% of students who did not express hostility toward Jews or Israel.

- **2% of non-Jewish students were extremely hostile to Jews and Israel.** This group endorsed all negative statements about Jews and Israel.

In our survey of US campuses during the 2023-24 academic year we did not find a climate of universal anti-Jewish hatred, nor did we find evidence that Jewish students' concerns about antisemitism were being blown out of proportion. Instead, we found that Jewish students' experiences of a hostile environment on campus were driven by about a third of students who held distinct patterns of beliefs about Jews and Israel. These findings point to the following takeaways:

- **Although a majority of students are not hostile to Jews or Israel, colleges and universities need to recognize that there is a minority of students who are contributing to a hostile environment for Jewish students on campus.** Educational institutions should treat antisemitism like any other form of prejudice and consider what Jewish students are saying about how antisemitism is manifesting itself on their campuses.
- **Efforts to address antisemitism on campus need to be more carefully targeted.** A one-size-fits-all solution to the general problem of antisemitism on campus is unlikely to be effective. Because students who are likely contributing to Jewish students' perceptions of hostility do not share the same views on these topics (or the same underlying motivations), they may require more than one type of intervention.
- **Colleges and universities can do a better job of exposing students to diverse views and encouraging dialogue across differences.** Regardless of their political views, including on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, faculty and educators on campus must help students learn how to express and act on their intense political convictions in a way that does not lead to violence or the ostracism of peers who think differently.
- **Leveraging research is important.** Universities should draw on their own research capacity to make more data-informed decisions about responding to antisemitism. This includes supporting research aimed at understanding antisemitism or evaluating the effectiveness of proposed solutions.

A better understanding of the beliefs and motivations of different groups on campus can help colleges and universities foster a climate that supports intellectual curiosity, acceptance of difference, and productive dialogue.

# INTRODUCTION

Following the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, Jewish college students in the United States have experienced unprecedented hostility from their fellow students and others in the campus community. There is little dispute about the gravity of the problem. Task forces established at multiple universities have documented Jewish students' concerns about antisemitism on campus in the 2023-24 academic year,<sup>1</sup> and a number of research studies have corroborated Jewish students' experiences of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel hostility.<sup>2</sup>

Although many universities recognize the challenges facing their Jewish students, they have struggled to respond effectively. Many Jewish students have reported that their institutions failed to protect them from harassment and discrimination.<sup>3</sup> Forceful actions, including de-certifying organizations such as Students for Justice in Palestine, sanctioning students who violate student conduct codes, and having police forcibly remove protesters, have sometimes exacerbated hostility between students.<sup>4</sup> The need to balance their obligations to both allow expressions of political dissent and protect different groups within the student body has forced many universities into uncomfortable and highly contentious conflicts not only with their students, but also with faculty, donors, and the broader public.

One driver of the difficulties universities have encountered is a failure to appreciate the perspectives of both Jewish and non-Jewish students. Sweeping claims have been made about the ideas, concerns, and motivations of different groups of students. Pundits have debated whether pro-Palestinian protesters are acting out of principled concern over the lives of Palestinian civilians,<sup>5</sup> an ill-informed desire for excitement and camaraderie,<sup>6</sup> or are using the conflict as a convenient cover for old-fashioned anti-Jewish animus.<sup>7</sup> Many commentators have identified broader political ideas, including academic discourse about “intersectionality” and especially about “decolonization,” as contributing to an environment experienced by Jewish students as hostile.<sup>8</sup>

These pronouncements, however, are often made in the absence of systematic research. Observations about the situation on campuses appear to be disproportionately influenced by those with the loudest voices and the most extreme positions. Such a perspective is ill-suited to diagnosing the problem and constructing effective responses. Since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war, we have been conducting a program of research to understand the beliefs, concerns, and motivations of undergraduate students—both Jewish and non-Jewish—at US colleges and universities. Our goal is to provide a data-driven picture of the campus environment that can help stakeholders develop programs and policies that address antisemitism and improve the living and learning experience for all students.

## Understanding the perspective of Jewish students

This report builds directly on a study we conducted in November and December of 2023. That study, which included more than 2,000 Jewish students at 51 colleges and universities that serve large Jewish student populations, focused on understanding the perspectives of Jewish students on campus. We found considerable variability across campuses in the level of hostility Jewish students faced in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war, with hostility substantially higher at some campuses than others. That study also found that Jewish students' concerns about antisemitism and perceptions of



anti-Jewish hostility were closely related to, and driven by, perceptions of hostility to Israel. That hostility was most likely to be expressed by other students on campus, as opposed to faculty or administrators.<sup>9</sup> The study also found that, notwithstanding contentious debates about how to define antisemitism,<sup>10</sup> the vast majority of Jewish students at these schools felt that denying Israel's right to exist was antisemitic, while also agreeing that even harsh criticism of Israel's conduct was not.<sup>11</sup>

## Understanding the perspective of non-Jewish students

Having developed an understanding of the scope of the problems facing Jewish students, we recognized that addressing their concerns requires, in part, an examination of the perspectives and motivations of their fellow non-Jewish students as they relate to Israel and Jews. This process includes testing some of the theories that pundits, activists, and other researchers have put forward to explain the conflicts on campus surrounding Israel and antisemitism in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war. Among these are claims about the political identities of the protesters and their support for particular political viewpoints or philosophies. Chief among these are ideas promoting “decolonization,” which often paints Jewish citizens of Israel as “settler colonialists” who are unjustly occupying indigenous Palestinian land, notwithstanding Judaism's long historical ties to the region.<sup>12</sup> Commentators have pointed to this idea as central to the conflicts playing out on campus since Hamas's attack, but there is little systematic data on how many college students support it, or how it is related to anti-Jewish hostility.<sup>13</sup>

Other scholarly research suggests that certain *psychological* dispositions could be driving anti-Jewish animus on campus. Some work has pointed to a desire for violence or vengeance against those in positions of power, referred to as “anti-hierarchical aggression,” as a driver of antisemitism; in particular, antisemitic conspiracy theories about a world dominated and oppressed by a secret organization of powerful Jews.<sup>14</sup> Another potential psychological driver of antisemitism is what psychologists call “dichotomous thinking”: a worldview involving a preference for clear, simple delineation between “good” and “bad.”<sup>15</sup> Because discourse surrounding the Middle East often paints Israeli Jews as privileged oppressors, students who are predisposed to dichotomous thinking may respond to this discourse by seeing *all* Jews in exclusively negative terms.

## Study goals and research questions

The goal of the study is to illuminate the landscape of attitudes and beliefs held by non-Jewish students, clarifying the magnitude and contours of the problem and helping college and university administrators craft more effective, data-driven responses.

In particular, we sought to understand:

- **How do Jewish and non-Jewish students differ in their evaluation of the climate on campus?** To what extent do both groups see hostility toward Jews and Israel as a concern on their campus?
- **How hostile are non-Jewish students toward Jews and Israel?** To what extent do non-Jewish students endorse negative anti-Jewish stereotypes? To what extent do they endorse hostile beliefs about Israel that most Jews find antisemitic or that perpetuate antisemitic conspiracy theories? How closely connected are anti-Jewish and anti-Israel beliefs?

- **How much do factors that have been thought of as possible contributors to hostility to Jews and/or Israel play a role on campus?** Do those who hold hostile beliefs about Jews and/or Israel also hold particular political identities or ideas? How is this hostility related to opinions about the Israeli government or the Israeli people? Could it be driven or exacerbated by a desire for vengeance against those in power, or a tendency to see the world in binary terms?
- **Who attends events expressing support for Israel and Palestinians on the campus quad or posts about the conflict on social media?** Are pro-Palestinian social media postings and protests dominated by students with a particular view of Jews or Israel? How prevalent are students who endorse explicitly anti-Jewish messaging at these protests?

## ABOUT THIS STUDY

The findings in this report draw on an online survey conducted in spring 2024 with undergraduate students at 60 colleges and universities across the United States. The campuses selected for this study have large estimated Jewish student populations and include private and public institutions that vary geographically and by the size of their undergraduate student body. The 60 campuses include all 51 schools included in our study of Jewish undergraduates conducted in fall 2023 (see list of schools in the Appendix).

Survey respondents were part of an undergraduate student panel created by College Pulse, a survey and analytics firm specializing in the college student population,<sup>16</sup> and were enrolled as undergraduates at one of the 60 schools during the spring semester of 2024. In total, the survey collected responses from 4,123 undergraduates: 3,810 non-Jewish students and 313 Jewish students. Jewish status was determined through a demographic question about religion collected by College Pulse when students were recruited to the panel. In this report, responses were weighted to be representative of the total undergraduate population at the 60 schools included in the sample, using weights provided by College Pulse (see the Technical Appendix for details about the study methodology and analysis paradigm, as well as tables of results with 95% confidence intervals and the full survey instrument).

### Understanding antisemitism and hostility on campus

This study aims to provide a better understanding of the sources and drivers of Jewish students' concerns about antisemitism on campus, which prior research suggests are often closely connected to perceptions of hostility toward Israel. To do this, we investigated how non-Jewish students think about Jews and Israel. The key question that animated this study was not whether or not a non-Jewish student was “antisemitic,” but rather whether they held views about Jews and/or Israel that could contribute to Jewish students' perception of hostility or feelings of social alienation on campus. Some views, including those about Israel, might contribute to a campus environment that is hostile to Jews because a large portion of Jewish students experience them as antisemitic. But other beliefs regarding Israel, such as those that invoke traditional antisemitic conspiracy theories (like replacing the word “Jews” with “supporters of Israel” in longstanding antisemitic conspiracy theories about Jewish control of finance or the media) can also lead to discrimination against Jewish students on campus, regardless of whether these beliefs are considered “antisemitic.”

The present study avoids using the terms “Zionism” and “anti-Zionism” in both the questions we asked respondents and in our discussion of results, because these terms mean different things to different people. In some contexts, these words are treated as reflecting beliefs about whether the state of Israel should or should not *continue to exist* as a homeland for the Jewish people.<sup>17</sup> In other contexts, the terms are used to represent an endorsement or criticism of past, present, or future actions by the Israeli *government*.<sup>18</sup> Current debates about Israel and antisemitism would benefit from greater clarity about how these terms are used, but to avoid confusion, we do not use them in this report.

Our primary focus in this study was to better understand the extent to which non-Jewish students were likely to agree with negative statements about Jews and/or Israel. The statements were selected based on past research that indicated that these statements were either perceived by Jewish students as antisemitic or could otherwise contribute to a hostile environment for Jewish students on campus. One concern when trying to capture negative feelings in surveys is “social desirability bias”: a tendency of survey respondents to suppress responses that might be viewed unfavorably by others.<sup>19</sup> To reduce the influence of biased, confused, or dishonest responses to any one statement, we asked non-Jewish respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with nine explicitly *negative* statements about Jews and Israel, and then examined the pattern of their responses to all nine items.<sup>20</sup>

The first set of statements represent traditional negative antisemitic stereotypes and reflect explicit hostility toward Jews, without any mention of Israel.<sup>21</sup>

- **“Jews in America have too much power.”**
- **“Jews don’t care what happens to anyone but their own kind.”**
- **“Jewish people talk about the Holocaust just to further their political agenda.”**

We also included a statement that reflects negative views about Jews but does so by way of criticizing Israel. This statement *explicitly* mentions both Jews and Israel.

- **“Jews should be held accountable for Israel’s actions.”**

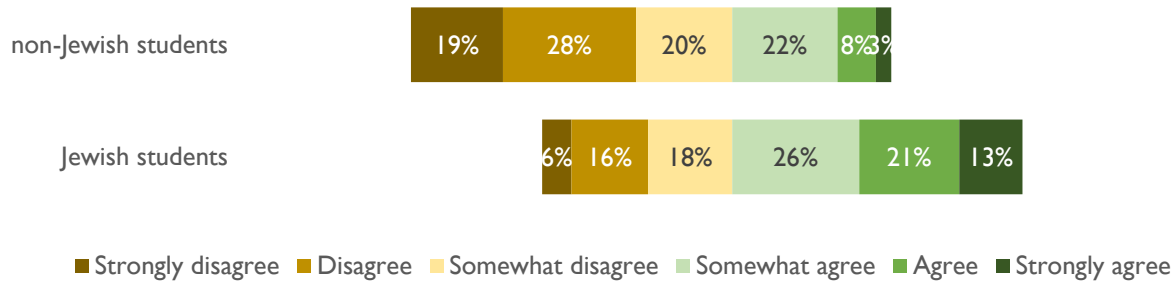
Another set of negative statements reflects hostility toward Israel and its supporters but does not *explicitly* mention Jews. We did not include expressions of criticism directed toward Israel’s *government*, but only statements about Israel that most Jewish students consider antisemitic, or which could otherwise cause tensions between Jewish and non-Jewish students. The statements, followed by our reasoning for including them, are listed below:

- **“Israel does not have the right to exist.”**  
Existing research finds that a substantial majority of Jewish students find this belief to be antisemitic.<sup>22</sup>
- **“All Israeli civilians should be considered legitimate targets for Hamas.” and “To what extent is your overall opinion of Hamas favorable or unfavorable?”**<sup>23</sup>  
Because Hamas is a terrorist organization that explicitly endorses antisemitic ideas and engages in the targeting and murder of Jews, these two items, which express support for Hamas and its attacks on Jewish civilians, are likely to be seen as an endorsement of anti-Jewish violence by many Jewish students.
- **“Supporters of Israel control the media.”**  
On the surface, this is a claim about the power and affluence of Israel’s political supporters, without any explicit reference to Jews. But it also draws on, and implicitly reinforces, traditional antisemitic tropes about *Jewish* control of the media<sup>24</sup> and could thus reinforce anti-Jewish hostility. It could also serve as a reflection of anti-Jewish hostility for individuals who are hesitant to express *explicit* hostility to Jews.
- **“I wouldn’t want to be friends with someone who supports the existence of Israel as a Jewish state.”**  
This statement does not refer to Jews specifically, but because the existence of Israel is an important part of the identity of the vast majority of American Jews,<sup>25</sup> this belief could effectively bar one from having Jewish friends.

# THE CLIMATE TOWARD JEWS AND ISRAEL ON CAMPUS

Not surprisingly given the protests that erupted during the spring semester, many students, both Jewish and non-Jewish, viewed their campus environment as hostile to Jews. In the spring of 2024, the majority of Jewish students (60%) at 60 campuses agreed, at least somewhat, that there was a hostile environment toward Jews on their campus. Fewer non-Jewish students shared this view (33%) (Figure 1).<sup>26</sup>

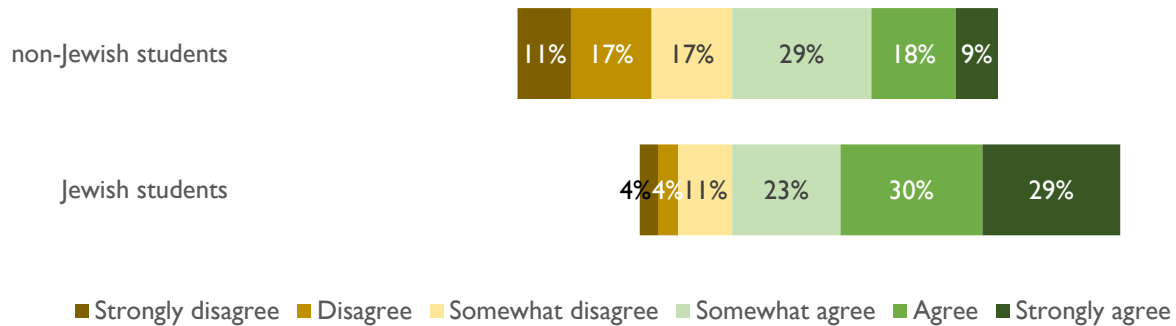
**Figure 1: Hostile environment toward Jews on campus**



Note: See Table B1 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals and significance tests.

A majority of both Jewish and non-Jewish students agreed, at least somewhat, that there was a hostile climate toward Israel, with Jewish students substantially more likely to agree. More than 80% of Jewish students viewed the environment on their campus as hostile to Israel, compared to 56% of non-Jewish students (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Hostile environment toward Israel on campus**

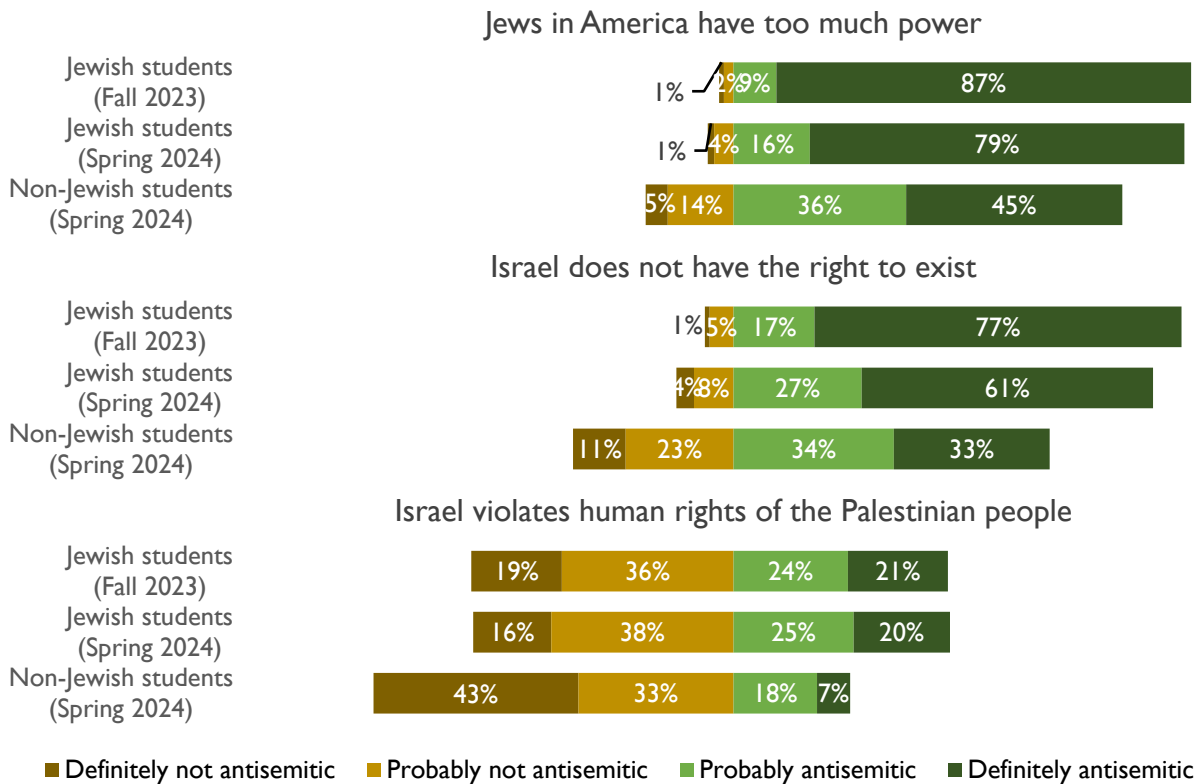


Note: See Table B2 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals and significance tests.

# WHAT STUDENTS THINK ABOUT ANTISEMITISM

To understand the context of anti-Jewish hostility on the 60 campuses included in the study, all respondents were shown statements about Jews and Israel and asked whether or not they felt the statements were antisemitic. The responses of Jewish students in spring 2024 were very similar to responses we collected in our earlier fall 2023 study of Jewish undergraduates. This was the case despite the fact that our fall 2023 study used a different sampling frame (applicants to the Birthright Israel program), and that there were dramatic changes in the situation on many campuses over the course of the spring semester. In both surveys, the majority of Jewish students felt that the claims that Jews in America have too much power and that Israel does not have the right to exist were “definitely” antisemitic, but only a small minority felt the same about the claim that Israel violates the human rights of the Palestinian people (Figure 3). Although they were less likely than Jewish students to see these statements as antisemitic, a majority of non-Jewish students also viewed explicit claims about Jewish power and denying Israel’s right to exist as antisemitic. In contrast, only a quarter believed the same about the claim that Israel violates the human rights of Palestinians. The findings from both studies suggest that Jewish and non-Jewish students have a relatively nuanced understanding of when and how statements about Israel “cross the line” into antisemitism.

Figure 3: What is antisemitic?



Note: See Table B3 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals and significance tests. The 2023 data on Jewish students were drawn from applicants to Birthright Israel.

# WHAT NON-JEWISH STUDENTS THINK ABOUT JEWS AND ISRAEL

To understand the extent to which non-Jewish students hold views that could contribute to Jewish students' feelings of being the target of hostility or social alienation, we asked respondents to react to nine different statements about Jews and Israel. To identify patterns of responses to the nine statements that assessed hostility to Jews and Israel, we dichotomized responses to each statement into "agree" and "disagree." We then used a statistical modeling approach (Latent Class Analysis) to examine how respondents' answers related to one another. The Latent Class Analysis procedure only considered the extent to which respondents who agreed with one statement also agreed with other statements, regardless of the content of the statement. This approach identified four distinct patterns of responses, which we describe with the following labels: Not Hostile to Jews or Israel,<sup>27</sup> Hostile to Israel and not Hostile to Jews ("Hostile to Israel"), Hostile to Jews and Less Hostile to Israel ("Hostile to Jews"), and Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel.<sup>28</sup>

Figure 4 shows that the majority of non-Jewish students (66%) at the 60 schools included in our study were classified as Not Hostile to Jews or Israel, 15% were Hostile to Israel, 16% were Hostile to Jews, and a very small group (2%) were Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel.<sup>29</sup>

Table 1 summarizes the views of each group with regard to the nine statements about Jews and Israel. Table 2 shows the proportion of students in each group who agree with each statement.

**Figure 4: Views about Jews and Israel (non-Jewish undergraduate students at 60 campuses)**



Note: See Table B4 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals and significance tests.

Table I: Summary of views about Jews and Israel

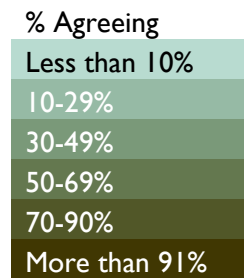
<b>Not Hostile to Jews or Israel (66% of non-Jewish undergraduates)</b>
Two thirds of non-Jewish students were unlikely to endorse <i>any</i> of the nine negative statements about Jews or Israel. However, a quarter of this group did agree that “supporters of Israel control the media.”
<b>Hostile to Israel, not Hostile to Jews (15%)</b>
The vast majority of these students agreed with the most negative statements about Israel, including that Israel does not have the right to exist, but almost none agreed with negative statements that explicitly referred to Jews, even the statement that Jews should be held responsible for Israel’s actions. Furthermore, despite their negative views about Israel, only a small minority expressed any favorability toward Hamas, and only a few endorsed Hamas’s targeting of civilians.
<b>Hostile to Jews, Less Hostile to Israel (16%)</b>
Virtually all (99%) of these students agreed with at least one of three anti-Jewish statements (although less than a third agreed with all three), indicating that they hold at least some explicitly negative views of Jews. They were much <i>less</i> likely to display hostility toward Israel than toward Jews. Only a third agreed that Israel does not have a right to exist, or that Jews should be held responsible for its actions, and only a quarter expressed any support for Hamas. Despite this, 70% agreed that “supporters of Israel control the media,” perhaps because this statement echoes the traditional anti-Jewish conspiracy theories that they are receptive to.
<b>Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel (2%)</b>
This very small group of students tended to agree with all nine negative statements about both Jews and Israel.



Table 2: Hostility to Jews and Israel

	<b>Not Hostile to Jews or Israel</b> (66% of non-Jewish students)	<b>Hostile to Israel, not Hostile to Jews</b> (15% of non-Jewish students)	<b>Hostile to Jews, Less Hostile to Israel</b> (16% of non-Jewish students)	<b>Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel</b> (2% of non-Jewish students)
Jews in America have too much power	3%	2%	65%	95%
Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind	2%	2%	67%	93%
Jewish people talk about the Holocaust just to further their political agenda	4%	11%	68%	92%
Jews should be held accountable for Israel's actions	3%	4%	39%	97%
Israel does not have the right to exist	2%	70%	34%	98%
All Israeli civilians should be considered legitimate targets for Hamas	4%	6%	24%	92%
Favorability of Hamas	12%	23%	26%	82%
Supporters of Israel control the media	25%	89%	70%	92%
I wouldn't want to be friends with someone who supports the existence of Israel as a Jewish state	7%	83%	35%	72%

Legend:



# WHAT INFLUENCES NON-JEWISH STUDENTS' VIEWS OF JEWS AND ISRAEL?

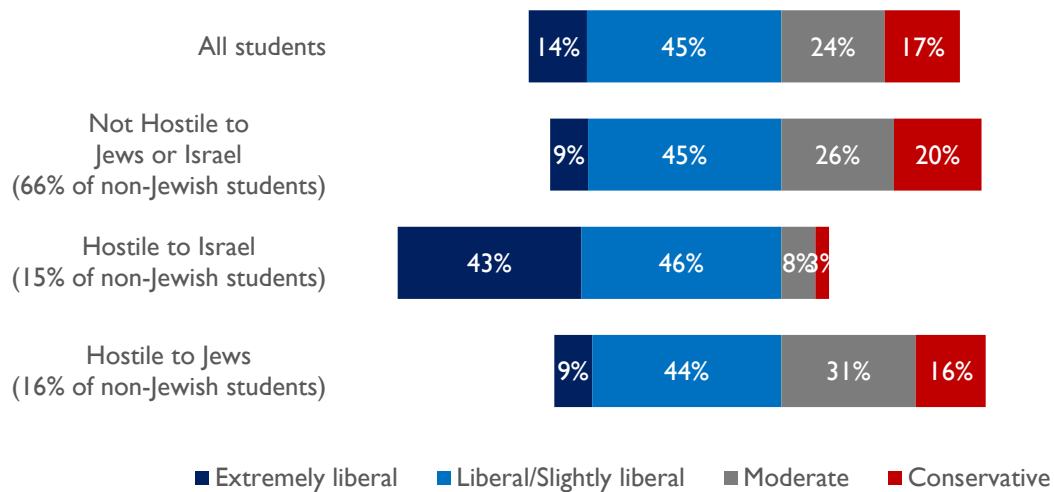
To understand the factors that drive non-Jewish students' feelings of hostility toward Jews and Israel, we examined our respondents' political identities, views about political issues theorized to contribute to a hostile environment on campus, including support for “decolonization,” opinions about Israel’s government, and the psychological traits of anti-hierarchical aggression and dichotomous thinking. To provide context on the campus as a whole, the charts below first show how all students on campus (Jewish and non-Jewish) responded to the factor in question. The charts then compare how non-Jewish students in the groups identified above differed from one another with respect to these factors.

Because the Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel group of students was so small, estimates of their views were subject to considerable uncertainty. Thus, we did not present findings for this group in the charts in this section, but instead discuss them separately later in the report.<sup>30</sup> In addition, because Jewish students were not the main focus of analyses in this report, their responses on these factors are also presented separately (see Figure 11).

## Political identity and political attitudes

Politics are part of the social and academic fabric affecting the climate on campus. Overall, more than half of all students (Jewish and non-Jewish) on these campuses identified as liberal, with 14% identifying as extremely liberal. About a quarter identified as moderate, and the remaining 17% identified as conservative.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, among non-Jewish students, those in the Hostile to Israel group were almost exclusively liberal, with over 40% identifying as extremely liberal, and hardly any identifying as moderate or conservative (Figure 5).<sup>32</sup>

Figure 5: Political identity



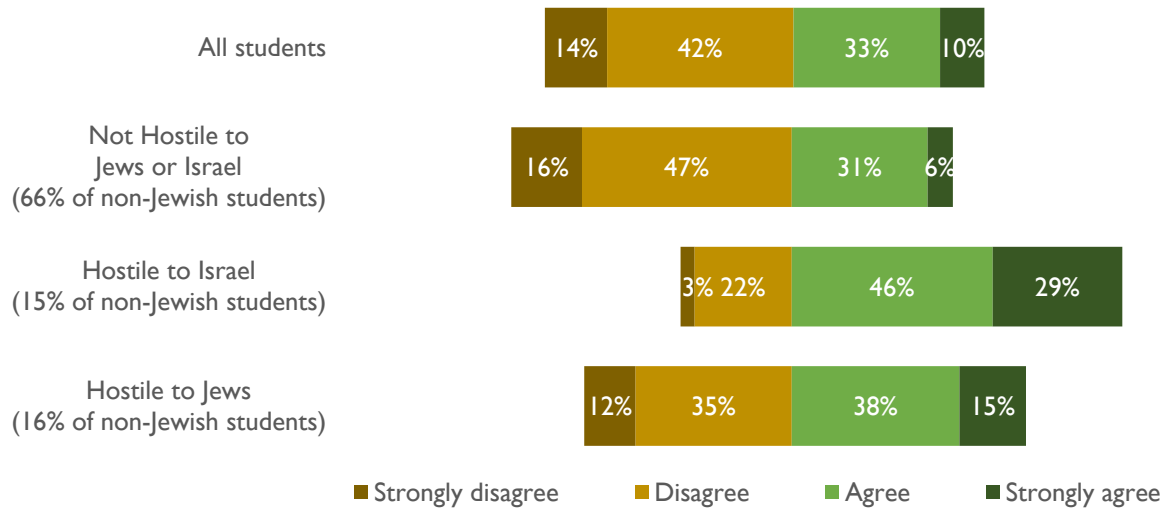
Note: See Table B5 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals and significance tests.

This same pattern is evident when we analyze participants’ political *attitudes*—students’ tendency (regardless of their political identity) to give responses aligned with the political “left” or “right” to seven questions about a variety of political issues, including gender identity, climate change, and the prevalence of racism in American society. Virtually all students who were Hostile to Israel had “left” or “far left” political opinions, and students who were Hostile to Jews were slightly more likely to hold views on the political center or right (not shown).<sup>33</sup>

### Support for “decolonization”

To understand how hostility to Jews and Israel might be related to support for the idea of “decolonization,” respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement “all land seized through colonization should be returned to indigenous peoples.”<sup>34</sup> This question was asked alongside the seven questions assessing other political attitudes discussed above, unrelated to Israel. Among students who were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel, only 37% agreed with this statement, and fewer than 10% strongly agreed. In contrast, a majority of the other two groups agreed with the statement. About three quarters of students in the Hostile to Israel group—who were highly likely to hold other far left views and identify as liberal—agreed with this statement, with 29% strongly agreeing. Students who were Hostile to Jews, who as discussed above were somewhat to the right of other students with regard to other political issues, were nonetheless significantly more likely to agree with *this* particular statement (Figure 6). This group’s views on “decolonization” are an anomaly with respect to its other broader political opinions and identities.<sup>35</sup>

Figure 6: Views on decolonization



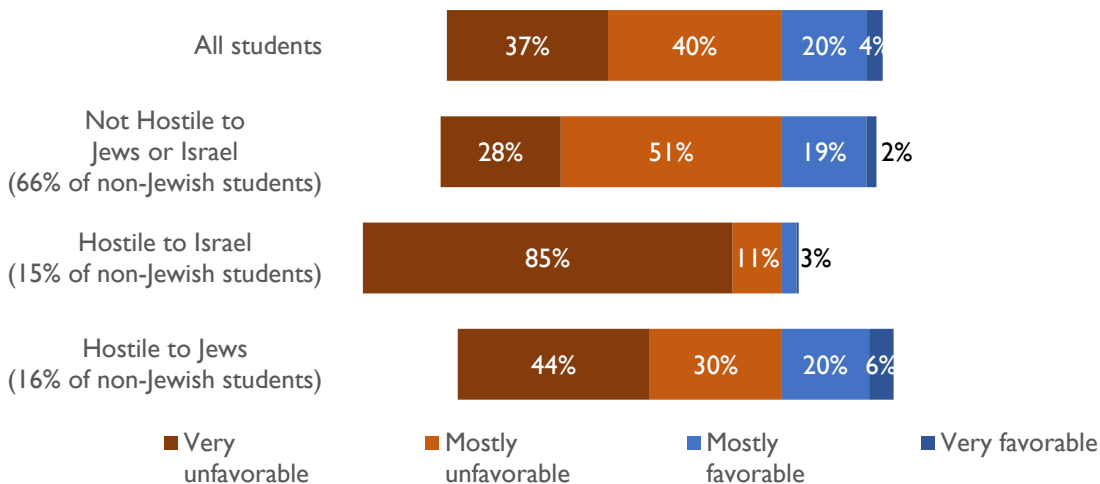
Note: See Table B7 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals and significance tests.

## Favorability toward the Israeli government and people

The groups identified in this study were partly defined by the extent to which they expressed intense hostility toward Israel, including whether they agreed it should exist at all. As noted earlier, the identification of these groups only considered statements about Israel that Jewish students were likely to find antisemitic or that could otherwise contribute to a hostile environment for Jewish students on campus. This section explores other attitudes toward Israel and Israelis that were not part of the definitions of the groups.

Figure 7 shows the extent to which each group had a “favorable” or “unfavorable” opinion of Israel’s government in the context of the Israel-Hamas war. As a whole, students tended to have mostly negative views of the Israeli government. That was particularly so for students who were Hostile to Israel, of whom 85% had very unfavorable views of its government, and very few expressed favorable views. Even among students who were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel, only 21% had favorable views of Israel’s government, and 28% were very unfavorable. Among students who were Hostile to Jews, three quarters had unfavorable views, with 44% having very unfavorable views.

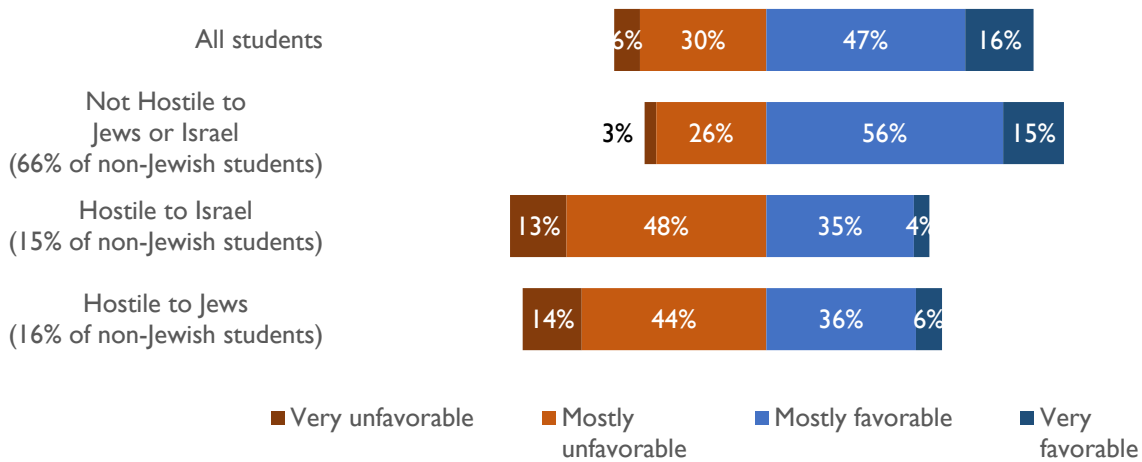
**Figure 7: Favorability of the Israeli government**



Note: See table B8 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals and significance tests.

Overall, a majority of all students had a favorable opinion of the Israeli people (Figure 8). Over 70% of students who were Not Hostile to Israel or Jews had a favorable opinion of the Israeli people, notwithstanding their coolness toward the Israeli government. In contrast, students who were Hostile to Israel and students who were Hostile to Jews, despite having very different views of the Israeli government, tended to have similarly negative views of the Israeli people: around 60% were unfavorable toward the Israeli people, with a bit more than 10% being very unfavorable.<sup>36</sup>

Figure 8: Favorability of the Israeli people

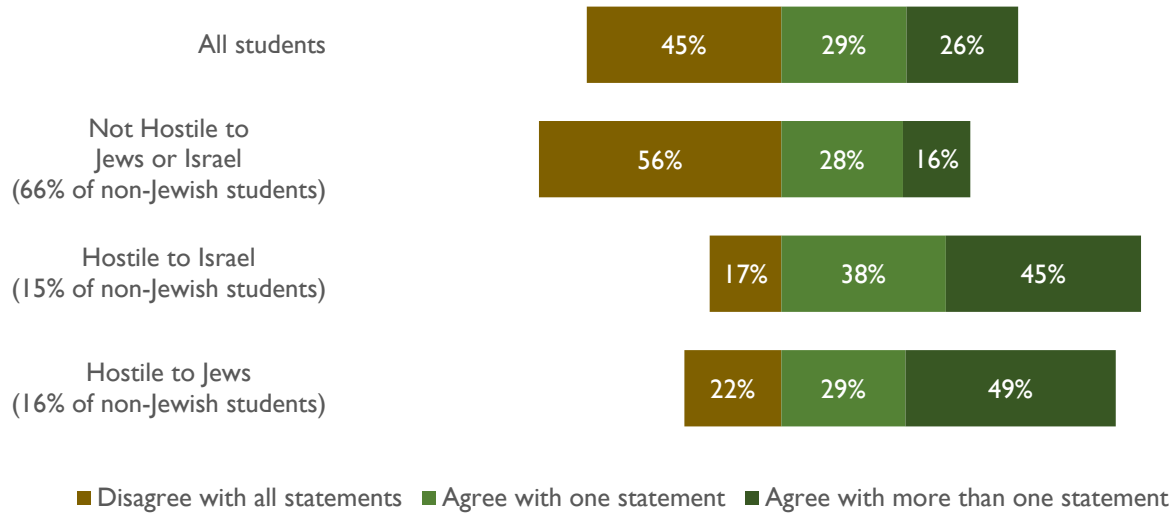


Note: See Table B9 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals and significance tests.

## Anti-hierarchical aggression and dichotomous thinking

Two psychological constructs, anti-hierarchical aggression and dichotomous thinking, have been identified by other researchers as factors that may contribute to anti-Jewish hostility. **Anti-hierarchical aggression**, reflecting a desire to punish or harm those in positions of power, or a willingness to use violence to overthrow the established order, was measured in that research by asking respondents to agree or disagree with a battery of 13 statements.<sup>37</sup> In this study, we measured this construct by using an adaptation of four of the 13 original statements including: “Political violence can be constructive when it serves the cause of social justice” and “Certain individuals in our society must be made to pay for the violence of their ancestors.”<sup>38</sup> We combined responses to these statements into a single scale by adding up the number of statements respondents agreed with. A majority of students who were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel did not agree with *any* of the four statements in this scale, and less than 20% agreed with more than one. However, students who were Hostile to Israel and students who were Hostile to Jews were much more likely to agree with these statements. Eighty-three percent of students who were Hostile to Israel agreed with at least one statement, and 45% agreed with more than one. Likewise, 78% of students who were Hostile to Jews agreed with at least one statement, and almost half agreed with more than one (Figure 9).

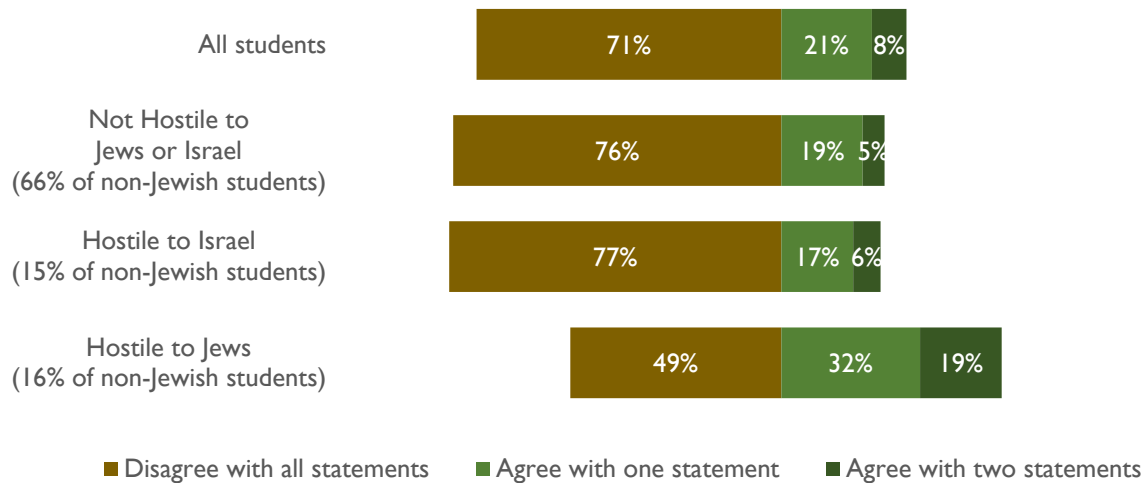
Figure 9: Anti-hierarchical aggression (adapted)



Note: See Table B11 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals.

Researchers have measured “**dichotomous thinking**”—a tendency to think of the world in binary terms—with a set of five questions.<sup>39</sup> Of these, we chose two to include in this study: “People can clearly be distinguished as being ‘good’ or ‘bad’” and “All questions have either a right answer or a wrong answer.” Figure 10 shows the proportion of students in each group who agreed with one, both, or neither of these statements.<sup>40</sup> A majority of students who were Hostile to Jews agreed with at least one of these two statements, and close to 20% agreed with both. Students who were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel and students who were Hostile to Israel gave similar responses to these questions: over three quarters of each group disagreed with both statements, and only a very small proportion agreed with both.

Figure 10: Dichotomous thinking (adapted)



Note: See Table B13 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals.

## STUDENTS EXTREMELY HOSTILE TO JEWS AND ISRAEL

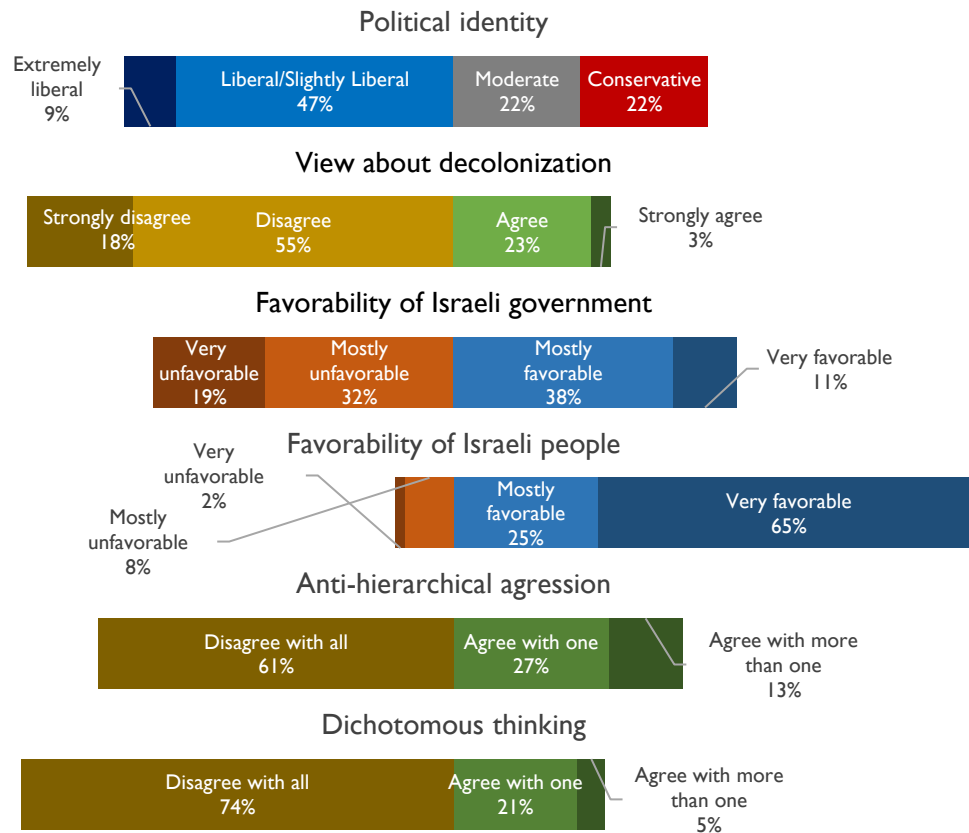
The 2% of students who were **Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel** were represented by only 91 responses to this survey. Because they were such a small group, estimates of their characteristics (for example, their political attitudes) were subject to very large “margins of error.” However, the results of our analysis, including statistical models that control for demographic factors,<sup>41</sup> suggest that, in comparison to students who were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel, students who are Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel were:

- Slightly more likely to hold center or right political *attitudes*, but not significantly different with regard to political *identity* (that is, they were no more or less likely to consider themselves “liberal,” “moderate,” or “conservative”).
- Less favorable toward the Israeli people and more favorable toward the Israeli government.
- More likely to display both anti-hierarchical aggression and dichotomous thinking.

# JEWISH STUDENTS

Jewish students represented 9% of all undergraduates at the schools included in the study. With respect to their political identities, views on the decolonization narrative, and their psychological dispositions toward anti-hierarchical aggression and dichotomous thinking, Jewish students were very similar to students who were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel. Like most of their non-Jewish peers, Jewish students had a diversity of political identities, but were most likely to identify as liberal, were relatively unlikely to support returning all land seized through colonization, and had relatively low levels of anti-hierarchical aggression and dichotomous thinking. The only dimension Jewish students differed on concerned their attitudes toward Israel. In contrast to other students, who were mostly unfavorable toward the Israeli government, Jewish students were evenly divided, with roughly the same proportion having favorable views as unfavorable views. At the same time, almost all Jewish students had favorable views of the Israeli *people*. Sixty-five percent of Jewish students reported having very favorable views toward the Israeli people, compared to 15% of non-Jewish students who were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel.

Figure 11. Jewish students



Note: See Tables B5, B7, B8, B11, and B13 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals.



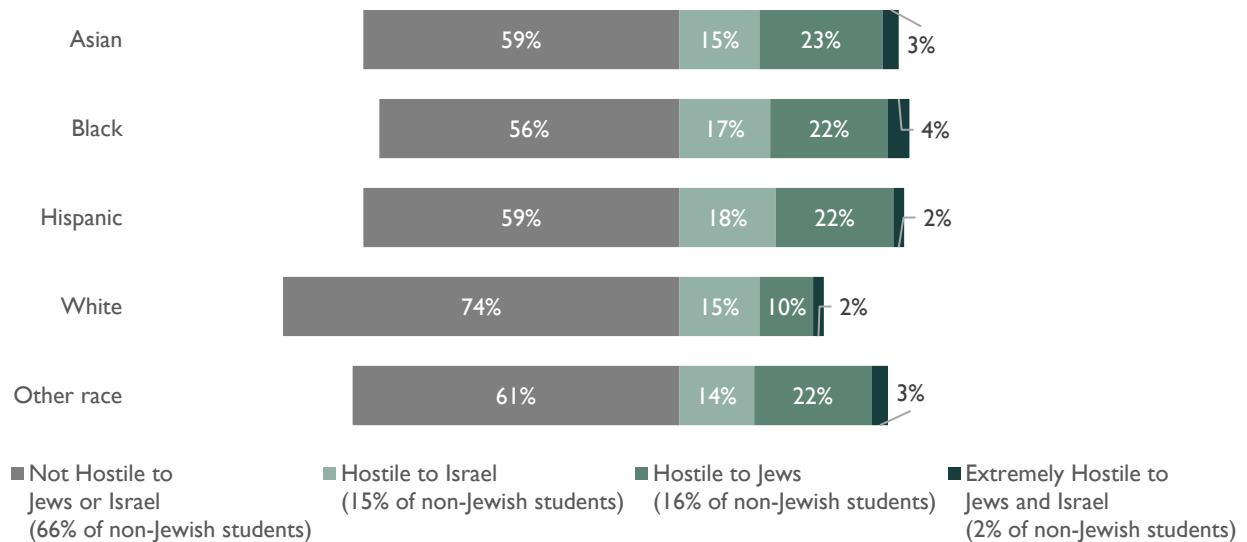
# UNDERSTANDING THE CAMPUS CONTEXT FOR HOSTILITY TO JEWS AND ISRAEL

The analyses presented above showed how the four groups of non-Jewish students we identified differed in terms of their ideas and motivations. But as shown in Figure 4, some of these groups make up a much larger proportion of the student body than others. This section explores the prevalence of the groups identified above (including those who are Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel) among students with different racial and religious identities, and among those who have engaged in public expressions related to the Israel-Hamas war on campus.

## Race and religion

We first explore how non-Jewish students of different racial and religious identities broke down in terms of the four groups. The survey gave students the option to identify as Asian, Black, Hispanic, white, or as some other race. Within each of these racial identities, a majority of students were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel. Likewise, less than 5% of any racial identity group was Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel. Between 14% and 18% of each group was Hostile to Israel. However, approximately 20% of non-Jewish students who identified as a racial identity other than white were Hostile to Jews, compared to around 10% of white students (Figure 12). Racial identity remained a statistically significant predictor of being Hostile to Jews even after controlling for other factors, such as political identity.<sup>42</sup>

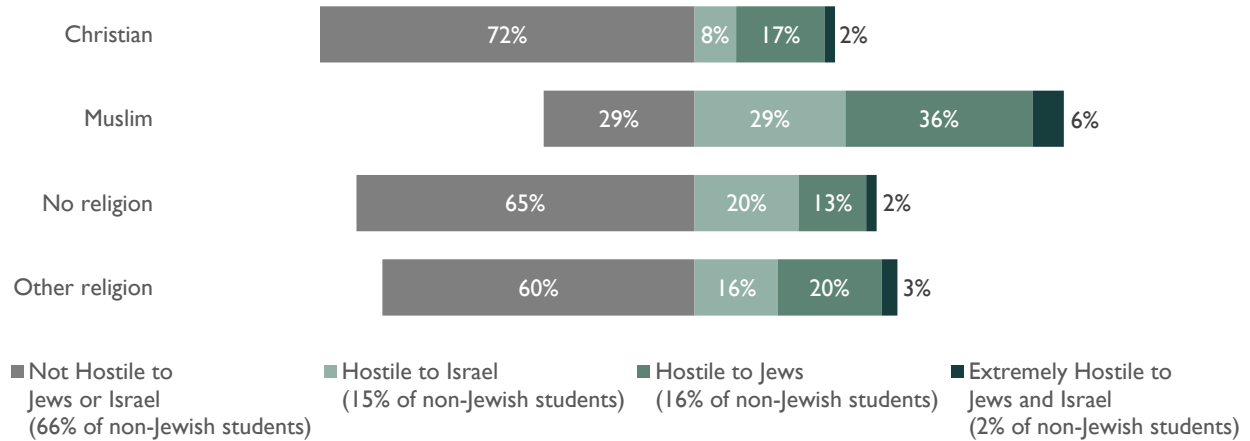
Figure 12: Racial identity



Note: See Table B15 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals.

In terms of religious identity, students who were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel made up a majority of Christians and students who identified with no particular religion or some other religion, but only 29% of students who identified as Muslim (Figure 13). Identifying as Muslim was significantly associated with being either Hostile to Israel or Hostile to Jews, even after controlling for other factors.<sup>45</sup>

**Figure 13: Religious identity**



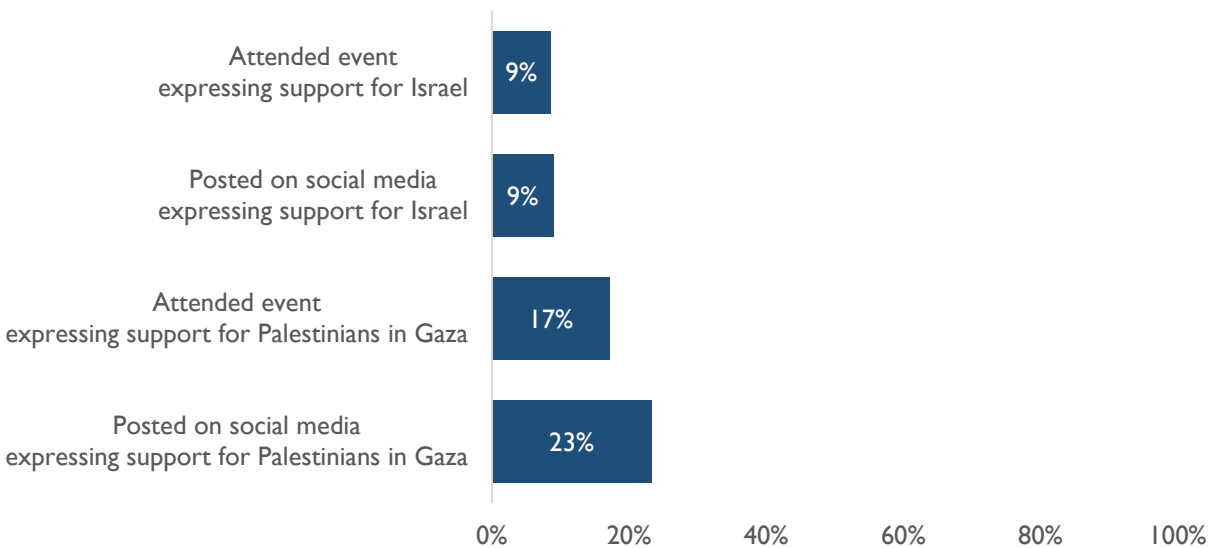
**Note:** See Table B16 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals.

## Posting on social media and attending events

We asked all undergraduates at these schools (including Jewish students) whether in the time period since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war they had posted on social media expressing support for Israel or Palestinians in Gaza, and whether they attended events in support of either side. Because posting on social media or attending an event in support of a cause could reflect a wide range of attitudes—from passionate activism to curiosity, support of friends, or even counter-protesting—these two measures likely overestimate the actual proportion of students who expressed a strong political stance on these issues or who engaged in different forms of political activism related to the Israel-Hamas war.

Nevertheless, even these measures find that only a minority of students reported participating in any form of political expression related to the Israel-Hamas war since the outbreak of hostilities. Only 17% of all undergraduates reported that they attended an event expressing support for Palestinians in Gaza, and only 23% said they posted related content on social media (Figure 14). Even smaller proportions reported posting or attending events in support of Israel.

Figure 14: Posting on social media and attending events related to the Israel-Hamas war

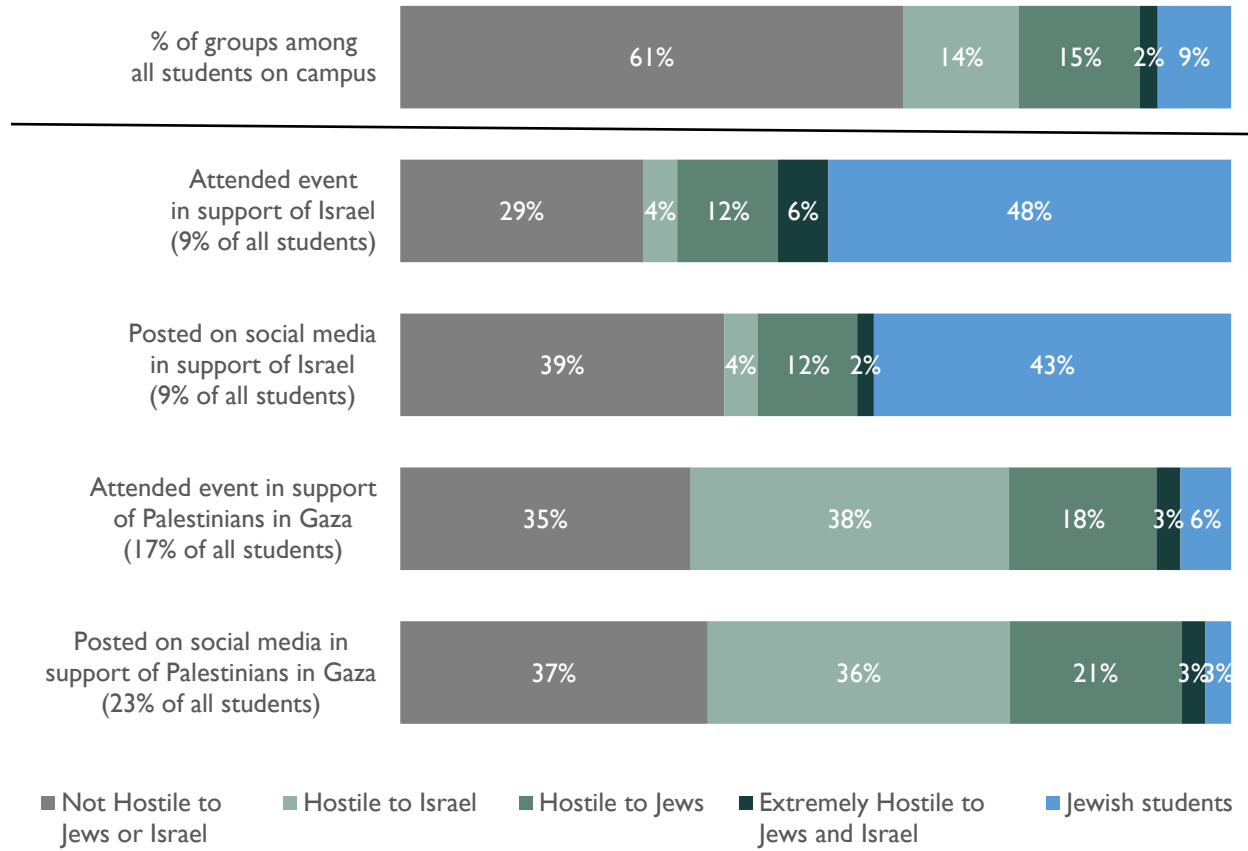


Note: See Table B17 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals and significance tests.

To understand which kinds of students posted on social media or attended an event related to the war, we examined the prevalence of students in each of the groups discussed above, as well as the prevalence of Jewish students, among those who posted or participated in events. Figure 15 shows the proportion of those who participated in events or posted on social media who were in each of the groups described above, as well as the proportion of Jewish students who did the same. Because the figure includes data on both Jewish and non-Jewish students, a bar at the top of the chart showing the overall proportion of *all* students who fall into each group is also provided for reference. Because it includes Jewish students, the numbers in this bar differ slightly from those presented in Figure 4, which refer to the proportion of *non-Jewish* students in each group.

Students who were Hostile to Israel were dramatically overrepresented among those who posted on social media (36%) or attended events expressing support for Palestinians in Gaza (38%), compared to their share of 14% among all students. However, they still did not constitute the majority of those participating in pro-Palestinian events or posting on social media in support of Palestinians in Gaza. Students who were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel made up a majority (61%) of all students on campus, but less than 40% of those posting on social media or attending events expressing support for either Israel or Palestinians. Students in the other groups of non-Jewish students (Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel and Hostile to Jews) were represented among those participating in events or posting on social media at roughly the same proportion they appeared among all students. Finally, as expected, Jewish students were substantially overrepresented among those who attended events expressing support for Israel and who posted on social media in support of Israel (48% and 43% respectively, compared to 9% of their share among all students). Compared to their share in the population, Jewish students were less likely to post on social media or attend events expressing pro-Palestinian sentiments. They made up around 6% of those who attended pro-Palestinian events, and 3% of those who posted in support of Palestinians on social media.

Figure 15: Who posts on social media and attends events related to the Israel-Hamas war



Note: See Table B18 in Technical Appendix B for 95% confidence intervals and significance tests.

## DISCUSSION

This study depicts a troubling and highly complex situation on US campuses at the end of the 2023-24 academic year. The findings provide further confirmation that antisemitism and hostility to Israel on campus have posed serious challenges for Jewish students since October 7.<sup>44</sup> This represents a dramatic shift from earlier years. In studies conducted between 2016 and 2019, we found that even at schools that recently experienced intense conflicts related to antisemitism (e.g., the University of Michigan, the University of Pennsylvania, and Harvard University), virtually no students, Jewish or otherwise, agreed there was a climate of hostility toward Jews on their campus.<sup>45</sup> At the end of the 2023-24 academic year, we found that 60% of Jewish students and a third of non-Jewish students recognize a climate of hostility toward Jews at their school. Furthermore, a majority of *all* students agree that there is hostility toward Israel on their campus, which regardless of how debates about defining antisemitism are resolved, can often translate into hostility or exclusion of Jewish (and especially Israeli) students.

There is little question that anti-Jewish hostility and antisemitism on campus are genuine problems. However, our analysis of nine different statements expressing hostility toward Jews and Israel identified a majority (66%) of non-Jewish students who were **Not Hostile to Jews or Israel**. In addition to rejecting traditional antisemitic tropes about Jews having too much power or only being concerned about themselves, these students also rejected the idea that Israel has no right to exist. This does not necessarily mean that these students are “pro-Israel.” Although the majority of these students hold positive views of the Israeli people, only a minority had favorable views of the Israeli government. In this respect, they were not that different from many of the Jewish students, almost all of whom had very favorable views of the Israeli people, but who were divided in their favorability of the Israeli government. Political disagreements about Israel between Jewish students and the majority of their fellow students, who are Not Hostile to Jews or Israel, are likely to be contentious. But when students who are Not Hostile to Jews or Israel express criticism of Israel they are less likely to be a major driver of Jewish students’ concerns about antisemitism on campus because they are less likely to express beliefs about Israel that most Jewish students find antisemitic.

Only a very small proportion of students (about 2%) were **Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel**. This group of students made up such a small portion of our sample that it was difficult to describe their characteristics with confidence, except that they did not seem to share a single political background.

Because they were far more prevalent than the Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel group, the remaining two groups of non-Jewish students (Hostile to Israel but not Hostile to Jews and Hostile to Jews but Less Hostile to Israel) were more likely to significantly contribute to Jewish students’ concerns about antisemitism and perceptions of anti-Jewish hostility on their campuses. Yet these groups seemed to have very different underlying motivations and characteristics. Understanding the differences between these two groups, and the role that each group plays in shaping the climate on campus, may be helpful in effectively addressing the concerns of Jewish students and strengthening the capacities of universities to pursue their educational missions.

Students who were **Hostile to Israel but not Hostile to Jews** represented roughly 15% of students at these schools. They expressed views about Israel—such as the belief that Israel has no right to

exist—that the vast majority of their Jewish peers find antisemitic. At the same time, these students, who were almost exclusively found on the political left, were very unlikely to display explicit hostility toward Jews, and they expressed little support for Hamas. Although we find no direct evidence of it in the data, it is possible that some of these individuals *do* harbor anti-Jewish animus but were reluctant to express it in the survey due to “social desirability bias.”<sup>46</sup> But even if these individuals did not harbor *any* explicit or implicit prejudice toward Jews, their intense hostility to Israel is *still* likely to cause serious challenges for Jewish students on campus. These students were willing to admit that they were uninterested in being friends with anyone who believes Israel has a right to exist, a group that includes the vast majority of their Jewish peers. A sizable minority of this group endorsed views about Israel’s control of the media that play into (and could perpetuate) longstanding antisemitic conspiracy theories. Furthermore, in addition to having predictably negative views of Israel’s government, these students also tended to have negative views of the Israeli people, which may be especially challenging for Jewish students, many of whom have Israeli friends or family members, or who are Israeli themselves. Thus, regardless of their rejection of traditional antisemitic stereotypes, these students’ views about Israel are likely contributing to Jewish students’ concerns about a hostile environment on their campus.

These students’ hostility toward Israel might be partly explained by their beliefs about “decolonization,” which are in line with their other progressive political attitudes and liberal political orientation. The intensity of their hostility may also be related to their higher levels of anti-hierarchical aggression, reflecting a desire for vengeance against those—including Israel and its supporters—that they see as occupying positions of power.

Students who were **Hostile to Jews but Less Hostile to Israel** represented about 16% of non-Jewish students at these schools. These students *did* express at least some form of explicit hostility to Jews. Virtually all of them agreed with at least one traditional antisemitic stereotype: that Jews in America have too much power, only care about themselves, or only talk about the Holocaust to further their own agenda. These students did not hold anti-Jewish views as strongly as the 2% of students who were Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel—almost none of these students agreed with *all three* of these anti-Jewish ideas. But this substantial group of students was still willing to endorse prejudicial beliefs about Jews that virtually all other students, including those who expressed intense hostility to Israel, rejected.

At the same time, despite their openness to explicitly anti-Jewish stereotypes, these students were much less likely to endorse negative statements about Israel. Slightly more than a third agreed that Jews should be “held accountable for Israel’s actions” or that Israel does not have a right to exist. A quarter expressed favorable views of Hamas or the killing of Israeli civilians. The fact that a minority of students in this group expressed these views suggests that, while it may be *present*, hostility to Israel is unlikely to be *driving* these individuals’ negative feelings toward Jews. Indeed, these students were just as likely to be favorable toward the Israeli *government* as students who we identified as Not Hostile to Jews or Israel. These students’ hostility toward Jews also did not seem strongly related to their political orientation: They were just as likely to identify as liberal or conservative or to hold liberal or conservative political opinions, as other students.

However, we do see evidence that these students’ negative views of Jews can sometimes *manifest* as negative views of Israel or Israelis. Seventy percent of these students endorsed the view that “supporters of Israel control the media,” perhaps because the statement closely resonates with

traditional claims that *Jews* control the media. These students were more likely to support returning all land seized through colonization and had lower favorability toward the Israeli people than we would expect, given their other political views and their feelings about the Israeli government. These positions may be due to their negative feelings toward Jews causing them to hold negative views toward Israelis and making them more receptive to political views that have negative implications for Israelis. These students were also more likely to display anti-hierarchical aggression and dichotomous thinking, which might make disruptive protests that portray a simple, good versus bad conflict between an oppressive Israeli government and an oppressed Palestinian minority, more attractive. So, while these students did not seem strongly invested in *political* criticism of the Israeli government's conduct during the war, a surge of anti-Israel hostility could provide the motivation or opportunity to express their pre-existing hostility toward Jews. At the same time, anti-hierarchical aggression and dichotomous thinking could help explain why this group holds negative views of Jews in the first place.

## Takeaways

Colleges and universities have legal and moral obligations to both protect their students and promote reasoned and informed discourse. Effectively addressing the concerns of Jewish students is a key component to fulfilling those obligations. Although the purpose of this study is not to identify particular policy solutions, these findings suggest a number of strategic directions that university stakeholders should consider when addressing Jewish students' concerns about hostility on campus.

**Although a majority of students are not hostile to Jews or Israel, colleges and universities need to recognize that there is a minority of students who are contributing to a hostile environment for Jewish students on campus.**

Even a small number of students with prejudicial views can negatively impact the campus climate, especially when these views are amplified by social media and other factors beyond the campus walls.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, colleges have a responsibility to treat antisemitism like any other form of prejudice. This means applying existing standards and policies surrounding hate speech or harassment of Jewish students in the same manner they are applied to students in other protected racial or ethnic groups. This also means considering the viewpoints of Jewish students regarding the ways anti-Jewish hostility is manifesting on campus. If the vast majority of Jewish students on campus see certain statements or actions related to Israel as antisemitic, then administrators must take those concerns seriously, notwithstanding their own personal beliefs about what sorts of statements *should* be considered antisemitic.

**In responding to antisemitism, it is important to tailor policy to fit the problem(s).**

A key finding of this study is that efforts to address antisemitism on campus need to be more carefully targeted. A one-size-fits-all solution to the general problem of "antisemitism on campus" is unlikely to be effective, because there does not appear to be a single driver of the problem. The two substantial groups of students who hold views about Jews and Israel that Jewish students find antisemitic are very different from one another and lumping them together is likely to further exacerbate, rather than alleviate, campus tensions. Because most students who express hostility toward Israel do not express explicit hostility toward Jews, or express support for Hamas, accusing all of them of "Jew hatred" and being "Hamas apologists" is likely to be seen as both inaccurate and

inflammatory. Moreover, there *are* a substantial number of students on campus who hold more traditional anti-Jewish views, a problem that is likely to persist regardless of how events in the Middle East play out. This research suggests that aside from contentious debates about Israel and “new” expressions of antisemitism, there is still a need for education about older forms of anti-Jewish prejudice on campus.

**There is a need for better education about politics, problem solving, and public debate.**

Aside from more tailored interventions aimed at addressing particular challenges related to antisemitism on campus, colleges and universities can do a better job of educating students about our diverse world and its complex social problems.

Our findings point to anti-hierarchical aggression—including an openness to violence as a political tool and a desire for vengeance against political enemies—as one possible factor contributing to hostility toward Jews and Israel. This suggests that faculty and other educators on campus, regardless of their political views, including on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, could devote more time and effort to helping students learn how to express their political convictions in a way that constructively engages with peers. Intense political debate *is* a core function of the university, but debate requires a willingness to both talk and listen to those we disagree with. If universities truly wish to foster a climate of robust intellectual debate, including around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, simply allowing the “free expression” of ideas is not enough. Faculty and administrators must teach students how to debate productively, in part by modeling this behavior themselves.

We also find that all or nothing “dichotomous thinking” is associated with explicit hostility toward Jews. Helping students develop a more nuanced understanding of social reality could reduce explicit anti-Jewish hostility that still exists among some students on campus. Developing nuanced thinking is a key goal of higher education in general, and our data suggest that further emphasis could have downstream benefits for Jewish students, for other minority groups on campus, and for the broader climate of political discourse on campus.

**To effectively respond to antisemitism on campus, university stakeholders should be willing to support and leverage research.**

In the wake of the eruption of antisemitism in the 2023-24 academic year, many universities have established “task forces” charged with addressing antisemitism and have produced numerous “action plans” aimed at improving the situation.<sup>48</sup> However, universities’ efforts to address antisemitism on campus are not always guided by rigorous research. Part of the problem may be that existing research on antisemitism is dominated by efforts to highlight the severity of the problem,<sup>49</sup> with comparatively less research devoted to identifying and evaluating strategies that might address the issue.

Even the findings presented here, while providing a more detailed overview of how non-Jewish students think about Jews and Israel, leave a number of unanswered questions that call out for additional research. For example, our earlier surveys of Jewish students<sup>50</sup> suggest that there may be dramatic differences across campuses with respect to the views of non-Jewish students about Jews and Israel. It will be important to understand how factors specific to particular campuses (university policy, geographic location, the composition of the student body, etc.) are related to the way non-Jewish students think about Jews and Israel, and how this in turn relates to the perceptions of Jewish



students regarding the campus climate. Another area to explore is the relationship between hostility toward Jews and religious and racial background. This survey confirms earlier findings that explicit hostility to Jews is more prevalent among non-white students,<sup>51</sup> a relationship that has important implications for efforts to build social connections across racial, ethnic, and religious lines. Existing research provides few insights as to why this relationship exists, or how schools should respond to it.<sup>52</sup> Our findings also suggest that it is especially important to explore opportunities for improving relationships between Jewish and Muslim students on campus. Another area that should be explored is the role of graduate students, faculty, and administrators in shaping the climate on campus.

Likewise, few efforts to “fight” antisemitism have been subjected to formal evaluation, leaving stakeholders in the dark about what works and what does not work in different contexts. Stepping back from concerns about antisemitism specifically, there is a general need for more rigorous research evaluating the effectiveness of different approaches for responding to hate speech, reducing prejudice, and creating a welcoming campus environment for students from diverse backgrounds.

There is tremendous capacity among social science and policy researchers in the academy for deepening our understanding of complex social problems (like antisemitism), designing programs for addressing those problems, and evaluating whether or not these programs have achieved their goals. Existing efforts to respond to antisemitism, including by universities themselves, have rarely availed themselves of this capacity when making critical decisions. A more systematic, research-based approach to addressing antisemitism on campus, pooling expertise and data from across schools, could provide higher education stakeholders across the country with more effective means of making their campus hospitable to students from all backgrounds.

## Conclusion

These current findings suggest that the situation on US campuses during the 2023-24 academic year defies a simple narrative. We do not find a climate of universal anti-Jewish hatred, nor do we find that Jewish students’ concerns about antisemitism are unfounded. Instead, we find that Jewish students’ experiences of a hostile environment on campus is driven by a minority (but significant share) of students who hold patterns of beliefs that are hostile toward Israel and/or Jews. This report is one aspect of our ongoing program of research aimed at identifying evidence-based strategies for effectively responding to antisemitism on campus. In future work, we will continue to explore many of the findings raised here in greater detail, in particular how campuses differ with respect to these issues. Our hope is that providing a better understanding of hostility toward Jews and Israel can help schools better engage with both Jewish and non-Jewish students and promote a climate that supports intellectual curiosity, acceptance of difference, and productive dialogue.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Subcommittee on Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Bias of the Jewish Advisory Committee at Stanford University, “It’s in the Air’: Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Bias at Stanford, and How to Address It,” May 31, 2024, [https://news.stanford.edu/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0033/156588/ASAIB-final-report.pdf](https://news.stanford.edu/data/assets/pdf_file/0033/156588/ASAIB-final-report.pdf); Harvard University Presidential Task Force on Combatting Antisemitism, “Preliminary Recommendations,” June 6, 2024, <https://www.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/June-2024-preliminary-recommendations-AS.pdf>; Columbia University Task Force on Antisemitism, “Report #1: Task Force on Antisemitism: Columbia University’s Rules on Demonstrations (1),” March 2024, <https://president.columbia.edu/content/report-1-task-force-antisemitism>.

<sup>2</sup> Graham Wright et al., “In the Shadow of War: Hotspots of Antisemitism on US College Campuses,” (Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, December 2023), <https://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/research/antisemitism/hotspots-2023-report1.html>; Eitan Hersh, “US College Students and the War in Israel: Jewish Engagement and Social Tension on Campus,” (San Francisco: Jim Joseph Foundation, February 20, 2024), <https://jimjosephfoundation.org/learning-resources/u-s-college-students-and-the-war-in-israel-jewish-engagement-and-social-tension-on-campus/>; Robert A. Pape, “Understanding Campus Fears After October 7 and How to Reduce Them” (Chicago, IL: Chicago Project on Security & Threats, The University of Chicago, March 2024), [https://d3qi0qp55mx5f5.cloudfront.net/cpost/i/docs/CPOST\\_Understanding\\_Campus\\_Fears\\_-\\_Report.pdf?mtime=1709832445](https://d3qi0qp55mx5f5.cloudfront.net/cpost/i/docs/CPOST_Understanding_Campus_Fears_-_Report.pdf?mtime=1709832445); Jeffrey Kopstein et al., “Attitudes Toward Jews and Israel on California Campuses: Results from a New Survey” (New York, NY: Center for Antisemitism Research, Anti-Defamation League, July 11, 2024), <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/attitudes-toward-jews-and-israel-california-campuses-results-new-survey>.

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<sup>16</sup> College Pulse, <https://collegepulse.com/>.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Bernstein, “On Campus, a New Social Litmus Test: Zionist or Not?,” *The New York Times*, May 22, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/style/jewish-college-students-zionism-israel.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Weisman, “Is Anti-Zionism Always Antisemitic? A Fraught Question for the Moment,” *The New York Times*, December 10, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/10/us/politics/anti-zionism-antisemitism.html>. See also Eidelson (2024), who rejects the idea that “criticism of Israel (sometimes simplified as “anti-Zionism”)” is inherently antisemitic. (Roy Eidelson, “A Call for Retraction: The Recent American Psychologist Article on Antisemitism,” June 25, 2024, <https://royeidelson.com/a-call-for-retraction/>).

<sup>19</sup> See, Robert Fisher, “Social Desirability Bias and the Validity of Indirect Questioning,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 20, no. 2 (1993): 303-314, <https://doi.org/10.1086/209351>; Chloë FitzGerald and Samia Hurst, “Implicit Bias in Healthcare Professionals: A Systematic Review,” *BMC Medical Ethics* 18, no. 19 (2017), <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12910-017-0179-8>.

<sup>20</sup> One item had a “favorable-unfavorable” scale rather than an “agree-disagree” scale.

<sup>21</sup> Similar items were included in studies of antisemitic views. See Anti-Defamation League, “Antisemitic Attitudes in America 2024,” February 29, 2024, <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/antisemitic-attitudes-america-2024> and Allington et al., “Antisemitism is Predicted by Anti-hierarchical Aggression.”

<sup>22</sup> Wright et al., “Drawing the Line.” See also Figure 3.

<sup>23</sup> Favorability of Hamas was asked in a four-item bank of question that also asked about the favorability of the Palestinian people, the Israeli government, and the Israeli people.

<sup>24</sup> Yair Rosenberg, “How to Be Anti-Semitic and Get Away With It,” *The Atlantic*, December 5, 2024, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/12/anti-semitism-israel-gaza-celebrity-statements/676232/>.

<sup>25</sup> Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020” (Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2021), <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/>.

Graham Wright, Leonard Saxe, and Kenneth Wald, “Is Criticism Disloyal? American Jews’ Attitudes toward Israel,” *Politics and Religion*. 15, no.1 (2022): 34-60. [doi:10.1017/S1755048320000693](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048320000693).

<sup>26</sup> Jewish students’ feelings on this issue echo findings from our 2023 survey (Wright et al., “In the Shadow of War.”) that found that at the end of the fall 2023 semester, most Jewish students on these same campuses felt that there was a hostile environment toward Jews and Israel on their campus, although the extent of this hostility varied dramatically from one campus to the next.

<sup>27</sup> Because all of the statements were negative, students who *disagreed* with them did not necessarily have *positive* views with regard to Israel or Jews.

<sup>28</sup> See Technical Appendix A for more details about Latent Class Analysis, the model used to identify these classes, and alternative model specifications. These same questions were also asked of Jewish respondents. For most of these items, less than 5% of Jewish students agreed. The exceptions were “Jewish people talk about the Holocaust just to further their political agenda” (7%), “Israel does not have the right to exist” (7%), “Supporters of Israel control the media” (9%), and “I wouldn’t want to be friends with someone who supports the existence of Israel as a Jewish state” (14%).

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<sup>29</sup> The relative size of these groups varies from campus to campus. Preliminary analyses find that there are some significant differences in the relative proportions of each group between different campuses. However, the uncertainty surrounding these estimates, especially at campuses with smaller number of responses, makes it difficult to characterize the magnitude or nature of these differences.

<sup>30</sup> See Technical Appendix B for complete details of the analyses presented here for all five groups of students (including both Jewish students and students who are Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel) with 95% confidence intervals and significance tests where applicable. The results discussed in this section were further confirmed by a multinomial logistic regression model, controlling for demographic factors, and estimating the effect of each construct discussed independently. The results of this model can be found in Technical Appendix A.

<sup>31</sup> Because the number of students identifying as conservative on these campuses was small, we do not distinguish between those identifying as “slightly conservative,” “conservative,” and “extremely conservative.”

<sup>32</sup> In addition to this standard question about political orientation, we also asked students if they identified with other political identities associated with the political left, including “leftist,” “progressive,” and “socialist.” About a quarter of the students in our sample (including Jews) identified as “progressive” or “leftist,” and only 11% identified as “socialist.” Eighty-eight percent of progressives, 92% of leftists, and 96% of socialists identified as some form of “liberal” in the standard political orientation question, indicating that this question remains effective at identifying students who identify as part of the political left.

<sup>33</sup> See Technical Appendix A for details on how this scale was constructed and Table B6 in Technical Appendix B for complete results. Differences in political attitudes between Hostile to Israel and students who were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel were not statistically significant after controlling for political identity and favorability toward the Israeli government. However, holding center or right opinions was still significantly associated with being in the Hostile to Jews (as opposed to Not Hostile to Jews or Israel) group, even after controlling for other factors. (See results of multinomial logit model in Technical Appendix B).

<sup>34</sup> This statement was adapted from the ideas presented in the article: Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630>, which has been widely cited and discussed in both academic and activist circles (see Tapji Garba and Sara-Maria Sorentino, “Slavery is a Metaphor: A Critical Commentary on Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang’s ‘Decolonization is Not a Metaphor,’” *Antipode* 52, no. 3 (2020): 7640782, <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12615>). It should be noted that, in the survey, this question was asked prior to any questions that asked respondents about their views of Israel.

<sup>35</sup> The positive association between being in the Hostile to Jews group and agreeing with the “decolonization” statement remained statistically significant even after controlling for other factors (See results of multinomial logit model in Technical Appendix A)

<sup>36</sup> Overall, all undergraduates (Jewish and non-Jewish) in the schools included in the study tended to have favorable views of the Palestinian people (See Table B10 in Technical Appendix B). Fifty-seven percent of Jewish students reported having favorable views toward the Palestinians, with 14% being very favorable. For all other groups, the percentage with favorable views was even higher, and over 70% of students who were Hostile to Israel reported being very favorable toward the Palestinian people.

<sup>37</sup> Allington et al., “Antisemitism Is Predicted by Anti-Hierarchical Aggression.”

<sup>38</sup> The other two items were “If I could remake society, I would put people who currently have the most privilege at the very bottom” and “Constitutions and laws are just another way for the powerful to destroy our dignity and individuality.” In adapting these four items, we focused on statements from the original scale that did not explicitly identify particular groups (as opposed to items such as “Most rich Wall Street executives deserve to be thrown in prison”) to allow the scale to tap this construct independently of broader political views. Cronbach’s alpha for the original four category items (with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree) was 0.69. In addition to the combined variable presented in Figure 9, we also created a scale by averaging together the original responses to all four items. Students who were Hostile to Israel and students who were Hostile to Jews scored significantly higher on this scale than students who were Not Hostile to Jews or Israel, confirming the results presented in Figure 9 (See Table B12 in Technical Appendix B for full results and 95% confidence intervals).

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<sup>39</sup> Dichotomous thinking includes two subconstructs: “dichotomous belief” and “preference for dichotomy.” Our questions were adapted from the dichotomous belief question bank. See, Atsushi Oshio, “Development and Validation of the Dichotomous Thinking Inventory,” *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal* 37, no. 6 (July 1, 2009): 729–41, <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2009.37.6.729>; Bonfá-Araujo et al., “Seeing Things in Black-and-White: A Scoping Review on Dichotomous Thinking Style.” Cronbach’s alpha for the original, four category items was 0.64.

<sup>40</sup> As with anti-hierarchical aggression, we also computed a continuous scale by averaging together responses to the original, four-category items. Analyzing that continuous variable again produces the same pattern of group differences shown in Figure 10. See Table B14 in Technical Appendix B for full results and 95% confidence intervals.

<sup>41</sup> See results of multinomial logit model in Technical Appendix A.

<sup>42</sup> See results of multinomial logit model in Technical Appendix A.

<sup>43</sup> See results of multinomial logit model in Technical Appendix A.

<sup>44</sup> Wright et al., “In the Shadow of War”; Hersh, “US College Students and the War in Israel”; Pape, “Understanding Campus Fears After October 7.”

<sup>45</sup> Graham Wright et al., “Politics on the Quad: Students Report on Division and Disagreement at Five US Universities” (Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, November 2019), <https://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/noteworthy/ssri/politics-quad.html>.

<sup>46</sup> Social desirability bias is less likely to affect the responses of the other groups discussed in this report. Students who were Hostile to Jews and those who were Extremely Hostile to Jews and Israel *were* willing to explicitly anti-Jewish views. Students who were Not Hostile to Jews and Israel, by contrast, were unlikely to express support either negative statements about Jews (which could be subject to social desirability bias) or negative statements about Israel (which are unlikely to be subject to this sort of bias).

<sup>47</sup> See, e.g., “Statement from Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines on Recent Iranian Influence Efforts,” accessed August 20, 2024, <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/press-releases-2024/3842-statement-from-director-of-national-intelligence-avril-haines-on-recent-iranian-influence-efforts>.

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<sup>50</sup> Saxe et al., “Hotspots of Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Hostility on US Campuses,” (Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, October 2016), Wright et al. “In the Shadow of War.”

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## APPENDIX A: SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

1. American University
2. Baruch College – CUNY
3. Binghamton University
4. Boston University
5. Brandeis University
6. Brown University
7. California Polytechnic State University
8. Columbia University
9. Cornell University
10. Duke University
11. Emory University
12. Florida Atlantic University
13. Florida State University
14. George Washington University
15. Harvard University
16. Indiana University – Bloomington
17. Michigan State University
18. New York University
19. Northeastern University
20. Northwestern University
21. Ohio State, University – Columbus
22. Pennsylvania State University
23. Queens College – CUNY
24. Rutgers University
25. San Diego State University
26. Syracuse University
27. Temple University
28. Tufts University
29. Tulane University
30. University of Arizona
31. University of California - Berkeley
32. University of California - Davis
33. University of California - Los Angeles
34. University of California - San Diego
35. University of California - Santa Barbara
36. University of Central Florida
37. University of Colorado - Boulder
38. University of Connecticut
39. University of Delaware
40. University of Florida
41. University of Georgia
42. University of Illinois - Urbana/Champaign
43. University of Kansas
44. University of Maryland - College Park
45. University of Massachusetts - Amherst
46. University of Miami
47. University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
48. University of Minnesota
49. University of Oregon
50. University of Pennsylvania
51. University of Pittsburgh
52. University of Southern California
53. University of Texas - Austin
54. University of Vermont
55. University of Virginia
56. University of Wisconsin - Madison
57. Vanderbilt University
58. Virginia Tech
59. Washington University in St. Louis
60. Yale University