



THE LIMITS OF HOSTILITY

STUDENTS REPORT ON ANTISEMITISM AND ANTI-ISRAEL SENTIMENT AT FOUR US UNIVERSITIES

Brandeis University

Steinhardt Social Research Institute
Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies



Research program focuses on undergraduate students and their perceptions and experiences of antisemitism and anti-Israel hostility on US campuses

Data collected 2015-17 from representative samples of undergraduates (both Jewish and non-Jewish) at 4 schools



THE SCHOOLS WE STUDIED

- Two rated among *Algemeiner's* "worst for Jewish students" and one rated among "best for Jewish students"
- Relatively large Jewish student bodies (more than 10% of undergraduates)
- Characteristic of the prestigious schools many Jewish students choose to attend

Brandeis University



University of Pennsylvania



Harvard University



University of Michigan



WHAT WE WANTED TO KNOW

- 1 What are the Jewish students' experiences of antisemitism and anti-Israel hostility on these four campuses?
- 2 Do Jewish and non-Jewish students differ in their perceptions of hostility toward Jews and Israel on these four campuses?
- 3 How much support is there for anti-Israel activity—specifically, for BDS—among non-Jewish students on each campus?
- 4 How do issues related to Jews and Israel compare to other concerns on campus?
- 5 Do Jewish and non-Jewish students differ in their perceptions of what constitutes a pressing issue on campus?
- 6 How do Jewish students fare in terms of their overall wellbeing compared to other students on each campus?



WHAT WE FOUND

- Jewish students are rarely exposed to antisemitism on campus**
The majority of Jewish students reported that they had not experienced any form of discrimination at their schools due to their religion. A vast majority also reported that they had not personally heard any of a number of antisemitic remarks with any frequency.
- Jewish students do not think their campus is hostile to Jews**
The majority of Jewish students at all four schools disagreed that their campus constituted a "hostile environment toward Jews." Non-Jewish students at all four schools echoed this view.
- Jewish students are exposed to hostile remarks toward Israel on campus**
Hearing hostile remarks toward Israel was far more prevalent than exposure to antisemitic statements.
- The majority of students disagree that there is a hostile environment toward Israel on campus**
The majority of students disagree that there is a hostile environment toward Israel on campus. However, at Michigan, just over half of Jewish students agreed to any extent that the school had a hostile environment toward Israel.
- Support for BDS is rare**
At each of these schools support for an academic boycott of Israel was virtually nonexistent among Jewish students and was rare among non-Jewish students.
- Israel and Jews are not a top concern for students**
At all four schools issues related to Israel and Jews were far down the list of "pressing issues" on campus—even among Jewish students.
- Jewish students feel safe and that they belong on campus**
Overwhelmingly, Jewish students reported feeling safe on their campus. They were also more likely to feel that they "belonged" at their institution than non-Jewish students.



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