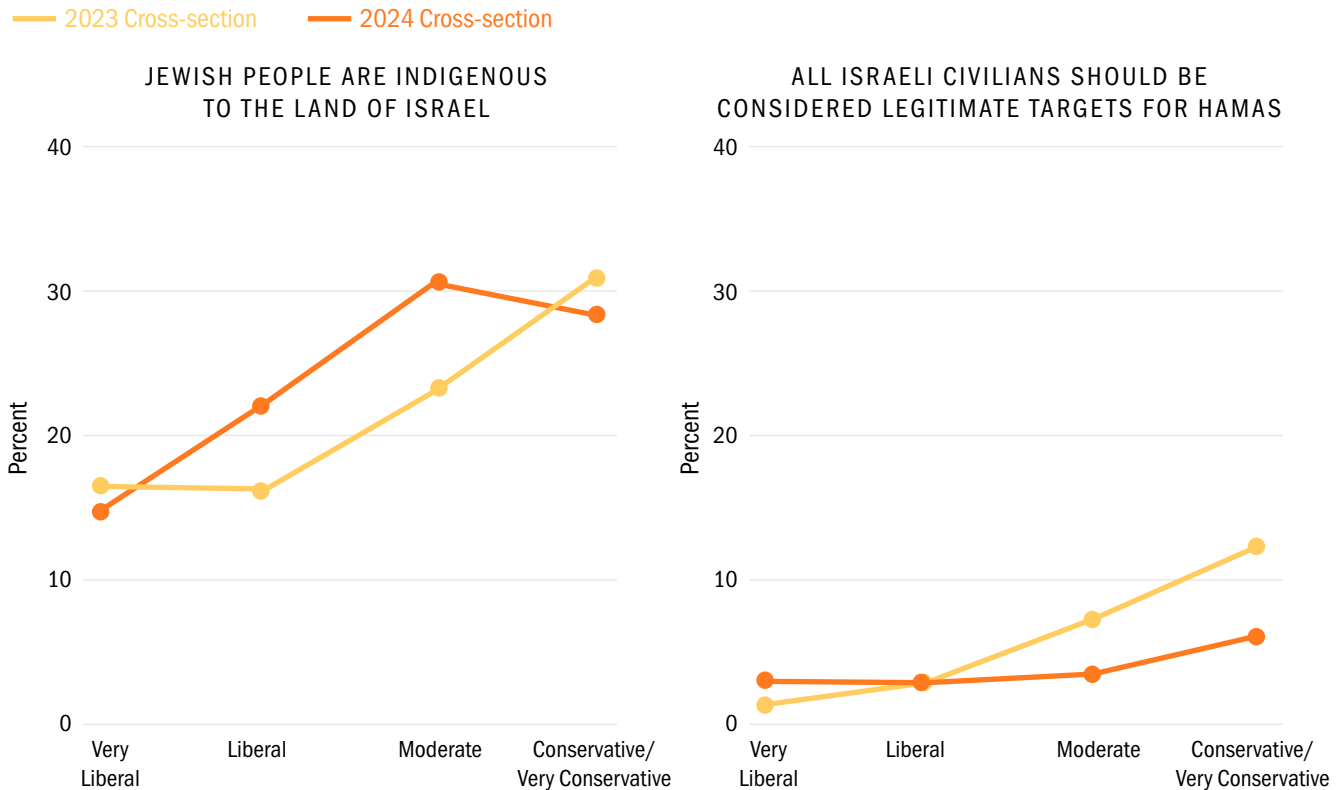


FIGURE 15



NOTE: N = 1,516 (2023 cross-section), 1,549 (2024 cross-section).

Effects of the War on Students

The Israel-Hamas War affected not just student opinions, but it also affected their behaviors and experiences. In this section, we focus on four specific ways the war affected them: the effect on news consumption, the effect on mental health, the effect on activism, and the effect on experiences with antisemitism.

A. NEWS CONSUMPTION

In both 2023 and 2024, we asked students, *How closely have you been following the war between Israel and Hamas?* Their answer options were: not at all, not very closely, somewhat closely, and very closely. The proportion following the news was stable across waves. In both the cross-sections and panels, approximately 50% of non-Jewish students and 74-79% of Jewish students said they followed news about the war somewhat or very closely. For Jewish students, following the news is highly correlated with Jewish background. For students with low *background* scores, 58% said they follow the news (still higher than typical non-Jewish students). Seventy-three percent of students with middle *background* scores and 86% of students with high *background* scores reported following the news.

TABLE 4

News-Following by Jewish/Non-Jewish Identity and by Support of a Jewish State

	Oppose Jewish State	Support Jewish State	Neither Support/ Oppose
Jewish	81% follow news	81% follow news	49% follow news
Non-Jewish	74% follow news	57% follow news	33% follow news

NOTE: 2024 cross-section. N: 543 (Jewish support), 185 (Jewish oppose), 254 (Jewish neither), 391 (Non-Jewish support), 342 (Non-Jewish oppose), 783 (Non-Jewish neither).

As Table 4 shows, an interesting pattern emerges on this and other questions when we divide students based on whether they are Jewish and whether they support or oppose a Jewish state in Israel. Among Jewish students, there is no difference in news-following between those who support the existence of a Jewish state and those who oppose it. But among non-Jewish students, opponents of the Jewish state are much more likely to follow the news.

As the table also shows, students who say they neither support nor oppose the Jewish state are not typically students who are deeply interested in the topic (as measured by their news interest) yet are unsure what they think of the political and moral issues at hand, though some may fall into this category. Rather, they are students who do not pay as much attention to Israel/Palestine news.

In both 2023 and 2024, we asked students an open-ended question to learn more about how they follow the news. We asked, *In your opinion, which news sources or social media influencers are currently providing the most informative, trustworthy, and unbiased news about the war between Israel and Hamas?*

Not all students named a source. Most respondents either answered that they did not closely follow news about the war or they expressed frustration about media bias and the difficulty of trusting any source. Of the students who answered the question by naming a source, there were some differences between the Jewish and non-Jewish samples.

TABLE 5

	Wave 2 (2023)		Wave 3 (2024)	
	Jewish	Non-Jewish	Jewish	Non-Jewish
American News (New York Times, CNN, NPR, etc.)	41%	30	33	28
Social Media	9	14	10	14
Israeli News (Haaretz, Times of Israel, Jerusalem Post, etc.)	8	1	5	0
Palestinian News (Al Jazeera, Times of Gaza, etc.)	4	8	4	7
UK News (BBC, the Guardian, Sky News, etc.)	7	5	3	4
Advocacy Organizations	4	1	3	1
Influencers	7	6	5	7
Personal Contacts	2	1	1	1

NOTE: Table reflects coding of open-ended responses as percent of full samples of Jewish and non-Jewish students in waves 2 and 3 who named a source in the designated category. N: 944 (wave 2, Jewish), 1,549 (wave 2, non-Jewish), 1,006 (wave 3, Jewish), 1,516 (wave 3, non-Jewish).

Jewish respondents were more likely to name American news, Israeli news, and news from advocacy organizations than their non-Jewish counterparts. Non-Jewish students were more likely to mention news from social media and Palestinian sources than Jewish students were. Regarding social media, it is clear from the focus groups that students are getting a mix of traditional news sources (e.g., *New York Times* Instagram posts) and non-traditional news on social media. While some Jewish students turn to Palestinian news sources as trusted sources, almost no non-Jewish students turn to Israeli media. Furthermore, the influencers that non-Jewish students named were overwhelmingly Palestinian. For instance, students wrote that they got their information from Bella Hadid (a Palestinian model), and Palestinian journalists such as Bisan Owda, Motaz Aziza, and Hasan Piker.

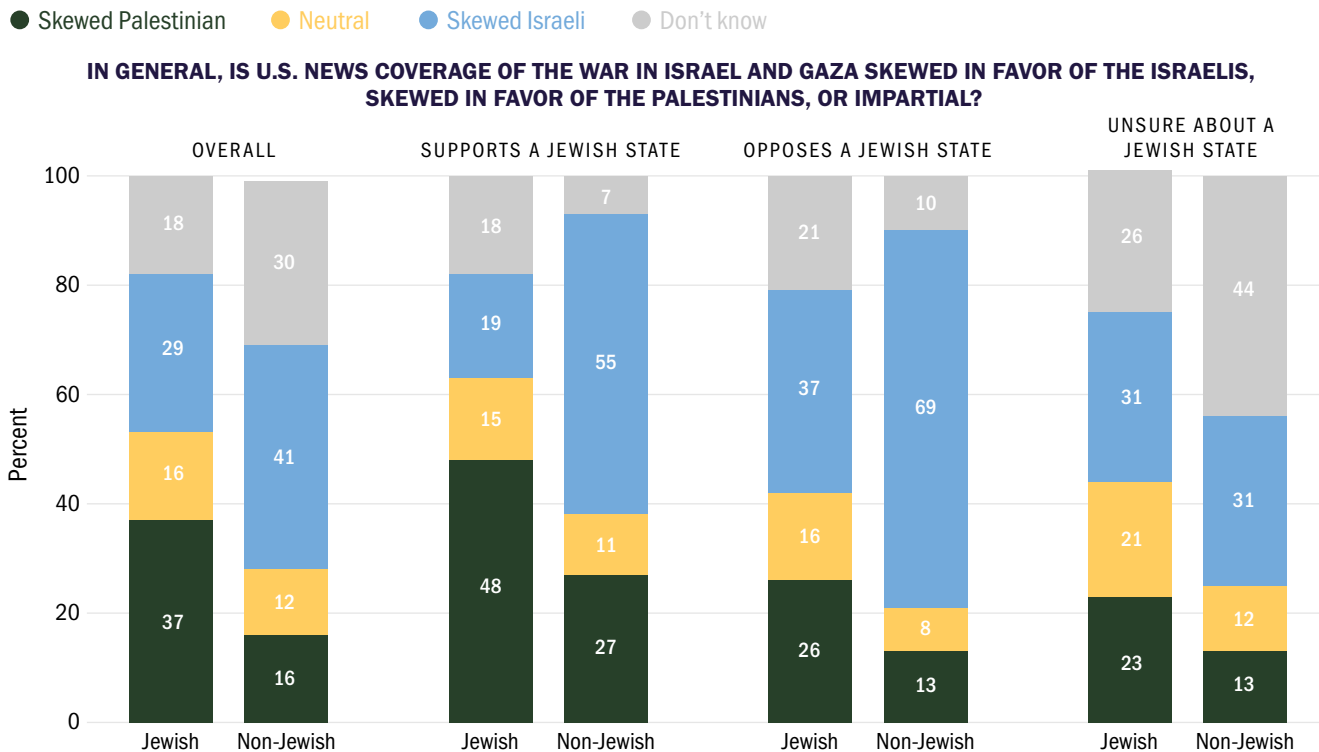
As a final measure of news-following, in 2024, we asked students whether they thought U.S. news coverage was biased in favor of one side or the other. Jewish students were more likely to think the news was skewed in favor of Palestinians and non-Jewish students thought the opposite. Figure 16

shows the responses of Jewish students compared to non-Jewish students. The graph also divides Jewish and non-Jewish students based on their opinions about the existence of a Jewish state.

Here, again, we see a difference when we look at Jewish versus non-Jewish students based on their view of Israel. Among Jewish students, those who believe there should be a Jewish state were much more likely to think U.S. news is skewed toward Palestinians than toward Israelis (48% versus 19%), and those who believe there should not be a Jewish state thought the opposite (27% versus 55%). But among non-Jewish students, students on both sides of the question of whether Israel should exist believe that U.S. news favors the Israeli position.

Again, this graph speaks to a recurring theme that Jewish students who oppose a Jewish state (18% of the 2024 wave) are distinct both from other Jewish students and from non-Jewish students who hold the same political viewpoint as them.

FIGURE 16



NOTE: 2024 cross-section. N: 1,006 (Jewish), 1,516 (Non-Jewish).

B. MENTAL HEALTH

Borrowing language from Gallup, we asked respondents in both 2023 and 2024, *How would you describe your own mental health or emotional well-being at this time?*

Looking at wave 3 (April-June 2024) cross-sectional results in Table 6, there are no large differences in the ways Jewish and non-Jewish students evaluate their mental health. But looking at wave 2 (November-December 2023) results, Jewish students were about 10 percentage points more likely to rate their mental health as poor. The panel shows that this difference reflects change in individual students over

time. In the Jewish panel, the percentage of students rating their mental health as poor reduced by 10 percentage points between the two waves. This implies that Jewish students at the start of the war had a temporary decline in self-reported mental health, but then returned to more typical responses on this survey item. The change is statistically significant.

After students were asked about the current state of their mental health, they were then asked a follow-up question: *How would you have rated your mental health before hostilities between Israel and Hamas broke out?* Students used the same 4-point scale (poor, fair, good, excellent) as before.

TABLE 6

	Cross-Section				Panel			
	Wave 2		Wave 3		Wave 2		Wave 3	
	Jewish	Non-Jewish	Jewish	Non-Jewish	Jewish	Non-Jewish	Jewish	Non-Jewish
Poor	25%	16	13	10	25	13	15	9
Fair	39	39	36	37	37	47	39	46
Good	29	36	41	41	31	33	37	38
Excellent	7	9	10	12	8	6	8	8
N	916	1422	961	1395	230	276	230	276

Note: “Don’t know” responses are excluded here.

TABLE 7

Percent of students rating mental health lower than they say they would have rated it before the war.

	Jewish Students	N	Non-Jewish	N
2023 Cross-Section	44%	1006	16%	1357
2023 Panel	44	237	16	280
2024 Cross-Section	33	961	17	1395
2024 Panel	41	237	16	280

NOTE: Q: “How would you have rated your mental health before hostilities between Israel and Hamas broke out?” Table depicts percent with higher rating than the rating they offered for their current mental health.

In Table 7, we show the percentage of students who rate their current mental health lower than they say they would have rated it before the war. Over 40% of Jewish students in 2023 (cross-section and panel) rated their mental health lower than they would have before the war. This compares to only 16% of non-Jewish students. In 2024, the non-Jewish students answer similarly as they did in 2023. For Jewish students, 41% of the panel still said their mental health would have been better before the war, but only 33% of the Jewish-cross section reported this way.

Muslim students responded to the survey question about mental health similarly to the Jewish students. In 2024, 42% of Muslim students rated their mental health lower than they said they would have rated it before the war. No other religious group or racial group responded to the mental health question similarly to Jews and Muslims.

C. ACTIVISM AND DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE CONFLICT

Students across the country had opportunities to engage in various forms of activism related to the Israel-Hamas War, and we were interested in the extent to which they engaged in activism. We asked students: *Since the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Hamas, have you participated in any of the following activities?* We asked about events sponsored by pro-Israel groups, events sponsored by pro-Palestine groups, and war-related events sponsored by other groups. We also asked students if they attended political events unrelated to the war in order to gauge how much the war stood out from other topics of activism. In this battery of questions, we also asked students if they posted about the war on social media

or participated in a class discussion about the conflict.

On the left side of Figure 17, we show results for Jewish students, Muslim students, and all other students. We draw attention to Muslim students because, like the Jewish students, they were affected by the war in ways that were different from most other students on campus.

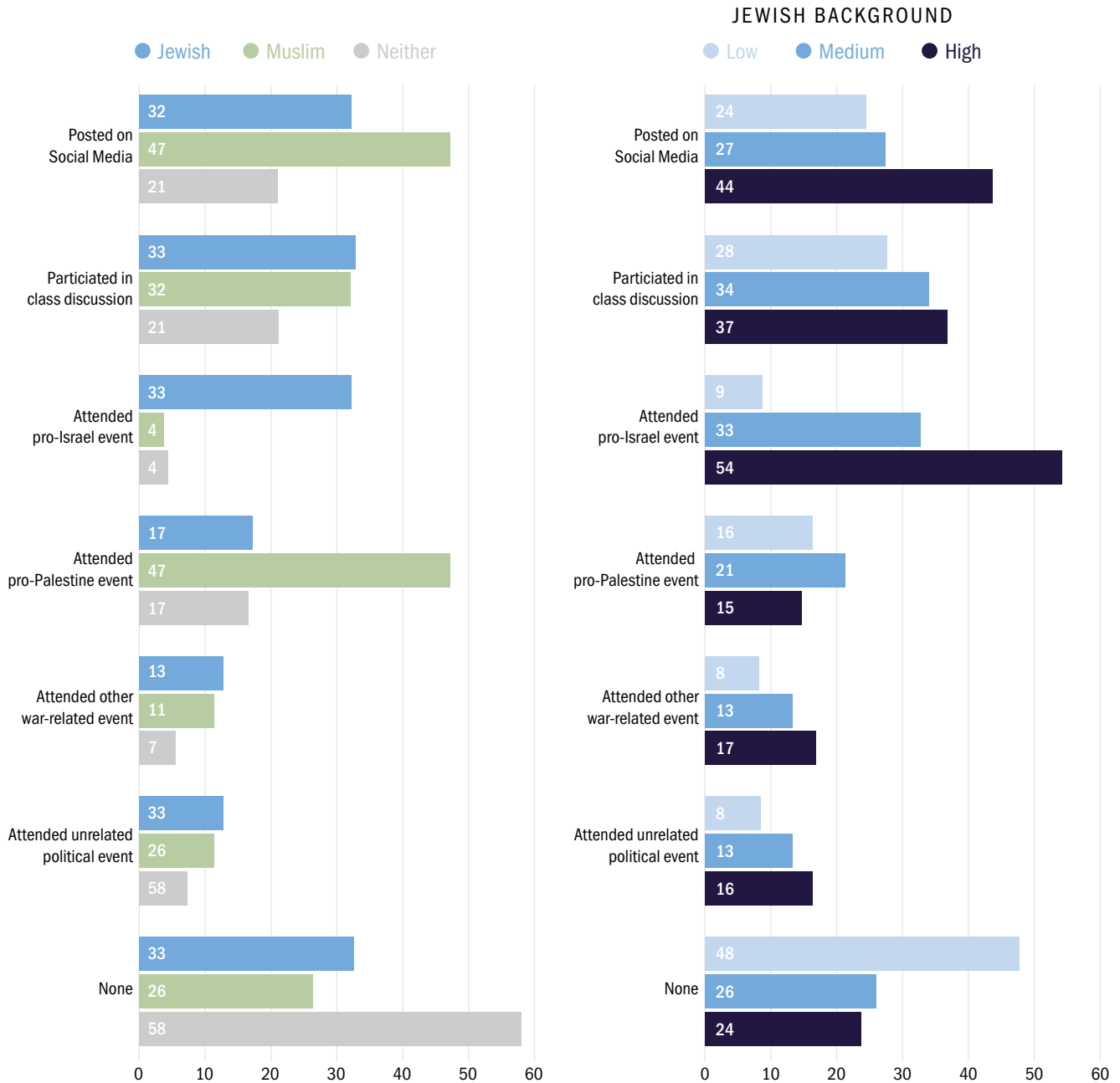
As noted, most non-Jewish and non-Muslim students did not participate in any form of activism, whereas two-thirds of Jewish students and three-quarters of Muslim students did at least one of the actions asked about here. A third of Jewish students reported posting on social media, attending a pro-Israel event, and talking about the conflict in class. The Muslim students in the sample were significantly more likely to post on social media or attend a pro-Palestine event than Jewish students were to post on social media and attend a pro-Israel event.

One big difference between pro-Israel events and pro-Palestine events is the rate at which non-Jews and non-Muslims participate. Only 4% of non-Jewish students attended events sponsored by pro-Israel groups. For events sponsored by pro-Palestine groups, 17% of non-Muslims attended, including 17% of Jewish students. Importantly, because the non-Jewish students who were surveyed attend schools with Jewish populations, the asymmetry here is unlikely to be the result of non-Jewish students not having the opportunity to attend pro-Israel events.

The right side of Figure 17 focuses only on Jewish students and divides the sample by their level of Jewish background. As shown, the big differences across categories are in posting on social media and in attending pro-Israel events, both of which are significantly correlated with one’s Jewish background.

FIGURE 17

SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HAMAS, HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES?



NOTE: 2024 cross-section. N = 1,006 (Jewish), 53 (Muslim), 1,463 (Other), 344 (low background), 300 (medium background), 362 (high background).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JEWISH BACKGROUND AND ACTIVISM

We now take a deeper dive into students who participated in activism on campus. We focus on three groups of students: Jewish students who attended a pro-Palestine event and who themselves believe that there should not continue to be a Jewish state (7% of the Jewish sample), Jewish students who attended a pro-Israel event and believe that there should continue to be a Jewish state (25% of the sample), and everyone else in the Jewish sample (68%). We cut the data this way because there are students who attended a pro-Palestine event but who support the existence of Israel or who attended a pro-Israel event but oppose the existence of Israel. Here, we focus on a combination of behavior *and* attitudes to examine the pro-Palestine and the pro-Israel activist communities.

We do this analysis with particular questions in mind: are the Jewish students who participated in pro-Palestine activities mostly individuals who grew up in Jewish camps, schools, and denominational movements (which are overwhelmingly

Zionist in orientation) but who then adopted pro-Palestine positions? Or are they students who mostly did not grow up in Jewish activities and denominational movements? Similarly, are students who participated in pro-Israel activities on campus a concentrated group of students with robust Jewish backgrounds? Or do they represent a diverse array of Jewish students who just happen to have common views on Israel?

What the table shows is that on measures of Jewish background, the pro-Israel activists are quite different from *both* pro-Palestinian activists and from Jewish students who are in neither category. The pro-Israel activist group is a concentrated group of high *background* students. They almost all attended synagogue, celebrated Shabbat and other holidays, and had bar/bat mitzvahs. Seven in ten had visited Israel, and about half went to Jewish day school or overnight camp. Altogether, about 85% of pro-Israel activists grew up in a denominational movement. Pro-Israel Jewish activists are also distinctive from both pro-Palestine Jewish activists and other Jewish students in socioeconomic status: most pro-Israel activists identified as upper-middle-class or upper-class.

TABLE 8

	Pro-Israel Activists	Pro-Palestinian Activists	Neither
Attended synagogue	85%	40	46
Celebrated Shabbat/holidays	90	68	61
Had a Bar/Bat Mitzvah	86	46	46
Hebrew School	71	39	41
Visited Israel	69	21	21
Jewish youth group	59	24	26
Jewish overnight camp	52	26	22
Jewish day school	48	10	14
No Denomination	16	51	49
Reform	30	25	25
Conservative	20	10	14
Orthodox	33	8	10
Upper-middle/Upper Class	57	44	45
Pct. Very Liberal	8	54	19
Pct. LGBTQ+	25	61	36
<i>N</i>	249	72	685

NOTE: Jewish students, 2024 cross-section. Pro-Israel activists are defined as those who believe that there should continue to be a Jewish state and who participated in an event sponsored by a pro-Israel group. Pro-Palestine activists are defined as those who believe there should not continue to be a Jewish state and who attended an event sponsored by a pro-Palestine group. The third group represents all other Jewish students. Percentages shown.

For those trying to understand who gets involved in activism and why, it is important to consider the social nature of political participation. In the case of pro-Israel activism, the concentration of high-socioeconomic status students who had many common Jewish experiences may help like-minded students form social bonds together but also may create the perception among other students who are also supportive of Israel that pro-Israel activism is for only this one type of student.

The pro-Palestine Jewish activists look like non-activists in terms of their Jewish upbringing. Most did not attend synagogue services, have bar/bat mitzvahs, or have Jewish educational experiences such as Hebrew school, day school, summer camps, or youth groups. But Jewish pro-Palestine activists are distinctive in other ways. As the bottom of Table 8 shows, the majority of Jewish students who are pro-Palestine activists identified as very liberal and as LGBTQ+.

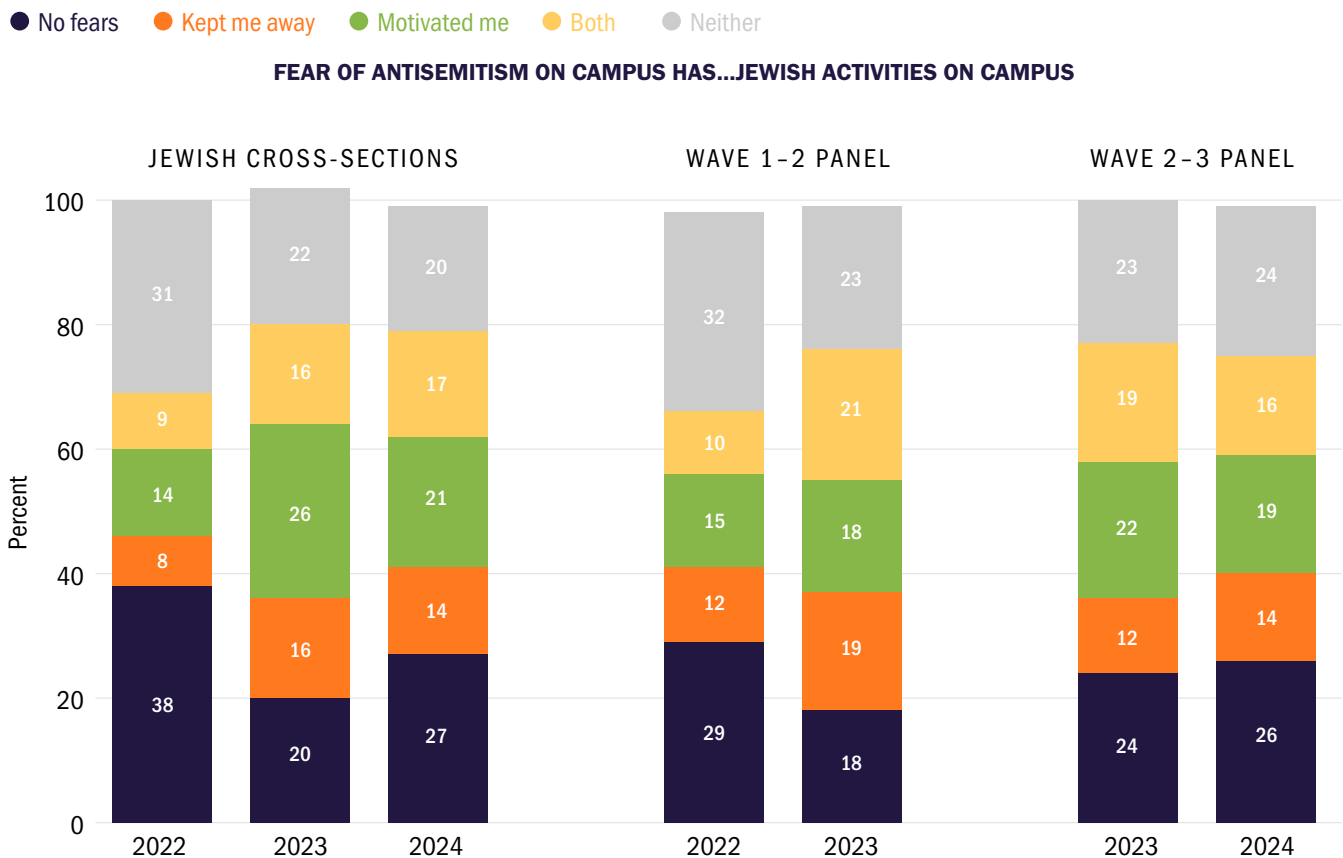
On these characteristics, the Jewish students not engaged in activism appear closer to the pro-Israel activists. For the pro-Palestine activists, a common ideology and sexual orientation may create social bonds among those with similar traits but also may create barriers to entry for otherwise like-minded students who do not share the traits.

D. ANTISEMITISM

Across all three waves of this study, we asked students whether “fear of antisemitism on campus has...

- ◆ Kept me away from Jewish activities on campus
- ◆ Motivated me to participate in Jewish activities on campus
- ◆ Both
- ◆ Neither
- ◆ I don’t have any fears about antisemitism on campus

FIGURE 18



NOTE: This figure depicts respondents’ views on how fears of antisemitism affect participation in Jewish activities. N for cross-sections: 1,721 (2022), 944 (2023), 1,006 (2024). N for panels: 155 (wave 1-2) 231 (wave 2-3).

Figure 18 shows how answers to this question changed across waves. Focusing first on the cross sections, we see that the number of students who said fears of antisemitism kept them away from Jewish activities on campus doubled from 8% to 16% between 2022 and 2023. During the same time, the number of students who said they had no fears of antisemitism dropped precipitously from 38% to 20%. The 2022-2023 panel confirms that this is not the result of sampling – the same students surveyed in 2022 felt a heightened sense of antisemitism when surveyed again in 2023. There is a statistically significant increase in students in the panel reporting that fears of antisemitism kept them from engaging in Jewish activities. But unlike some findings in previous sections, the 2023-2024 panel shows there was no reversion to pre-October 7 attitudes in experience with antisemitism by the end of the school year.

In the 2023 and 2024 waves, we asked students: *Since the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Hamas, have you been personally targeted by antisemitic comments, slurs, or threats?* We purposefully asked if they were themselves targeted rather than if they merely witnessed antisemitism or heard about incidents. In both waves, we asked if they experienced

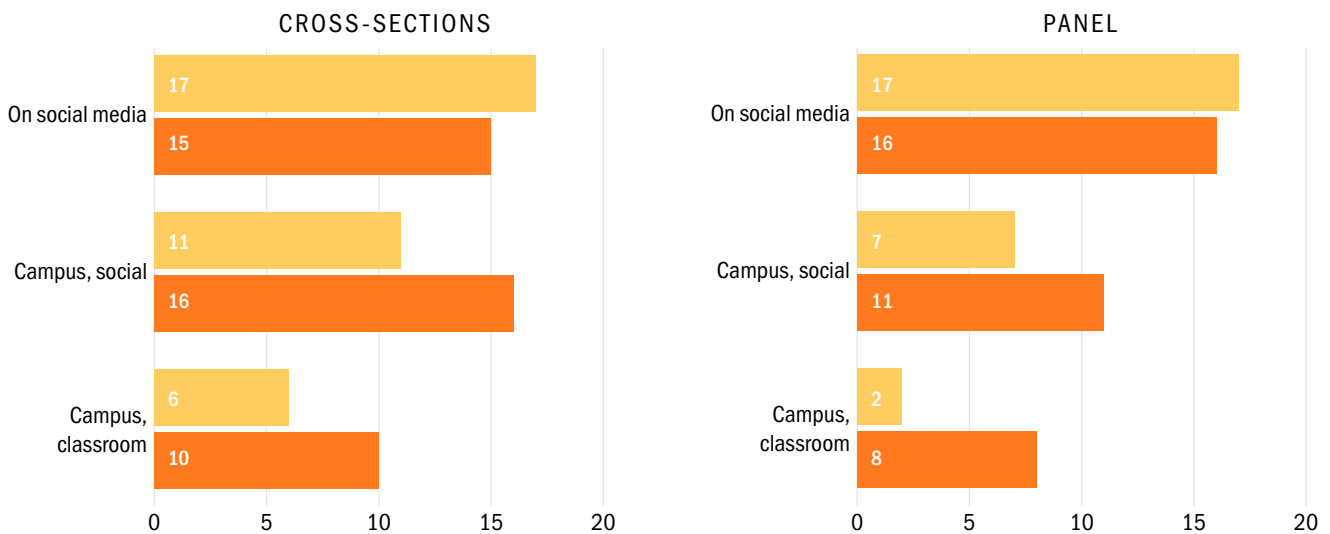
antisemitic comments on social media, in a classroom environment on campus, or in a social environment on campus. Respondents could select more than one option or could select “no” or “not sure”. Respondents in 2023 were also asked if they experienced antisemitism in an off-campus environment. Here, we just focus on the on-campus exposure that was asked about in both waves.

About 15-17% of Jewish students (1 in 6) in both waves said they had been targeted with antisemitic messages on social media. The slight decrease in exposure to antisemitic comments on social media is not statistically significant. In 2023, 11% reported experiencing direct antisemitism in a campus social environment. The percentage increased to 16% in 2024. There is a similar increase in the panel, though it is not statistically significant. The increase in students saying they were personally targeted with antisemitic messages in a campus classroom environment is highly statistically significant. This change suggests that over the 2023-2024 school year, a greater share of students felt personally targeted with antisemitic comments, slurs, and threats in a classroom setting.

FIGURE 19

● 2023 ● 2024

SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HAMAS, HAVE YOU BEEN PERSONALLY TARGETED BY ANTISEMITIC COMMENTS, SLURS, OR THREATS?



NOTE: N: 944 (2023 cross-section), 1,006 (2024 cross-section) 231 (wave 2-3 panel). Percentages shown.