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DISCOURSE JUNE 25, 2026 UPDATED AUGUST 6, 2026

Is Anti-Zionism Antisemitism? What the Evidence Measures

Research does not settle whether anti-Zionism is antisemitism; it measures the link. A mediation model explains over 55% of anti-Israel attitudes.

Anti-Zionism

Israel

Conspiracy beliefs

IHRA definition

Online discourse

Political ideology



Anyone who has followed the debates on campus or in the news has heard the claim stated as though it were settled: anti-Zionism is antisemitism. What does the

research actually show? In three preregistered US studies, a model in which conspiracy beliefs implicating Israel and Zionists carry the link between antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes accounted for **more than 55% of the variance** in those attitudes (Harber and colleagues, 2026, peer-reviewed). That association is strong, but it is mediated and conditional, not an equivalence, and the research does not settle the contested claim itself.

Anti-Zionism here means opposition to [Zionism, the movement for and support of a Jewish state in Israel](#); in the studies it is measured as anti-Israel attitudes and as denial of Jewish self-determination. What the evidence can measure is the relationship between the two attitudes. The Institute measures that discourse, how often Israel-related language is coded antisemitic, which framings recur, and how the two attitudes correlate, without ruling on the contested claim itself.

Key Findings

- A model in which conspiracy beliefs implicating Israel and Zionists mediate the link between antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes explained **more than 55% of the variance** in those attitudes; conspiracy beliefs about Jews unrelated to Israel did not carry the link (Harber and colleagues, 2026, peer-reviewed).
- Coronavirus conspiracism correlated with all measured forms of antisemitism, but the correlation with attitudes toward Jews as Jews was **notably stronger** than with anti-Zionist antisemitism, and the anti-Zionist link was statistically accounted for by its overlap with the Jew-directed form (Allington and colleagues, 2023, peer-reviewed).
- Under the IHRA framework, **13.1% of conversations about Israel** were coded antisemitic, against 11.2% of conversations about Jews; 15% of the antisemitic Jews-conversations invoked denial of Jewish self-determination (Jikeli and colleagues, 2022, peer-reviewed).
- Antisemitism reaches anti-Israel attitudes through two distinct routes, a right-wing path via social dominance and a separate left-wing path that fuses with Palestinian identity (Ozer and colleagues, 2025; Hadar and colleagues, 2026, peer-reviewed), while overt antisemitic attitudes remain right-concentrated (Hersh and Royden, 2022, peer-reviewed).

- Among UK media-page comments coded antisemitic on one 2021 conflict escalation, the **apartheid analogy appeared in 5.2%** and the Nazi analogy in 4.2%, with attribution of sole guilt to Israel at 27.9% (Becker and colleagues, 2022, peer-reviewed).

Why are anti-Zionism and antisemitism so easily confused?

Because three different things share a border, and the most widely used definition draws part of that border through the middle. Antisemitism is hostility toward or prejudice against Jews as Jews. Zionism is the movement for, and support of, a Jewish nation-state in Israel. Anti-Zionism is opposition to that project, ranging from criticism of the Israeli government's conduct to rejection of the legitimacy of a Jewish state. The first is a prejudice against a people; the second and third are political positions about a state. They are different kinds of thing, which is why conflating them is contested, and why separating them is a measurement problem rather than a matter of opinion.

Part of the overlap is built into the standard itself. The IHRA working definition, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance standard that most of the content studies here use to code antisemitism, counts some Israel-related expression as antisemitic, for example denying Jewish people the right to self-determination or holding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of Israel, while stating that criticism of Israel comparable to that leveled at any other country is not. By that widely adopted standard, part of what is described as anti-Zionism already sits inside antisemitism and part sits outside it, and exactly where the line falls is itself disputed.

The rest of the overlap is empirical. The two attitudes correlate, they are linked through conspiracy beliefs that implicate Israel and Zionists, and one can act as a more socially acceptable outlet for the other, all of which the measured findings below document. They also stay distinguishable: the standard definition exempts ordinary criticism of Israel, the anti-Zionist form correlates less strongly with conspiracy thinking than the Jew-directed form, and some groups hold strong anti-Israel views alongside little antisemitism. The confusion is real, and it has a measurable structure, which is what the rest of this report sets out.

The report measures the discourse, not the verdict

The boundary between anti-Zionism and antisemitism is contested, and the figures below describe how the two correlate, how often Israel-related language is coded antisemitic under a stated framework, and which framings recur. A 2026 review of the field lists the dynamics underlying anti-Zionist expressions of antisemitism as one of four active, open research areas, not a closed verdict (Bilewicz and colleagues, 2026, peer-reviewed).

How strongly are antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes linked?

The two attitudes are strongly and measurably related, but the link runs through a specific channel. Across three preregistered US studies in 2026, a model the authors call the Conspiracies Mediated Model of New Antisemitism accounted for **more than 55% of the variance** in anti-Israel attitudes (Harber and colleagues, 2026, peer-reviewed). The mediator is the load-bearing detail: conspiracy beliefs implicating Israel and Zionists carried the association between antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes, whereas conspiracy beliefs about Jews unrelated to Israel did not, and the result was not explained by a general conspiratorial mindset.

The same study measured a partisan asymmetry that resists any single narrative. Democrats, compared with Republicans, expressed less antisemitism but stronger anti-Israel attitudes and greater endorsement of anti-Israel and anti-Zionist conspiracy beliefs (Harber and colleagues, 2026). The relationship is a measured, mediated association, not a finding that criticism of Israel is in itself antisemitism.

How antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes are linked in the data

THREE PREREGISTERED US STUDIES, 2026

55%+ OF VARIANCE IN ANTI-ISRAEL ATTITUDES EXPLAINED



Conspiracy beliefs about Jews unrelated to Israel did not carry this link, and the result was not explained by a general conspiratorial mindset.

Source: Harber, Bulska, Malloy, and Vila, 2026, peer-reviewed.

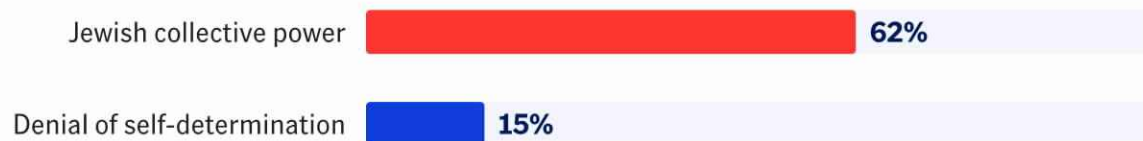
Are anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish antisemitism the same thing?

Measured as separate constructs, they are related but not identical. A preregistered UK survey using a validated antisemitism scale found that coronavirus conspiracy suspicion correlated with all three measured forms, generalised, Judeophobic (attitudes toward Jews as Jews), and anti-Zionist, but the correlation with the Judeophobic form was **notably stronger** than with the anti-Zionist form (Allington and colleagues, 2023, peer-reviewed). In a further analysis, the anti-Zionist-antisemitism link to conspiracism was statistically accounted for by its overlap with Judeophobic antisemitism, indicating the two share substantial common ground while remaining distinguishable.

The content data show the same partial separation. In an expert-annotated corpus, the antisemitic share of conversations about Jews was driven mostly by an old trope rather than an Israel-specific one: **62% of antisemitic Jews-conversations** fit the IHRA paragraph on mendacious or stereotypical allegations about Jewish collective power, while 15% fit the denial of Jewish self-determination (Jikeli and colleagues, 2022, peer-reviewed). Even within conversations about Jews, the anti-Zionism-coded category is the minority frame.

Which antisemitic frames appear in conversations about Jews

SHARE OF ANTISEMITIC ENGLISH TWEETS FITTING EACH IHRA PARAGRAPH, 2019 TO 2020



Source: Jikeli and colleagues, 2022, peer-reviewed. Categories are not exclusive.

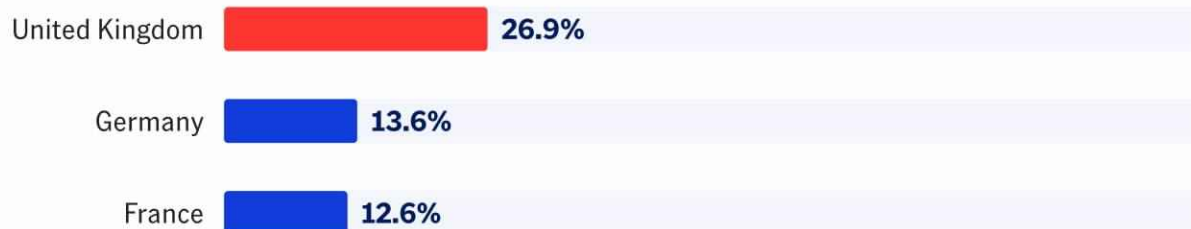
How often is Israel-related discourse measured as antisemitic?

13.1% of conversations containing the word Israel were coded antisemitic under the IHRA framework in keyword corpora (January to August 2020), close to the 11.2% measured for conversations containing the word Jews over a longer window, though the measured share swings widely with the platform and the moment (Jikeli and colleagues, 2022, peer-reviewed). The two figures cover different periods, so they bound a range rather than make a strict comparison.

Comment sections tied to a flashpoint run far higher. In comments on leading media outlets' Facebook pages reacting to the May 2021 escalation, **26.9% of UK comments** were coded antisemitic under an IHRA-based scheme, about twice the share in Germany (13.6%) and France (12.6%) (Becker and colleagues, 2022, peer-reviewed). These are shares within comments reacting to one conflict event, not a general prevalence of antisemitism in the population.

Share of media-page comments coded antisemitic, by country

COMMENTS ON THE MAY 2021 ESCALATION, IHRA-BASED CODING



Source: Becker, Ascone, and Troschke, 2022, peer-reviewed. 4,500 comments, 1,500 per country.

Which framings appear in the discourse?

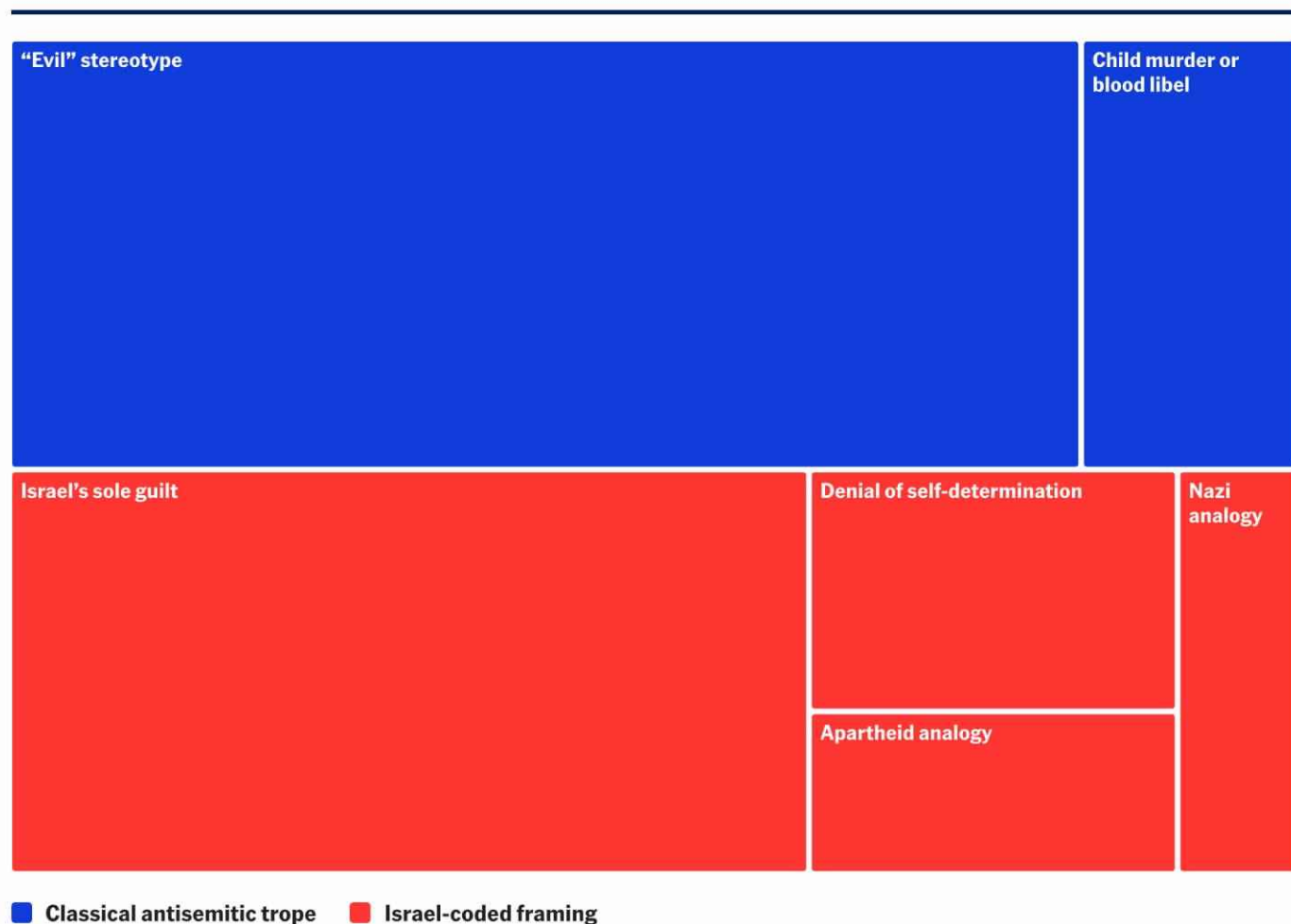
Within comments already coded antisemitic, the recurring concepts fall into two families, classical antisemitic tropes and Israel-coded framings, grouped in the chart below. Among UK antisemitic comments on the 2021 escalation, the most frequent concept was the generic evil stereotype at **39.8%**, a classical trope, followed by attribution of sole guilt to Israel (27.9%), child murder or blood libel (8.1%), denial of Jewish self-determination (7.7%), the apartheid analogy (5.2%), and the Nazi analogy (4.2%) (Becker and colleagues, 2022, peer-

reviewed). These percentages describe how often each framing appeared in comments the coders had already classified as antisemitic under the IHRA scheme; they are not a finding that using the apartheid or Nazi framing is, by itself, antisemitism.

One framing has been measured directly for its association with hostility. In two nationally representative Norwegian surveys, endorsement of Holocaust inversion, the belief that Israel treats Palestinians as badly as Jews were treated during World War II, was associated with justification of harassment and violence against Jews and with refusal to take a stance against it (Enstad, 2026, peer-reviewed). The author reads the inversion as a socially more acceptable vehicle for expressing hostility, and states the finding is correlational, not proof that any criticism of Israel is antisemitic.

Which concepts appear in UK comments coded antisemitic

SHARE INVOKING EACH CONCEPT, SIZED BY PREVALENCE, 2021



Source: Becker, Ascone, and Troschke, 2022, peer-reviewed. The six most frequent of 57 coded topoi; shares are within comments already coded antisemitic and not exclusive, so the cells show relative prevalence, not a partition.

Does it track the left or the right?

The measured answer is both, through different routes, which is why the question rarely resolves cleanly. A dual-threat model with support across six national samples holds that perceived Jewish power feeds antisemitism through two channels: among people who favor social hierarchy it registers as a threat to ingroup dominance, and among people who oppose hierarchy it registers as a threat to egalitarian ideals, accounting for why antisemitism surfaces **at opposite ends** of the ideological spectrum (Hadar and colleagues, 2026, peer-reviewed).

The Israel-specific pathways split the same way. In British samples primed with material about the war in Gaza, a right-leaning route ran through social dominance orientation, while a separate route fused identity with the Palestinian people in a way that conflated attitudes toward Israel with prejudice toward Jews (Ozer and colleagues, 2025, peer-reviewed). A US experiment found a licensing effect: when antisemitism was justified by disapproval of Israel or the war, self-identified liberals, but not conservatives, liked the speaker more, an effect on social approval rather than a claim that disapproval of Israel is antisemitism (Moon and colleagues, 2026, peer-reviewed).

Overt attitudes and age cut across the ideological picture. Contrary to the assumption that the extremes mirror each other, overt antisemitic attitudes were rare on the left and more common on the right, with the highest concentration among young adults on the far right (Hersh and Royden, 2022, peer-reviewed). A 2025 academic poll found **10% of voters ages 18 to 34** agreed with all three antisemitic statements tested, against 2% of those 65 and older, and about one in five young respondents supported boycotting Jewish-owned businesses to protest the war, an item that conflates protest of Israel with action against Jewish Americans (Yale Youth Poll, 2025).

Young US voters agree with antisemitic statements at higher rates

SHARE AGREEING WITH ALL THREE STATEMENTS TESTED, 2025

Voters 18 to 34  **10%**

Voters 65 and older  **2%**

Source: Yale Youth Poll, Fall 2025, academic poll.

Methodology and limitations

The findings draw on three kinds of measurement. Survey and experimental studies measure attitudes and the associations between them (Harber and colleagues, 2026; Allington and colleagues, 2023; Hadar and colleagues, 2026; Ozer and colleagues, 2025; Moon and colleagues, 2026; Enstad, 2026; Hersh and Royden, 2022; Yale Youth Poll, 2025). Content-analysis studies code samples of online text against the IHRA framework and report the antisemitic share (Jikeli and colleagues, 2022; Becker and colleagues, 2022). All are peer-reviewed journal or conference work or an academic poll; several abstract-sourced studies are labeled in the source list.

Three limits bound every figure. The relationships are correlational: the studies report that attitudes are associated, not that one causes the other, and several authors say so explicitly. The content shares describe specific samples, keyword corpora and one-event comment sections, not a population, and shift with the platform and the moment. And the coding rests on the IHRA framework, one widely used but contested standard for identifying antisemitism, so a different framework could draw the line differently. Where the literature disagrees, it is named here: the overlap finding that the anti-Zionist and Jew-directed forms are statistically hard to separate (Allington and colleagues, 2023) sits beside the mediation model that treats Israel-implicating conspiracy belief as a distinct channel (Harber and colleagues, 2026). The Institute reports both as measured associations and does not settle the definitional question between them.

Conclusion

So is the claim, stated on campus and in the news as though it were settled, actually settled by the research? It is not. The studies describe a relationship with a specific structure, strong,

conditional, and asymmetric, and they decline the equivalence the slogan asserts.

That structure holds across every axis the evidence measured. The two attitudes are strongly linked, but the link runs through one channel: a model in which conspiracy beliefs implicating Israel and Zionists carry the association explained more than 55% of the variance in anti-Israel attitudes, while conspiracy beliefs about Jews unrelated to Israel did not carry it. They overlap without collapsing into one thing: coronavirus conspiracy suspicion correlated more strongly with attitudes toward Jews as Jews than with the anti-Zionist form, and even within conversations about Jews the old collective-power trope drove 62% of the antisemitic share against 15% for denial of Jewish self-determination. Israel-related language is coded antisemitic at rates that [climb sharply around conflict events](#), from 13.1% of Israel conversations in a long keyword window to 26.9% of UK comments reacting to the May 2021 escalation. And the hostility reaches both ideological poles by different routes, a right-leaning path through social dominance and a separate left-leaning path that fuses with Palestinian identity, with 10% of voters ages 18 to 34 agreeing with all three antisemitic statements tested against 2% of those 65 and older.

That structure does not stay in the journals. The conflation lives in the everyday: in the campus chant heard one way by the crowd and another by the target, in the conspiracy trope about who controls what, in the call to boycott a Jewish-owned business to protest a war, an item that folds protest of a state into action against a people. The Institute exists to measure the inputs that fuel antisemitism, and the slide from a political position about a state to a prejudice against a people is one candidate input. Is the measured overlap between these two attitudes one of the channels that feeds antisemitism, or a distinct stance the data keeps separable? The collective-power trope the studies still find inside this overlap is centuries older than the state the slogan argues about, carried forward through earlier eras and earlier vocabularies long before any survey existed to count it. Whether the present overlap is the latest turn of that long argument, or a separate political quarrel that only borrows its language, is a question that reaches back further than the data can, and forward past where any single measurement ends. The Institute records where the two attitudes meet and where they part; the longer arc that runs through and past those measurements is the open question this report sets down and society goes on weighing.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is anti-Zionism the same as antisemitism?

Measured as separate constructs, they are related but not identical. Conspiracy suspicion correlated more strongly with attitudes toward Jews as Jews than with anti-Zionist antisemitism, and the anti-Zionist link was statistically accounted for by its overlap with the Jew-directed form (Allington and colleagues, 2023). The research reports overlap and association, not equivalence.

Does criticizing Israel make someone antisemitic?

No study in this evidence base measures that, and several authors caution against the inference. What the research measures is association: for example, that antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes are linked through conspiracy beliefs implicating Israel and Zionists (Harber and colleagues, 2026), and that one specific framing, Holocaust inversion, correlates with justifying hostility toward Jews (Enstad, 2026). Association among measured attitudes is not a judgment about any individual's criticism.

Is antisemitism a left-wing or a right-wing phenomenon?

The data show both, through different routes. A dual-threat model explains why antisemitism appears at opposite ends of the spectrum (Hadar and colleagues, 2026), and Israel-related hostility runs through a right-wing social-dominance pathway and a separate left-wing identity-fusion pathway (Ozer and colleagues, 2025). Overt antisemitic attitudes, measured directly, are more common on the right and concentrated among the young far right (Hersh and Royden, 2022).

What is the IHRA definition, and do these studies use it?

The IHRA working definition is the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's framework for identifying antisemitism, widely used and itself contested. Several of the content-analysis studies here adopt it as their coding standard (Jikeli and colleagues, 2022; Becker and colleagues, 2022), which means their antisemitic shares reflect that framework; a different standard could classify some borderline cases differently.

Why does the share of Israel-related discourse coded antisemitic vary so much?

Because it depends on the sample and the moment. Keyword corpora over long windows put the antisemitic share of Israel conversations around 13% (Jikeli and colleagues, 2022), while comment sections reacting to a single 2021 escalation reached 26.9% in the UK (Becker and colleagues, 2022). Conflict events raise the measured share sharply, so a figure describes its sample and timing as much as the topic.

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The Hanover Institute for Public Policy studies the inputs fueling antisemitism in the United States and publishes what the evidence shows. Its work is content analysis, computational social science, and other data-driven research, and its reports take no policy positions.

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