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German Institute for Global and Area Studies
Leibniz-Institut für Globale und Regionale Studien



The impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on intergroup attitudes in Germany: Evidence from a natural experiment

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Chicago, 6.4.2024

MOTRA – Monitoring System & Transfer Platform Radicalisation

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The Study „People in Germany“ (Menschen in Deutschland MiD)

MiD

Menschen in Deutschland

<https://www.mid.uni-hamburg.de>

Research Interest:

Analyses of the prevalence, social distribution, risk factors and time trends of:

- political extremist attitudes (anti-democratic, right-wing extremism, Islamism)
- intolerance and group-related prejudices (xenophobia, islamophobia, antisemitism)
- attitudes towards politically motivated violence

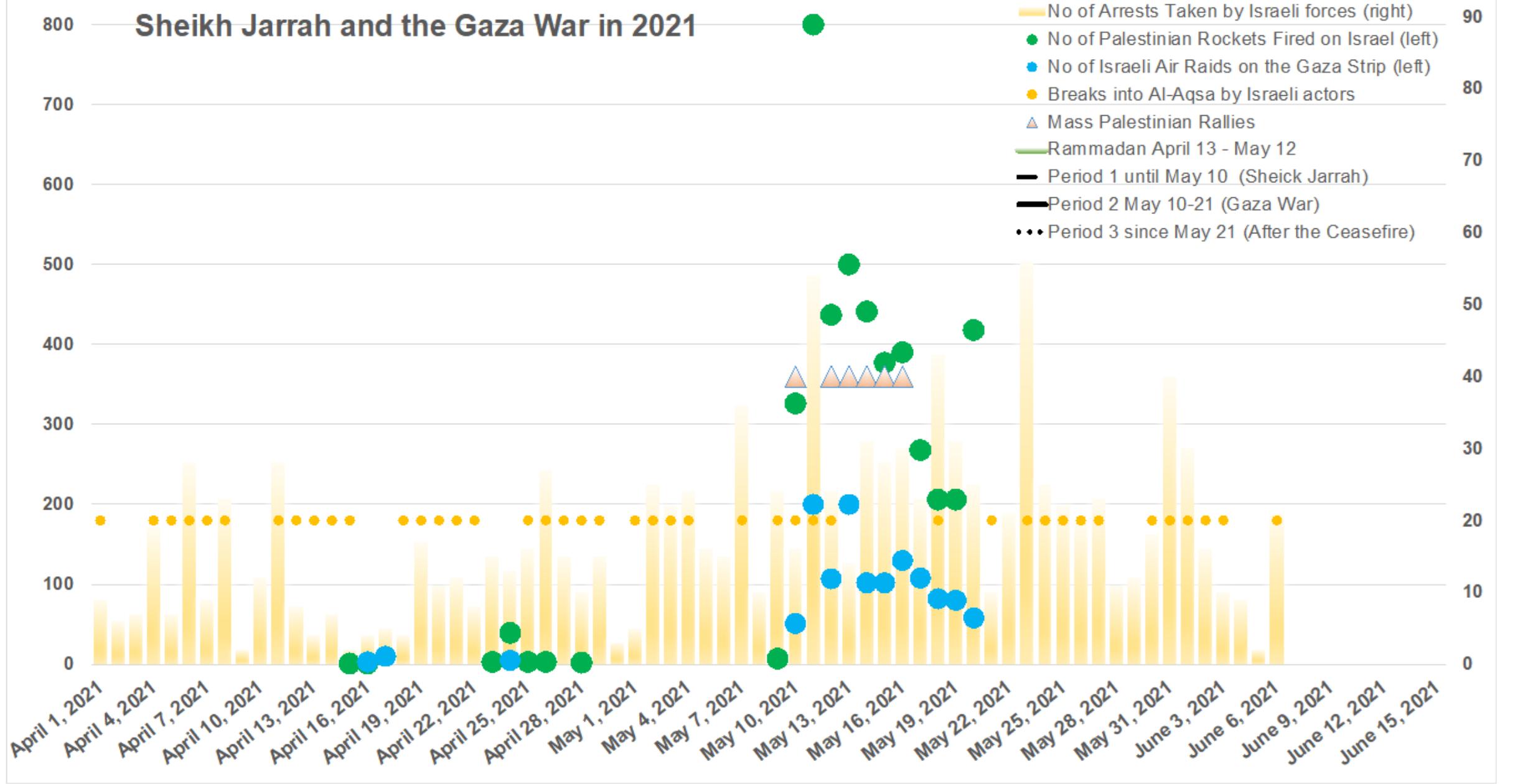
Method:

- Annually repeated, representative surveys of persons aged 18+ living in Germany.
- Sample of general population ($n \approx 2000$) with oversamples of Muslims ($n \approx 1000$) and non-Muslim Migrants ($n \approx 1000$).
- 3rd Wave conducted in Spring 2023 ($n=3990$)

The Israel-Gaza conflict in May 2021: Background

- Changes in US policy under the Trump administration
- Changes in policy of Arab Gulf states (Abraham Accords)
- Local dynamics
 - April 13, 2021 (start of Ramadan=independence day Israel)
 - Israeli police invade al-Aqsa mosque and shut down loudspeakers
 - Palestinians are denied access to Damascus Gate (East Jerusalem)
 - Until May 10, 2021
 - Protests by Palestinians and clashes with Israeli police; Marches by right-wing Israeli groups (slogans: "Death to the Arabs"); April 29: Mahmoud Abbas cancels elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council; Hamas sets ultimatum
 - May 10, 2021
 - Rockets being fired on Israeli sites by Islamic militants from the Gaza Strip
 - Israeli forces respond with attacks on Hamas and Islamic Jihad positions
 - May 21, 2021: Ceasefire agreed

Sheikh Jarrah and the Gaza War in 2021



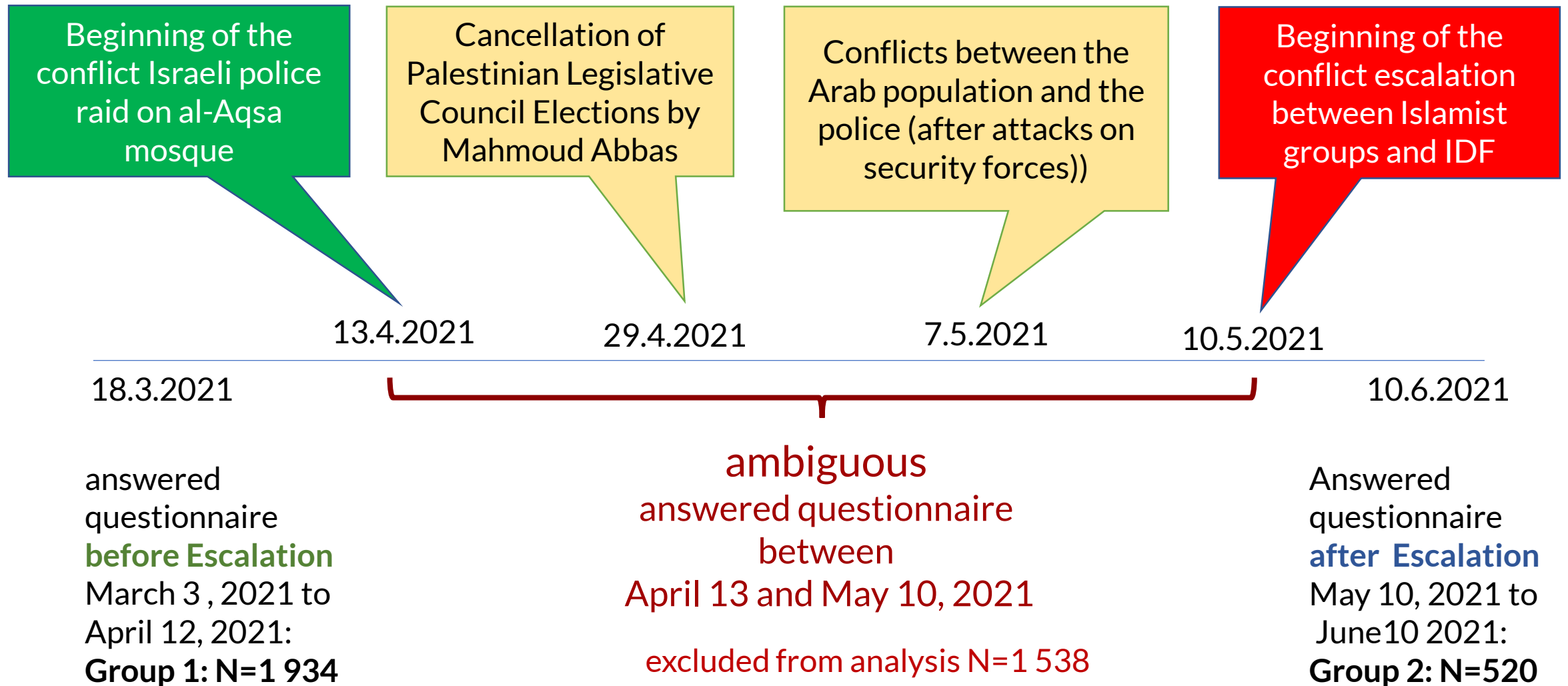
Israel-Gaza conflict 2021 and Time schedule of the MiD 2021 survey



Hypotheses

1. Individuals who perceived the escalation of the Gaza war show significant higher antisemitic attitudes than those who did not perceive this d.
(significant differences before vs. after conflict escalation).
2. This effect is stronger among Muslims than Non-Muslims
 - (-identification with inferior Muslim group;*
 - perception that members of own group are victimized;*
 - perception that violence is unjustified;*
 - feeling of vicarious victimization can lead to strong emotions (humiliation))*

Israel-Gaza conflict 2021 and Time schedule of the MiD 2021 survey



Antisemitic attitudes: Items and Distributions

Combined subsamples (n=2454), unweighted data

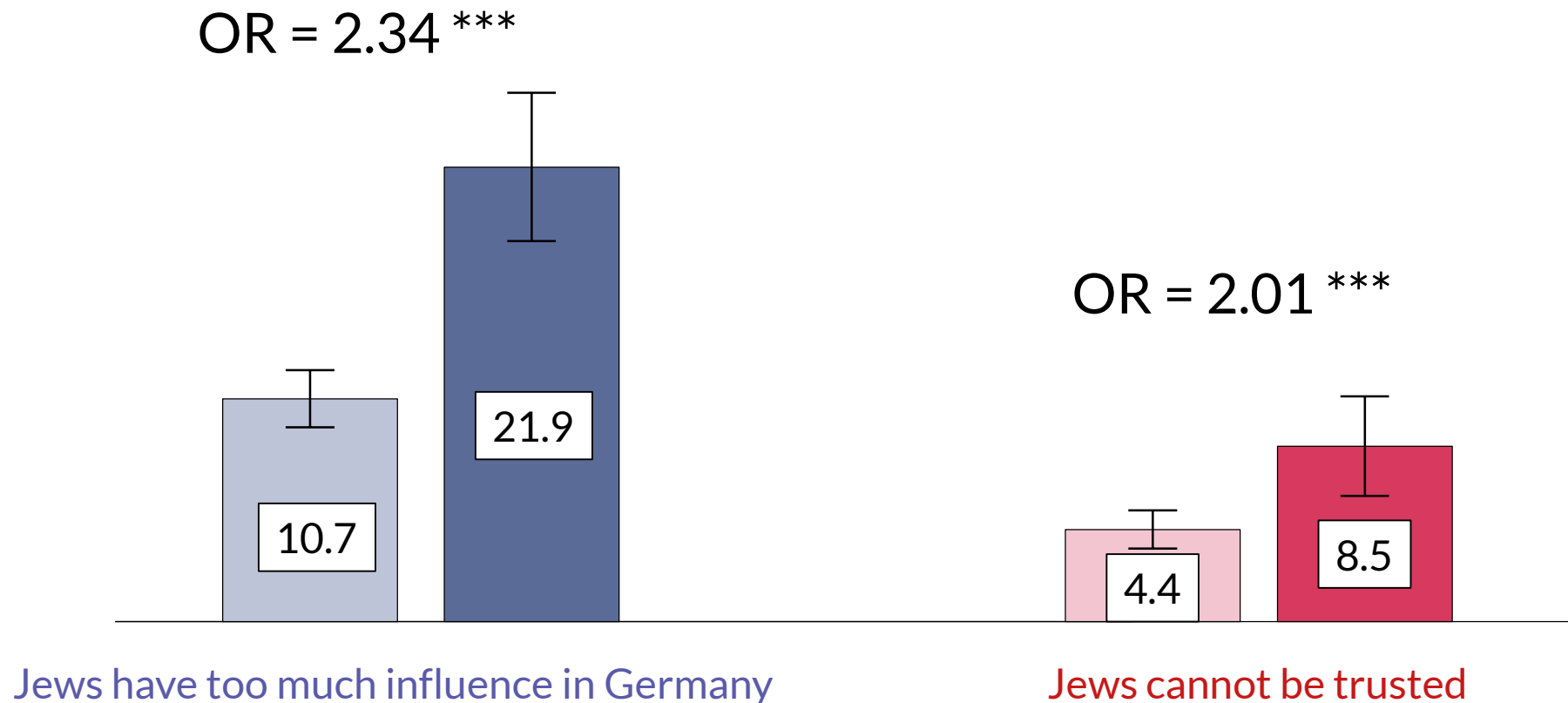
	strongly disagree 1	partially disagree 2	partially agree 3	strongly agree 4	% agree	M	SD
Jews have too much influence in Germany	61.2	25.7	9.7	3.4	13.1	1.55	.80
Jews cannot be trusted	79.9	14.8	3.5	1.7	5.2	1.27	.61

Antisemitic attitudes before and after conflict Escalation

Percentage agreement by date of participation in the survey

before April 13, 2021
after May 10, 2021

before April 13, 2021
after May 10, 2021



Socio-demographic variables by date of participation in the survey

	before April 13, 2021	after May 10, 2021	test
age (mean)	48.1	43.4	***
sex (% male)	53.8	51.3	ns
education (% high)	60.9	57.7	ns
religion (% Muslim)	21.4	47.1	***
migration status (% migrant)	54.0	81.7	***



Statistical control of socio-demographic variables is necessary.

Logistic regression of survey period on antisemitic attitudes

controlling for socio-demographic variables (Odds-Ratios)

<i>„Jews have too much influence in Germany“</i>			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
age		1.01 ⁻¹ **	1.00
sex (1 = male)		1.25	1.07
education (1 = high)		1.64 ⁻¹ ***	1.47 ⁻¹ **
religion (1 = Muslim)			3.23 ***
migration status (1 = migrant)			2.44 ***
date of participation (1 = after May 10)	2.34 ***	2.22 ***	1.49 **



Hypothesis 1 is confirmed for *„Jews have too much influence in Germany“*.

Logistic regression of survey period on antisemitic attitudes

controlling for socio-demographic variables (Odds-Ratios)

	<i>„Jews cannot be trusted “</i>		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
age		1.01 ⁻¹	1.00
sex (1 = male)		1.73 **	1.52 *
education (1 = high)		1.98 ⁻¹ ***	1.75 ⁻¹ **
religion (1 = Muslim)			3.51 ***
migration status (1 = migrant)			1.67
date of participation (1 = after May 10)	2.01 ***	1.91 ***	1.31

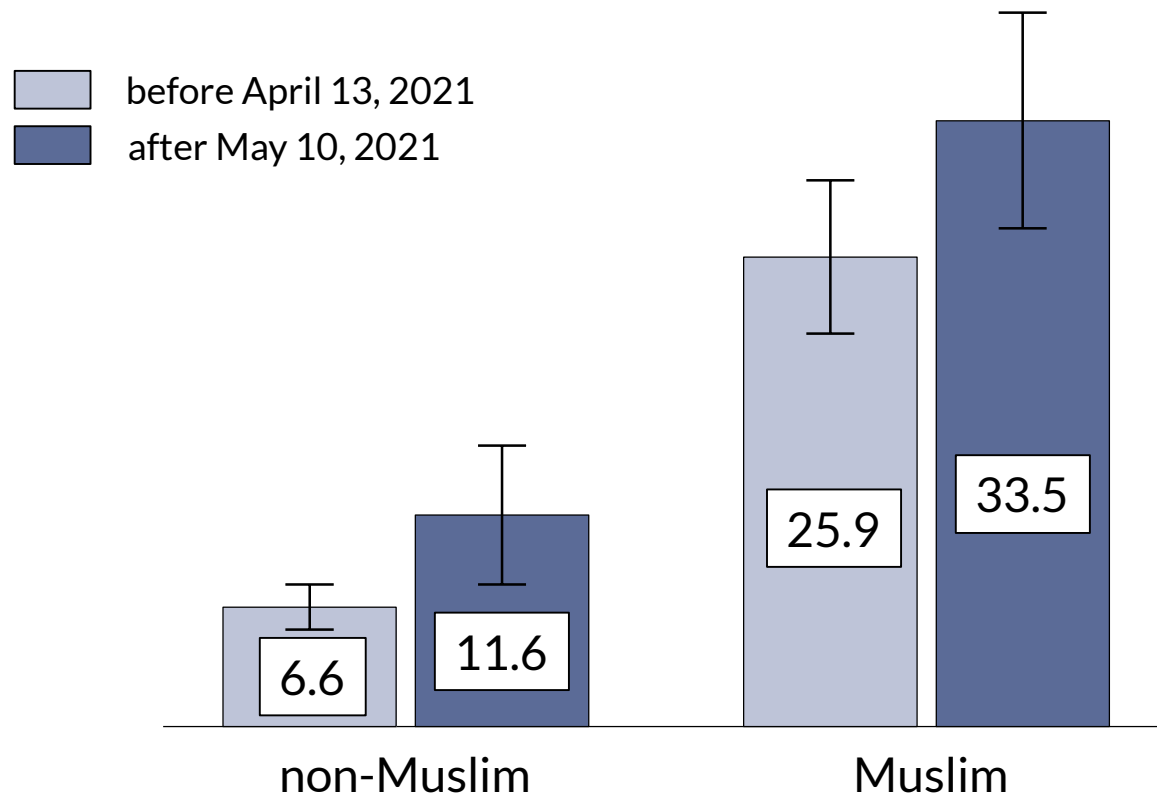


Hypothesis 1 is rejected for *„Jews cannot be trusted“*.

Antisemitic attitudes: Comparison of Muslims and non-Muslims

Percentage agreement by date of participation in the survey and Odds-Ratios

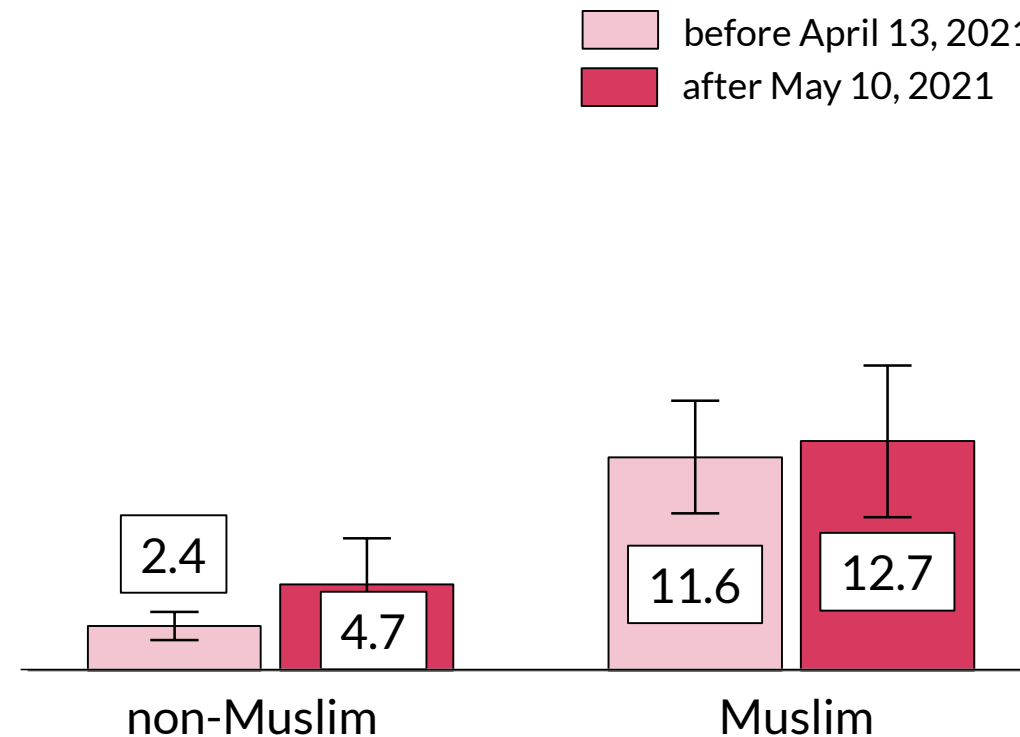
Jews have too much influence in Germany



Model 1 1.87 **
Model 2 1.90 **

1.44 *
1.44 *

Jews cannot be trusted



1.99 *
2.15 *

1.10 ns
1.07 ns



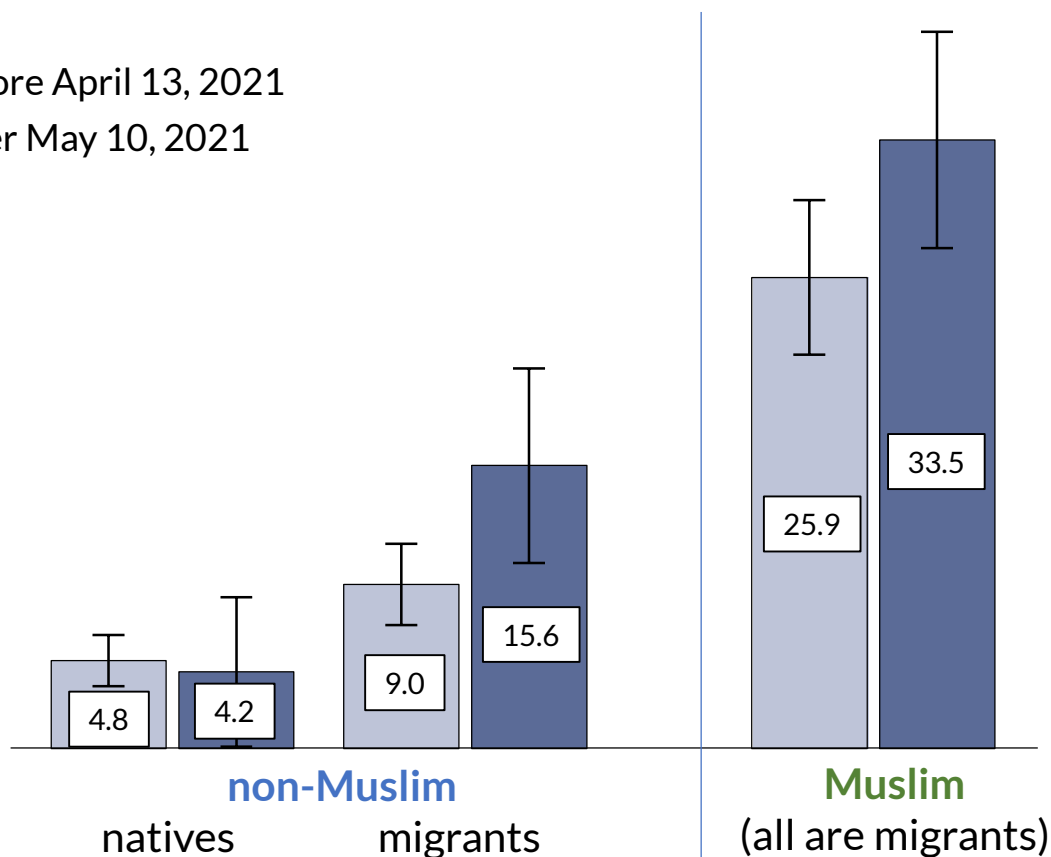
Hypothesis 2 is rejected for both Items

Comparison of Muslims, non-Muslim migrants, and non-Muslim natives

Percentage agreement by date of participation in the survey and Odds-Ratios

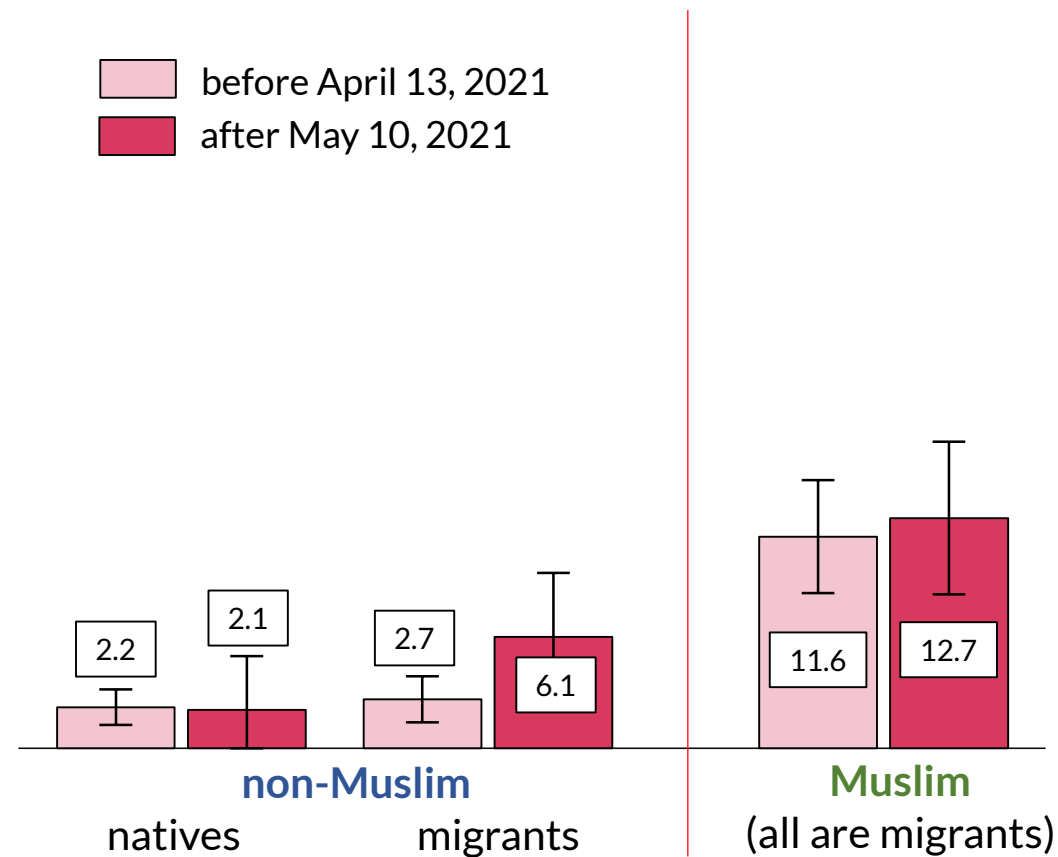
Jews have too much influence in Germany

before April 13, 2021
after May 10, 2021



Jews cannot be trusted

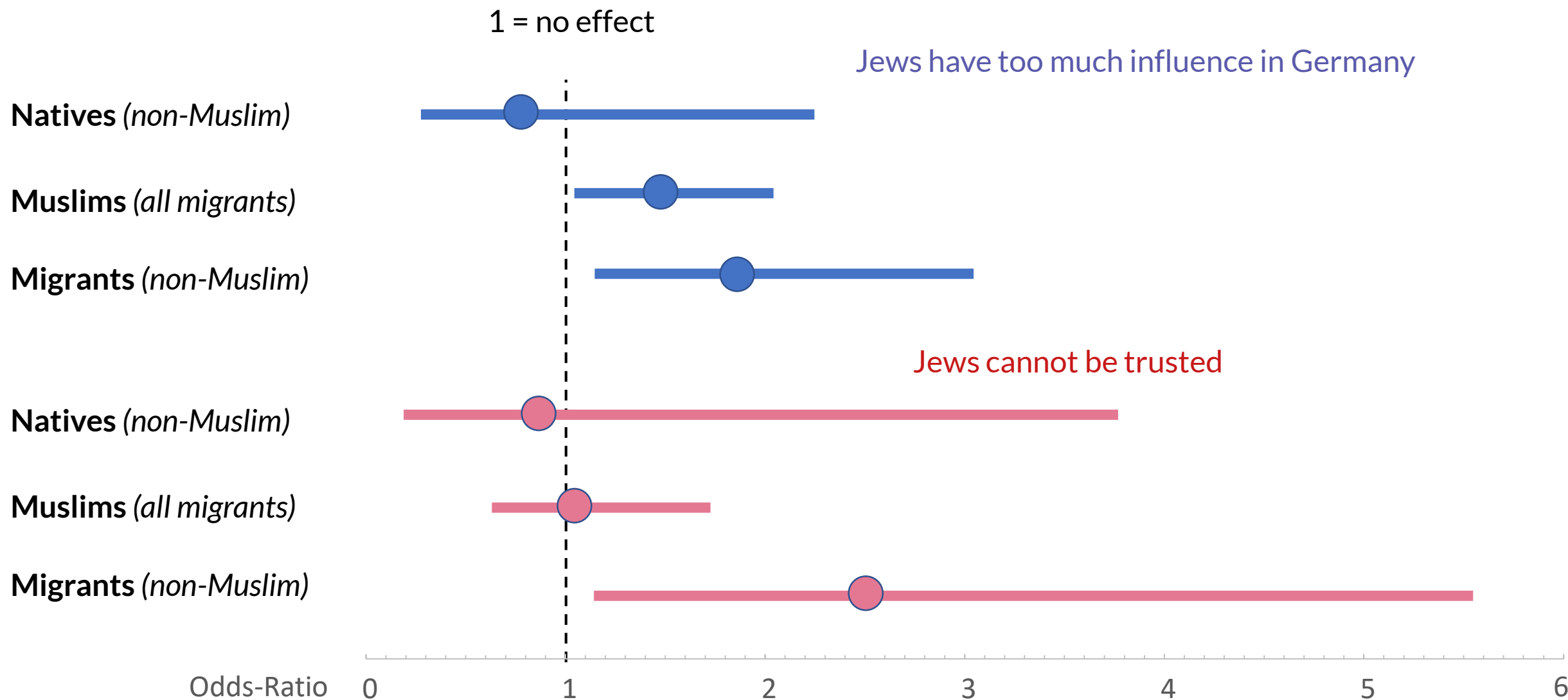
before April 13, 2021
after May 10, 2021



Model 1	1.16 ⁻¹ ns	1.86 *	1.44 *	1.07 ⁻¹ ns	2.35 *	1.10 ns
Model 2	1.28 ⁻¹ ns	1.86 *	1.44 *	1.16 ⁻¹ ns	2.51 *	1.07 ns

Comparison of Muslims, non-muslim Migrants, and non-muslim Natives

Percentage agreement by date of participation in the survey: Odds-Ratios



Conclusions

- The perception of the military escalation of the Gaza conflict is associated with a significant increase of antisemitic attitudes among certain subgroups of the adult population living in Germany.
- Multivariate analyses show, that different kinds of antisemitic prejudices and different social subgroups were affected differently by the confrontation with the military conflict escalation in Gaza.
 - For the item “*Jews have too much influence in Germany*” after multivariate control of age, sex, and education significant increasing effects could be identified among non-muslim migrants and muslim migrants. For non-muslim respondents without a migration background no significant differences could be identified in the quasi-experimental pre-post design.
 - For the item “*Jews cannot be trusted*” after multivariate control of age, sex, and education significant increasing effects could be identified for non-muslim migrants only.
- The hypothesis according to which the increasing effect of the military conflict escalation on antisemitic attitudes was expected to be stronger for muslim respondents could not be confirmed for both items used to measure traditional kinds of antijewish prejudices.

Open questions:

- *Why do the effects differ so clearly for the two items used as dependent variables in this natural experiment?*
- *Why are the effects particularly strong among non-muslim migrants?*

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