

Student Newspapers and Antisemitism on Campus: The Claremont College Pilot Report

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1 Introduction

Antisemitism and anti-Zionism have seen a drastic increase in the United States in recent years. Over 3,000 antisemitic incidents have been reported on college campuses in the last two school years, and 9,467 antisemitic hate crimes took place in the U.S. from 2015 to 2023 [4,6]. Since the October 7th attack, the situation has escalated much further, as shown by figure 1.

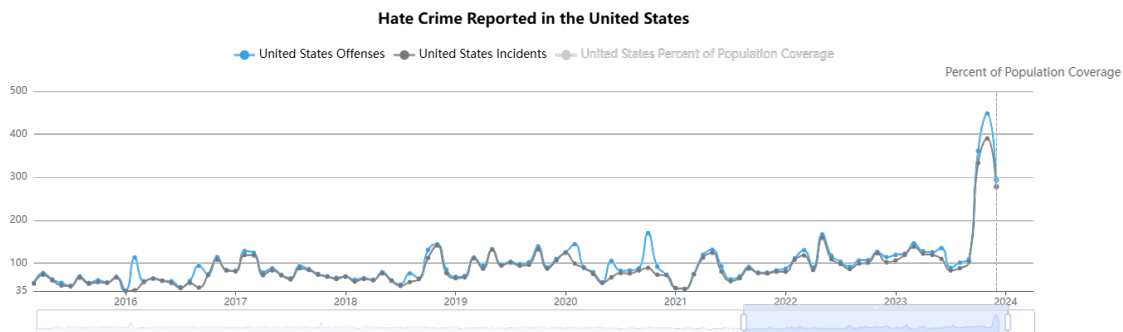


Figure 1: Antisemitic Hate Crimes from 2015 to 2023 [6]

Students and faculty are misinformed and extremified from many different forms of media. As discourse breaks down and dialogue becomes impossible, situations escalate into both verbal and physical confrontation. Student newspapers may act as a powerful indicator for finding campuses at greater risk of antisemitic incidents or in greater need of administrative or legal guidance. Additionally, student newspapers provide better insights than social media. The data is clean, primarily text, easily associated with a corresponding university, and able to be scraped at scale.

This project aims to scrape, process, and label student newspapers to find trends with campus hate crime reports. What students feel comfortable expressing in student media should provide insights into the campus atmosphere, and may be a useful predictor in increases in antisemitic incidents. By running statistical analysis across and between universities, Jewish students and staff can get a better understanding of how safe their campus is and what to do about it.

The main research questions I aim to answer are as follows:

- Do antisemitic incidents occur more frequently than usual after anti-Zionist articles?
- Do schools with more anti-Zionist articles have higher rates of antisemitic incidents?

2 Methodology

The workflow I use is depicted in figure 2. The goal of the pipeline is to produce a report including detailed statistical and visual conclusions, with all data manually verified or labeled to ensure accuracy and objectivity.

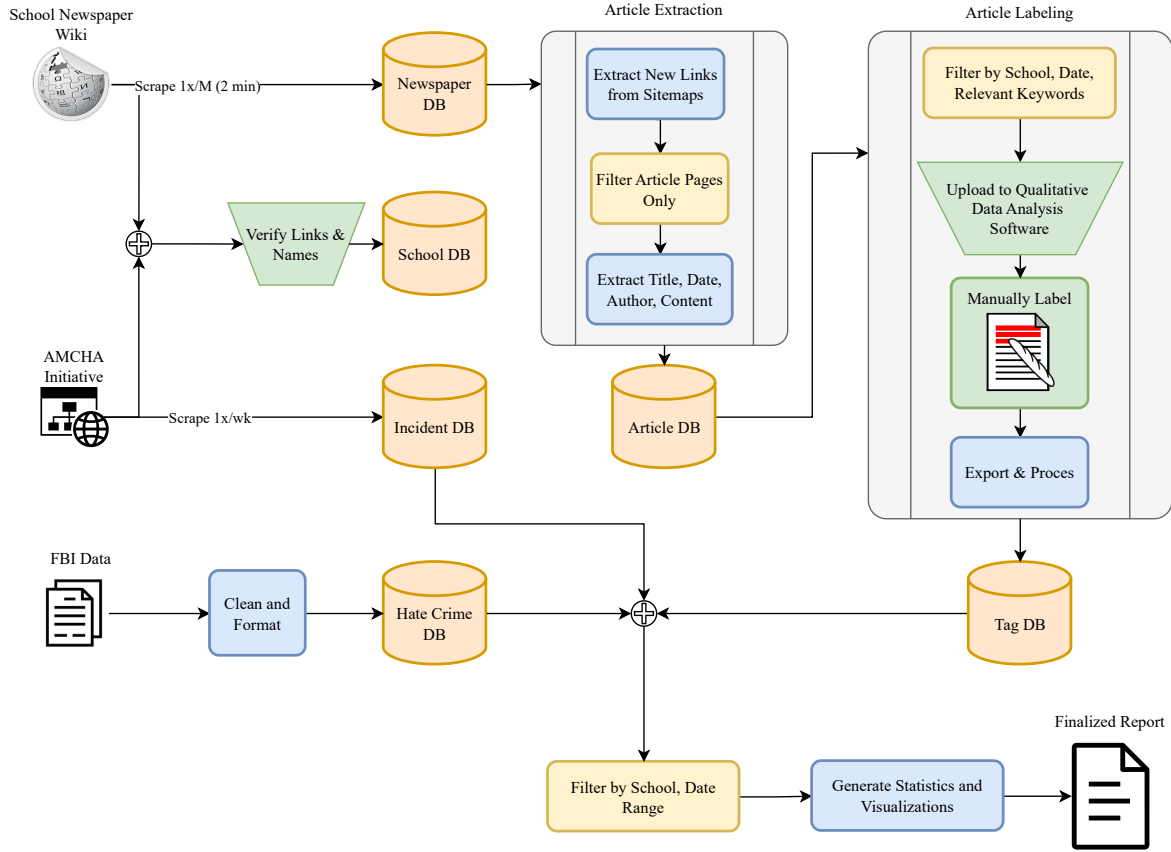


Figure 2: Workflow Visualization

Wikipedia [2] provides a reliable source of student newspapers, and I check and scrape this source monthly to guarantee the inclusion of as many schools and newspapers as possible. The AMCHA Initiative [3] has a public-facing database of antisemitic and anti-Zionist campus incidents varying from bullying to BDS resolutions, and I scrape the most current data on a weekly basis. There are around 9,000 incidents in this database, with over 100 cases of physical assault. There are 938 schools in the Wikipedia list, and 747 schools in the AMCHA database, of which I have manually matched and verified 474 institutions. This manual verification is essential for the cases of schools with identical newspaper names, such as "The Independent," and small differences in semantics, such as "University of California, Los Angeles" vs. "University of California - Los Angeles."

Schools with a valid newspaper link pass through the article extraction pipeline, which has thus far scraped 5.6M links, including at least 2M articles. It can get the links of all newly written articles in approximately 10 minutes, and can extract content at a rate of approximately 6 articles

per second on a desktop computer.

These articles then pass through the article labeling pipeline. The different labels used are from Decoding Antisemitism, a European research project aimed at categorizing and labeling anti-semitism online [1]. These labels are granular, based on historical and detailed categories, and allow for analysis on subsets of labels. This gives schools the ability to interpret the data in accordance with the working definitions of antisemitism their institution adopts. It also provides insights into how particular tropes or pieces of misinformation appear and affect different schools. The tagging of labels is all done manually.

The FBI Uniform Crime Reporting project [6] maintains a comprehensive database of all hate crimes reported to police. This data, while potentially under-reported, does include cases of universities and colleges. It is difficult to integrate and not always present for all schools, but a useful source when available.

At the end of the pipeline, FBI, AMCHA, and manual tag data are all compiled. This leads to conclusions on the frequency of tags over time, incidents over time, and hate crimes over time. Distributions of tags are also generated. Statistical tests are possible, but not yet in-practice due to a small sample of labeled data.

2.1 CLAREMONT COLLEGES

The Claremont Colleges are a consortium containing 5 liberal arts undergraduate colleges, often referred to as the 5Cs. These schools are a useful starting point for analysis, as their papers contain a moderate amount of relevant articles, all newspapers are in the database, and there are nonzero incidents for all schools. There are no incidents in the FBI database that are easily tied to the schools.

Institution	Newspaper	Relevant Articles	Tagged Articles
Claremont Consortium	The Student Life	365	-
Scripps	The Scripps Voice	32	12
Pitzer	The Outback	26	14
Claremont McKenna	The Forum	67	4
Harvey Mudd	The Muddraker	0	0
Pomona	N/A	0	0

Table 1: Article Information for the 5Cs

Attempting to get all articles that may have anti-Zionist or antisemitic content was done by querying for articles with one of the words *Israel*, *Palestine*, *Palestinian*, *encampment*, or *occupation*. This is not a perfect search, and may miss articles, but was chosen as expanding the query comes at the cost of labeling additional benign articles. The number of articles returned by this query, and the number of these articles with at least 1 tag can be found in table 1. Due to the volume of articles, *The Student Life* has not been annotated yet. Due to how *The Muddraker* digitizes past editions, their online articles are not representative of the paper’s complete history.

Figure 3 shows the most frequent tags found in the articles. References to genocide, calls for boycott, and references to the state of Israel as an apartheid state are the 3 most frequent tags.

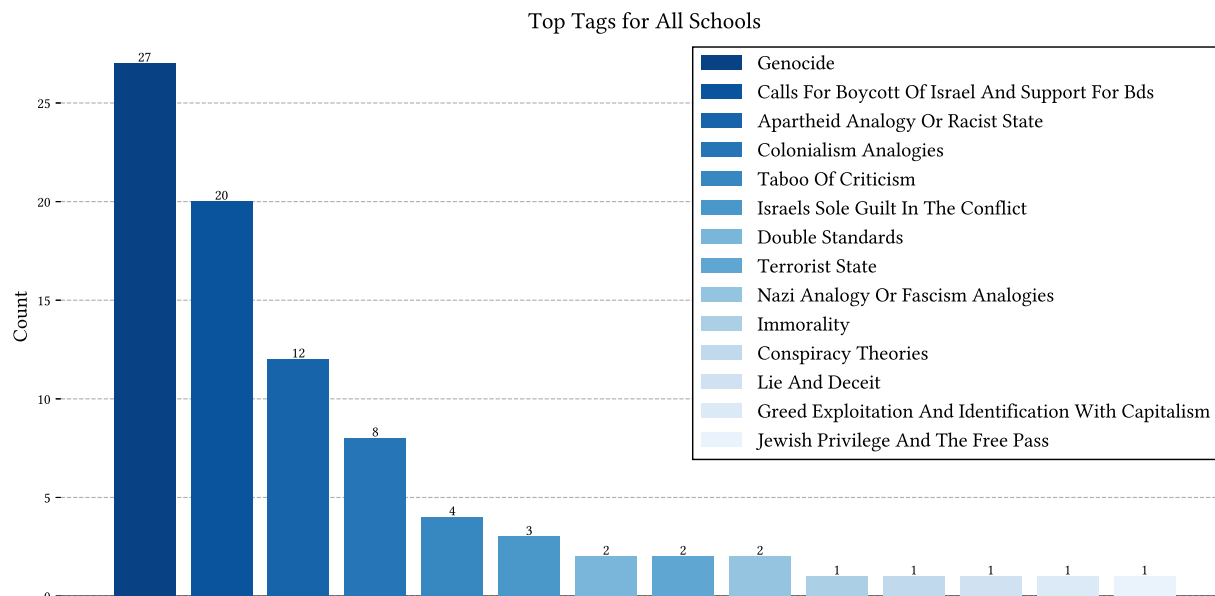


Figure 3: Tags Present in Scripps, Pitzer, and CMC Articles

Some additional tags that appeared include indicating that speech about Palestinians is the one exception to free speech, and the notion that Zionism is colonialist or amoral. Notable campus events include a student die-in, the occupation of Carnegie Hall, the removal of Pitzer’s study-abroad at the University of Haifa, and the suspension of the Motley Coffeehouse. Many campus staff members are attacked in association with pro-Israel beliefs, including Pomona President Starr, Scripps Professor Yuval Avnur, and Scripps Professor Rivka Weinberg. On the other side, Pitzer Professor Dan Segal, a professor whose areas of study exclude the Israel-Palestine conflict, is quoted in *The Outback* as saying that “Palestine will be free, from the river to the sea” is a “beautiful sentence” [7]. According to the Anti-Defamation League, this phrase is an antisemitic slogan, often used as a rallying cry by supporters of Hamas and other anti-Israel organizations [5].

Figure 4 contains the breakdown of incidents by AMCHA category. It is important to note that these categories differ in severity, and conclusions reached on the more extreme incidents alone may be more potent.

Figure 5 displays the number of tagged articles and AMCHA incidents by month for Scripps, Pitzer, and CMC alone. Including incidents for Harvey Mudd and Pomona will be done after *The Student Life* is labeled, providing at least partial media coverage of the schools. Conclusions on the causal or correlative aspects of this data are not drawn due to the small sample size. Figures for top tags and time-series for Pitzer, Scripps, and Claremont McKenna College are all included below. One clear observation is that the number of incidents and tags are both much lower at Claremont McKenna than the other two colleges, despite an equal student body size. However, this is inconclusive until matters such as time, redundancy of reporting on events, and other factors are controlled for and measures of significance can be yielded.

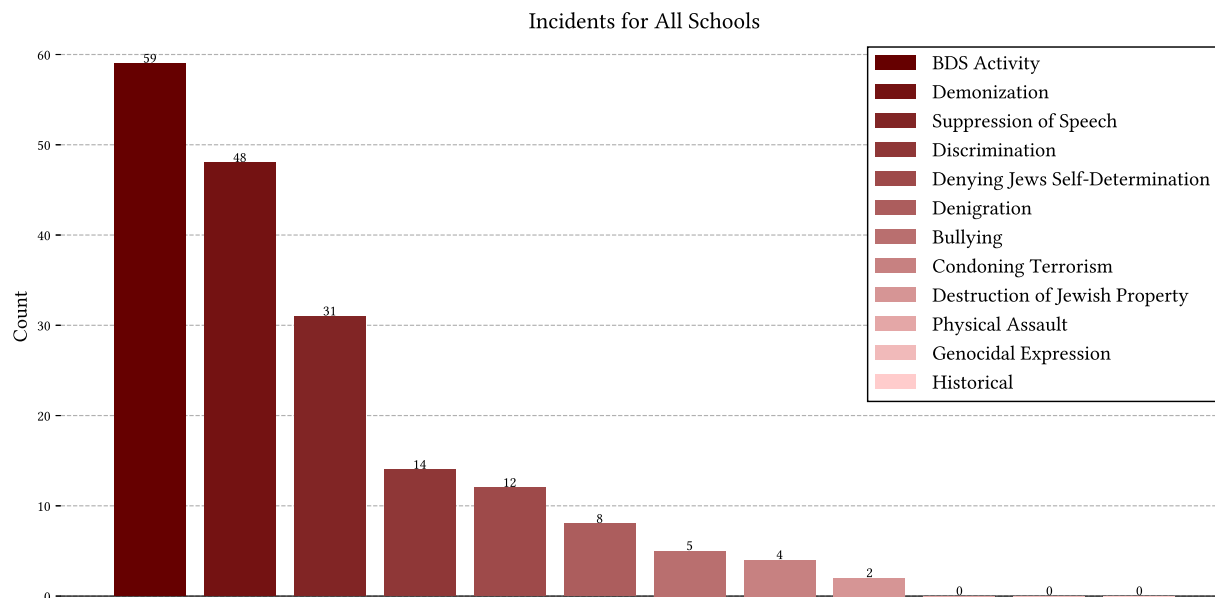


Figure 4: Incidents at Scripps, Pitzer, and CMC

2.1.1 Pitzer College

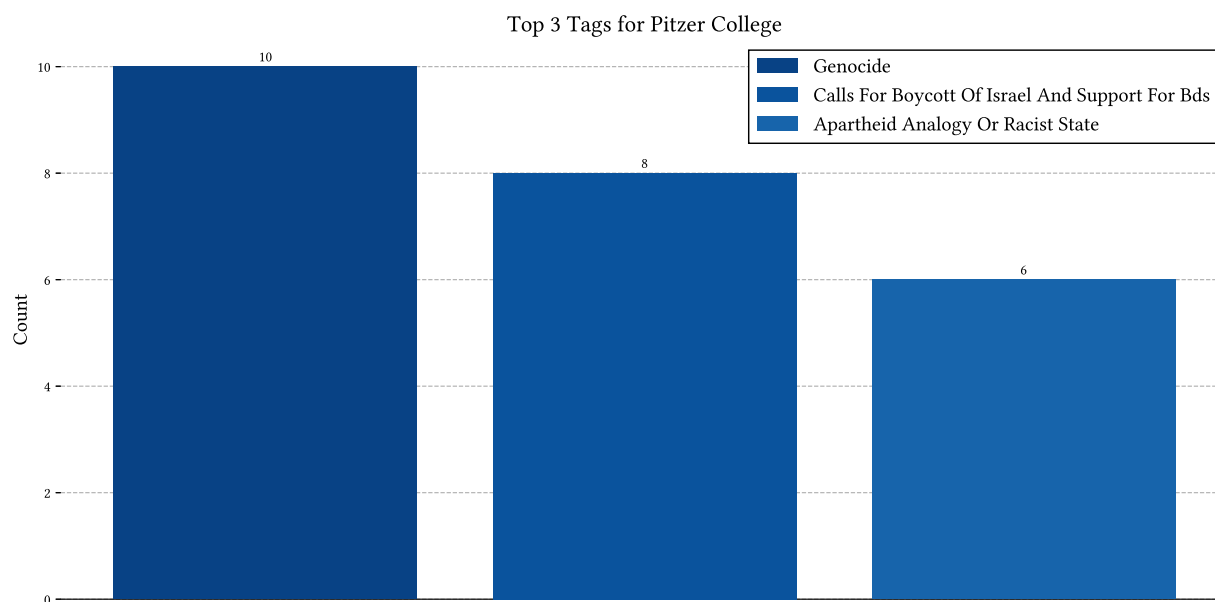


Figure 6: Tags Present in Pitzer Articles

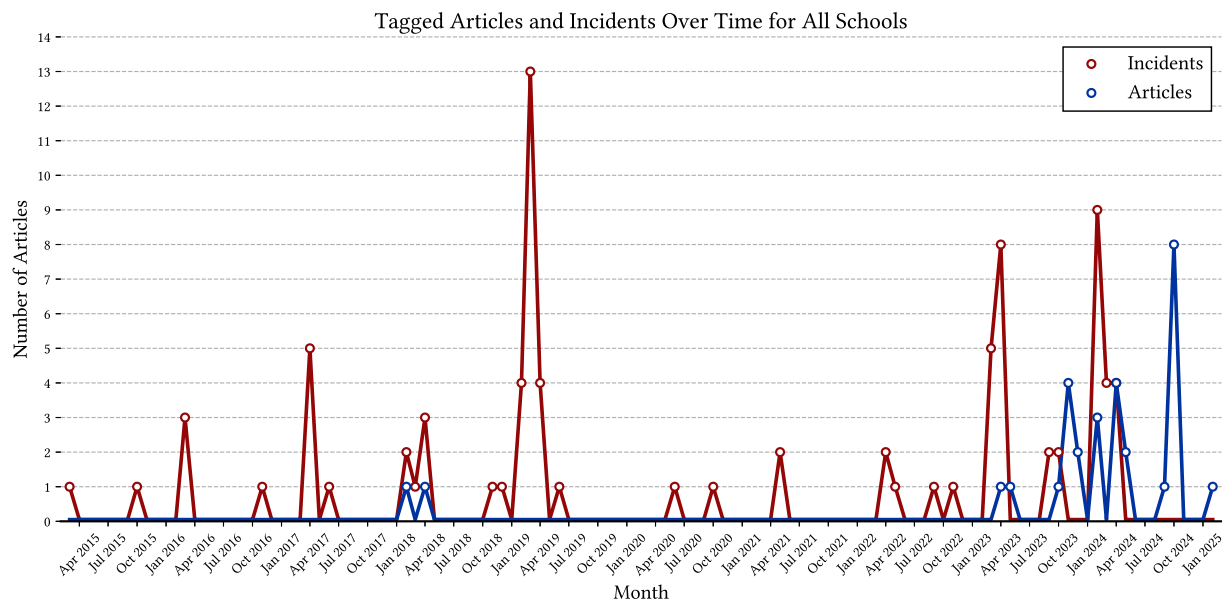


Figure 5: Incidents and Tags for Scripps, Pitzer, and CMC

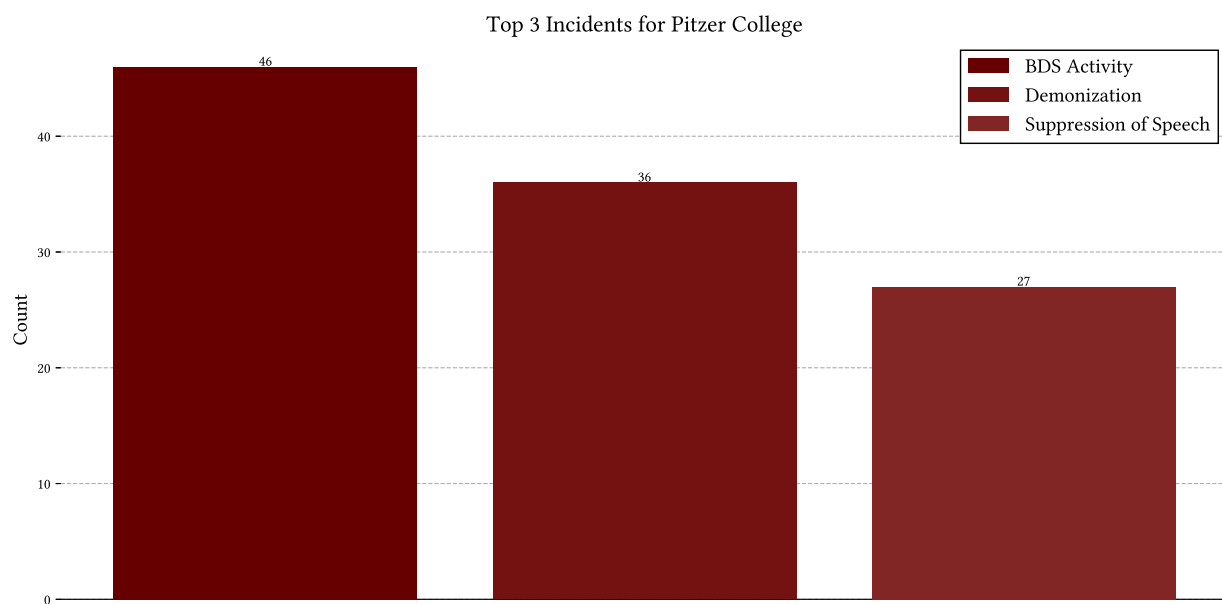


Figure 7: Incidents at Pitzer

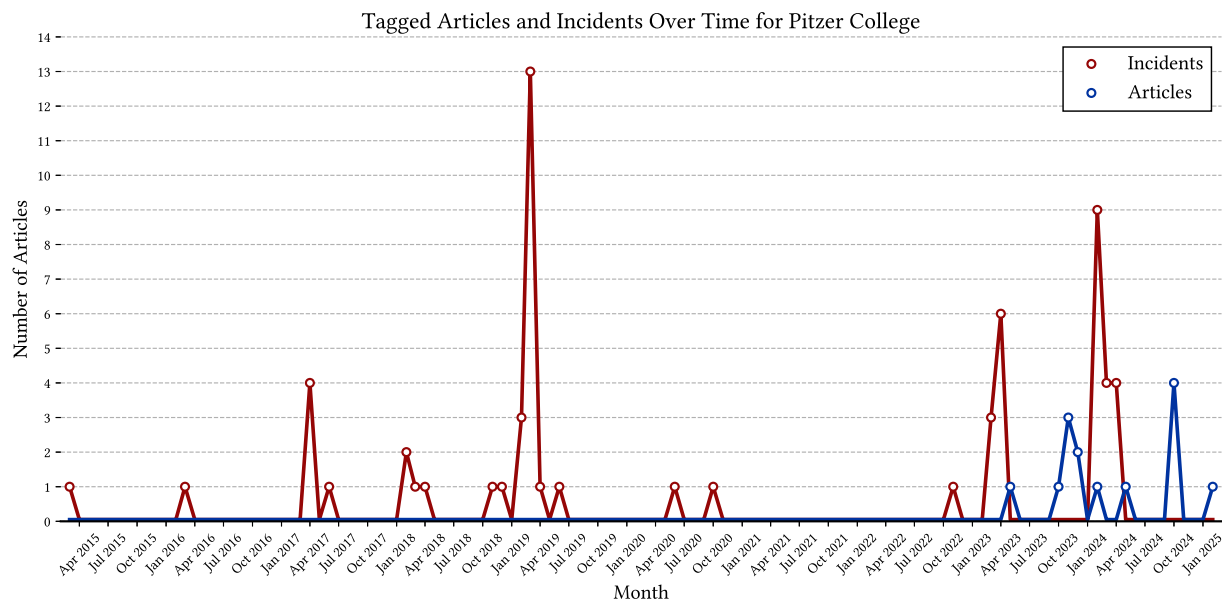


Figure 8: Incidents and Tags for Pitzer

2.1.2 Scripps College

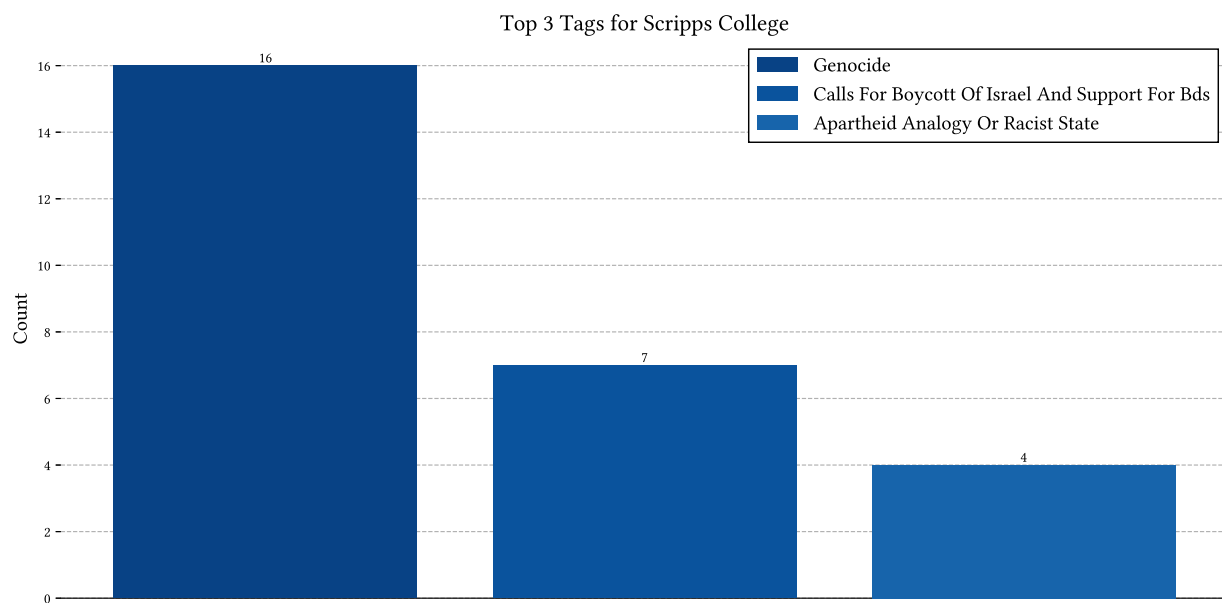


Figure 9: Tags Present in Scripps Articles

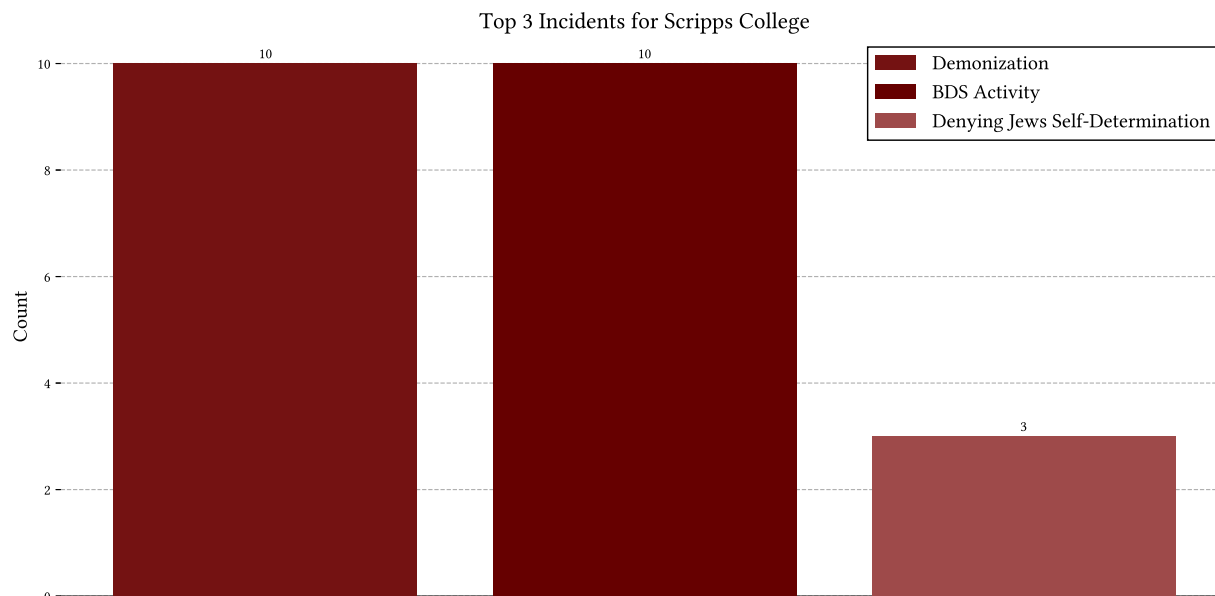


Figure 10: Incidents at Scripps

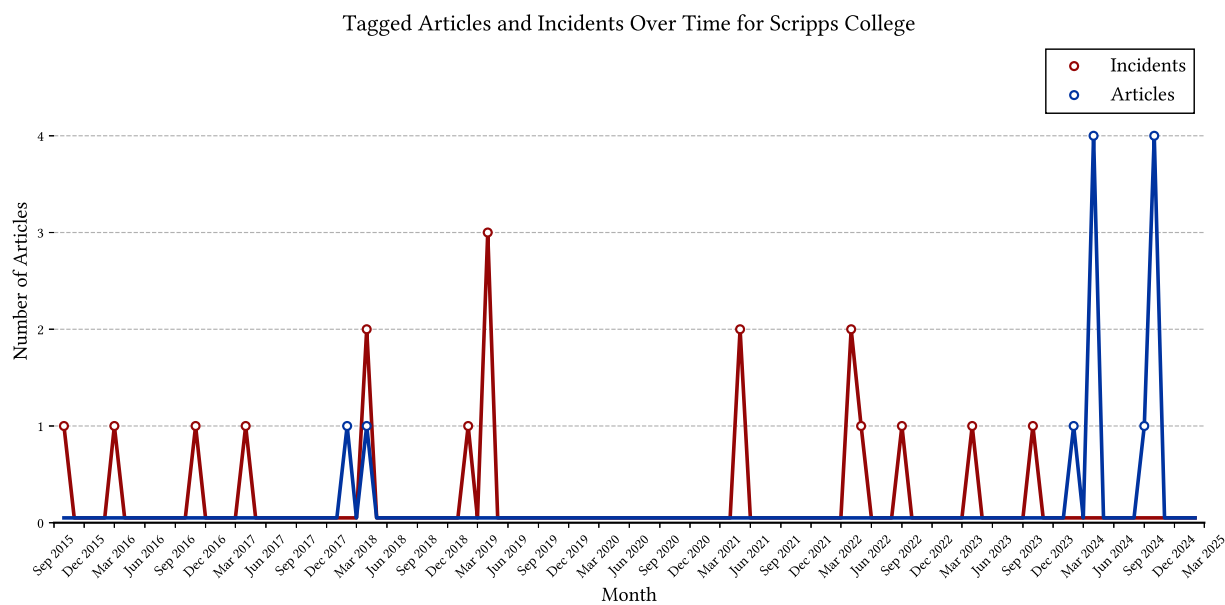


Figure 11: Incidents and Tags for Scripps

2.1.3 Claremont McKenna College

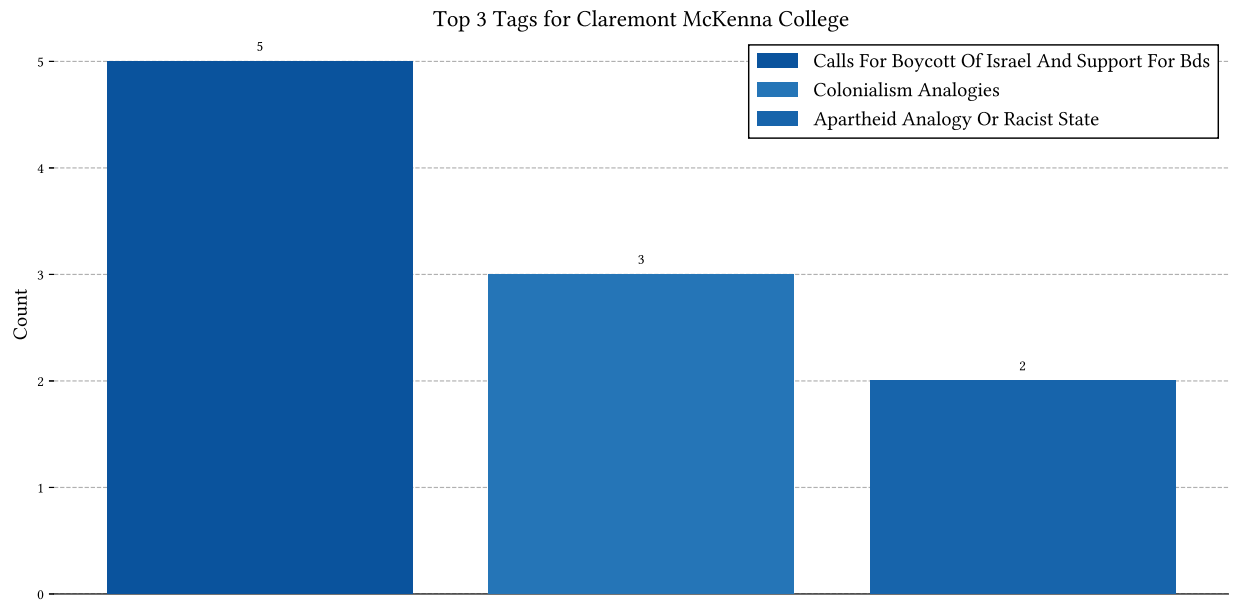


Figure 12: Tags Present in Claremont McKenna Articles

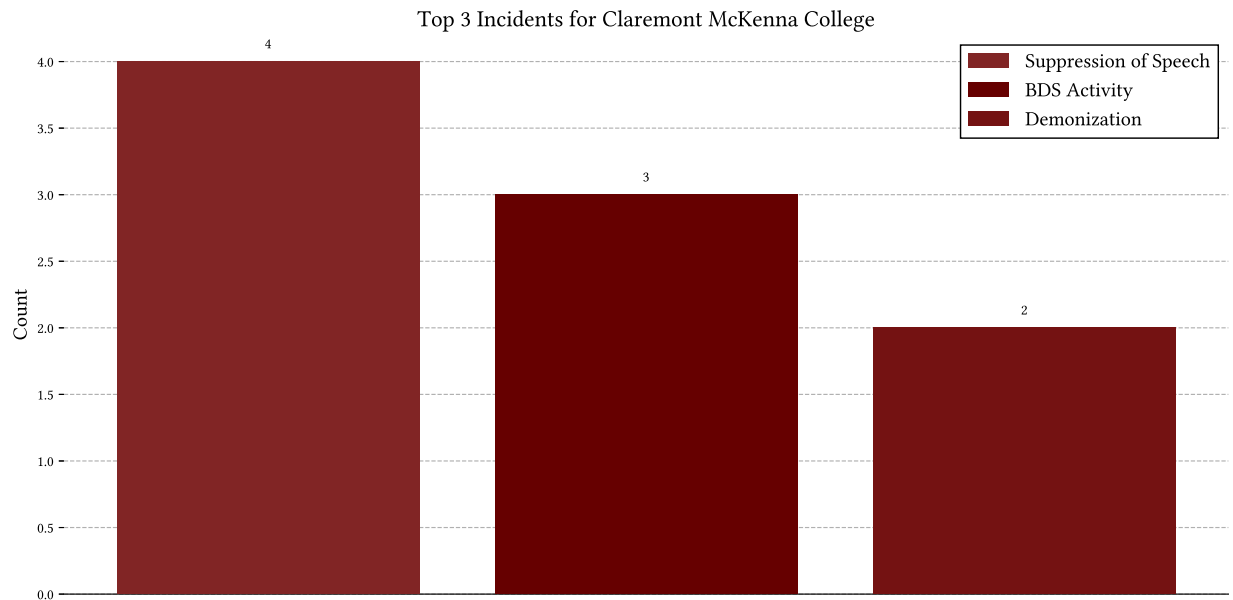


Figure 13: Incidents at Claremont McKenna

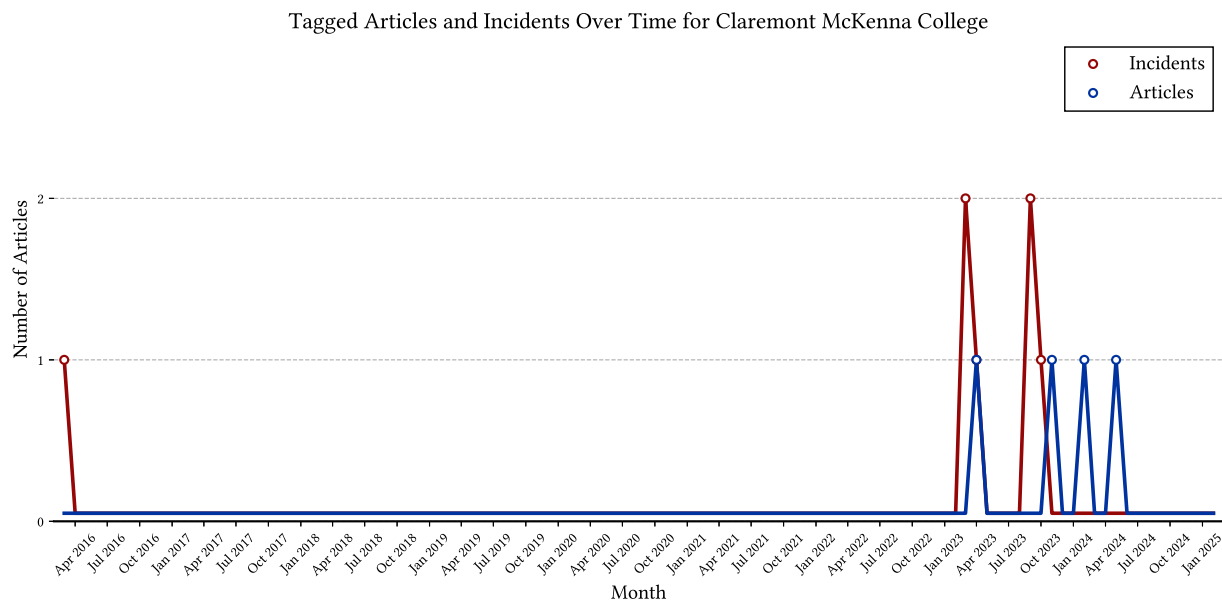


Figure 14: Incidents and Tags for Claremont McKenna

3 Conclusion and Future Work

This report is firstly proof of the working end-to-end capability of this pipeline to filter by school, rapidly label articles, and explore the resulting data.

The pilot report for Pitzer, Scripps, and Pomona provides valuable information on the most important incidents, people, and subjects to those on campus. This data should be used by administrators and Jewish leadership to better understand where the dialogue is breaking down, how their staff is affected, and how their students react to certain policies and efforts.

The most important future work is to continue to annotate data and build informative tools. The annotation of *The Student Life* would enable a more complete picture of the 5Cs to emerge. Annotation of more schools will give better data. This data, once sufficient in size, can be explored for statistical patterns and richer information. A vital test in the immediate future is to see with what statistical confidence incidents increase or decrease after anti-Zionist articles, and if this significantly changes when only including the most escalated incidents or only including certain tropes. In the far future, I am also interested in how correlated the number of anti-Zionist articles is to cases of physical violence or hate crimes reported to the FBI.

Schools with at least 10 FBI incidents of antisemitism are in table 2. This table also includes the number of AMCHA incidents, the specific cases of physical violence, a rough estimate of the queried articles that would need to be labeled, and the total number of articles for the school's paper.

The ultimate goal of this project is to stay current with as many universities as possible. With enough infrastructure and annotation, data can be kept current, allowing for annual reports. These reports may have great use to prospective students, campus administrators, and legal institutions.

School	FBI #	Incident #	Phys. Violence	Query #	Article #
University of Delaware	48	22	0	16	36,797
Indiana University, Bloomington	30	35	1	32	8,358
Brown University	30	153	1	29	2,317
University of Massachusetts, Amherst	29	85	2	228	101,172
University of Maryland, College Park	28	0	0	28	3,300
University of California, Berkeley	21	188	7	2	4,405
University of California, San Diego	19	72	1	96	29,202
University of Washington	16	90	0	160	68,273
Towson University	16	5	1	12	15,044
Purdue University	15	15	0	315	62,200
San Francisco State University	14	153	0	11	18,410
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	14	78	0	47	88,210
University of California, Santa Cruz	11	168	0	46	10,175
Princeton University	10	70	0	61	3,651

Table 2: Future Schools of Interest

By using newspapers as a glimpse into campus climates, I hope I can help provide a safer and more aware future for college-affiliated Jewry nationwide.

3 References

- [1] Matthias J Becker, Hagen Troschke, Matthew Bolton, and Alexis Chapelan. Decoding Antisemitism: A Guide to Identifying Antisemitism Online. Springer Nature, 2024.
- [2] Wikipedia Contributors. List of college and university student newspapers in the united states, Feb 2025.
- [3] AMCHA Initiative. Incidents, Apr 2025.
- [4] Hillel International. Antisemitism on college campuses: Incident tracking, Mar 2025.
- [5] Anti-Defamation League. Slogan: “from the river to the sea palestine will be free”, Apr 2025.
- [6] Federal Bureau of Investigation. Hate crime in the united states incident analysis, 2024.
- [7] theoutbackstaff. Opinion: Pitzer administration ineptly censors pro-palestinian message on free wall, May 2023.