

Experiencing Discrimination at the University

**Perceptions and Experiences of
Discrimination at Bielefeld University**

Wilhelm Berghan, Madlen Preuß and Ulrich Dubbert

We are extremely grateful to all the study participants, whose willingness to participate in this survey and share their experiences of discrimination made this study possible.

This study took place as part of the Bielefeld University campaign *Uni ohne Vorurteile* (University without Prejudice), and is headed by the working group of the same name.

Wilhelm Berghan, B. A.

Madlen Preuß, M. A.

Ulrich Dubbert, M. A.

Bielefeld University

Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG)

Universitätsstrasse 25

33615 Bielefeld Germany

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INTRODUCTION

Universities are widely seen as places of exchange and participation that guarantee free and independent processes of exploration regarding specific phenomena. In their function as both a workplace and educational institution, universities are subject to the *Allgemeinen Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* (General Equal Treatment Law). And it should not be forgotten that despite their fundamental democratic nature, universities represent no more, but also no less, than a specific cross-section of German society as a whole. A ‘good’ or high level of education can, but does not necessarily, serve to counter prejudice, hostility, or discrimination. Recognizing difference through diversity, and eliminating ascribed inequalities that are deeply embedded in structures only works to the extent that members of the university also support and assist in these causes. Formally belonging to an academic institution such as a university does not automatically protect one from discrimination or exclusion – nor does it confer immunity against becoming a victim or even a perpetrator in these processes.

During the course of the work conducted by the *Uni ohne Vorurteile* (University without Prejudice, UoV) campaign, we kept receiving reports that provided a first introduction to experiences of discrimination and unjust treatment at Bielefeld University. However, a systematic and controlled collection (and thus, a representative sample) of such experiences is required to both draw attention to the issues and to initiate processes of change. For this reason, we, the members of the *Uni ohne Vorurteile* working group, designed a questionnaire that should be understood as an initial survey dedicated to addressing two key sets of questions:

- (1) What acts of discrimination have members of the Bielefeld University community previously experienced? Who or what is behind these cases of unequal treatment, and what are the characteristics targeted with particular frequency for members of the university confronted with discrimination? How exactly do these situations of unequal treatment unfold, and to what extent do third parties also notice and acknowledge subjective perceptions of discrimination as such?
- (1) What sense of urgency, if any, exists at Bielefeld University to carry out initiatives against discrimination? What relevance do university members ascribe to such activities, and how much acceptance do general social efforts receive that are carried out by a wide variety of volunteers at this university? Is a university-wide campaign such as *Uni ohne Vorurteile* even wanted, and if yes, what do university members believe such a campaign needs to be successful?

The purpose of the following report is not to make a claim for completeness or ultimate factuality. Instead, it provides only the subjective experiences of and with discrimination that study participants shared, which we, in turn, can and do want to report on. However, the task and the momentum resulting from the findings of this study can be used to very clearly identify and illuminate the problems at Bielefeld University.

1. SURVEY BACKGROUND

At present, Bielefeld University seeks to provide an environment “free of discriminatory structures, behaviors, and prejudices, where all members of the university community in academics, research, and administration are appreciated and accepted” (University Bielefeld, 2016) for its approximately 24,000 students and 2,750 academic and non-academic staff members. Dedicated to achieving this vision is not only the *Arbeitskreis Diversität*¹ (Diversity Working Group), which was specifically established for this task, but also a large number of groups at the university². The working group *Uni ohne Vorurteile*³, which is responsible for the campaign of the same name at the university, is another organization working towards this goal. The *Uni ohne Vorurteile* working group, however, is not responsible to any one specific university group, but rather serves as a trusted service center for all members of the university community.

Our work began in Summer Semester 2013, first with members from the University *Rektorat* (Rector’s Office), the *Allgemeinen Studierendenausschuss* (General Students’ Committee) and the *Institut für interdisziplinäre Konflikt- und Gewaltforschung* (Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence). During the course of our work, we were joined by the *Mobile Beratung gegen Rechtsextremismus Detmold* (Mobile Counseling Against Right-Wing Extremism Detmold), representatives from university administration and facilities staff and the team *Lehren und Lernen* (Teach and Learn), as well as a law professor, whose participation ensured that every status group at the university could be represented. In addition to promoting Bielefeld University as a place of equality and acceptance, our primary goal is to raise awareness and understanding of discrimination at all levels of the university and to foster the courage in university members to stand up against discrimination. In particular, at the center of our work stands the question of how to counter anti-democratic or discriminatory phenomena that are (re)produced in everyday life at the university. From the outset, not only has the *Uni ohne Vorurteile* public lecture series helped to achieve these objectives, but the various workshops that have been offered to both instructors and students, as well as the publicity work distributing postcards and buttons have also contributed to these goals. Cooperations have also been forged with other initiatives and working groups located at Bielefeld University and beyond. Surveying members of the university community on their experiences of discrimination

¹ <http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/diversity/diversity.html>

² <http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/Universitaet/Studium/Studentische%20Hochschulgruppen/>

³ <http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/ohne-vorurteile/>

and their opinions of the campaign was also part of our work since the beginning. At various events, short questionnaires relating to the topic of discussion were passed out to those in attendance. The responses and descriptions of situations provided by the respondents of these questionnaires indicated a very clear need for a systematic and controlled study of the university environment to be undertaken. With the support of the *Rektorat*, this first university-wide study should launch the beginning of regular surveys to observe and measure the extent of discrimination, as well as document any processes of change perceived by members of the university community.

In the tertiary educational settings, the phenomenon of discrimination and its relevance is often played down because of its context or underestimated. This also applies to Bielefeld University, as indicated in comments such as the following:

"In my opinion, discrimination at the university is not a relevant topic in comparison to other areas."

It is often the case that those who feel affected by discrimination do not necessarily receive understanding and acknowledgment of their experiences. On the contrary, they are assumed to be pretending to have experienced the perceived attack made towards them personally or their group in order to dramatize or even try to benefit from it.

"I don't think that such a big deal should always be made of discrimination. People often feel discriminated against, but in reality, they are just lazy and expect special treatment."

Furthermore, such attitudes can also be reflected in evaluations of the respective work conducted in the framework of various initiatives, whose very relevance and usefulness are denied. Examples of this attitude relating to the campaign *Uni ohne Vorurteile* include comments such as the following:

„Just get rid of it [the campaign] and understand that all these problems do not exist“

Although the negative association between education and hostility towards different social groups has been strongly demonstrated in the context of multiple surveys of the general population, this should not necessarily be understood as a causal relationship. Neither do formal level of education nor academic setting ensure a lesser degree of discrimination or resentment towards specific groups. Instead, learning certain educational content and going through processes of socialization and contexts constitute the relationship between education and democratic attitudes and behaviors (Hopf 1999; Coenders and Scheepers 2003; Heyder 2003, among others). Studies such as that by Kassis und Schallié strikingly prove that hostility to-

wards social groups is also widespread in tertiary education (2013; 2014). Accordingly, being a member of a university does not certify that one is free of (un)conscious prejudices that often lead to discriminatory behaviors. This is ultimately also why social inequalities are not only to be found at the inter-individual or inter-group levels, but can also be deeply embedded in the (hierarchical) structures, norms, and contexts of an institution such as a university.

But what does discrimination (at a university) look like? To begin answering this question, the *Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes* (Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency) provides a fitting, if short, initial definition: “A person is treated worse than other people” (2013: 31). Following the *Allgemeinen Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* (General Equal Treatment Law), to which public institutions such as universities are legally bound, such unequal treatment is discriminatory if it happens because of certain characteristics or occurs without objective justification (Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz [Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection], 2013). In addition to this purely legal definition, additional, differentiated definitions have been put forth in general academic research that are particularly influenced by the social and educational sciences. A representative example of this is the conception described by Blank, Dabady, and Citro (2004), who identify four different types of discrimination. Discrimination can be (1) both open and intentional, but also (2) unintentionally and subtly expressed. In addition to this, discrimination can be further understood as (3) statistical, or (4) structural discrimination, in which it is apparently neutrally embedded in (institutional) processes and therefore appears infrequently in individual actions (see a. a. O.: 55 ff.). While both of the first two types of discrimination are found more at the individual or group level, static and structural forms of discrimination can be ingrained in the actions and practices of an institution due to persistent structures of inequality. As a result of this, equal opportunities and distribution of resources can no longer be guaranteed (see also ADS, 2013: 36 ff.). It would thus be short sighted to see discrimination merely as individual behavior directed towards others. Much to the contrary, these different types of discrimination must be seen as being located at distinct (and yes, interconnected) levels in order to fully understand discrimination in its entirety.

When attempting to survey and analyze experiences of discrimination at the university, the subjective aspect of discrimination seems to be of particular importance. This is not only because the objective aspect (i.e. actual quantifiable acts of discrimination) would be comparatively difficult to measure in a solely survey-based study. Individuals do differ considerably in whether they experience something as discrimination or not, which makes it necessary to ask

members of the university community about their specific perceptions, experiences, and observations of discrimination⁴. In order to prevent bias – the so-called “priming effect”⁵ – a specific definition of discrimination was not given in the questionnaire. A workaround was created by including five selected descriptions of situations that were to be classified based on their degree of discrimination (see Appendix, Table 1.1.)⁶. This allowed, on the one hand, the many different sides of the phenomenon to be introduced, while also measuring the respondents’ personal understanding of discrimination. In addition, respondents also had the opportunity to include their own descriptions and definitions of discrimination in an open-answer, free-text field.

Given the relevance and responsibility of universities as institutions both in and for society, it is surprising that there does not seem to have been, to this point, systematic monitoring of (experiences of) discrimination at German universities that takes all status groups into equal account. However, numerous research reports can be found that are devoted to the topic as it relates to students, such as Klein and Rebitzer (2012), who conducted an extensive online survey of students’ experiences of discrimination at the Christian Albrechts University of Kiel. They report that 90 percent of the respondents indicated that discrimination occurs at their university infrequently to almost never. That said, approximately 15 percent did report that they had experienced discrimination at least once (see a. a. O.: 125 ff.). Klein and Rebitzer provide relevant findings on experiences of discrimination in the form of specific categories (of affiliation), but at the same time, their limited sample selection reduces the significance of these findings for unequal treatment at universities on the full scale. As part of the project *Diskriminierungsfreie Hochschule - Mit Vielfalt Wissen schaffen* (Discrimination-Free University – Creating Knowledge through Diversity), recommendations were developed for dealing with such experiences at universities, in addition to systematizing factors and risks contributing to discrimination. After attending discussions with experts and workshops with partner universities, the authors arrived at the conclusion that in addition to neglecting non-academic staff, equal attention is not paid to the different categories of the *Allgemeinen Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* (General Equal Treatment Law) (see Czock et al., 2012: 100 ff.; 125 ff.)

⁴ For more in-depth discussion of the question of measuring objective and subjective discrimination, see Salentin (2007). With regard to the recently published study “Diskriminierungserfahrungen in Deutschland” by the ADS, Albert Scherr provides illuminating commentary on classifying experienced and actual discrimination (in Tagesschau.de, 2016).

⁵ Priming is defined as the influence on thought in which (un)conscious, set stimuli cause certain reactions.

⁶ This provides a general selection of examples given of discrimination at the university (Figure 1.1).

The present study should begin to address this point. Even though this study is also a first survey for Bielefeld University, the systematization of experiences of discrimination allows for a differentiated picture to emerge than the one that was previously available, and shows whether, and in which ways, discrimination is experienced at the university.

2. METHOD: DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE

The goal of this study was to obtain as large and representative a sample of members of the Bielefeld University community as possible – regardless of the specific group. Using the university-wide mailing list, both students and employees were informed via email of the survey and requested to participate. In total, 29,000 people were contacted, keeping in mind that the actual number of people reached may be lower due to email being sent to recipients who, for example, were no longer part of the university, had name changes, or were simply absent.

Data collection was conducted using an online survey and took place from 9 December 2015 – 29 February 2016. A total of two invitation emails were sent, the first of which announced the opening of the survey (9 December 2016), and the second of which served as a reminder to participate (19 January 2016). Both emails contained the link to the Unipark platform⁷, which was used to conduct the online survey.

The standardized and anonymized questionnaire was primarily designed for individuals 16 years and older. In addition to the main sets of questions in which a respondent's personal experiences or observations of discrimination were recorded, the survey contained additional individual statements that were dedicated to a general evaluation of the atmosphere and sense of wellbeing at Bielefeld University, as well as an assessment of the *Uni ohne Vorurteile* (University without Prejudice) campaign. Both topic fields had a variety of open-ended, free-text response fields. This was designed to provide study participants with enough space to give their subjective as well as their diverse responses on experiencing discrimination, but also to meet the goal of conducting a preliminary and thorough study.

The total gross sample size, which included all participants who clicked on the Unipark-Link and opened the survey, was 2,695 people. The first content-related question was answered by a total of 2,354 members of the university community. Based on this number, a total of 59.2 percent of respondents completed the survey, which corresponds to a total of 1,393 people. Thus, 961 people left the survey without completing it. It is also important to note that answering questions was not compulsory, and accordingly, the number of respondents in the results provided in the following sections can vary, and must be taken into account during interpretation.

61.1 percent of respondents were female and 37 percent male, while 1.9 percent classified themselves as belonging to neither category (see Table 1). The spectrum of ages ranged from

⁷ <http://www.unipark.com/de/>

18 to 83 years old, and the average age was 30.7 years old. Approximately 22.1 percent of respondents from the university community reported having a migration background. The distribution of all status groups represented at Bielefeld University is assured, though some distortions can be observed. The vast majority of the respondents in the sample set were students, with a total of 1,081 individuals. Stronger participation was also seen among doctoral researchers as well as non-academic staff, whereas quite weak participation was observed among university teaching staff.

Tab. 1.2 Sociodemographic Characteristics of Study Participants

		Number	Percent
Gender	Female	921	61.1
	Male	558	37.0
	Other	29	1.9
Age group	24 and younger	419	34.7
	25 - 29	348	28.8
	30 - 39	250	20.7
	40 - 49	68	5.6
	50 - 59	79	6.6
	60 - 69	28	2.3
Migration background ⁸	no	1,021	77.9
	yes	290	22.1
Status group	Students	1,093	69.5
	Doctoral researchers	124	7.9
	University teaching staff	56	3.6
	Academic staff	106	6.7
	Staff in facilities and administration	193	12.3

⁸ The statistical category “migration background” was redefined for this analysis. A respondent with a migration background is defined as an individual who does not have German citizenship, was not born in Germany, or whose parents do not have German citizenship or were not born in Germany.

3. EDUCATION PROTECTS (?): EXPERIENCED DISCRIMINATION AT BIELEFELD UNIVERSITY

The following chapter is dedicated to the oft-cited and occasionally empirically proven general rule that education protects from discrimination. To accomplish this, the chapter first focuses on the general impression of the social atmosphere and existence of discrimination at Bielefeld University. The foundation for a good social atmosphere can be created with the help of institutionalized policies and rules for interaction. This also requires, however, the input and acceptance of those towards whom these measures are directed. Another thing that must be taken into account here is that some members of a university community come into contact more than others due to their different status groups and concerns, as well as the different places where they go on campus. Thus, purely subjective assessments and perceptions can already provide information about on-campus relations, and likewise, the general sense of well-being of members of a university. This ultimately also leads to the question of to what extent educational institutions (can) protect from discrimination. Here, the perceived incidence of discrimination at Bielefeld University must be compared to that of general German society; following the assumption that education protects against discrimination, the perceived prevalence of discrimination at the university should thus be far lower.

Experiences of discrimination among members of the university community are highlighted in greater detail in the following chapter. Their reported experiences, which draw upon both personal experiences as well as observations of discrimination, provide very detailed information. In addition to the characteristics that are used as grounds for unequal treatment or unfair bias, the causes and forces responsible for discrimination are also given. Another question to be answered is whether – and to what extent – such situations are not only observed by third parties, but courageously spoken out against.

3.1. The Atmosphere at the University: An Assessment by University Members

The problematization of experiencing discrimination in a certain space is inextricably linked to the question of social atmosphere. The latter can already provide a first impression of the perceptions of anti(democratic) tendencies, given its particular manifestation. The question arises here as to how relationships between different levels in the hierarchy and/or status groups are evaluated.

The first point to note is that a vast majority of respondents (75.8 percent) were in agreement with the statement “Overall, there is a good social atmosphere at the university” (see Figure

3.1). Approximately one in five respondents were even in complete agreement, and only 6.7 percent of all respondents disagreed or completely disagreed that there is a good social atmosphere at Bielefeld University. 17.3 percent chose the middle category, meaning that they did not have a clear opinion either way.

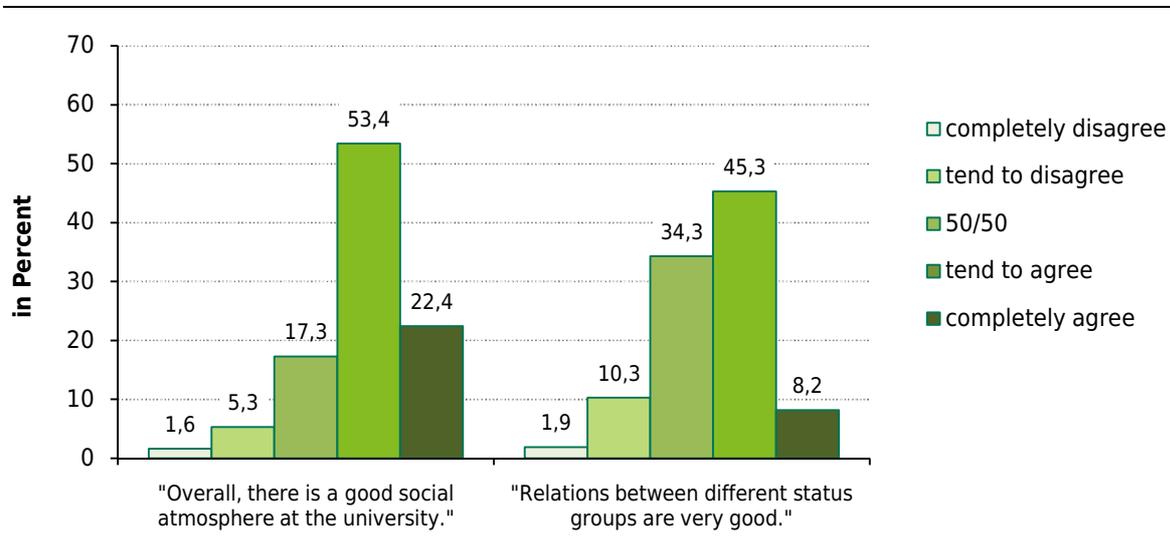


Figure 3.1: Perception of Social Atmosphere.
 Social atmosphere, number of respondents: 1,825
 Status groups, number of respondents: 1,820
 For the purposes of illustration and readability, the percent in agreement is adapted on the Y-axis.

Agreement with the second statement – that relations are very good between individual status groups – proved to be comparatively more modest. Of the 53.5 percent who agreed that relations are very good, a smaller proportion of respondents (8.2 percent) were in complete agreement with the statement. On the other hand, over one-third of the respondents (34.3 percent) answered “50/50” (meaning “partially agree, partially disagree”), which can be explained with the previous information provided in this report on the general quality and quantity of contact. One in eight student respondents (12.2 percent) disagreed or completely disagreed with the statement.

Despite the gap in agreement between both statements, the first impression conveyed here is that the social atmosphere at Bielefeld University is good to very good, which is clearly confirmed with reference to the general perception of discrimination⁹ (see Figure 3.2). Over half of the university respondents surveyed (55.7 percent) were of the opinion that discrimination at Bielefeld University occurs infrequently. For approximately 17 percent of respondents, however, discrimination is not an uncommon phenomenon in everyday life at the university, while

⁹ It should be noted that the general perception of discrimination must be distinguished from actual personal experiences and observations of discrimination. For more on this, see Chapter 3.2.

a bit more than a quarter (27.3 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

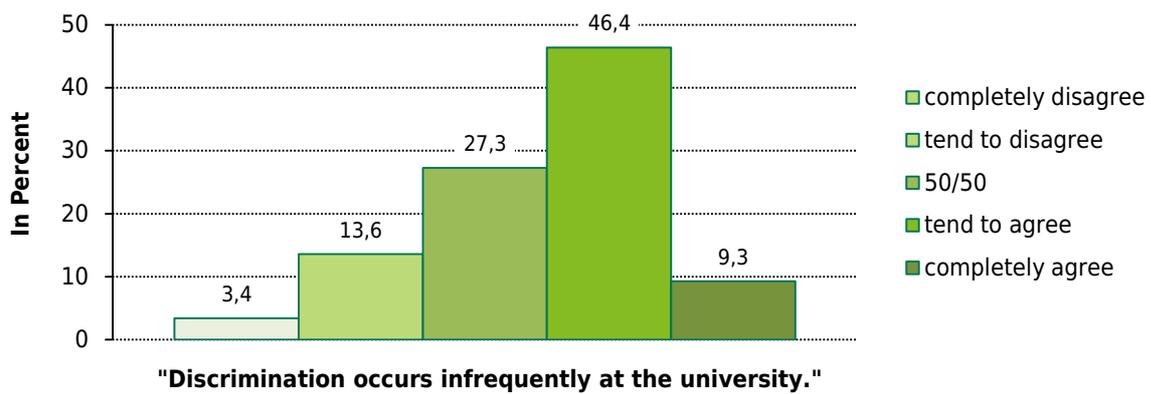


Figure 3.2: General Perception of Discrimination at Bielefeld University. (N = 1,723)
 For the purposes of illustration and readability, the percent in agreement is adapted on the Y-axis.

In addition, students were also requested to rate their opinion of the prevalence of discrimination at Bielefeld University and in Germany on the whole in terms of different characteristics that are used to discriminate against individuals. This comparison clearly and unequivocally shows that, at least according to the perception, educational institutions can largely protect against discrimination (see Figure 3.3). For all characteristics listed, respondents rated the prevalence of discrimination at the university as lower than in Germany as a whole.

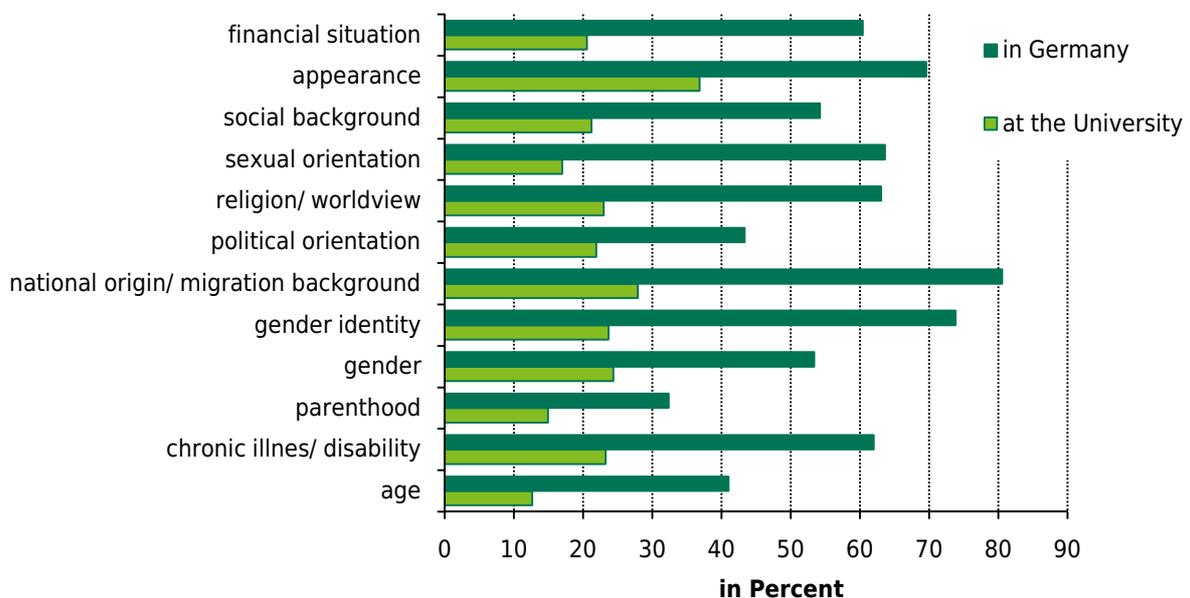


Figure 3.3: Comparison of Prevalence of Discrimination at Bielefeld University and in Germany. The number of respondents was between 1,444 und 1,470. The figures displayed here are the sums of the responses in agreement with “prevalent” and “very prevalent.” For the purposes of illustration and readability, the percent in agreement is adapted on the X-axis.

Depending on the category or characteristic targeted by discrimination or unequal treatment, perceived discrimination from respondents ranges from 12.7 percent (age) to 36.8 percent (appearance), indicating that discrimination at Bielefeld University is at least “rather prevalent.” For Germany on the whole, in contrast, a darker image emerges: while almost one in three respondents (32.4 percent) were of the opinion that discrimination due to parenthood is prevalent in Germany, 80.6 percent indicated that they believed discrimination due to national origin and/or migration background to be extremely widespread.

It should be stated here that the members of the university community surveyed gave Bielefeld University good grades overall: assessments of both the social atmosphere as well as the general relative lack of discrimination attested here provide additional support to the thesis of the protective nature of educational environments. In comparison to Germany as a whole, there can be little doubt that the university is perceived as a kind of space of protection and safety.

3.2 Reports of Experiencing Discrimination at the University

The question of to what extent the university lives up to its goal (but also if it corresponds with the impression of its members) of being a space of protection and safety from unequal treatment and discrimination will be answered in the following chapter. Actual experiences and personal observations from respondents take on an important role here in providing detailed depictions that give indispensable insight into experiences of discrimination at a university, which oftentimes remain inaccessible or hidden.

To answer this question, participating members of the university community were first asked whether they had already experienced or observed discrimination at the university, and if yes, they were then asked to rate how frequently this occurred using a four-point scale ranging from “never” to “regularly” (see Figure 3.4).

A total of 45.5 percent of respondents shared that they had already had a personal experience with discrimination or unequal treatment; 23.9 percent had been confronted with the situation several times, and 3.3 percent even reported being regularly subjected to discrimination. On the other side of the spectrum, 54.5 percent of study participants reported never previously having felt discriminated against.

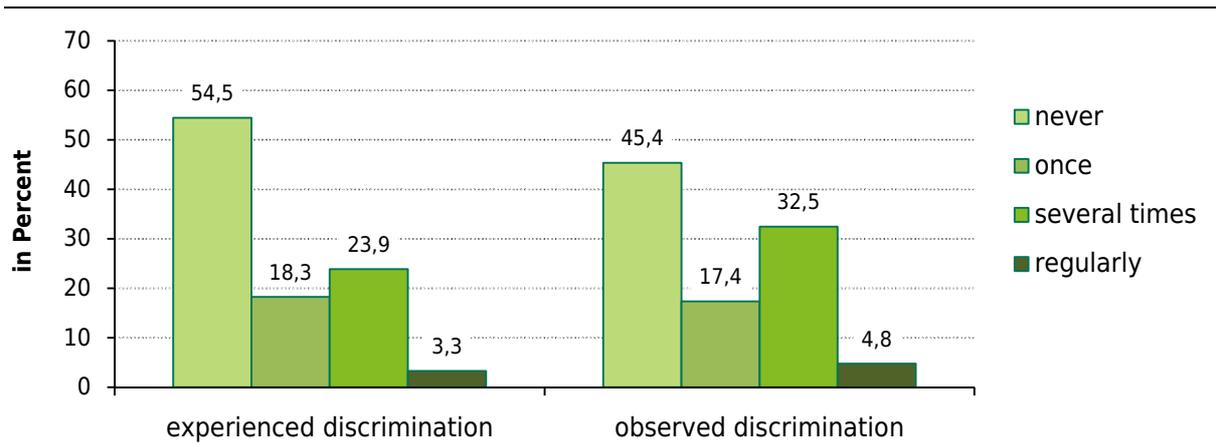


Figure 3.4: Experiences and Observations of Discrimination at Bielefeld University.

Experienced discrimination, Number of respondents: 1,504.

Observed discrimination, Number of respondents: 1,426.

For the purposes of illustration and better readability, the percent in agreement is adapted on the Y-axis.

With regard to these observations of unequal treatment, the relationship of frequency is reversed: more than half of the respondents (54.7 percent) indicated here that they had witnessed an act of discrimination by a third party at least once. Almost a third (32.5 percent) had observed several situations in which other people were discriminated against as part of everyday life at the university, while 4.8 percent of university members who participated in the survey reported regularly observing discrimination.

Interestingly enough, socio-demographic categories such as gender or migration background, which are often quite influential factors, do not play a role here (see Appendix: Table 3.1). For both discrimination experienced personally, as well as discrimination observed, there was no difference reported between female and male members of the university community. Nevertheless, respondents that do not feel they belong to either gender (marked in the table as “other”) reported experiencing discrimination considerably more frequently; this finding, however, should be interpreted with caution due to the very small number of survey respondents in this gender category. Even though members of the university community with a migration background do not see themselves as being more frequently confronted with direct discrimination, they did more frequently observe discrimination as a third party. This difference with respect to respondents without a migration background is only limited to this sample set, and is thus not of significance. On the other hand, the age of university members in terms of their experience with discrimination is quite revealing. The youngest age group, aged 18–24 years, in particular reports far less personal experience with discrimination than older respondents. It may thus be cautiously assumed that personal experiences of discrimination rise significantly with increasing age (as long as age groups above 60 years of old are not

considered, given the small number of respondents). The case is similar with observed discrimination. Here, too, younger members of the university community aged 18–24 reported significantly less discrimination compared to older respondents.

With regard to the status groups represented, and the respective experiences of discrimination reported, it is clear, for one, that doctoral researchers and the administrative and facilities staff are the groups that see themselves most frequently encountering discrimination. These differences are significant when compared with students, who reported experiencing discrimination the least. When it comes to observing situations of discrimination, the academic staff group turned out to be particularly attentive: they were most frequently witness to unequal treatment as third parties, while students, on the other hand, observed considerably less discrimination of others.

At this point, it is safe to say that a rather contrary image of cases of discrimination at Bielefeld University emerges. While one half of the respondents report previously never having had experiences of this sort, discrimination definitely seems to be part of everyday life at the university for the other half. For a considerable proportion of respondents, discrimination is not a singular case: one quarter of all surveyed university members were confronted with discrimination several times or even regularly, and more than a third reported regularly observing such situations. Thanks in part to the very strong sample size of relevant cases, it must also be said that there is a rather unequal incidence of (in)directly experienced discrimination for different status groups at Bielefeld University. This may have to do with the relationship of dependence that comes with employment. This can be seen quite clearly in the comparison between students and administration and facilities staff, but also with doctoral researchers, who report discrimination much more frequently.

The argument put forth in this report that discrimination is part of the reality of everyday life at the university makes it necessary now to examine the individual data segments more closely, paying particular attention to (ascribed) characteristics, but also questioning the sources of discrimination. Who or what is behind these personal experiences or observations of discrimination? Ultimately, in view of Bielefeld University's claim of creating an environment free of discrimination, it is important to understand how hidden or open discrimination occurs. To accomplish this, the different contexts in which discrimination takes place must also be examined and evaluated. Accordingly, the survey posed questions not only about the presence of third parties, but also their understanding and willingness to intervene in acts of discrimination.

Characteristics Targeted by Discrimination

All participating university members who reported having experienced or observed discrimination at least once were asked the following question: “Which group affiliations and/or characteristics was this discrimination based on?” A list of different categories was provided, and up to three characteristics could be chosen, which could be supplemented as desired with an open-ended, free-text response field. In addition, participants were instructed to base their answers only on the most recent discriminatory situation they had experienced at Bielefeld University.

Experiences of direct discrimination will be considered first. Here, the category of gender is by far the most frequent reference point for why university members feel discriminated against, with over a third of respondents in agreement (33.7 percent; see Figure 3.5). This is followed by age (13.9 percent), social background (15 percent), and/or financial situation (14.8 percent). But appearance (14.2 percent), as well as national origin or migration background (12 percent) and political orientation were additional characteristics named by respondents as targets of discrimination.

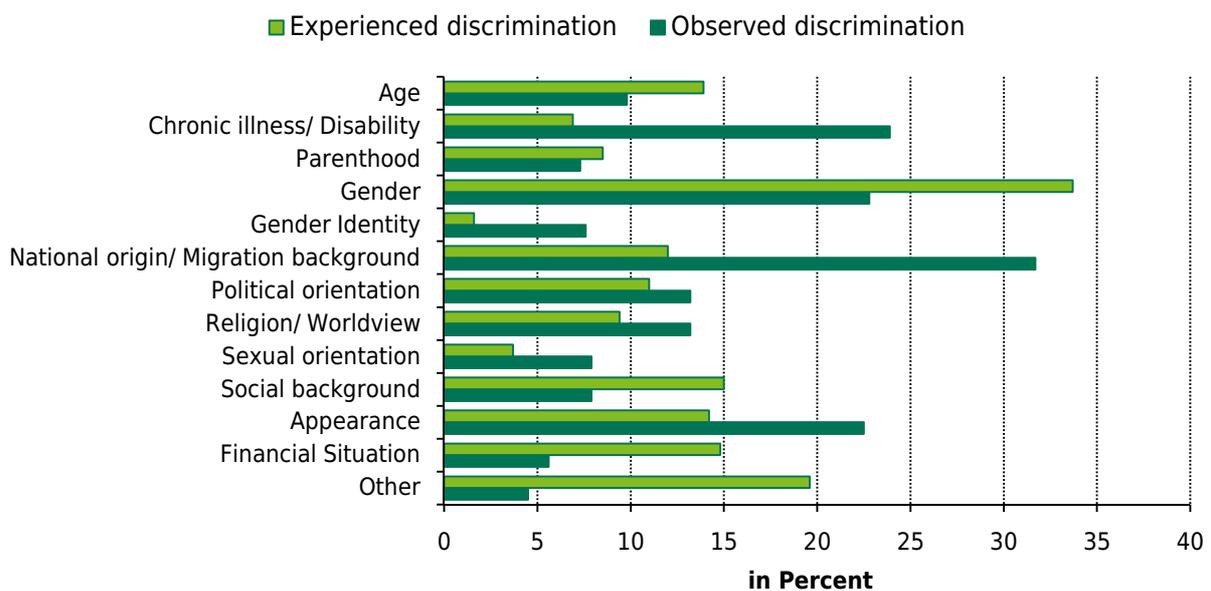


Figure 3.5: Characteristics Targeted by Discrimination, in Comparison: Experienced and Observed Discrimination.

Experienced discrimination, number of respondents: 756.

Observed discrimination, number of respondents: 356.

For the purposes of illustration and readability, the percent in agreement is adapted on the X-axis.

Unequal treatment is experienced considerably less frequently due to gender identity (1.6 percent) or sexual orientation (3.7 percent). In contrast, chronic illness and/or physical disability are comparatively more common traits targeted by discrimination. Approximately one in eleven university members that took part in the survey indicated that they had been treated

unfairly due to parenthood (8.5 percent), or their religious affiliation / worldview (9.4 percent). A considerably different distribution of character traits targeted by discrimination is seen in cases of observed discrimination. With 31.7 percent, national origin and migration background are cited first and foremost by respondents as the reason why others are discriminated against. Chronic illness or disability (23.9 percent) is also more frequently cited as the reason for discrimination in observed than personally experienced cases. More than a quarter of university members surveyed also reported having previously been witness to discrimination based on appearance (22.5 percent) or gender (22.8 percent). Much less common were cases of discrimination based on financial situation (5.6 percent), but also social background or sexual orientation (each 7.9 percent), as well as gender identity (7.6 percent). The same applies to parenthood (7.8 percent) and age (9.8 percent), which are less frequently identified as the factors behind cases of observed discrimination. Experienced and observed discrimination also diverge when it comes to political orientation or religion / worldview: these characteristics are more frequently cited in observed cases of discrimination (each 13.2 percent) than in personal experiences of discrimination.

A highly differentiated image of the various characteristics upon which discrimination is based emerges from this data. In part, the perceptions of those who had directly experienced discrimination themselves and those who had (only) observed it are quite different from each other. These distinct experiences, with differing degrees of visibility and perception of discrimination, clearly demonstrate how just diverse everyday life can be for members of the university community.

Sources of Discrimination

Depending on the particulars of the situation, not only can the characteristics targeted by discrimination vary, but so too can the possible sources from which the unequal treatment first arose. In this context, questions were asked about both the person's respective status group as well as context in which the experienced or observed discrimination occurred.

As before, questions pertaining to the incident of discrimination and its context were asked to all respondents who had indicated that they had experienced discrimination personally and/or observed discrimination happening to others at least once. Here, the instructions were repeated again that respondents should base their answers only on the most recent situation of discrimination. For both questions, respondents also had the opportunity to choose applicable answers from a list provided, and to add supplementary information as needed.

Almost a third (31.8 percent) of respondents who had previously had a direct experience of discrimination said that this unequal treatment came from a lecturer (see Figure 3.6). Discrimination coming from fellow classmates or students was similarly high, with 28.6 percent. Far less common was discrimination caused by other agents or reasons: while unequal treatment and discrimination by administrative staff was 16.5 percent, only about one in every ten members of the university surveyed reported feeling discriminated against by a colleague (11.1 percent) or due to material circumstances (9.7 percent).

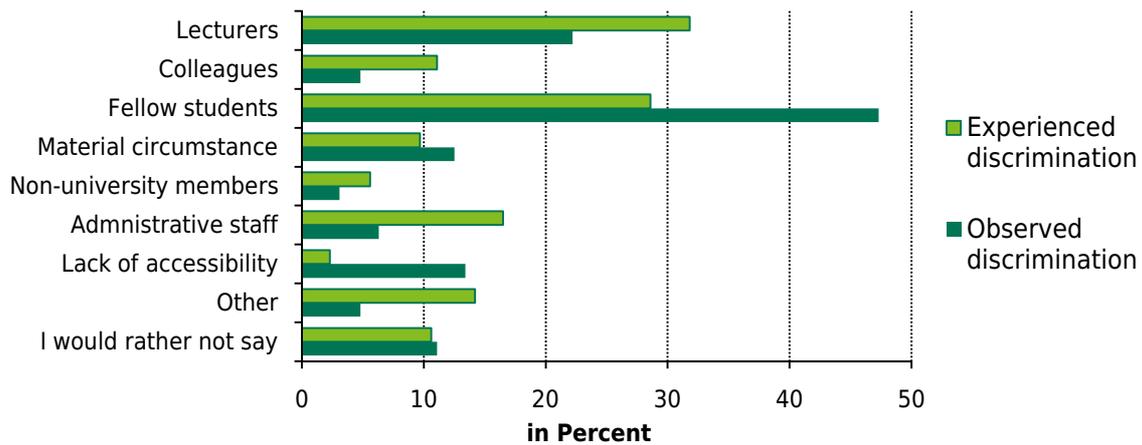


Figure 3.6: Causes of Discrimination, in Comparison: Personally Experienced and Observed Discrimination. Experienced discrimination: number of respondents: 732; Observed discrimination, number of respondents: 351. For the purposes of illustration and readability, the percent in agreement is adapted on the X-axis.

A much less common factor in experienced discrimination was lack of accessibility, which only 2.3 percent of the study participants felt affected by. 10.6 percent of the respondents did not want to give the reason for the discrimination, while one in seven (14.2 percent) provided additional information on other groups or circumstances in which the discriminatory acts occurred. Here, supervisors were by far the most commonly cited (24 cases), along with different university groups (15 cases). Professors and university management also received mention (6 cases), while other causes were cited fewer than four times.

Instead, discrimination was mostly frequently observed as being caused by fellow classmates or students. Nearly one in two respondents reported having already been witness to such situations (47.3 percent). Another 22.2 percent of respondents identified university instructors as the group responsible for treating others in a discriminatory way. The discrimination rate of the other categories was comparatively low: 13.4 percent of university members surveyed noted “lack of access” as a source of discrimination, while 12.5 percent observed “material circumstances.” Even more uncommon sources of discrimination were the groups “colleagues” (4.8 percent) and “administrative staff” (6.3 percent). One in ten respondents, however, did not

specify who or what was behind the case of discrimination (11 percent), while 4.8 percent cited a different group of people or circumstance to explain the discrimination observed.

It is important to point out here again that students comprised the largest share of the survey sample size. This fact must be kept in mind, particularly with regard to the frequency with which fellow students and university instructors were cited as the source of discrimination in comparison to other factors.

Given this context, it is also not surprising that discrimination is experienced and observed at above-average rates in general educational instruction and teaching (see Figure 3.7).

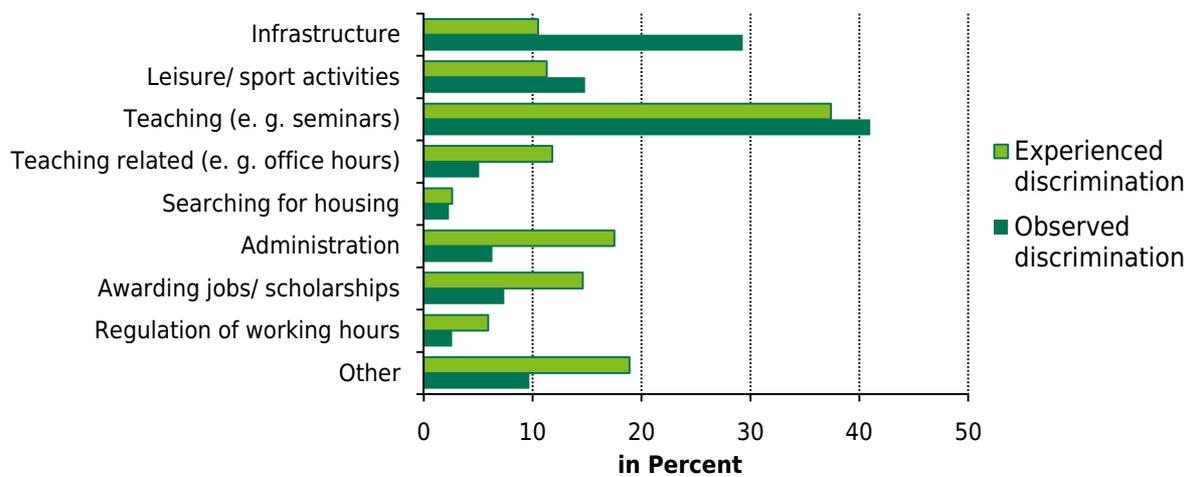


Figure 3.7: Context of Discrimination, in Comparison: Personally Experienced and Observed Discrimination. Experienced discrimination, number of respondents: 732. Observed discrimination, number of respondents: 351. For the purposes of illustration and readability, the percent in agreement is adapted on the X-axis.

Considerably more than a third (37.4 percent) of the university members surveyed indicated that they had previously been discriminated against in class – during a seminar or lecture. Unequal treatment was perceived to have occurred far less frequently in the remaining contexts: 17.5 percent had experienced discrimination in general administrative matters, and around one in seven respondents cited discrimination having occurred in the awarding of jobs or scholarships. Discrimination was even less frequently identified as having occurred during teaching-related situations such as office hours (11.8 percent), during leisure or sports activities (11.3 percent) or due to the general infrastructure of the university (10.5 percent). The lowest rates of discrimination occurred in the context of searching for housing (2.6 percent) and in the regulation of working hours (5.9 percent). Nearly a fifth of study participants (18.9 percent) added supplemental information to the admittedly narrow listing of possible contexts, and these tended to extend beyond the immediate university environment. The most frequently cited answer by far was the workplace (32 instances), within which discrimination was above all expe-

rienced from colleagues and/or in relation to supervisors. In addition to this, publicly posted promotional materials (8 instances), committee work (5 instances) or general university politics (6 instances) were cited by respondents as reasons for having felt discriminated against.

When it comes to observing discrimination experienced by others, it should be stated from the outset that observations of discrimination, much in contrast to personal experiences of discrimination, are highly dependent on how open or closed off the situation is in which the discrimination takes place. Contexts such as administration, awarding jobs or scholarships, or office hours are only accessible to a limited group of people, and accordingly, discrimination is less frequently witnessed. Taking this point into account helps to explain the significant differences between personally experienced and observed forms of discrimination with respect to the various contexts. As such, the contexts named above were thus less frequently cited in cases of observed discrimination compared to cases of experienced discrimination (i.e. administration, 6.3 percent observed v. 17.5 percent experienced; teaching-related contact, 5.1 v. 11.8 percent; and awarding jobs / scholarships, 7.1 v. ~14 percent). The same goes for matters such as regulation of working hours (2.6 v. 5.9 percent) and searching for housing (2.3 v. 2.6 percent), while the latter does signify a generally low rate of discrimination. Meanwhile, discrimination is more frequently observed than personally experienced in the context of infrastructure (29.3 percent), leisure and/or sports activities (14.8 percent) and teaching (41 percent). Approximately one in ten respondents (9.7 percent) were witness to discrimination in other contexts. Apart from observing general discriminatory behavior directed towards janitorial staff (5 instances), study respondents did not cite other specific instances worth mentioning here.

Overall, contexts stand out in which primarily students are present – a point that can be explained with the population distribution of the study sample. As such, both university lecturers and fellow students were cited as the most frequent parties responsible for both experienced and observed discrimination. In turn, teaching has a particularly high rate of discrimination. At the same time, the additional examples given by respondents should also be taken into consideration in which the general working environment is cited as discriminatory. It is also clear that the distinction between public and closed settings is very significant when it comes to considering discrimination. Therefore, it not surprising that observations of unequal treatment and discrimination are much lower in more closed-off contexts such as teaching-related contact, administrative matters, staffing decisions, or choosing whom to award scholarships.

Describing and Dealing with the Discriminatory Situation

The findings outlined thus far in this study have shown that, on the one hand, Bielefeld University is perceived as a space of protection and safety in comparison to society at large, but at the same time, however, respondents attest to experiencing a significant amount of discrimination. This leads to the question of whether people had the courage to speak up in these reported situations, and if so, to what degree. In other words, how much support did people being subjected to discrimination receive when others were present? What kind of assistance did observers provide to those experiencing discrimination? What resources and opportunities for working through such experiences were used? Finally, do the respondents surveyed not only know about the possible counseling services available both within and outside of the university, but do they also make use of them?

Almost two-thirds of the respondents that had previously experienced discrimination reported that other individuals were present (63 percent) (see Table 3.2): 51.5 percent said that there were several people present, while 11.6 percent said only one other person was present. For more than a third of the respondents (37 percent), the direct experience of discrimination did not take place in the presence of others.

Table 3.2: Presence of Others During Discrimination

	Experienced discrimination		Observed discrimination	
	in percent	Number	in percent	Number
No	37.0	243	18.5	63
Yes, one Person	11.6	76	7.6	22
Yes, several people	51.5	338	73.9	253
Total	100	657	100	341

In comparison to this, observers of discrimination seem far less frequently to be the only witness present: a total of 73.9 percent indicated that there were several unaffiliated people present in the situation, while 7.6 percent of respondents reported that the observed discrimination had occurred in the presence of one other person. Approximately one in five respondents (18.5 percent) had witnessed the situation alone. Intervention and support coming from uninvolved witnesses remained, however, quite low (see Table 3.3). While approximately one-third of those who observed discrimination said that they or others provided assistance to the person being discriminated against (31.2 percent), only 23.8 percent of the respondents who themselves directly experienced discrimination reported having received help from third-parties present.

Respondents could specify the respective forms that this assistance took with the help of open-ended, free-text answer fields. It turns out that those who had directly experienced discrimination differentiated between merely agreeing that a situation was discriminatory, and

confronting the person doing the discriminating by a third-party. Confrontation and clear intervention – which is to be understood in this context as morally courageous behavior – was cited most frequently here (26 instances). On the other hand, a more restrained reaction, such as providing comfort or empathy to the person affected, was cited by 16 university members.

Table 3.3: Assistance Provided by Others During Discrimination

	Experienced discrimination		Observed discrimination	
	in percent	Number	in percent	Number
No	76.2	307	68.8	183
Yes	23.8	96	31.2	83
Total	100	403	100	266

Note:

Experienced discrimination, question: “Did this person/at least one of the people present intervene or assist on behalf of the person being discriminated against?”

Observed discrimination, question: “Did you or another person intervene or assist on behalf of the person being discriminated against?”

However, it is important to point out that among the respondents who directly experienced discrimination, only a few of them were themselves active in speaking up against the unjust treatment, while almost a third of respondents completely ignored discrimination in the direct situation (see Appendix, Figure 3.8).

For observers of discrimination, however, the data indicate that they more frequently intervened in the discriminatory situations, confronting the person doing the discriminating (16 instances). At the same time, however, people also reacted in a more restrained way, resulting only in agreement and acknowledgement of the discrimination (17 instances). Nevertheless, some respondents were active against discrimination in other ways, such as by initiating discussions on the topic in seminar sessions, or by committing themselves more strongly to social engagement (8 instances).

In light of these findings, it must be said that discrimination undoubtedly takes place rather infrequently behind closed doors, and is instead a much greater part of everyday life at the university. Furthermore, the presence of other people in no way reduces the risk of becoming a victim of discrimination. In addition to the necessary moral courage, (continuing) awareness and understanding are indispensable in classifying such cases as discriminatory. As such, respondents were asked in the survey if they knew about counseling services they could contact for assistance. Answers to this question indicated that over two-thirds of respondents were not familiar with either responsible officials or counseling centers that deal with incidents of discrimination (see Appendix, Figure 3.9). The extent to which these responses were limited to Bielefeld University remains to be seen, as the question was not specifically limited by location. Even accounting for this, though, the finding is still problematic.

Up to this point, the multifaceted aspects of discrimination have been viewed in terms of responses to standardized, and thus comparable, statements. For a comprehensive and thorough survey of such cases of discrimination (which the majority of members of the university community are confronted with), more precise descriptions and information are needed, and this kind of information can only be obtained by using open-ended, free-text responses. For this reason, the respondents were given the opportunity several times throughout the study to more concretely describe their experiences and observations of discrimination, and many took advantage of this option, resulting in a comprehensive image of discrimination at Bielefeld University. Even though conducting an extensive analysis is not possible in the framework of this report, some of the responses should be included that illustrate in a representative manner the variety of discrimination that occurs at different levels:

"When applying for a permanent job at the Office of [anonymized], I was told after a short interview that a) I was overqualified for the position, and thus was not expected to stay for long at the job, and b) as a second reason, at my age, pregnancy is still a possibility, or at least it cannot be excluded. Because this position already had to be re-staffed on short notice twice due to these reasons, they did not want to take the risk again. This was told to me in the presence of a representative from the Personalrat [Staff Council], who made absolutely no move to intervene."

"It wasn't a specific person who was discriminated against, but an elderly university instructor was looking for a politically correct word for people with dark skin, and came up with "Nigger."

"Due to my appearance and certain presumed religious associations (dark-skinned man with a full beard), my background/migration status and religious affiliation were discussed without consulting me as to whether those assumptions actually corresponded to reality. This happened more frequently in the past months and was often used to discredit me by reducing me to my appearance without knowing my personality, and saying things like 'Jihadist, Salafist terrorist, religious fanatic, damn Muslim, etc.' within earshot of me."

"A specific professor openly denigrated the secondary school education of a Gesamtschüler [comprehensive high school graduate] as well as his appearance during a lecture."

"A woman in a wheelchair had to write without a table because the room only had desks [chairs with tables attached to them]. Despite asking the instructors, the room was not changed and she had to leave the course."

These descriptions of personally experienced or observed acts of discrimination help bring what is sometimes a rather abstract phenomenon into sharp relief. They show, beyond the numbers, how discrimination manifests in the university setting, and how people are treated unfairly and put at a disadvantage due to their gender or appearance, their presumed religious or ethnic affiliation, their disability or status. Both individual behaviors as well as institutional structures and practices are experienced as discriminatory. The self-conception and perception

that the university, as an institution of higher learning, constitutes a certain space of protection hardly seems valid. In fact, the thesis is confirmed that the university is indeed a part of society where mentalities and practices that produce inequalities and discrimination do exist.

4. UNI OHNE VORURTEILE: A FIRST EVALUATION FROM UNIVERSITY MEMBERS

We now turn our attention to evaluations of the work conducted by *Uni ohne Vorurteile* (University without Prejudice), a working group dedicated to spreading awareness of and addressing discrimination and inequalities in anti-democratic phenomena in all its forms. How familiar are university members with this project, and what criticisms do they have? How worthy of support, generally speaking, do they find the work done at Bielefeld University, where a number of different initiatives have already accomplished successful work? Do the members of the university community surveyed also feel a sense of responsibility in promoting an environment free of discrimination?

The first point to make here is that a majority of respondents found the project *Uni ohne Vorurteile* to be very relevant (see Figure 4.1), with 83.8 percent of study participants acknowledging the legitimacy of such a project at the university, of whom more than half (53.3 percent) considered its work to be “very important.” This testifies to widespread, general support, both of the ideal itself of promoting equality and freedom from discrimination, as well as the working group’s previous contributions. In contrast, 6.7 percent of the respondents indicated that they were not convinced and consider the work done by *Uni ohne Vorurteile* to be either rather unimportant or very unimportant.

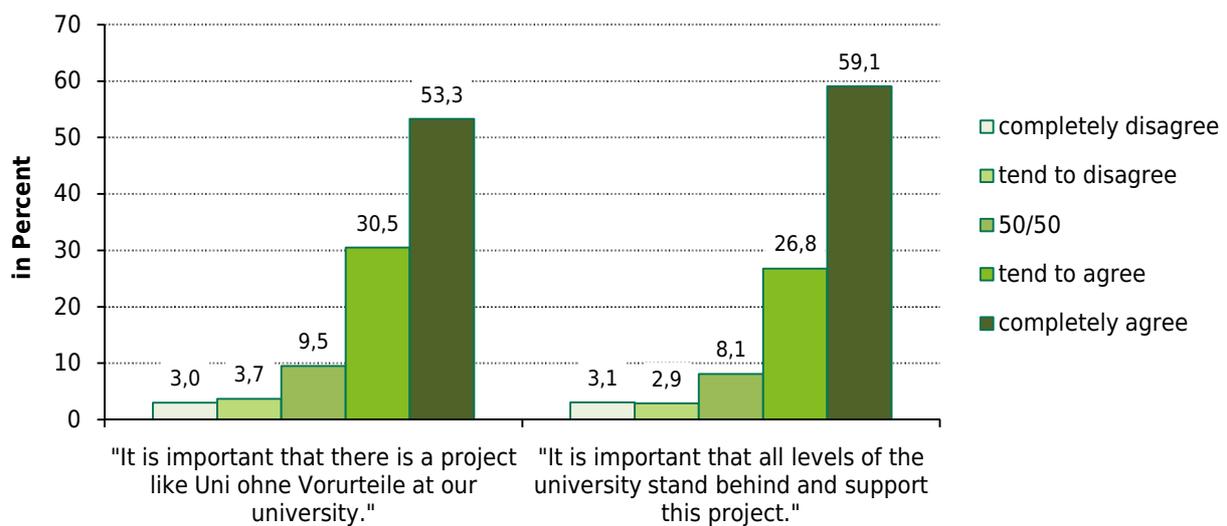


Figure 4.1: Relevance of the *Uni ohne Vorurteile* Project. Importance, number of respondents: 1.,376; Support, number of respondents: 1,375. For the purposes of illustration and better readability, the percent in agreement are depicted on the Y-axis.

The particular relevance attributed to this work is also apparent in the widespread agreement that these efforts should also be supported at all levels of the university. A clear majority (59.1 percent) expressed desire that this ideal and its implementation receive support, and another 26.8 percent tended to agree with this, while around 6 percent were in disagreement. In this context, it should be noted that this attitude goes along with the general goal of the university of fostering an environment free of prejudice and discrimination. Two-thirds of all university members surveyed were in complete agreement with this ideal (see Appendix, Figure 4.2).

And yet this does not mean that the support demonstrated here translates into a personal sense of responsibility in the respondents. Only 20.3 percent felt very responsible for reducing discrimination at Bielefeld University. On the contrary, 18.2 percent reject or tend to reject this form of personal responsibility to work against unequal treatment and discrimination (see Figure 4.3), and with 22.6 percent, a not-insignificant proportion of respondents chose the middle category. Given the previous finding that an overwhelming majority of surveyed participants supported working against discrimination on *all* levels, it can be assumed that individuals have a less clear understanding of their own responsibilities in terms of how to respond to discriminatory situations and structures. On the other hand, it is also possible that the respondents surveyed expect the university to act following a top-down principle, rather than engaging individually.

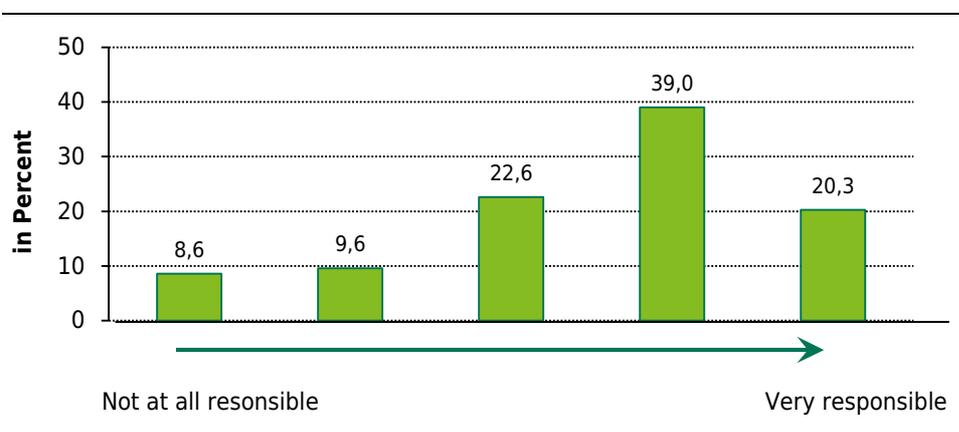


Figure 4.3: Perceived Personal Responsibility for Anti-Discrimination (N = 1,375). (Question: “Do you personally feel responsible for making discrimination happen less frequently at Bielefeld University?”). For the purposes of illustration and readability, the percent in agreement is adapted on the Y-axis.

As was true of the survey on experiences of discrimination at the university, the evaluation of the *Uni ohne Vorurteile* project was also designed to gather differentiated and concrete feedback in order to take criticisms and suggestions, as well as any needs into account in our future work. Accordingly, a series of open-ended, free-text answer fields was made available to

the respondents, in which they were asked about the merit of the project, places for improvement, and ideas for possible cooperations both within and outside of the university. These free-text fields allowed respondents to give more detailed answers. Even though an extensive qualitative analysis is not part of this report, the following responses, classifications, and criticism provide illustrative, representative examples of the general view of the *Uni ohne Vorurteile* project held by study participants.¹⁰

„It [the project] should not be a “fig leaf” [superficial cover-up], and it must actually extend into all levels – and I see room for improvement, especially when it comes to professors and academic structures.“

„Before receiving this email, I had never heard of this project.“

„Buttons and posters alone are not enough! It would be more effective to bring attention to the cause in each seminar or module.“

„There have to be specific contact persons, who can offer concrete assistance. Otherwise your project is nice, but relatively useless.“

„For me, this was the motto of the university when I began studying, and it still is.“

Respondents frequently mentioned that the level of awareness of the project and the work related to it urgently needs to be increased, and better communication (i.e. “more promotion” within the university) would be desirable. At the same time, the project was met with a certain suspicion that the motto “University without Prejudice” is just a marketing campaign, that it just serves as a kind of “fig leaf,” and/or that the working group could just let itself fall for this. Connected to this is the concern is that the chosen motto “University without Prejudice” could “minimize the destructive power that racism, for example, can have“.

„One such project is not enough – universities are hierarchical places where discrimination is inherent from the very beginning. There have to be structural changes.“

„It is an approach to prevent discrimination on all levels, but discrimination often has its roots in the system itself, and there is thus still much to be done.“

„Taking a stand is important, especially on the part of large organizations, and I find it extremely important that the university is doing so!“

¹⁰ It is important to note that openly hostile statements were found in the responses and opinions given on both experiences of discrimination and the *Uni ohne Vorurteile* project. We, however, refrain from giving these responses space in our report because they are not ultimately revealing for the research questions, nor did we want to provide these authors with a “stage” by reproducing their derogatory comments.

Other study participants emphasized the relevance of a more comprehensive view and the subsequent wide-reaching implementation of a “university without prejudice.” In their opinion, discriminatory, degrading, and exclusionary structures “at all levels” need to be dealt with, instead of concentrating on individual dimensions. This project should, as formulated in another part, therefore initiate “structural changes” instead.

These comments can serve as examples of how the voiced criticism does not only relate to the perceived irrelevance of the project, implying that it merely makes a “fuss about tolerance,” but that the criticism is also targeted specifically and constructively at the conceptualization and the understanding of the term itself. As such, even though strong criticism is found in some of the responses, it is aimed in most cases at improving the *Uni ohne Vorurteile* with respect to equality and freedom from discrimination.

„I find that the university is really over the top with all its fuss about tolerance. It would do some of them good to come back down to Earth.“

„At the university and possibly in your project group, there are some voices that are too loud, and they seem to force themselves into the role of the victim and see discrimination in places where no one else does.“

Knowing that having a basic degree of sympathy for the responsible institution is indeed closely related to voluntary participation in such surveys, the number of positive responses, nevertheless, turned out to be surprisingly high. The attention raised by the project seems, on the one hand, to highlight the “need to think differently.” On the other hand, it is recognized that (only) in the context of this project can certain grievances be aired and directed towards resolution. Beyond this, the “University without Prejudice” seems to offer a sense of identification both for individual members of the university community, as well as the university as an institution, providing it the opportunity to clearly position itself against inequality and discrimination.

„It is good because it takes stance and sends a clear message against discrimination in all its forms. This does not just help prevent discrimination in the future because the atmosphere is one that such behavior is not welcome in, but it also helps to make victims feel empowered to confront discrimination. It shows that discrimination is taken seriously, and that victims are believed. And everything is being done to make sure that it never happens again.“

„This project should be continued and should serve as an example for other universities.“

Accordingly, “University without prejudice” is perceived as being a “motto” of Bielefeld University, one that students can identify with from the beginning of their studies, and one that also highlights the importance that large institutions such as universities can and should take a

clear position under such a banner. In this sense, this self-conception is also seen as being an “example for other universities”.

Overall, the ideals of a freedom from prejudice and discrimination, as defined in the existing project, received a high level of recognition and acceptance from study participants. Differences of opinion in terms of the actual implementation or the underlying understanding of the concepts only again highlight the necessity of further discussion and exchange in order to successfully bring a “university without prejudice” to all the different levels and interest groups within the university. To accomplish this, it is not only necessary to work together on the design of this project, but it is also essential that we share a common desire to enact change.

5. SUMMARY AND IDEAS

With this report, the working group *Uni ohne Vorurteile* devoted itself to investigating the perceptions and experiences of discrimination at Bielefeld University for the first time.

Using a systematic and controlled online survey of up to 2,354 members of the university community, it was found that approximately one in two respondents had experienced discrimination, both as the person discriminated against and as an observer of discrimination. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents rated the social atmosphere at the university as “good,” and numerical estimates of incidents of discrimination are significantly lower at the university than outside of it. The actual number of cases of discrimination, however, paints a different picture.

According to personal perceptions of discrimination, the target of discriminatory attacks is largely based on gender, but characteristics such as age, social background, financial situation, appearance, migration background, and political orientation can also be factors. The main sources of discrimination named were fellow students and university instructors, which may be attributed to the population distribution in the sample surveyed, as well as the ubiquity of teaching activities at the university. Here it should be emphasized that discrimination in testing situations was far less common than expected, and was only reported in three cases. Instead, general teaching situations were cited as the environment in which most discrimination took place, as well as the general workplace.

Only a quarter of those who themselves had experienced discrimination in the presence of others reported that a third-party courageously spoke up and decisively intervened in the situation. The findings of this study also show that two-third of respondents could not name responsible contact persons or counseling centers for dealing with cases of discrimination. In a related vein, over 80 percent of respondents were familiar with the work of the *Uni ohne Vorurteile* working group, and would like to see such (continued) engagement. In addition to this, respondents expressed desire for greater presence in the public and a permanent place at the university. At the same time, respondents called for the campaign to be more than a “fig leaf” [i.e. a superficial cover-up], and it should extend to all (status) levels of the university in order to spread awareness and educate about discrimination, and to encourage morally upright, courageous behavior.

With its campaign *Uni ohne Vorurteile*, Bielefeld University was the first university in Germany to send a clear message against discrimination. Nevertheless, discrimination and per-

sistent structures of inequality can still be found as part of everyday life at Bielefeld University.

Even if the findings here do not allow for generalization (since the data are not representative for all members of the university), the reports on discrimination still need to be taken seriously. These reports can already serve as occasion to confront this challenge. At the same time, this survey can also offer initial suggestions and inspiration for how such a “university without prejudice” could one day be.

1) Problematization and Recognition

The discrepancy between the perception that a university is a space of protection from discrimination, and the widespread experience of discrimination at the university, can certainly be seen as an opportunity for constructive debate. This discrepancy, however, can also jeopardize how discrimination is dealt with on a day-to-day basis. It must first and foremost be recognized and acknowledged that universities are a condensed cross-section of German society as a whole, in order to focus on and deal with the topic of discrimination as such. Open and committed handling of existing discriminatory practices, mentalities, and structures – examples of which were provided in this report – is beneficial and expedient. Only through this do spaces for speaking out and action open up, offering the possibility of protecting people from being hurt from further acts of discrimination.

2) Sensitization

Promoting and enforcing spaces free of discrimination requires raising awareness and education, but it also demands the skills of those interacting within these spaces. In addition to the structural rootedness of discrimination at the university (the existence of which was acknowledged by many study participants), individual or group-based discrimination seems to be understood less well. There needs to be more knowledge and reflection about discrimination on the part of every member of the university. This, on the one hand, allows people to recognize discrimination in their own lives, which may be unintended, and to establish new patterns of behavior. In addition to this, only through raising awareness and education can moral courage and initiative from members of the university promote spaces free of discrimination.

3) Institutional Positioning and Reform

Clear institutional positioning and reform is required to achieve a “university without prejudice.” However, to do this, it is necessary to engage and connect with different agents, both from within and outside of the university. Documenting experiences of discrimination

seems justified, particularly experiences that are directly linked to the conditions and particularities of universities, and which can hurt members in their daily lives at the university. In addition to the *Gleichstellungsbericht* (Report on Equality), a periodic *Diskriminierungsbericht* (Report on Discrimination) is also conceivable, which would identify risks and possible conflicts, but also record progress made. Appropriate counseling services for discrimination available to all members of the university community should also be considered. Nevertheless, these ideas depend on implementing the work of the *Uni ohne Vorurteile* into the greater university strategy and it requires intensive exchange among staff representatives, academic departments, and other institutions.

Discrimination can seriously hinder both people and institutions from developing and attaining their goals. It is an everyday phenomenon and is part of daily life at the university, as such. A university can and should work consciously and proactively against individual acts as well as structural forms of discrimination. Equality and freedom from discrimination are an integral part of the self-conception of being a “university without prejudice,” and we must live up to this ideal.

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APPENDIX

Table 1.1: *Description of Situations and Assessment of their Degree of Discrimination (in percent)*

	Not discriminatory	Somewhat discriminatory	Discriminatory	N
Access to certain rooms at the university is limited (e.g. some rooms can only be reached by stairs).	20.3	19.7	60.0	1,756
A female worker is considered unfit by her supervisor for her chosen career based on her appearance.	3.7	6.7	89.6	1,755
Janitorial work is performed mostly by workers with a migration background.	35.3	29.0	35.7	1,753
Weaker on-the-job performance is attributed to socioeconomic standing.	7.2	17.2	75.6	1,749
In the university cafeteria service, the workers are mostly female.	50.8	25.1	24.1	1,755

„Female academic staff more frequently receive part-time positions, while men tend to receive full-time positions and interesting projects that allow them to distinguish themselves. Young mothers who are currently in or returning from parental leave are not given their own or interesting projects, or no (longer) would attempt to do them (...) When collaborative research centers visit to conduct their assessments, young female colleagues are enthusiastically sent along to demonstrate the high level of support given to women. But in reality, it is almost exclusively men who are project leaders, and women are discouraged or bullied out.“

*„In class, comments are made that are sexist, racist, or relativize the Holocaust. People in university buildings are thus exposed to offensive sexual, racial, or anti-Semitic comments..
- The Cafeteria is difficult for people in wheelchairs to use
- Bathrooms are only available in gender binary (male/female)“*

„I find it discriminatory when religious groups, regardless of which religion it may be, are afforded more opportunities for self-presentation and organization than other interest groups, such as political associations, organizations against sexism, or cultural associations“

„Comments from instructors about the supposed cultural differences of black students.“

„The signs for ‘female parking spots’ in the parking garages. These are located close to the exits and are to serve as a possibility for escape if a woman is attacked. Men can also be victims of (sexual) violence, but they are excluded from this in the parking spot signage. This does not leave any space for the security needs of men. ‘Escape’ or ‘Safe’ parking spots would be a more suitable designation.“

„Due to personally being effected [by discriminatory processes], the necessary academic distance is claimed to be lacking (e.g. women on gender topics, people with migration backgrounds on experiences of racism)“

„Previously, people in wheelchairs could comfortably put their cafeteria trays on their laps

without things sliding or falling off. Now with the new sleek trays that don't have dividers, I am always meeting people in wheelchairs (or students with other physical limitations) who don't have a chance of bringing their lunch to the table without assistance."

„That there are no overtime regulations for academic staff members at the doctoral researcher level (or at least people are not informed about them). Basic employment standards are circumvented through a combination of the work contract (no payment for overtime possible) and the doctoral regulations, which demand a certain amount of unpaid work on the doctoral research project. This regularly leads to people working twice as much or more."

"Information provision and polls like these are often only held in German, even though the university is supposed to be (and trying to be) an international place of learning. (There is a difference between everyday usage of German and understanding the details and intricacies of particular policy issues relevant to certain announcements or questionnaires.) This is clear discrimination against people who do not speak German fluently (there are plenty of such people on campus). The university has a distinct religious bias. The religious service at the start of the school year; and the fact that the uni-kita is ran by a christian institution are evidence of this. This is clear discrimination against atheists, agnostics and people of different, non-christian religions, whose beliefs are implicitly considered inferior. Given the nature of scientific research, universities should, however, by design, be secular (i.e. allow everyone their own belief, without expressing or suggesting any preference)."

„A female colleague received a congratulatory email for the birth of her child, in which the big challenges awaiting for her were addressed - meaning the challenges of combining family life and a professional career (do new fathers also get such emails?)"

„Certain names are always used as negative examples. Criminals in these example cases are disproportionately male."

„Your examples in this pure form are only seen extremely rarely. Actual discrimination is much more subtle, particularly when there is no visible physical disability/discrimination etc. The most common forms that I have seen/experienced are refusing to communicate / refusing to subjectively and understandably explain grades etc. / Breaking off advisory relationships on questionable grounds / Not responding to or delaying response to complaints / Ignoring or indiscretion."

„On selection committees, the unique characteristics of female applicants are often interpreted as weaknesses, while a man's special features are perceived as qualities and advantages. (Example: a young, ambitious, highly qualified female applicant was characterized as somewhat unqualified, while a male applicant who was just 5 years from retirement and hadn't done any research in years was considered to be especially experienced based on his age. Due to his experience, the male applicant is trusted to quickly make up for lacking key qualifications for the job, while it is assumed that the female will never be able to make up for her inexperience. Or: male applicants who come across offensively in interviews or presentations are perceived as confident and assertive, while female applicants, in contrast, are seen as aggressive and unpleasant"

„I am trans and I do not know which bathroom I should use. When I am in the main building, I always first have to go to Building X because there is a trans toilet there. If I am taking a test and have to go to the bathroom, I lose a lot of time because of this. If I am in the library working and have to go to the bathroom, then I have to go over to the other building. It would be good if there were a toilet for trans people in EVERY section of each building. This would be a big help. I also don't know where I can get undressed at the gym on the Lampingstrasse. There are more than two locker rooms there. It would be easy to open another locker room for trans* people. Then I could finally participate in sports again."*

Figure. 1.1: Examples of Discrimination: Selection of Free-Text Responses

Table 3.1: *Experienced and Observed Discrimination by Gender, Migration Background, Age, and Status Group (comparison of Means)*

		Experienced discrimination		Observed discrimination	
		Mean	Cases	Mean	Cases
Gender	Female	1.76	913	1.96	870
	Male	1.73	553	1.95	521
	Other	2.31	29	2.64	28
Migration Background	no	1.72	1,017	1.93	1,002
	yes	1.84	289	1.98	286
Age	24 and younger	1.44	418	1.68	418
	25 - 29	1.73	347	2.02	342
	30 - 39	1.95	249	2.10	245
	40 - 49	2.18	68	2.31	65
	50 - 59	2.03	79	1.96	76
	60 - 69	1.43	28	1.61	28
	70 and older	1.27	15	1.27	15
Status group	Students	1.67	1,024	1.89	991
	Doctoral students	1.94	123	2.13	112
	University teaching staff	1.87	55	2.04	49
	Academic staff	1.94	106	2.27	98
	Administration and facilities staff	1.99	188	2.08	169

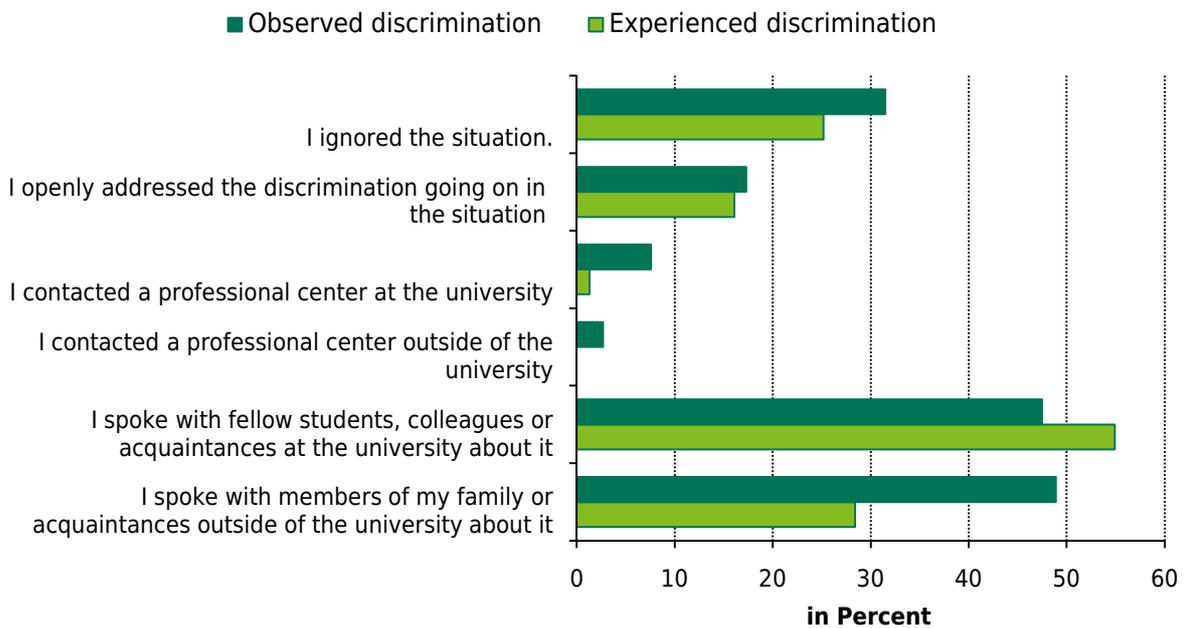


Figure 3.8: Reactions to Discrimination, in Comparison: Personal Experiences and Observations of Discrimination.

Experiences of discrimination, number of respondents: 695.

Observations of discrimination, number of respondents: 317.

For the purposes of illustration and better readability, the x-axis depicts the percentage of cases in agreement with the statements on the Y-axis.

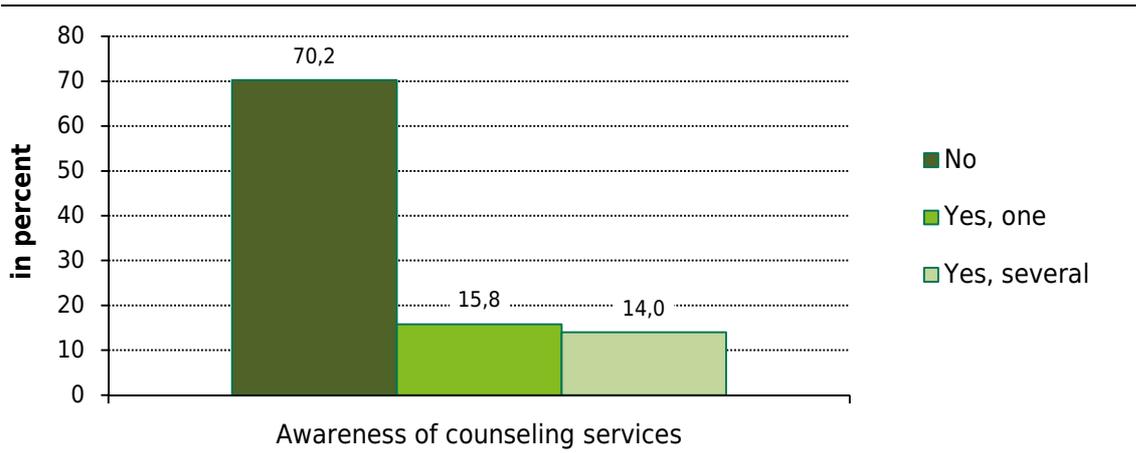


Figure 3.9: Awareness of Counseling Service Centers for Cases of Discrimination (N = 1,378). For the purposes of illustration and readability, the y-axis depicts the percent in agreement.

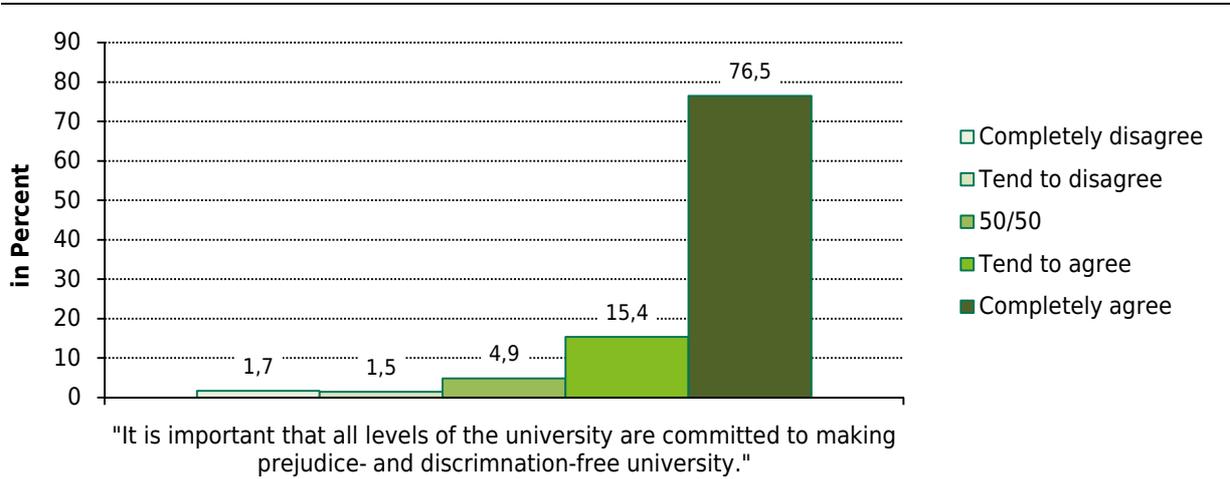


Figure 4.2: Commitment to a University Free of Prejudice and Discrimination (N = 1,384). For the purposes of illustration and readability, the y-axis depicts the percent in agreement.

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