



Trapdoors: Palestine solidarity and the authoritarian potential of invisible academic bureaucracies

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Abstract. In this intervention, we raise concerns about the latent authoritarian potential of academic bureaucracies to restrict or even prohibit spaces for critical exchange on highly politicized issues. We introduce the term “trapdoors” to describe how academic bureaucracies are able to silently limit free speech on controversial topics such as Palestine solidarity. Trapdoors are rules and regulations, such as fire safety measures, that normally do not impede academic activities but which can be activated to silence uncomfortable interventions. What defines them is their inconspicuousness: hidden in plain sight both within the academic bureaucracy and from the public eye. Based on various examples that received media attention, our own experiences, and some interviews with other affected people, we argue that these practices are currently being used to silence critical student and academic voices on the genocide of Palestinians. We see these practices as a potential threat to academic freedom, as they can easily be expanded upon for authoritarian ends.

1 Introduction

In February of 2025, Francesca Albanese, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, was scheduled to speak at the Freie Universität Berlin. Even though it later transpired that the university had been pressured by both the Israeli ambassador to Berlin and Berlin’s governing mayor, the justification for the cancellation merely cited “polarization and the unpredictable security situation”, according to the UK-based magazine *Jewish Voice for Labour* (<https://www.jewishvoiceforlabour.org.uk/article/no-free-speech-at-the-free-university-of-berlin/>, 12 November 2025). Similarly, an event by Forensic Architecture was canceled in Aachen citing “the safety and well-being of our students” as a reason (<https://www.rwth-aachen.de/cms/root/die-rwth/aktuell/pressemitteilungen/dezember/~bfcqhf/stellungnahme-zum-montagabendgesprach/?lid=1>, 12 November 2025). Even in non-academic contexts, similar patterns emerge. For example, at the Palestine Congress in April of 2024, “the police insisted on a two-hour fire safety and permit check for the building” (<https://mondediplo.com/outside-in/german-police-palestine-congress>, 12 Novem-

ber 2025), according to *Le Monde diplomatique*. These examples have little to do with fighting the real danger of antisemitism: “The dominant form of combating antisemitism in Germany can be understood as a form of securitization. Administrative bans and police repression dominate over promoting knowledge and understanding”, as Celikates et al. (2024) argue in *Jacobin*. As universities emerge as one of the few public spaces in which dissent with Israel’s genocide in Gaza is made visible, university administrations choose their most effective, yet oblique, method to keep universities in line with the status quo: their bureaucracies.

An almost uniform pattern is becoming apparent whenever anyone seeks to address the Palestine/Israel conflict at universities and other public institutions: step 1, call people involved a “safety”, “security”, or “diversity” concern; step 2, start a lengthy process of risk assessment; step 3, conclude that the risk is too high and that the measures to contain risks are prohibitive. While, on occasion, more explicitly political statements are being made that lead to people, talks, films, or exhibitions being canceled (or, in the case of students, arrested), oftentimes justification for these bans and cancella-

tions are based on ostensibly neutral administrative rules and regulations. In this intervention, we suggest to understand this misuse of university bureaucracies to limit free academic exchange as *trapdoors*. We borrow this term from a common trope in films and cartoons. As the unsuspecting victim steps on a certain spot on the floor, a lever is pulled, opening a trapdoor and sending them to an unknown but probably unpleasant fate. The defining feature of *trapdoors* is their inconspicuousness: they are routinely present, but undetectable until they open, and condemn their victims to disappear without a trace. We argue that these *trapdoors* carry with them a significant authoritarian potential, as ostensibly neutral rules can be weaponized to impede controversial or inconvenient academic exchanges.

2 What are *trapdoors*?

Trapdoors manifest when rules that usually do not impede activities are selectively enforced with disproportionate zealotry to prohibit unwelcome opinions, such as pro-Palestinian positions, while sidestepping any political discourse. They work through fire safety regulations, security protocols, willfully misused diversity provisions, or rules and regulations regarding the booking and allocation of rooms and facilities on university campuses. Everyone who has worked in a large organization such as a university knows that, for everyday operations to unroll normally, these safeguards, guidelines, and rules are usually followed with a certain amount of goodwill. However, if an unwelcome event is planned – or even if it is promoted by the wrong people – then they may harden into a “shell as hard as steel”, to echo Max Weber (2002 [1904/1905]:168), and can be interpreted in the most punitive way.

In the German context specifically, the censorship by bureaucracy has many precedents. In 1972, the so-called “Radikalerlass” created a system of surveillance in West Germany that was aimed almost exclusively at leftist officials or those applying for positions in the public service (Wolfrum, 2022). After domestic protests and international pressure, the Radikalerlass was repealed in almost all federal states during the 1980s. The effects of this ideological screening continue to be felt today and are used against various socio-political activists, such as climate activists, anti-fascists, and globalization critics, who are accused of forming criminal organizations (under paragraph 129 of the Criminal Code).

The Radikalerlass explicitly and visibly used employment bans and bureaucratic means to stifle free speech; *trapdoors*, by contrast, affect everyday processes and activities that make work more difficult in less visible ways. Their elusive nature means that they do not offer an easy target against which protest can be formed. They allow gatekeepers within the academic bureaucracy to come up with flimsy justifications for preventing activities, as their hands are ostensibly

tied by fire safety or security regulations. Not all gatekeepers intentionally weaponize their administrative power to uphold the political line of their organization. While some agents may actively use *trapdoors* as a political tool, some may simply act out of compliance or to avoid reputational risks for themselves, their career, or their organizations. *Trapdoors* are a convenient avenue to evade contentious issues by shifting the responsibility and blame away from individuals and towards institutions in a depoliticized manner. This form of containment in itself is not new and has been described by social scientists in different contexts (e.g., Ahmed, 2021; Graeber, 2015; Lipsky, 1980).

The opening or closing of doors as a metaphor to describe a channeling of political activity by bureaucratic means is also a common theme in this literature. Most recently, Ahmed (2020) has used the metaphor of “doors” to describe inherently conservative processes of maintaining existing power structures and dynamics at universities:

In my project on complaint, doors keep coming up. Perhaps we could think of doors as ‘the master’s tools’, to borrow from Audre Lorde; doors tell us how institutions function, for whom they function; how only some are allowed to enter, how others become trespassers. Doors can tell us something not only about who can get in but who can get by or who can get through. (Ahmed, 2020)

However, doors not only impede people but also perspectives, especially if they do not fit with the view of the establishment. In her book *Complaint!*, Ahmed illustrates how the doors of bureaucracy function to remove institutional violence, transmuting it into ordinary and therefore acceptable outcomes for those in positions of power. The specific manner of processing any challenges to power, often by linguistically shifting categories (e.g., “physical assault” becomes a “direct style of management”), gives adverse decisions a veneer of legitimacy (Ahmed, 2021:175). That “doors can teach us about power” is also the case with “trap doors”, which are designed to create the impression that no obstacle is there, on the surface. While they also manage institutional anxieties – about reputation, funding, antisemitism, press attention – they work in a slightly different way: their mechanism does not simply transmute an undesirable event, but opts to inflate its riskiness and/or refuse its very existence as a *political* issue. In both cases, irritants are flushed out mechanically, through “regular” bureaucracy, which makes it difficult to challenge the institution and its rules: nothing is there that stands in the way of that *specific* issue. This mechanism, however, is not an automatism; it requires people – each with their own idiosyncratic sets of motivations and ideologies – to operate the levers that open and close these doors. We can only speculate about the positionalities of “street level bureaucrats” (Lipsky, 1980) in academic institutions, but we can assume that they are not motivated by a personal vendetta against pro-Palestinian students and faculty, but rather nav-

igate a complex terrain in which individual ideals may sit uncomfortably with sincere concerns about safety and the very real danger of antisemitism or Islamophobia; there is a lack of confidence to assess the situation; there are worries about getting into hot water with higher-ups; there are anxieties about funding or good standing with the ministry of education; and, last but not least, there are vulgar readings of German history, and superficial lessons are drawn from it. However, once the lever is pulled, the trapdoor is opened, and the disruptive element is swallowed, these individual dilemmata do not matter anymore, as the antagonism was thusly resolved without even leaving a trace of political tension.

Analytically, *trapdoors* can also tell us something about what and who is or is not allowed public visibility and how this relates to a wider political environment. Different modes of seeing and making complexities intelligible to authorities have long been part of social scientific analysis of institutional authority (Jasanoff, 2001). At that, it is not only about means of surveillance as described in Foucault's panopticism (cf. Foucault, 1977), but just as much about everything that is rendered invisible by the eye of authority (Scott, 1998). Following Scott (1998), "Seeing like a University" also entails turning a blind eye to some forms of speech and ensuring that it remains unseen and unheard by actors outside the university. As this curtailing of speech goes against the very ethos of the university as a space of free exchange, the censorship itself needs to remain unseen, as well.

Academia, in particular, has always been an arena for political conflict, in addition to being a place for free inquiry and exchange of ideas. We argue that *trapdoors* compromise both of these functions of academia. Since *trapdoors* allow a depoliticized response to a political challenge, they enable academic institutions to smother unwelcome positions and opinions while not appearing as a willful act of discrimination or censorship. Through this, academic bureaucracies can select who can pass over them unimpeded and who will be "trapped" by them. Such ostensibly impartial and rational selections obstruct the fundamental preconditions for free academic exchange.

3 Falling through the trapdoor

How does a *trapdoor* work in practice? For many decades, they have been deployed against the discussion of other politically contentious issues such as Kurdish independence (Başar, 2018; Civaka Azad, 2017) or discussions of German colonial genocide reparations (Genocide Namibia, 2015). Their increased frequency in the context of the genocide in Gaza has recently rendered them more apparent.

A rapid review of existing documented cases of *trapdoors* and a series of rapid interviews with people involved in pro-Palestine protests and events at different German universities provided us with some illustrations of the phenomenon and a basis for a provisional typologization. While they are

not meant as a full empirically grounded case study, the interviews provided inside perspective on *falling through the trapdoor* and give anecdotal evidence for the prevalence of this strategy. All interviews were conducted in English via Zoom, transcribed, and anonymized to ensure the safety of interviewees. The examples focus on Palestine/Israel-related activities at universities since 7 October 2023 and the subsequent escalation of Israel's genocide against Palestinians. Based on our own experiences with trapdoors, reviews of documented cases, and interviews with other scholars, we identified three types of *trapdoors*: (a) event cancelation and restrictions, (b) denial of room booking, and (c) funding cuts. We also explore how these types of *trapdoors* may be reinforced through anticipatory compliance. Analytically, these three types reveal how the success of trapdoors depends on their (in)visibility to the public and on the plausible deniability they offer to those who action them. While mostly addressing examples from academia in Germany, we also include some cases from other European countries to show that *trapdoors* are not exclusive to German academia. Anecdotally, colleagues at universities outside of Germany have experienced *falling through the trapdoor*, but we suspect that they take idiosyncratic shape in different academic contexts that would require further empirical and conceptual analysis. This intervention is not meant to provide a full empirically grounded account of the phenomenon, but rather to provide fellow academics a provisional language to describe a phenomenon experienced by many, but shared by few, and to encourage more in-depth research on the topic.

3.1 Trapdoors through event restrictions and cancelations

Most examples of *trapdoors* that have received public attention concern event restrictions or cancelations. In this case the trapdoor is in plain sight. The event has already been publicly announced and must therefore be publicly canceled through official channels. The event organizers thus have recourse to publicly denounce and scandalize the cancelation as an act of censorship in disguise. The stake for the rectorate and the administration of the university is thus to maintain plausible deniability of such intentions by reference to non-political reasons for the cancelation.

In the examples collected, the university's officials typically communicate to publicly justify the cancelation with seemingly apolitical reasons related to safety and security. The challenge for both sides is to convince the public of their own narrative. Safety concerns, that is, concerns for the well-being of event participants, were brought up to cancel the PalFest in the UK on short notice. The PalFest is a Palestinian literature festival that was supposed to take place at the Royal Geographical Society in London on 27 October 2023 (Griffiths et al., 2024). Such efforts often go along with the delegitimization or even the demonization of the event organizers. Security and inclusivity concerns are often tied to

gether in the case of Palestine solidarity under the following narrative: the event focuses on a contentious topic with high risks of physical or verbal violence from groups portrayed as hateful or dangerous within the organizers, the participants, or the audience. As a precautionary measure against these anticipated – one might say, contrived – threats, the event is then canceled. The cancelation of the PalFest, entitled *Nakba – A Century of Resistance and Solidarity*, followed this pattern.

In addition, institutions may not cancel an event but heavily limit its outreach capacity instead. Regularly, this means that organizers subsequently cancel the event “voluntarily”. In April 2025, a public seminar on theology and Palestine hosted by an independent research institute of Berlin was turned into an internal event with restricted public communication at the last minute. The speaker canceled the lecture as a result, as they deemed these new conditions discriminatory and unacceptable. At the Freie Universität (FU) Berlin, Francesca Albanese, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, had been invited to speak on human rights, international law, and Palestine in February 2024. Instead of canceling the event outright, FU Berlin offered to host the event behind closed doors, with a livestream for the public, claiming that the university could not “sensibly guarantee the safety” of participants (Knight, 2025). The organizers and speakers subsequently moved the event to another location outside of the university (Knight, 2025).

Whether intentional or not, these situations transfer the responsibility of maintaining or canceling away from the university administration and to the organizers, which gives the administration the advantage to reject accusations of censorship under the guise of compromise – it increases their plausible deniability. This also prevents any real discussion of safeguarding and power inequalities that have been at the center of more visible cancelation cases. We understand this strategy as consistent with the neoliberal academic context, in which German universities primarily seek to avoid reputational risks stemming from the tension between commitments to academic freedom and political pressure to uphold their *Staatsräson*.¹

3.2 Trapdoors through denied room bookings

The second type of trapdoor we identified is through denied room bookings. Room-booking denial is internal to the university, and officials are rarely involved directly. The trapdoor often disguises itself as technical regulations, following the rules of the university in order to hide the political nature of the act. Occurrences of such trapdoors are rarely made public. They are far more common but less conspicuous than

event cancelations, unless victims gather enough evidence to scandalize their case. In general, victims of such trapdoors know that they have been purposefully denied access to facilities, as they can compare their treatment with similar groups whose requests are granted.

Even though they share similar outcomes – meetings and events cannot be held within the university – this type of trapdoor differs from event cancelation strategies in its mechanisms. In Frankfurt, students and researchers of Goethe University who organized the conference “Talking About (the silencing of) Palestine” saw their room-booking request denied on the basis that the conference was an external event (welcoming external audiences). In this case, the external group was “Students for Palestine”. To the organizers, the university emphasized that, while debates on “ Hamas’ terror against Israel, its roots and effects, the war in the region and perspectives for its future” were welcomed, the involvement of “Students for Palestine” was putting the academic nature of the conference at risk. The organizers thus had to comply with the fees, timeline, and regulations associated with external events. In the end, the university officially stated that the organizers withdrew their room-booking request and voluntarily moved the conference outside of the university. This way, they freed themselves from accusations of censorship (<https://aktuelles.uni-frankfurt.de/english/organizers-of-palestine-conference-withdraw-room-reservation/>, 12 November 2025).

Trapdoors preventing room bookings are the submerged part of the iceberg: they are less visible, and they prevent undesirable groups from gaining visibility. They deny spaces for regular meetings and the structuring of Palestine solidarity. They particularly affect students, who depend on administration approval to access university facilities and are more easily victims of arbitrary discrimination or loopholes (even student bake sales for medical support for Palestinians are suddenly hit with demands for permits). Whether intentional or not, delays in response to booking requests have been reported by several student interviewees, who indicated that these jeopardized the logistics of their events. In yet another “Francesca Albanese” story, the University of Bonn’s Amnesty International chapter requested a room for a hybrid lecture with the UN Special Rapporteur in April 2025. The university delayed their response by 2 weeks, justifying a need to clear the topic, before rejecting the booking altogether 2 working days before the event, on the basis that student groups are not allowed to book rooms through the central university system, even though other student groups had been allowed to book rooms previously. Some departments at the University of Bonn have since published room-booking “guidelines” that reinforce the ability to cancel room bookings if disruptions of order and safety at the university are to be feared, without explaining who would make that sort of assessment and on what basis.

Room-booking bans, cancelations, and delays are thus often accompanied by a layer of arbitrariness. According to

¹ In a government declaration in the aftermath of 7 October, Olaf Scholz declared that “at this moment, there is only one place for Germany. The place at Israel’s side. That’s what we mean when we say: Israel’s security is a German *Staatsräson*” (Glucroft, 2023).

the student group Uni(te) for Pali (U4P), a group of students from the University of Bremen, the rectorate of their university announced they would deny the approval for any room requests by members of “a group like U4P”. It is unclear what is meant by “a group like U4P” and on what basis the decision was made, if not a general criminalization of pro-Palestinian student groups. Relatedly, several interviewees also shared stories of professors hesitating or refusing to book rooms for Palestine-related events and attributed this to anticipatory compliance with the German *Staatsräson*, due to perceived isolation and feared retaliation or negative consequences for their careers. The chilling effects of this anticipatory compliance are not widely documented, so only the most prominent cases of room-booking cancellations received any sort of media attention. We expect the dark figure of affected small, student-organized events to be much higher than the cases we could list in this short intervention.

3.3 Trapdoors through funding cuts

The final type of trapdoor we identified is through funding cuts. Contrarily to the two other trapdoor types covered above, this trapdoor tends to be invisible, even to its victims. These *trapdoors* are often linked to real, perceived, or anticipated threats to the employment, funding, or reputation of university employees and researchers. They materialize as a candidate not being recruited, a contract not being renewed, or a project not being selected on the basis of reputation or declarations. However, such occurrences rarely offer definitive proof that the trapdoor was activated by political reasons. They only offer speculations. We may draw a parallel with systemic discrimination: the discrimination can be proven through general trends and statistics but less frequently in single cases.

However, some specific events have made the funding cut trapdoor quite visible to the public in recent times. In Germany, investigative journalists drew public attention to the misconduct of the attempt by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF) to cut public research funding that had already been allocated in order to punish researchers who had stated that their students had the freedom and the right to be concerned about human rights. The Education Minister at the time, Bettina Stark-Watzinger, even talked to the German tabloid, *Bild*, likely to garner support for the decision. This led to a wave of outrage in the German and international academia in the autumn of 2024, in which the minister was accused of attempting to weaponize federal legal provisions (here in the name of the fight against antisemitism) to silence legitimate concerns and opinions in a way that undermines not just academic freedom and freedom of expression, but also governmental integrity. Shortly after, in January 2025, the United States’ federal government launched a witch hunt for any student or academic critical of Israel, cutting public funding of any universities that did not fully cooperate.

We would like to stress the class-sensitive nature of this trapdoor. The temporary contracts of non-tenured staff – research assistants, PhD candidates, post-doctoral researchers – make them more vulnerable, especially in a context where the neoliberalization of universities has worsened the precarity of researchers. Two research assistants at one German university shared with us how higher-level management put pressure on them, threatening with the non-renewal of their contract because of their political activities for Palestine solidarity within their university. Similarly, when a postdoctoral researcher complained about a previously canceled event and the dire implication for academic freedom, he was told by his department’s general director that he “always [had] the freedom to just leave”. A professor in Austria shared how their university management intervened to prevent them from contracting an external lecturer who had faced a defamatory campaign over a social media re-post condemning Israel.

Several of the lecturers interviewed shared that they chose to avoid some contentious topics in class because they felt ill-prepared to manage dialogue, because of a lack of clarity on the laws and regulations on teaching content, format, and responsibilities, and because of a perceived lack of support in their work environment. This perceived lack of transparency and support also affected their behavior and speech outside the classroom, fearing consequences for their career in academia. Many of them have used the term “anticipatory compliance” to describe this phenomenon. We argue that anticipatory compliance enables and enhances *trapdoors* by maintaining the silence around them. The many examples we raised show that public exposure and outrage are key to combatting trapdoors. University officials and administrations keep trapdoors hidden to avoid reputational risks. When a trapdoor case becomes public, they use depoliticization and delegitimization to obtain the public’s consent.

4 The authoritarian potential of *Trapdoors*

The increasing number of *trapdoors* in European academic institutions shows that the overregulation of university space carries a distinct authoritarian potential. The anthropologist David Graeber suggests that “even the most benevolent bureaucracies are really just taking the highly schematized, minimal, blinkered perspectives typical of the powerful, turning them into ways of limiting that power or ameliorating its most pernicious effects” (Graeber, 2015:82). Using the example of policing, he shows how most victims of police violence are actually innocent but attract the wrath of police officers when challenging their monopoly on the interpretation of a situation. Taking such identifications with rules into account, he defines bureaucratic violence as a reaction to “attacks on those who insist on alternative schemas or interpretations” (Graeber, 2015:80). This means that multiple perspectives do not have a space in bureaucracy, at least not by (legal) definition. We are currently observing this manner

of academic policing in the US, where universities are being punished by right-wing extremists with anti-science tendencies. Even more cautious approaches to anticipatory compliance, for example, those studying the phenomenon through the frame of the “good citizen” (Pykett et al., 2010), point to the relationship between elite/ordinary performances of “good citizenship” and the changing political expectations that shape them (e.g., government-sanctioned Islamophobia). Further empirically grounded, ideally comparative studies are needed to critically engage with similarities and differences in the deployment of *trapdoors* and resistance against them.

While *trapdoor*-like mechanisms have always existed, the authors of this intervention have experienced a stark intensification of this practice in recent years and especially since 7 October 2023. As Burrell et al. (2024) have illustrated in the case of the UK, the bloating of university managements has led to more authoritarian forms of governance. This is due not only to the increase in management positions – in the UK, academics are outnumbered by administrators – but to the ideology of “efficiency”, “productivity”, and “excellence” that is introduced to curb real innovation and critical thinking. In Germany, this development can be seen in the growing hierarchization of universities, for example, though the DFG’s excellence initiative, growing dependence on third-party funding, endowed professorships, and an overall intensification of competition. In this context, potentially controversial events, such as those connected to Palestine solidarity, are readily sacrificed in order to avoid any reputational blemish that could ruin the next *cluster of excellence* initiative. By this logic, the loss of academic freedom is a small price to pay, even as it does nothing to advance the legitimate goal to combat antisemitism. Even as universities struggle with their own complicity in Germany’s colonial projects and the Nazi regime, their chosen method of stifling critical voices tragically echoes and even threatens to reproduce the very authoritarianism universities claim to address. The right in Germany is eager to appropriate legitimate concerns about rising antisemitism and the historical responsibility of German universities that acted as power centers during the Nazi regime for their authoritarian goals. As allegedly liberal institutions wring their hands about ethical complexities and conflicting responsibilities while letting critical voices disappear through academic *trapdoors*, they inadvertently function as an accomplice to authoritarianism yet again.

The resulting narrowing of space for enquiry in teaching and research maps neatly onto a skepticism towards free academic inquiry that is common in the far right. This does not always mean that neoliberal management and the far right are in harmony with one another (2020). The efforts to suppress Palestine solidarity by institutions across the political spectrum have further extended the influence of the far right into educational establishments. Under the guise of “combating antisemitism”, the far right has tapped into a core German cultural and legislative responsibility (Kahmann, 2017;

Tzuberi, 2025). A historically left interest and rhetoric is appropriated as a move against the political opposition (Ziai, 2024). The process is accelerated by the erosion of human rights, the ambitions of “centrist” politicians to appeal to far-right voters, and the fear of progressives of being labeled antisemitic when voicing human rights concerns relating to Israel/Palestine. The result is a culture of censorship that is performed at every level of governance. It is particularly worrying that, rather than the far right that agrees with the silencing regime, this culture regards citizens with the greatest investment in democracy and an equitable society (peace, climate, and social justice activists) as a threat. Despite claims to care for Germany’s “unique” responsibility and its constitution, the prohibition of real care and responsibility speeds up the hollowing out of democracy.

This is supported by the fact that bureaucratic violence is often framed in benevolent terms. The *trapdoors* are twisted into “safeguards” that protect an “enlightened” Germany against antisemitism or, increasingly, “imported antisemitism” by Muslims and “foreign” anti-racist theories in particular (Dhawan, 2024). Under this guise, *trapdoors* constitute part of a formidable repertoire for any authoritarian regime with the ambition to curtail academic freedom without too much public attention and objection. Even if one has little sympathy with pro-Palestinian student protest, one should ask whether we want to bequeath this apparatus to any future government coalition in Germany. How sure are we that a more authoritarian government will not come into power, given the current rise of the far right? How sure are we that these “*trapdoors*” that currently target “only” a few radical protesters will not be used to marginalize education workers and students with any sort of critical position? The situation has already become so dire that Germany has dropped out of the top 10 countries in the academic freedom rankings (Kinzelbach et al., 2025). Unless they are actively resisted by all who value academic freedom, these *trapdoors* may soon open beneath anyone.

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