

3 Ideological Cleavages in Israeli Public Opinion in the 2022 Elections

Yaniv Shapira, Liran Harsgor and Alon Yakter

Israeli politics in 2022 was characterized by record levels of turmoil and ideological disagreement. And yet, many claims that the ideological gaps among the Israeli public, particularly within Jewish society, are not as wide as is believed. According to this view, most of the public agrees on most ideological issues and divides mostly on emotional and personalistic considerations.

The 36th government, headed by Naftali Bennet and Yair Lapid in 2021–2022, embodied this claim well. After three repeated elections that ended without a government, Bennet and Lapid successfully formed their “Change Coalition” in June 2021. Their government has been one of the most interesting and controversial in Israel’s history. It comprised eight parties from across the political spectrum: on the left, Labor and Meretz; in the center, Yesh Atid and Blue and White (Kahol-Lavan); on the right, Yemina, New Hope and Yisrael Beiteinu; and, for the first time, an Arab party, Ra’am. This heterogeneity reflected a broad ideological range (Shapira and Rahat, 2021) that produced an “ideologically open coalition” (Laver and Shepsle, 1996) containing ideological spaces that could be filled by opposition parties.

The ideological diversity in the change coalition was reflected in the coalition’s formal guidelines (2021), which declared that “[this] unity government will focus on the many issues that concern the country’s citizens in the areas of security, health, and the economy,” and that the legislature would “broaden the margins of national agreement.” Lapid (2023) dubbed this view as “the 75 Alliance”: “In Israel’s 75th year, 75% of the citizenry agree on 75% of the issues.” Statements in this vein have become common, for instance, by MK Matan Kahana (2020), who wrote, “I am convinced that we agree on most issues ...vso in fact we can live together wonderfully!” and Beit Shemesh Mayor Aliza Bloch (2020) who said, “We agree on most of the issues. I believe that the difficulty begins when we begin our discourse from a place of conflict. We immediately look for disagreements. On most issues, there are none.”

However, critics of this government claimed that it did not stand on a foundation of shared ideology and clear national goals but rather on its personalistic opposition to Benjamin Netanyahu. According to many, on both the right and the left, the preoccupation with Netanyahu spawned two polarized camps with murky ideological differences. For example, journalist Aluf Benn (2021) claimed that “the only consideration in the elections was ‘yes Bibi’ or ‘no Bibi,’” and journalist Amit

Segal (2020) wrote that “just not Bibi” was not a sufficient national agenda. In public opinion surveys as well, a growing majority said that the elections took place mainly on a personal basis rather than on the issues (Rahat, 2022).

Therefore, it appears that the ideological lines on Israel’s political map have blurred during the 2022 elections. In a 2022 Facebook post, Lapid, then acting Prime Minister, wrote, “One of the big secrets of Israeli society is that we agree on most issues. In fact, we agree more than we ever have.” Our goal in this chapter is to examine this “secret” empirically. Specifically, we seek to answer three questions: Firstly, on which issues do we find ideological disagreements at the mass-level across party lines? Secondly, which issues had a stronger influence on Jewish voting patterns in the 2022 elections? And finally, is there an observable trend of growing ideological polarization over the preceding decade?

Given these goals, our analysis focuses on the party level rather than on party blocs, despite prior indications of strong inter-bloc cleavages in Israel (Rahat et al., 2016; Arian and Shamir, 2001; Shamir and Arian, 1999). This choice stems from two reasons. Firstly, Israel’s partisan blocs are not as obvious as before. Recent years marked the entry of new parties and the diminishing power of historically large ones (Kenig and Tuttnauer, 2017). Moreover, the ongoing political crisis formed new coalitional alliances that do not necessarily reflect the traditional right/left divide, e.g., the tight partnership between the nationalist right and anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox parties or the pact between the liberal-hawkish right, the Zionist left and some Arab (Palestinian Israeli) parties. Secondly, Israel’s various parties embody social-political and ideological nuances that often get lost in the broader bloc-level view. The party level showcases these nuances at a higher resolution: Is there disagreement among supporters of the right-wing parties on certain issues? Is it correct to assume that supporters of the center-left are ideologically close? Do the supporters of some parties on both partisan sides find broad agreement on certain issues?

Our findings produce several insights. Firstly, there is broad agreement among the Jewish public regarding economic issues, such as Israel’s desirable economic structure, and civilian issues, such as civil marriage. Secondly, alongside this, the cleavage regarding the Israeli–Palestinian conflict remains deep and central and largely reflects support for parties affiliated with the right, center and left, respectively. Moreover, we observe a significant parallel cleavage concerning the desirable powers of the Supreme Court. It divides supporters of the religious parties from the opposition, with Likud supporters in between. Thirdly, the latter two issues, not the former and more consensual ones, predicted more strongly voting in the 2022 elections.

This chapter, therefore, offers two main contributions to the debate on Israeli public opinion and voting patterns: Firstly, in a period characterized by a nationalistic and polarized discourse, it empirically outlines the lines of agreement and conflict among Israel’s Jewish electorate. Secondly, our findings contribute to understanding the main ideological cleavages in Israeli public opinion and their importance heading into the 2022 elections. Alongside the growing focus on other issues in Israel, such as the emotional divide and attitudes toward Netanyahu, our

findings show that the ideological gaps still play an important role in the present crisis.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. The following part (3.1) presents the research literature on ideological cleavages in Israel's electorate from a comparative viewpoint. Then, part 3.2 describes the database and our methodology. Part 3.3 addresses the first research question and examines empirical findings on the Jewish voting public's stances on selected ideological issues on the eve of the 2022 elections. Part 3.4 elaborates on the importance of these issues in actual voting patterns. Part 3.5 examines whether public opinion has become more polarized on these issues in the preceding decade. The last part (3.6) summarizes the chapter's conclusions and contribution to the discussion on Israel's current political situation.

3.1 Research Background

3.1.1 Ideological Cleavages from a Comparative Standpoint: Stasis versus Change

The main ideological divide, and the most prevalent in Western democracies in recent decades, is between left and right (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1990; Huber and Inglehart, 1995; Benoit and Laver, 2006). Across most of the West, this spectrum includes two dimensions, economic and cultural (Kriesi et al., 2008; van der Brug and van Spanje, 2009). Economically, the left tends to support government intervention and income redistribution, whereas the right tends to support minimal government intervention and free market policies. Culturally, the left advocates progressive values, including social equality, multiculturalism and environmental protection, whereas the right champions traditional norms, national identity, law and order and hawkish foreign policy.

At the same time, recent social and economic changes have led to significant transformations in this historic ideological breakdown. The most significant new fault line pits liberal-progressive versus authoritative-traditional values.¹ In this cleavage, the former support globalization, individual liberty and progressive cultural and environmental values, while the latter support cultural conservatism, local-national identity and hierarchical power structures (Hooghe et al., 2002; Kriesi et al., 2006, 2012).

Beyond ideology, the political discourse is increasingly shaped by other factors, too. For example, affective partisan polarization, driven by emotional tendencies based on group identity, has become a focal point in academic research (Iyengar et al., 2012; Gidron et al., 2020; Reiljan, 2020; Wagner, 2021). Rather than policy differences, this factor emphasizes strong emotional identification with an in-group and negative feelings toward the out-group (Iyengar et al., 2012; Mason, 2018; Dias and Lelkes, 2022).

Additionally, we see a trend of personalization in politics (Rahat and Sheaffer, 2007; Balmas et al., 2014), wherein leaders' personalities and charisma overshadow traditional power loci and party brands. This phenomenon has implications for voters' considerations, as personal fondness or grudges take center stage either

as emotional mechanisms or as ideological shortcuts (McGregor, 2018; Lavi et al., 2022). Together, these ideological and non-ideological forces point to increasing disagreement and polarization among various electorates across the West. Is this also the case in Israel?

3.1.2 The Ideological Cleavage in Israel

Israel's main ideological cleavage has historically surrounded the protracted ethno-territorial conflict in which it has engaged since its establishment. After the Six-Day War, Israel divided politically into two main camps – the dovish left and the hawkish right – which disagreed over the future of the territories occupied in that war and the appropriate balance between Israel's democratic and ethno-national character (Shafir and Peled, 2002; Shamir and Arian, 1994, 1999). This divide defined Israel's main ideological cleavage in the ensuing decades, overshadowing other collective issues and identities and sowing inter-group tensions (Arian and Shamir, 2008; Enos and Gidron, 2018; Hermann, 2019; Kimmerling, 2001; Sheafer et al., 2011). Even today, the prevailing use of the terms “left” and “right” in Israel's public domain, the press and academia refers to this ideological axis.

The most influential and cited study addressing Israel's ideological cleavage is by Shamir and Arian (1999), who sketched the outlines of Israel's two main political blocs until the mid-1990s. They claimed that these blocs reflect collective identities comprised of an external dimension and an internal dimension. The external dimension relates to Israel's borders and its relations with the international community, the Arab states and the Palestinians. As such, it includes positions on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, peace process, territorial compromise and a Palestinian state. The internal dimension refers to Jewish-Israeli society, i.e., the meanings of Zionism, nationalism, citizenship, state-religion relations and the tension between Israel's Jewish and democratic components. Findings show that the external dimension, which relates to the conflict, is the strongest predictor of voting patterns and the clearest fault line between left and right.

Moreover, the emergence of the center bloc since the early-2000s also stems from this issue (Arian and Shamir, 2008). Yakter and Tessler (2023) call center voters “doubtful doves” and show that their stances regarding the conflict are characterized by two opposing trends: On the one hand, support in principle for a two-state solution (doves), but on the other, skepticism about a possible peace agreement in the present reality (doubtful).

Nevertheless, the events and transformations in Israel in recent years, alongside the aforementioned global trends, led many researchers to neglect the “classic” left/right breakdown and focus on new directions. One such avenue, which echoes the broader comparative trend, is political personalization (Rahat and Sheafer, 2007; Rahat and Kenig, 2018; Rahat, 2019). In Israel, particularly in recent years, this phenomenon centers around Netanyahu's dominance and its influences on the values held by the public (Rahat, 2022). Lavi et al. (2022), for example, found that support for Netanyahu is associated with non-liberal values and lessening defense of democratic rule. These trends, alongside the ongoing political crisis and the

establishment of Bennet and Lapid's Change Coalition, have established the claim that Israel's political system and its voters are driven primarily by their feelings about Netanyahu rather than ideological considerations.

Another Western trend observed in Israel is the affective polarization between voters of different partisan blocs. While Israel aligns with global polarization levels (Gidron et al., 2020), its polarization appears to have increased in recent years (Amitai et al., this volume; Gidron et al., 2022; Harel et al., 2020; Lev, 2023). Moreover, emotional identification with an ideological group – another facet of this phenomenon – constitutes a clear predictor of voting independent of party platforms (Oshri et al., 2022).

While the growing preoccupation with affective polarization is shifting the political center of gravity from the ideological to the emotional, it raises questions about the place and scope of Israel's ideological cleavages. Can a political reality characterized by high emotional polarization co-exist with the claim of broad ideological agreement? Alternatively, does Israel's growing political polarization build upon deep and widening ideological disagreement on the core issues? If so, the increasing focus on personal factors reinforces the need to re-explore the "classic" ideological fault lines among Israeli voters, as we do next.

3.2 Data and Methodology

3.2.1 Database

The empirical analysis in this chapter contains three parts based on INES survey data. First, using the 2022 election survey, we examine the average positions of each party's voters on several key ideological issues. Next, using multinomial logistic regressions, we look at which issues had the strongest influence on voting in the 2022 election. Finally, we analyze data from the preceding decade (2013–2022) to estimate the extent to which these gaps changed over this period.

Due to several limitations, our analysis focuses only on Jewish voters. Firstly, the number of voters for Arab parties in the 2022 sample is very low, rendering the drawing of reliable conclusions difficult. Secondly, these respondents had a low answer rate on our questions of interest. Thirdly, the political shifts and uncertainty surrounding these parties up to the election, including whether they will run separately or together, deem voting intentions problematic at the time of the survey. We hope that the scope and nature of the available data on Arab voters will improve in the future and enable better incorporation into this type of analysis.

3.2.2 Variable Measurement

3.2.2.1 Voting

For the classification of respondents' voting intentions, we use the following question: "If the elections were to take place today, what list would you vote for?" In the analyses of the 2022 voter opinion survey, we included respondents who indicated one of the following parties: Likud, Yesh Atid, State Camp, Religious Zionism, Shas, United Torah Judaism (UTJ), Yisrael Beiteinu, Labor

Table 3.1 Distribution of respondents by party (sample size in parentheses)

<i>Parties</i>	<i>Election 2022</i>	<i>2013–2022 Combined</i>
Likud	22.4% (n = 232)	43.7% (n = 1,792)
Yesh Atid ²	24.8% (n = 256)	28.4% (n = 1,163)
State Camp	11.3% (n = 117)	–
Religious Zionism	15.1% (n = 156)	–
Shas	7.8% (n = 81)	7.3% (n = 300)
United Tora Judaism	6.8% (n = 70)	–
Yisrael Beiteinu	3.2% (n = 33)	3.5% (n = 142)
Labor	4.9% (n = 51)	17.1% (n = 703)
Meretz	3.7% (n = 38)	–
Total	100% (N = 1,304)	100% (N = 4,100)

and Meretz. As elaborated below, the longitudinal analyses (2013–2022) include five main parties – Likud, Yesh Atid, Shas, Yisrael Beiteinu and Labor – as some of the others either did not run consistently, merged with/split from other parties or contained too low a number of respondents. Table 3.1 summarizes the parties that we included, the sample size and the distribution of respondents between them.

3.2.2.2 *Ideological issues*

Ideological issues were classified according to four subjects: the economy, state-religion relations, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and democracy. In the descriptive section, the questions are recoded such that a high value indicates a right-wing/hawkish stance. For each of the questions, respondents who answered “don’t know/no opinion” were omitted.³

3.2.2.2.1 *The economy*

Positions were measured as follows: “Regarding Israel’s economic structure, do you more support a socialist approach? Or a capitalist approach?” Answers were “definitely capitalist,” “more capitalist than socialist,” “more socialist than capitalist” and “definitely socialist.”

3.2.2.2.2 *Religion and state*

We used two questions. First, “Should Israel’s government ensure that public life is governed by Jewish religious tradition?” which could be answered thusly: “It is definitely the government’s job to do so,” “Perhaps,” “I do not think that the government should be doing so” and “It is definitely not the government’s job to do so.” Second, “To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement: The state should offer the option of civil marriage in addition to that of religious marriage.” Answers were “Definitely disagree,” “Disagree,” “Agree” and “Definitely agree.”

3.2.2.2.3 *The Israeli–Palestinian conflict*

Positions were measured using three questions. The first was, “Should we arrive at a peace agreement with the Palestinians?” Answers were: “Definitely not,” “I don’t think so,” “I think so” and “Definitely.” The second question was, “Should Israel agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state in Judaea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip as part of a permanent settlement?” Answers were: “Definitely not,” “Apparently not,” “Apparently” and “Definitely.” The third question: “What do you believe are the Palestinians’ ultimate aspirations?” Answers were: “To conquer Israel and destroy most of the Jews therein,” “To conquer Israel,” “To regain control over all of the territories that we captured in the Six-Day War” and “To regain control over some of the territories that we captured in the Six-Day War.”

3.2.2.2.4 *Democracy*

We used two questions. The first addressed the essence of democracy: “With which of the following two claims regarding the essence of democracy do you agree most? ‘Any regime that governs as per the principle of majority rule is a democracy’ or ‘For a regime to be democratic, it must also uphold human rights and freedom of speech’?” Respondents could choose between the former statement or the latter. The second question addressed one of the main issues surrounding the separation of powers and the authority of the Supreme Court: “To what extent do you agree with the following statement: ‘The Supreme Court must have the authority to overturn a law enacted by the Knesset.’” The answers: “Definitely disagree,” “Disagree,” “Agree” and “Definitely disagree.” The survey was conducted before the judicial reform crisis began in January 2023; stances on this issue were not influenced by the political debate and protests it triggered.

3.3 **Descriptive Analysis of Voter Positions by Party in the 2022 Elections**

3.3.1 *Method of Analysis*

To examine the domains on which voters agree or not, we plotted descriptive graphs summarizing the share of each party’s voters that support one side or the other in each key issue. To do so, we re-coded each answer scale dichotomously, such that all answers tending toward the right (e.g., full/partial support for capitalism over socialism or strong/moderate opposition to civil marriage) were coded “1” and answers tending to the left were coded “0.”⁴ Coding the question as a dummy variable and showing the percentage of each party’s supporters with the value of 1 enables us to obtain a clear picture of the share of supporters/opponents of a given policy. Thus, we could answer the question, “In what does the majority support?” For example, if a certain issue shows that 60% of Likud voters received the value of 1, we could conclude that most respondents who declared they would vote for Likud supported that position.

In each graph, a dashed vertical line indicates the percentage of respondents of the entire sample that received a value of 1 on a given ideological issue. This mark presents a reference point for each party's supporters compared to the Jewish public's aggregate position. The further the dashed line is from the midpoint (50%), the more we can conclude that there is broad agreement on that issue. Conversely, the closer the dashed line to the midpoint, the more divided the Jewish public on that issue.

3.3.2 Findings

3.3.2.1 The economy

Figure 3.1 shows the percentage of voters for each party that prefer capitalism over socialism. The vertical line shows that most of the sample skews left economically, with only 35.8% preferring capitalism over socialism. The data indicate a relatively

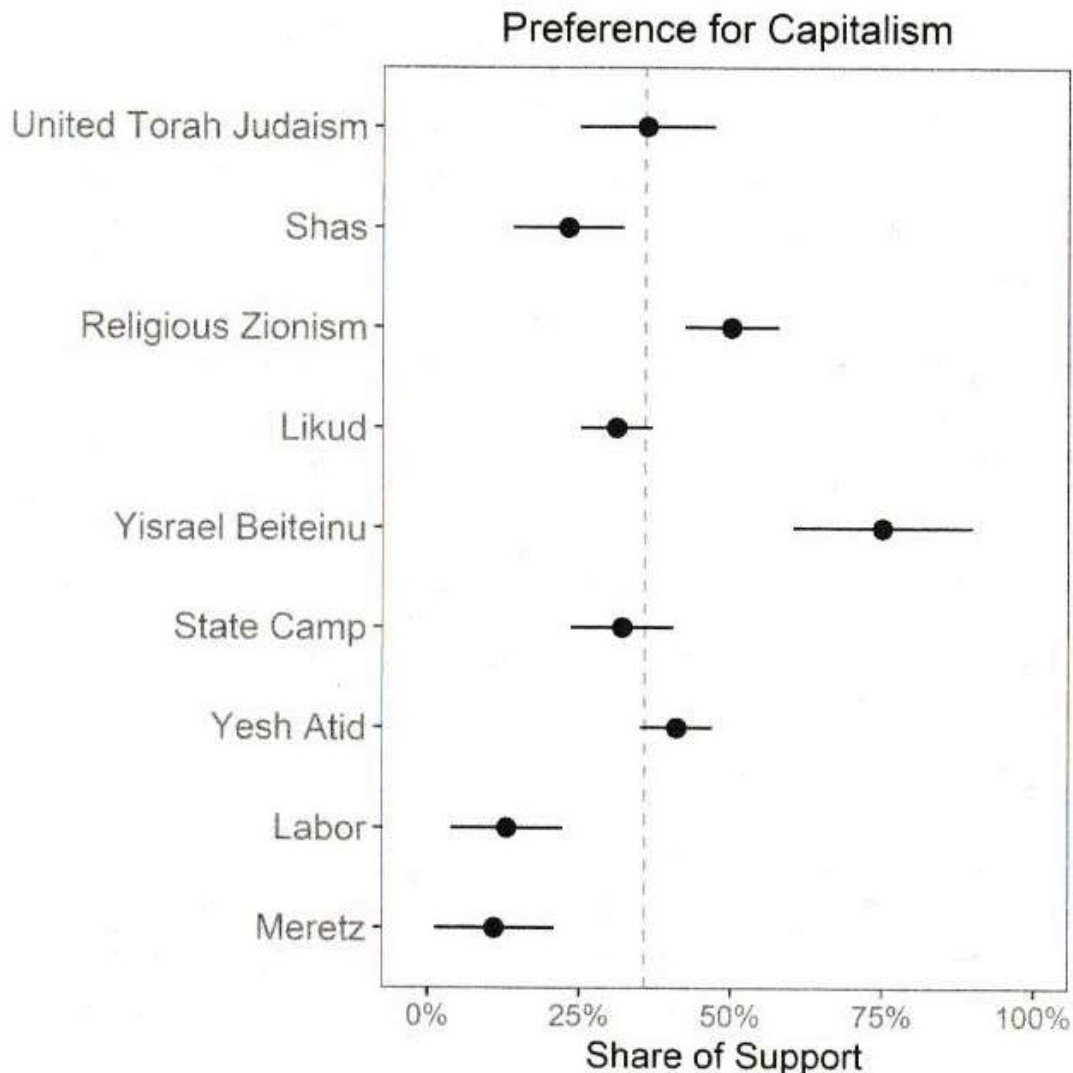


Figure 3.1 Percentage of supporters of capitalism over socialism, by party

Note: The horizontal lines indicate the standard error at a confidence level of 95%. The vertical dashed line indicates the stance of the entire sample.

broad agreement on this issue across parties and ideological blocs. The only two parties wherein over half of the supporters prefer capitalism are Yisrael Beiteinu, with many supporters hailing from the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and are averse to the term “socialism,” and Religious Zionism, whose leaders have identified in recent years with a capitalist orientation. Nevertheless, even in this party, about half of the respondents prefer a socialistic economy.

3.3.2.2 Religion and state

Figure 3.2 presents respondents' positions on state-religion relations. The left-hand panel shows the percentage of each party's voters who support public life being governed by Jewish tradition. On this issue, we see clear polarization between the religious parties and the rest, where Likud voters are split thereon. About 46% of the sample, headed by religious party voters and less so by Likud voters, support this view. This finding testifies to a deep ideological divide among the Jewish public. Nonetheless, the first question emphasizes general concepts such as tradition and Judaism, which can be interpreted by many as symbolic and affective. When

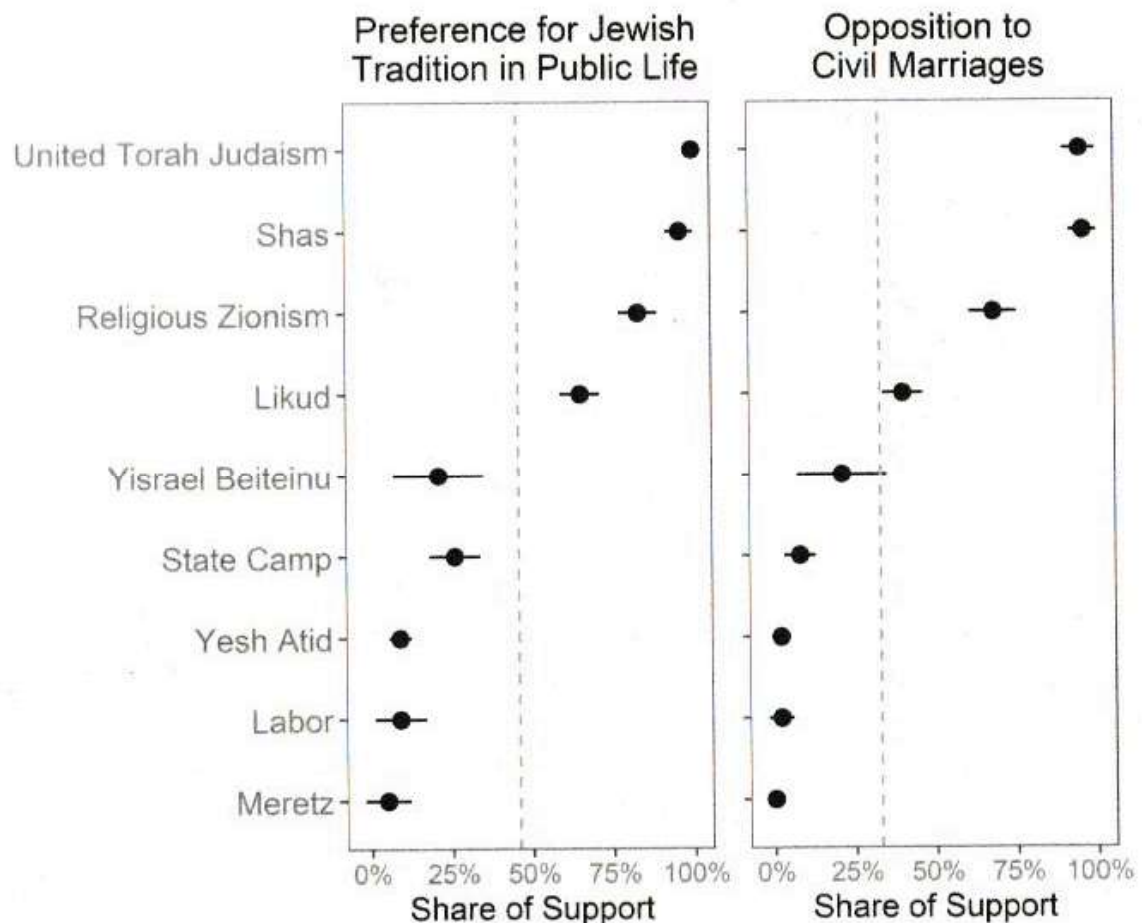


Figure 3.2 Percentage of supporters of Jewish tradition governing public life (left) and opponents of civil marriage (right), by party

Note: The horizontal lines indicate the standard error at a confidence level of 95%. The dashed vertical lines indicate the stance of the entire sample.

examining concrete policy, i.e., permitting civil marriage (the right-hand panel), the majority supports a liberal approach, with only a third opposing. Likud supporters, many of whom identify as religiously traditional, are especially noteworthy: while most Likud supporters favor incorporating Jewish tradition into public life symbolically, most express a pluralistic stance on civil marriage. Hence, views on religion and state break down between supporters of the religious parties and the rest, where Likud supporters tend to support religion governing public life in theory but are divided on concrete policy involving actual prohibitions and limitations.

3.3.2.3 *The Israeli–Palestinian conflict*

Figure 3.3 shows respondents' positions on the conflict, the primary ideological divide in Israeli politics in recent decades. Despite the relative gridlock and neglect of this issue in the years ahead of the 2022 election, the answers map onto the parties' accepted classification along the left-right axis. The establishment of a Palestinian state (left-hand panel) is the most divisive question, with 61% opposed, indicating a rightward skew and narrow range of support. A clear divide appears between supporters of the right-wing bloc and their opponents. The only exceptions are Yisrael Beiteinu supporters, who are divided on this issue despite the party's hawkish stance.

There is broader agreement (73% of the entire sample) on the lack of faith in the possibility of peace (middle panel). This belief is shared by most respondents except for Labor and Meretz supporters, while Yesh Atid supporters are divided thereon. The main difference between these two dimensions stems from the skepticism that characterizes center-left voters (Yesh Atid and State Camp): Whereas most support the idea of two states, they do not believe in its viability. The partisan divide regarding the conflict, therefore, surrounds the question of the solution's *nature in principle*, whereas there is relatively broad agreement on its low practical viability.

Another essential issue relating to Jewish–Arab relations is perceptions of Palestinian aspirations. The right-hand panel shows the percentage of supporters of each party who believe that the Palestinians' ultimate goal is to conquer Israel, not just regain part or all of the occupied territories: overall, 67% believe that the Palestinians aspire to more than just territorial compromise. This question, too, reflects the various parties' perceived positions on the left-right spectrum: Meretz and Labor (left) supporters feel the least threatened by Palestinian aspirations; the Orthodox, ultra-Orthodox and Likud parties feel the most threatened; and Yesh Atid and the State Camp (center) fall in between, with a slight tendency leftward for Yesh Atid and rightward for State Camp. Yisrael Beiteinu supporters are located between the right and the center, a combination of the party's traditional hawkish stance and its recent break from the right-wing bloc. It appears the Yisrael Beiteinu supporters, whether due to a change in their positions or to new joiners from the center, are closer to the "skeptical dove" pattern characterizing Israel's centrist voters.

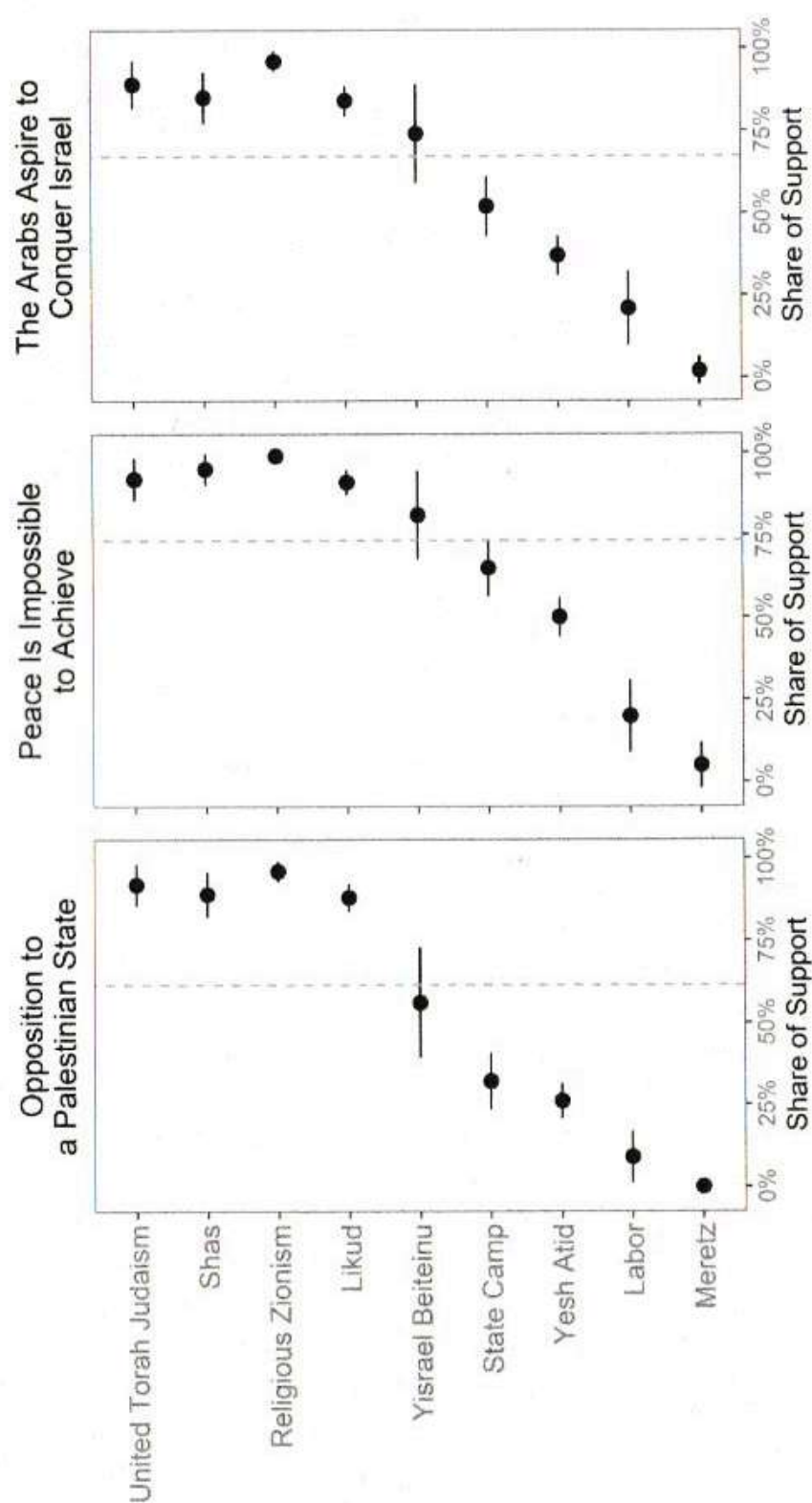


Figure 3.3 Percentage of those opposed to the establishment of a Palestinian state (left), those who believe that a peace agreement is impossible (middle) and those who surmise that the Palestinians aspire to destroy Israel (right), by party

Note: The horizontal lines indicate the standard error at a confidence level of 95%. The dashed vertical lines indicate the stance of the entire sample.

3.3.2.4 Democracy

One question asked respondents about the principle that better constitutes the essence of democracy: just majority rule or also protecting human rights and freedom of speech. According to Figure 3.4, there is broad agreement across all party supporters: About 78% of respondents selected the latter, not just the first. This majority is especially robust among voters of the Change Coalition, with over 80% support. It is slimmer among supporters of Likud and the religious parties, with 65%–75% support, whereas the most divided party was Likud, with 40% supporting the narrower majoritarian view.

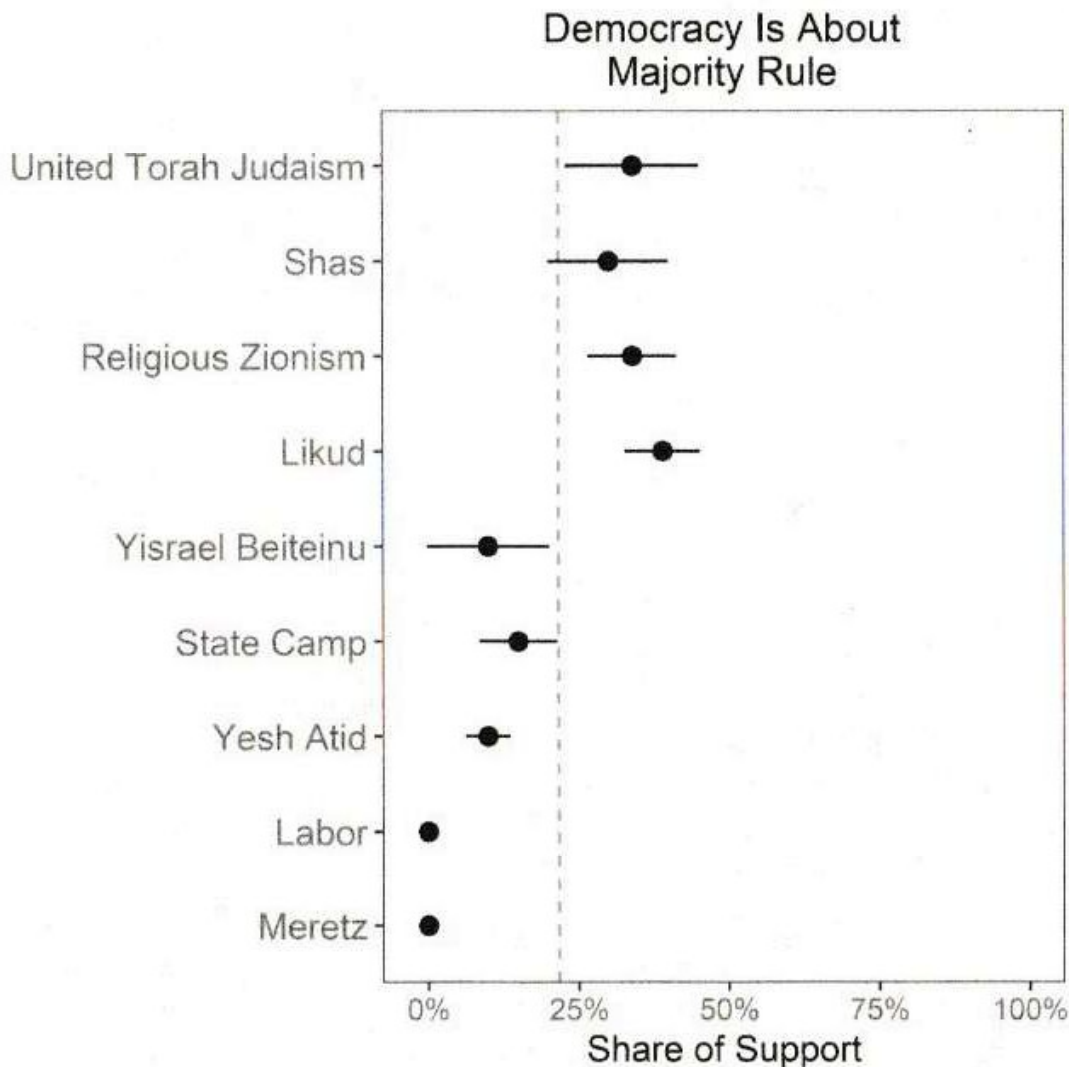


Figure 3.4 Percentage of supporters of democracy being defined solely as majority rule, by party

Note: The horizontal lines indicate the standard error at a confidence level of 95%. The dashed vertical line indicates the stance of the entire sample.

The ideological divide deepens when moving from the overall essence of democracy to more concrete and loaded issues about its application. One of the main issues in a country's democratic structure is checks and balances, and in the Israeli case, the authority of the Supreme Court vis-à-vis the Knesset. Figure 3.5

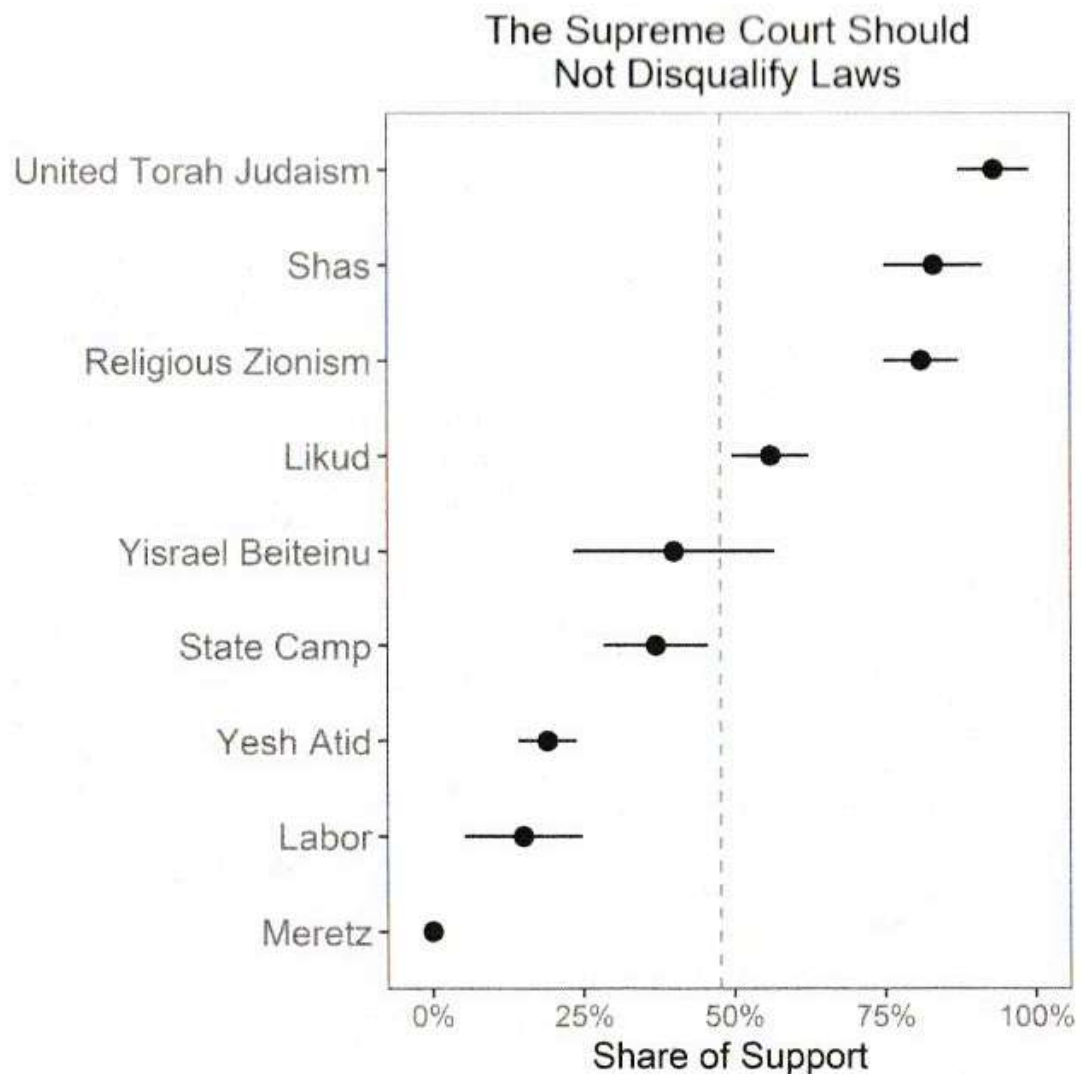


Figure 3.5 Percentage of those who oppose the Supreme Court having the authority to overturn Knesset legislation by party

Note: The horizontal lines indicate standard errors at a confidence level of 95%. The dashed vertical line indicates the stance of the entire sample.

shows data on one of the main questions regarding this issue: should the Supreme Court have the authority to overturn Knesset legislation? Our data show significant disagreement, where about 48% of all respondents believe that it should not have this authority, and about 52% believe that it should. Of the issues presented thus far, this is the most disputed, even before the judicial reform attempt and subsequent protest wave.

A party-level analysis largely finds the standard right-left divide but with several interesting differences. While the most unequivocal support for the Supreme Court's authority to overturn Knesset legislation is found among supporters of left-wing parties, Yesh Atid supporters also joined this group. On the other side, State Camp and Yisrael Beiteinu supporters were split on this issue, with nearly half of them joining the right-wing and religious party supporters. The opposing stance shows the mirror opposite: the religious and ultra-Orthodox party supporters

exhibit unequivocal opposition to the Supreme Court's authority, whereas Likud supporters are the most divided. Yet despite its resemblance to the classic right-left divide, the greatest split was in the center bloc, between Yesh Atid supporters, who are more liberal, and State Camp and Yisrael Beiteinu supporters, who are more conservative; and on the right, where Likud supporters are less adamant on this issue than supporters of the religious and ultra-Orthodox parties. Among the entire sample, there is significant disagreement on this issue. With that in mind, this disagreement may also reflect the issue's new and yet unformed nature before the 2022 elections. Future research could investigate whether the judicial reform initiative that arose thereafter contributed to clearer and more agreed opinions on this issue within each party or ideological bloc.

3.4 The Electoral Significance of Disagreements for the 2022 Elections

Thus far, we have shown which issues are the most disputed and which garner the most agreement among Jewish voters. At the same time, whether an issue is controversial or not does not necessarily testify to its electoral importance. The purpose of this section is to examine which issues are most predictive of Jewish respondents' actual voting intentions.

3.4.1 Method of Analysis

The analysis uses a multivariate multinomial logit regression, which estimates the correlation between each ideological position and the likelihood of voting for each party. As explained earlier, the dependent variable in the model is voting for a **specific party** rather than a bloc, thereby providing more nuanced insights without pre-assuming ideological similarity between voters for different parties.

The model estimates the predictors of voting for each party relative to a reference party. For our model, we chose **Likud** to serve as the reference point due to being the largest party and the most frequent formateur in the preceding decade. In addition, as a right-wing non-religious party, its use as a base category can reveal differences between its supporters and voters for right-wing religious parties, Likud's main ideological partners in recent years. Statistically, choosing Likud as the baseline party means that the explanatory variables predict voting for each other party compared to the odds of voting for Likud.

The model contains two groups of independent variables. The first and main group contains the four **ideological issues** cited in the preceding section – the economy, religion and state, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and democratic perceptions – each represented by a question chosen from those previously analyzed. Positions on the economy were measured by preferred economic structure, where a high value indicates support for a capitalist economy. The religion-state issue was measured by the question asking about the extent to which Jewish tradition should govern public life, where a high value indicates more religious positions. The issue of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict was measured by support for the establishment of a Palestinian state, where a high value indicates a hawkish stance opposing it. The issue of the Supreme Court's authority was measured based on views about its

power to overturn Knesset legislation, where a high value indicated an authoritarian stance opposing this possibility. Unlike the preceding section, the regression analysis uses the questions' full four-point scale, not binary dummy variables.

The second variable group contains **socio-demographic control variables**, including age, gender, education, income, religiosity and ethnic background. The age brackets used are 18–22, 23–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, 60–69, 70–79 and 80 and over. The education categories used are completed 8th grade, completed high school, achieved a post-secondary non-academic diploma and achieved an academic degree. Income was measured by the question, "What is your average monthly household expenses?" The categories are far below average, below average, average, above average and far above average. The religiosity variable was measured by the question, "To what extent do you keep religious tradition?" where a high value represents close adherence. Finally, ethnicity is a dummy variable obtaining a value of 1 if the respondents or their father were born in Africa or Asia and 0 if born elsewhere.⁵

3.4.2 Findings

The model's findings are shown in Table 3.2. As explained above, the model's coefficients estimate each variable's correlation with the likelihood of voting for each party relative to Likud, the reference category. Accordingly, variables with positive coefficients indicate that higher values increase the likelihood of voting for that party than for Likud, whereas negative coefficients indicate the opposite, i.e., a higher likelihood of voting for Likud. The coefficients of the various parties are grouped by columns. Coefficients labeled with asterisks indicate statistical significance at the 95% level.

We begin with the socio-demographic control variables. With voters' ideological positions included in the model, their explanatory power is relatively weak. The most significant variable of this group is religiosity, but not for all parties. As anticipated, this variable was statistically significant and positive for the ultra-Orthodox parties and significant and negative for Yesh Atid, Meretz, and Yisrael Beiteinu, the latter three having a distinctly secular profile. Note that religiosity was also the most significant socio-demographic variable in past studies of Israeli electoral patterns. Aside from this variable, the rest of the socio-demographic variables show insignificant correlations, with the exception of specific parties.

What about ideological positions? The analysis shows that economic views significantly predict voting only for some of the parties (vis-à-vis the Likud). This finding aligns with previous studies that found that the economic issue is the weakest voting predictor of all ideological issues. This variable was significant and positive only for Yisrael Beiteinu and Religious Zionism, indicating that right-wing stances regarding the economy raise the chances of voting for those parties versus the Likud.

A predicted probability analysis based on our model estimates that the transition from the most socialist category to the most capitalist increased the likelihood of voting for those parties from 0.7% to 10% (Yisrael Beiteinu) and from 9% to 24% (Religious Zionism) holding the rest of the variables constant. Alongside

Table 3.2 Predictors of voting in the 2022 elections: Multinomial logit regression

	UTJ	Shas	Religious Zionism	Yisrael Beiteinu	State Camp	Yesh Atid	Labor	Meretz
Age	-0.22 (0.16)	-0.31** (0.14)	-0.22** (0.09)	-0.25* (0.15)	0.08 (0.10)	0.08 (0.09)	-0.02 (0.14)	0.09 (0.16)
Gender = Female	0.18 (0.47)	-0.29 (0.40)	-0.82*** (0.28)	-0.85* (0.48)	-1.19*** (0.33)	0.25 (0.32)	0.47 (0.50)	0.22 (0.52)
Education	-0.51** (0.21)	-0.12 (0.19)	0.28** (0.14)	0.28 (0.25)	0.53*** (0.17)	0.50*** (0.16)	0.62** (0.26)	0.92*** (0.31)
Income	-0.04 (0.17)	-0.16 (0.15)	0.01 (0.10)	0.23 (0.18)	-0.07 (0.12)	0.07 (0.12)	-0.22 (0.18)	0.14 (0.19)
Religiosity	3.38*** (0.58)	2.70*** (0.39)	0.42** (0.18)	-1.10*** (0.38)	-0.18 (0.24)	-0.59*** (0.23)	-0.60 (0.37)	-0.85** (0.41)
Ethnic Background = Mizrahi	-1.08* (0.64)	0.64 (0.42)	-0.18 (0.30)	-0.71 (0.62)	0.08 (0.34)	-0.33 (0.33)	-1.07* (0.60)	0.11 (0.57)
Economy	-0.06 (0.27)	-0.52** (0.26)	0.46*** (0.17)	0.96*** (0.33)	-0.41* (0.22)	0.15 (0.21)	-0.94*** (0.35)	-0.60 (0.38)
Religion and State	1.15** (0.53)	0.55* (0.31)	0.18 (0.15)	-0.83*** (0.28)	-0.77*** (0.18)	-1.26*** (0.18)	-1.17*** (0.30)	-1.41*** (0.36)
Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	-0.63** (0.32)	-0.67** (0.26)	0.89*** (0.24)	-1.01*** (0.27)	-1.28*** (0.19)	-1.46*** (0.18)	-2.54*** (0.33)	-3.02*** (0.41)
Supreme Court's Authority	0.69** (0.28)	0.43* (0.24)	0.48*** (0.16)	-0.26 (0.27)	-0.69*** (0.19)	-1.11*** (0.19)	-1.20*** (0.30)	-1.81*** (0.38)
Constant	-14.59*** (3.08)	-7.94*** (1.91)	-7.56*** (1.27)	3.65** (1.76)	6.86*** (1.23)	8.45*** (1.19)	11.93*** (1.72)	10.98*** (1.90)
Observations	848	848	848	848	848	848	848	848

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. The Likud party served as a reference category.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

this, this variable was significant and negative for Shas and Labor, i.e., leftist economic positions increase the chances of voting for those parties versus the Likud. Transitioning from the most capitalist to the most socialist category increases the chances of voting for Shas from 3% to 12% and for Labor from 0.8% to 9%. An interesting finding regarding Yesh Atid voters, a party known as centrist and liberal: extreme stances on the economy – both capitalist and socialist – decrease the chances of voting for it. Economic views, therefore, do not align with the common inter-bloc divide.

The issue of religion and state, which constitutes an essential part of the internal dimension of collective identities in Israel, is a statistically significant predictor of the likelihood of voting for any party relative to the Likud, except Religious Zionism. On this issue, Likud and Religious Zionism voters stand between supporters of the ultra-Orthodox parties and the secular parties. The lack of significance of this variable for Religious Zionism vis-à-vis Likud can be explained, perhaps, by the former's notable success in the 2022 elections – its base of support included non-religious hawkish audiences, as well as the religious-traditional profile of Likud voters. It is also likely that the symbolic-declarative nature of the survey question we used caused more Likud voters to support it, as discussed in the previous section.

A predicted probability analysis shows that transitioning from the most liberal to the most traditional stance nearly doubled one's likelihood of voting Likud, from 18% to 34%. Nevertheless, the question of Jewish tradition in public life most likely does not reveal the complexity of this electorate. As shown in Figure 3.2, on a more practical issue such as civil marriage, Likud supporters are divided and do not exhibit a clear traditional stance. Another observation arising from the predicted probability analysis is the difference between the supporters of the two center parties, Yesh Atid and the State Camp: while a transition from the most liberal to the most traditional position decreased one's chances of voting Yesh Atid from 37% to 12%, the chances of voting for State Camp remain nearly the same (they decreased from 14% to 12%), revealing the difference in the ideological profile of the supporters of these parties, which until recently ran together on the same ticket.

Regarding the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the analysis shows that previous findings about its centrality remain valid in 2022. Voters' stances on a Palestinian state remained the most distinctive issue between different voters. This variable is significant and negative both for the secular parties and for the ultra-Orthodox parties as well. The more hawkish a given voter's position on the conflict, the less likely he/she is to vote for any other secular party compared to the Likud. Indeed, a predicted probability analysis based on our model shows that a transition from full agreement with a Palestinian state to full opposition thereto considerably increases a voter's likelihood of voting for Likud from 6% to 35%. On the other hand, for Religious Zionism, this variable is significant and positive, i.e., a hawkish stance regarding the conflict increased the likelihood of voting Religious Zionism even vis-à-vis Likud: full support for a Palestinian state predicted a 0.6% likelihood of voting Religious Zionism, i.e., nearly 0 chance, while absolute opposition thereto increased one's likelihood of voting Religious Zionism to 24%, or a fortyfold jump.

On the other side of the political map, the transition from the most hawkish stance to the most dovish stance increased one's likelihood of voting for Labor from 0.3% to 13%, and for Meretz from 0.1% to 10%. Transition from the most hawkish view to the most dovish also increased one's likelihood of voting for the center parties (from 18% to 30% for Yesh Atid, and from 8% to 16% for the State Camp). As anticipated, it appears that center-left voters are dovish on the conflict, although there are differences between those parties as well. Hence the conflict remains the main issue dividing the various parties' supporters, despite the diplomatic freeze and absence of negotiations on the eve of the 2022 elections.

Finally, the Supreme Court's authorities became a primary dispute after the 2022 elections. How strongly did it affect those elections beforehand? Figure 3.5 shows that this issue aligned largely – albeit not completely – with the classic right-left divide. Stronger opposition to the Supreme Court's authority to overturn Knesset legislation significantly and negatively predicts voting for any of the secular parties versus the Likud, except for Yisrael Beiteinu; and significantly and positively voting for the religious parties. State Camp and Yesh Atid voters, the two center parties, differ on this issue: While transition from the most opposed view to the most supportive of the Supreme Court's authority increased one's chances of voting for State Camp by just 2% (from 11% to 13%), while the likelihood of voting Yesh Atid increased by 19% (from 15% to 34%). Religious Zionism voters exhibited extreme views thereon compared to their ideological partners, Likud voters: While the transition from the most opposed to the most supportive decreased one's likelihood of voting Likud from 27% to 21%, the likelihood of voting for Religious Zionism decreased more sharply from 21% to 8%.

This finding corroborates the analysis in the previous section: Likud voters differ ideologically on civic-democratic issues from their political partners. In this sense, this electorate appears nearly as a separate ideological bloc dividing the center-left parties from the religious parties. Note that the effect of this issue on the predicted probability of supporting the Likud versus the other parties is weaker than that of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

3.5 Ideological Polarization in the Preceding Decade (2013–2022)

In this section, we test whether voters' positions heading into the 2022 elections indicate an increase or a decrease in the ideological gaps between the various parties in the decade preceding the 2022 elections. Unlike affective polarization, which focuses on the extent of emotional fondness or revulsion to other political camps, ideological polarization relates to the ideological gap on a given issue between different parties' supporters (DiMaggio et al., 1996). The decade preceding the 2022 elections was marked by multiple elections and a difficult political crisis. Like the descriptive analysis earlier in this chapter, here we examine the rate of support that each party's voters express by ideological issue, focusing on the three “classic” issues: the economy, religion and state and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The

issue of the Supreme Court's authority is omitted from this part since it was missing from earlier election surveys.

As aforementioned, the analysis focuses on a limited number of parties that can be analyzed consistently and reliably over time. To maintain reasonable inference, parties whose self-attested supporters were fewer than 30 in a given survey were removed from the analysis: Shas in 2015, 2019 and 2020 and Yisrael Beiteinu in 2019 and 2020. In addition, in the 2013 elections, Likud and Yisrael Beiteinu ran on a shared ticket, so data on this election for the latter are not shown. Further, in the 2019 and 2020 elections, Yesh Atid ran as a faction in Blue and White together with Hosen Yisrael and Telem. In 2020, Labor ran in an electoral alliance with Meretz and Gesher. Finally, the questions on civil marriage and the Palestinians' aspirations were not asked in some of the years, leading us to omit them from this analysis.

The findings are shown in Figure 3.6. On the economic issue (the upper left-hand panel), we do not observe an increase in ideological polarization. While most parties' supporters show stable positions on this issue, Likud voters exhibit a downward trend in support of capitalism over the past decade. This trend likely represents the de-emphasis among the Likud-voting public and Netanyahu on right-wing economic policy throughout this period. Nevertheless, more surveys are needed to understand whether this is a long-term trend, a temporary decrease, or statistical noise.

Unlike the previous issue, the incorporation of Jewish tradition into public life (upper right-hand panel) shows a slight increase in ideological polarization between Labor and Yesh Atid voters and Likud and Shas voters over the past decade. This increase reflects opposing trends between the two sides: Fewer Yesh Atid and Labor voters support the enforcement of Jewish customs in public life, while more Likud voters support this. Alongside this, even if the gap on this issue somewhat widened, it reinforces an already existing schism.

Regarding the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the lower right-hand panel in Figure 3.6 shows the percentage of voters from every party who oppose a Palestinian state. Again, we see a widening gap between Yesh Atid and Labor voters and Likud and Shas voters. We also find that the gap between Likud voters and Yesh Atid voters on this issue was smaller in 2013 and increased in 2022. This trend mainly stems from a hawkish change among Likud voters: There is a clear upward trend (except for in the 2020 elections) in the share of Likud voters who oppose a two-state solution. Yesh Atid and Labor voters favor the two states but remain stable on this issue. A growing gap is also seen between Likud and Yisrael Beiteinu voters. These two parties ran on one ticket in the 2013 election and their voters show similar positions against two states in 2015. In the 2021 and 2022 elections, however, the gap widened significantly as Likud voters grew more hawkish and Yisrael Beiteinu voters moved a little closer to their Change Coalition partners, Yesh Atid and Labor. Whether this indicates an internal position change within the same voters or substitution with more moderate ones, it appears that Yisrael Beiteinu supporters are moving from the hard right to the center-right in recent years.

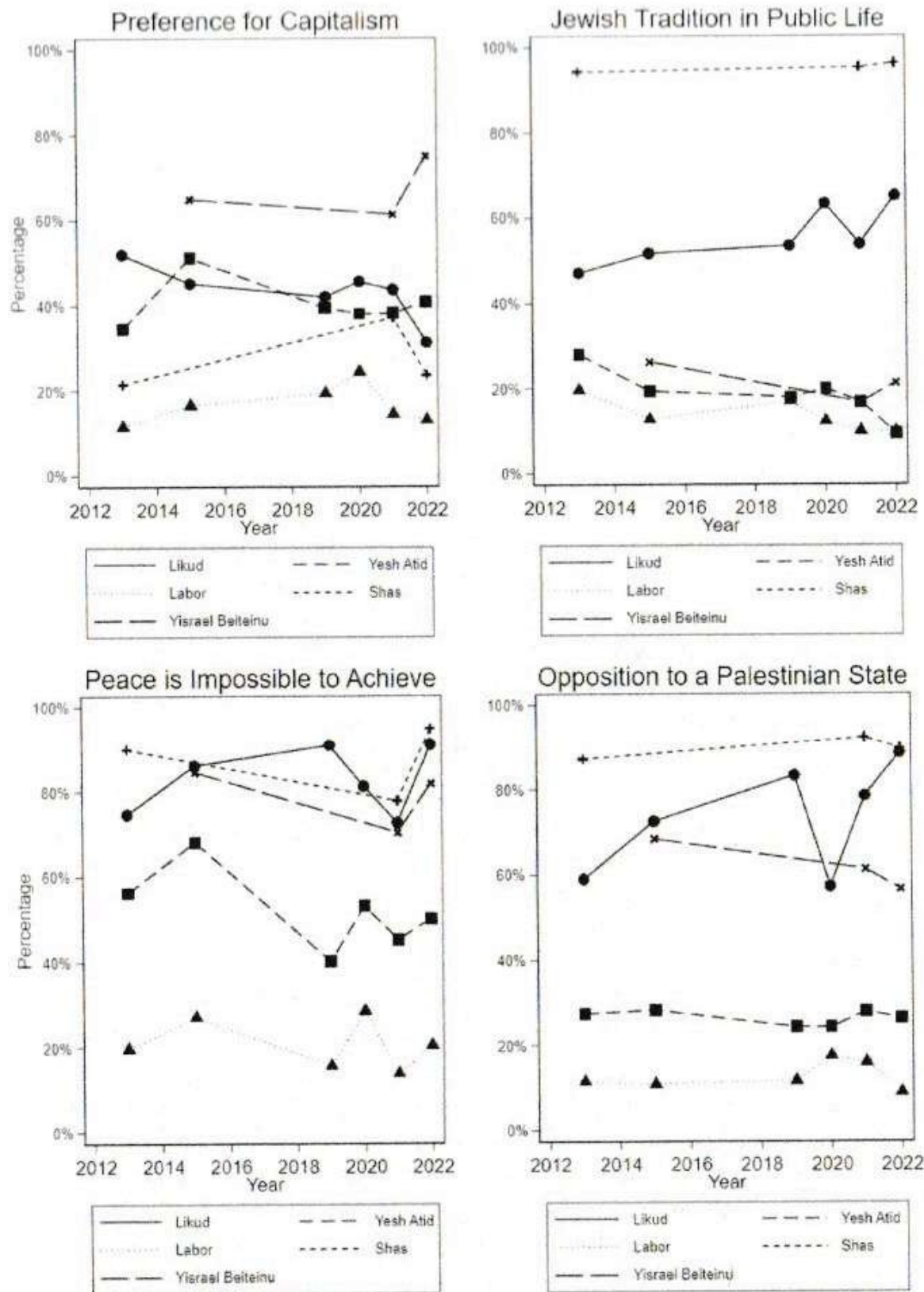


Figure 3.6 Percentage of support for a capitalist economy over a socialist one (upper left); % of support for the incorporation of Jewish tradition into public life (upper right); % of those who believe that peace cannot be achieved (lower left); and % of opponents to a Palestinian state (lower right), by party and election year (2013–2022)

Finally, the lower left-hand panel shows the percentage of voters for each party who believe that peace cannot be achieved with the Palestinians. The most noteworthy trend is a decrease among Yesh Atid voters who believe that peace cannot be achieved. While in 2015, over 60% of Yesh Atid voters believed that peace is unattainable, in the 2022 elections over half believed that peace is possible. This trend might stem from an exodus of Labor and Meretz voters toward Yesh Atid for strategic reasons. Overall, while we see a slight increase in polarization on this issue over the decade, stemming from opposing trends among Yesh Atid voters and Likud and Shas voters, the overall picture remains the same.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter examines the ideological cleavage map and patterns among Israeli-Jewish voters heading into the 2022 elections. In past years, Israel's political system has experienced an ongoing crisis that included five elections in less than four years, instability and polarization, the threat of a constitutional crisis and broad and ongoing public protests. At the same time, a recurring claim argues that the crisis has been emotional and personal and that there was and still is broad agreement among the electorate on many ideological issues. Our goal is to provide an empirical evaluation of this argument using survey data from the past decade. We addressed three main questions: firstly, the supporters of which parties agree and disagree, and on what issues? Secondly, which ideological issues predicted voting among the Jewish electorate in 2022? Thirdly, is there an increasing trend toward ideological polarization between the parties over this decade or relative stability?

The analysis focused on several key ideological issues: the economy, religion and state, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the nature of democracy. Our findings show that regarding civic-social issues, such as the desired economy or civil marriage, there is broad agreement, at least among the Jewish public. On the economy, a solid 65% of voters favor a socialist approach and a similar share supports civil marriage. Regarding civic-social issues, therefore, the claim made above bears out in reality.

At the same time, deep ideological cleavages are observed around core issues of Israel's identity. Despite the gridlock in the peace process ahead of the 2022 elections, the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is very much alive and poses a central ideological cleavage among the Jewish electorate. Views on the conflict reflect the classic left-center-right breakdown: voters for the left-wing parties exhibit dovish positions, voters for the right-wing parties exhibit a hawkish stance and center voters exhibit a "doubtful-dovish" view that combines support for a Palestinian state and pessimism regarding its feasibility.

The lack of agreement across different party voters does not end with the conflict. Significant disputes are also found around other issues, from the place of religion in public life to the powers vested in the Supreme Court. These issues are deeply intertwined with the country's religious-secular divide and its democratic-liberal character. While voters for the Change Coalition parties mostly oppose Jewish tradition governing public life and support the Supreme Court's authority

to overturn Knesset legislation, voters for the religious parties exhibit the opposite ideological profile. An interesting finding arose among Likud voters who remain in between: on these two issues, at least 35% take the opposite stance from their religious bloc partners.

This last point raises an interesting question regarding the ideological position of Likud voters. Despite their party's ongoing pact with the religious and ultra-Orthodox right, its voters exhibit ideological complexity that differentiates them from the latter, particularly on issues of citizenship and democracy. Even though Likud voters are close to their partners on symbolic issues of religion and the nature of democracy, they are split on practical issues such as civil marriage and curbs on the Supreme Court. Hence, Likud voters embody a potential intra-bloc tension surrounding the practical enactment of right-wing, conservative and authoritarian domestic policy, as was the case in the attempted judicial reform after the 2022 election. Yet at the same time, in the foreign policy and security domain, Likud voters exhibit strong hawkishness and relative unity with their bloc partners. Thus, despite the potential tension on civic-democratic matters and the prolonged peace-process gridlock, views on the conflict remain the main ideological foundation that unites the right-wing electorate.

This finding is reinforced when looking at the electorally predictive power of the four main ideological issues in the 2022 election. Our findings show that the issues with the greatest public disagreement and intra-bloc unity – especially the conflict and the Supreme Court – predict voting most strongly. This, in turn, underscores the stable salience of these issues, which Shamir and Arian defined as Israel's main collective political identities two decades into the twenty-first century. This stability is also observable in longitudinal trends over the past decade, which show relatively steady gaps between different party supporters and little discernible widening or narrowing therebetween.

The data and the findings presented herein reflect the situation near the 2022 elections. The judicial reform initiative and consequent public crisis raise big questions about the centrality of the cleavage concerning the Supreme Court's authorities, its subsequent politicization and future fault lines among the electorate on this matter. Future research on Israeli public opinion should be mindful of such developments. At the same time, the events of October 7 and the ensuing war in Gaza may deepen the salience of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in Israeli public opinion in ways that we cannot yet speculate. Finally, to provide a full picture of Israeli society, there is a need for a broader sampling of the Arab parties' electorate, which constitutes a growing segment of Israel's registered voters.

We opened by asking about the scope of agreement among the (Jewish) Israeli public. Our findings identify several ideological cleavages but also attest to some existing agreements. Given Israel's ongoing political crisis, there is a growing need to understand the domains wherein we can reach broad agreement. Despite the current face-off of a right-ultra-Orthodox bloc versus a diverse center-left one, our findings show that there exists an ideological basis for other partnerships, such as among the secular parties on both left and right on civic-social issues.

Moreover, even on controversial issues such as the authority of the Supreme Court, there is common ground for agreement between the left, the center and a large portion of Likud voters. The upcoming years will reveal whether this potential will be realized, even partially, or whether the judicial reform initiative and the events of October 7 will entrench and widen Israel's existing ideological cleavages.

Notes

- 1 This cleavage is occasionally referred to as the GAL-TAN (Green-Alternative-Liberal versus Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist) axis.
- 2 In the 2019 elections, Yesh Atid ran as part of Blue and White, together with Hosen Yisrael and Telem.
- 3 For all of the questions, the percentage of respondents who answered "don't know" and were thus omitted was sufficiently low (2%–9%).
- 4 For the question on perceived Palestinian aspirations, those who answered "To conquer Israel" or "To conquer Israel and destroy most of the Jewish population" received a value of 1, whereas those who chose limited sovereignty over part or all of the 1967 territories received a value of 0.
- 5 This variable was measured similarly to that in Shamir and Arian's 1999 article. Note that this variable does not differentiate between immigrants from the former USSR and Israeli-born Ashkenazi Jews.]

References

- Aluf, Ben. 2021. "As If There Was No Covid: The Only Consideration in The Elections is 'Yes Bibi' or 'No Bibi'." *Haaretz*, March 24th, 2024. [Hebrew]
- Arian, Asher and Michal Shamir. 2001. "Candidates, Parties and Blocs: Israel in the 1990s." *Party Politics* 7 (6): 689–710.]
- Arian, Asher and Michal Shamir. 2008. "A Decade Later, The World Had Changed, The Cleavage Structure Remained: Israel 1996–2006." *Party Politics* 14 (6): 685–705.
- Balmas, Meital, Gideon Rahat, Tamir Sheafer and Shaul Shenhav. 2014. "Two Routes to Personalized Politics: Centralized and Decentralized Personalization." *Party Politics* 20 (1): 37–51.
- Benoit, Kenneth and Michael Laver. 2006. *Party Policy in Modern Democracies*. London: Routledge.]
- Bloch, Aliza. 2020. Interview on the TV program Real Time, Kan 11, April 16th. [Hebrew]
- Dias, Nicholas and Yphtach Lelkes. 2022. "The Nature of Affective Polarization: Disentangling Policy Disagreement From Partisan Identity." *American Journal of Political Science* 66 (3): 775–790.]
- DiMaggio, P., John H. Evans and Bethany Bryson. 1996. "Have American's Social Attitudes Become More Polarized?" *American Journal of Sociology* 102 (3): 690–755.]
- Enos, Ryan D. and Noam Gidron. 2018. "Exclusion and Cooperation in Diverse Societies: Experimental Evidence from Israel." *American Political Science Review* 112 (4): 742–757.]
- Fuchs, Dieter and Hans-Dieter Klingemann. 1990. "The Left-Right Schema." In Kent M. Jennings and Jan W. van Deth (editors), *Continuities in Political Action: A longitudinal Study of Political Orientations in Three Western Democracies*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 203–234.
- Gidron, Noam, James Adams and Will Horne. 2020. *American Affective Polarization in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.]
- Gidron, Noam, Lior Sheffer and Guy Mor. 2022. "Validating The Feeling Thermometer As A Measure of Partisan Affect in Multi-Party Systems." *Electoral Studies* 80 (102542).]

- Harel, Tal O., Jessica Katz Jameson and Ifat Maoz. 2020. "The Normalization of Hatred: Identity, Affective Polarization, and Dehumanization on Facebook in The Context of Intractable Political Conflict." *Social Media + Society* 6 (2): 2056305120913983.
- Hermann, Tamar. 2019. "Public Opinion in Israel: The Sociodemographic Nexus." In Reuven Y. Hazan, Alan Dowty, Menachem Hofnung and Gideon Rahat (editors), *The Oxford Handbook of Israeli Politics and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 246–264.
- Hooghe, Liesbet, Gary Marks and Carole J. Wilson. 2002. "Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions on European Integration?" *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (8): 965–989.]
- Huber, John and Robert Inglehart. 1995. "Expert Interpretations of Party Space and Party Locations in 42 Societies." *Party Politics* 1 (1): 73–111.]
- INES, d.y. [various years]. *Israel National Election Studies*. <https://socsci4.tau.ac.il/mu2/ines/data/>
- Iyengar, Shanto, Gaurav Sood and Yphtach Lelkes. 2012. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76 (3): 405–431.]
- Kahana, Matan. 2023. Twitter Account, August 26. [Hebrew]
- Kenig, Ofer and Or Tuttnauer. 2017. "The Decline of the Large Mainstream Parties." In Michal Shamir and Gideon Rahat (editors), *The Elections in Israel 2015*. New York: Transaction Publishers, 21–46.
- Kimmerling, Baruch. 2001. *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society, and the Military*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachet, Martin Dolezel, Simon Bornschier and Timotheos Frey. 2006. "Globalization and The Transformation of The National Political Space: Six European Countries Compared." *European Journal of Political Research* 45: 921–956.
- Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachet, Martin Dolezel, Simon Bornschier and Timotheos Frey. 2008. *West European Politics In The Age of Globalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.]
- Kriesi, Hanspeter, Edgar Grande, Martin Dolezel, Marc Helbling, Dominic Höglinger, Swen Hutter and Bruno Wüest. 2012. *Political Conflict in Western Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.]
- Lapid, Yair. 2022. Facebook Page, February 19. [Hebrew]
- Lapid, Yair. 2023. Speech as Knesset Opposition Leader, Hurvitz Conference on Economics and Society, May 31st, 2023. [Hebrew]
- Laver, Michael and Kenneth Shepsle. 1996. *Making And Breaking Governments: Cabinets and Legislatures in Parliamentary Democracies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lavi, Liron, Naama Rivlin-Angert, Claretta Treger, Tamir Sheaffer, Israel Waismel-Manor and Michal Shamir. 2022. "King Bibi: Personification of Democratic Values in the 2029–2021 Election Cycle." In Michal Shamir and Gideon Rahat (editors), *The Elections in Israel 2019–2021*. New York: Routledge, 77–98.
- Lev, Gideon. 2023. "The Polarization in Israel Has Reached an Extreme. Studies Explain It, But It's Happening." *Haaretz*, March 10th, 2023. [Hebrew]
- Mason, Lilliana. 2018. "Ideologues Without Issues: The Polarizing Consequences of Ideological Identities." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 82 (1): 280–301.
- McGregor, Shannon C. 2018. "Personalization, Social Media, And Voting: Effects of Candidate Self-Personalization on Vote Intention." *New Media and Society* 20 (3): 1139–1160.
- Oshri, Odellia, Omer Yair and Leonie Huddy. 2022. "The Importance of Attachment to an Ideological Group in Multi-Party Systems: Evidence from Israel." *Party Politics* 28 (6): 1164–1175.]
- Rahat, Gideon. 2019. *The Fall of the Group and the Rising Stars: From Partisan Politics to Personal Politics*. Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute. [Hebrew]

- Rahat, Gideon. 2022. "Personalization and Personalism in the 2019–2021 Elections: Another Climax of Personal Politics?" In Michal Shamir and Gideon Rahat (editors), *The Elections in Israel 2019–2021*. New York: Routledge, 53–76.
- Rahat, Gideon and Ofer Kenig. 2018. *From Party Politics to Personalized Politics? Party Change and Political Personalization in Democracies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rahat, Gideon, Reuven Y. Hazan and Pazit Ben-Nun Bloom. 2016. "Stable Blocs and Multiple Identities: The 2015 Elections in Israel." *Representation* 52 (1): 99–117.]
- Rahat, Gideon and Tamir Sheafer. 2007. "The Personalization(s) of Politics: Israel, 1949–2003." *Political Communication* 24 (1): 65–80.]
- Reiljan, Andres. 2020. "'Fear and Loathing Across Party Lines' (Also) in Europe: Affective Polarisation in European Party Systems." *European Journal of Political Research* 59 (2): 376–396.]
- Segal, Amit. 2020. "A Sum-up of the Last Year and a Half: 'Just Not Bibi' Isn't Enough." *Mako*, March 28th, 2024. [Hebrew]
- Shafir, Gershon and Yoav Peled. 2002. *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shamir, Michal and Asher Arian. 1994. "Competing Values and Policy Choices: Israeli Public Opinion on Foreign and Security Affairs." *British Journal of Political Science* 24 (2): 249–271.
- Shamir, Michal and Asher Arian. 1999. "Collective Identity and Electoral Competition in Israel." *American Political Science Review* 93 (2): 265–277.
- Shapira, Assaf and Gideon Rahat. 2021. *The Legitimacy Test of the Change Government*. Jerusalem: Israeli Democracy Institute. [Hebrew]
- Sheafer, Tamir, Shaul R. Shenhav and Kenneth Goldstein. 2011. "Voting for Our Story: A Narrative Model of Electoral Choice in Multiparty Systems." *Comparative Political Studies* 44 (3): 313–338.
- Van der Brug, Wouter and Joost Van Spanje. 2009. "Immigration, Europe and the 'New' Cultural Dimension." *European Journal of Political Research* 48 (3): 309–334.]
- Wagner, Marcus. 2021. "Affective Polarization in Multiparty Systems." *Electoral Studies* 69: 102199.]
- Yakter, Alon and Mark Tessler. 2023. "The Long-Term Electoral Implications of Conflict Escalation: Doubtful Doves and the Breakdown of Israel's Left/Right Dichotomy." *Journal of Peace Research* 60 (3): 504–520.]