



Institute For Liberty and Responsibility
Reichman University

**How the October 7th War Shapes Jewish Attitudes
toward Arabs' Voting Rights in Israel**

Report

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Authored by:

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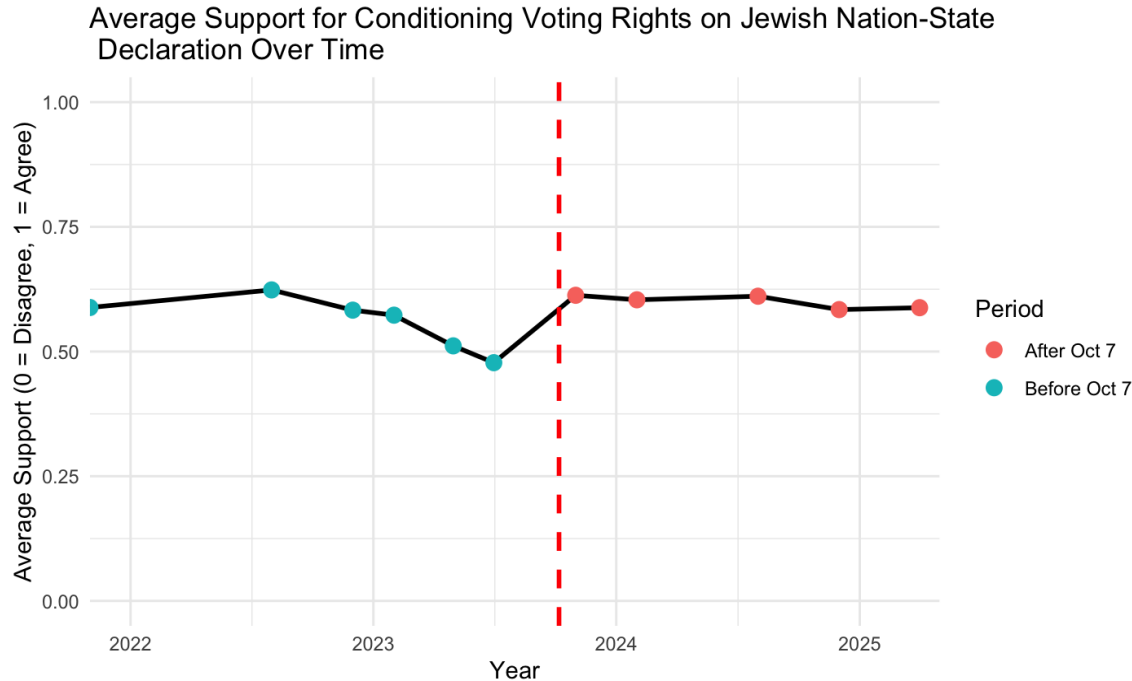
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How the October 7th War Shapes Jewish Attitudes toward Arabs' Voting Rights in Israel

With a shattered sense of security and heightened fear following the October 7, 2023, attacks, many Israelis grew skeptical of co-existence not only with Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, but with Arab citizens within Israel proper, too. With the onset of war, the national focus shifted from internal debates about democracy and political reforms to debates about how to best protect the Jewish state from external threats - and perceived internal ones. Thus, in eleven surveys conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility at Reichman University from November 2021 to April 2025, we asked respondents to what extent they agree or disagree that the right to vote should be taken from those who refuse to declare that Israel is the Nation-State of the Jewish people - a proposed measure aimed at denying Arab citizens the right to vote. Respondents were provided with the options of "Strongly agree," "Somewhat agree," "Somewhat disagree," "Strongly disagree," and "Don't know." All responses were rescaled from zero to one (excluding those who responded "Don't Know"). Where mentioned, percent changes will reflect the relative increase between the averages before and after Oct 7 on this normalized scale.

This analysis will discuss the response of only those who identified themselves as Jewish, examining overall trends following Oct 7. Then it will disaggregate the data by ideology, religiosity, age, and voting behavior. The results show a significant increase in average support, after Oct 7, for revoking voting rights from those who do not declare Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish people.

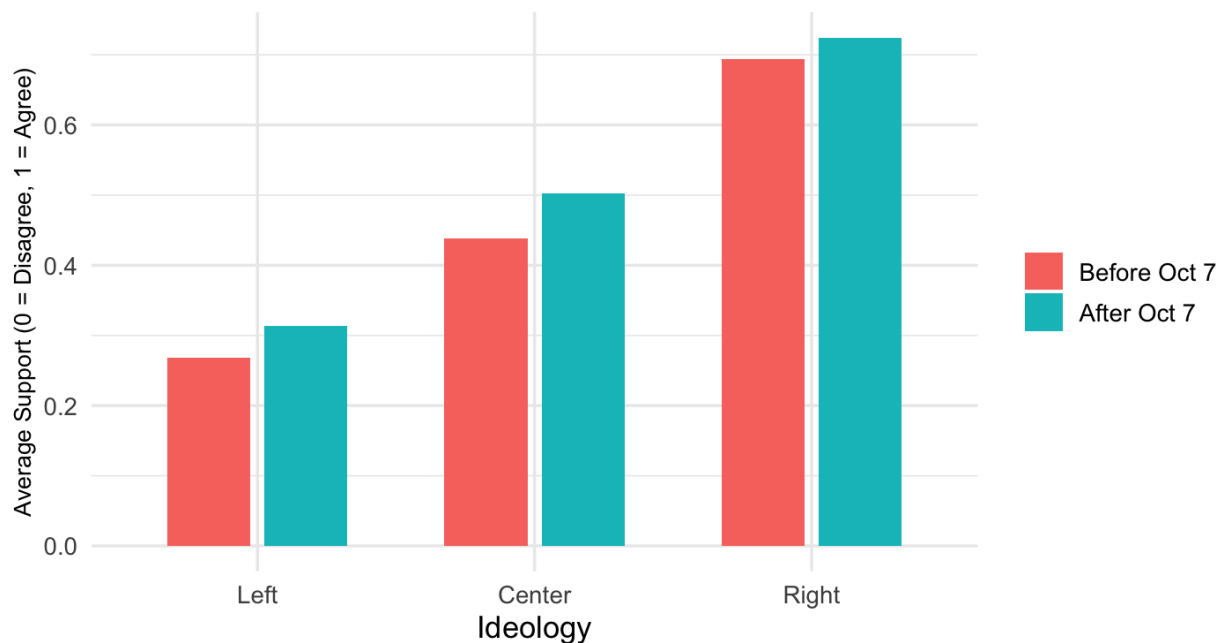
Overall Trend



The overall declining trend of the first half of the graph (before Oct 7) suggests that Jews may have been softening to the idea of not restricting the voting rights of Arab citizens. The lowest average support months (February 2023, May 2023, and July 2023) correspond with the widespread backlash and protests against the judicial reforms announced by the government in January 2023 - reforms intended to curtail the authority and independence of the judicial system. The battle against the government's plans fueled public support for democracy and civil rights, manifested in declining support for the denial of voting rights. But after Oct 7, there is a stark 9% increase in those who believe voting rights should be taken from those who do not declare Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish people. In the six surveys before Oct 7 (November 2021, August 2022, December 2022, February 2023, May 2023, and July 2023), support averaged 0.55, but in the five surveys after Oct 7 (November 2023, February 2024, August 2024, December 2024, and April 2025), average support rose to 0.60. This increase could suggest that in reaction to Oct 7 and a continued war against Hamas (as well as other Iran-backed proxies), Jews are less willing to compromise the Jewish nature of Israel and are increasingly worried about the loyalty of other minorities within the country. Notably, both averages (before and after Oct 7) surpass 50%, indicating a majority support for this idea. The biggest jump in support between two survey dates occurred between July 2023 and November 2023 (the two dates that border Oct 7), where average support increased from 0.48 to 0.61. After this initial increase, average support remains at higher levels, while never surpassing the post-Oct 7 record of 0.61. The data suggests that perhaps on Oct 7, the fear of a dying democracy was overpowered by a fear for Israel's security and safety.

Ideology

Average Support for Conditioning Voting Rights on Jewish Nation-State Declaration by Ideology

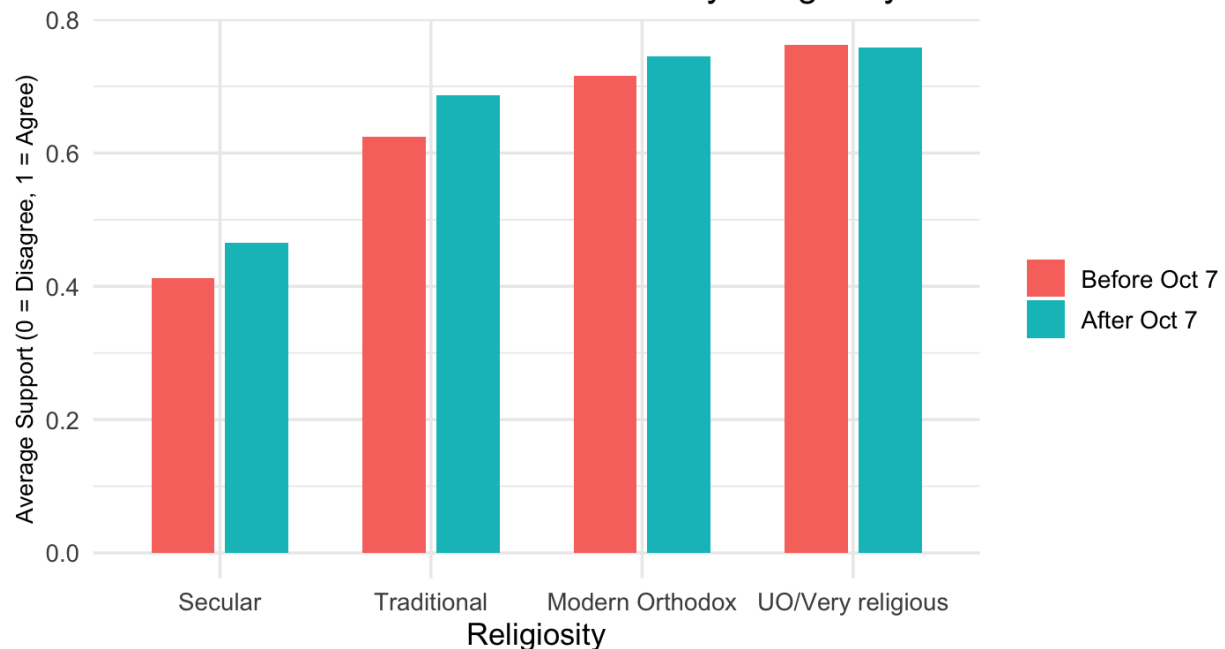


Respondents ranked their ideology on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 to 3 grouped as right and 5 to 7 grouped as left. As the ideological continuum moves from left to center, to right, average levels of support for conditioning voting rights increase, indicating a positive correlation between right-wing ideology and support for restricting voting rights. As such, those on the right have the highest levels of support at 0.69 before Oct 7 and 0.73 afterward, a 4% increase. Notably, both of these right-bloc averages are higher than the overall averages of support. The center shows a larger increase of 14.7%, shifting support from an average of 0.44 to 0.50 after Oct 7, and the left shows an even larger increase of 17%, from 0.27 to 0.31. The right may not have shifted as much as expected compared to the left and right, perhaps reflecting that the right-wing was already focused on protecting the Jewish nature of the State and wary of minorities that may compromise that. Unlike the center and the left, they did not require a traumatic event or war to shift their views.

Religiosity

Moving across levels of religiosity from secular to Ultra-Orthodox/Very religious, respondents increase support for revoking voting rights for those who do not declare Israel as the Nation-State for the Jewish people. As such, those secular are shown to have the lowest average support, hovering at an average of 0.44, and the ultra-Orthodox show the greatest average support, hovering just above an average of .75. Those traditional have moderate levels of average support around 0.65, and those Modern Orthodox fall just above that at about 0.73. Notably, the secular group increased by 12.8% from 0.41 before Oct 7 to 0.47 afterward, and the traditional group showed a 9.9% increase in support from 0.63 to 0.69. These shifts are the only two statistically significant increases observed. The Modern Orthodox group increased support from 0.72 before Oct 7 to 0.75 afterward, but no significance was observed. Most peculiar is the Ultra-Orthodox, who exhibit the highest levels of support, but also a very slight and statistically insignificant decrease in support in reaction to Oct 7 from 0.763 to 0.759. Similar to the pattern observed by ideology, those with already high levels of support for voting restriction (in this case, the Ultra-Orthodox and Modern Orthodox) may not need a war to shift their perspective because the belief in declaring loyalty to vote was already ingrained in their ideology.

Average Support for Conditioning Voting Rights on Jewish Nation-State Declaration by Religiosity

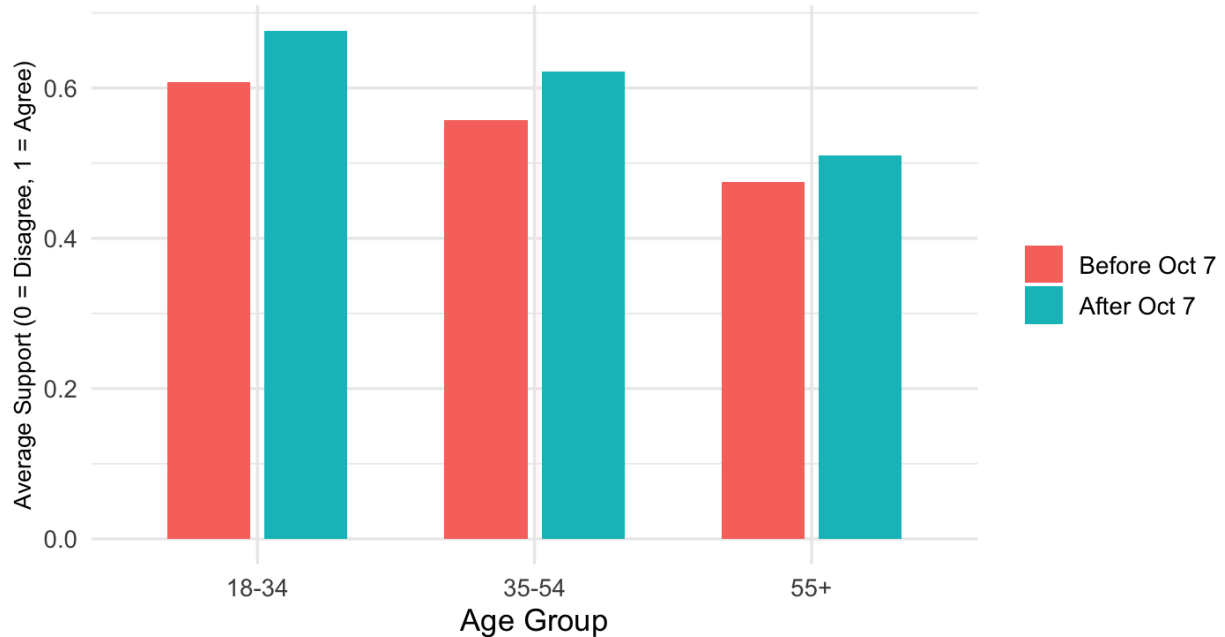


Age

As age increases, average support for conditioning voting rights based on declaring Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish people decreases. As such, the youngest age group, 18 to 34, shows the highest support at 0.61 before Oct 7 and 0.68 afterward, an 11% increase. Those aged 35 to 54 follow a similar trend, increasing by 11% from 0.56 to 0.62, while those aged 55 and older increase by only 7% from 0.48 before Oct 7 to 0.51 afterward. Notably, all ages, regardless of level of initial support, show statistically significant increases following Oct 7, suggesting a willingness across all ages to prioritize Israel's Jewish identity over Israel's democracy.

Based on the pattern across ideology and religiosity, where groups with the lowest initial levels of support showed the greatest increase after Oct 7, the oldest generation, having the lowest initial levels of support, *should* have increased their support the most. Instead, they increased the least. This deviation from the pattern may suggest the idea of people shifting their priority from democracy to safety may not hold by age group. Instead, the data suggests that beliefs become less malleable with age, leaving those younger with more pliability and reactivity in their ideas than their older counterparts.

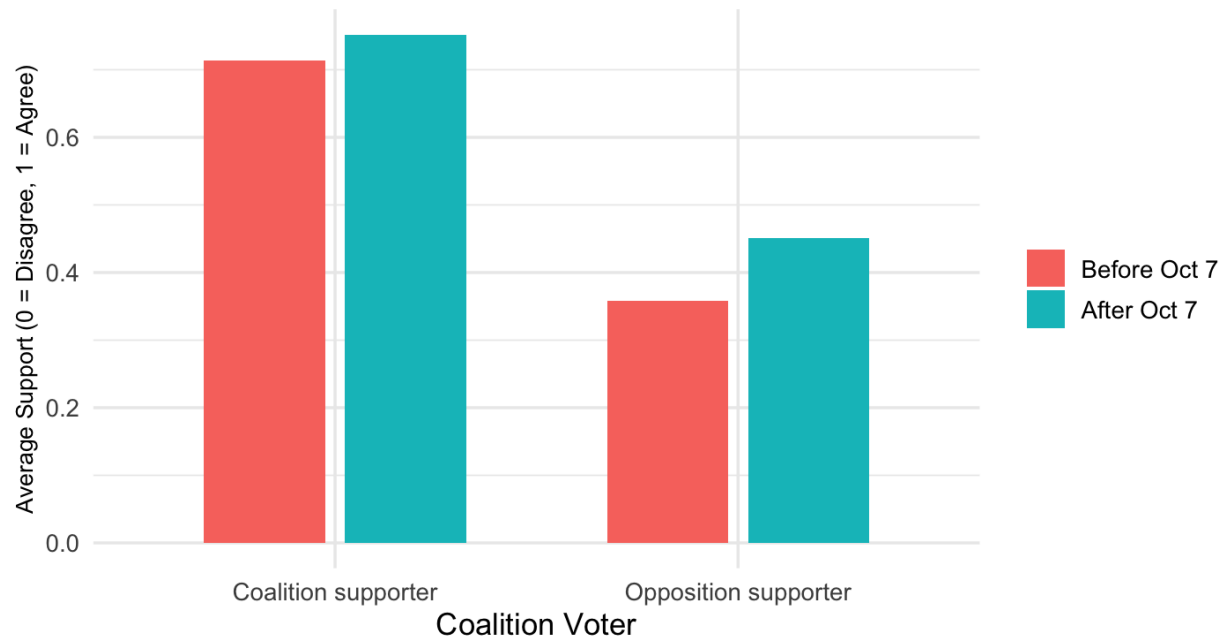
Average Support for Conditioning Voting Rights on Jewish Nation-State Declaration by Age Group



Voting Behavior

Lastly, based on voting behavior, current coalition supporters are more likely to support voting conditions than opposition supporters. Still, both groups show statistically significant increases in support in reaction to Oct 7. Opposition supporters increase by 26% following Oct 7 from 0.36 to 0.45, while coalition supporters show a rise of 5% from 0.71 to 0.75. The increase in support from opposition supporters is the greatest observed across all demographic groups, suggesting that the Oct 7 attacks and the ensuing war increased the importance of Israel's Jewish character among opposition supporters.

Average Support for Conditioning Voting Rights on Jewish Nation-State Declaration by Coalition Voter



Conclusion

The survey data reflects an increase in Jewish support for revoking voting rights from those who do not declare Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish people after Oct 7, and this trend appears across demographic groups. Put simply, the data suggests that Jews in Israel came to hold a more negative attitude toward the country's Arab citizens. In early 2023, during the crisis over the government's planned judicial reform, support for the denial of voting rights declined, but this decline was reversed during the war that began on Oct 7.

This push to weed out any disloyal (and likely Arab) citizens of the Jewish state aligns well with existing literature, which states that perceived security threats are a key predictor of exclusionist political attitudes toward minority groups (Canetti-Nisim et al., 2008). In this context, as Jews felt unsafe after Oct 7, they clung to their in-group and felt growing antagonism toward the Arab out-group, with an increased willingness to strip voting rights from those deemed disloyal. While this reaction may be understandable, it is critical to explore its implications. If this hypothetical, but mildly popular, proposal were implemented, it could erode a piece of Israeli democracy, as it would disproportionately disenfranchise Arab voters in Israel who may not feel comfortable declaring Israel a Jewish Nation-State. As such, this analysis suggests a subtle but noteworthy deterioration of democratic values embedded within Jewish public opinion itself, prompting questions about the future of Israel's democracy if this trend continues.

Bibliography

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