



**Institute For Liberty and Responsibility
Reichman University**

**How the October 7th War Shapes Jewish Attitudes
toward Arab Equality in Israel**

Report

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Authored by:

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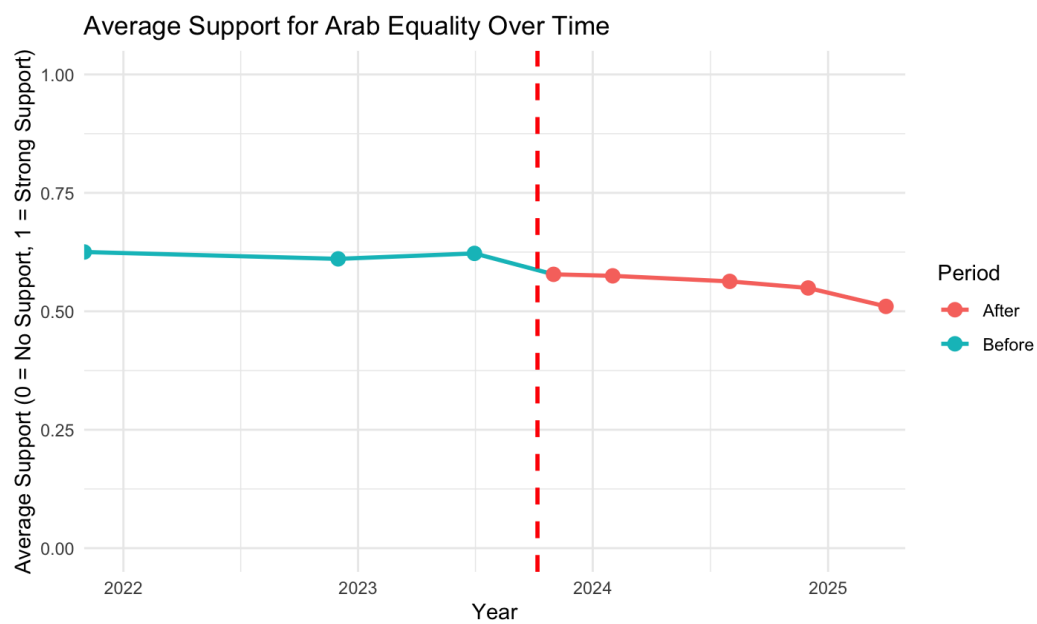
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How the October 7th War Shapes Jewish Attitudes toward Arab Equality in Israel

On paper, Arab citizens of Israel, who make up about 20% of the population, have the same rights as Jews in Israel, but they face many societal, political, and economic barriers that exclude and ostracize them from Israeli society. As Arabs residing within Israel proper, their standing among Jews is also impacted (perhaps unfairly) by the actions of the Palestinian community within Gaza and the West Bank. As such, since the attacks of October 7, 2023, and the subsequent war, the relationship between Arabs and Jews within Israel proper has been tested. Thus, this report aims to examine the views of Israeli Jews on the State's responsibility to foster equality between Jews and Arabs, specifically in reaction to the attacks of Oct 7 and the ensuing war.

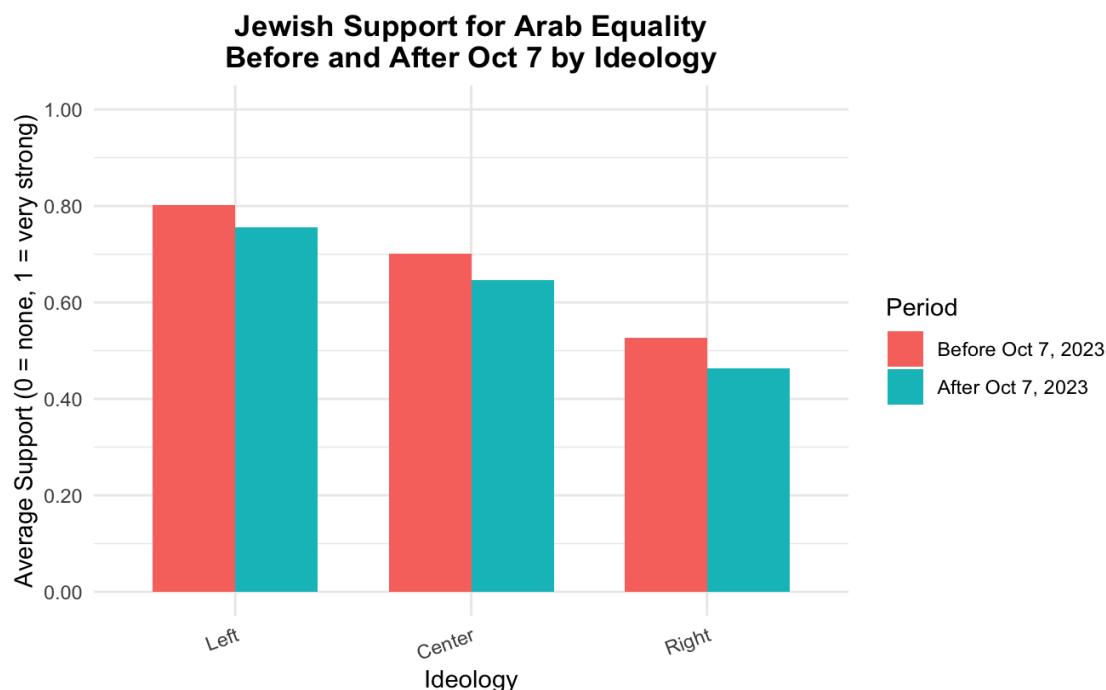
In a series of public opinion surveys, respondents were asked the question: To what extent, in your opinion, should the State of Israel act to ensure equality between Jews and Arabs? Respondents were given five answers to choose from, including "To a very large extent," "To a large extent," "To a medium extent," "To a small extent," "Not at all," and "Don't Know." Responses were rescaled from zero to one. The following results will discuss the response of only those who identified themselves as Jewish and will exclude those who responded "Don't Know." This report will first look at overall trends among Jewish respondents and then evaluate the impact of ideology, age, religiosity, and political affiliation using eight surveys conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility at Reichman University from November 2021 to April 2025. The results show that following the events of Oct 7, there is a significant decline in average Jewish support for equality between Jews and Arabs, but results differ by group.

Overall Trends



Overall, there is a gradual decline in average support for Arab equality from November 2021 to April 2025, falling from approximately 0.63 to 0.51 on a scale of zero to one. The most recent survey, conducted in April 2025, marks the lowest point in the observed period, reflecting a large erosion of support over time. The biggest decline in average support for Arab equality occurred between July 2023 (three months before the outbreak of the war) and November 2023 (the first month of the war), during which support fell from about 0.62 to 0.57, indicating the notable impact that Oct 7 had on Jewish public opinion regarding Arabs. In the three surveys before Oct 7 (November 2021, December 2022, and July 2023), the average support for Arabs was 0.63, while in the five surveys after Oct 7 (November 2023, February 2024, August 2024, December 2024, and April 2025), the average support declined to 0.56, signifying a 11% decrease in support and a meaningful shift in public opinion in reaction to Oct 7. The continued decline into April 2025 suggests that the impact of Oct 7 may have a longer-lasting or compounding effect on public opinion.

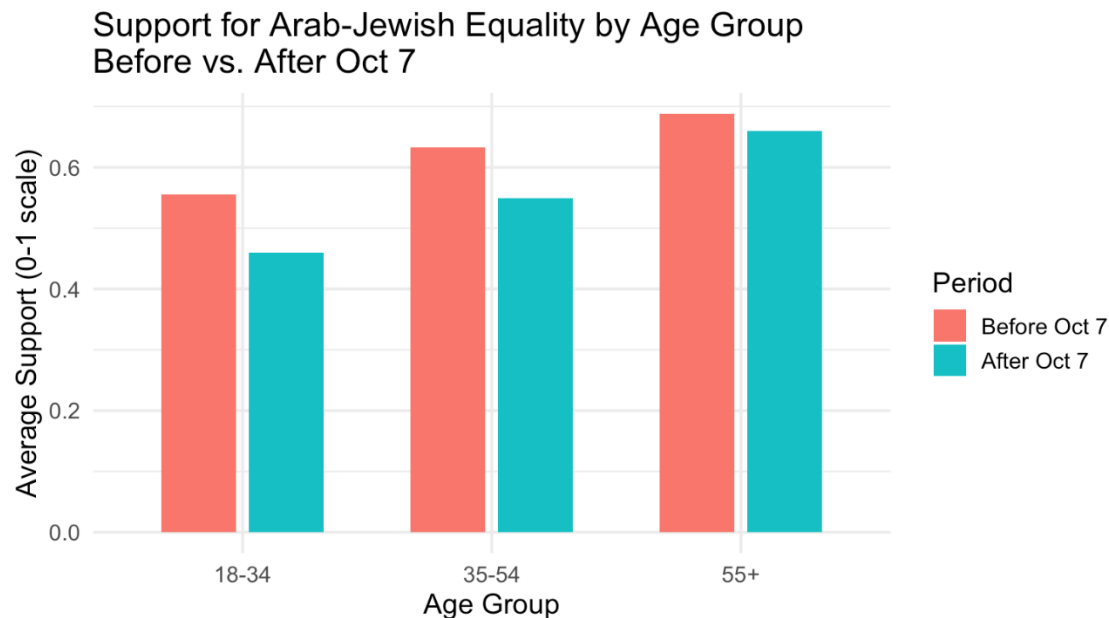
Ideology



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. From this figure, it is evident that as Jews move across the ideological continuum from left to center to right, support for equality with Arabs declines. This figure also shows that support for Arab equality decreased among each ideology group after Oct 7. The right showed the lowest initial average support for Arab equality and the largest decline after Oct 7, with an almost 12% drop in support from 0.53 to 0.46. The center showed the second-highest drop in support after the war, with a decline of 8% from 0.7 to 0.65. Those on the left remain the most supportive of Arab equality, but also

saw a slight but notable decrease in support of about 6% from 0.8 to 0.76. These results suggest that there were wide-reaching impacts across ideologies of the war on Jewish views toward Arabs, with more intense shifts among the right-leaning Jews.

Age

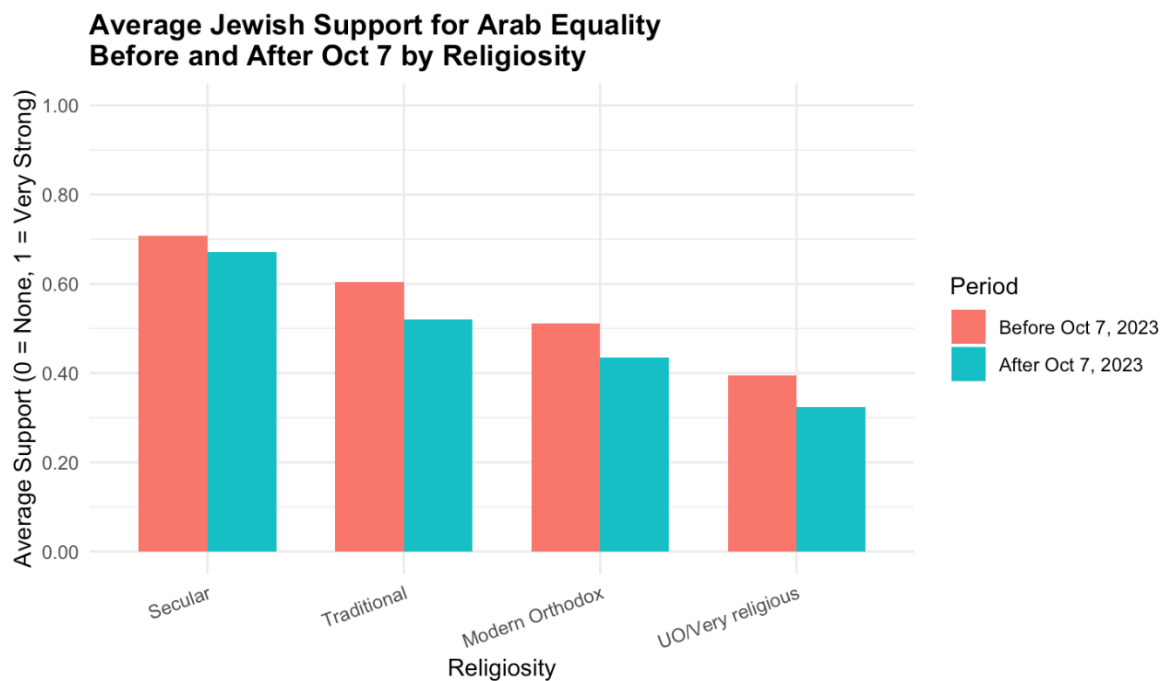


Analyzing the impact of age on attitudes toward equality with Arabs shows that young people, ages 18 to 34, show the least support for Arab equality, and their opinions on Arabs were more impacted by Oct 7 than any other age group. On the scale of support for Arab equality, those 18 to 34 have an average of 0.55 before Oct 7 and an average of 0.46 after Oct 7, signifying a statistically significant drop in support by 17.7%. Those aged 35 to 54 also dropped significantly by 13.3% following Oct 7, from 0.63 to 0.55 on the average support scale. The age group 55 and older has the greatest support for Arab equality at an average of 0.68 throughout the period examined here, and they show the most consistent support over time, with a decrease of only 4.1% since Oct 7. These results suggest that although all ages express lower support for equality since Oct 7, the older generation is less affected by the war in evaluating equality with Arabs compared to their younger counterparts.

Religiosity

Support for Arab equality also decreased among each level of religiosity in reaction to Oct 7. The Ultra-Orthodox/very religious group, which showed the lowest initial average support for equality with Arabs, also showed the largest decline after Oct 7, as average support dropped 18.5% from 0.4 to 0.32. Secular citizens, who have the greatest support for equality with Arabs, only dropped support by 5.1% from 0.71 to 0.67 post-Oct 7. The traditional and Modern Orthodox groups' support declined at relatively equal

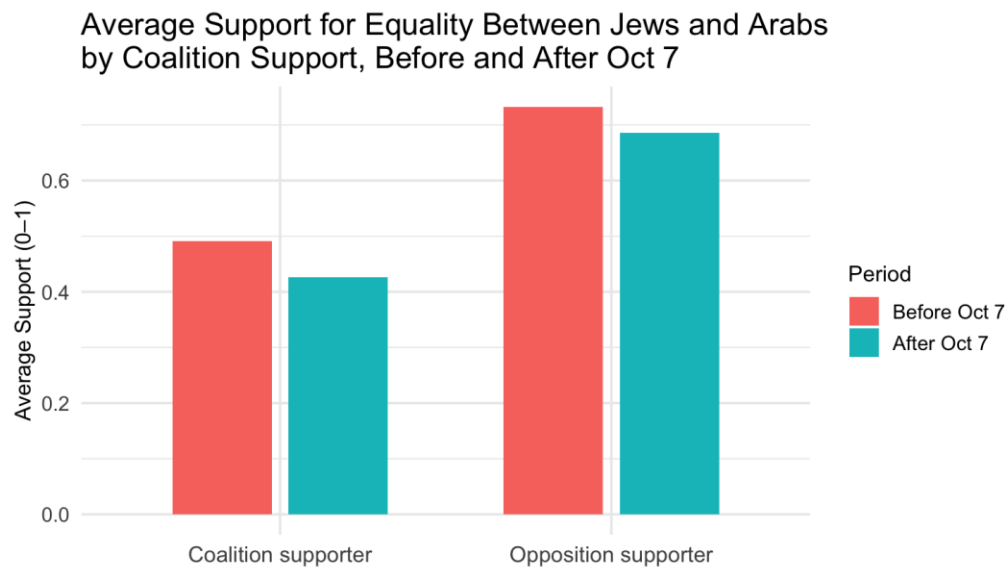
rates of 13.8 and 14.9 percent, respectively. These results indicate that everyone, regardless of religion, has changed their views on Arab equality following the war. Still, the decline was most significant among the more traditional and religious Jews, suggesting a greater sensitivity in those communities.



Coalition Voter Group

Analysing the impact of coalition support on Arab equality shows that coalition supporters are less supportive of Arab equality than opposition supporters.¹ Support for Arab equality significantly decreased for coalition supporters by 13.4% from 0.49 to 0.43 after Oct 7. At the same time, support for Arab equality decreased for opposition supporters by 6.4% from 0.73 to 0.69 after Oct 7. The already wide gap between coalition and opposition supporters slightly grew in response to the war, suggesting a potential deepening shift in political views.

¹ All coalition data refers to the current coalition-opposition split. Any survey before November 2022 was excluded from this analysis.



Conclusion

Public support for Arab-Jewish equality has significantly decreased in response to the events of Oct 7. This finding may indicate a worrisome conclusion that Jews are (consciously or subconsciously) equating Arab citizens of Israel with Hamas, or at the very least, harboring more fear toward Arabs. Notably, each group that began least supportive of Arab equality before Oct 7 (youth, Ultra-Orthodox, coalition supporters, and right-wing groups) shows the highest rate of declining support after Oct 7, suggesting that the groups with the lowest support rates hold a generally more conditional, tentative stance on Arabs that is more easily influenced by adverse events. However, additional research is needed to understand this phenomenon entirely. Lastly, the change observed in support over time is continuous and gradual, and at no time has support for Arab equality rebounded throughout the period examined here, suggesting a tenacious and potentially deepening shift in public sentiment.

The evident rift in Jewish-Arab relations since Oct 7 can be compared to that of 9/11, where Americans grew more fearful and discriminatory of all Muslim-Americans in reaction to the terror attack. The results fit with existing frameworks, such as the integrated threat theory, which posits that perceived threats (whether symbolic or realistic) increase prejudices, often against a minority or outgroup, and offers a useful lens into both of these cases. In response to a traumatic event, people prioritize their sense of security, often at the expense of marginalizing or 'othering' a minority group associated with the threat. In the US, Americans were willing to target Muslims' civil liberties to increase feelings of safety (Huddy, 2007). Now, the same pattern is apparent in Israel. While sentiment toward Muslim Americans has somewhat recovered from 2001, it is still unknown if Israel's situation will follow suit.

Bibliography

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