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The Israeli Public's Attitude toward the Universities

An Overview

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The Israeli Public's Attitude toward the Universities

Using surveys conducted between 2023-2024, this Institute for Liberty and Responsibility review examines the attitudes of the Israeli public toward universities. The review explores public perceptions of the universities' contributions to Israeli society across multiple domains and assesses views on representation of different social groups among faculty members. The analysis reveals lukewarm public sentiment toward universities with substantial differences between different political groups, suggesting universities need to improve their public image and better communicate their societal contributions.

Introduction

Research universities in Israel, and the higher education system as a whole, are of great importance in training an educated and skilled citizenry, as well as in advancing science and technology, the economy, and society in Israel. At the same time, in recent years, many criticisms have been directed against universities. Some criticisms are voiced by various political factors and opinion leaders with claims that some university lecturers promote different political positions or anti-Zionist agendas.ⁱ According to other critiques, various social and political groups are not adequately represented among faculty members throughout the higher education systemⁱⁱ. And there are those who believe that academic studies are losing their relevance.ⁱⁱⁱ

Currently, there is almost no public opinion data examining the Israeli public's attitude towards universities. A recent study that examined the level of trust among citizens from 67 countries, including Israel, in relation to scientists, showed that the level of trust the Israeli public has in scientists is just slightly above average.^{iv} However, it is not clear what the public's attitude is towards the universities in Israel, as an important public institution, and to what extent the public values the universities compared to other public institutions and bodies. It is also unknown how the public assesses the contribution of universities to the Israeli economy and society, or whether the Israeli public believes there is appropriate representation of various social groups among university faculty.

This document details a series of findings from three surveys conducted between September 2023 and March 2024. The findings show that the attitude of the Israeli public toward universities in

Israel is lukewarm – not particularly positive, but also not particularly negative. At the same time, the attitude toward universities is notably polarized, and there are significant differences in attitudes toward universities among members of different political groups. Perhaps more importantly, only a minority of the public, about 25%, believes that universities in Israel make a significant contribution to the economy and society, and almost half of Israelis believe that universities should greatly increase the representation of different social groups among university faculty members.

For additional details on the methodology of the surveys, see the methodological appendix at the end of the document.

(1) The Israeli Public's Attitude Toward Universities in Israel

In two surveys conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility in September 2023 and March 2024, respondents were asked about their attitudes toward a series of institutions and organizations operating in Israel, including universities, on a scale of 0 (most negative) to 10 (most positive).^v The choice to ask about universities rather than "higher education institutions" stemmed from the desire to focus on the public's attitude toward those institutions at the forefront of scientific research in Israel, where doctoral students in Israel are trained and where most scientific research in Israel is conducted.

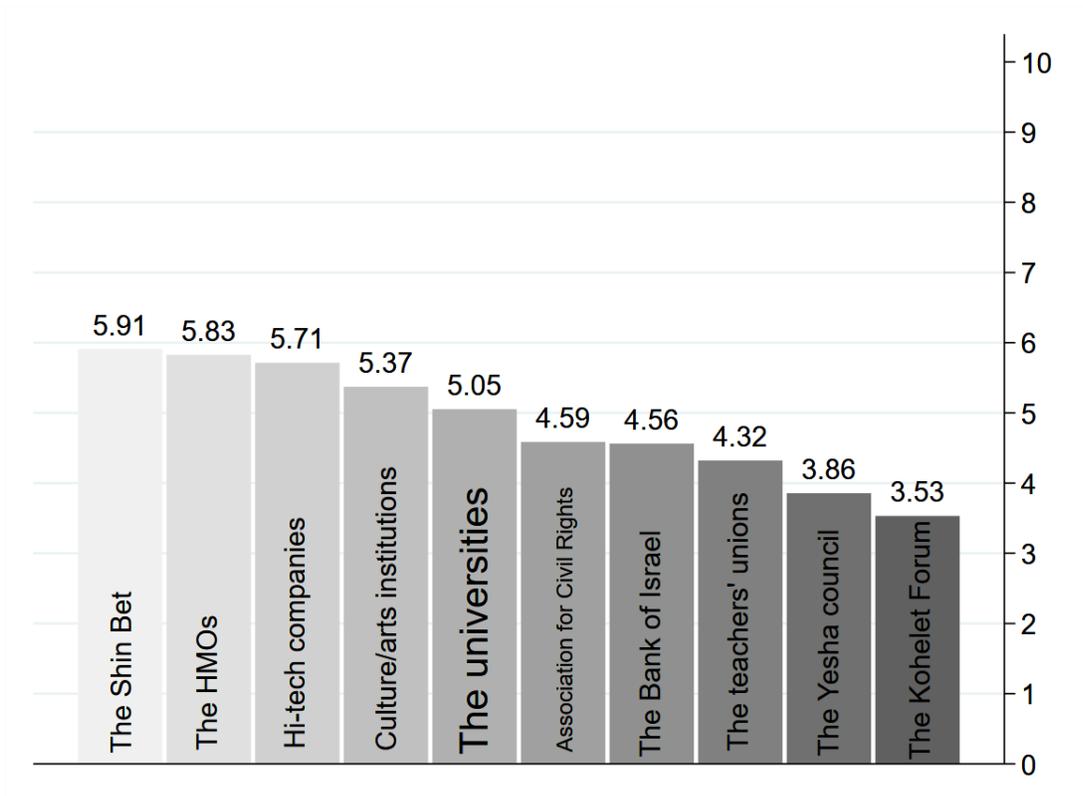
In addition to universities, respondents were also asked about their attitudes toward several other bodies and organizations, with emphasis on those that public opinion polls in Israel do not tend to ask about. Adding questions regarding a series of institutions and organizations was intended to help understand how the Israeli public actually ranks universities in relation to a diverse and multidisciplinary list of other bodies, including bodies with a clear political affiliation and those without such a clear affiliation. In particular, in the survey conducted in September 2023, respondents were asked about their attitudes toward the universities, the teachers' unions, the Bank of Israel, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, high-tech companies, cultural and arts institutions, the Yesha Council, the Kohelet Policy Forum, the Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), and the Israel Security Agency (the Shin Bet). In the survey conducted in March 2024, minor changes were made, where the question regarding attitudes towards "cultural and arts

institutions" was removed, and instead of a question about attitudes toward the Bank of Israel, respondents were asked about their attitudes toward the banks. Questions about attitudes toward the other eight institutions and organizations mentioned above were asked again. The questions regarding attitudes toward universities and various bodies were asked twice, in September 2023 and March 2024. This was done with the aim of examining, among other things, whether any significant changes occurred after half a year, particularly in light of the October 7 events and the outbreak of the war against Hamas in Gaza.

The September 2023 Survey:

In this survey, the attitude of the Israeli public toward the universities was 5.05 (standard deviation of 2.9), meaning a neutral attitude.^{vi} Compared to the other nine bodies examined, an attitude of 5.05 toward universities ranks fifth out of the ten bodies. The findings are presented in Figure 1 below. The most positive attitude is toward the Shin Bet, followed by the HMOs and high-tech companies. At the bottom of the ranking are teachers' unions, and the two bodies with a right-wing or conservative political orientation, the Yesha Council and the Kohelet Forum. It appears that the attitude of the Israeli public as a whole toward universities is lukewarm, and there are quite a few more popular bodies, but also quite a few less popular ones.

Figure 1. The Israeli Public's Attitude Toward a Series of Institutions and Organizations, September 2023



Legend. The values range from 0 to 10, where at 0 means a very negative attitude, 10 means a very positive attitude, and 5 means a neutral attitude. Estimates were calculated with weights for voting in the November 2022 elections.

Many of the criticisms of universities come from politicians, organizations, and citizens from the political right. To examine the extent to which different political groups differ in their attitudes toward universities, we analyzed the attitude toward all ten bodies, divided by voting for coalition parties (excluding voters of the Mamlachti Camp party) and opposition parties (including voters of the Mamlachti Camp).^{vii} Table 1 presents these findings, with the different bodies arranged according to the size of the average gap between coalition voters and opposition voters regarding the specific body, in descending order. This measure represents a sort of index for the degree to which there is political polarization regarding the specific body.

Table 1 shows that in September 2023, the attitude toward universities was polarized to a considerable degree. In particular, the attitude toward universities is the second most polarized – slightly less polarized than the attitude toward the Yesha Council, and almost identical to the polarization regarding the Kohélet Forum. These findings suggest that the attitude toward universities in Israel was largely influenced by different political preferences in September 2023, perhaps influenced by the struggle over the judicial reform ("judicial revolution") promoted by the

coalition at that time. In fact, in this survey, the attitude toward universities is the most negative among coalition voters (along with the attitude toward teachers' unions), and it is almost the most positive among opposition voters (third after high-tech companies and the Shin Bet).

Table 1. Attitude toward various bodies, by coalition and opposition voters, September 2023

	Coalition voters	Opposition voters	Difference
1 The Yesha Council	5.37	2.93	2.44
2 The universities	4.05	6.13	2.08
3 The Kohelet Forum	4.55	2.51	2.04
4 Hi-tech companies	5.23	6.65	1.42
5 The Association for Civil Rights	4.20	5.31	1.11
6 Culture/arts institutions	4.86	5.96	1.10
7 The teachers' unions	4.08	4.67	0.59
8 The Bank of Israel	4.72	5.17	0.45
9 The Shin Bet	6.48	6.26	0.22
10 The HMOs	5.89	5.93	0.04

Legend. The values range from 0 to 10, where 0 means a very negative attitude, 10 means a very positive attitude, and 5 means a neutral attitude.

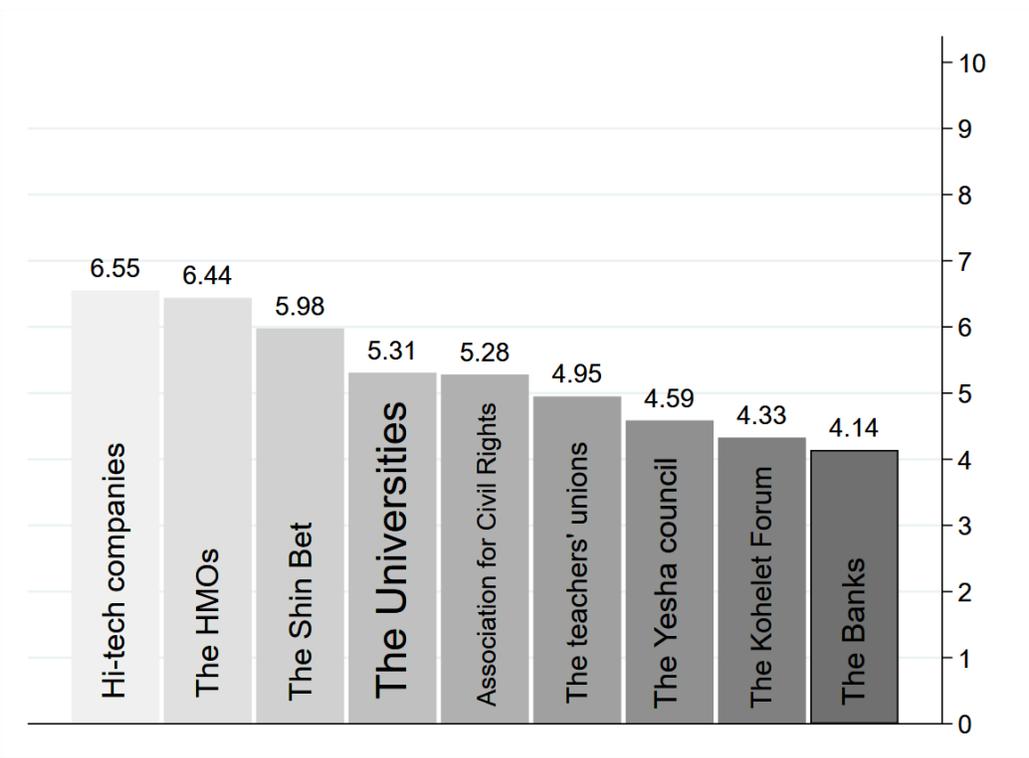
March 2024 Survey:

In this survey, the attitude of the Israeli public toward universities was slightly more positive compared to September 2023 – 5.31 (standard deviation of 2.8) – meaning a slightly more favorable attitude than a neutral one. Compared to the other eight bodies examined in this survey, an attitude of 5.31 toward universities ranks fourth out of the nine bodies. The findings are presented in Figure 2 below. It can be seen that in this survey, high-tech companies receive the most positive attitude, followed by the HMOs and the Shin Bet, while at the bottom of the ranking are the Yesha Council, the Kohelet Forum, and finally the banks. As in the September 2023 survey, the attitude of the Israeli public as a whole toward universities is mediocre, or only slightly more positive than that.

It should be noted that compared to the September 2023 survey, the attitude in the Israeli public improved toward all eight bodies whose attitude was examined in both surveys.^{viii} On average, the

attitude toward these bodies improved by 0.58 points. The greatest improvement occurred in the attitude toward high-tech companies (an improvement of 0.84 points) and in the attitude toward the Kohelet Forum (an improvement of 0.79 points), while the smallest improvement occurred in the attitude toward the Shin Bet (an improvement of only 0.06 points) and in the attitude toward universities (an improvement of 0.26 points) (in the remaining four bodies, there was an improvement of 0.61 to 0.73 points). Thus, despite some improvement in the public's attitude toward universities between September 2023 and March 2024, this is a smaller improvement than most other bodies.

Figure 2. The Israeli Public's Attitude Toward a Series of Institutions and Organizations, March 2024



Legend. The values range from 0 to 10, where 0 means a very negative attitude, 10 means a very positive attitude, and 5 means a neutral attitude. Estimates were calculated with weights for voting in the November 2022 elections.

As in the previous survey, in March 2024 we also analyzed the attitude toward all nine bodies, separately for coalition voters and opposition voters. These findings are presented in Table 2 (the institutions are arranged according to the average gap size between coalition and opposition voters, in descending order). From the table, we can see that in March 2024, the attitude toward

universities was polarized to a significant degree, though less than in September 2023. In particular, in March 2024, the attitude toward universities is the third most polarized, but this time much less polarized than the attitude toward the Yesha Council and the Kohelet Forum. This is after the attitude toward universities among coalition voters improved by 0.78 points and "only" by 0.32 among opposition voters.^{ix} Among coalition voters, the attitude toward universities in March 2024 was the third most negative (more positive than the attitude toward the banks and the teachers' unions), and among opposition voters – the fourth most positive (after the attitude toward high-tech companies, the Shin Bet, and the HMOs).

Table 2. Attitude toward different bodies, by coalition and opposition voters, March 2024

		Coalition voters	Opposition voters	Difference
1	The Yesha Council	6.22	3.47	2.75
2	The Kohelet Forum	5.58	3.11	2.47
3	The universities	4.83	6.45	1.62
4	The Association for Civil Rights	4.92	5.99	1.07
5	Hi-tech companies	6.35	7.29	0.96
6	The Shin Bet	6.30	6.89	0.59
7	The teachers' unions	4.73	5.19	0.46
8	The banks	4.00	4.38	0.38
9	The HMOs	6.60	6.69	0.09

Legend: The values range from 0 to 10, where 0 means a very negative attitude, 10 means a very positive attitude, and 5 means a neutral attitude.

To summarize these findings, it appears that the attitude in Israeli society toward the universities in Israel is rather lukewarm – even if it is slightly more positive at the time of writing these lines than during 2023 – with a series of bodies more popular than the universities and a series of bodies less popular than the universities. Additionally, the attitude toward the universities in Israel is politically polarized to a significant degree, with fairly large differences between coalition and opposition voters.^x

(2) Perceptions regarding the contribution of research universities to the State of Israel in various fields

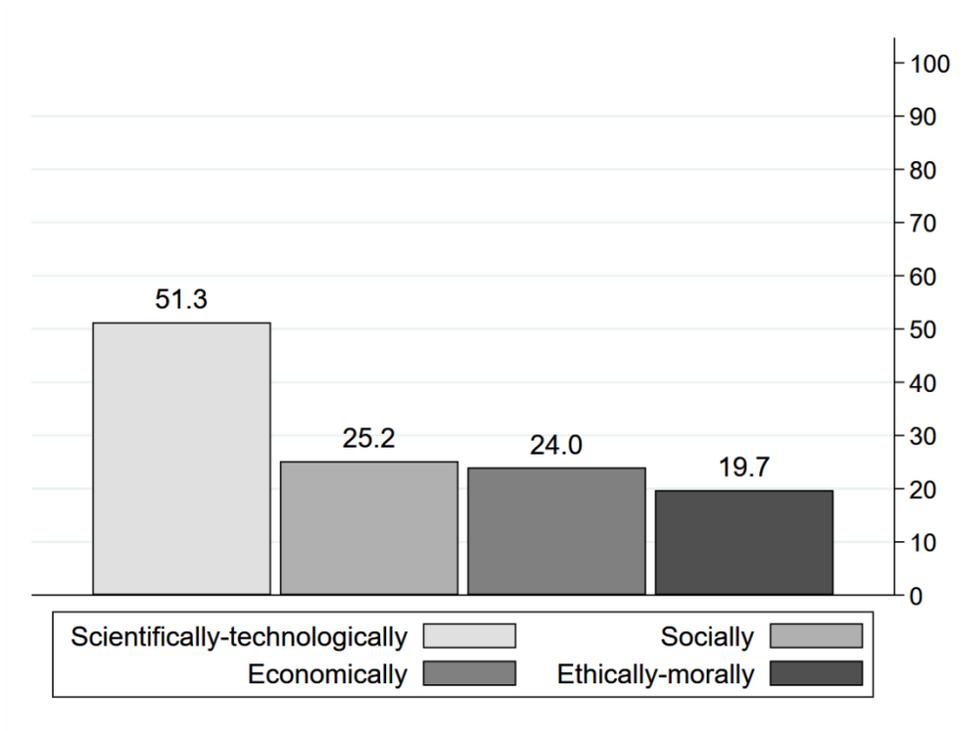
In a survey conducted in January 2024, respondents were asked to what extent they believe the universities contribute to the State of Israel with regard to four aspects: scientifically-technologically, economically, socially, and ethically-morally.^{xi} The four selected domains relate to some of the important aspects in which research universities can contribute to the State of Israel,^{xii} where questions about contributions to different aspects were designed to allow respondents to indicate in which domains they see significant contribution and in which they do not. We preferred to ask the questions this way instead of one general question about the contribution of the universities to Israel – a question that might have been influenced by respondents' assessment of the universities' contributions to specific domains.

Table 3 details the percentage of respondents who indicated the extent of the perceived contribution of the universities to Israel in each of the four domains, and Figure 3 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that the universities contribute to a large extent to the pertinent domain. From Table 3 and Figure 3, it can be seen that there is relatively widespread agreement in Israeli society that the research universities contribute significantly to the State of Israel in the scientific-technological domain: roughly 51% of the public believed this contribution is significant, and only about 10% believed this contribution is minimal. However, in other areas, a lower percentage of respondents believed that the contribution of the universities is substantial. About 25% of respondents believed that the contributions of the universities in the social and economic domains are significant, while a similar percentage believed that the contribution of universities in these two domains is minimal. Only 20% of respondents answered that the contribution of the universities in the ethical-moral domain is significant, compared to about a quarter who answered that the universities' contribution in this aspect is minimal. It should be noted that relatively many respondents – between 20% and 27% of respondents in various fields – answered "don't know" in response to these questions, which indicates that in the public there is a significant degree of unfamiliarity with (or lack of clarity about) the contribution of the universities in various aspects.

Table 3. [ADD TITLE]

Contribution	To a small extent	To a certain extent	To a large extent	Don't know
Scientifically-technologically	9.6%	19.1%	51.3%	20.1%
Socially	23.2%	28.0%	25.2%	23.6%
Economically	23.7%	25.3%	24.0%	26.9%
Ethically-morally	27.4%	27.7%	19.7%	25.2%

Figure 3. Percentage of Israelis who believe universities make a significant contribution, in various domains



Legend: The percentages range from 0 to 100. Estimates were calculated with weights for voting in the November 2022 elections.

As with the attitude towards universities above, regarding the four questions about the contribution of the universities, we also compared the responses of coalition and opposition voters. Table 4 details the percentage of coalition voters and opposition voters who indicated the extent of the

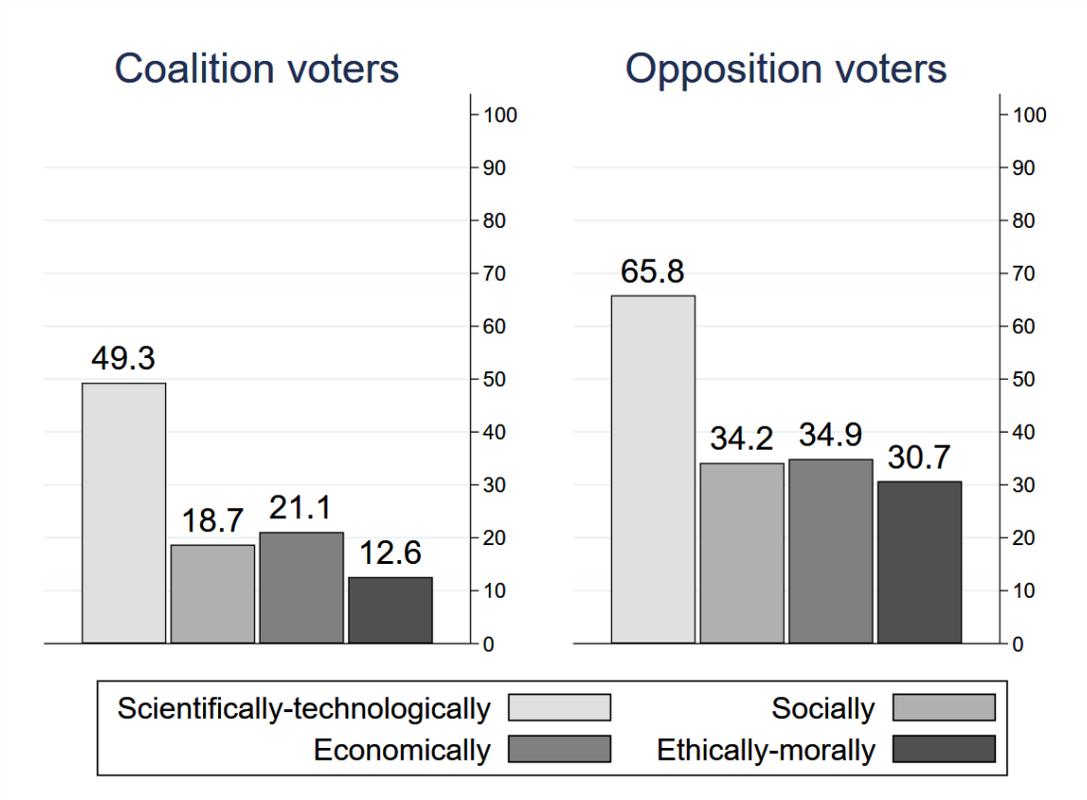
contribution of the research universities to the State of Israel in each of the four domains, and Figure 4 shows the percentages of voters from the coalition and the opposition who indicated that the universities contribute significantly in various aspects. It can be seen that there are differences of 14 to 18 percentage points in the proportion of coalition and opposition voters who indicate that the research universities contribute significantly in various aspects. These are significant differences, although they are smaller than differences between coalition and opposition voters regarding many policy issues (for example, the level of support for the judicial reform in 2023) or in their attitudes toward different politicians. Thus, about half of coalition voters and about two-thirds of opposition voters rated the contribution of the universities in the scientific-technological domain as significant; about a fifth of coalition voters and about a third of opposition voters rated the contribution of the universities in the social and economic domains as significant; and only slightly more than a tenth of coalition voters rated the contribution of the universities in the ethical-moral domain as significant, compared to about a third of opposition voters.

Table 4. Assessment of the contribution of research universities to Israel – Coalition and Opposition voters

Contribution		To a small extent	To a certain extent	To a large extent	Don't know
Scientifically-technologically	Coalition	12.9%	22.1%	49.3%	15.7%
	Opposition	5.0%	17.1%	65.8%	12.1%
	Difference	8.0%	5.0%	-16.5%	3.5%
Socially	Coalition	32.0	29.9	18.7	19.4
	Opposition	17.8	32.7	34.2	15.4
	Difference	14.2	-2.7	-15.5	4.0
Economically	Coalition	32.0	23.5	21.1	23.5
	Opposition	18.8	28.7	34.9	17.6
	Difference	13.2	-5.2	-13.8	5.9
Ethically-morally	Coalition	41.8	26.5	12.6	19.1
	Opposition	18.3	34.9	30.7	16.1
	Difference	23.5	-8.4	-18.1	3.0

Legend: The percentages range from 0 to 100.

Figure 4. Universities make a significant contribution, in various domains – Opposition and Coalition voters



Legend: The percentages range from 0 to 100.

(3) Perceptions regarding the representation of different social groups in universities in Israel

In recent years, claims have been leveled against the universities in Israel that various social groups, such as Arabs, Mizrahim, and women, are underrepresented among lecturers and faculty members in the universities, and that the proportion of faculty members from these groups should be increased.^{xiii} In fact, the universities themselves are working to increase the representation of at least one group among faculty members in universities – women.^{xiv} In light of this, in a survey we conducted in January 2024, we asked respondents two questions regarding representation in academia.

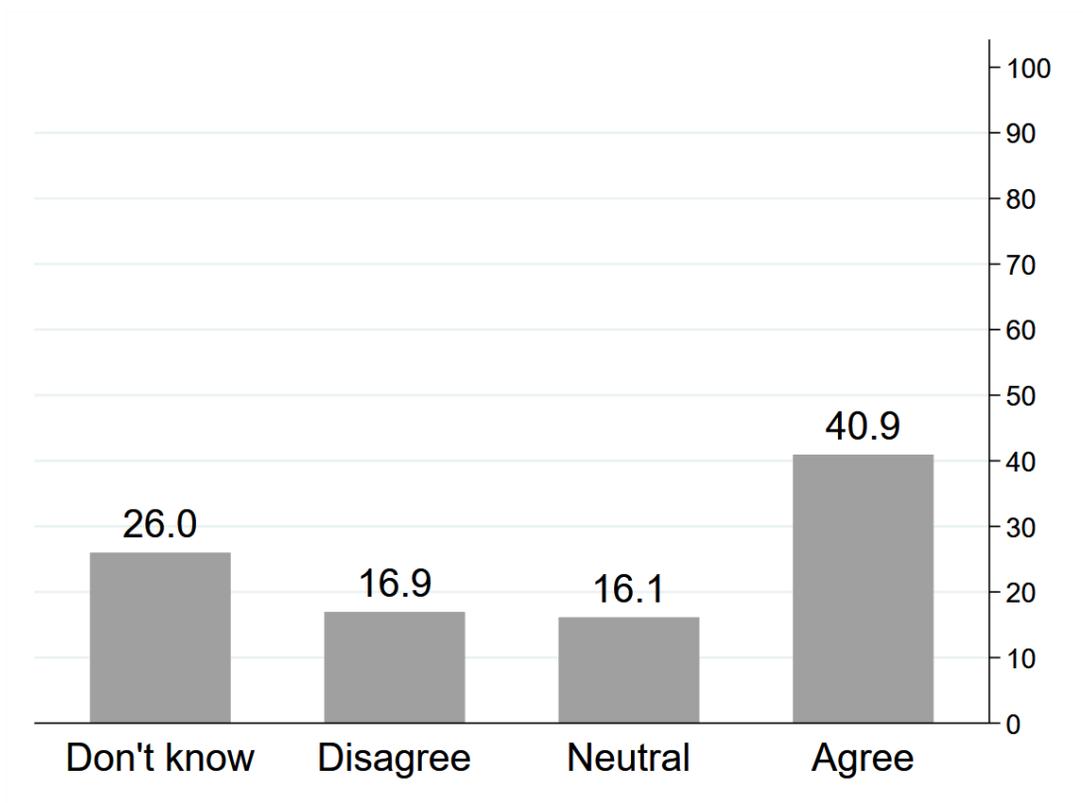
First, respondents were asked whether they believe that different social groups in Israel are not adequately represented among university lecturers.^{xv} This question was asked with the aim of

trying to assess to what extent the Israeli public believes that there are groups that are not adequately represented among lecturers in Israeli universities, without specifying particular social groups. This broad question wording was designed to examine whether, in general, the Israeli public believes that there are some social groups that are not adequately represented in the universities. Second, respondents were asked to what extent they believe the universities should act to increase the representation of different social groups among their faculty members.^{xvi} Again, this is a broad question, designed to examine whether the public believes that the universities should be active in increasing the representation of different groups among faculty members.

Perceptions regarding the extent of representation of different groups among university lecturers

Figure 5 presents the distribution of responses in the entire sample regarding adequate representation of different social groups among university lecturers. A relative majority of 41% agreed regarding the absence of such representation, 16% gave a neutral response, and 17% disagreed with this claim about the lack of adequate representation. A relatively large proportion of the sample, 26%, indicated that they do not know. It should be noted that the differences in responses to this question between men and women, Jews and Arabs, and respondents with or without academic education were relatively small.^{xvii} In contrast, the differences in responses to this question among coalition and opposition voters, as well as the differences among Jewish respondents by level of religiosity, were larger.^{xviii} These larger gaps may indicate that when answering this question, many respondents thought mainly of certain groups as those that are not adequately represented among university lecturers, in particular lecturers with a religious background or those with a certain political-ideological affiliation.

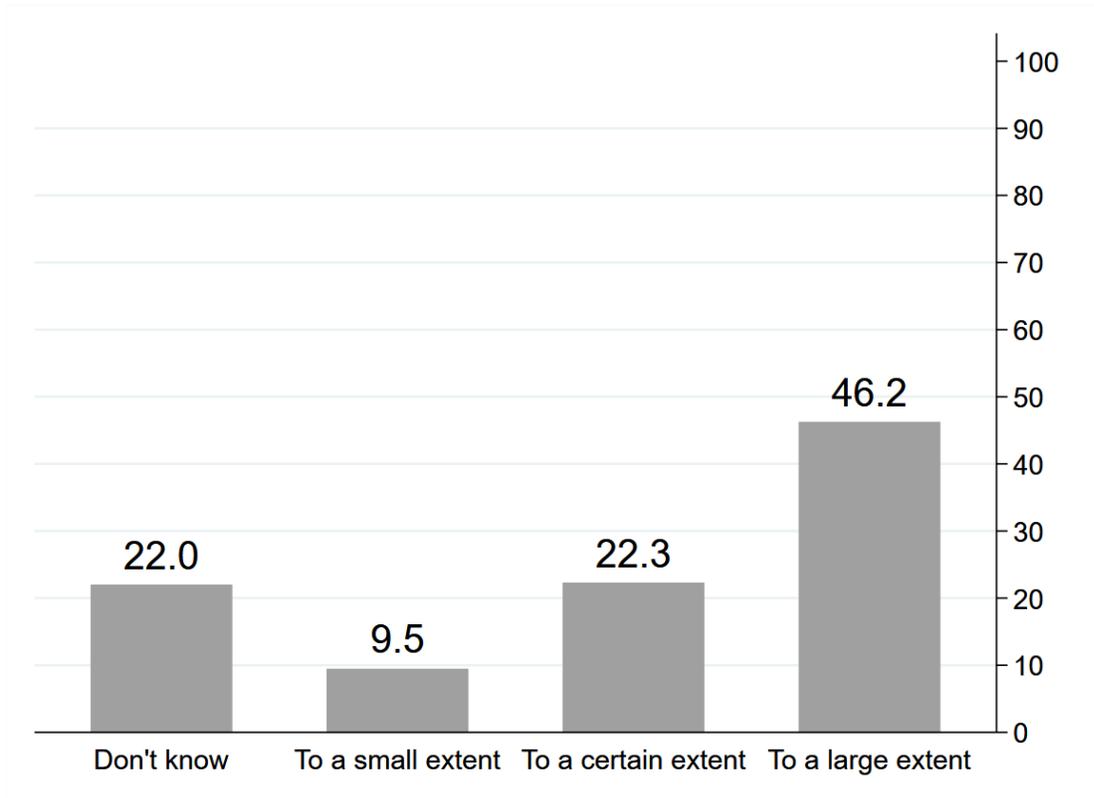
Figure 5. Percentage of agreement that there is no adequate representation for different social groups among university lecturers, entire sample



Legend: The percentages range from 0 to 100. Estimates were calculated with weights for voting in the November 2022 elections.

Additionally, we asked respondents to what extent they believe the universities should act to increase the representation of different social groups among their faculty members (see Figure 6 below). A relative majority of 46% of the public indicated that universities should act to a large extent to increase representation of social groups among faculty members, while 22% answered "to some extent," and 10% answered "to a small extent." Another 22% indicated they do not know. In response to this question as well, the differences in answers between men and women, Jews and Arabs, and respondents with or without academic education were relatively small, while the differences among coalition and opposition voters, as well as among Jewish respondents by level of religiosity, were larger.^{xix}

Figure 6. Support for university action to increase representation among faculty members, entire sample



Legend. The percentages range from 0 to 100. Estimates were calculated using weights based on voting in the November 2022 elections.

Summary

Several insights emerge from the surveys conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility between September 2023 and March 2024. First, the Israeli public's attitude toward the universities is neutral, or at most, slightly more positive than that. One might perhaps be encouraged that this is not an especially negative attitude, but it is evident that this attitude toward universities is also not particularly positive. Additionally, it is evident that different political groups are polarized to a considerable degree in their attitude toward the universities. The gap between coalition and opposition voters in their attitude toward the universities is quite large, and in fact it is similar to,

or only slightly smaller than, the gap between coalition and opposition voters regarding two bodies that clearly deal with various political-social issues, the Yesha Council and the Kohelet Policy Forum. It seems that the various universities should act to improve their image, especially among citizens who support the coalition or the political right.

Second, alongside a fairly widespread recognition among the Israeli public of the significant contribution of the research universities to the State of Israel in the scientific-technological domain – more than half of the public believes this – only about a quarter of the public believes that the universities make a significant contribution to Israel's economy and society, and an even lower percentage (about 20%) believes that the universities' moral-ethical contribution to the country is significant. All this, when nearly half of Israelis believe that the universities' economic and social contributions are minimal or indicated that they do not know how to assess the universities' contribution in these aspects. It appears that the universities need to act more extensively to clarify their contribution to the public.

Finally, a relative majority of about 40% of Israelis strongly agree that universities do not adequately represent various social groups, and almost half of Israelis strongly believe that universities should act to increase the representation of various social groups among their faculty members. It seems that many Israelis believe that universities underrepresent various groups, and that the universities – apart from their commendable activities to increase the representation of women among faculty members – should act to increase the representation of additional social groups.

Appendix: Methodology

The personnel of the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility at the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy at Reichman University composed the survey questions and subsequently analyzed the data. The September 2023 survey was conducted by Geocartography, which conducts online surveys in Israel. The survey was conducted on September 3-6, 2023. The March 2024 survey was also conducted by Geocartography, on March 3-6, 2024. The January 2024 survey was conducted by iPanel, which also conducts online surveys in Israel, on January 14-17, 2024. The data in all three surveys were collected online. The questionnaires in all three surveys were translated into Arabic so that Arab respondents could choose whether to answer the questionnaire in Hebrew or Arabic.

1,562 respondents aged 18 and over completed the survey in September 2023. Of these, 1,228 were Jewish respondents and 334 were Arab respondents. The maximum margin of error for the entire sample is 2.5% at a 95% confidence level. 1,526 respondents aged 18 and over completed the survey in March 2024. Of these, 1,266 were Jewish respondents and 260 were Arab respondents. The maximum margin of error for the entire sample is 2.5% at a 95% confidence level. 805 respondents aged 18 and over completed the survey in January 2024. Of these, 652 were Jewish respondents and 153 were Arab respondents. The maximum margin of error for the entire sample is 3.5% at a 95% confidence level.

In the various surveys, the Jewish respondents constitute a representative sample, or close to representative, of the adult Jewish population in Israel, broken down by gender, age groups, district in the country, and level of religiosity. In addition, the Arab respondents in the various surveys constitute a sample that is close to representing the adult Arab population in Israel broken down by gender, age groups, district in the country, and level of religiosity, with an under-sampling of male respondents, respondents from the South, and respondents aged 40 and over. All analyses in the three surveys in which estimates were calculated for the entire sample were conducted using weights for voting in the last national elections (November 2022).

Basic descriptive statistics of the respondents in the various surveys, broken down by several prominent variables, are presented below in Table A1. For comparison, the table also includes a breakdown of data from the Israeli National Election Study^{xx} (INES) from November 2022, which is the most up-to-date representative probability survey that includes similar data. It can be seen

that there are relatively minor deviations between the three surveys we conducted and the November 2022 INES survey data regarding the percentage of Jews, women, those with academic education in the sample, and level of religiosity (among Jewish respondents). In two of our samples, there is a slight over-representation of young respondents relative to the INES survey, and in the third – a slight over-representation of older respondents. Additionally, there is an under-sampling of respondents with leftist ideology, alongside an over-sampling of respondents from the ideological center (although it is possible that various events that have occurred since November 2022 have led to changes in the ideological self-definition of some Israelis).

Table A1. Descriptive statistics of respondents in the three surveys compared to the 2022 INES survey

	Sept. 2023 survey	March 2024 survey	Jan. 2024 survey	Nov. 2022 INES survey
Women (% of the sample)	56.2%	56.8%	50.6%	54.2%
Jews (% of the sample)	78.6%	83.0%	81.0%	83.2%
Jews (% of the sample)	52.6%	55.8%	48.3%	52.2%
Age groups (% of the sample)				
18-29	30.7%	28.0%	23.6%	22.8%
30-49	42.3%	45.2%	39.4%	43.3%
50-69	22.9%	23.1%	22.9%	27.7%
70+	4.1%	3.7%	14.2%	6.2%
Religiosity (% among Jews in the sample)				
Secular	47.2%	50.2%	44.3%	46.2%
Traditional	25.3%	22.8%	33.4%	¹ 27.1%
Modern-Orthodox	12.1%	13.7%	12.0%	11.5%

¹ קטגוריה זו כוללת הן משיבים שענו שהם "מסורתיים", דתיים" והן משיבים שענו שהם "מסורתיים", לא כל כך דתיים".

Ultra-Orthodox	15.5%	13.3%	10.3%	15.2%
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Self-identification: ideological right-left (% of the sample)

Right	47.8%	52.9%	47.3%	48.3%
Center	26.3%	23.5%	27.1%	17.8%
Left	20.1%	18.8%	20.6%	28.6%
Don't know / other	5.8%	4.9%	5.0%	5.4%

Legend: The question examining self-identification on the right-left ideological axis included seven response options (not including the "don't know" option), where 1 means right, 4 means center, and 7 means left. Those who answered 1-3 were defined as "right," those who answered 4 were defined as "center," and those who answered 5-7 were defined as "left."

Endnotes

ⁱ See, for example, Yanko, 2018; Kadri-Ovadia, 2023; Gilad, 2024; Linor, 2024.

ⁱⁱ See, for example, Haruti-Sober, 2017; Elbashan, 2019.

ⁱⁱⁱ See, for example, Yanko, 2019.

^{iv} The average trust given to scientists among the public in Israel was 3.36 on a scale of 1-5 (1- very low trust; 5- very high trust). The average for scientists in Israel places it at 61st out of the 67 countries examined in the study (Cologna et al., 2024).

^v Question wording: "What is your attitude toward the following institutions and organizations operating in Israel? Give your answer on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means a very negative attitude, 10 means a very positive attitude, and 5 means a neutral attitude (middle)." Each respondent randomly answered about their attitude toward five out of ten bodies. Respondents were also given a "don't know" response option, and respondents who answered this question were excluded from the analysis of the specific institution/organization. In the September 2023 survey, the percentage of "don't know" respondents ranged from 1.4% (health funds) to 19.2% (Kohélet Forum) [average=7.6%], and in the March 2024 survey, the percentage of "don't know" respondents ranged from 1.9% (health funds) to 32.8% (Kohélet Forum) [average=11.3%]. The percentage of "don't know" responses to the question about attitudes toward universities was 3.8% in September 2023 and 3.7% in March 2024.

^{vi} All analyses referring to attitudes toward any institution among the entire sample were calculated with weights for voting in the November 2022 elections.

^{vii} Respondents who voted for Meretz, Balad, or Habayit Hayehudi parties (about 6% in each of the two surveys) were considered opposition voters. Excluding these respondents from the analysis of opposition voters does not change the attitude toward any of the ten bodies by more than 0.2 points.

^{viii} The reason for this improvement in relation to all bodies is unclear. It may be an effect of the different periods in which the surveys were conducted, or it may be an effect of the order of questions (in September 2023, but not in March 2024, before the questions about attitudes toward institutions, respondents were asked, among other things, about their assessment of how the government is handling issues such as road accidents, crime in Israel, or violence against women).

^{ix} Among those who did not vote for the coalition or opposition, the attitude toward universities worsened by 0.55 points between the surveys.

^x Effect sizes (Cohen's D) of the differences between coalition and opposition voters regarding universities are 0.74 and 0.63 in the two surveys, respectively.

^{xi} Question wording: "In your opinion, do research universities contribute or do not contribute to the State of Israel: [A matrix presentation of four questions, in random order] (1) economically; (2) scientifically-technologically; (3)

socially; (4) and ethically-morally. Response options: do not contribute at all; contribute to a small extent; contribute to some extent; contribute to a large extent; contribute to a very large extent; don't know. To facilitate the presentation of the findings, in the analyses presented in this section, the response options "do not contribute at all" and "contribute to a small extent" were combined into the category of "contribute to a small extent," and the response options "contribute to a large extent" and "contribute to a very large extent" were combined into the category of "contribute to a large extent."

^{xii} The distinction between a social contribution and an ethical-moral contribution was made out of a desire to distinguish between the social aspect, which relates more to social stability and connection between different groups in Israeli society, and the ethical-moral aspect, which relates more to promoting certain values in Israeli society. We acknowledge that we cannot ensure that all respondents distinguished between these aspects in this way.

^{xiii} See, for example, Elbasan, 2019.

^{xiv} See, for example, the activities of the Council for Higher Education and the Planning and Budgeting Committee to increase the representation of women among academic staff in higher education institutions. One example of this is the "Multi-year plan for gender fairness in academia" presented on the Council for Higher Education website: [https://che.org.il/התכנית-הרב-שנתית/קידום-נשים-באקדמיה/](https://che.org.il/התכנית-הרב-שנתית/קידום-נשים-באקדמיה).

^{xv} Question wording: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the claim that among lecturers in Israeli universities there is no adequate representation for different social groups?" Response options: strongly disagree; somewhat disagree; neither agree nor disagree; somewhat agree; strongly agree; don't know. To facilitate the presentation of the findings, in the analyses presented in this section, the response options "strongly disagree" and "somewhat disagree" were combined into the category of "disagree," and the response options "somewhat agree" and "strongly agree" were combined into the category of "agree."

^{xvi} Question wording: "To what extent, in your opinion, should universities act to increase among their faculty members the representation of different social groups?" Response options: not at all; to a small extent; to some extent; to a large extent; to a very large extent; don't know. To facilitate the presentation of the findings, in the analyses presented in this section, the response options "not at all" and "to a small extent" were combined into the category of "to a small extent," and the response options "to a large extent" and "to a very large extent" were combined into the category of "to a large extent."

^{xvii} Among men in the sample, 46% strongly agreed with the claim regarding lack of adequate representation, and among women – 40%; among Jews in the sample, 44% strongly agreed, and among Arabs – 39%; and among respondents with academic education, 45% strongly agreed, while among those without academic education – 41%.

^{xviii} Among coalition voters in the sample, 60% strongly agreed, and among opposition voters only 34%. Among secular Jewish respondents, 27% strongly agreed, among traditional Jews 50% strongly agreed, among religious Jews 68% strongly agreed, and among ultra-Orthodox Jews 70% strongly agreed.

^{xix} Thus, among men 48% answered "to a large extent" compared to 46% among women; among Jews 48% answered "to a large extent" compared to 44% among Arabs; and among respondents with academic education 49% answered "to a large extent" compared to 46% among respondents without academic education. In contrast, among coalition voters 58% answered "to a large extent" compared to 42% among opposition voters. And among secular Jewish respondents 35% answered "to a large extent" compared to 56% among traditional Jews, 59% among religious Jews, and 66% among ultra-Orthodox Jews.

^{xx} See the INES website, at <https://socsci4.tau.ac.il/mu2/ines/>.

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