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Political Perceptions and attitudes in the ultra-Orthodox community

An Overview

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This study examines political perceptions and attitudes within Israel's ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) community, based on two original surveys conducted before and after the October 7th, 2023 outbreak. The analysis explores ultra-Orthodox's feelings of partnership in Israeli society, democratic perceptions, trust in state institutions and political positions, across different sub-groups within the community. The review reveals complex attitudes: high levels of national pride and belonging alongside refusal to contribute to the state; general support for democracy with a limited support for liberal democratic norms such as minority rights; moderate trust in government institutions and denial of the supreme court; and rightist political positions. Findings also indicate that the October 7 war affected ultra-Orthodox political views, showing increased support for Jewish privileged rights and decreased support for peace agreements.

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Abstract

The Ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) community is a unique and complex sector in Israeli society. The relationship between the ultra-Orthodox public and the State of Israel and its institutions has always been a source of tension and conflict. This research aims to examine the perceptions and attitudes of Ultra-Orthodox community members towards democracy, politics, and the State of Israel as a whole by examining the ultra-Orthodox sense of partnership in the State of Israel; their perceptions of democracy in general and its implementation in Israel; their attitude toward state institutions; and their political positions. Additionally, the research seeks to examine whether ultra-Orthodox society is monolithic or whether differences can be identified between various groups within it. Furthermore, the research aims to examine whether these attitudes and perceptions have changed following the war that began on October 7, 2023. For this purpose, we review data based on two surveys conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility in collaboration with the Aharon Institute and Askaria. The first survey was conducted in August-September 2023, included 1,135 ultra-Orthodox participants, and combined telephone and internet sampling. The second survey was conducted in February 2024, during the Gaza war, among 452 ultra-Orthodox participants.

Here are the main findings of the research:

Partnership in Israeli Society

- A majority of 63% of ultra-Orthodox in the survey feel pride and belonging to the Israeli state. Hasidim and Lithuanians feel less pride and belonging than Sephardim, Chabad, and others. Conservative ultra-Orthodox also feel less pride and belonging than modern ultra-Orthodox.
- 65% of the respondents feel that ultra-Orthodox men do not need to contribute to the state in any additional way besides studying Torah.

Perceptions of Democracy

- A large majority of 72% of respondents consider that it is important to live in a state with democratic governance.
- Most survey respondents see democracy as the realization of the people's rule and majority rule, with many seeing democracy as a reflection of equality and various rights, including

freedom of expression and freedom of religion. However, a significant portion of respondents emphasized other aspects in their interpretation of democracy, such as restraining the Supreme Court and the judicial system. A small portion of respondents see democracy as the realization of Torah values and Jewish tradition.

- Most respondents view minority rights protection, free elections, freedom of expression, equal rights, religious freedom, ensuring dignified existence, and critical media as essential to democracy. In contrast, 54% of the respondents believe that it is not essential to democracy that the judicial branch will be able to determine that the government acts illegally.
- 87% of the respondents agreed that men should not have more rights than women. However, 46-48% support including women in decision-making regarding education and socioeconomic issues, and only 21-26% supported including women in decisions regarding state and religion and foreign and security issues.
- 60% of the respondents agreed with giving extra rights to Jews compared to non-Jewish citizens.
- Most survey respondents rate Israeli democracy's functioning as moderate. However, they seem to rate democracy's functioning more positively than non-ultra-Orthodox.
- Only 18-27% of respondents believe that in Israel all citizens have equal rights; that there is protection of minority rights; and that all citizens are guaranteed living in human dignity (in terms of socio economic living conditions). About two-thirds feel that Israel has freedom of and from religion and that citizens elect leaders in free elections. A majority of 62-76% think that in Israel, the media is free to criticize the government and the court can determine that the government acts illegally.

Trust and Satisfaction with State Institutions

- The ultra-Orthodox on average, are moderately satisfied with the government with a slight tendency toward distrust. Compared to the general population, ultra-Orthodox are more satisfied with the government.
- Only 20% of the respondents express trust in the Knesset, and only 33% feel there is a politician or party that represents them. These trust levels are higher than non-ultra-Orthodox but lower than non-ultra-Orthodox right-wing individuals.

- 47% of the respondents either don't think there is a party, or don't know if there is a party, that will best handle their perceived most important issue.
- Only 1% of survey respondents expressed trust the Supreme Court. These trust levels are very low compared to the non-ultra-Orthodox population.

Political Positions

- Most of the survey participants defined themselves on the right side of the left-right spectrum (average 2.3 on a scale from 1 (most right-wing) to 7 (most left-wing)).
- 74% of the survey respondents oppose the claim that Israel should work toward a peace agreement with the Palestinians.
- 87% of the survey respondents agreed with the claim that it is the state's duty to ensure a human dignity (in terms of socio economic living conditions) for every citizen.

Impact of the Gaza War

- In an additional survey conducted in February 2024, after the war broke out, support for giving extra rights to Jews compared to non-Jews increased from 60% in the previous survey to 70%; and the opposition to working toward a peace agreement with the Palestinians has raised from 74% to 81%.

Introduction

Preface

The relationship between the ultra-Orthodox community and the secular institutions of the State of Israel and its democratic values has always been a source of tension and conflict. This is not surprising, as the ultra-Orthodox community is characterized by maintaining a separate lifestyle, strict interpretation of Jewish law (Halacha), and voluntary submission to "Daat Torah" (rabbinic authority). The connection between this and democracy or secular state institutions seems tenuous.

However, the reality in Israel is more complex. On the one hand, the ultra-Orthodox indeed reject the idea of secular democracy – in their view, the supreme authority is reserved for religious law. This position leads to disagreements with Israeli governments throughout history and with Israeli society on issues such as military service, gender equality, minority rights, Sabbath observance, education, and more.

On the other hand, the ultra-Orthodox public takes a significant part in the Israeli political mechanism and the democratic processes that manage it and constitute its ideological and practical infrastructure. The ultra-Orthodox public plays the democratic political game, votes for ultra-Orthodox parties to advance its interests, and its representatives in the Knesset are key players and prominent voices around the decision-making table in Israeli governments throughout history. This contradiction is a focus of academic and intellectual curiosity. In this context, it is interesting to examine how ultra-Orthodox society understands Israeli politics and democracy and how it interprets it through the religious prism of its lifestyle.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, at the end of 2023, the ultra-Orthodox population in Israel is estimated approximately 1,335,000 people, 13.6% of Israel's total population. It is expected to reach 16% by 2030, and its growth rate stands at 2.2% per year compared to only 1.9% for Israel's total population. The proportion of young people between the ages 0-19 stands at 58%, compared to only 31% in the general population (Kahaner and Malach, 2023). These significant numbers indicate that understanding this population's political attitudes and perceptions is crucial, as Israel's political and governmental future will largely depend on the perceptions of the ultra-Orthodox public.

The research aims to map the attitudes and perceptions of ultra-Orthodox community members towards democracy, liberal values, political positions, and the State of Israel as a whole. More specifically, the research asks:

1. To what extent do the ultra-Orthodox feel partnership in the State of Israel?
2. What are the ultra-Orthodox perceptions of democracy in general and its implementation in Israel? In other words, how do the ultra-Orthodox interpret democracy, and do they feel committed to democracy?
3. What is the ultra-Orthodox attitude toward state institutions, and to what extent do they trust them? How do they evaluate their performance, and do they feel the political system represents them?
4. What are the specific political positions of the ultra-Orthodox? Have their political perceptions been merged with ideological right-wing perceptions in Israel?

Another issue that interests academic research is the diversity of ultra-Orthodox society and its multiple sub-groups. Although Israeli media and society generally tend to regard ultra-Orthodox society as a uniform entity, whether due to its seclusion in communities and specific residential areas or due to its conservative and closed conduct, the ultra-Orthodox community is diverse and composed of different communities that maintain various religious practices and lifestyles. Therefore, another question this research will address is whether ultra-Orthodox society can be regarded as a single political unit or whether these attitudes and perceptions examined in this research differ between different groups in ultra-Orthodox society. More specifically, we seek to ask whether differences in political perceptions and attitudes can be identified between different sub-groups in ultra-Orthodox society, between those with different degrees of conservatism, between genders, and between age groups.

To answer these questions, the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility at Reichman University, in collaboration with the Aharon Institute, conducted through Askaria a comprehensive survey among the ultra-Orthodox public in August-September 2023; an additional, more limited survey was conducted in February 2024. This report will present the findings of both surveys.

In the first part of the report, we will present the background to the current research, its perspective, and the specific background for conducting the research. In the second part of the report, we will present the research methodology. In the third part, the main findings of the research will be presented across four topics: 1. Partnership in Israeli society 2. Democratic perceptions 3. Trust and satisfaction with state institutions 4. Political positions. In the fourth part, we will discuss the conclusions arising from the survey findings.

Ultra-Orthodox Society and Cultural Entrenchment

The sociological research of ultra-Orthodox society has revolved over the years around two concepts that characterize ultra-Orthodox society: "enclave culture" and "the society of scholars." Among researchers of ultra-Orthodox society, there is agreement that ultra-Orthodox society operates in what is called an 'enclave culture' (Sivan, 1991; Douglas, 1993): a society that zealously seeks to maintain distance from the general society. This is a response of a community that builds its rigid external boundary out of fear of tempting enticements from the neighboring community. The community cannot prevent its members from leaving, it does not have the means to enforce it. It marks the boundaries between groups by what Sivan calls the 'wall of good virtues' (Sivan, 1991). This symbolic wall offers moral reward to those dwelling within it. It emphasizes to its members that they are a chosen group of people, loyal to a 'holy purpose' and possessing 'good virtues,' in contrast to members of the other community who are characterized by tyranny and immorality.

Brown (2002; 2017) conceptualized ultra-Orthodox culture somewhat differently, though not entirely distinctly. As a direct continuation of the 'enclave culture' theory, Brown coined the term 'cultural entrenchment.' According to Brown, the ultra-Orthodox see the fortification of the Torah world as the core of Israel's existence, preservation, and survival. Accordingly, their relationship with the state is pragmatic, expressed through non-boycott and 'cool' cooperation with political institutions.

This separation stands – along with other factors – at the basis of the phenomenon of the 'society of scholars' (Friedman, 1991), according to which the Ultra-Orthodox sector in Israel advocates directing men to study Torah as a way of life. The Ultra-Orthodox 'society of scholars' relies on the 'holy yeshivas' where Ultra-Orthodox men are educated. The yeshivas encompass the life of

the Ultra-Orthodox man from his entry into 'small yeshiva' equivalent to general high school, through the large yeshiva intended for ages 17-22, and for many years after his marriage within the framework of the 'kollel' – a learning institution intended for married men. This doctrine is influenced by myths, worldviews, and beliefs (Hayon, 2017). It produces that same separation, and its expressions are seclusion and distance from the general non-ultra-Orthodox society, on the cultural and educational level (Friedman, 1991), as well as on the geographical level – ultra-Orthodox families gathering in homogeneous living areas (Kahaner, 2009; Shalhav and Friedman, 1985).

The Construction of Ultra-Orthodox Society by the State and Modern Ultra-Orthodoxy

When we approach the study of ultra-Orthodox society, we must remember that it is a society that was largely consolidated through political and social arrangements by the State of Israel (Brown, 2021). For example, the socio-economic model of the "society of scholars" was established in the 1970s when Ultra-Orthodox community leaders succeeded in mobilizing the state to expand Torah institutions and fund them through various arrangements. Or when they succeeded, through coalition agreements and other arrangements, to obtain military service postponement arrangements for yeshiva (a Torah study institution) students. In practice, the postponement became an exemption of military service (Brown, 2021).

Another example of the consolidation of ultra-Orthodox society through political arrangements concerns the institutionalization of the separate education system that enabled the establishment of the "society of scholars" (Brown, 2021; Friedman, 1991). While pre-state (Yishuv) institutions did not officially recognize Agudat Israel's (one of the main ultra-Orthodox political parties over the years) education system, its independence was anchored in the Status Quo arrangement in the year preceding the establishment of the state and later during the legislation of the Compulsory Education Law (Friedman, 1991). The ultra-Orthodox education system could operate even without official autonomy granted by the state institutions as it did during the Yishuv period; but recognition also led to participation in budget allocation and effectively established a system that operates to this day with limited control and supervision by the Ministry of Education (and the state), unlike state education. It should be noted that initially, the independent ultra-Orthodox education stream received partial government funding, but over the years, with the strengthening

of ultra-Orthodox parties' political power, the share of government funding increased (Brown, 2021).

A third example, beyond channeling women into occupation in the education system, the state has a significant role in the institutionalized exclusion of ultra-Orthodox women and gender segregation. While the state is responsible for many new initiatives made for integrating ultra-Orthodox women into the labor market (Kahaner, 2020; Neriya-Ben Shahr, 2015), it takes part in institutionalizing women's channeling and gender segregation in the public sphere. The funding of independent education, for example, enabled the growth and establishment of the "Beit Yaakov" education network, where many Ultra-Orthodox women worked. Thus, the independent education system enables is channeling women into being employed only in the educational system while allowing ultra-Orthodox women to support their families as their husbands study Torah (Friedman, 1995). Additionally, since 2012, the Council for Higher Education has been encouraging and subsidizing programs for integrating the ultra-Orthodox into academia, seeing gender segregation in studies as a necessary aspect for their success. The institutionalized segregation does not remain only within academia's boundaries, and the gender separation becomes institutionalized in public events, conferences, the IDF, and professional training (Tirosh, 2019; Tirosh, 2020).

Modern Israeli Ultra-Orthodoxy

Ultra-Orthodox society is identified in research as a society undergoing rapid processes of modernization and Israelization in various areas of life: from the labor market, education, and leisure culture to the emergence of independent individual identity, leadership, and ideology (Malach and Kahaner, 2017; Leon, 2014; Zicherman, 2014; Kaplan and Stadler, 2012; Zicherman and Kahaner, 2012; Kaplan, 2007; Sivan and Kaplan, 2003; Sheleg, 2000; Leon, 2009; Kahaner, 2017). Gilad Malach and Lee Kahaner (2017) determined that "Ultra-Orthodox society is no longer a closed society as it was in the past, and its gates have opened to ideas, perceptions, and various changes that it previously refused to adopt" (Malach and Kahaner, 2017:22). They point to employment, academic education, military and civil service recruitment, technology and communications, consumer culture and leisure space, and changing fertility rates among women as components creating change.

Beyond the familiar division into sub-groups – Lithuanian, Hasidic, and Sephardic – various researchers have classified ultra-Orthodox society and identified what is commonly called modern ultra-Orthodoxy (Zicherman and Kahaner, 2012; Kahaner, 2017; Malach and Kahaner, 2017; Cohen, 2019; Kahaner, 2020). These researchers argue that different groups of ultra-Orthodox can be distinguished (even within the distinction of modernity) based on how they maintain their way of life; among other things, to what extent they maintain within their family a separation between the external ultra-Orthodox environment which is subject to ultra-Orthodox institutions and leadership and the broader Israeli society, whether in a religious/secular or traditional environment (for example, studying in ultra-Orthodox educational institutions versus state-run ultra-Orthodox education); or to what extent they are exposed in their homes to modern communication sources such as the web and more. The source of employment also serves as a significant characteristic for examining differences between groups; for example, ultra-Orthodox whose source of income relies on jobs that maintain contact with the secular space versus ultra-Orthodox whose source of income relies on educational institutions and various combinations of income sources (Kahaner, 2017).

However, it is beyond the scope of this study to review all the differences between the various groups. What is relevant to us is that ultra-Orthodox groups and even individuals differ in their way of life. This research seeks, as mentioned before, to understand whether these differences in lifestyle also lead to different political perceptions and attitudes. Or in other words, whether ultra-Orthodox society can be viewed as a single unit in analyzing the political perceptions and attitudes of its members. The research hypothesis is that differences in the lifestyles of specific groups can lead to different perceptions. Therefore, the research will deal with analyzing differences between groups across various parameters. Among other things, the research seeks to examine: How do Ultra-Orthodox who define themselves on the spectrum between conservatism and modernity differ in their political perceptions? Can gender differences be identified between ultra-Orthodox women and men? Are there differences between ultra-Orthodox from different age groups and between those belonging to different sub-groups in ultra-Orthodoxy?

Democracy and the State of Israel versus Ultra-Orthodoxy

Apparently, it seems that the "cultural entrenchment" of ultra-Orthodox society should lead to ultra-Orthodox criticism of Western democratic values. The submission to Torah and observance

of commandments, and reliance on "Daat Torah" and God's will, might lead to rejection of democratic values including liberty, pluralism, equality, and people's sovereignty. They also lead to arguments against the secular regime of the State of Israel, as there is no place for a regime that does not derive its authority from God (Brown, 2017). However, it is evident that the ultra-Orthodox use Israeli democracy and its institutions - voting en masse in elections and some even using national-statist rhetoric (for example, Leon, 2016).

If the ultra-Orthodox are an entrenched and enclave society seeking to establish external boundaries, we would expect their perceptions to reject secular democratic concepts and express clear boundaries in relation to Israeli society. But if it's about practice, and if we take into account that the state is what established ultra-Orthodox society through its institutions, and the ultra-Orthodox know how to identify and recognize its importance to their establishment, then perhaps we would expect to find that the external boundaries of ultra-Orthodox society actually become undermined. Especially regarding political perceptions and positions. Such undermining would mean that the ultra-Orthodox public as a whole has adopted democratic perceptions or positive attitudes toward the secular Israeli state and that there is an overlap between ultra-Orthodox perceptions and those of non-ultra-Orthodox Jews, especially those belonging to the political right.

Few studies have presented quantitative empirical data regarding contemporary ultra-Orthodox perceptions of democracy and the state. Herman et al. (2016) sought to clarify the ultra-Orthodox position regarding democracy. They found that ultra-orthodox values and social perceptions are separatist, anti-democratic and discriminatory. Stern et al. (2021) summarize that research conducted so far shows that most ultra-Orthodox citizenship in Israel can be regarded as "thin citizenship," instrumental and minimal, within which the ultra-Orthodox contribute in a limited and distinct way to the Israeli economy and society, and even more minimally to military or civil service.

Stern et al. (2021) noted that one could have assumed that over the past twenty years, ultra-Orthodox positions in all areas would approach non-ultra-Orthodox population positions due to the dramatic integration of the ultra-Orthodox in higher education and employment. However, their research results revealed other insights. Their main conclusion was that ultra-Orthodox society denies Israel's democratic component. The ultra-Orthodox feel part of the state and determine that

the state is a good place for ultra-Orthodox to live, but simultaneously disavow its formal democratic institutions, including the judicial system, Knesset, and police. The research also showed that additional democratic principles of the state, such as equal rights for non-Jewish groups, acceptance of others, and women's rights, are not part of ultra-Orthodox society's conceptual world. It was also found that the ultra-Orthodox feel like a strong group in the state, but their primary commitment is to Halacha, and they believe that the authority to decide on central state matters lies with the rabbis, even in issues such as foreign affairs, security, and economy (Stern et al., 2021). Additionally, the research showed that regarding trust in the Supreme Court, for example, there are no significant gaps between ultra-Orthodox defined as 'modern' on the conservatism-modernity axis and conservative ultra-Orthodox. The researchers' conclusion was that although ultra-Orthodox society is growing and diversifying, a change in its democratic perceptions and the question of ultra-Orthodox civic role as individuals and as a community has not yet occurred.

Background to the Current Research

Similar to the studies mentioned above, the current research seeks to show quantitatively and clearly the values and political positions of the ultra-orthodox in Israel. However, this study differs from previous studies primarily in the period it seeks to focus its analysis on (summer 2023 and then in February 2024).

In recent years, three major events occurred that may influence, or at least challenge, traditional ultra-orthodox political perceptions and positions. The first is the COVID-19 crisis in 2020-2022; the second is the constitutional crisis that struck Israel in 2023 surrounding the government's attempts to implement judicial reform; the third is the Israel-Hamas war (Swords of Iron) that began with Hamas's attack on October 7, 2023.

First, regarding the COVID-19 crisis, it can be assumed that many populations in Israel and worldwide were affected by the global pandemic and various governments' handling of it. Government-imposed lockdowns, social distancing, and conflicts surrounding vaccinations - all of these could lead different societies to disagreements and rifts (see for example: Leonardo & Lucio, 2021). In the context of COVID-19, almost no research was conducted on the ultra-Orthodox population, but it can be assumed that it also underwent changes.

In February 2021, the 'True Data' Institute conducted a series of surveys that may shed light on the interaction between the ultra-Orthodox sector and general Israeli society (True Data, 2021). For example, it emerged that 87% of ultra-Orthodox reported that they followed authorities' guidelines during the first lockdowns, and they even felt their environment took these guidelines seriously. 74% declared that it was important to them that the secular public think positively about their sector. However, 80% indicated that in their opinion, the rift between the ultra-Orthodox and Israeli society worsened following COVID-19. Accordingly, 80% of survey respondents felt that "there is finger pointing at the ultra-Orthodox" and 87% felt that "there are elements looking to blame the ultra-Orthodox." While these findings do not directly address the question our research deals, these strong and unequivocal feelings could have led to some upheaval in ultra-Orthodox society and have the potential to cause changes in the political perceptions and positions of a significant portion of the ultra-Orthodox.

Regarding the judicial reform attempts, as of summer 2023, the Israeli public in general and the ultra-Orthodox sector in particular were in a challenging political and social period. On one hand, after the elections held on November 1, 2022, the right-wing bloc led by Benjamin Netanyahu succeeded in forming a government based on a homogeneous right-wing coalition of 64 members, with the ultra-Orthodox parties within it. On the other hand, Justice Minister Yariv Levin's announcement in January 2023 of a judicial reform that would weaken the power and independence of Israel's judicial branch, and statements by government and coalition members about changes and aspirations in matters of religion and state, led to prolonged and extensive public protest unprecedented in Israel since its establishment, a protest that deepened political polarization (Yair, 2023).

This crisis affected all sectors in the State of Israel, and the ultra-Orthodox sector should not be different. As mentioned, the democratic perceptions of the ultra-Orthodox community were characterized as separatist, anti-democratic, and discriminatory perceptions that do not align with Israel's values as a democratic state. However, it can be assumed that raising the legal question and the democratic value question to the center of the agenda affected this sector as well. Hayon (2023), for example, argued that ultra-orthodox society should oppose the reform as it sabotage democratic values, and this misuse in a circular motion will harm the sector. According to him, the direct factor for the welfare and comfortable life enjoyed by the ultra-orthodox sector in Israel is the modern

conduct of a Western state based on liberal and democratic thinking. Without a direct correlation between modernization and liberalism, Israel could not have maintained such rich welfare policy as part of its economic success. The reform, he argues, seeks to grant unlimited power to the formal representatives of the people. However this is an unpredictable power might harm the individual rights of the weak ultra-orthodox, for example junior women employees in large ultra-Orthodox networks. The reform could also lead the ultra-Orthodox sector - through its representatives with unbalanced power - to economic and social conduct influenced by extreme religious ideologies, and lack of long-term economic-social consideration, which will ultimately lead to damage to that economic and social comfort that has so benefited the ultra-orthodox sector until now.

Very few articles and data have been published regarding the ultra-Orthodox sector's positions on the judicial reform and the constitutional crisis that follows it, making it difficult to assess the impact of this event on the political perceptions of the ultra-orthodox in Israel. The Israel Democracy Institute examined the positions of the general public in Israel regarding the judicial reform, and their survey findings, mainly concerning differences between ultra-orthodox and secular individuals, may shed light on the political perceptions of the ultra-Orthodox society. For example, 68% of the self-defined secular public in Israel believes the reform is 'very bad,' while 66% of the ultra-Orthodox public defines it as very good. Similar data emerges regarding concrete questions such as support for the Override Clause - 59% of the secular people oppose it, while 60% of the ultra-Orthodox support its legislation. It also shows that 67% of the secular people oppose eliminating the reasonable standard compared to 62% of ultra-Orthodox who support its elimination. Additionally, 87% of the secular people call the government to stop the reform legislation program or at least continue it only with consensus, compared to 65% of ultra-Orthodox who want to continue passing the legislation program (Yakir, 2023).

These publications examined the ultra-Orthodox public homogeneously - as one bloc that isn't divided into sub-groups. To understand the ultra-Orthodox population and the nuances in the political perceptions of its components, we need to map the entire ultra-orthodox population not into different sub-groups but also into distinct positions and worldviews (Malchi, 2017; Kahaner, 2020; Regev and Gordon, 2021).

The challenge facing the current research is twofold: first, to achieve correct sampling of ultra-Orthodox society, with its variety of sub-groups and characteristics of the ultra-Orthodox people in Israel; second, to decode these sub-groups positions toward complex issues like democracy, civil rights, and liberal values.

The survey we conducted took place in August-September 2023, before the October 7 events and the "Swords of Iron" war. However, the war has shaken and continues to shake Israeli public opinion, and we felt that this upheaval did not skip over ultra-Orthodox society. Additionally, various publications by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility indicated that the war caused a shift in the public toward an anti-democratic direction: for example the public support grew for a strong leader who acts against democracy, and the Israeli public's willingness to restrict freedom of expression in the name of war increased (Efrat, 2023). Within this research, we seek to examine whether there has been a change in the democratic perceptions of the ultra-Orthodox after the outbreak of war. Therefore, we conducted an additional survey in February 2024 (smaller in scope than that of August-September 2023).

Methodology

The report is based on a survey conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility at the Reichman University, in collaboration with the Aharon Institute, through Askaria from August 23 to September 4, 2023, among 1,135 ultra-Orthodox individuals over age 18 (questionnaire attached in Appendix A). The survey combined internet and telephone sampling to reach conservative segments of the ultra-Orthodox population who don't have any web access. The sample was taken from different strata of the ultra-Orthodox population and aimed for representation of women and men not only among the conventional and known sub-groups - Lithuanian, Hasidic, Sephardic and other - but also along the modernity-conservatism axis (descriptive statistics of demographic data attached in Appendix B).

Survey participants were asked various questions about political perceptions and positions. The questions can be divided into four main topics:

A. Partnership in Israeli society. Within this, questions were asked regarding the level of pride and sense of belonging to the state of Israel. Additionally, participants were asked whether ultra-Orthodox men should contribute to the state in additional way besides studying Torah.

B. Democratic perceptions. First, participants were asked an open question: what is democracy for them. Then a series of questions was raised about the importance of living in a democracy and specific questions about the assessment of Israeli democracy and its functioning. Participants were also asked about their level of support for making Israel more Jewish at the expense of democracy. Additionally, half of the sample was asked a series of questions about their agreement with the essentiality of a set of characteristics for a democratic state: the court can determine that the government acts illegally; media is free to criticize the government; there is protection of minority group rights; citizens elect their leaders in free elections; all state citizens have equal rights; citizens enjoy freedom of expression and demonstration; citizens are permitted to observe or not observe religious commandments; and every citizen is guaranteed dignified living. The second half of the sample was asked to what extent these characteristics actually exist in Israel. Regarding aspects of equal rights, participants were asked about their level of agreement that Jews should have more rights than non-Jews in Israel and that men should have more rights than women. We also asked whether women should be among decision-makers in matters of education, foreign affairs and security, society and economy, and religion and state.

C. Trust and satisfaction. Under this topic, participants were asked questions regarding their attitudes toward state institutions. First, participants were asked questions about their level of trust and satisfaction with the government as well as questions regarding the government's attentiveness to public problems and its ability to handle the most important issue on the agenda. Then questions were asked about participants' level of trust in the Knesset and the Supreme Court. Additionally, participants were asked to what extent they feel there is a party/politician in the country that represents them. Participants were also asked an open question asking them to identify what is the most important problem facing the state and which party can best deal with this problem.

D. Political positions. Under this topic, participants were asked questions regarding their ideological political positions. First, they were asked how they rate themselves on the right-left spectrum. Then they were asked to what extent they think Israel should work toward a peace

agreement with the Palestinians and to what extent they think it is the state's duty to ensure dignified living.

In the findings chapter, the distribution of the answers for each survey question will be presented. Note that questions that compose the same topic and had significant correlation between them were unified into a consolidated index whose results are detailed. In most cases, when "don't know/refuse to answer" responses were negligible, they were removed from the analysis. Then, differences between groups were examined using t-tests and ANOVA tests to examine variance between means.

The groups examined (see Appendix B):

1. Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups: Participants were asked to which sub-group they belong to in the ultra-orthodox sector: Hasidic/Lithuanian/Sephardic/Chabad/Other/Don't know.
2. Level of conservatism: Participants were asked where they place themselves on the spectrum between very conservative (1) to modern (5). This variable was grouped into three categories: modern (1+2), neutral (3), and conservative (4+5).
3. Age: Participants were asked to state their age in years. This variable was grouped into three age group categories: young (up to 30), adults (30-50), and older adults (over 50).
4. Gender: Participants were asked to state their gender.

To compare perceptions between ultra-orthodox and non-ultra-Orthodox citizens, we used Policy and Values surveys conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility that asked similar questions on a sample of the general population, including the ultra-Orthodox public. Throughout the findings chapter, under each topic that had data from other surveys in the time period closest to the ultra-orthodox survey, we incorporated data allowing comparison between the two groups. However, data regarding ultra-orthodox from general population surveys should be taken with reservation, as these surveys are based on online samples that don't necessarily represent ultra-Orthodox society like in the current focused survey. Nevertheless, the data allows some comparison between the moods in both groups.

To examine whether there was a change in the political perceptions of the ultra-Orthodox after the events of October 7, 2023, we conducted an additional survey among 452 ultra-Orthodox

individuals from January 29 to February 4, 2024. The survey was more limited in scope and included some of the questions from the first survey (the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C). The follow-up survey findings are detailed in the fifth part of the findings chapter.

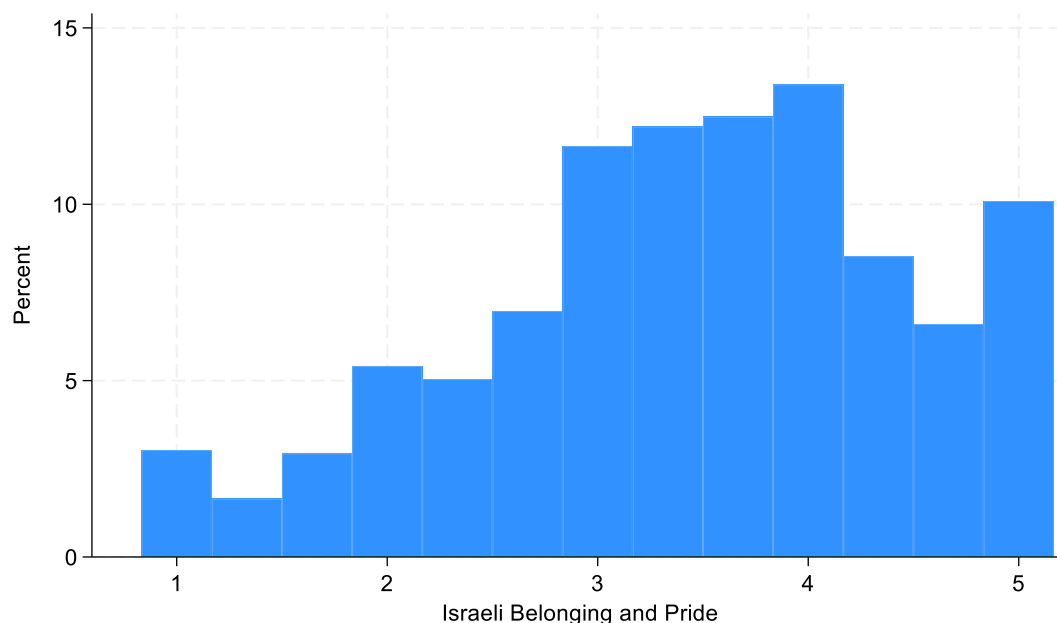
Findings

Partnership in Israeli Society

Israeli Pride and Belonging

The question of Israeli pride and belonging was examined by creating an index averaging the questions "To what extent do you define yourself as Israeli," "To what extent do you feel part of the State of Israel and its challenges," and "To what extent do you feel pride in the successes of the State of Israel." The questions ranged from 1 (very little extent) to 5 (very great extent) (Cronbach's alpha=0.79 indicates high internal reliability and correlation between the questions and therefore allows creating an index).

Figure 1: Israeli Belonging and Pride - Ultra-Orthodox Survey August-September 2023



As can be seen from the variable distribution in Figure 1, 25% of ultra-Orthodox do not feel Israeli pride and belonging (lower than 3 in the index). 63% tend toward feeling pride and belonging (greater than 3 in the index). The mean of the index is 3.4 and the median is 3.7. It appears that

most ultra-orthodox feel pride and belonging to the state, a surprising finding given the prevalent public perception that this sector sees itself as disconnected or even alienated from the state.

Significant differences were found between sub-groups and between conservatism levels according to ANOVA test. Specifically, Hasidic and Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox feel less pride and belonging than Sephardic and Chabad/others (Figure 2). Conservatives feel less Israeli pride and belonging than neutral or liberal individuals (Figure 3). The differences between the sub-groups and between conservatism levels are not surprising. The Hasidic and Lithuanian communities developed strong and autonomous communities to preserve their religious identity. This approach led to the adoption of rigid attitudes toward the outside world, including the state. In contrast, the Sephardic community maintained cultural and social connections with other parts of Israeli society, which leads to a stronger sense of belonging to the state.

Figure 2: Israeli Belonging and Pride by Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups- Ultra-Orthodox Survey August-September 2023

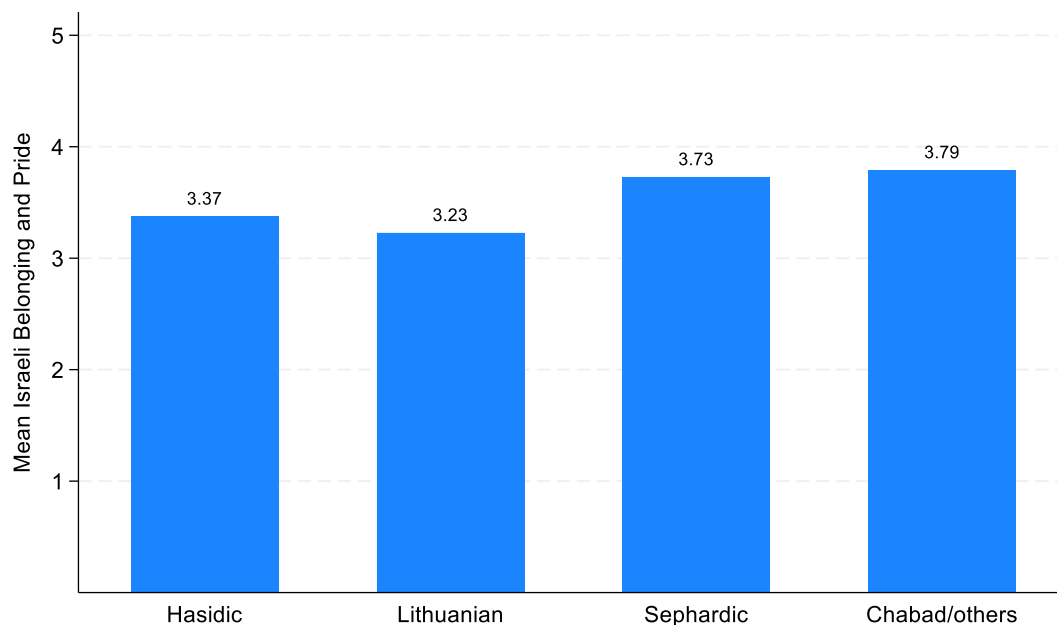
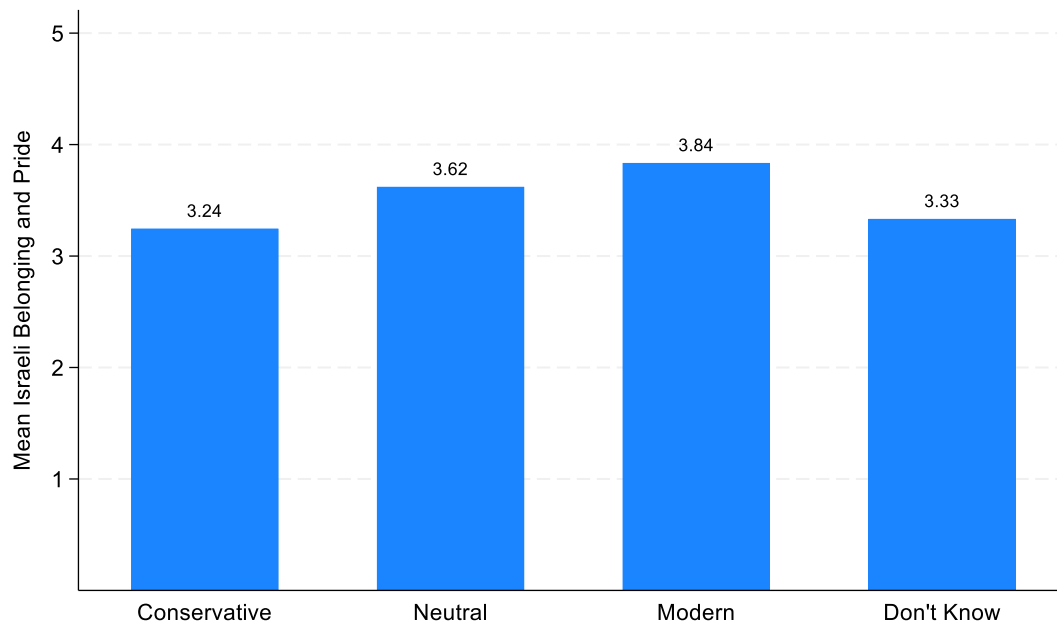
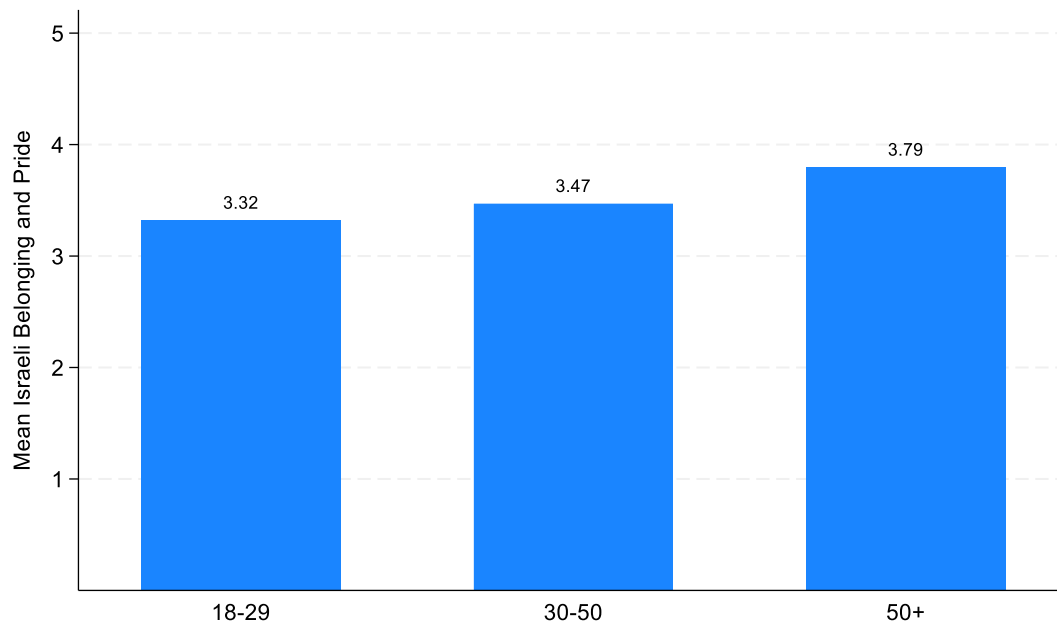


Figure 3: Israeli Belonging and Pride by Levels of Conservatism - Ultra-Orthodox Survey August-September 2023



As can be seen in Figure 4, there are significant differences between age groups, such that as age increases, the feeling of Israeli pride and belonging increases. This is an interesting finding that may indicate the seclusion of young people in educational institutions. However, as age increases, and as they are increasingly exposed to life in the State of Israel, whether through work, military service (in frameworks designated for the ultra-orthodox), academia, or non-religious communities, and as they move further away from the closed yeshiva or fortified seminary, the gradual exposure to general Israeli society can lead to broadening horizons and strengthening the sense of belonging. No significant gender differences were found according to t-test in the degree of pride and belonging ($p < 0.05$).

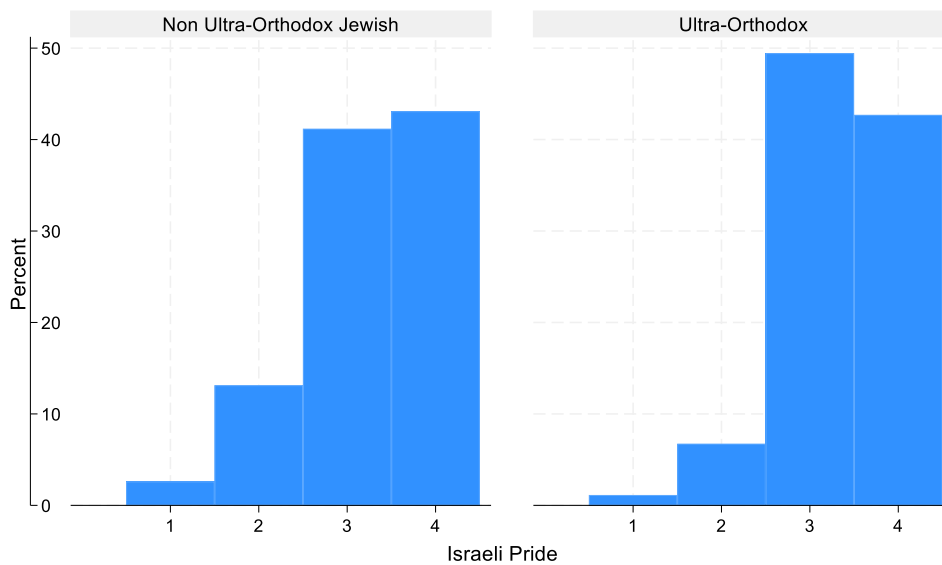
Figure 4: Israeli Belonging and Pride by Age Groups - Ultra-Orthodox Survey August-September 2023



Israeli Pride - Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

Data from a policy survey conducted in September 2023 by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility shows that 86% of ultra-orthodox in the survey (N=191) feel proud to be Israeli compared to 81% of the general non-ultra-orthodox population (N=1038) (Figure 5). However, the differences in the means between the groups are not significant according to t-test. This rate among the ultra-orthodox is indeed higher than the rate we found in the survey focused on the ultra-Orthodox, but it aligns with the direction of the data and indicates a tendency of the vast majority of ultra-orthodox to feel strong pride in the state.

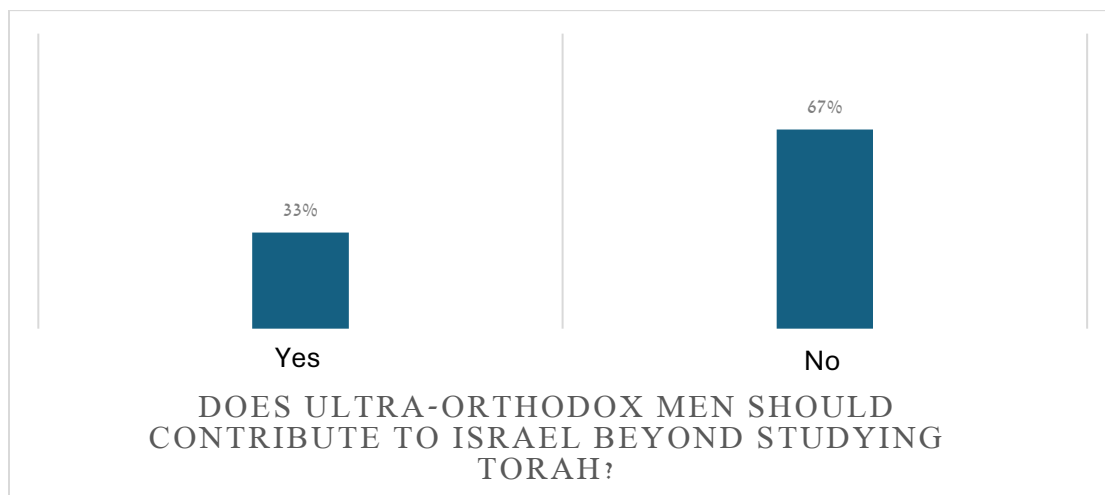
Figure 5: Sense of Israeli Pride: Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox - Policy Survey September 2023



Contribution to the State Beyond Torah Study

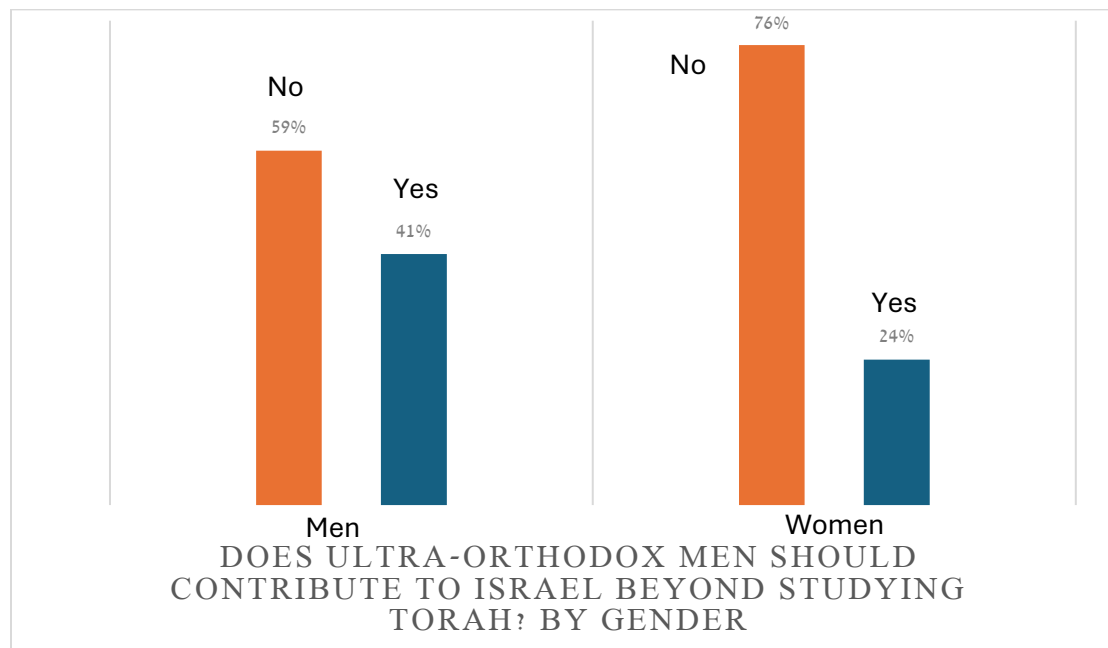
Survey participants were asked whether ultra-Orthodox men should contribute to the state in ways beyond Torah study. The findings in Figure 6 show that the majority of ultra-Orthodox (67%) believe that ultra-Orthodox men should not contribute to the state in additional ways beyond Torah study.

Figure 6: Contribution to the State Beyond Torah Study - Ultra-Orthodox Survey August-September 2023



Significant differences are apparent between women and men on this issue (Figure 7): while 76% of women believe there is no need for additional contribution beyond Torah study, only 59% of men believe so. This finding may reflect the influence of conservative ultra-orthodox education on women, which directs them to support Torah study as a central value and to preserve the society of scholars.

Figure 7: Contribution to the State Beyond Torah Study by Gender - Ultra-Orthodox Survey August-September 2023



We found significant differences in opposition to contribution beyond Torah study across different Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups (Figure 8), conservatism (Figure 9), and age (Figure 10). Opposition to additional contribution to the state is particularly noticeable among Lithuanian Jews (77%) and conservatives (76%), and among young people (74%) who are still in ultra-Orthodox frameworks and hold more conservative views than their parents.

Since the society of scholars was shaped by Lithuanian leaders the Chazon Ish and later Rabbi Shach, and the central idea in this society is Torah study and dedication to it (unlike the Hasidic and Sephardic public who used to go to work and earn a living), we can see that indeed among Lithuanians and conservatives, the opposition to additional contribution besides Torah study is higher than in other sub-groups and among the more moderate. The differences between age groups

- the greater opposition among young people compared to older ones - also indicates an age-related trend of distancing. The younger the respondents are, the closer they are to learning institutions that are fortified against Israeli influences and effectively transmit the messages and ideals of ultra-orthodox society.

Figure 8: Contribution to the state besides Torah study by Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups- Ultra-orthodox survey August-September 2023

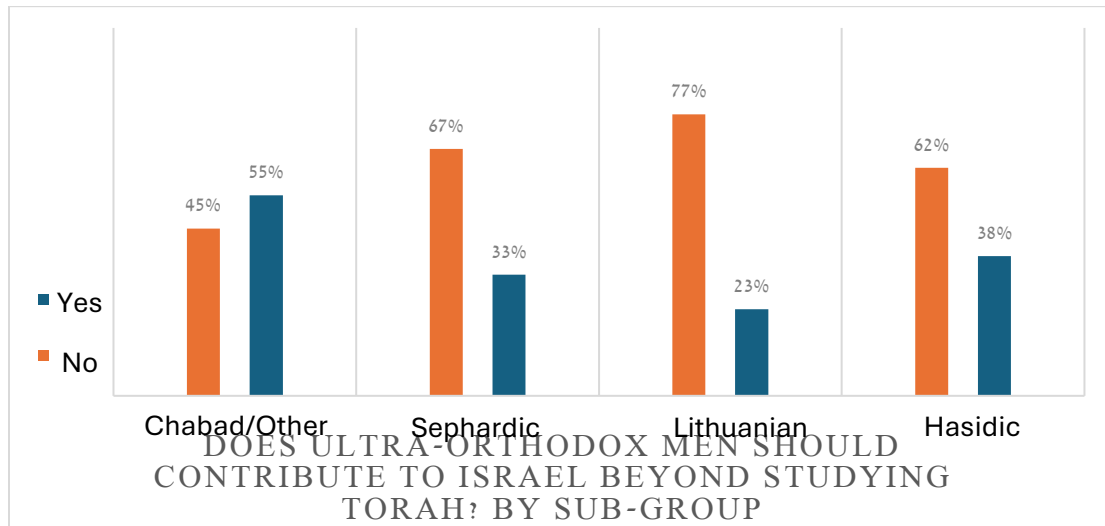
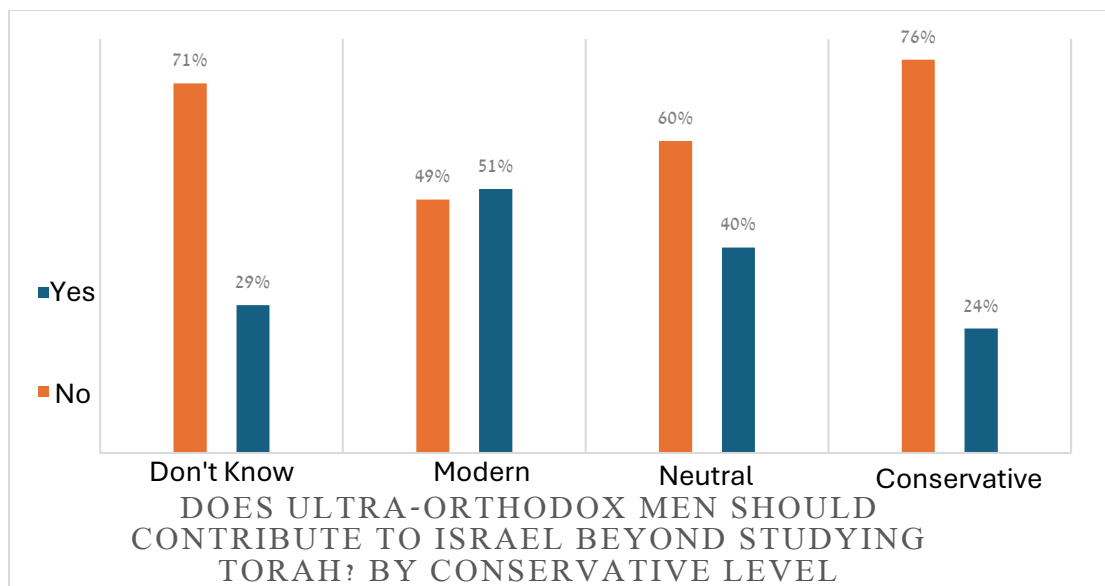


Figure 9: Contribution to the state besides Torah study by level of conservatism - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Age Group	Yes (%)	No (%)
50+	32%	68%
30-50	35%	65%
18-29	26%	74%

DOES ULTRA-ORTHODOX MEN SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO ISRAEL BEYOND STUDYING TORAH? BY AGE GROUP

What is democracy for the ultra-Orthodox?

Figure 11: Word cloud (Hebrew) - What is democracy? Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



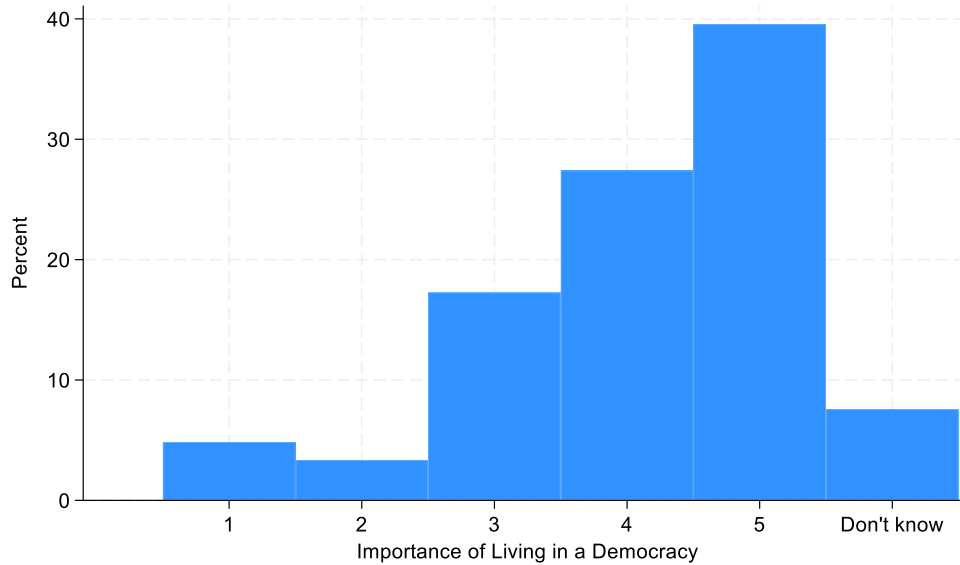
From the word cloud, it appears that while a very large portion of the ultra-Orthodox view democracy through the prism of people's rule and majority rule, at the same time many see it as a reflection of values of equality, freedom, freedom of expression, and minority rights - significant aspects of democracy.

A significant expression that repeated and connects between the specific ultra-Orthodox perception and the broader classical perception of liberties and freedom was "a person shall live by their faith." Along with these aspects, some responses emerged that challenge the way democracy is perceived in the general public. An aspect that repeated and received considerable resonance in the responses concerned diminishing the value of the Supreme Court and expressing a desire to restrain the judicial system. Additionally, respondents found characteristics of non-coercion and religious freedom in democracy, as well as the need to reflect Jewish values of Torah study, observance of Jewish law, and establishment of a Jewish state. Therefore, the ultra-Orthodox perception of democracy reflects a complex value system, where people's rule and majority rule merge with values of freedom of expression and religious freedom. However, when it comes to equal rights and judicial autonomy, the tendency to value liberal democratic principles decreases.

Importance of Living in a Democracy

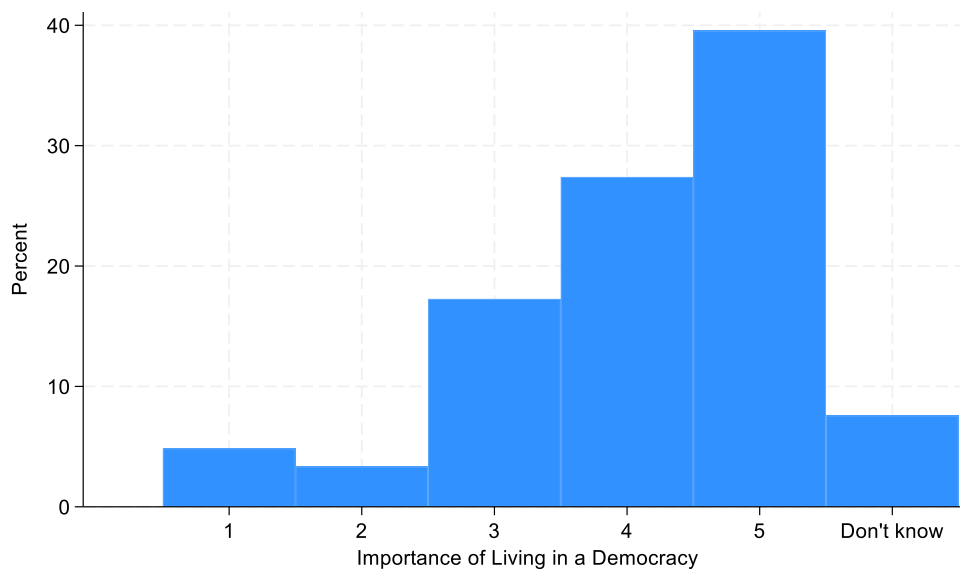
In response to the question "How important is it for you to live in a country with democratic rule?" on a scale ranging from not at all (1) to very much (5), Figure 12 shows that a large majority among the ultra-Orthodox (72%) consider it very important to live in a country with democratic rule (answers 4+5), while a small minority (9%) consider it not important at all or of little importance (answers 1+2) (mean 4.01, median 4).

Figure 12: Importance of Living in a Democracy - Ultra-orthodox survey August-September 2023



There are no significant differences between men and women and between age groups in the importance of living in a democracy. There are also no significant differences between ultra-orthodox sub-groups. However, Figure 13 shows that conservatives consider it significantly less important to live in a democracy compared to modern and neutral individuals (though still, most of them attribute importance to living in a democracy).

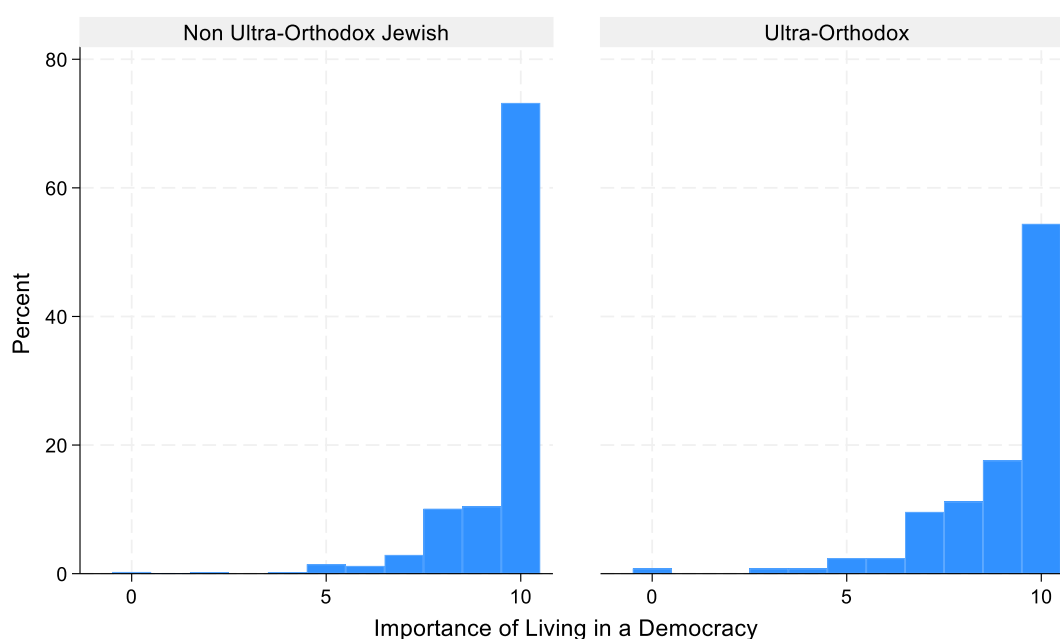
Figure 13: Importance of Living in a Democracy by Level of Conservatism - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 20



Importance of Living in Democracy - Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

In a survey conducted on values in July 2023 by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility, a similar question was asked on a sample containing ultra-Orthodox (N=126) and non-ultra-Orthodox (N=1178) Jewish respondents (to what extent is it important for you to live in a democratic country, on a scale ranging from not important at all (0) to very important (10)). The mean among non-ultra-Orthodox Jews on this measure stands at 9.43 and among ultra-Orthodox at 8.9. The meaning of these means and the data presented in Figure 14 is that it is less important for ultra-Orthodox Jews to live in a democracy than for non-ultra-Orthodox Jews. However, similar to the data presented from the survey focused on the ultra-Orthodox above, still the majority of ultra-orthodox feel it is important for them to live in a democracy.

Figure 14: Importance of Living in Democracy: Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox - Values Survey July 2023



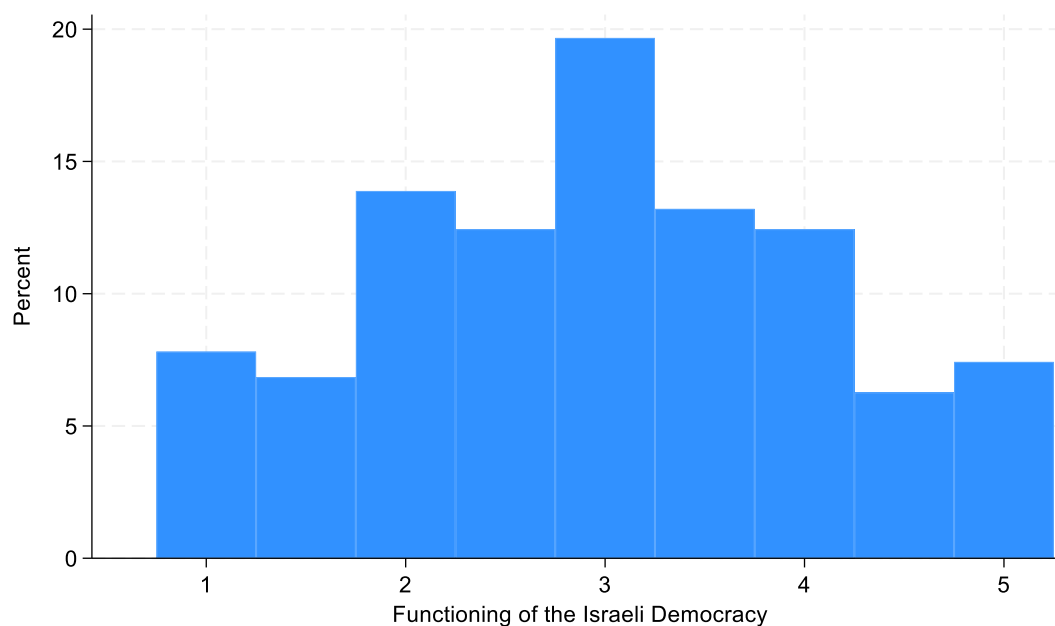
Functioning of the Israeli Democracy

The assessment of Israeli democracy and its functioning was measured by creating an index in the survey from two questions: "To what extent do you think Israel is a democratic country?" on a scale ranging from not at all (1) to very much (5); and "In general, how satisfied are you with the way Israeli democracy functions?" on a scale ranging from not at all (1) to very much (5).

(There is correlation between the questions, Cronbach's alpha = 0.8 indicating high internal reliability).

The results in Figure 15 show that the most common response among the ultra-Orthodox respondents is the middle score (3), meaning a moderate assessment of democracy's functioning (20%). The remaining respondents are divided more or less equally in their tendency toward positive or negative assessment (about 40% on each side). The mean of the index is also close to the middle response (2.97) as is the median (3).

Figure 15: Functioning of the Israeli Democracy - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



No significant differences were found between men and women and between age groups. Figure 16 shows that among Sephardim, the mean of the index is significantly higher than in other sub-groups, meaning that Sephardim assess the functioning of Israeli democracy somewhat more positively than other sub-groups. Following this, Figure 17 shows significantly that the mean of neutral and modern individuals is higher than that of conservatives, meaning they assess the functioning of Israeli democracy more positively.

Figure 16: Functioning of the Israeli Democracy by Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups- Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

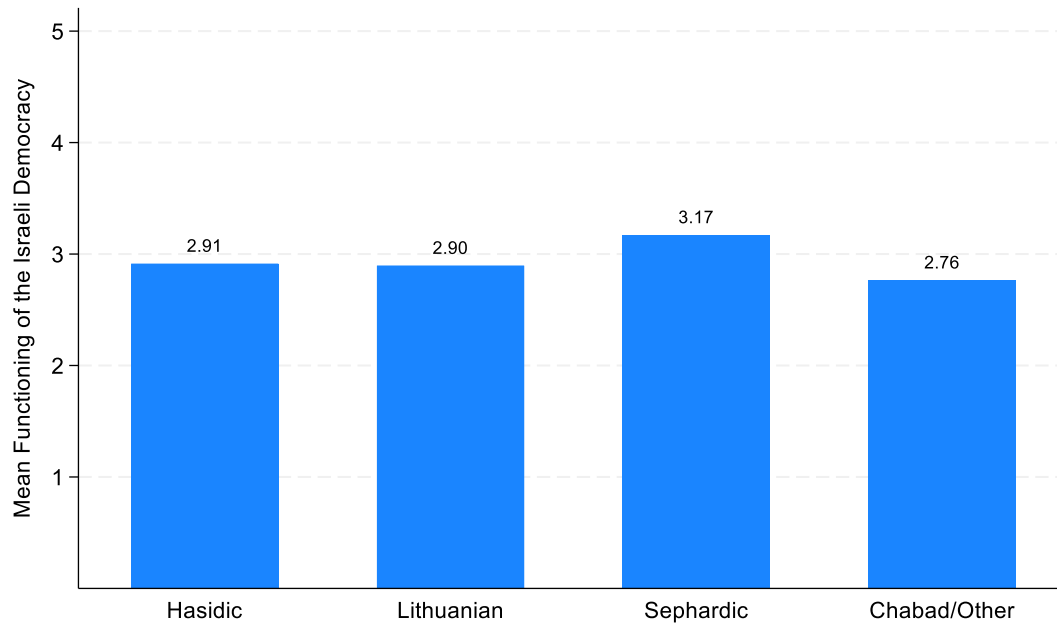
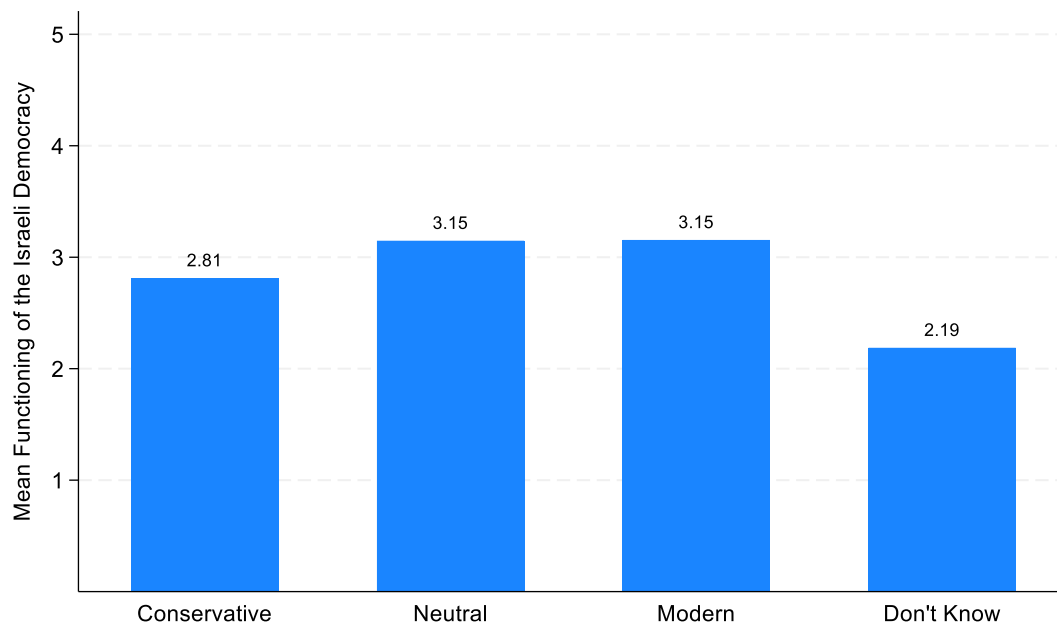


Figure 17: Functioning of the Israeli Democracy by Level of Conservatism – Ultra Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Functioning of the Israeli Democracy- Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

In a survey conducted on values in July 2023 by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility, similar questions were asked on a sample containing ultra-orthodox (N=126) and non-ultra-orthodox (N=1178) Jewish respondents ("To what extent do you think Israel is a democratic country?" and "In general, how satisfied are you with the way Israeli democracy functions?" on a scale ranging from not democratic at all/very dissatisfied (0) to very democratic/very satisfied (10)).

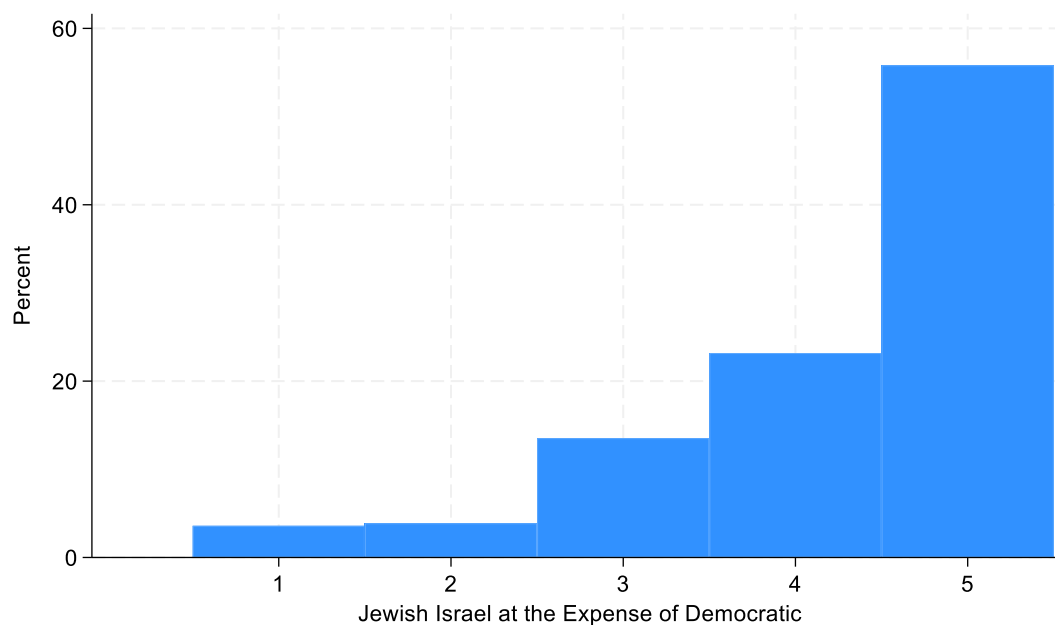
From these questions, we also created an index variable and examined the differences between ultra-Orthodox and non-ultra-Orthodox. The mean among ultra-Orthodox was 7.2 while among non-ultra-Orthodox Jews it was 6.4. In this survey, we see that both ultra-Orthodox and the general population tend to positively assess Israeli democracy and its functioning. However, the significant differences in the means show that ultra-Orthodox are more satisfied with Israeli democracy's functioning and assess it as more democratic than non-ultra-Orthodox. One possible explanation for the positive assessment of democracy among ultra-Orthodox could be support for the government in power at the time of the survey, in which both parties representing the ultra-Orthodox - Shas and United Torah Judaism - were coalition members. Interestingly, the survey was conducted during the raise of judicial reform attempts that caused a decrease in the general public's satisfaction with democracy, especially among opposition supporters. But it seems the reform attempts did not harm ultra-Orthodox satisfaction with democracy. In contrast, data from a values survey conducted in August 2022 shows that the mean among ultra-Orthodox in satisfaction with Israeli democracy stood at 3.34 compared to 5.16 among non-ultra-Orthodox Jews (on a scale of 0-10), indicating that the identity of parties in the coalition probably affects more how these populations assess democracy.

Jewish State at the Expense of Democratic State

In the survey we conducted in the ultra-Orthodox population, we asked "To what extent are you in favor of Israel being more Jewish, even if this means the state will be less democratic?" on a scale ranging from not at all (1) to very much (5). Figure 18 shows that while the great majority of ultra-Orthodox consider it important to live in a democratic state as we see above, here the ultra-orthodox identity comes into expression and we can see that the great majority of ultra-Orthodox (78%) are in favor of Israel being a more Jewish state even at the expense of democracy.

Democracy is an important value, but Judaism is a more important value. The mean response among all ultra-Orthodox in the sample stands at 4.24, indicating a high tendency to support this statement, meaning preferring Judaism over democracy.

Figure 18: Jewish Israel at the Expense of Democratic - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



On this question, there is a significant difference between women and men. According to Figure 19, women want slightly more than men for Israel to be more Jewish at the expense of being democratic, although among both genders the most common response is the highest level of agreement with the statement. There are no significant differences between Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups and between age groups in the level of support for Israel being more Jewish. Also in this case, Figure 20 shows that conservatives significantly tend to agree more than neutral and modern individuals, and neutral individuals agree more than modern ones with the preference of a Jewish state, although there is a majority expressing this preference in all groups.

Figure 19: Jewish Israel at the Expense of Democratic by Gender - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

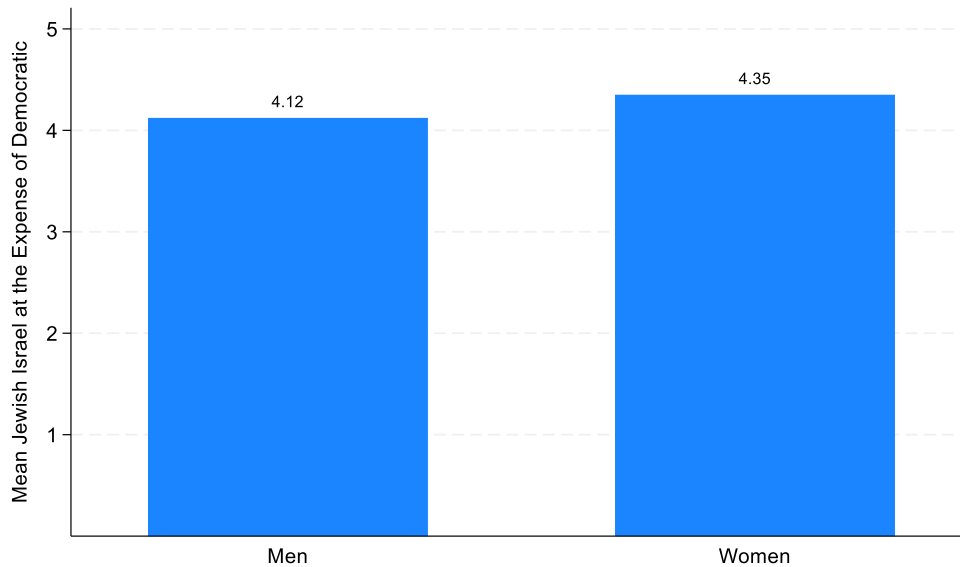
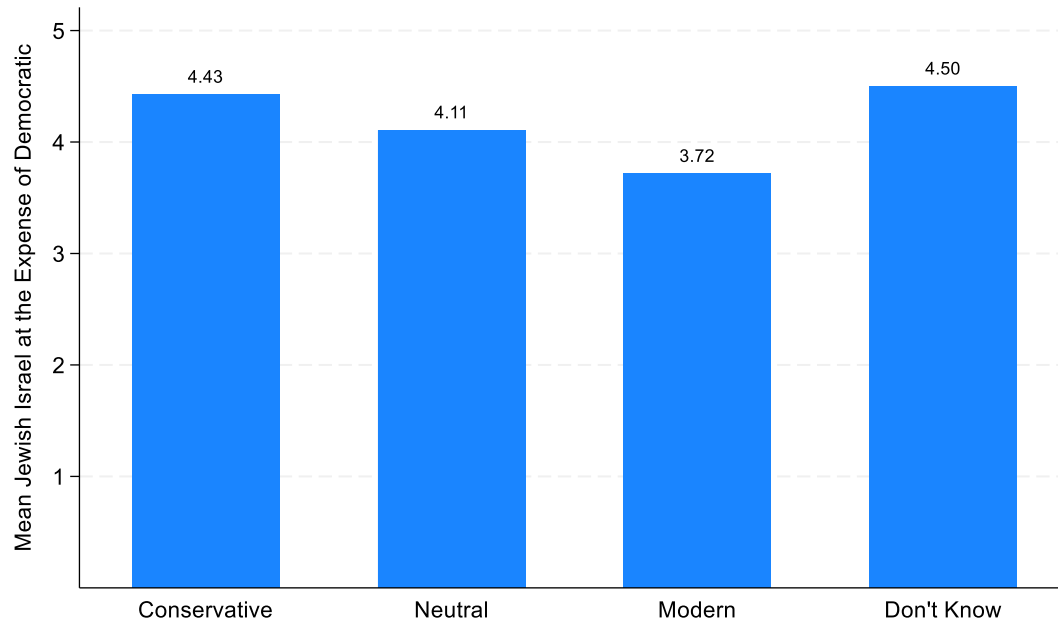


Figure 20: Jewish Israel at the Expense of Democratic by Level of Conservatism - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



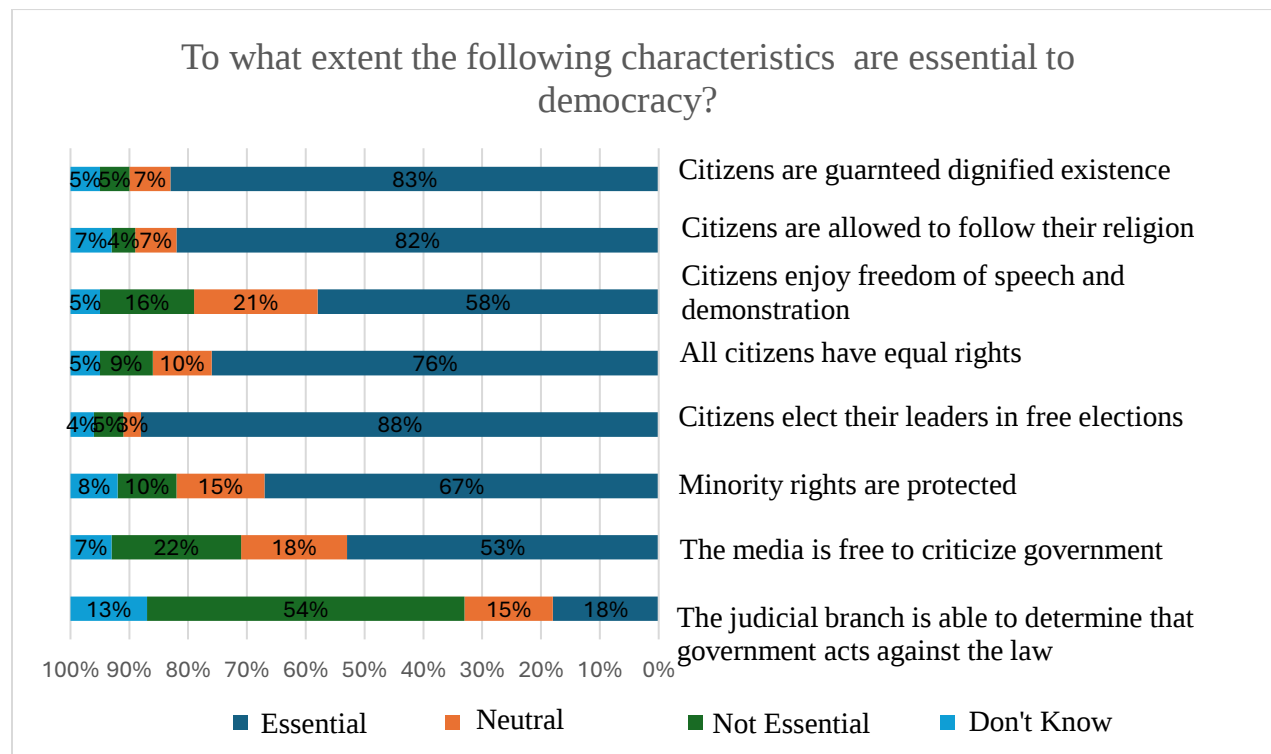
Essential Democratic Characteristics

We asked half of the sample to what extent they believe a series of characteristics are essential for the functioning of a democratic state.

Figure 21 shows that the majority of ultra-Orthodox feel that the following characteristics are essential for democracy: a state where there is minority right protection; citizens elect their leaders in free elections; all citizens of the state have equal rights; citizens enjoy freedom of expression and demonstration; freedom of religious; and every citizen is guaranteed a dignified existence.

A state where the media is free to criticize the government is also a characteristic that slightly more than half of respondents found essential to democracy. In contrast, an absolute majority believed that the characteristic whereby the judicial branch can determine that the government is acting against the law is not essential to democracy, compared to only 18% who saw this as an important characteristic. One can see that, except for the characteristic concerning the judicial branch and the bias that the ultra-Orthodox public feels it has towards it, the ultra-Orthodox public knew how to characterize and identify most democratic characteristics and their essentiality.

Figure 21: Essentiality of Democratic Characteristics - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

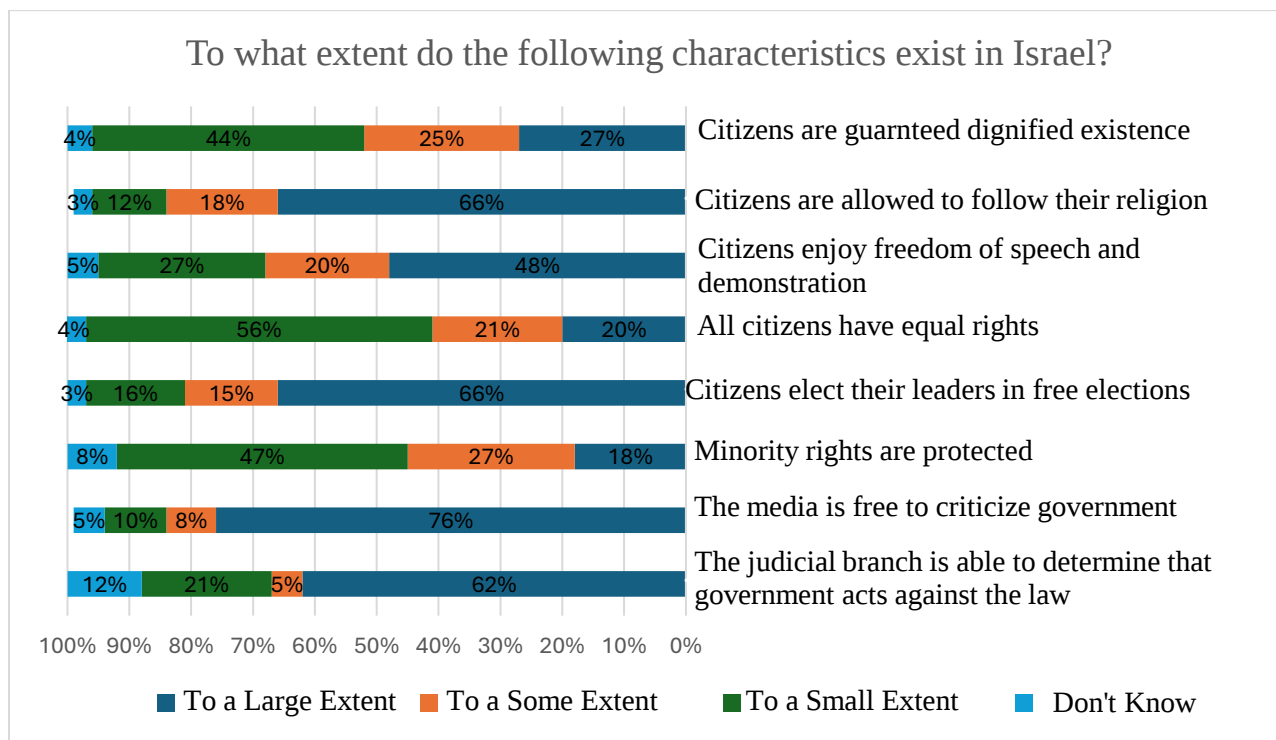


Existence of Democratic Characteristics in Israel

We asked the second half of the sample to what extent these democratic characteristics exist in Israel. In Figure 22, we can see that only a minority of ultra-orthodox (18-27%) believe that in

Israel all citizens have equal rights, that there is protection of minority rights, and that all citizens are guaranteed a dignified existence. In contrast, 66% of them think that in Israel there is freedom from religion and that citizens elect their leaders in free elections. An absolute majority of ultra-Orthodox (62-76%) also think that in Israel the media is free to criticize the government and the judicial branch can determine that the government is acting against the law. Given the fact that a majority among the ultra-Orthodox believe that court intervention is not essential for democracy, this might be a critical interpretation of the existing situation in Israeli democracy and dissatisfaction with excessive court intervention.

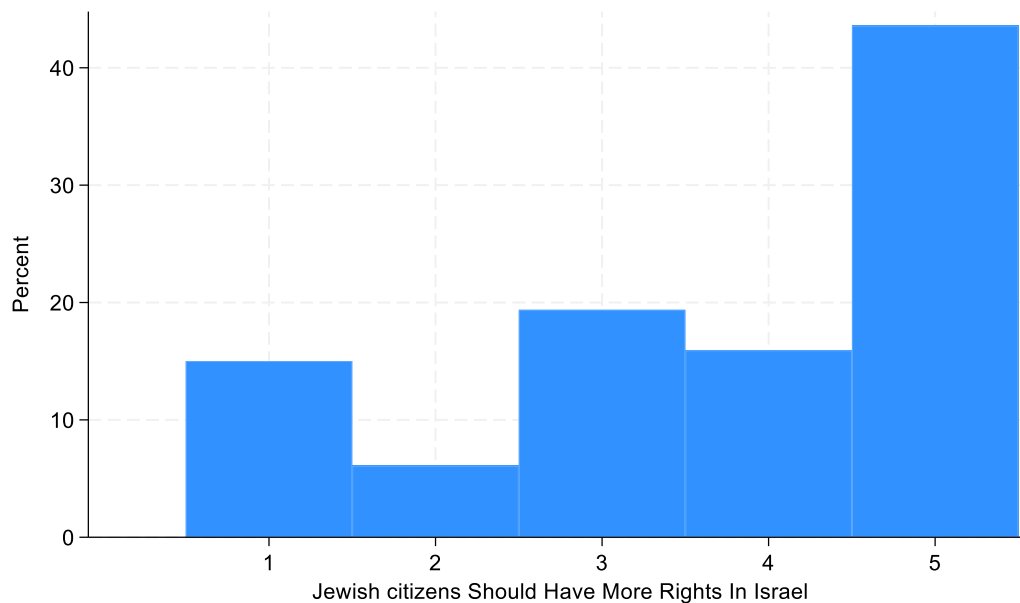
Figure 22: Existence of Democratic Characteristics in Israel - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Support for Jewish Privileged Rights

We also asked more specifically "To what extent do you agree with the statement that Jewish citizens should have more rights than non-Jewish citizens in Israel?" on a scale ranging from not at all (1) to strongly agree (5). In Figure 23, we see a clear position of the majority of ultra-orthodox (60%) that Jewish citizens should have more rights. The average (3.66) and median (4) also indicate that the ultra-Orthodox support privileged rights for Jews compared to non-Jews.

Figure 23: Granting Privileged Rights to Jews - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Women agree more than men with Jews should be privileged (Figure 24). Interestingly, Sephardim, who are perceived as more liberal, support giving privileged rights to Jews significantly more than other subgroups (Figure 25). Conservatives and neutrals, agree more with giving privileged rights to Jews (Figure 26). Younger people also support giving privileged rights more than older adults (Figure 27).

Figure 24: Privileged Rights to Jews by Gender - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

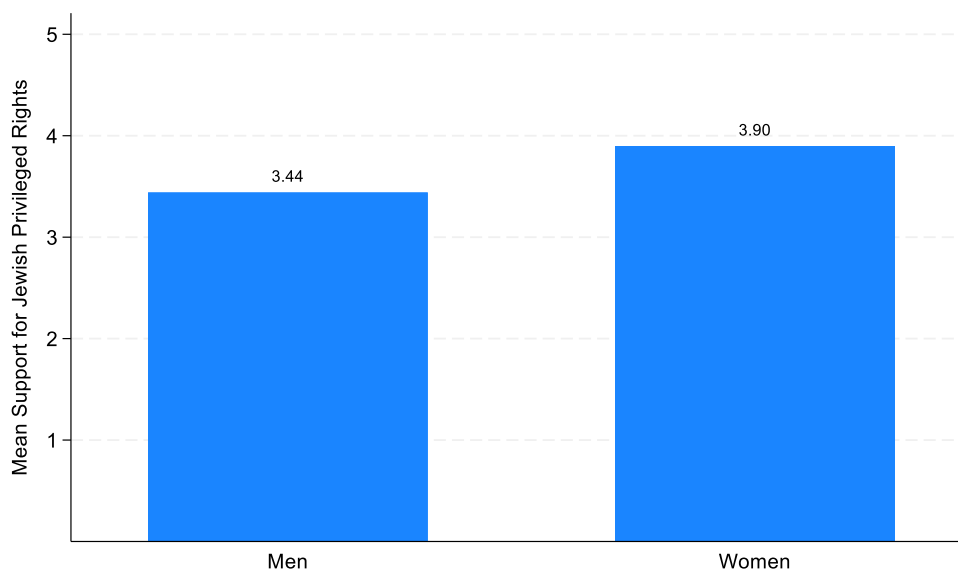


Figure 25: Privileged Rights to Jews by Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups- Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

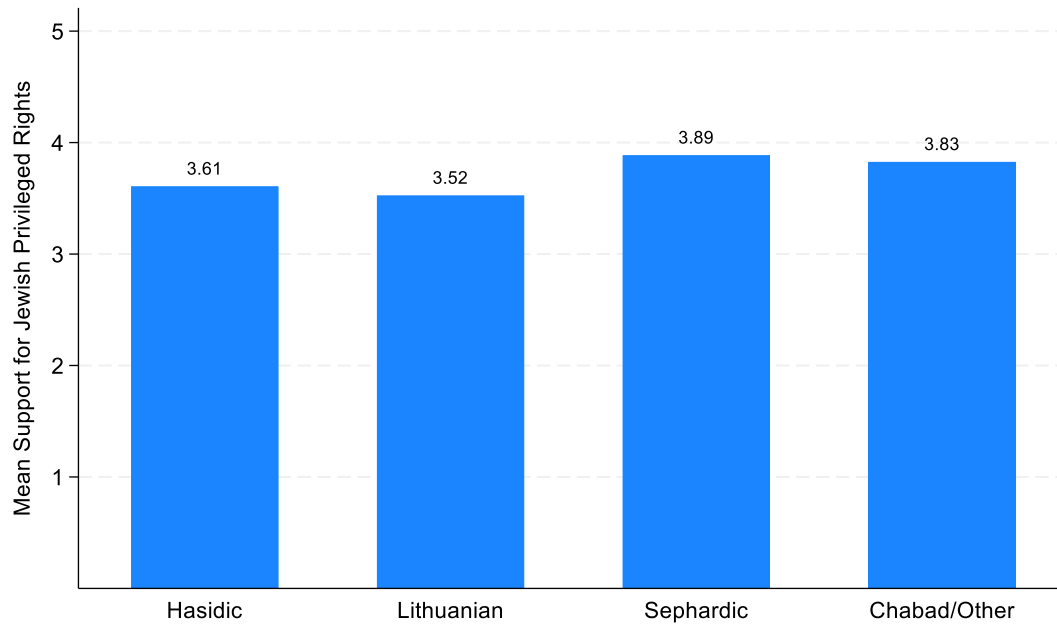


Figure 26: Privileged Rights to Jews by Level of Conservatism - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

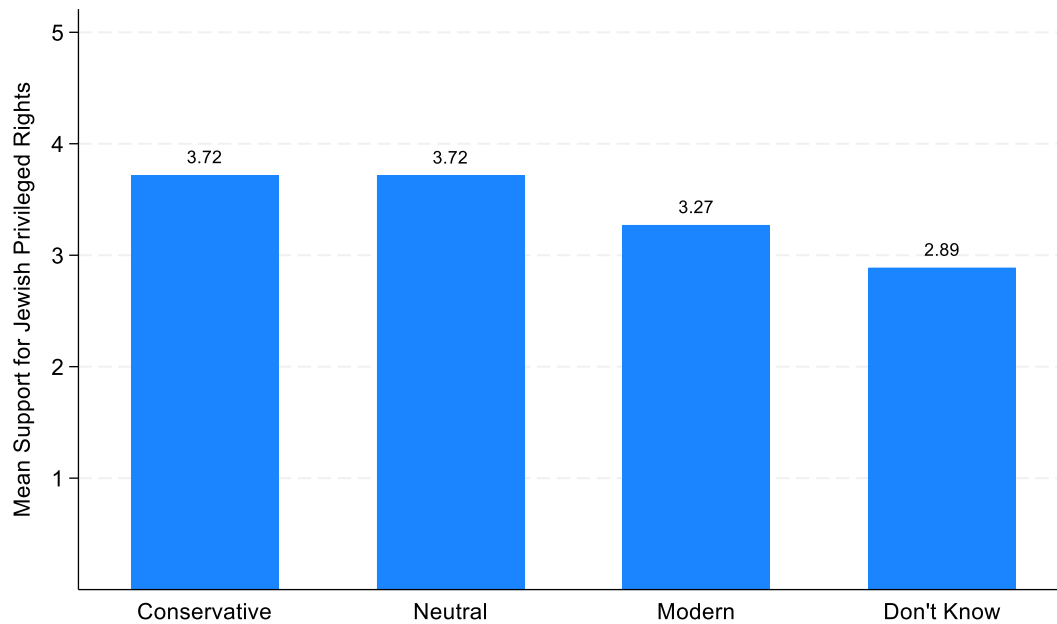
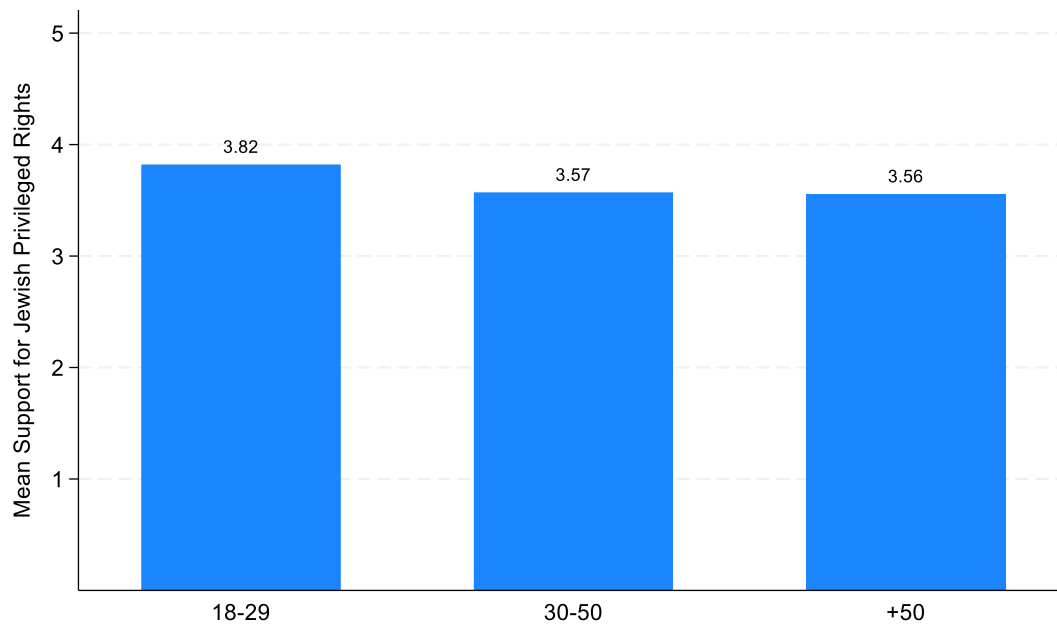


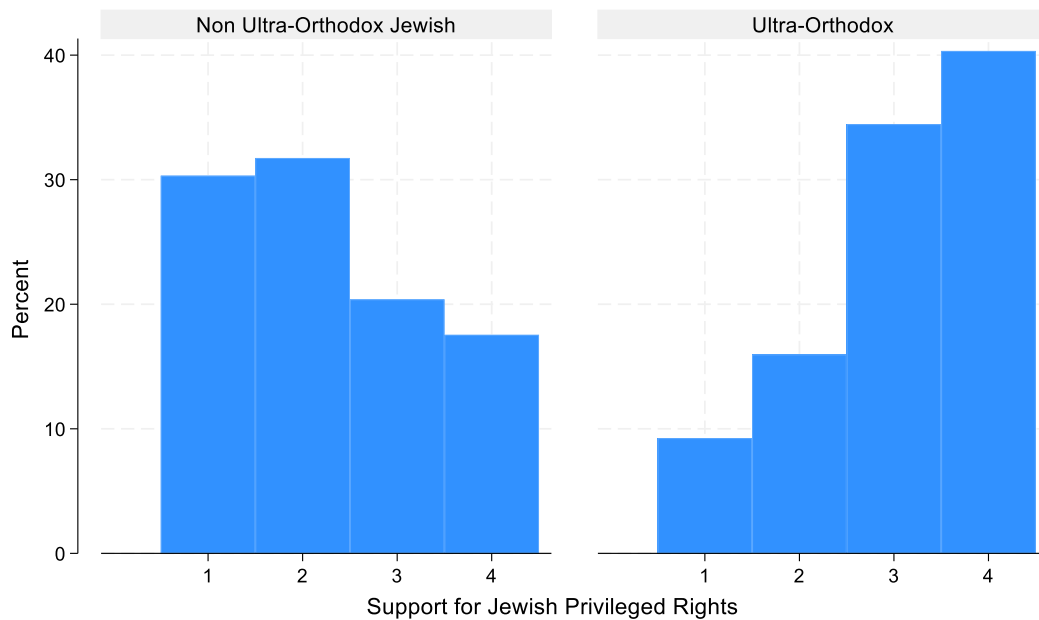
Figure 27: Privileged Rights to Jews by Age Groups - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Support for Equal Rights: Jews More Than Non-Jewish Citizens - Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

In a values survey conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility in July 2023, a similar question was asked with slightly different response options among a sample containing ultra-orthodox (N=126) and non-ultra-orthodox (N=1178): "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: In Israel, Jewish citizens should have more rights than non-Jewish citizens?" on a scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). In Figure 28, we can see almost a mirror image between ultra-orthodox and non-ultra-Orthodox: Ultra-Orthodox agree much more with giving privileged rights to Jews than non-ultra-orthodox. This finding is consistent with the data we presented above.

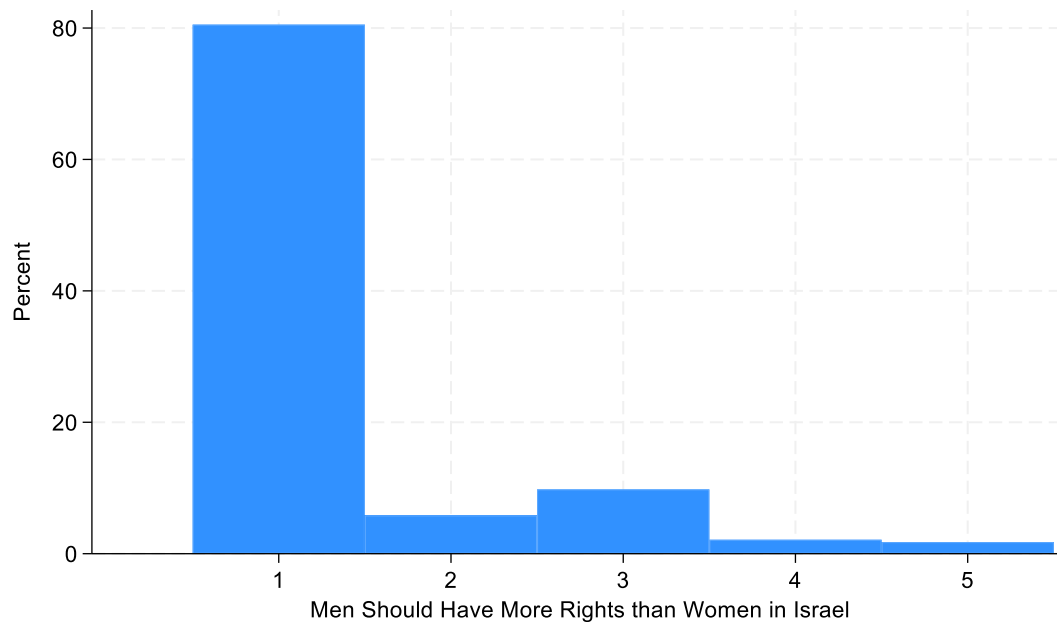
Figure 28: Support for Jewish Privileged Rights: Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox - Values Survey July 2023



Equal Rights for Women

In the ultra-Orthodox survey, we asked "To what extent do you agree with the statement that men should have more rights than women in Israel?" on a scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Here, there is almost a consensus among ultra-orthodox (87%) regarding non-support for giving privileged rights to men over women. In other words, according to the response to this question, it appears that the ultra-Orthodox support equal rights for women (Figure 29). As evidence, the mean and median of this measure are very close to 1 (disagreement). No significant differences are seen here based on gender, sub-groups, conservatism, and age. Prima facie, it's not clear how a sector that practices gender separation in various aspects of public life supports gender equality. However, apparently, the interpretation of gender separation among ultra-Orthodox is not seen as a violation of equal rights between women and men or as discrimination against women. Therefore, a deeper understanding is needed to comprehend the nature of this agreement with gender equality (later we will examine such a question regarding the integration of women in decision-making processes).

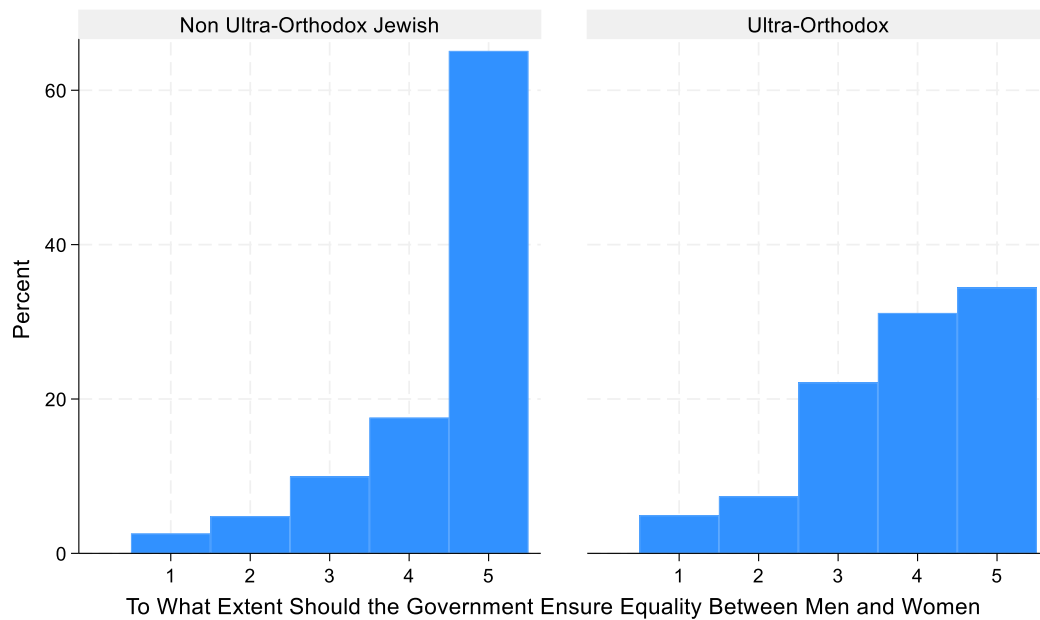
Figure 29: Granting Privileged Rights to Men - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Equal Rights for Women - Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

In the values survey conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility in July 2023, there was no direct question regarding giving privileged rights to men over women. However, there was a question that examined "To what extent, in your opinion, should the State of Israel act to ensure equality between men and women?" (1= not at all, 5= to a great extent). Hence, the high values in this measure express opposite values to the measure in the ultra-Orthodox focused survey showing support for women's equality above. Figure 30 shows that there is less agreement among ultra-orthodox with the statement that the government should ensure equality between men and women than among non-ultra-Orthodox. On one hand, the majority of ultra-Orthodox support gender equality in principle, as shown in the survey among the ultra-Orthodox population, but on the other hand, they do not fully support government action to achieve equality.

Figure 30: Support for Government Ensuring Gender Equality: Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox - Values Survey July 2023

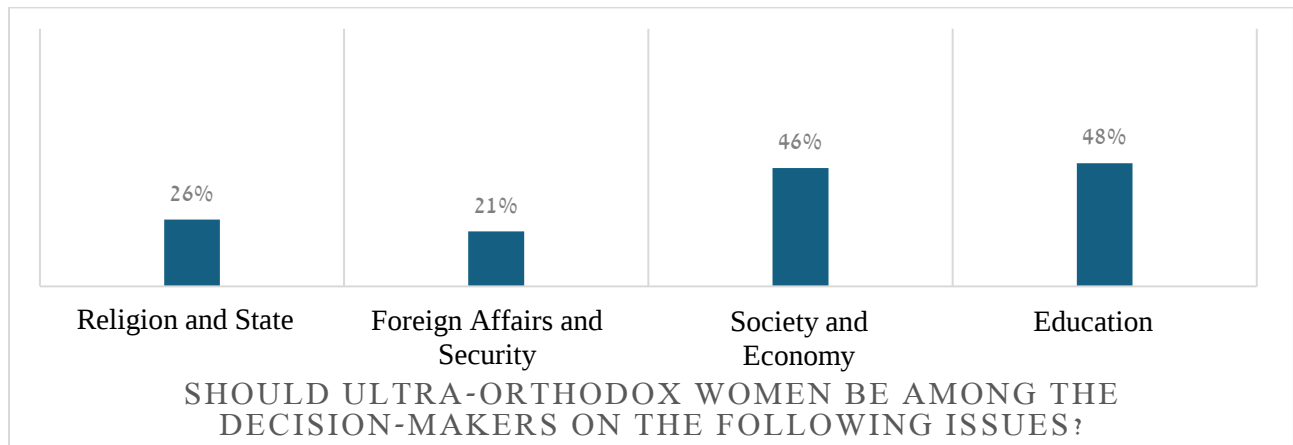


Integration of Ultra-Orthodox Women in Decision Making

We also asked a series of questions in which we examined more specifically whether respondents agree that ultra-orthodox women should be among decision-makers in various areas (Education, Society and Economy, Foreign Affairs and Security, and Religion and State). Figure 31 shows that more than half of respondents in each question disagreed with the statement that ultra-Orthodox women should be among decision-makers in each of these areas. However, the areas that received the highest support for integrating women in decision-making were in educational institutions, and in society and economy. There was less support for integrating women in decision-making regarding foreign affairs and security, and religion and state.

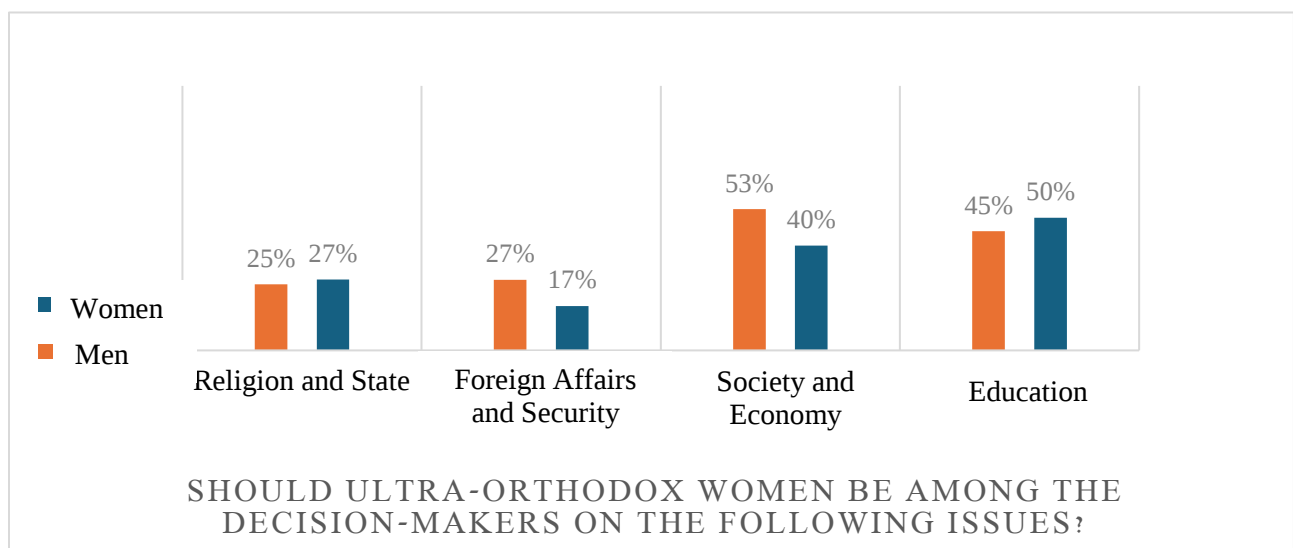
This finding indicates the fundamental perceptions regarding the roles of women and men in ultra-orthodox society. In the eyes of the ultra-Orthodox, there should be equality between men and women, but each gender has its roles and one should not enter the roles of the other gender. The finding demonstrates gender stereotypes that make it difficult for ultra-Orthodox women to advance to decision-making positions.

Figure 31: Support for Integrating Women in Decision Making in Various Areas – Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023 (percentage of supporters)



Interestingly, Figure 32 shows that a higher percentage among women than men support integrating women in decision-making regarding education, and surprisingly, a higher percentage of men think women should be integrated in decision-making in foreign affairs and security areas. There are almost no differences between women and men in support for integrating women in decision-making in religion and state matters.

Figure 32: Support for Integrating Women in Decision Making in Various Areas by Gender - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023 (percentage of supporters)

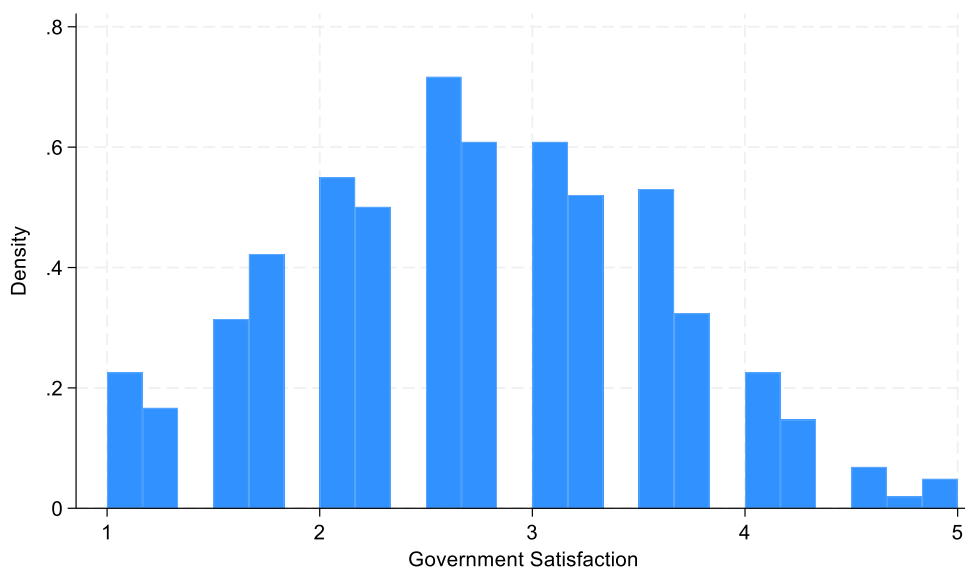


Trust and Satisfaction

Government Satisfaction Index

We constructed a government satisfaction index similar to the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility's monthly updated government satisfaction and performance index. The index is composed of 4 survey questions: "How satisfied are you with the current government's performance?" on a scale ranging from not at all (1) to very much (5); "How much trust do you have in the government?" on a scale ranging from not at all (1) to very much (5); "To what extent do you agree with the claim that the current government is attentive to public concerns?" from not at all (1) to very much (5); and "What score would you give the government in handling the most important problem?" from low (1) to high (10).¹ The mean index score in the survey is 2.68 and the median is 2.75, indicating a slight tendency toward dissatisfaction. However, looking at the overall distribution in Figure 33 shows that small minorities expressed high satisfaction with the government or high dissatisfaction, and as the mean shows, most respondents are in the middle with a small tendency toward dissatisfaction.

Figure 33: Government Satisfaction Index - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



¹ "Don't know" responses were removed from the analysis. The scoring question regarding handling the most important problem was recoded to range from 1 to 5. High internal reliability was found between the questions (Cronbach's alpha = 0.80). It should be noted that responses to questions regarding the extent to which the government is attentive to public concerns and the government's score in handling the most important problem were done on half the sample. Therefore, the index measure applies to only about half of the sample, excluding those who answered "don't know" to at least one of the questions (N=611).

We found significant differences between ultra-Orthodox men and women in their level of satisfaction. Men are more satisfied with the government than women (Figure 34). Older people significantly more satisfied with the government than younger people (Figure 35). However, there are no differences between Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups and between levels of conservatism.

Figure 34: Government Satisfaction by Gender - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

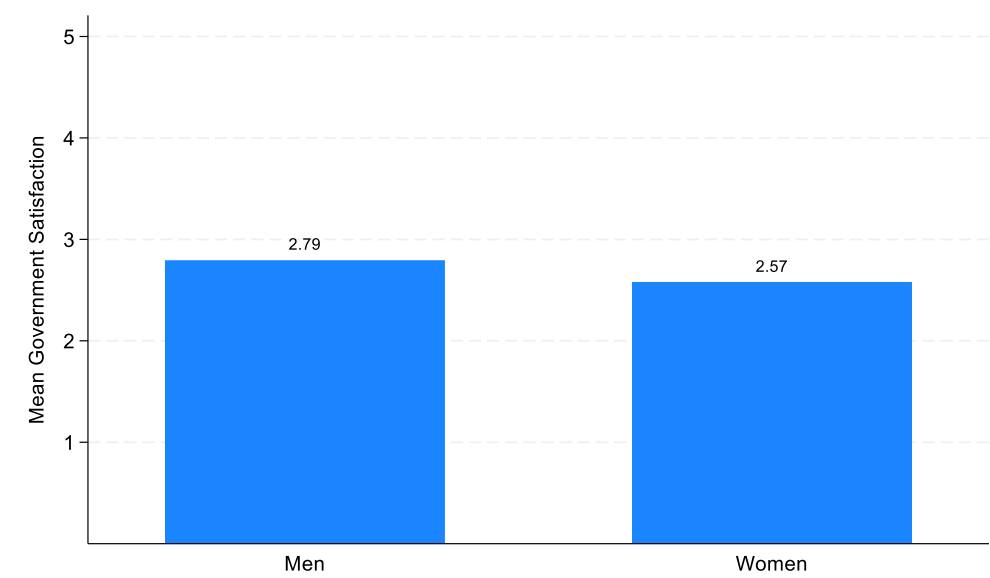
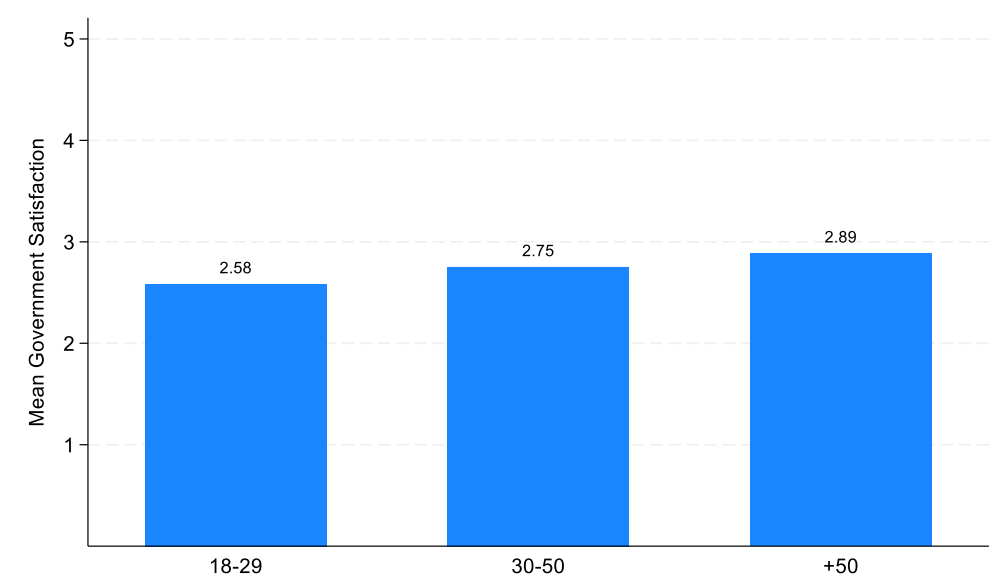


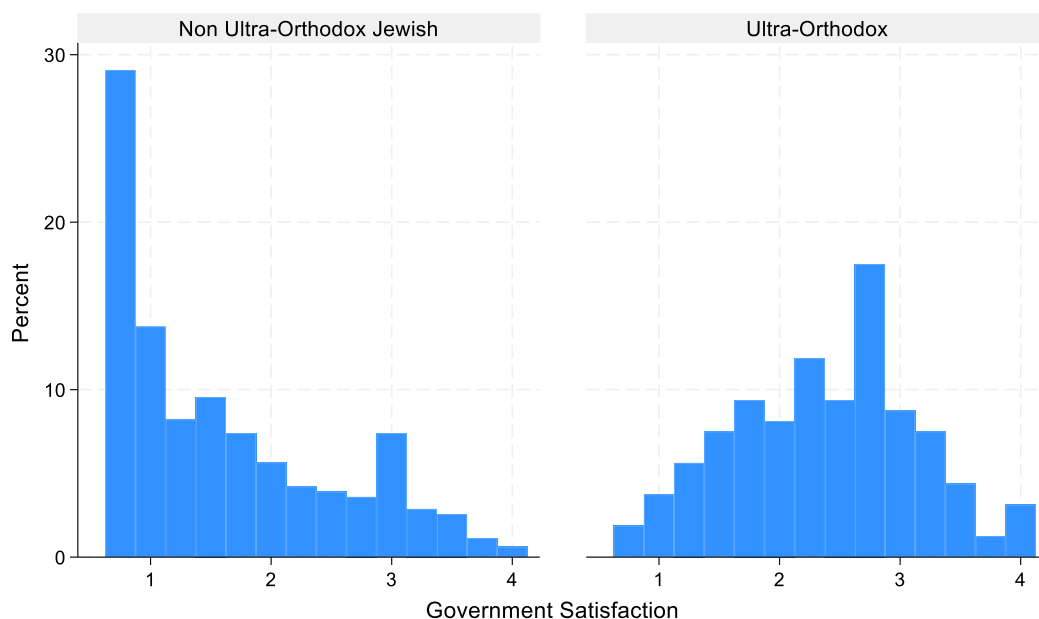
Figure 35: Government Satisfaction Index by Age Groups - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Government Satisfaction Index - Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

In a survey on policy and attitudes from September 2023 conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility, similar questions were asked to those that composed the satisfaction index, except that the range of responses ranged from 1 to 4. Calculation of the index shows significant differences between ultra-orthodox and non-ultra-Orthodox Jews (Figure 36). As in the survey focused on the ultra-Orthodox, in this survey too it appears that the ultra-orthodox position regarding satisfaction with the government is close to the middle of the scale (average 2.38). In contrast, among non-ultra-Orthodox the average stands at 1.6. Also in the distribution of responses, one can see that the graph of the non-ultra-Orthodox clearly tends toward dissatisfaction compared to the graph of the ultra-orthodox which is more or less balanced. This data is influenced by the fact that the ultra-Orthodox parties are part of the government and the public they target is naturally more satisfied with the performance of a government that is supposed to represent their interests. This is also evidenced in the non-significant difference in the average government satisfaction among ultra-Orthodox (average 2.38) compared to non-ultra-Orthodox who voted for parties that make up the coalition (after the 2022 elections) belonging to the right-ultra-Orthodox bloc (average 2.28).

Figure 36: Government Satisfaction Index: Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox - Policy Survey September 2023



Trust in the Knesset

We also asked respondents to rate their level of trust in the Knesset on a 1-5 scale. Ultra-Orthodox trust in the Knesset tends toward lower values (Figure 37). The mean trust in the Knesset among ultra-Orthodox is 2.59 and only about 20% of ultra-Orthodox express trust in the Knesset. ultra-Orthodox men significantly express more trust in the Knesset than women (Figure 38). However, there are no differences in trust in the Knesset between sub-groups, conservatism and age.

Figure 37: Trust in the Knesset - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

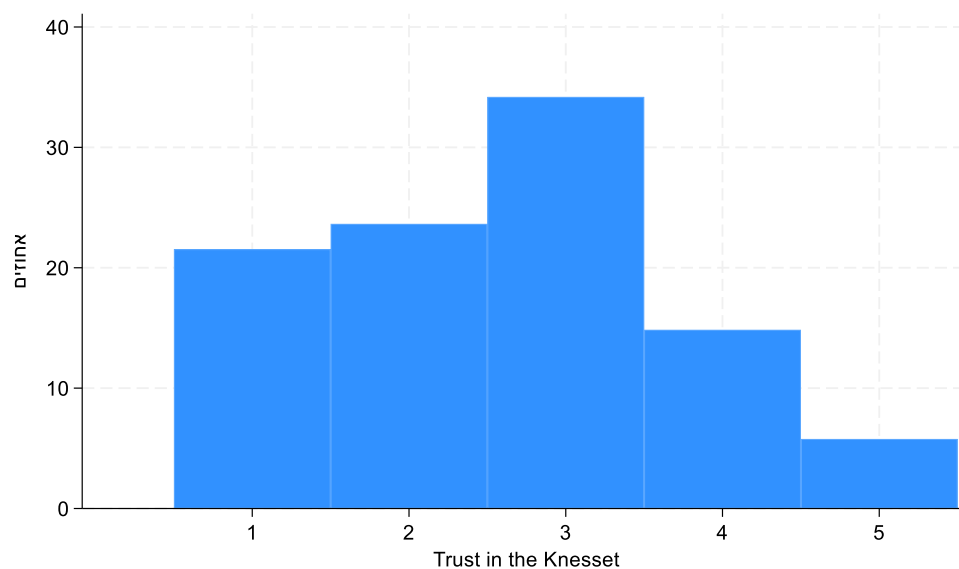
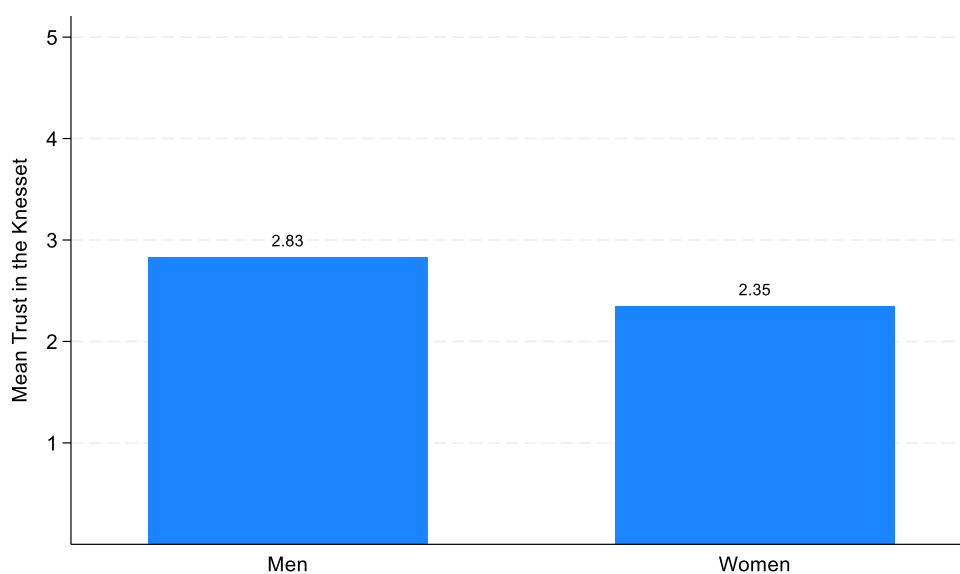


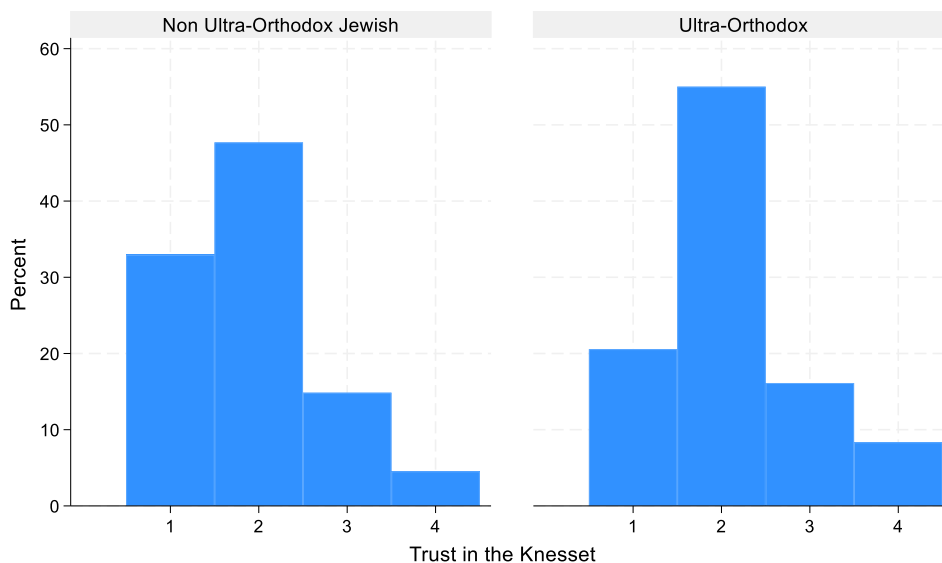
Figure 38: Trust in the Knesset by Gender - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Trust in the Knesset - Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

In the policy and attitudes survey conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility in September 2023, a similar question was asked, but the response range was between 1 (not at all) to 4 (very much). The mean trust in the Knesset among ultra-orthodox stood at 2.12 compared to 1.91 among non-ultra-Orthodox. From this we can learn that ultra-Orthodox feel slightly more trust in the Knesset than non-ultra-Orthodox (see also Figure 39). However, like the results from our survey among ultra-orthodox only, it appears that the ultra-orthodox tend toward distrust in the Knesset.

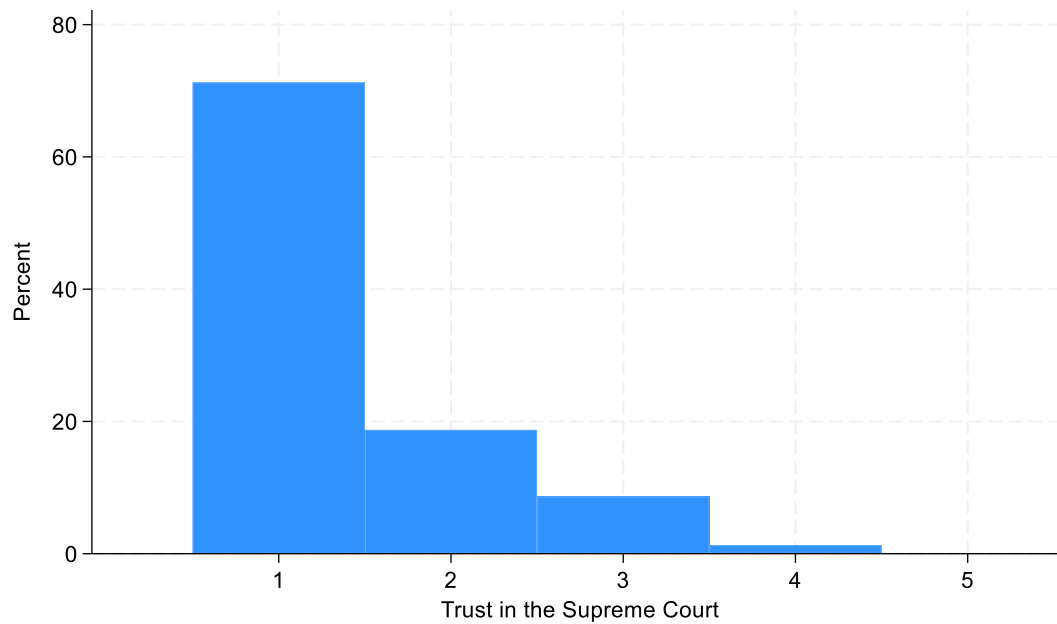
Figure 39: Trust in the Knesset: Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox - Policy Survey September 2023



Trust in the Supreme Court

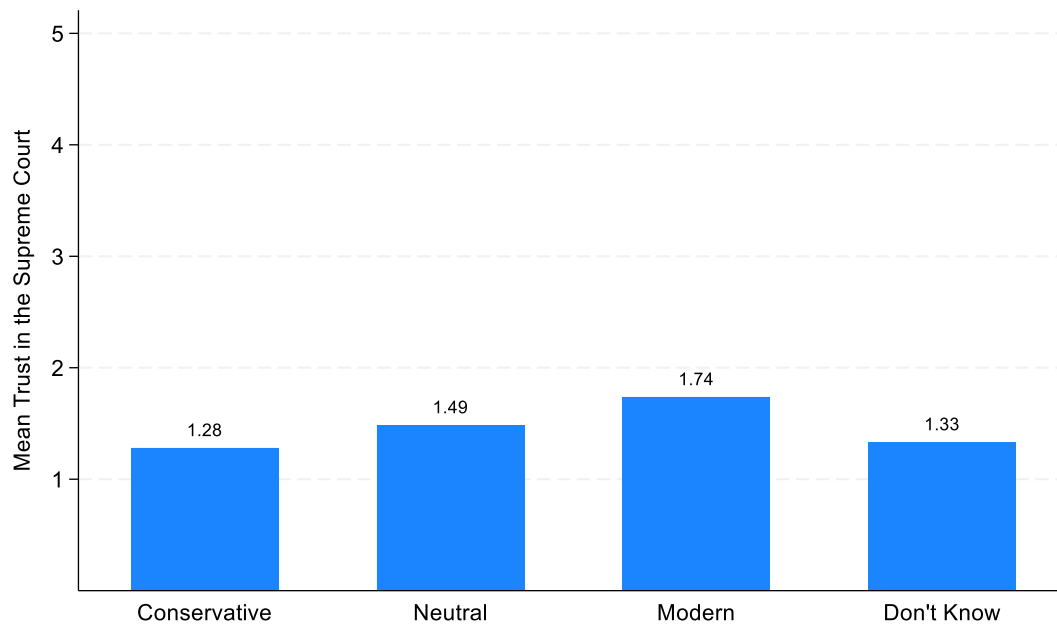
According to the survey focused on the ultra-Orthodox, regarding trust in the Supreme Court, the situation is completely different from trust in the Knesset and government. Only 1% of the ultra-orthodox express trust in the Supreme Court (Figure 40). The mean, on a scale of 1-5 is only 1.4. The data clearly shows: The ultra-orthodox have an extreme lack of trust in the Supreme Court.

Figure 40: Trust in the Supreme Court - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



There are no differences here between genders, sub-groups and age. But Modern individuals trust the Supreme Court more than conservatives and neutrals, and neutrals trust more than conservatives (Figure 41).

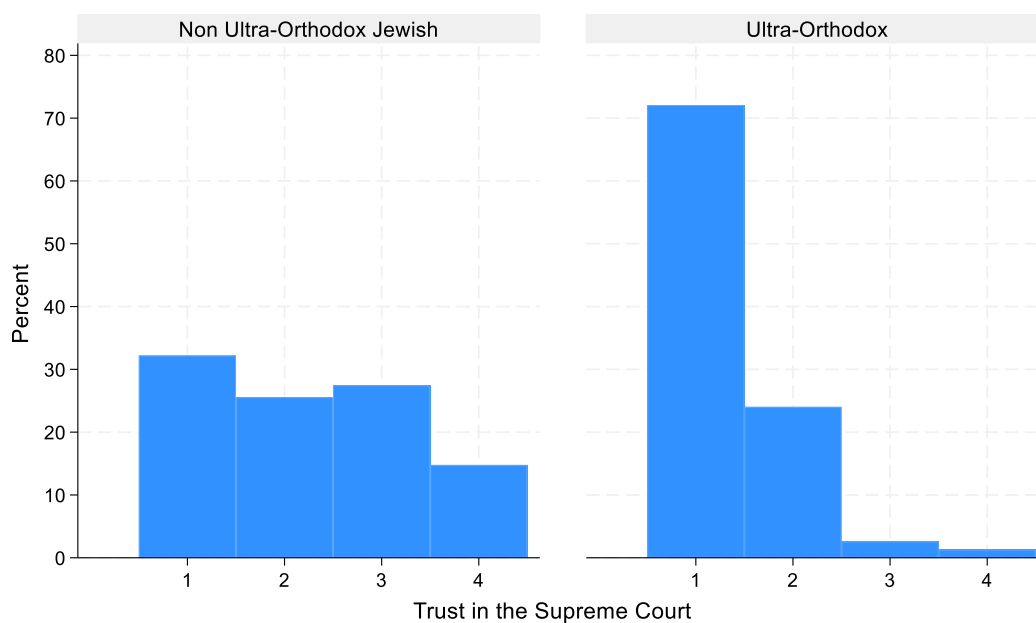
Figure 41: Trust in the Supreme Court by Levels of Conservatism - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Trust in the Supreme Court - Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

In the policy and attitudes survey conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility in September 2023, a similar question was asked regarding trust in the Supreme Court, but the response range was between 1 (not at all) to 4 (very much). The mean trust in the Supreme Court among ultra-orthodox was 1.32 and among non-ultra-Orthodox 2.25. This is a very significant difference. It is evident that ultra-Orthodox do not express trust in the Supreme Court, as we observe in the survey among the ultra-Orthodox population. Among the non-ultra-Orthodox population, respondents are distributed among the different responses, and therefore the average tends toward the middle (Figure 42).

Figure 42: Trust in the Supreme Court: Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox - Policy Survey 2023

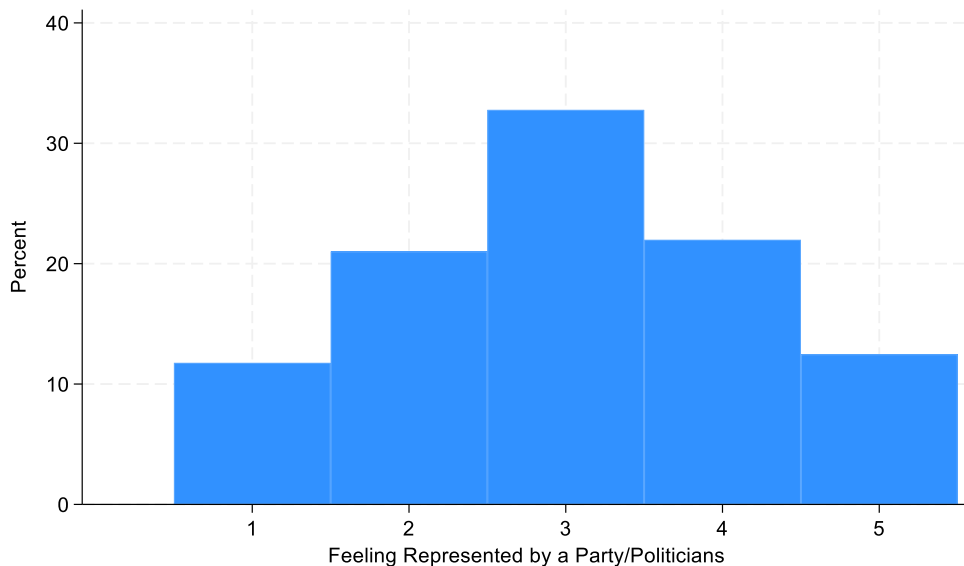


Representation Perceptions

In the survey conducted among the ultra-Orthodox population, we asked the following question: "To what extent do you feel there is a party and/or politician in the country that represents you?" on a scale ranging from not at all (1) to very much (5). The question was asked among about half of the sample (N=714). Contrary to expectations, ultra-orthodox are ambivalent about this question and the responses are distributed equally among the different options. The mean response to the

question stands at a moderate level (3). Figure 43 shows that 33% feel there is a party/politician that represents them to a great extent compared to 33% who do not feel this way.

Figure 43: Representation Perceptions - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



There are no differences between genders and age in feeling of representation. But interestingly, Chabad/other feel significantly that they are less represented (Figure 44). Also modern ultra-Orthodox feel less represented than conservatives or neutrals (Figure 45).

Figure 44: Representation Perceptions by Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

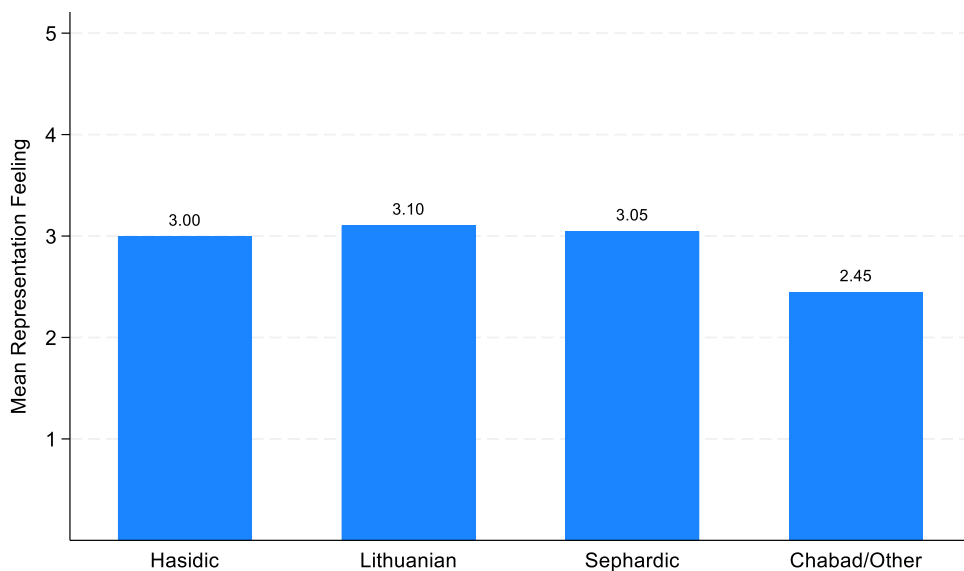
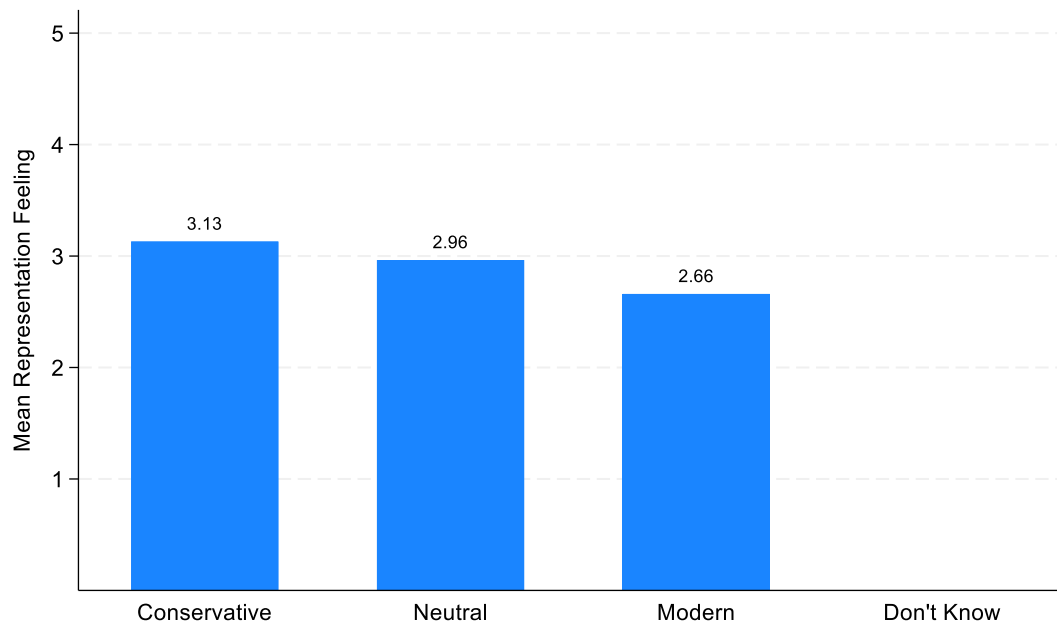


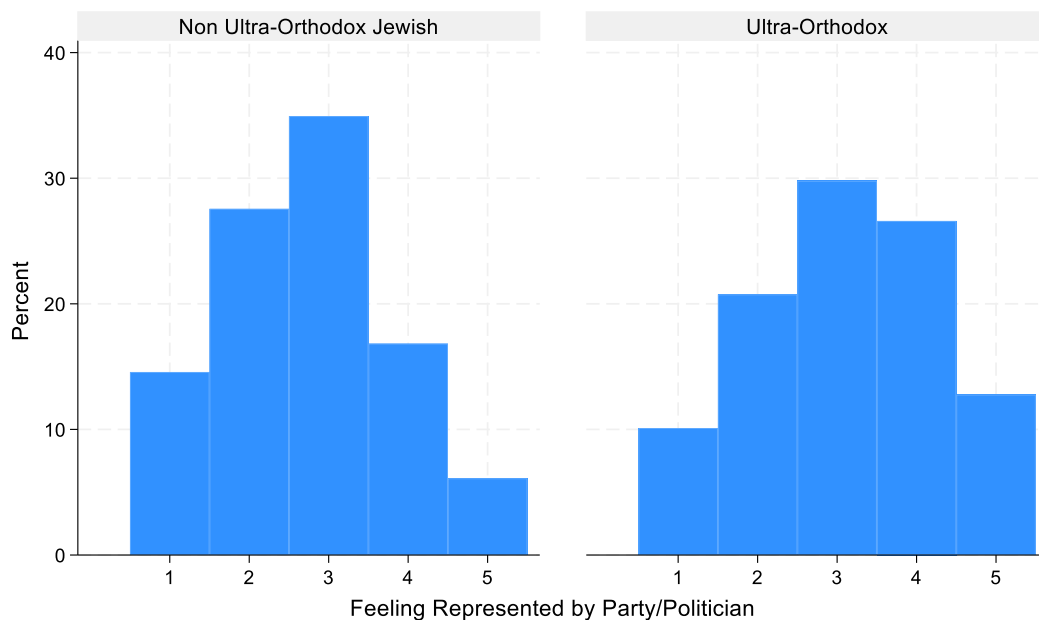
Figure 45: Representation Perceptions by Level of Conservatism - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Representation Perceptions - Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

In the policy survey (September 2023) by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility, we asked a similar question regarding representation. The mean representation feeling among ultra-Orthodox was 3.11 and among non-ultra-Orthodox 2.72. Thus, it is evident that ultra-orthodox feel more than non-ultra-Orthodox, although in this sample too it appears that the responses of the ultra-Orthodox are divided almost equally along the scale (Figure 46).

Figure 46: feeling of Representation: Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox - Policy Survey September 2023

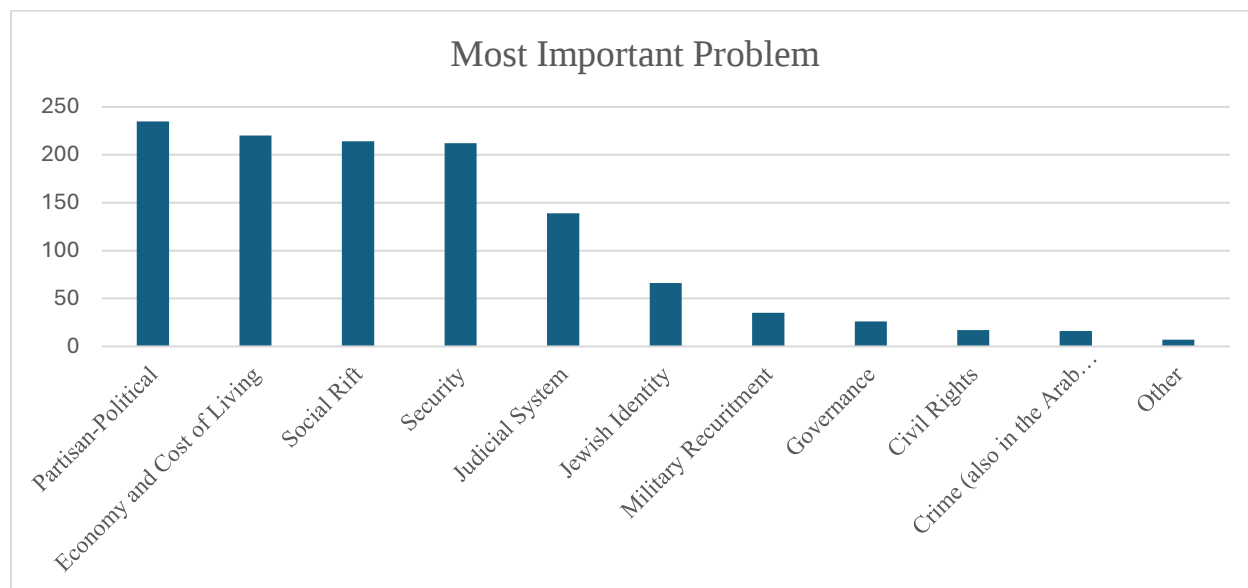


The Most Important Problem Facing the State

In the ultra-Orthodox focused survey, we asked an open question: "What do you think is the most important problem facing the state today?" We coded the responses into main topics (Figure 47). It appears that the issues occupying the ultra-orthodox most as of August-September 2023 are the issues that were on the agenda of the judicial reform. 235 ultra-Orthodox respondents claimed that the most important issue was partisan-political (this topic included responses to the open question related to right-left, protests around the judicial reform, or influence of "elites" such as the "left," "media," etc.). 214 respondents claimed that the most important problem is the social rift or lack of unity. If the previous category was mentioned in a more critical or confrontational way, this category also referred to events around the reform and its results but with a more anxious emotion without blaming either side. However, 139 additional respondents claimed that the main problem relates to the judicial system, whether it's the status of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, or generally the "lack of balance" between the executive and legislative branches. Beyond reform and political issues on the agenda, another important problem is the economic issue or cost of living (220 respondents). The security issue - terrorism, the Iranian threat, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict - was pushed to fourth place among (212 respondents). Surprisingly, the issue

of the state's Jewish identity was only sixth in its importance (66 respondents). This included aspects related to the integration of Torah/Halacha in state laws. An issue that received its own category and was mentioned by 35 respondents was the issue of ultra-orthodox military recruitment or the recruitment law.

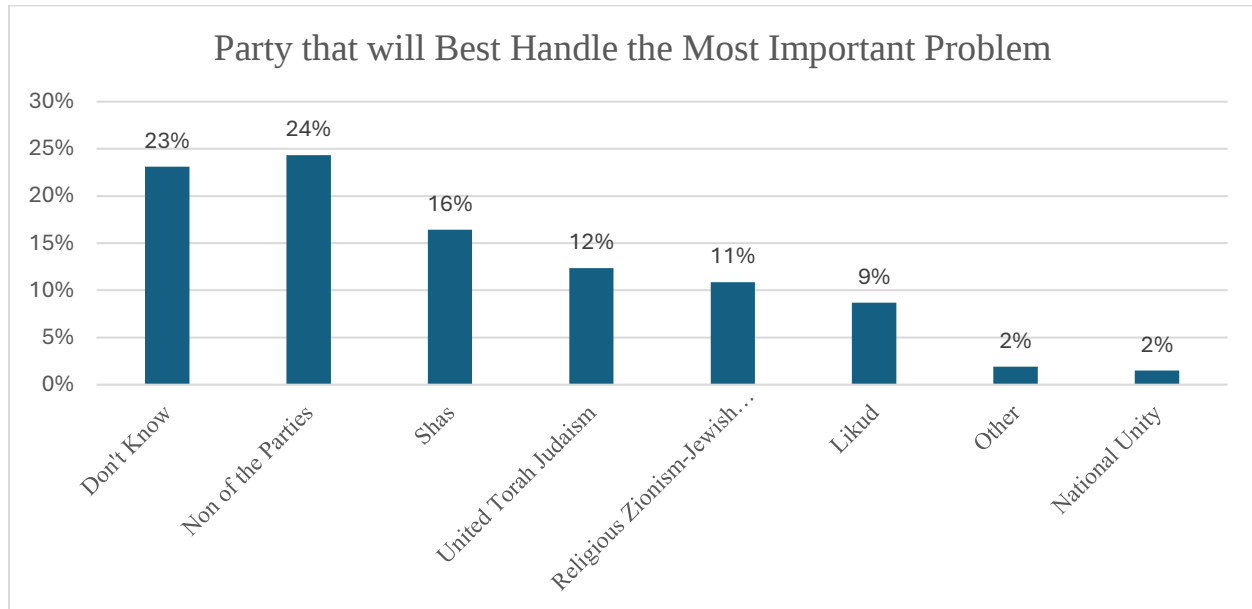
Figure 47: The Most Important Problem - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Party That Will Best Handle the Most Important Problem

We asked respondents which party, in their opinion, would best handle the most important problem. Figure 48 shows that 47% - almost half of those answering this question (half sample N=736) - do not feel there is a party that can handle the most important problem or don't know if there is one. Only 28% of respondents answered that the two ultra-orthodox parties - Shas and United Torah Judaism - would succeed in doing so. Religious Zionism-Jewish Power (Smotrich and Ben-Gvir's parties) surprisingly receives support that is close to the support for United Torah Judaism. Very few respondents claim that center or left parties will successfully handle the most important problem. This data reflect significant distrust of the ultra-Orthodox public in the ultra-Orthodox parties and perhaps even a sense of disgust with ultra-Orthodox politicians. On the other hand, the data shows that some ultra-Orthodox believe that non-ultra-Orthodox parties are actually better able to deal with the state's problems.

Figure 48: The Party That Will Handle the Most Important Problem - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



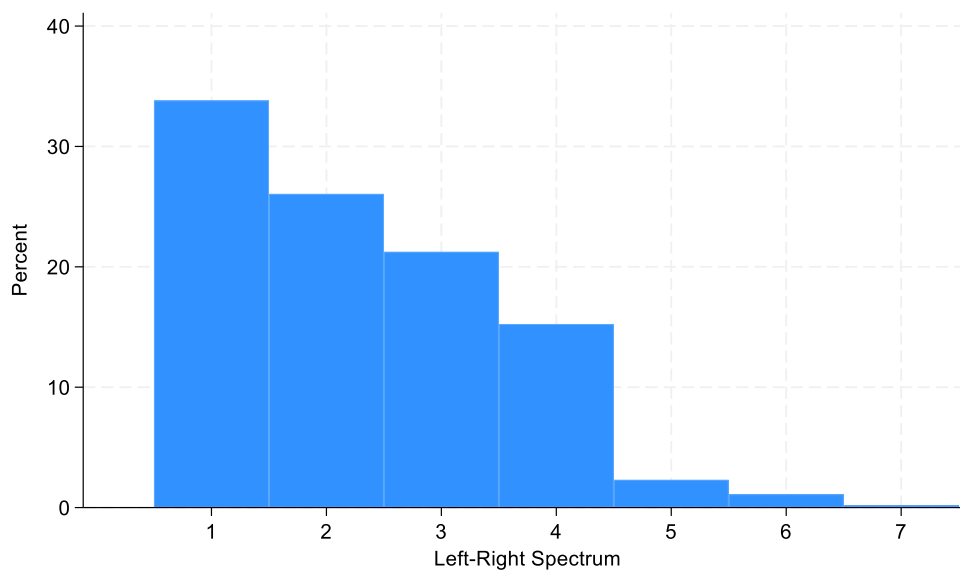
Political Positions

Ideological Identification on the Left-Right Spectrum

In the survey among ultra-orthodox society, we asked respondents where would they place themselves on the ideological "left-right" spectrum between right (1) to left (7), where 4 is center.

The responses clearly show that ultra-orthodox tend to the right. Figure 49 shows that the vast majority of ultra-Orthodox define themselves as most right-wing and as one moves leftward on the ideological spectrum, fewer ultra-Orthodox are found there. The mean of the variable also tends to the right (2.3).

Figure 49: Ideological Identification on Left-Right Spectrum - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



There are significant differences between ultra-orthodox men and women in identification on the left-right spectrum. The average for ultra-Orthodox women is 2.19 and for men is 2.41 (Figure 50). Ultra-Orthodox women tend slightly more to the right than men, although both genders clearly tend to the right.

Figure 50: Ideological Identification on Left-Right Spectrum by Gender - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

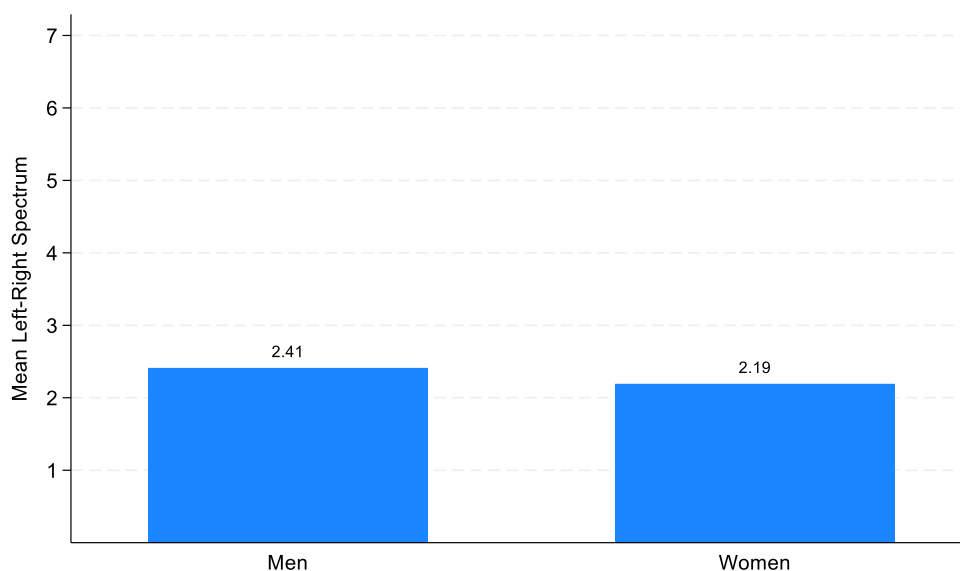
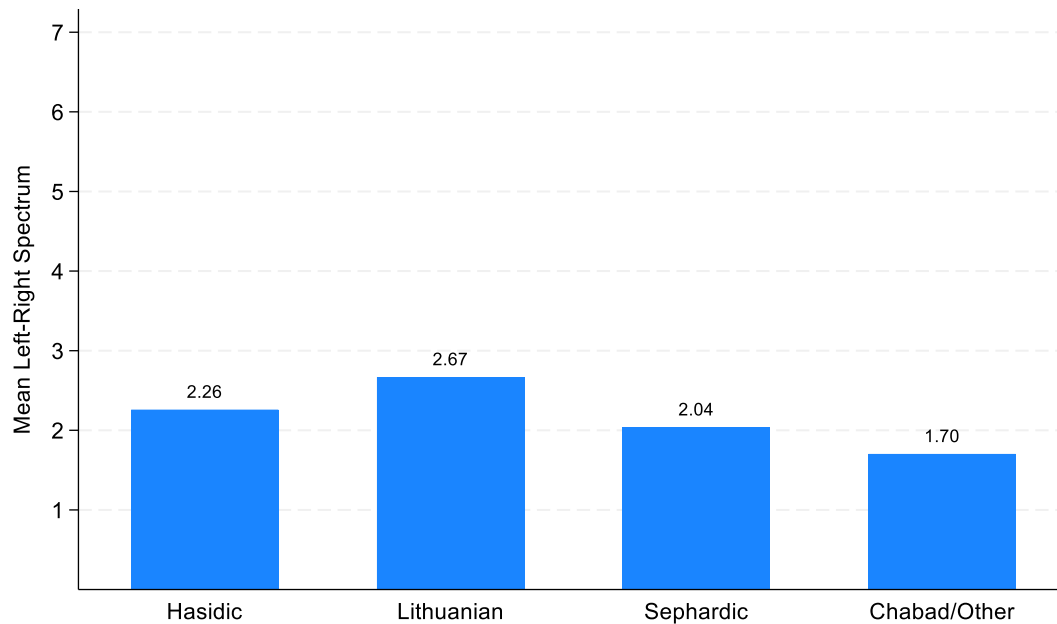


Figure 51 shows that Lithuanian Jews tend slightly more to the left than other sub-groups (average 2.67), and Sephardim (2.04) and Chabad/others (1.7) tend significantly more to the right than other groups. There are no significant differences in identification between age groups and between levels of conservatism.

Figure 51: Ideological Identification on Left-Right Spectrum by Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups – Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

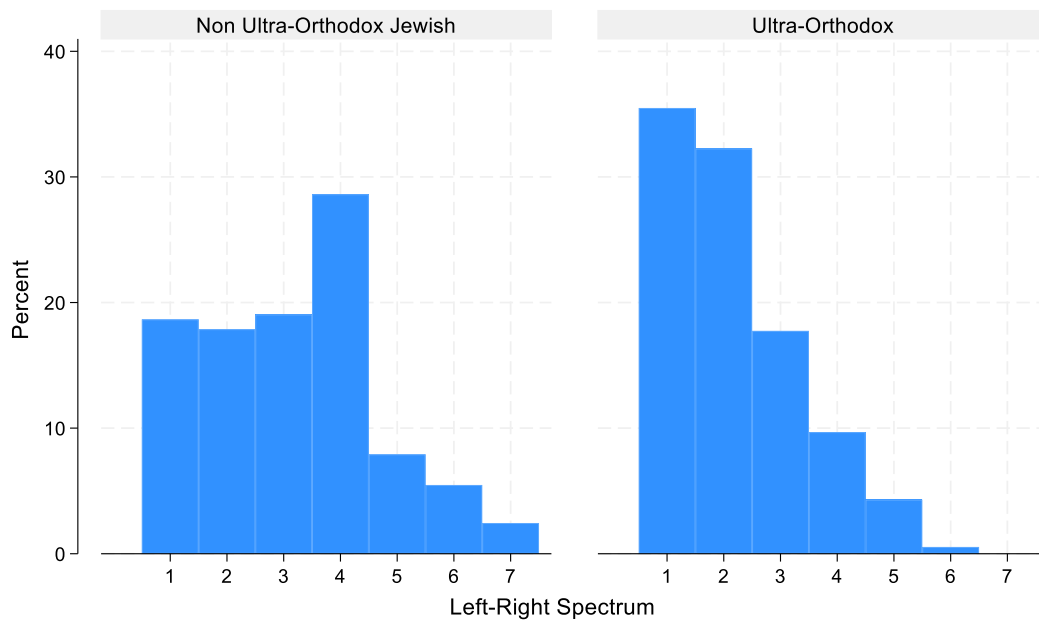


Ideological Identification on Left- Right Spectrum - Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

In the policy and attitudes survey from September 2023 conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility, an identical question was asked regarding respondents' self-identification on the right-left spectrum. Breaking down the distribution of responses in Figure 52 shows that in this survey too, ultra-Orthodox tend very much to the right. The vast majority of ultra-Orthodox define themselves as most right-wing and the average clearly tends to the right side (2.17). In contrast, non-ultra-Orthodox Jews tend more to the center, although this population too shows a clear rightward tendency. The differences in averages between ultra-Orthodox (2.17) and non-ultra-Orthodox Jews (3.15) are significant. Among ultra-orthodox the median response is 2 and among non-ultra-Orthodox 3. In other words, ultra-Orthodox clearly tend more to the right compared to

non-ultra-Orthodox, consistent with the data that emerged in the ultra-Orthodox focused survey above.

Figure 52: Ideological Identification on Left-Right Spectrum: Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox - Policy Survey September 2023

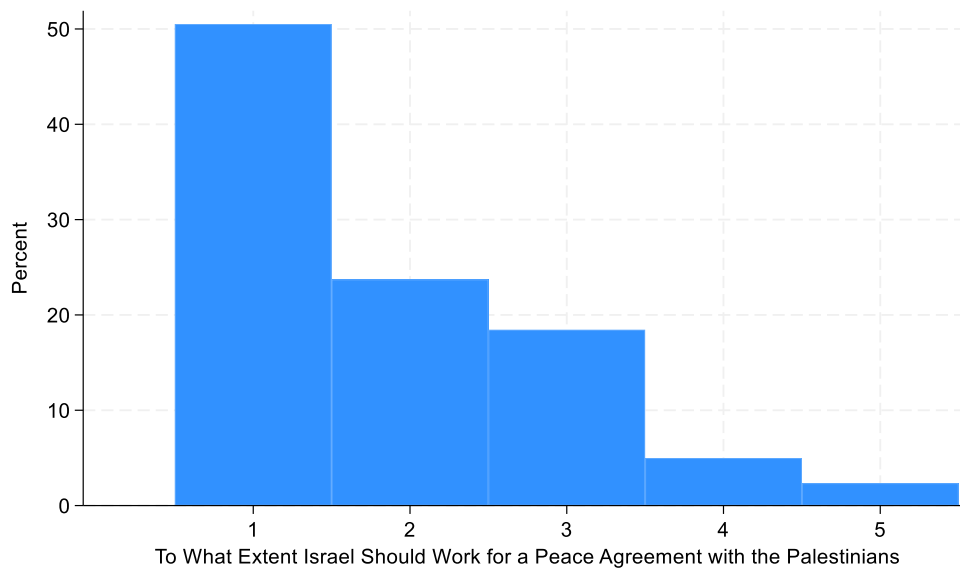


Support for Peace Agreement with the Palestinians

In the ultra-orthodox focused survey, we asked "To what extent do you think Israel should work toward a peace agreement with the Palestinians?" on a scale ranging from not at all (1) to very much (5).

One can see in Figure 53, similar to the previous question regarding the left-right spectrum, that the vast majority of ultra-Orthodox (74%) oppose Israel working toward a peace agreement with the Palestinians. The distribution shape is similar to the previous question about the left-right spectrum, and the average for this question stands at 1.85, meaning clear opposition to a peace agreement with the Palestinians.

Figure 53: Support for Peace Agreement with the Palestinians - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023



Here too women tend to disagree with an action for a peace agreement than men (Figure 54). Chabad/Others support the least in a peace agreement, and Lithuanian support slightly more than other sub-groups (Figure 55). Unlike the ideological spectrum question, here it is evident that younger people oppose action more than older people (Figure 56).

Figure 54: Support for Peace Agreement with Palestinians by Gender - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

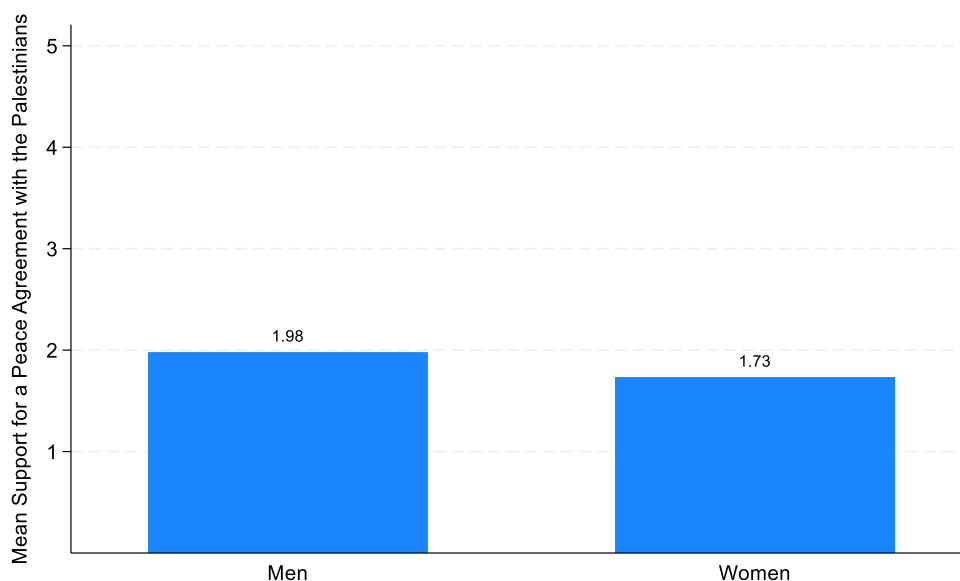


Figure 55: Support for Peace Agreement with Palestinians by Sub-groups - Ultra-orthodox survey August-September 2023

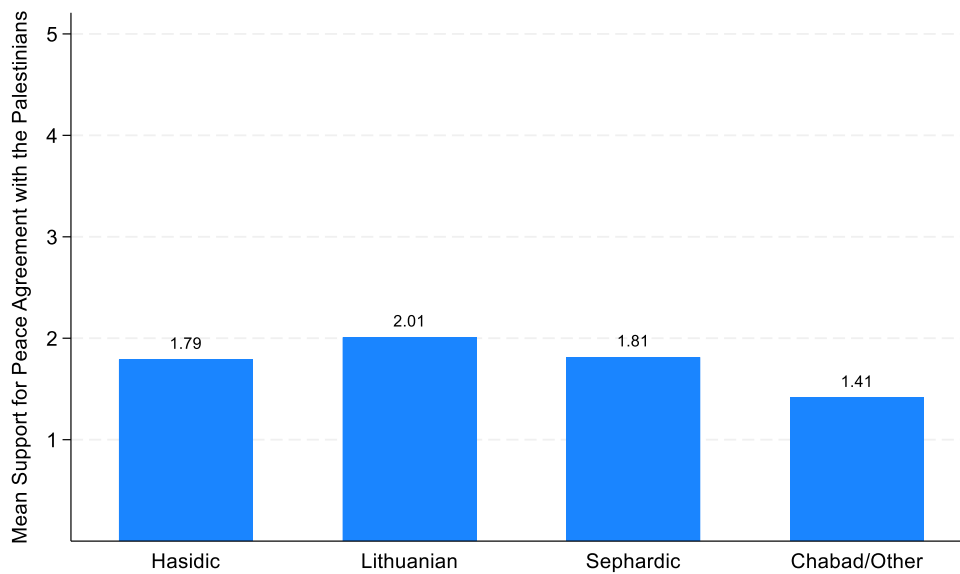
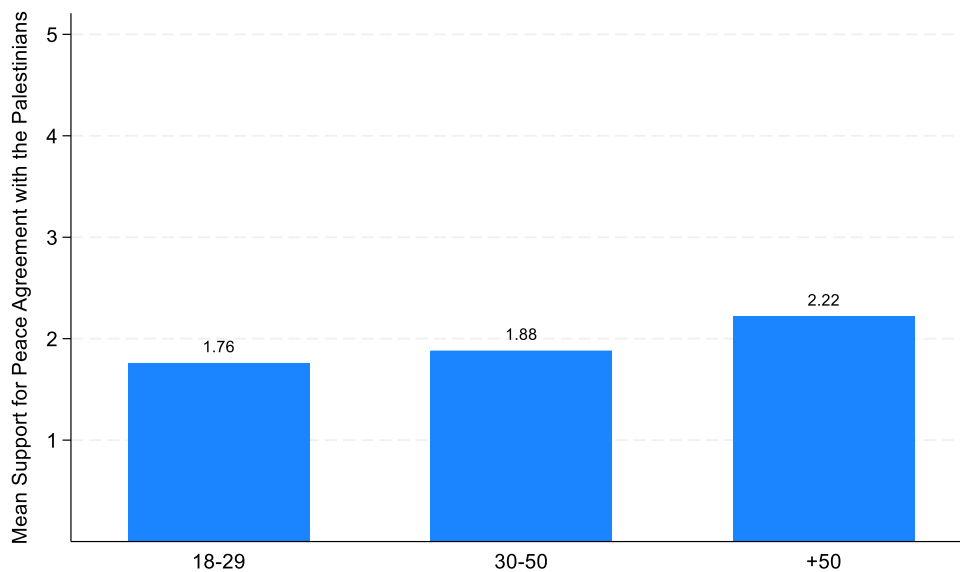


Figure 56: Support for Peace Agreement with Palestinians by Age Groups - Ultra-Orthodox survey August-September 2023

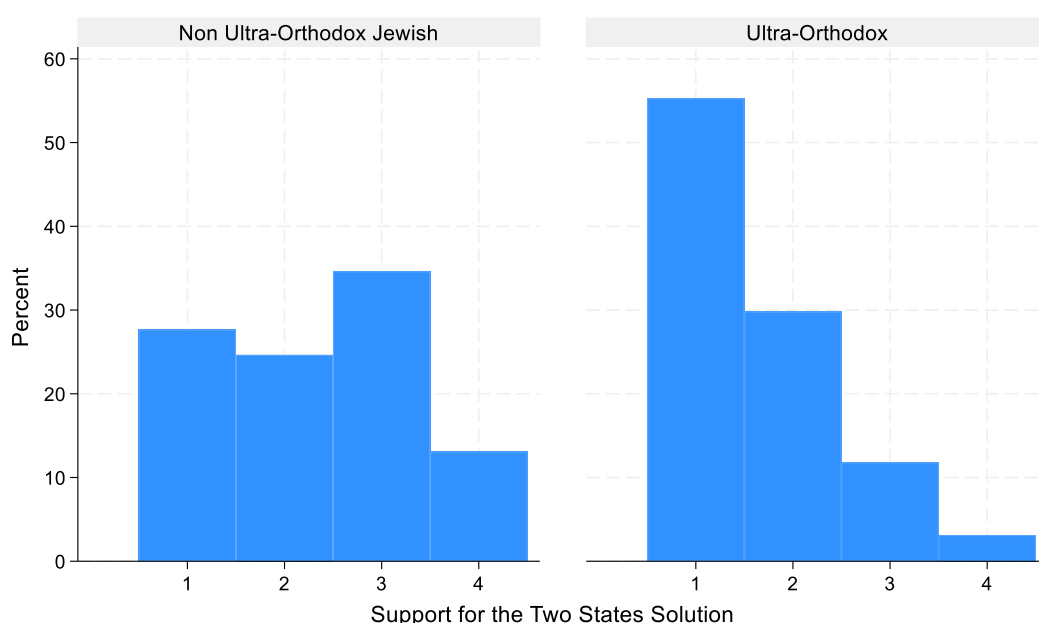


Support for the Two States Solution - Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

In a policy survey conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility in September 2023, there is a question regarding the level of support for the two-state solution: "In principle, do you support or oppose the two-state solution?" on a scale ranging from strongly opposed (1) to strongly

support (4). This is, of course, a fundamentally different question from the general question of supporting an agreement with the Palestinians, but it refers to one of the basic conditions of such an agreement: the existence of a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Figure 57 shows that among the ultra-Orthodox, there is a very large majority (over half) who do not support the two-state solution at all. While among non-ultra-Orthodox, the responses are distributed across the scale, with the most common response being support (3). Similar to the ultra-Orthodox-focused sample, in this sample 85% of ultra-Orthodox oppose the two-state solution, compared to 52% opposed among non-ultra-Orthodox.

Figure 57: Support for Two States Solution: Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox - September 2023 Policy Survey



The State's Duty to Ensure Human Dignity

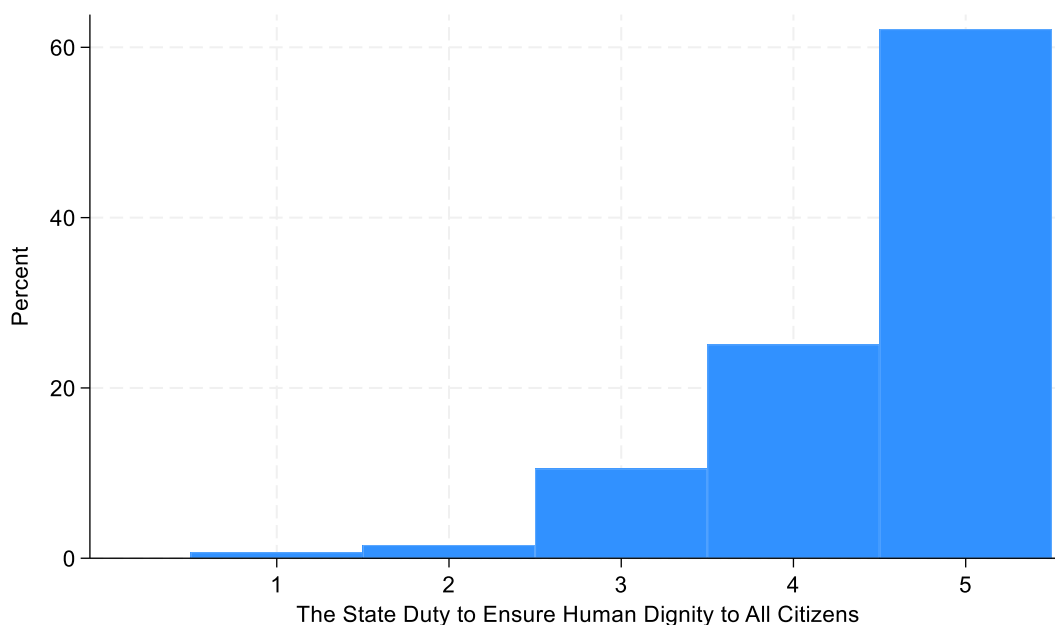
In the survey focused on ultra-Orthodox respondents, we asked "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: It is the state's duty to ensure human dignity for every citizen?" on a scale ranging from not at all (1) to very much (5). Figure 58 shows that on this question, there is significant support among the ultra-Orthodox for the state's duty to ensure human dignity (in terms of socio economic living conditions) (87%). The median and most common response is the maximum level of agreement that it is the state's duty to ensure human dignity for every citizen, with an average of 4.46. There are no significant differences between men and women in this

question, between Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups, or between levels of conservatism and age groups. The support among the ultra-Orthodox is comprehensive.

This can be interpreted as support for the state's welfare mechanisms, a perspective more aligned with economic left-wing views. This is not surprising, as a large part of the ultra-Orthodox population relies on state support mechanisms. For example, the income in an ultra-Orthodox household is divided into 67% from work (compared to 73% in a non-ultra-Orthodox Jewish household) and 27% from stipends and support (compared to 14% in a non-ultra-Orthodox Jewish household) (Kahner and Malach, 2023: p. 52).

One can say this is the ultra-Orthodox political paradox. On one hand, the ultra-Orthodox public in Israel is known for its broad support for the welfare state, which is usually associated with left-wing positions. However, these socio-economic positions do not change the general ultra-Orthodox position on the political map, which, as we have seen, tends distinctly to the right.

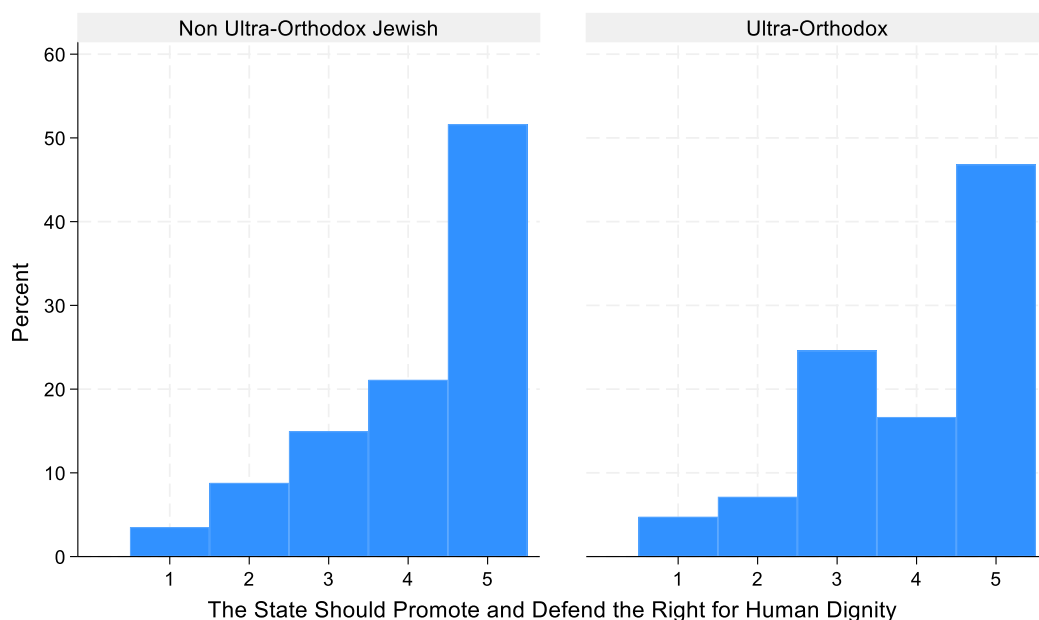
Figure 58: The State's Duty to Ensure Human Dignity - Ultra-Orthodox Survey August-September 2023



State Activities to Promote the Right to Human Dignity - Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox

In a values survey conducted by the Institute for Liberty and Responsibility in July 2023, a question similar, but not identical, to the previous one was asked: "How important is it for you that the State of Israel will work to protect or promote the right for human dignity" on a scale ranging from not at all (1) to very much (5). In this question, there appears to be no significant difference between ultra-Orthodox and non-ultra-Orthodox: all strongly support the importance of the state working to protect or promote the right for human dignity (Figure 59). The averages for the question in both groups are similar and stand at 4. The ultra-Orthodox support for promoting the right for human dignity is also reflected in this sample.

Figure 59: The State Should Protect and Act to Promote the Right for Human Dignity: Ultra-Orthodox vs. Non-Ultra-Orthodox - Values Survey July 2023



What Have Changed Following the War?

Wars are dramatic events that can influence the political perceptions of the public. Did the "Swords of Iron" war, which broke out on October 7, 2023, bring about a change in attitudes among the ultra-Orthodox public? To examine whether substantial changes occurred in the central political

perceptions before the war's outbreak, we conducted an additional, smaller survey through Eskria in February 2024 (N=452).

The sense of identification with Israel and its problems remained very similar among the ultra-Orthodox, with a large percentage of respondents (58%) choosing the two answers that show high identification (the average stands at 3.6, compared to the previous average of 3.4 on the index). In other words, there is no significant change in the ultra-Orthodox sense of identification with Israel and its problems.

The percentage of ultra-Orthodox respondents who claimed that men should not contribute to the state in any way other than Torah study also remained similar, standing at 65% (compared to 67% in September 2023). The differences between women and men in the level of opposition also remained similar: 70% of women and 60% of men opposed additional contribution by men to the state (compared to 76% among women and 59% among men in September 2023). This means the war did not change the ultra-Orthodox thinking regarding contribution to the state.

The importance of living in a democracy slightly decreased: 68% of respondents in the February 2024 survey claimed it was important to them to live in a democracy, compared to 72% in September 2023. However, the difference in averages between the two samples on this question is not significant.

Support for Israel being more Jewish at the expense of being democratic increased slightly, with 84% of respondents supporting this (compared to 78% in September 2023). This increase translates to a statistically significant increase of 0.13 in the average support for the state's Jewishness at the expense of its democracy.

Correspondingly, we found a 10% increase in support for the statement that Jews should have more rights than non-Jewish citizens in the state (70% of respondents in the February 2024 survey supported granting extra rights to Jews, compared to 60% in September 2023). In this question too, the increase translates to a statistically significant increase of 0.18 in the question's average between the samples. It should be noted that in the general population, there was also a weakening

of commitment to liberal values and democratic perceptions during the war (Efrat, 2023), so this development is not surprising.

We also found a 7% increase in opposition to working towards a peace agreement with the Palestinians (81% of respondents in February 2024 opposed a peace agreement, compared to 74% in September 2023). This increase in opposition translates to a significant decrease of 0.3 in the average support for working towards a peace agreement with the Palestinians between the samples.

In summary, after the events of October 7, 2023, and the outbreak of war, we see a certain regression in support for democratic positions: an increase in support for extra rights for Jews and an increase in support for Jewishness at the expense of democracy. There was also an increase in opposition to an agreement with the Palestinians. However, these trends are relatively moderate in their intensity. Wars by their nature can potentially radicalize attitudes towards minority groups and cause a retreat in support for liberal and democratic values, and overall, the trends observed here are similar to those seen in the general population and are not extreme.

Discussion

The Israeli democracy is a complex mosaic of cultures, beliefs, and opinions. One of the most significant groups in this mosaic is the ultra-Orthodox society, whose beliefs and ways of life pose a challenge and add to the complexity of democracy in the State of Israel. In this study, we examined the perceptions and political attitudes of ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel through public opinion surveys and divided the findings into five central chapters: 1. Partnership in Israeli society. 2. Democratic perceptions. 3. Trust and satisfaction. 4. Political attitudes. 5. The impact of October 7, 2023, and the "Swords of Iron" war.

In the first part of the report, we reviewed the literature about ultra-Orthodox society, where one of the prominent concepts that emerged was "cultural entrenchment": the perception of most of the ultra-Orthodox community that the state itself does not carry a positive religious value and therefore should be kept at a distance due to its secular nature and the inherent threat to maintaining tradition - but not to be boycotted (Brown, 2017). The conclusions arising from the data in this

report prove that the separatist rhetoric, which characterized the mainstream as revealed in the research, does not stand up to reality when the question is directed at individual members.

We might have expected to see findings indicating alienation or lack of partnership among ultra-Orthodox individuals, considering that ultra-Orthodox society is characterized by a distinct lifestyle and a critical approach to secular state institutions. However, the data presented here reveals a fascinating picture of feelings of pride and belonging to the state, while also pointing to gaps and ambivalence regarding contribution to the state, trust in government institutions, and the perception of democracy itself.

The data also shows that in Israeli ultra-Orthodox society, there is a unique perception of combining democracy and Judaism. On one hand, the ultra-Orthodox see democracy as an important value that allows religious freedom and preservation of their unique way of life. This perception is strengthened when we see that the ultra-Orthodox are able to identify various democratic characteristics as essential to the functioning of a democratic state. And perhaps contrary to common assumption, the vast majority explicitly support equality between men and women. On the other hand, when a conflict arises between democratic values and Jewish values, Judaism will receive the highest priority.

How can we explain the contradiction between support for democracy on one hand, and the willingness to sacrifice it for other values on the other? How can we explain, for example, the ultra-Orthodox rejection of some of the state's institutions and the low trust they have in them, alongside strong feelings of belonging and pride?

One explanation likely lies in the fact that conservative or fundamentalist religious perceptions can coexist with practical perceptions. Practically, the ultra-Orthodox understand that in Israeli democracy they can maximize their own interests. Here it is worth remembering Friedman (1991), who argued that the 'society of scholars' could not have developed in a state that was not liberal and economically robust like the State of Israel. As long as democratic values do not conflict with Torah/Jewish values, the ultra-Orthodox have no difficulty declaring their preference for this form of government. However, when there is a practical possibility of harming conservative/religious

values, such as integrating women into decision-making in foreign, security, and religious matters, they prefer conservative values.

There are additional Explanations for ultra-Orthodox Support of Democracy and the State. First, Israeli democracy allows the ultra-Orthodox to maintain their religious lifestyle while receiving government support. Laws and regulations protecting their religious rights are passed due to their political influence, which increases their appreciation for the democratic system. Second, throughout history, ultra-Orthodox parties have become a central player in Israeli politics. Their active participation in decision-making processes and direct contact with power centers provide them with a sense of belonging and appreciation for the democratic system that enables this.

This leads to another explanation: the political partnership of ultra-Orthodox parties in Israeli governments over the generations leads to improvements in support and services provided to the ultra-Orthodox public. Areas such as education, housing, and welfare receive special attention, which increases the overall satisfaction of the ultra-Orthodox with the government and democratic system.

Another explanation for satisfaction with the functioning of Israeli democracy and its preference relates to support for the current governing government (the 37th government). The ultra-Orthodox parties are an integral part of the government, which gives the ultra-Orthodox community a sense of influence and power in decision-making. When the ultra-Orthodox are part of the government, they feel they can more effectively promote their interests.

Third, it's possible that the ultra-Orthodox support for democracy as revealed in the survey is thin or instrumental and does not reflect a genuine commitment to liberal democratic values. For example, the rejection of the Supreme Court or support for granting extra rights to Jews. The rejection of the Supreme Court stems from a combination of historical, ideological, social, and political factors, including the fact that the Supreme Court is perceived by the ultra-Orthodox as a secular body with secular values whose rulings on Shabbat, family law, and ultra-Orthodox conscription are anti-religious.

Alongside all these, one of the main conclusions emerging from the data relates to the convergence of ultra-Orthodox political perceptions and attitudes with those of the right in Israel. As we showed, the vast majority of ultra-Orthodox define themselves ideologically as right-wing and support political positions prevalent in the Israeli right.

The sense of political representation among the ultra-Orthodox is based on a deep identification with ultra-Orthodox parties like Shas and United Torah Judaism, which are seen as promoting the interests and values of the ultra-Orthodox public. However, this sense of representation, as we saw, is beginning to erode, and its place is seemingly being taken by politicians from the extreme and moderate right.

There is a combination here between the processes of "Israelization" that the ultra-Orthodox public is undergoing – adopting Israeli values – and the abandonment of liberal values and adoption of traditional and religious values within the political right in Israel. The ultra-Orthodox public sees the political right as a camp that emphasizes the Jewish and national identity of the state, values that are very close to the hearts of the ultra-Orthodox. This is also an historical result of the "alliance of the marginalized" – an alliance between the right, which for years was outside the ruling parties, and the ultra-Orthodox minority (Kahner, 2020).

Additionally, the right is considered a natural partner in the struggle to maintain the status quo in matters of religion and state, support for religious institutions, and opposition to legislation perceived as anti-religious. Another reason for moving rightward is the discomfort with ultra-Orthodox representation expressed in the survey and the feeling that politicians have become political operators who are less ideological.

An additional central conclusion is that not all political perceptions and attitudes can be viewed as a monolithic ultra-Orthodox perspective. Although we did not see profound differences between various groups within the ultra-Orthodox population, we did find variations, sometimes significant. For example, throughout the survey, we saw that ultra-Orthodox women hold more conservative positions than men. The most prominent finding is the stronger opposition among

women to additional contribution by ultra-Orthodox men beyond Torah study. This finding aligns with the central idea of the "society of scholars" characterizing ultra-Orthodox society and proves that ultra-Orthodox women have internalized this idea through educational and community institutions. The respondents might have seen the world of Torah study by their spouse as paramount and refused to consider any compromise to this noble value.

Regarding differences between Ultra-Orthodox sub-groups, we did not find deep divisions between Hasidic and Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox, but we did find that Sephardic Jews feel more belonging to the state and more identification with right-wing positions compared to other groups. Perhaps this is a result of stronger Sephardic integration into Israeli society. However, in most perceptions and attitudes, we found differences between those who define themselves as modern versus traditional: the modern ultra-Orthodox are more exposed to the broader Israeli society, and their perspectives are more moderate. In a large part of the attitudes, we also found differences between age groups. Generally, younger individuals hold more conservative and right-wing positions compared to other age groups. A possible explanation relates to the educational system and lack of exposure to the outside world. Older individuals have traveled a longer path, entered the workforce, and been exposed to different perspectives, while younger individuals remain closed within yeshivas.

In summary, the report reveals an interesting and complex picture of ultra-Orthodox democratic and political perceptions. On one side, a sense of pride and belonging, and on the other, unwillingness to contribute beyond Torah study; a desire to live in a democracy and identify crucial democratic characteristics alongside supporting unequal rights for the non-Jewish minority in favor of the Jewish majority; an apparent declared support for gender equality, but simultaneously supporting women's integration in decision-making only in education and social matters; satisfaction and trust in government alongside moderate representational feelings and rejection of other institutions like the Supreme Court; almost complete identification with the right while supporting welfare policies characteristic of the left.

These complexities raise questions about Israel's future when the ultra-Orthodox population is expected to grow to higher percentages. Will these contradictions change the state's regime, and how will they affect the complex social mosaic in Israel? These are open questions that will likely

occupy us in the coming years, alongside discussions about ultra-Orthodox integration and shared life in Israel.

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Appendices

Appendix A' - Survey Questionnaire August-September 2023

Ultra-Orthodox Questionnaire – Attitudes Towards Israeliness, Connection to Israeli Society and Identification with Its Values - August-September 2023

Demographics

1. Are you: ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) / Religious / Traditional / Secular
2. Gender - Male/Female
3. Age:
4. Ultra-Orthodox stream - Lithuanian/Hasidic/Sephardic/Chabad/Other: which?
5. Marital status - Single/Married/Divorced/Widowed
6. What is your current occupation: [Allow multiple selections] Yeshiva or Kollel student - for men only / Housewife - for women only / Employee / Self-employed / Student / Retiree/Pensioner / Unemployed / Other
7. And what is your spouse's occupation?
8. Number of children ____
9. Where would you place yourself on the scale between conservative and modern where 1 - very conservative, 5 very modern

Very conservative - 1	2	3	4	Very modern - 5
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1. The average income for an ultra-Orthodox household is 12,000 ₪ net per month, after taxes and payments, from all income sources: work, pension, allowances, rent. Is your income: Much below average / Slightly below average / Similar to average / Slightly above average / Much above average / Refuse to answer
2. Based on the last three months, what was your monthly gross income before deductions from all your workplaces? Up to 2,500 ₪ / 2,501-4,000 ₪ / 4,001-5,000 ₪ / 5,001-6,500 ₪ / 6,501-8,000 ₪ / 8,001-10,001 ₪ / 10,001-13,000 ₪ / 13,001-17,000 ₪ / 17,001-24,000 ₪ / 24,001 ₪ and above / Don't know / Refuse to answer
3. What is the highest certificate or degree you have: No certificate (studied only in yeshiva / seminary) / Sald tests / Matriculation certificate / Senior certified teacher (graduate of

- seminary or religious institute) / Other higher professional certificate (accounting, etc.) / Practical engineering certificate / Equivalent degree - for women only / Academic degree
4. [If employed] Your workplace is in an environment - Completely Ultra-Orthodox / Mixed ultra-Orthodox and non-ultra-Orthodox / Majority non-ultra-Orthodox
 5. In which employment sector? Education and teaching / Health services, welfare, aid / High-tech sector / Commerce / Services / Industry / Other sector _____

Affiliation with Ultra-Orthodox Society and Israeli Society (one item)

1. To what extent do you define yourself as Israeli (5 levels) - Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
2. To what extent do you feel part of the State of Israel and its challenges? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
3. To what extent do you feel pride in the achievements of the State of Israel? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent

Socio-economic Perceptions (+Don't know only in telephone, try to get an answer by telephone as much as possible)

1. To what extent do you agree that ultra-Orthodox children should be taught mathematics and English from a young age? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
2. To what extent do you agree with the claim that lowering the military exemption age will increase employment rates among ultra-Orthodox men? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
3. What is the ideal situation for you for an ultra-Orthodox family: The man studies in kollel and the woman works / Both spouses work / The man works and the woman is a housewife / Other _____ Mark 1 for the most ideal situation and 3 for the least ideal
4. Should ultra-Orthodox men contribute to the state in ways other than studying Torah? Yes/No
5. If yes, in what way? Mark what you find most appropriate. Volunteering within the community / Volunteering in the general population / National/civil service / Military service / Other. Specify _____

Democratic/Liberal Perceptions (+Don't know - for telephone only, try to get an answer)

1. To what extent is it important to you to live in a country with a democratic government?
Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
10. To what extent do you think Israel is a democratic country? Not at all / To a small extent
/ To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
2. In general, to what extent are you satisfied with the way Israeli democracy functions? Not
at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
3. To what extent are you in favor of Israel being more Jewish, even if it means the country
will be less democratic? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent /
To a very large extent
4. Different people attribute different meanings to the term "democracy." Briefly describe
what you think is the most important and essential characteristic of a democratic regime?
_____ [Open question]
5. [Half sample] Now we would like you to indicate to what extent you think the following
characteristics are essential characteristics of a democratic state: [Scale of 1-5, from 1 very
non-essential to 5 very essential + Don't know]
6. The court can determine that the government is acting against the law
7. The media is free to criticize the government
8. There is protection for minority group rights
9. Citizens choose their leaders in free elections
10. All citizens of the state have equal rights
11. Citizens enjoy freedom of expression and demonstration
12. Citizens are allowed to observe religious commandments or not observe religious
commandments
13. Every citizen is guaranteed a dignified existence
14. [Half sample] To what extent do you think the following characteristics currently exist in
the State of Israel: [Scale of 1-5, from 5 to a very large extent to 1 not at all + Don't know]
15. The court can determine that the government is acting against the law
16. The media is free to criticize the government
17. There is protection for minority group rights
18. Citizens choose their leaders in free elections
19. All citizens of the state have equal rights

20. Citizens enjoy freedom of expression and demonstration
21. Citizens are allowed to observe religious commandments or not observe religious commandments
22. Every citizen is guaranteed a dignified existence

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent

1. In Israel, Jewish citizens should have more rights than non-Jewish citizens.
2. In Israel, men should have more rights than women.
3. To what extent are you satisfied with the performance of the current government? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
4. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "The current government is attentive to the public's problems"? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
5. What do you think is the most important problem facing the country today [Open question]? _____
6. What score would you give the government in handling the problem you mentioned, from 1 (low) to 10 (high); 11- Don't know
7. Which political party do you think will handle the problem you mentioned in the best way?

Likud

Yesh Atid

Religious Zionism-Jewish Power

The State Camp

Shas

United Torah Judaism

Israel Beiteinu

United Arab List (Ra'am)

Hadash-Ta'al

Labor

Meretz

Balad

The Jewish Home

Other party, specify: _____

No party

Don't know

1. To what extent do you have confidence in each of the following institutions? The answers to all trust questions: Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
 - a. The Knesset
 - b. The Government
 - c. The Supreme Court
2. In general, to what extent do you feel that there is a party and/or politician in the country that represents you? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
3. Should ultra-Orthodox women be among the decision-makers on the following issues?
[Answer options: Yes/No + Don't know]
 - a. Community educational institutions
 - b. Policy-making regarding society and economy
 - c. Policy-making regarding foreign affairs and security
 - d. Policy-making regarding religion and state
4. Where would you place yourself on the "Right-Left" spectrum politically? Give your answer on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means Right, 7 means Left, and 4 is the middle point (Center)

Right				Center				Left
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	+ Don't know	
5. To what extent do you believe Israel should work toward a peace agreement with the Palestinians? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent

6. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: It is the state's duty to ensure every citizen a dignified existence. Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent

Appendix B - Descriptive Statistics of Respondents in the Survey Focused on Ultra-Orthodox (N=1135)

Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Total	1135	
Mean Age (SD)	34.6 (10.73)	
Age Groups:		
Young (18–29)	463	40.8%
Adults (30–50)	526	46.3%
Older (50+)	146	12.9%
Gender:		
Women	570	50.2%
Men	565	49.8%
Ultra-orthodox sub-groups:		
Hasidic	379	33.4%
Lithuanian	376	33.1%
Sephardic	325	28.6%
Chabad/Other	55	4.85%
Level of Conservatism		
Conservative (1–2)	585	51.5%
Neutral (3)	434	38.2%
Modern (4–5)	107	9.4%
Don't know (0)	9	0.8%
Marital status		
Single	85	7.5%
Married	1037	91.4%
Divorced	12	1%
Widowed	1	0.1%
Income (According to the monthly average for an ultra-Orthodox household, 12,000 NIS)		
Far below average income	236	20.8%
Slightly below average	213	18.8%
Around average	215	18.9%
Slightly above average	222	19.6%
Far above average	150	13.2%
Don't know / Refused	99	8.7%

Appendix C - February 2024 Survey Questionnaire

Demographics

1. Are you:
 - Ultra-Orthodox
 - Religious
 - Traditional
 - Secular
2. Gender - Male/Female
3. Age:
4. Ultra-Orthodox stream - Lithuanian/Hasidic/Sephardic/Chabad/Other: which?
5. To what extent do you feel part of the State of Israel and its challenges? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
6. Should ultra-Orthodox men contribute to the state in ways other than studying Torah?
Yes/No
7. To what extent is it important to you to live in a country with a democratic government?
Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
8. To what extent are you in favor of Israel being more Jewish, even if it means the country will be less democratic? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
9. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: In Israel, Jewish citizens should have more rights than non-Jewish citizens. Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent
10. To what extent do you believe Israel should work toward a peace agreement with the Palestinians? Not at all / To a small extent / To some extent / To a large extent / To a very large extent

An Overview, October 2024

The Institute for Liberty and Responsibility, Reichman University

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