# The Effects of Attachment to an Ideological Group in Multi-Party Systems: Evidence from Israel

Odelia Oshri<sup>\*</sup> Odelia.oshri@mail.huji.ac.il

Omer Yair omer.yair@mail.huji.ac.il

Leonie Huddy Leonie.Huddy@stonybrook.edu

#### Abstract

This paper argues that, in multiparty systems, individuals' attachment to an ideological group – their "identity-based ideology" – can powerfully predict their political behavior and attitudes, irrespective of their policy preferences. In two studies conducted in Israel (N = 1,320), each incorporating a vignette experiment, we draw on social identity research and test the effects of a multiitem Attachment to an Ideological Group (AIG) scale. We show that, even controlling for issue preferences or left-right ideological self-placement, the AIG scale strongly predicts intentions to vote for a party from one's ideological camp. The AIG scale also strongly predicts levels of affective polarization, motivated reasoning, and reactions to new politically relevant information. Notably, the effects of the AIG scale are consistently stronger than the effects of issue preferences or ideological self-placement. These findings underscore the importance of attachment to an ideological group in today's volatile democratic multiparty systems.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>\*</sup> Odelia Oshri is a Lecturer in the department of Political Science and the European Forum at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Omer Yair is a postdoctoral fellow at The Federmann School of Public Policy and Government, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Leonie Huddy is a professor in the department of Political Science at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

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In various multi-party systems, citizens' ideological leanings and policy preferences have been shown to influence their vote choice and political attitudes (e.g., van der Eijk et al. 2005; Torcal et al. 2018). However, a burgeoning literature has recently documented that people's political behaviors and judgments are also impacted by their emotional and psychological attachment to an ideological group and its members – or in other words, by their "*identity-based ideology*" (Mason 2018a) – above and beyond ideological stances and issues preferences. Thus far, such effects have been demonstrated only in the American two-party system, where ideological self-placement is largely symbolic and only moderately correlated with main policy issues (Converse 1964; Conover & Feldman 1981; Kinder & Kalmoe 2017). No study of multi-party systems has hitherto specifically targeted this issue.

Yet, a comprehensive investigation is in order: If an effect parallel to the one found in a two-party system is obtained in multi-party systems as well, our overall understanding of politics and public opinion will be greatly enhanced. As previous scholars have noted (e.g., Mason 2018b), emotional and psychological attachment to political groups can lead to support politicians who do not necessarily share voters' stances on all issues, and can heighten the emotional tone and animosity of politics across the left-right (or conservative-liberal) divide. Thus, this paper endeavors to shed light on the role of "*identity-based ideology*" in multiparty systems.

Specifically, the paper examines whether voters' attachment to an ideological group predicts their political behavior and attitudes in Israel – a multi-party system which, as shown below, is characterized by intense ideological competition. Relying on two studies (N = 1,320), each with an embedded vignette experiment, we demonstrate that a multi-item *Attachment to an Ideological Group (AIG)* scale, tapping a sense of attachment to an ideological group and its

members, strongly predicts Israelis' vote choice, attitudes toward political rivals, motivated reasoning, and reactions to new information. Furthermore, in both our observational and experimental analyses, the AIG scale is a stronger predictor of Israelis' political behavior and attitudes than common measures of ideological self-placement or policy preferences. These results provide strong support for the contention that, irrespective of issue positions or ideological orientations, voters' sense of attachment to an ideological group powerfully predicts their political judgment and behavior in multi-party systems.

Overall, we demonstrate that identification with group members is a primary driver of political behavior in multi-party systems. These findings suggest that for various people, ideological "left" and "right", even in multi-party systems, mean more than certain policy directives regarding the economy or society; rather, they signal group belonging and group competition—who is "us" and who is "them". One implication is that messages from political elites and group leaders, as well as threats to the status of voters' ideological group, could affect voters' political behavior and attitudes, regardless of, or even when contrasting previously-held beliefs and policy positions. Our paper suggests that in many ways, ideological groupings and citizens' strong attachment to a certain ideological group can render the political competition in multi-party systems similar to the two-headed competition between Democrats and Republicans in the US two-party system. Thus, attachment to ideological groups can have importance implications to our understanding of many multi-party systems.

# Left-right ideology in multi-party systems

Ideology, commonly referred to as a "system of beliefs" (Converse 1964), has been shown to structure voters' political perceptions and issue positions (e.g., van der Eijk et al. 2005), as well as organize party groupings in the political space and guide voters' expectations regarding the likelihood of political alliances (e.g., Fortunato et al. 2016).

Traditionally, the left-right (or liberal-conservative) ideological spectrum has been analyzed as either a one- or a two-dimensional continuum representing a broad worldview captured by positions and beliefs regarding several key economic, social, and cultural issues (e.g., De Vries et al. 2013; Bølstad & Dinas 2017). Unlike the US two-party system, where conservative-liberal ideological self-placement is largely divorced from substantive issue preferences (e.g., Conover & Feldman 1981; Kinder & Kalmoe 2017), in many European multiparty systems, left-right ideological self-placement is considered a strong force in politics. Indeed, the left-right continuum is often referred to as a 'super issue'; is considered "one of the most important dimensions to describe voters' substantive political orientations"; and has been shown in research as "one of the most important factors that determine European voters' choices at the ballot box" (van der Eijk et al. 2005: 166; Torcal et al. 2018).

However, various scholars have suggested that the left-right division extends beyond ideology and issue preferences. Left versus right, or liberal versus conservative, ideological affiliations also reflect symbolic group identities that carry considerable affective significance for voters, in both the US and Europe (e.g., Conover & Feldman 1981; Freire 2008). Moreover, it has been recently suggested that ideology has an *identity*-based component (e.g., Malka & Lelkes 2010). Namely, voters' attachment to and identification with members of their respective ideological groups are also important, and such affinities independently affect their political

behavior and attitudes. Findings from this burgeoning literature are elaborated in the next section.

#### Attachment to an ideological group in multiparty systems

In recent years, scholars have distinguished between two separate components of ideology: issue-based ideology, on the one hand, and identity-based, or symbolic, ideology on the other (e.g., Malka & Lelkes 2010; Ellis & Stimson 2012). The former stands for ideology in the traditional sense, as a coherent set of issue positions, while the latter is anchored in social identity and reflects attachment to one's ideological group and its members. Ideology can thus be conceptualized as a set of substantive policy preferences as well as a social identity, and these two notions can be separated, both theoretically and empirically. To quote Mason (2018b: 22), "Ideology is not simply a system of values and preferences that constrain policy preferences."

The case for "identity-based ideology" rests on voters' attachment to, and social identification with, an ideological group. This argument, in turn, is based on the inherent and fundamental human tendency to identify with social groups. Social Categorization Theory posits that people organize reality by classifying objects into groups according to salient characteristics (Turner et al. 1987). In social contexts, in- and out-group categories are highly meaningful and shape the perception and evaluation of others (Turner et al. 1987). In a political context, the labels "left" (or "liberal") and "right" (or "conservative") designate who is "us" and "them" for many citizens (Mason 2018a). It has been demonstrated, moreover, that voters' knowledge of

their political camp is acquired in the early stages of socialization and, for many, becomes entrenched in their cognition and psyche (Green et al. 2002).

Thus far, studies on identity-based ideology and ideological group attachment have focused almost exclusively on the American two-party political arena (for an exception, see Pacilli et al. 2016). We build on the existing research and apply it to a multi-party context. We contend that a deep sense of attachment and belonging to an ideological group in multi-party systems, where parties are aligned along the left-right ideological continuum, has a strong and independent effect on political judgments and behavior.

Ideological groups or party blocs are important components in multi-party systems. They are characterized by stable cooperation among allied parties, which often form pre-electoral coalitions for the purpose of winning governing power. It is also well documented that volatile voters tend to switch between parties that are ideologically similar, and will far less frequently move to a party from another ideological camp (e.g., van der Meer et al. 2015; Rahat et al. 2016). It follows that people's political behavior and attitudes are predicted not only by their "issue-based ideology" and policy preferences – which in various multi-party systems will be important for many voters – but also by their attachment to their ideological group: the stronger the attachment, the stronger the motivation to act in the group's interests.

We test the effects of attachment to an ideological group on voters' political behavior and judgments in Israel – where, as shown below, "issue-based ideology" is a strong predictor of these determinants. Hence, Israeli society makes for an illustrative case study to test the effect of attachment to an ideological group on political attitudes and voting patterns.

## Left-right ideology in Israel

Since its independence in 1948, Israel's political life has been structured by the left-right ideological division over the country's relations with its neighboring Arab states, and later on, over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Arian & Shamir 2001). Unlike many other democracies, in Israel the left-right ideological axis is salient mainly in respect of security and foreign affairs: Those on the left (or "doves") are generally supportive of territorial compromises intended to advance peace agreements with the neighboring Arab countries and the Palestinians, while those on the right ("hawks") tend to oppose such concessions and favor a more forceful stance which foregrounds security and the need to deter potential enemies (Shamir & Arian 1999).

Israel is a geographically small country that operates under a perpetual threat of attack. Over the years, it has been involved in numerous and varied armed conflicts and has suffered several periods of widespread and deadly terror attacks. The army service is mandatory, and most Israelis serve two to three years in the Israel Defense Forces. For over 50 years, Israel has occupied the Judea and Samaria regions, where the majority of the population are Palestinians. In such a reality, it stands to reason that the division along the left-right, hawkish-dovish ideological lines should be substantive and relevant for many Israelis. Indeed, Israel has been described as "a polity that is highly ideological, where ideology is widely thought to play an important role, and where ideological discourse is strong" (Arian & Shamir 1983: 143).

Importantly, Israelis' left-right ideological self-placement is predictive of main policy issues regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,<sup>2</sup> and it is a powerful predictor of the vote (e.g., Shamir & Arian 1999), as well as other political behaviors and attitudes (e.g., Enos & Gidron

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For example, between 2006 and 2015, the average correlation between Jewish Israelis' ideological self-placement and a three-item scale gauging their stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict stood at 0.52 (see Online Appendix H).

2018; Yair and Sulitzeanu-Kenan 2018; Manekin et al. 2019). Accordingly, Israel provides a rich ground for testing the impact of ideological-group attachment on political attitudes and behavior, above and beyond issue-based ideology and policy preferences, including one's position on the conflict.

# Attachment to an ideological group in Israel

We contend that, in Israel, the "left" and "right" ideological labels also capture distinct *social identities*, which could affect political judgment and behavior. Specifically, the left-right political division in Israel overlaps with other major social cleavages such as secular-religious, Ashkenazi-Sephardic, and geographical center-periphery divides (Shamir & Arian 1999). This patterning, in turn, gives rise to stereotypes regarding citizens who support either the right- or the left-wing ideological party bloc. Combined with parental and communal socialization, such generalizations help people understand which political *qua* social group they are closer to, and wish to be part of (e.g., Green et al. 2002). Scholars have established that group identities grow more cohesive and salient when multiple identity dimensions reinforce rather than cut across one another (e.g., Brewer 2000). Our case is rendered even more robust, however, owing to Israelis' tendency to identify less with a particular political party than with an ideological camp as a whole (e.g., Arian & Shamir 2001).

Consider a hypothetical Israeli citizen who identifies with the ideological right and regards her membership in that political camp as an important aspect of her self-concept. That person's political judgment and behavior will differ substantially from those of her compatriot who identifies with the ideological left. These discrepancies do not stem only from their divergent attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or other policy preferences, i.e., their issue-based ideology. Rather, they likely emanate also from their affinity with the religious, ethnic, or other social group they feel part of and root for. It is not coincidental that, during electoral campaigns, public figures and political elites in Israel usually target the socio-cultural groups comprising a specific ideological group. On the flip side, as a strategy to garner the support of the in-group, they often denigrate their ideological rivals as being part of an inferior socio-cultural group (Amran 2015). As shown in the literature on ideological identities in the US, such group attachment, or *social identities*, are sufficiently meaningful and strong to have important political implications (e.g., Mason 2018a). In light of the above, we anticipate that Israelis' sense of attachment to an ideological group will affect their political behavior and attitudes. In this regard, we set forth and test several hypotheses.

Our first hypothesis relates to vote choice. Israel is a multiparty system in which dozens of parties compete in each election, and ten or more of these regularly gain seats in Parliament (the Knesset). Many of these parties diverge substantially in terms of their ideological positions. These differences do not escape voters' attention (e.g., Bargsted & Kedar 2009), and in all probability affect their vote choice.

At the same time, Israelis' voting decisions may likewise be affected by their attachment to an ideological group. A strong attachment to a group creates an impetus to conform with its norms (Malka & Lelkes 2010). Thus, an Israeli who feels strongly attached to, say, the ideological right, might feel compelled to vote for a party from the right-wing ideological bloc even if her issue-based ideology is more congruent with the platform of a centrist party. The reason is that, in voting for the right-wing party bloc, this individual conforms to the norms of her in-group, signals her support for that group, and increases its chances of winning the election. The choice of a particular party *within* one's favorite ideological bloc might depend on specific ideological considerations or idiosyncratic preferences (Bølstad & Dinas 2017). At the same time, voting for a party from another ideological bloc, or even abstaining, would be deemed as failing one's in-group and violating its norms.

H1: The stronger one's attachment to an ideological group, the more one is likely to vote for a party from one's ideological party bloc.

In addition, we suggest that attachment to an ideological group should also increase affective polarization, in the sense of positive attitudes toward the political ingroup and hostility toward political rivals (Miller & Conover 2015; Iyengar et al. 2019). A number of studies have documented that current hostility between Democrats and Republicans in the US stems, in part, from group-based factors (e.g., Mason 2018b). There is also a burgeoning literature concerning affective polarization outside the US (e.g., Reiljan 2019; Wagner 2020); and in Europe, strong partisan identification has recently been shown to increase affective polarization, particularly in competitive electoral systems, where each major party poses an electoral threat, and thus also a status threat, to its rivals (Huddy et al. 2018).

In line with this rationale, we propose that Israelis' attachment to an ideological group will likewise increase affective polarization. Psychologically, a stronger attachment is likely to manifest in a more benign and warmer attitude toward other group members, consistent with the notion of *in-group favoritism*. Conversely, supporters of a rival ideological group are perceived as a threat to the electoral chances and social status of one's own ideological group, and are thus

evaluated more negatively, consistent with the notion of *out-group derogation* (e.g., Iyengar et al., 2019).

H2: The stronger one's attachment to an ideological group, the more one is likely to exhibit affective polarization.

We also expect Israelis strongly attached to their ideological group to display more motivated reasoning when evaluating political, group-related information. A vast literature in psychology and political science has shown that, when evaluating political information, people in general, and especially those with strong attitudes and identities, are affected by directional, partisan motivations. In other words, in order to reach a desired conclusion, people tend to unquestioningly accept congenial information and challenge or dismiss messages that do not align with their beliefs (e.g., Lodge & Taber 2013). They also tend to evaluate an unethical action related to politics as less serious and more justified when it is perpetrated by an in-group member compared to an out-group member (e.g., Anduiza et al. 2013). Accordingly, we hypothesize that Israelis strongly attached to an ideological group will exhibit higher levels of motivated reasoning in their political judgments, especially on issues related to political competition with ideological rivals.

H3: The stronger one's attachment to an ideological group, the more one is likely to exhibit motivated reasoning in one's political judgments.

Finally, we expect Israelis with a strong group attachment to display defensive emotions, such as anger or enthusiasm, in reaction to a threat to their group's status and electoral success.

Emotions in general, and anger and enthusiasm in particular, are known to propel political action and are therefore a strong predictor of political participation (e.g., Mason 2018b). Typically, "defensive group emotions are felt most intensely by the strongest group identifiers" (Huddy et al. 2018: 191). We thus anticipate that Israelis with strong emotional and psychological attachment to an ideological group will display defensive emotions when they encounter information that compromises their ideological group's electoral success or social standing more generally. Such information will be taken as implicating their in-group and therefore as a call to rally in the defense of its status and political standing. In contrast, when exposed to information favorable to their ideological group's status, such individuals are expected to present strong positive emotional reactions, e.g., enthusiasm.

H4: The stronger one's attachment to an ideological group, the more one is likely to exhibit defensive emotional reactions in response to information threatening the status of one's ideological group, and positive emotional reactions in response to reassuring information.

# Methodology

To examine our hypotheses, we conducted two online surveys among Jewish Israelis, the majority ethnic group in Israel. Since the main ideological competition in Israel has traditionally been between the left and the right, our analyses focus on leftists and rightists, and relate to centrists only tangentially.

## Overview of the two studies

The surveys were fielded roughly one year apart, and span different political circumstances. Study 1 was fielded in July 2018, when the next Israeli national election was not expected for at least another year, while Study 2 was fielded at the end of August 2019, less than 3 weeks before the September 2019 national election. Study 1 was intended to provide initial evidence for the predictive power of ideological-group attachment, while Study 2 was designed to replicate Study 1's main findings (as well as to examine whether such attachment also predicts political participation, see Online Appendix F). Overall, the results of the two studies provide strong support for our hypotheses.

## Samples

Study 1. Using Panel Hamidgam, a company conducting online surveys in Israel, we surveyed 617 Jewish Israelis between July 17 and 19, 2018. The sample is broadly representative of the Jewish population of Israel: mean age is 38.9 (SD = 12.8), and the percentage of women is 50.1. In terms of ideological tendencies, 55.9 percent of the sample self-identified as right-wing, 16.9 percent as center, and 27.2 percent as left-wing. Our sampling strategy was designed to compare between leftists and rightists; accordingly, centrists were intentionally undersampled, while leftists – oversampled (for more details on the samples in the two studies and a comparison with a nationally representative sample, see Online Appendix A).

Study 2. Using the same survey company as in Study 1, we surveyed 703 Jewish Israelis between August 27 and September 1, 2019. This sample is also broadly representative of Israel's Jewish population ( $M_{age} = 42.4$ ;  $SD_{age} = 15.4$ ; 49.6 percent women), but as opposed to Study 1, it

includes only those respondents who identified themselves as either rightists (71.3 percent) or leftists (28.7 percent). The rationale for this restriction is to focus on respondents who are part of the two historically important ideological groups in Israel.

#### Measures

*Issue-based ideology scale*: In both studies, Israelis' left-right policy preferences on security and foreign affairs were captured with a three-item *Issue-based ideology* scale tapping preferences concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The items required respondents to indicate, on a scale of 1 ('definitely agree') to 4 ('definitely disagree'), their position on the following issues: (1) the establishment of a Palestinian state; (2) the future of Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem; and (3) a peace agreement with the Palestinians. These items showed high inter-correlation in both studies ( $\alpha$ s = .85–.87), and were averaged to create an *Issue-based ideology* scale that ranges between 0 and 1 (higher values denoting more rightist/hawkish stance; Study 1: M = 0.59; Study 2: M = 0.68). Respondents were also asked to place themselves on a 7-point *Ideological self-placement* item (1-right, 4-center, 7-left; Study 1: M = 3.40; Study 2: M = 3.10). Notably, our *Issue-based ideology* scale strongly correlated with the *Ideological self-placement* item in both studies (rs = .75—.78; ps < .001) (two-tailed tests throughout). Our main analyses use the *Issue-based ideology* scale, but similar results were obtained using *Ideological self-placement* instead (see more below).

To gauge ideological extremity, we created an *Aligned issue-based ideology* measure that taps the extent to which one's issue preferences align with the stances of one's ideological camp

on the *Issue-based ideology* scale. This measure varies between 0 and 1 (higher values denoting stronger ideological alignment; M = 0.52 in both studies).<sup>3</sup>

Attachment to an ideological group: To gauge Israelis' attachment to an ideological group, we adapted the 8-item partisan identity scale used by Bankert et al. (2017), which was meant to tap "a subjective sense of group belonging, the affective importance of group membership, and the affective consequences of lowered group status - all of which are crucial ingredients of a social identity" (Huddy et al. 2018: 179). Our respondents first answered a branching question gauging their political leaning: 'right,' 'moderate right,' 'center,' 'moderate left,' 'left,' and 'other.' Those who identified with right or moderate right were considered as rightists; those identifying as left or moderate left – as leftists; and those identifying as center – as centrists. Respondents then completed the eight 5-point items of our Ideological group attachment scale, adapted such that the "group" chosen in response to the branching question figured as the respondent's ideological group (left, right, and - in Study 1 - center). The items used include "when I talk about [rightists/leftists] I usually say 'us' as opposed to 'them,'" "when people criticize [rightists/leftists] I take this as a personal insult," and "when people say good things about [rightists/leftists] it makes me feel good" (from 'disagree' to 'agree to a very great extent').<sup>4</sup>

In both studies, the eight items were strongly correlated across the entire sample ( $\alpha$ s = .88-.90) as well as within each ideological camp ( $\alpha$ s = .87-.92 in Study 1; 83-.89 in Study 2). We also conducted an exploratory factor analysis for these eight items. Employing the iterated

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In both studies, the score of about 10 percent of rightists and leftists on the *Issue-based ideology* scale was consistent with the attitudes of the opposite ideological camp. These respondents were assigned a zero score on the *Aligned issue-based ideology* scale.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Tables B1-B2 in the Online Appendix B present the wording of all eight items and the distribution of the responses in the two studies.

principal factor method, this analysis revealed a single factor with eigenvalue greater than 1 in each study (Study 1: eigenvalue = 4.45, 87% of the variance explained; Study 2: eigenvalue = 3.97, 83% of the variance explained). Similar results were obtained for each ideological group separately, corroborating the scaling of the eight items. We thus created an *Attachment to an Ideological Group* (*AIG*) scale that varies between 0 and 1, with higher values denoting stronger attachment. In Study 1, rightists (M = .48) and leftists (M = .53) scored higher on *AIG* than centrists (M = .39), possibly because the center ideological group is relatively new in Israeli politics (Shamir 2015). In Study 2, the *AIG* scores of rightists (M = .52) and leftists (M = .55) were similar.<sup>5</sup>

Notably, in both studies, the correlation between the *AIG* scale and the above-mentioned *Aligned issue-based ideology* measure emerged as moderate among both rightists (rs = .21-.25) and leftists (rs = .25-.39) (all ps < .001). This suggests that, in Israel, the strength of policy positions along the left-right continuum and the strength of attachment to an ideological group are related yet clearly distinct.<sup>6</sup>

*Voting intention*: In both studies, respondents were asked about their voting intention, as follows: "If Knesset elections were held today, which party would you vote for?" Respondents were presented with a list of all parties which at the time had seats in the Knesset. They could also choose the option labeled "other" and manually add another party, as well as indicate if they were undecided or did not intend to vote. The first two dependent variables, *Right vote* (Study 1: M = .36; Study 2: M = .54) and *Left vote* (Study 1: M = .21; Study 2: M = .20), are dummy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Below we also report results using a shorter, 4-item *AIG* scale. Results are overall very similar to the 8-item *AIG* scale.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The correlations between the *AIG* scale and a 4-point ideological strength measure (created by folding the *Ideological self-placement* item at its midpoint) are similarly moderate in the two studies among both rightists (rs = .42-.45) and leftists (rs = .29-.40) (ps < .001).

variables, with the value 1 denoting the intention to vote for parties considered as part of the right-wing or left-wing ideological party blocs, respectively, and 0 otherwise.<sup>7,8</sup>

Affective polarization: In Study 1, respondents were presented with several items tapping affective polarization (Iyengar et al. 2019), as elaborated in what follows. (i) *Social distance*: Respondents were asked to indicate, on a 5-point scale ranging from 'very disappointed' (1) to 'very pleased' (5), how they thought they would feel if a close relative were to marry (a) a rightist or (b) a leftist (question order randomized). We then calculated, for each respondent, the difference in the answers to the two items. (ii) *Warm feelings*: On an 11-point scale ranging from 'hatred' (0) to 'affection' (10), respondents rated their feelings toward rightists and leftists (question order randomized). Then we calculated the difference between each respondent's attitudes toward rightists and leftists. (iii) *Stereotypes*: Respondents were asked to rate, on a 10-point scale, two items pertaining to traits ascribed to rightists and leftists: moderate (1) versus extreme (10); and moral (1) versus immoral (10) (question order randomized). Next, for each group (rightists and leftists), we created a traits scale by combining the above two items, tapping moderation and morality (rs = .38-.50), and calculated the difference between each respondent's evaluation of the two groups.

These three measures (i, ii and iii) were scaled to vary between -1 and 1, with higher values denoting (1) feeling socially closer to rightists than leftists ( $M_{rightists} = .28$ ;  $M_{leftists} = -.16$ ) (t(511) = 13.54; p < .001); (2) warmer feelings toward rightists than leftists ( $M_{rightists} = .45$ ;  $M_{leftists} = -.33$ ) (t(511) = 26.31; p < .001); and (3) ascribing more positive traits to rightists than leftists than leftists ( $M_{rightists} = .19$ ;  $M_{leftists} = -.22$ ) (t(511) = 12.65; p < .001). These three difference measures

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> In Table A2 of the Appendix we present the classification of the parties into the different ideological blocs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> In addition to voting behavior, in Online Appendix F we also show that our *AIG* scale also predicts different measures of political participation.

emerged as highly reliable ( $\alpha = .83$ ) and were averaged to an Affective polarization difference scale that varied between -1 and 1 ( $M_{rightists} = .31$ ;  $M_{leftists} = -.24$ ) (t(511) = 21.58; p < .001), with higher values denoting more positive attitudes toward rightists.

Attitudes toward Netanyahu's investigations: To test whether attachment to an ideological group predicts motivated reasoning, in Study 1 respondents were administered two questions tapping their attitudes regarding the case against Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – who, at the time, was being investigated for having allegedly received bribes from several media tycoons (Winer 2018). In line with the motivated reasoning literature cited above, we expected that leftists' and rightists' attachment to their respective ideological group would inversely predict their attitudes toward said investigations: Strong attachment to the ideological left (right) will decrease (increase) support for the view that these investigations are politically motivated.

On two 5-point items, respondents were asked to indicate, respectively, (1) the extent to which they believed that the suspicions against Netanyahu were founded and (2) the extent to which they agreed with the claim that the investigations against Netanyahu are politically driven. These two items emerged as moderately correlated (r = -.47; p < .001) and were used to create a single scale, termed *Attitudes toward Netanyahu's investigations*, which varies between 0 and 1, with higher values indicating stronger conviction that the investigations are politically motivated. As expected, the investigations were evaluated differently by rightists (M = .58) and leftists (M = .18) (t(511) = 19.11; p < .001).

Control variables: In all analyses, we control for the aforementioned Issue-based ideology scale (or the Aligned issue-based ideology measure, see below), as well as age, gender

(female), education (a 4-point measure), religiosity (a 4-point item), respondents' *economic*based ideological orientation,<sup>9</sup> and support for Jewish religious law.<sup>10</sup> All control variables were set to vary between 0 and 1 (for descriptive statistics, see Online Appendix A).

#### Survey experiments

To test our fourth hypothesis, concerning defensive emotions, we implemented a vignette experiment in each of the two studies. In each experiment, we used a mock news article whose content projects either a threat or a reassurance with regard to the status of the respondent's ideological group. The purpose of these manipulations was to examine whether one's attachment to an ideological group conditions one's emotional reaction to new information.

*Study 1 experiment.* The two versions of mock news article used in this experiment capitalized on the uncertainty at the time regarding the outcome of Prime Minister Netanyahu's investigations (see above). Netanyahu was the head of the right-wing Likud party and of the current right-wing coalition, and we anticipated that bribery indictments might compel him to step down, hurting the prospects of the ideological right to stay in power; while dropping the charges against him could substantially improve their prospects.

The first, 'pro-left' article stated that indictments against Netanyahu on severe charges of bribery were imminent, and that this was likely to significantly weaken the electoral prospects of the right-wing bloc to stay in power. The second, 'pro-right' article stated that the charges

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Respondents answered a 4-point item asking whether they favored a capitalist or a socialist approach to the structuring of economic life in Israel ('definitely socialist' to 'definitely capitalist'). In both studies this item only weakly correlated with the *Issue-based ideology scale* (rs = .09-.14).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Respondents answered a 3-point item asking what should be prioritized in cases of a contradiction between democracy and Jewish religious law ('upholding democracy' to 'keeping the Jewish law').

against Netanyahu would be dropped in the near future, significantly raising the chances that the ideological right would stay in power (for full text of the experimental vignettes, see Online Appendix J). We created a *threat* dummy variable which takes the value 1 if the respondent read a 'threatening' article (e.g., a rightist respondent reading the pro-left article), and 0 otherwise.

After reading the vignette, respondents answered several items tapping their emotional reactions to the article, our main outcome variables. Respondents were asked to indicate, on a 5-point scale, their reaction with respect to four emotions: anger, enthusiasm, concern, and satisfaction (cf. Groenendyk & Banks 2014), from 'I did not feel any [emotion in question]' to 'I felt [the emotion in question] to a very great degree.' Previous studies have shown that anger and concern (or fear), while being correlated,<sup>11</sup> have distinct behavioral consequences, such that anger increases political participation, while concern increases mostly political contemplation (e.g., Groenendyk & Banks 2014). Accordingly, we created an *Anger* item, scaled to vary between 0 and 1 (M = .29), and a separate, similarly scaled, *Concern* item (M = .22). The enthusiasm and satisfaction items emerged as highly correlated (r = .70; p < .001) and were combined into an *Enthusiasm* scale, ranging between 0 and 1 (M = .14).

*Study 2 experiment*. In this experiment we manipulated *status* threat and reassurance as well as *issue* threat and reassurance, in a 2 (status: threat/reassurance) X 2 (issue: threat/reassurance) fully-crossed factorial design. Unlike the Study 1 experiment, this design allows us to directly contrast the extent to which potential threats or reassurances to group status or to issue positions, conditional on attachment to an ideological group and issue-based ideology, respectively, affect action-oriented emotions, and thus also to test whether group or ideological factors better predict emotional reactions to new information.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> These items correlated at r = .48 in Study 1 and at r = .68 in Study 2 (ps < .001).

The experiment capitalized on the proximity of the September 2019 elections and the attendant uncertainty regarding, first, their results, and second, subsequent resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations in light of the expected announcement of President Trump's "deal of the century" (Eichner 2019). Specifically, at the time of the survey, it was unclear whether the ideological right, headed by Netanyahu, or the center-left would win the election and form the next coalition. In addition, Trump's "deal of the century" was expected to be announced after the election, but the specific details of this initiative were unknown and it was unclear whether or not it would require Israel to resume negotiations with the Palestinians and offer territorial concessions (Eichner 2019).

In the experiment, respondents were randomly assigned to read one of four fictitious news articles. The first paragraph of all four articles cited a mock election poll to the effect that either the right-wing party bloc or the center-left party bloc is expected to win the election (i.e., by receiving more than 50 percent of the Knesset seats) and form the next coalition. The text was made to resemble the wording of a generic news article reporting the latest election poll, as the results presented to respondents only slightly deviated from those of certain actual polls publicized in the preceding weeks. A *status threat* dummy variable was set as 1 if respondents read the paragraph threatening their ideological group's status (e.g., a rightist respondent reading the 'center-left wins' paragraph), and 0 otherwise.

The second paragraph focused on issues: Respondents read that senior members of the party which was expected to form the next coalition (the rightist Likud or the centrist Kachol-Lavan) (i) were getting ready to resume negotiations with the Palestinians after the election, as well as mulling potential territorial concessions that Trump's "deal of the century" would

probably stipulate; or (ii) categorically rejected the option of resuming negotiations with the Palestinians, since Trump's "deal of the century" was unlikely to pressure Israel in that direction. An *issue threat* dummy variable was set as 1 if respondents read the paragraph that threatened their issue preference (e.g., a rightist respondent reading the 'negotiations will resume' paragraph), and 0 otherwise.

After reading the article, respondents answered the same four items tapping emotional reactions as in Study 1, followed by several demographic variables, and then were debriefed. We created an *Anger* item, scaled to vary between 0 and 1 (M = .25) and a similarly-scaled *Concern* item (M = .33). The enthusiasm and satisfaction items again emerged as highly correlated (r = .82; p < .001) and were combined into an *Enthusiasm* scale, ranging from 0 to 1 (M = .17).

### Results

We start by examining whether Israelis' attachment to an ideological group predicts their vote intention (H1). Table 1 presents results from Study 1: in Models 1–4 the dependent variables are dummy variables, representing votes for a party from the ideological right-wing bloc (Models 1–2) and from the ideological left-wing bloc (Models 3–4). To demonstrate the *prima facie* effect of the *Issue-based ideology* scale on the vote, we leave the *AIG* scale out of Models 1 and 3. As can be seen in these models, issue-based ideology strongly predicts the vote.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent variable	Intention to vote for right- wing parties		Intention to vote for left- wing parties		Affective polarization difference scale		Attitudes toward Netanyahu's investigations	
-								
AIG scale		-3.23		3.82***		-0.44***		-0.25***
		(2.83)		(1.11)		(0.08)		(0.07)
Right-wing supporter		0.25		-1.13		-0.14**		0.01
		(1.27)		(0.99)		(0.05)		(0.05)
AIG scale X Right-wing		6.65*		-6.45***		0.95***		0.48***
		(2.95)		(1.87)		(0.12)		(0.09)
Issue-based ideology scale	3.47***	0.86	-5.04***	-0.85	0.63***	0.25***	0.35***	0.08
	(0.58)	(0.88)	(0.69)	(0.93)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Economic (Soc./Cap.) ideology	1.79**	1.61*	-1.70**	-1.54*	-0.05	-0.10*	0.27***	0.24***
	(0.59)	(0.68)	(0.60)	(0.70)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Support for religious law	0.99+	0.51	-1.28	0.11	0.27***	0.18***	0.18***	0.13**
	(0.52)	(0.56)	(0.83)	(1.00)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Age	0.11	-0.01	-1.22*	-1.42*	-0.09*	-0.11**	0.00	-0.01
	(0.50)	(0.54)	(0.62)	(0.71)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Female	0.03	0.22	0.29	0.05	0.05 +	0.06**	0.01	0.01
	(0.28)	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.37)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Religiosity	2.05***	2.03**	-2.01**	-1.91*	0.03	0.00	0.10*	0.08+
	(0.58)	(0.64)	(0.75)	(0.92)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Education	-0.47	-0.15	-0.10	-0.60	-0.04	-0.01	-0.05	-0.02
	(0.40)	(0.45)	(0.48)	(0.61)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	-4.36***	-3.93**	3.09***	0.87	-0.31***	-0.03	0.04	0.21***
	(0.58)	(1.34)	(0.54)	(0.94)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.06)
Calculated coefficient for the AIG		3.42***		-2.63+		0.51***		0.23***
scale among right-wing supporters		(0.76)		(1.58)		(0.08)		(0.06)
Observations	419	419	419	419	419	419	419	419
R-squared					0.57	0.69	0.50	0.57

Table 1. Study 1 – Vote intention, affective polarization, and motivated reasoning

Robust standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. Models 1–4 use a logistic regression and Models 5–8 use an OLS regression. The dependent variable in Models 5–6 varies -1–1; higher values denoting more favorable attitudes toward rightists. The dependent variable in Models 7–8 varies 0–1; higher values denote stronger conviction that the investigations are politically motivated. *AIG* stands for Attachment to an Ideological Group. In Models 2 and 4, we add the *AIG* scale, a dummy variable for a rightist respondent, and an interaction of these two indices. The *AIG* scale coefficient in these models taps the result among leftists; the counterpart coefficient calculated for rightists is presented at the bottom of the table. Notably, adding these three variables substantially reduces the effect of *Issue-based ideology* scale and clearly shows that the *AIG* scale strongly predicts the vote.<sup>12</sup>

The predicted probabilities of voting for right-wing (Model 2) and left-wing (Model 4) parties are presented graphically in Figures 1a and 1b. In Model 2, holding all other non-binary variables constant at their respective means, the probability that a female rightist with the lowest *AIG* score (0) will vote for a right-wing party is 17.8% [95% CIs: 5.9-29.6], while for a female rightist with the highest *AIG* score (1) this probability is 86.9% [75.7-98.2]. The exact opposite trend is revealed when it comes to voting for left-wing parties (Model 4): The probability that a female leftist with the lowest *AIG* score will vote for a left-wing party is 13.2% [-2.0-28.5], while for a female leftist with the highest *AIG* score will vote for a left-wing party is 87.4% [73.2-101.5]. Overall, these results provide strong support for the first hypothesis. Notably, they are also generally replicated in Study 2, which was conducted shortly before a national election (see full results in Online Appendix D): The *AIG* scale strongly predicts voting for a right-wing party among rightists, while, among leftists, the effect is in the same direction but fails to reach conventional levels of statistical significance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> To compare the predictive power of the AIG and Issue-based ideology scales, we also ran analyses in which we removed the interaction term, as well as its constitutive terms, and replaced it with a modified AIG scale, running from strong leftist group attachment (0) to strong rightist group attachment (1). As shown in Online Appendix D, this modified group-attachment item is a stronger predictor of the dependent variables in Table 1 compared to Issue-based ideology.

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities based on Table 1 in Study 1



Panel A. Voting for right-wing parties (Model 2)

Panel B. Voting for left-wing parties (Model 4)



*Note.* Predicted probabilities, and corresponding confidence intervals, of a female voter for right-wing parties (Panel A) and left-wing parties (Panel B) across levels of the *AIG* scale, based on Models 2 (Panel A) and 4 (Panel B) of Table 1, holding other variables at their respective means. Solid line represents voters for right wing parties; dashed – voters for left-wing parties.

Models 5–8 in Table 1 present results for our second and third hypotheses. H2 is tested in Models 5–6, with *Affective polarization* as the dependent variable (varies -1 to 1; higher values denoting more favorable attitudes toward rightists). The *AIG* scale strongly predicts affective polarization among both leftists and rightists: Holding all other variables constant at their means, the predicted values for a female leftist and a female rightist with the highest *AIG* scores diverge considerably: -0.30 [-0.41, -0.18] and 0.51 [0.41, 0.61], respectively.

H3 is tested in Models 7–8, with *Attitudes toward Netanyahu's investigations* as the dependent variable (varies 0 to 1; higher values denoting stronger conviction that these investigations are politically motivated). The *AIG* scale strongly predicts motivated reasoning among both leftists and rightists. Holding all other variables constant at their means, the predicted values for a female leftist and a female rightist with the highest *AIG* scores clearly diverge: 0.15 [0.07, 0.24] and 0.64 [0.56, 0.71], respectively.

We also conducted several robustness tests, detailed in Online Appendix D. *Inter alia*, we reran all models in Table 1 using the 7-point *Ideological self-placement* item, and we also conducted matching analyses intended to balance respondents with low and high *AIG* scores on all observables, thereby reducing model dependency. Importantly, it might be that our *AIG* scale is strongly correlated with the outcome measures only since it is measured more precisely (with 8 items) compared to other indices such as the *Aligned issue-based ideology* (3 items). We thus replicated Table 1 using a shorter, 4-item *AIG* scale, based on Bankert and colleagues' (2017) abridged, 4-item scale . As shown in Online Appendix D, results are very similar to those in the Table 1, assuaging concerns over differences in scale construction and measurement properties.

Overall, results of the robustness tests provide additional support for Hypotheses 1–3. Still, these hypotheses were tested using observational data. Therefore, we test H4, i.e., whether to an ideological-group attachment conditions defensive emotional reactions to status threats and reassurances, using two vignette experiments.

#### Experimental results

*Study 1.* In this experiment, leftists and rightists were randomly assigned to read a vignette that was either threatening or reassuring to the status of their respective ideological camps.<sup>13</sup> In order to test H4, we run three separate models predicting anger, concern and enthusiasm, respectively. We made two changes to the model specification used in Table 1. First, the *AIG* scale now interacts with the *threat* dummy variable, tapping the effect of that scale in the threatening versus reassuring condition. Second, to examine the possibility that respondents' issue-based ideology conditions their emotional response to the vignette, the model now includes the *Aligned issue-based ideology* item, as well as its interaction with the *threat* dummy.

Figure 2 presents the predicted values for the three emotional reactions.<sup>14</sup> In the left-hand column, we plot the marginal effect of the *AIG* scale in the threatening and reassuring conditions across the *AIG* scale score, while in the right-hand column – the marginal effect of the *Aligned issue-based ideology* in the two conditions across this measure. In respect of all three emotions, it is clear that the *AIG* scale strongly conditions one's emotional reactions to the experimental vignettes, while the *Aligned issue-based ideology* does not.

# Figure 2. Study 1 – Predicted defensive emotions in response to threat and reassurance

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The results of the factual manipulation checks used in the two studies are detailed in Online Appendix I.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> The results of both experiments are presented in tabular format in Online Appendix C. In both studies, all analyses used OLS regressions. Employing instead ordinal regressions in the *Anger* and *Concern* models produced very similar results.



*Note.* The left-hand column shows the effect of the *AIG* scale on defensive emotions in response to threat/reassurance to group status. The right-hand column presents the effect of ideological issue-based alignment on defensive emotions. Solid line represents the reassuring condition; dashed – the threatening condition.

For example, after reading a threatening article, respondents with the lowest *AIG* score reported a low level of *concern*: 0.06 in the 0–1 scale [-0.05, 0.16], while those with a high *AIG* score reported a rather high level of *concern*: 0.56 [0.45, 0.68]. In contrast, when reading the reassuring article, respondents' *AIG* score did not predict *concern* at all. Similar results were obtained for *anger*. As expected, the opposite results were obtained for *enthusiastic* responses, with the *AIG* scale predicting *enthusiastic* reaction in the reassuring condition but not in the threatening condition. Overall, these results provide strong support for H.

*Study 2.* Unlike the Study 1 experiment, here we randomize both *status* threat (whether one's ideological camp will likely win or lose the election) and *issue* threat (depending on one's ideological camp, whether or not negotiations with the Palestinians are likely to resume). To test H4, we interact the *AIG* scale with the *status threat* dummy, and the *Aligned issue-based ideology* measure – with the *issue threat* dummy.

Figure 3 presents the predicted values for the three emotional reactions (*concern, anger and enthusiasm*). Again, in the left-hand column, we plot the marginal effect of the *AIG* scale in the *status* threat and reassurance conditions, while in the right-hand column we plot the marginal effect of the *Aligned issue-based ideology* in the *issue* threat and reassurance conditions. The figure clearly shows that the *AIG* scale strongly conditions one's emotional reactions to a status threat or reassurance. *Aligned issue-based ideology* also conditions emotional reactions, but the effects are not nearly as strong as in the case of the *AIG* scale (see also Online Appendix C). These results clearly provide additional evidence in support of H4.

Overall, the empirical analyses provide strong support for our hypotheses and for the contention that Israelis' attachment to an ideological group strongly predicts their political behavior and judgments.



Figure 3. Study 2 – Predicted defensive emotions in response to status and issue threat and reassurance

*Note.* The left-hand column shows the effect of the AIG scale on defensive emotions in response to status threat/reassurance. The right-hand column presents the effect of ideological issue-based alignment on defensive emotions in response to issue threat/reassurance. Solid line represents the reassuring condition; dashed – the threatening condition.

## Discussion

To date, research into attachment to ideological groups was conducted almost exclusively in the US two-party system. Our study extends the scope of these investigations to Israel, a setting where the effect of this phenomenon is arguably least likely to be felt, owing to pronounced issue-based cleavages. Nonetheless, the results obtained have validated a multi-item *Attachment to an ideological group (AIG)* scale and demonstrated empirically that such affinities are an important element in political and public opinion in Israel and, in all probability, in multi-party polities at large.

Importantly, the effects of the AIG scale in our data were consistently stronger than the effects of issue preferences or ideological self-placement. But while additional studies are needed to examine the robustness of our findings, one important implication is that ideological group attachment can affect voters' political behavior and attitudes even when contrasting previously-held policy preferences and ideological beliefs; for example, in the presence of messages from popular politicians wishing to act in ways incompatible with certain ideological dogmas. Thus, "identity-based ideology" should be understood as an important individual-level variable in various multi-party countries.

Notably, the political arena in various multi-party systems today is characterized by party dealignment, electoral volatility, weakening of party-voter ties, and burgeoning of new parties (e.g., Oesch & Rennwald 2018). Indeed, Israel itself has a rather volatile party system (Rahat et al 2016). In such perpetually changing electoral landscape, voters' attachment to an ideological group might thus constitute a stabilizing force, mitigating support for anti-establishment and extreme political groups. This possibility certainly awaits further research and requires a replication of our findings in Israeli in other multi-party systems.

A related implication of our findings is that for various people in multi-party systems, ideological "left" and "right" signal group belonging and intergroup competition—who is "us" and who is "them"—and that they sometimes (perhaps most times) mean more than certain issue preferences and policies. And given that ideological left-right competition is prevalent in many multi-party systems, our findings suggest that in such polities, especially volatile multi-party systems, strong attachment of citizens to a given ideological group could make the multi-party system similar to the US two-party system, with attachment to ideological group playing a role similar to that of partisanship in the US (see, e.g., Huddy et al. 2015).

Against this background we note that while this paper has analyzed responses of Israeli leftist and rightist participants, in recent decades, a new centrist party bloc has emerged and gained ground in Israeli politics (Shamir 2015). One might wonder to what extent centrists' vote choices are governed by issue versus identity considerations. In other words, do centrists vote based on ideology, group attachment, or both? Our study (see Online Appendix G) provides tentative support that, like the right- and left-wing adherents, centrists are affected by their attachment to the center ideological group. More research on centrist voters is in order, insofar as, today, supporters of the ideological center constitute a substantial section of the electorate in many countries besides Israel.

Finally, more advanced theoretical and empirical research is needed to shed light on the causal relationship between ideological-group attachment and ideological orientations. Are issue positions affected by attachment to an ideological group, or vice versa? Or perhaps the relation is reciprocal? Much progress in this matter has been achieved in the American context with respect to the relationship between partisan identification and issue preferences (e.g., Levendusky 2009). Yet research needs to be conducted in multi-party systems concerning the causal ordering of

ideological group attachment and issue preferences. It is important to note, in this connection, that our study has revealed a consistent, and substantial, effect of Israelis' issue preferences and ideological leanings on their political judgment and behavior. Thus, while attachment to an ideological group is clearly an important factor in the democratic process, policy preferences and ideological positions are vital as well.

This paper is not without limitations. First, our samples are not representative of the Israeli Jewish population, and it remains an open question whether a study using a probabilitybased, representative sample (such as the INES studies) would replicate our results. Furthermore, in the Study 2 experiment, an issue other than potential negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians (e.g., a unilateral annexation of occupied territories) may have resulted in a stronger emotional reaction among ideologically extreme respondents. Finally, we tested the importance of attachment to an ideological group only in one multi-party country. These limitations notwithstanding, our results provide a strong support for the assumption that attachment to an ideological group is an important predictor of political behavior and attitudes in multi-party systems.

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# The Effects of Attachment to an Ideological Group in Multi-Party Systems: Evidence from Israel

## **Online Appendix**

Section A: Sample comparison, descriptive statistics, and participation rates

Section B: The AIG scale - item wording and distributions

Section C: Tabular format of the experimental results

Section D: Robustness tests and additional empirical analyses

Section E: Examining the linearity of the interactions

Section F: Predicting political participation

Section G: Study 1 results for centrists

Section H: Analyses based on previous INES datasets

Section I: Factual manipulation checks

Section J: The text of the experimental vignettes

### Section A: Sample comparison, descriptive statistics, and participation rates

*Sample comparison.* Table A1 presents a comparison of main demographic and political characteristics in our two samples with those of the 2015 Israeli National Election Study (INES). Overall, our two samples are similar to the INES in terms of gender composition, college education, and the average of respondents' ideological self-placement. They deviate from the INES in respondents' average age (our respondents are younger), religiosity (our respondents are overall less religious and more secular), and political tendency (our respondents are less likely to be centrists, due to deliberate under-sampling of centrists in both studies).

*Descriptive statistics*. Table A2 presents the descriptive statistics of the main variables in each study.

*Participation rates in the two studies.* In Study 1, the participation rate (AAPOR, 2016: 49–50) was 14.1%: The survey company sent out a total of 4,385 invitations to complete the survey, and 617 respondents provided a usable response (AAPOR, 2016: 49): 617 / 4,385 = 0.141.<sup>15</sup> In Study 2, the participation rate was 6.0%: The survey company sent out a total of 11,650 invitations, and 703 respondents provided a usable response (AAPOR, 2016: 49): 703 / 11,650 = 0.06.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Out of the 4,385 recipients, only 905 started the survey (about 300 were screened out due to a quota).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Out of the 11,650, only 1,218 started the survey (about 500 were screened out due to a quota).

	Study 1 (July 2018)	Study 2 (Aug- Sept. 2019)	INES 2015 National Sample (Jewish population)
Age (Mean; SD)	38.9 (12.8)	42.5 (15.4)	47.8 (19.1)
Women (% of sample)	50.1%	49.6%	50.2%
College education (% of sample)	42.5	48.4	46.3%
Observance of religious tradition			
Not at all	30.0%	29.5%	21.1%
A little bit	41.2%	35.9%	47.6%
A lot	19.0%	16.5%	20.6%
Observe all of it	9.9%	18.2%	10.6%
Ideological group (based on 5-pt			
"political tendency" item) <sup>17</sup>			
Right (either 'right' or 'moderate right')	55.9%	71.3%	52.8%
Center	16.9%	0%	27.3%
Left (either 'left' or 'moderate left')	27.2%	28.7%	19.9%
Average ideological self-placement (7-pt scale; 7-left)	3.4	3.1	3.3

Table A1.	Comparing	our samples	with a	nationally	representative	sample
I GOIC III.	Comparing	our sumpres		manomany	1 opi obenicaci ve	Sample

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> About 9 percent of respondents in the INES indicated, in the political-tendency item, either "other" or that they did not identify with either political tendency. These respondents were excluded from our calculations.

	Study 1 (July 2018)			Study 2 (Aug-Sept 2019)		
	Ν	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
<b>Age</b> (0-18; 1-64 in Study 1; 74 in Study 2)	617	0.45	0.28	703	0.44	0.27
Female	617	0.50	0.50	703	0.50	0.5
Religiosity (0- no religious tradition; 1- observes all tradition)	617	0.36	0.31	703	0.41	0.36
Education (0- less than HS graduate ; 1- academic education)	610	0.68	0.34	703	0.70	0.35
Issue-based ideology scale (1- right-wing ideological agenda)	610	0.59	0.30	703	0.62	0.30
Aligned issue-based ideology	610	0.52	0.34	703	0.52	0.35
7-pt Self-placement ideology (0- right; 1- left)	617	0.40	0.29	703	0.35	0.31
4-pt Ideological strength (0- center; 1- extreme ideologue)	617	0.51	0.35	703	0.61	0.30
AIG scale	617	0.48	0.23	703	0.53	0.21
4-pt Economic (SocCap.) ideology (0- def. socialist; 1- def. capitalist)	527	0.38	0.27	703	0.45	0.27
<b>3-pt Religious law support</b> (0- prefers democracy; 1- prefers the Halacha)	592	0.34	0.38	703	0.39	0.41
Intention to vote for right-wing parties	617	0.36	0.48	703	0.54	0.50
Intention to vote for left-wing parties	617	0.21	0.41	703	0.20	0.40
Attitudes toward Netanyahu's investigations <sup>a</sup>	617	0.42	0.29	-	-	-
<b>Difference scale [affective polarization]</b> <sup>a</sup> (-1- pro-leftists; 1- pro-rightists)	617	0.10	0.35	-	-	-
Partisan-identity scale <sup>b</sup>	-	-	-	599	0.55	0.24
Intention to vote in next election <sup>b</sup> (1- certain no; 4- certain yes)	-	-	-	703	3.67	0.66
<b>Political discussion</b> <sup>b</sup> (1- not at all; 4- to a large extent)	-	-	-	703	2.95	0.81
Online political participation <sup>b</sup>	-	-	-	615	0.13	0.21
Anger	617	0.29	0.29	703	0.25	0.30
Concern	617	0.22	0.28	703	0.33	0.32
Enthusiasm	617	0.14	0.21	703	0.17	0.25

### Table A2. Descriptive statistics of the two samples

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> asked only in Study 1; <sup>b</sup> asked only in Study 2. In Study 1, and following commonly used classifications (e.g., Manekin et al. 2019), the Zionist Camp, Meretz and Joint List were coded as left-wing parties, while the Likud, HaBayit HaYehudi, Yisrael Beiteinu, Yahadut HaTora, Shas, Yachad, Otzma Yehudit, and Zehut – as right-wing parties. In Study 2, the Labor-Gesher, Democratic Camp-Meretz, and Joint List were coded as left-wing parties, while the Likud, Yemina, Yisrael Beiteinu, Yahadut HaTora, Shas, Otzma Yehudit, and Noam – as right-wing parties.

## Section B: The *AIG* scale – item wording and distributions

## Table B1. Item wording and distribution of the 8-item AIG scale – Study 1

Item	Ideological	% agree to a	% disagree	Average for			
	group	very great	great extent	certain	limited		each item
		extent		extent	extent		$(varies 0-1)^{10}$
1) When I talk about rightists/leftists/supporters	Rightists:	17.4	25.5	25.2	14.8	17.1	.53
of the center, I usually say "us" as opposed to	Leftists:	11.3	28.0	37.5	14.3	8.9	.55
"them"	Centrists:	4.8	25.0	25.0	20.2	25.0	.41
2) I am interested in what people think about	<b>Rightists</b> :	11.0	20.0	31.9	23.8	13.3	.48
rightists/leftists/supporters of the center	Leftists:	8.9	24.4	31.6	27.4	7.7	.50
	Centrists:	3.9	21.2	39.4	22.1	13.5	.45
3) When people criticize	<b>Rightists</b> :	7.0	16.8	28.7	22.6	24.9	.40
rightists/leftists/supporters of the center, I take	Leftists:	9.5	20.8	33.9	20.8	14.9	.47
this as a personal insult	Centrists:	1.0	6.7	21.2	24.0	47.1	.23
4) I have a lot in common with other supporters	Rightists:	11.0	32.5	36.2	16.2	4.1	.58
of the right/left/center	Leftists:	13.7	44.1	32.7	7.7	1.8	.65
	Centrists:	3.9	26.9	40.4	17.3	11.5	.49
5) If the right/left/center bloc is weak in the	Rightists:	6.4	15.9	26.4	21.7	29.6	.37
surveys, this has a negative impact on my mood	Leftists:	5.4	26.8	33.3	19.6	14.9	.47
	Centrists:	1.9	9.6	23.1	23.1	42.3	.26
6) When I meet another supporter of the	Rightists:	6.1	22.3	27.0	22.6	22.0	.42
right/left/center bloc I feel a connection with that	Leftists:	4.2	20.8	38.7	22.0	14.3	.45
person	Centrists:	1.0	15.4	38.5	16.4	28.9	.36
7) When I talk about the right/left/center bloc in	Rightists:	13.6	29.9	26.4	18.6	11.6	.54
Israel, I refer to this bloc as "my political camp"	Leftists:	16.7	39.3	20.2	18.5	5.4	.61
	Centrists:	3.9	26.9	30.8	19.2	19.2	.44
8) When people say good things about	Rightists:	14.5	32.8	25.2	18.3	9.3	.56
rightists/leftists/supporters of the center, it makes	Leftists:	12.5	31.0	33.9	16.1	6.6	.57
me feel good	Centrists:	4.8	27.8	31.7	19.2	16.4	.46

Note.  $N_{Rightists} = 345$ ;  $N_{Leftists} = 168$ ;  $N_{Centrists} = 104$ .

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Higher scores denote stronger group attachment.

Item	Ideological group	% agree to a very great extent	% agree to a great extent	% agree to a certain	% agree to a limited extent	% disagree	Average for each item (varies 0-1) <sup>19</sup>
1) When I talk about rightists/leftists, I usually	Rightists:	18.4	25.0	32.5	13.2	11.0	.57
say "us" as opposed to "them"	Leftists:	18.8	21.3	36.1	12.4	11.4	.56
2) I am interested in what people think about	Rightists:	11.4	25.4	37.1	17.4	8.8	.53
rightists/leftists	Leftists:	4.5	22.8	32.2	28.2	12.4	.45
3) When people criticize rightists/leftists, I take	Rightists:	7.0	18.2	33.1	20.2	21.6	.42
this as a personal insult	Leftists:	9.9	19.3	30.7	20.3	19.8	.45
4) I have a lot in common with other supporters	Rightists:	12.8	32.1	38.3	10.6	6.1	.59
of the right/left	Leftists:	13.9	43.1	34.7	6.9	1.5	.65
5) If the right/left bloc is weak in the surveys this	<b>Rightists</b> :	8.0	17.8	33.1	22.0	19.2	.43
has a negative impact on my mood	Leftists:	13.4	28.2	34.2	15.8	8.4	.56
6) When I meet another supporter of the right/left	<b>Rightists</b> :	8.8	17.6	36.5	20.8	16.4	.45
bloc, I feel a connection with that person	Leftists:	6.4	25.3	35.6	20.8	11.9	.48
7) When I talk about the right/left bloc in Israel, I	<b>Rightists</b> :	16.4	28.3	31.7	13.2	10.4	.57
refer to this bloc as "my political camp"	Leftists:	18.8	39.1	25.7	8.9	7.4	.63
8) When people say good things about	Rightists:	16.2	30.7	29.3	16.0	7.8	.58
rightists/leftists, it makes me feel good	Leftists:	11.9	35.6	36.1	10.9	5.5	.59

Table B2. Item wording and distribution of the 8-item AIG scale – Study 2

Note.  $N_{Rightists} = 501; N_{Leftists} = 202.$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Higher scores denote stronger group attachment.

## Section C: Tabular format of the experimental results

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dependent variable	Anger	Concern	Enthusiasm
•	~		
AIG scale	0.22*	-0.02	0.54***
	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Threat	0.01	-0.08	0.15**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.05)
Threat X AIG scale	0.28*	0.52***	-0.53***
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.08)
Right-wing supporter	-0.09**	-0.06+	0.00
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)
Aligned issue-based ideology	-0.02	-0.04	0.05
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Threat X Aligned issue-based ideology	-0.01	-0.00	-0.05
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.06)
Economic (Soc./Cap.) ideology	-0.07	-0.00	-0.02
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.03)
Support for religious law	0.01	-0.05	0.04
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.03)
Age	-0.03	0.03	0.00
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Female	0.05+	0.03	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Religiosity	-0.06	-0.05	-0.06
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.04)
Education	-0.03	-0.04	-0.08*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Constant	0.22**	0.23***	-0.03
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Calculated coefficient for the AIG	0.50***	0.50***	0.01
scale in the threat condition	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.05)
Observations	419	419	419
R-squared	0.20	0.20	0.31

Table C1. Study	1 – emotional	reactions to	the experiment	(Figure 2)
			1	· · · ·

Robust standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. The dependent variables vary 0–1.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dependent variable	Anger	Concern	Enthusiasm
AIG scale	0.11	0.00	0.56***
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)
Status threat	-0.10+	-0.14*	0.08 +
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Status threat X AIG scale	0.52***	0.63***	-0.55***
	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.08)
Right-wing supporter	-0.03	-0.03	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Issue threat	0.05	0.07 +	-0.04
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Aligned issue-based ideology	-0.08*	-0.01	-0.08*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Issue threat X Aligned issue-based ideology	0.18**	0.11 +	-0.04
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Economic (Soc./Cap.) ideology	-0.08+	-0.08+	-0.05
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Support for religious law	0.10**	0.02	0.08*
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Age	-0.12**	-0.15***	-0.00
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Female	0.05*	0.05*	-0.03+
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Religiosity	-0.05	0.01	-0.04
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Education	0.02	0.06 +	0.01
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Constant	0.12*	0.24***	0.05
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.05)
Calculated coefficient for the AIG scale in	0.63***	0.63***	0.01
a status threat situation	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.04)
Calculated coefficient for aligned issue-	0.11*	0.10*	-0.12***
based ideology in an issue threat situation	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Observations	703	703	703
R-squared	0.29	0.25	0 30
	0.27	0.23	0.50

## Table C2. Study 2 – emotional reactions to the experiment (Figure 3)

Robust standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. The dependent variables vary 0-1.

### Section D: Robustness tests and additional empirical analyses

As stated in the main text, we conducted several robustness checks and sensitivity analyses. First, we ran a number of analyses to achieve a cleaner comparison between the *AIG* and *Issuebased ideology* scales in terms of their power to predict the dependent variables in Table 1 in the main text. Specifically, we removed the interaction term between the *AIG* scale and the Rightist dummy variable, as well as the constitutive terms, in Models 2, 4, 6, and 8 of Table 1, and replaced these variables with a modified *AIG* scale, ranging between 0 (strong leftist group attachment) and 1 (strong rightist group attachment). Both leftists and rightists with the lowest group attachment were assigned the value 0.5. Thus, all right-hand variables in these analyses were rendered on a similar, 0–1 scale, enabling a more clear-cut comparison of the full extent of respondents' ideological-group attachment versus issue preferences.

The results are presented, in a graphical form, in the two panels of Figure D1 below (results in a tabular format are available upon request). This figure clearly shows that, compared to the *Issue-based ideology* scale, the modified *AIG* scale is the stronger predictor of all four dependent variables, thus providing additional support for the predictive power of this measure.

Second, in the main text (Models 1–4 in Table 1), we provide results showing that, in Study 1, the *AIG* scale strongly predicted respondents' intentions to vote for parties from their respective ideological blocs. In Table D1 below, we present a replication of these results in Study 2, which was fielded shortly before the national election. In parallel to Table 1 in the main text, in Models 1 and 3 of Table D1, we show the results without adding the *AIG* scale, a dummy for right-wing supporter, or an interaction between the two. In these models, *Issue-based ideology scale* strongly predicts voting intentions. Yet this effect is reduced by 45–50 percent in Models 2 and 4, when accounting for respondents' ideological-group attachment.

Model 2 of Table D1 demonstrates that the *AIG* scale strongly predicts rightists' intention to vote for right-wing parties, replicating findings of Study 1. In contrast, in Model 4, the *AIG* scale does not reliably predict leftists' intention to vote for left-wing parties: The coefficient is in the right direction but is not statistically significant (p = .18; two-tailed test). This indicates that many leftists might have voted strategically (cf. Kedar 2012), opting to support the centrist Kachol-Lavan party – which prior to the election was seen as the main competitor to the rightwing Likud party, in terms of the chances to form the next coalition. Overall, Study 2 partially replicates the voting results obtained in Study 1.

Third, in Table 1 in the main text, we used as the primary issue-based ideology measure a scale of three policy items. However, as a possible alternative to this measure, we could also have used respondents' ideological self-placement. In Table D2, we thus run the analyses preformed in Table 1, replacing the *Issue-based ideology scale* measure with the *Ideological self-placement* item. For all intents and purposes, our main findings remain unchanged: The *AIG* scale is still a strong predictor of all dependent variables in Table D2. Fourth, Model 8 of Table 1 in the main text shows that the *AIG* scale strongly predicts our affective polarization scale, which comprises three items.<sup>20</sup> In Table D3, we confirm this finding in respect of each of these items.

Fifth, as an additional robustness test we also employed matching analyses (Ho et al. 2007). The rationale is that respondents with high and low scores on the *AIG* scale might differ with regard to various covariates, impacting the results of our observational analyses (Table 1 in the main text). The object of the matching analyses was to reduce model dependence by rendering respondents who scored high and low on the *AIG* scale as equal as possible on the other control variables (Ho et al. 2007). To this end, we employed Hainmueller's (2012) Entropy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Difference in attitude toward a close relative marrying a rightist/leftist; difference in a feeling thermometer toward rightists/leftists; and difference in stereotypes regarding rightists/leftists.

Balancing reweighting technique and balanced, among rightists and leftists separately, the high and low ideological-group attachment scores on all the control variables we had used in the original analyses. This test can be regarded as stringent, since it substantially reduces variance in our main independent variable, the *AIG* scale.

The results of the matching analyses are presented in Table D4 (for rightists) and Table D5 (for leftists). As can be seen, even after equalising (or nearly so) high and low ideologicalgroup attachment on all covariates, those with a high score, among both rightists and leftists, emerged as more likely to vote for ingroup parties (Model 1 in Tables D4 and D5), and as more affectively polarized (Model 3). In addition, rightist with strong ideological-group attachment are also more likely to report that the investigations against Prime Minister Netanyahu are politically motivated (Model 2 in Table D4); among leftists, the coefficient of the *High AIG scale* dummy variable in Model 2 in Table D5 (predicting attitudes toward the Netanyahu investigations) is in the expected direction but insignificant. Overall, these results provide additional support that attachment to an ideological group strongly predicts political behavior and judgment.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, we replicated Table 1 using a shorter, 4-item *AIG* scale, based on the items of Bankert and colleagues' (2017) abridged 4-item *Partisan identity scale*. We did so to reduce concerns that our results are merely the by-product of different scale construction, since the 8-item *AIG* scale is arguably a more precise measure compared to other items such as the *Aligned issue-based ideology* (3 items). Table D6 replicate Tables 1–2 in the main text, with the original 8-item *AIG* scale replaced by the shortened 4-item version ( $\alpha$ s = .84–87). The results in Table D6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Following Kam and Trussler's (2017) recommendation, we also ran similar analyses for our experimental results (based on the model specifications of Tables C1–C2 in this appendix). These results (not shown) generally demonstrate that, even after matching on observables, those with high *AIG* scores are more likely to defensively react to the experimental vignettes.

are very similar to those in Table 1 in the main text, assuaging concerns over differences in scale construction and measurement properties.

Figure D1. Results of Table 1 in the main text using a modified AIG scale

Panel A. Models 2 & 4 in Table 1



Panel B. Models 6 & 8 in Table 1



*Note.* This figure presents the coefficients of the different variables in Table 1 in the main text, along with the 95% confidence intervals. All variables vary from 0 to 1. In Panel A the estimates are from a logit regression, while in Panel B – from an OLS regression.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
VARIABLES	Intention to vote for right-		Intention to vot	e for left-wing
	wing p	oarties	part	ies
AIG scale		-2.81+		1.27
		(1.53)		(0.95)
Right-wing supporter		-0.26		-1.37
		(0.82)		(0.88)
AIG scale X Right-wing		6.38***		-3.40*
		(1.63)		(1.68)
Issue-based ideology scale	4.51***	2.53***	-6.62***	-3.36***
	(0.45)	(0.59)	(0.69)	(0.84)
Economic (Soc./Cap.) ideology	1.42***	1.15**	-2.09***	-1.75**
	(0.41)	(0.44)	(0.54)	(0.63)
Support for religious law	0.76*	0.98*	-0.75	-0.83
	(0.34)	(0.39)	(0.64)	(0.72)
Age	0.46	0.71	-0.30	-0.32
	(0.38)	(0.46)	(0.52)	(0.57)
Female	-0.52*	-0.41+	0.24	-0.03
	(0.20)	(0.23)	(0.28)	(0.31)
Religiosity	1.19**	0.54	-0.89	0.41
	(0.39)	(0.45)	(0.70)	(0.84)
Education	-0.63*	-0.68+	0.92*	0.73
	(0.30)	(0.35)	(0.45)	(0.46)
Constant	-3.51***	-3.06***	2.24***	1.21
	(0.50)	(0.92)	(0.61)	(0.85)
Calculated coefficient for the AIG		3.57***		-2.13
scale among right-wing supporters		(0.60)		(1.37)
Observations	703	703	703	703
Robust standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.0	001, ** p<0.01, *	p<0.05, + p<0.1	. All models use a l	ogistic

# Table D1: Study 2 replication of voting results presented in Table 1

regression.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent variable	Intention to vo	ote for right-	Intention to v	ote for left-	Attitudes	toward	Affective polar	ization scale
	wing p	arties	wing pa	arties	Netanyahu's ir	vestigations		
AIG scale		-2.82		3.60**		-0.21**		-0.36***
		(2.77)		(1.15)		(0.07)		(0.08)
Right-wing supporter		-0.30		-0.84		-0.03		-0.21***
		(1.25)		(1.03)		(0.05)		(0.06)
AIG scale X Right-wing		5.91*		-6.23**		0.41***		0.82***
		(2.91)		(2.04)		(0.10)		(0.12)
Ideological self-placement	-5.24***	-2.72**	6.32***	1.55	-0.44***	-0.21***	-0.74***	-0.46***
	(0.79)	(1.05)	(0.82)	(1.07)	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.10)
Economic (Soc./Cap.) ideology	1.72*	1.59*	-1.84**	-1.59*	0.25***	0.23***	-0.09+	-0.11**
	(0.69)	(0.70)	(0.69)	(0.71)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Support for religious law	0.82	0.49	-0.78	0.21	0.15***	0.12**	0.24***	0.18***
	(0.57)	(0.56)	(0.83)	(1.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Age	0.09	-0.00	-0.88	-1.39*	-0.01	-0.01	-0.12**	-0.11**
	(0.53)	(0.55)	(0.65)	(0.70)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Female	0.09	0.21	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.05*	0.06**
	(0.30)	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.36)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Religiosity	1.91**	1.96**	-1.54+	-1.88*	0.07	0.07	-0.02	-0.01
	(0.66)	(0.66)	(0.79)	(0.91)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Education	-0.35	-0.19	0.19	-0.50	-0.04	-0.03	-0.03	-0.02
	(0.45)	(0.47)	(0.52)	(0.61)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	-0.35	-1.89	-3.15***	-0.51	0.46***	0.37***	0.41***	0.37***
	(0.57)	(1.41)	(0.90)	(1.12)	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.08)
Calculated coefficient for the AIG		3.09***		-2.63		0.20**		0.45***
scale among right-wing supporters		(0.81)		(1.69)		(0.06)		(0.07)
Observations	420	420	420	420	420	420	420	420
R-squared					0.55	0.58	0.66	0.71

Table D2. Replication of Table 1 using the Ideological self-placement item

Robust standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. Models 1–4 use a logistic regression and Models 5–8 use an OLS regression. The dependent variable in Models 5–6 varies 0–1, with higher values denoting stronger conviction that the investigations are politically motivated. The dependent variable in Models 7–8 varies -1–1, with higher values denoting more favorable attitudes toward rightists.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dependent variable	Difference in attitude toward marrying an in- / out-group member	Difference in warmth toward the in- / out-group	Difference in positive stereotypes toward the in- / out- group
AIG scale	-0 40**	-0 60***	-0 31**
Ino seale	(0.12)	(0.00)	(0.10)
Right-wing supporter	-0.21**	-0.04	-0.17*
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
AIG scale X Right-wing	0.93***	1.25***	0.67***
6 6	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.15)
Issue-based ideology scale	0.26**	0.25**	0.23**
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.08)
Economic (Soc./Cap.) ideology	-0.16**	-0.07	-0.07
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Support for religious law	0.19**	0.11*	0.23***
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Age	-0.17**	-0.12*	-0.04
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Female	0.06 +	0.08**	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Religiosity	-0.04	-0.00	0.04
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Education	0.03	0.02	-0.07
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Constant	0.06	-0.07	-0.07
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Calculated coefficient for the	0.52***	0.65***	0.36***
AIG scale among right-wing	(0.09)	(0.09)	(0.10)
supporters			
Observations	419	419	419
R-squared	0.46	0.73	0.43

Table D3. Separate an	alvses of the thre	ee affective pol	larization differenc	e scale items

Robust standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, + p<0.1 (two-tailed tests). The dependent variables vary between -1 and 1, with higher values denoting a more positive attitude toward rightists.

	Study 1		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dependent variable	Vote for right- wing parties	Attitudes toward Netanyahu's investigations	Affective polarization scale
High AIG scale	1.10*** (0.31)	0.06*	$0.22^{***}$
Constant	0.24 (0.21)	0.57*** (0.02)	0.22*** (0.03)
Observations R-squared	259	259 0.02	259 0.14

## Table D4. Matching analysis, among rightists, of results in Table 1 in the main text

Standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. Among right-wing supporters.

	Study 1		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dependent variable	Vote for left- wing parties	Attitudes toward Netanyahu's investigations	Affective polarization scale
High AIG scale	1.04** (0.37)	-0.04	-0.14*** (0.03)
Constant	0.22 (0.25)	0.19*** (0.02)	-0.16*** (0.02)
Observations R-squared	160	160 0.01	160 0.10

## Table D5. Matching analysis, among leftists, of results in Tables 1 in the main text

Standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. Among left-wing supporters.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent variable	Intention to vo	ote for right-	Intention to v	ote for left-	Affective polar	ization scale	Attitudes	toward
-	wing pa	arties	wing p	arties	-		Netanyahu's ii	nvestigations
Shortened AIG scale		-2.82		3.23***		-0.38***		-0.18**
		(2.23)		(0.91)		(0.07)		(0.06)
Right-wing supporter		0.76		-1.80+		-0.08		0.06
		(1.03)		(0.95)		(0.05)		(0.05)
Shortened AIG scale X Right-wing		5.64*		-4.78**		0.81***		0.37***
		(2.34)		(1.73)		(0.10)		(0.08)
Issue-based ideology scale	3.47***	0.91	-5.04***	-0.98	0.63***	0.26***	0.35***	0.09
	(0.58)	(0.85)	(0.69)	(0.94)	(0.05)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Economic (Soc./Cap.) ideology	1.79**	1.55*	-1.70**	-1.53*	-0.05	-0.11*	0.27***	0.24***
	(0.59)	(0.66)	(0.60)	(0.72)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Support for religious law	0.99+	0.54	-1.28	-0.00	0.27***	0.18***	0.18***	0.13**
	(0.52)	(0.55)	(0.83)	(0.97)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)
Age	0.11	-0.03	-1.22*	-1.40*	-0.09*	-0.11**	0.00	-0.02
-	(0.50)	(0.54)	(0.62)	(0.71)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Female	0.03	0.15	0.29	0.12	0.05 +	0.05*	0.01	0.01
	(0.28)	(0.31)	(0.32)	(0.38)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Religiosity	2.05***	2.07***	-2.01**	-1.91*	0.03	0.01	0.10*	0.08 +
	(0.58)	(0.62)	(0.75)	(0.90)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Education	-0.47	-0.15	-0.10	-0.61	-0.04	-0.01	-0.05	-0.02
	(0.40)	(0.44)	(0.48)	(0.60)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Constant	-4.36***	-4.15***	3.09***	1.22	-0.31***	-0.06	0.04	0.17**
	(0.58)	(1.09)	(0.54)	(0.87)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Calculated coefficient for the AIG		2.82***		-1.56		0.43***		0.19***
scale among right-wing supporters		(0.65)		(1.51)		(0.07)		(0.05)
Observations	419	419	419	419	419	419	419	419
R-squared					0.57	0.69	0.50	0.57

### Table D6. Table 1 (Study 1) with an abridged 4-item AIG scale

Robust standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. Models 1–4 use a logistic regression and Models 5–8 use an OLS regression. The dependent variable in Models 5–6 varies -1–1, with higher values denoting more favorable attitudes toward rightists. The dependent variable in Models 7–8 varies 0–1, with higher values denoting stronger conviction that the investigations are politically motivated. *AIG* stands for Attachment to an Ideological Group.

### **Section E: Examining the linearity of the interactions**

Following Hainmueller and colleagues (2019), we tested the linearity of the interactions used in Table 1 in the main text and in Tables C1–C2 in the online appendix (graphically shown in Figures 2–3 in the main text), by implementing the *kernel* function within the 'interflex' package developed by these authors. The results are graphically shown in panels 1–10 of Figure E which depict the marginal effect of the independent variables (*Right-wing supporter* in panels 1–4; *Threat* in panels 5–7; *Status threat* in panels 8–10) on the respective dependent variables, contingent on the *AIG* scale score. At the bottom of each graph is the distribution of the moderator, *AIG* scale, across the two ideological camps (Figures E1–E4) and across the different experimental conditions (Figures E5–E10).

To reiterate, Figure E depicts the interaction between the *Right-wing supporter* and *AIG* scale variables in Model 2, Table 1. Overall, Figure E endorses the linearity assumption. For example, it shows that, with the increase of the *AIG* scale score, the effect of rightist sympathies on the intention to vote for a right-wing party (the dependent variable) increases *in a linear fashion*. Similarly, in the other panels of Figure E we see an overall linear increase / decrease across the difference levels of the moderator, even if in some panels (e.g., Figure E3, with the *Netanyahu's investigations* scale as the dependent variable) the effect is not perfectly linear.



## Figure E. The linearity of the interactions presented in the main text

### **Section F: Predicting political participation**

Similar to our expectation that stronger attachment to an ideological group would affect Israelis' vote choice, we also expected that Israelis' with a strong attachment to an ideological group will exhibit higher levels of political participation and engagement, with the aim of helping their group win the election and enjoy a high social status (see, e.g., Huddy et al. 2015, 2018).

#### Measures

To measure political participation, in Study 2, fielded close to the September 2019 national election, we utilized three measures taken from the INES: (1) *Intention to vote*: Respondents were asked to indicate their intention to vote in the upcoming election, on a 4-point scale (from 'certain no' to 'certain yes'; 75.8 percent answered 'certain yes'); (2) *Political discussion*: Respondents were asked to what extent they discuss political matters with family and friends, on a 5-point scale (from 'not at all' to 'to a large extent'; 72.8 percent chose the two highest categories); and (3) *Online political participation*: Respondents first indicated whether they use social media platforms; those who answered 'yes' were then asked three 5-point items (from 'never' to 'several times a day'), tapping the number of times they had performed the following actions on social media in the past week: (i) expressed their opinion on a political topic; (ii) shared political posts by parties or politicians; and (iii) shared posts on political topics written by other people. Next, we created an *Online political participation* scale by averaging the above three items ( $\alpha = .88$ ) and rescaling them to vary between 0 and 1 (M = .13).

We used several OLS regressions to examine whether our *AIG* scale predicts these measures of political participation. In these regressions we included all control variables used in

the main text, as well as an additional control: Respondents' attachment to a political *party* (or "partisan social identity"). We added this control in order to discriminate between the effects on Israelis' political participation of their attachment to an ideological group versus a political party. To our knowledge, this is the first study to distinguish between the effects of these two social identities in a multi-party system. To create a partisan social-identity measure, we used a 4-item scale taken from the INES, with the scale items gauging respondents' attachment to the party they feel closest to. By averaging these items, we then created a *Partisan identity* scale ( $\alpha = .83$ ; M = .55) – which was found to strongly correlate with the *AIG* scale (r = .55; p < .001).

#### Results

Table F1 displays our results. Notable, since the dependent variables in these analyses are not directional (unlike the dependent variables in Table 1 in the main text), we control for the *Aligned issue-based ideology* measure instead of the *Issue-based ideology* scale, and we also do not include an interaction between the *AIG* scale and right-wing leanings.

Model 1 shows the results of an ordinal regression predicting intention to vote in the upcoming election (from 'certain no' to 'certain yes'). The *AIG* scale strongly predicts intention to vote: Holding all non-binary variables constant at their means, the probability that a female with the lowest *AIG* score will select 'certain yes' is 60.4 percent [44.7, 76.0]; however, for a female with the highest *AIG* score, that probability is 91.9 percent [87.0, 96.8]. The *AIG* scale also strongly predicts level of political discussion with family and friends (Model 2), and online political participation (Model 3). Notably, the *Partisan identity scale* also predicts political discussion and online political participation but to a lesser extent compared to the *AIG*  scale. These results provide robust support for our expectation that the *AIG* scale predicts political participariton.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dependent variable	Intention to vote in	Political discussion	Online political
1	the next election		participation
AIG scale	2.01***	3.36***	0.21***
	(0.60)	(0.56)	(0.06)
Partisan-identity scale	0.31	0.97*	0.11*
	(0.50)	(0.47)	(0.05)
Aligned issue-based ideology	0.00	0.39	-0.01
	(0.31)	(0.24)	(0.03)
Economic (Soc./Cap.) ideology	-0.19	0.45	0.01
	(0.43)	(0.33)	(0.03)
Support for religious law	-0.35	-0.73*	0.08*
	(0.41)	(0.29)	(0.03)
Age	0.95*	-0.25	0.06
	(0.44)	(0.31)	(0.04)
Female	0.00	-0.47**	-0.07***
	(0.22)	(0.16)	(0.02)
Religiosity	0.31	0.14	-0.09*
	(0.43)	(0.30)	(0.04)
Education	-0.19	0.38+	-0.02
	(0.32)	(0.23)	(0.03)
Cut 1	-2.65***	-1.26**	
	(0.59)	(0.44)	
Cut 2	-1.85***	1.18**	
	(0.55)	(0.41)	
Cut 3	-0.05	3.60***	
	(0.52)	(0.44)	
Constant			0.00
			(0.05)
Observations	599	599	522
R-squared			0.13

### Table F1. Study 2 – Predicting political participation

Robust standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. Models 1–2 use an ordered logit (ordinal) regression. Model 3 uses an OLS regression. The dependent variable in Model 3 varies 0–1; higher values denote higher levels of online political participation. *AIG* stands for Attachment to an Ideological Group.

We also conducted several robustness tests, presented in Tables F2 and F3 below. First, the results presented in Table F1 do not include an interaction between the *AIG* scale and a rightist respondent. Such an interaction is added to each of the three models in Table F2, using the same models. These interactions emerge statistically insignificant. Second, Model 3 in Table F1 shows that our *AIG* scale predicts an *Online political participation* scale that comprises three items (expressing opinion on a political topic; sharing posts by parties or politicians; and sharing others' posts on political topics). Table F3 endorses and strengthens this finding: The *AIG* scale strongly predicts each of the three items. Finally, as in Section D of the Online Appendix, we conducted several matching analyses. Overall, even using these analyses we can see that in Tables F4 and F5 below that *AIG* scale predicts the difference political participation measures.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dependent variable	Intention to vote in	Political discussion	Online political
	the		participation
	next election		
AIC scale	2.00*	2 40***	0.24*
AIG scale	2.90*	5.49 <sup>1441</sup>	$0.24^{*}$
District series and an	(1.30)	(0.98)	(0.12)
Right-wing supporter	-0.01	-0.50	0.01
	(0.74)	(0.59)	(0.07)
AIG scale X Right-wing	-1.19	-0.29	-0.06
~ · · · ·	(1.37)	(1.00)	(0.13)
Partisan-identity scale	0.31	0.99*	0.11*
	(0.50)	(0.47)	(0.05)
Aligned issue-based ideology	-0.04	0.34	-0.02
	(0.31)	(0.24)	(0.03)
Economic (Soc./Cap.) ideology	-0.07	0.64+	0.02
	(0.43)	(0.34)	(0.04)
Support for religious law	-0.23	-0.57+	0.09**
	(0.39)	(0.30)	(0.03)
Age	0.84 +	-0.35	0.05
	(0.44)	(0.31)	(0.04)
Female	-0.03	-0.53**	-0.07***
	(0.22)	(0.16)	(0.02)
Religiosity	0.52	0.42	-0.07+
	(0.43)	(0.32)	(0.04)
Education	-0.22	0.34	-0.02
	(0.32)	(0.23)	(0.03)
Cut 1	-2.57**	-1.58*	
	(0.88)	(0.63)	
Cut 2	-1.77*	0.88	
	(0.84)	(0.61)	
Cut 3	0.03	3.33***	
	(0.82)	(0.63)	
Constant			-0.01
			(0.08)
Observations	599	599	522
R-squared		- / /	0.13

## Table F2. Table F1 – with an interaction between right-wing support and AIG scale

Robust standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. Models 1–2 use an ordered logit (ordinal) regression while Model 3 uses an OLS regression. The dependent variable in Model 3 varies 0–1, with higher values denoting higher levels of online political participation.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dependent variable	How often expressed	How often shared	How often shared
	opinion on a	posts by parties or	others' posts on
	political topic?	politicians?	political topics?
	• •		
AIG scale	1.84**	2.70***	2.66***
	(0.64)	(0.65)	(0.61)
Partisan-identity scale	0.48	1.33*	1.25*
	(0.54)	(0.57)	(0.54)
Aligned issue-based ideology	-0.09	-0.41	-0.47
	(0.31)	(0.30)	(0.30)
Economic (Soc./Cap.) ideology	0.06	0.41	0.39
	(0.36)	(0.37)	(0.35)
Support for religious law	1.08**	0.93**	0.63+
	(0.36)	(0.33)	(0.35)
Age	0.63	0.16	0.75 +
	(0.38)	(0.39)	(0.38)
Female	-0.81***	-0.50*	-0.62**
	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.19)
Religiosity	-0.90*	-0.79*	-0.75+
	(0.43)	(0.39)	(0.43)
Education	-0.29	-0.18	0.12
	(0.30)	(0.29)	(0.28)
Cut 1	1.72***	2.81***	2.66***
	(0.51)	(0.54)	(0.51)
Cut 2	2.74***	3.94***	3.91***
	(0.51)	(0.57)	(0.53)
Cut 3	3.68***	5.26***	5.24***
	(0.53)	(0.61)	(0.57)
Cut 4	5.15***	6.54***	6.10***
	(0.58)	(0.63)	(0.58)
Observations	522	522	522

## Table F3. Separate analyses of the three Online political participation items

Robust standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. All models use an ordered logit (ordinal) regression.

		Study 2		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	
Dependent variable	Intention to vote in the next election	Political discussion	Online political participation	
High AIG scale	0.91***	1.11***	0.11***	
Cut 1	(0.21) -3.39***	(0.18) -2.52***	(0.02)	
Cut 2	(0.30) -2.20***	(0.21) -0.42***		
Cut 3	(0.18) -0.62***	(0.12) 1.79***		
Constant	(0.13)	(0.15)	0.08*** (0.01)	
Observations R-squared	501	501	420	

## Table F4. Matching analysis, among rightists, of results in Table F1

Standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. Among right-wing supporters.

	Study 2		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Dependent variable	Intention to vote in the next election	Political discussion	Online political participation
High AIG scale	0.71+ (0.40)	1.27*** (0.28)	0.09**
Cut 1	-3.63***	-3.78***	(0.03)
Cut 2	(0.52) -2.91*** (0.38)	(0.59) -0.82*** (0.20)	
Cut 3	-1.31*** (0.23)	(0.20) 1.31*** (0.22)	
Constant	(0.20)	(0.22)	0.10*** (0.02)
Observations R-squared	202	202	195 0.04

## Table F5. Matching analysis, among leftists, of results in Table F1

Standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.001, \*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05, + p<0.1. Among left-wing supporters.

#### Section G: Study 1 results for centrists

The study focuses on the effects of attachment to an ideological group among leftists and rightists in Israel, and therefore respondents who self-identified as supporting the center bloc are deliberately under-sampled: In total, only 104 centrists are included in our datasets, all surveyed in Study 1. This section provides tentative evidence that attachment to their ideological group also affects centrists' political judgments.

We run several logistic regressions in which the dummy variable is intention to vote for a center party (Yesh Atid or Kulanu; see also Manekin et al. 2019). Used as a sole independent variable, the AIG scale predicts the intention to vote for a center party among centrists (b = 2.42; SE = .89; p = .006). Adding to this model the *Aligned issue-based ideology* measure hardly affects the coefficient of the *AIG* scale (b = 2.57; SE = .93; p = .006), with the *Aligned issue-based ideology* variable emerging as insignificant (b = -.25; SE = .75; p = .735).<sup>22</sup> Finally, adding the covariates used in Table 1 in the main text does not change the effect of the *AIG* scale on the vote (b = 3.17; SE = 1.08; p = .003).<sup>23</sup> These results suggest that ideological-group attachment among centrists might also explain voting intentions, although we stress that the small size of our sample renders these results highly tentative.

While the effects of centrists' *AIG* score on other dependent variables used in Study 1 were not tested, the aggregate results pertaining to the *Netanyahu's investigations* scale and the *Affective polarization* scale show that that centrist respondents leaned slightly more to the left than to the right. With regards to the Netanyahu investigations, centrists (M = .28; SD = .21) were more likely than leftists (M = .18; SD = .18) – but much less so than rightists (M = .58; SD

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> The number of observations in the first model is 104 and in the second, 101.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> The number of observations in this model is 92.

= .24) – to believe they were politically motivated (F(2, 614) = 213.2; p < .001; all post-hoc comparisons, conducted using the Scheffe method, likewise proved significant at p < .001).

Centrists also reported slightly warmer attitudes toward leftists than toward rightists: These participants' score on the -1-1 *Affective polarization difference* scale is slightly negative (M = -.06; SD = .20), attesting to a discrepancy that significantly deviates from the neutral score of 0 (t(103) = -3.03; p = .003). As to the three items that comprise the *Affective polarization* scale, centrists did not exhibit a clear preference for family member marrying either a leftist or a rightist, as manifested in the marriage item reported in the main text (M = -.01; SD = .22). Centrists did, however, report slightly warmer feelings toward leftists than toward rightists (M = -.05; SD = .26), as well as slightly more positive stereotypes regarding the former group (M = -.11; SD = .27). Overall, these results suggest that centrists in our sample feel slightly closer socially to leftists than to rightists. Further research is necessary to corroborate this preliminary finding.

#### Section H: Analyses based on previous INES datasets

Utilising four recent Israel National Election studies (INES), we found correlations between the 3-item *Issue-based ideology* scale and the 7-point *Ideological self-placement* item. <sup>24</sup> The data were obtained via the INES website and comprised the 2006, 2009, 2013, and 2015 Israeli national elections.

Our analyses incorporated three INES items: (i) *In your opinion, is it possible to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians?* [Certain Yes; Think yes; Think no; Certain no]; (ii) *In your opinion, should Israel agree or disagree to the establishment of a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza strip under the framework of a permanent agreement?* [Definitely should agree; Think that should agree; Think that should disagree; Definitely should disagree]; (iii) *Should Israel be prepared to return, or should it continue to keep the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem, even at the cost of precluding a permanent agreement?* [Definitely should agree to hand over; Should hand over; Should continue to keep; Definitely should continue to keep.]

These items were singled out as essential to the left-right, Hawkish-Dovish ideological dimension in Israel, and also because their wording remained unchanged in all the surveys between 2006 and 2015. As in the main text, the results below are based only on responses of Jewish Israeli participants.

In each election, the three items exhibited high reliability ( $\alpha = .70$  in 2006, .63 in 2009, .79 in 2013, and .76 in 2015) and, as described in the main text of the paper, we created an *Issue*based ideology scale by averaging the values obtained in each election.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> See https://www.tau.ac.il/~ines/elections.html.

### Correlations:

The correlation between the 3-item *Issue-based ideology* scale and the 7-point *Ideological selfplacement* item was .43 (p < .001; N = 493) in 2006; .50 (p < .001; N = 314) in 2009; .56 (p < .001; N = 669) in 2013; and the highest, at .58 (p < .001; N = 595), in 2015. Overall, the average correlation in the four elections stood at .52.

### Correlations, contingent on college education:

Previous studies in the United States indicate that ideological consistency is displayed mostly by highly educated Americans (Kinder & Kalmoe 2017; Freeder et al. 2019). To establish if this pattern also holds in Israel – or alternatively, if Israelis display ideological consistency regardless of education level – we compare the correlation between the 3-item *Issue-based ideology* scale and the 7-point *Ideological self-placement* item among Israelis with a higher education (college) and among Israelis who lack such education.

Our analyses show stronger correlations among Israelis with a college education, but for most elections the differences are not substantial. In 2006, the correlation between *Issue-based ideology* scale and *Ideological self-placement* item in these two populations was almost identical: .42 (p < .001; N = 217) among those without college education, and a similar .42 (p < .001; N = 233) among their college-educated counterparts. In 2009, this discrepancy was large: a correlation of .37 (p < .001; N = 165) among those without college education, compared with .65 (p < .001; N = 147) among the college-educated population. We note, however, that of the four INES datasets used for the purposes of our study, the 2009 sample is the smallest. In 2013, the correlation difference was again rather small: .53 (p < .001; N = 400) among those without

college education, compared with .59 (p < .001; N = 266) among those with college education. The difference in 2015 was only slightly larger than in 2013: .53 (p < .001; N = 328) among those without college education, compared with .60 (p < .001; N = 263) among the college-educated.

Overall, the correlation between *Issue-based ideology* scale and *Ideological selfplacement* item is substantial among respondents with and without college education. This further corroborates the contention that many Israelis – and not only highly educated – display consistency in their ideological leanings.
#### Section I: Factual manipulation checks

In both studies, we implemented factual manipulation checks (Kane & Barabas 2019), with a view of examining whether respondents accurately comprehended the fictitious articles.

*Study 1.* After reading the vignette in Study 1, respondents were required to answer a comprehension question. The two versions of the experimental vignette projected the messages, respectively, that Netanyahu will / will not be indicted, and that the right-wing ideological bloc is likely to lose in the next election / form the next coalition. Accordingly, respondents were asked whether, based on the article they had read, the power of the right-wing bloc is "expected to grow stronger or weaker, or to remain unchanged, as a consequence of pressing / dismissing charges against Netanyahu" (Response options: expected to grow stronger; expected to grow weaker; expected to remain unchanged; don't know).

As expected, in the 'pro-left' condition (the right-wing bloc is likely to lose the next election), 70.3 percent of respondents reported that, based on the article, the right-wing bloc is expected to become weaker in the next elections. In the 'pro-right' condition (the right-wing bloc is likely to form the next coalition), 90.1 percent of respondents reported that, based on the article, the power of the right-wing bloc in the next elections is expected either to remain unchanged (44.4 percent) or to increase (45.7). We had not anticipated a large number of respondents to state that the right-wing bloc would become *stronger* if the charges against Netanyahu were dropped. However, the article predicts that the right-wing bloc is likely to maintain its power and head the next coalition, and this message might have led some respondents to conjecture that dropping the charges would effectively strengthen the power of the right-wing bloc.

*Study* 2. After reading the vignette in Study 2, respondents were asked two comprehension questions. The first asked which bloc is expected to form the next coalition (Response options: the right-wing bloc; the center-left bloc; a unity government will likely be formed; don't know). The second question asked whether negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians are likely to resume after the election (Response options: yes, negotiations are likely to resume; no, negotiations are unlikely to resume; don't know).

Responses to both these questions were overwhelmingly accurate. Specifically, 95.6 percent of those in the pro-right condition reported that the right-wing bloc was likely to form the next coalition, while in the pro-left condition, 88.2 percent stated that the center-left bloc was likely to do so. Overall, the first factual manipulation check was answered correctly by 92% of respondents. Regarding the second question, 90.1 percent of those who had read that negotiations were likely to resume after the election reported this projection, while 97.4 percent of those who had read that negotiations were unlikely to resume after the election predicted that outcome. Overall, the second factual manipulation check was answered correctly by 93.6% of respondents.

## Section J: The text of the experimental vignettes

## Study 1 vignettes:

### All respondents read:

Now we will ask you to read the contents of a short news article that was recently published on one of Israel's leading news websites. Immediately after reading the article, please, answer several questions about it:

### Version 1: Serious charges against Netanyahu (threat for the right / reassurance for the left):

## Political projections: Netanyahu likely to be charged

Is Benjamin Netanyahu's term as Prime Minister about to come to a dramatic end? This evening's major news broadcasts report a growing likelihood that charges of bribery will be pressed against Netanyahu in Cases 1000 and 4000, and it seems highly probable that charges will also be brought in Case 2000. The reports state that senior figures in the Attorney General's office are convinced Netanyahu will face severe charges. These predictions are based on the testimonies and investigative materials obtained recently through the cooperation of several state witnesses who had worked under the Prime Minister in the past. One report asserts that a senior official in the Attorney General's office considers the new testimonies and investigative materials robust. The official added that, in light of recent discussions among the executive staff of the Attorney General's office, he expects in the coming months an announcement by Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit that Netanyahu will face charges.

It is unclear how Netanyahu will respond to such a scenario. However, several political correspondents reported this evening that charges against Netanyahu will almost certainly lead various coalition parties to demand the Prime Minister's resignation. Senior Likud officials are also expected to call for Netanyahu's resignation, to prevent a significant damage to Likud in the next elections. In discussing the political ramifications of prosecuting Netanyahu, one reporter said that, even if Netanyahu does not resign, the likely serious charges against him would undermine the right-wing bloc in the next elections and change the balance of power in Israeli politics.

Version 2: Charges against Netanyahu will be dropped (reassurance for the right / threat to the <u>left</u>):

Political projections: Charges against Netanyahu will likely be dropped.

Will the current investigations against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu come to nothing? This evening's central news broadcasts report that charges of bribery against Netanyahu in Cases 1000 and 4000 will likely be dropped, and, in all probability, the other cases will also be closed with no indictment. The reports state that senior figures in the Attorney General's office are convinced Netanyahu will not face charges – this, despite the testimonies and investigative materials obtained recently through the cooperation of several state witnesses who had worked under the Prime Minister in the past. One report asserts that a senior official in the Attorney General's office considers the new testimonies and investigative materials unreliable. The official added that, in light of the recent discussions among the executive staff of the Attorney General's office, he expects in the coming months an announcement by Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit that the charges against Netanyahu will be dropped.

It is unclear how Netanyahu would respond to the unlikely scenario of facing charges. In the past, the Prime Minister intimated that he had no intention of resigning, even if indicted. Accordingly, several political commentators reported this evening that, should Netanyahu face less severe charges, with no bribery allegations, the various coalition parties will not demand his resignation. In this case, senior Likud officials will probably not call for Netanyahu to step down either, and he will continue to lead the Likud party in the next elections. In discussing the political ramifications of dropping charges against Netanyahu, one reporter said that the closure of the cases against him would help the right-wing bloc to maintain its power in the next election and subsequently lead the coalition.

#### Study 2 vignettes:

#### All respondents read:

Now we will ask you to read the contents of a short news article that was recently published on one of Israel's leading news websites. Immediately after reading the article, please, answer several questions about it:

Version 1: Center-left wins; negotiations will resume (status threat to the right / status reassurance for the left; and issue threat to the right / issue reassurance for the left):

## New Poll Indicates that the Center-Left Is Leading; Israel Expected to Resume Negotiations with the Palestinians Following the Elections

The results of a new poll indicate that the upcoming elections will bring to power the center-left bloc. According to the poll, conducted earlier this week for Channel 12 News among a representative sample of adult Israelis, the center-left, excluding Yisrael Beiteinu, will gain 61 seats in the Knesset, raising the odds that the Blue and White party will form the next coalition. The poll shows that, for the first time in six months, Blue and White has emerged as the leading candidate to head the next government, with 33 seats against Likud's 30. The Joint List is predicted to win 12 seats, the Democratic Union, led by Nitzan Horowitz – 10, Yamina, led by Ayelet Shaked – 8, Yisrael Beiteinu – 8, United Torah Judaism – 7, and Shas and Labor-Gesher – 6 seats each. The poll projects that the Otzmah Yehudit party will garner only 1.8% of votes, and Zehut, with only 0.8% of votes, will fail to pass the threshold.

At the same time, based on new information obtained today, senior Blue and White officials intend to rejoin the Palestinians at the negotiating table in the wake of the elections. Discussions among senior figures behind the closed doors have made it clear that, after the election, Israel will come under heavy international pressure to resume negotiations with the Palestinians, under President Trump's anticipated Peace Plan. Some of the officials stated overtly that Israel is committed to the success of the peace plan and ready to negotiate, including relief measures to aid Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and, if required, even territorial compromises. They likewise claim that the negotiations will be backed by a coalition majority and, if need be, also by the Joint List from outside the coalition. At this stage, however, preparations for negotiations remain secret, out of concern that publicity would damage the Blue and White's popularity with voters.

Version 2: Right-wing wins; negotiations will resume (status reassurance to the right / status threat for the left; and issue threat to the right/ issue reassurance for the left):

## New Poll Indicates that the Right is Leading; Israel Expected to Resume Negotiations with the Palestinians Following the Elections

The results of a new poll indicate that the right will stay in power after the elections. According to the poll, conducted earlier this week for Channel 12 News among a representative sample of adult Israelis, the center-left, excluding Yisrael Beiteinu, will gain 63 seats in the Knesset, raising the odds that the Likud will form the next coalition. The poll shows that Likud, headed by Benjamin Netanyahu, is the leading candidate to head the next government, with 34 seats against Blue and White's 29. Yamina, led by Ayelet Shaked, is predicted to win 13 seats, the Joint List – 9 seats, Shas, United Torah Judaism and Yisrael Beiteinu – 8 seats each; the Democratic Union, led by Nitzan Horowitz – 7 seats; and Labor-Gesher – 4 seats. The poll projects, however, that the Otzmah Yehudit party will garner only 1.8% of votes, and Zehut, with only 0.8% of votes, will fail to pass the threshold.

At the same time, based on new information obtained today, senior Likud officials intend to rejoin the Palestinians at the negotiating table in the wake of the elections. Discussions among senior figures behind the closed doors have made it clear that, after the election, Israel will come under heavy international pressure to resume negotiations with the Palestinians, under President Trump's anticipated Peace Plan. Some of the officials stated overtly that Israel is committed to the success of the peace plan and ready to negotiate, including relief measures to aid Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and, if required, even territorial compromises. They likewise claim that the negotiations will be backed by a coalition majority and, if need be, also by the Joint List from outside the coalition. At this stage, however, preparations for negotiations remain secret, out of concern that publicity would damage the Blue and White's popularity with voters.

## Version 3: Center-left wins; negotiations will not resume (status threat to the right / status reassurance for the left; and issue reassurance to the right / issue threat for the left):

# New Poll Indicates that the Center-Left Is Leading; Israel Not Expected to Resume Negotiations with the Palestinians Following the Elections

The results of a new poll indicate that the upcoming elections will bring to power the center-left bloc. According to the poll, conducted earlier this week for Channel 12 News among a representative sample of adult Israelis, the center-left, excluding Yisrael Beiteinu, will gain 61 seats in the Knesset, raising the odds that the Blue and White party will form the next coalition. The poll shows that, for the first time in six months, Blue and White has emerged as the leading candidate to head the next government, with 33 seats against Likud's 30. The Joint List is predicted to win 12 seats, the Democratic Union, led by Nitzan Horowitz – 10, Yamina, led by Ayelet Shaked – 8, Yisrael Beiteinu – 8, United Torah Judaism – 7, and Shas and Labor-Gesher –6 seats each. The poll projects that the Otzmah Yehudit party will garner only 1.8% of votes, and Zehut, with only 0.8% of votes, will fail to pass the threshold.

At the same time, based on new information obtained today, senior Blue and White officials categorically rule out the possibility of rejoining the Palestinians at the negotiating table in the wake of the elections. Discussions among senior figures behind the closed doors have made it clear that, after the election, Israel is unlikely to come under heavy international pressure to resume negotiations with the Palestinians. The officials further claim that, in its anticipated Peace Plan, President Trump's administration will take the possibility of any territorial compromise off the agenda. Some of the officials stated overtly that Israel will not be required to contribute to economic aid advanced to the Palestinian population as part of the deal. They stipulated, moreover, that such aid will be forthcoming only on condition that the Palestinians do not initiate hostilities.

## Version 4: Right-wing wins; negotiations will not resume (status reassurance to the right / status threat for the left; and issue reassurance to the right / issue threat for the left):

# New Poll Indicates that the Right Is Leading; Israel Not Expected to Resume Negotiations with the Palestinians Following the Elections

The results of a new poll indicate that the upcoming elections will bring to power the center-left bloc. According to the poll, conducted earlier this week for Channel 12 News among a representative sample of adult Israelis, the center-left, excluding Yisrael Beiteinu, will gain 61 seats in the Knesset, raising the odds that the Blue and White party will form the next coalition. The poll shows that, for the first time in six months, Blue and White has emerged as the leading candidate to head the next government, with 33 seats against Likud's 30. The Joint List is predicted to win 12 seats, the Democratic Union, led by Nitzan Horowitz – 10, Yamina, led by Ayelet Shaked – 8, Yisrael Beiteinu – 8, United Torah Judaism – 7, and Shas and Labor-Gesher – 6 seats each. The poll projects that the Otzmah Yehudit party will garner only 1.8% of votes, and Zehut, with only 0.8% of votes, will fail to pass the threshold.

At the same time, based on new information obtained today, senior Blue and White officials categorically rule out the possibility of rejoining the Palestinians at the negotiating table in the wake of the elections. Discussions among senior figures behind the closed doors have made it clear that, after the election, Israel is unlikely to come under heavy international pressure to resume negotiations with the Palestinians. The officials further claim that, in its anticipated Peace Plan, President Trump's administration will take the possibility of any territorial compromise off the agenda. Some of the officials stated overtly that Israel will not be required to contribute to economic aid advanced to the Palestinian population as part of the deal. They stipulated, moreover, that such aid will be forthcoming only on condition that the Palestinians do not initiate hostilities.

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