

Partisan Alignment and the Propensity to Choose a Job in a Government Ministry

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ABSTRACT

The global experience of political polarization, and politicians' attacks on democratic institutions, render individuals' identification with the governing coalition, or with its opposition, a likely antecedent of their attraction to work for government organizations. This article examines to what extent individuals' partisan alignment with the governing coalition, and perceptions of its actions as a threat to democracy, shape attraction to government jobs. Findings are based on a two-stage survey with 1,861 Israeli panel respondents, aged 21-30, carried out during the government's attempt to undermine the legal system (hereafter: the Judicial Overhaul), and a follow-up survey experiment with 1,211 of the respondents. Against the politically neutral explanations of previous research, we show that partisan alignment affects the propensity to choose a job in a government ministry versus other sectors. We find mixed evidence in support of the proposition that perceptions of the Judicial Overhaul as a threat to democracy underlie this effect.

POINTS FOR PRACTITIONERS

- In polarized political contexts, voters of the opposition may forgo a government career.
- Perceptions that political executives are undermining democracy may likewise deter job seekers' interest in working for the government.

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INTRODUCTION

Public management research suggests that job seekers' attraction to work in the public sector is shaped by their perceptions of a fit between their values and goals and the attributes of organizations and jobs (e.g., Jakobsen et al., 2023). Studies further point to concrete values and goals that job seekers try to fulfill, including "public-sector motivation" (PSM) (Perry et al., 2010) and additional intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (e.g., Asseburg et al., 2020). Political factors, such as support for, and identification with the governing parties, and their agenda, as well as job seekers' political orientation, are generally ignored. No attention has been paid to the alignment between job seekers' partisanship, that is their identification with a political party (Huddy et al. 2015), and the party composition of the government (hereafter: partisan alignment). Job seekers' perceptions of political executives' actions and agendas are likewise overlooked.

Ignoring individuals' partisan alignment with the governing coalition as a potential factor of attraction to work for the government is inconsistent with the reality and image of public-sector work. Political principals exert influence over public organizations' agendas (Wood and Waterman, 1991), and they are salient to the media's depiction of these organizations (Figenschou et al. 2017). Additionally, even in meritocratic systems partisan loyalty may have significant influence on career civil servants' selection and promotion (Brierley et al., 2023; Kopecký et al. 2016). Job seekers may thus expect that the party composition of the government will affect the policies that they would be expected to implement, and that their own partisan identities may affect their career prospects. Hence, the partisan composition of government is likely to be part of job seekers' assessment of the fit between their values and goals and those of public organizations.

The proposition that politics matters for attraction to government jobs is most probable in democracies that are socially divided by partisan cleavages and high levels of "affective polarization", namely animosity towards political opponents and their leaders (Gidron et al. 2020; Iyengar et al. 2019). Polarization induces perceptions of counter-partisans as an existential threat (Braley et al., 2023; Simonovits et al., 2022), and acceptance of violations of democracy by one's party leaders (e.g., Graham and Svolik, 2020). Compatibly, at the societal level, polarization is correlated with political elites' engagement in "democratic backsliding" (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018; Orhan, 2022)—subversion of the electoral process, undermining citizens' rights, and curbing checks and balances on their power (Bermeo, 2016; Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018; Waldner and Lust, 2018). Such polarized

political settings likely render partisan alignment salient for individuals' perceived fit with work for the government. While an expanding public administration literature examines the consequences of democratic backsliding for state bureaucracies and their employees (Bauer, 2023; Bauer et al. 2021), its ramifications for individuals' attraction to the civil service has not yet been studied. We therefore pose the question: *To what extent do individuals' partisan alignment (support for the opposition vs. the governing coalition), and their perceptions of the government coalition's actions as a threat to democracy, shape their attraction to civil service jobs compared with either businesses or nonprofits?*

Empirically, our study is set in Israel, where the current governing coalition has been actively engaged in democratic backsliding via the "Judicial Overhaul" (Gidron 2023), and affective polarization has been on the rise (Amitai et al., 2023). The Judicial Overhaul involves the government's attempt to curtail the powers and independence of the Supreme Court and to replace career-based legal advisers within the government with political appointees. Between January and September 2023 this initiative fueled mass social protests and a toxic debate. Employing a two-staged survey (N=1,861) and a follow-up survey experiment (N=1,211), we find that partisan alignment affects individuals' attraction for a job in a government ministry, compared with the business or nonprofit sectors. We also find mixed evidence that this effect is mediated by perceptions of the Judicial Overhaul as a threat to democracy.

Below, we first survey the public management research on attraction to the public sector and the public administration research on the consequences of democratic backsliding. Next, we lay out our theoretical framework and hypotheses, describe the contextual background, explain the research design, and present the findings. We conclude with a discussion of the implications and suggestions for further research.

ATTRACTION AND SELF-SELECTION TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Public-management research on individuals' attraction to work in the public sector paid much attention to concerns about governments' difficulty to compete with businesses over motivated and highly-skilled job applicants (e.g., Fowler and Birdsall, 2020) as well as the uneven representation of social groups within the civil service (Meier, 2019; Linos, 2018). This literature has thus far ignored individuals' partisan alignment with the governing coalition, and job seekers' perceptions of political elites' actions and agendas, as factors of their attraction to public sector employment.

To facilitate the identification of the effects of partisan alignment and perceptions of politicians' agendas, we must account for the factors that current research considers central in shaping job seekers' attraction across sectors. These include three key factors: individuals' PSM (Perry et al. 2010), other aspects of intrinsic (e.g., challenge at work), and extrinsic motivations (e.g., salary and job security). PSM, defined as individuals' "predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations" (Perry and Wise, 1990: 368), received the most attention. Recent studies specify four dimensions of PSM: *attraction to public service*, that is individuals' commitment to serve society; *commitment to public values* such as ethicality and equal opportunities; *compassion* towards others and especially the underprivileged; and *readiness for self-sacrifice* in the sense of putting society's interests before those of the self (Kim et al. 2013).

A large number of studies confirm the relationship between individuals' PSM and their attraction and self-selection to public-sector jobs (e.g., Asseburg and Homberg, 2020; Korac et al. 2019; Vandenabeele, 2008; Wright and Christensen, 2010; Wright et al. 2017; but see: Kjeldsen, 2014). Still, studies further find that extrinsic and other (non-PSM) intrinsic motivations are potent predictors of public-sector attraction, even among individuals with high PSM (Asseburg and Homberg, 2020; Asseburg et al., 2020; Linos, 2018; Van de Walle et al., 2015; Vandenabeele, 2008). Hence, individuals' attraction to sectors and jobs is shaped by a combination of considerations, with PSM being an important, albeit not the sole motivation shaping job seekers' selection among sectors.

At the same time, public-management researchers gradually realized that individuals who are driven by high PSM are attracted not to a sector as such, but to an organization and a job that would allow them to serve society. Prospective applicants may believe that this motivation would best be met by working for an organization in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors (Ballart and Rico, 2018, Carpenter et al. 2012; Christensen and Wright, 2011; Kjeldsen, 2014; Ritz et al. 2022). Furthermore, drawing on person-environment-fit theory (e.g., Cable and Edwards, 2004; Kristof-Brown et al. 2005; van Vianen, 2018), studies show that what is at stake is individuals' perceptions of a fit between their values and goals and the attributes of a job, an organization, and its employees (Carpenter et al. 2012; Christensen and Wright, 2011; Jacobsen et al. 2023; Wright and Christensen, 2010). Hence, individuals with high PSM are attracted to jobs in organizations or sectors that they perceive as having a high fit with their commitment to public values and to serving society (Ritz et al. 2022). Still, other goals or "work values" (Cable and Edwards, 2004), such as the prospects of building good relationships with others, pay, job security, prestige, task variety and

individual autonomy, all guide individuals' assessment of their fit with sectors and prospective employers.

Considering the above, it appears plausible that individuals' partisan alignment with the governing coalition would affect their sense of a fit between their personal goals and values and the perceived attributes of government organizations. This effect is likely to be more pronounced in politically polarized contexts, which also tend to involve democratic backsliding (Orhan, 2022). Hence, to further specify the article's contribution, we turn to the literature on the consequences of democratic backsliding for the bureaucracy.

BUREAUCRACY UNDER DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING

Public administration research on bureaucracy amidst democratic backsliding has taken two strands, focusing on the impact upon and the response of those who work in government. The first strand analyzes the strategies that politicians, who engage in democratic backsliding, adopt towards the civil service (Bauer et al. 2021; Bauer and Becker, 2020; Peters and Pierre, 2019, 2022). Whilst emphasizing that these strategies vary (Bauer et al. 2021; Peters and Pierre, 2019, 2022), sidelining the bureaucracy seems to be politicians' most common approach. This involves politicization via patronage appointments (Peters and Pierre, 2019), promoting loyalists from within the bureaucracy, dismissing "disloyal" civil servants or coercing them to resign (Bellodi et al. 2023; Story et al. 2023), and altering merit and union-based legal protections (Moynihan, 2022, 2022a). A related strategy involves excluding bureaucrats from decision and information circles (Lotta et al. 2023; Moynihan, 2022a; Peters and Pierre, 2019), and relegating them to marginal positions. Finally, politicians shift budgets and resources to units that are populated with loyalists (Dussauge-Laguna, 2022; González-Vázquez et al. 2023; Peci, 2021; Peters and Pierre, 2019) at the expense of liberal bureaucratic units (Lotta et al. 2023; Moynihan 2022a). The above strategies are typically coupled with bureaucracy bashing to undermine bureaucratic reputation and power (Moynihan, 2022a; Lotta et al. 2023).

The second strand of studies provides evidence regarding bureaucrats' responses to democratic backsliding. Studies, carried out in the US during the Trump presidency (Hollibaugh et al., 2020) and in Brazil during presidents Bolsonaro and Temer's terms in office (Guedes-Neto and Peters, 2021; Schuster et al., 2022), suggest that bureaucrats are inclined to engage in voice, exit (Hirschman, 1970), and sabotage, in this order of frequency, if requested to implement what the researchers specify as harmful or illiberal policies, a

pattern that is amplified as their PSM level increases. Other studies of bureaucrats' perceptions of and responses to populist administrations in Brazil (Story et al. 2023) and in the US (Kucinskas and Zylan's 2023) find bureaucratic withdrawal and limited active resistance. Finally, a recent study in Israel (Alon-Barkat et al., 2023) finds that civil servants who perceive the Judicial Overhaul as a threat to democracy are inclined to exit the civil service due to their expectations of a decline in bureaucratic meritocracy, in professional influence, and in their capacity to serve the public's interest.

HOW PARTISAN ALIGNMENT SHAPES ATTRACTION TO WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT?

Our distinct theoretical focus is on the effect of job seekers' partisan alignment with the governing coalition on their attraction to work in the government. In the Israeli multiparty system, individuals' positive affect towards co-partisans, and their animosity toward counter-partisans, have been shown to extend to parties within the same party bloc versus parties in the opposing bloc (Bassan-Nygate and Weiss, 2022; Gidron et al., 2023). Consequently, our analysis focuses on the effect of job seekers' support for the opposition versus the coalition party blocs. The context of our study imposes two scope conditions on our potential findings. First, the Israeli context is characterized by high affective polarization (Gidron et al. 2020; Amitai et al. 2023), that is animosity across party blocs, rendering partisanship salient to individuals' self-concept (Huddy et al., 2015). Second, our study was carried out alongside the Israeli government's contentious attempt to undermine judicial and legal checks and balances, which many Israelis perceived as a threat to democracy. Within these scope conditions, we hypothesize that individuals' partisan alignment with the governing coalition shapes their attraction to work for the government via the following two routes.

First, support for the opposition versus the coalition is likely to shape job seekers' perceptions of the extent to which work for the government would allow them to realize their values and goals, or, conversely, require them to pursue objectives that are inconsistent with their beliefs. This expectation stems from the influence of political principals and their appointees on departments' policy agendas (Wood and Waterman, 1991), and to political principals' saliency in the media's depiction of government departments (Figenschou et al. 2017). Moreover, regardless of the essence of politicians' policy agendas, affective polarization may render supporters of the opposition aversive to working for a government

department, which is headed by a political principal whom they resent. Conversely, for coalition supporters, the party composition of the government may be an attraction factor.

Consistent with these expectations, studies of those already working in government suggest that political turnover is associated with senior career civil servants' voluntary resignations (Bolton et al. 2021; Doherty et al. 2019), and reduced effort (Richardson, 2019). Ideological incongruence partially underlies these findings (Bolton et al. 2021; Doherty et al. 2019, Richardson, 2019). Looking beyond senior civil servants, mid-level and street-level bureaucrats' partisan misalignment with political principals does not increase their turnover, yet it lowers their motivation and performance (Piotrowska, 2023; Spenkuch et al. 2023). Additionally, as mentioned above, civil servants, at all levels, report a higher inclination to leave if required to implement harmful or illiberal policies (Guedes-Neto and Peters, 2021; Hollibaugh et al., 2020; Schuster et al., 2022).

Holding job opportunities constant, we expect partisan alignment to weigh even more heavily in job seekers' decisions of entry compared to civil servants' consideration to leave. Civil servants are ideationally and emotionally committed to their roles, the departments for which they work, their colleagues, and clients (cf. Brehm and Gates, 1999; Downs, 1965; Moynihan and Pandey, 2008). They have also invested in job-specific expertise (Bertelli and Lewis, 2012) and adapted their lives to fit a specific workplace. Thus, civil servants' exit costs often exceed the toll incurred by working under a disliked political principal, especially if political turnover is frequent. Since job seekers are unbound by such attachments and costs, partisan alignment may have a greater effect on entry decisions compared with exit choices.

Supporters of the coalition and supporters of the opposition may also vary in their expectations to be selected for a governmental job, and to enjoy senior managers' support, appreciation, and advancement. Even in countries that uphold meritocracy, partisan loyalty has been shown to influence the selection and promotion of senior career civil servants (Bach and Veit, 2018; Dahlström and Holmgren, 2019; Veit and Scholz, 2016). In other countries (Kopecký et al. 2016), this influence often pervades mid-level, and in some countries also low-level positions (Brierley, 2021; Brierley et al., 2023; Colonnelli et al., 2020; Kopecký et al. 2016). Such politicization of hiring and promotion is especially prevalent in central government ministries compared with independent agencies and quangos (Kopecký et al. 2016). We thus pose the following hypothesis:

H₁ Partisan alignment affects individuals' attraction to work for the government versus businesses or nonprofits.

Second, supporters of the coalition and the opposition are likely to diverge in their perceptions and evaluation of political elites' engagement in democratic backsliding. Several studies find that citizens are inclined to condone democratic backsliding when pursued by their party leadership. This is so because they rationalize violations of democracy by co-partisan leaders as consistent with democratic norms (e.g., Krishnarajan, 2023; Singer, 2023). Alternatively, they are willing to tolerate such violations as a means for achieving policy goals that they value (e.g., Graham and Svolik, 2020), or for protecting themselves from the rival party (e.g., Braley et al., 2023; Simonovits et al., 2022).

Consistent with the above findings, in Israel both citizens and civil servants diverge in their perceptions of the Judicial Overhaul as a threat to democracy (Gidron et al. 2023; Alon-Barkat et al. 2023). As previously discussed, civil servants who perceive governing elites as a threat to democracy are inclined to exit the civil service, yet they are trapped in a dilemma of whether to resolve their conflict by leaving or stay to mitigate harm to the public (e.g., Alon-Barkat et al. 2023; Kucinskis and Zylan, 2023). Job seekers, however, are not constrained by a similar dilemma leading to our second hypothesis that job seekers who perceive the governing coalition's actions as a threat to democracy would forego pursuing government jobs.

H₂ Perception of the governing coalition's policies and actions as a threat to democracy is negatively associated with individuals' attraction to work for the government versus businesses or nonprofits.

Finally, an additional theoretical proposition that we test below, beyond the pre-registered hypotheses, is that perception of the governing coalition's policies and actions as a threat to democracy mediate the relationship between job seekers' partisan alignment and their attraction to work for the government.

BACKGROUND TO THE ISRAELI CASE

Israel's population is mostly Jewish (~79%), of which ~12 percent are an ultra-orthodox minority ("Haredi" in Hebrew). The remaining 21% of the population is non-Jewish, mostly Israeli-Arab/Palestinian, including Muslims, Christians, and Druze. The Israeli-Arab and ultra-orthodox minorities are characterized by relatively lower income and participation rates in the workforce. They are also somewhat culturally separated from the general Israeli public due to their religion or religiosity, respectively, living in separate localities or neighborhoods, operating distinct school systems, and being exempt from military service. Consequently, the

factors shaping sector choice by members of these minority groups may differ from those of the majority (cf. Linos, 2018).

In recent years, the Israeli political landscape congealed into two distinct blocs of Netanyahu's supporters and opponents (Gidron et al., 2022). Additionally, Israelis' average level of affective polarization increased, rising by 180% between 2009 and 2022 (Amitai et al., 2023). At the time of conducting this research (late August and early September 2023), Israel was headed by the most right-wing coalition in its history, elected in November 2022. This coalition, headed by Benjamin Netanyahu, included the *Likud* party, which political scientists currently classify as a right-populist party (Gidron, 2023), the ultra-orthodox parties' *Shas* and *Yahadut Hatora*, and the radical-right *Religious Zionism* alliance.

On January 4, 2023, shortly after the government's formation, Minister of Justice Yariv Levin (Likud) presented the Judicial Overhaul plan (officially termed "the legal reform"), which includes four elements. First, changing the structure of the Judges Selection Committee to enable an automatic majority for its coalition members. Second, allowing the Knesset, which is controlled by the coalition, to re-enact legislation that has been ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Third, diminishing the Court's capacity to strike down executive decisions, and fourth, replacing meritocratically appointed legal advisors across government with political appointees. At the time of this research, only the third component passed all stages of the Knesset legislation process (since then invalidated by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional). Additionally, the coalition openly engaged in bureaucracy bashing, dismissals, and patronage appointments.

Since the announcement of the Judicial Overhaul, and until the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, as of October 7, 2023, waves of mass social protests, mostly against the Judicial Overhaul, erupted across Israel. Israelis' evaluations of the Judicial Overhaul radically diverged along partisan lines (Gidron et al. 2023), with coalition opponents mostly assessing it as an attempt to eliminate checks and balances over the government's powers that risks liberal democratic values, such as gender equality, freedom of religion, and minority rights. Political attacks on senior civil servants and political patronage were also castigated by the government's opponents. Conversely, coalition supporters believed that the Judicial Overhaul is essential for a real democracy, as they associated it with responsiveness to voters, and with diversification of the judiciary and the bureaucracy.

A recent news article reports a reduction of 30% in the number of applicants for new government jobs, and a doubling in the number of vacant positions, rising from 10% to 20% (Aarzi-Saror, Aug 2023). Interviews likewise point to public managers' concerns about their

difficulty of filling vacant positions (Alon-Barkat et al., 2023). That said, there is no direct evidence linking the reduction in the pool of applicants to partisan alignment and to concerns regarding the Judicial overhaul.

METHODOLOGY

The research is based on a pre-registered study (#141923)ⁱ (the main study), and a follow-up survey experiment intended to test the causal effect of partisan alignment on sector choice. Ethical approvals were obtained from the [anonymized university] IRB committee (08/13/23).

Survey administration and sample characteristics

The main study included a two-wave online survey, designed to appear to the respondents as two unrelated studies. Respondents were 21-to-30-year-old Israelis, recruited from among the registered participants of iPanel, an Israeli survey company. The first survey (29 Aug. – 11 Sep. 2023) included measurements of respondents' partisan alignment (based on reported voting in November 2022), perception of the Judicial Overhaul as a threat to democracy, trust in government organizations, and several demographic variables. The second wave (14 – 18 Sep. 2023), distributed to the same respondents, included measurements of their PSM and preference to work for a government ministry, a business, or a non-profit organization. The separation between questions about political attitudes (in the 1st survey) from the outcome variable (in the 2nd survey), was intended to address potential expressive responding (Bullock and Lenz, 2019; Yair and Huber, 2020)ⁱⁱ, to reduce concerns about Common Method Variance (Simmering et al., 2015), and reduce respondents' fatigue. An obvious disadvantage of this design is attrition of respondents between the first and second wave.

A total of 2,738 respondents completed the first wave of the survey, excluding those who did not pass an attention task, and duplicate responses. Of these, 1,861 (68%) participated in the second wave of the survey. Table 1 compares the demographics of our full sample (N=1,861) with that of respondents of the same age range (21-30), who participated in a national survey that was carried out in 2022 by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) (N=1,348). Our sample over-represents women, BA graduates, and underrepresents non-Jews. This skewed representation is partly due to the survey company's panel population, and partially because our use of demographic quotas was restricted to the first wave of the

survey. To address this limitation, all observational data analyses, below, are reported with and without sample weights.

Table 1: Sample Representativeness

| | iPanel (21-30) | CBS 2022 (21-30) |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Female | 56% | 50% |
| <i>Education</i> | | |
| None or other | 4% | 4% |
| high school matriculation | 34% | 62% |
| post-high school diploma | 18% | 11% |
| BA | 33% | 15% |
| MA | 8% | 3% |
| PhD | 0% | 0% |
| Other | 2% | 4% |
| Non-Jewish | 9% | 20% |
| Ultra-Orthodox | 13% | 14% |
| N | 1,861 | 1,348 |

Operationalization of the independent and outcome variables

To measure partisan alignment, we asked respondents, in the first wave, which party they voted for in the last elections (including an option of “didn’t vote”). We then categorized their answers into *supporters of the opposition* (39%, or 40% weighted) and *supporters of the coalition* (51% or 47% weighted), and non-voters (10% or 13% weighted).

To measure the extent to which respondents’ perceive the Judicial Overhaul as a threat to democracy, the first wave included a battery of six items, ranging from completely disagree (=1) to completely agree (=7), reflecting both sides of the polarized public debate, such as: “I believe that Israel’s democracy is in real danger”, or “I believe that the legal reform will strengthen democracy” (r). The battery’s reliability is high with a Cronbach alpha=0.93. Additionally, as described in Online Appendix A, to assess the causal effect of the Judicial Overhaul on sector choice, in the second wave respondents were randomly allocated to a treatment that was intended to prime their awareness to the Judicial Overhaul, without them recognizing that this is the aim of the study. The prime was therefore weak, due to our concern with expressive responding.

The dependent variable, respondents’ attraction to work for the government, was measured in the second wave of the survey. Respondents first chose from ten possible options the occupation field that is most relevant to them.ⁱⁱⁱ Based on this selection, they were presented with **one** of ten similar vignettes, describing a job within their preferred field, with an identical monthly salary (10,000 NIS), work conditions (based in Jerusalem, with some

flexibility to work from home), and direct contact with the senior management. Respondents were then asked to state their preference between performing the specified job in a large government ministry, a large business, or a large nonprofit organization. A central advantage of this elicitation method is that it holds constant job attributes, thus rendering the response a clean choice between sectors.

Control variables

The second wave included a validated 16 item measure of the four dimensions of PSM (Kim et al. 2013). The Cronbach alpha of each of these dimensions ranges from 0.74 to 0.79. However, a four-factor CFA model fit is poor (CFI=0.889, TLI=0.864, RMSEA=0.083), and we find that only ‘attraction to public service’, which we include in the following analyses, is associated with respondents’ preference to work for a government ministry. We further control for the type of organization in which respondents currently work, insofar as they are employed (government ministry, local authority, governmental enterprise, business, nonprofit), for their field(s) of post high school or academic studies (cf. Asseburg and Homberg, 2020), and for standard demographic variables, including gender, education level, level of gross monthly income, and minority groups (Non-Jews and Ultra-orthodox Jews). The first wave further included a measure of respondents’ trust in government ministries (Grimmelikhuijsen and Knies, 2017), and a seven-item battery measuring risks associated with the Judicial overhaul. These two measures, which are strongly correlated with perceptions of democratic backsliding, are not included in the main analyses, but we examine them in the Online Appendix. The wording of the vignettes, operationalizing the dependent variable, and of the above-mentioned indices, are available in Online Appendices B and C, respectively.

RESULTS

A bivariate correlation table, including all main variables, is presented in Section D of the Online Appendix. Table 2 presents multivariate analyses of respondents’ binary preference for a job in a government ministry (=1) versus a business or NGO (=0). Models 1 to 3 present Linear Probability models (LPM) with non-weighted data, and models 4 to 7 employ Generalized Linear Models (GLM) with sample-weighted observations. Models 1 & 4 examine H1 (partisan alignment). Models 2 & 5 estimate H2 (perceived democratic backsliding). Models 3, 6 and 7 tentatively examine the expectation that perceived

democratic backsliding mediates the effect of partisan alignment. Perceived democratic backsliding and PSM are composite indices. All predictors are standardized to vary from zero to one employing min-max normalization. In robustness tests, presented in the Online Appendix, sections E-I, we replicate the structure of Table 2 with alternative model specifications. In these, we include non-voters (Section E), examine the four PSM dimensions (Section F), control for trust in government organizations (Section G), employ an alternative index for perceptions of threat to democracy (Section H), and estimate multinomial regressions instead of binary LPMs and GLMs (Section I). Our substantive results, as presented below, prove stable to all of these alternatives.

The effect of partisan alignment on sector choice (H1)

Table 2 models 1 and 4 show that supporters of the opposition are ~16 percentage points (pp.) less likely to seek work in a government ministry ($p < 0.01$). Notably, these results hold while controlling, *inter alia*, for respondents' PSM dimension of 'attraction to the public sector'.

To buttress these observational results, and assess the causal relationship between partisan alignment and sector choice, we went beyond our pre-registered analysis, and distributed a third wave of the survey to the same respondents ($N=1,212$; 28 Nov-5 Dec. 2023). This wave randomized the order of the questions on partisanship (intended voting) and on sector choice (assignment to professional field vignette was based on the 2nd wave). This design provides two randomly assigned conditions that vary by the level of the respondents' awareness to partisanship when choosing a sector.^{iv} If partisan alignment has a causal effect on sector choice, we should expect a stronger association between partisan alignment and sector choice when partisanship is primed, i.e., asked before sector choice. Table 3 and Figure 1 provide support for this expectation. Model 1 reproduces the negative association between support for the opposition and preference to work for a government ministry. In model 2 we see that the interaction term between the partisanship prime and support for the opposition is sizable and statistically significant. Priming partisanship has an inverse effect on coalition and opposition supporters, increasing the propensity of the former to opt for a government ministry by 10 pp, and decreasing this propensity among the latter by 9.7 pp. These results suggest that partisan alignment has a causal effect on respondents' preference to work for a government ministry versus businesses or nonprofits. In Online appendix section L we estimate this effect across different social groups, and income levels. We find this effect among both low and high-income respondents, and among the majority group, but not among minorities (ultra-orthodox jews and non-jews), although an insignificant effect in the same

direction is recorded ($b = -.139, p = .337$). These results suggest that the lack of partisan alignment effect among minority groups cannot be (wholly) explained by the salience of economic considerations.

Table 2: Multivariate Regression Analyses of Preference to Work for a Government Ministry

| | OLS | | | GLM with weights | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Support for the opposition | -0.157*** (0.027) | | -0.094*** (0.036) | -0.158*** (0.037) | | -0.112** (0.049) | -0.070 (0.046) |
| Perceived democratic backsliding | | -0.241*** (0.041) | -0.144*** (0.056) | | -0.220*** (0.056) | -0.108 (0.074) | -0.182*** (0.070) |
| PSM attraction | 0.214*** (0.068) | 0.216*** (0.068) | 0.213*** (0.068) | 0.268*** (0.099) | 0.284*** (0.097) | 0.274*** (0.098) | 0.219** (0.098) |
| Women | -0.054** (0.025) | -0.039 (0.026) | -0.043* (0.026) | -0.082** (0.035) | -0.071** (0.036) | -0.074** (0.036) | -0.074** (0.035) |
| working in a ministry (ref=not working) | 0.212*** (0.052) | 0.210*** (0.052) | 0.208*** (0.052) | 0.257*** (0.070) | 0.239*** (0.069) | 0.247*** (0.070) | 0.273*** (0.073) |
| working in a local authority | 0.062 (0.059) | 0.052 (0.059) | 0.057 (0.059) | 0.146* (0.080) | 0.127 (0.080) | 0.136* (0.080) | 0.056 (0.079) |
| working in a public corporation | -0.011 (0.052) | -0.014 (0.052) | -0.013 (0.051) | 0.020 (0.076) | 0.023 (0.080) | 0.020 (0.078) | 0.024 (0.070) |
| working in business | 0.010 (0.034) | 0.011 (0.034) | 0.009 (0.034) | -0.002 (0.047) | 0.001 (0.047) | -0.002 (0.047) | 0.049 (0.043) |
| working in a nonprofit | 0.096 (0.067) | 0.095 (0.067) | 0.095 (0.067) | 0.179** (0.088) | 0.178** (0.089) | 0.179** (0.088) | 0.196** (0.087) |
| Income | -0.009 (0.011) | -0.009 (0.011) | -0.009 (0.011) | -0.002 (0.015) | -0.002 (0.015) | -0.002 (0.015) | -0.0001 (0.015) |
| Education level | -0.008 (0.013) | -0.014 (0.013) | -0.010 (0.013) | 0.007 (0.016) | 0.002 (0.017) | 0.005 (0.017) | -0.012 (0.016) |
| Ultra-orthodox | 0.086** (0.038) | 0.081** (0.039) | 0.071* (0.039) | 0.053 (0.056) | 0.051 (0.057) | 0.039 (0.056) | |
| Non-Jewish | 0.173*** (0.050) | 0.149*** (0.050) | 0.171*** (0.050) | 0.111 (0.070) | 0.093 (0.067) | 0.117* (0.070) | |
| Constant | 0.273*** (0.080) | 0.319*** (0.081) | 0.311*** (0.081) | 0.187* (0.103) | 0.209* (0.107) | 0.213** (0.106) | 0.208** (0.105) |
| N | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,239 |
| R ² | 0.093 | 0.093 | 0.097 | | | | |
| Adj. R ² /AIC | 0.073 | 0.073 | 0.076 | 9358 | 9530 | 9547 | 7674 |

Notes: *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01; SEs in parentheses; all models include FEs for the ten vignettes and for respondents' disciplines of study

Table 3 & Figure 1: The causal effect of partisan alignment on preference to work for a government ministry

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|--|
| Oppo. supporter | -0.182*** (0.030) | -0.082+ (0.042) | <p>P(public sector choice)</p> <p>Control Partisanship prime</p> <p>■ Coalition supporter ■ Opposition supporter</p> |
| Partisanship prime | -.017 (.029) | 0.100* (0.045) | |
| Partisanship prime × Oppo. supporter | | -0.197*** (0.059) | |
| Constant | .492*** (.027) | 0.431*** (.033) | |
| Adj. R ² | .033 | .044 | |
| N | 1,075 | 1,075 | |

Note: SEs in parentheses; *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

The effect of Judicial Overhaul on sector choice (H2)

Table 2 models 2 and 5 show that respondents who perceive the Judicial Overhaul as a threat to democracy are significantly less inclined to work for a government ministry ($p<0.05$). Moving from the minimum to the maximum index value, the marginal difference of probabilities is a sizable 24.1 pp. in model 2, and 22 pp. in model 5. When including both partisan alignment and perceived democratic backsliding in the same model (3 & 6), the association of the latter with sector choice is statistically significant in model 3, yet insignificant in model 6 that employs a weighted sample. [But see our discussion below of model 7 where we find that the correlation holds among a sub-sample of the Jewish majority.] Furthermore, as elaborated in Online Appendix section A, our experimental prime of democratic backsliding yielded no effect on sector choice, nor did it mediate the associations between partisanship and preference to work for a government ministry. The null experimental findings could indicate that respondents' perceptions of the Judicial Overhaul as a threat to democracy have no causal effect on the attractiveness of work in government, or, alternatively, that the treatment, due to its weakness, did not successfully simulate this effect. Ultimately, we find mixed support for H2.

The mediation of partisan alignment by perceived democratic backsliding

Preliminary examination of perceived democratic backsliding as a mediator of partisan alignment yields mixed results. Consistent with our expectations, model 3 in Table 2 shows that when including both predictors in the same model the coefficient of perceived

democratic backsliding is negative and significant (-14.4, $p < 0.01$) and the coefficient of support for the opposition decreases by 10 pp. compared with model 1. Conversely, in model 6 with weighted observations, the coefficient of perceived democratic backsliding is insignificant, whereas that of support for the opposition remains negative and statistically significant (-.11, $p < 0.05$). This difference raises the possibility that this mediation thesis may be restricted to the majority group (which is over-represented in the unweighted models). Model 7 thus fits model 6 to a subset of the majority group (excluding ultra-orthodox Jews and non-Jews). This model indeed supports the proposition that perceptions of democratic backsliding (-.18, $p < 0.01$) underlie the effect of partisan alignment, the coefficient of which loses its significance among majority group members.

To further examine whether perceptions of democratic backsliding mediate the association between partisan alignment and preference to work in a government ministry, we estimated three structural equation models, performed with R's Lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012), that correspond to models 3, 6, and 7 in Table 2. The results of these analyses, presented in Sections J and K of the Online Appendix, replicate the above findings. They support the mediation hypothesis among members of the majority group, where the direct effect of partisan alignment is insignificant, and its indirect effect via perceived democratic backsliding is negative and significant (-.12, $p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

The above findings support our expectation that partisan alignment shapes individuals' preference to work for a government ministry (H1). The magnitude of this effect in terms of marginal probabilities is substantially large (~16 pp.). The experimental results indicate that this relationship is indeed causal, at least among members of the majority group. As for the hypothesis that perceived democratic backsliding shapes individuals' attraction to work for the government (H2), the results are mixed. The experimental results do not support such a causal effect. This null finding may stem from an ineffective treatment. The observational findings are mixed. A cautious interpretation suggests that it is only among the majority group that partisan alignment is significantly mediated by perceived democratic backsliding.

The reliability of the findings is high. They are derived from a carefully designed two-stage survey and a follow-up survey experiment. Results are robust to numerous model specifications as reported in the Online Appendix. Moreover, the findings' external validity is

high as they capture respondents' reactions to real-world occurrence of polarization and democratic backsliding.

CONCLUSION

Current research of individuals' attraction to the public sector ignores individuals' political attitudes and the political context within which individuals evaluate their fit with sectors and jobs. In an era of political polarization this aspect is increasingly important. To the best of our knowledge, ours is the first study to directly examine whether and how individuals' partisan alignment with the governing coalition affects their preference to work for government vis-a-vis other sectors. Our findings suggest that in politically polarized contexts, partisan alignment may be limiting the size and diversity of applicants to the public sector. Moreover, in countries that are undergoing democratic backsliding, bureaucrats' and job-seekers' reactions may exacerbate the materialization of regime change. As prior studies find, opposition supporters who are already working in government are inclined to resolve their moral conflict via exit and low engagement (Alon-Barkat et al. 2024; Kucinkas and Zylan, 2023). As we show, those seeking work prefer the private and non-profit sectors. Conversely, coalition supporters, who are motivated to rationalize and condone democratic backsliding by their party leaders (Braley et al., 2023; Graham and Svolik, 2020; Krishnarajan, 2023; Simonovits et al., 2022; Singer, 2023) are probably inclined to stay, if already working in government, and, as we show, to join if seeking work. Thus, the endeavors of authoritarians are facilitated by liberals' exit and entry choices.

Our findings open several avenues for further research. First, they tentatively indicate that the mechanisms underlying the effect of partisan alignment may vary across social groups. Exploration of alternative mechanisms, with larger sub-samples of minorities would be beneficial to further examine these differences. Second, we suspect that supporters of the opposition may be less affected by their aversion towards the governing coalition and its perception as a threat to democracy if they expect it to fail and to be short-lived. Thus, future studies may examine whether partisan alignment differently affects job seekers depending on their expectations of future political turnover. Third, further research may examine the effect of partisan alignment on public sector attractiveness in settings of high political polarization but without overt democratic backsliding. Fourth, future studies may examine this relationship across varying levels of political polarization. Fifth, future research may explicitly measure how partisanship and perceived democratic backsliding affect job seekers'

perception of person-organization-fit. Finally, it is important to examine whether and how institutional factors moderate the effect of partisan alignment. Specifically, meritocratic bureaucratic systems of recruitment and promotion may ameliorate this effect. Still, when analyzing such moderation, we need to acknowledge that partisan alignment is also likely to shape job seekers' *perceptions* of bureaucratic autonomy, meritocracy, and professional influence (cf. Alon-Barkat et al. 2024).

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ⁱ https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=SNM_MP6

ⁱⁱ At the end of the second survey respondents were asked to write what they believe to be the aim of the study. Only a few (N=52, 2.8%) mentioned political attitudes, trust in government or the Judicial Overhaul in their explanation and none mentioned our first survey.

ⁱⁱⁱ Communications & public relations, engineering & maintenance, health & care professions, accounting & finance, data management & analysis, customer-facing roles, legal advice, human resource management, strategy, and a residual other.

^{iv} A randomization check, predicting the experimental condition based on a logit regression with partisanship (measured in a previous wave), PSM, gender, age and education level, as predictors, yielded an insignificant model (LR Chi-squared = 5.35, p=.80) and no significant coefficients.

ONLINE APPENDIX

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SECTION A: Experimental priming of the Judicial Overhaul

The experimental element of this pre-registered study¹ was designed to prime respondents' awareness to the judicial overhaul (JO), in order to test the causal effect of this event on young adults' (21-30) propensity to join the public sector. We hypothesized that the JO reduces this propensity in general, thus:

H1: priming awareness to the JO will reduce the likelihood of choosing a (hypothetical) job offer in the public sector, versus the in private or non-profit sectors;

The hypothesized negative effect of priming awareness to the JO on the likelihood of choosing a (hypothetical) job offer in the public sector was expected to be stronger among:

H2a: Supporters of the opposition parties, compared to supporters of the coalition parties;

H2b: Respondents who perceive greater democratic backsliding;

H2c: Respondents who perceive greater threat to the public's interest.

We primed respondents' awareness to the JO by asking them to choose "what is the main issue that is on the mind of people like yourself these days", from a list of 4 issues – one of which was the government's JO (the others were “the cost of living”, “the ramifications of AI”, and “the Iranian threat”). In the control condition, respondents were presented with the same question and issues, other than the JO that was not included among the list of 4 issues and replaced by “global warming”. Both the treatment and control conditions included a 5th option "other", in which respondents were able to freely write an issue of concern. The probabilities of assignment to each of the conditions were equal. The prime (or control) appeared right before the vignettes, which are described in the manuscript and fully presented in Online Appendix Section B.

Following the pre-registered plan for testing these hypotheses, Table A1 shows the results of eight linear probability models, with the binary choice between working in the government vs. private and non-profit organizations as dependent variable, a binary treatment variable (priming the JO or control), support for the opposition, perceived democratic backsliding and JO concerns, and 9 dummy variables indicating the field of occupation chosen by the respondent (Huang 2022).

Models 1-4 test H1-H2c, and models 5-8 repeat these analyses while adding sampling weights. None of these hypotheses are supported by the results. Importantly, the treatment had no main effect on the propensity to choose working for a government ministry, nor did it have a significant interaction effect with partisan alignment, perceived democratic backsliding and JO concerns.

These null findings present the question of whether the JO has no causal effect on the attractiveness of work in the public sector, or whether the treatment did not successfully simulate the effect of the JO. This possible failure may stem from the subtle nature of the prime, or that the effect of the JO on people's attraction to the public sector has already occurred prior to the experiment, allowing only a negligible effect of the priming. A

¹ https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=SNM_MP6

manipulation check indicates that 77% of the respondents correctly remembered which issue was omitted from their list, suggesting that the treatment was generally noticed by the respondents, giving more credence to the second explanation. A third possibility is that including the JO, or the control, within a list of four issues diluted its effect due to the salience of other issues. Specifically, among those who were assigned to the treatment 66.7% ticked “the cost of living” as the issue that most concerns people like themselves (the corresponding percentage among the control group was 77.6%). To summarize, we find no direct support for a causal effect of the JO on the attractiveness of the public sector, but given the weakness of the prime we do not think that this result should be taken conclusively.

Table A1. Estimating the effect of priming the judicial overhaul on attraction to work for a government ministry

| VARIABLES | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 | Model 8 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Treatment (Priming JO) | -0.001 (0.022) | -0.021 (0.031) | -0.031 (0.038) | -0.024 (0.041) | -0.014 (0.032) | -0.016 (0.043) | -0.027 (0.056) | -0.034 (0.061) |
| Opposition voter | | -0.161*** (0.033) | | | | -0.104* (0.046) | | |
| Perceived democratic backsliding | | | -0.271*** (0.050) | | | | -0.213** (0.071) | |
| JO concerns | | | | -0.238*** (0.048) | | | | -0.206** (0.066) |
| Treatment × Opposition voter | | 0.030 (0.046) | | | | -0.015 (0.068) | | |
| Treatment × Dem. backsliding | | | 0.055 (0.070) | | | | 0.020 (0.105) | |
| Treatment × JO concerns | | | | 0.041 (0.068) | | | | 0.036 (0.103) |
| Professional domain FE | -0.117* (0.058) | -0.113+ (0.060) | -0.119* (0.058) | -0.118* (0.058) | -0.003 (0.096) | 0.085 (0.101) | -0.006 (0.094) | 0.013 (0.095) |
| Constant | 0.400*** (0.038) | 0.469*** (0.041) | 0.525*** (0.044) | 0.520*** (0.045) | 0.377*** (0.055) | 0.394*** (0.058) | 0.474*** (0.062) | 0.474*** (0.063) |
| R-squared | 0.017 | 0.042 | 0.041 | 0.038 | 0.018 | 0.034 | 0.034 | 0.033 |
| Adj. R-Squared | 0.0112 | 0.0351 | 0.0352 | 0.0314 | 0.0131 | 0.0267 | 0.0279 | 0.0263 |
| Observations | 1,861 | 1,713 | 1,861 | 1,861 | 1,856 | 1,708 | 1,856 | 1,856 |

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1

SECTION B: Wording of the Ten Vignettes

- Suppose that this week you come across a full-time job offer with a starting salary of 10,000 NIS **in the public relations and communications department** of a large organization. Within this role, **you will be in contact with journalists and will produce content to be uploaded to the organization's website and social media.** Additionally, **you will have contact and working relations with those who are at the apex of the organization.** The workplace is in Jerusalem, and work from home will be partly allowed.

If the same position is offered in the following three organizations, in which organization would you prefer to work:

*a large government ministry *a large business *a large nonprofit organization

- Suppose that this week you come across a full-time job offer with a starting salary of 10,000 NIS **in the strategy department** of a large organization. Within this role, **you will be involved in writing work plans, which will shape the organization's policy strategy.** Additionally, **you will have contact and working relations with those who are at the apex of the organization.** The workplace is in Jerusalem, and work from home will be partly allowed.

If the same position is offered in the following three organizations, in which organization would you prefer to work:

*a large government ministry *a large business *a large nonprofit organization

- Suppose that this week you come across a full-time job offer with a starting salary of 10,000 NIS **in the human resources department** of a large organization. Within this role, **you will participate in managing the process of recruiting and promoting employees in the organization.** Additionally, **you will have contact and working relations with those who are at the apex of the organization.** The workplace is in Jerusalem, and work from home will be partly allowed.

If the same position is offered in the following three organizations, in which organization would you prefer to work:

*a large government ministry *a large business *a large nonprofit organization

- Suppose that this week you come across a full-time job offer with a starting salary of 10,000 NIS **in the legal department** of a large organization. Within this role, **you will write legal reports on issues that stand on the organization's agenda.** Additionally, **you will have contact and working relations with those who are at the apex of the organization.** The workplace is in Jerusalem, and work from home will be partly allowed.

If the same position is offered in the following three organizations, in which organization would you prefer to work:

*a large government ministry *a large business *a large nonprofit organization

- Suppose that this week you come across a full-time job offer with a starting salary of 10,000 NIS **in the public inquiries department** of a large organization. Within this role, **you will handle complaints and information requests from individuals.** Additionally, **you will have contact and working relations with those who are at the apex of the organization.** The workplace is in Jerusalem, and work from home will be partly allowed.

If the same position is offered in the following three organizations, in which organization would you prefer to work:

*a large government ministry *a large business *a large nonprofit organization

- Suppose that this week you come across a full-time job offer with a starting salary of 10,000 NIS **in the information processing and data analysis department** of a large organization. Within this role, **you will collect and analyze data, that will allow the organization to examine its effectiveness.** Additionally, **you will have contact and working relations with those who are at the apex of the organization.** The workplace is in Jerusalem, and work from home will be partly allowed.

If the same position is offered in the following three organizations, in which organization would you prefer to work:

*a large government ministry *a large business *a large nonprofit organization

- Suppose that this week you come across a full-time job offer with a starting salary of 10,000 NIS **in the accounting unit** of a large organization. Within this role, **you will participate in the planning and ongoing management of the organization's budget.** Additionally, **you will have contact and working relations with those who are at the apex of the organization.** The workplace is in Jerusalem, and work from home will be partly allowed.

If the same position is offered in the following three organizations, in which organization would you prefer to work:

*a large government ministry *a large business *a large nonprofit organization

- Suppose that this week you come across a full-time job offer with a starting salary of 10,000 NIS **in the health and care services department** of a large organization. Within this role, **you will participate in ensuring the quality of care in the organization's institutions.** Additionally, **you will have contact and working relations with those who are at the apex of the organization.** The workplace is in Jerusalem, and work from home will be partly allowed.

If the same position is offered in the following three organizations, in which organization would you prefer to work:

*a large government ministry *a large business *a large nonprofit organization

- Suppose that this week you come across a full-time job offer with a starting salary of 10,000 NIS **in the department of engineering and maintenance** in a large organization. Within this role, **you will participate in the initiation and implementation of projects in the field of construction and maintenance of the organization.** Additionally, **you will have contact and working relations with those who are at the apex of the organization.** The workplace is in Jerusalem, and work from home will be partly allowed.

If the same position is offered in the following three organizations, in which organization would you prefer to work:

*a large government ministry *a large business *a large nonprofit organization

- Suppose that this week you come across a full-time job offer with a starting salary of 10,000 NIS in a large organization. Within this role, **you will have significant responsibilities**. Additionally, **you will have contact and working relations with those who are at the apex of the organization**. The workplace is in Jerusalem, and work from home will be partly allowed.

If the same position is offered in the following three organizations, in which organization would you prefer to work:

*a large government ministry *a large business *a large nonprofit organization

Section C: Operationalization of Composite Indices

Perceived democratic backsliding

- I believe that Israel's democracy is in real danger
- I support the legal reform (r)
- I think that the legal reform will increase trust in the judicial system (r)
- I believe that the legal reform will strengthen democracy (r)
- I participate in the protests against the legal reform
- The legal reform is actually a regime coup.

1=strongly disagree 7=strongly agree

Comm.: measured in the 1st wave; items presented in a random order.

Public Service Motivation

Attraction to public service:

- I admire people who initiate or take part in actions that contribute to the community
- It is important to me to contribute to tackling social problems
- It is important to me to perform a significant public service
- It is important to me to contribute to the common good

Commitment to public values:

- I see great importance in equal opportunities for all citizens
- It is important to me that the citizens of Israel can receive a stable supply of public services
- When designing public policy, it is imperative to consider the needs of future generations
- Civil servants should act fairly and with integrity

Compassion:

- I feel sympathetic to the hardship of the underprivileged in society
- I empathize with people who face difficulties in society
- I get very upset when I see other people being treated unfairly
- When making decisions, their influence on other people should always be considered

Self-sacrifice:

- I am prepared to pay a high price for the good of society
- Contribution to society is more important to me than personal achievements
- I would be prepared to pay a high price in order to help others in society
- I would agree to a good plan that will improve the lives of the poor in Israel even if it would reduce my personal welfare

1=to a very small degree5=to a very large degree

Comm.: measured in the 2nd wave; items presented in a random order.

Harm to the public interest due to the Judicial Overhaul (JO concerns)

- I am concerned that women's rights will be harmed.

- I am concerned that LGBTQ rights will be harmed
- I am concerned that the secular way of living in the country will be harmed.
- I am concerned that Israeli Arab's rights will be harmed.
- I am concerned about the politicization of the civil service.
- I am concerned that the economy will be harmed due to reduced international investments and investors' exit from the country.
- I am concerned that the IDF's capabilities will be harmed due to citizens' reduced willingness to serve.

1=not concerned at all5=very concerned

Comm.: measured in the 1st wave; items presented in a random order.

Trust in Government Ministries

- Israeli government ministries act in the best interests of citizens like me
- Israeli government ministries perform their work on the basis of very high professional competence
- Israeli government ministries act in fairness and with integrity
- I have high trust in Israeli government ministries

1=strongly disagree5=strongly agree

Comm.: measured in the 1st wave; items presented in a random order

Section D: Bivariate Correlation Table

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1-Prefer public | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2-support opposition | -0.16*** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3-demo. backsliding | -0.16*** | 0.74*** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4-harm to public interest | -0.15*** | 0.70*** | 0.85*** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5-trust in gov ministries | 0.11*** | -0.42*** | -0.52*** | -0.47*** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6-PSM attraction | 0.09*** | -0.02 | -0.02 | 0.02 | 0.06* | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7-woman | -0.02 | 0.10*** | 0.18*** | 0.19*** | -0.17*** | 0.06* | | | | | | | | | |
| 8-income | -0.05* | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.03 | -0.05* | -0.11*** | | | | | | | | |
| 9-education level | -0.05* | 0.19*** | 0.13*** | 0.12*** | -0.05* | 0.01 | 0.21*** | 0.22*** | | | | | | | |
| 10-Ultra-orthodox | 0.07** | -0.33*** | -0.34*** | -0.40*** | 0.13*** | 0.00 | -0.03 | -0.05* | -0.18*** | | | | | | |
| 11-non-Jewish | 0.04 | 0.25*** | 0.16*** | 0.14*** | -0.10*** | -0.05* | 0.12*** | -0.07** | 0.12*** | -0.12*** | | | | | |
| 12-works for a ministry | 0.13*** | 0.01 | -0.02 | -0.01 | 0.07** | 0.07** | 0.00 | 0.02 | 0.13*** | -0.06* | 0.06** | | | | |
| 13-works for a municipality | 0.01 | 0.05* | 0.01 | 0.02 | -0.04 | 0.02 | 0.06** | -0.10*** | 0.00 | -0.02 | 0.13*** | -0.07** | | | |
| 14-works for a public corp. | -0.03 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.03 | -0.01 | 0.02 | 0.00 | 0.03 | 0.04 | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.08*** | -0.07** | | |
| 15-works for a business | -0.07** | -0.04 | 0.00 | 0.01 | -0.02 | -0.09*** | 0.00 | 0.14*** | 0.02 | -0.02 | -0.15*** | -0.33*** | -0.28*** | -0.32*** | |
| 16-works for an NGO | 0.04 | -0.01 | 0.00 | -0.02 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.02 | -0.03 | -0.02 | 0.03 | -0.03 | -0.06* | -0.05* | -0.06* | -0.22*** |

SECTION E: Robust Analysis Including Non-Voters

| | OLS | | | GLM with weights | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Support for the opposition | -0.155*** (0.027) | | -0.093*** (0.035) | -0.148*** (0.036) | | -0.097** (0.047) | -0.073 (0.045) |
| Non-voter | -0.085** (0.042) | | -0.054 (0.044) | -0.071 (0.062) | | -0.046 (0.064) | -0.001 (0.063) |
| Perceived democratic backsliding | | -0.235*** (0.040) | -0.142*** (0.053) | | -0.217*** (0.055) | -0.121* (0.073) | -0.184*** (0.067) |
| PSM attraction | 0.174*** (0.066) | 0.177*** (0.065) | 0.174*** (0.065) | 0.156 (0.097) | 0.168* (0.096) | 0.163* (0.096) | 0.175* (0.094) |
| Women | -0.031 (0.024) | -0.016 (0.025) | -0.020 (0.025) | -0.037 (0.034) | -0.026 (0.035) | -0.030 (0.035) | -0.055 (0.034) |
| working in a ministry (ref=not working) | 0.206*** (0.049) | 0.204*** (0.049) | 0.203*** (0.049) | 0.275*** (0.069) | 0.258*** (0.068) | 0.266*** (0.068) | 0.243*** (0.072) |
| working in a local authority | 0.009 (0.055) | -0.001 (0.055) | 0.004 (0.055) | 0.070 (0.079) | 0.051 (0.079) | 0.059 (0.079) | 0.017 (0.075) |
| working in a public corporation | -0.018 (0.049) | -0.023 (0.049) | -0.020 (0.049) | -0.016 (0.073) | -0.017 (0.076) | -0.017 (0.075) | 0.014 (0.067) |
| working in a business | 0.001 (0.032) | 0.003 (0.032) | 0.001 (0.032) | -0.026 (0.044) | -0.024 (0.044) | -0.025 (0.044) | 0.041 (0.042) |
| working in a nonprofit | 0.094 (0.064) | 0.096 (0.064) | 0.095 (0.064) | 0.178** (0.080) | 0.181** (0.080) | 0.181** (0.080) | 0.218*** (0.084) |
| Income | -0.004 (0.010) | -0.004 (0.010) | -0.003 (0.010) | 0.002 (0.014) | 0.002 (0.014) | 0.002 (0.014) | -0.002 (0.014) |
| Education level | -0.015 (0.012) | -0.021* (0.012) | -0.017 (0.012) | -0.010 (0.016) | -0.013 (0.016) | -0.011 (0.016) | -0.012 (0.015) |
| Ultra-orthodox | 0.075** (0.037) | 0.068* (0.038) | 0.058 (0.038) | 0.073 (0.057) | 0.064 (0.057) | 0.056 (0.058) | |
| Non-Jewish | 0.144*** (0.043) | 0.128*** (0.041) | 0.144*** (0.043) | 0.099* (0.060) | 0.090 (0.056) | 0.104* (0.060) | |
| Constant | 0.290*** (0.076) | 0.335*** (0.077) | 0.328*** (0.077) | 0.256** (0.100) | 0.285*** (0.102) | 0.285*** (0.103) | 0.232** (0.102) |
| N | 1,721 | 1,721 | 1,721 | 1,721 | 1,721 | 1,721 | 1,344 |
| R ² | 0.078 | 0.078 | 0.082 | | | | |
| Adj. R ² /AIC | 0.059 | 0.060 | 0.063 | 10540 | 10531 | 10550 | 8298 |

Notes: *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01; all models include FEs for the ten vignettes and for respondents' disciplines of study

SECTION F: Robust Analysis including all Four PSM Dimensions

| | OLS | | | | GLM with weights | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Support for the opposition | -0.160*** (0.027) | | -0.096*** (0.037) | -0.153*** (0.038) | | -0.109** (0.050) | -0.068 (0.047) |
| Perceived democratic backsliding | | -0.243*** (0.042) | -0.146*** (0.056) | | -0.214*** (0.056) | -0.106 (0.074) | -0.179** (0.070) |
| PSM attraction | 0.226** (0.095) | 0.237** (0.095) | 0.221** (0.095) | 0.323*** (0.125) | 0.348*** (0.127) | 0.325** (0.127) | 0.228* (0.127) |
| PSM compassion | -0.005 (0.103) | 0.008 (0.103) | -0.002 (0.103) | 0.021 (0.137) | 0.034 (0.136) | 0.023 (0.137) | 0.020 (0.143) |
| PSM values | 0.040 (0.104) | 0.020 (0.103) | 0.052 (0.104) | -0.077 (0.146) | -0.094 (0.146) | -0.067 (0.147) | -0.067 (0.145) |
| PSM sacrifice | -0.048 (0.075) | -0.059 (0.075) | -0.053 (0.075) | -0.048 (0.104) | -0.064 (0.102) | -0.051 (0.103) | 0.022 (0.105) |
| Women | -0.056** (0.026) | -0.042 (0.026) | -0.046* (0.026) | -0.081** (0.036) | -0.071* (0.037) | -0.074** (0.037) | -0.071** (0.035) |
| working in a ministry (ref=not working) | 0.213*** (0.052) | 0.210*** (0.052) | 0.209*** (0.052) | 0.255*** (0.070) | 0.238*** (0.069) | 0.245*** (0.070) | 0.273*** (0.073) |
| working in a local authority | 0.065 (0.059) | 0.054 (0.059) | 0.060 (0.059) | 0.142* (0.079) | 0.123 (0.079) | 0.132* (0.079) | 0.055 (0.079) |
| working in a public corporation | -0.010 (0.052) | -0.013 (0.052) | -0.011 (0.052) | 0.018 (0.076) | 0.020 (0.080) | 0.019 (0.078) | 0.024 (0.069) |
| working in a business | 0.009 (0.034) | 0.010 (0.034) | 0.009 (0.034) | -0.005 (0.047) | -0.003 (0.047) | -0.005 (0.047) | 0.050 (0.044) |
| working in a nonprofit | 0.096 (0.067) | 0.094 (0.067) | 0.095 (0.067) | 0.173** (0.087) | 0.171* (0.087) | 0.173** (0.087) | 0.196** (0.087) |
| Income | -0.009 (0.011) | -0.009 (0.011) | -0.009 (0.011) | -0.003 (0.015) | -0.003 (0.015) | -0.002 (0.015) | -0.001 (0.015) |
| Education level | -0.008 (0.013) | -0.014 (0.013) | -0.010 (0.013) | 0.006 (0.017) | 0.002 (0.017) | 0.005 (0.017) | -0.012 (0.016) |
| Ultra-orthodox | 0.087** (0.039) | 0.081** (0.039) | 0.071* (0.039) | 0.054 (0.056) | 0.052 (0.057) | 0.040 (0.057) | |
| Non-Jewish | 0.178*** (0.051) | 0.154*** (0.050) | 0.178*** (0.051) | 0.111 (0.073) | 0.095 (0.069) | 0.118 (0.072) | |
| Constant | 0.264*** (0.091) | 0.317*** (0.092) | 0.297*** (0.092) | 0.222* (0.124) | 0.250** (0.124) | 0.243* (0.125) | 0.230* (0.127) |
| N | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,239 |
| R ² | 0.093 | 0.093 | 0.097 | | | | |
| Adj. R ² /AIC | 0.071 | 0.071 | 0.075 | 9550 | 9542 | 9559 | 7684 |

Notes: * p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .01; SE in parentheses; all models include FEs for the ten vignettes and for respondents' disciplines of study

SECTION G: Robust Analysis Including Trust in Government Departments

| | OLS | | | GLM with weights | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Support for the opposition | -0.136*** (0.029) | | -0.091** (0.036) | -0.147*** (0.041) | | -0.112** (0.049) | -0.068 (0.046) |
| Perceived democratic backsliding | | -0.210*** (0.047) | -0.119** (0.059) | | -0.207*** (0.065) | -0.099 (0.079) | -0.159** (0.075) |
| Trust in gov ministries | 0.108** (0.053) | 0.078 (0.056) | 0.069 (0.056) | 0.062 (0.071) | 0.039 (0.075) | 0.029 (0.076) | 0.064 (0.073) |
| PSM attraction | 0.209*** (0.069) | 0.213*** (0.069) | 0.210*** (0.068) | 0.269*** (0.099) | 0.284*** (0.098) | 0.275*** (0.098) | 0.221** (0.098) |
| Women | -0.047* (0.026) | -0.036 (0.026) | -0.041 (0.026) | -0.079** (0.036) | -0.070* (0.036) | -0.074** (0.036) | -0.073** (0.035) |
| working in a ministry (ref=not working) | 0.204*** (0.052) | 0.204*** (0.052) | 0.203*** (0.052) | 0.247*** (0.070) | 0.233*** (0.069) | 0.242*** (0.070) | 0.266*** (0.073) |
| working in a local authority | 0.063 (0.059) | 0.053 (0.059) | 0.058 (0.059) | 0.145* (0.081) | 0.127 (0.081) | 0.134* (0.080) | 0.053 (0.079) |
| working in a public corporation | -0.013 (0.052) | -0.016 (0.052) | -0.014 (0.051) | 0.017 (0.077) | 0.019 (0.080) | 0.017 (0.078) | 0.016 (0.070) |
| working in a business | 0.007 (0.034) | 0.009 (0.034) | 0.007 (0.034) | -0.005 (0.047) | -0.002 (0.048) | -0.005 (0.047) | 0.044 (0.044) |
| working in a nonprofit | 0.088 (0.067) | 0.089 (0.067) | 0.090 (0.067) | 0.174** (0.088) | 0.174** (0.089) | 0.176** (0.088) | 0.188** (0.087) |
| Income | -0.009 (0.011) | -0.009 (0.011) | -0.009 (0.011) | -0.003 (0.015) | -0.003 (0.015) | -0.002 (0.015) | -0.001 (0.015) |
| Education level | -0.009 (0.013) | -0.014 (0.013) | -0.010 (0.013) | 0.006 (0.016) | 0.003 (0.016) | 0.005 (0.016) | -0.012 (0.016) |
| Ultra-orthodox | 0.086** (0.038) | 0.083** (0.039) | 0.073* (0.039) | 0.051 (0.056) | 0.051 (0.057) | 0.038 (0.057) | |
| Non-Jewish | 0.175*** (0.050) | 0.151*** (0.050) | 0.172*** (0.050) | 0.113 (0.070) | 0.093 (0.067) | 0.116* (0.070) | |
| Constant | 0.233*** (0.082) | 0.283*** (0.085) | 0.279*** (0.085) | 0.166 (0.105) | 0.194* (0.112) | 0.203* (0.111) | 0.184* (0.110) |
| N | 1,549 | 1,549 | 1,549 | 1,549 | 1,549 | 1,549 | 1,237 |
| R ² | 0.095 | 0.094 | 0.098 | | | | |
| Adj. R ² /AIC | 0.075 | 0.074 | 0.077 | 9531 | 9521 | 9538 | 7665 |

Notes: *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01; SE in parentheses; all models include FEs for the ten vignettes and for respondents' disciplines of study

**SECTION H: Robust Analysis with Harm to the Public Interest Due to the Judicial Overhaul
Instead of Perceived Democratic Backsliding**

| | OLS | | | GLM with weights | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Support for the opposition | -0.157*** (0.027) | | -0.115*** (0.034) | -0.158*** (0.037) | | -0.123** (0.048) | -0.081* (0.043) |
| Harm to the Public Interest | | -0.215*** (0.041) | -0.105** (0.053) | | -0.208*** (0.054) | -0.094 (0.071) | -0.173** (0.069) |
| PSM attraction | 0.214*** (0.068) | 0.230*** (0.069) | 0.219*** (0.068) | 0.268*** (0.099) | 0.283*** (0.097) | 0.273*** (0.098) | 0.229** (0.097) |
| Women | -0.054** (0.025) | -0.038 (0.026) | -0.044* (0.026) | -0.082** (0.035) | -0.069* (0.036) | -0.074** (0.036) | -0.070** (0.036) |
| working in a ministry (ref=not working) | 0.212*** (0.052) | 0.217*** (0.052) | 0.211*** (0.052) | 0.257*** (0.070) | 0.263*** (0.070) | 0.259*** (0.070) | 0.279*** (0.072) |
| working in a local authority | 0.062 (0.059) | 0.057 (0.059) | 0.061 (0.059) | 0.146* (0.080) | 0.154* (0.083) | 0.148* (0.081) | 0.063 (0.080) |
| working in a public corporation | -0.011 (0.052) | -0.009 (0.052) | -0.010 (0.052) | 0.020 (0.076) | 0.029 (0.076) | 0.023 (0.076) | 0.030 (0.069) |
| working in a business | 0.010 (0.034) | 0.014 (0.034) | 0.010 (0.034) | -0.002 (0.047) | 0.009 (0.047) | 0.001 (0.046) | 0.052 (0.043) |
| working in a nonprofit | 0.096 (0.067) | 0.089 (0.067) | 0.093 (0.067) | 0.179** (0.088) | 0.171** (0.085) | 0.176** (0.087) | 0.193** (0.087) |
| Income | -0.009 (0.011) | -0.010 (0.011) | -0.009 (0.011) | -0.002 (0.015) | -0.003 (0.015) | -0.002 (0.015) | -0.002 (0.015) |
| Education level | -0.008 (0.013) | -0.015 (0.013) | -0.009 (0.013) | 0.007 (0.016) | 0.002 (0.017) | 0.005 (0.017) | -0.011 (0.016) |
| Ultra-orthodox | 0.086** (0.038) | 0.074* (0.040) | 0.067* (0.040) | 0.053 (0.056) | 0.041 (0.058) | 0.032 (0.057) | |
| Non-Jewish | 0.173*** (0.050) | 0.142*** (0.050) | 0.172*** (0.050) | 0.111 (0.070) | 0.083 (0.068) | 0.115 (0.070) | |
| Constant | 0.273*** (0.080) | 0.312*** (0.081) | 0.303*** (0.081) | 0.187* (0.103) | 0.208* (0.107) | 0.214** (0.107) | 0.204* (0.105) |
| N | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,551 | 1,239 |
| R ² | 0.093 | 0.088 | 0.095 | | | | |
| Adj. R ² /AIC | 0.073 | 0.068 | 0.075 | 9538 | 9524 | 9546 | 7673 |

Notes: *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01; SE in parentheses; all models include FEs for the ten vignettes and for respondents' disciplines of study

SECTION I: Multinomial Regression Analysis

Table I.1: Multinomial Regression without Sample Weights

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | business | NGO | business | NGO | business | NGO |
| Support for the opposition | 0.760*** (0.151) | 1.200*** (0.217) | | | 0.484** (0.201) | 0.611** (0.291) |
| Perceived democratic backsliding | | | 1.124*** (0.230) | 1.960*** (0.333) | 0.635** (0.308) | 1.346*** (0.445) |
| PSM attraction | -1.542*** (0.368) | 0.590 (0.546) | -1.538*** (0.369) | 0.556 (0.546) | -1.530*** (0.369) | 0.594 (0.547) |
| Working in ministry (re=not working) | -0.788*** (0.277) | -0.976** (0.429) | -0.778*** (0.278) | -0.936** (0.430) | -0.776*** (0.278) | -0.936** (0.430) |
| Working in local authority | -0.591* (0.334) | -0.408 (0.422) | -0.501 (0.334) | -0.302 (0.427) | -0.546 (0.335) | -0.344 (0.427) |
| Working in public corporation | 0.151 (0.290) | -0.089 (0.397) | 0.167 (0.289) | -0.072 (0.400) | 0.152 (0.290) | -0.082 (0.400) |
| Working in business | 0.026 (0.186) | -0.146 (0.248) | 0.004 (0.186) | -0.172 (0.250) | 0.022 (0.187) | -0.153 (0.250) |
| working in a nonprofit | -0.813** (0.398) | -0.132 (0.442) | -0.818** (0.397) | -0.190 (0.447) | -0.818** (0.399) | -0.171 (0.447) |
| Women | 0.118 (0.137) | 0.617*** (0.197) | 0.043 (0.139) | 0.453** (0.201) | 0.065 (0.140) | 0.492** (0.202) |
| Income | 0.107* (0.059) | -0.210** (0.091) | 0.109* (0.059) | -0.199** (0.091) | 0.107* (0.059) | -0.206** (0.091) |
| Education level | 0.036 (0.073) | 0.072 (0.103) | 0.069 (0.072) | 0.116 (0.102) | 0.048 (0.073) | 0.091 (0.103) |
| Ultra-orthodox | -0.678*** (0.211) | 0.451* (0.261) | -0.646*** (0.213) | 0.553** (0.267) | -0.609*** (0.213) | 0.609** (0.269) |
| Non-Jewish | -0.590** (0.275) | -1.949*** (0.526) | -0.471* (0.269) | -1.768*** (0.522) | -0.594** (0.274) | -1.925*** (0.527) |
| Constant | 1.123*** (0.413) | -1.959*** (0.621) | 0.902** (0.422) | -2.352*** (0.634) | 0.957** (0.422) | -2.310*** (0.635) |
| AIC | 2,477.910 | | 2,475.095 | | 2,471.652 | |
| N | 1,551 | | 1,551 | | 1,551 | |

Notes: *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01; SE in parentheses; all models include FEs for the ten vignettes and for respondents' disciplines of study

Table I.2: Multinomial Regression with Sample Weights

| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 3 | | Model 4 (majority only) | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| | business | NGO | business | NGO | business | NGO | business | NGO |
| Support for the opposition | 0.737*** (0.157) | 1.289*** (0.232) | | | 0.486** (0.206) | 0.763** (0.306) | 0.227 (0.232) | 0.779** (0.345) |
| Perceived democratic backsliding | | | 1.093*** (0.244) | 1.999*** (0.356) | 0.612* (0.319) | 1.239*** (0.470) | 1.097*** (0.365) | 1.160** (0.541) |
| PSM attraction | -2.120*** (0.374) | 1.446** (0.565) | -2.185*** (0.377) | 1.282** (0.564) | -2.139*** (0.376) | 1.388** (0.567) | -1.549*** (0.468) | 0.565 (0.702) |
| Working in ministry (re=not working) | -0.866*** (0.301) | -0.797* (0.473) | -0.773** (0.302) | -0.686 (0.475) | -0.813*** (0.302) | -0.721 (0.476) | -0.969*** (0.355) | -1.667*** (0.641) |
| Working in local authority | -0.753** (0.293) | -0.530 (0.408) | -0.629** (0.292) | -0.337 (0.412) | -0.681** (0.295) | -0.393 (0.413) | -0.345 (0.392) | -0.174 (0.483) |
| Working in public corporation | 0.403 (0.297) | -0.252 (0.455) | 0.415 (0.297) | -0.251 (0.458) | 0.412 (0.298) | -0.239 (0.457) | 0.158 (0.344) | -0.807 (0.566) |
| Working in business | 0.161 (0.179) | 0.165 (0.246) | 0.138 (0.179) | 0.141 (0.246) | 0.161 (0.179) | 0.169 (0.247) | -0.110 (0.225) | -0.191 (0.307) |
| working in a nonprofit | -0.813** (0.377) | -0.695 (0.486) | -0.830** (0.376) | -0.845* (0.495) | -0.833** (0.377) | -0.811 (0.495) | -0.961** (0.428) | -0.911 (0.586) |
| Women | 0.160 (0.142) | 0.615*** (0.200) | 0.094 (0.143) | 0.455** (0.204) | 0.112 (0.144) | 0.500** (0.205) | 0.077 (0.174) | 0.714*** (0.253) |
| Income | 0.060 (0.063) | -0.281*** (0.101) | 0.061 (0.063) | -0.270*** (0.101) | 0.057 (0.063) | -0.280*** (0.101) | 0.049 (0.073) | -0.360*** (0.125) |
| Education level | -0.047 (0.085) | 0.091 (0.122) | -0.029 (0.085) | 0.130 (0.123) | -0.038 (0.085) | 0.109 (0.123) | 0.084 (0.102) | -0.005 (0.150) |
| Ultra-orthodox | -0.463** (0.217) | 0.515* (0.278) | -0.412* (0.221) | 0.623** (0.284) | -0.378* (0.221) | 0.688** (0.287) | | |
| Non-Jewish | -0.367* (0.205) | -1.466*** (0.340) | -0.285 (0.199) | -1.363*** (0.335) | -0.402* (0.206) | -1.528*** (0.342) | | |
| Constant | 1.723*** (0.422) | -2.567*** (0.651) | 1.587*** (0.430) | -2.820*** (0.661) | 1.576*** (0.430) | -2.859*** (0.664) | 1.422*** (0.548) | -1.674** (0.844) |
| AIC | 2,358.538 | 2,358.538 | 2,359.182 | 2,359.182 | 2,354.391 | 2,354.391 | 1,648.657 | 1,648.657 |
| N | 1,551 | | 1,551 | | 1,551 | | 1,239 | |

Notes: *p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01; SE in parentheses; all models include FEs for the ten vignettes and for respondents' disciplines of study

Section J: Measurement Model

| latent var | observed items | std. estimate | p-value |
|----------------------------------|------------------|---------------|---------|
| Perceived democratic backsliding | backsliding_1 | 0.766 | NA |
| | backsliding_2 | 0.943 | 0.000 |
| | backsliding_3 | 0.921 | 0.000 |
| | backsliding_4 | 0.955 | 0.000 |
| | backsliding_6 | 0.806 | 0.000 |
| Attraction to public service | PSM_1_attraction | 0.514 | NA |
| | PSM_2_attraction | 0.713 | 0.000 |
| | PSM_3_attraction | 0.689 | 0.000 |
| | PSM_4_attraction | 0.746 | 0.000 |

Model fit statistics: CFI=0.993 TLI=0.990; RMSEA=0.042

SECTION K: Structural Equation Models

To further examine whether perceptions of democratic backsliding underlie the association between partisan alignment and preference to work in a government ministry (versus business and non-profits) we performed three structural equation models with R's Lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012). The first and second models (N=1,551) are based on a best-fit solution with non-weighted and weighted data, respectively. The third model, which also uses weighted data (N=1,239), excludes ultra-orthodox and non-Jewish respondents. Key findings from the three models, using Lavaan's "standardized all" solution, are presented in Figure K, panels 1-3. The measurement model is presented in Online Section J, and the full structural model components in Tables K.1-K.3 below. All models make a very good fit to the data as evident from their CFI, TLI and RMSEA statistics

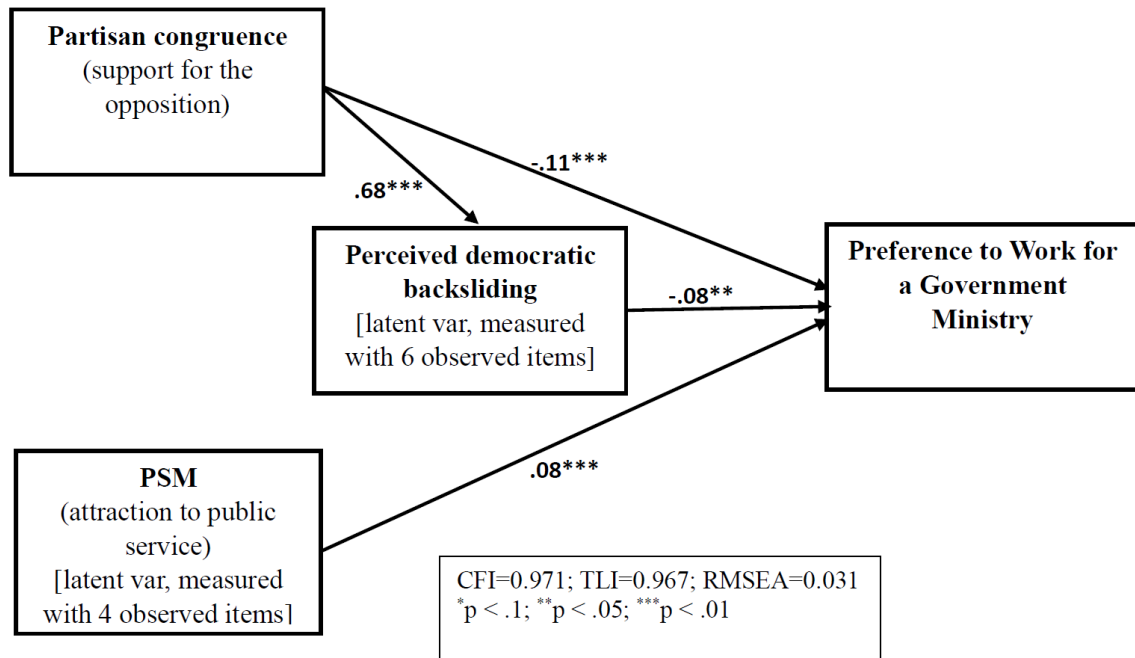
In all three models we set partisan alignment (support for the opposition vs. the coalition) and PSM-attraction to public service (a latent variable measured with 4 items) as the predictors, perceived democratic backsliding (a latent variable measured with 6 items) as the mediator, and preference to work for a government ministry as the dependent variable. As presented in Tables K.1-K.3, the findings in Figure K are based on models in which we control for respondents' gender, current sector of work (or not working), income, education level, fields of academic study if applicable, and, other than the majority-only model, whether they are non-Jews or ultraorthodox. Using lavaan's modification process, and based on the findings of Alon-Barkat et al. (2024), we modified the structural model, setting gender and being ultraorthodox as predictors of the mediator (perceived democratic backsliding) in addition to partisan alignment. Still, the substantive results are the same without this modification.

The findings of the first model, using non-weighted data, suggest, mirroring model 3 of Table 2 in the main manuscript, that partisan alignment has a direct negative effect (-.11, $p < 0.01$) as well as a negative indirect effect via perceived democratic backsliding (-.054, $p < 0.05$). In the second model, using weighted data, and consistent with model 6 of Table 2 in the main manuscript, the direct effect of partisan alignment is negative and significant (-.14, $p < 0.01$), but its indirect effect through perceived democratic backsliding is insignificant ($p = .48$). Lastly, in a similar vein to model 7 or Table 2 in the main manuscript, restricting the model, with weighted data, to members of the majority (excluding non-Jews and ultraorthodox Jews), the direct effect of partisan alignment is insignificant, and its indirect

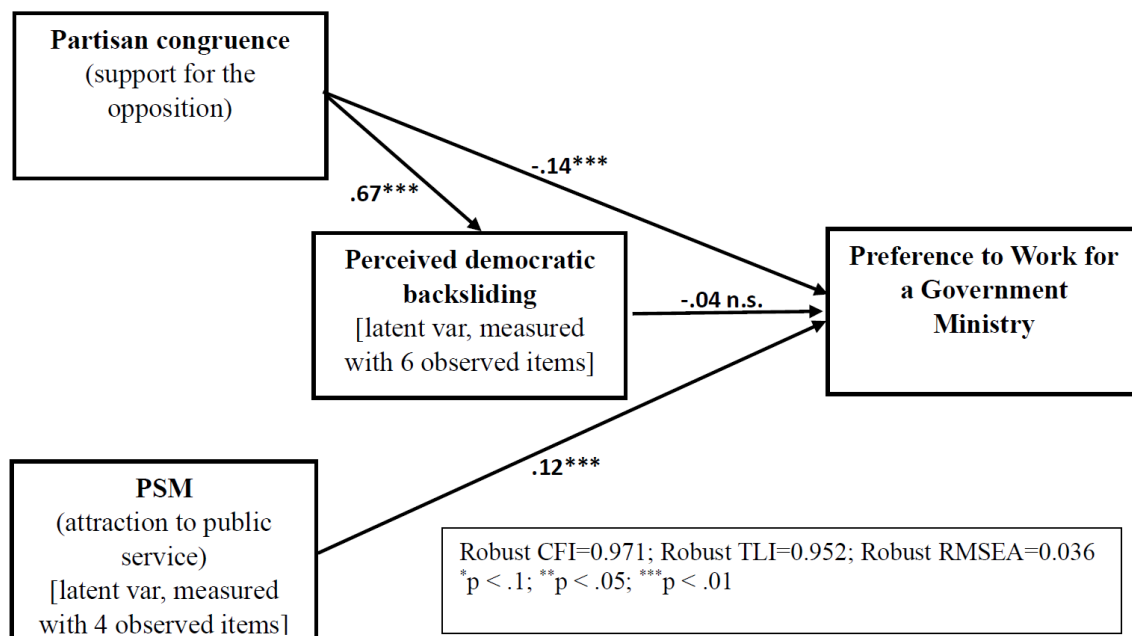
effect via perceived democratic backsliding is negative and significant ($-.12, p < 0.05$). The direct effect of PSM attraction to public service is positive and significant in all three models.

Figure K: Structural Equation Models

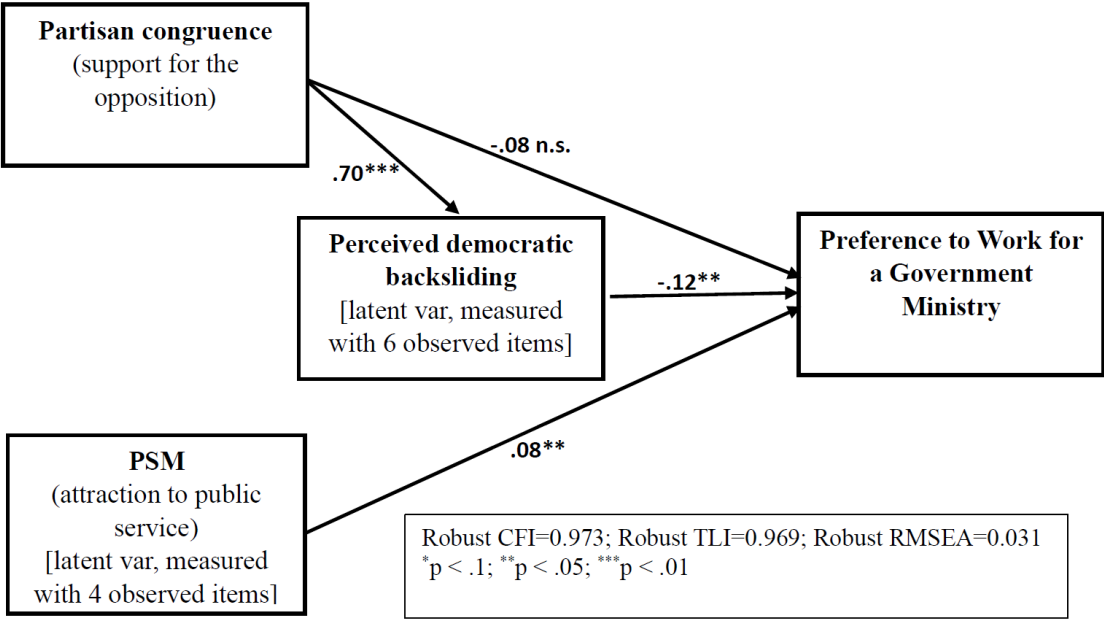
Panel 1: Non-weighted SEM



Panel 2: Weighted SEM



Panel 3: Weighted SEM Jewish respondents



K.1 Unweighted model

| | | Std. | P |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Prefer to work for a gov ministry | ~ Support for the opposition | -0.11 | 0.003 |
| | ~ PSM attraction | 0.08 | 0.003 |
| | ~ Ultra-orthodox | 0.05 | 0.071 |
| | ~ Non-Jewish | 0.09 | 0.001 |
| | ~ Woman | -0.04 | 0.119 |
| | ~ income | -0.02 | 0.393 |
| | ~ education level | -0.03 | 0.359 |
| | ~ works for a ministry | 0.12 | 0.000 |
| | ~ works for a municipality | 0.03 | 0.299 |
| | ~ Works for a public corpo. | -0.01 | 0.842 |
| | ~ Works for a business | 0.01 | 0.739 |
| | ~ Works for an NGO | 0.04 | 0.157 |
| | ~ Academic studies 1 | -0.07 | 0.008 |
| | ~ Academic studies 2 | 0.08 | 0.002 |
| | ~ Academic studies 3 | 0.00 | 0.842 |
| | ~ Academic studies 4 | 0.04 | 0.155 |
| | ~ Academic studies 5 | 0.00 | 0.918 |
| | ~ Academic studies 6 | -0.01 | 0.747 |
| | ~ Academic studies 7 | 0.05 | 0.085 |
| | ~ Academic studies 8 | 0.00 | 0.946 |
| | ~ Academic studies 9 | 0.03 | 0.254 |
| | ~ Academic studies 10 | 0.03 | 0.294 |
| | ~ Academic studies 11 | -0.02 | 0.472 |
| Perceived democratic backsliding | ~ Support for the opposition | 0.68 | 0.000 |
| | ~ Ultra-orthodox | -0.12 | 0.000 |
| Prefer to work for a gov ministry | ~ Woman | 0.11 | 0.000 |
| | ~ Demo. backsliding | -0.08 | 0.042 |

CFI=0.971; TLI=0.967; RMSEA=0.031

K.2 Weighted model

| | | Std. | P |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Prefer to work for a gov ministry | ~ Support for the opposition | -0.14 | 0.008 |
| | ~ PSM attraction | 0.12 | 0.004 |
| | ~ Ultra-orthodox | 0.04 | 0.291 |
| | ~ Non-Jewish | 0.08 | 0.131 |
| | ~ Woman | -0.07 | 0.053 |
| | ~ income | -0.01 | 0.855 |
| | ~ education level | 0.00 | 0.972 |
| | ~ works for a ministry | 0.13 | 0.000 |
| | ~ works for a municipality | 0.07 | 0.102 |
| | ~ Works for a public corpo. | 0.01 | 0.784 |
| | ~ Works for a business | -0.01 | 0.913 |
| | ~ Works for an NGO | 0.07 | 0.051 |
| | ~ Academic studies 1 | -0.04 | 0.340 |
| | ~ Academic studies 2 | 0.04 | 0.161 |
| | ~ Academic studies 3 | 0.00 | 0.949 |
| | ~ Academic studies 4 | 0.04 | 0.196 |
| | ~ Academic studies 5 | 0.01 | 0.712 |
| | ~ Academic studies 6 | -0.04 | 0.199 |
| | ~ Academic studies 7 | 0.02 | 0.477 |
| | ~ Academic studies 8 | 0.02 | 0.690 |
| | ~ Academic studies 9 | -0.02 | 0.653 |
| | ~ Academic studies 10 | 0.03 | 0.201 |
| | ~ Academic studies 11 | -0.07 | 0.016 |
| Perceived democratic backsliding | ~ Support for the opposition | 0.67 | 0.000 |
| | ~ Ultra-orthodox | -0.14 | 0.000 |
| Prefer to work for a gov ministry | ~ Woman | 0.10 | 0.000 |
| | ~ Demo. backsliding | -0.04 | 0.480 |

CFI=0.971; TLI=0.952; RMSEA=0.036

K.3 Weighted model (Jews only)

| | | Std. | P |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Prefer to work for a gov ministry | ~ Support for the opposition | -0.08 | 0.104 |
| | ~ PSM attraction | 0.08 | 0.048 |
| | ~ Woman | -0.07 | 0.081 |
| | ~ income | 0.00 | 0.964 |
| | ~ education level | -0.03 | 0.270 |
| | ~ works for a ministry | 0.13 | 0.001 |
| | ~ works for a municipality | 0.02 | 0.604 |
| | ~ Works for a public corpo. | 0.00 | 0.935 |
| | ~ Works for a business | 0.05 | 0.280 |
| | ~ Works for an NGO | 0.07 | 0.071 |
| | ~ Academic studies 1 | -0.06 | 0.068 |
| | ~ Academic studies 2 | 0.04 | 0.206 |
| | ~ Academic studies 3 | 0.02 | 0.483 |
| | ~ Academic studies 4 | 0.04 | 0.286 |
| | ~ Academic studies 5 | -0.02 | 0.462 |
| | ~ Academic studies 6 | -0.02 | 0.493 |
| | ~ Academic studies 7 | 0.03 | 0.404 |
| | ~ Academic studies 8 | -0.02 | 0.503 |
| | ~ Academic studies 9 | -0.03 | 0.289 |
| | ~ Academic studies 10 | 0.01 | 0.669 |
| | ~ Academic studies 11 | -0.02 | 0.480 |
| Perceived democratic backsliding | ~ Support for the opposition | 0.70 | 0.000 |
| | ~ Woman | 0.14 | 0.000 |
| Prefer to work for a gov ministry | ~ Demo. backsliding | -0.12 | 0.020 |

CFI=0.973; TLI=0.969; RMSEA=0.031

SECTION L: Partisan alignment treatment across social groups and income-levels

In the following analyses we examine the effect of priming partisan alignment on sector choice among different sub-groups. Specifically, we consider the role of partisan alignment among low-income respondents, which may assign greater weight to economic considerations, and among minority groups, which may be guided by different considerations compared with majority members when choosing whether to work in a government ministry.

The analyses suggest that the effect of priming partisan alignment is robust across, low- and high-income respondents, and among the majority group. Among minorities (ultra-orthodox Jews and non-Jews) we find a smaller and statistically insignificant effect.

Table L1: Estimating the effect of priming partisan alignment across sub-groups:

| | High-income | Low-income | Majority group | Minorities |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Opposition voter | -0.155* (0.069) | -0.043 (0.053) | -0.117* (0.048) | 0.072 (0.104) |
| Partisanship prime | 0.067 (0.075) | 0.119* (0.057) | 0.132* (0.054) | 0.026 (0.084) |
| Partisanship prime × Opposition voter | -0.214* (0.098) | -0.190* (0.074) | -0.230*** (0.067) | -0.139 (0.144) |
| Constant | 0.473*** (0.053) | 0.407*** (0.041) | 0.454*** (0.039) | 0.382*** (0.060) |
| Adj. R ² | .082 | .025 | .063 | .010 |
| N | 363 | 712 | 865 | 210 |

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, + p<0.1