



Environmental taxation triggers persistent psychological resistance to climate policy

Nechumi Malovicki-Yaffe¹ · Boaz Hameiri¹ · Leah Bloy² · Ram Fishman¹

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Abstract

Environmental taxation is often lauded as an effective tool for changing consumer behavior, but it can also trigger substantial psychological resistance, especially among disproportionately affected groups, such as the Jewish ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) community, potentially creating a broad anti-environmental backlash. In the current study we provide novel empirical evidence for the psychological mechanisms that can drive such reactance and its potential long-term persistence. In 2021, Israel introduced a tax on single-use plastics, only to swiftly retract it amidst vehement political opposition and a change in government. We conducted six rounds of surveys within the Haredi population, known for its heavy use of single-use plastics. Immediately after the tax's enactment, we found a substantial decrease in “pro-climate” positions. Regression analysis showed this change to be primarily driven by a sense of victimization—being unfairly singled out by the tax for political, rather than environmental, reasons. The economic burden of the tax played a lesser role. Two years after the tax was repealed, however, the decrease in “pro-climate” positions persisted, despite a decrease in sense of victimhood. These findings shed light on the potential negative and enduring psychological and political consequences of environmental taxation. They underscore the importance of addressing underlying grievances to foster genuine engagement with climate-related issues.

Keywords Tax · Environmental policy · Single-use plastic · Ultra-orthodox · Psychological resistance · Victimhood

✉ Nechumi Malovicki-Yaffe
nyaffe@tauex.tau.ac.il

Boaz Hameiri
bhameiri@tauex.tau.ac.il

Leah Bloy
leah.bloy@male.huji.ac.il

Ram Fishman
ramf@tauex.tau.ac.il

¹ Department of Public Policy, Gerson H Gordon Faculty of Social Science, Tel-Aviv University, Tel Aviv, 69978, Israel

² Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Science, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel

Introduction

Environmental regulation policy is considered a necessary tool in shifting consumer choices toward the use of more environmentally benign products (Borg et al., 2022; Dietz et al., 2009; Poore & Nemecek, 2018). However, policymakers must consider the long-term effects of such policies (Peters, 2017; Hulme, 2009) and mitigate harm by incorporating future considerations into contemporary planning. However, consensus on the most effective measures and instruments available remains elusive (Capano & Woo, 2017; Howlett & Ramesh, 2014; Bloemen et al., 2019), particularly when such policies are perceived as unfair or cynical by groups that are disproportionately affected or politically opposed to the ruling party (Chan & Lin, 2022; Falkenberg et al., 2022). Such policies may indeed politically polarize environmental issues, create psychological resistance (sometimes also referred to as reactance³), and reduce public and political support not only for the specific environmental issue in question but also for the broader environmental and climate agenda (Gromet et al., 2013; Palm et al., 2020). Given the urgent need to mobilize public opinion in favor of pro-climate policy, it is crucial to understand when specific environmental regulations might generate a broad attitudinal and political backlash, what psychological and economic mechanisms drive this backlash, and how long such a backlash might last. Although the potential for negative and unintended consequences of environmental regulation for the population has been raised before (Gurtoo & Antony, 2007; Wu, 2003), in the current study we provide novel evidence of its persistence.

Specifically, we investigated the unintended impact of a tax policy on single-use plastic utensils in Israel on broad environmental and climate perceptions. Consumption levels of single-use plastic goods in Israel are the highest among the OECD member countries and cause widespread pollution of the local marine and terrestrial environment (Libsker, 2018; Ministry of Environmental Protection, 2021; Stub, 2021). The tax was therefore favorably received by large segments of Israeli society as a necessary step toward reducing pollution. However, it also quickly became a charged issue in the most strongly affected population – namely, the Jewish ultra-Orthodox/Haredi community. It was indeed seized upon by this population as a central political issue and was highlighted in the national election campaign that took place shortly after the law went into effect (July–November 2022). The election resulted in a change in government, and the tax was rapidly repealed.

Using six rounds of surveys among the aforementioned Haredi population (Kana, 2021), we examined the extent to which the regulation influenced climate-related attitudes; whether the change in such positions was triggered by economic or psychological factors; and whether this change persisted after the tax itself was repealed.

Literature review

Although taxation of pollution-generating consumer products is often viewed as an effective and economically efficient mechanism for shifting consumer choices (Hong & Adams, 1999; Khanna et al., 2021), multiple studies have shown that the economic burden of such taxation may be unevenly distributed in society (Maestre-Andrés et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2016). In particular, low-income and marginalized groups often have a greater propensity to consume low-cost products with a large environmental footprint, such as single-use plastics

(Yan et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2019), suggesting that these groups would suffer a disproportionate share of the economic impact of taxing such products. Although such marginalized groups tend to be more affected by climate change and pollution (Dodman & Satterthwaite, 2008; Timmons, 2009), they are often not provided with meaningful representation in discussions about environmental policy (Swim & Bloodheart, 2018). Therefore, they may perceive new environmental regulation as paternalistic, unfair, insensitive to their grievances and needs or, in certain circumstances, even as targeting them unfairly under the pretext of environmental concerns (Maestre-Andrés et al., 2019). Such attitudes may also be compounded by variables that can be categorized as “social identities” and are also known to strongly affect responses to government policies (Ballew et al., 2020; Mackay et al., 2021). This situation, in turn, can lead to a negative disposition regarding environmental agendas and to lower levels of trust in government. Thus, both economic and psychological mechanisms may trigger broad psychological resistance in response to environmental regulation.

Background and context

In Israel, the group with the highest per capita consumption of single-use plastics is the Haredi population (Flint Ashery, 2022) – a low-income minority (The ultra-Orthodox community presents an interesting paradox: despite displaying numerous attributes of a marginalized minority group, it maintains substantial political power Malovicki-Yaffe et al., 2024), and the group most affected economically when the tax was implemented. Though the new tax was deemed necessary by large segments of society, it garnered intense opposition from Haredi leaders and politicians who argued that the law disproportionately hurt their community and strengthened their sense of victimhood (Stub, 2021; Bloy et al., 2025). The Haredi population (like other low-income groups; Yan et al., 2021) relies heavily on single-use plastics because they are inexpensive and easy to dispose of, and because Haredi families are generally very large, with seven children on average (Stub, 2021; Malovicki-Yaffe et al., 2018, 2024). Many community members also contested the process by which the law was passed in the Israeli parliament and argued that it did not adequately address the affected communities’ and industries’ needs and grievances (London, 2023; Stub, 2021). Importantly, for the first time in more than a decade, Haredi sectarian political parties, which receive the lion’s share of Haredi votes, were not part of the ruling government coalition that enacted the law. We hypothesized that this factor contributed to the Haredi population’s perception of the law as a cynical guise for the political targeting of their population. The growing public sentiment against the tax was seized upon by the Haredi parties and became a central issue in the next national election campaign that began several months after the tax was enacted (Fig. 1 displays an election poster focusing on the tax). That election led to a change of government, with the Haredi parties garnering a central role in the new coalition. The tax was repealed within days of the new coalition’s coming to power. Figure 2, panel A, displays a timeline of the events, superimposed on a Google Trends report on searches for the term “single-use plastics” over this time period.

Even though the general issue of climate change was not featured in the Haredi parties’ election campaign, we hypothesized that: (1) implementation of the tax would reduce support in the Haredi public for broad environmental agendas including climate-change mitigation; (2) implementation of the tax would also heighten the perception that the government

Fig. 1 Election poster of a Haredi party: The Hebrew says, “It’s not the single-use [plastic]; it’s the humiliation. They will not humiliate you anymore”

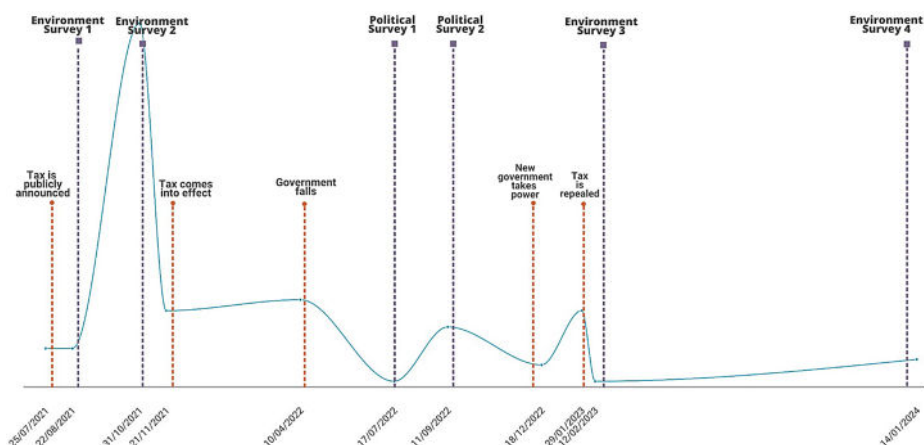


Fig. 2 Trends in Google searches for the term “single-use plastic” in Israel during the study period. The timings of the surveys and key political events related to the enactment and repeal of the law are highlighted

was deliberately targeting the Haredi population, creating a sense of victimhood; (3) the decline in support for climate-change action would result from the heightened sense of victimhood, and not only from the economic cost of the tax itself; and (4) the reduction in support for environmental agendas, including climate change mitigation, would persist even after the tax was repealed and the sense of victimhood had diminished.

Methods

The research team

The first and third authors are women and members of Israel’s Haredi population and therefore sensitive to the cultural concerns of this group.

Sample and data collection

Israel's Haredi minority numbers approximately 1.3 million and constitutes 13% of the country's population. This minority is generally difficult to survey because it is a conservative society that is very suspicious of interventions conducted by the outside secular world. Given two of the authors' Haredi affiliation, however, the research team was able to conduct six surveys of this population during the relevant study period. Participants were recruited through advertisements on the largest global Haredi website (*Kikar HaShabbat*,) Treblesi, 2022), which has a following of 1.5 million unique users. Full survey instruments are included in the supplementary information (SI) Table 1.

The first two surveys (rounds 1 and 2) were nearly identical. As shown in Fig. 2, the first survey was conducted two months before the law was enacted, and the second was conducted shortly after it was enacted, when public interest was at its peak, as evident from Google Trend searches for the term "single-use plastic" (Fig. 2). During the preceding weeks, the tax had been extensively discussed in the Haredi media and portrayed as an assault on the Haredi way of life. The discourse made it clear that this tax would have severe implications for the Haredi population in terms of cost and convenience.

The first and the second *political* surveys (rounds 3 and 4) were conducted (1) immediately after the government that enacted the tax lost the election, and (2) one month later, after the tax was repealed. These surveys were focused on the politics of the elections. Women were far less represented in the sample, as they are typically much less likely than men to reply to political surveys. All of the analyses were weighted to account for the different demographic compositions of the samples (in accordance with Regev & Gordon, 2020).

The two additional surveys (rounds 5 and 6) replicated the first and second surveys, focusing on participants' perceptions of the environment and their sense of victimhood. The fifth survey was carried out about a month after the law was repealed, and the sixth was carried out a year later.

Table 1 Summary of the timing, topic, and demographic characteristics of the surveys

Round	Date	Sample size	Age mean (SD)	% Women	Monthly income ^a Mean (SD)	Conservatism ^b Mean (SD)
1	Sep 22–29, 2021	1010	33.8 (13.5)	46%	2.9 (1.2)	4.6 (1.4)
2	Nov 1–3, 2021	1057	37.0 (12.4)	44%	3.0 (1.2)	4.7 (1.4)
5	Feb 7–12, 2023	1041	38.4 (12.4)	48%	2.8 (1.2)	4.6 (1.4)
6	Jan 24–29, 2024	963	39.2 (14.2)	57%	2.9 (1.4)	4.8 (1.3)
Total		4077	37.1 (13.3)	48%	2.9 (1.2)	4.7 (1.4)

^a Respondents were informed that the average monthly income of a Haredi household was NIS 13,160 (approximately USD 3,500) and were asked to indicate, using a Likert scale, their own income, on a scale ranging from 1 (*well below average*) to 5 (*well above average*). ^b The Haredi population displays a continuum of openness to the modern, secular world on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*modern*) to 7 (*conservative*)

Measures

The environmental perception index

The “environmental perception index” was constructed by the authors from the answers to the following seven questions: (1) To what extent do you think that the use of single-use plastics harms nature? (2) To what extent do you think that human activity can harm nature? (3) How concerned are you about reports on the destruction of the environment? (4) To what extent do you think that the fires and floods in the world are the result of human action? (5) To what extent do you think we have a responsibility as Jews “not to destroy our world”? (6) To what extent do you think the government should intervene and act to reduce damage to the quality of the environment? (7) To what extent are you willing to change your habits to reduce the harm to nature?

Respondents were asked to answer each question using a Likert scale with options ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*to a very large extent*). The environmental perception index was constructed as the numerical mean of the seven answers ($\alpha=0.87$). Higher values of the index indicated stronger pro-environmental perceptions.

The sense of victimhood index

The “sense of victimhood index” was constructed by the authors from the answers to the following three questions: (1) To what extent do you think that the law imposing a tax on single-use plastics is intended to harm families with children? (2) To what extent do you think that the law imposing a tax on single-use plastics is intended to harm the Haredi way of life (hospitality, family gatherings)? (3) To what extent do you think that the law imposing a tax on single-use plastics is intended in general to harm the Haredi community?

Respondents were asked to answer each question using a Likert scale with options ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*to a very large extent*). The sense of victimhood index was constructed as the numerical mean of the three answers ($\alpha=0.90$). Higher values on this index indicated stronger perceptions that the tax law was intended to harm the Haredi population.

Additional measures

Our analysis took into account several additional variables, including:

Income Respondents were informed that the average monthly income of a Haredi household was NIS 13,160 (approximately USD 3,500) and were asked to indicate, using a Likert scale, their own income, on a scale ranging from 1 (*well below average*) to 5 (*well above average*).

Monthly spending on single-use plastics This item was measured by asking respondents to rate their monthly spending on single-use plastics on a sliding scale ranging between NIS 0 and NIS 500 (approximately USD 150).

Frequency of use of single-use plastics: This question allowed respondents to select one of three options: 1 (*on a daily basis*), 2 (*about once a week*), 3 (*on special occasions*), or “*other*,” which was coded as a missing value.

Anticipated reduction in the use of single-use plastics Participants were informed that “the added tax on single-use plastics is now being implemented. As a result, single-use plastics are expected to double in price. The goal of the new tax law is to reduce the use of single-use plastics and thus reduce damage to the environment. This law will immediately affect families with many children that tend to use single-use plastics frequently.” Participants were asked to assess the percentage, from 0 to 100, of the reduction they anticipated in their use of single-use plastics.

In addition to the above, we collected demographic information including gender, age, and indicators of conservatism (the Haredi population displays a continuum of openness to the modern, secular world).

Political Positions. In the third and fourth surveys, we asked participants to select only the laws whose cancellation would be a precondition for the Haredi parties’ joining the governing coalition, from the following list: (1) The cancellation of a single-use plastics tax; (2) The cancellation of rabbinic reform (which would have limited the power of Israel’s chief rabbis); (3) The cancellation of public transport reform (which would have allowed the running of public transportation on the Jewish Sabbath); (4) The cancellation of the “kosher phone” reform (which would have allowed the use of phones that have access to “forbidden content,” or internet-unfiltered phones); (5) The cancellation of a tax on sweetened drinks. The participants had a multiple-choice option to choose whichever law or laws they considered an indispensable condition for joining the coalition.

Results

Figure 3 displays the mean values of the environmental perception index and the victimhood index over the four relevant survey rounds (environmental surveys 1, 2, 5, and 6). During the second survey, after the enactment of the tax, there was a strong increase in sense of victimhood, but this sense returned to basically the same levels as survey 1 in surveys 5 and 6, after the law was repealed. In contrast, support for pro-environmental positions not only declined markedly during the second survey, but remained lower during the following surveys as well, more than a year after the tax was repealed (there seemed to be a slight improving trend, but it was not of statistical significance and far from sufficient to restore participants’ perceptions to the levels of the first survey). Notably, there were no significant differences in reported spending on single-use plastics during the different rounds, possibly because the population found ways to adapt.

These findings suggest that a heightened sense of victimhood might have been responsible for the initial reduction in environmental support, but that anti-environmental sentiments persisted even after the sense of victimhood subsided and the law was repealed.

To conduct a more careful test of the association between victimhood and environmental positions, we conducted a weighted regression (in accordance with the known demographics of the ultra-Orthodox community; Regev, E., & Gordon, G., 2020), in which we

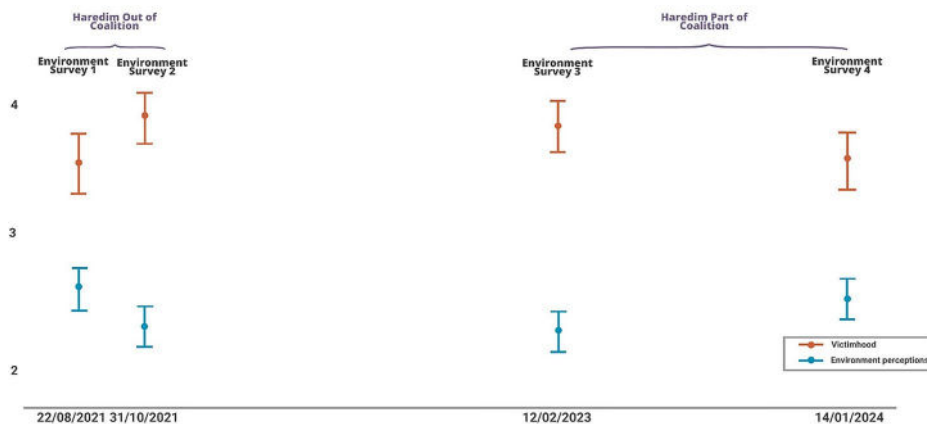


Fig. 3 Changes in mean values of the environmental perception index and the victimhood index from before tax enactment and until after the tax repeal (during survey rounds 1, 2, 5, and 6). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals

estimated the interaction of victimhood in each survey round. We found a significant main effect of victimhood, as well as a significant interaction effect between victimhood in the second survey, along with a main effect for the other surveys. The explanatory variables included the victimhood index, measures of frequency of disposable plastics use, income, conservatism, and a range of demographic variables.

To better understand whether the decline in pro-environmental perceptions and the increase in sense of victimhood were connected, we pooled data from the four relevant environment and victimhood survey rounds (1, 2, 5, and 6) and estimated a regression in which the dependent variable was the environmental perception index. Explanatory variables included binary indicators of each survey round (with survey 1 being the omitted base category), characteristics which were likely to affect environmental perceptions (frequency of disposable plastics use, income, conservatism, and a range of demographic variables), and their interactions with the survey round indicators. Victimhood and its interactions with the survey rounds was also included in the regression.

Estimated regression coefficients are reported in Table 2. The first column reports the un-interacting coefficients, and columns 2, 3, and 4 report the interaction coefficients with survey rounds 2, 5, and 6 (all coefficients are estimated in the same regression).

As anticipated, as can be seen in column 1, pro-environmental perceptions (high values on the climate perception index) were negatively correlated with greater use of single-use plastics, whether measured in terms of monthly expenditure or frequency of use; positively correlated with greater anticipated reductions as a result of the tax; and were higher among female, respondents (some of these correlations are addressed in detail by). The corresponding interaction coefficients (columns 2–4) are mostly insignificant, indicating that the correlations between these socioeconomic variables and environmental positions did not change substantially across survey rounds, with the exception of gender.

Changes in the overall level of environmental positions are captured by the coefficients of the survey round indicators. In contrast to the patterns shown in Fig. 3, when victimhood is controlled for, differences between survey rounds 1 and 2 are insignificant. However, environmental positions remain significantly lower in rounds 5 and 6 than in round 1. This

Table 2 Summary of the interaction between survey rounds 1, 2, 5, and 6, environmental perception index, and demographic characteristics of the surveys (standardized beta coefficients and SEs in parentheses)

Predictors	Coefficient	Survey round 2	Survey round 5	Survey Round 6
Monthly income	0 (0.03)	0.01 (0.04)	0 (0.05)	0.04 (0.04)
Monthly expenditure on single-use plastics	-0.09** (0.03)	0.05 (0.04)	-0.07 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)
Single-use plastics used once a week, relative to daily (binary)	0.3* (0.15)	0.02 (0.21)	0.16 (0.19)	0.18 (0.19)
Single-use plastics used on special occasions only, relative to daily (binary)	0.43* (0.15)	-0.01 (0.26)	0.28 (0.2)	0.21 (0.2)
Female	0.17*** (0.03)	-0.11* (0.04)	-0.12** (0.04)	-0.07 (0.04)
Conservatism	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.07 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)
Age	0.19*** (0.05)	-0.01 (0.08)	-0.03 (0.08)	- 0.22*** (0.06)
Sector [Sephardi]	0.13 (0.08)	-0.07 (0.1)	0 (0.1)	0.01 (0.11)
Sector [Lithuanian]	-0.06 (0.08)	-0.26* (0.1)	0 (0.11)	-0.01 (0.11)
Sector [Chabad+other]	0.17 (0.19)	-0.21 (0.26)	-0.1 (0.26)	-0.02 (0.26)
Victimhood	-0.27*** (0.03)	-0.11* (0.05)	-0.08 (0.05)	0.01 (0.04)
Survey Rounds 2(binary)	0.02 (0.08)			
Survey Rounds 3(binary) (binary)	-0.18** (0.08)			
Survey Rounds 4(binary) (binary)	-0.24** (0.08)			
Observations	3720			
R ²	0.214			
AIC	13546.913			

Note, significance * = ($p < 0.05$), ** = ($p < 0.01$), *** = ($p < 0.001$). Coefficients reported in Columns 2,3, and 4 are for interactions between binary indicators of survey waves and all variables. For example., in Column 2 the coefficient in the row “Monthly Income” is for the interaction between Monthly Income and a binary indicator of Survey Round 2

finding reinforces the hypothesis that victimhood was responsible for changes in environmental positions between survey rounds 1 and 2, but not for the more persistent changes in rounds 5 and 6.

Further indications of this pattern are provided by estimates of the effect of victimhood itself (last row of Table 2). Pro-environmental perceptions were negatively and strongly correlated with sense of victimhood. The strength of this association grew substantially between the first round (starting at $\beta = -0.27$, $p < 0.001$) and the second round, when this association was stronger by 0.11, as indicated by the interaction coefficient in column 2. In rounds 3 and 4, the strength of the association has returned to become statistically indistinguishable from round 1.

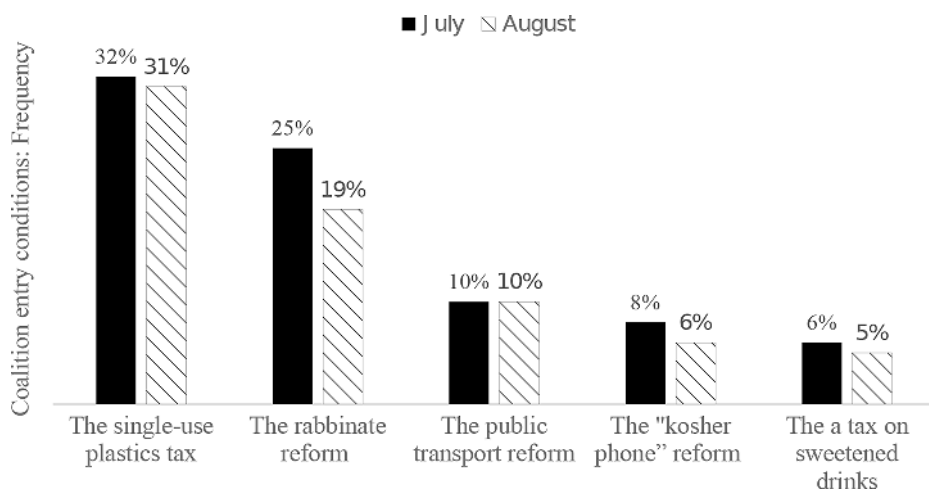


Fig. 4 Cancelling the plastics tax as a priority: Frequency of being chosen as an indispensable condition for joining the coalition

Political dimensions

As stated above, the Haredi parties were not part of the ruling coalition when the tax was enacted, and there was a strong shared sentiment among the Haredi population that that government had enacted many anti-Haredi laws. On July 1, 2022, the Israeli government collapsed. The negotiations for forming a new coalition were just beginning. This time around it was clear that if the right-wing parties wanted to form a coalition, they would have to include the Haredi parties. The Haredi population perceived the previous government's decisions as offensive and hostile and it was clear that they would want to abolish them.

A frequency analysis demonstrated that the issue most commonly ranked as most important for the Haredi population was the cancellation of the single-use plastics tax: 32% of the participants in July and 31% in August indicated that this cancellation was their first preference. A full description of the results can be seen in Fig. 4.

Discussion

The tax on single-use plastics may have helped Israel achieve its short-term goal – namely, reducing the use of non-green products among Haredi individuals. However, our findings indicate significant unintended long-term consequences, including a notable negative impact on environment-related attitudes and beliefs. This shift in perception could ultimately hinder policymakers' ability to promote more ambitious environmental or climate legislation.

We found that the strongest predictor of this negative impact on attitudes and beliefs was participants' perception that they were the victims of unfair treatment and persecution. Moreover, with the accumulation of evidence, it seems that the reduction in the use of single-use plastics was only temporary, as the Haredi population found ways to circumvent the added tax (Safir, 2022).

Motivating people to care about the environment is one of humanity's current cardinal concerns (Van Rooij et al., 2020). However, increasing data have shown that marginalized and non-WEIRD populations (i.e., people who do not belong to Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic countries) are not part of this conversation (Timmons Roberts, 2009). In the current study we examined the Israeli law that taxed single-use plastics (undoubtedly essential for limiting environmental damage) and how it affected attitudes and shaped the environmental consciousness of Haredi Jews in Israel who, as mentioned, are a poor and marginalized population on many dimensions, though not all. As such, we were able to identify similar trends when it came to their use of single-use plastics, and the overall tendency to pollute (Flint Ashery, 2022; Yan et al., 2021). Different, perhaps, from other marginalized groups, the Haredi community tends to have members in the Israeli government. However, at the time when the law taxing single-use plastics was enacted, they had no representatives in the Israeli government, and the law did not take their psychological and day-to-day needs into account. The enactment of this law was thus perceived by the Haredi community and its leaders as something that restricted their perceived collective autonomy to behave in accordance with their social identity (Kachanoff et al., 2022), showing once again that when legislation is framed in a manner that undermines the values or way of life of a group, the result is often a backlash (Barak-Corren et al., 2018).

Indeed, the results of our surveys demonstrate that at first the Haredi population showed a willingness to reduce its single-use plastics consumption. However, the tax radicalized this sector's anti-environmental stance, and the abolition of the law was considered the most important precondition for the Haredi parties' joining the subsequent governing coalition. Notably, this was the first law repealed by the new government at the request of the Haredi parties.

This issue overrode some other prospective laws which one might have assumed would touch on core Haredi ideology, such as reforms regarding the rabbinate and the "kosher phone." The data suggest that this finding was driven by a sense of victimhood.

Feelings of being persecuted or thinking that others bear harmful intentions toward a person or people are related to what is known as victimhood perceptions (Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Gabay et al., 2020). In the current study, sense of victimhood played a role above and beyond the role of other demographic variables. Although the Haredi population reduced its consumption of single-use plastics at first, its attitude toward the climate worsened.

In fact, the Haredi population is very sensitive to the issue of environmental destruction, on the basis of the Torah prohibition, "Thou shalt not destroy" (*bal tash hit*; Deuteronomy 20:19), a prohibition derived from the commandment that "When thou shalt besiege a city a long time... thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof." According to Halacha (Jewish law) there are many practices and laws regarding re-use, utilization, and especially caution with regard to natural resources and sensitivity to destruction (Shilhav & Kaplan, 2003; Vogel, 2001). The use of single-use plastics is very closely connected to a sense of destroying, and using the "Thou shalt not destroy" prohibition would have been a relatively easy way to make the new law more appealing to this population. However, the tax on single-use plastics in Israel was passed by a government with no Haredi representatives (a rather rare occurrence), led by a member of the Israeli parliament who excoriates the Haredi population. Furthermore, there was no attempt to talk to the Haredi population or to find ways to explain the importance and meaning of the law. An approach akin to the idea of moral reframing – that is, framing ideas in a way that is consistent with an individual's moral values (Feinberg &

Willer, 2019) – could have made an enormous difference. This line of thinking has already been validated within this specific realm (Kaufmann et al., 2023).

Moreover, there is evidence suggesting that the Haredi population collectively bypassed the tax anyway, the tax applied exclusively within Israel, while the Palestinian territories operate under a separate taxation system where it does not apply. This price disparity incentivized the Haredi community to organize large-scale purchases from the Palestinian territories, effectively bypassing the tax (Nachshoni, 2021). These findings suggest that the behavioral patterns of the Haredi population remained unchanged, as they utilized their collective purchasing influence to circumvent the new expenses (Safir, 2022). Furthermore, as previously mentioned, within one month of the new government's tenure under their leadership, the law was repealed.

The results of the current study lead to broader questions that go beyond the specific case of the Haredi community in Israel. After all, at any given time, in the most democratic government in the world, almost half the population is represented in the opposition and is not part of the ruling coalition. How then do we mobilize people to support environmental policies that they politically oppose? We believe that the environment should concern us all, but that politics are an obstacle. As such, there is a real need to rise above politics and find ways to speak with each population in its own language. Although different populations may prioritize the crucial issues of the day differently, there is a moral basis underlying these differences that can be bridged through the use of sensitive language. We would suggest the use of moral reframing. Such framing would enable everyone to care about the climate in their own “language” and on their own terms. Confronting the most difficult issues facing humanity requires collaboration among all human beings, with an acknowledgment of the mutual goal. The underlying idea here corresponds with the biblical story of Noah's ark and the flood, which emphasized that all the animals exited the ark in pairs, two by two. No animal went alone, and no one can be saved alone.

Research limitations and future research

It should be noted that the data from the current study were collected online, and currently only 66–80% of the Haredi population in Israel has access to the internet (Malach & Cahaner, 2022). Thus, the sample does not represent the more extreme and conservative Haredi groups, who eschew the use of the internet. In addition, given the large sample, in conducting the analysis we weighted the demography to be in line with the normal distribution that appears in the literature (Regev & Gordon, 2020). Another important point to consider is that the final wave of the survey was conducted after the October 7, 2023, massacre and the subsequent war. These events profoundly impacted both Israeli society and the ultra-Orthodox community and may have influenced questions of identification with national identity. This could provide an external explanation for the decline in the sense of victimhood. However, studies show that the initial rise in Israeli identity among the Haredi population was short-lived, as Haredi identity ultimately regained dominance over national identity. Therefore, we assume that the decline in the sense of victimhood was primarily a result of the repeal of the law, alongside the prominent presence of Haredi representatives in the government and positions of power. Also, we did not address the economic issue of the state's loss of tax income due to the Haredi population's bypassing of the Israeli tax by

importing plastic utensils from jurisdictions under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Going forward, researchers should include these issues as well.

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Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate The study was approved by TAU IRB # 0004068-4 and all participant identities were protected.

Competing interests The authors declare they have no financial interests. This research was conducted by Real Time Data institute. With no financial interests.

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