

# ISRAELI DEMOCRACY EXAMINED

November 2010

## Auditing Israeli Democracy

### Democratic Values in Practice

Asher Arian, Tamar Hermann

Yuval Lebel, Michael Philippov, Hila Zaban, Anna Knafelman

# 2010

THE ISRAEL  
DEMOCRACY  
INSTITUTE

THE  
GUTTMAN  
CENTER



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Asher Arian, Tamar Hermann

Yuval Lebel, Michael Philippov, Hila Zaban, Anna Knafelman

Translator: Karen Gold

Language Editor (English): Shulamit Berman

Language Editor (Hebrew): Keren Gliklich

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The Israel Democracy Institute, P.O.B. 4482, Jerusalem 91044

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**The Israel Democracy Institute** is an independent, non-partisan body on the seam of academia and politics. The Institute plans policy and devises reforms for government and public administration agencies, and for the institutions of democracy.

In its plans and endeavors, the Institute strives to support the institutions of Israel's developing democracy and consolidate its values. The Institute's serious research work is followed up by practical recommendations, seeking to improve governance in Israel and foster a long-term vision for a stable democratic regime adapted to the structure, the values, and the norms of Israeli society. The Institute aspires to further public discourse in Israel on the issues placed on the national agenda, to promote structural, political, and economic reforms, to serve as a consulting body to decision-makers and the broad public, to provide information and present comparative research.

Researchers at the Israel Democracy Institute are leading academics directing projects in various areas of society and governance in Israel. The Institute's publications department produces, markets, and distributes the results of their work in several series: Books, policy papers, Democracy Index, the Caesarea Forum, periodicals, and conferences proceedings.

**The Guttman Center** was established in its present form in 1998, when the Guttman Institute for Applied Social Research became part of the Israel Democracy Institute. Professor Louis Guttman founded the original Institute in 1949 as a pioneering center for the study of public opinion and the advancement of social science methodology. The goal of the Guttman Center is to enrich public discourse on issues of public policy through the information retrieved from the Center's databases and through public opinion surveys conducted by the Center.

The Israel Democracy Institute is the recipient of the 2009 Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement – Special Contribution to Society and State.

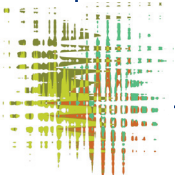
**Asher Arian** was the Scientific Director of the Guttman Center, Senior Fellow at The Israel Democracy Institute, and Professor of Political Science at the City University of New York.

**Tamar Hermann** is a Senior Fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute and a faculty member of the Political Science Department of the Open University of Israel.

**Yuval Lebel, Michael Philippov, Hila Zaban, and Anna Knafelman** are research assistants at The Israel Democracy Institute.



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Israeli Democracy Examined



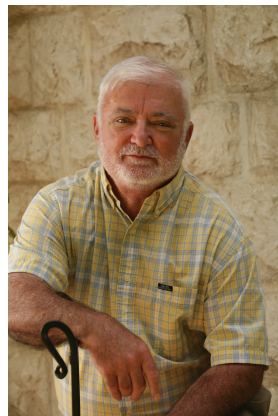




## **Prof. Asher Arian z"l (1938–2010)**

Prof. Asher Arian was among the foremost political scientists in Israel and a world-renowned expert on election studies and public opinion polls. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1938 and immigrated to Israel in 1966.

Prof. Arian held a doctorate in political science from Michigan State University. In Israel, he founded the Political Science Department at Tel Aviv University and served as its first head.



In 1977, he was appointed dean of Tel Aviv University's Faculty of Social Sciences, after which he held the university's Romulo Betancourt Chair in Political Science. In 1979, Arian was a founding member of the Israel Political Science Association, which he also chaired. In 1986, he was appointed Distinguished Professor in political science at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and in the early 1990s joined the Political Science Department at the University of Haifa, where he served as Full Professor until his retirement.

During Prof. Arian's years of extensive research activity, he published dozens of books and articles in the fields of governance, elections, public opinion, and political behavior in Israel. Two of the major projects under his leadership were a series of surveys and books on elections in Israel (the most enduring research project in political science in Israel, initiated by him in 1969) and the National Security and Public Opinion Project of Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies.

Prof. Arian was one of the first Senior Fellows of the Israel Democracy Institute. In this capacity, he spearheaded the incorporation of the Guttman Institute for Applied Social Research into the IDI. In addition, he initiated and led the Democracy Index project, which offers a yearly assessment of the state of democracy in Israel from a comparative, historical, and international perspective.

Prof. Asher Arian passed away in the midst of his work on the 2010 Democracy Index. He will be greatly missed by all of us.

May his memory be blessed.



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## **Abstract**

### **Part One: The Democracy Index 2010**

The opening section of the 2010 Israeli Democracy Index examines the state of Israeli democracy according to a series of internationally recognized quantitative measures in the field of political science. The qualities presented in the indices were examined along two axes: (1) Israel's current functioning vis-à-vis that of 35 other democracies around the world; and (2) its performance as a democracy, past and present. As with previous Indices, the data has been compiled in text and graphic form to highlight overall trends (improvement, decline, or no change) in Israel's situation as compared with other countries and with past years. In this year's Index, 19 of the 37 indicators measured in the Democracy Index were updated.

### **Major Findings**

- In most international indices, Israel is ranked immediately after the established democracies, near the new democracies of Eastern Europe, Central America, and South America.
- In recent years, there have not been major changes in Israel's overall ranking as a democracy: its relative position has not improved, but neither has it worsened.
- Many weaknesses of Israel's democracy are associated with the "rights aspect" (one of three aspects of Israeli democracy examined by the Index, together with the institutional aspect and the stability aspect); for example, Israel's high incarceration rate combines with shortcomings in the rule of law, which falls short of the accepted standard in Western countries.
- While Israel's ranking in the gender equality indicators has declined in recent years, Israel is still positioned above most of the new democracies in this regard.
- In the Political Stability Index, Israel ranks in last place among the democracies studied.

- Israel scores low marks in the area of social cleavages; these divisions affect the country's democratic quality and are not diminishing with time.
- The strongest improvement is in the institutional measures, primarily as a result of the rise in Israel's score in the governance indicators.
- Indicators of corruption in the political system did not register noticeable changes in comparison with 2009.

## **Part Two: The 2010 Democracy Survey**

The second section of the 2010 Israeli Democracy Index analyzes the findings of a public opinion poll conducted in Israel in March 2010 among a representative sample of Jewish and Arab respondents. The survey focused on the public's assessment of the practice of democracy in Israel, and the level of support for, and satisfaction with, Israeli democracy. The purpose of this section of the Index is to gauge the public's views on a series of democratic values, and its perceptions regarding the functioning of democracy in Israel in comparison with previous surveys from 2003 to 2009.

### **Major Findings**

- While there is broad support for the assertion that Israel must remain a democratic state, the Israeli public tends to characterize the country's democracy as weak and ineffective. The preferred solution is a more centralized government. The bulk of the survey's respondents (60%) ascribe advantages to an authoritarian government and a strong leadership, which, as they see it, solve problems efficiently.
- Israelis are disappointed by the low degree to which their preferences (as reflected in voting patterns) influence the government's policies. The majority (59%) prefer a regime made up of experts, who would make decisions based on professional considerations rather than political ones. This is compounded by

disappointment with the functioning of elected bodies and a lack of trust in the Knesset and political parties. As in the past, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) enjoys a high level of trust on the part of the Israeli public. The office of the President of Israel continues to improve its image, and this year a majority (70%) expressed a high degree of trust in the incumbent president.

- Of the Jewish public, 86% believe that critical decisions for the state should be taken by a Jewish majority. A total of 53% maintain that the state is entitled to encourage Arabs to emigrate from Israel.
- Since the Democracy Index was first published in 2003, significant gaps have been observed between the opinions of long-time Israelis and those of immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (hereafter: FSU immigrants). It seems that the latter are among the less liberal Israeli groups with regard to such issues as majority-minority relations and gender equality.
- This year, as in previous years, the Democracy Survey indicates an unwavering optimism in the public's attitude toward Israel's future. Although the majority of Israelis are very troubled by corruption, have lost faith in politicians, and are convinced that another war will break out in the next few years, they continue to want to live in Israel, are proud of their state, and feel that they belong to the Israeli collective.

### **Part Three: Democratic Principles in Practice**

The analysis in this section was conducted on two planes: the vertical and the horizontal. On the vertical plane, we focused on comparing support for core democratic values with citizens' assessment of the extent to which these values are realized by government institutions and agencies. The horizontal plane, by contrast, centered on relations between citizens, as individuals and as groups, and examined whether the citizens of Israel in fact uphold their stated commitment to constitutional values and the rights derived from them.

## The Vertical Dimension

- The public in Israel, as in many other democracies, explicitly supports a democratic regime: 81% of the general public agrees with the basic assertion that “democracy is not a perfect regime, but it is better than any other form of government.”
- Despite the support in principle for a democratic regime, more than half the general public (55%) supports the statement that “Israel’s overall situation would be much better if there were less attention paid to the principles of democracy and greater focus on observing the law and on public order.” A breakdown of the responses of the Jewish interviewees according to self-reported political orientation on a left-right continuum shows significant differences between the groups: The above statement is supported by 60% of those who identify themselves as right-wing; 50% of those in the center; and 49% of those on the left. In other words, among right-wingers, there is greater willingness to waive democratic principles than there is among centrists or left-wingers.
- Some 36% of respondents feel that Israel today is not democratic enough; 34% believe that it is sufficiently democratic; and 27% hold that it is too democratic. If these results are broken down by sector, the view that Israel is not democratic enough is particularly strong among FSU immigrants (49%), as compared with 41% of the Arab population and only 31% of long-time Israelis.
- The distribution of responses to the question: “What grade would you give Israeli democracy today, where 1 = failed and 10 = excellent?” shows that the Jewish public as a whole assigns Israeli democracy an average grade of 5.4, while FSU immigrants feel it deserves a slightly higher grade (5.6). The Israeli Arab public gives Israeli democracy a lower average grade of 5.1.
- The public is divided in its attitude to the statement that Israel was more democratic in the past than it is today. Among the

Jewish population, the percentage of those who disagree with this statement stands at 47%, which exceeds the percentage who support it (39%).

- With regard to a constitution for Israel: 65% of the general public indicate that the subject is important to them. Among the Jewish public, 69% feel this way, as compared with only 45% of the Arab respondents.
- Israel as a Jewish and democratic state: Among the Israeli public as a whole, the highest percentage—43%—consider both parts of this definition (“Jewish” and “democratic”) to be equally important; 31% classify the Jewish component as more important; and only 20% ascribe greater importance to the democratic component. Among Arab citizens of Israel, the democratic element takes precedence (38%).
- Freedom of religion and freedom of expression: The prevalent view with respect to both these rights is that they are implemented to a suitable degree (approx. 41% in both cases). With regard to human rights, however, 39% feel that they are not implemented sufficiently.
- Trust in institutions: Only slightly more than half the general Israeli public—54%—state that they trust the Supreme Court fully or to some extent, as opposed to 44% who state openly that they do not trust it. Only 41% of the respondents express full or partial trust in the police. As for Israel’s political parties, 72% of the general public assert that they do not trust them. A large majority (63%), however, are opposed to the view that the parties are no longer necessary and can therefore be abolished.

### **The Horizontal Dimension**

- The notion that citizenship is a legal status conferring equal rights has been only partially internalized by the Israeli public: 51% of the general public support full equality of rights between Jews and Arabs. A breakdown of the Jewish public by level of

religiosity shows that the greater the level of religious observance, the stronger the objection to equality of rights between Jews and Arabs: only 33.5% of secular Jews are opposed to such equal rights, in contrast to 51% of traditional Jews, 65% of religious Jews, and 72% (!) of ultra-Orthodox Jews.

- Almost two thirds (62%) of the Jewish sample feel that as long as Israel is in a state of conflict with the Palestinians, the views of Arab citizens of Israel on foreign affairs and security issues should not be taken into account.
- Roughly two thirds (67%) of Jewish Israelis feel that first-degree relatives of Arabs should not be allowed entry into Israel under the rubric of family unification.
- As for equality in the allocation of resources, a majority of respondents (55%) think that greater resources should be allocated to Jewish communities than to Arab ones. Only a minority (42%) disagree with this statement. Among right-wingers, a clear majority (71%) agree with it, while only a minority (46%) of centrists, and an even smaller minority (38%) of leftists, agree. Breaking down the data by religiosity shows that among ultra-Orthodox Jews, 51% agree with this statement; among religious Jews, 45%; among traditional Jews, 28%; and among secular Jews, only 18%.
- With regard to equality in the financing of religious services (needs and amenities), the situation appears to be better: 39% of the general public support equal funding, while 35% are opposed. As for equal financing of schools, the percentage of supporters among the general public is even greater (51%), in contrast with 27% who are opposed. If we look solely at the Jewish public, the proportion of support for equal financing of religious services stands at 41%, compared with 33% opposed. With reference to equal financing of schools, the level of support reaches 54%, in contrast with 26% opposed.
- Examining the extent of Jewish Israelis' tolerance for neighbors who are "other" (immigrants from the FSU, ultra-Orthodox Jews,



former settlers, homosexual couples, foreign workers, Arabs, mentally retarded individuals, Ethiopian immigrants, mentally ill individuals in community treatment settings, people who do not observe the Sabbath and holidays) reveals that the neighborly relationship considered most troubling is that with Arabs (46%), followed by people who are mentally ill and foreign workers (both 39%). The notion of being neighbors with a homosexual couple bothers 25% of respondents; with ultra-Orthodox Jews, 23%; with Ethiopian immigrants 17%; with non-Sabbath observers 10%; and with FSU immigrants, 8% of respondents.

- Based on the survey data, the Arab public seems to be less tolerant than the Jewish public when it comes to living as neighbors with people who are “other.” In this case, the most undesirable types of neighbors are homosexual couples (70%), ultra-Orthodox Jews (67%), and former settlers (65%). The most “tolerable” neighbors, in the view of Arab respondents, are foreign workers (48%).
- Some 72% of the general public feel that Israel is being harmed as a democracy by the increasing gaps in society.
- A total of 54% of the Jewish public object to the statement that there should be legal penalties for persons who speak out against Zionism; likewise, 50% agree with the statement that it is important to allow non-Zionist parties to take part in elections.
- A slim majority of the Jewish sample—51.5%—agree with the statement that only new immigrants who are Jewish according to Halakhah (Jewish religious law) should be entitled to automatically receive Israeli citizenship. Of long-time Israelis, a total of 59% agree with this statement, while among FSU immigrants, this figure drops to 34.5%. If we examine the responses of the Jewish public according to self-reported level of religiosity, we find that support for the exclusion of non-Jews breaks down as follows: 41% among the secular; 63% among the traditional; 79% among the religious; and 88% among the ultra-Orthodox.

- There is virtually total consensus (82%) among the Jewish public that emergency medical treatment should be provided to patients, whether or not they have health insurance. Among the Arab public, by contrast, this position is supported by only 40% of the respondents.
- On the question of denying the right to elect or be elected to those who are eligible for conscription but do not serve in the army, we found sizeable differences between sectors: 56% of long-time Israelis agree with this position, whereas 62% of FSU immigrants do not agree. Examining the same issue according to self-reported level of religiosity yields the finding that 76% of the ultra-Orthodox public is opposed to this idea.

## **Part One**

# **The Democracy Index 2010**



## A. Description of the Research and Its Goals

The **Democracy Index** project of the Israel Democracy Institute is a periodic assessment of Israeli democracy, focusing on the extent to which democratic values and goals are realized in Israel. To determine the performance of Israeli democracy, we concentrated on a range of characteristics and variables that are identified in democratic theory with stable, established, liberal democracies.

The concept of “democracy” has numerous definitions and connotations. For our purposes, we will be defining a democratic state as follows: a state in which a majority of the inhabitants enjoy civil rights that comprise, minimally, the right to be elected and the right to elect decision makers from among two or more candidates, in periodic, secret, competitive elections whose results are binding.<sup>1</sup> In tandem with this definition, it is important to clarify two basic premises of this study: first, that democracy is not a dichotomous phenomenon but a continuum of different political systems that reflect varying degrees of “democraticness”; and second, that democracy is a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing a range of institutions, attributes, and functions. Accordingly, this assessment of the state of democracy in Israel relates to three areas: the institutional aspect, the rights aspect, and the stability aspect.<sup>2</sup> Each of these aspects is made up of a cluster of fundamental characteristics that serve as the basis for evaluating the quality of democracy in any country (Figure 1, below).

The **institutional aspect** relates to the system of formal institutions underpinning a democratic regime, the division of power among them, and the reciprocal relationships between the players in a political system, i.e., elected representatives and public officials. This aspect addresses five key characteristics: accountability, representativeness, checks and

1 A. Arian, D. Nachmias, D. Navot, and D. Shani, *The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index: Measuring Israeli Democracy* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2003), 18.

2 *Ibid.*

balances, political participation, and government integrity (measured as the extent of political corruption, or lack thereof). The first four characteristics contribute to the direct or indirect inclusion of citizens or their preferences in government decision-making processes, while the last one (political corruption) is considered part of the institutional aspect, since its very presence contradicts the essence of democracy, whereby representatives are expected to work for the good of those they represent and not for their own benefit or other vested interests.

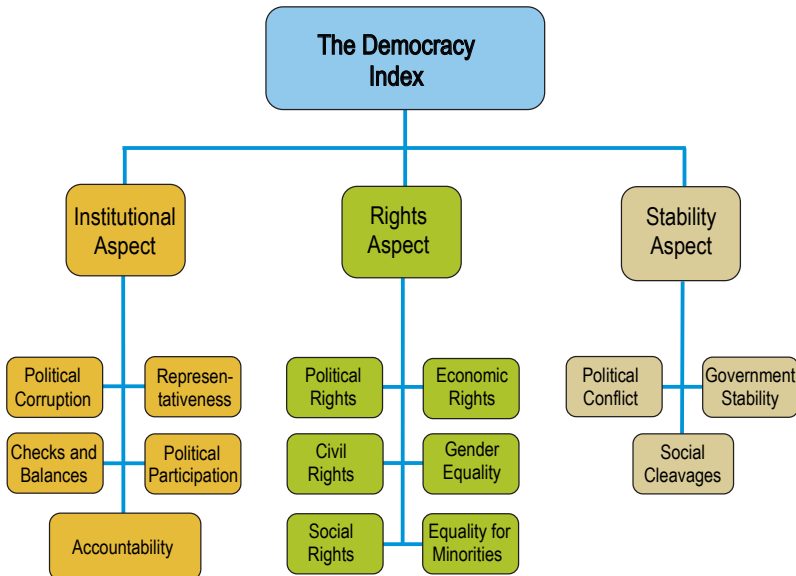
The **rights aspect** relates to an essential, formal principle of democracy, namely, the safeguarding of human dignity and liberty; minority rights; and the rule of law. Included in this aspect are political, civil, social, and economic rights. Gender equality and equality for minorities are also components of this aspect. The first three rights are in keeping with the concept of citizenship underlying any democratic regime. Economic (or property) rights often appear under the rubric of civil rights, particularly in the American context, since in the U.S., citizenship translates into the right of ownership. Since the notion of property is less central to the Israeli democratic ethos, we have decided to present it as a separate category. Gender equality and equality for minorities are actually relevant to all the rights mentioned, but the emphasis here is on equality in the implementation of rights. This distinction rests on the assumption that it is important to examine not only the exercise of civil rights in society as a whole but also whether the weaker groups in a society enjoy these rights to the same extent as the stronger groups.

Stability is not an integral feature of democracy, and it can characterize any type of regime. Nevertheless, stability can be an indicator, or even a consequence, of a highly developed democracy, and it is certainly an attribute to which every democratic regime aspires. Similarly, the absence of stability can negatively influence the quality and functioning of a democracy. The **stability aspect** relates to the stability of the government, meaning its ability to govern effectively (and not only to the stability of the democratic regime). This aspect also encompasses civil protest and opposition, along with the country's

social divisions, or cleavages. Displays of opposition attest to conflicts between citizens and the government, or between groups of citizens, whereas the depth of social divisions is a function of the level of tension between groups in a society.

The study was conducted on two levels. At the first level, we examined the state of Israeli democracy according to a series of quantitative measures drawn from existing databases in a range of areas (hereafter: the democracy indicators). At the second level, we evaluated the state of democracy in Israel as reflected in public opinion by gauging the public's positions on a series of democratic values and its perceptions regarding the functioning of Israeli democracy. To this end, we conducted a comprehensive survey among a representative sample of Israel's adult population (Jews and Arabs) in March 2010 (hereafter: the Democracy Survey).

Figure 1  
The Structure of the Index



The qualities measured in the various democracy indicators and the Democracy Survey<sup>3</sup> were compared along two axes: the first, Israel's current functioning vis-à-vis that of 35 other democracies around the world; and the second, its performance as a democracy over time.<sup>4</sup>

The book is divided into three parts: Part One includes the updated **2010 Democracy Index**, and presents quantitative measures developed at international research institutes that trace the state of governance in dozens of countries over a time frame of several years. Most of these assessments are based on a combination of primary and secondary sources, and on the views of experts in Israel and elsewhere. As in previous years, we have assembled the data to highlight overall trends (improvement, decline, or no change) in Israel's situation as compared with other countries and with past years. In 2010, 19 of the 37 indicators measured in the **Democracy Index** were updated. (For full details of Israel's ranking in all global indicators included in the **Democracy Index**, and of the change trends since 2003, see Appendix 1.)

Part Two of the book contains the Democracy Survey, which presents the findings of a public opinion poll based on a series of set questions that have been in use since 2003. The questions examine the public's attitudes and assessments regarding the exercise of democracy in Israel, the degree of support for democracy, and the level of satisfaction with it. (For the distribution of responses to the recurring questions, and for the trends of the change over the years, see Appendix 2.)

3 For a full description of the democracy indicators, see Arian et al. (note 1, *above*). Six indicators of the World Bank were added in the 2007 Democracy Index: voice and accountability; political stability and absence of violence; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; and control of corruption. For further details, see: A. Arian, N. Atmor, Y. Hadar, *The 2007 Israeli Democracy Index: Cohesion in a Divided Society* (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2007). In the 2009 Democracy Index, two indicators of the World Economic Forum (WEF) were added: the Global Competitiveness Index and Global Gender Gap Index. For further discussion, see: A. Arian, M. Philippov, A. Knafelman, *The 2009 Democracy Index: Twenty Years of Immigration from the Soviet Union* (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2009).

4 For purposes of this study, we selected a total of 36 countries defined by the Polity Project as "democratic states," and by Freedom House as "free countries."



Part Three of the **Democracy Index** is devoted this year to measuring the congruence between the Israeli public's espousal in theory of such core democratic values as equality before the law, freedom of expression, and protection of minority rights, and its support for these values in practice.

## B. The Democracy Indicators

### 1. An Overview

As in past years, the areas of corruption and rule of law garnered a good deal of attention in 2010. Two former ministers—Avraham Hirschson and Shlomo Benizri—were found guilty of offenses involving corruption, and investigations are presently being conducted against former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, present Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman, and high-ranking economic figures. Likewise, the debate over the state's character continues: relations between religious and non-religious Jews; majority-minority relations; adherence to democratic values; and the relationship between the various branches of government.

In most democracy indicators in 2010, Israel straddles the boundary between the established and developing democracies. Despite some improvement in several indicators, on the whole its scores are low in comparison with those of the developed democracies surveyed. Nonetheless, compared with the **2009 Democracy Index**, the overall pattern of change is positive: of the 19 indicators updated this year, 9 displayed improvement; 5 worsened; and 5 did not register any change (Table 1, below). In the international comparison, Israel's ranking rose in 3 indicators, remained unchanged in 9, and fell in 6. In some indicators, Israel received low scores in comparison with previous years, causing it to drop in the rankings; but in other cases, its score remained the same or even improved, though the scores of other countries also rose, affecting Israel's relative position on the scale.

The greatest change was registered in the institutional indicators, as a consequence of the improvement in Israel's scores in the World

Bank's governance indicators. The indicators of corruption and political stability did not show a marked change compared with 2009, since cases of corruption continue to plague the Israeli public, as reflected in the country's scores in the corruption indicators. In the stability ratings, there were no outstanding changes in comparison with the previous assessment, and Israel's scores remained very low when compared with the 35 other democracies in the study. Indicators in the area of rights showed mixed trends this year, though the changes from 2009 were very slight. In the international comparison, Israel's scores remained low in most of the rights indicators.

## **2. Israel 2010 as Reflected in the Indicators: An International and Historical Comparison**

The international comparison, and the changes vis-à-vis the previous assessment, yield a complex picture of the status of Israeli democracy. Figure 2 presents Israel's ranking in 18 indicators, compared with the 35 other democracies included in the study.<sup>5</sup> The horizontal axis is divided according to the three aspects included in the Index—the institutional aspect, the rights aspect, and the stability aspect. The vertical axis represents Israel's ranking in relation to other democracies, the first place representing the highest level of democracy, while the 36<sup>th</sup> place denotes the lowest. In several instances, Israel shares the same score with a number of countries such that its ranking spans more than one position.

In the historical comparison, several changes were registered this year in Israel's standing. Table 1 (below) classifies the updated indicators in terms of the direction of changes since 2009, as improved, unchanged, or worsened.

5 Nineteen indicators were updated in this year's study, but there is no international comparison of per-capita incarceration rates with security prisoners included.

The **institutional aspect** comprises 15 indicators, 8 of which were updated this year.<sup>6</sup> Israel's ranking in the ICRG's (International Country Risk Guide)<sup>7</sup> horizontal accountability index, which measures the extent of army intervention in politics, remained unchanged from 2009. In the voice and accountability indicator of the World Bank (WB), Israel registered a decline, though its scores in government effectiveness and regulatory quality improved in comparison with the previous assessment (in 2007).<sup>8</sup> There was also a moderate rise in the checks and balances index (measured by the level of constraints on the executive branch). Similarly, there was a modest improvement in Israel's scores in the corruption indicators of Transparency International (TI),<sup>9</sup> which examines perceptions of corruption (through its Corruption Perceptions Index), and the World Bank, which assesses control of corruption. Israel's ranking in the ICRG's corruption indicator, however, remained unchanged.

In the international comparison, there was a slight improvement in Israel's ranking vis-à-vis other countries in three World Bank indicators: voice and accountability, government effectiveness, and regulatory quality. Four indicators—horizontal accountability (ICRG); constraints on the executive branch (checks and balances index); the

6 This year's Index does not address indicators related to elections: proportionality of elections, party dominance, and electoral participation.

7 For purposes of the **Democracy Index**, we have used only five of the ICRG indicators, namely, the measures of accountability, corruption, law and order, religious tensions, and ethnic tensions. For further information on these ratings, see the project's website: [www.prsgroup.com/ICRG\\_Methodology.aspx](http://www.prsgroup.com/ICRG_Methodology.aspx) (all sites referred to in this study were retrieved in May 2010).

8 The World Bank issues its governance indicators every few years, based on the assessments of international research institutes, expert opinions, and public opinion polls. For a detailed analysis, see: D. Kaufmann, A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters VIII: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators, 1996-2008*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 4978, 2009. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1424591>

9 The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), published yearly, is based on expert assessments. For further information, see the organization's website: [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI); and the Corruption Index of the ICRG—showed no change; however, a drop was recorded in Israel's ranking in the World Bank's Corruption Control Index.

The **rights aspect** includes 18 comparative indicators, 8 of which were updated this year.<sup>10</sup> The rights indicators present a complex picture: In four measures (rule of law; number of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants, including security prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants; economic freedom; and the Gender Empowerment Measure), Israel's ranking rose; in three ratings (number of prisoners, not including security prisoners; the Global Competitive Index; and the Gender-Related Development Index), a decline was recorded; and one indicator (law and order) remained unchanged, though Israel's standing in the World Bank rule of law indicator registered an improvement. Israel's overall incarceration rate—both security and non-security (criminal) prisoners—declined slightly; however, the number of criminal prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants rose. Israel's standing in the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom continued its gradual upward trend, while the Global Competitiveness Index of the World Economic Forum (WEF) registered a decline. It is nonetheless important to note that as a result of the global economic crisis, most countries participating in the survey experienced a drop in their scores. In the UN's Gender-Related Development Index, Israel's ranking fell somewhat, though an improvement was recorded in the Gender Empowerment Measure.

In the international comparison, Israel's ranking did not improve in any of the rights indicators: No change was recorded in the ICRG's law and order rating, as well as the WB's rule of law indicator, while in the other indicators in the rights aspect, there was a decline in Israel's comparative global standing.

10 The following indicators were not adjusted this year: the Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum; GINI coefficients for income distribution and disposable income; competitiveness in political participation; human rights violations; freedom of the press; freedom of religion; and discrimination against minorities.

Figure 2  
Israel's Ranking in the Democracies

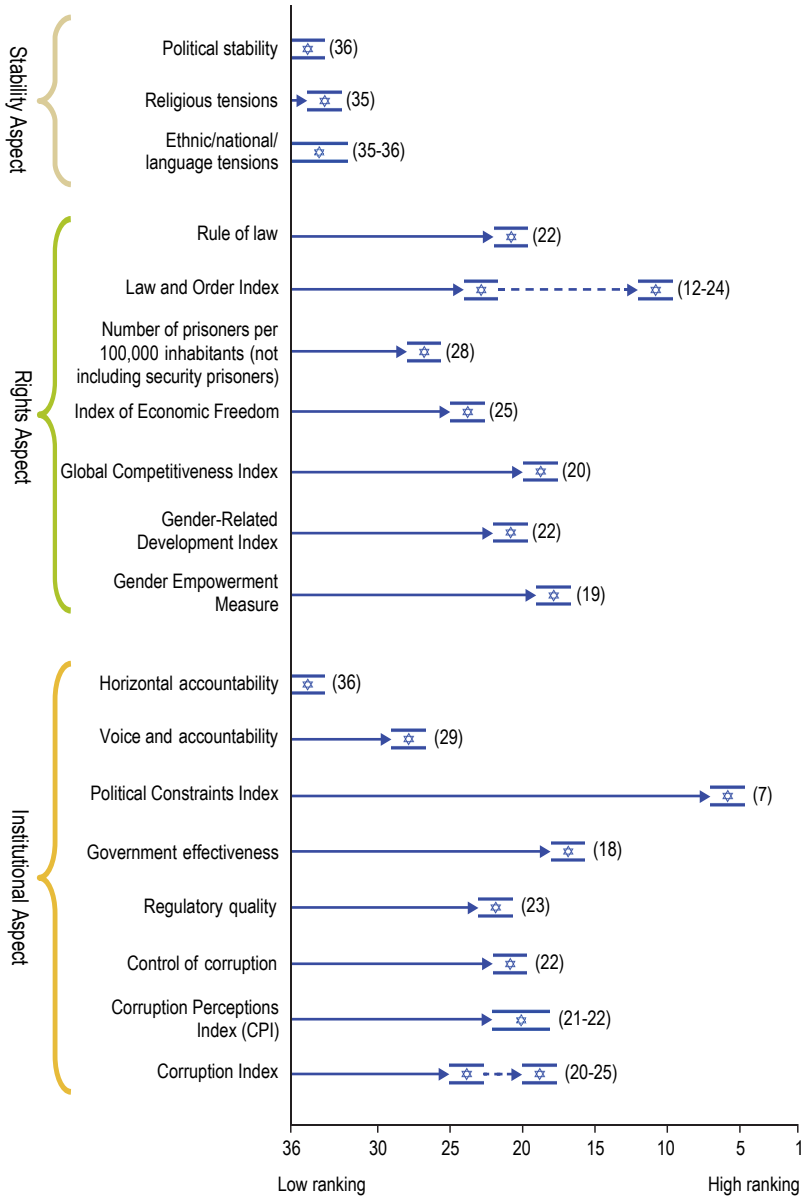


Table 1  
**Israel 2010 as Reflected in the Indicators:  
 Changes since the Previous Assessment**

The Rating	Israel's score in 2010	Israel's score in the previous assessment	The Scale	Change
<b>Institutional Aspect</b>				
Horizontal accountability (military involvement in politics) (ICRG)	2.5	2.5	0–6 (0 = high military involvement)	=
Voice and accountability (World Bank)	68.3	69.7 as of 2007	0–100 (100 = high score)	↓
Political Constraint Index (checks and balances) (Henisz)	0.784	0.779 as of 2004	0–1 (0 = absence of constraints)	↑
Government effectiveness (World Bank)	88.2	85.3 as of 2007	0–100 (100 = high score)	↑
Regulatory quality (World Bank)	86	82.5 as of 2007	0–100 (100 = high score)	↑
Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) (Transparency International)	6.1	6	0–10 (0 = high corruption)	↑
Corruption Index (ICRG)	3	3	0–6 (0 = high corruption)	=
Control of corruption (World Bank)	78.7	77.3 as of 2007	0–100 (100 = high score)	↑

↑ Indicates an improvement in Israel's ranking as an essential democracy in comparison with the previous assessment.

↓ Indicates a decline in Israel's ranking as an essential democracy in comparison with the previous assessment.

Rights Aspect				
Law and order (ICRG)	5	5	0–6 (0 = limited maintenance of law and order)	=
Rule of law (World Bank)	78.5	74.3 as of 2007	0–100 (100 = high score)	↑
Number of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants, (not including security prisoners)	208	196	0–100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	↓
Number of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants (including security prisoners)	325	326	0–100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	↑
Economic freedom (Heritage Foundation)	67.7	67.6	0–100 (0 = full freedom)	↑
Global competitiveness (World Economic Forum)	4.8	4.97	1–7 (1 = low competitiveness)	↓
Gender-related Development Index (GDI) (UN)	0.921	0.925 as of 2007	0–1 (0 = inequality)	↓
Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) (UN)	0.705	0.656 as of 2007	0–1 (0 = inequality)	↑
Stability Aspect				
Political stability (World Bank)	11	12 as of 2007	0–100 (100 = high score)	↓
Religious tensions (ICRG)	2.5	2.5	0–6 (0 = high tension)	=
Ethnic / national / language tensions (ICRG)	2	2	0–6 (0 = high tension)	=

In the **stability aspect**, 3 out of 6 indicators were updated this year.<sup>11</sup> Israel's ranking in the political stability indicator of the World Bank dropped to last place out of the 36 countries surveyed. Two ICRG indicators—religious tensions and ethnic tensions (based on race, nationality or language)—rate the level of tensions between different groups in society resulting from social cleavages. The scores in these indicators remain unchanged from the previous year. In the international comparison, Israel's position did not change relative to the 2009 assessment.

### 3. Selected Findings

#### (a) The Institutional Aspect

As stated, the institutional aspect is concerned with the formal political institutions underpinning the democratic regime. The perspective gained from studying these bodies allows us to understand and improve political systems.<sup>12</sup> Like its predecessors, the **2010 Democracy Index** relates to the functioning of institutions. As in previous years, we have also updated the indicators of political corruption.

#### (1) Checks and Balances

This topic relates to the constraints imposed on the executive branch of government—in theory and in practice—by both the legislative branch and the judiciary, as well as other mechanisms of horizontal accountability.<sup>13</sup> To examine this parameter, we make use of the **Political Constraint Index** developed by Witold Henisz, which centers on two elements: one, the number of “veto points,” that is, independent branches of government with veto power over policy outcomes; and

11 The following indicators were not updated this year: changes in government; political conflict (weighted rating); and term of office.

12 J. G. March and J. P. Olsen, “Elaborating the ‘New Institutionalism,’” in R. A. W. Rhodes, S. A. Binder, and B. A. Rockman (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4.

13 For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see Arian, Nachmias, Navot & Shani (note 1, *above*), 40.



two, the distribution of preferences among the actors that inhabit these points. The index ranges from 0 (no constraints on the ability of the executive branch to change existing policy) to 1 (full constraints). Calculating the index is not a simple process, and involves numerous assumptions. As a rule, it is calculated as 1 minus the expected range of policies for which a change in the status quo can be agreed upon by all political actors with veto power.<sup>14</sup> According to Henisz's model, over time there has been a noticeable change for the better in the level of constraints imposed on the executive branch in Israel. From 1949 until the mid-1980s, Israel's scores ranged around 0.5; however, in 1992 there was a sharp increase in the extent of the constraints imposed on the executive: that year, and again in 2004, Israel received a score of 0.77; in 2009, there was a further slight increase (to 0.78). In 2009, as in 2004, Israel ranked in seventh place on this scale, between Germany and Chile. Of the countries in our survey, the highest scores were recorded by Belgium (0.891), Australia (0.866), and Canada (0.863), while Argentina (0.460), Greece (0.363), and Thailand (0.262) ranked lowest (Figures 3a, 3b).

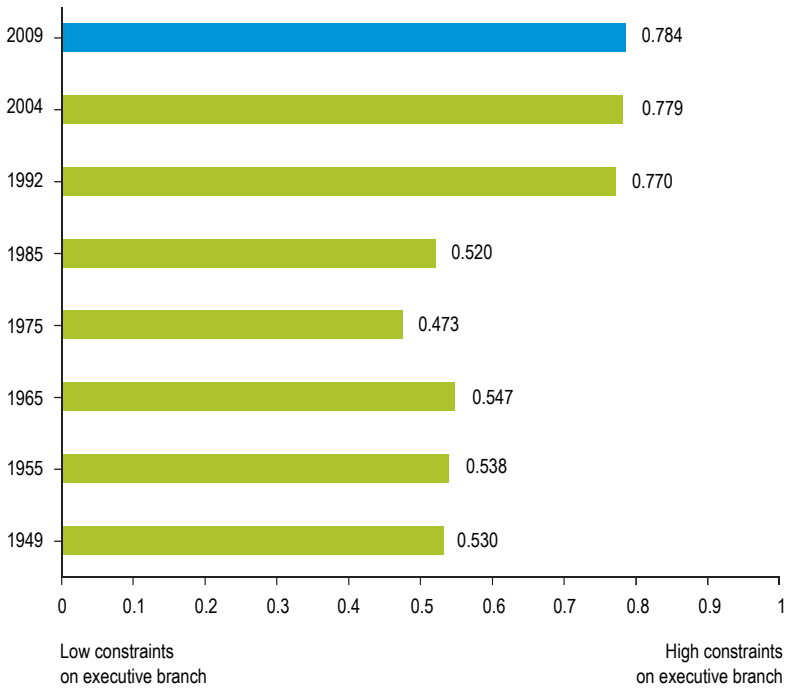
14 For further information, see W. J. Henisz, "The Institutional Environment for Economic Growth," *Economics and Politics* 12 (1) (2000): 1-31; available at: [www-management.wharton.upenn.edu/henisz](http://www-management.wharton.upenn.edu/henisz)

Figure 3a

**Checks and Balances: An International Comparison**



Figure 3b  
Checks and Balances in Israel



## (2) Governance Indicators

The World Bank defines governance as the institutions and traditions by which a state's authority is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored, and replaced; the ability of the government to effectively formulate and implement policy; and the respect of citizens for the institutions that govern their economic and social interactions. The World Bank issues its governance indicators every few years, with the indicator scores determined by assessments from 25 international research institutes and think tanks, evaluations by experts in various countries, and public opinion polls. The results of these assessments are summed up in an index ranging from 0 to 100.

Figure 4a  
**Voice and Accountability: An International Comparison**

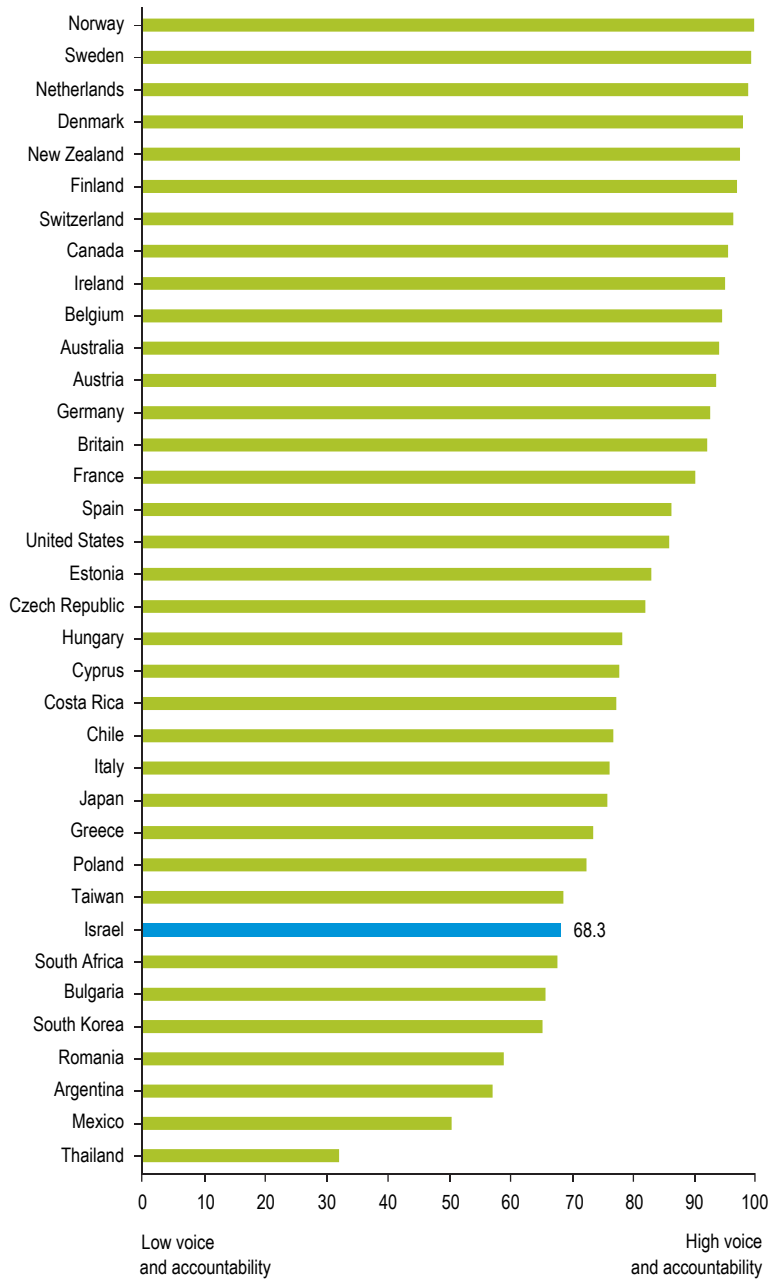
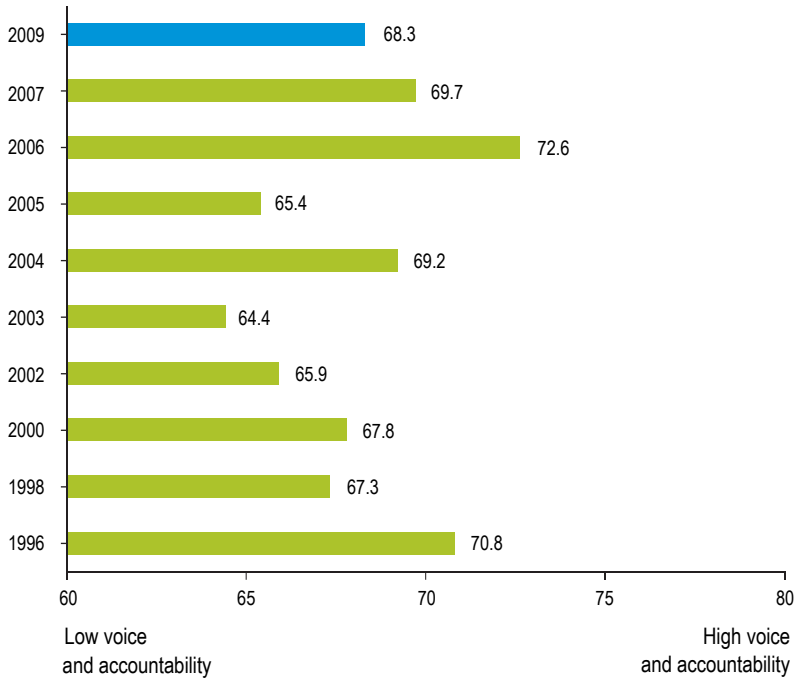


Figure 4b  
**Voice and Accountability in Israel**



The higher a country's score, the higher its level of governance. In two indicators measured by the World Bank—government effectiveness and regulatory quality<sup>15</sup>—Israel's situation has improved vis-à-vis the previous assessment, while its position in the voice and accountability indicator has worsened. In **Voice and Accountability**, Israel received a score of 68.3 (Figure 4a); in **Regulatory Quality**, 86 (Figure 5); and in **Government Effectiveness**, 88.2 (Figure 6), placing it between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> positions in the international comparison.

15 For a detailed discussion, see the World Bank site:  
<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp>

Figure 5

**Regulatory Quality: An International Comparison**

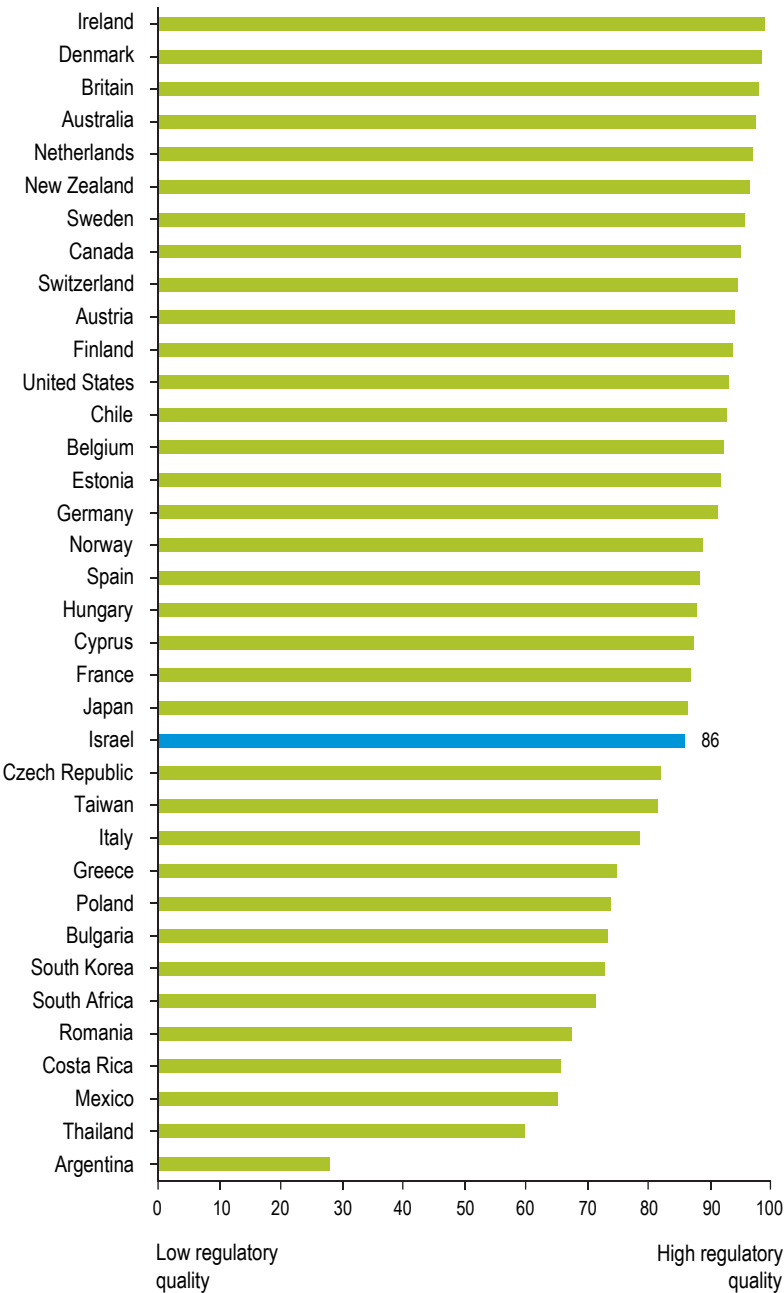
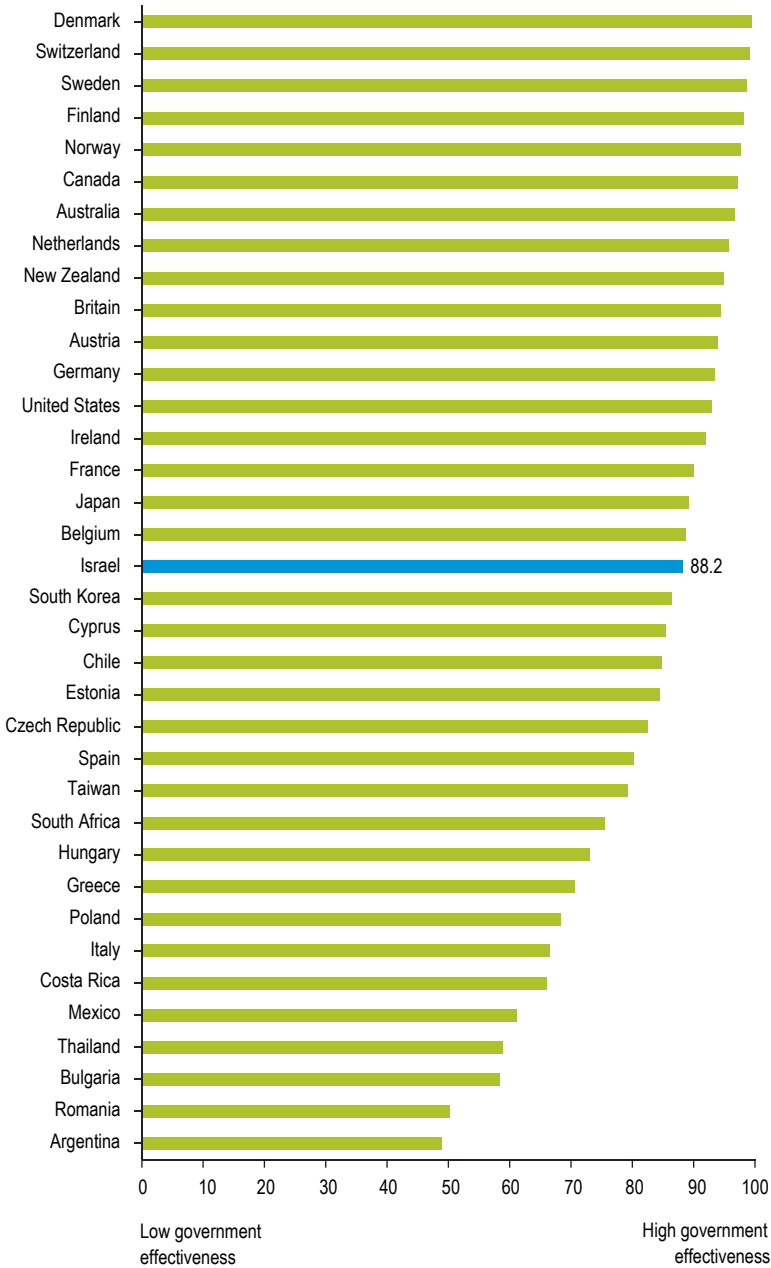


Figure 6

# Government Effectiveness: An International Comparison



### (3) Political Corruption

The accepted definition of political corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain. Political corruption contradicts the basic principles of democracy, in particular the principle of the rule of law. It is difficult to assess the extent of political corruption in as much as each country defines it differently; nonetheless, there is a global effort to confront this challenge and produce a comparative assessment of corruption. In the **Democracy Index**, we use three measures to evaluate the scope of political corruption in dozens of countries throughout the world.

The **Corruption Perceptions Index** (CPI) is published by Transparency International, an organization that fights corruption, promotes transparency and integrity around the world, and works to raise global awareness on this issue. The Index, which has been issued annually since 1995, is based on the perceptions and assessments of experts as established by surveys conducted at 12 research institutes and organizations in 179 countries. Scores range from 0 to 10; the higher the score, the more free of corruption the country is considered to be. According to the **2010 Democracy Index**, Israel is ranked 21<sup>st</sup>–22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 36 countries surveyed, with a score of 6.1, placing it between Cyprus and Spain. New Zealand, Denmark, and Sweden received the highest scores of the countries in our study, while Thailand, Mexico, and Argentina scored the lowest, as shown in Figure 7a.

The **Corruption Index** produced by the ICRG (International Country Risk Guide) is a comparative update of the state of corruption in the countries included in the survey. The ICRG views corruption as a problem that undermines the political order and, in extreme cases, is liable to bring about the fall or overthrow of a regime. It gathers data on the level of corruption in 140 countries, using 7 categories. The score ranges from 0 (high level of corruption) to 6 (absence of corruption).<sup>16</sup>

16 For further information about the Guide and its methodology, see the ICRG site: [www.prsgroup.com/ICRG\\_Methodology.aspx#PolRiskRating](http://www.prsgroup.com/ICRG_Methodology.aspx#PolRiskRating)



Figure 7a  
**Political Corruption: An International Comparison**  
 (based on the CPI)

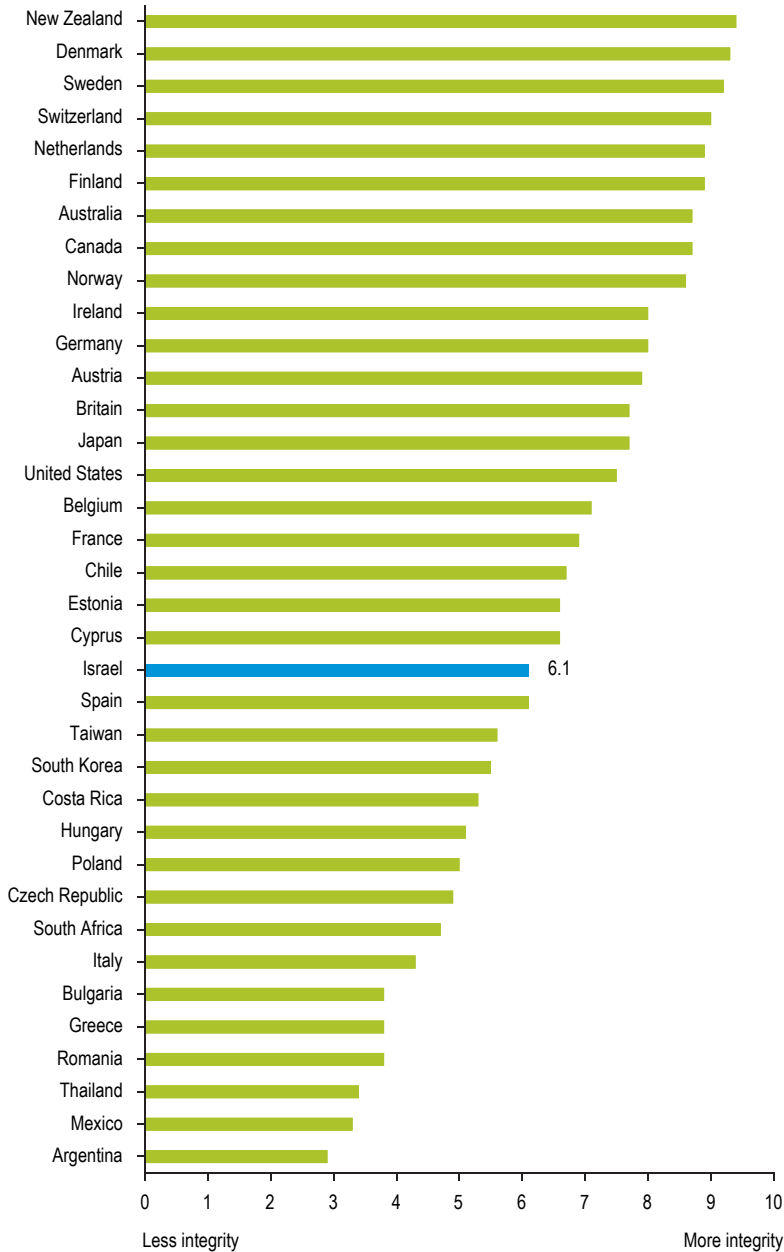
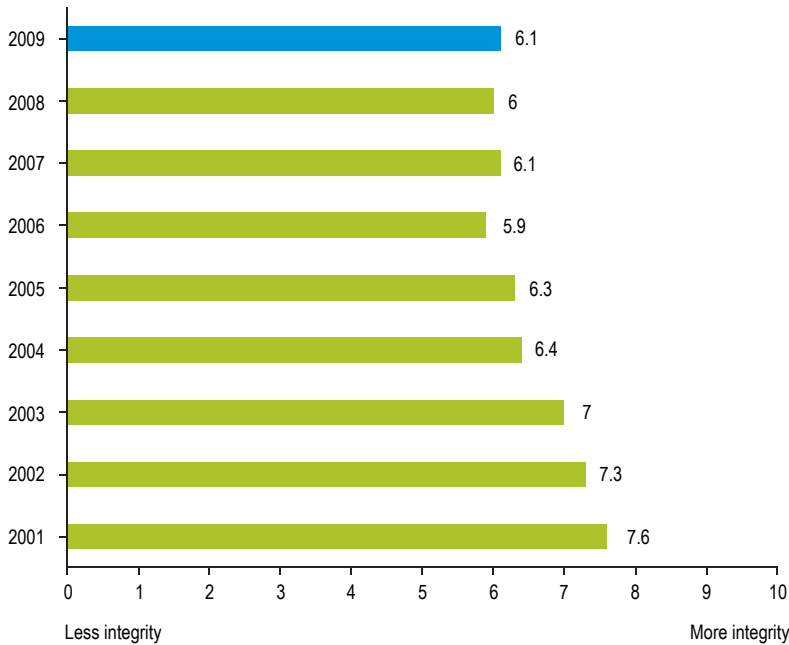


Figure 7b  
**Political Corruption in Israel (CPI)**



Israel received a score of 3 on this index, alongside Hungary and Japan, placing it in the 20<sup>th</sup>–25<sup>th</sup> position out of 36 countries.<sup>17</sup>

The **Corruption Control Index** produced by the World Bank ranges from 0 (no control) to 100 (full control). Israel scored 78.7 in this ranking, placing it 22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 36 countries surveyed, between Estonia and Taiwan (Figure 8a). The highest scores were obtained by Finland, Denmark, and New Zealand, with Mexico, Thailand, and Argentina at the bottom of the scale. As shown in Figure 8b, Israel registered an improvement in its ranking vis-à-vis the previous assessment, but not when compared with its levels in the 1990s.

17 Six countries received the same score.

Figure 8a  
Control of Corruption: An International Comparison

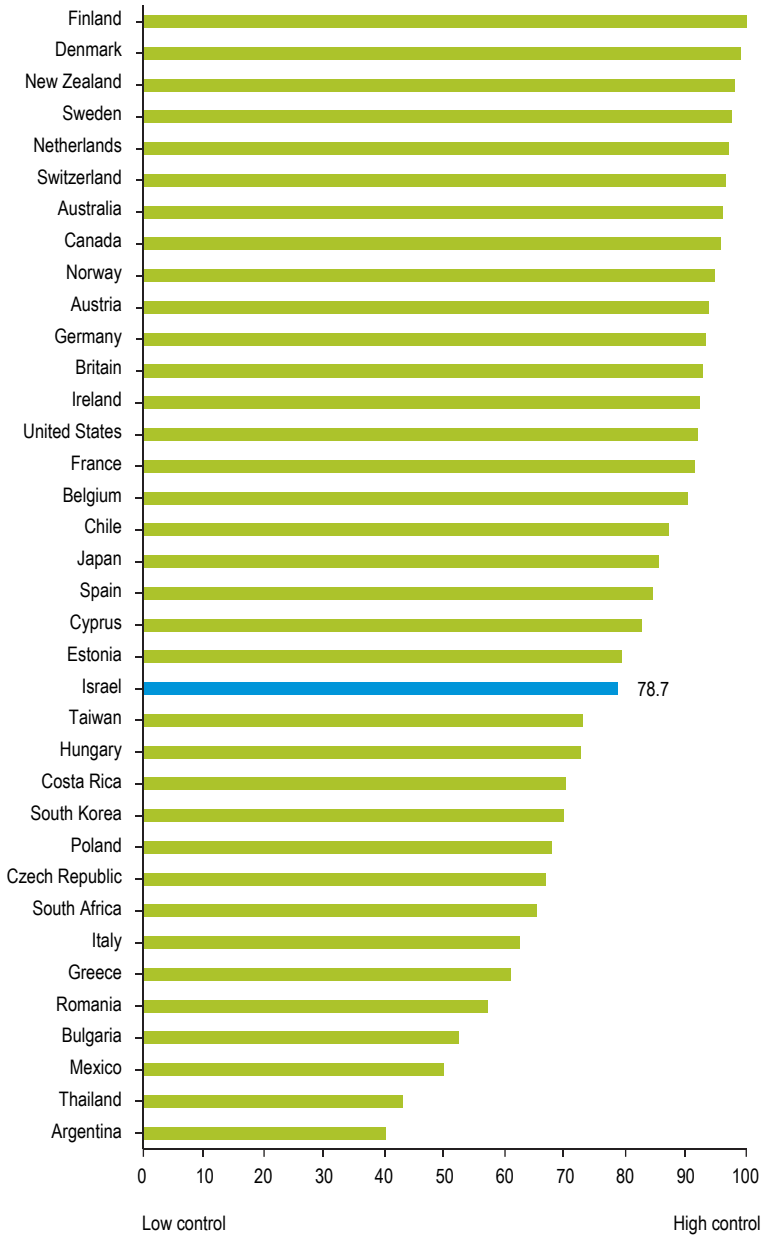
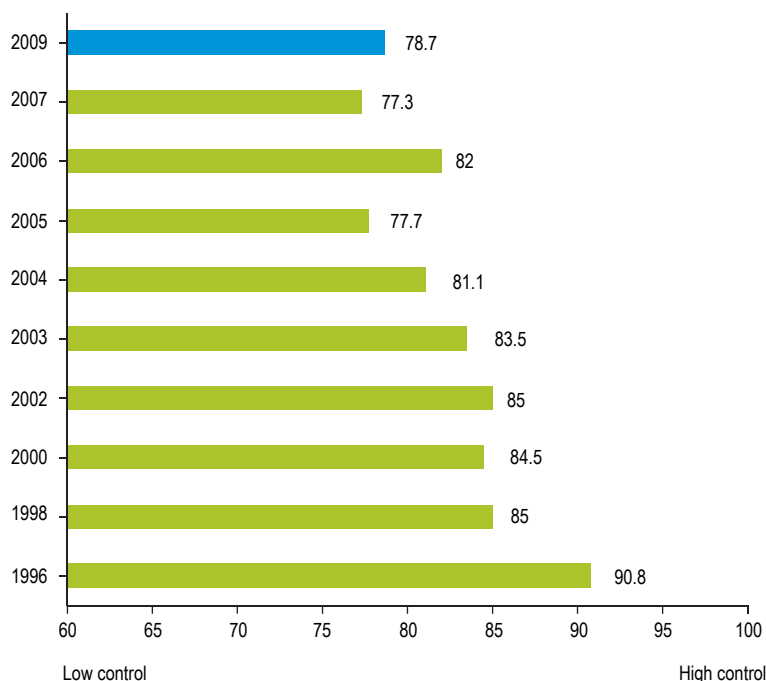


Figure 8b  
**Control of Corruption in Israel**



### **(b) The Rights Aspect**

This aspect is concerned with the political, civil, social, and economic rights of individuals, and with gender equality in society. Political rights are those rights that citizens enjoy by virtue of belonging to a political framework, and that entitle them to participate in the political processes of the state. Civil rights safeguard individual freedoms. Social rights (such as the right to work, the right to education, and the right to health) are granted to individuals to fulfill basic needs and ensure personal development. Economic rights are intended to preserve the property of individuals in society. And gender equality refers to the absence of discrimination against women's rights in comparison with those of men.<sup>18</sup>

18 For a detailed analysis of these rights, see Arian, Nachmias, Navot and Shani (note 1, *above*).

### (1) Civil Rights: Law and Order, Rule of Law, and Number of Prisoners per Capita

The **Law and Order Index** of the ICRG is divided into two sub-components: “law,” which assesses the strength and impartiality of the country’s legal system, and “order,” which assesses popular observance of the law, meaning the extent of citizens’ compliance with the law. The overall score ranges from 0 (absence of law and order) to 6 (high level of law and order).<sup>19</sup> Israel received a score of 5 on this index, indicating that it has a formal, institutionalized system of law enforcement and that the majority of its citizens respect the law. This ranked it 12<sup>th</sup>–24<sup>th</sup><sup>20</sup> of the 36 countries studied, exactly its position in previous years. To complete the picture, we also relied on the **Rule of Law Index** computed by the World Bank, in which Israel received a score of 78.5, placing it in the 22<sup>nd</sup> slot, between Cyprus and the Czech Republic. Of the countries in our survey, Norway, Denmark, and Austria placed at the top of the ranking, while Bulgaria, Argentina, and Mexico were lowest on the list (Figure 9a). From a historical perspective, Israel registered an improvement over the previous assessment, but as with the Control of Corruption Index, here as well it did not recapture the high scores that characterized it in the 1990s (Figure 9b).

The index that measures the strictness of the law enforcement system is the **Number of Prisoners per 100,000 Inhabitants**. The assumption is that a high incarceration rate points to excessive harshness and restrictions on individual freedom imposed by the law enforcement apparatus. As such, it is a further indication of the extent to which civil rights are upheld in a country. In measuring Israel’s incarceration rate, a distinction is generally made between the overall number of prisoners and the number of security prisoners (residents of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza). In March 2009, there were 22,725 prisoners incarcerated in Israel, of whom 8,130 were security prisoners, meaning that the number of prisoners per 100,000 population (including security prisoners) stood at 325.

19 For further discussion, see the ICRG site (note 16, *above*).

20 Thirteen countries received identical scores in this index.

Figure 9a  
**Rule of Law: An International Comparison**

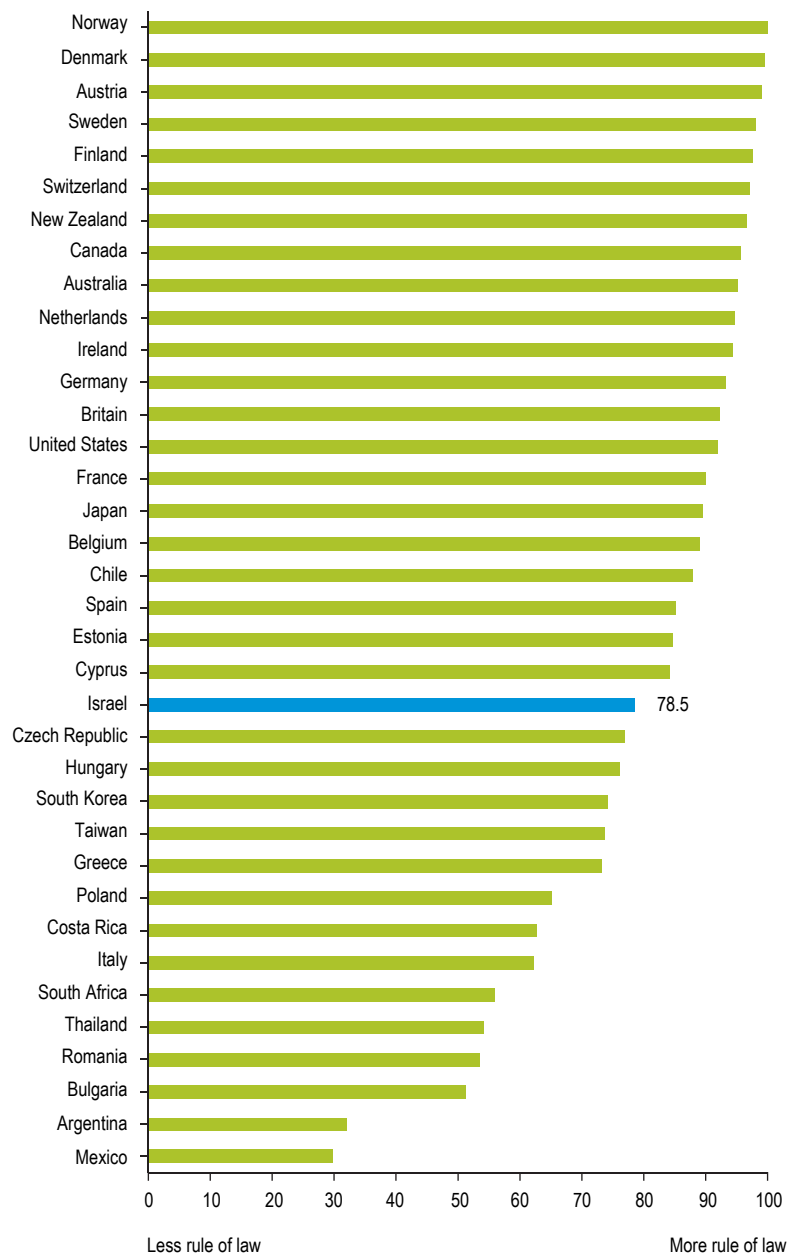
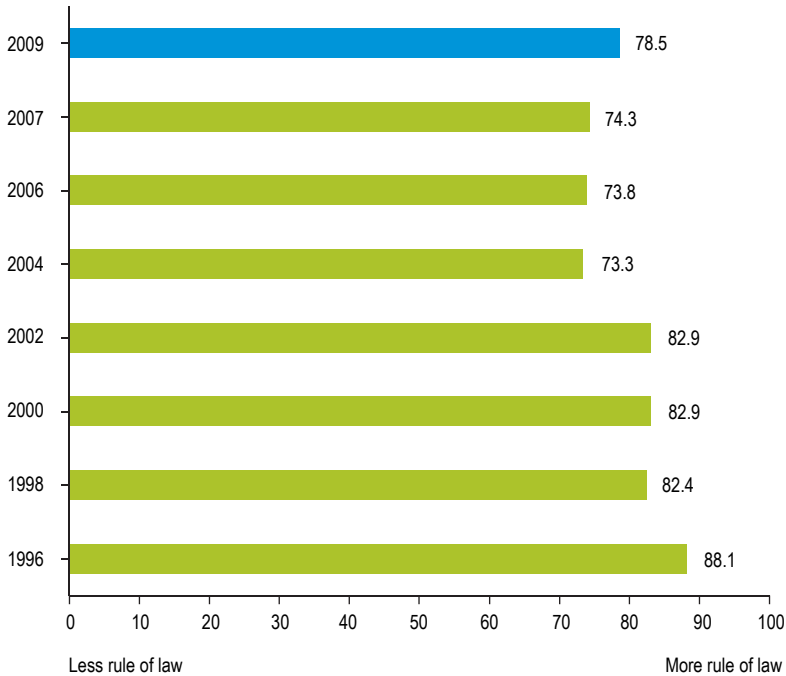


Figure 9b  
Rule of Law in Israel



If we exclude security prisoners, the number of prisoners per 100,000 residents in 2009 was 208, as compared with 196 in 2008, and 158 in 2007 (Figure 10b).<sup>21</sup> This places Israel 28<sup>th</sup> out of the 36 countries surveyed, as shown in Figure 10a. Heading the list of countries in our survey with the highest number of prisoners per 100,000 residents are the United States (753), South Africa (325), and Thailand (313). The countries in our study with the lowest incarceration rates per 100,000 inhabitants are Finland (67), Denmark (66), and Japan (63).<sup>22</sup>

21 Israel's position was determined based on the number of prisoners per capita, not including security prisoners. If the total number of prisoners is calculated, Israel places 35<sup>th</sup> out of 36 countries.

22 Data for Israel were obtained from the site of the Israel Prison Service: [www.ips.gov.il/Shabas/TIPUL\\_PRISONER/Prisoners+Info/default.htm](http://www.ips.gov.il/Shabas/TIPUL_PRISONER/Prisoners+Info/default.htm). The data on the remaining countries are taken from the site of the International Centre for Prison Studies, Kings College London: [www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/law/research/icps](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/law/research/icps)

Figure 10a  
**Number of Prisoners per 100,000 Inhabitants:  
An International Comparison**

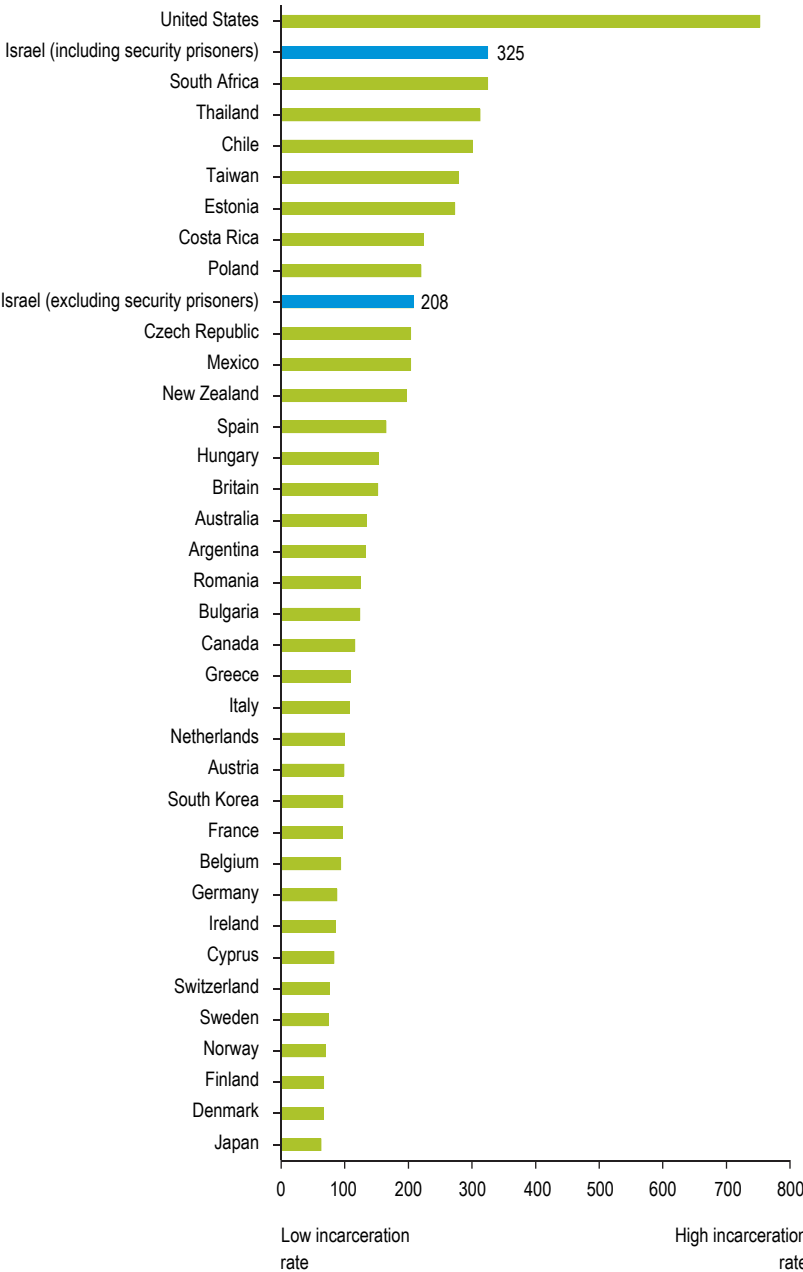
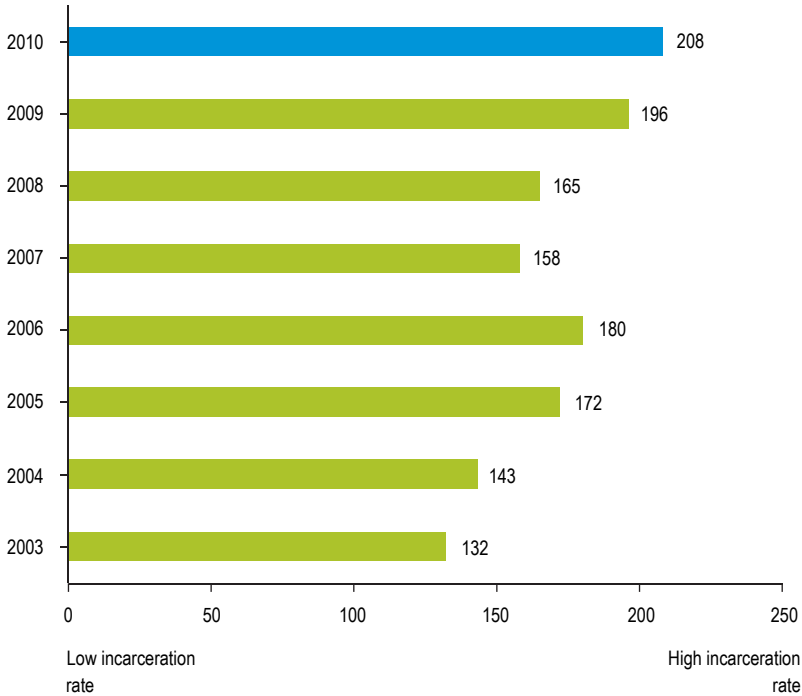




Figure 10b  
**Number of Prisoners per 100,000 Inhabitants in Israel<sup>23</sup>**



## (2) Economic Rights

To assess the protection of economic rights (freedom of property), we chose the **Index of Economic Freedom** developed by the Heritage Foundation. This index examines the institutional environment in which a country's economic activity takes place. It should be noted that the Heritage Foundation is an explicit advocate of the principles of neo-liberalism, namely, a free market and minimal government intervention. As such, its definition of a free economy is the absence of coercion or government restrictions on the production, distribution, or consumption of goods and services, beyond what is necessary to preserve freedom itself. The Index of Economic Freedom (IEF) has

23 In the historical comparison of incarceration rates in Israel, the figure cited refers to the number of prisoners not including security prisoners.

been published since 1995, and this year it surveys the situation in 183 countries. Each country's score is based on a combination of 10 economic indicators: business freedom, trade policy, fiscal policy, government size (government spending), monetary policy, investments and capital flow, financial freedom (banking and financing), property rights, freedom from corruption, and wage and price policy.<sup>24</sup>

The Index of Economic Freedom ranges from 0 (least free) to 100 (most free). Figure 11 presents Israel's scores in each of the 10 indicators. Israel received high scores in trade freedom, as well as investments and capital flow, but was ranked low in government spending, fiscal freedom, and freedom from corruption. As shown in Figure 12a, the countries in our survey with the highest levels of economic freedom according to this index are Australia (with a score of 82.6), New Zealand (82.1), and Ireland (81.3). By contrast, Greece (62.7), Bulgaria (62.3), and Argentina (51.2) rank at the bottom of the list, and are defined as "unfree." In 2010, Israel was ranked 25<sup>th</sup> out of 36 countries (with a score of 67.7), placing it between Mexico and Hungary. This reflects a slight rise in its score as compared with 2009, but a drop of one place in its international ranking (from 24<sup>th</sup> place in 2009).

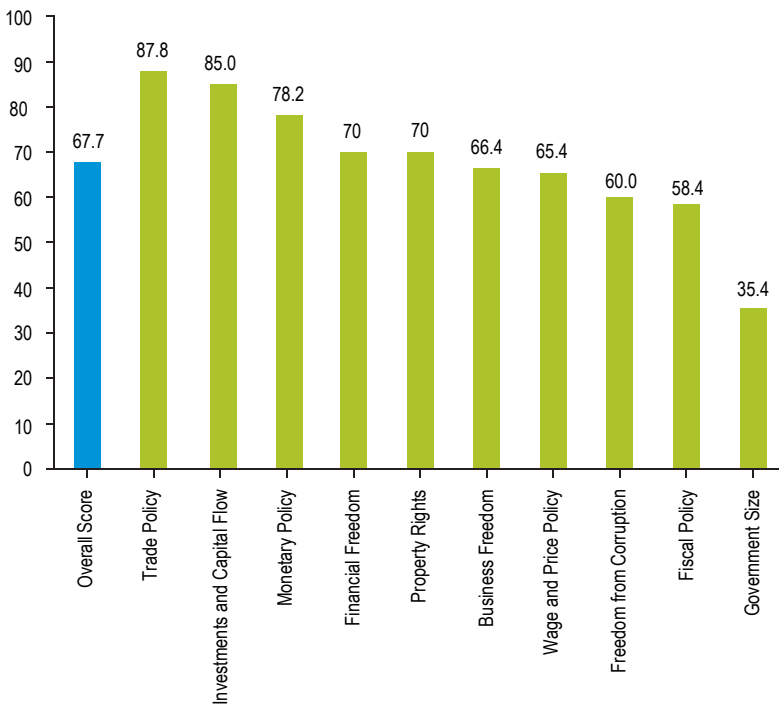
Another measure of economic rights is the **Global Competitiveness Index** published by the World Economic Forum. It rests on the assumption that the level of competitiveness of a country's economy reflects the extent to which that country is capable of ensuring prosperity and equal opportunity for its citizens. The Index, which was developed in 2004, examines 134 countries in the following 12 areas: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, health and primary education, higher education and professional training, goods market efficiency, labor market efficiency, financial market sophistication, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, and innovation. The Index is based on public opinion polls and surveys by experts,<sup>25</sup>

24 For a detailed discussion, see the Foundation's site: [www.heritage.org/index](http://www.heritage.org/index)

25 For further discussion, see the site of the World Economic Forum: [www.weforum.org/en/media/Latest%20Press%20Releases/PR\\_GCR082](http://www.weforum.org/en/media/Latest%20Press%20Releases/PR_GCR082)

and its scores range from 1 (low level of competitiveness) to 7 (high competitiveness). The countries in our study with the highest level of competitiveness are Switzerland (5.60), the United States (5.59), and Sweden (5.51). At the bottom of the scale are Greece (4.04), Bulgaria (4.02), and Argentina (3.91). In the 2010 Index, Israel achieved a score of 4.80, placing it 20<sup>th</sup> out of 36 countries, between Ireland and Chile.<sup>26</sup>

Figure 11  
**Economic Freedom in Israel\***



\* The names of some of the components of the Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom (Trade Freedom, Monetary Freedom, Investment Freedom, Labor Freedom, Fiscal Freedom, and Government Spending) were altered to match the accepted terminology in Israel.

26 For further information, see the WEF site at:  
[www.weforum.org/documents/GCR0809/index.html](http://www.weforum.org/documents/GCR0809/index.html)

Figure 12a

**Economic Freedom: An International Comparison**

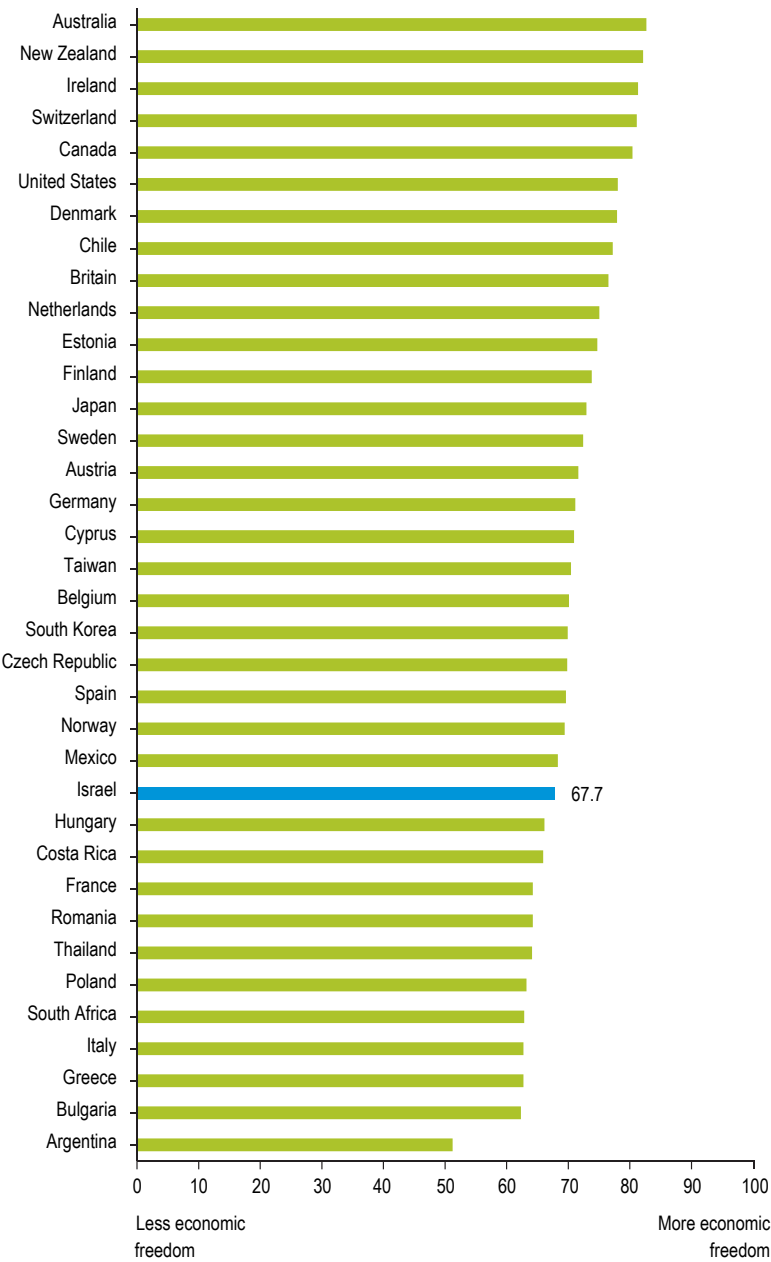
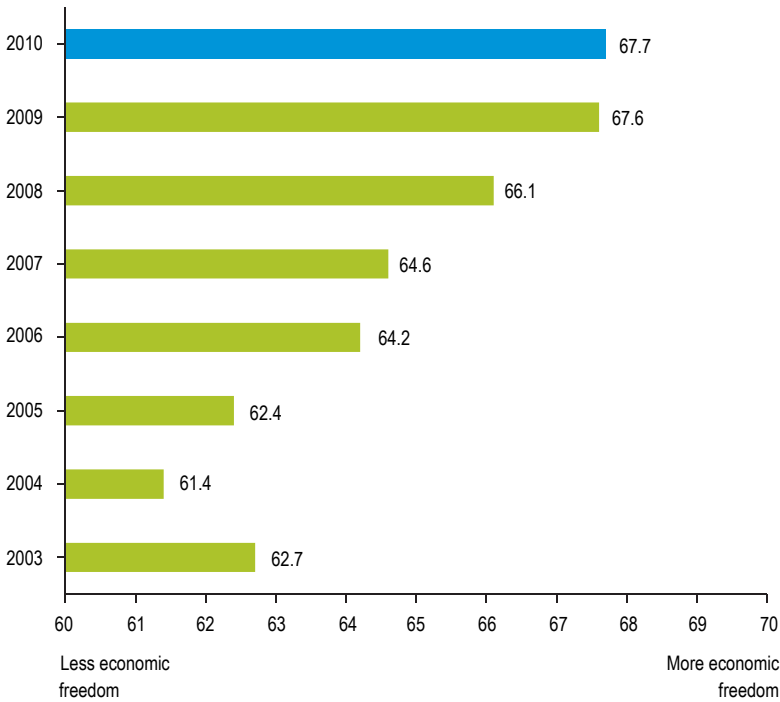


Figure 12b  
Economic Freedom in Israel



### (3) Gender Equality

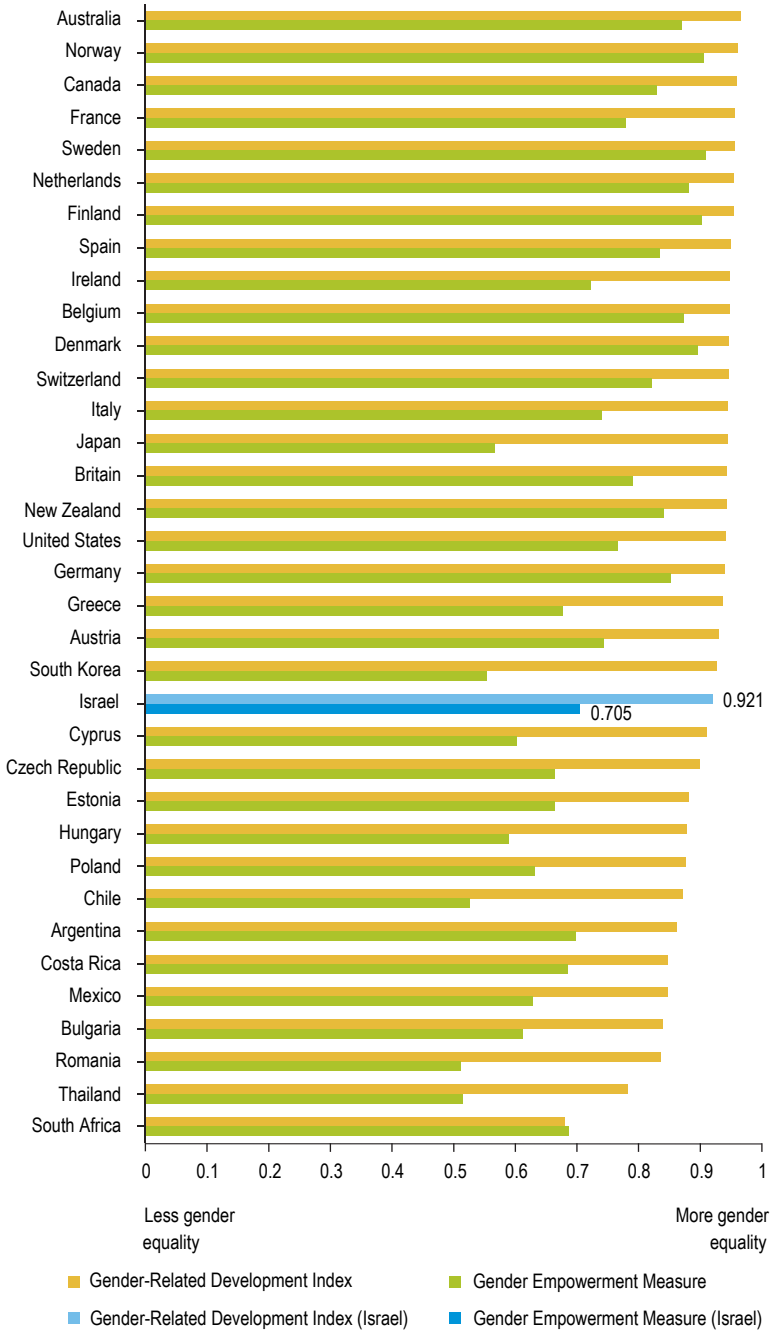
The Human Development Report issued by the United Nations includes two measures relating to the status of women: The first is the **Gender-Related Development Index (GDI)**, which measures inequality between men and women. A low score in this measure means that a given country has a large gap between the achievements of men and those of women. The second is the **Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)**, which examines progress in the status of women in a country's economic and political arenas in general, particularly the extent to which women (as opposed to men) are able to actively participate in the country's economic and political life and be partners in decision

making.<sup>27</sup> Scores for both measures range from 0 (total inequality) to 1 (full equality).

In 2010, Israel received a score of 0.921 in the GDI, ranking it 22<sup>nd</sup> out of the 36 countries sampled, between South Korea and Cyprus. At the top of the rankings were Australia (0.966), Norway (0.961), and Canada (0.959). Closing the list were Romania (0.836), Thailand (0.782), and South Africa (0.68) (see Figure 13). In the GEM, Israel's score was 0.705, placing it in the 19<sup>th</sup> position, between Ireland and Argentina. The Scandinavian countries—Sweden (with 0.909), Norway (0.906), and Finland (0.902)—head the list of countries surveyed, while Chile (0.526), Thailand (0.514), and Romania (0.512) ranked the lowest. Compared with the previous assessment, Israel's position worsened in the GDI, but improved in the GEM. In both measures, Israel experienced a decline in its international ranking, meaning that other countries were more successful in improving the status of women.

27 See the organization's website for further information:  
[http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/gdi\\_gem/](http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/indices/gdi_gem/)

Figure 13  
Gender Equality: An International Comparison



### **(c) The Stability Aspect**

Political stability is defined as the absence of fundamental changes or substantial disruptions in the functioning of the political system. As a rule, political stability is measured by the level of violence; the duration of a government's term of office; and the level of social/ethnic/political tensions in a country.<sup>28</sup>

#### **(1) Political Stability**

Political stability, as defined by the World Bank, relates to citizens' perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including domestic violence and terrorism.<sup>29</sup> As a result of its security situation, Israel has scored low on this measure over the years. Although there is no danger that the government of Israel will be toppled unconstitutionally, the constant fear of terrorist activity has a negative effect on the citizens' views regarding the country's level of stability. As in past years, Israel occupies the lowest slot of the 36 countries surveyed, with a score of 11 out of 100. This actually marks a worsening of its position in comparison with the 2005 World Bank report, where it received a score of 14.4 (Figure 14b). Of the countries surveyed, those characterized by the highest level of political stability are Finland (97.1), Norway (96.7), and Austria (95.7), while those ranking the lowest in this indicator are Mexico (24.4), Thailand (12.9), and Israel (as shown in Figure 14a).

28 L. Hurwitz, "Contemporary Approaches to Political Stability," *Comparative Politics* 5(3) (1973): 449; J. C. Plano, R. E. Riggs, and H. S. Robin, *The Dictionary of Political Analysis* (Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 1982), 149.

29 For further information, see *A Decade of Measuring the Quality of Governance: Governance Matters 2006* in the World Bank site: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWBIGOVANTCOR/Resources/1740479-1150402582357/2661829-1158008871017/booklet\\_decade\\_of\\_measuring\\_governance.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWBIGOVANTCOR/Resources/1740479-1150402582357/2661829-1158008871017/booklet_decade_of_measuring_governance.pdf)



Figure 14a

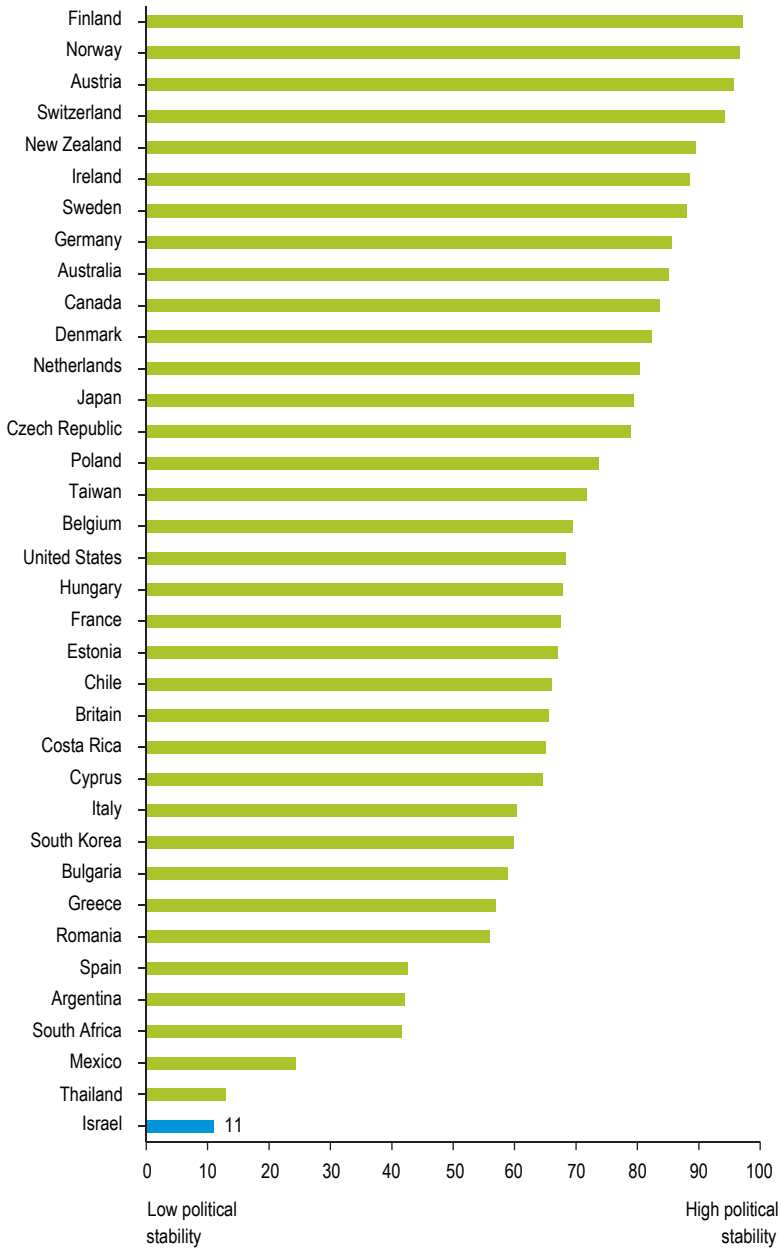
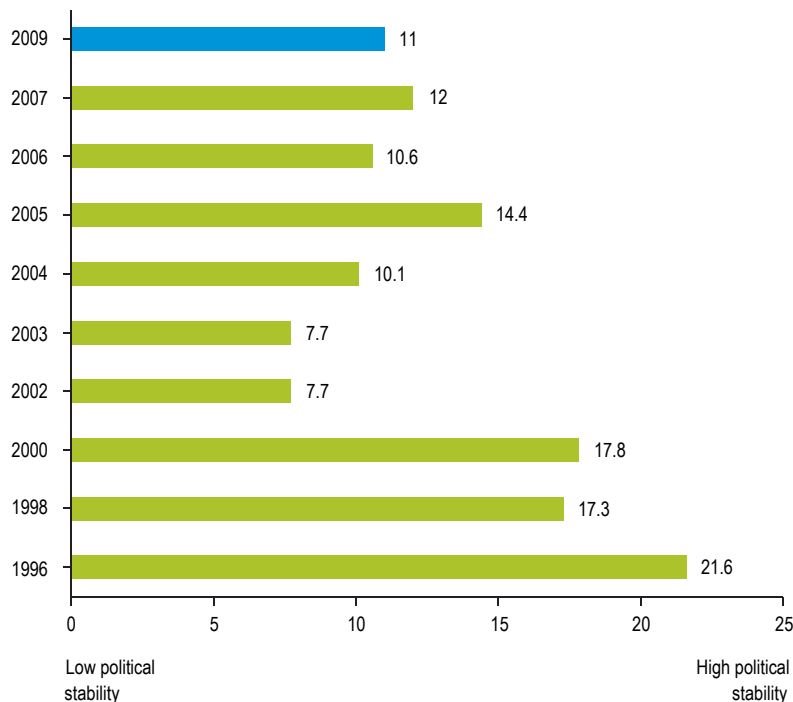
**Political Stability: An International Comparison**

Figure 14b  
**Political Stability in Israel**



## (2) Social Divisions

The pattern of relationships between groups in society; the level of tensions between them; and the scope, nature, and salience of social divisions all strongly influence the stability of the political system. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan use the term “cleavage” to denote a social division that separates people along at least one key characteristic such as occupation, social status, ethnicity, or religious affiliation.<sup>30</sup> The attempt to arrive at a quantitative estimate of social cleavages is especially difficult. The ICRG does so via two components of its Political Risk Rating: religious tensions and ethnic tensions.

30 S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments,” in P. Mair (ed.), *The West European Party System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 91–111.

**Religious Tensions:** A scale of seven categories is used to assess the level of tension arising from religious divisions. This tension may be expressed in an attempt to replace civil law with religious law, in the exclusion of certain religious groups from the political process, or in oppression or coercion aimed at placing a religious hegemony in power. Scores range from 0 (high tension) to 6 (low tension).<sup>31</sup>

**Ethnic Tensions:** A scale of seven categories is used to assess the degree of tension in a society by reason of race, nationality, or language. Here too, the scale ranges from 0 (high level of tension) to 6 (low tension). In Israel, this indicator applies both to the cleavage along ethnic lines within the Jewish community and the divide between nationalities.

Many countries received the highest possible score in the tension ratings, indicating low levels of tension. In the measure assessing religious tensions, Israel's score is 2.5, placing it 35<sup>th</sup> out of the 36 countries surveyed. The Netherlands (with a score of 4) and Thailand (2) also ranked low on the list. In the ethnic tensions measure, the countries with the highest scores (indicating low levels of tension) are Argentina, Costa Rica, and Finland, while France (2.5), Israel (2), and Thailand (2) scored low in this area (pointing to a high degree of tension). Israel and Thailand share the lowest spots in this ranking, in the 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> positions.

31 For further discussion, see the ICRG site (note 16, *above*).



## **Part Two**

# **The Democracy Survey 2010**



## A. Introduction

A key purpose of the **Democracy Index** project is to supplement the material obtained from the objective indices enumerated in Part One with a subjective assessment by the Israeli public of various aspects of the country's democratic regime. This assessment is based on a survey conducted by the Mahshov Institute in March 2010 among a representative sample of the Israeli adult population (aged 18 and over). The sample included 1,200 respondents, who were interviewed in three languages: Hebrew, Arabic, and Russian. The maximum sampling error is  $\pm 2.8$ , at a 95% confidence level.

In Part Two, we examine the public's perception of Israeli democracy in three areas—the institutional aspect, the rights aspect, and the stability aspect—and continue to monitor changes in Israeli public opinion since the publication of the first **Democracy Index** in 2003. Likewise, we discuss the association between the objective trends observed in Part One of the Democracy Index and shifts in Israeli attitudes vis-à-vis each of the above three aspects. Part Three of the **Democracy Index** is devoted this year to assessing the congruence between the public's espousal of core democratic values in theory—including equality before the law, freedom of expression, and protection of minority rights—and its support for putting these values into practice.

## B. Israeli Public's Perceptions of the Practice of Democracy

### 1. The Institutional Aspect

#### (a) Interest in Politics

Our analysis of the public's interest in politics is based, *inter alia*, on the approach in political science theory that regards "enlightened understanding" of political structures and practices on the part of the

public as a necessary precondition for a sound democratic process.<sup>32</sup> Thus, it is assumed that citizens who take an interest in current events and who keep informed of political developments will make a more considered decision on election day, based on information and deliberation; will be less influenced by populist moves of political parties; and will judge the latter's actions over time. Accordingly, we can conclude that in general, an inquisitive, non-apatetic political culture encourages more effective government performance, promotes improvement and progress, and counteracts stagnation.

The picture emerging from Israel in recent years does not offer grounds for optimism, in that there has been a decline in the public's interest in political issues. In 2003, 76% of Israelis reported that they were very interested or somewhat interested in politics, as opposed to 73% in 2006 and only 62% in 2010 (Figure 15). Arab citizens of Israel are the group most removed from politics: at present, only 47% state that they are very interested or somewhat interested in politics.<sup>33</sup> While women in Israel tend to keep up with political events with the same frequency as men, at the same time they report a relatively low level of interest in politics. Thus 68% of the men attest that they are interested in politics (38% to a large extent), as opposed to 57% of the women (only 16% to a large extent).

A sizeable proportion of Israelis report a low level of interest in politics, yet they continue to keep informed about the major issues through the media. Over the years this pattern has remained unchanged: The percentage of those who "keep informed" is significantly higher than the percentage of those who are "interested." In the current year, 76% of the respondents keep abreast of political developments every day or several times a week (Figure 15). Further, the need to be "in the know" on political issues is shared by most segments of the population. The group that keeps informed on the most frequent basis is FSU

32 See R. A. Dahl, *On Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 37.

33 All differences reported in this section are significant:  $p < 0.5$  or  $p < 0.01$ .



immigrants (89%), compared with 75% of long-time Israelis and 67% of the Arab population.

In keeping with the downward trend of recent years in young people's level of interest in politics, this year as well a low proportion of this age group shows an interest in politics as compared with older adults. Moreover, in comparison with 2009, there was a marked decline in the number of interviewees in the 31–40 age group who reported an interest in politics (Figure 16).

Figure 15

### Interest in Politics

"To what extent are you interested in politics?"

"How often do you keep informed about what's going on in politics?"

(by year; percent)

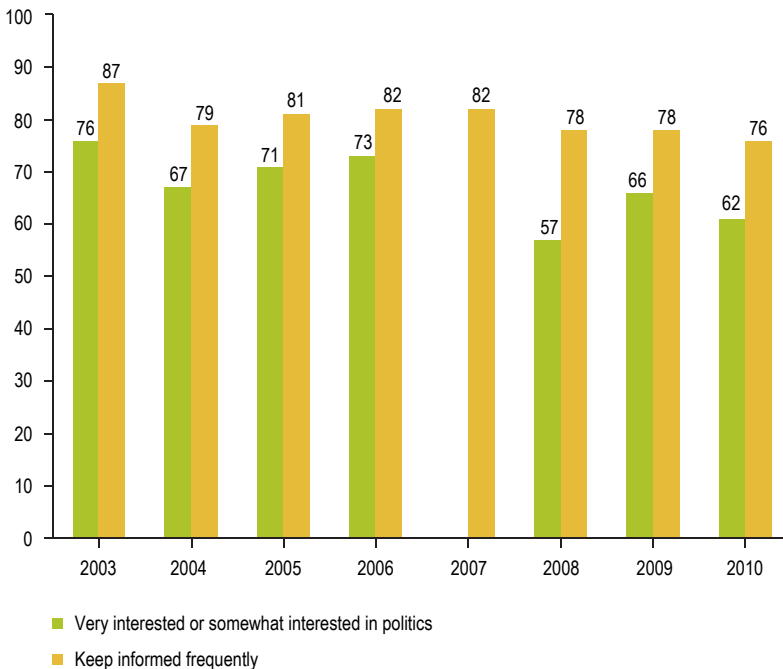


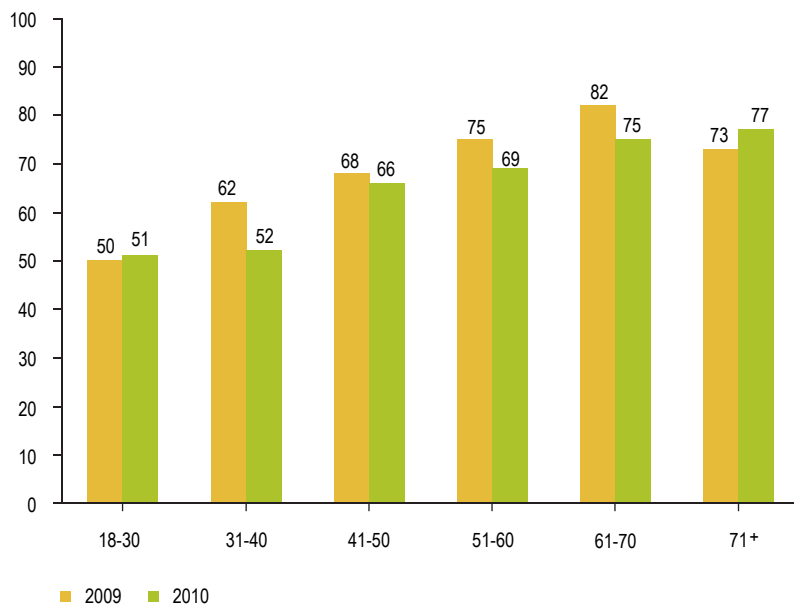
Figure 16

**Interest in Politics, by Age**

"To what extent are you interested in politics?"

To a large extent, to some extent

(by year; percent)



### **(b) Sense of Lack of Influence on Government Policy and Diminished Electoral Power**

Political scientists are not in agreement as to the benefits and drawbacks of citizens' participation in politics. Some scholars argue that over-involvement on the part of civil society is liable to undermine regime stability and even adversely affect the functioning of democracies.<sup>34</sup> In this study we adopt a different premise, namely, that active citizenship is one of the most important prerequisites for the political culture of a democratic state, and that citizens' interest in politics is a necessary

34 J. A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (7th ed., London: Routledge, 2003), 269–283.

precondition for sound democratic process. It is only the combination of citizens' ability to influence politics and their willingness to do so that generates inputs to the political system, which then returns appropriate outputs to the citizens.<sup>35</sup> In countries where entire groups, or large numbers of individual citizens, lack the ability or the desire to influence government policy, this contravenes one of the basic tenets of democracy—the principle of representativeness.

An analysis of citizens' perceptions reveals that only 20% of the Israeli public feel they have the ability to influence government policy to a large extent or to some extent. A total of 48% feel that they lack any influence—a figure that has remained unchanged for several years. As noted in earlier Democracy Indices, FSU immigrants, more than any other group, feel they are unable to influence events in Israel. It would appear that the combination of a passive civic culture (which the immigrants brought with them) and their status as newcomers to Israel is the chief reason for such views (Figure 17).<sup>36</sup> An unexpected finding is that Israeli women feel more capable of influencing government policy than do Israeli men: 55% of women expressed this view, as opposed to 48% of men.

35 D. Easton, "An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems," *World Politics* 9 (1957): 393–400; G. A. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963).

36 For an expanded discussion of this issue, see Arian, Philippov and Knafelman (note 3, above).

Figure 17

**Perception of the Practice of Democracy: The Institutional Aspect**

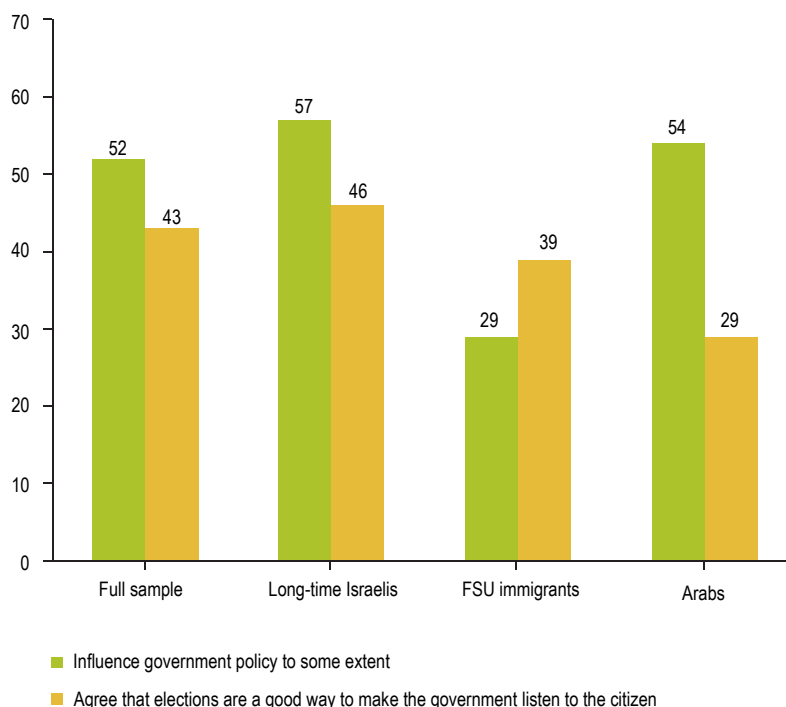
“I and citizens like me have some influence on government policy”

To a large extent, to some extent or to a small extent

“Elections are a good way to make the government pay attention to the people’s views”

Agree or strongly agree

(by sector; percent)



In addition to their sense of inability to change government policy, many citizens feel unable to influence what goes on in the country through their vote. Only 43% of the respondents believe that “elections are a good way to make the government pay attention to the people’s views”—a steep drop compared to 58% in 2009, which was an election year (Figure 17). The change may be an expression of dissatisfaction among some respondents with the results of the elections, which dictated the establishment of a coalition government whose member

parties were forced to compromise, in coalition negotiations, on promises they had made during the campaign. Another finding that illustrates the widespread cynicism regarding the electoral process is that half the sample population believe that “it makes no difference who you vote for; it doesn’t change the situation.”

Compounding these worrisome findings is the public’s skeptical attitude toward politicians, and specifically, their readiness to serve the citizen. On the one hand, in recent years there has been an increase in Israelis’ level of trust in politicians: In 2007, the proportion of those who felt that “politicians consider the opinion of the man in the street” stood at 30%; in 2009, it rose to 37%, and has remained there in 2010. Yet on the other hand, a decisive majority of the public still feels that politicians do not take the citizen into account—a finding that testifies to a high degree of cynicism in the attitude of Israelis toward the public commitment of their elected representatives. This feeling is shared by Jewish immigrants and long-time residents alike; but as in previous years, there are actually many in the Arab sector who do not subscribe to this view: in fact 60% of Arab respondents believe in the willingness of politicians to consider citizens’ opinions.

### **(c) Support for Democracy, and the Desire for Strong Leadership and a Government of Experts**

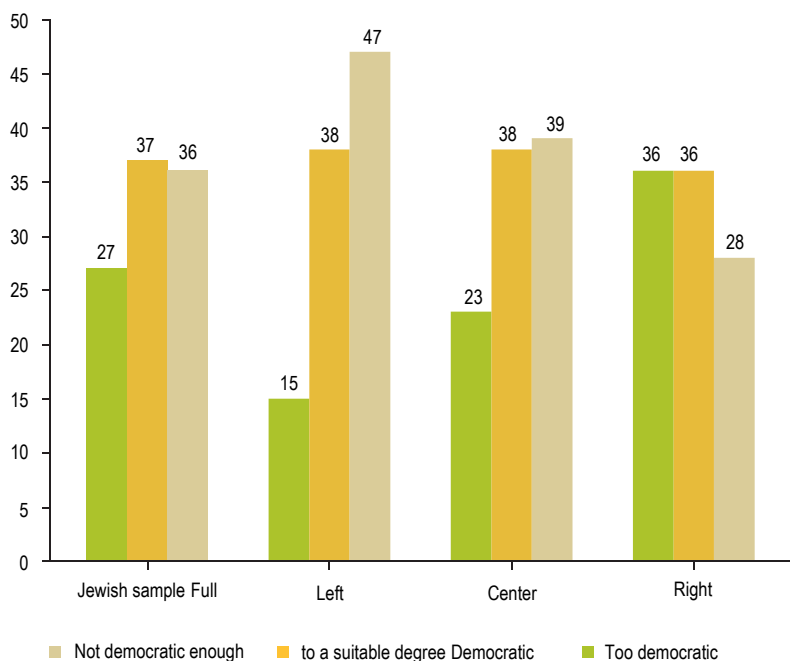
In keeping with the trend observed in recent years, in 2010 as well the Israeli public takes a highly critical view of Israeli democracy: a total of 63% are dissatisfied with its performance. In contrast with the relative optimism of 2006 (when just 46% reported dissatisfaction), the percentage of “dissatisfied” has increased and remained relatively constant in recent years. Moreover, as in 2009, some 27% of Israelis feel that Israel is “too democratic.” Among those respondents who define themselves as right-wingers, 36% share this view, as compared with only 15% of self-described leftists (Figure 18).

Figure 18

**Assessment of Israel's Performance as a Democracy**

"In your opinion, is Israel today democratic to a suitable degree, too democratic, or not democratic enough?"

(Jewish sample; by political orientation; percent)



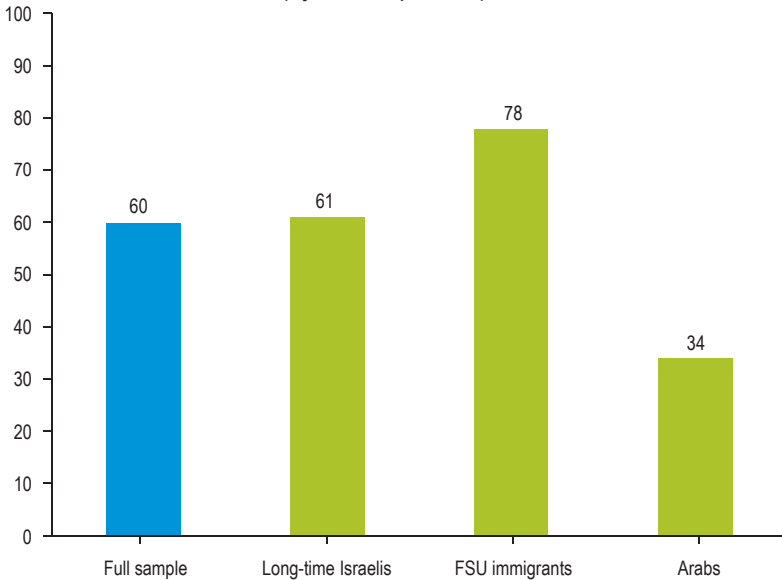
Many Israelis also point to weaknesses in Israel's democratic regime, maintaining that it should be made more effective. Some 60% of the public support the notion that "a few strong leaders can be more useful to the country than all the discussions and laws." On this point as well, there are differences between sectors: FSU immigrants support this statement more than long-time Israelis (Figure 19). The gap between the attitudes of immigrants and those of long-time Israelis regarding the need for a strong leader has remained relatively steady in recent years, though this year the immigrants' views became slightly more extreme, with a slight rise in support for strong leadership as compared with 2009 (74%).

Figure 19

**Support for Strong Leaders in Israel**

“A few strong leaders can be more useful to the country than all the discussions and laws”

Agree or strongly agree  
(by sector; percent)



But despite these findings, it would be incorrect to state that a majority of the Israeli public identifies across the board with the idea of an authoritarian government. True, most Israelis see advantages in a highly centralized regime, as opposed to the visible shortcomings and ineffectiveness of a democracy. Thus, when respondents were asked to express an opinion regarding several forms of government (among them, the choice of a centralized, authoritarian regime as opposed to a democratic one), almost half (44%) agreed with the view that a strong leadership is preferable to the Knesset and elections, and some 59% favor a different non-democratic political system, namely, a government made up of experts, who would make decisions on the basis of professional considerations. Nevertheless, 89% of the public still believe that democracy is the most desirable form of government for Israel (Figure 20).

Figure 20

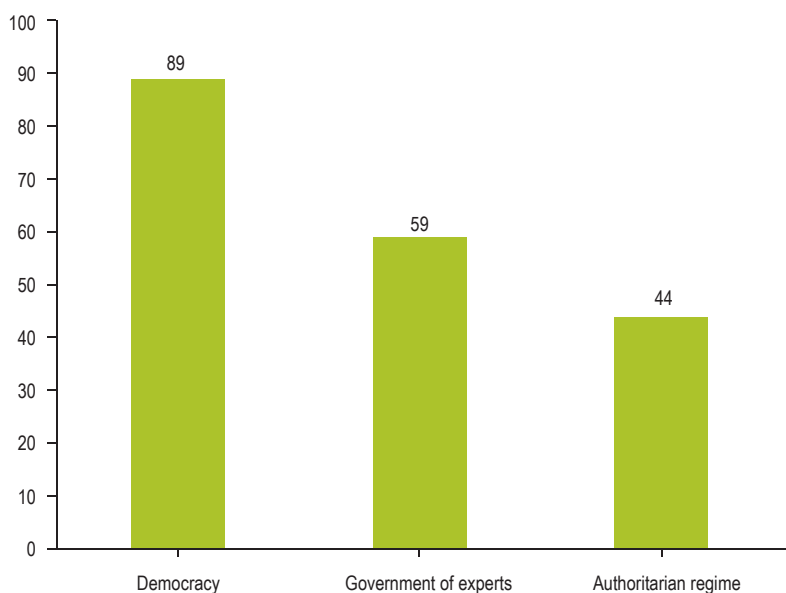
**Suitability of Different Forms of Government to Israel's Situation**

"A strong leadership that does not need to take the Knesset or elections into account"

"A government of experts who make decisions based on their understanding of what is best for the state"

"A democratic regime"

(Desirable or very desirable; percent)



The support among FSU immigrants for a strong leadership that would replace the Knesset and elections is similar to that among long-time Israelis. But when we examine the support for a government comprised of experts, immigrants tend to favor such a system to a greater extent than do long-time Israelis: 70% of the former prefer a government made up of experts, as opposed to 52% of the latter. An analysis of the responses by age reveals that young people tend to support a non-democratic regime to a greater extent than do older adults. The differences between the various age groups are not particularly high, though the gaps between the youngest and the oldest group are statistically significant (Figure 21).



To explore in greater depth the issue of Israelis' support for an authoritarian regime as an alternative to democracy, we analyzed the findings using logistic regression. It was found that when we include the age, gender, and level of education of the respondents in the model, an academic degree significantly reduces authoritarian tendencies. Thus, the probability that a person without a degree would support an authoritarian system of government is far greater than it would be in the case of a person with an academic degree.<sup>37</sup> Of the academics surveyed, only 36% support an authoritarian regime, compared with 51% of the non-academics. It appears, therefore, that higher education is an important component in determining political attitudes, and has a positive effect on the individual's level of appreciation for the advantages of democracy as opposed to other forms of government.

#### **(d) Integrity and the Rule of Law**

The **2010 Democracy Survey** took place a few weeks before the first reports in the media concerning the so-called "Holyland affair," which exposed suspected corruption at the highest echelons of Israeli politics and public administration. It appears, however, that a very large segment of the Israeli public did not need this affair to conclude that politicians in this country are tainted by corruption. A total of 85% feel that corruption in Israel is rampant; only 12% believe that Israel is less corrupt than other democracies; and 40% maintain that Israel is more corrupt. Almost half of Israelis (44%) hold that to reach the top in politics, a person has to be corrupt. This represents a slight increase over last year (38%). As in 2009, half the public (50%) are of the opinion that politicians are in politics solely for personal gain. The most skeptical group in this regard are FSU immigrants, while Arab citizens have the highest degree of trust in their elected officials (Figure 22).

37  $B = -0.602$ ,  $B(\exp) = 0.548$ ,  $r^2 = 0.03$ ,  $p < 0.001$

Figure 21

**Suitability of Different Forms of Government to Israel’s Situation,  
by Age**

“A strong leadership that does not need to take the Knesset or elections  
into account”

“A government of experts who make decisions based on their understanding  
of what is best for the state”

“A democratic regime”

(Desirable or very desirable; percent)

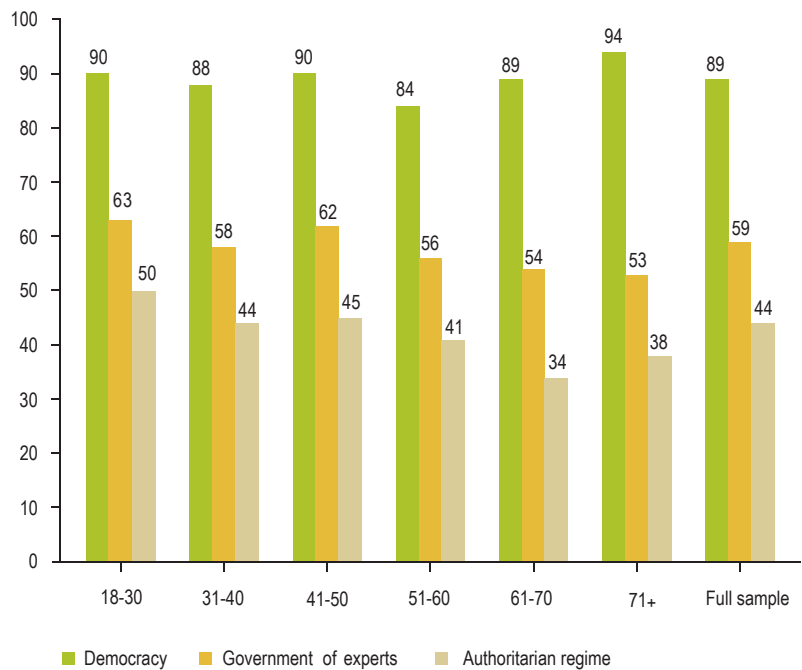
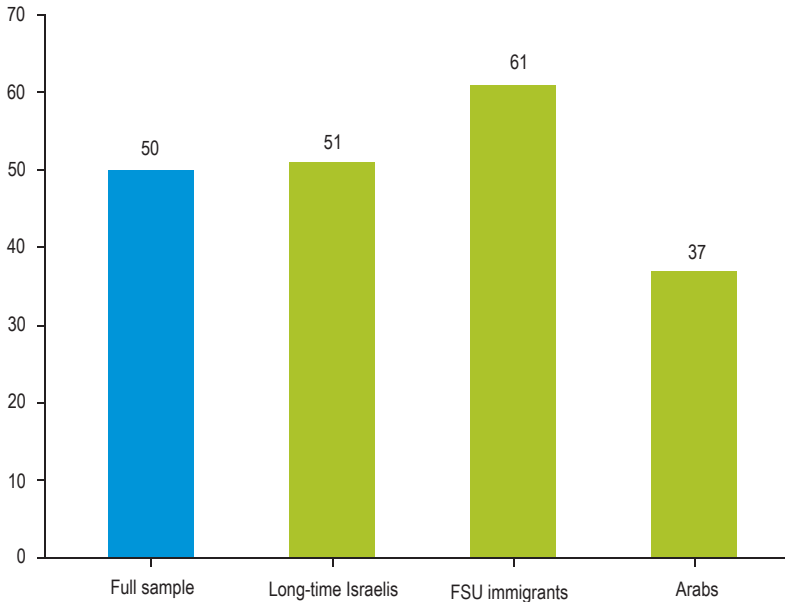


Figure 22  
**Trust in Politicians**  
**“Politicians are in politics solely for personal gain”**  
 Agree or strongly agree  
 (by sector; percent)



## 2. The Rights Aspect

### (a) Freedom of Expression in Israel

Our discussion of the rights aspect begins with the subject of political rights. Freedom of expression is a core principle of any democratic government. An examination of the public perception of freedom of expression in Israel shows that roughly one half (49%) of Israelis feel that Israel enjoys greater freedom of expression than other democracies. 42% maintain that freedom of expression is exercised in Israel to an impressive degree, while a sizeable minority (39%) believe that, on the whole, there is too much freedom of expression in Israel. In comparison with the 2009 Index, there has not been a noticeable change in the public's views on this issue.

**(b) Equality for Minorities**

The quality of a democracy is measured, to a large extent, by the public's attitude and level of tolerance toward the political rights of the minorities in its midst. For many years, political discourse in Israel has centered around the status of Arab citizens of Israel, and equality of rights between Arabs and Jews continues to be a controversial issue. The survey found that 54% of Jewish Israelis support full equality of rights between Jews and Arabs. As in 2009, however, 53% of Jews agree with the statement that the government should encourage Arab emigration from Israel. This year as well, a gap was recorded between the views of FSU immigrants and those of long-time Israelis on this issue: 50% of long-time Israelis favor encouraging Arab emigration from Israel, as opposed to 71% of immigrants. What is more, 70% of Israeli Jews are opposed to having Arab parties join the government; on this question, there were no significant differences between immigrants and long-time Israelis. Similarly, 86% of Jewish Israelis agree with the statement that a Jewish majority should be required for crucial decisions affecting the fate of the country. In other words, a sizeable portion of the Jewish public does not consider the right to influence government decisions as an integral part of the civil rights to which Arab citizens are entitled (Figures 23–24).

A related issue is the upholding of human rights in Israel. International organizations often criticize Israel over violations of human rights; in response, successive governments have maintained that Israel does not wish to infringe upon these rights and that it upholds both human and civil rights to the same degree as other democracies whose security situation is sensitive. The Israeli public is divided in its opinions on this issue: 20% of Israelis believe that Israel upholds human rights too much; 40%, that it does so to a suitable degree; and 40%, that it upholds them too little. On a comparative basis, 36% of Israelis maintain that Israel upholds human rights more than other democracies do; 38% feel that Israel is similar to other democracies in this regard; and 26% believe that Israel upholds human rights to a lesser extent than do other democracies.

Figure 23

**Democratic Attitudes – The Rights Aspect:  
Attitude toward the Arab Minority**

“The government should encourage Arab emigration”

“A Jewish majority should be required for decisions fateful to the country”

Agree or strongly agree

(Jewish sample; by sector; percent)

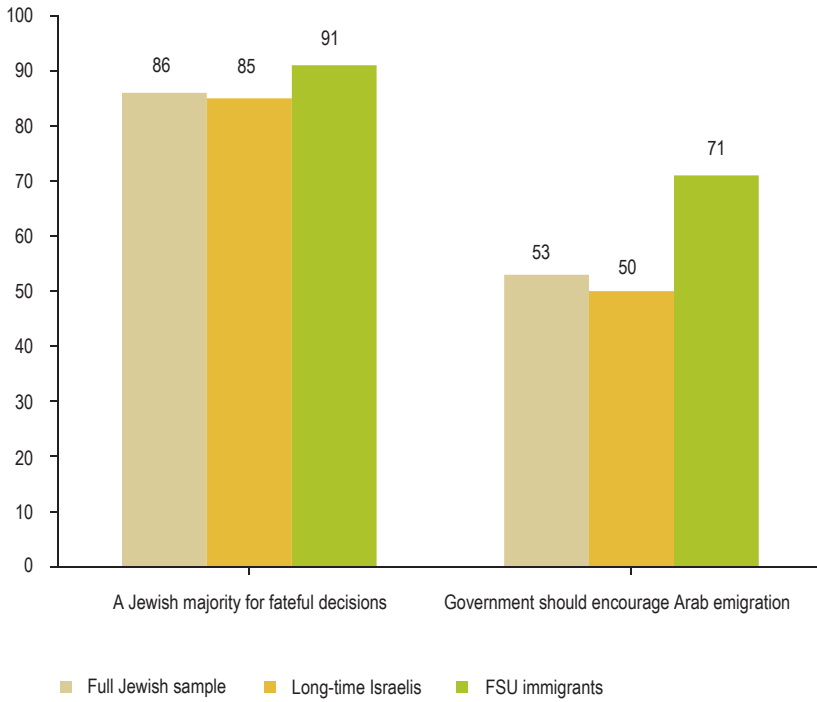


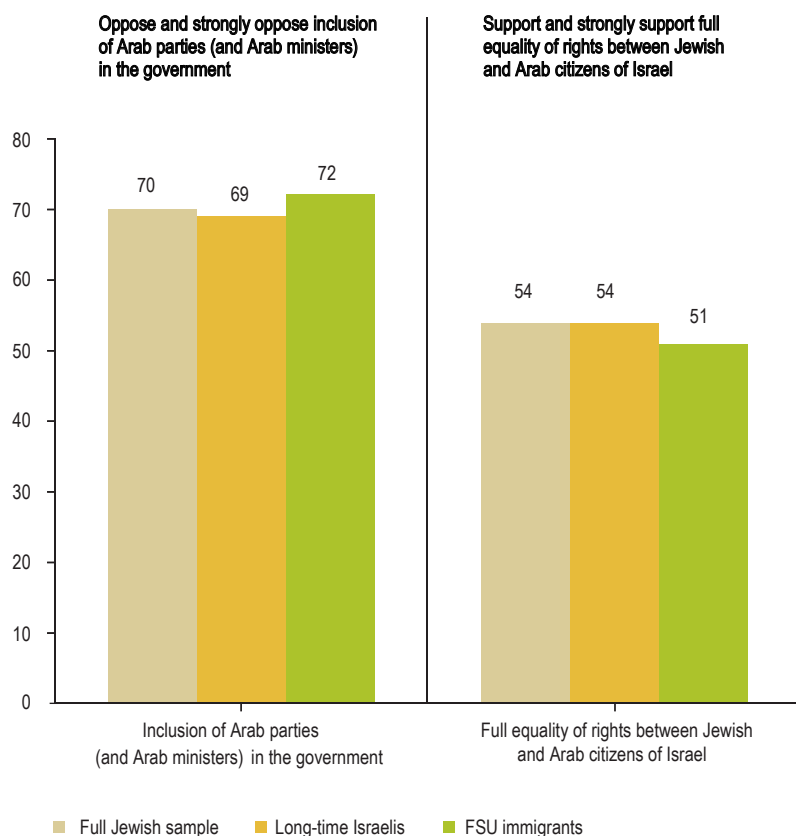
Figure 24

**Democratic Attitudes – The Rights Aspect:  
Political Equality for Minorities**

“Inclusion of Arab parties (and Arab ministers) in the government”

“Full equality of rights between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel”

(Jewish sample; by sector; percent)



**(c) Gender Equality**

The third issue that we addressed in the context of the rights aspect is gender equality. In the **2009 Democracy Index**, we examined Israelis’ attitudes toward gender equality in the realms of politics and employment as well as the division of labor in the family. In 2009,

a woman ran for prime minister, and the issue of gender in politics garnered a great deal of attention. At the time, we found that the majority of citizens support gender equality in politics. We reexamined the same question this year, when this topic is no longer at the center of the public agenda. The findings show that in 2010, 32% of Israelis feel that men make better political leaders than do women (in other words, the majority do not share this view). As in previous Indices, FSU immigrants were found to hold extremely conservative views regarding women's political abilities: 46% of immigrants feel that men make better political leaders than do women (Figure 25).

In terms of attitudes toward gender equality, minor differences were found between men and women: 35% of the men supported the statement that "men are better political leaders than women," as compared with 29% of the women. In characterizing those who supported this statement, we found that respondents without an academic degree tended to support it to a greater extent than did those with a degree. It was further found that support for this statement is influenced by level of religiosity: the more religious the respondent, the more strongly he or she supports the above claim: specifically, 59% of ultra-Orthodox Jews as compared with 27% of secular Jews. The relatively high level of support for this view among secular Jews can be explained by the fact that the majority of FSU immigrants—who generally hold traditionalist views regarding gender equality—belong to the secular camp: among secular long-time Israelis, only 21% agreed with this statement, as opposed to 44% of secular FSU immigrants.

When Israel is compared with other democratic states, we find that it ranks behind most Western democracies, in which only a fifth of the population prefer a man as a political leader; yet we are not speaking of a large gap between the views of Israelis and those of Western Europeans (Figure 26).<sup>38</sup>

38 *World Values Survey, 1981–2008, Official Aggregate V.20090901*, 2009. World Values Survey Association: [www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org)

Figure 25

**Democratic Attitudes – The Rights Aspect:**  
**Gender Equality in Israel**

“Men are better political leaders than women”  
Agree or strongly agree  
(by sector; percent)

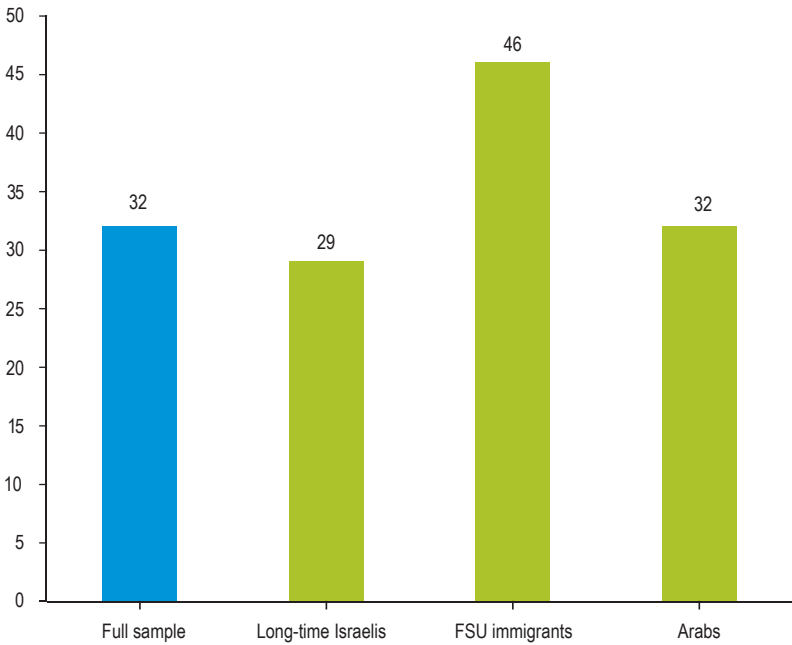
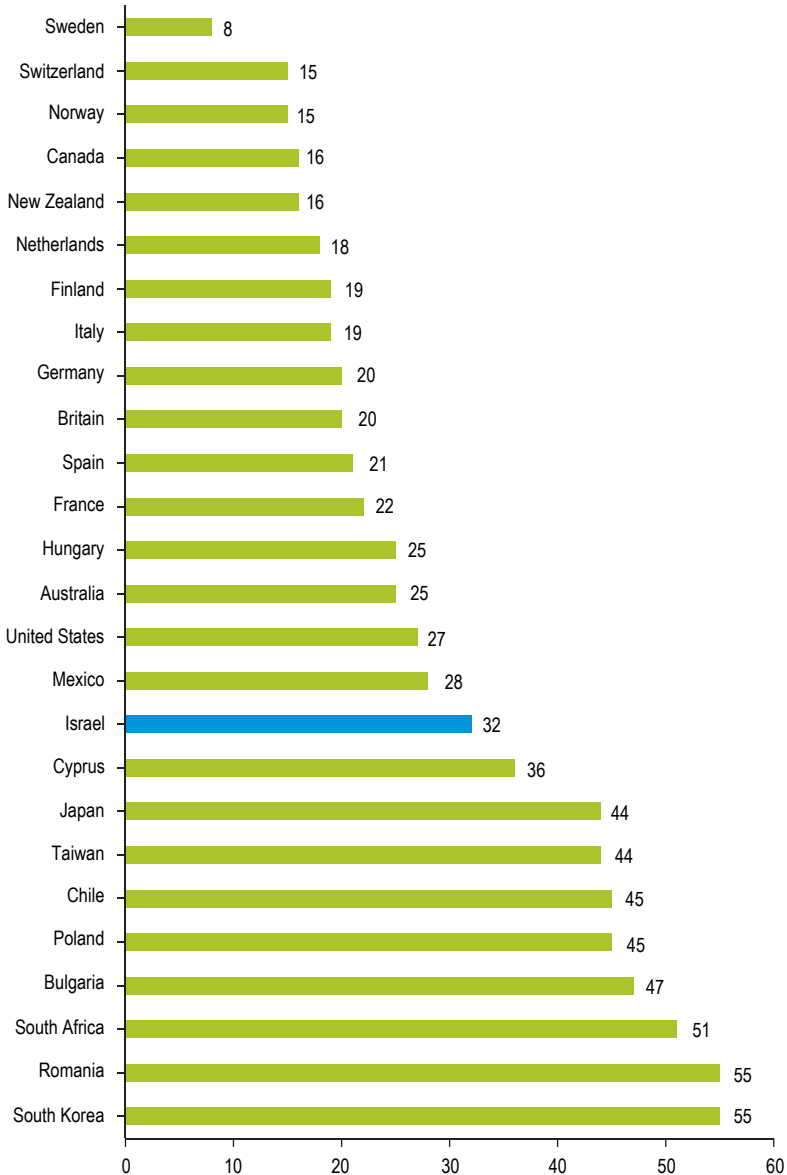




Figure 26

**Democratic Attitudes – The Rights Aspect:  
Gender Equality, An International Comparison**

“Men are better political leaders than women”  
Agree or strongly agree  
(by country; percent)



### **3. The Stability Aspect**

#### **(a) Public Trust in Government Institutions**

The level of trust in Israel's elected institutions has rebounded somewhat but is still very low. Only 33% of respondents expressed a sense of trust in the government, and only 37% have faith in the Knesset. In light of these figures, it is not surprising that 84% of the Jewish public feel that the government does a poor job of handling the country's problems, and only a minority (39%) are satisfied with the performance of the prime minister. As shown in Figure 27, political parties are the institution held in the lowest esteem by Israelis; they are trusted by only 25% of respondents (a moderate rise over 2009, when 21% expressed trust in the parties). Apparently, the more time that elapses following elections, the lower the citizens' level of trust in the parties for which they voted: In 2009, which was an election year, 62% trusted their parties, whereas by 2010, that figure had dropped to 55%.

Trust in law-enforcement institutions remains low: 54% of respondents express trust in the Supreme Court; 50%, in the State Attorney's Office; and 42%, in the police (these do not represent significant changes over last year). In other words, only half the public trust the system of law enforcement and its various institutions. Moreover, there has been a marked decline in the level of trust in these institutions over the years. In 2003, for example, the public's trust in the institutions surveyed stood at 60% and above (Figure 28). Similarly, trust in the media is waning: in 2010, only 34% of Israelis trust the media, as opposed to 49% who expressed this view in 2003 (Figure 29). As in previous years, the institution that enjoys the highest degree of trust is the IDF (81%); among the Jewish public, trust in the IDF stands at 90%, crossing political and ideological lines in Israeli Jewish society. In 2007 (following the Second Lebanon War), the IDF earned relatively low ratings in terms of public trust, but since this crisis of faith there has been a noticeable recovery. This year as well, trust in the institution of the presidency continues to rise, and stands at 70% as opposed to 60% in 2009 and only 22% in 2007. In other words, since Shimon Peres

replaced Moshe Katsav as president, the public's trust in the presidency has more than tripled.

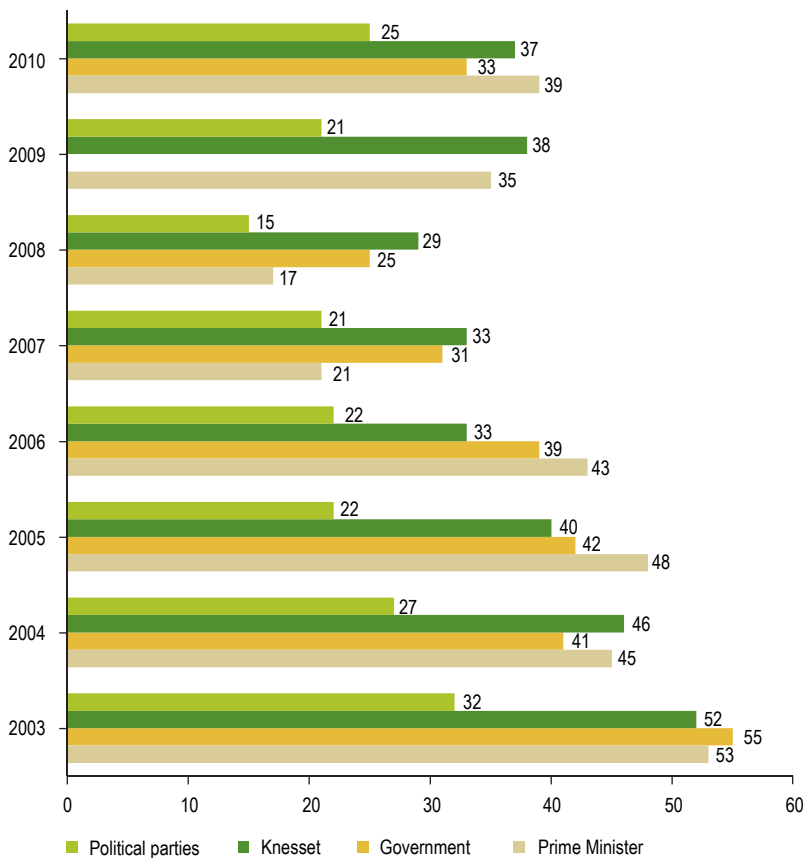
In sum, though the public's trust in Israel's key institutions has been somewhat restored since its low point in 2008, these levels are still low for a democratic state. This moderate recovery is a positive sign, but it is too early to draw conclusions about a change in the overall trend.

Figure 27

**Trust in Key Institutions: Prime Minister, Government, Knesset, and Political Parties, 2003–2010**

"To what extent do you trust each of these figures or institutions?"  
To a large extent or to some extent

(percent)



**Note:** In 2009, trust in the government was not assessed.

Figure 28

**Trust in Key Institutions: Supreme Court, State Attorney's Office,  
Police, 2003–2010**

“To what extent do you trust each of these figures or institutions?”  
To a large extent or to some extent  
(percent)

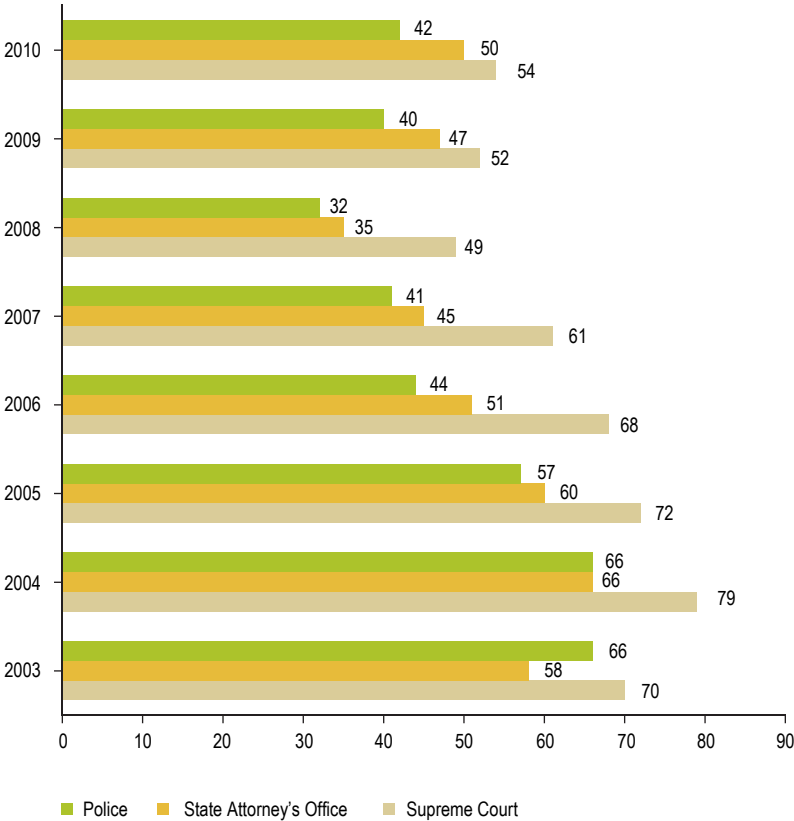


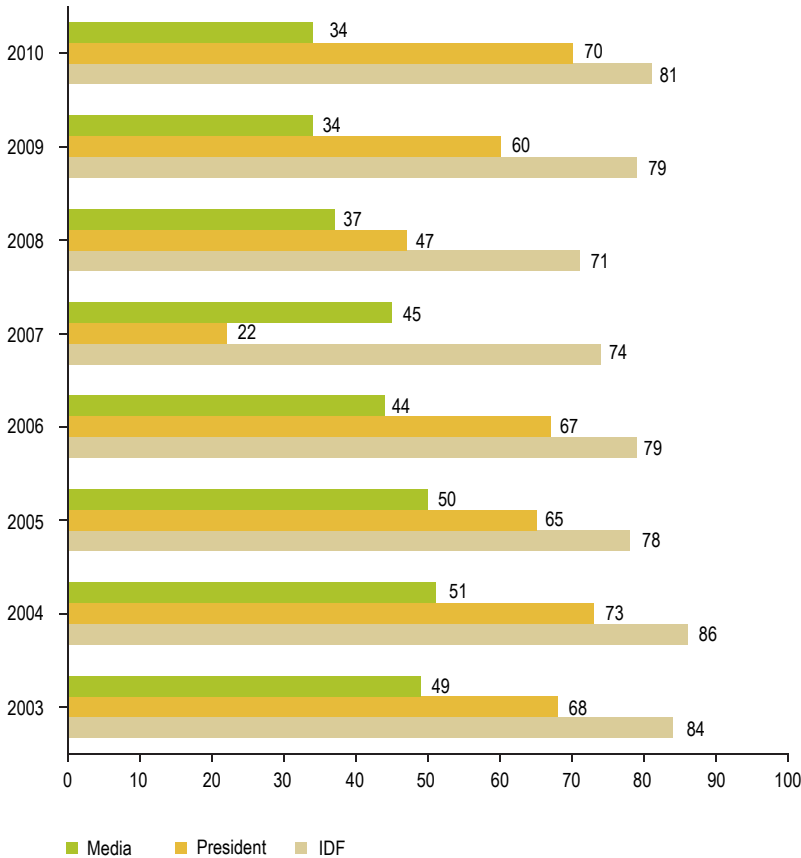
Figure 29

**Trust in Key Institutions: IDF, President, Media, 2003–2010**

“To what extent do you trust each of these figures or institutions?”

To a large extent or to some extent

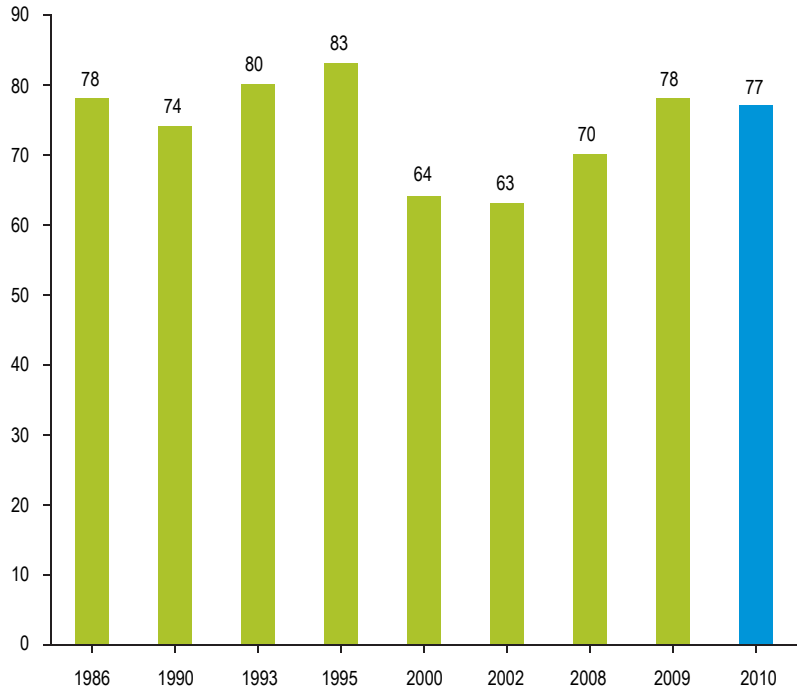
(percent)

**(b) Desire to Live in Israel**

The desire on the part of Israelis to build their lives in Israel has remained stable over the years, with 74% reporting that they are firm in their desire to live in Israel in the long term. Looking at the Jewish sample alone, this figure rises to 77% (Figure 30). This position remains unchanged despite the fact that 83% of Israelis believe that

there will be a war with the Arab states within the next five years. In other words, though the majority are convinced of the imminent threat of war, this does not lessen their desire to live in Israel. What is more, despite fears of war, 85% of the Jewish public believe in Israel’s long-term resilience.

Figure 30  
**Desire to Live in Israel in the Long Term, 1986–2010**  
“Are you certain that you want to live in Israel in the long term?”  
Certain that I want to  
(Jewish sample; percent)



### **(c) Political Stability and Social Solidarity**

Not only are Israelis concerned about a future war and external threats to the country's stability; they also believe that Israel's internal political stability needs to be improved: 48% maintain that the level of political stability in Israel is less than that in other democracies, while 62% see Israel as marked by a greater degree of social tension as compared with other democracies.

Despite acute social tensions, however, the level of social solidarity in Israel 2010 remains high: a majority (65%) of respondents feel part of the state and its problems to a large extent; 22% feel this way to some extent; and only 13% do not see themselves as part of the state and its problems. Among long-time Israelis, 74% feel part of the state, as opposed to 53% of FSU immigrants and 34% of Arab respondents. A total of 81% of Israelis are proud to be citizens of the state: broken down by sector, the findings are 88% among long-time Israelis, 81% among FSU immigrants, and 48% among Arab citizens.

In many cases, the feeling of belonging to the Israeli collective is linked to army service and to sharing the burden of Israel's security. Service in the IDF is seen as important by Israeli society not only from a legal perspective but from a social one. Despite the fact that draft evasion has increased in recent years, it is widely denounced by the Israeli public. Analyzing the readiness of Israeli citizens to serve in the IDF, we find that 91% of the Jewish public would enlist if they were of conscription age. Only 10% of long-time Israelis and 3% of immigrants reported that they would not want to serve in the IDF if called upon to do so. Of the Jewish sample studied, 43% would wish to serve in combat or elite units.

Figure 31

**Sense of Belonging to Israel, and National Pride**

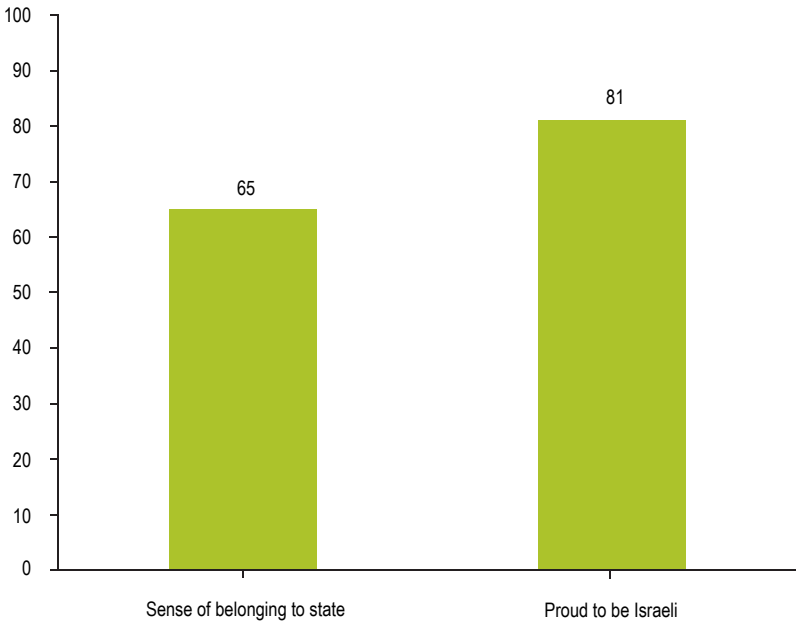
“To what extent do you feel part of Israel and its problems?”

To a large extent or to a very large extent

“How proud are you to be an Israeli?”

Quite proud or very proud

(percent)



**C. Summary**

An analysis of the findings in this section yields a complex, multi-faceted picture. It would appear that the political culture of many Israelis encompasses non-democratic elements in each of the three aspects studied. If we examine the relative weight of undemocratic attitudes in Israeli society, we find that more than a third of the citizens have pronounced authoritarian tendencies. These leanings correlate with a non-liberal attitude toward minorities. Thus, alongside broad support for the assertion that Israel must remain a democracy, the Israeli



public tends to characterize Israeli democracy as a weak and ineffective form of government. As a way to improve the existing regime, the public suggests replacing it with a more centralized system. Most of the survey's respondents appreciate the advantages of an authoritarian regime and a strong leadership that would solve problems efficiently, and even express a preference for a government composed of experts who would make decisions based on professional considerations rather than the wishes of the electorate.

Furthermore, most Israelis are disappointed in the extent to which their participation in elections has influenced government policy. This is compounded by profound disappointment in the functioning of the country's elected institutions, and a low level of trust in the Knesset and political parties. As in the past, it seems that only the IDF enjoys a high degree of trust among the Israeli public. Meanwhile, the office of the president continues to improve its image.

According to the figures, the public's views regarding civil rights in Israel have remained largely unaltered: The Jewish public believes that fateful decisions for the state should be made by a Jewish majority, and that the state is even entitled to encourage Arab emigration. Note that since the publication of the first **Democracy Index** in 2003, we have observed significant gaps between the opinions of long-time Israelis and FSU immigrants on this issue. The latter have emerged as one of the less liberal groups in Israel with regard to such issues as majority-minority relations and gender equality.

As in the past, Israelis display cautious optimism regarding the future of the country. Although the majority of Israelis are deeply concerned by the extent of corruption in the country, have lost faith in the politicians, and are convinced that another war is on the horizon, they continue to want to live in Israel, are proud of their country, and feel a sense of belonging to the Israeli collective.



## **Part Three**

# **Democratic Principles in Practice**



## A. Introduction: Democratic Values and Democratic Behavior

This section of the 2010 Democracy Index analyzes the views of a broad spectrum of the Israeli public with regard to translating several “constitutional values” in practice, among them such basic democratic values as equality before the law, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion. This study is intended to explore to what extent the stated support of a large portion of the Israeli public for a democratic regime in theory, and specifically for the above values—support that has emerged from a number of assessments in the past—remains constant or wavers when it comes to implementing these values in practice.<sup>39</sup> In that case, there is often a “price tag,” for example, when theoretical support for freedom of expression clashes with the desire to maintain public order and national security, or when the noble idea of equality before the law translates into also granting rights to those not considered an “integral part” of the collective.

The expected, but problematic, gap between support in theory and in practice—not to mention the gap between theoretical support and actual behavior—has been the focus of numerous analytical and empirical studies in Israel and elsewhere. The conventional wisdom in this regard is that context is all-important; in other words, reality is the crucial mediator between the public’s perception of democratic freedoms in principle and its support for granting or denying them.<sup>40</sup> This is all the more true since democracy is a form of government, but no less,

39 See for example: Arian, Nachmias, Navot and Danielle (note 1, *above*), 16–23; and H. G. Fleck and B. Malka-Igelbusch, “Survey on Liberal Values in Israel,” Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty: [www.fnst-jerusalem.org/2009/10/20/survey-on-liberal-values-in-israel/#more-459](http://www.fnst-jerusalem.org/2009/10/20/survey-on-liberal-values-in-israel/#more-459)

40 See for example: D. W. Davis and B. D. Silver, “Civil Liberties vs. Security: Public Opinion in the Context of the Terrorist Attacks on America,” *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (1) (January 2004): 28–46; and E. C. Nisbet and J. Shanahan, *MSRG Special Report: Restrictions on Civil Liberties, Views of Islam, and Muslim Americans* (Media and Society Research Group, Cornell University, 2004).

a culture and a way of life; accordingly, the decision to implement or ignore democratic principles is an ongoing dilemma, and not a point to be debated in special situations. Indeed, as we shall see in the course of our discussion, the “major” questions demand an answer not only when formulating public policy but also when the individual is faced with deciding whom he is and is not willing to have as a neighbor.

In recent decades, a broad consensus has emerged among scholars that support for democracy in principle is now a global trend. What is more, no other form of government today garners such wide support in theory, meaning that democracy is the name of the game even in states that are clearly not democratic in practice. Surveys conducted in the 1990s in 63 states—including established democracies, new democracies, and some non-democratic regimes—point to the unequivocal triumph of the democratic idea, at least at the level of citizens’ stated positions.<sup>41</sup> Ronald Inglehart views this phenomenon as a central feature of the transition from a modern society, which focused on conducting trade, to a postmodern society, in which trade is less central and the marketplace of ideas is flourishing. While postmodern society, which he characterizes as postmaterialist, is marked by a profound erosion of respect for authority, democratic values are actually gaining strength.<sup>42</sup> Jacques Thomassen also argues in this context that the crisis of faith in their leadership that many democratic societies are experiencing today is the product not of a loss of faith in the democratic system itself but of a low assessment by the general public of government performance. Thus any analogy with the collapse of democracy in 1930s Europe is incorrect and unjustified.<sup>43</sup> The problem today is a different one; hence the methods of solving it must also be different.

41 H. D. Klingemann, “Mapping Political Support in the 1990s: A Global Analysis,” in P. Norris (ed.), *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 31–54.

42 R. Inglehart, “Postmodernization Erodes Respect for Authority, but Increases Support for Democracy,” in P. Norris (ed.), *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 236.

43 J. Thomassen, “Democratic Values,” in R. Dalton and H. D. Klingemann (eds.),

There are a number of explanations for the increase in theoretical support for democracy. In their book on political culture, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba assert that the reasons lie in the emergence of a culture of participation grounded on the view that the ordinary citizen is politically relevant and must be involved. This is also the basis for the demand that the citizen have a voice in the public debate on government decisions, even if he cannot gain entry into the decision-making apparatus itself. This approach has earned widespread support, especially among previously disenfranchised groups. Today, however, even the political elites are more committed than ever to expanding political participation.<sup>44</sup> James Rosenau presents a similar argument concerning the dramatic global shift toward a participatory revolution nurtured, in his view, by the worldwide rise in education and the abundance of accessible information available to every citizen—two unprecedented historical developments that facilitate the formulation of enlightened political demands.<sup>45</sup>

But there's a fly in the ointment. One would have expected that this sweeping support for abstract democratic values, and the demand for wide-scale democratic participation, would translate into both concrete positions and actions that are consistent with these values. But this is not the case. The reality is that there are large gaps between theory and practice. Thus for example, we are all aware of the worrisome disparity between the demand in principle for political participation by citizens and the level of participation in practice; for despite the fact that almost everyone supports the idea of participation, many do not exercise this democratic right. Moreover, one would expect that citizens who are active politically would closely examine the alternatives available to them and choose the one best suited to them; but studies of political

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*The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 431–432.

44 G. A. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989), 2–3.

45 J. S. Rosenau, "The Relocation of Authority in a Shrinking World," *Comparative Politics* 24 (3) (1992): 253–272.

behavior show that only rarely does reality fit this rational-activist model, be it in established democracies<sup>46</sup> or new ones.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, it has been found that in the aforementioned transition from a modern to a postmodern society, not only was there an erosion of faith in authority in general and governmental authority in particular, but feelings of uncertainty, and a sense that the public order—at least ostensibly—is on shaky ground, are intensifying. These trends give rise to the “authoritarian reflex” among citizens, which often generates fundamentalist attitudes, xenophobia, and nostalgia for strong leaders who are inherently opposed to the most basic democratic principles, which are supported in theory by the majority.<sup>48</sup>

This same authoritarian reflex, which paradoxically often goes hand in hand with explicit support for democracy as the preferred form of government, is also nourished by ethnic, racial, religious, or nationalist tensions in society. In many places, not only have these tensions not dissipated, as certain adherents of modernization might have expected, but they have become more pronounced.<sup>49</sup> Compounding the above is the rapid growth of immigrant communities in the Western democracies. In tandem with processes of assimilation, these communities are marked today by noticeable efforts on the part of newcomers, and even second and third generation immigrants, to preserve their identity and connection with their societies of origin, which are not always committed to Western-style democracy, and whose culture is different from that of the receiving society. This dichotomy exacerbates internal tensions and challenges democratic values, since the solutions adopted in practice by the receiving society are not consistent with its declared

46 Almond and Verba (note 44, *above*), 338.

47 “Are Democratic Citizens Emerging in Africa? Evidence from the Afrobarometer,” Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No.70, 2009: [www.afrobarometer.org/papers/AfrobriefNo70\\_21may09.pdf](http://www.afrobarometer.org/papers/AfrobriefNo70_21may09.pdf)

48 Inglehart (note 42, *above*), 242.

49 R. Jalali and S. Martin Lipset, “Racial and Ethnic Conflicts: A Global Perspective,” *Political Science Quarterly* 107 (4) (1992): 585–606.



values, particularly with regard to freedom of expression and of religion.<sup>50</sup>

Numerous studies have attempted to analyze the mediating factors that explain the intricate relationship between theoretical support for democracy and the situation in reality, which often includes manifestations of intolerance and behaviors that contrast starkly with democratic values. In the context of imparting such values, several rounds of public opinion polls have been conducted in Europe over the past decade (as part of the European Social Survey, or ESS).<sup>51</sup> Among the findings is a common pattern of European democratic values that bridge East and West, North and South. These include recognizing the duty to vote in elections (participation); helping others (solidarity); obeying the law (institutionalization), and formulating an independent position as citizens (autonomy). In a more concrete vein, the surveys examine to what extent immigrants are treated in an egalitarian manner. Thus for example, an analysis of the ESS from 2003 shows a correlation between level of education and degree of tolerance for immigration and immigrants. The Survey's findings indicate that better-educated individuals relate more positively to multiculturalism than do those who are less well educated, and look less negatively at immigration and immigrants, even if the latter are liable to threaten their livelihood.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, studies conducted in the U.S. and Europe indicate that in the U.S. as well as in European Union member and would-be member states (in this case, Turkey, Albania, and Macedonia), discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or disability is a common occurrence.<sup>53</sup> Other empirical evidence of

50 On the complex set of changes taking place in a united Europe, see for example: R. Kastoryano, "Settlement, Transnational Communities and Citizenship," *International Social Science Journal* 52 (165) (2002): 307–312.

51 See the site of the research project: [www.europeansocialsurvey.org](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org)

52 J. Hainmueller and M. J. Hiscox, "Educated Preferences: Explaining Attitudes toward Immigration in Europe," *International Organization* 61 (2007): 399–442: <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~hiscox/EducatedPreferences.pdf>

53 *Discrimination in the EU in 2009*, Special Eurobarometer Report 317, 9: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_317\\_sum\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_317_sum_en.pdf)

negative attitudes toward strangers and immigrants in democratic countries can be seen in the results of a referendum conducted in Switzerland in November 2009, in which those opposed to building minarets on mosques were in the majority.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, in local elections in the Netherlands in March 2010, Geert Wilders' PVV party—whose platform is anti-immigration and anti-Muslim—scored unprecedented gains.<sup>55</sup> Studies conducted in the U.S. following the September 11 attacks also showed that in situations of anxiety and uncertainty, the American public's commitment to values such as freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, and even freedom of religion loses ground, though it does not necessarily vanish entirely.<sup>56</sup>

Not only is Israel a relatively young democracy; it is also one of the sole democracies in the world that is under constant threat, even if opinions are divided as to whether this is an actual existential danger. What is more, Israel's demographic makeup—whereby a Jewish majority and a Palestinian national minority coexist in the same political framework and within the broader context of the Middle East conflict—greatly influences the ability to maintain a genuine, stable democracy. Moreover, although Israel is, by definition, a country that absorbs Jewish immigrants, in practice it also takes in a large number of non-Jewish immigrants. It is therefore hardly surprising that the tension between democratic principles and practice is particularly acute here. Yet at the same time, due to the circumstances of our existence—which, to say the least, do not lend themselves to building a strong

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R. J. Simon and J. P. Lynch, "A Comparative Assessment of Public Opinion toward Immigrants and Immigration Policies," *International Migration Review* 33 (2) (1999): 455–467.

54 I. Traynor, "Swiss Vote to Ban Construction of Minarets on Mosques," *Guardian*, November 22, 2009 (accessed August 30, 2010):

[www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/nov/29/switzerland-bans-mosque-minarets](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/nov/29/switzerland-bans-mosque-minarets)

55 "Dutch Anti-Islam MP in Pool Gains," *Al-Jazeera English* (March 5, 2010): <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/europe/2010/03/20103492847982214.html>

56 D. W. Davis and B. D. Silver, "Civil Liberties vs. Security: Public Opinion in the Context of the Terrorist Attacks on America," *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (1) (January 2004): 28–46: [www.msu.edu/~bsilver/AJPSCivLib.pdf](http://www.msu.edu/~bsilver/AJPSCivLib.pdf)

democracy—a reasonable correlation between theory and practice is all the more important. We therefore set out to examine whether Israeli citizens merely “talk” democracy or also “do” democracy.

Our study of the practical aspects of democracy was conducted on two planes: the vertical and the horizontal. On the vertical plane, we present and analyze the public’s attitudes toward democracy in principle, focusing on Israeli citizens’ assessment of the extent to which the institutions and agencies of government implement core democratic values. On the horizontal plane, by contrast, we address relations between citizens as individuals and as groups, and specifically whether the citizens of Israel maintain their stated commitment to constitutional values, and to the rights deriving from them, when confronted with dilemmas at the practical level. The following analysis relates, for the most part, to the total sample, representing the general public in Israel; but where relevant, we will also address subsamples, primarily for the differences between the views of the Jewish majority and the Arab minority, based on the assumption that due to the minority group’s reliance on democratic protection, it will more strongly support the exercise of democratic rights. At the same time, there is reason to assume that the minority group will display a greater degree of doubt and mistrust toward the majority, in particular vis-à-vis government institutions. We would further expect the majority to be less concerned about the universal application of rights, and less suspicious of government institutions and their intentions. On the other hand, we would also expect them to be wary of the minority group, for fear that the latter’s exercise of full democratic rights would expand its influence over the public space and over a greater portion of public resources. In cases where sizeable differences were found within subgroups of the majority, we highlight these and attempt to explain them based on ideological and socio-demographic factors.

Before proceeding, we wish to add a methodological caveat: Particularly in situations of friction, which are often the case in Israel, members of minority groups—for fear of causing themselves harm, among other reasons—have a greater tendency than the majority

toward social acceptability bias, that is, reporting what they think survey interviewers want to hear. Consequently, certain of the figures below are not consistent with the underlying assumptions presented above and with sociological reasoning. In these cases, we will adopt the approach of the renowned Jewish scholar, Rashi (R. Shlomo Itzhaki), and declare these results to be “perplexing.” In other words, these are the findings, but we do not have a good explanation for them, apart from the presumption that they originate in social acceptability bias or a sense of threat. It should be noted in this context that the Arab sample, since it matches the proportion of the older Arab population within the general Israeli public, is too small to break down into subgroups and still maintain a reasonable degree of statistical certainty from which to draw valid conclusions. So for example, in the analysis below, we will not be relating to differences between Christians, Muslims, or Druze as separate subgroups.

## **B. The Vertical Plane: The Public’s Views on Government in Israel (Principles and Practice)**

### **1. Attitude toward Israeli Democracy: An Overview**

As we noted earlier, in most states today, regardless of the type of regime, the majority of citizens and their leaders profess to support the democratic idea.<sup>57</sup> So too in Israel: More than 80% of the general public agree with the basic statement that “democracy is not a perfect regime, but it is better than any other form of government.” This finding is also consistent with the clear preference for democracy as the most desirable regime (89%) as compared with other forms of government (as stated earlier, 59% of respondents support a government comprised of experts, while 44% favor a strong leadership that does not need to take the Knesset or elections into account) (Figure 20). Ostensibly,

57 This is referred to by Dalton and Klingemann in the preface to their book. See note 43 (*above*), 8.

then, this points to a solid democratic consensus—a good reason for satisfaction among those who hold Israeli democracy dear. But we need only scratch the surface to see that, as the findings of this survey indicate, things are not all rosy in terms of the Israeli public's essential commitment to democracy.

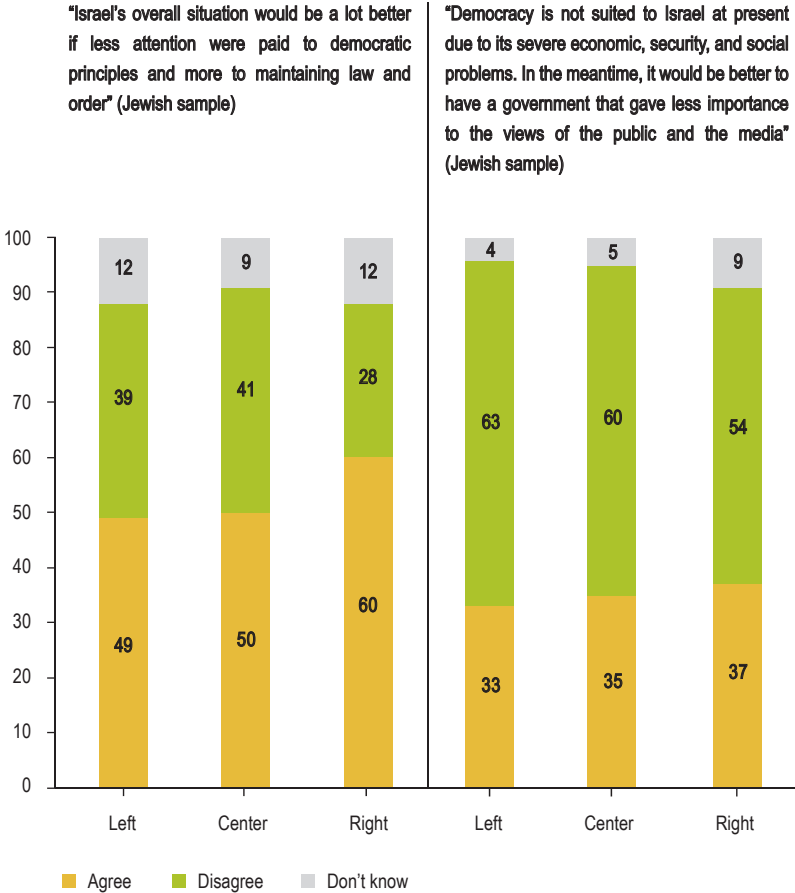
The ease with which a majority of the Israeli public today is willing to cut corners when it comes to acting on the practical ramifications of the democratic idea is only the tip of the iceberg. Thus, more than half the general public (55%) support the statement that "Israel's overall situation would be much better if less attention were paid to democratic principles and more to maintaining law and order." Stated otherwise, there is a widespread willingness among the Israeli public today to sacrifice a certain degree of democracy in exchange for seeing law and order upheld to a greater extent. It follows that the majority view democracy not as a totality of values that should be maintained as such but as a modular set that can be added to or subtracted from as circumstances dictate. Thus for example, if public order is lacking, it can and should be rectified by moderating the degree of democracy.

Breaking down the responses to the above question by self-reported political orientation of the Jewish respondents on a left-right continuum shows marked differences between the groups: Among those who identify themselves as right-wingers, a clear majority (60%) agree with the above statement, while among those who align themselves with the center or left, roughly one half share this view (Figure 32). That is to say, the failings in the area of public order are so disturbing to large numbers in all the political camps that they are willing to sacrifice certain aspects of democracy for the sake of restoring order.

A breakdown of responses by education (in the Jewish sector) reveals moderate but systematic differences between groups, to wit: the more educated the respondents, the less they are in favor of waiving democratic principles. Thus, among those with an elementary school education, 69% support such concessions; for those with up to ten years of education, the figure drops to 57%; and among those with a high school or college education, 54% share this view.

What is more, though the majority reject the following statement, more than one third of the general public in Israel (39%) agree that “democracy is not suited to Israel at present due to its severe economic, security, and social problems; in the meantime, it would be better to have a government that gave less importance to the views of the public and the media.”

Figure 32  
**Democracy in Israel**



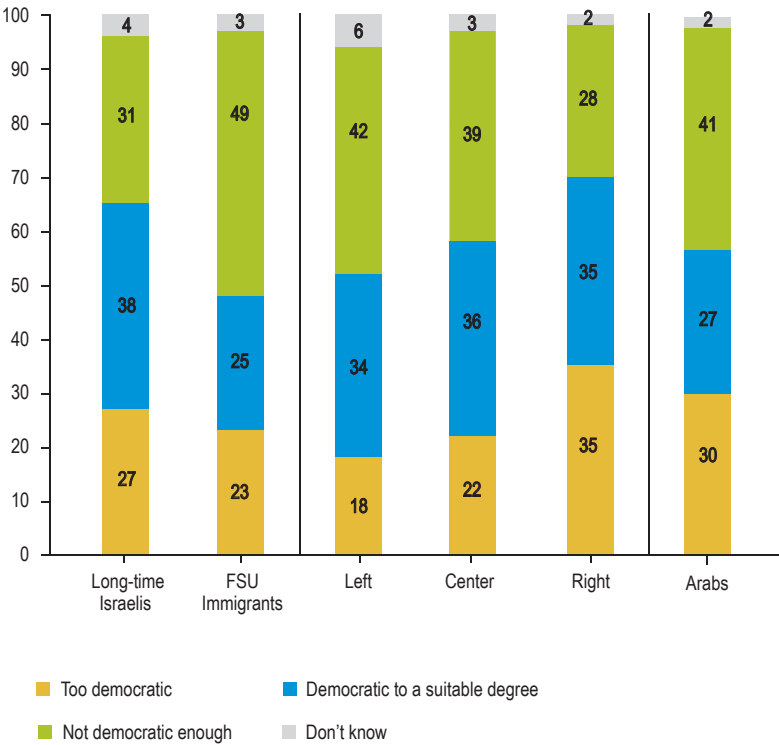
A breakdown of the Jewish public by self-reported political orientation from left to right shows that the differences between political camps on this topic are not great, although the right supports the above statement somewhat more strongly than do the center or the left (Figure 32). Education, by contrast, plays an important role in shaping the public's stand on the subject: Of those with a college education, 64% are opposed to this statement, and those with a full or partial high school education, roughly 52%, while among those with an elementary school education, only 44% are opposed.

Despite the willingness (cited above) to reduce certain aspects of democracy in order to improve other aspects of public life (law and order) or to contend with particular circumstances, the general public is divided in its opinion of just how democratic Israel really is. While the gaps between groups are not great, as we saw in the previous section the prevailing response (37%) is that Israel on average is sufficiently democratic. Some 36% feel that it is not democratic enough, while 27% maintain that it is too democratic. Breaking down these responses by sector, we find that the view that Israel is not democratic enough is particularly strong among FSU immigrants (49%) as opposed to 41% of the Arab public and only 31% of long-time Jewish Israelis (Figure 33). It may be assumed that among the immigrant and Arab populations, the difficulty of integrating into various aspects of the long-time Jewish-Israeli mainstream reinforces the view that there is "not enough" democracy in Israel.

A breakdown of the responses on this question by self-reported political orientation on a left-right continuum reveals that 35% of those who define themselves as right-wing feel that Israel is too democratic, as opposed to only 18% of those who locate themselves on the left. Those who identify with the center fall in between the two, but closer to the left, at 22%. The converse is also true, if we examine the response of "not enough" democracy: Only 28% of the right maintain that Israel is not democratic enough, as compared with 42% of those who define themselves as leftist. Some 38% of those in the center believe that Israel is not democratic enough, again a view more closely aligned with the

left. Education, it was found, does not play an important role in this context. As we can see from Figure 33, only among long-time Israelis is the most frequent response that Israel is democratic “to a suitable degree.” Among respondents on the right, the breakdown is more or less equal between those who hold that Israel is sufficiently democratic and those who feel that it is too democratic, whereas in all other groups, the predominant opinion is that Israel is not democratic enough.

Figure 33  
**Assessing the Extent of Democracy in Israel**  
“In your opinion, how democratic is Israel today?”  
(by sector; percent)



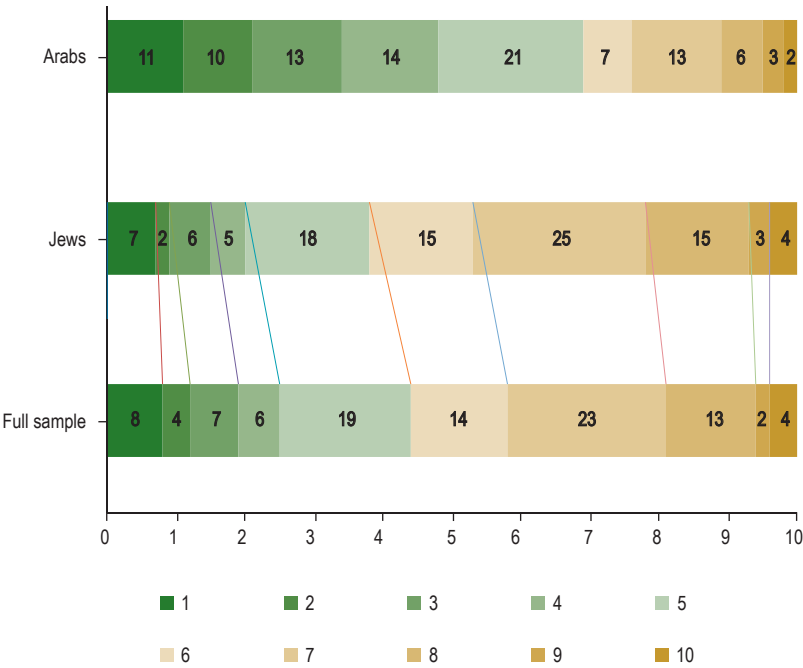


The dissatisfaction indicated by these findings apparently also explains the distribution of responses to the question: “What grade would you give Israeli democracy, where 1 = failed and 10 = excellent?” (Figure 34). In the test of reality, the public assigns Israeli democracy a failing grade. This is also consistent with the findings cited in previous sections of the Index regarding widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of Israeli democracy (the proportion of “dissatisfied” among the general public, 63%, is much higher than that of the “satisfied,” 36%) and with the government’s handling of various problems (25% satisfied, as compared with 72% dissatisfied). The Jewish public awards Israeli democracy an average grade of 5.4. FSU immigrants give it a slightly higher grade (5.6), while the average grade among the Arab public is even lower (5.1). But these averages tend to obscure the full extent of the differences between sectors that emerge from Figure 34: Although only 16% of the Jewish public assign Israeli democracy the three lowest grades (1–3), 34% of Arab respondents take this view. Moreover, although the most frequent grade (25%) among Jewish respondents is 7, the most common score (21%) among Arab respondents is 5. In other words, the opinion of Israeli democracy among the Jewish public may not be high, but the assessment of the Arab public is significantly lower.

Interestingly enough, the statistics indicate that the public is not nostalgic for the past but is divided in its opinions on the statement: “Israel was once far more democratic than it is today.” Exactly one half of respondents agree with this statement while one half oppose it. Among Jews, the nostalgia is even less: those who disagree with this statement (47%) exceed those who agree with it (39%). A breakdown of responses to this question by length of time in Israel reveals that only 45% of long-time Jewish Israelis feel a sense of nostalgia, while among FSU immigrants a higher proportion (50%) long for the past. Assuming that the findings are valid, the Arab public is the most nostalgic for the past. From our perspective, this finding is somewhat “perplexing” (in the sense cited above), since presumably only a few would disagree with the statement that in recent years there has been

a marked improvement in the civil status of Arab citizens of Israel. This improvement is the result of a lengthy series of legal decisions and a growing recognition among decision makers of the need for civil equality as well as the civic empowerment of this group, which is demanding its rights more vociferously.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps due to the strong sense of alienation that characterizes the Arab-Israeli public at present, 68% are nostalgic for the past and maintain that Israel used to be more democratic than it is today.

Figure 34  
**Israeli Democracy: A Report Card**  
(by sector; percent)



We broke down the responses of the Jewish public to this question by age as well, in order to see if those who themselves experienced Israeli democracy in the past differ in their retrospective assessment from those who did not experience it firsthand; however, the findings do not indicate a statistical correlation between age of the respondents and degree of nostalgia.

To sum up: It is clear that the Israeli public is disappointed in Israeli democracy. It is difficult to conclude from the data whether the dissatisfaction identified by ourselves and many others relates to democracy per se or to what is perceived as the unsatisfactory performance of the government in Israel. Despite the frequency of the response that Israel is “not democratic enough,” there is considerable willingness on the part of citizens to waive certain elements of democracy based on the perception that this can contribute to improving other aspects of public life, particularly with regard to law and order. This offers further proof of our initial statement that reality often creates gaps between attitudes toward democracy in theory and their translation into practice.

## **2. Constitution**

With the exception of Great Britain—which has no formal constitution but does have a material one, that is, a tradition of values, laws, and procedures that serve as a quasi-constitutional meta-framework—Israel is the only democracy in the world that has no constitution, though it too has basic laws that, according to some experts, are gradually combining to form the groundwork for a constitution. And of course, Israel has a declaration of independence, which delineates its ideological-constitutional framework in ways that are well known.

Much has already been written about the political and other reasons for this unique situation and its ramifications for the quality of

58 See on this point: D. Rabinowitz and K. Abu Baker, *The Stand-Tall Generation* (Tel Aviv: Keter, 2002) (Hebrew).

government in Israel;<sup>59</sup> likewise, various proposals for a constitution have been put forward.<sup>60</sup> But the debate regarding the urgency of a constitution generally takes place at the level of experts and politicians, with ordinary citizens rarely joining in the discussion. Nevertheless, let us not forget the wave of protests that erupted in the early 1990s under the banner: “A Constitution for Israel.”

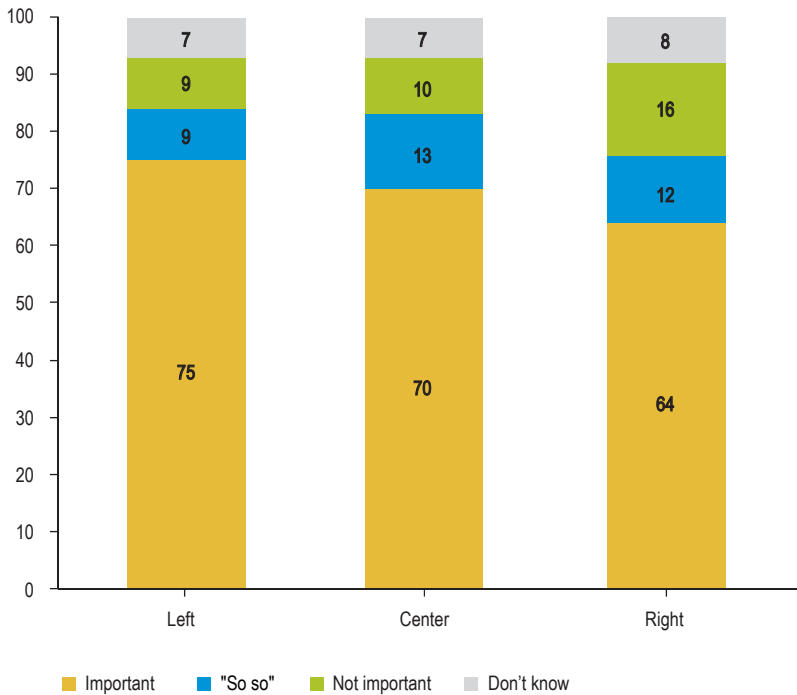
This leads us to the question of what the public feels today about the benefits to Israeli democracy of having a constitution. Accordingly, we asked: “How important is it to you that Israel have a constitution?” Some 65% of the total sample responded that the subject is important to them. More specifically, the bulk of the Jewish respondents (69%) reported that a constitution is important or very important to them, as opposed to only 45% of the Arab respondents. This finding is somewhat surprising, given that it is minority groups in particular who benefit directly from a constitution, which always includes a declaration of rights, that is, provisions that protect them from the tyranny of the majority. It is therefore difficult to explain the scant importance that the Arab public attaches to a constitution, unless it feels that no constitution accepted by Israel would ensure genuine equality of rights between the Jewish majority and Arab minority.

A breakdown of responses among the Jewish public by self-reported political orientation on a left-right continuum indicates that the subject of a constitution is more important to those who define themselves as leftist (75%) than it is to those who place themselves at the center (70%) or right (64%) of the spectrum (Figure 35).

59 D. Dorner, “Does Israel Have a Constitution?” *Saint Louis University Law Journal* 43 (1999): 1325.

60 For example, the proposal for a Constitution by Consensus, which was a product of the Israel Democracy Institute: [www.haskama.org.il](http://www.haskama.org.il), as well as the proposed constitution of the Institute for Zionist Strategies: [www.izs.org.il/eng/?father\\_id=169&catid=198](http://www.izs.org.il/eng/?father_id=169&catid=198)

Figure 35  
**Importance of a Constitution, by Political Orientation**  
 “How important is it to you that Israel have a constitution?”  
 (Jewish sample; percent)

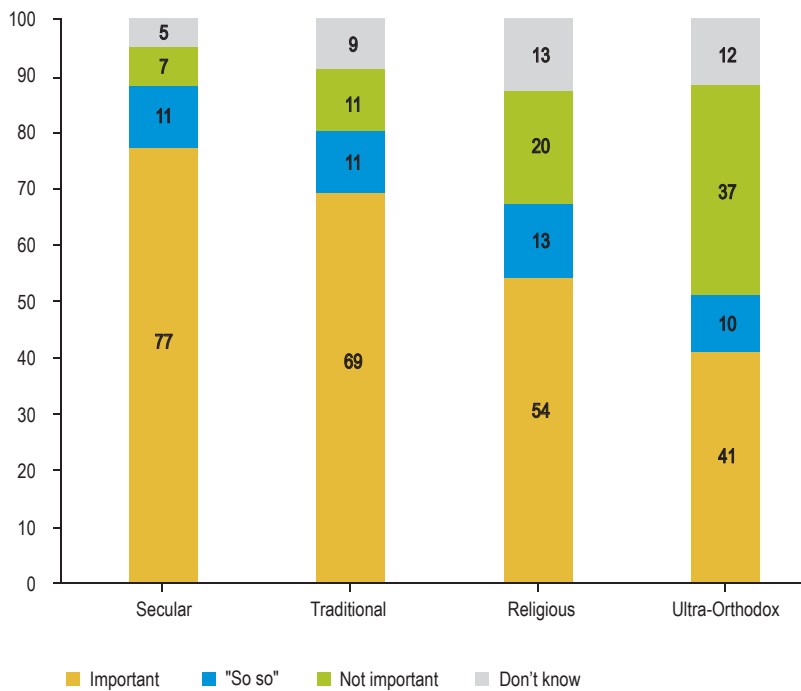


Because the internal Jewish debate on the issue of a constitution has revolved, since its inception, around the secular-religious axis, we have also broken down the responses on the basis of the respondents' self-reported religiosity (Figure 36). This produced a clear majority—over three quarters (77%)—among secular Jews who maintain that a constitution is important for Israel, and a smaller majority among traditional and religious Jews (69% and 54%, respectively). Among the ultra-Orthodox, only a minority, albeit a sizeable one (41%), ascribe importance to a constitution.

It appears, therefore, that the general public in Israel today recognizes the importance of a constitution, though in two segments

of the population—Arab and ultra-Orthodox—this is not the majority view. Nonetheless, in both these groups, a large minority agrees with the importance attached to a constitution by the Israeli public as a whole.

Figure 36  
**Importance of a Constitution, by Level of Religiosity**  
“How important is it to you that Israel have a constitution?”  
(Jewish sample; percent)



### 3. Jewish and Democratic: The Character of the State of Israel

This sensitive subject is important to our discussion inasmuch as it touches on the prioritization of values, and no less, of actions, in situations that are affected by the dual definition—Jewish and democratic—of the state. This definition is something that all citizens of Israel, Jews and non-Jews alike, live with—whether willingly or unwillingly.<sup>61</sup> Accordingly, it is important to know which component of the definition—the Jewish or the democratic—holds greater significance in the eyes of the Israeli public, and what are the practical consequences that derive from this preference.

We posed the question: “Israel is defined as a Jewish and democratic state. Which part of this definition is more important to you personally?” It emerged that among the Israeli public as a whole, the highest percentage (43%) consider both parts of the definition to be equally important; 31% designate the Jewish component as having greater importance; and only 20% feel similarly about the democratic component.<sup>62</sup>

When we break down the responses by nationality, we discover, as expected, major differences between the Jewish and Arab populations: Among the Jews, a balance between the two components (“both are equally important”) is still the preferred response (48%), followed by “Jewish” (32%), and finally “democratic” (only 17%) (see Figure 37). This frequent dual preference is almost self-evident for the Jewish public, since it does not dictate the need for a definite decision on this thorny issue. But it is highly significant that among those who do not express this preference, the proportion of those who chose the Jewish component alone is almost twice that of the respondents who

61 On the issue of this duality, see for example: Y. Z. Stern, “Wealth Hoarded by Its Owner, to His Detriment: The Place of Secular and Jewish Law in Israeli Society,” in B. Porat (ed.), *Thoughts on Jewish Democracy* (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute and Am Oved, 2010), 561–589 (Hebrew).

62 A host of academic articles and opinion pieces have been written on the dual definition of Israel’s character. See for example: R. Gavison, “Jewish and Democratic? A Rejoinder to the ‘Ethnic Democracy’ Debate,” *Israel Studies* 4 (1) (1999): 44–63.

unequivocally prefer the democratic option. This sizeable difference can serve as a basis for assuming that if, for some reason, the Jewish public found itself with its back against the wall, so to speak, and were forced to choose between these two aspects of the character of the state, which have coexisted since its founding, there is a greater likelihood that the nationalist (i.e., Jewish) component would win out over the political (democratic) one.

A breakdown of the Jewish sample according to self-reported left-right political orientation shows that the majority of those who classify themselves as centrists (57%) prefer the dual definition—a larger proportion than those who place themselves on the right (42%) or identify themselves as left-wing (49%). On the other hand, if we look at the preference for the Jewish component, the right takes the lead, with 50%, compared with 22% of the center and 18% of the left. As expected, the left leads the list of those who favor the democratic component (with 30%, though this is still a minority), as opposed to 20% from the center of the political map and only 7% from the right. In other words, even on the left, the preference is for the dual definition of Israel's character; but of the two other options, the democratic definition is considered more suitable than the Jewish one. On the right, by contrast, the preference for the Jewish definition is greater than that for the dual definition, not to mention the democratic one.

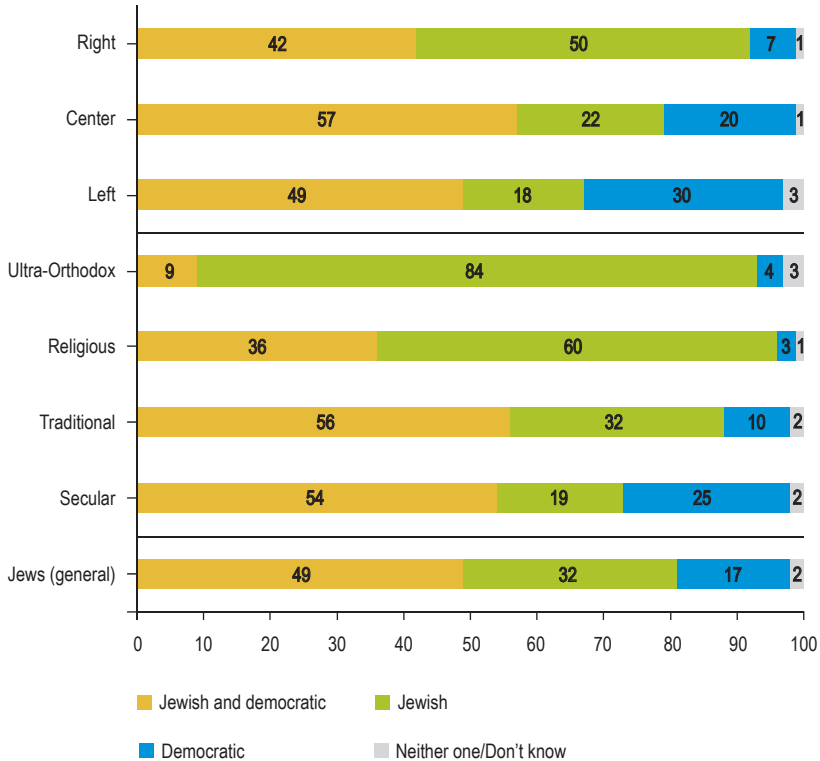
A breakdown of the data by self-reported religiosity points to even more pronounced differences between sectors: Among the ultra-Orthodox, a decisive majority (84%) give priority to the Jewish component, as do a majority (60%) of those who define themselves as religious. By contrast, only a minority of traditional and secular Jews (32% and 19%, respectively) selected the Jewish component alone. But with reference to the dual definition, the opposite is true: "Jewish and democratic" garners a majority among traditional (56%) and secular Jews (54%). Note that even among those who label themselves secular, only a minority (25.5%) prefer the democratic definition alone, though this is a sizeable minority compared with the traditional (10%), the religious (3%), and the ultra-Orthodox (4%).



Figure 37  
**Jewish and/or Democratic?**

"Israel is defined as a Jewish and democratic state. Which part of this definition is more important to you?"

(Jewish sample; percent)



The most common, though not unequivocal, preference among Arab citizens of Israel (38%) is naturally the democratic component, since from their perspective, the definition of the state as Jewish is, at best, foreign, and at worst, threatening—a source of negation of their collective national rights. But the ranking of the other alternatives is by no means self-evident; in fact, it is difficult to find an explanation for it without further in-depth study: In second place among the Arab public, in terms of frequency of response, is actually the Jewish component (25%) (though presumably in a different sense than that of the Jewish

majority). Roughly one fifth (19%!) state that neither of these elements is important to them; that is, they prefer a definition that is not Jewish and democratic; not Jewish; and not democratic (perhaps an Islamic theocracy or another model of government). Only 15% favor the dual definition of a “Jewish and democratic” state.

We also examined the relationship between the Jewish and democratic components, this time indirectly, by means of the following question: “Do you agree/disagree with the statement: ‘Rabbis should be consulted more often on political decisions that are fateful to the country’?” While the majority of the Jewish sample (67%) reject this notion, almost one third (29%) agree with it, meaning they would like to see religious figures among the country’s policy makers, even if they were not elected for this purpose by democratic process.

Since rabbinic authority holds more relevance for those who are not secular Jews, we again broke down the responses of the Jewish public to this question according to self-reported religiosity on a secular–ultra-Orthodox continuum. As expected, we found a large majority (86%) of secular Jews who oppose such consultations with rabbis, and a majority—albeit a smaller one (66%)—among traditional Jews as well. By contrast, among religious Jews, this trend is reversed: a majority (59%) favor including rabbis in crucial decisions even though they were not elected for this purpose, and an even larger majority among the ultra-Orthodox (89%) support consultations of this nature.

We attempted to explore the correlation between respondents’ preference for defining the state as Jewish or democratic or both, and their position on consulting with rabbis on decisions fateful to the state. Accordingly, we cross-tabulated the responses given by each respondent to both questions. We found that in all groups—those who favor the Jewish component, those who prefer the democratic component, and those who support both equally—the majority reject the notion of consulting with rabbis when making crucial decisions. But the ratio between supporters and opponents is significantly different in the three groups: thus, 54% of those who give priority to the Jewish component are opposed to consulting with rabbis whereas 47% of this group favor

doing so; among those who prefer the democratic component, however, three quarters (75%) are opposed to consulting with rabbis and only one quarter (25%) support such a move. Among those who see the two components (Jewish and democratic) as being of equal value, 72% are opposed to rabbinic consultations and 28% are in favor, placing them closer to the respondents for whom democracy is more important than the Jewish definition of the state, and farther from those for whom the Jewish definition carries more meaning.

In a similar vein, the Yisrael Beiteinu party recently proposed that the right to full citizenship be contingent upon a personal declaration of loyalty to the State of Israel as a democratic, Jewish, and Zionist state. Obviously, such a declaration will prove difficult first and foremost for minority groups, in particular the ultra-Orthodox and Arabs: The former will have problems with the Zionist component and perhaps also the democratic, and the latter with the Zionist aspect as well as the Jewish one (although, as we saw earlier, our findings indicate that the democratic component does not earn a sweeping majority in this group either). What is more, if this exclusionary proposal is accepted, the right to full citizenship will be denied to many who enjoy it today, since they will not be able to make the required declaration without lying about their true beliefs. Nonetheless, the findings indicate that in the Israeli public as a whole, 55% support this demand. Moreover, among the Jewish public, there is a large majority of almost two thirds (62%) who favor it.

Breaking down the responses by self-reported left-right political orientation (Figure 38) reveals, as expected, that on the right, support for such a pledge is clearly higher (67%) than it is in the center (55%) or on the left (43%). Yet the fact that such a sizeable minority on the left still supports a declaration of loyalty that would disenfranchise large segments of the Israeli collective raises many questions. A breakdown of responses by self-reported religiosity (Figure 38) shows that only among the ultra-Orthodox is there no majority of any size in favor of such a declaration. In all three of the other groups in the Jewish sample there is a majority that supports it and only a minority of varying

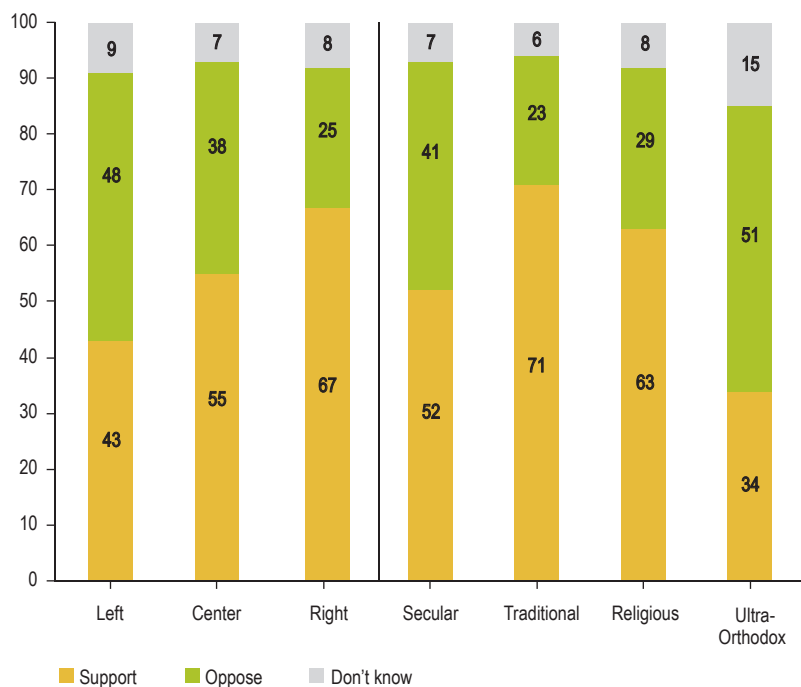
degrees that opposes the idea. In fact, the ultra-Orthodox are among the strongest opponents of a declaration of loyalty (51%). Next in line are a large minority of secular Jews (41%), who apparently regard it as an infringement of civil freedoms and as a means for an obviously right-wing party to exclude the ultra-Orthodox and Arab populations. The weakest opposition to a declaration of loyalty can be found among religious and traditional Jews—29% and 23%, respectively. In other words, the traditional and religious camps are the strongest supporters of the notion of a declaration of loyalty to the state; among secular Jews, there is a sizeable minority who have reservations about it; and among the ultra-Orthodox, a majority take exception to it.

Figure 38

### Declaration of Loyalty as a Condition for Citizenship

“What is your opinion of the proposal that every Israeli be required to declare full loyalty to the State of Israel as a democratic, Jewish, and Zionist state, as a condition for receiving citizenship?”

(Jewish sample; percent)



#### 4. Performance of Israeli Democracy

Let us now move on to the question of whether the public feels that democratic attitudes and values are reflected as they should be in the relationship between the state and its citizens. We will be expanding here on the points made in Part Two of the Index. Respondents were asked: “In your view, to what extent are the following principles upheld in Israel today: freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and human rights?” With regard to freedom of religion and freedom of expression, the most frequent response among the general Israeli public was that they are upheld “to a sufficient degree” (41% in both cases). When speaking of human rights, however, the most common response (39%) is that they are not upheld enough.

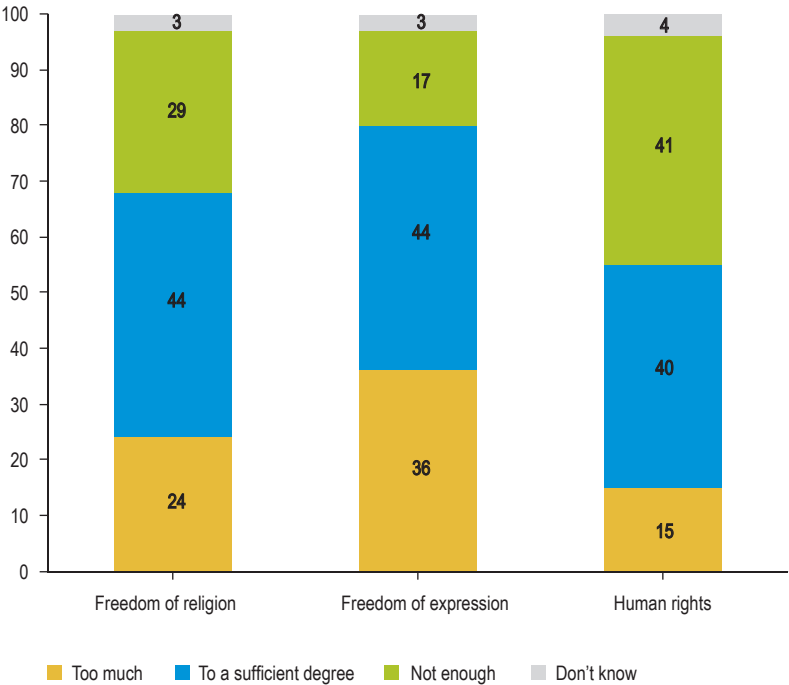
Among the Jewish public, the most frequently expressed view (44%) is that freedom of religion is upheld to a sufficient degree (while 29% feel that it is not upheld enough, and 24% that it is upheld too much) (Figure 39). Stated otherwise, among those who maintain that freedom of religion is not upheld to the right extent, slightly more point to a deficiency in its application than to an excess. When we examine freedom of expression, the most frequent response (44%) among the Jewish public is, again, that it is upheld to a sufficient degree, but here the proportion of those who feel that there is too much freedom of expression in Israel clearly surpasses those who hold that there is too little freedom in this area (36% as opposed to 17%). With regard to human rights, the picture is different, with virtually equal percentages maintaining that Israel upholds these rights to a suitable degree and that it upholds them too little (40% and 41%, respectively). The proportion of those who believe that Israel upholds human rights too much is low—15%. It seems that the majority group identifies a weakness in the performance of Israeli democracy to a greater extent in the area of human rights than in the two other areas that we examined. Below, we address the question of to what extent the Jewish public actually supports measures intended to improve the implementation of human rights, and it appears that the eagerness to pay the price for this is not great, to put it mildly, particularly with regard to non-Jews.

Figure 39

**Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Expression, and Human Rights**

“In your view, to what extent are the following principles upheld in Israel today:  
freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and human rights?”

(Jewish sample; percent)



A breakdown of responses in the Jewish public on the question of freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and human rights by self-reported location on a left-right continuum reveals an interesting picture: In the case of freedom of religion and human rights, the percentage of people identifying as leftist who maintain that the state does not uphold either of these rights to a sufficient degree (34% and 50%, respectively) clearly exceeds the percentage of people on the right who take this view (25% and 34%, respectively). But with regard to freedom of expression, the proportion of those on the right who feel that the state does not uphold this freedom to a sufficient degree (20%)

is slightly higher than the proportion of those on the left (18%), while in the center, those who share this view stand at only 11%. In other words, on the left and on the right—more than in the center—there is a certain sense of being silenced. With regard to the left, this is hardly surprising, for this shrinking political camp has been warning for years about restrictions on freedom of expression in Israel. As for the right, which has not tended to protest against such limitations, there is apparently a growing feeling of this sort, which can perhaps be explained by the clashes that have erupted in recent years between the authorities and certain right-wing groups, for example with regard to dissent or conscientious objection by soldiers over the evacuation of settlements in the territories. Approximately one third on the right, and a similar proportion on the left, feel that there is too much freedom of expression in Israel, but presumably each camp is relating to the ability of those in the opposite camp to voice their opinions—the left, to what they perceive as expressions of nationalism and racism on the right; and the right, to what they see as manifestations of a lack of patriotism and of damage to national interests on the part of left-wing activists.

A breakdown of the responses on freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and human rights by self-reported religiosity shows that the ultra-Orthodox are the only group of the four for whom the most frequent opinion (37%) is that Israel has too little religious freedom (sufficient freedom - 34%; too much freedom - 24%). In the remaining groups—religious, traditional, and secular—the prevailing view is that religious freedom is applied to a sufficient degree, although the size of the “satisfied” group among the religious and traditional populations (56% and 54%, respectively) clearly surpasses the size of this group among the secular Jews surveyed (only 36%). If so, it seems that the status quo does not serve the interests of the ultra-Orthodox and the secular (each group for its own reasons) as much as it serves those of religious and traditional Jews.

With regard to freedom of expression, the group that constitutes the exception is, once again, the ultra-Orthodox, but this time in the opposite direction from what we saw with respect to freedom of

religion. In contrast to the three other groups, where the most frequent view is that freedom of expression is upheld to a sufficient degree, the ultra-Orthodox maintain that the state permits too much freedom of expression (42%, compared with 38% among traditional Jews, 35% among the religious, and 34% among the secular).

On the subject of human rights, the exception is the secular Jews, where the most frequent view is that the state shows insufficient respect for human rights (47%, compared with 38% among the ultra-Orthodox, 34% among the traditional, and 29% among the religious).

As for the Arab public, the very high proportion of responses asserting that Israel has too much freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and human rights raises the likelihood that there was a measurement error on these questions in the survey, for if this were a case of social acceptability bias, the responses would have been clustered around the choice of “to a sufficient degree.”

The findings that we cited concerning respect for freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and human rights are especially interesting in light of the distribution of responses to the question: “To what extent do you feel that the State of Israel respects your human and civil rights?” (Figure 40). On the whole, the feeling most frequently expressed by the Jewish public (49%) is that the state respects or strongly respects human and civil rights. The second largest group (32%) takes the middle position on this question, and only a minority (19%) feel that the state does not respect these rights to some degree or at all. That is to say, the dissatisfaction among the Jewish public with the lack of respect for human and civil rights (as indicated above) is not the result, in most cases, of a negative personal experience.

Not surprisingly, the picture among the Arab public is different: 40% feel that the state does not respect their human and civil rights; 34% take the middle position; and only one quarter (25%) feel that their rights are respected. In other words, the Jewish public naturally feels much more “at home” in the Israeli democracy than does the Arab public.

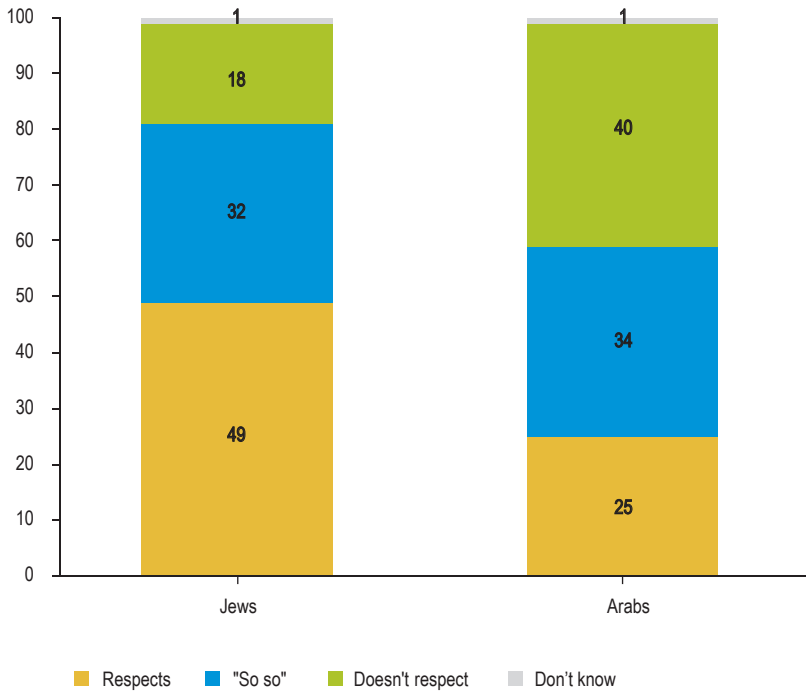


Figure 40

**Respect for Human and Civil Rights in Israel**

“To what extent do you feel that the State of Israel respects your human and civil rights?”

(by sector; percent)



In the same vein, we examined the public's attitude toward organizations that focus on protecting human and civil rights and raising awareness of these rights. In Israel, these organizations are identified politically with the left, and on more than one occasion they have been involved in exposing “unpleasant” facts in Israel and abroad regarding the conduct of the state and its agencies with regard to violations of human rights.<sup>63</sup> Only recently, we were witness to a blistering attack by right-wing

63 See for example: B. D. Yemini, “The Fund for the Annihilation of Israel,” *Maariv*, February 2, 2010: [www.nrg.co.il/app/index.php?do=blog&encr\\_id=f2b4c1b55b e76d1e6d7b777256ea0370&id=881](http://www.nrg.co.il/app/index.php?do=blog&encr_id=f2b4c1b55b e76d1e6d7b777256ea0370&id=881) (Hebrew).

circles on these organizations (primarily the New Israel Fund, which is financed, according to its opponents, by foreign elements that are regarded in Israel as pro-Palestinian). A further accusation leveled against these organizations is that they provided the evidence that formed the basis of the Goldstone Report.<sup>64</sup> The survey's findings indicate that this attack left its mark: Half the general public in Israel (50%) agree with the statement that "Human and civil rights organizations, like the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and B'Tselem, cause harm to the state." Among the Jewish public, 49% agree with this statement. A breakdown of responses in the Jewish public by self-reported left-right political orientation shows that, as expected, a majority (59%) on the right think that human rights organizations harm the state (32% of the right-wing camp disagree with this assessment). On the left, meanwhile, the greatest proportion of respondents (49%) oppose this view (as compared with 39%, who support it). Those who identify themselves with the center are closer to the right than to the left on this matter, with 49% agreeing and 43% disagreeing (Figure 41).

Surprisingly, despite the fact that human rights organizations devote major efforts to protecting the rights of the non-Jewish minority in Israel and of the Palestinians in the territories, the picture among the Arab population is similar to that among the Jewish public: The survey findings indicate that the percentage who agree with the statement that human rights organizations cause harm to the state (51%) is greater than those who disagree (39%). Whereas it was possible to conceive of an explanation for the ostensibly paradoxical attitude toward a constitution—for example, the Arab public's basic lack of trust in the possibility of achieving genuine equality in a state defined as Jewish and democratic, even given a constitutional framework—in this case we are unable to offer any rationalization, leaving the subject open to further study. At present, we will have to content ourselves with the assumption that the findings resulted from measurement error.

64 See for example:

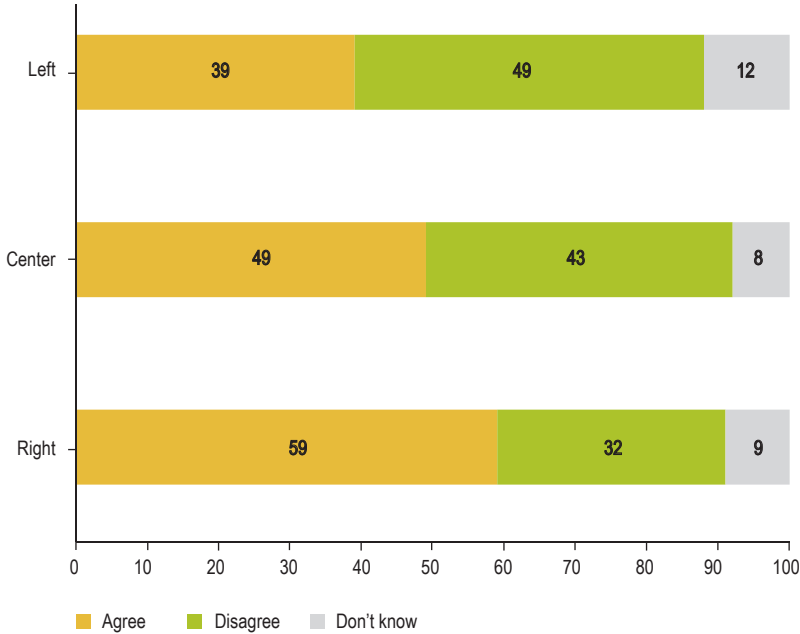
<http://news.walla.co.il/?w=/1638516/647338/5/@/@/media> (Hebrew).

Figure 41

**Human and Civil Rights Organizations, by Political Orientation**

“Human and civil rights organizations, like the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and B’Tselem, cause harm to the state”

(Jewish sample; percent)



## 5. Government Institutions

Two types of government institutions are especially relevant to our discussion on translating democratic values into action: judicial bodies and the security services. Particularly in a society such as Israel, which operates on the presumption of constant foreign and domestic threats to its security, the judiciary—led by the Supreme Court—is expected to interpret legislation and safeguard democratic freedoms. By contrast, the security establishment is liable to be an unending source of violations of these freedoms. Below, we will also be touching on the subject of Israel’s political parties in the context of plurality of views and the competition to shape the public space—two key democratic values.

**The Supreme Court.** In the previous section of the Index, we pointed to a decline in the standing of the Supreme Court as one of the pillars of Israel democracy. Clear proof of this is the fact that today only slightly more than half the Israeli public (54%) state that they trust the Supreme Court (as opposed to 44% who state openly that they do not have faith in it). A breakdown of the level of trust among the Jewish public by self-reported political orientation on a left-right continuum reveals that the moderate left has the highest level of trust in the Supreme Court (72%) followed by the center (59%). The radical left is more divided, between those who have faith in the Court (47%) and those who do not trust it (45%), most likely due to the argument heard in these circles that the Supreme Court is part of a regime that infringes on human and civil rights, for example because it has often responded favorably to requests of one sort or another from the security establishment. The right and the more radical right are also divided, with a slight inclination toward mistrust (54% and 55%, respectively).

But the erosion in the standing of the Supreme Court does not end with the level of trust in that institution. The situation has reached the point where almost half (45%) of the general public in Israel feel there should be limitations on the powers of the Supreme Court, since it is “not impartial” (among the Jewish public, 47% support limiting the Court’s powers on this basis). A breakdown of responses among the Jewish public by self-reported left-right political orientation demonstrates that a clear majority on the right, in its various gradations (55% on average), is in favor of limiting the powers of the Supreme Court. In the center and the moderate left, those who oppose such limitations are in the majority (52% and 63%, respectively). Again, the more radical left, whose mistrust of the system we saw earlier, is divided equally between those who side with limiting the Court’s powers and those who reject such an option (41% in both cases). Nonetheless, when we place the Supreme Court and other government institutions on the same plane, its standing is still better than that of the other institutions in terms of its public image.

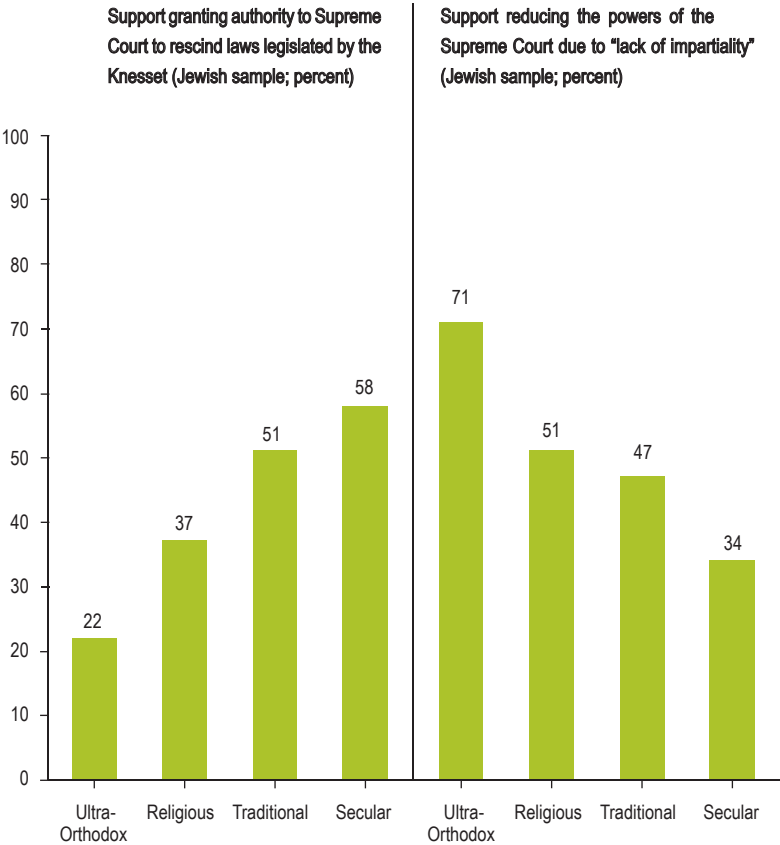
As we saw earlier (Part Two, Section 3a), the Supreme Court enjoys a greater level of trust when compared primarily with the government and the Knesset (among the general public, those who express trust in the government stand at 33%, and in the Knesset, 37%). The low level of trust in the legislators and their motives may explain the finding that a majority of the public (53%) support the notion that the Supreme Court should be given the power to repeal laws legislated by the Knesset if, in the opinion of the judges, these laws violate democratic principles (40% are opposed). And in fact, cross-tabulating between the level of trust in the Knesset and the notion of empowering the Supreme Court to repeal laws passed by the legislature shows that of those who do not trust the Knesset, 61% are ready to give the Supreme Court the power to repeal laws, as opposed to only 37% of those who have faith in the legislative branch and are therefore presumably unwilling to grant the Supreme Court the authority to repeal legislation.

Breaking down the responses to this question according to self-reported political orientation on a left-right continuum, we find that the bulk of those who align themselves with the center (57%) or the left (61%) support empowering the Supreme Court to repeal laws legislated by the Knesset (presumably because a majority among them regard the Court as a trustworthy government body); this is as compared with only 41% of those who place themselves on the right—a camp that apparently places less faith in the Supreme Court.

Since it is known that opposition to the Supreme Court is centered in the ultra-Orthodox and religious populations, we broke down the responses by level of religiosity as well. And indeed, among those who define themselves as ultra-Orthodox or religious, we found a sizeable majority who express mistrust in the Supreme Court (79% and 66%, respectively), compared with a minority who share this view among those who define themselves as traditional or secular (only 36% and 29%, respectively). Breaking down the responses on limiting the powers of the Supreme Court because it is not impartial according to self-reported religiosity demonstrates clearly that the willingness to limit the powers of the Supreme Court rises gradually but

systematically with an increase in level of religiosity: among secular Jews—34% are in favor; traditional Jews—47%; religious Jews—51%; and ultra-Orthodox Jews—71%. Conversely, the readiness to empower the Supreme Court to repeal laws declines gradually but systematically with a rise in level of religiosity: among secular Jews—58%; traditional Jews—51%; religious Jews—37%; and ultra-Orthodox Jews—22% (Figure 42).

Figure 42  
**The Powers of the Supreme Court, by Level of Religiosity**



**Security forces.** As stated, the level of public trust in the army is completely different from that placed in the police. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) ranks at the top of the list in terms of trust (81%), while the police lag far behind, with only 42% of respondents expressing full or partial trust in that institution. Yet despite this, the police receive a rather broad mandate from the public regarding various aspects of their duties. This contradiction can be attributed to the finding that there is a strong desire for law and order among the Israeli public. As we saw, this longing is reflected, *inter alia*, in a willingness to sacrifice certain components of democracy in exchange for strengthening personal and national security.<sup>65</sup> We noted earlier that a majority of the Israeli public agrees with the statement that Israel's situation would improve if less attention were paid to democratic principles and more to law and order. But it doesn't end there: In the eyes of a large portion of the Israeli public, maintaining public order apparently ranks above the right to protest and demonstrate: Among the general public, 57% feel that the police should be permitted to disperse demonstrations that disturb public order, with reference in the survey question to the disruption of traffic, that is, a situation that is somewhat inconvenient but does not cause damage to persons or property.

If we break down the responses by sector, we find that 61% of the Jewish public support such powers for the police. In the Arab sector, by contrast, where relations with the police are sensitive and highly charged, only 34%—or roughly one half the figure for the Jewish public—support giving a green light to the police on this issue (Figure 43). In other words, the translation of values into practice is repeatedly shown to be dependent on life circumstances and specific interests, and is not a one-dimensional outcome of adherence in principle to the democratic ideal.

65 An interesting finding that attests to the feeling that public order—though it is not one of the democratic freedoms—is insufficiently maintained is the fact that over one third of the general public in Israel (36%) support the death penalty for murder.

With reference to security as well (and not just to public order), the readiness to give a free hand to the security forces is relatively high, though surprisingly enough, not inordinately so. Of the general Israeli public, 50% responded that if the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency), the police, or the IDF suspect someone of terrorist activity, they should be granted full powers to investigate as they see fit without any legal constraints (Figure 43). Among the Jewish public, a slightly higher majority (52%) agreed with this statement, along with a sizeable minority (38%) of the Arab public (note the very high proportion of Arab respondents, totaling 20%, who had no opinion on this issue).

On the question of whether a policeman should be entitled to carry out a body search on anyone at any time and place to check if they are concealing dangerous drugs (which could lead the way to infringement of basic democratic rights), the views of the general public are less emphatic: 39% rejected the notion, while 38% supported it (the remainder, almost a quarter of the respondents, had no definite opinion). The fact that the police are known to treat Arab citizens of Israel more harshly apparently explains the finding that among Arab respondents there was a greater tendency to oppose the expansion of police search powers, although according to statistics, crime levels and drug use in Arab communities are higher than in Jewish areas:<sup>66</sup> 40% of Arab respondents rejected the idea, while 32% supported it.

A similar level of skepticism is evident in the public's views on expanding police powers with regard to detention: 48% reject the idea that the police should be granted full powers to decide on the length of a suspect's detention, as opposed to 28% who support it. The remaining respondents have no definite opinion. The differences on this issue

66 The Israel Police does not distinguish in its publications between the Jewish and Arab sectors due to the sensitivity of the issue. But the Knesset's Research and Information Center recently assembled data on the subject that point to a rise in crime in the Arab sector as compared with a decline in the Jewish one: Y. Ronen, *Crime Statistics on Arab Society in Israel* (Jerusalem: The Knesset Research and Information Center, February 23, 2010): [www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/m02469.pdf](http://www.knesset.gov.il/mmm/data/pdf/m02469.pdf)



between the Jewish and Arab populations are negligible—a finding that demands explanation, since the police tend to arrest Israeli Arab citizens in greater numbers than they do Jews.

**Political parties.** Although we did not focus in this survey on Israel's political parties per se, we examined the level of support for competitiveness and plurality of views (which are self-evident in any democratic regime) as reflected in attitudes toward the parties. The survey confirms that despite the low level of trust in the parties (72% of the general public indicated that they do not trust them), the most frequent response (42%), though not a majority view, is that competition between parties strengthens democracy (34% disagree with this statement, and the remainder have no clear opinion). Moreover, a majority of 51% are opposed to the statement that the political parties in Israel are harmful to democracy since they increase discord among the people (Figure 44). We found a similar distribution of views regarding the necessity of political parties for the sound functioning of Israel's democratic regime: 51% agree that the parties are needed. A large majority (63%) also reject the view that the parties are no longer necessary and can therefore be abolished (Figure 44). At the same time, the prevailing opinion (47%) is that it would be better if Israel had only two major parties instead of many parties, as is the case today. The fact that in the Arab public there is less support for the idea of a two-party system (only 28%) presumably stems from the assumption that if such a model indeed came into being, government effectiveness might be enhanced, but the Arab political parties in their present configuration would almost certainly disappear.

In general, then, it can be said that despite the public's low level of trust in Israel's political parties, the majority understand their role in a democratic regime and favor creating a situation in which they can properly fulfill this function. As we shall see below, the public is also in favor of allowing parties that express views outside the national consensus to exist on the political stage.

Figure 43  
**Support for Tightening Enforcement of Law and Order, by Nationality**

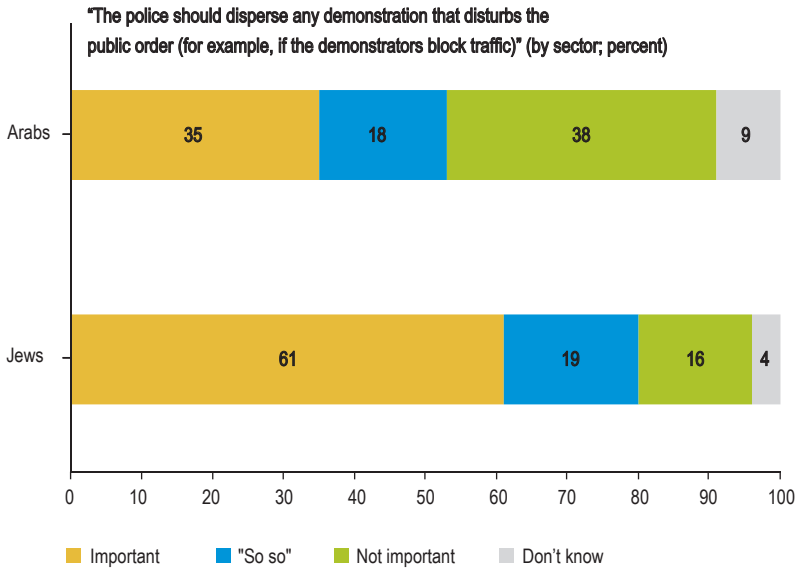
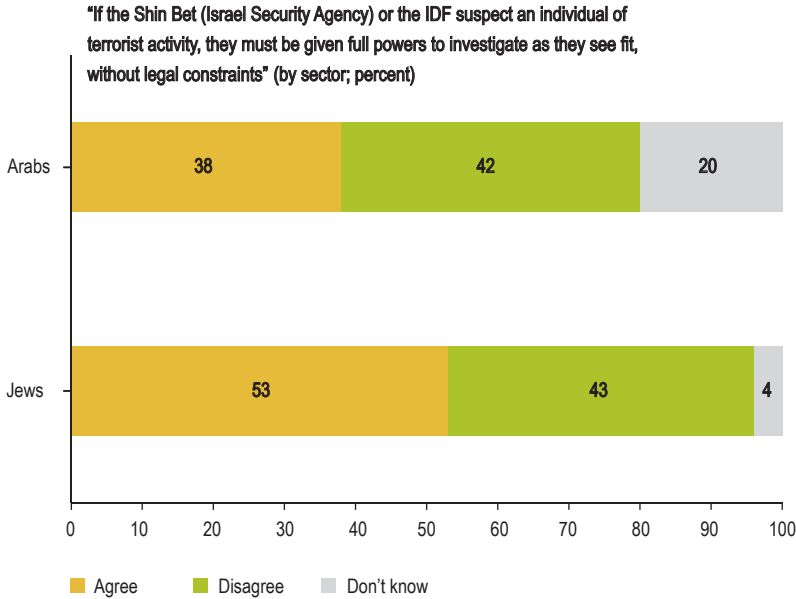
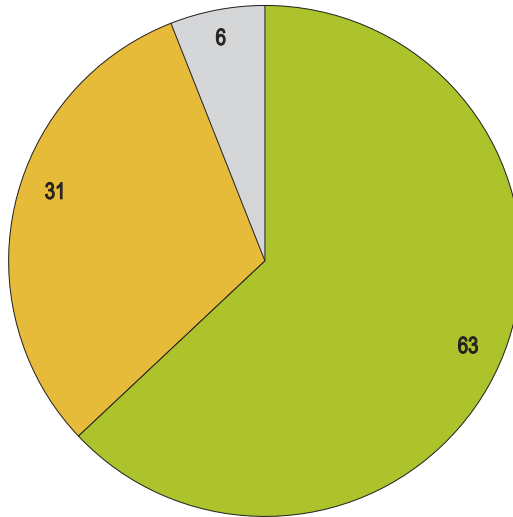


Figure 44

**Need for Political Parties**

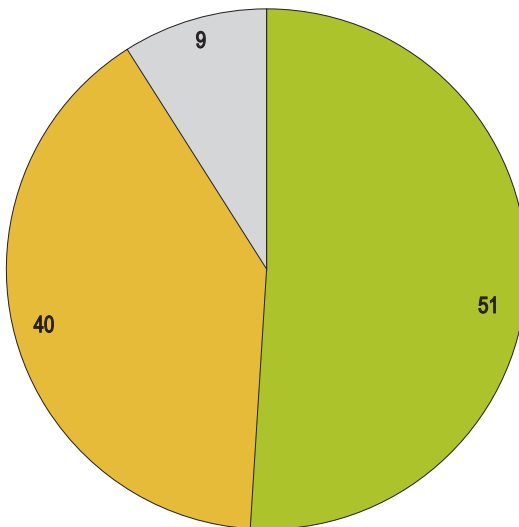
“The political parties are no longer necessary and can therefore be abolished”

(Jewish sample; percent)



“The political parties harm democracy because they divide the people”

(Jewish sample; percent)



● Agree ● Disagree ● Don't know

## **C. The Horizontal Plane: Relations between Citizens—Perceptions of Equality before the Law, Freedom of Expression, and Tolerance of the “Other”**

Up until this point, we have focused on the vertical plane, that is, the public's perceptions of the government from the standpoint of values, institutions, and democratic performance. We will now be examining the relevant perceptions of the Israeli public on the horizontal plane, that is, relations between the individuals and groups that make up Israeli society. In this context, we will attempt to clarify the degree to which a democratic commitment in principle to these relationships is also reflected in practice. As stated above, even in countries where there is a broad consensus on the extent of their democratic nature, there are still some “creases” to iron out; it is therefore reasonable to assume that the same holds true for Israel as well, though some go so far as to question its membership in the family of democratic nations,<sup>67</sup> while others define it, somewhat more gently, as a “tainted democracy.”<sup>68</sup>

### **1. Jewish-Arab Relations**

When speaking of the congruence between value-based positions and behavior in practice, there is particular importance to relations between the Jewish majority and Israel's minority groups, chief among them the country's Arab citizens. There is no question that the Jewish-Arab schism is among the most pernicious in terms of the functioning of Israeli democracy—at the level of the political system and of society, of the collective and the individual. This is reflected in the far-from-perfect translation into action of several democratic values, principally the value of equality. Let us preface our remarks by saying that problems

67 A. Ghanem, N. N. Rouhana, and O. Yiftachel, “Questioning ‘Ethnic Democracy’: A Response to Sammy Smooha,” *Israel Studies* 3 (2) (1998): 253–268.

68 B. Neuberger, “Israel: A Liberal Democracy with Four Flaws,” in: J. E. David (ed.), *The State of Israel: Between Judaism and Democracy* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2003), 361–370.

in the implementation of equality in the Jewish-Arab context can be found not only in relation to Israel's status as a Jewish and democratic state—that is, at the level of collective rights and the shaping of the public space—but also in the failings and perceptions of equality at the individual level, for example in the area of employment opportunities or residential options.<sup>69</sup>

Based on the survey results, the idea that citizenship is a legal status that confers equality has only been partly internalized. Accordingly, only 51% of the general public in Israel are in favor of “full equality of rights between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel” (with 45% opposed). Among the Jewish public, 54% support full equality of rights and 46% are opposed. Breaking down these responses by self-reported religiosity, we find vast differences of opinion on this issue: Although only a minority (34%) of secular Jews are opposed in principle to full equality of rights between Jews and Arabs, a majority of traditional (51%), religious (65%), and ultra-Orthodox Jews (72%!) share this view. A further breakdown of the responses by self-reported political orientation indicates that a majority on the right (62%) are opposed to full equality of rights, while in the center and left, the majority are in favor (61% and 67%, respectively) (Figure 45).

Breaking down the responses by educational level shows that in Israel, unlike Europe, the degree of willingness to grant equal rights does not rise with the level of education.

Not surprisingly, when the principle of equality is translated into action, the proportion of those who display discriminatory attitudes becomes even higher. A grave example of the problems in the implementation of equality can be found in the distribution of responses to the question: “In your opinion, should more Arabs be appointed to senior positions in Israel?” (Figure 46). Here, a decisive majority of Jewish respondents (70%) are opposed. In other words, despite the fact

69 An up-to-date discussion of the extent of ongoing inequality at the systemic level can be found in the annual reports of the Sikkuy organization. See the Equality Index of Jewish and Arab Citizens in Israel: [www.sikkuy.org.il/reports\\_heb.html](http://www.sikkuy.org.il/reports_heb.html)

that Arab citizens almost never occupy senior posts in the civil service, over two thirds of the Jewish public oppose appointing more Arabs to high-ranking positions! This discriminatory attitude toward the Arab population is also reflected in the finding in Part Two (Section 2b) that a large majority of the Jewish public is opposed to including Arab parties and Arab ministers in the government. When asked specifically about appointing an Arab judge to the Supreme Court, only 37% of respondents reported that such an appointment is important to them.

Figure 45

### Equality between Jews and Arabs

Support for full equality of rights between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel  
(Jewish sample; percent)

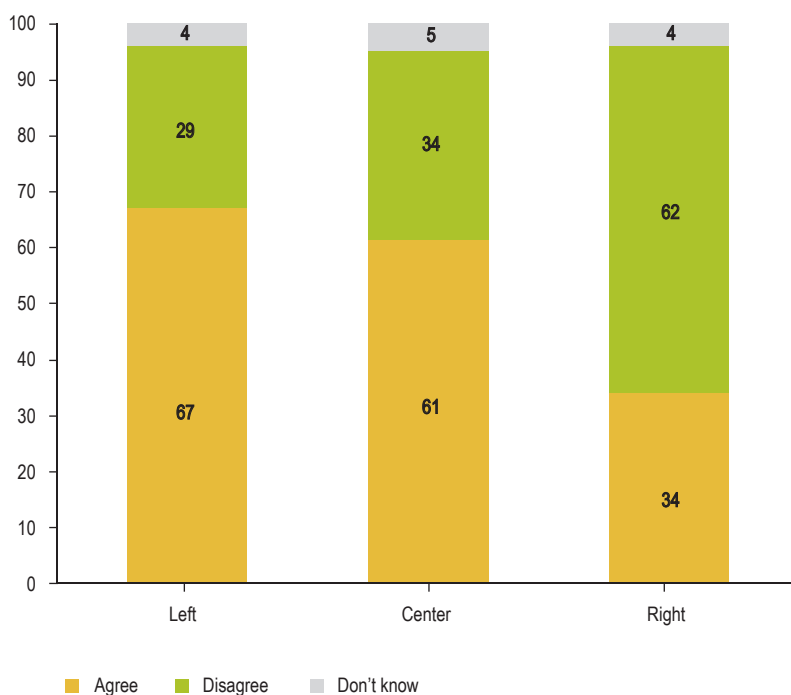


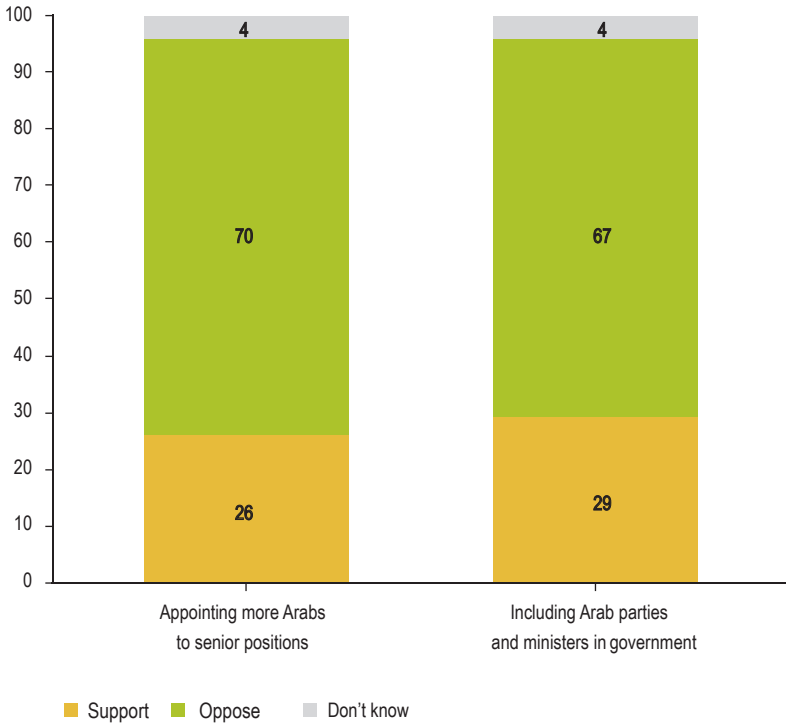
Figure 46

**Appointment of Arabs to Senior Positions**

(a) Appointing More Arabs to Senior Positions

(b) Including Arab Parties and Ministers in Government

(Jewish sample; percent)



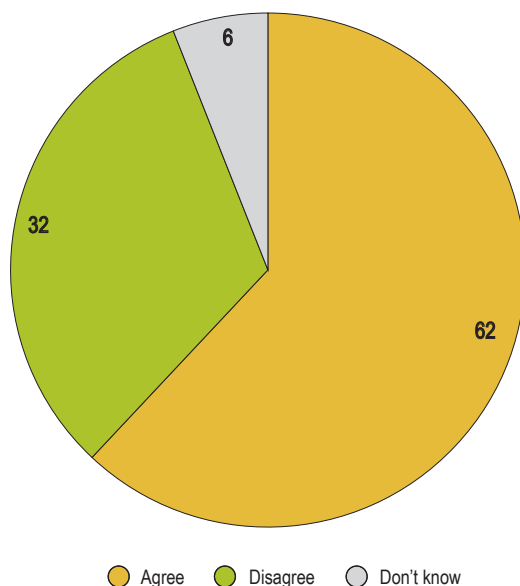
The scales tilt even further in the direction of civil inequality when national security enters the picture. Thus, as we showed earlier (Part Two, Section 2b), a sizeable majority of the Jewish public believes that “a Jewish majority should be required for decisions fateful to the state.” Nearly two thirds of the Jewish respondents (62%) also maintain that as long as Israel is in a state of conflict with the Palestinians, the views of Arab citizens of Israel should not be taken into account on security issues (Figure 47).

Figure 47

**The Arab Voice on Crucial Questions**

“As long as Israel is in a state of conflict with the Palestinians, the views of Arab citizens of Israel should not be considered on security issues”

(Jewish sample; percent)



Nonetheless, it should be noted that the prevailing view among the Jewish public (50%) is that Israel should not follow in the footsteps of the United States (which during World War II placed its Japanese citizens in internment camps for fear that they would assist the enemy) and detain Arab citizens in the event of war or a grave security crisis. One third (33%), however, actually favor such a step in wartime (the remainder had no clear opinion on the subject).

The fear of upsetting the advantage of the Jewish majority is also reflected in the distribution of responses to the question of whether first-degree relatives of Arab citizens of Israel should be allowed entry into the state under the rubric of family reunification—something that many states recognize as a basic human right. More than two thirds (67%) of the Jewish public are opposed.



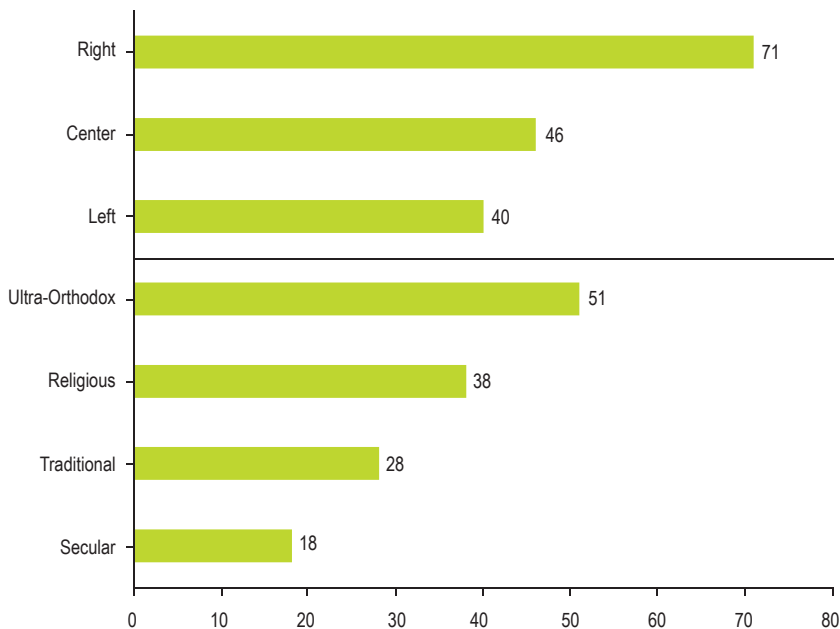
Jewish respondents were also asked to what extent they agreed with the statement: “It is acceptable to me that Israel, as a Jewish state, direct more funds to Jewish communities than to Arab ones.” The greater part of the respondents (55%) expressed agreement, while only a minority—albeit a considerable one (42%)—disagreed. Once again, we broke down the responses based on self-reported political orientation, level of religiosity, and level of education (Figure 48). The findings indicate that, though a clear majority on the right (71%) agreed with this statement, only a minority (46%) in the center, and an even smaller minority on the left (40%), shared this view. Breaking down the results by religiosity revealed a strong correlation between level of religiosity and willingness to accept the idea of unequal allocations: The higher the level of religiosity, the greater the readiness to have Israel, as a Jewish state, give more to Jewish communities and less to Arab ones: Among the ultra-Orthodox, 51% took this view; among religious Jews, 45%; among traditional Jews, 28%; and among secular Jews, 18%. Education was not found to be a predictive factor in respondents’ opinions on this issue.

On the other hand, as suggested by the distribution of responses to the following questions, when we remove the isolating phrase “a Jewish state” from the wording of the question, the level of opposition in the Jewish public to a more egalitarian distribution of rights to Arab citizens of the state declines somewhat. This difference underscores the importance of how the discussion is framed, or in other words, the way the context is defined. The more that differences between population groups are highlighted (whether implicitly or explicitly), the more exclusionary the results we would expect to receive. This is of course significant with respect to the way that leaders present, or frame, political decisions vis-à-vis the public. We posed the question: “How acceptable is it to you that: (a) state funding for religious needs be granted to Jews, Muslims, and Christians based on identical criteria; (b) Jewish and Arab schools receive funding based on identical criteria?”

Figure 48

**Preferential Allocations to Jewish Communities, by Political Orientation and Level of Religiosity**

“It is acceptable to me that Israel, as a Jewish state, direct more funds to Jewish communities than to Arab ones”  
(Jewish sample; percent)



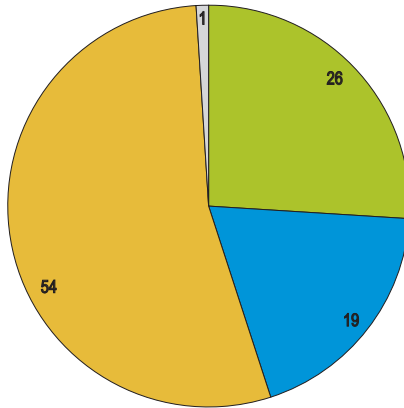
In both cases, we found that among the general public, those who support equal funding exceed those who oppose it: with regard to religious needs, 39% are in favor and 35% are opposed; and in the case of schools, 51% support equal allocations, with 27% opposed. If we look at the Jewish sample alone, support for equal funding for religious needs stands at 40%, compared with 33% opposed. As for schools, 54% favor equal funding compared with 26% who oppose it (Figure 49).

Figure 49

### Equality in Education and Religious Services

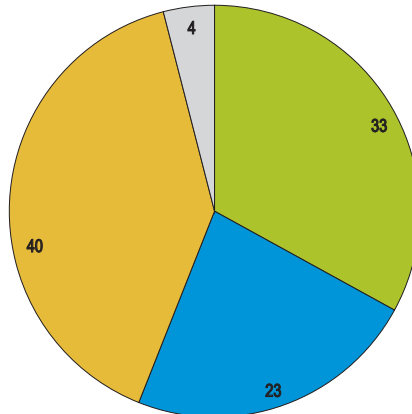
"How acceptable is it to you that Jewish and Arab schools receive funding based on identical criteria?"

(Jewish sample; percent)



"How acceptable is it to you that state funding for religious needs and amenities be granted to Jews, Muslims, and Christians based on identical criteria?"

(Jewish sample; percent)



● Acceptable
 ● "So so"
 ● Not acceptable
 ● Don't know

Breaking down the responses by self-reported political orientation on a left-right continuum reveals a definite correlation: There is greater opposition on the right to equal funding for religious needs and amenities than there is in the center or the left (42%, 29%, and 24%, respectively). Level of religiosity has an even greater impact than political orientation, as indicated by the following statistics: Among the ultra-Orthodox, a clear majority (59%) are opposed to equal funding of religious needs and amenities, while only a minority of religious (40%), traditional (34%), and secular Jews (28%) share this view. Education does not appear to play a significant role in this context.

With regard to the funding of schools, the picture is the same when we break down the responses by left-to-right political orientation or by level of religiosity, but on this issue, level of education does play a role: Among respondents with an elementary school education, 40% are opposed to equal funding, as compared with 34% of those with some high school education; 29% of those with full high school education; and only 24% of those with an academic degree. Apparently, the higher the level of schooling, the greater the sensitivity to the issue of equality in education.

## **2. Social Distance/Closeness**

Although closeness between different population groups is not a formal cornerstone of a democratic regime, democratic societies that grant their citizens political equality often reduce social distance and are generally more tolerant. The process is a circular one in that increasing social closeness frequently also enhances the willingness to expand political equality, which in turn draws groups closer, and so on. Yet we cannot ignore the opposite phenomenon: Closeness between population groups with a different ethos and customs can also exacerbate tensions and reinforce tendencies toward intolerance, as we see for example in Europe, with the growth of immigrant communities from non-European countries and their penetration into the local social fabric.

One of the accepted measures of social closeness is the degree of willingness to live as neighbors with various groups deemed to

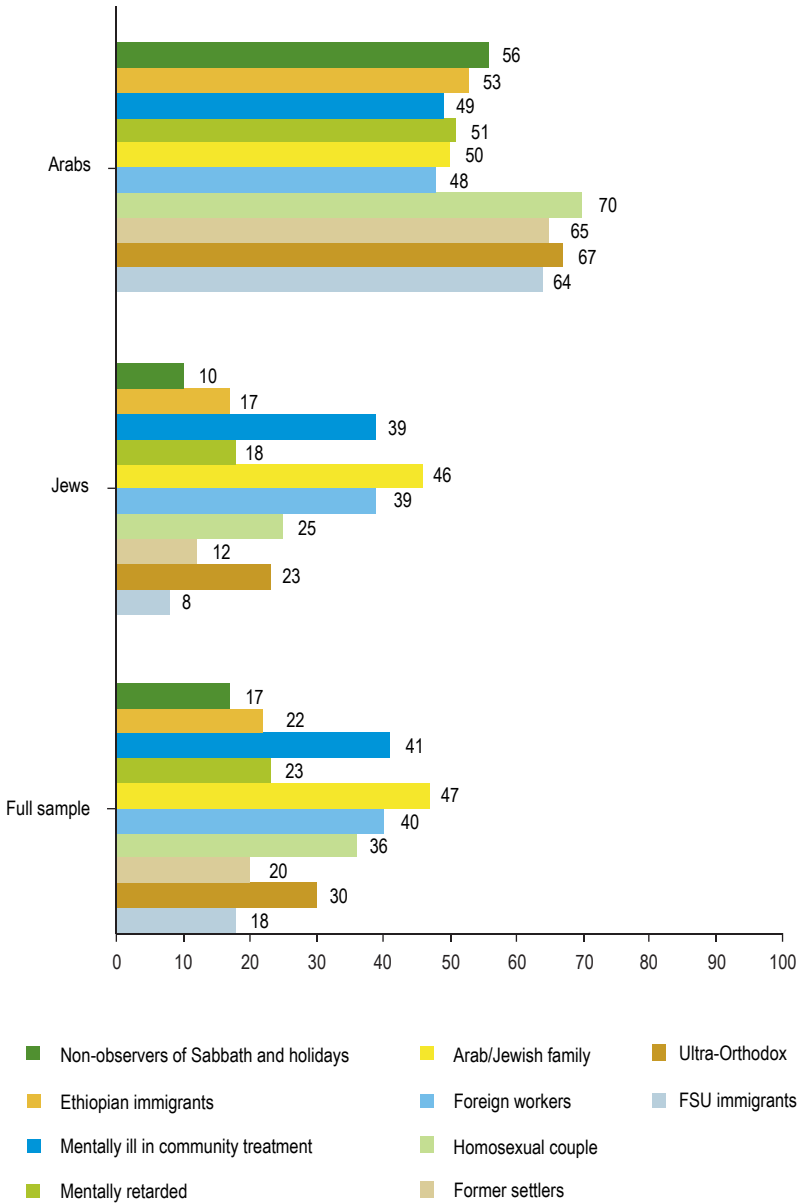
be “other.” We therefore posed the question: “Would it bother you to have as your neighbor: immigrants from the Former Soviet Union; ultra-Orthodox Jews; former settlers; a homosexual couple; foreign workers; an Arab family (asked of Jews)/a Jewish family (asked of Arabs); mentally retarded individuals; Ethiopian immigrants; mentally ill individuals in community treatment; people who do not observe Sabbath or holidays?” (Figure 50). For all groups cited, more than half the Jewish respondents answered that having such a neighbor would not bother them (the average of those who responded that they would be bothered is 23%). In other words, here the Jewish public displays an impressive degree of tolerance. But the data also reveal stark differences between the sectors in terms of their readiness to be close with various groups. Thus, the Jewish public is most uncomfortable with having Arabs as neighbors (46%), followed by the mentally ill in community treatment (39%) and foreign workers (39%). With respect to the remaining groups of “others,” one quarter or less would feel bothered by having a homosexual couple (25%) or ultra-Orthodox Jews (23%) as neighbors. Regarding immigrants as well, the readiness for proximity varies: Thus, the level of discomfort at having Ethiopian immigrants as neighbors (17%) is twice that of having FSU immigrants as neighbors (8%). In the Jewish sample as a whole, the projected discomfort at being neighbors with people who do not observe the Sabbath or holidays (10%) turns out to be far lower than that associated with having ultra-Orthodox Jews as neighbors; presumably, this is due to the perception that having ultra-Orthodox neighbors would place greater demands on those who are not observant to show consideration for religious sensitivities than would be the case with totally secular neighbors. Living next to former settlers bothers 12% of the Jewish public.

Breaking down the responses by level of religiosity reveals fundamental differences between the groups at both extremes of religious observance: the ultra-Orthodox—the most “reclusive” group of the four—are bothered most of all by the prospect of Arab neighbors (85%), followed by a homosexual couple (74%), and lastly, foreign

workers (71%). The secular respondents, by contrast, are most bothered by living next to the mentally ill in community treatment (39%), followed by Arabs and the ultra-Orthodox (33% in both cases). The intermediate groups—traditional and religious Jews—fluctuate between both extremes depending on the group, but in all cases are less bothered by having “others” as neighbors than are the ultra-Orthodox but more so than the secular. The traditional Jews surveyed are most uncomfortable being neighbors with Arabs (50%); with the mentally ill in community treatment (48.5%), and with foreign workers (43%). Religious Jews are bothered to the greatest extent by being neighbors with Arabs (69%); a homosexual couple (55%); and foreign workers (54%).

If we break down the sample population by education, a very interesting picture emerges: education no doubt plays a role, but it is a complex one. When it comes to individuals with an academic degree, the three groups whom they would least like to have as neighbors are (in descending order): Arabs (44%), the mentally ill in community treatment (43%), and foreign workers (41%). For those with an elementary school education, the three least favored groups are: a homosexual couple (59%), foreign workers (50%), and Arabs (48%). The average extent to which respondents with an academic degree would be bothered by certain neighbors is 25%, while in the group at the opposite extreme—those with only an elementary school education—it is 29%. What this means is that those who are less educated are in fact less tolerant of having a neighbor perceived as “other” than those who are better educated. But the fact that the average level of intolerance among college-educated respondents is higher than that for the Jewish sample as a whole (23%) implies that it is actually the middle groups that are more tolerant. And indeed, those with a high school education, who constitute the largest group, show an average of 23%.

Figure 50  
**Living Next to “Others”**  
 “It would bother me to be neighbors with...”  
 (by sector; percent)



On the subject of having “others” as neighbors, the Arab public, based on the survey findings, is characterized by a lower level of tolerance than the Jewish public. Here, the most undesirable neighbors are a homosexual couple (70%), ultra-Orthodox Jews (67%), and former settlers (65%), while the group they would be least bothered by are foreign workers (48%). The average extent to which the Arab public would be bothered by certain neighbors is 56%, which suggests that being seen as an undesirable “other” in the eyes of the majority group does not necessarily lead to the adoption of more tolerant norms by the “rejected” group.

### **3. Implementation of Human and Civil Rights, and the Services Derived from Them**

Among the basic principles of democracy is the universal application of such human and civil rights as freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly. According to the social-democratic ethos, which is the norm in some but not all democracies, this extends to the universal application of a range of social services derived from the above rights, such as health insurance, education, disability pension, and unemployment benefits. It should be noted that in most modern democracies, there is a broad consensus as to the definition of basic human and civil rights. With regard to social services, however, and especially the question of which essential services should and should not derive from these rights, opinions are divided among different democratic systems and even within the same state.

We will now attempt to address these distinctions in Israel, where the social-democratic ethos is still relatively strong, as indicated by the findings of this survey. Of the general public, 72% believe that Israeli democracy is harmed by the fact that in recent years, the gaps between rich and poor in Israel have grown. Likewise, 79% maintain that in order to preserve Israeli democracy, the state must invest greater resources in the educational system in disadvantaged areas, even at the expense of other needs, so as to enable students in outlying communities to attain the same academic achievements as students in affluent areas.



Returning to the topic of freedom of expression, although many respondents felt that Israel, on the whole, has too much freedom of expression (as noted above), the data point to a rather impressive internalization of this basic democratic value at the practical level. Thus, according to the survey's findings, a solid majority (66%) of the general public in Israel oppose the statement that there should be a law to shut down media that criticize government policy too harshly. A slightly larger majority (68%) are opposed to having the state monitor what people write on the Internet and take them to court if they speak out against the government.

A breakdown of the responses on shutting down media that are critical of the government shows marked differences between right and left, though the majority in both camps are opposed to such an action: 39% on the right would favor a shutdown under the circumstances, as compared with 19% in the center, and only 20% of those who define themselves as left-wing.

Breaking down the responses on monitoring the Internet by political camp reveals a very similar picture: Here too, the majority are opposed, but the percentage of those who agree that the government should monitor the Internet is considerably greater among respondents who define themselves as right-wing (31%) than among those who place themselves at the center (19%) or left (19%) of the political spectrum (Figure 51).

For the most part, those who sail safely in the mainstream are not particularly troubled by the issue of freedom of expression, for they have nothing to fear in this regard. We therefore examined the views of the Jewish majority on the subject, and the findings strengthen the impression that the principle of freedom of expression has indeed been internalized. Thus, the bulk of respondents (54%) among the Jewish public are opposed to the statement that there should be legal penalties for those who speak out against Zionism. One half also agree that it is important to allow non-Zionist parties to participate in elections.

A breakdown of responses by self-reported political orientation on a left-right continuum reveals noticeable differences: With regard to

those who speak out against Zionism, the majority of respondents on the left and center oppose legal penalties (66% and 63%, respectively), while on the right, a large minority (48%) share this view. As for permitting non-Zionist parties to participate in elections, 64% on the left and 54% in the center are in favor, compared with 47% of those who define themselves as right-wing (Figure 52).

Figure 51  
**Freedom of Expression in the Media**

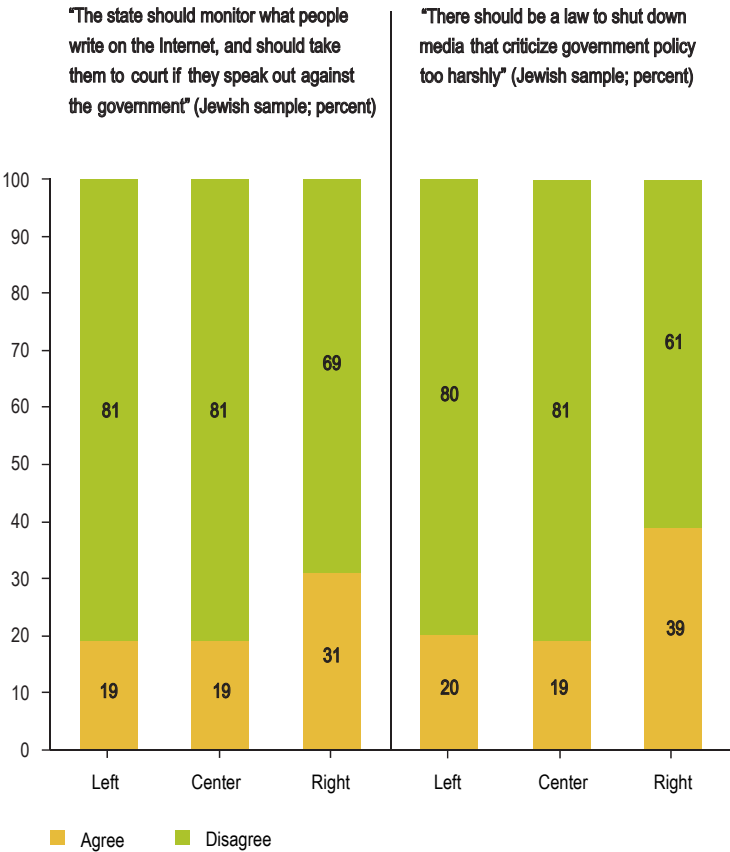
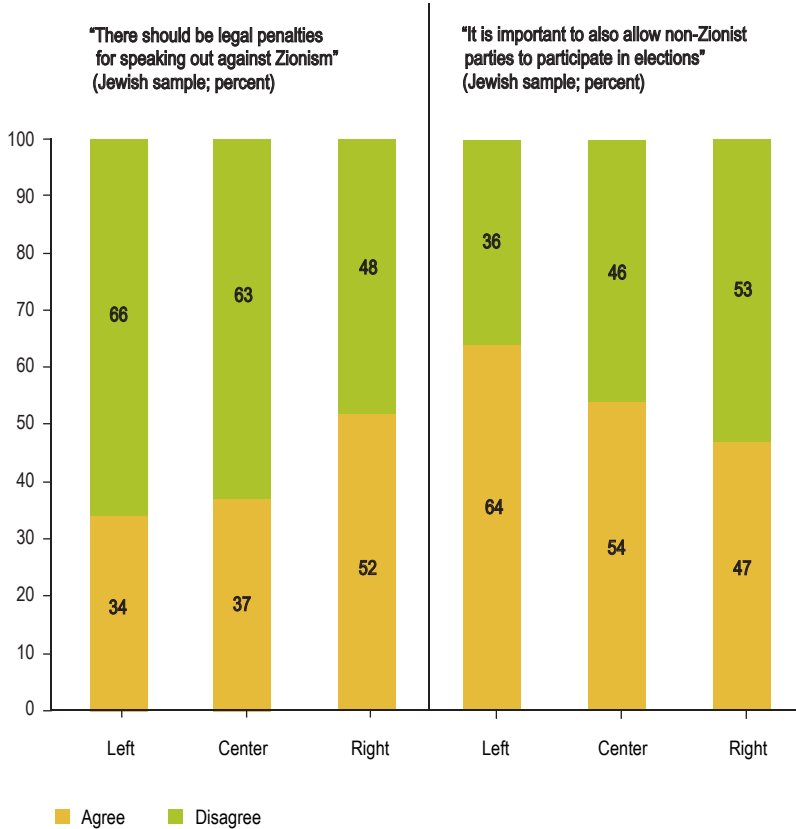


Figure 52  
**Attitude toward Opponents of Zionism**



Earlier, we discussed the implementation of various rights in the case of Arab citizens of Israel. We will now look at their application vis-à-vis other groups. It seems that the Israeli public has a ranking of rights and services that it perceives as fundamental or secondary, as well as a hierarchy of which groups are entitled to enjoy them. Thus, when the subject is the right of children to an education, the readiness to share the state's resources with those who are not citizens is quite low. The general public in Israel is divided in its attitude toward the exclusionary statement that "education in Israel should be free only for children whose parents are citizens, and not for children of foreign

workers, for example”: 39% feel the matter is “not important,” while the identical percentage regard it as “important” and the rest have no definite opinion (Figure 53). Of the Jewish public, 37% consider the matter “not important,” as opposed to 40.5% who feel it is “important” to deny free education to children whose parents are not citizens (the remainder have no definite opinion). It should be noted that among the Arab public, 46% believe that free education should not be limited to the children of citizens, as opposed to 31% who support denying free education if the parents are not citizens. In other words, on this point the Arab public is more “democratic” than the Jewish one.

The tendency of the Jewish public to exclude others who are not Jews is also reflected in the responses regarding the rights that should be granted to non-Jewish immigrants (Figure 54). Thus, a small majority of the Jewish sample (52%) agree with the statement that only immigrants who are Jewish according to halakha (Jewish religious law) should automatically receive Israeli citizenship. But there are profound differences between groups on this issue: Among long-time Israelis who are Jewish, 59% agree with this exclusionary statement, while the percentage of those who support it among FSU immigrants is much lower (35%), for obvious reasons.

When the responses of the Jewish public are broken down by self-reported level of religiosity, we find that while a minority of secular Jews—albeit not a small one (41%)—support discriminating against immigrants who are not Jewish according to halakha when it comes to granting immediate citizenship, a majority of traditional, religious, and ultra-Orthodox Jews take this view (63%, 79%, and 88%, respectively).

On the other hand, there seems to be a greater willingness among various groups in Israel to grant or preserve the rights of those who are not explicitly identified as foreign, meaning that they are apparently perceived as “one of us” (another example of the importance of how a discussion is framed, as we noted earlier). We asked to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed with the statement: “Free emergency medical care should be provided even if a patient has no medical insurance” (Figure 53). On

this subject, there is virtually total consensus among the Jewish public (82%) that emergency treatment should be administered whether or not the patient has medical insurance. In the Arab sample, the most frequently expressed opinion (though not a majority view) favors granting treatment to a person who is uninsured (40%), but the proportion of those who feel this is not important is quite similar (34%).

Figure 53

### Equality in Health and Education, by Nationality

(a) "Free emergency medical care should be provided even if a patient has no medical insurance"

(b) "Education in Israel should be free only for children whose parents are citizens, and not for children of foreign workers, for example"

(by sector; percent)

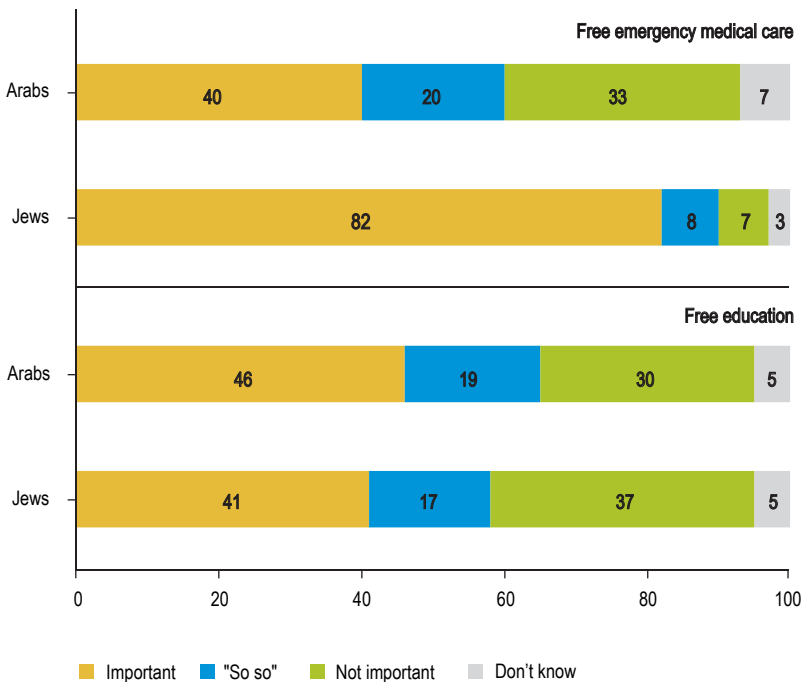
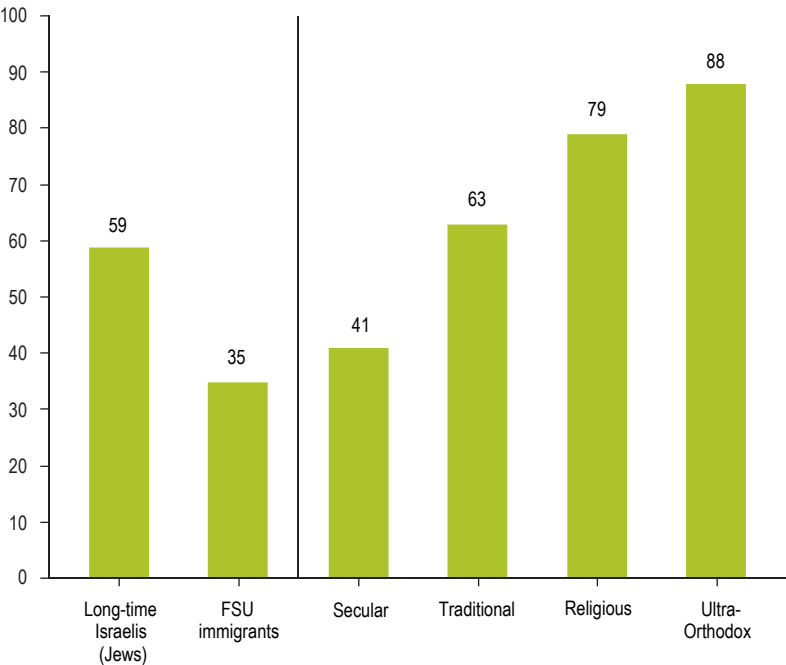


Figure 54

**The Right to Citizenship**

“Only new immigrants who are Jewish according to halakha should automatically receive Israeli citizenship”  
(percent who agree; Jewish sample)



We asked further: “Do you agree or disagree with the statement: ‘A person convicted of a serious crime should not have any civil rights?’” The responses indicate that here too, respect for the principle of universal rights is widespread, even if it is not accepted by all: Among the general public, 51% reject the above statement, as opposed to 40% who favor stripping the civil rights of persons convicted of serious crimes. Breaking down the responses by sector, it is interesting to note that among FSU immigrants, the prevailing view (47%) actually favors denying civil rights to a convicted criminal. At the start of our discussion, we spoke of the greater sensitivity of minority groups to the issue of denial of rights; despite this, the extent of opposition in the

Arab public to denying rights to convicted criminals is precisely the same as it is among the Jewish majority (51%).

In our earlier discussion on the subject of neighbors, we noted that the Jewish public as a whole was remarkably tolerant about having a homosexual couple as neighbors. In terms of granting equal rights to homosexuals, the picture is quite similar, with the Jewish public again displaying considerable tolerance: The prevailing opinion (45%) is that it is important or very important that a gay couple should have the same legal rights as other couples. In the eyes of 31% of respondents, however, the issue is not at all important.

A breakdown of the Jewish public by level of religiosity shows that only a minority of secular Jews (21%) and traditional Jews (31%) are opposed to granting equal rights to homosexual couples, in contrast to the religious and ultra-Orthodox, where the majority are opposed (51% and 68%, respectively). Not surprisingly, among the Arab public—where, as noted, there is a low degree of tolerance for having homosexuals as neighbors—there is also not much openness on the question of equal rights: The proportion of those who feel the matter is not important (54%) clearly exceeds the corresponding figure for the Jewish public, with only 24% of the Arab public considering the issue important (the remainder have no definite opinion).

In the context of equal rights, we touched on the subject of the various streams of Judaism—a sensitive topic for the Israeli-Jewish public. We posed the question: “How important is it to you that state funding for religious needs and amenities be given equally to all streams of Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, etc.?” We found that 53% of Jewish respondents consider the subject important or extremely important, 22% feel it is not important, and 19% do not have a definite opinion.

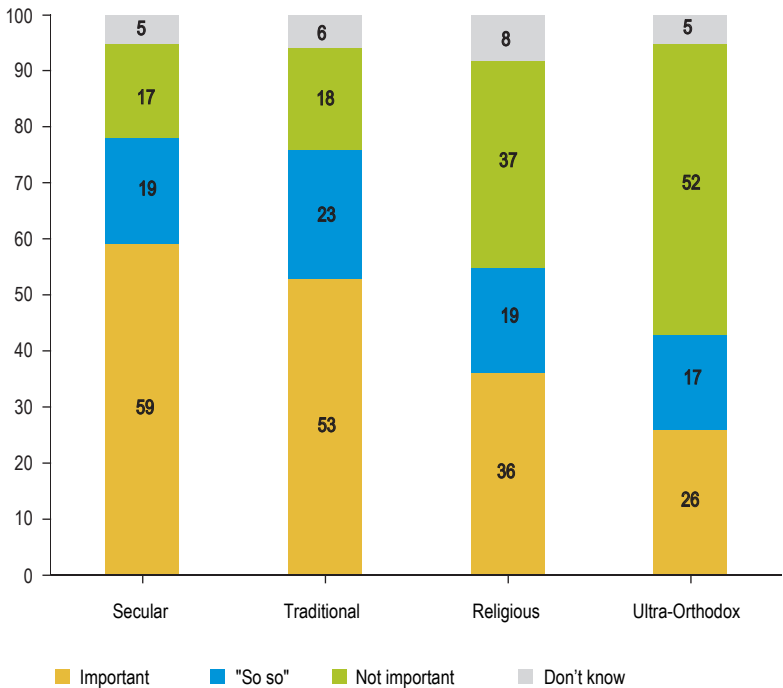
Breaking down the responses by self-reported level of religiosity reveals that although a majority of secular Jews (59%) and traditional Jews (53%) maintain that the subject is extremely important, among the religious and ultra-Orthodox, only a minority attach importance to equal funding for all streams (36% and 26%, respectively) (Figure 55).

Figure 55

**Equal Religious Amenities for the Various Streams of Judaism,  
by Level of Religiosity**

“How important is it to you that state funding for religious needs and amenities  
be equal for all streams of Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, etc.?”

(Jewish sample; percent)



We examined the extent of agreement with the statement: “Those who choose not to serve in the army [of those subject to conscription, meaning the Jewish population] should be denied the right to vote for or be elected to the Knesset” (Figure 56). On this subject, we found profound differences between sectors: A majority (56%) of long-time (Jewish) Israelis agree with this statement, whereas among FSU immigrants, the majority (62%) do not want citizens to be stripped of the right to vote or be elected as the result of a decision not to serve.

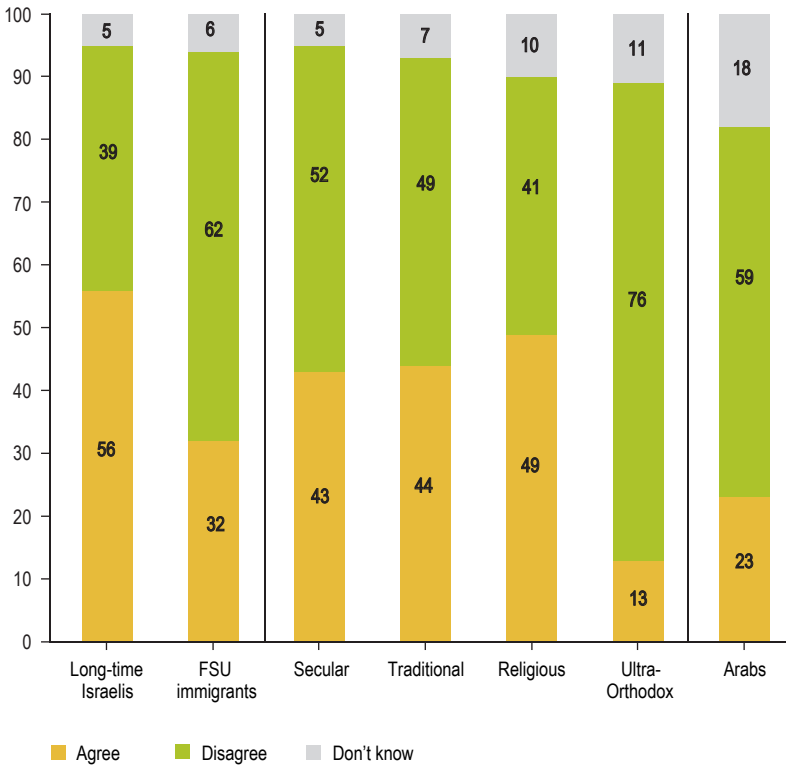


Figure 56

**Conditioning the Right to Vote and Be Elected on IDF Service**

“Those who choose not to serve in the army should not have the right to vote for or be elected to the Knesset”

(percent who agree; by sector)



Since the Jewish sector most strongly identified with not serving in the army is the ultra-Orthodox, we examined the responses on the basis of self-reported religiosity, and we indeed found that a decisive majority (76%) of the ultra-Orthodox public, along with a small majority (52%) of the secular public, reject the notion of denying civil rights to those who do not serve. Among traditional Jews, the prevailing opinion (49%) is opposed, but the minority who support the above statement is not much smaller (44%). We found the opposite distribution of responses among those who define themselves as religious: Here the

most frequently expressed opinion (49%) favors denying the right to vote or be elected to those who choose not to serve in the army, with a sizeable minority (41%) opposed.

As expected, a sizeable majority of the Arab public reject this notion, though less than the corresponding figure among the ultra-Orthodox (59% of the Arab sample, compared with 23% who support it), since denying the right to vote for or be elected to the Knesset to those subject to conscription who deliberately choose not to serve could ultimately lead the Jewish majority to deny these rights also to those who do not serve in the army in any event, that is, the Arab public.

## **D. Summary**

Recent decades have seen the emergence of a broad consensus among scholars that support for democracy in principle has now become a global trend. Accordingly, democracy is the name of the game even in states that are decidedly undemocratic in practice. But there's the rub. We might have expected that this sweeping support for abstract democratic values, and the demand for expanded democratic participation, would translate into concrete positions as well as conduct consistent with these values. But it seems this is not the case, and in reality, major gaps can be discerned between theory and practice. This is particularly evident when citizens are asked to pay the price—at times, a high one, in terms of personal security, social homogeneity, etc.—for translating theoretical support for democratic values into action. Consequently, far-ranging compromises are often seen at the practical level on values that are supported in theory at the declaratory level.

Israel is a relatively young democracy encompassing a Jewish majority and a Palestinian national minority. Additionally, it is a country that absorbs Jewish immigrants as well as a large body of non-Jewish immigrants. It is no wonder, therefore, that the tension between democratic principles and practice is particularly acute here. In this survey, we examined whether the Israeli citizen merely “talks democracy” or also “does democracy.”

Our analysis was conducted on two planes: the vertical and the horizontal. On the vertical plane, we focused on comparing support for core democratic values with citizens' assessment of the extent to which these values are practiced by government institutions and agencies. On the horizontal plane, by contrast, we focused on relations between citizens, as individuals and as groups, and examined whether the citizens of Israel in fact uphold their stated commitment to constitutional values and the rights deriving from them.

**The vertical plane.** A sizeable majority of Israeli citizens are avowed supporters of the democratic idea. This finding is consistent with the clear preference expressed for democracy as the most desirable form of government compared with other regimes, such as a government composed of experts or a strong leader. It would appear that there is a solid consensus in favor of democracy, but roughly one half of the public is willing to waive the exercise of democratic principles in exchange for improvement in the area of law and order. It was further found that the assessment of the government's performance on the whole is low, and that on average, Israeli democracy earns a less than passing grade from its citizens. The assessment of the Arab public is even slightly lower.

As to the desired character of the state, when respondents were asked to choose which of the two components—Jewish or democratic—is more significant in their eyes, it emerged that almost half the Jewish public, that is, not even a majority, prefer a combination of the two. In second place is the Jewish definition alone, with the democratic element in third place. Among Arab respondents, the most frequent preference (slightly more than one third—again, not the majority view) is for a democratic state alone, with only a small minority asserting that the dual definition is preferable. As expected, we found differences among the Jewish respondents between left and right, and even more so, between secular Jews, on the one hand, and religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews, on the other: The democratic component is favored among those who define themselves as leftist and secular, while the

Jewish component is stronger among those who classify themselves as right-wing and religious or ultra-Orthodox.

Examining the public's positions on the elements and institutions of democracy reveals that a clear majority of the Jewish public support a constitution for Israel (in the ultra-Orthodox sector, only a minority, though a sizeable one, is in favor). This is in contrast to the Arab public, where surprisingly enough, less than a majority see a constitution as important to them, perhaps because this sector's distrust of the system is so entrenched that the prevailing view is that even a constitution would not solve the perceived discrimination against them.

The most frequently expressed opinion on the part of the Israeli public as a whole is that freedom of expression and freedom of religion are upheld in Israel to a suitable degree. However, it should be noted that among the Jewish public, the opinion that there is too much freedom of expression is more prevalent than the belief that there is too little. On the subject of respect for human and civil rights in Israel, the prevailing view among the Jewish public is that these rights are respected to a sufficient degree. Not surprisingly, the Arab public feels otherwise, believing that these rights are insufficiently respected.

With reference to the Supreme Court, we found that only half the general public in Israel expresses trust in it. This lack of trust is particularly conspicuous in the religious and ultra-Orthodox segments of the Israeli public. Moreover, roughly one half of the general public feels that the Supreme Court's powers should be limited due to its "lack of impartiality." Nevertheless, slightly more than half the general public are willing to grant the Supreme Court the power to repeal laws legislated by the Knesset. An analysis of the data suggests that this is a consequence of the low level of trust in the legislature.

Further, regarding the attitude toward the state's institutions, there is a clear willingness—though not overwhelming and not in all areas—to give the security forces free rein in carrying out their duties. For obvious reasons, the Jewish public favors this more strongly than does the Arab public; but Arab respondents do not totally reject the notion of giving the police greater leeway.

With regard to the political parties, it was found that despite the low degree of trust that they command, the prevailing opinion (though not the majority view) is that competition between parties plays a key role in strengthening Israel's democratic regime.

**The horizontal plane.** As indicated by the survey, the idea that citizenship is a legal status conferring equal rights has been only partially internalized: Only about one half of Israel's Jewish citizens favor full equality of rights between Jews and Arabs. Among the Jewish public, support for full equality declines in inverse proportion to the level of religiosity, and as expected, is higher on the left than on the right. When the theoretical concept of equality is challenged with concrete questions, it becomes apparent that the Jewish public espouses equality in practice even less than it does in theory. Thus for example, the majority of the Jewish public maintain that, as a Jewish and democratic state, it is reasonable that Israel fund Jewish communities more than it does Arab ones. At the same time, when we do not highlight the definition of the state as "Jewish and democratic," and examine the issue of equality in allocation of public resources to such areas as education and religious needs strictly on its own merits, the majority of the Jewish public are in favor, with a preference for equality in education. Here too, support for this position decreases the more religious the respondent and the more right-wing his political outlook.

Although closeness between different population groups is not a formal cornerstone of a democratic regime, democratic societies are generally characterized by a greater degree of tolerance of "the other" than are non-democratic societies. The degree of distance or closeness that members of different groups in Israel feel toward "others" was tested by the question of willingness to live near them. It was found that, on average, more than half the Jewish public are willing to have as neighbors all of the groups enumerated in the survey. The least desirable neighbors were found to be Arabs, the mentally ill in community treatment, and foreign workers. In this context, a correlation was found between level of education and tolerance of "the other": the

more educated respondents displayed a greater willingness to have members of other groups as neighbors. The Arab public expressed more isolationist views, with the majority being extremely reluctant to have homosexuals, ultra-Orthodox Jews, or settlers as neighbors.

The survey indicates that the Israeli public as a whole has quite successfully internalized the concept of freedom of expression, though more so among those who define themselves as left-wing than among those who place themselves on the right. It emerges that the majority support allowing non-Zionist parties to participate in elections, and oppose penalties for those who speak out against Zionism. A majority of respondents from the general public are also opposed to shutting down media that are sharply critical of the government or monitoring writers on the Internet and penalizing them for derogatory comments.

When the notion of civil equality is translated into questions on excluding non-Jewish “others,” the Jewish public shows a tendency to marginalize such groups, primarily but not exclusively in the case of the Arab sector. Thus for example, the majority of the Jewish public would deny Arab citizens the right to participate in crucial decisions on security matters, and opposes increasing the number of Arabs in high-ranking positions in the civil service.

On the whole, then, the data indicate a far-from-perfect translation of democratic values into practice, yet at the same time, a genuine internalization of basic principles in quite a number of areas. In other words, though the situation is not exemplary (and there is much room for improvement, particularly with regard to attitudes toward “the other”), and though certain groups in the Israeli public present a set of highly problematic positions and behaviors, it appears that Israeli democracy today is not on the brink of an abyss. Nonetheless, to ensure that it does not end up there, the state faces the weighty task of deepening public awareness of the importance of supporting democracy in deeds as well as words.

## **Appendices**





## Appendix 1: Summary of the Democracy Indices, 2003-2010

### The Institutional Aspect

Rating	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>1. Vertical accountability</b> 1-3 (1 = unregulated elections)	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
<b>2. Horizontal accountability</b> 0-6 (0 = high army involvement in politics)	3	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	<b>2.5</b>
<b>3. Deviation from the Proportionality Principle</b> 1-100 (0 = perfect proportionality)	2.55	-	-	2.72	-	-	1.6	-
<b>4. Party dominance</b> (100 = high dominance, low representativeness)	300	315	324	413.7	-	-	429	-
<b>5. Level of constraints on the executive in implementing policy</b> 1-7 (1 = unlimited authority)	7	-	7	-	-	-	-	-
<b>6. Extent of constraints on the executive in changing policy</b> 0-1 (0 = no constraints)	0.786	0.779	-	-	-	-	-	<b>0.784</b>
<b>7. Voter turnout in national elections</b> 0-100 (100% = full turnout)	67.8	-	-	63.2	-	-	65.2	-
<b>8. Voter turnout of registered voters</b> 0-100 (100% = full turnout)	74.4	-	-	70.8	-	-	72.1	-
<b>9. Voter turnout in local elections</b> 0-10 (100% = full turnout)	57.4	50	-	-	-	-	55	-
<b>10. Corruption Perceptions Index (TI)</b> 0-10 (0 = high level of corruption)	7.3	7	6.4	6.3	5.9	6.1	6	<b>6.1</b>
<b>11. Corruption Index (ICRG)</b> 0-6 (0 = high level of corruption)	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
<b>12. Voice and accountability (WB)*</b> 0-100 (100 = high accountability)	64.4	69.2	65.4	70.8	69.7	-	-	<b>68.3</b>
<b>13. Corruption Control Index (WB)*</b> 0-100 (100 = high control)	83.5	81.1	77.7	82	77.3	-	-	<b>78.7</b>
<b>14. Regulatory quality (WB)*</b> 0-100 (100 = high regulation)	77.6	75.6	75.6	79.5	82.5	-	-	<b>86</b>
<b>15. Government effectiveness (WB)*</b> 0-100 (100 = high effectiveness)	81	86.3	82.5	87.2	85.3	-	-	<b>88.2</b>

\* World Bank indicators have been updated in accordance with the organization's new publication for 1996-2010.

### The Rights Aspect

Rating	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>1. Competitiveness in participation</b> 1-5 (1 = suppression of opposition activities)	5	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
<b>2. Freedom of the press</b> 0-100 (0 = full freedom)	30	27	28	28	28	29	31	-
<b>3. Human Rights Violations Index</b> 1-5 (1 = upholding of human rights)	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>4. Prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants</b> 100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	132	143	172	180	158	165	196	<b>208</b>
<b>5. Prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants, including security</b> prisoners 0-100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	173	189	252	265	295	311	326	<b>325</b>
<b>6. Law and order</b> Index 0-6 (0 = absence of law and order)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>7. Freedom of religion</b> 1-7 (1 = total freedom)	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>8. GINI coefficient for disposable income</b> 0-1 (0 = full equality)	0.3685	0.3799	0.3878	0.3874*	-	-	-	-
<b>9. GINI coefficient for income distribution</b> 0-1 (0 = full equality)	0.5265	0.5234	0.5255	0.5224*	-	-	-	-
<b>10. Index of Economic Freedom</b> 1-5 (1 = broad economic freedom)	64.0	63.1	63.8	66.7	68.4	66.1	67.6	<b>67.7</b>
<b>11. Global competitiveness</b> Index 1-7 (7 = high competitiveness)	-	-	-	-	-	5.2	4.97	<b>4.8</b>

Rating	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>12. Global Gender Gap Index</b> 0-1 (1 = full equality)	-	-	-	-	-	0.69	0.7	-
<b>13. Gender-Related Development Index</b> 0-1 (0 = lack of equality)	0.891	0.900	0.906	0.911	0.925	0.927	-	<b>0.921</b>
<b>14. Gender Empowerment Measure</b> 0-1 (0 = lack of equality)	0.596	0.612	0.614	0.622	0.656	0.660	-	<b>0.705</b>
<b>15. Political discrimination against the minority</b> 0-4 (0 = no discrimination)	3	-	3.5	-	-	-	-	-
<b>16. Economic discrimination against the minority</b> 0-4 (0 = no discrimination)	3	-	3.5	-	-	-	-	-
<b>17. Cultural discrimination against the minority</b> 0-12 (0 = no discrimination)	1	-	0	-	-	-	-	-
<b>18. Rule of law (WB)*</b> 0-100 (100 = high control)	73.3	73.3	72.9	73.8	74.3	-	-	<b>78.5</b>

### The Stability and Cohesion Aspect

Rating	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>1. Changes in government</b>								
Number of changes in government, 1996-2006	5	-	5	4	-	-	-	-
<b>2. Incomplete Term of Office Index</b> 0-100 (100% = full term)	77.42	-	-	63	-	-	67.9	-
<b>3. Weighted Political Conflict Index</b> 0-infinity (0 = no conflict)	3,100	-	10,462	-	-	-	-	-
<b>4. Religious tensions</b> 0-6 (0 = high tension)	2	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	<b>2.5</b>
<b>5. Ethnic/national/linguistic tensions</b> 0-6 (0 = high tension)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	<b>2</b>
<b>6. Political stability (WB)*</b> 0-100 (100 = high stability)	7.7	10.1	14.4	10.6	12	-	-	<b>11</b>

## Appendix 2: Democracy Survey 2010 Compared with the Democracy Surveys 2003-2009 (full sample; percent)

### The Institutional Aspect

Survey questions	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>A. Perception of implementation of the accountability principle</b>								
Actions of elected officials relative to the people's preferences								
To what extent do you agree or disagree that politicians do not tend to take into account the views of the ordinary citizen? (disagree)	38	38	42	38	30	32	37	37
<b>B. Political participation</b>								
1. Level of political participation								
How often do you keep informed about what's going on in politics through TV, the radio or the press? (every day or several times a week)	87	79	81	82	82	78	78	76
2. Perception of implementation of the principle of political participation								
In your opinion, do citizens in Israel participate in politics more or less than they do in other countries? (more)	40	49	37	38	36	32	50	48
To what extent can you and your friends influence government policy? (can)	20	18	31	27	24	19	18	20
<b>C. Integrity in government</b>								
In your opinion, is there more or less corruption in Israel than in other countries? (less)	11	15	22	14	18	24	11	12

### The Rights Aspect

Survey questions	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>A. Political and civil rights</b>								
Attitudes toward political and civil rights								
In your opinion, are human rights in Israel upheld more or less than in other countries? (less)	27	40	33	39	36	37	26	<b>26</b>
And freedom of expression? (less)	15	17	24	19	21	24	12	<b>13</b>
<b>B. Equality for minorities</b>								
To what extent do you support or oppose each of the following:								
Arab parties (including Arab ministers) joining the government (support)	38	45	44	41	30	36	37	<b>30</b>
Full equality of rights between Jewish and Arab citizens (support)	53	64	59	60	50	56	54	<b>54</b>
Agreement of a Jewish majority should be required on decisions fateful to the country, such as returning territories (oppose)	26	23	34	29	33	38	27	<b>24</b>
The government should encourage Arab emigration from the country (oppose) [Jews only]	43	41	50	38	45	44	48	<b>47</b>

### The Stability and Cohesion Aspect

Survey questions	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>A. Satisfaction with the government</b>								
In your opinion, what is Israel's position in general? (not good)	63	54	35	40	50	34	31	<b>24</b>
<b>B. Assessing stability in Israel</b>								
Do you think the political system in Israel is stable or unstable compared to other democratic countries? (unstable)	63	-	46	53	60	57	54	<b>48</b>
<b>C. Protest and opposition</b>								
Using violence to achieve political aims is never justified (agree)	82	78	82	82	74	61	75	<b>69</b>
<b>D. Trust in institutions</b>								
To what degree do you have trust in the following people or institutions:								
Political parties (have trust)	32	27	22	22	21	15	21	<b>25</b>
Prime minister (have trust)	53	45	48	43	21	17	35	<b>39</b>
The media (have trust)	49	51	50	44	45	37	34	<b>34</b>
State Attorney's Office (have trust)	58	66	60	51	45	35	47	<b>50</b>
Supreme Court (have trust)	70	79	72	68	61	49	52	<b>54</b>
The police (have trust)	66	66	57	44	41	32	40	<b>42</b>
The President (have trust)	68	73	65	67	22	47	60	<b>70</b>
The Knesset (have trust)	52	46	40	33	33	29	38	<b>37</b>
The IDF (have trust)	84	86	78	79	74	71	79	<b>81</b>
Government ministers (have trust)	55	41	42	39	31	25	33	<b>33</b>

Survey questions	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>E. Social cleavages</b>								
In your opinion, is there more or less tension between groups in society in Israel than in other countries? (less)	7	15	20	15	24	29	10	<b>9</b>
<b>F. Connection to the community</b>								
To what extent are you proud to be an Israeli? (proud)	84	79	83	86	76	80	80	<b>81</b>
Do you want or not want to live in Israel in the long term? (want)	88	87	89	90	79	83	87	<b>86</b>
To what extent do you feel yourself to be part of the State of Israel and its problems? (feel part)	79	73	77	69	59	56	66	<b>65</b>

### Democracy: Support and Satisfaction

Survey questions	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>A. Support for democracy</b>								
A few strong leaders can be more useful to the country than all the discussions and the laws (disagree)	44	42	43	40	31	35	39	<b>40</b>
<b>B. Satisfaction with Israeli democracy</b>								
In general, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the functioning of Israeli democracy? (dissatisfied)	49	55	51	46	66	57	61	<b>63</b>



## Notes

1. All the findings are quoted in percent.
2. The data present the two "end categories" concerning democracy for questions with four or five categories (that is, 1-2 or 3-4 or 4-5), and the end category in questions with 2-3 categories (that is, 1 or 2 if the question is dichotomous, and 1 or 3 if there are three categories).
3. This Appendix includes some of the questions that were asked in the Democracy Survey 2010, compared with the previous seven years. The questions for which responses do not appear in Appendix 2 are detailed in Appendix 3.
4. When questions are addressed only to the Jewish respondents, square brackets appear beside the question.
5. The size of the sample in 2010 was 1,200; sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; in 2009 the size of the sample was 1,191; sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; in 2008 the size of the sample was 1,201; sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; in 2007 the size of the sample was 1,203; sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; in 2006 the size of the sample was 1,204; sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; in 2005 the size of the sample was 1,203; sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; in 2004 the size of the sample was 1,200; sampling error was  $\pm 2.9$  with a 95% confidence level; in 2003 the size of the sample was 1,208; sampling error was  $\pm 3.1$  with a 95% confidence level.

### Appendix 3: Distribution of Responses to the Democracy Survey, March 2010 (full sample; percent)

**1. To what extent are you interested in politics?**

- |                      |    |
|----------------------|----|
| a. To a large extent | 23 |
| b. To some extent    | 39 |
| c. To a small extent | 25 |
| d. Not at all        | 13 |

**2. In your opinion, is Israel today too democratic, democratic to a suitable degree, or not democratic enough?**

- |                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| a. Far too much         | 7  |
| b. Too much             | 21 |
| c. To a suitable degree | 35 |
| d. Too little           | 30 |
| e. Far too little       | 7  |

**And what about adherence to these principles?**

	1 – Far too much	2 - Too much	3 - To a suitable degree	4 - Too little	5 – Far too little
3. Freedom of religion	15	14	42	21	8
4. Human rights	7	14	39	31	9
5. Freedom of expression	17	22	42	14	5

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

	1 – Definitely disagree	2	3	4 – Definitely agree
6. It makes no difference who you vote for. It does not change the situation.	29	21	21	29
7. Men are better political leaders than women.	47	22	14	18

**8. What is your level of trust in the resilience and future existence of Israel?**

a. Definitely trust	37
b. Trust	30
c. Trust somewhat	17
d. Do not trust much	10
e. Do not trust	3
f. Do not trust at all	2

**To what extent do you have trust in the following people or institutions?**

	1 – No trust at all	2 – Little trust	3 – Some trust	4 – A lot of trust
9. The party you voted for in the last elections	23	22	33	22

**10. In your opinion, to what extent is there corruption in Israel?**

a. Not at all	3
b. To a small extent	12
c. To quite a large extent	36
d. To a very large extent	49

We will present you with various types of political systems. Concerning each one, please state whether it is desirable for Israel:

	1 – Very desirable	2 – Desirable	3 – Not so desirable	4 – Not at all desirable
11. A strong leadership that does not need to take the Knesset or elections into account	20	24	24	32
12. A government composed of experts who make decisions based on their understanding of what is best for the state	23	36	23	18
13. A democratic regime	61	28	8	3

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

	1 – Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 – Strongly agree
14. Politicians are in politics solely for personal gain	11	16	23	27	23
15. Elections are a good way to make the government pay attention to the people's views	14	21	22	29	14
16. To reach the top in politics today, you have to be corrupt	11	23	22	25	19

**17. There is much talk about left and right in politics. Where would you rank yourself on a right-left continuum where 1 is far-right and 7 is far-left?**

1 – Right	2	3	4	5	6	7 – Left
19	11	18	24	14	6	8

**18. If you were about to be called up for army service now, what would you do?**

a. I would make an effort to avoid army service	14
b. I would enlist, but only as a non-combatant	13
c. I would enlist and let the IDF determine my placement	31
d. I would enlist and ask to serve as a combatant	25
e. I would enlist or volunteer in an elite combat unit	16

**19. To what extent do you generally observe religious traditions?**

a. I do not observe tradition at all	21
b. I observe tradition to some extent	41
c. I observe tradition to a large extent	24
d. I observe tradition meticulously	14

**20. To what social class do you belong?**

a. Upper class	7
b. Upper-middle class	17
c. Middle class	61
d. Lower-middle class	10
e. Lower class	5

The following questions relate to Part Three of the 2010 Democracy Index. The distribution below includes those respondents who found it difficult or declined to answer certain questions.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

	1 – Definitely disagree	2	3	4	5 – Definitely agree	Don't know / refuse
21. Competition between political parties strengthens democracy	12	21	21	29	13	4
22. Political parties in Israel care what the people think	18	25	27	21	6	3
23. Political parties are necessary if democracy is to function as it should	10	15	20	32	19	4
24. It would be best to dismantle all political institutions and start anew	23	25	17	16	15	4
25. It would be preferable if Israel had two large parties instead of the many parties that exist today	14	20	16	24	23	4
26. There are no real differences between the political parties in Israel	25	23	23		24	5
27. The political parties are no longer needed, and can therefore be abolished	40	24	14		17	5
28. It is acceptable that Israel, as a Jewish state, should channel more funds to Jewish communities than to Arab ones	25	17	19		36	3

**29. What grade would you give Israeli democracy today:**

1 - Failed	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Excellent	Don't know / refuse
8	3	7	6	18	14	23	13	3	4	1

**30. Israel is defined as a Jewish and democratic state. Which part of this definition is more important to you personally?**

- a. A Jewish state 31
- b. A democratic state 20
- c. Both are equally important 43
- d. Neither one is important 5
- e. Don't know / refuse 1

**How important is it to you that in Israel:**

	1 – Not at all important	2	3 – So-so	4	5 – Extremely important	Don't know / refuse
31. State funding for religious services should be provided to Jews, Muslims and Christians based on identical criteria	27	8	20	13	26	6
32. The police should be given full powers to decide on the length of a suspect's detention	33	14	19	11	17	6
33. Homosexual couples should have the same legal rights as other couples	23	11	18	12	30	6
34. Education in Israel should be free only for the children of citizens, but not for the children of foreign workers, for example	26	12	17	14	26	5

	1 – Not at all important	2	3 – So-so	4	5 – Extremely important	Don't know / refuse
35. Police should be authorized to carry out body searches on anyone, anywhere, at any time, to check whether they are concealing dangerous drugs	26	12	20	14	24	4
36. Murder should be punishable by the death penalty	24	10	15	14	32	5
37. Free emergency medical treatment should be provided even if a patient has no medical insurance	5	6	10	14	61	4
38. Jewish and Arab schools should receive funding based on identical criteria	20	7	18	17	34	4
39. State funding for religious needs should be equal for all streams of Judaism – Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, etc.	18	7	20	15	33	7
40. Israel should have a constitution	8	7	11	15	51	8
41. The police should disperse any demonstration that disturbs the public order (for example, the blocking of traffic)	10	9	19	19	38	5
42. An Arab judge should serve on the Supreme Court	30	10	15	15	24	6

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	1 – Definitely agree	2 – Agree somewhat	3 – Somewhat opposed	4 – Strongly opposed	Don't know / refuse
43. Israel was once far more democratic than it is today	23	19	25	19	12
44. Democracy is not a perfect regime, but it is better than all other forms of government	51	29	10	5	5
45. Democracy is not suited to Israel right now due to its grave economic, security, and social problems. In the meantime, it would be better to have a strong, effective government that could disregard the courts, the media, and public opinion	17	23	22	32	7
46. Israel's Supreme Court today is not politically impartial, and its powers should therefore be limited	22	23	22	22	11
47. Human rights and civil rights organizations, such as the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and B'Tselem, cause damage to the state.	25	25	21	19	10
48. As long as Israel is in a state of conflict with the Palestinians, the views of Arab citizens of Israel on security issues should not be taken into account (not asked of Arabs)	38	23	19	13	7



	1 – Definitely agree	2 – Agree somewhat	3 – Somewhat opposed	4 – Strongly opposed	Don't know / refuse
49. Israeli democracy has been harmed by the fact that in recent years the gaps between rich and poor have grown	41	31	14	7	7
50. Israel's overall situation would be much better if there were less attention paid to the principles of democracy and more to maintaining law and order	28	28	19	14	11
51. To preserve democracy, Israel must invest in education in disadvantaged areas, even at the expense of other issues, so that students in outlying communities can achieve the same results as students from more affluent areas	54	25	10	5	6

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	1 – Agree	2 - Disagree	Don't know / refuse
52. Rabbis should always be consulted more often when crucial political decisions are made	32	63	5
53. The political parties in Israel are harmful to democracy because they exacerbate differences of opinion among the people	40	51	9
54. Criminals convicted of serious crimes should be denied any civil rights	40	51	9

	1 – Agree	2 - Disagree	Don't know / refuse
55. It is important to also allow non-Zionist political parties to participate in elections	50	43	7
56. If the Shin Bet, the police, or the IDF suspect someone of terrorist activity, they should have full authority to conduct their investigation as they see fit, without any legal constraints	50	43	7
57. There should be legal penalties for speaking out against Zionism (not asked of Arabs)	39	54	7
58. Only new immigrants who are Jewish according to halakha (Jewish religious law) should be entitled to automatically receive Israeli citizenship	47	45	8
59. Those who choose not to serve in the army should be denied the right to vote or be elected to the Knesset	39	52	9
60. There should be a law to shut down media that criticize government policy too harshly	26	66	8
61. The state should monitor what people write on the Internet, and should take them to court if they speak out against the government	24	68	8
62. First-degree relatives of Arab citizens should be allowed entry into Israel under the rubric of family unification	28	61	11

**63. What is your opinion of the suggestion that every Israeli be obligated to make a declaration of loyalty to the State of Israel as a democratic, Jewish and Zionist state in order to be granted the right to vote in elections?**

- a. Very much opposed 21
- b. Somewhat opposed 16
- c. Support quite strongly 29
- d. Support very strongly 26
- e. Don't know / refuse 8

**Would it bother you to have as your neighbors:**

	1 – It would bother me	2 – I don't care	3 – It would not bother me	Don't know / refuse
64. FSU immigrants (not asked of Russians)	16	21	55	8
65. Ultra-Orthodox Jews	29	23	46	2
66. Former settlers	19	24	54	3
67. A homosexual couple	35	20	42	3
68. Foreign workers	39	22	36	3
69. An Arab family (for Arabs, a Jewish family)	45	19	33	3
70. Mentally retarded individuals	22	25	49	4
71. Mentally ill individuals in community treatment	39	23	34	4
72. Ethiopian immigrants	21	24	52	3
73. People who do not observe the Sabbath or holidays	16	24	58	2

- 74. During World War II, the United States interned its Japanese citizens for fear that they would help Japan in its war against the United States. Do you think Israel should do the same with its Arab citizens in wartime or during a security crisis, for fear that they would help the enemy? (not asked of Arabs)**
- |                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| a. Definitely not      | 25 |
| b. Probably not        | 25 |
| c. Think so            | 21 |
| d. Definitely          | 12 |
| e. Don't know / refuse | 17 |
- 75. Imagine Israeli society as four circles. The smallest one, in the middle, Circle 1, indicates the "center" of society. Circle 2, which surrounds it, denotes those people who are near the center but not really part of it. Circle 3 symbolizes citizens who are further from the center, and Circle 4 are those who are even further from the center. In which of these four circles do you feel you belong?**
- |  |    |
|--|----|
| a. The center of society                         | 20 |
| b. Close to the center but not really part of it | 24 |
| c. Citizens who are further from the center      | 22 |
| d. Those who are even further from the center    | 12 |
| e. Don't know / refuse                           | 22 |
- 76. In your opinion, should the Supreme Court of Israel be given the power to repeal laws legislated by the Knesset if, in the opinion of the judges, these laws violate democratic principles?**
- |                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| a. Very much opposed    | 19 |
| b. Somewhat opposed     | 21 |
| c. Agree quite strongly | 32 |
| d. Agree very strongly  | 21 |
| e. Don't know / refuse  | 7  |
- 77. What do you think of the way the government is handling Israel's current problems?**
- |                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| a. Handling them very well       | 2  |
| b. Handling them well            | 23 |
| c. Handling them not so well     | 49 |
| d. Handling them not at all well | 22 |
| e. Don't know / refuse           | 4  |