

The President's Conference – Israeli Democracy Examined

**Auditing Israeli Democracy – 2009**

**Twenty Years of Immigration from the Soviet Union**

Asher Arian, Michael Philippov, Anna Knafelman

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**The President's Conference**

August 2009

**ISRAELI DEMOCRACY EXAMINED**

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# **THE 2009 ISRAELI DEMOCRACY INDEX**

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**Asher Arian, Michael Philippov, Anna Knafelman**

**The Guttman Center  
of  
The Israel Democracy Institute**



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## Summary

Israel is a country of immigration, and immigration to Israel (*aliyah*) is a central ethos of Israeli society and politics. Jewish immigration to the Land of Israel was the primary goal of the Zionist movement, and was established in the Law of Return enacted in 1950, which officially stated the right of every Jew to immigrate to the State of Israel. The large wave of immigration from the Former Soviet Union (henceforth: FSU) during the 1990s changed the composition of Israel's population and the face of Israeli society. The year 2009 marks the twentieth anniversary of this wave of immigration, which began in the spring of 1989. The **Democracy Index 2009** reviews public attitudes concerning democracy, the measure of support for it, and the level of satisfaction with the functioning of Israeli democracy. Moreover, the Index offers an extensive survey of the immigrants' integration into Israeli society and politics, of their political culture, and of their relationship with the absorbing society.

Most Israelis continue to support democracy and to be interested in politics, but are dissatisfied with the functioning of Israeli democracy. Most feel they cannot influence government policy and long for strong leadership that will govern more effectively. Another troubling finding is the sense of most respondents concerning the level of corruption prevalent in Israeli politics. Most maintain that corruption is widespread in Israel, and that politicians are mainly concerned with their personal interests. Not only are politicians distrusted, but so are the country's institutions. Although the level of trust in institutions has risen

slightly since last year, the level of trust in political institutions – the Knesset and the political parties – remains low. Moreover, a troubling decline was recorded in the level of trust in institutions of law enforcement, particularly the police. By contrast, most citizens maintain that the status of the IDF has been successfully restored since the Second Lebanon War, and trust in it is extremely high.

In the rights aspect, a majority of the Israeli public theoretically endorses political liberties, but the level of support declines when questioned about specific liberties. A decline was also recorded in the support for equal rights for the Jewish majority and the Arab minority. This finding is particularly prominent in the political domain – most Jewish citizens do not agree to the participation of the Arab minority in the government or in the making of decisions fateful to the country's future. Concerning rights, pronounced differences emerged between the political culture of the Jewish old-timers and that of the FSU immigrants, who have less liberal attitudes concerning rights. Regarding the Arab minority, for instance, the immigrants' attitudes are more extreme, and most advocate encouraging Arabs to emigrate and denying them their rights. Immigrants' attitudes toward gender relationships are also more traditional. The findings in the rights aspect are also supported by the findings of international indices, which show that the level of the protection of rights in Israel is low relative to other democracies.

In general, two years after the end of the Second Lebanon War, the national mood

appears to have improved. This positive finding of the survey relates to issues of community belonging – the majority are proud to be Israeli, and feel part of the State of Israel and its problems. The rate of people stating a desire to live in Israel has also increased. This finding is salient among young people, and the rate of young people who definitely wish to remain in Israel has risen over the last two years, currently reaching 80%. Yet, gaps are evident between Jewish old-timers and young immigrants in this regard – the rate of young immigrants who are sure that they wish to live in Israel is far lower than that of Jewish old-timers in a similar age category. The main reason for the Jewish old-timers' lower motivation to live in Israel is a sense that their chances of improving their standard of living are greater elsewhere. Among the immigrants, the main reason is the security situation.

A complex picture is revealed regarding social solidarity. Israel is characterized by deep social and ideological cleavages, which are reflected in inter-group relationships, mainly between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority, between religious and secular Jews, between left-wing and right-wing supporters, and so forth. Furthermore, the level of social trust in Israel is very low, and most people maintain that one should be cautious in relationships with others. This finding stands out in an international comparison, which shows that the level of social trust in Israel is far lower than in most of the democracies that participated in the study.

The deep cleavages in Israeli society influence not only social relationships, but also political stability. The party system is highly split, and governments generally

complete about two thirds of their terms of office. The public also sense that the Israeli political system is unstable. Another finding related to political stability is the fact that about 25% of the public are willing to justify the use of violence to attain political aims. Although this figure indicates that support for the justification of violence has dropped to some extent relative to 2008, it is still high for a democratic country where the rules of the game are based on the adoption of decisions through peaceful means.

Social relations were also examined in the context of the relationship between the immigrants and the absorbing society. A combination of positive and negative stereotypes concerning immigration prevails in old-time Israeli society. Although most citizens harbor doubts about the Jewishness of most 1990s immigrants, they do not regret their arrival. The immigrants' attitude toward the State of Israel is not clear-cut. Most claim that their pre-immigration aspirations and expectations have been realized in Israel to some extent, but they also maintain that their contribution to the country exceeds the benefits that they receive from it.

This attitude is related to the immigrants' difficulties in integrating into Israeli society and into the Israeli economy. Most of them assert that their socio-economic status declined after immigration. They work in jobs unsuited to their education and qualifications, and report many problems related to low salaries and discrimination at the workplace. Moreover, most immigrants are concentrated in the Israeli periphery, a fact that affects the accessibility of jobs suited to their education. Concerning political integration, the immigrants do not feel they can influence government policy

or events in their immediate environment – in the residential community, in the educational institution, and at the workplace. Most continue to acquire information about politics through the media in Russian and to participate in politics, mainly by voting in elections.

In February 2009, general elections were conducted in Israel. Despite dissatisfaction with the functioning of the political system, voter turnout in the elections was slightly higher than in the 2006 elections. Although the results of the elections are characterized by high proportionality, the Knesset is extremely divided – a factor that is likely to influence political stability. Israeli society too continues to be characterized by

deep cleavages, by a lack of trust, and by reservations about the implementation of equal rights for all citizens. These findings indicate that Israeli democracy contends with many problems, and is still in need of enhancement and improvement in many areas. Furthermore, the absorption and integration of the immigrants into Israeli society requires special attention. On the one hand, attempts should be made to deepen the socio-economic integration of the immigrants, and on the other, action should be taken to instill democratic values in the public, in general, and among the immigrants who arrived from a non-democratic political culture, in particular.



## **Part One**

# **The Democracy Index 2009**



## A. Description of the Research and Its Goals

The **Democracy Index** project deals with the periodic evaluation of Israeli democracy, focusing on the extent to which democratic values and goals are implemented in Israel. Hence, the research seeks to examine the quality of Israeli democracy and the quality of its functioning and performance. To determine this, we concentrated on a range of characteristics and variables that democratic theory identifies with stable and established democracies, or on features identified with liberal democracies.

The concept of “democracy” has many definitions and meanings. We will define a democratic state as follows: a state in which most inhabitants enjoy civil rights that include at least the right to be elected and the right to elect decision makers from among two or more contenders for power in periodic, secret, and competitive elections, whose results are compelling.<sup>1</sup> Together with this definition, it is important to clarify two basic assumptions of this study. The first is that democracy is not a dichotomous phenomenon, but is better depicted by a continuum of various degrees of democracy; the second is that democracy is a multi-dimensional phenomenon encompassing a range of features and functions. Accordingly, the assessment of the level of democracy in Israel includes three aspects: the institutional aspect, the rights aspect, and the stability aspect.<sup>2</sup> Each aspect includes a group of basic characteristics, which are the basis for

evaluating the quality of democracy in each country (Figure 1).

The institutional aspect deals with the system of formal institutions at the base of the democratic regime, with the division of power among them, and with the mutual relations between the players in the political system – elected representatives and public officials. The characteristics underlying the institutional aspect are: accountability, representativeness, checks and balances, political participation, and the government’s integrity (political corruption). The first four characteristics contribute to the direct or indirect integration of the citizens or of their preferences in government decision making processes, while the last characteristic (political corruption) is part of the institutional aspect because its very presence represents a contradiction to the sovereignty of the citizens.

The rights aspect deals with the formal and essential principle of democracy: protecting human dignity and liberty, minority rights, and the rule of law. The rights included in this aspect are political rights, civil rights, social rights, and economic rights. Gender equality and equality for minorities are also components of this aspect. The first three rights are consistent with the civil rights underpinning the democratic regime. Economic rights (property) often appear in the literature under the rubric of “civil rights,” but we decided to present them in

1 Asher Arian, David Nachmias, Doron Navot, and Danielle Shani, *The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index: Measuring Israeli Democracy* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2003), 18.

2 *Ibid.*

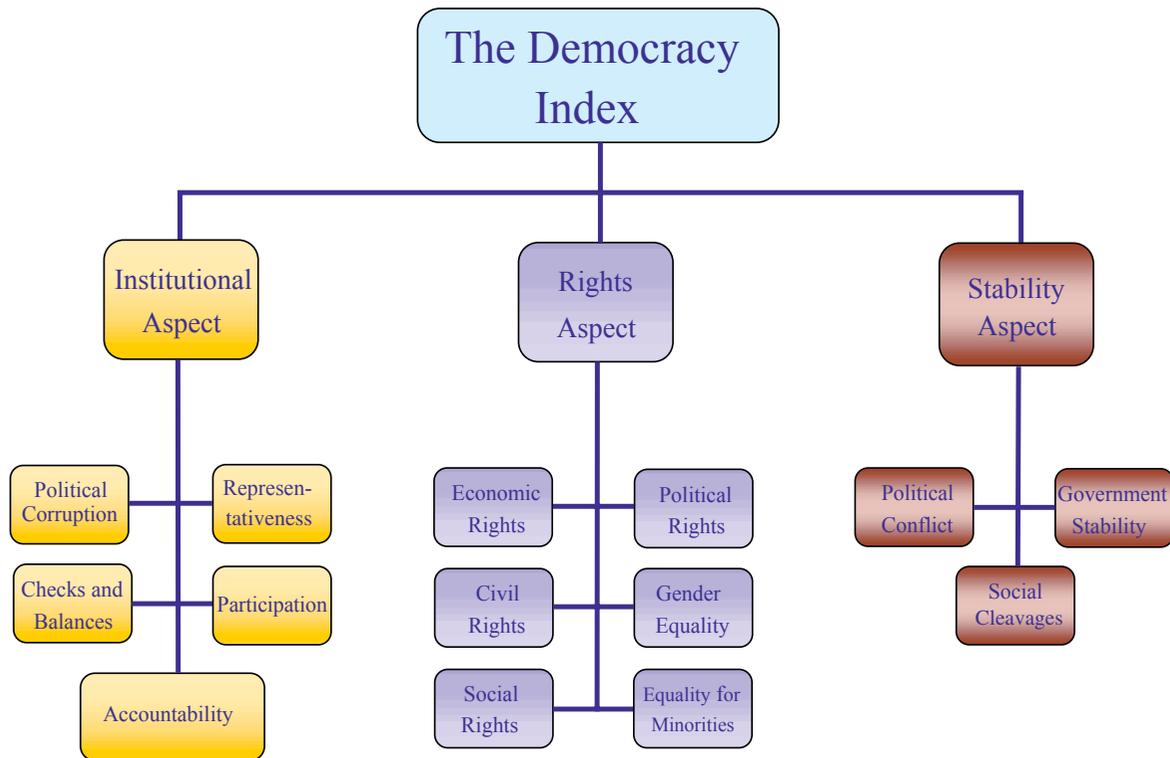
a separate category. The attributes, “gender equality” and “equality for minorities,” are actually relevant to all these types of rights, but the emphasis is on equality within the right. The assumption underlying this distinction is that it is important to examine not only the implementation of civil rights in the society in general, but also whether the weaker groups in the society enjoy these rights as much as the strong groups.

Stability is not an integral part of democracy’s features. It may characterize many types of regimes, although not necessarily democratic ones. Nonetheless, stability is likely to attest to the existence

of a developed democracy or to result from it, and all democratic regimes aspire to it. Indeed, instability could influence the quality and the functioning of democracy. The stability aspect deals with the stability of the government, meaning its ability to govern effectively (but not with the stability of the country’s democratic regime, in general). It also deals with manifestations of civil protest and opposition, and with the country’s social cleavages. Manifestations of protest and opposition attest to confrontations between the citizens and the government, and social cleavages are a function of tensions between groups in the society.

Figure 1

**The Structure of the Index**



The study was conducted at two levels. At the first level, we examined the status of Israeli democracy according to a series of quantitative measures from available databases in a range of areas (henceforth: the democracy indicators). At the second level, we evaluated the status of democracy in Israel as reflected in public opinion in order to gauge the public's views concerning a range of democratic values, and to examine the public's perceptions concerning the functioning of democracy in Israel. For this purpose, we conducted a comprehensive survey (henceforth: the Democracy Survey) among a representative sample of Israel's adult population (Jewish and Arab citizens) in March 2009.

The characteristics detailed above<sup>3</sup> in the various indicators and in the Democracy Survey were examined according to two comparative classifications: the first – Israel's performance in the past; the second – the current functioning and performance of 35 other democracies.<sup>4</sup> These characteristics were then explored in a public opinion survey that examined to what extent the three aspects of democracy prevail in Israel in 2009.

This book is divided into two parts. The first part seeks to present a multi-dimensional picture of the quality of Israeli democracy as reflected in the updated democracy indicators. This part includes the update of the Index, **Democracy Index 2009**, and presents quantitative measures developed

in international research institutes, which trace the situation in dozens of countries over the years. Most of these estimates are based on a combination of primary and secondary sources, and on the assessments of professional experts in Israel and abroad. As we do every year, we have concentrated the data so as to point out general trends – improvement, deterioration, or no change in the situation of Israel vis-à-vis the past and vis-à-vis other countries. In 2009, 18 of the 37 indicators that are included in the **Democracy Index** were updated. (Full details of the assessments that Israel received in all the international indicators included in the **Democracy Index** and of the trend changes since 2003 appear in Appendix 1.)

The second part is the Democracy Survey, which is divided into two chapters. The first chapter presents the findings of a public opinion survey based on a set of questions in use since 2003. The questions examine the public's assessments of Israeli democracy and their attitudes toward it – the implementation of democracy in Israel, the measure of support for it, and the level of satisfaction with it. (See Appendix 2 for the distribution of the responses to the questions recurring in the survey since 2003, and for the trend changes.) The second chapter marks the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of massive immigration from the Soviet Union. Israel is a country of immigration, and has actively encouraged and promoted immigration from its inception. The large

3 *Ibid*, for a full description of democracy indicators. Six indicators of the World Bank were added in the Democracy Index 2007. For further details, see Asher Arian, Nir Atmor, Yael Hadar, *The 2007 Israeli Democracy Index – Auditing Israeli Democracy: Cohesion in a Divided Society* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2007). This year, we added two indicators of the World Economic Forum.

4 For the purposes of the study, we chose 36 countries that the Polity Project defined as “democratic” and Freedom House defined as “free.”

immigration wave from the Soviet Union began in 1989 and continues to this day, although at a far slower pace (about 6,000 immigrants a year).<sup>5</sup> By 2007, 970,000 immigrants from the FSU had arrived in Israel.<sup>6</sup> Most of the immigrants arrived in the massive wave of the early 1990s; that is, most of them have been living in Israel for a long time and have become an inseparable part of Israeli society.

In the **Democracy Index 2009**, we seek to expose the public to the sensitive issues associated with the “Russian” immigration.

We wish to examine the immigrants’ views concerning their integration into Israeli society, with an emphasis on economic, social, and political dimensions. We will also address the issue of the emigration from Israel of the immigrants, and will consider at length the political culture of FSU immigrants and the political values imported from their country of origin, which affect Israeli political discourse. The Index also assesses and reviews in depth the attitudes of the public toward immigration and toward the immigrants.

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5 The Ministry of Immigrant Absorption: [www.moia.gov.il](http://www.moia.gov.il) (data from all Internet sites that appear in the book were retrieved in May 2009).

6 Data provided by Pnina Tsedaka, Head of the Population and Demography Department, Central Bureau of Statistics, 7 May 2009.

## B. The Democracy Indicators

### 1. A Summary Outline

The previous year was not an easy one for Israeli democracy. On the one hand – citizens indicated an increasing distrust of the political system, resulting *inter alia* from dissatisfaction with the government's functioning, and from the many instances of corruption involving high-ranking political figures;<sup>7</sup> on the other hand – the ongoing security threat in the south of the country that culminated in Operation Cast Lead. The operation disrupted life in the population centers in the south and increased tensions between the country's Jewish and Arab citizens.

The 2009 democracy indicators present a complex picture of Israeli democracy. Despite a certain improvement evident in some indicators, Israel received low scores compared with the developed democratic countries that participated in the study. The general trend change vis-à-vis the previous Index is mixed. Out of 18 indicators updated this year, seven registered improvement, six registered deterioration, and five showed no change (Table 1). In the international comparison, Israel's ranking went up in three indicators, remained unchanged in ten indicators, and declined in four indicators (Figure 2). In some of the indicators, Israel received lower scores than in previous years and dropped in the ranking. In other cases, Israel's score did not change, but those of

other countries did, thereby changing Israel's relative position.

The main improvement was recorded in the institutional indicators, following a slight rise in the political participation and representativeness measures. The indicators of corruption and stability in the political system were characterized by negative trends, originating in the exceptional political developments that unfolded in Israel in 2008. Thus, elections in February 2009 were conducted after Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's resignation. The police questioned the Prime Minister on suspicions of corruption, and he was targeted for strong criticism by all sides of the political spectrum. Tzipi Livni, who replaced Olmert as head of the Kadima Party, failed to form a coalition and, therefore, not for the first time, elections were called before the official end of the government's term. Since the process of dissolving the government and of advancing the date of elections was set in motion by suspicions of corruption against the Prime Minister, there is room for drawing a connection between the growing levels of corruption and the increasing instability of the political system.

The rights indicators were characterized by a mixed trend, but even in indicators showing improvement, Israel's scores are still lower than those of other democracies in the world.

7 For further details, see Asher Arian, Tamar Hermann, Nir Atmor, Yael Hadar, Yuval Lebel, and Hila Zaban, *The 2008 Israeli Democracy Index – Auditing Israeli Democracy: Between the State and Civil Society* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2008).

8 Eighteen indicators were updated this year, but no international comparisons are available for three of them: voter turnout in local elections; number of prisoners, including security prisoners, and incomplete term of office.

## 2. Israel 2009 as Reflected in the Indicators: An International and a Historical Comparison

The international comparison and the comparison with a previous assessment suggest a complex picture of the status of Israeli democracy. Figure 2 presents Israel's ranking among 35 other democracies included in the study according to 15 indicators.<sup>8</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 relative ranking vis-à-vis other democracies: the first place denotes the highest ranking in the quality of the democracy, and the 36<sup>th</sup> place denotes the lowest. In some cases, Israel shares a score with other countries so that its position fluctuates between several places. In a historical comparison, several changes were recorded this year in the assessments of Israel.<sup>9</sup> Table 1 presents the updated indicators according to the direction of the change in Israel's score: improvement, no change, or deterioration.

The institutional aspect includes 15 indicators, eight of which were updated this year.<sup>10</sup> The representativeness<sup>11</sup> and participation indicators recorded an improve-

ment in the evaluation of Israel's situation in historical and international comparisons. While its score in the Party Dominance Index rose, no change was recorded in Israel's relative ranking. The rise in this score conveys the Knesset's high level of representativeness, but also reflects the substantial splitting of the party system. Extensive splitting is harmful to the government's stability, and hampers governance as a result of the weakness of the party that forms the government and of the many coalition players holding veto power in the decision making process. The score in the Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International declined slightly, and Israel's ranking dropped from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> place.<sup>12</sup> The ICRG (International Country Risk Guide) Corruption Index and the Index of Army Intervention in Politics show no change, neither in Israel's score nor in its ranking.<sup>13</sup>

The rights aspect includes 18 comparative indicators, seven of which were updated this year. Since the World Bank and the United Nations did not publish updated evaluations of the rights situation in the world, we chose to use two new indicators of the World Economic Forum.<sup>14</sup> In the Freedom of the Press Index of Freedom House, Israel's ranking deteriorated from a score of 29 last

9 Most evaluations deal with last year. Evaluations concerning the 2009 elections were compared with evaluations of parallel indicators in 2006.

10 World Bank indicators – voice and accountability, control of corruption, regulatory quality, and government effectiveness – were not published this year, nor were new data about constraints on the executive branch.

11 Representativeness indicators touch on the proportionality of election results and on the Party Dominance Index, which measures the distribution of power in the Knesset.

12 The Corruption Perceptions Index is published every year, and is based on the evaluations of experts who estimate the level of corruption in each country. For details, see: [www.transparency.org](http://www.transparency.org)

13 For the Democracy Index, we use five indices published by ICRG. These indices measure areas of accountability, corruption, law and order, and social tensions. For further information on the indices, see: [www.prsgroup.com/icrg/icrg.html](http://www.prsgroup.com/icrg/icrg.html)

14 The indicators of the World Economic Forum are the Global Competitiveness Index and the Global Gender

year to 31 this year. The Economic Freedom Index of the Heritage Foundation is the only indicator in the rights aspect showing an improvement in Israel's ranking, from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> place. This improvement reflects a rise of 1.5 percentage points<sup>15</sup> in Israel's score relative to 2008. The Law and Order Index of the ICRG shows no change for Israel, neither in the ranking nor the score. Deterioration was recorded in four indicators: the number of prisoners in Israel per 100,000 inhabitants – both security and non-security prisoners – continued to rise, and Israel dropped from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> place. In the Global Competitiveness Index of the World Economic Forum, Israel dropped from a score of 5.2 in 2007 to a score of 4.97 in 2008 and, hence, from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> place. The Gender Gap Index

of the World Economic Forum also points to a deterioration: Israel dropped from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> place. Israel's drop in the international ranking follows the drop in its score and the improvement recorded in the scores of other countries, which had ranked lower in the past.

In the stability aspect, three indicators out of six were updated this year:<sup>16</sup> the Incomplete Term of Office Index declined from 68.1% in 2006 to 64.9% this year (no international comparison is available for this indicator). Two additional ICRG indicators examined tensions between groups in the society against a background of social cleavages. Scores for these indicators have not changed vis-à-vis the previous assessment, and no change was recorded in Israel's ranking.

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Gap Index. The indicators that were not updated this year are the United Nations' Gender Development Index and the Empowerment Index; the Rule of Law Index of the World Bank; the GINI coefficient; the Competitiveness of Participation Index; the Human Rights Violations Index; Freedom of Religion Index and Index of Minority Discrimination.

15 A percentage point is a unit denoting a difference between two percentage figures. An improvement of percentage points between two values means an X-Y result. For instance, a rise from 20% to 30% is a rise of 10 percentage points or of 50%.

16 This year, we did not update the Government Changes Indicator, the Weighted Political Conflict Index, and the Political Stability Indicator of the World Bank.

Figure 2

**Israel's Ranking in the Democracies' Sample according to 15 Criteria**

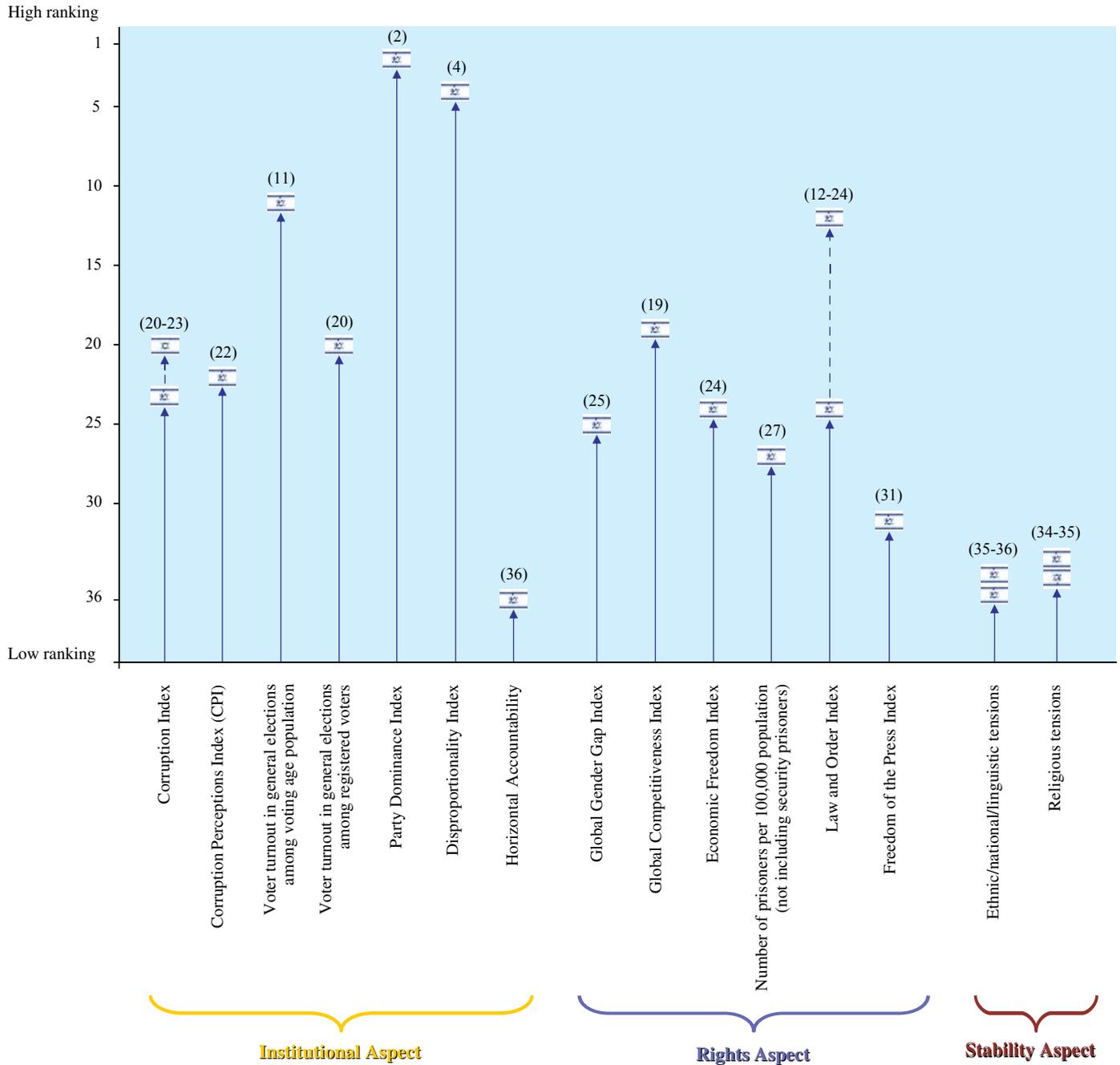


Table 1

**Israel 2009 as Reflected in the Indicators: Changes since the Previous Assessment**

Rating	Israel's score in 2009	Israel's score in the previous evaluation	Scale	Change
<b>Institutional Aspect</b>				
Horizontal Accountability	2.5	2.5	0-6 (0 = high military involvement)	=
Deviation from the Proportionality Principle (Disproportionality)	1.61	2.49	0-100 (0 = small deviation)	↑
Party Dominance Index	429	414	100-12,000* (100 = control by one party)	↑
Voter turnout in general elections of all citizens	65.2	63.5	0-100 (100 = high score)	↑
Voter turnout in general elections of the voting age population	72.1	70.8	0-100 (100 = high score)	↑
Voter turnout in local elections	55	50	0-100 (100 = high score)	↑
Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)	6	6.1	0-10 (0 = high corruption)	↓
Corruption Index	3	3	0-6 (0 = high corruption)	=
<b>Rights Aspect</b>				
Freedom of the Press Index	31	28	0-100 (0 = full freedom)	↓
Law and Order Index	5	5	0-6 (0 = limited law and order protection)	=
Rate of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants, excluding security prisoners	196	165	0-100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	↓
Rate of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants, including security prisoners	326	311	0-100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	↓
Economic Freedom Index	67.6	66.1	0-100 (100 = full freedom)	↑
Global Competitiveness Index	4.97	5.2	1-7 (1 = low competitiveness)	↓
Global Gender Gap Index	0.69	0.7	0-1 (0 = big gaps)	↓
<b>Stability Aspect</b>				
Incomplete Term of Office Index	68.1	64.9	0-100 (100 = high score)	↓
Religious Tensions	2.5	2.5	0-6 (0 = high tension)	=
National/Ethnic/Linguistic Tensions	2	2	0-6 (0 = high tension)	=

↑ Points to improvement in the assessment of Israel as an essential democracy vis-à-vis the previous assessment.

↓ Points to deterioration in the assessment of Israel as an essential democracy vis-à-vis the previous assessment.

\* The scale varies from country to country because the index is based on the number of seats in parliament.

### 3. Selected Findings

#### (a) The Institutional Aspect

The institutional aspect is concerned with the system of formal institutions underlying the democratic regime. The study of political institutions offers a perspective that enables the understanding and upgrading of political systems.<sup>17</sup> This year, the **Democracy Index 2009** was prepared after the elections and, therefore, we updated the institutional indicators related to the electoral process: the citizens' participation and the representativeness of the results. As in previous years, we also updated the indicators of political corruption.

#### (1) Participation

The principle of political participation relates to the activities of individuals and groups seeking formal influence on government processes and, particularly, to the participation of the voting public in decision making processes.<sup>18</sup> Participation is expressed in voting and running for elections, in signing petitions, in taking part in demonstrations, in membership in political organizations, and so forth. Political participation can be examined according to several indicators: voter turnout in general elections as a proportion of all citizens registered to vote; voter turnout in general elections as a proportion of the voting age population, and voter turnout in local elections (without international comparison).

#### Voter Turnout of Citizens Registered to Vote in General Elections.

This measure refers to the number of ballots cast divided by the number of citizens registered to vote. Figures of voter turnout in elections as a proportion of all citizens registered to vote are from IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), which has gathered statistical data about voting in all democratic elections since 1945.<sup>19</sup> However, it bears emphasizing that although this is a key measure in estimates of political participation, it does not present a complete picture because voting is compulsory in 32 countries and, in 19 of them, this duty is actually enforced. Of the countries participating in the study, compulsory voting is enforced in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, Cyprus, and Switzerland. Voting is compulsory, but not enforced, in Costa Rica, Greece, Italy, Mexico, and Thailand.<sup>20</sup>

In 2009, Israel ranked 20<sup>th</sup> out of 36 countries, between Ireland and Costa Rica (Figure 3). The highest voter turnout was recorded in Australia (94.8% in 2007), in Belgium (91.1% in 2007), and in Cyprus (89% in 2006); however, voting is compulsory in all three. People who have a right to vote, but do not, are required to provide an explanation, and they may be fined for failing to fulfill their civic duty. Switzerland (48.3% in 2007), South Korea (46% in 2008), and Romania (39.2% in 2008) are at the bottom of the scale.

17 J. G. March and J. P. Olsen, "Elaborating the 'New Institutionalism'," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, ed. R. A. W. Rhodes, Sarah A. Binder, and Bert A. Rockman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4.

18 Rod Hague and Martin Harrop, *Comparative Government and Politics*, (5<sup>th</sup> ed., Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), 111.

19 For details, see: [www.idea.int/vt/index.cfm](http://www.idea.int/vt/index.cfm)

20 For details, see: [www.idea.int/vt/compulsory\\_voting.cfm](http://www.idea.int/vt/compulsory_voting.cfm)

Voter turnout in the elections to the 18<sup>th</sup> Knesset in February 2009 was 65.2% of all registered voters (5,281,482 registered citizens, 5.26% more than in the 2006 elections).<sup>21</sup> Voter turnout was higher in 2009 than in the 2006 elections (63.5%). The lowest voter turnout was recorded in the special elections for Prime Minister in 2001 (62.3%). The average voter turnout rate in Knesset elections from 1949 to 2009 is 77.9%. Despite the slight improvement in voter turnout recorded this year, it is still far below the average.

**Voter Turnout of the Voting Age Population in General Elections.** This variable is expressed in percentages. It is a function of the number of ballots cast divided by the number of citizens, 18 years of age and over, in the country's population. These figures too are from IDEA. In 2009, Israel ranked 11th out of 34 countries,<sup>22</sup> between Austria and Germany. The highest voter turnout was recorded in Belgium (86% in 2007), Denmark (83.2% in 2007), and Australia (82.4% in 2006). At the bottom of the scale are Canada (41.9% in 2008), Hungary (41.1% in 2006), and Switzerland (39.8% in 2007).

Voter turnout as a proportion of the voting age population in the elections to the

18<sup>th</sup> Knesset was 72.1% of all citizens over 18 who were in the country then (4.8 million citizens, according to the estimate of the Central Bureau of Statistics).<sup>23</sup> Voter turnout in the 2009 elections was higher than in the 2006 elections (70.8%). Figure 3 presents voter turnout figures in elections conducted in 1992-2009. The average voter turnout rate in Knesset elections from 1949 to 2009 was 78.5%. High voter turnout (about 80%) has traditionally characterized Israel ever since the elections to the relevant institutions in the *Yishuv* period.<sup>24</sup> At the end of the 1960s, however, a gap began to emerge between the two indicators measuring political participation. The large gap is explained by the fact that about half a million registered voters do not live permanently in Israel and, therefore, do not take part in elections, which explains the drop in the voter turnout of registered voters.

**Voter Turnout in Local Elections.** This variable appears in percentages, and reflects the number of ballots cast in local elections in a given year divided by the number of registered voters in each locality. Figures for Israel come from the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>25</sup> Voter turnout in local elections has been dropping consistently since the 1970s

21 Central Elections Committee, 2009: [www.knesset.gov.il/elections18/heb/history/BasicFacts.aspx](http://www.knesset.gov.il/elections18/heb/history/BasicFacts.aspx)

22 Data on voter turnout as a proportion of the voting age population in Greece and Romania are unavailable.

23 Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009. "What Is the True Voter Turnout Percentage?": [www.cbs.gov.il/reader/newhodaot/hodaa\\_template.html?hodaa=200924024](http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/newhodaot/hodaa_template.html?hodaa=200924024)

24 Itzhak Galnoor, *Steering the Polity: Communications and Politics in Israel* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982), 333.

25 Cited in Avraham Brichta, "Changes in Local Government in Israel: 1950-1998" (in Hebrew), in *Elections in the Local Authorities in Israel – 1998: Continuity or Change?*, ed. Ami Pedahzur and Avraham Brichta (Tel Aviv: Ramot, 2001), 205.

(Figure 4). The lowest figure was recorded in 2004, when the voter turnout rate was 50%. In the 2008 elections, it rose to 55%,<sup>26</sup> but is still lower than the Israeli average (66.7%), and low relative to voter turnout in general elections.

Figure 3

**Voter Turnout in an International Comparison and in Israel**  
**Combined Participation Index (percentages)**

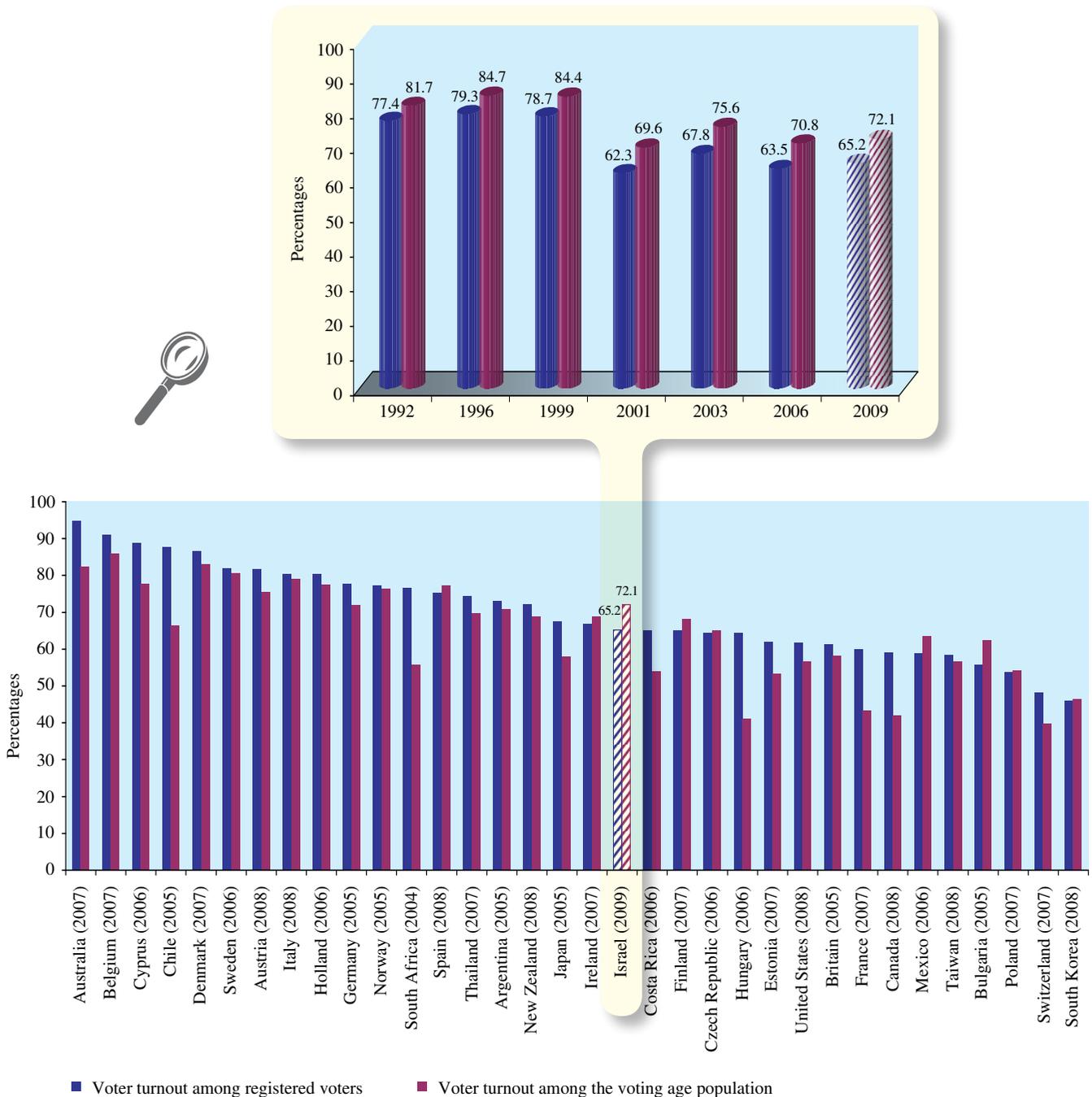
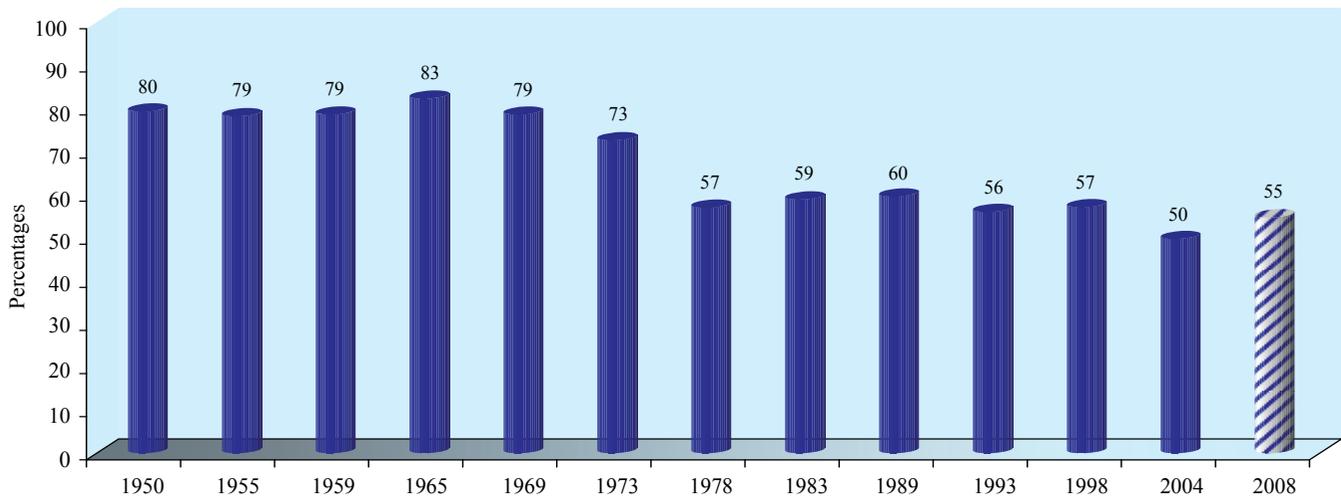


Figure 4

**Voter Turnout in Local Elections (percentages)****(2) Representativeness**

Representativeness refers to the extent that public preferences find expression in the elected institutions.<sup>27</sup> In the literature, two key measures serve to examine representativeness in the political system: deviation from the proportionality principle (disproportionality) and party dominance.

**The Disproportionality Index.** This term refers to the correlation between the number of votes cast for a party in the elections and the number of its seats in the parliament. The higher the correlation, the more representative

the parliament. In the **Democracy Index**, we usually resort to Gallagher's Least Squares Index.<sup>28</sup> This measure ranges from 0 – perfect proportionality – to 100 – no proportionality.

Data about Israel were calculated according to the results of the Knesset elections on 10 February 2009; data for other countries in this index were obtained from Gallagher's database on democratic indices.<sup>29</sup> Israel ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of 36 countries in the Disproportionality Index. Its score of 1.61 attests to the very high proportionality of the election results (Figure 5). The

26 No official figures about voter turnout in the 2008 local elections were published, but in an interview published in *Haaretz*, the Director General of the Ministry of the Interior stated that the ministry estimated it as 55% of the voting age population. See Ilan Shahar, "Contrary to the Ministry of Interior's Claim: Voter Turnout Actually Went Up" (in Hebrew), *Haaretz*, November 13, 2008:

[www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=1036937&contrassID=1&subContrassID=7&sbSubContrassID=0](http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=1036937&contrassID=1&subContrassID=7&sbSubContrassID=0)

27 Richard Rose, "Elections and Electoral Systems: Choices and Alternatives," in *Democracy and Elections*, ed. Vernon Bogdanor and David Butler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 34.

28 Michael Gallagher, "Proportionality, Disproportionality and Electoral Systems," *Electoral Studies* 10 (1991): 33–51.

29 For further details, see Gallagher's database on democratic indicators:

[www.tcd.ie/Political\\_Science/staff/michael\\_gallagher/EISystems/Docts/ElectionIndices.pdf](http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/staff/michael_gallagher/EISystems/Docts/ElectionIndices.pdf)

highest proportionality is recorded in South Africa, Denmark, and Holland. The lowest proportionality is recorded in Japan and England, followed by Taiwan in the last place. The proportionality recorded in the last elections in Israel is the highest since 1973, and in a comparison over time, a rise was recorded since the elections in 2003 (2.52) and 2006 (2.49).

**The Party Dominance Index.** This measure reflects the extent to which a small number of parties control the legislature. The assumption is that if the parliament is controlled by one party or by a very small number of parties, segments of the population remain unrepresented. The Party Dominance Index is determined by dividing the size of the parliament (the number of seats) by the number of seats of the largest party, and multiplying the result by one hundred.<sup>30</sup> The index ranges from 100 – a score indicating full control by one party – to the number of seats in a given parliament times 100 (the figure changes from country to country according to the size of the parliament) – a score indicating that each party holds one seat, that is, full dispersal. The Party Dominance Index was calculated on the basis of the results of the last elections held in each country.<sup>31</sup>

In an international comparison of representativeness according to the Party

Dominance Index, Israel's score of 429 attests to a broad fragmentation of parliamentary power, and puts it in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in a ranking of 36 countries. Belgium, Israel, and Finland rank at the extreme end, representing a high fragmentation of power (high proportionality). Japan, Taiwan, and in the last place, South Africa, are at the other extreme. Figure 6 presents party dominance in Israel over the years and points to a rise in proportionality (and a drop in dominance) in the 2009 elections, as opposed to the 2003 elections (316) and to the 2006 elections (414). This is the highest level of proportionality since the all time high recorded in 1999 (462). In an international comparison, Israel ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 36 countries as it did in the 2006 elections. The rise in representativeness due to low party dominance attests to the declining power of Israel's large parties in recent decades, and to the greater dispersal of votes among all the parties.

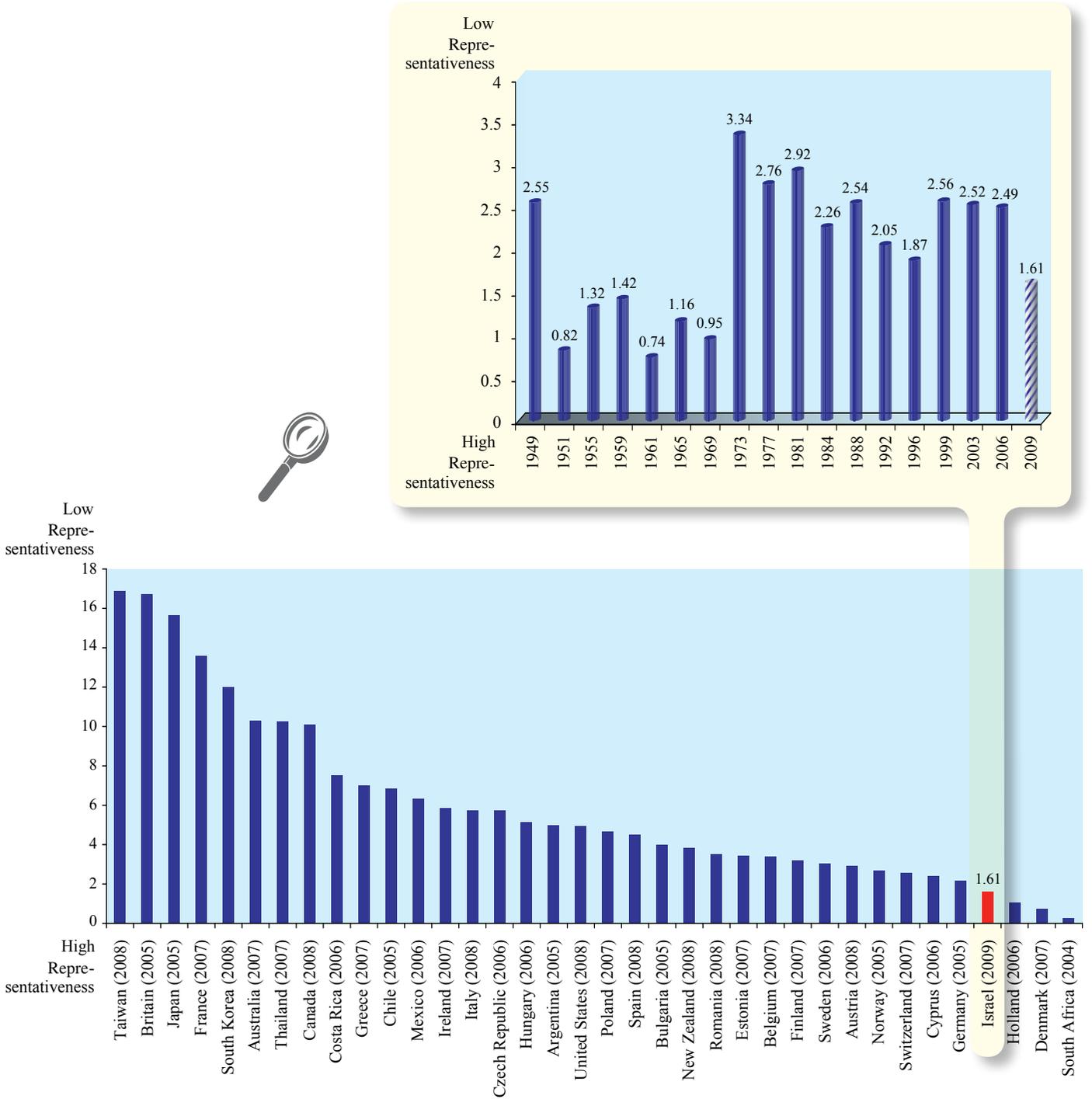
In an international comparison, Israel ranked relatively high in both measures – the Disproportionality Index and the Party Dominance Index. Both point to the high level of representativeness of the Israeli parliament; however, the other side of the high level of representativeness is the instability of Israel's political system. High representativeness means extreme fragmentation of the party system.

30 The original formula calls for dividing the number of parliament seats by the number of seats held by the largest party. In the Democracy Index, we multiply the result by 100 to present the results clearly and in the most convenient form. For details about this index, see Joe Foweraker and Roman Krznaric, "How to Construct a Database of Liberal Democratic Performance," *Democratization* 8, 3 (2001), 13.

31 The data on election results are from the following sources: [www.parties-and-elections.de/index.html](http://www.parties-and-elections.de/index.html); [www.electionresources.org](http://www.electionresources.org); [www.electionworld.org](http://www.electionworld.org)

Figure 5

**Representativeness in an International Comparison and in Israel**  
**Deviation from the Proportionality Principle (Disproportionality)**



Thirty-three electoral lists competed in the 2009 elections, but only 12 passed the electoral threshold (2%) and attained Knesset representation. The two largest parties received 28 and 27 seats. Therefore, in order to form a coalition, which requires the support of 61 Knesset members, the ruling party had to reach many partnership agreements. A coalition of many parties allows many groups in society to be represented not only in the parliament, but also in the executive branch of government. The stability of such a coalition, however, is not guaranteed, and it may suffer from governance problems since its future depends on many parties, which all have veto power on various policies.

### (3) Political Corruption

The accepted definition of political corruption is the abuse of public power for unjustified or personal gain. Political corruption, a major issue in Israel's political discourse in recent years, contradicts basic principles of democracy and, particularly, the principle of the rule of law. Measuring the extent of political corruption is problematic because each country has its own definition. Nevertheless, an attempt has been made to contend with the challenge of examining corruption in comparative terms. In the **Democracy Index**, we rely on two measures used to evaluate the extent of political corruption in dozens of countries throughout the world: the Corruption Perceptions

Index and the Corruption Index of ICGR (International Country Risk Guide).

**The Corruption Perceptions Index.** The Corruption Perceptions Index is published by Transparency International, an organization that fights corruption, promotes transparency and integrity throughout the world, and raises international awareness on the issue. This measure has been published yearly since 1995, and is based on the perceptions and evaluations of experts as determined in surveys conducted by twelve research institutes and organizations in 179 countries. The scores range from 0 to 10 – the higher the score, the freer of corruption is the country considered to be. As can be seen in Figure 7, Israel is in the 22<sup>nd</sup> place in the ranking of 36 countries according to the 2009 Index, between Cyprus and Taiwan, with an average score of 6. Denmark, Sweden, and New Zealand received the highest scores; each one has a score of 9.3. Mexico, Thailand, and Argentina scored the lowest.

The change in the perception of corruption that has been taking place in Israel in recent years is worth noting. Figure 7 presents the score that Israel received in the Corruption Perceptions Index between 2001-2008. In general, a gradual deterioration was recorded in this period, from a score of 7.6 in 2001, ranking 14<sup>th</sup> out of 36 countries, to a score of 6 at the end of 2008, ranking 22<sup>nd</sup> – a significant drop in the assessment of Israel as a country free of corruption.<sup>32</sup>

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32 For details, see: [www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi)

Figure 6

**Representativeness in an International Comparison and in Israel**  
**Party Dominance Index**

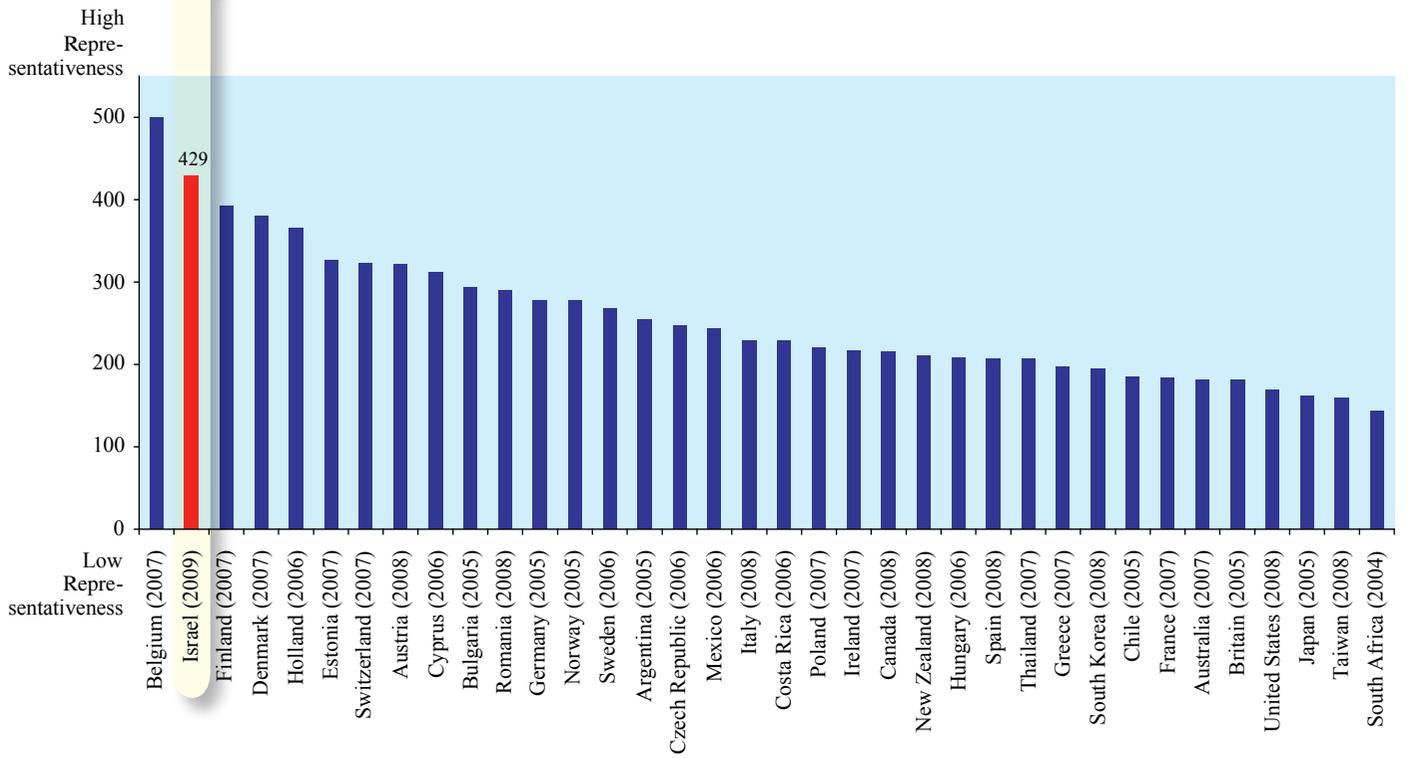
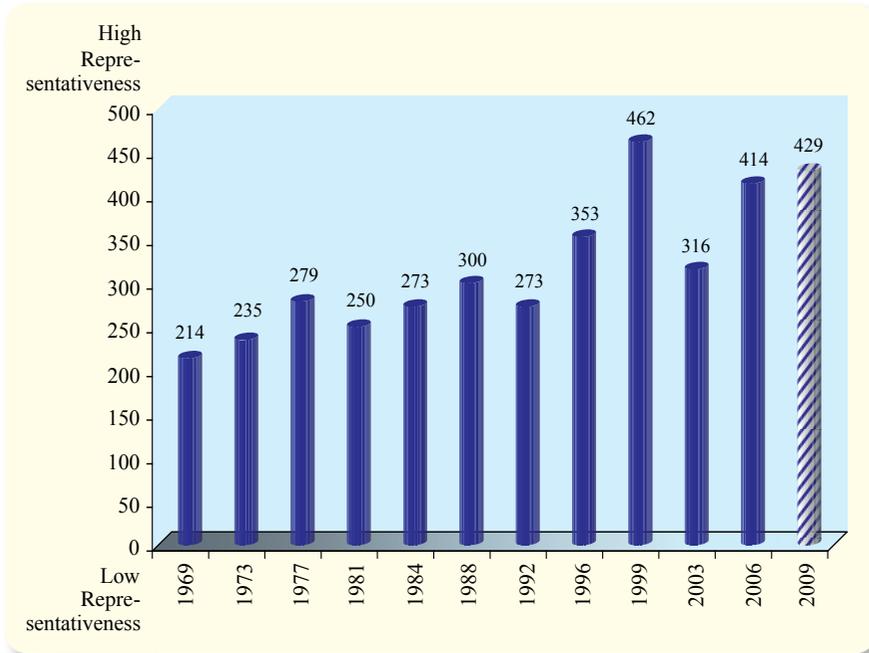
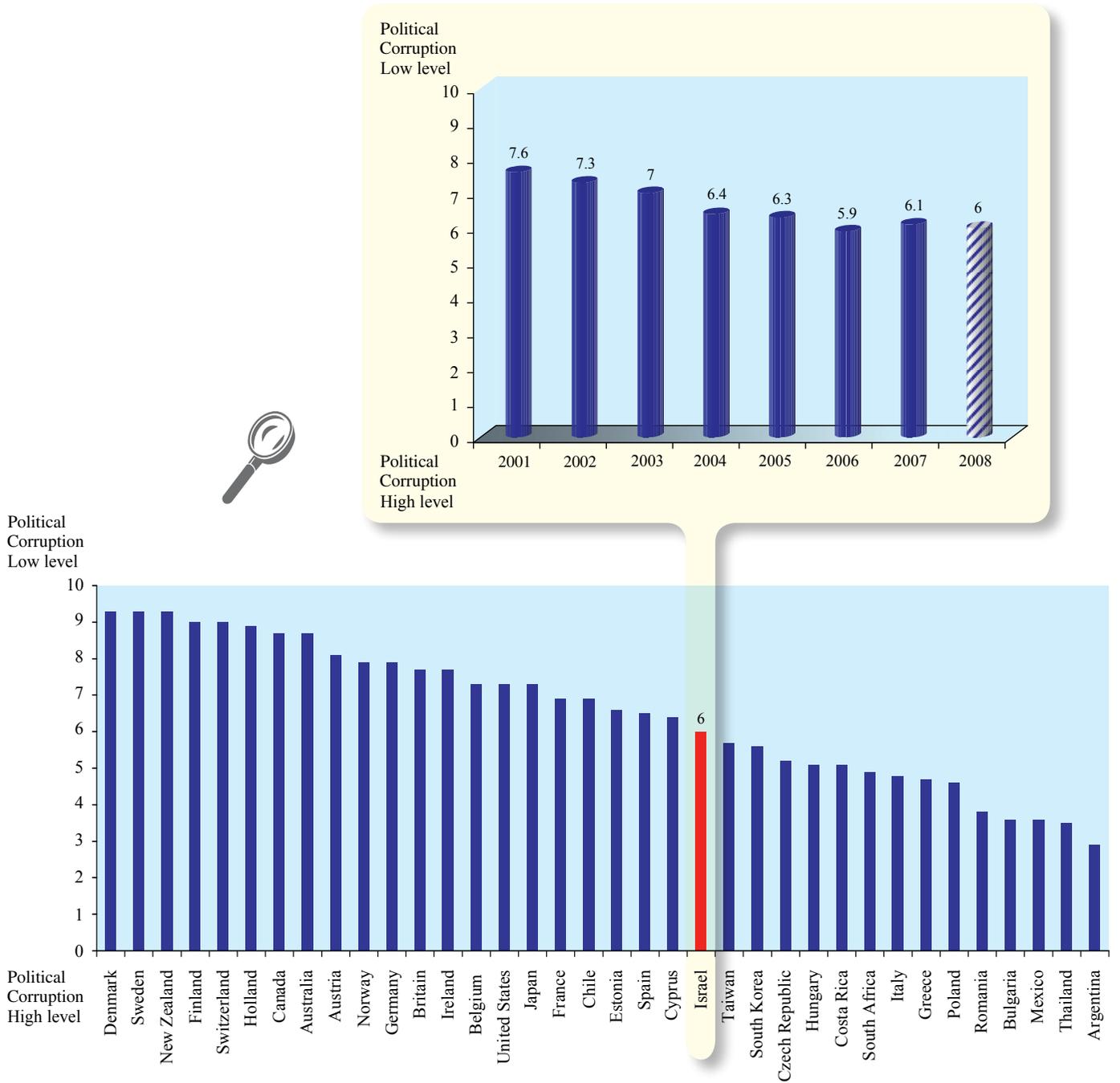


Figure 7

**Political Corruption in an International Comparison and in Israel**



**The Corruption Index of ICRG.** The ICRG is a comparative update 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, may lead to the toppling of the regime. The ICRG collects information on corruption in 140 countries. The measure includes seven categories, and scores range from 0, which denotes high corruption, to 6, which indicates no corruption.<sup>33</sup> In this measure, Israel received a score of 3, beside Hungary and Japan, placing it between 20 and 23 in the ranking of 36 countries.<sup>34</sup>

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

This aspect is concerned with the political, civil, social, and economic rights of individuals and with gender equality in a given society. Political rights are the rights that citizens have by virtue of their inclusion in political frameworks, which enable them to participate in the country's political proceedings. Civil rights preserve individual liberties. Social rights are granted to individuals in order to fulfill their basic needs and ensure their personal development (such as the right to work, the right to education, and the right to health). Economic rights are meant to preserve the property of individuals in the society. Gender equality means that there is no discrimination in the rights of women as opposed to the rights of men.<sup>35</sup>

### **(1) Political Rights: The Freedom of the Press Index**

Political rights protect liberties vital to the maintenance of proper and egalitarian, democratic procedures to ensure free, fair, and secret elections, and equal opportunities to citizens who seek to participate in the political processes. Every year, we examine the Freedom of the Press Index developed by Freedom House in 1979 in order to clarify the status of these rights. This organization distributes a questionnaire among experts and ranks 195 countries throughout the world according to the level of freedom of the press prevailing in each one – “free,” “partly free,” or “not free.” In determining the score, the organization takes into account the constitutional environment, the political pressures on journalists, and the economic factors affecting information accessibility. The scores range from 0 (full press freedom) to 100 (no press freedom). A score of 0-30 attests to a free press, a score of 31-60 attests to a partly free press, and countries scoring above 61 are defined as “countries without a free press.”<sup>36</sup>

Figure 8 presents a ranking of 36 democratic countries that participated in the study according to the score they received in the Freedom of the Press Index. Israel scored 31, ranking 31<sup>st</sup>. For the first time since the initial publication of this index, Israel is in the category of countries in which the

33 For details, see: [www.prsgroup.com/ICRG\\_Methodology.aspx#PolRiskRating](http://www.prsgroup.com/ICRG_Methodology.aspx#PolRiskRating)

34 Four countries received the same score.

35 For further details, see Arian et. al, *The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 1 above).

36 For further details, see: [www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=350&ana\\_page=348&year=2008](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=350&ana_page=348&year=2008)

press is partly free. Leading the countries with the greatest measure of press freedom are Finland, Denmark, and Norway, with scores of 10 and 11; Argentina, Mexico, and Thailand are the countries with the lowest measure of press freedom in the sample. Like Israel, all three are in the category of partly free countries. Israel is situated between South Korea and Bulgaria. Its score (31) is worse than last year's (28). Israel's relatively low score can be explained by the security situation, which entails constraints on the press imposed by the government and the security forces.<sup>37</sup> The organization's report notes that Israel dropped in the ranking due to the armed conflict in Gaza at the end of December 2008. In the course of the conflict, the government imposed limitations on the journalists' freedom of movement; official attempts were made to influence media coverage; the Israeli media adopted self-censorship and its reporting was biased.<sup>38</sup>

## (2) Civil Rights: Law and Order, the Rule of Law, and the Rate of Prisoners in the Population

The **Law and Order Index of ICRG** is divided into two sub-categories that grant three points each. The "law" sub-category examines the power and independence of the country's legal system. The "order" sub-category examines the public visibility of the law in the country, that is, the citizens'

measure of compliance with the law. The general score ranges from 0 (no law and order) to 6 (a high level of maintenance of law and order).<sup>39</sup> In this measure, Israel received a score of 5. Its score attests to an institutionalized and ordered system of law enforcement and to respect for the law among most of its citizens. In the ranking of the 36 countries that were examined, Israel ranked between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 24<sup>th</sup> place,<sup>40</sup> exactly as it did in previous years.

An additional measure that examines the strictness of the law enforcement system is the **number of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants**. The assumption is that a high rate of prisoners indicates excessive stringency and imposition of limitations on individual freedom by the law enforcement system. This is another indication of the protection of civil rights in the country. In measuring the rate of prisoners in Israel, a distinction is usually drawn between prisoners in general and security prisoners (who are residents of the territories captured in the 1967 war). In 2008, Israel held 22,778 prisoners, of which 9,068 were security prisoners. The number of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants (including security prisoners) was 326. The number of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants, excluding security prisoners, was 196. This figure represents an increase relative to the figures of 158 prisoners in 2007 and 165 at the beginning

37 In 1948, the newly established State of Israel adopted the 1945 Defense (Emergency) Regulations that grant almost unlimited authority to the Censor "to prohibit the publishing in publications of matters that in his opinion would be, or be likely to be or become, prejudicial to the defense of Palestine, or to the public safety, or to public order." These Regulations, designed for security protection and for the preservation of the public order, are still valid today.

38 Karin Deutsch Karlekar, *Press Freedom in 2008: Restrictive Laws and Physical Attacks Fuel Further Declines*, 7: [www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fop/2009/FreedomofthePress2009\\_OverviewEssay.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/fop/2009/FreedomofthePress2009_OverviewEssay.pdf)

39 For further details, see: [www.prsgroup.com/ICRG\\_Methodology.aspx#PolRiskRating](http://www.prsgroup.com/ICRG_Methodology.aspx#PolRiskRating)

40 In this index, 13 countries have the same score.

of 2008. Figure 9 shows that Israel ranked 27<sup>th</sup> out of the 36 countries examined in an international comparison.<sup>41</sup> At the top of the list of countries with the highest number of prisoners per 100,000 people are the United States (756), South Africa (334), and Chile (306). The countries with the lowest number of prisoners are Denmark (63), Japan (63), and Finland (64).

### (3) Economic Rights

For the purpose of estimating the protection of economic rights (freedom of property), we chose a measure of economic freedom developed by the Heritage Foundation. This index examines the institutional environment of economic activity in each country. The Heritage Foundation explicitly supports neo-liberal principles – free market and minimal government intervention – and defines economic freedom as the absence of government coercion or limitations in the production, distribution, or consumption of products and services beyond the extent required to protect freedom itself.

The **Index of Economic Freedom** has been published since 1995, and this year includes 183 countries. The score that each country receives is based on a combination of ten economic indicators: business freedom, trade policy, fiscal policy, government size (government expenditure), monetary policy, investments and capital flow, financial freedom (banking and financing), property rights, freedom from corruption, and salary and price policy.<sup>42</sup>

The Index of Economic Freedom published in January 2009 ranges from 0% (no economic freedom) to 100% (maximum economic freedom). Figure 10 shows the scores that Israel received in each of the ten indicators. Figure 11 indicates that the countries defined as most free are Australia (82.6%), Ireland (82.2%) and New Zealand (82%), whereas Greece (60.8%), Poland (60.3%), and Argentina (52.3%) close the list and are defined as mostly unfree. In 2009, Israel ranked 24<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of 36 countries (with a score of 67.6%), between South Korea and Hungary. This place in the ranking reflects a slight rise from 2008, when Israel ranked 25<sup>th</sup>. A comparison with previous years shows that Israel has not regained its 2003 ranking of 17<sup>th</sup> place.

A new measure attesting to the status of economic rights is the **Global Competitiveness Index**, published by the World Economic Forum. This index was developed in 2004, and includes 134 countries. A nation's level of competitiveness reflects the extent to which it is able to ensure prosperity and equal opportunity to its citizens. This index measures twelve areas of competitiveness, which include institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labor market efficiency, financial market sophistication, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, and innovation.

41 Israel's ranking is determined by the number of prisoners, excluding security prisoners. If all prisoners are included, Israel ranks 34<sup>th</sup> out of 36 countries.

42 For further details, see: [www.heritage.org/index/pdf/Index09\\_Methodology.pdf](http://www.heritage.org/index/pdf/Index09_Methodology.pdf) (Note that the names of some of the components of the Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom were altered to match customary terminology in Israel.)

Figure 8

Freedom of the Press in an International Comparison and in Israel

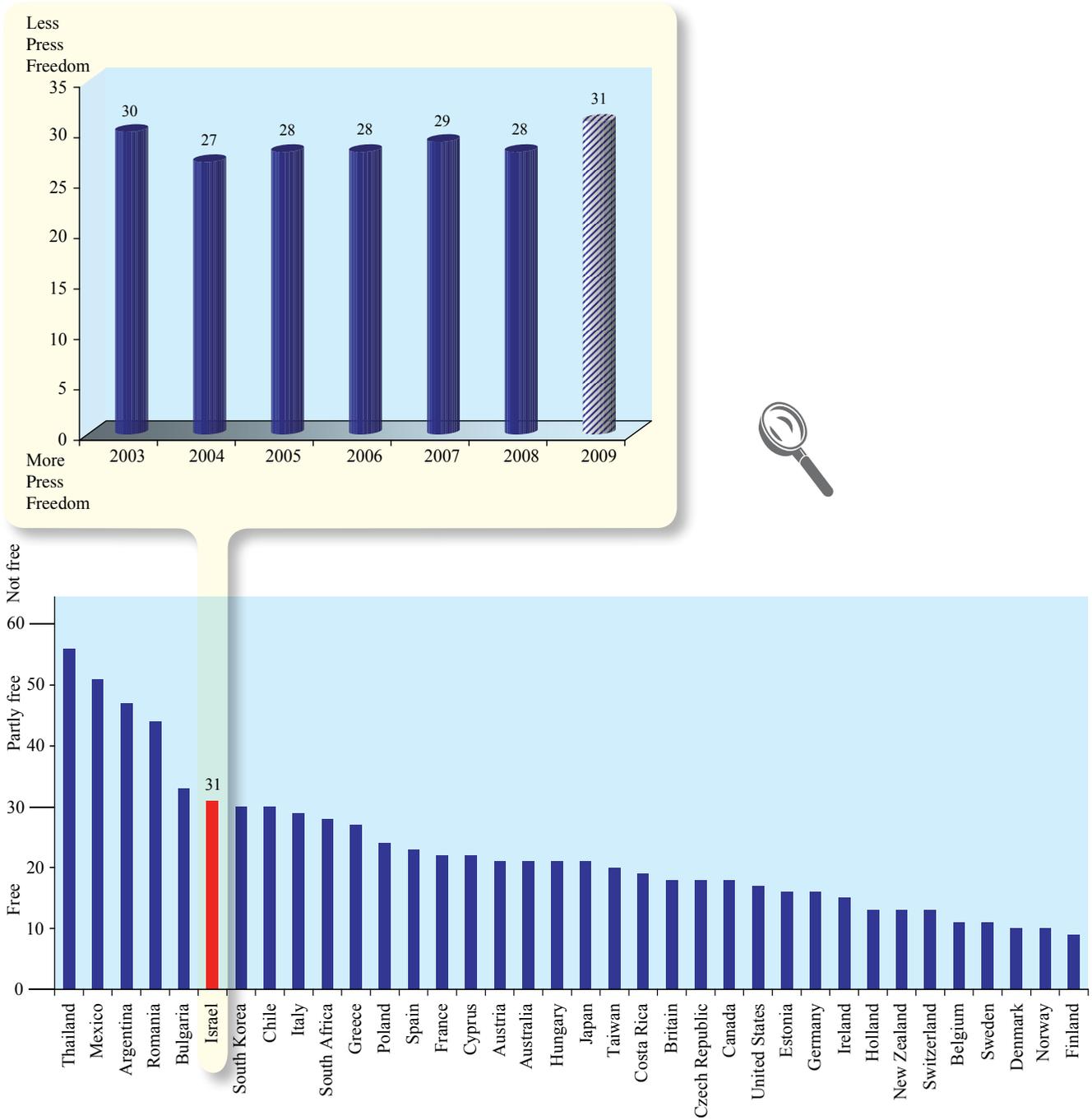
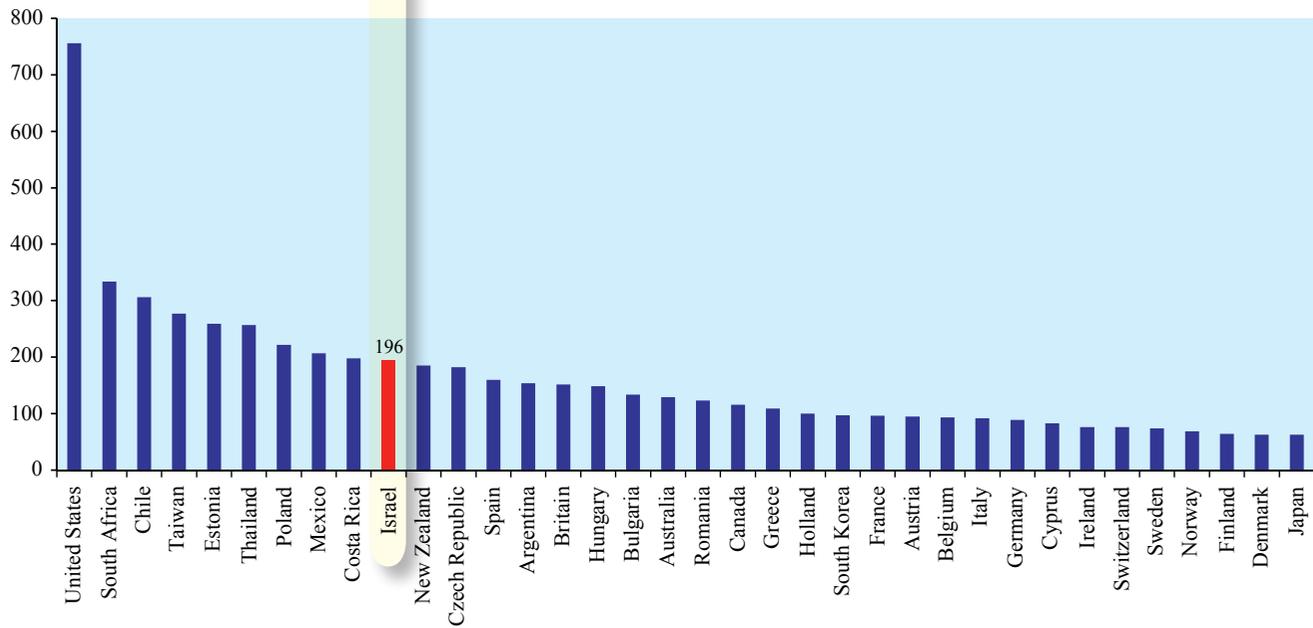
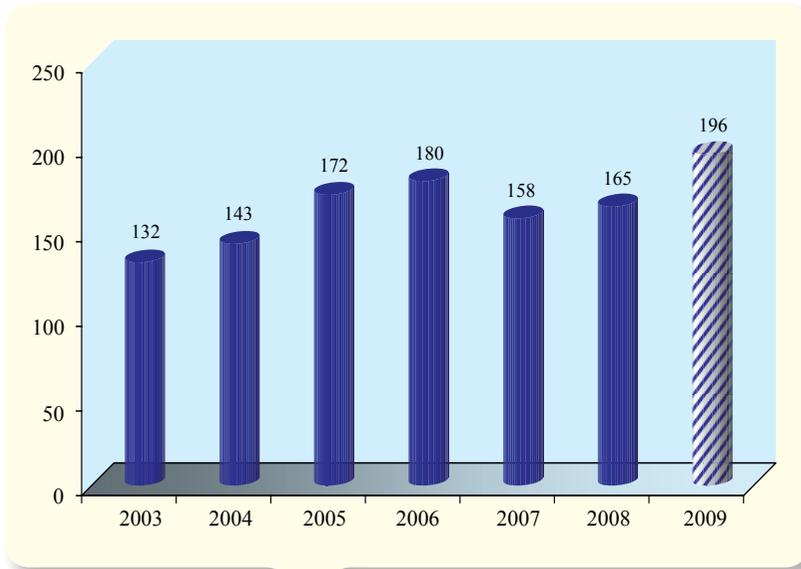


Figure 9

**Number of Prisoners per 100,000 Inhabitants in an International Comparison and in Israel\***

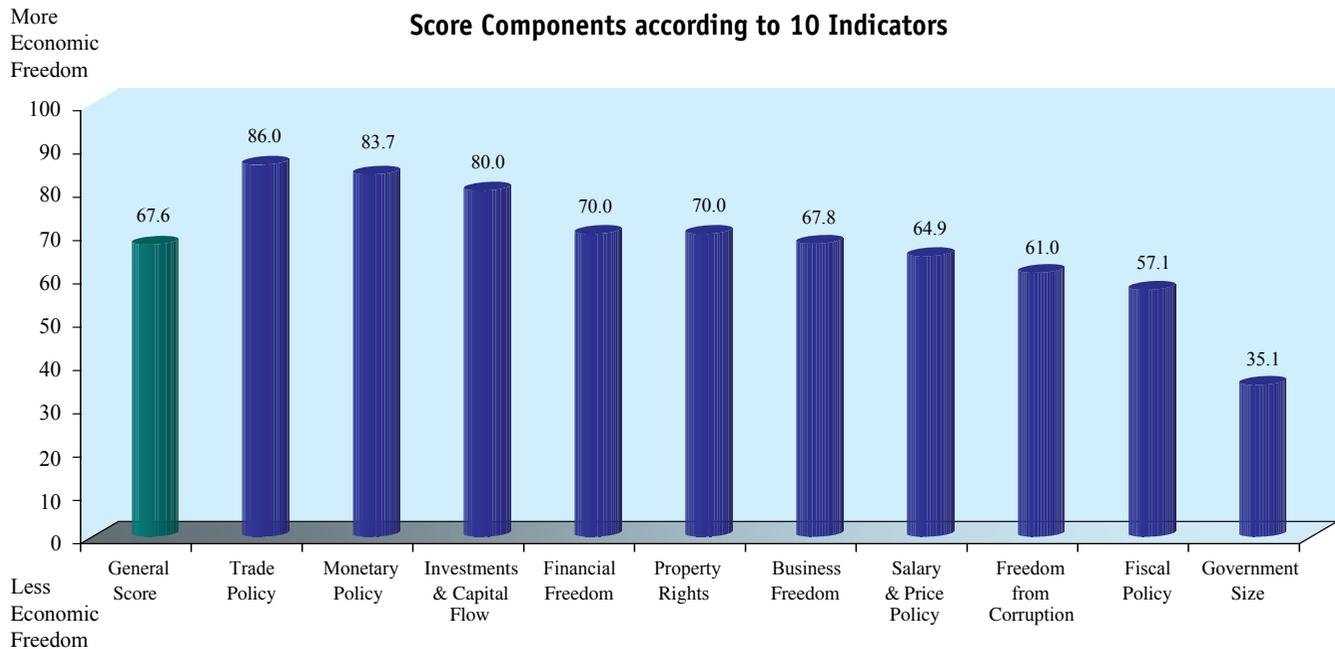


\* Excluding security prisoners

Figure 10

### Economic Freedom in Israel\*

#### Score Components according to 10 Indicators



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

The index is based on public opinion polls and on surveys of experts.<sup>43</sup>

Scores in the Competitiveness Index range from 1 (low competitiveness) to 7 (high competitiveness). Figure 12 shows that the countries with the highest level of competitiveness are the United States (5.74), Switzerland (5.61), and Denmark (5.58). Closing the list are Romania (4.10), Bulgaria

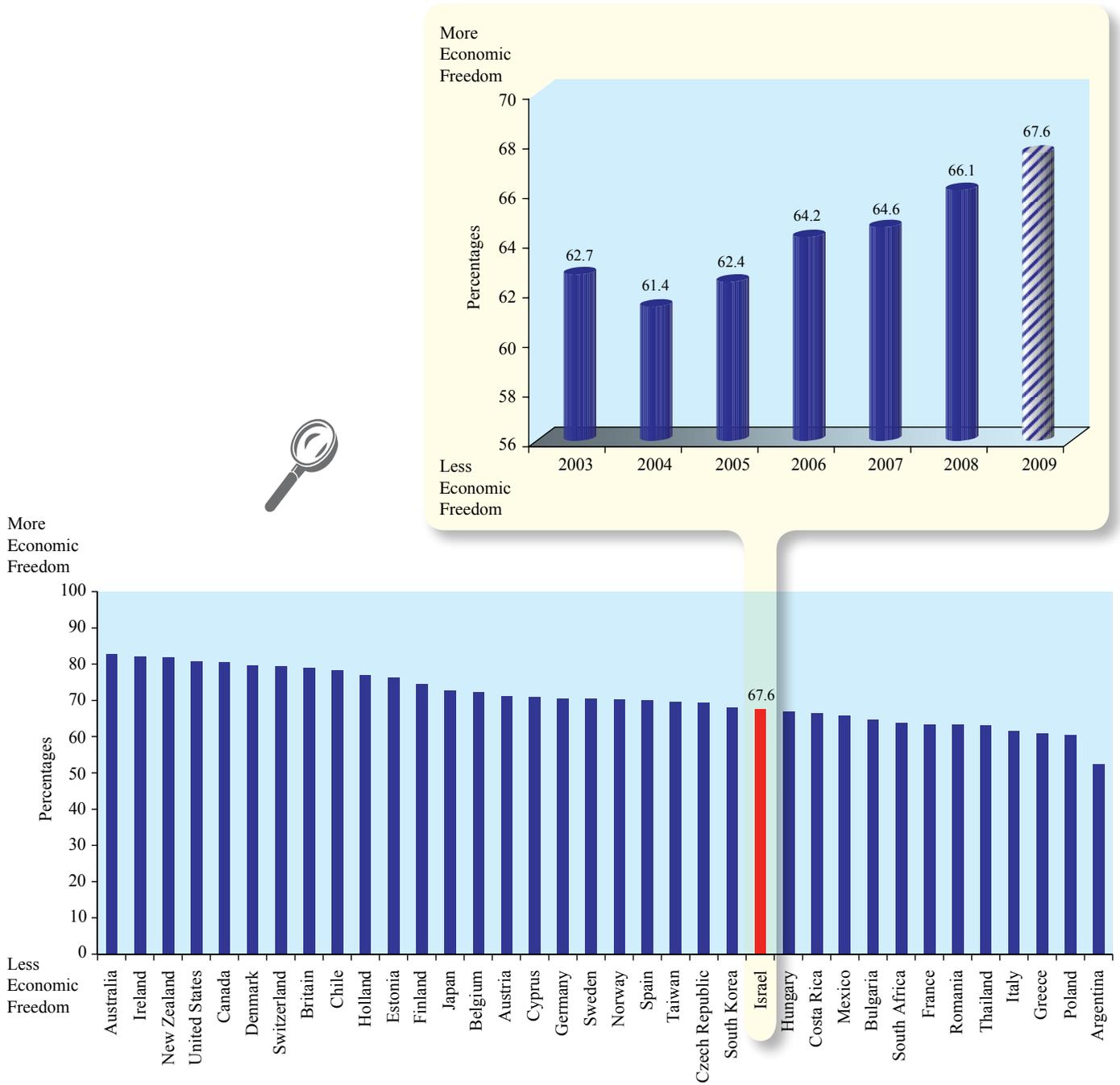
(4.03), and Argentina (3.87). In 2009, Israel ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in the list of 36 countries (with a score of 4.97), between Ireland and New Zealand. The organization's report in 2009 indicates that Israel's Achilles' heel is its government institutions, the increasing concern with the protection of property rights, inefficient government expenditures, and the decline in the citizens' trust in politicians.<sup>44</sup>

43 For further details, see: [www.weforum.org/en/media/Latest%20Press%20Releases/PR\\_GCR082](http://www.weforum.org/en/media/Latest%20Press%20Releases/PR_GCR082)

44 For further details, see: [www.weforum.org/documents/GCR0809/index.html](http://www.weforum.org/documents/GCR0809/index.html)

Figure 11

**Economic Freedom in an International Comparison and in Israel (percentages)**



#### (4) Gender Equality

This year, we have chosen to examine gender equality in Israel through the **Global Gender Gap Index**. This index has been published by the World Economic Forum since 2006, and provides a framework for evaluating the scope of gender inequality and the changes that occur over time in 160 countries. It focuses on gender gaps in politics, the economy, education, and health. It rests on three assumptions. First, it focuses on measuring gaps between genders rather than levels of equality. Second, it measures gaps as reflected in outcome variables rather than gaps in input variables. Third, it ranks countries according to gender equality rather than according to measures of women's empowerment.<sup>45</sup>

Scores in the Gender Gap Index range from 0 (inequality) to 1 (equality). Figure 13 shows that the countries with the highest score in gender equality are Norway (0.82), Finland (0.82), and Sweden (0.81). Closing the list are Mexico (0.64), Japan (0.64), and South Korea (0.62). In 2008, Israel ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in the ranking of 36 countries (with a score of 0.69), between Thailand and Hungary. The 2008 report indicates a drop in Israel's ranking as opposed to previous years. Its weaker points are in the economic sphere – where Israel scored 0.66 – and in the political sphere – where Israel received a very low score of 0.14. In the areas of

education (score of 1) and health (score of 0.97), no gender gaps were found in Israel (Figure 14).

One measure accepted in the literature for examining gender gaps in the political realm is political participation as manifest in the representation of women in parliament (Figure 15). This criterion is important because, *inter alia*, inadequate representation of women in politics prevents them from realizing their basic civil rights. Since the 15<sup>th</sup> Knesset, more women have been elected, but the number of women in the Israeli parliament is low relative to the number of men. In the elections to the 18<sup>th</sup> Knesset conducted in February 2009, 21 women were elected, constituting 17.5% of Knesset members. The low percentage of women in the Knesset explains Israel's low scores in the political empowerment measure of the Gender Gap Index. Note the significant gaps between parties in the 18<sup>th</sup> Knesset: in Kadima (the largest Knesset faction), out of 28 members, seven are women. The Likud (the second largest faction) has five women out of 27 members. The highest rate of women is in Yisrael Beitenu – five out of 15 members. By contrast, the Arab lists (Hadash, Balad [National Democratic Assembly], and Ra'am-Ta'al) include only one woman (out of 11 MKs in all these factions combined), and Shas and United Torah Judaism refrain from including even one woman in their lists.

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45 For further details, see: [www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2008.pdf](http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2008.pdf)

Figure 12

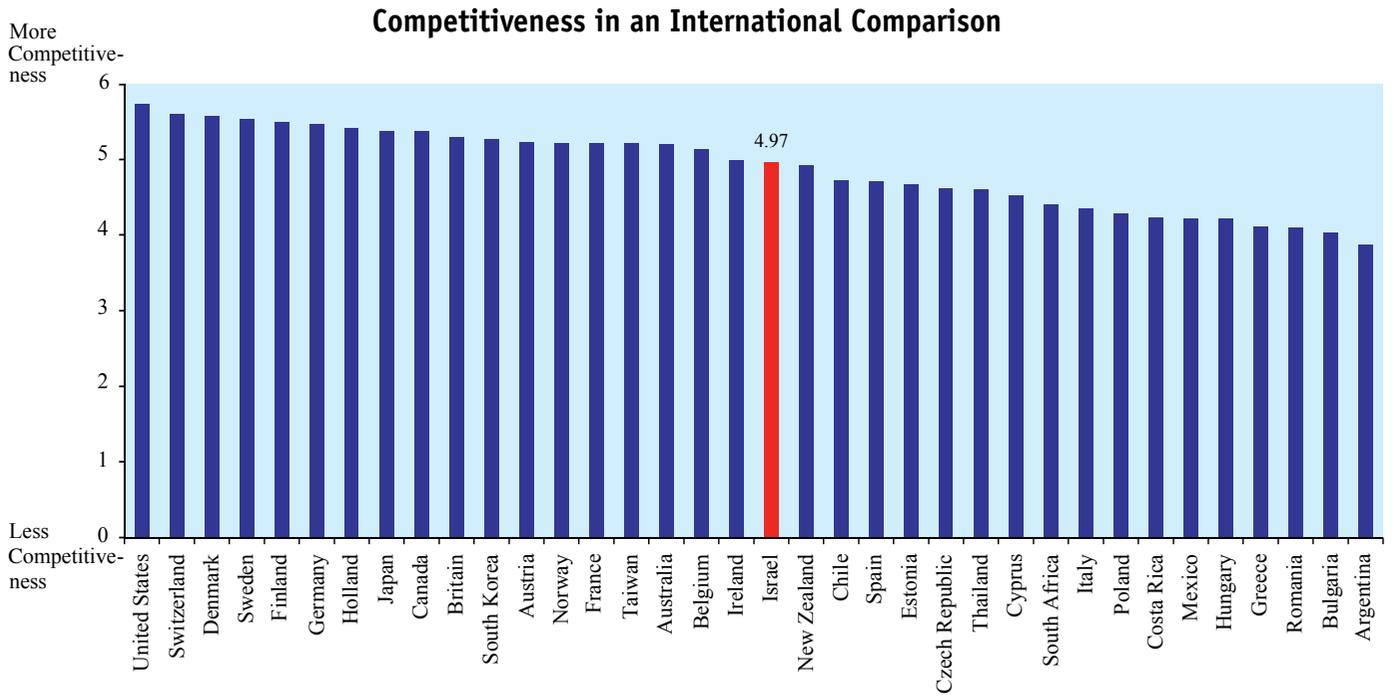


Figure 13

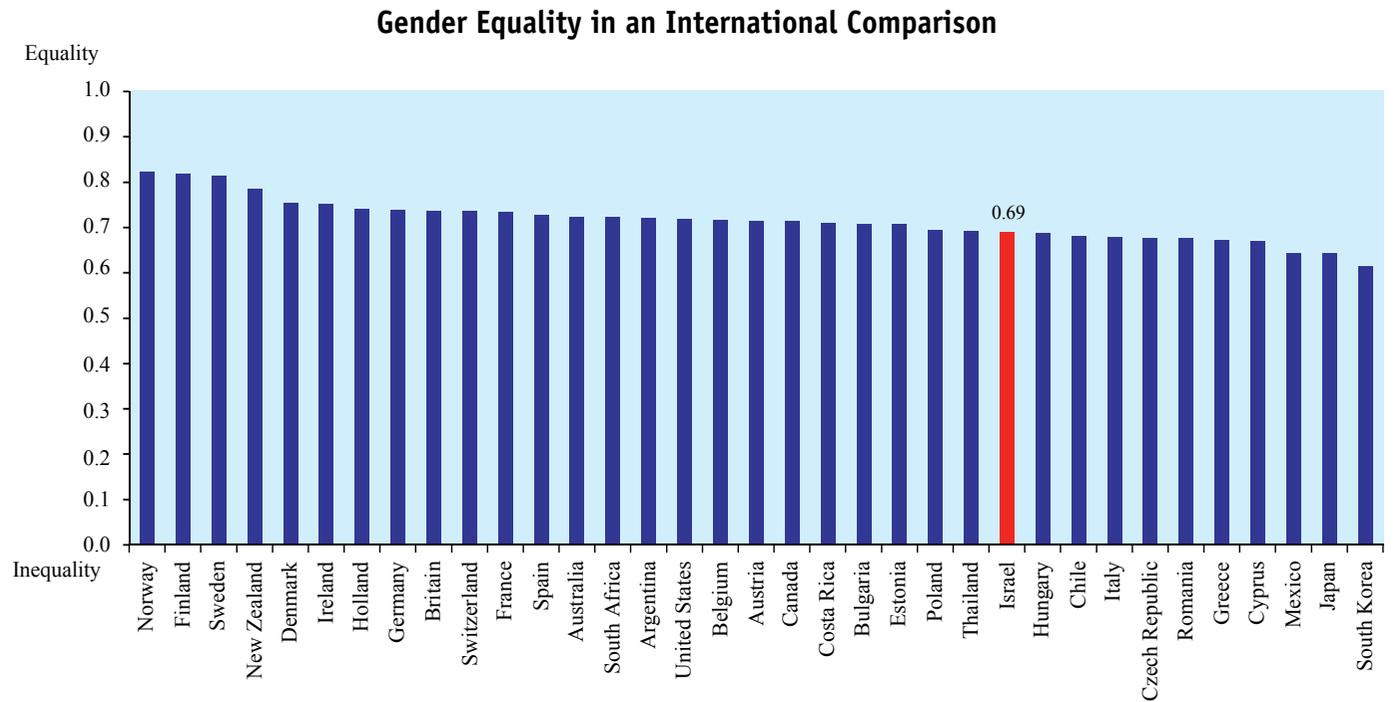


Figure 14

**Gender Equality in Israel**  
Score Components according to 4 Indicators

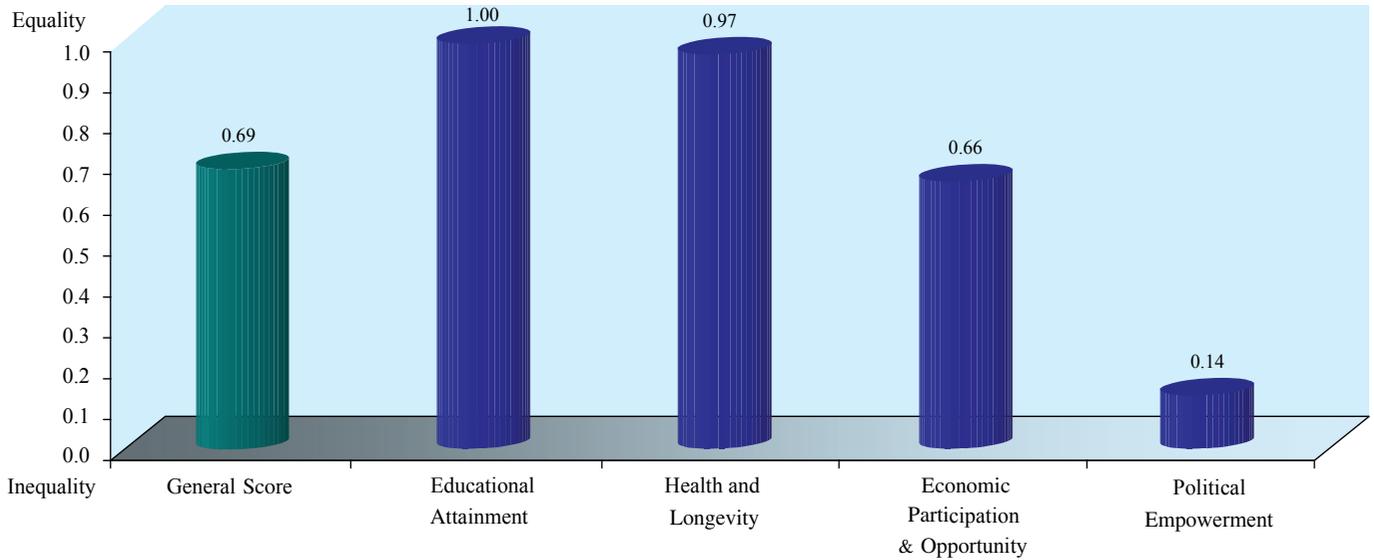
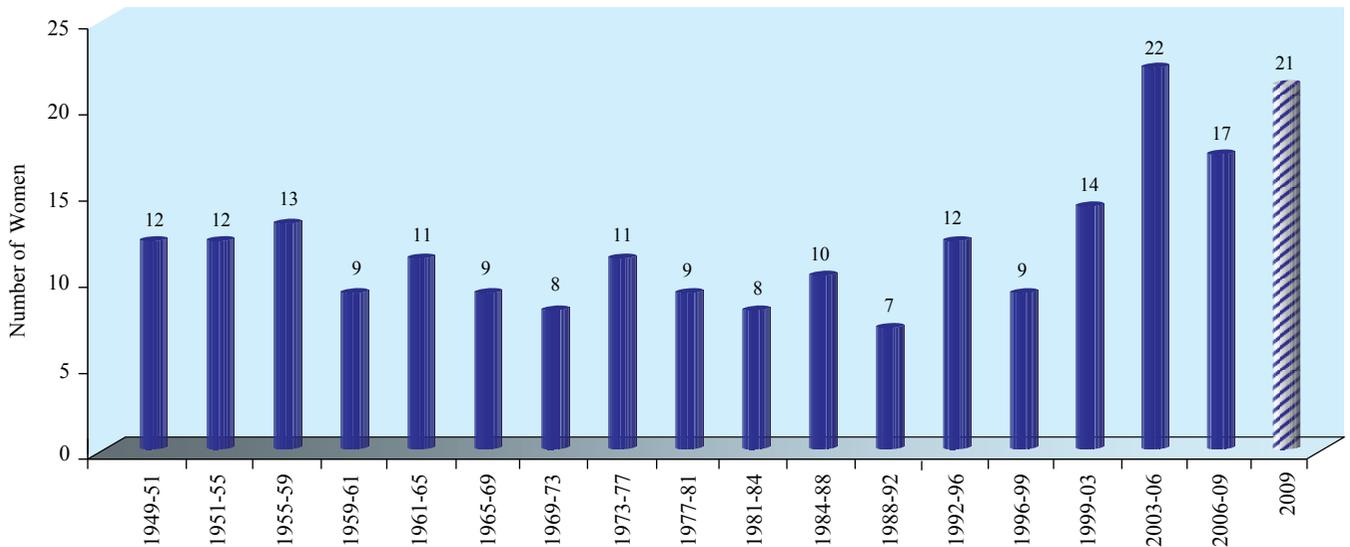


Figure 15

**Women Elected to the Knesset in Israel, 1949-2009**



### (c) The Stability Aspect

The definition of political stability is: an absence of fundamental changes or of substantial disruptions in the functioning of the political system. Political stability is generally measured by the level of violence, the length of a government's term, and the level of social/ethnic/political tensions in the country.<sup>46</sup>

#### (1) The Stability of the Government

Scholars have long been interested in the matter of stability of political systems. In reference to this, we measure the stability of the government rather than the actual stability of the democratic regime. In the **Democracy Index 2009**, we focus on the Incomplete Term of Office Index, which examines the frequency of changes of government and the government's term of office as designated on the day it is sworn in. In other words, we consider whether the government succeeded in completing its term of office or was replaced before the end of its term as set by law. The Incomplete Term of Office Index is calculated by dividing the length of a government's term – from the day it is sworn in until the swearing in of the next government – by the designated term of office – from the day it was sworn in until the appointed date of the next elections, as determined in Basic Law: the Knesset.<sup>47</sup> This indicator ranges from 0% to 100%.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> government, headed by Ehud Olmert, began its term in May 2006, and new elections were held in February 2009. The Olmert government was based on a broad coalition that included 78 MKs and, therefore, was considered relatively stable.<sup>48</sup> The “constructive non-confidence law,” which hampers the opposition's efforts to bring down the government, was considered to be another stabilizing element. Despite the political crises and the turnover of ministers, as well as the public criticism of the outcome of the Second Lebanon War, the government seemed relatively stable. The corruption allegations against Prime Minister Olmert, however, led to his resignation. Tzipi Livni replaced Olmert at the head of Kadima, but she failed to form a coalition in the time allowed by the law, and elections were advanced to 10 February 2009.

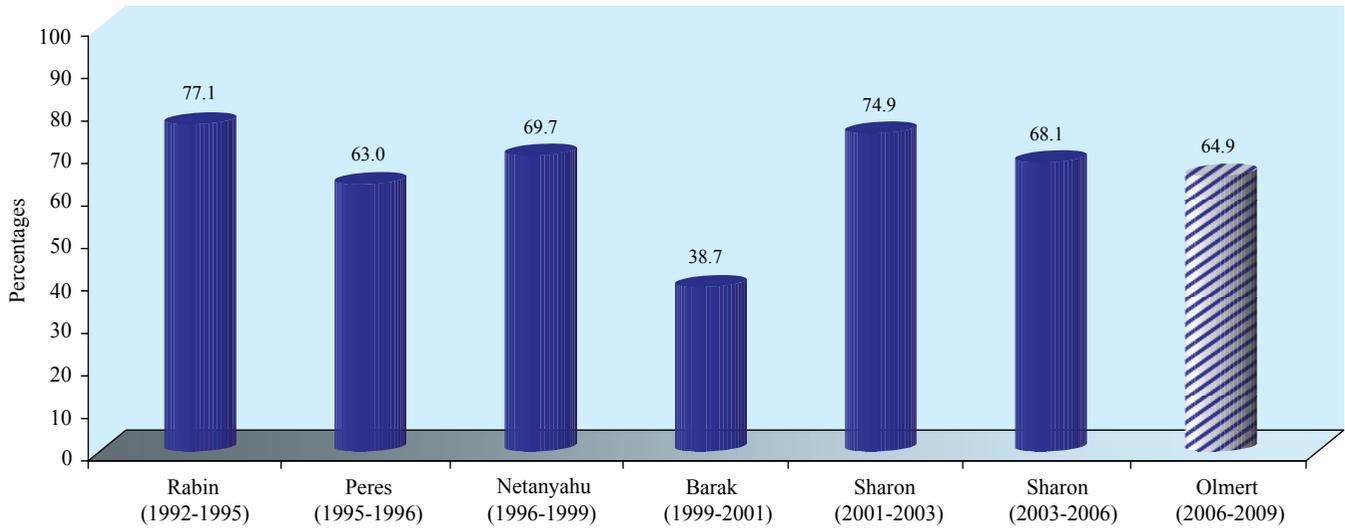
Figure 16 presents this indicator over time. In the last decade, no government succeeded in completing its term. The 28<sup>th</sup> government led by Ehud Barak (1999-2001) completed only 38.7% of its term. The 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> governments of Ariel Sharon (2001-2006) did last for longer periods, but succeeded in completing (respectively) only 74.9% and 68.1% of their assigned terms. The last government completed only 64.9% of its term.

46 Jack C. Plano, Robert E. Riggs, and Helenan S. Robin, *The Dictionary of Political Analysis* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1982), 149; Leon Hurwitz, “Contemporary Approaches to Political Stability,” *Comparative Politics* 5 (1973): 449.

47 For further details, see: [www.knesset.gov.il/elections16/heb/laws/yesod2.htm](http://www.knesset.gov.il/elections16/heb/laws/yesod2.htm)

48 The coalition formed after the 2006 elections included 78 MKs, and after Yisrael Beitenu left the government in January 2008, it included 67 MKs.

Figure 16

**Incomplete Term of Office in Israel Index (percentages)****(2) Social Cleavages**

The pattern of relationships between social groups, the tensions between them, the magnitude of the scope and nature of the cleavages – all strongly influence the stability of the political system. Lipset and Rokkan define a cleavage as a social division separating groups in society according to characteristics such as occupation, social class, ethnicity, religion, and so forth.<sup>49</sup> The attempt to arrive at a quantitative estimate of social cleavages is particularly difficult. The ICRG database is the only one that addresses social cleavages with the help of two indicators: the Religious Tension Index and the Ethnic/National/Linguistic Tension Index.

**The Religious Tension Index.** The Religious Tension Index is a scale of seven categories that estimates tension in a society based on a religious cleavage. The tension may come to the fore in attempts to replace civil law with religious law, to marginalize religious groups from political and social processes, or in oppression or coercion aimed at creating a ruling religious hegemony. The scale ranges from 0 (low tension) to 6 (high tension).<sup>50</sup>

**The Ethnic/National/Linguistic Tension Index.** The Ethnic/National/Linguistic Tension Index is a scale of seven categories that estimates the level of tension in a society due to ethnic, national, or linguistic cleavages. This scale also ranges from 0 (high tension)

49 Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments,” in *The West European Party System*, ed. Peter Mair (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 91–111.

50 For further details, see: [www.prsgroup.com/ICRG\\_Methodology.aspx](http://www.prsgroup.com/ICRG_Methodology.aspx)

to 6 (low tension). In Israel, this index applies to both the ethnic cleavage within the Jewish public and the national cleavage between national groups.

Figure 17 presents both religious tensions and ethnic/national/linguistic tensions in 36 democracies in 2009. In the Religious Tension Index, many countries obtain the maximum score, whereas among countries receiving low scores, we find Israel, Holland, and Thailand. Israel's score is 2.5, which puts it in the 34<sup>th</sup>-35<sup>th</sup> place, together with Holland. In the Ethnic/National/Linguistic Tension Index, the countries with a high score (meaning low tension) are Argentina, Costa Rica, and Finland. By contrast, countries with a low score (meaning high tension) are France, Israel, and Thailand. Israel's score is 2, which ranks it in the 35<sup>th</sup>-36<sup>th</sup> place, beside Thailand.

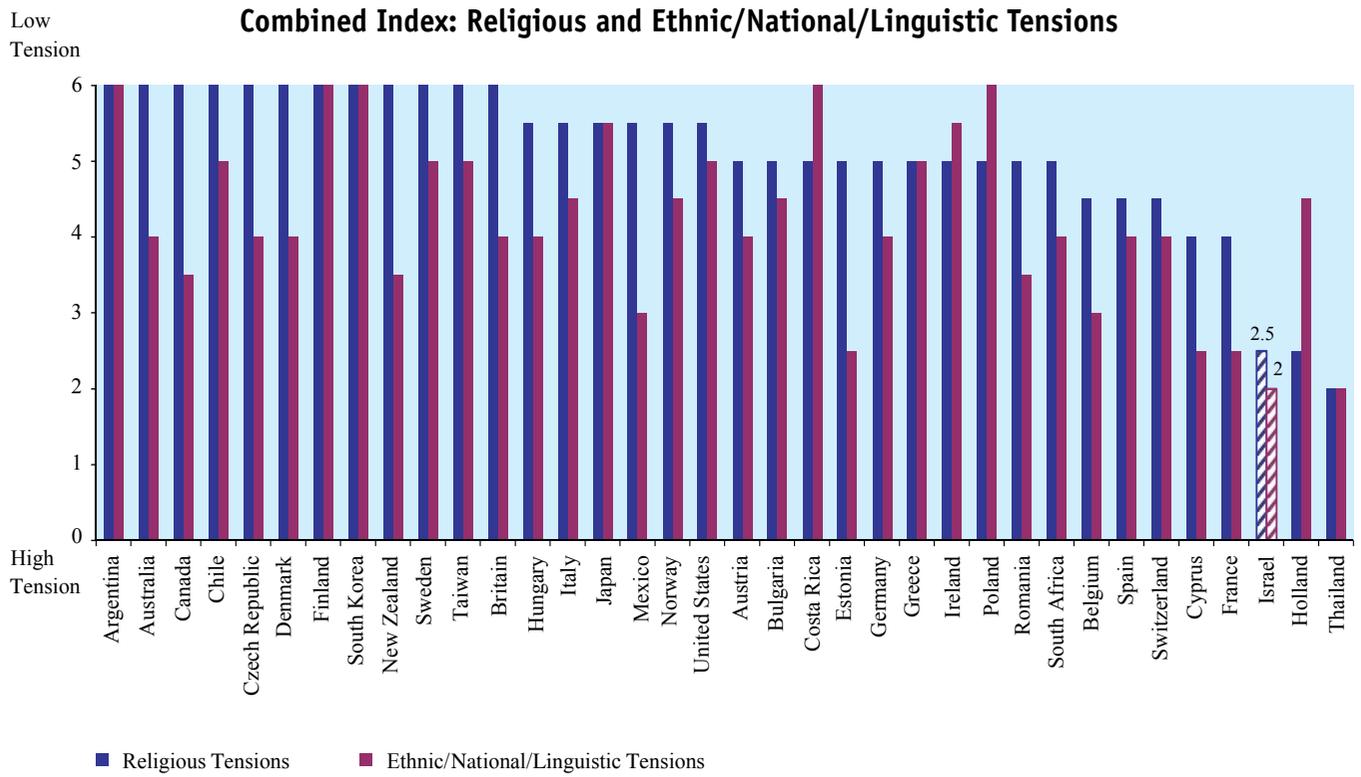
According to a historical examination of these two indices since 1992, high tension

has prevailed in Israel for years. Between 1992 and 2008, Israel scored 2-3 in the Religious Tensions Index, and 1 and 2 in the National/Ethnic/Linguistic Tension Index. No real changes occurred compared with previous years. Both indices point to high tension between the groups that constitute Israeli society. This tension is caused by several factors: Israel is a heterogeneous country, religiously, ethnically, and linguistically. Most of its cleavages overlap, implying that there is a correlation between the various groups to which a person belongs. This exacerbates the cleavages and increases the chances that inter-group tensions will translate into open conflicts. Thus, for example, linguistic, national, and religious cleavages overlap. Similarly, national and economic cleavages also overlap, as do ethnic and religious cleavages with the left-right political cleavage.<sup>51</sup>

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51 Thus, for instance, Israel's Arab citizens are mainly Moslems and members of low socio-economic groups. By contrast, Israel's Jewish citizens are Jewish by religion and belong to socio-economic groups of higher status than those to which Arab citizens belong. For further discussion of Israel's overlapping social cleavages, see Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lisak, *Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1989); Sami Smooha, "Class, Ethnic, and National Cleavages and Democracy in Israel," in *Israeli Democracy under Stress*, ed. Ehud Sprinzak and Larry Diamond (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), 309-342; Michal Shamir and Asher Arian, "Collective Identity and Electoral Competition in Israel," *The American Political Science Review* 93 (1999): 265-277.

Figure 17



## **Part Two**

# **The Democracy Survey 2009**



## A. Introduction

Along with the analysis of the objective international measures in the first part of the current report, we conducted a public opinion survey in order to assess the attitudes of the Israeli public toward Israeli democracy. The survey was conducted in March 2009 in a representative sample of the Israeli adult population (aged 18 and over).<sup>52</sup> The sample included 1,191 subjects, who were interviewed in three languages: Hebrew, Arabic, and Russian. One of the population groups on which we focused is that of FSU immigrants,<sup>53</sup> who have been arriving in Israel since 1989. For the purpose of conducting statistical analyses of this group, the immigrants sample was expanded to include 408 respondents (as opposed to 180 immigrants in the national sample). Data dealing with the Israeli public are based on the representative sample, whereas data on the immigrants' group are based on the expanded sample, which allows for an in-depth statistical analysis of this group (for instance, according to age and degree of religiosity).

Part two is divided into two chapters. The first deals with the public's attitudes toward three aspects of Israeli democracy: the institutional aspect, the rights aspect, and the stability aspect. The analysis places special emphasis on the attitudes of FSU immigrants in order to contrast them with

those of Jewish old-timers. We will deal with the social and political integration of FSU immigrants in Israeli society through an analysis of their political attitudes, the immigrants' perceptions of their influence on politics, and their desire to live in Israel. The second chapter deals with the topic to which the Democracy Index 2009 is devoted – the immigrants' integration into Israeli society and into the Israeli economy. This chapter presents the sensitive issues associated with the “Russian” immigration and the immigrants' perceptions of their own integration. Note that we do not draw comparisons between immigration waves and their absorption and integration into Israel; this study is confined to FSU immigrants – and to those of the large immigration wave of the 1990s among them.

One limitation of the current study concerns the comparison between immigrants and Jewish old-timers, given that the latter is a less homogeneous group than the immigrants. We also find variance in social capital among immigrants as a function of year of immigration and country of origin, although most immigrants came to Israel from the large and midsize cities in the FSU during a brief period in the early 1990s.<sup>54</sup> By contrast, Jewish old-timers appear as a far more complex ethnic, religious, and social class mosaic, which includes secular,

52 The survey was conducted by the Mahshov Institute. Maximum sampling error, at confidence levels of 95%, is  $\pm 2.8$ .

53 Henceforth, the term “immigrants” refers to FSU immigrants who have come to Israel since 1989, and the term “Jewish old-timers” refers to Israeli Jews who are not FSU immigrants.

54 Larissa I. Remennick, *Russian Jews on Three Continents* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 59.

Ultra-Orthodox, Mizrahi, and Ashkenazi Jews.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, in the comparison between the political cultures of these two groups, when we found internal variance in the Jewish old-timers group, we broke it down according to the degree of religiosity and ethnicity.

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55 Horowitz and Lisak, *Trouble in Utopia* (note 51 above).

## B. Perceptions of the Implementation of Democracy among the Israeli Public in 2009

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### 1. The Institutional Aspect

#### (a) Interest in Politics – In Israel and in the World

We open the discussion of the survey's findings with questions related to the general interest of Israeli citizens in politics. The analysis of public interest in politics is based on Robert Dahl's view that "enlightened understanding" is a necessary criterion for a proper democratic process.<sup>56</sup> The plausible assumption is that a citizen interested in and knowledgeable about politics will be more active and will seek ways to influence events. A citizen who takes a steady interest in politics will make a more considered decision on election day based on information and deliberation; will be less influenced by the parties' populist moves; and will judge their actions taking a long-term view.

A comparison over the years shows that, to some extent, the interest of the Israeli public in political issues has declined. In 2003, 76% of Israelis were very interested or interested in politics, as opposed to 73% in 2006 and 66% in 2009. Since these were all election years, this is a meaningful comparison. In general, we discern a slow process of citizens drawing away from politics, whose causes were discussed in the

**Democracy Index 2008.**<sup>57</sup> Arab citizens are the group most detached from Israeli politics: only 39% attest to an interest in politics.<sup>58</sup>

The international comparison indicates that the average Israeli is more interested in politics than citizens in most of the other democratic countries: only in two out of the 32 countries sampled, interest in politics was higher than in Israel (Figure 18).<sup>59</sup> In Israel in 2009, 78% of the respondents stay informed about what goes on in politics every day or several times a week. Note that this survey was conducted right after the election campaign and the formation of the government. Some of the respondents draw a distinction between interest in politics and the tendency to stay informed about political topics. The rate of those "staying informed" is far higher than the rate of those "interested" (Figure 19). Staying informed about politics appears to be a basic need of most Israeli citizens.

Older age-groups appear to be the most interested in political issues, while young Israelis tend to be less interested in politics: only 50% of the youngest group is interested in politics (Figure 19). In 2003, the rate for this group was 68%, that is, a drop of 18 percentage points in the last six years.

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56 Robert A. Dahl, *On Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 37.

57 For further details, see Arian et. al., *The 2008 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 7 above).

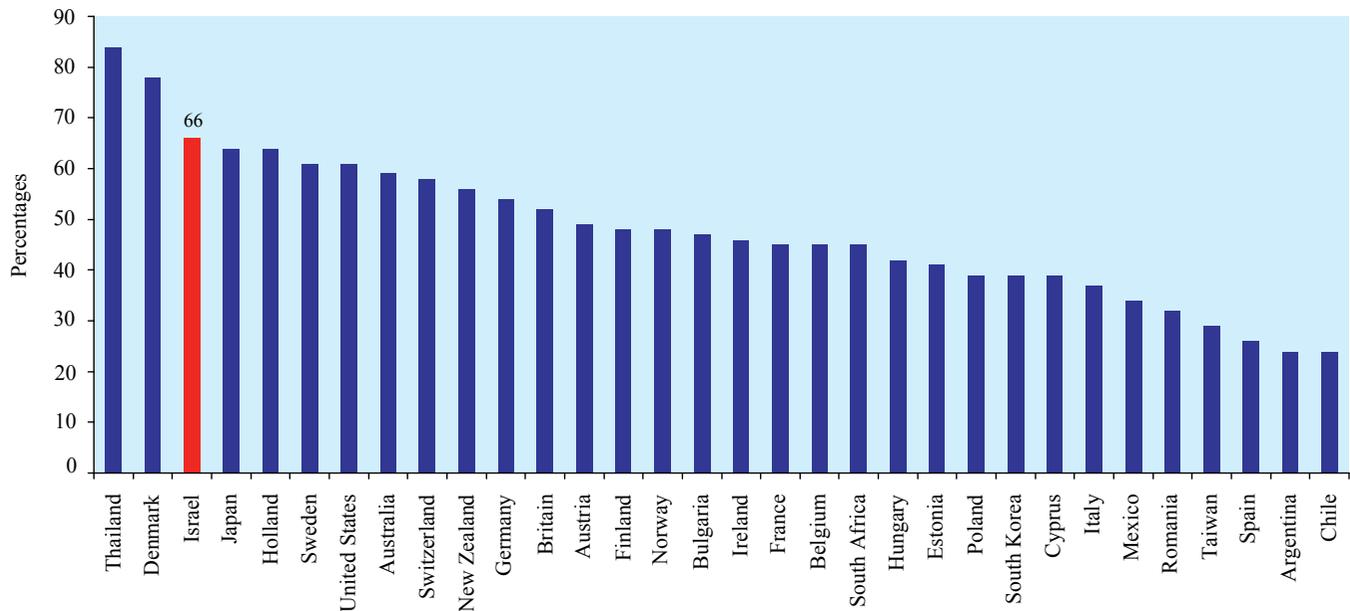
58 Henceforth, references to differences indicate differences that are statistically significant,  $P < 0.05$  or  $P < 0.01$ .

59 Data were computed according to the findings of the 2005-2007 World Values Surveys: [www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org); *European Social Survey 2006 - ESS*: <http://ess.nnsd.uib.no>

Figure 18

**Interest in Politics in an International Comparison**

**“To what extent are you interested in politics?”  
Very interested and interested (percentages)**

**(b) Sense of Influence on Events**

Political science experts have long been involved in a controversy over the participation of citizens as an essential requirement for the proper operation of the democratic process. Some scholars claim that the influence of an active civil society could weaken the stability of the regime and even harm the functioning of democracy.<sup>60</sup> In this study, we adopt another hypothesis: active citizenship is one of the most important conditions for the political culture of a democratic state. The

citizens' interest in politics is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for a proper democratic process. Only the combination of the citizens' ability to influence politics and their willingness to do so generates inputs to the system, which will then return suitable outputs to the citizens.<sup>61</sup> In countries where specific citizens or groups lack any ability to influence government policy, a basic principle of democracy is violated – the principle of representativeness.

60 Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, (7<sup>th</sup> ed., London: Routledge, 2003), 269-284.

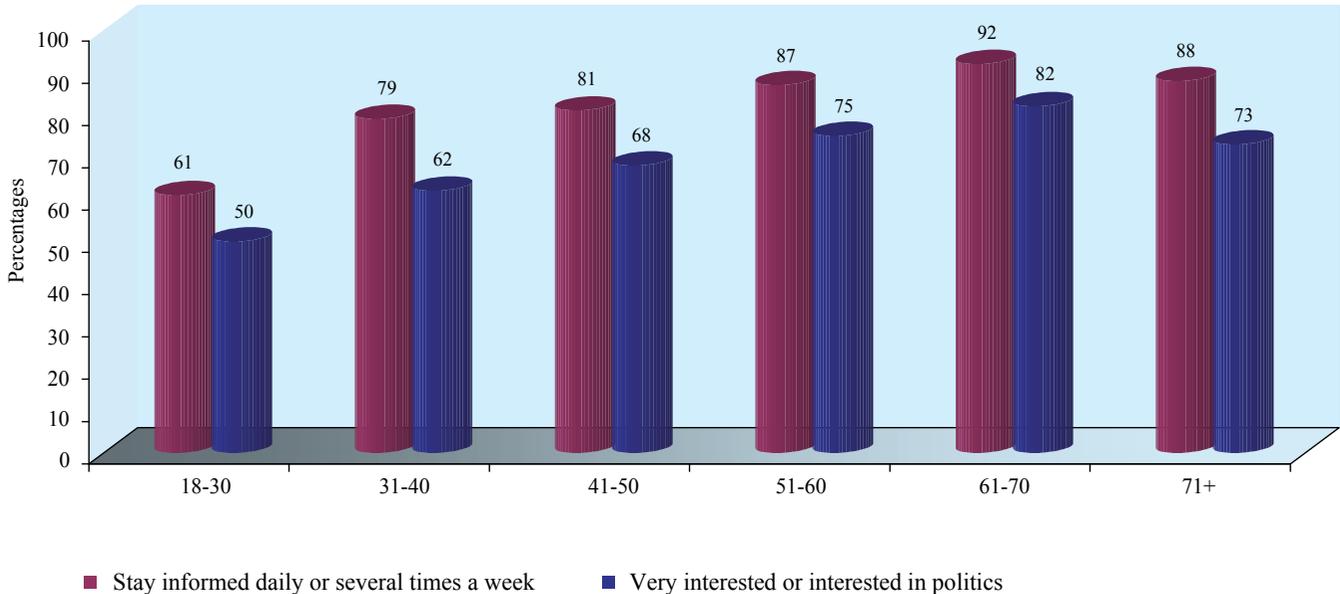
61 David Easton, “An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems,” *World Politics* 9 (1957): 393-400; Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963).

Figure 19

**Interest in Politics**

**“To what extent are you interested in politics?”**  
**Very interested and interested (percentages)**

**“How often do you stay informed about what’s going on in politics?”**  
**Every day and several times a week**  
**(according to age; percentages)**



An analysis of the citizens’ perceptions revealed that only 18% of the Israeli public feel they can influence government policy to a large or to a certain extent. This figure has remained stable for several years. About 50% of the public feel they have no ability to influence (Figure 20). This is a worrisome finding, particularly at the time of an election campaign. A breakdown of the respondents’ answers according to sectors indicates high variance. FSU immigrants’ perception of their ability to influence is the lowest of all the groups.

Although the Israeli public as a whole sense that they cannot influence government policy, 50% of Israelis maintain that Israeli

citizens participate in politics more than citizens in other democratic countries. This is a significantly higher assessment of the level of participation in Israel compared with the previous year, when only 32% claimed that Israeli citizens participate in politics more than citizens in other countries.

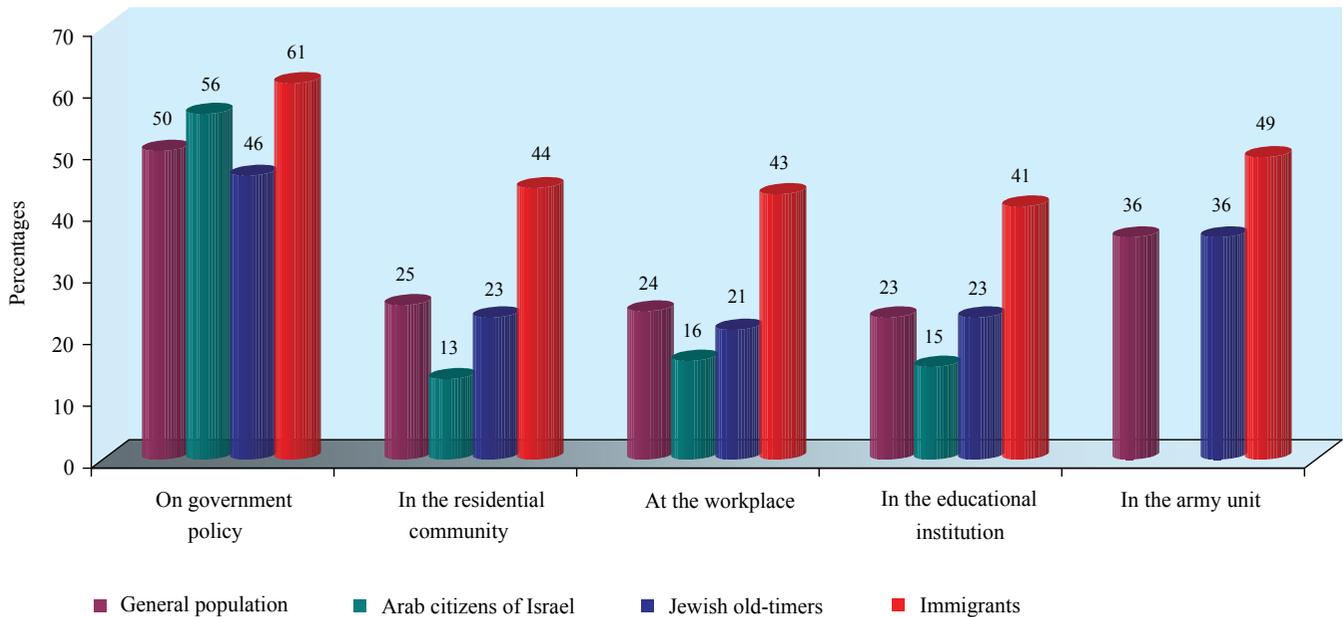
To clarify the issue of active citizenship, we examined in which contexts Israeli citizens think that they have the ability to influence. We found that most citizens think that they have no influence in the political context. By contrast, most citizens maintain that they do have the ability to influence events in the military context, in the educational institution, at the workplace, and in the

residential community. An examination of the differences between the various groups indicates that the group of FSU immigrants has the most passive perception. About half its members feel they are unable to have an influence in any area. The explanation for this finding is related to two aspects – immigration and political culture. Apparently, FSU immigrants do not yet fully participate in the social networks in Israel, and are less familiar with the mechanisms of influence in

society (laws, bureaucratic ordinances, and so forth). Moreover, immigrants also bring to Israel a perception of distance between the citizen and the state that basically contends that the state should not interfere in the citizens' lives and vice-versa. A plausible assumption is that individualism, which is so vital to survival in a totalitarian regime like the one in which the immigrants grew up, also affects their attitude concerning their role and their power as Israeli citizens.

Figure 20

**Perception of the Implementation of Democracy: The Institutional Aspect\***  
**“I and citizens like me have no influence on government policy**  
**or in the following contexts”**  
**(according to sectors; percentages)**



\* The question about the ability to exert influence in the military context was not presented to the Arab sample, since most Arab citizens do not serve in the IDF.

The patterns of political participation and integration of FSU immigrants are essentially different from those of the previous mass immigration – the Mizrahim who came mainly from Arab countries. Mizrahim launched their political protest several years after their arrival in Israel (the 1959 Wadi Salib riots), and continued their extensive political and social activities in an attempt to highlight the problems unique to them as a group. In this context, they established, for example, the Black Panthers movement (1971) and the Shas Party (1984). There are signs of increasing political participation among “Russian” immigrants as well. In 1996, for instance, the Yisrael Ba’aliyah Party was established to represent them and gained seven seats in the Knesset. Unlike Shas, however, Yisrael Ba’aliyah disappeared from the political map after only two Knesset terms. Yisrael Beitenu, a party widely perceived as the natural successor of Yisrael Ba’aliyah since it relies on the immigrants’ votes, does not represent the interests of the “Russian sector,” or at least not much more prominently than do other parties. In the 2009 elections, Yisrael Beitenu tried to distance itself from the sectorial image so as to gain votes from Jewish old-timers – it produced electoral broadcasts without referring to “immigrant supporters,” and its campaign was conducted only in Hebrew.

The immigrants’ active participation in the elections and the many Russian speakers in the Knesset should not be seen as a sign

of this group’s full integration into Israeli politics. Previous studies did not corroborate the claim that immigrants have achieved political integration into Israeli society since their voting patterns and their voting considerations differ from those of the Jewish old-timers.<sup>62</sup> As the current study shows, other measures of political integration – such as the ability to influence government policy, local politics, and even the community – also indicate that the immigrants do not think that they have an ability to influence.

Another index reflects the use of the media as a source of political information about politics. In the current study, we found that 39% of the immigrants receive information mainly from the Hebrew media, whereas 56% receive it from the Russian media. The content of the “Russian” media and that of the Hebrew media are essentially different. Thus, for instance, the “Russian” media tends to be more right-wing than the Israeli media, in general.

Of all the groups in Israel, Arab citizens perceive themselves as having the greatest influence in the contexts of the residential community, the workplace, and the educational institution (Figure 20). Their sense of influence pertains mainly to local government. The rate of participation of Arab citizens in local elections is also higher. By contrast, Arab citizens feel they have relatively little influence at the national level, and their voter turnout in general elections is also low. Thus, for example, the

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62 For further discussion, see Ken Goldstein and Zvi Gitelman, “From Russians to Israelis,” in *The Elections in Israel 2003*, ed. Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 256; Viacheslav Konstantinov, “The Immigration from the Former Soviet Union and the Elections in Israel 1992-2006: Is a ‘Third Israel’ Being Created?” in *The Elections in Israel 2006*, ed. Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), 129.

voter turnout in general elections of Arab citizens in 2003 was 62%, but in the local elections that were conducted that year, the average voter turnout rate in Arab localities reached 90%.<sup>63</sup>

We also examined citizens' perceptions concerning their responsibility for government actions. These perceptions are particularly interesting in an election year because they reveal whether voters feel responsible for their choices in the long run as well. We found that about half of the public (47%) agree that they are responsible, while 53% maintain that citizens are not responsible for the actions of their government.

This finding may be related to the public's attitude toward their elected representatives. In recent years, the Israeli public have generally displayed extreme cynicism: only 30% in 2007 and 32% in 2008 held that politicians tend to take into account the views of the ordinary citizen. To some extent, the measure of trust in politicians recorded a rise in 2009: 37% think that politicians are indeed attentive to their voters. Nevertheless, 58% agreed that "elections are a good way of making governments relate to the views of the people." It is hard to draw unequivocal conclusions from these findings, but they may be explained as follows: more than 50% of the public in Israel maintain that politicians do not take public opinion into account and, therefore, citizens are not responsible for the actions of their elected representatives.

### **(c) Support for Democracy and Longing for Strong Leadership and for a Government of Experts**

The public's assessment of the functioning of democracy in 2009 appears to be quite pessimistic: 61% of the Israeli public are dissatisfied with the functioning of Israeli democracy, and Jewish and Arab citizens do not differ on this issue. Twenty-eight percent of the public think that Israel is too democratic, 35% affirm that Israel is democratic to a suitable degree, and 37% maintain that Israel is not democratic enough. A breakdown of the various groups shows that the two groups least satisfied with Israeli democracy are the Arab citizens and the FSU immigrants: 57% of Arab citizens and 50% of FSU immigrants claim that there is too little democracy in Israel; 31% of Jewish old-timers agree with this statement.

Note that many Israelis identify weaknesses in Israeli democracy and maintain that it should be made more effective. Sixty-one percent of the public support the idea that "A few strong leaders can be more useful to the country than all the discussions and the laws." Differences are discernible between the various sectors: immigrants (74%) support this statement more than other Israelis (Figure 21). The gaps between the immigrants' and the Jewish old-timers' attitudes regarding the strong leader issue have remained stable since 2003.

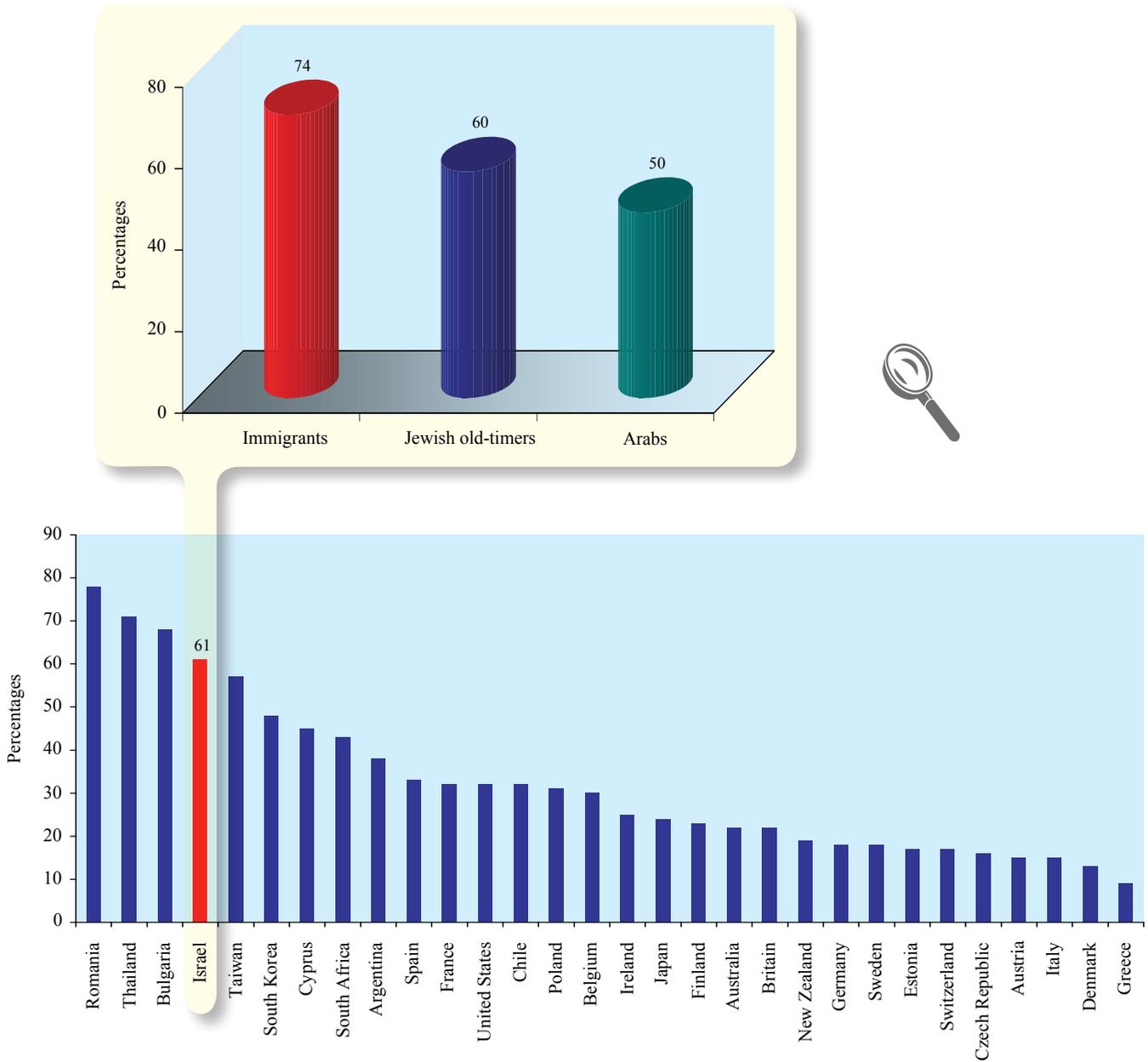
63 Avi Ben-Bassat and Momi Dahan, "Social Identity and Voter Turnout", *CESifo Working Paper Series No. 2331* (June 2008), 5. (Also in the upcoming publication, a. Ben-Bassat and M. Dahan, "Social Identity and Local Elections," in *Municipal Political Economics*, ed. A. Ben Bassat and M. Dahan (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute). Available at: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1156263>)

Figure 21

**Support for Strong Leaders in an International Comparison and in Israel**

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

**Agree and definitely agree (according to sectors; percentages)**



In a comparison over the years, we see that at the time of the 2009 elections, when the issues of a strong leader and a strengthened executive branch were placed on the public agenda (*inter alia* by Yisrael Beitenu), the

Israeli public softened their views on these issues vis-à-vis the two previous years – 61% supported the principle of strong leadership. In a comparison between countries, Israel ranked 27<sup>th</sup> out of 30 democratic countries,

meaning that support for strong leadership in most democratic countries is lower than in Israel (Figure 21).<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, 40% of respondents in Israel support the following statement: “The powers of the prime minister should be expanded at the expense of other branches of government.” Respondents were also asked for their views on proposals for four types of political systems and on their suitability to Israeli reality: a strong leader who does not need to take the Knesset or election campaigns into account; a government of experts; a military regime, and a democratic regime. We found that, despite general support for strong leadership, which appears more efficient than discussions and laws, most Israelis do not view it as a natural alternative to the current regime: about 60% of the public support strong leadership, but only about 42% are willing to turn Israel into a country with an authoritarian government.

Despite the complexity that emerges from the public’s views, and although we are referring to a relative minority of Israelis who support the idea of an authoritarian regime, this finding seems worrisome. When we examine the supporters of the idea of “a strong leader who does not need to take the Knesset or election campaigns into account,” we find that support for this idea is more widespread among the right than among the left (43% of supporters on the right, as

opposed to 39% of supporters in the center and 29% of supporters on the left). In other words, the more right-wing people are, the greater their support for this statement.<sup>65</sup> The degree of religiosity is also related to support for the idea of an authoritarian regime: 51% of the Ultra-Orthodox, 49% of the traditional, and 33% of the secular support it. An examination of voting patterns for political parties indicates that the highest support for this idea was found among Shas (59%) and Likud voters (46%), as opposed to 40% of Yisrael Beitenu voters, an identical rate of Kadima voters, and 29% of Labor voters.

One of the study’s prominent findings is the high support of the immigrant public for “a government of experts” who make decisions on the basis of professional considerations, without regard for public preferences. Support for a government of experts is high among immigrants – 72% – as opposed to 55% of Jewish old-timers. One explanation for this finding is the immigrants’ sense of distance from the authorities, which is added to the attitude of passive citizenship that we found in this group.<sup>66</sup> Note that support for a government of experts is not specific to Israel. In many democratic countries, the public find this form of government appealing and, in most of them, it enjoys the support of almost half of the respondents. Support for a government of experts is particularly high in post-Communist countries (Figure 22).

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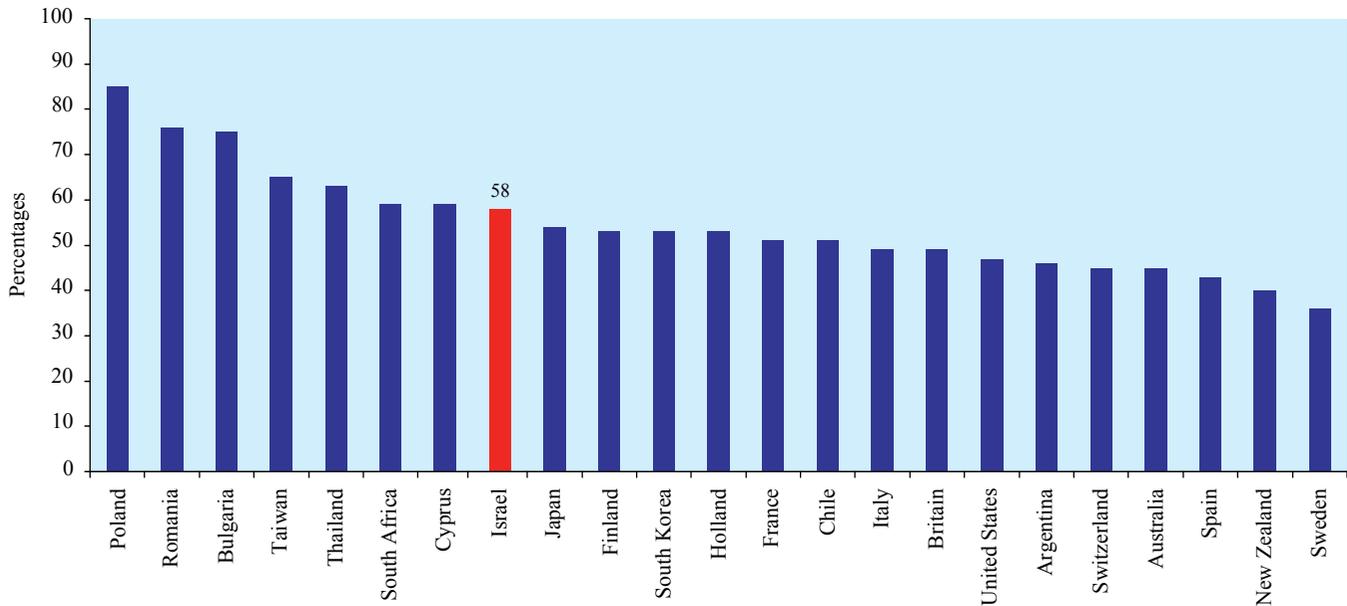
64 *World Values Survey*, 2004–2007: [www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org)

65 Pearson correlation:  $R=0.173^{**}$

66 For further discussion about passive citizenship among Soviet Union natives see, for instance, Jeffrey W. Hahn, “Continuity and Change in Russian Political Culture,” *British Journal of Political Science* 21, 4 (1991): 393–421.

Figure 22

**A Government of Experts as a Desirable Political System**  
**Very desirable or desirable (percentages)**



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

The recently exposed incidents of corruption in Israeli politics continue to shape public attitudes in this regard. A majority of the Israeli public maintain that there is corruption in Israel – 89% – a figure that has remained almost unchanged since 2003. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents hold the view that there is more corruption in Israel than in other democratic countries – a higher rate than in previous years (Figure 23).<sup>67</sup>

Moreover, half (50%) of the public (Figure 24), think that politicians are in politics only for the sake of personal gain. Arab citizens hold different views, and the majority (66%) tend to question this stance.

Another indication of the Arab sector’s greater trust in politicians – as opposed to the rest of the Israeli public – is that only 22% of Arab citizens agree with the claim that “to reach the top in politics you have to be corrupt.” By contrast, the most pessimistic group concerning the integrity of politicians is that of FSU immigrants: 47% of them agree with this claim, as opposed to 39% of Jewish old-timers. Nonetheless, the Israeli public seem to trust politicians slightly more than in previous years. This sense of trust could be related to the last election campaign, which placed the issue of “clean politics” on the agenda, and to the fact that, recently, candidates to the premiership have not been connected to corruption incidents.

<sup>67</sup> In 2009, respondents were asked to compare Israel to other democratic countries, whereas in previous years the question referred to a comparison to all other countries in the world.

Figure 23

**Perception of Corruption in Israel, 2003-2009**  
**“To reach the top in politics you have to be corrupt”**  
**“There is more corruption in Israel than in other countries”**  
**Agree and definitely agree (percentages)**

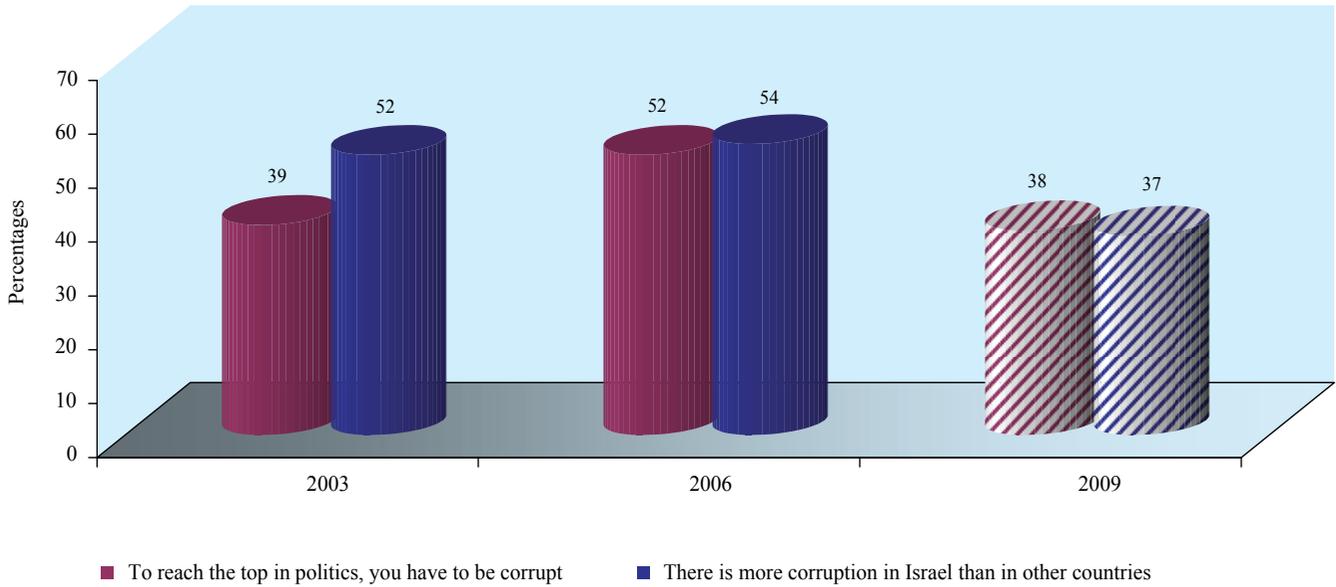
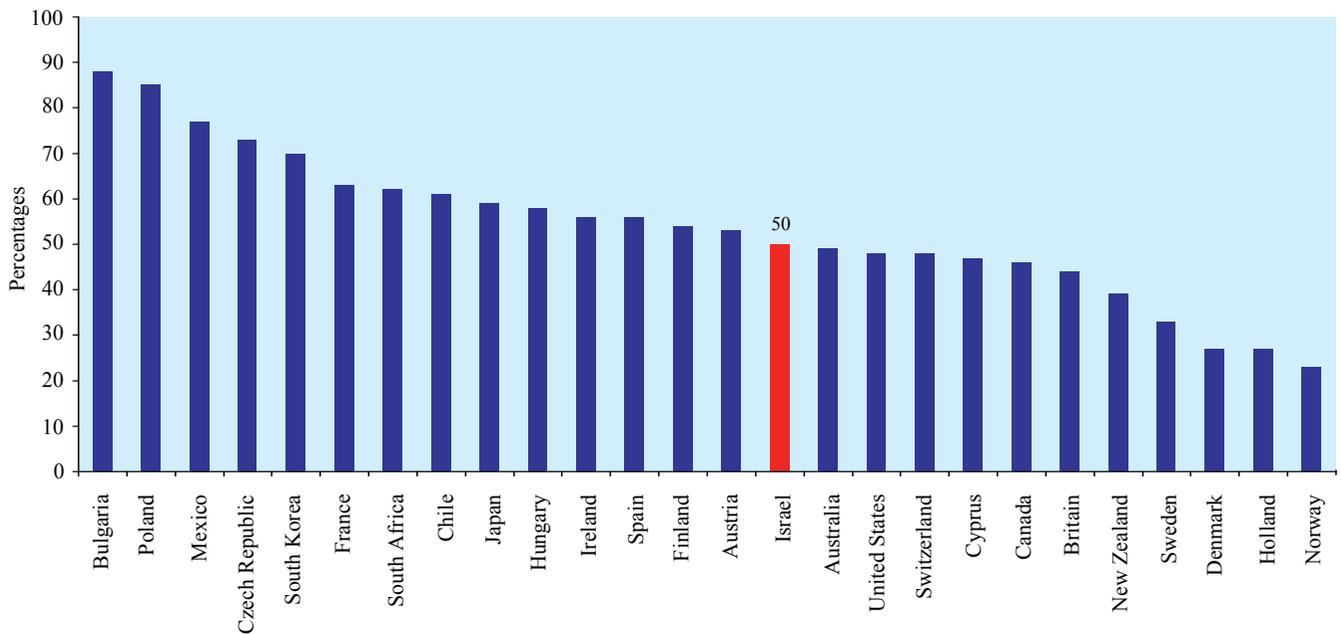


Figure 24

**Trust in Politicians**  
**“Politicians are in politics only for the sake of personal gain”**  
**Agree and definitely agree (percentages)**



## 2. The Rights Aspect

### (a) Freedom of Expression in Israel

The discussion of the rights aspect begins with political rights. Freedom of expression is a key principle in every democracy. An examination of the public perception of freedom of expression in Israel in an international comparison shows that the Israeli public do not think Israel is in any way different from other countries: only 12% maintain that freedom of expression in Israel is more limited than in other countries. This figure is atypical compared with recent years: in 2008, twice as many (24%) respondents supported this claim.

The Israeli public support the abstract principle of freedom of expression. Seventy-four percent support the statement: “I support freedom of expression for all, regardless of their views.” But when the questions deal with concrete issues and relate directly to Israeli reality, there is a striking change in attitudes: 58% agree with the view that “A speaker should be forbidden to express harsh criticism of Israel in public.” This figure reflects a rise of 10 percentage points since 2003, when 48% of the respondents agreed with the statement (Figure 25). In other words, as of 2009, the Israeli public believe in the general value of freedom of expression, but most refuse to allow harsh criticism of the country.

Criticism of the political establishment in a democracy, however, is inseparable from

freedom of expression. Broad opposition to the right to express strong criticism could be related to the problematic nature of Israel’s security situation and of its media image in 2009. Operation Cast Lead enjoyed extensive public support, but was also the target for strong criticism by individuals and groups in Israel, and mainly by many countries around the world. This is not a new finding: Michal Shamir and John Sullivan found that political tolerance is tested in the context of a threat, and Israel is a country that has been subject to a concrete threat ever since its establishment.<sup>68</sup>

The attitude of FSU immigrants concerning the issue of freedom of expression is less rigid than that of Jewish old-timers. Half of them (51%) support forbidding harsh criticism, as opposed to 61% of Jewish old-timers. Nevertheless, the views of the immigrant public concerning the right to express criticism are almost equally divided. The clashing values related to freedom of expression in the political culture of FSU immigrants is one possible explanation of this phenomenon: on the one hand, the immigrants were socialized politically in the *perestroika* era, which implanted in many of them the values of *glasnost*;<sup>69</sup> on the other hand, public criticism of the establishment was not acceptable in that political culture and, particularly, at the time of a security threat.

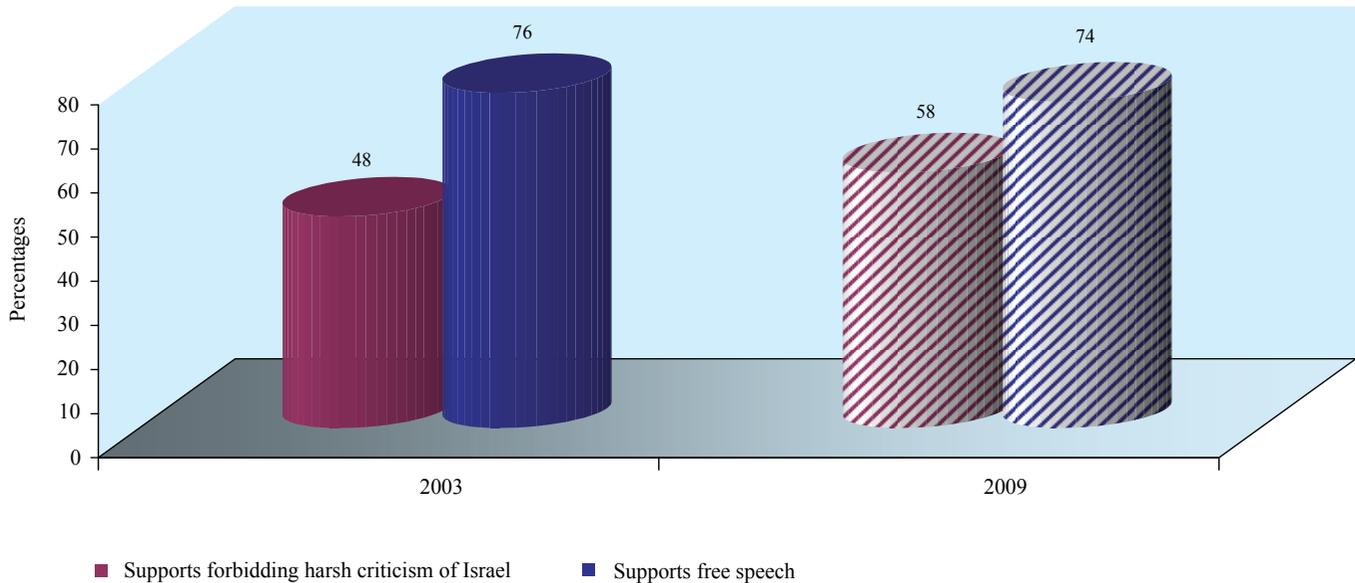
68 Michal Shamir and John Sullivan, “Political Tolerance in Israel” (in Hebrew), *Megamot* 29, 2 (1985): 146.

69 “*Glasnost*” translates literally as freedom of expression.

Figure 25

**Democratic Attitudes: The Rights Aspect – Freedom of Expression**

**“I support freedom of expression for all regardless of their views”**  
**“A speaker should be forbidden to express harsh criticism of Israel in public”**  
**Agree and definitely agree (percentages)**

**(b) Equality for Minorities**

A good way to test a democracy’s strength is to examine how it contends with groups at the margins of society. Unquestionably, Israel’s political and security realities largely hamper this analysis since the Jewish-Arab national cleavage within Israel prevails against the background of the broader Arab-Israeli conflict. Interpreting the public’s attitudes toward the Arab minority is a complex matter, and requires addressing many subjects, including issues of security, nationality, and religion.

The issue of equality for minorities and civil rights in Israel has been at the center of political discourse in 2009, which came to the fore in the last election campaigns of the political parties. Yisrael Beitenu placed the issue of loyalty to the country on the agenda,

maintaining that it can be measured and that it should dictate the establishment’s attitude toward groups in the society. The discussion about the loyalty of Arab citizens to the State of Israel forced many parties (and, thereby, also many voters) to formulate a position on the issue.

In 2009, 53% of the Jewish public support encouraging Arab emigration from Israel. In this context, note the interesting gaps between Jewish old-timers and immigrants: 77% of the immigrants support encouraging Arab emigration from Israel, as opposed to 47% of old-timers (Figure 26). This gap has not changed since the first Democracy Index in 2003. There are several explanations for the immigrants’ strong support for the idea of encouraging Arab emigration. Upon arriving in Israel, the immigrants apparently learn

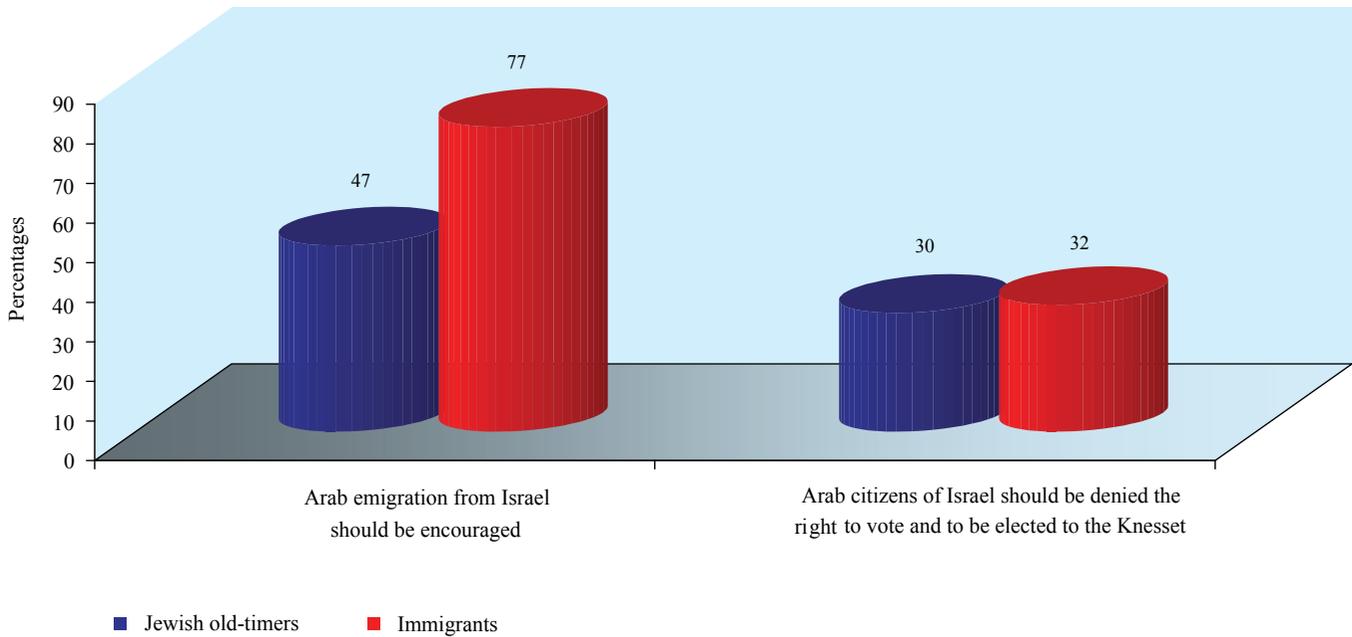
that prejudice against Arabs is befitting and acceptable in Israeli society and that Arabs are a hostile group:<sup>70</sup> if you wish to be a “true Israeli Jew,” take a stand against Arab citizens. Furthermore, the literature dealing with post-Soviet culture tends to discuss the concept of the “enemy image.” Those born in the FSU use this concept, which focuses on the tendency of the individual to split one’s surroundings into “good” and “bad” in order

to simplify a complex reality, to formulate their view of groups outside the consensus. This is also a psychological mechanism that facilitates coping with difficulties by displacing responsibility and blame onto the “other,” who is considered hostile. Moreover, the influence of the Russian media in Israel also shapes negative attitudes toward the Arab public.<sup>71</sup>

Figure 26

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

**“Israeli Arabs should be denied the right to vote and to be elected to the Knesset”  
 “The government should encourage Arab emigration”  
 Agree and definitely agree (Jewish sample only; by sectors; percentages)**



70 Zvi Gitelman, *Immigration and Identity: The Resettlement and Impact of Soviet Immigrants on Israeli Politics and Society* (Los Angeles: Wilstein Institute of Jewish Policy Studies, 1995).

71 Michael Philippov, “1990s Immigrants from the FSU in Israeli Elections 2006: The Fulfillment of the Political Dreams of Post-Soviet Man?” in *The Elections in Israel 2006*, ed. Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), 135-157; Larisa L. Fialkova and Maria N. Yelenevskaya, *Ex-Soviets in Israel: From Personal Narratives to a Group Portrait* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2007).

Regarding Israel’s Arab citizens, the attitudes of FSU immigrants are less liberal than those of Jewish old-timers: 33% of Jewish old-timers are ready to have Arab parties join the government, as opposed to 23% of the immigrants (Figure 27); only 27% of the public in general (19% of the Jewish public) oppose the statement, “Agreement of a Jewish majority is required on decisions fateful to the country.” We witness a rise in the rate of Jews who think that no decisions fateful to the country should be made without a Jewish majority (in 2008, 38% opposed this statement). These figures point to broad

support for the idea of denying political rights to Israel’s Arab minority.

Attitudes concerning the status of Arab citizens in the current Index show that the rate of those who maintain that “Arab citizens of Israel suffer from discrimination as opposed to Jewish citizens” (42%) has declined relative to previous years (Figure 28). Among Jewish old-timers, 41% agree with this statement, as opposed to 28% of the immigrants. In 2004, approximately 40% of the respondents opined that in Israel there are less civil rights than in other countries, and in 2009, 26% of the respondents supported this statement, continuing the trend of decline.

Figure 27

**Democratic Attitudes: The Rights Aspect –  
Attitude toward Minorities, according to Sectors**

**“Israeli Arabs suffer from discrimination as opposed to Jewish citizens”**  
**“Arab parties, including Arab ministers, joining the government”**  
**“Full equality of rights for Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel”**  
**Support and strongly support (according to sectors; percentages)**

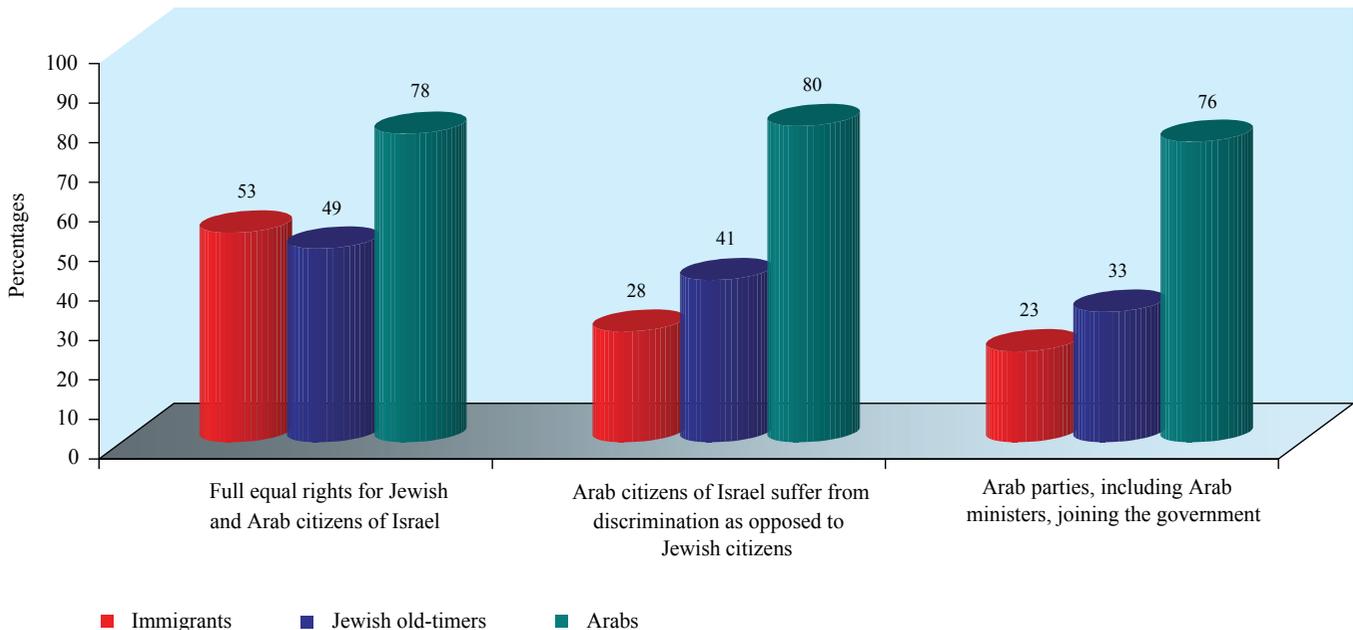
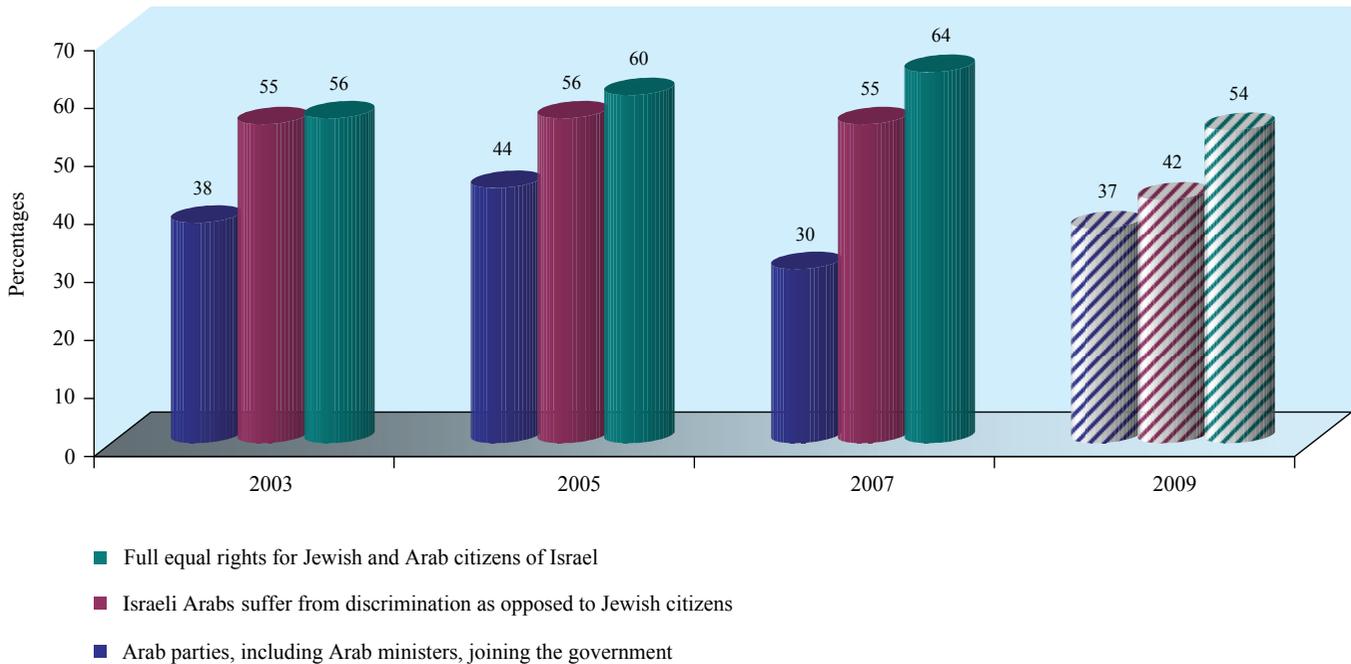


Figure 28

**Democratic Attitudes: The Rights Aspect – Attitude toward Minorities, 2003-2009****“Israeli Arabs suffer from discrimination as opposed to Jewish citizens”****“Arab parties, including Arab ministers, joining the government”****“Full equality of rights for Jewish and Arab Israeli citizens”****Agree and definitely agree (percentages)**

Following the discussion that erupted in the 2009 electoral campaign concerning the relationship between citizens' loyalty and citizenship, respondents were asked to state their view about the statement: "Only citizens loyal to the country are entitled to civil rights." Fifty-four percent of the public agree with this statement (56% of the old-timers and 67% of the immigrants). Thirty-eight percent of the Jewish public think that Jewish citizens should have more rights than non-Jewish citizens (43% of the Jewish old-timers as opposed to 23% of the immigrants) (Figure 29). One explanation for the gap between these two groups is that some immigrants are not considered Jewish

according to Halakhah and, therefore, they consider the implementation of this statement in a law to be a violation of the rights of non-Jewish citizens.

**(c) Gender Equality**

Another issue that we examined in the context of the rights aspect is gender equality, which also received a great deal of attention in the last electoral campaign (2009). In these elections, a woman was a candidate for prime minister, and she also made gender a central issue of her campaign. Kadima, headed by Tzipi Livni, emerged as the largest party. It is, therefore, not surprising that most of the public oppose the statement, "Men are

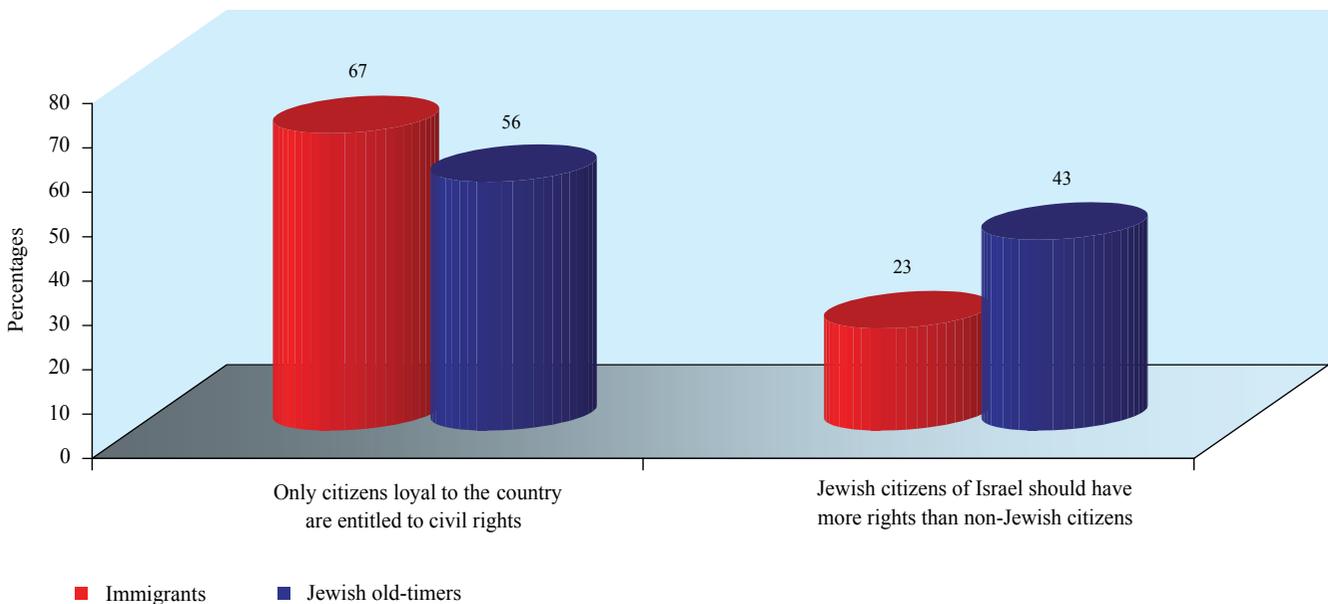
better political leaders than women” (67%). Since the attitude toward women is linked to issues of religious tradition, we analyzed this question in the Jewish sector according to the respondents’ degree of religiosity. The highest support for the claim that men are better political leaders than women was found among Ultra-Orthodox old-timers – 53% – followed by FSU immigrants – about 50%. This is a surprising finding, since this is a largely secular group; it also reflects a rise over last year, when only 41% of the immigrants agreed with this statement (Figure 30).

A similar phenomenon was recorded in the attitudes of FSU immigrants on other gender issues. Although a decisive majority

of them are secular, their attitudes toward women are far more traditional than those of the secular, traditional, and religious groups in the Jewish old-timer population: 9% of the secular, 17% of the traditional, and 36% of the religious agreed with the following statement: “It is better for the man to work outside and for the woman to take care of the home.” By contrast, among FSU immigrants, who defined themselves as secular, 44% agreed with this statement (Figure 31). An analysis of all the responses revealed that 19% of Jewish old-timers agreed with this statement, as opposed to 46% of all immigrants, and 24% of Arab citizens. However, in response to the statement, “It is equally important for women and

Figure 29

**Democratic Attitudes: The Rights Aspect – Political Rights**  
**“Only citizens loyal to the country are entitled to civil rights”**  
**“Jewish citizens of Israel should have more rights than its non-Jewish citizens”**  
**Agree and definitely agree (according to sectors; percentages)**



men to have a career,” we found no real differences between immigrants and Jewish old-timers (Figure 32). Seventy-nine percent of the public as a whole agreed with this statement.

One explanation for the gaps between the immigrant and the Jewish old-timers groups lies in the values that the immigrants brought from their countries of origin. Official Soviet education upheld full equality between men and women in the socialist state (unlike the capitalist world). Women were supposed to join the workforce just like men. Nonetheless, already at school, children learned about the division of roles between men and women:

the woman works and takes care of the home, and the man works and only helps the woman take care of the home. The equal opportunity mechanism for men and women was also problematic, and in the political domain, it was altogether non-existent. Soviet education presented students with standards, ideals, and constructs of the modern man and woman: the man is supposed to be strong, brave, and intelligent, and the woman is supposed to be sensitive, loyal, and capable of love. This division encouraged stereotypical thinking, and is evident in the non-liberal attitudes that Soviet citizens adopted toward gender equality.<sup>72</sup>

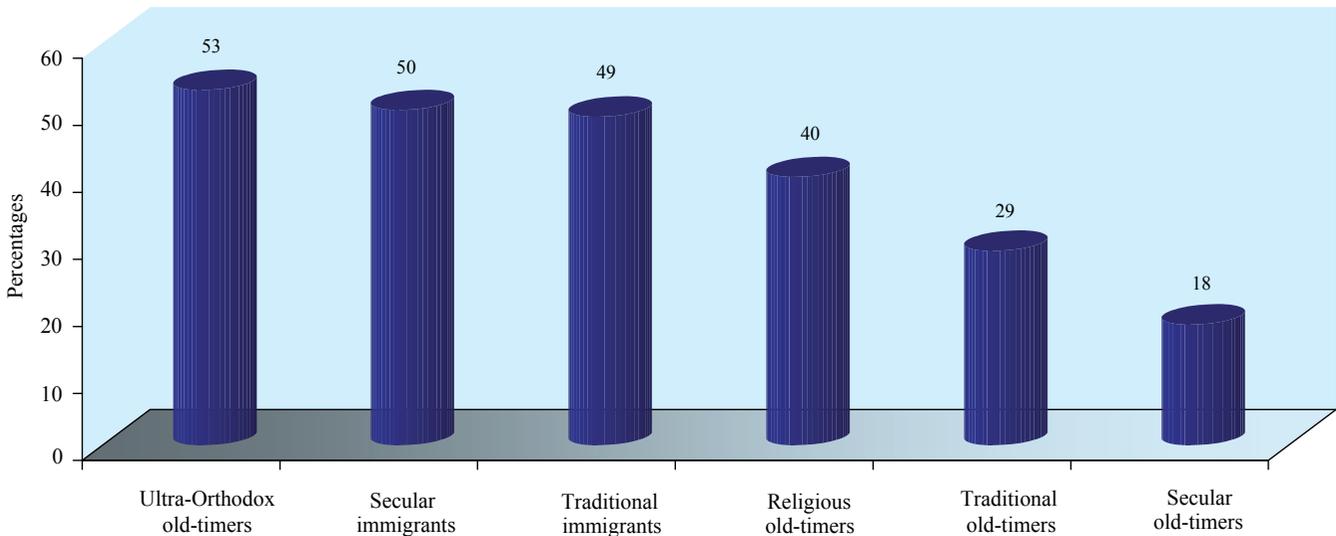
Figure 30

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

**“Men are better political leaders than women”**

**Agree and definitely agree**

**(according to sectors and degree of religiosity; percentages)**



72 Lynne Attwood, “Gender and Soviet Pedagogy,” in *The Making of the Soviet Citizen: Character Formation and Civic Training in Soviet Education*, ed. George Avis (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 126.

Figure 31

**Democratic Attitudes: The Rights Aspect – Gender Equality in the Family**  
**“It is better for the man to work outside and for the woman to take care of the home”**  
**Agree and definitely agree**  
**(according to sectors and degree of religiosity; percentages)**

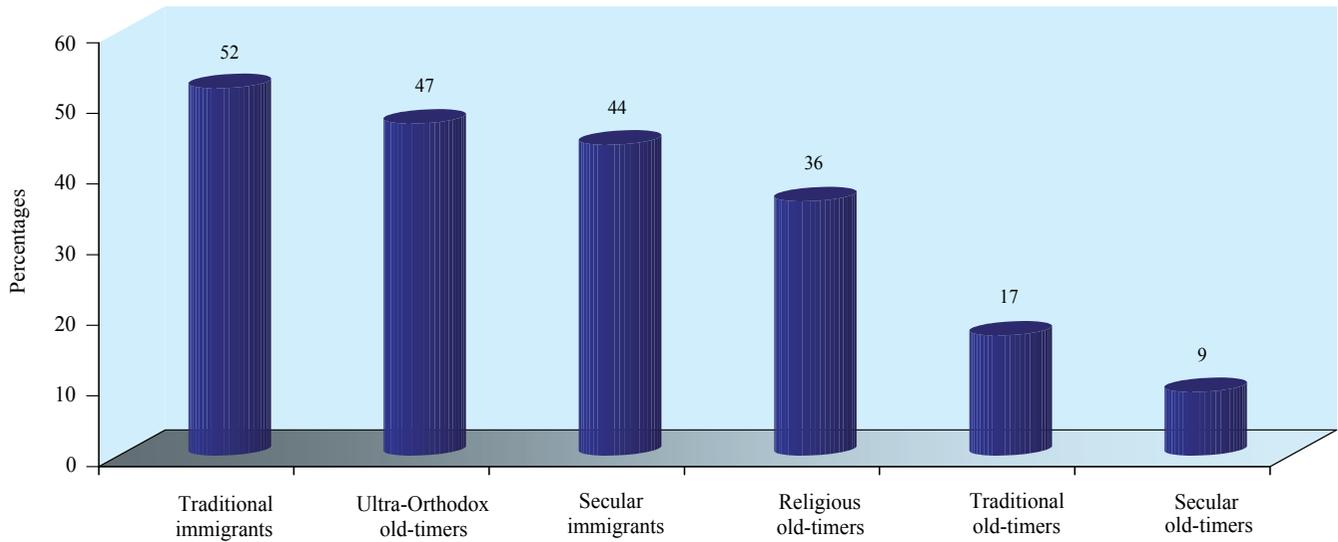
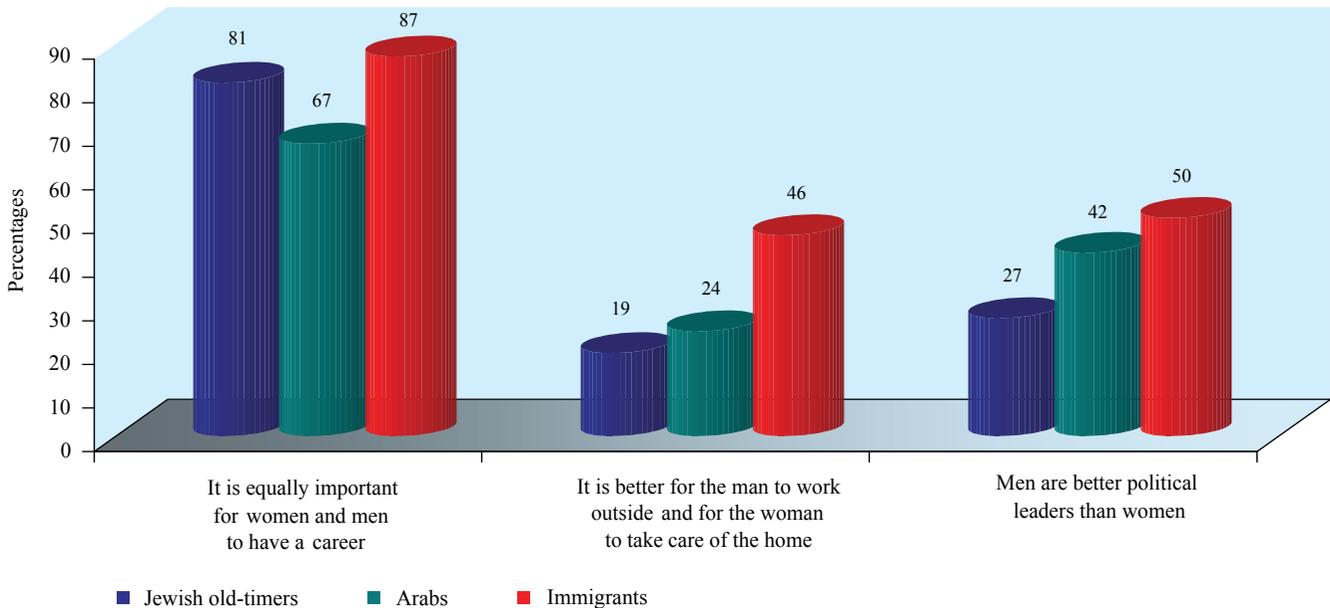


Figure 32

**Democratic Attitudes: The Rights Aspect – Gender Equality in Politics, Family, and Career**

**“Men are better political leaders than women”**  
**“It is better for the man to work outside and for the woman to take care of the home”**  
**“It is equally important for women and men to have a career”**  
**Agree and definitely agree (according to sectors; percentages)**



The research findings specific to the Israeli context, which underscore the many economic difficulties faced by FSU immigrants, must be included in the discussion of the immigrants' traditional attitude toward gender roles. These difficulties burden the woman with the care of the young generation (children and sometimes grandchildren) and of the older generation (the parents), in addition to her strenuous effort to attain economic independence in the new country.<sup>73</sup> These circumstances may partially explain the desire of many immigrants to see the woman taking care of the home, without having to work outside as well.<sup>74</sup>

In sum, most immigrants believe in the general slogan of gender equality and support the right of women to develop a career, but a significant gap is evident between their attitudes at the abstract, declarative level and reality. The meaning of equality is not firmly established in their consciousness, and about half maintain that the woman's place is at home and her role is to take care of the family.

### 3. The Stability Aspect

#### (a) Trust in Government Institutions

The 2009 Index registered a moderate rise in the citizens' trust in the country's institutions vis-à-vis 2008 (Figures 33-34). The institution enjoying the highest level of trust is the IDF (79%), with a rise of 8 percentage points since 2008. Eighty-eight

percent of the Jewish public trust the IDF. In the Second Lebanon War, the public were highly critical of the IDF, although Operation Cast Lead was considered a success and is apparently the explanation for the rise of trust in this institution.

Trust in the president also went up this year (60% vis-à-vis 22% in 2007). Since Shimon Peres replaced Moshe Katsav, public trust in the institution of the president has increased almost threefold. Trust in the Knesset and in the political parties also recorded a rise. In the 2009 Survey, respondents were asked to report their degree of trust not only in political parties, in general, but also in the party for which they had voted. A significant gap emerged between their trust in political parties (21%), and their trust in the specific party for which they had voted (62%).

Trust in the Supreme Court has regained strength this year (57%). At the same time, trust in law enforcement institutions is relatively low. Fifty-two percent of the public trust the courts, whereas the police received a relatively low score, only 40% – a decline of 26 percentage points vis-à-vis 2003, when 66% of respondents expressed trust in the police. The picture emerging from the international comparison is also gloomy. In Israel, trust in the police is low relative to that in other democratic countries – Israel is in the 20<sup>th</sup> place out of 24 countries, between Romania and Thailand (Figure 35).

73 Most women in this sector are indeed part of the workforce. The rate of working women in the immigrants' group is higher than in the old-timers' group. Central Bureau of Statistics, *Labor Force Survey 2006*, 10 June 2008: [www.cbs.gov.il](http://www.cbs.gov.il)

74 See, for instance, Larissa I. Remennick, "Women of the 'Sandwich' Generation and Multiple Roles: The Case of Russian Immigrants of the 1990s in Israel," *Sex Roles* 40 (1999): 347–378.

Figure 33

**Trust in Key Institutions: President, Knesset, and Political Parties, 2003-2009**

**“To what extent do you have trust in each of the following people or institutions?”  
To a large extent and to some extent (percentages)**

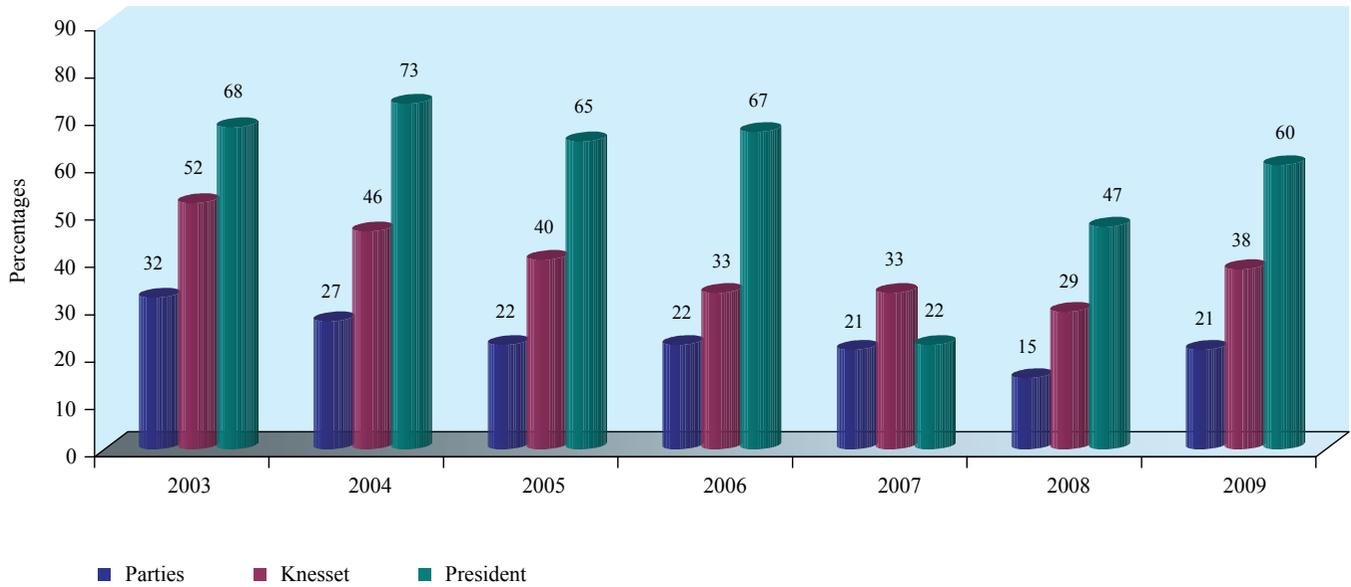


Figure 34

**Trust in Key Institutions: IDF, Police, Supreme Court, 2003-2009**

**“To what extent do you have trust in each of the following people or institutions?”  
To a large extent and to some extent (percentages)**

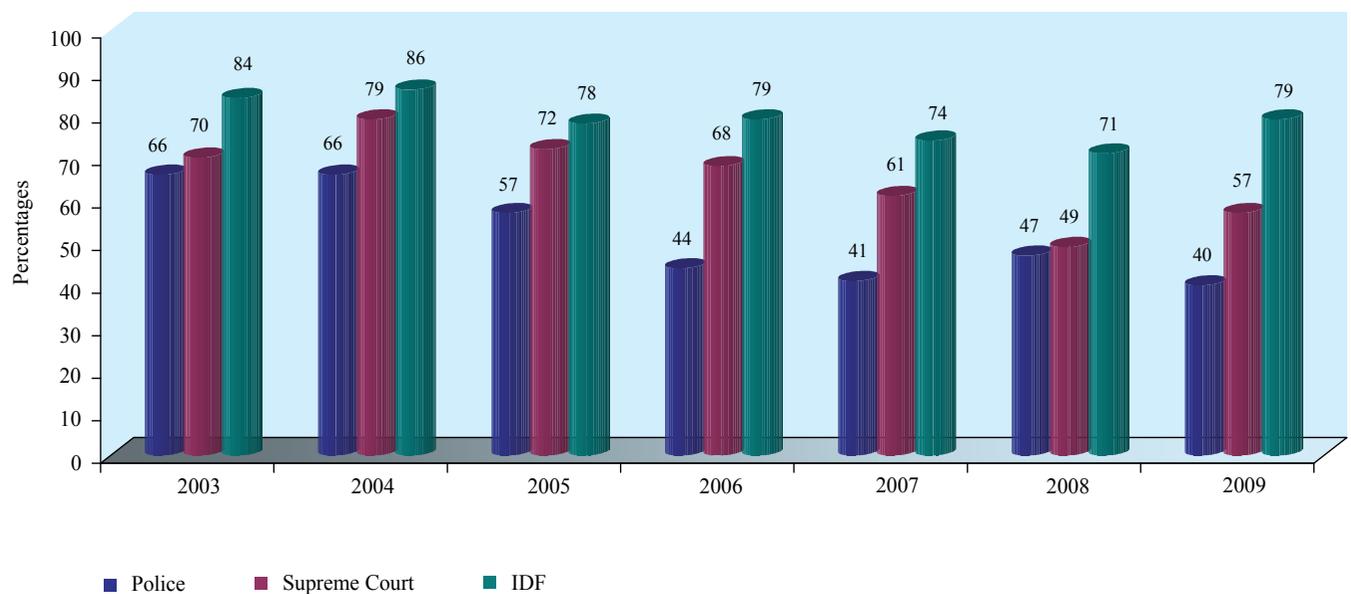
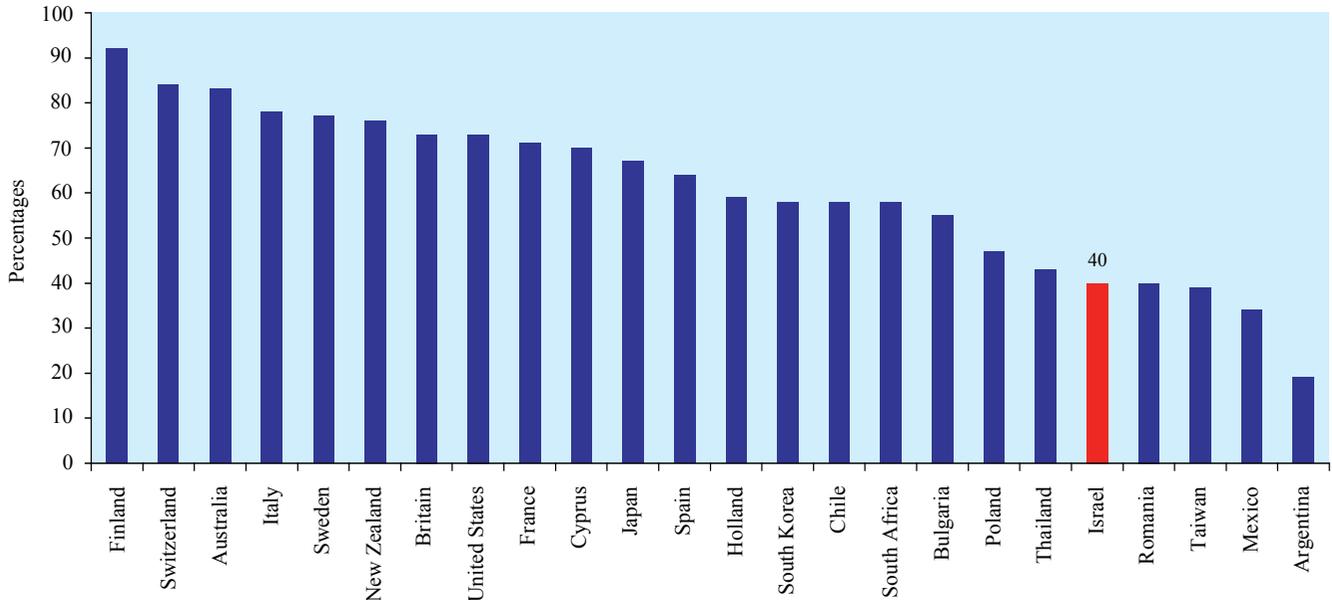


Figure 35

### Trust in the Police in an International Comparison To a large extent and to some extent (percentages)



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

In 2009, a rise was recorded in the rate of Israelis who are sure of their desire to live in Israel (77%). Among Jewish respondents, 78% expressed a comparable desire (Figure 36). Among FSU immigrants, the rate of those who wish to live in Israel is similar to that of Jewish old-timers, but the distribution of responses according to age in the immigrants' group is a matter of concern. For instance, among immigrants aged 18-30, the rate of those who are sure of their desire to live in Israel is low compared with other groups – only about 50%, as opposed to 77% of Jewish old-timers in this age-group (Figure 37).

In the Democracy Index 2009, we examined the reasons for people wanting to leave Israel. Two similar elements emerged from the responses of the public in general: the security situation and the desire for a higher standard of living. Within the Jewish

sample, however, we found that immigrants ascribe greater importance to the security factor (viewing it as a very important or quite important reason) than old-timers: 81% of the immigrants indicated that the security situation is the foremost reason for their desire to emigrate, as opposed to 59% of the old-timers. A similar picture emerges when we consider the views of respondents who expressed doubts about their desire to remain in the country. FSU immigrants considering emigration from Israel assign paramount importance to security problems, together with a desire to improve their standard of living. Among Jewish old-timers considering emigration, however, no essential differences were found between the three reasons detailed above. In general, immigrants appear to be more aware than Jewish old-timers of the reasons that cause Israeli citizens to leave the country (Figures 38-39).

Figure 36

**Desire to Live in Israel in the Long Run, 1986-2009**  
**“Are you sure that you want to live in Israel in the long run?”**  
**Sure that I want to (Jewish sample only; percentages)**

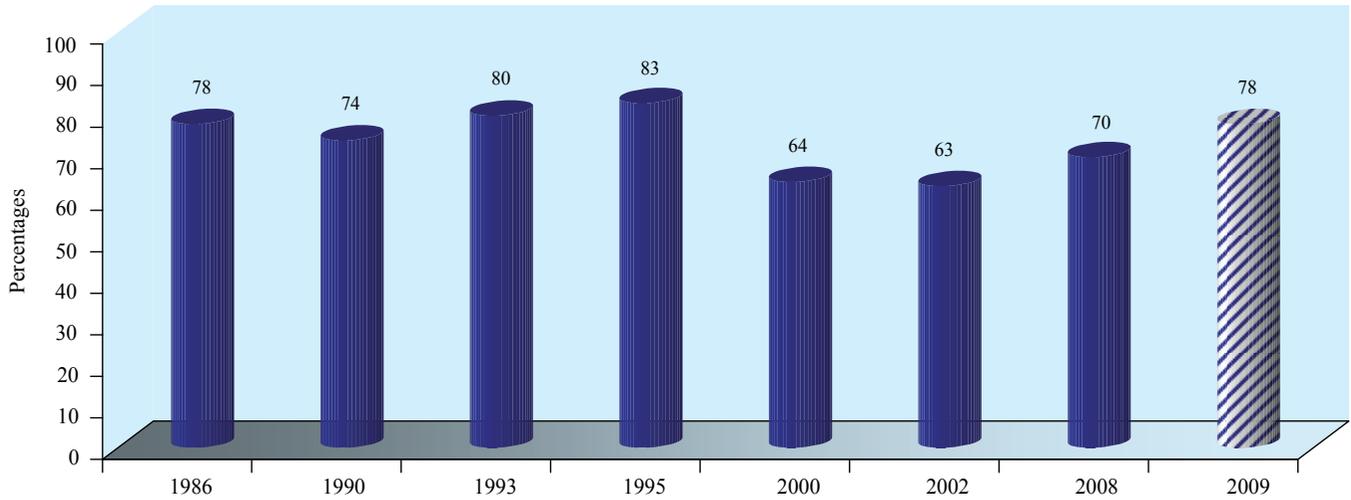


Figure 37

**Desire to Live in Israel in the Long Run: Immigrants vs. Jewish Old-Timers**  
**“Are you sure that you want to live in Israel in the long run?”**  
**Sure that I want to (according to sectors; according to ages; percentages)**

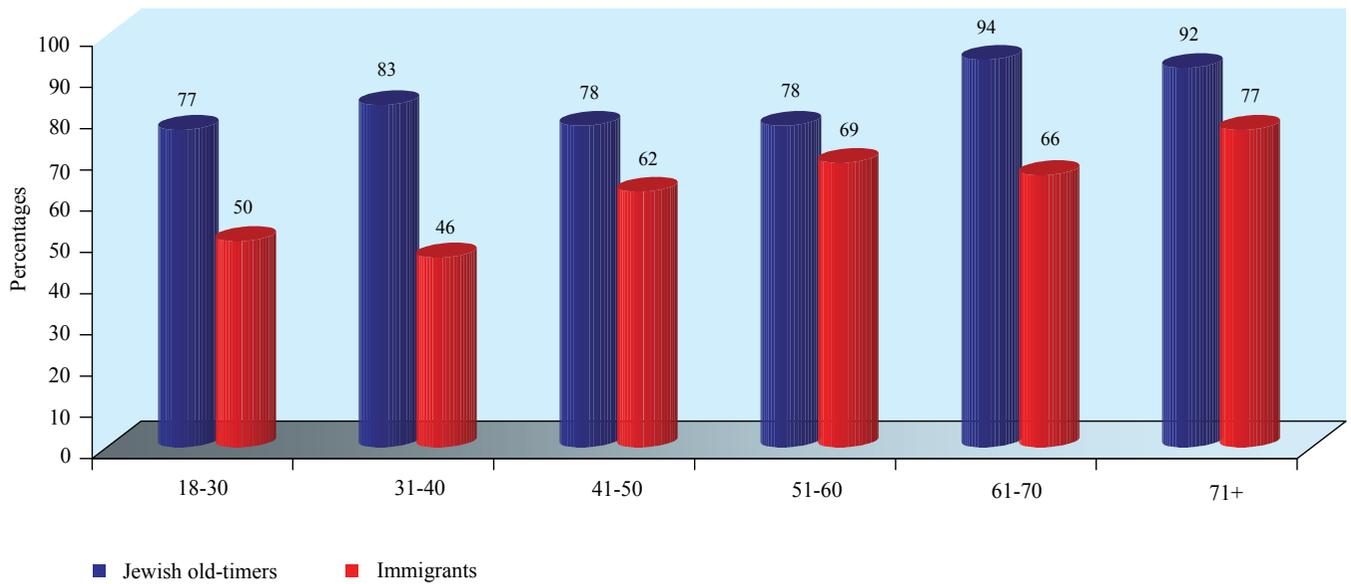


Figure 38

**Reasons for the Desire to Leave Israel**

**“In your view, to what extent do each one of the following reasons make people want to leave Israel?”**  
**(Immigrants and Jewish old-timers; percentages)**

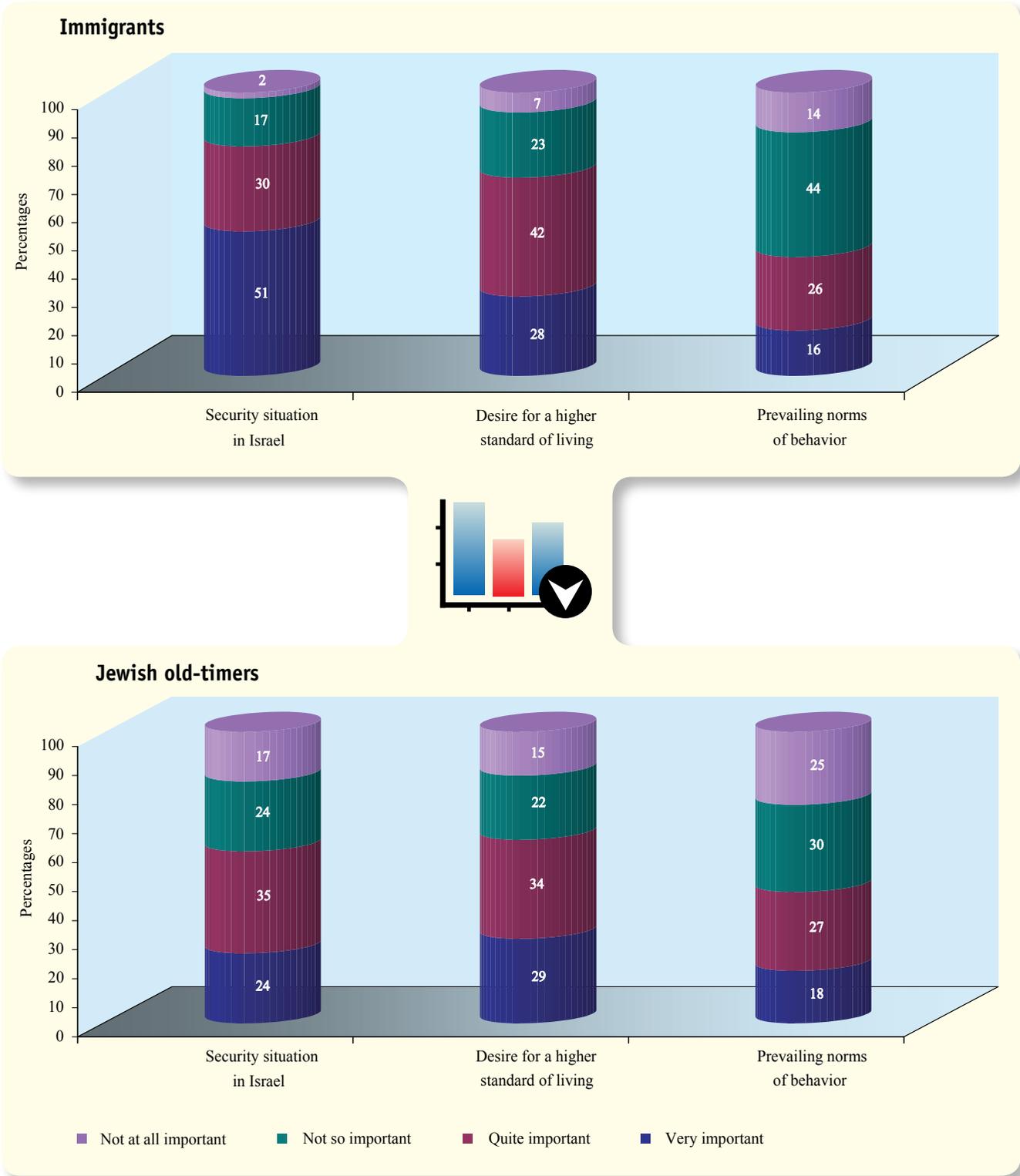
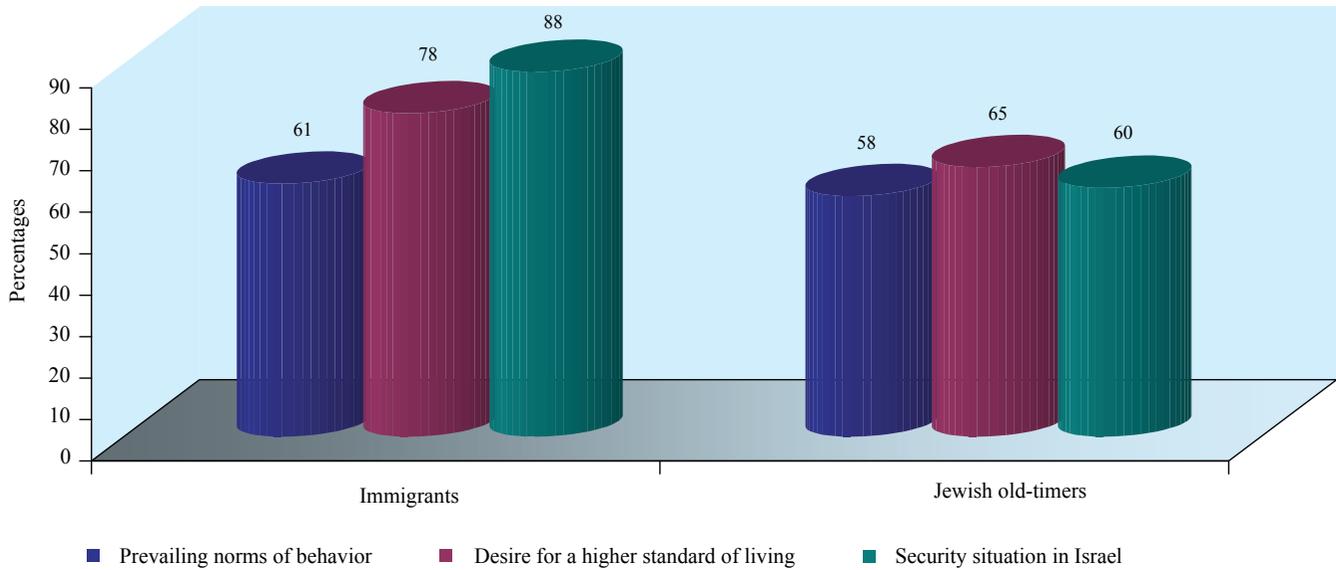


Figure 39

**Main Reasons for the Desire to Leave Israel**  
**Quite important and very important reason**  
**(among potential\* departees in the Jewish sample only; percentages)**



\* Respondents who do not want to live in Israel in the future or have doubts about it.

This finding is related to a trend that we have witnessed since the Second Lebanon War: a decline in the rate of FSU immigrants who are sure of their desire to live in Israel – 48% in the 18-40 age group. Although this trend also characterized Jewish old-timers at the end of the war, an impressive recovery was recorded, and scores in 2009 returned to what they had been before 2006 (80%). No similar trend of recovery was recorded among FSU immigrants (Figure 40).

When asked, “Would you want your children and grandchildren to live in Israel?”

92% of Jewish old-timers answered yes, as opposed to 74% of FSU immigrants. A breakdown of answers according to these categories points to large gaps between the two groups: for instance, in the 31-40 age-group (that is, parents of children up to 18), 80% of Jewish old-timers are sure of the desire to raise children in Israel, as opposed to only 28% among FSU immigrants (Figure 41). One of the explanations for this finding is that many FSU immigrants live in the periphery, in the north and south of the country;<sup>75</sup> these communities have suffered

75 Thus, for instance, the highest concentrations of immigrants are in the southern district (25%) and in Haifa and the northern district (30%). In recent years, the security situation in these areas has been rather precarious. By contrast, only 15% of the Jewish population in general live in the southern district and about 20% live in Haifa and the northern district (Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2008*, Table 2.8).

from a precarious security situation and an increased sense of threat in recent years. The sense of threat strongly affects their desire to live in Israel and to bring up their children here. Other explanations might be related to the wish to improve their standard of living and to ensure a better economic future for their children.

A discussion about the mood among the immigrants and their attitude toward emigration from Israel would not be complete without paying attention to their concrete reality. The rate of emigration from Israel among FSU immigrants who arrived after

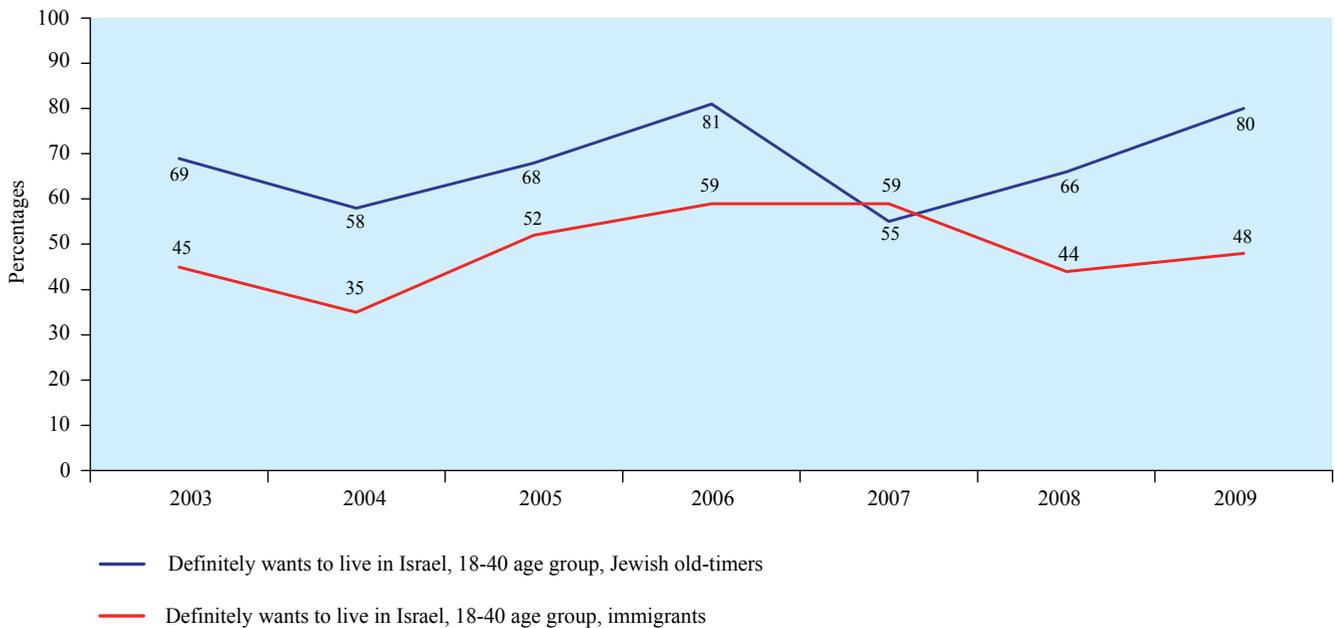
1989 is much higher than the emigration rate of Jewish old-timers. The report submitted to the Knesset Committee for Immigration, Absorption, and Diaspora Affairs indicated that “many young and educated FSU immigrants have left Israel for western countries and, presently, there is quite a widespread phenomenon of emigration to Russia.”<sup>76</sup>

Not enough official figures are available on immigration to and from Israel among FSU immigrants. Yuli Edelstein, the Deputy Minister of Absorption in the Sharon government, who served as acting Minister of

Figure 40

### Desire to Live in Israel

**“Are you sure that you want to live in Israel in the distant future?”  
Sure that I want to (18-40 age group; Jewish sample only; percentages)**



76 Naomi Mei-Ami, *Data on Emigration from Israel* (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Knesset Research and Information Center, 2006), 7.

Absorption, said in an YNET interview in 2002: “The immigration of Jews from FSU countries is not a bottomless pit. This is the right moment to say that in the past twelve years, about one million Jews have come to Israel and about a quarter have emigrated to other places.”<sup>77</sup> The figure Edelstein noted was higher than the estimates of the Central Bureau of Statistics, whereby 970,000 immigrants from the FSU had

arrived in Israel by 2007, and 795,000 live in Israel today.<sup>78</sup> According to the figures of the Central Bureau of Statistics, 90,000 immigrants have left Israel since 1989.<sup>79</sup>

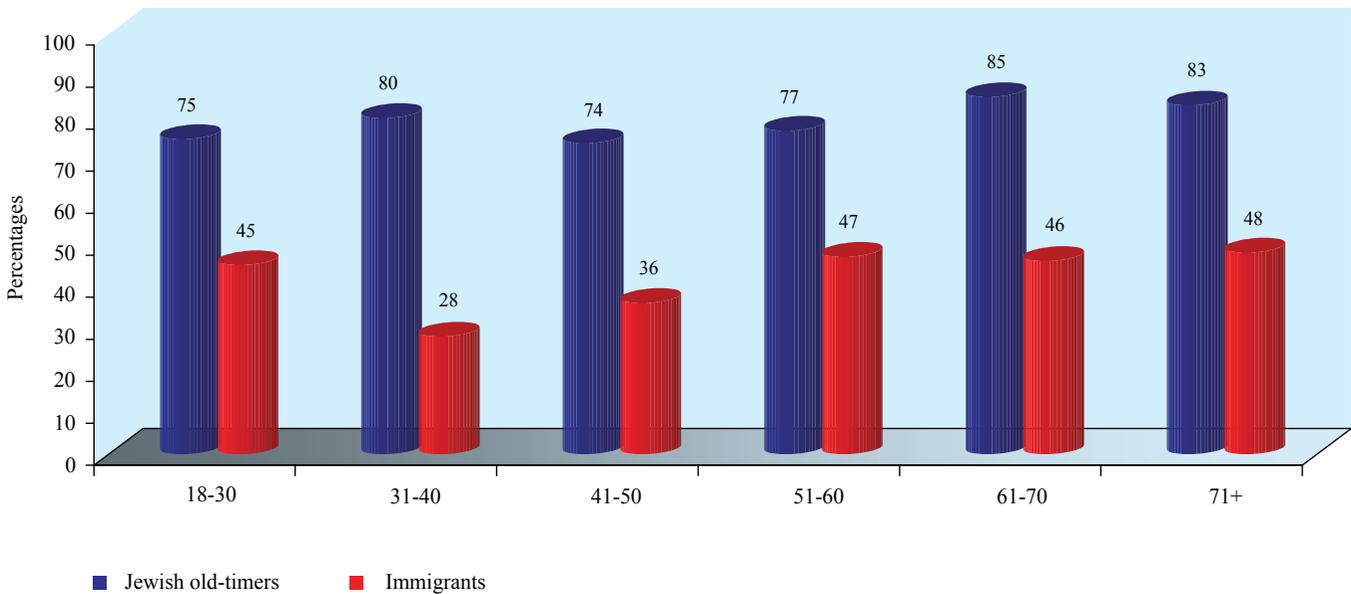
**(c) Belonging to the Community**

Most Israelis (80%) are proud to be Israeli and, foremost among them, Jewish old-timers (88%). The group with the weakest sense of pride are the Arab citizens of Israel

Figure 41

**The Next Generation**

**“Do you want your children or grandchildren to live in Israel?”  
Sure that I want to (according to sectors; according to ages; percentages)**



77 Diana Bahur, YNET, 21 October 2002: [www.ynet.co.il/articles/1,7340,L-2191554,00.html](http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/1,7340,L-2191554,00.html)

78 According to the data we obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistics, about 970,000 immigrants had arrived in Israel by 2007; about 95,000 died in 1989-2007; 90,000 FSU immigrants left Israel by 2007. Today, 795,000 FSU immigrants live in Israel (entered Israel through the Law of Return). This figure does not include children born in Israel to mothers who immigrated from the FSU. Figures were provided in an exchange of correspondence with Pnina Zadka, Head of the Population and Demography Department, Central Bureau of Statistics, 7 May 2009.

79 According to the definition of the Central Bureau of Statistics, all citizens who have left Israel and have not returned within a year are viewed as having left the country (“*yordim*”; emigrants).

(38%). Despite this pride, however, about a third of the public do not feel that they are part of Israel and its problems: only 66% feel a sense of belonging to Israel – 73% of Jewish old-timers, as opposed to 59% of FSU immigrants, and only 33% of the Arab public (Figure 42).

What makes people “true Israelis”? Figure 43 indicates that the most important condition for being a “true Israeli” is to respect the country’s laws. And yet, 53% of Israelis maintain that the most important

condition for being a “true Israeli” is to be born in Israel, a slightly surprising figure in a country that absorbs immigrants, or in simpler terms – a country of immigration. In other countries, the view that truly being a citizen requires that the person be born in the country is even more common. Thus, we find that other countries of immigration, such as the United States and Australia, rank the importance of being born in the country in order to be a true citizen even higher than Israel (Figure 44).<sup>80</sup>

Figure 42

**Sense of Belonging to Israel**

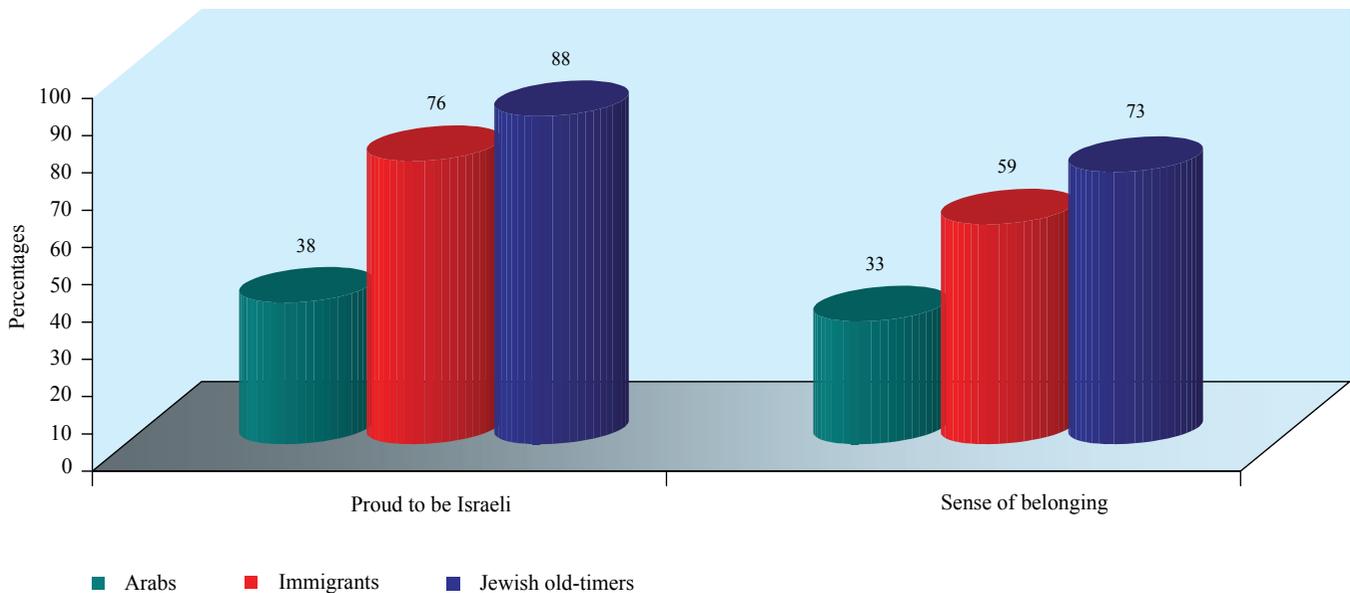
**“To what extent do you feel part of Israel and its problems?”**

**To a very large extent and to a large extent**

**“To what extent are you proud to be an Israeli?”**

**Very proud**

**(according to sectors; percentages)**



80 ISSP- International Social Survey Programme, 2003: [www.issp.org](http://www.issp.org)

Figure 43

**The Important Components for Truly Being an Israeli**

**“Some claim that the following are very important for truly being an Israeli. Others claim they are not important. In your view, to what extent are the following important or not important?”**  
**Very important and quite important (according to sectors; percentages)**

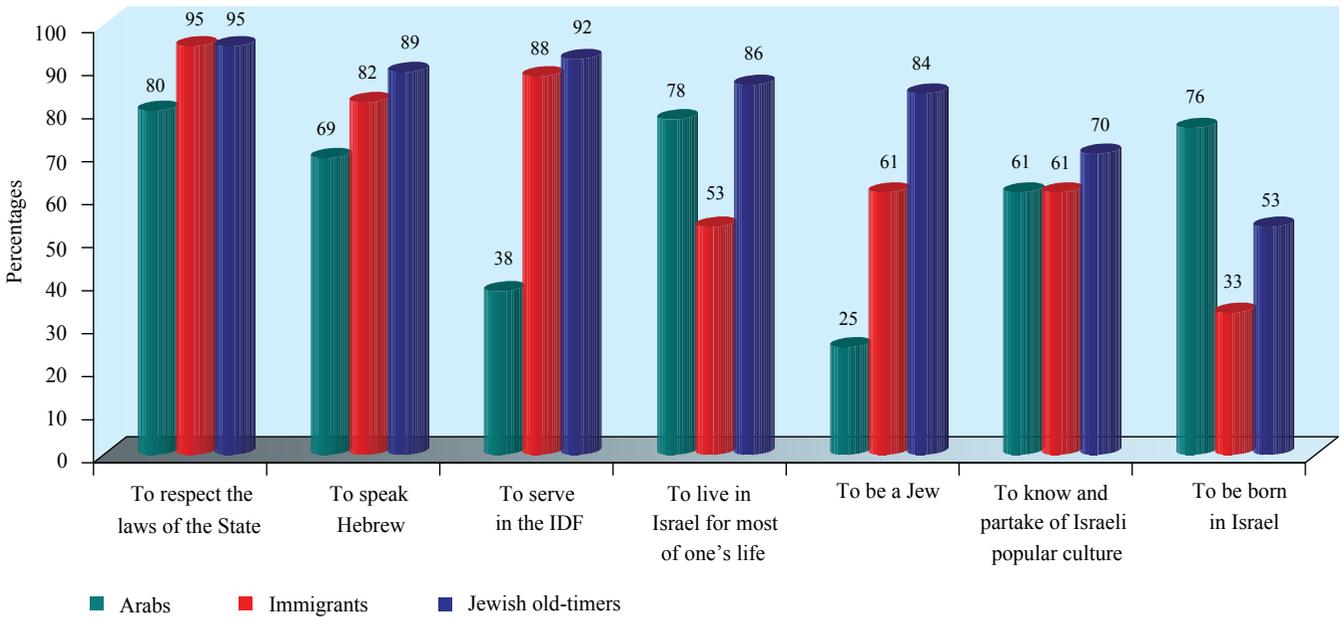
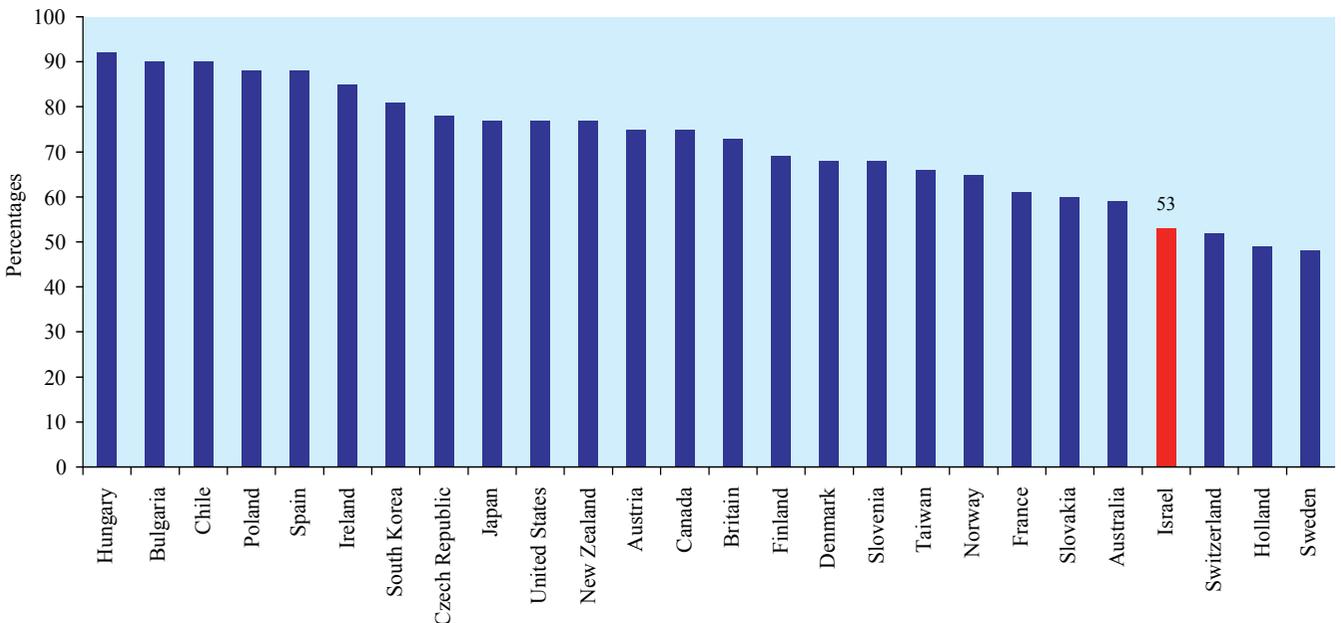


Figure 44

**The Essential Condition for Citizenship: An International Comparison**

**“To be a true citizen, you have to be born in the country”**  
**Very important and quite important (percentages)**



We might naturally expect that every group in the society stresses its own characteristics as necessary for authentic citizenship. The Arab citizens of Israel maintain that nothing is more important than to be born in Israel and to live here for most of one's life. The analysis of the Jewish respondents' answers found no differences between immigrants and old-timers. FSU immigrants join the Jewish old-timers' consensus on almost every issue, even when it is less characteristic of them. Thus, most immigrants are sure that truly being an Israeli requires that the person speak Hebrew and be familiar with Israeli popular culture. This finding could be expressed in optimistic terms: although some of the immigrants do not speak Hebrew in day-to-day life and shut themselves off in a cultural and linguistic "ghetto," they read Israeli reality well and identify the admission tickets into Israeli society as perceived by Jewish old-timers.

Social trust is one of the principal components when examining relationships in a political community. In his study, Ronald Inglehart found a relationship between the mutual trust that prevails between individuals in a society and the country's economic development.<sup>81</sup> In the current study, social trust was examined through the question: "In general, do you think that people can be trusted or that one should be very cautious in relationships with others?" Seventy-two percent of the Israeli public maintain that usually, or always, one should be cautious in relationships with others. The group with the

least trust in others is the Arab sector (87%); FSU immigrants also tend to place little trust in their surroundings (80%). Israel is in the 24<sup>th</sup> place, between South Africa and Taiwan, in a ranking of social trust in 28 democratic countries, which is relatively low (Figure 45). Inglehart found that such low levels of trust characterize Islamic and post-Soviet countries.

#### **(d) Inter-group Relations**

Political tolerance is a fundamental element of democratic culture and a necessary condition for the implementation of democratic values in the social and political realm. Mutual tolerance between social groups also affects social relationships, the depth of cleavages, and the level of social trust. To examine the relationships between groups in Israeli society and the depth of the cleavages within it, we asked respondents to define their attitudes toward various groups: a group related to the national cleavage – Arab citizens of Israel; a group related to the political cleavage – right-wing and left-wing activists; a group related to the religious-secular cleavage – Ultra-Orthodox Jews; and a group related to relationships with a gender minority (with a homosexual orientation) – the homo-lesbian community. Among groups that are targets of negative attitudes, we found Arab citizens, Ultra-Orthodox Jews, and left-wing activists. This is not a new finding. The opposition of the Jewish public focuses on the Arab citizens, as it did in the 1980s and following the eruption of the Al-Aksa

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81 Ronald Inglehart, "Culture and Democracy," in *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, ed. Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 80-97.

intifada and the October 2000 events.<sup>82</sup>

Previous studies have pointed to the importance of the right-left ideological continuum in the context of Israel's political culture and political behavior.<sup>83</sup> Hence, we classified the respondents into three groups – right, center, and left, according to their self-definitions.<sup>84</sup> We also examined the attitudes of the FSU immigrants group, and found a correspondence between the type of group chosen as least favored and the type of group that chose it. Thus, in the general Jewish sample, right-wing supporters have a negative attitude toward left-wing activists and vice-versa. Supporters of the center are the most moderate group, and their negative and positive attitudes toward the various groups hardly changes from one group to another; the least favored group among supporters of the center are Ultra-Orthodox Jews (Table 2). The picture is slightly different in the immigrants' sample: right-wing and center supporters among FSU immigrants (88% of the immigrant public) have a negative view of left-wing activists, and a negative attitude toward Ultra-Orthodox Jews is prominent among immigrants who support the center (Table 3). The main difference between the total Jewish sample and the immigrants'

sample is among supporters of the center – immigrants have a more negative attitude toward other groups than the center in the total Jewish sample.

One way of probing the depth of the cleavage and its potential for threatening stability and becoming an open social conflict is to examine the measure of legitimation granted to the use of violence for the attainment of political aims. Findings in 2009 resemble those recorded in 2007: 74% of the public agree with the statement: "Using violence to attain political aims is never justified," as opposed to only 61% last year. Despite the improvement and the more moderate attitudes of the public, however, it is important to note that a quarter of Israeli society justifies the use of political violence. This finding emphasizes the depth of the problem at a time when many political decisions are controversial.

An analysis of the attitudes concerning justification of the use of political violence revealed that the 18-30 age group grants it the highest degree of legitimation (27%). According to 33% of FSU immigrants, as opposed to 35% of Arab citizens and 22% of Jewish old-timers, political violence is legitimate.

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82 For further analysis, see Asher Arian, Shlomit Barnea, Pazit Ben-Nun, Raphael Ventura, and Michal Shamir, *The 2005 Israeli Democracy Index: A Decade after the Assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2005), 98-99.

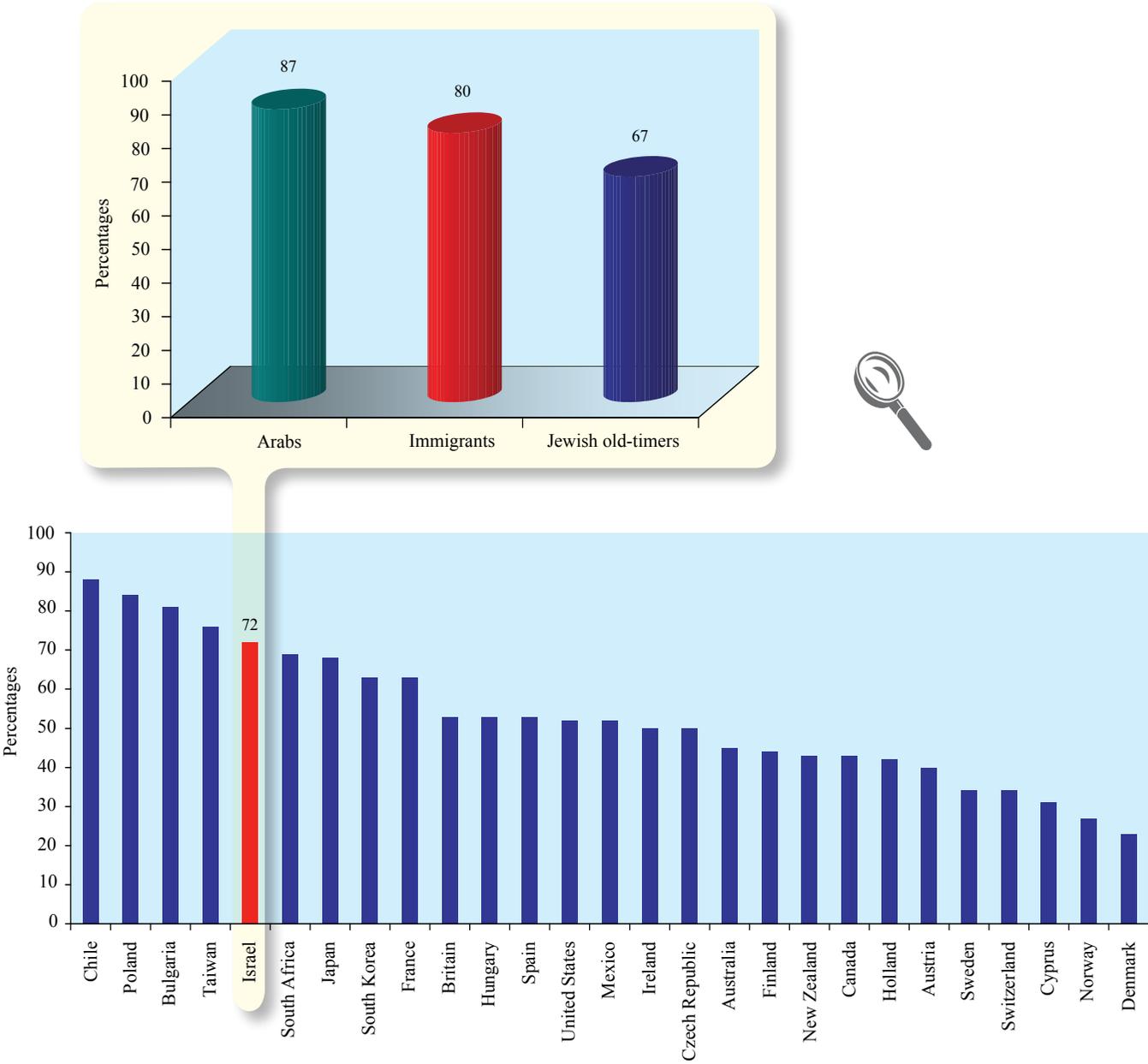
83 Michal Shamir and Asher Arian, "Collective Identity and Electoral Competition in Israel," *The American Political Science Review* 93 (1999): 265-277.

84 The right-left classification relies on the respondent's self-placement on a scale of 1 (right) to 7 (left): 1-3 (right supporters); 4 (center supporters); 5-7 (left supporters).

Figure 45

### Social Trust

“In general, do you think that people can be trusted or that one should be very cautious in relationships with others?”  
Usually or always be very cautious (percentages)



Source: ISSP- International Social Survey Programme, 2003: [www.issp.org](http://www.issp.org)

Table 2

**Attitude toward Groups in the Society: Jews**  
**“What is your attitude toward the following groups?”**  
**Quite negative and very negative (Jewish sample only; N=958; percentages)**

	Left-wing activists	Right-wing activists	Ultra- Orthodox	Arabs	Homo-lesbian community
<b>Right</b> (N=450)	82	17	44	72	61
<b>Center</b> (N=287)	57	41	61	55	41
<b>Left</b> (N=221)	30	72	72	32	19

Table 3

**Attitude toward Groups in the Society: Immigrants**  
**“What is your attitude toward the following groups?”**  
**Quite negative and very negative (Immigrants sample only; N=336; percentages)**

	Left-wing activists	Right-wing activists	Ultra- Orthodox	Arabs	Homo-lesbian community
<b>Right</b> (N=201)	88	20	72	78	65
<b>Center</b> (N=93)	72	45	84	58	69
<b>Left</b> (N=42)	41	47	70	59	40

### (e) Territorial Concessions

Since the Six-Day War, Israel’s political agenda has been shaped by attitudes toward territorial concessions. Over the years, a deep cleavage has split the public into two political camps – right and left. The distinction between two camps known as “doves” and “hawks” is indeed simplistic since different approaches and nuances can be found in both, but the main difference in this regard

is between supporters of a solution based on a compromise between the two peoples and those who oppose concessions on the essential issue – the future of the territories beyond the Green Line. To examine the public’s attitudes regarding the issue of these territories, we asked two questions: one dealt with the evacuation of settlements beyond the Green Line in a final status agreement, and the other with the transfer of Jerusalem’s Arab

neighborhoods to the Palestinian Authority in a final status agreement. We broke down the respondents' answers according to their ideological loyalties, and we also compared responses in the Jewish sample as a whole to the responses of the immigrant sample.

In the Jewish sample, we found a correspondence between the general political orientation and the attitude toward the evacuation of settlements and the transfer of Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem (for further details, see Tables 4 and 6). Forty-eight percent of the Jewish public as a whole are not willing to evacuate settlements in a final status agreement, 37% are willing to evacuate isolated settlements, and 15% are willing to evacuate all the settlements beyond the Green Line. An analysis of the immigrants' sample reveals that their attitudes concerning the evacuation of settlements are more "hawkish" than those of the Jewish public in general: 64% are unwilling to evacuate settlements in a final status agreement, 30% are willing to evacuate isolated settlements, and 6% are willing to evacuate all the settlements (for further details, see Table 5). On the issue of Jerusalem, we hardly found differences between the right and the left among the immigrants. Attitudes among supporters of the left and the center are not fundamentally different from the attitudes of the right (Table 7). We may conclude that the center and the left-wing groups among the immigrants have more "hawkish" attitudes than the center and left within the Jewish sample as a whole.

#### **4. The Democracy Survey 2009: A Summary of the Salient Findings**

The Israeli public continue to show high interest in politics in comparison with other democratic countries. Two thirds of the

public are interested in politics to a large extent or to some extent. And yet, only half of young Israelis are interested in politics to a similar extent. The public perceptions of Israeli democracy present a problematic picture: about one third of Israelis – and of them, more than half of the Arab respondents and of FSU immigrants – maintain that Israel is not democratic enough.

Israelis believe in the effectiveness of a regime headed by a strong leader (and Israel differs in this regard from most democratic countries in the world), but they tend not to grant additional powers to the prime minister at the expense of the legislative branch. Among all the alternatives to a democratic regime, the Israeli public choose a government of experts who make decisions on the basis of their personal and professional views, and without taking the public's attitudes into account. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents agree that a regime of this type is suitable for Israel; among the immigrants, the rate is 72%.

In 2009, Israelis feel their country is deeply corrupt; 37% maintain that corruption in Israel is greater than in other democracies. Interestingly, views among the Arab public are more positive – only a minority think that politicians in Israel are corrupt. Another finding that indicates dissatisfaction with the functioning of the democracy is that about half of the public feel they lack any ability to influence government policy; 61% of FSU immigrants support this view. With regard to the ability to influence local and communal politics, public opinion is more positive, although not among FSU immigrants: more than 40% say they have no way of influencing what happens in the residential community, in the educational institution, and not even at the workplace.

Table 4

**Evacuation of Settlements: Jews**

**“What is your view on the evacuation of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria in a final status agreement with the Palestinians?”**  
(Jewish sample only; N= 970; percentages)

	Willing to evacuate all settlements, including the large settlement blocs	Willing to evacuate all the small and isolated settlements	There should be no evacuation under any circumstances
Right	5	29	66
Center	14	48	39
Left	40	44	16

Table 5

**Evacuation of Settlements: Immigrants**

**“What is your view on the evacuation of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria in a final status agreement with the Palestinians?”**  
(Immigrants sample only; N= 372; percentages)

	Willing to evacuate all settlements, including the large settlement blocs	Willing to evacuate all the small and isolated settlements	There should be no evacuation under any circumstances
Right	2	28	70
Center	11	36	53
Left	13	39	49

Table 6

**Transfer of Jerusalem’s Arab Neighborhoods: Jews**

**“In a final status agreement, to what extent would you agree to Israel transferring Jerusalem’s Arab neighborhoods to the Palestinians?”**  
(Jewish sample only; N= 977; percentages)

	Definitely agree	Quite agree	Somewhat disagree	Definitely disagree
Right	10	15	17	58
Center	22	17	23	38
Left	38	24	16	22

Table 7

**Transfer of Jerusalem’s Arab Neighborhoods: Immigrants**

**“In a final status agreement, to what extent would you agree to Israel transferring Jerusalem’s Arab neighborhoods to the Palestinians?  
(Immigrants sample only; N= 390; percentages)**

	Definitely agree	Quite agree	Somewhat disagree	Definitely disagree
<b>Right</b>	6	13	17	64
<b>Center</b>	9	12	20	59
<b>Left</b>	5	13	23	60

Trust in government institutions did increase in 2009 to some extent, but the citizens’ trust in most institutions and, particularly, in political institutions – the Knesset and the parties – is low. Trust in law enforcement institutions is also not high, and the level of trust in the police is among the lowest in democratic countries: only 40% trust the Israeli police.

The **Democracy Index 2009** points to a worrisome phenomenon: most of the Israeli public express general support for freedom of expression, but also oppose harsh criticism of Israel. Thus, 58% support forbidding harsh criticism of Israel – 10 percentage points more than in 2003. Nor do the Jewish public display liberal attitudes toward the Arab minority, and this trend has continued for several years: only about half of Israelis agree that there is a need for equality of rights between Jews and Arabs in Israel, and only a small minority think that Arab ministers should join the government, or that Arab citizens should participate in decisions fateful to the country. Close to half of the respondents think that the government should encourage Arab emigration from the

country, and almost a third agree that it is necessary to deny Israel’s Arab citizens the right to vote and to be elected to the Knesset.

One of the issues that we dealt with at length in the **Democracy Index 2009** is that of social solidarity and belonging to the community. Findings indicate that, as in recent years, most of the public are proud to be Israeli and feel themselves part of Israel and its problems. Furthermore, the rate of young people who are sure of their desire to continue to live in Israel increased over the last two years by about 25 percentage points and, presently, is approximately 80%. By contrast, about half of the young immigrants are not sure that they wish to live in Israel. We examined the desire of immigrants and of Jewish old-timers to raise children in Israel and found that in the 31-40 age-group, 80% of Jewish old-timers are sure that they want to bring up their children in Israel, as opposed to only 28% of FSU immigrants. Jewish old-timers explain their wish to leave Israel mainly on economic grounds and on a desire to improve their living standard, and place security issues second. By contrast,

immigrants emphasize that security is the main reason for their desire to leave the country.

The political integration of the immigrants discussed at length in the **Democracy Index 2009** enables us to determine that the political culture of FSU immigrants as of 2009 differs from that of most groups in the country. In general, the immigrants' attitudes are less liberal and less tolerant in almost every realm and concerning every topic examined. Thus, for instance, despite their education and their secularism, they have traditional attitudes as far as family values are concerned.

Furthermore, despite the widespread view that "Russian politics" has been assimilated in Israel, the immigrants do not feel they fully share in the events taking place around them. On the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of immigration from the FSU, many immigrants express views that bring to mind the patterns of political behavior in the Soviet regime. This attests to very weak political integration into Israeli democracy. In an analysis over the years, we found no changes – the immigrants' attitudes appear more stable and more consistent than those

of the Jewish old-timers. As of 2009, the political integration of the immigrants is only partial and confined to systematic participation in elections. They do not feel they can influence their surroundings, and their civic perception is extremely passive. Such feelings may preserve the social-economic problems discussed in the pertinent sections of the **Democracy Index 2009**. FSU immigrants prefer strong leaders or a government of experts who do not depend on democratic mechanisms. Many of them are dissatisfied with Israeli democracy, and find these two forms of government appealing, and good alternatives to the current Israeli regime. The Index indicates that the mood among the immigrants is worse than the mood among Jewish old-timers, that the problems they suffer from are more serious, and that their reactions are more extreme. Immigrants are more worried about security problems, less sure of their desire to live in Israel, and not sure about their desire to raise children in Israel. In the following section, we continue our analysis of the immigrants' integration, and will attempt to explain their feelings.

## C. The Socio-Economic Integration of FSU Immigrants in Israel

### 1. Introduction

From the beginning of the massive immigration from the FSU in 1989 and until 2007, 970,000 immigrants arrived in Israel according to the Central Bureau of Statistics.<sup>85</sup> According to other data presented by the former Deputy Minister of Absorption, MK Marina Solodkin, who relies on Ministry of Absorption figures, 1.1 million immigrants had arrived in Israel by 2005.<sup>86</sup> The gaps between these two sets of data reflect the computation methods in use at the Central Bureau of Statistics, which do not include immigrants who came to Israel after they had married an Israeli citizen living in the country.

The integration process of FSU immigrants in Israeli society is complex and involves many aspects, which hinder the development of tools for easy and objective measurement. We opened the discussion with the immigrants' political integration, and found significant differences between the political attitudes of the immigrants and those of the Jewish old-timers. We also found that the immigrants are extremely worried about the security situation and some are not sure that they want to live in Israel and raise children here. These figures fit the data concerning their emigration from Israel.

We wish to emphasize that the aim of this discussion is not to create a model for measuring the immigrants' integration into Israeli society and into the Israeli economy, with all the implications that this entails. Interesting attempts to do so have been made in the past.<sup>87</sup> The aim of our study is to point out issues that appear to be important to the socio-economic integration of FSU immigrants, and to examine the immigrants' perceptions of their integration.

From the start, the 1990s immigration process provoked many questions in Israel, and attitudes toward it among the general public, among politicians, and in academia have never been consistent. Sami Smooha was far from presenting "Russian" immigration in a romantic light: "The massive Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union to Israel since the summer of 1989 does not attest to Israel's greater appeal. FSU Jews are uprooted from their home against their will by surging anti-Semitism, they are prevented from entering the United States (after the latter, bowing to Israeli pressure, ceased to recognize them as political refugees), and they find their way to Israel for lack of any other option as actual refugees."<sup>88</sup>

A decade and a half later, the accepted view among sociologists seems to be that the

85 Information was provided by Pnina Zadka, Head of the Population and Demography Department, Central Bureau of Statistics, 7 May 2009.

86 Marina Solodkin, "Problemy Etnokulturnoi i Nazionalnoi Identifikazii" [Ethno-Cultural and National Identity Problems] in "*Russkoe*" *Lizo Izrailya* [The "Russian" Face of Israel], ed. Moshe Kenigstein (Jerusalem: Gesharim, 2007), 52.

87 See, for instance, the 2007 Ruppin Index: <http://www.ruppin.ac.il/download/files>

88 Smooha, "Class, Ethnic, and National Cleavages and Democracy in Israel," (note 51 above).

massive wave of the 1990s is a classic case of immigration, directly motivated by economic issues and by the political instability that characterized the Soviet Union before its collapse.<sup>89</sup>

Historian Alex Jacobson sees the “Russian” wave of immigration as one of the most important and successful chapters of Israel’s history: “The statement that the story of the absorption of the ‘Russians’ has ultimately been a great success despite the many difficulties and problems, is no longer news. Surveys show that more than 80% of them (including the non-Jews among them...) are satisfied with their decision to come and see Israel as their home.”<sup>90</sup> This stance conveys the view prevalent in Israeli society. Jacobson’s view is shared by many economists and sociologists, who claim that the “Russian” immigration moved Israel forward by dint of the vast human capital, the small number of children per family, and the readiness to work hard at any job and to invest in their children’s education.<sup>91</sup> And yet, can we say that the integration process is a “great success” if there are “many difficulties and problems?” Does the fact that most immigrants are satisfied with the decision to leave a crumbling country to come to Israel necessarily attest to their successful integration into the new country?

The answer to these questions is complex. Despite the considerable achievements in the immigrants’ integration process, there are also significant problems, as detailed in this study.

We must emphasize that this study was conducted twenty years after the beginning of large waves of immigration from the FSU, which had already taken place by the 1990s. More than 90% of the participants in the survey (a representative sample of the immigrants) have lived in Israel for about a decade or more. In other words, most of the respondents have experienced the processes of integration, and it is now possible to assess the measure of success of these processes and to formulate reliable interim conclusions.

## 2. Economic Integration: Objective Data

Twenty years after their arrival in Israel, the immigrants of the 1990s live in a complex socio-economic reality. Some scholars maintain that the economic integration of FSU immigrants is yet to be completed. Despite their vast human capital, the immigrants have not yet reached levels of economic integration similar to those of the FSU immigrants who went to the United States in the 1990s. Immigrants of the one and a half generation<sup>92</sup> have also not been successfully integrated into the Israeli economy.<sup>93</sup> The

89 See, for instance, Yoav Peled and Gershon Shafir, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Remennick, *Russian Jews on Three Continents* (note 54 above).

90 Alex Yakobson, “Collapse, Shmolapse: Israeli Society Facing the Prophecies of its Downfall” (in Hebrew), unpublished.

91 See, for instance, Karnit Flug and Nitsa Kassir, *On Poverty, Work, and In-Between* (in Hebrew), Discussion Paper Series, Research Department (Jerusalem: Bank of Israel, 2001); Sami Smooha, “The Mass Immigrations to Israel: A Comparison of the Failure of the Mizrahi Immigrants of the 1950s with the Success of the Russian Immigrants of the 1990s,” *The Journal of Israeli History* 27 (2008): 1–27.

92 This refers to immigrants who came to Israel when they were of school-age.

story of the 1990s immigrants is inconsistent with the integration model described as a U: a drop in status at the first stage (due to employment that does not necessarily fit the immigrant's profession), and a return to their original status after several years. Even after fifteen or twenty years, FSU immigrants receive lower salaries than those of Jewish old-timers in identical positions. The percentage of immigrants in "blue collar" jobs has not changed since the early 1990s. This finding is related to the relative decline in the educational attainments of young immigrants.<sup>94</sup> According to Dubson, contrary to the situation in the Soviet Union, in which the regime failed to turn Soviet Jews into members of the working class, many Russian Jews in Israel have become a classic proletariat within a short time. Remennick also drew comparisons between the economic integration of Soviet immigrants in Israel and in other countries. She found a decline in the economic status of educated immigrants in Israel; in the United States, which absorbed an immigrant population with a similar social composition, by contrast, Soviet immigrants were relatively successful economically and were integrated rather quickly into the American middle class.<sup>95</sup>

The immigrants' employment difficulties in Israel have many causes: the immigrants' qualifications did not fit the needs of the Israeli economy, which found it difficult to absorb such a large number of professionals. Consequently, many immigrants experienced a serious decline in their employment status – a transition from the professional and technical sectors in the FSU to the services sector and to skilled and unskilled manual labor in Israel.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, unlike the American or European economy, the Israeli economy is small and not sufficiently flexible. Upward mobility is at times contingent on social networks acquired only after a prolonged stay in the country.

As for the decline in the immigrants' economic status, we can, of course, say that the problems concern mainly the older generation, while the younger generation is better integrated, acquires an education, and succeeds in hi-tech fields.<sup>97</sup> The current (relative) success of the younger immigrants, however, does not offset the serious problems of the older immigrants, who were a majority in the immigration wave of the 1990s (this was the wave of the oldest immigrants in the history of Israel). We may very plausibly assume that the

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93 Yinon Cohen and Yitzchak Haberfeld, "Self-Selection and Earning Assimilation: Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union in Israel and the United States," *Demography* 44 (2007): 665.

94 Boris Dubson, "Sozialno-Professionalnaya Mobilnost Immigrantov" [Social-Professional Mobility among Immigrants], in "*Russkoe*" *Lizo Izrailya* [The "Russian" Face of Israel], ed. Moshe Kenigstein (Jerusalem: Gesharim, 2007), 286-287.

95 Remennick, *Russian Jews on Three Continents* (note 54 above).

96 Peled and Shafir, *Being Israeli* (note 89 above); Smooha, "The Mass Immigrations to Israel" (note 91 above); Tamar Ruth Horowitz and Elazar Leshem, "The Immigrants from the FSU in the Israeli Cultural Sphere" (in Hebrew), in *Profile of an Immigration Wave: The Absorption Process of Immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, 1990–1995*, ed. Moshe Sicon and Elazar Leshem (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998), 291–333.

97 *Ibid.*

problems of the older generation will have implications for the progress of the younger one,<sup>98</sup> since children usually inherit their parents' economic status.<sup>99</sup>

The process of decline in social status has critical implications for the immigrants – feelings of alienation from the country, emigration from Israel, lesser chances of success in the absorbing country of the second generation that grew up in poor families, Israel's declining appeal to potential immigrants (59% of Jews in Russia and Ukraine are currently unwilling to emigrate to Israel for fear of harming their socio-economic status),<sup>100</sup> and the improper and ineffective use of the immigrants' workforce potential in the Israeli economy.

Problems in improving the economic status of FSU immigrants were found not only regarding employment. There are also serious housing problems. Rates of home ownership, crowded housing, and the value of homes are not only good indicators of quality of life, in general, but they are also directly related to the socio-economic status of individuals. According to Smooha, 75% of FSU immigrants live in their own homes. "The basket"<sup>101</sup> also includes highly subsidized mortgages [...] Since the basket is given to families, multi-generation immigrant families could combine several baskets and thus double or triple family resources."<sup>102</sup>

Noah Lewin-Epstein and Moshe Semyonov examined the situation of older immigrants (fifty and older in 2008) regarding housing. They claim that, despite assistance from the state, FSU immigrants are much worse off than Jewish old-timers and Arab citizens of Israel.<sup>103</sup>

Only 30% of the older immigrants own a home, while most of them live in crowded conditions and in low-standard housing. Contrary to Jewish old-timers in their age-group, older immigrants pay mortgages (even when they did not manage to earn pension rights in Israel, so that mortgage payments are deducted from their social security), and the banks actually own most of these homes. The Social Housing Law enacted in Israel in the late 1990s, which enabled many Israelis to buy their apartments at low prices (for instance, from public housing companies such as Amidar and Amigur), mainly benefited the Jewish old-timers.<sup>104</sup> Among the older immigrants who could not benefit from this law, many are doomed to a life of poverty and are exposed to the risks associated with sub-standard housing in rough neighborhoods.<sup>105</sup>

### 3. Social Integration

The literature on the integration of immigrants advances the claim that, contrary to the many difficulties that hamper their

98 Dubson, "Social-Professional Mobility among Immigrants" (note 94 above).

99 Smooha, "Class, Ethnic, and National Cleavages" (note 51 above).

100 *Survey of the Guttman Center on Jews in Russia and Ukraine* (December-January, 2006-2007).

101 The "absorption basket" in the 1990s was 20,000 NIS for an immigrant couple with two children.

102 Smooha, "The Mass Immigrations to Israel" (note 91 above).

103 Noah Lewin-Epstein and Moshe Semyonov, "Home Ownership and Housing Conditions among the 50+ Population in Israel" (in Hebrew), *Bitahon Sotsiyali* 76 (March 2008): 153-174.

104 See, for instance, Alexandr Berman, "V Kabalu Radi Kryshi nad Golovoi" [Slaving Away for a Roof], *Vesti* 7 (August 2008).

105 Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov, "Home Ownership" (note 103 above).

economic integration, their social integration has actually been successful. Upon arrival, immigrants are automatically granted Israeli citizenship, which boosts their social status. Ostensibly, then, the immigrants' absorption process could be described as a decline in their economic status, but not in their social status.<sup>106</sup> The distinction, however, is not clear, since economic status influences the perception of a person's status in society, and successful social integration can hardly be sustained without some economic success.

A crucial aspect of social integration is related to the relationship between the immigrants and the absorbing society, and to the implications of this encounter. Almost invariably, massive immigrations throughout history have been characterized by a complex and difficult encounter between the immigrants and the local inhabitants. Usually, these two groups differ from one another in many aspects and compete for employment and housing resources. The conflict between immigrants and Jewish old-timers appears to be inevitable, and the question is how acute and how difficult will it be, and how long will it last. In the case of Israel, too, the variance between immigrants and Jewish old-timers dictates the inherent conflict between them: most 1990s FSU immigrants are secular, and some are not Jewish according to Halakhah. Furthermore, the absorbing Israeli society at times perceives the immigrants' tendency to preserve values and behavioral patterns that they bring from their country of origin

as unwillingness to become integrated in the new country.<sup>107</sup>

In the wake of the large waves of immigration, some groups in Israeli society view the immigrants as a group that competes with them for economic resources, resulting in the genuine potential for the emergence of a social cleavage.<sup>108</sup> In addition, the general public have adopted a broad set of stereotypes of FSU immigrants. Although the public indeed think that most immigrants are intelligent and well-educated, their image is also associated with such phenomena as the Russian mafia, crime, a Russian ghetto, and alcoholism.<sup>109</sup>

#### 4. Integration: The Survey's Findings

##### (a) General Integration: Aspirations and Expectations

In this chapter, we examine to what extent the immigrants have realized their aspirations and expectations in Israel. In the youngest and oldest groups of immigrants, about a quarter of the respondents reported that they came to Israel without prior aspirations. In the other age-groups, only 10% said that they had no aspirations or expectations. We will focus our analysis on the situation of the group of immigrants who had aspirations and expectations prior to their arrival in Israel (Figure 46): 70% reported that their aspirations and expectations have been realized to a large or to some extent. Only 28% said that their aspirations have been realized to a large extent.

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106 Peled and Shafir, *Being Israeli* (note 89 above).

107 Majid Al-Haj and Elazar Leshem, *Immigrants from the Soviet Union in Israel: Ten Years Later* (Haifa: University of Haifa, 2001).

108 Smooha, "Class, Ethnic, and National Cleavages" (note 51 above).

109 Nehemia Meyers, "Is the Israeli Press Defaming Newcomers from FSU?" *Jewish Bulletin of North California* (1996): [www.jewishf.com/bk9609913/ipress.html](http://www.jewishf.com/bk9609913/ipress.html)

A breakdown by age groups reveals a complex picture: 45% of the immigrants aged 18-30 stated that their expectations have been realized to a large extent. In other words, it appears that the immigrants who came to Israel as children, who received their education in Israel and who served in the IDF, are the ones who succeeded in realizing their expectations. An examination of other age groups reveals a sharp decline in the rate of respondents whose aspirations have been realized. The most prominent group in this regard is that of immigrants aged 31-40: only 21% claim to have largely realized their aspirations. Note that this group includes immigrants who were of high-school age upon arrival and others who were in their thirties, meaning that they were young enough to be able to acquire new skills and a new language, and to become integrated into Israeli society. The failure to capitalize on their youth in order to become integrated in the new country has created a large gap between their expectations and their actual realization, which explains their deep frustration compared with other age-groups. Another explanation is related to the pursuit of security and economic stability in Israel and of good opportunities for their children of many of the immigrants, which were not their lot in the collapsing country that they left behind. In view of the prevailing security conditions in Israel, they may not feel they have succeeded in attaining this aim.

Most of the immigrants who have arrived since 2000 – a relatively young group – claim that their aspirations have been realized to a large extent or to some extent. It may be that the FSU immigrants who arrived in the last years are better equipped with the western tools required to succeed in

a competitive capitalist economy than their predecessors.

### **(b) Social Integration: The Encounter between the Absorbing Society and the Immigrants**

Most Jewish old-timers (68%) are satisfied with the FSU immigration *per se* and oppose the statement, “It would have been better if FSU immigrants had not come at all.” On this issue, differences are evident within the Jewish old-timers group: the more traditional and Ultra-Orthodox public express greater agreement with this statement than the secular public (Figure 47). Apparently, there is no consensus on this question among the various groups in society. Thus, for example, among respondents whose parents were both born in Islamic countries (Mizrahim), 38% agree that it would have been better if the “Russian” immigration had not occurred, whereas half of this rate – 20% – of the respondents whose parents were both born in western countries (Ashkenazim) agreed with this statement.

How does the contribution of the FSU immigrants to the country compare with what they have received from it? This issue was examined in a sample of the public as a whole. We found a considerable gap between the perceptions of the absorbing society and that of the immigrants regarding the latter’s contribution: 61% of the immigrants maintain that they give to the country more than they receive from it, as opposed to 20% of the Jewish old-timers (Figure 48). Of all the questions in the survey, this one revealed the largest gap between immigrants and Jewish old-timers. The responses of the Jewish old-timers attest to satisfaction with the absorption of the “Russian” immigration –

they claim that the immigrants have received what they were entitled to and have contributed accordingly. On the other hand, considerable dissatisfaction is evident in the responses of the immigrants. In their view, their contribution to Israeli society is not sufficiently appreciated.

Israeli society has developed positive and negative stereotypes of FSU immigrants, which are often mutually contradictory. On the one hand, a prominent finding is that 83% of Jewish old-timers maintain that “FSU immigrants tend to be educated

people” – a very positive image of the group. Nevertheless, 68% of Jewish old-timers think that “In the wake of immigration from the FSU, crime has escalated in Israel” (Figure 49). Another stereotype relates to the Jewish old-timers’ perception of the immigrants’ attitude toward Israel. Despite the relatively extensive media coverage of the immigrants’ contribution to the IDF, only 55% of Jewish old-timers think that “FSU immigrants are patriotic Israelis.” 45% do not agree with this statement.

Figure 46

### Satisfaction with Immigration to Israel

“To what extent have you realized in Israel the aspirations and expectations you had before your immigration?”  
(Immigrants sample only; according to age; percentages)

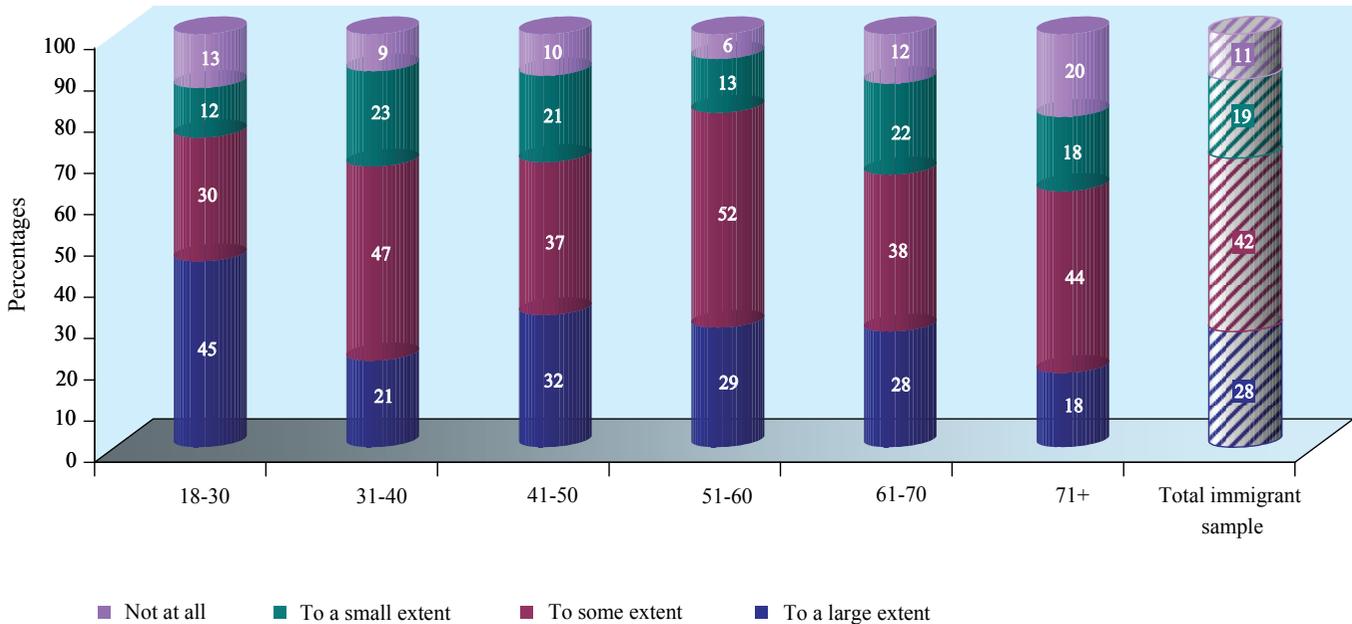


Figure 47

**Jewish Old-Timers' Attitude toward FSU Immigration**

**"Looking back, it would have been better if FSU immigrants had not come at all"  
(Jewish old-timers sample only; according to degree of religiosity; percentages)**

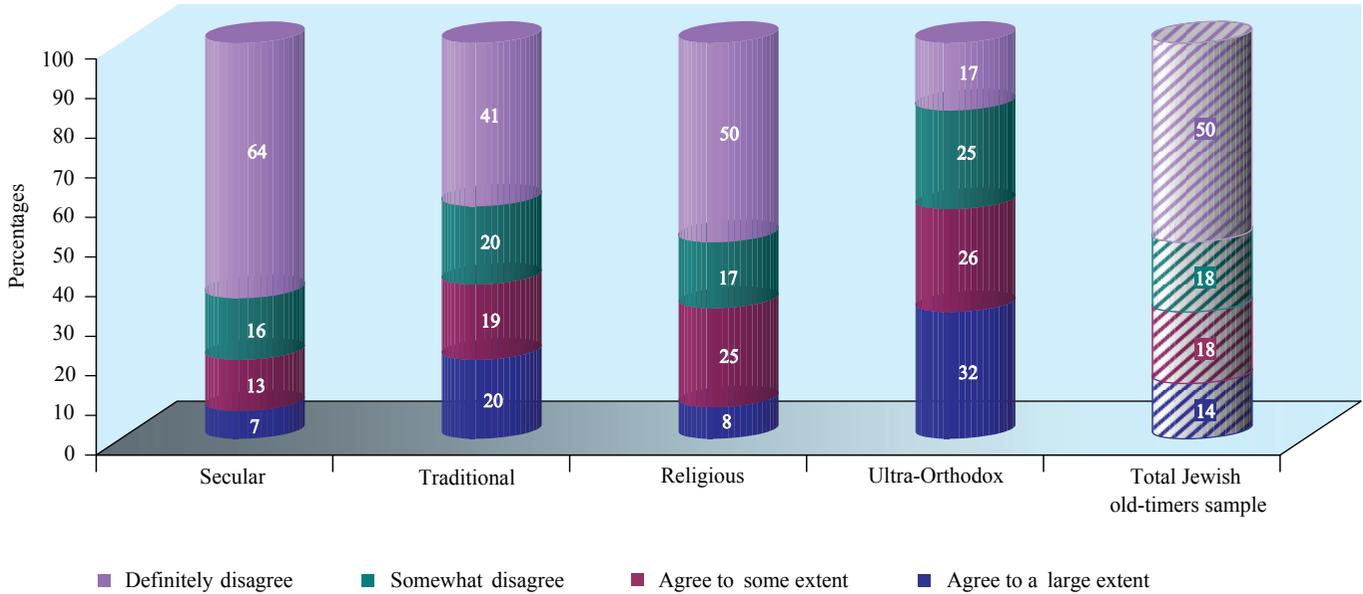


Figure 48

**Relations between the Absorbing Society and the Immigrants**

**"If you were asked to evaluate the contribution of FSU immigrants to Israeli society and to the State of Israel, you'd say that the immigrants –"  
(percentages)**

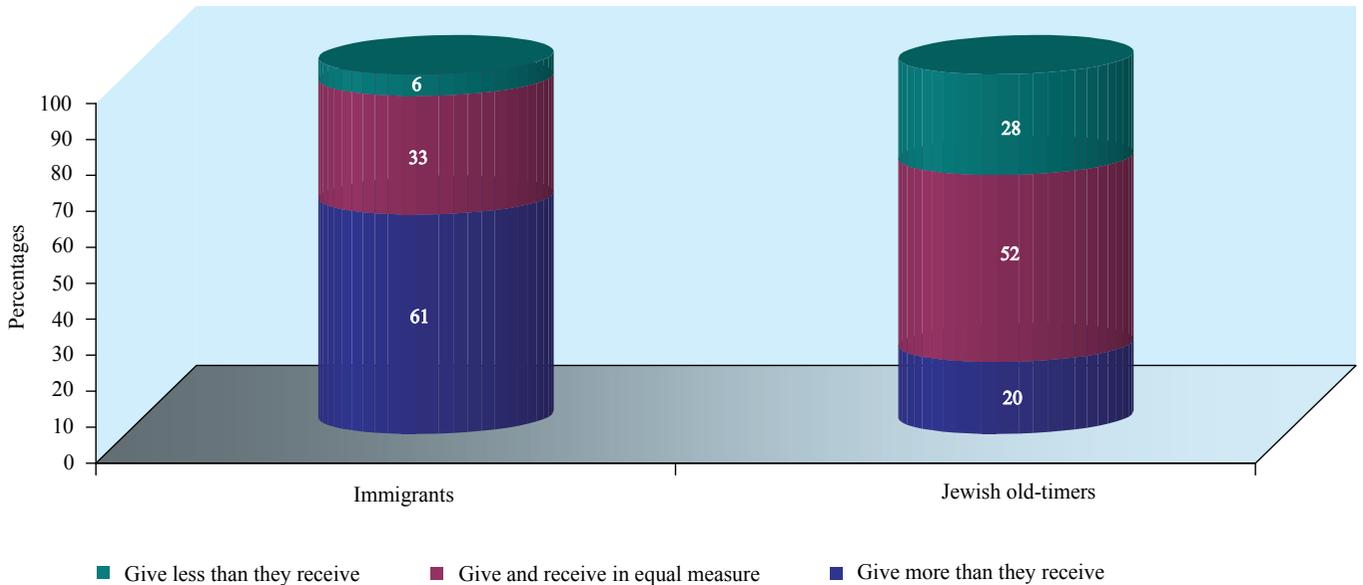
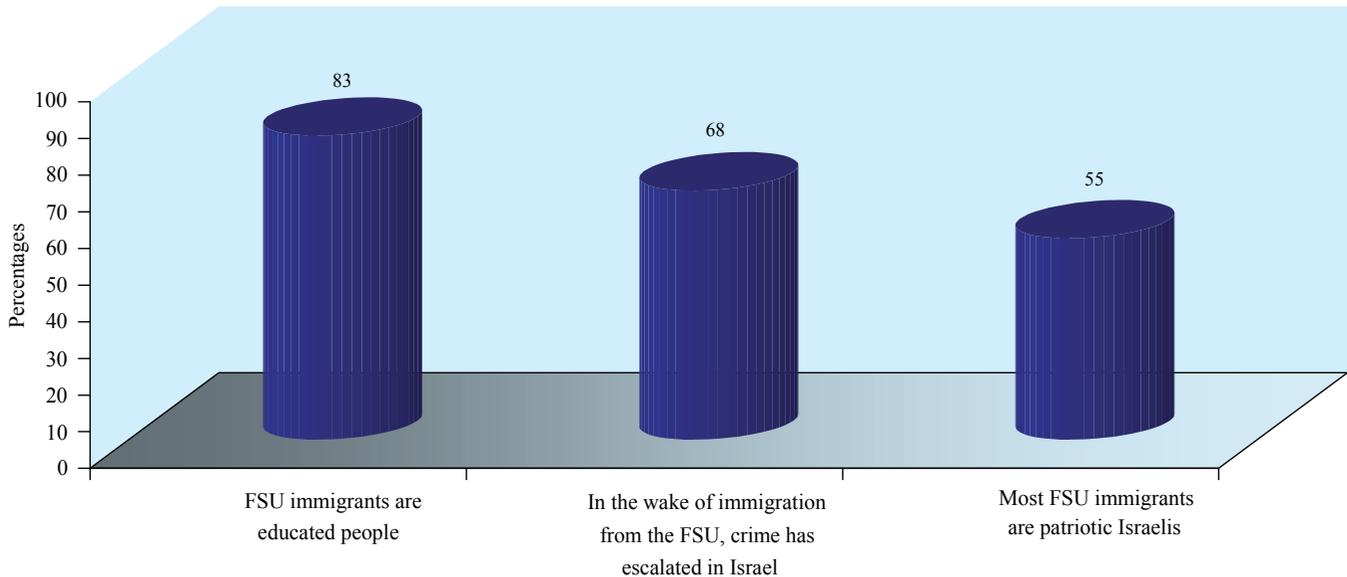


Figure 49

**Stereotypes of FSU Immigrants****“In the wake of immigration from the FSU, crime has escalated in Israel”****“FSU immigrants are educated people”****“FSU immigrants are patriotic Israelis”****(Jewish old-timers sample only; percentages)**

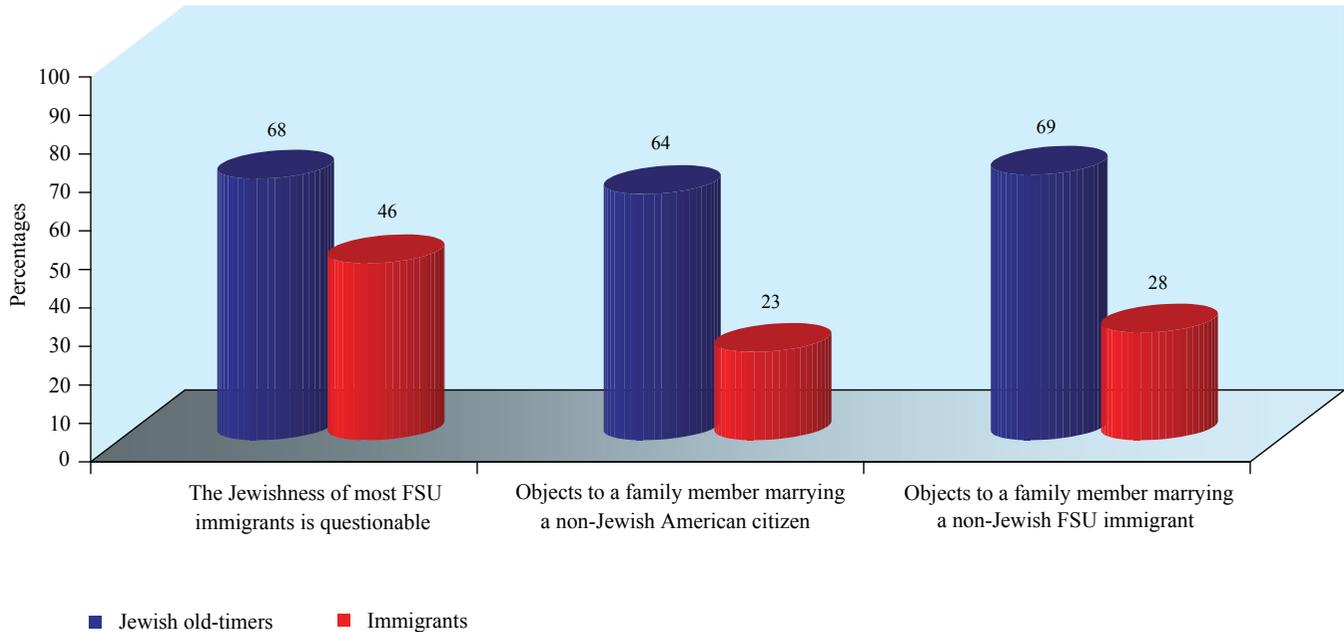
Another kind of stereotype that might explain the negative attitudes of groups in Israel toward immigrants is related to the question of Jewish identity. A persistent tension prevails in Israel concerning the Jewish and the national dimensions of the concept of “Jewishness,” and Jewish old-timers do not always welcome the secular Jewish identity of most of the immigrants. Sixty-eight percent of Jewish old-timers think that “the Jewishness of most FSU immigrants is questionable”; 69% of the respondents also object to a family member marrying a non-Jewish FSU immigrant. This is not

necessarily an expression of hostility toward FSU immigrants, but a sign of unwillingness to enter into family relationships with non-Jews. Thus, 64% object to a family member marrying a non-Jew, not even an American citizen (Figure 50). For FSU immigrants, however, this is not a theoretical question. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants live in a Jewish state, two thirds of whose inhabitants question the immigrants’ Jewishness, and a similar rate are unwilling to establish family ties with non-Jews. This situation could affect the pace of the immigrants’ integration into the society through marriage.

Figure 50

**Attitudes concerning the Jewishness of FSU Immigrants**

**“The Jewishness of most FSU immigrants is questionable”**  
**“Objects to a family member marrying an American citizen who is not Jewish”**  
**“Objects to a family member marrying a FSU immigrant who is not Jewish”**  
**(percentages)**



In the mid-2000s, about 30% of all FSU immigrants were not Jewish according to a Halakhah.<sup>110</sup> The immigrants in this decade are less (halakhically) Jewish than that of the 1990s.<sup>111</sup> In this survey, 74% of FSU immigrants defined themselves as “Jewish on both sides,” 8% said they were Jewish on their mother’s side, 8% said they were Jewish on their father’s side, and only 10% defined themselves as “not Jewish.”

The issue of the immigrants’ Jewishness has long been on the public agenda. One of the main solutions proposed for immigrants

who are not halakhically Jewish is conversion. Although the conversion process, its character, and its content are controversial, we found that Jewish old-timers and immigrants agree on this issue: 56% of Jewish old-timers maintain that non-Jewish immigrants should be encouraged to convert; 60% of the immigrants agree. This is a surprising finding given that most immigrants are secular, and that the conversion process is not a trivial matter to them. Apparently, not all immigrants are aware of the difficulties entailed in the process, and their political

110 Yair Sheleg, *Non-Halakhic Jews: On the Issue of Non-Jewish Immigrants to Israel* (in Hebrew), Policy Paper 51 (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2004).

111 Central Bureau of Statistics, 2002: [www.cbs.gov.il/publications/migration\\_ussr01/word/mavo\\_02.doc](http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications/migration_ussr01/word/mavo_02.doc)

passivity, together with the feeling that they lack the power to influence policy, lead them to agree to the government's initiative. By contrast, the immigrants' national feelings and their desire to belong to their country's majority groups are so strong that the non-Jewish immigrants are also willing to do everything in order to feel part of the Jewish collective in Israel, including converting, if necessary.

**(c) Economic Integration: Younger Immigrants Do Not Work in Their Profession Either**

The analysis of the immigrants' economic integration touches on issues such as the subjective measurement of economic success, and the degree of satisfaction with their work and their housing conditions. We found a gap between the social status of the immigrants in their country of origin and their status after immigration to Israel. Even twenty years after the beginning of this wave of immigration, most immigrants have not succeeded in regaining the social status that they had prior to immigration: 37% of them defined themselves as belonging to the upper or upper-middle class before immigration, as opposed to only 10% who place themselves in this category after immigration. By contrast, 14% placed themselves in the lower-middle or lower class before their immigration, as opposed to 36% who define themselves as such after their immigration. Among members of the

middle class, gaps are less pronounced: 49% defined themselves as members of the middle class in the FSU, as opposed to 54%, who belong to the middle class in Israel (Figure 51). These are subjective perceptions of class membership and include not only economic success, but a general evaluation of the person's place in society. The sharpest decline in socio-economic status appears to affect older immigrants. Most of them came to Israel when they were of working age, but failed to recover the (relatively high) status that they had enjoyed in the FSU. Only 12% of the older group (70 and older) assessed their previous status in the FSU as lower or lower-middle class; 57% of the members of this group assess that this is also their status in Israel. The 31-40 group that came to Israel at a relatively young age is prominent in this context, but 37% of them still feel that they are part of the lower or lower middle-class. This datum is related to the findings about members of this group who have not realized their aspirations and expectations.

A comparison between the perceptions of the status of various groups reveals that the status that immigrants ascribe to themselves tends to be lower than the status that Arab respondents or Jewish old-timers ascribe to themselves (Figure 52). Economic status is also measured through more objective measures: 57% of the immigrants said that their family expenses are lower than the average,<sup>112</sup> as opposed to 34% of Jewish old-timers. This figure is extremely important

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112 A family of four spends, on the average, 11,500 NIS. Respondents were asked to assess their expenditures according to this datum.

Figure 51

**Social Status before and after Immigration**

**“To what social class do you belong?”**  
**“To what social class did your family belong before immigration?”**  
 (Immigrants sample only; percentages)

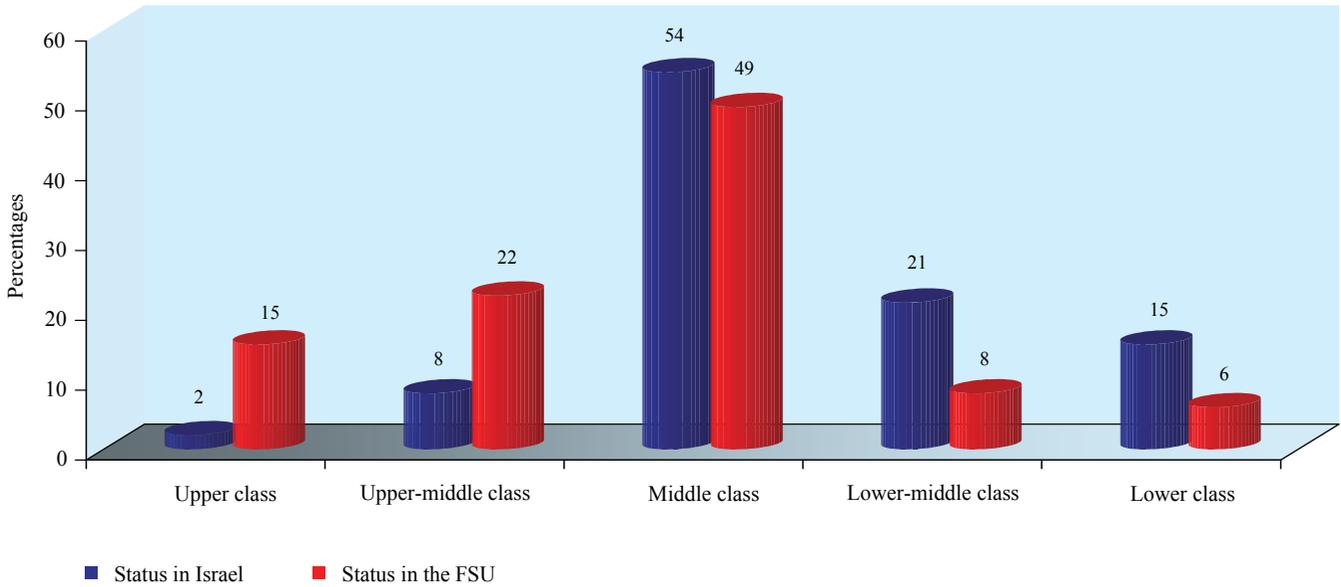
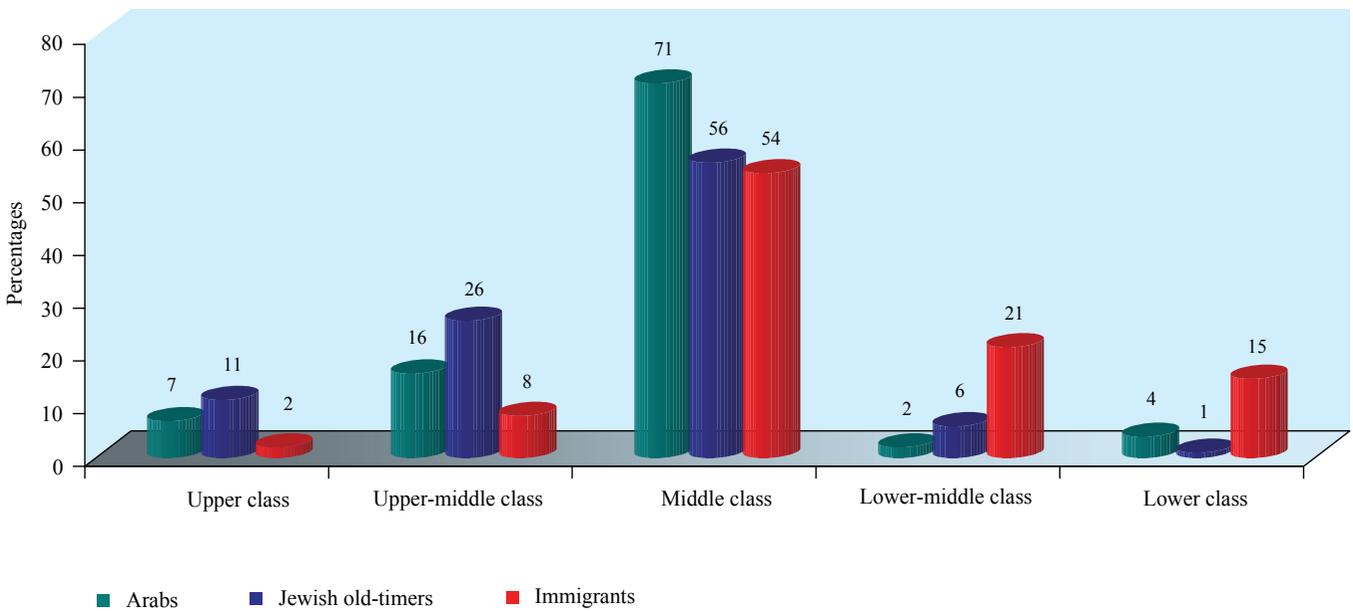


Figure 52

**Social Class: Self-Ascription**

**“To what social class do you belong?”**  
 (according to sectors; percentages)



because more immigrants than old-timers include mortgage payments in their expenses (particularly the older groups).<sup>113</sup>

FSU immigrants are not only the group that feels its social status is relatively low, but also the most pessimistic regarding the future. The survey examined expectations of improvement in the economic situation despite the current world economic crisis. Most of the public sound optimistic: 73% of Arab citizens and of Jewish old-timers expect an improvement in their standard of living in the years to come. Expectations are lower among immigrants: only 55% expressed optimism concerning the chances of improving their living standard in the future. A breakdown according to age groups among those who are sure that their standard of living will improve in the future indicates significant gaps between Jewish old-timers and immigrants on one hand, and Arab citizens on the other. In the 18-30 age group, approximately 50% of immigrants and Jewish old-timers compared with 39% of Arab citizens are sure that their standard of living will improve. However, in the next age-group (31-40), the picture already changes: 49% of Jewish old-timers are sure that their living standard will improve, as opposed to 17% of Arab citizens and 18% of immigrants. In the older age groups, the gaps between Jewish old-timers and immigrants remain; by contrast, optimism rises slightly

among Arab citizens (Figure 53).

We then examined the immigrants' integration into the job market. We began with a question about the fit between their education and the demands of their jobs. In this regard, we found a gap between the immigrants' and the Jewish old-timers' responses: 24% of the Jewish old-timers answered that the demands of their jobs are lower than their educational qualifications, as opposed to 54% of the immigrants. The only group in which the situation of the immigrants resembles that of the Jewish old-timers is the youngest age-group (18-30), which includes immigrants who came to Israel as children and who received their professional training in the country. In the age-group that follows (31-40), we find a gap of 28 percentage points between immigrants and Jewish old-timers. About half of the respondents in this age group report that their educational qualifications are higher than the requirements of their current job. As age rises, so does the gap between the groups and the rate of immigrants who report this kind of lack of fit (Figure 54). We also found a correlation between employment suited to one's educational qualifications and a sense of having realized one's expectations: 47% of those reporting that their level of education fits the demands of their jobs also reported that they have realized to a large extent their expectations and their aspirations in Israel.

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113 Most 1990s immigrants came to Israel penniless, so that mortgages were a very significant component of the homes they bought. As a result, their monthly payments were also high and the installments many. Immigrants were given mortgages without appropriately testing their ability to reimburse them while sustaining a reasonable standard of living. Mortgages were also given to one-parent families and to immigrants close to retirement. For further discussion, see Roni Bar-Nathan Abudi, *Background Paper on the Difficulties of Immigrant Pensioners Repaying the Mortgage*, Report Submitted to the Knesset Committee for Immigration, Absorption, and Diaspora Affairs (in Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Knesset Research and Information Center, 2004), 4.

Figure 53

**Expectations of a Higher Standard of Living**

**“Do you expect your standard of living to rise in the next few years?”  
Definitely yes (according to sectors; according to ages; percentages)**

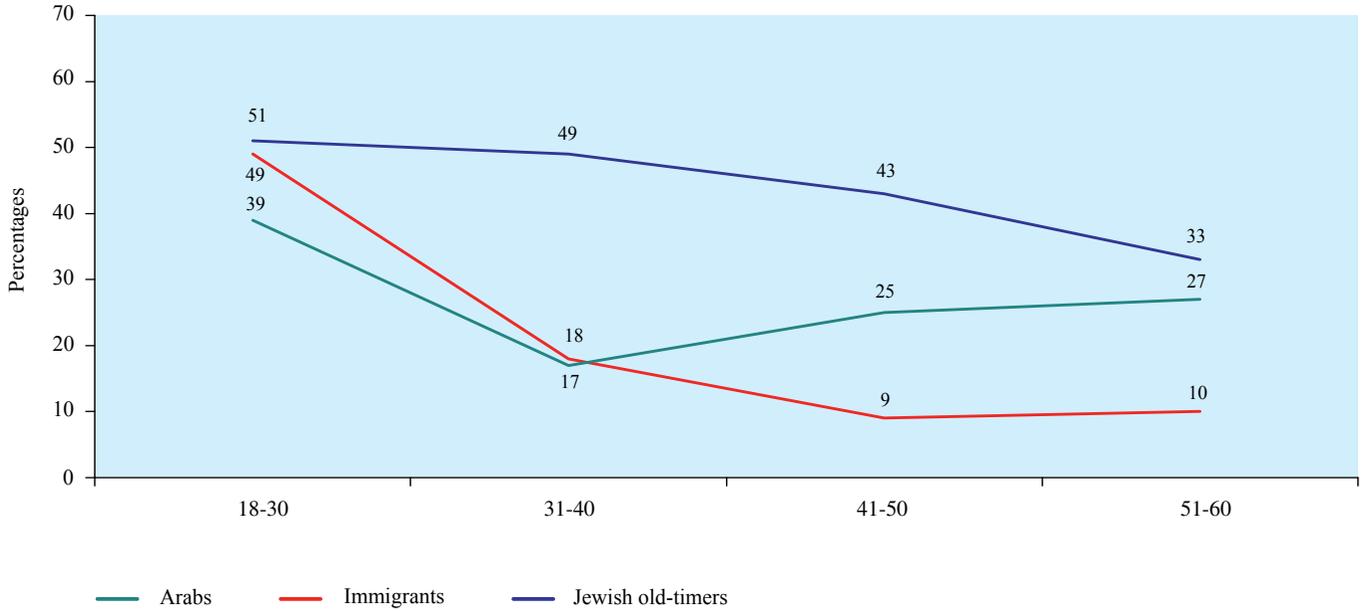
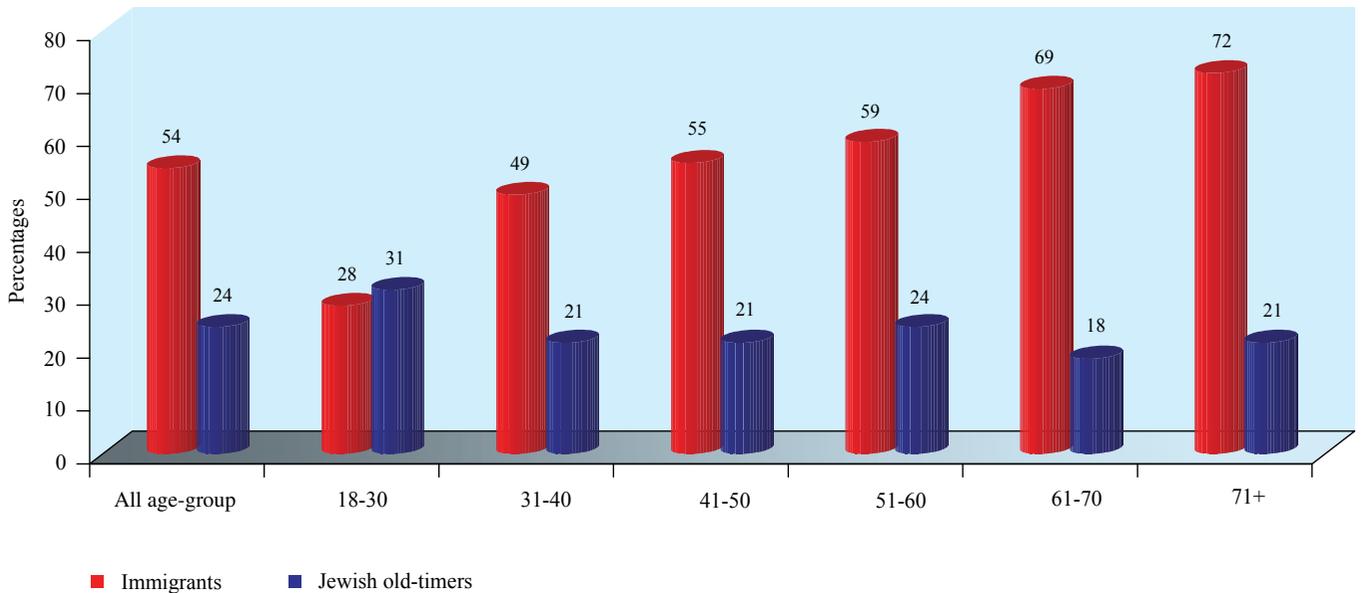


Figure 54

**Integration in Employment**

**“To what extent does your level of education fit the demands of your current job?  
(last job in Israel)”  
My level of education is higher than my job’s demands  
(Jewish sample only; according to age; according to sectors; percentages)**



The data of this survey correspond with the empirical data in the report submitted to the Knesset Committee for Immigration, Absorption, and Diaspora Affairs by the Knesset's Information and Research Center in 2008. According to the report, although the immigrants' level of participation in the work force is higher than that of Jewish old-timers, the immigrants' occupations differ from those of the natives. Immigrants are employed mainly in sales and services (26% as opposed to 20% of the general population) or as skilled workers, mechanics, factory workers, and so forth (26%, as opposed to 15% of the population as a whole). The rate of immigrants in academic, technical, or management occupations is only about 20% – as opposed to 39% of the general population – although the weight of those with an academic education in the two groups is similar.<sup>114</sup>

We also examined the subjective sense of self-realization at the workplace. Gaps, although less wide, were also found here between Jewish old-timers and immigrants. Seventy-eight percent of Jewish old-timers maintain that they fulfill themselves at work to a large extent or to some extent; 65% of Arab citizens think so, as opposed to 59% of immigrants. In other words, although immigrants sense a gap between their education and the demands of their jobs, most feel that they fulfill themselves at work to a large extent or to some extent, which attests to their adaptability.

In the course of the survey, we asked

respondents an open question about the most serious problem that they encounter, which remains unresolved. Answers were coded into six categories. A majority (36%) pointed to employment problems related not only to unemployment rates, but also to the lack of fit between their education and the demands of their jobs, to a decline in their employment status, to discrimination at the workplace, and to low salaries (Figure 55). Employment difficulties are also particularly high among young immigrants (aged 31-40), and 43% of this group pointed to employment as their main problem (Figure 56).

Nineteen percent of the immigrants placed the lack of subsidized housing at the top of the list. This problem is particularly serious for the older group, many of whom live in sub-standard housing and lack the means to buy a home. Housing is generally a matter of concern for the immigrant public: 28% of the immigrants maintain that housing conditions in Israel are not as good as they were in their countries of origin.

Other central issues that were mentioned include language difficulties (poor Hebrew and the level of the classes at the Hebrew teaching centers), civil marriage, and pensions. Here too, we found age differences. Naturally, pensions are more important to the older population, and the issue of civil marriage was mentioned by 16% of the young immigrants (18-30). In short, the burning issues that concern FSU immigrants are related to various components of their economic integration.

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114 Naomi Mei-Ami, *The Integration of Immigrants in Industry, Business, and Science* (in Hebrew), Report Submitted to the Knesset Committee for Immigration, Absorption, and Diaspora Affairs (Jerusalem: Knesset Research and Information Center, 2008), 3.

Figure 55

**The Main Problem of FSU Immigrants Unaddressed by the Government, according to Importance**

**“In your view, what is the main problem of FSU immigrants as yet unaddressed by the government? (Immigrants sample only; percentages)”**

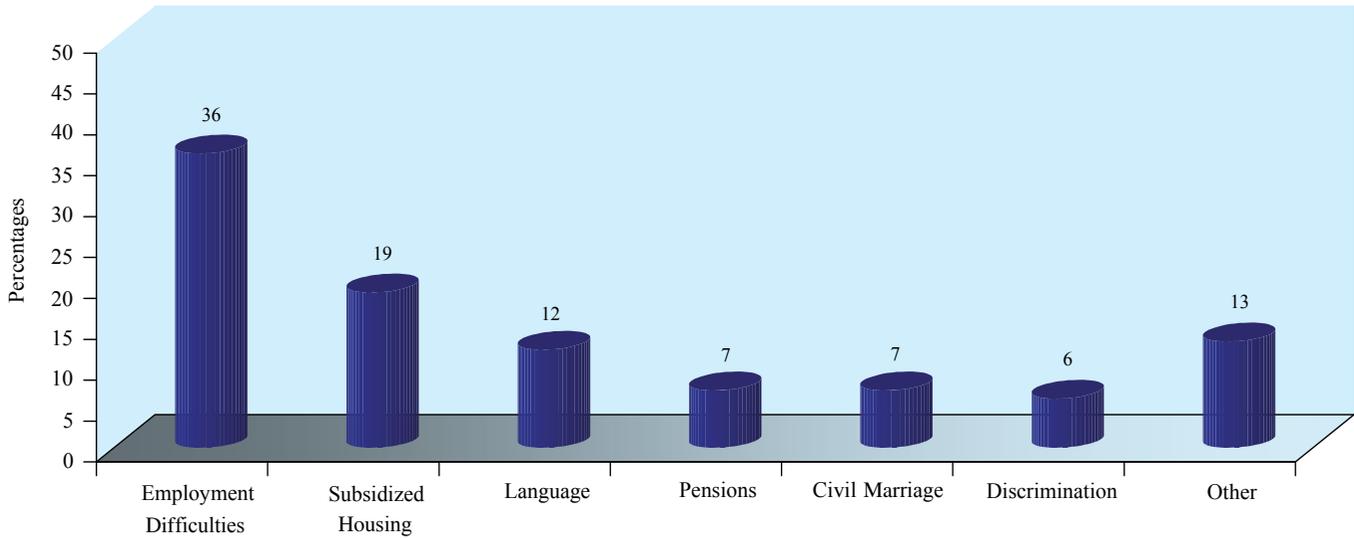
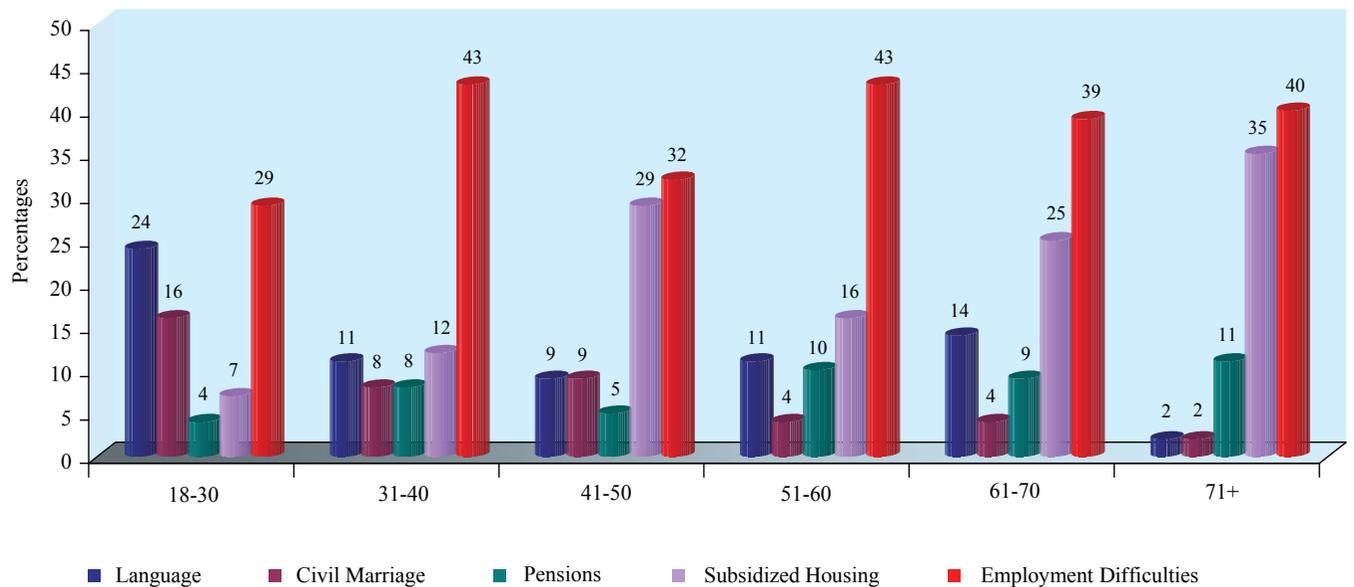


Figure 56

**The Main Problem of FSU Immigrants Unaddressed by the Government, according to Age Groups**

**“In your view, what is the main problem of FSU immigrants as yet unaddressed by the government? ” (Immigrants sample only; according to age; percentages)”**



To conclude this chapter, we asked respondents to score the work of the Russian-speaking politicians for the benefit of the immigrant public. The average score that the immigrants granted to their representatives was 3 out of 5. The 40-50 age group granted them the lowest score – 2.7.

### 5. Integration of FSU Immigrants in Israeli Society: A Summary

On its twentieth anniversary, FSU immigration is generally considered a success story by Israeli society and politicians. More than two thirds of Israeli old-timers are satisfied with the “Russian” immigrants, and a majority (68%) support continued investment in and encouragement of FSU immigration. In the **Democracy Index 2009**, we analyzed in depth the integration of the immigrants, particularly in the political, economic, and social realms, in order to evaluate the balance between the successes and the failures of their assimilation in the new society.

Concerning economic integration, the accepted view is that the immigrants’ integration into the Israeli economy is a success story. This view hinges on the claim that immigrants brought significant human capital with them, on the low unemployment figures, and on the high rate of home owners among FSU immigrants. Nevertheless, this picture is also complex and worrisome. The immigrants’ integration into the Israeli economy is only partially successful, and most of them have not managed to regain the socio-economic status that they had enjoyed in their country of origin. Moreover, most immigrants have failed to find jobs suited to their educational achievements. The most worrisome finding is the failure to become

integrated of the relatively young groups, aged 31-40, who came to Israel at a young age with high expectations of improving their standard of living. Only a minority among them feel that their aspirations have been realized to a large extent. The only age group that succeeded in becoming integrated into the Israeli economy in accordance with its education and the fulfillment of its expectations is that of the youngest immigrants, most of whom came to Israel as children. That is, the people who acquired their education and work experience in their countries of origin have failed to become properly integrated into the Israeli economy. This finding attests not only to frustration among the immigrants, but also to the failure of the Israeli economy to fully exploit the human capital that arrived in the country.

As for social integration, even twenty years after the first encounter between the absorbing society and the immigrants, relations between the two populations seem far from harmonious. Most of the Jewish old-timers cast doubts on the immigrants’ Jewishness, and about one third of them are not happy with this wave of immigration *per se*. The negative attitudes of the Mizrahi and Ultra-Orthodox groups are most prominent in this context. By contrast, most secular Ashkenazim welcome these immigrants. Most immigrants maintain that they give more to the country than they get from it, as opposed to most of the Jewish old-timers, who claim that the immigrants’ contribution corresponds to the benefits that they receive. About two thirds of the Jewish old-timers think that the immigrants have brought crime to the country, but most also think that it is generally an educated group. Another finding exposes a significant gap between Jewish

old-timers and immigrants concerning their hopes for the future: a majority of old-timers, as opposed to a minority of the immigrants, maintain that their standard of living will improve in the future. This gap remains consistent in all age-groups.

The main conclusion of the **Democracy Index 2009** is that the process of integrating FSU immigrants into Israeli society is yet

to be completed. Twenty years after the beginning of their immigration, the immigrants' status in Israeli society does not meet their expectations. Many problems are evident in their economic and social integration, as is the significant gap between the human capital that these immigrants brought with them and its use for their successful integration into Israeli society.

## Democracy Index 2009: Epilogue

The **Democracy Index 2009** offers an objective and subjective assessment of Israeli democracy. Both parts – the international measures and the public opinion survey – are mutually complementary and enable a reliable analysis of issues bearing on Israel’s society and political regime. The 2009 version of Israeli democracy has many strong points, but also weaknesses that undermine its stability.

The international measures point to high rates of political corruption in Israel, which are harmful to the functioning and effectiveness of its institutions. The Israeli public are aware of this situation and distrust of government institutions, particularly in the legislative branch and in the political parties, is one expression of this awareness. Most Israelis do not respect politicians; the accepted view is that they entered politics only for the sake of personal gain.

Concerning political participation, Israel did not return to the rates that had characterized it until the early 2000s. Although international measures show that Israel’s situation is better than that emerging from the voter turnout data, the public’s attitudes in this regard appear passive and, hence, worrisome. About half of all Israelis maintain that they have no impact whatsoever on political events and that their ability to influence government policy is slight. Should this situation continue for several years, it could perpetuate and deepen the gap between the citizens and politics. Note that this gap is not typical of other institutionalized democracies.

Another problem casting a shadow on Israeli democracy and evident in the

**Democracy Index 2009** is related to freedom of expression. According to objective measures, the level of freedom of the press that is prevalent in Israel places it at the end of the list of democratic countries, beside countries in Eastern Europe and South America. For the first time since the Freedom of the Press Index began publication, Israel belongs to the group of “partly free” countries. Israeli political culture represents this objective measure well. Most of the public support freedom of expression, but are not prepared to accept criticism of the State of Israel.

According to objective measures, Israel is a divided country, torn by sharp social tensions that come to the fore in problematic relationships between the various groups that compose it. The Israeli public appear to be aware of this situation. The majority express negative attitudes toward the Arab minority. Some political groups, such as left-wing activists, are also perceived negatively. In other words, the social cleavages are distinctive features of Israeli democracy, and the situation is not expected to improve in the near future.

Another interesting combination of the objective data and public opinion was measured regarding gender. Israel ranks relatively low according to the international measures of the status of women. The proportion of women in the Knesset is very low in comparison with other democracies. The political system, however, appears to lag behind the public’s attitudes, which seem quite liberal regarding gender. Thus, Israeli society generally supports the right of women to develop a career and does not view men as better political leaders than women.

Concerning the integration of FSU immigrants, the findings point to problems in three areas. As far as political integration is concerned, prominent gaps emerged between the political culture of FSU immigrants and those of the public, in general. As a rule, the immigrants' attitudes are less democratic. Concerning social integration, Jewish old-timer society has apparently come to terms with this wave of immigration as such and is willing to continue encouraging it, however, at the same time it fosters many stereotypes concerning the immigrants. Regarding economic integration, the immigrants perceive their economic success as very limited, even among the youngest age groups, and the immigrants' desire to move

to another country has increased over the years, particularly after the Second Lebanon War. These perceptions are corroborated by official data gathered in this study.

Israeli democracy functions under many external and internal constraints. In these circumstances, a democratic political culture is vital for the stability of the democratic system. Israeli society is a society of immigrants who come from many types of political cultures, not necessarily democratic. The values guiding its citizens, therefore, are many and varied. The continued assessment of Israeli democracy is essential in order to identify its weaknesses and the processes that are potentially harmful to its resilience.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Summary of the Democracy Indices, 2003-2009

1. The Institutional Aspect							
Rating	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>1. Vertical accountability</b> 1-3 (1 = unregulated elections)	3	-	<b>3</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>2. Horizontal accountability</b> 0-6 (0 = high army involvement in politics)	3	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	<b>2.5</b>
<b>3. Deviation from the Proportionality Principle (Disproportionality)</b> 0-100 (0 = perfect proportionality)	2.55	-	-	2.72	-	-	<b>1.61</b>
<b>4. Party dominance</b> 100 – [100 * number of seats in the lower house] (100 = high dominance, low representativeness)	300	315	324	413.7	-	-	<b>429</b>
<b>5. Level of constraints on the executive in implementing policy</b> 1-7 (1 = unlimited authority)	7	-	<b>7</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>6. Scope of constraints on the executive to change policy</b> 0-1 (0 = no limitations)	<b>0.7864</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>7. Voter turnout in national elections</b> 0-100 (100% = full turnout)	67.8	-	-	63.5	-	-	<b>65.2</b>
<b>8. Voter turnout of registered voters</b> 0-100 (100% = full turnout)	74.4	-	-	70.8	-	-	<b>72.1</b>
<b>9. Voter turnout in local elections</b> 0-100 (100% = full voting)	57.4	50	-	-	-	-	<b>55</b>
<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	<b>6</b>
<b>11. Corruption Index (ICRG)</b> 0-6 (0 = high level of corruption)	3	4	3	3	3	3	<b>3</b>
<b>12. Voice and accountability (WB)*</b> 0-100 (100 = high accountability)	65.7	62.3	66.7	<b>70.2</b>	-	-	-
<b>13. Control of corruption (WB)</b> 0-100 (100 = high control)	82.4	78.4	73.9	<b>79.6</b>	-	-	-
<b>14. Regulatory quality (WB)*</b> 0-100 (100 = high control)	76.4	76.4	75.2	<b>78.0</b>	-	-	-
<b>15. Government effectiveness (WB)*</b> 0-100 (100 = high governance effectiveness)	80.9	86.1	78.0	<b>83.4</b>	-	-	-

<b>2. The Rights Aspect</b>							
<b>Rating</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>1. Competitiveness in participation</b> 1-5 (1 = suppress opposition activities)	5	-	<b>5</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>2. Freedom of the Press Index</b> 0-100 (0 = full freedom)	30	27	28	28	28	29	<b>31</b>
<b>3. Human rights violations</b> 1-5 (1 = protection of human rights)	<b>4</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>4. Prisoners per 100,000 population</b> 0-100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	132	143	172	180	158	165	<b>196</b>
<b>5. Prisoners per 100,000 population, including security prisoners</b> 0-100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	173	189	252	265	295	311	<b>326</b>
<b>6. Law and Order Index</b> 0-6 (0 = low respect for law and order)	5	5	5	5	5	5	<b>5</b>
<b>7. Freedom of religion</b> 1-7 (1 = total freedom)	<b>3</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>8. GINI rating for disposable income</b> 0-1 (0 = full equality)	0.3685	0.3799	0.3878	<b>0.3874*</b>	-	-	-
<b>9. GINI rating of income distribution</b> 0-1 (0 = full equality)	0.5265	0.5234	0.5255	<b>0.5224*</b>	-	-	-
<b>10. Economic Freedom Index</b> 1-5 (1= broad economic freedom)	64.0	63.1	63.8	66.7	68.4	66.1	<b>67.6</b>
<b>11. Global Competitiveness Index</b> 1-7 (7 = high competitiveness)	-	-	-	-	-	5.2	<b>4.97</b>
<b>12. Global Gender Gap Index</b> 0-1 (1 = full equality)	-	-	-	-	-	0.69	<b>0.69</b>
<b>13. Gender Development Rating</b> 0-1 (0 = lack of equality)	0.891	0.900	0.906	0.911	0.925	<b>0.927</b>	-
<b>14. Gender Empowerment Rating</b> 0-1 (0 = lack of equality)	0.596	0.612	0.614	0.622	0.656	<b>0.660</b>	-
<b>15. Political discrimination of the minority</b> 4-0 (0 = no discrimination)	3	-	<b>3.5</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>16. Economic discrimination of the minority</b> 0-4 (0 = no discrimination)	3	-	<b>3.5</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>17. Cultural discrimination of the minority</b> 0-12 (0 = no discrimination)	1	-	<b>0</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>18. Rule of law (WB)</b> 0-100 (100 = high control)	75.5	73.1	73.4	<b>70.0</b>	-	-	-

<b>3. The Stability and Cohesion Aspect</b>							
<b>Rating</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>1. Government changes</b> Number of government changes 1996-2006.	5	-	5	4	-	-	-
<b>2. Incomplete term of office</b> 0-100 (100% = full term)	77.42	-	-	63	-	-	<b>64.9</b>
<b>3. Weighted Political Conflict Index</b> 0-infinity (0 = no conflict)	3,100	-	<b>10,462</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>4. Religious tensions</b> 0-6 (0 = high tension)	2	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	<b>2.5</b>
<b>5. National/ethnic/linguistic tensions</b> 0-6 (0 = high tension)	2	2	2	2	2	2	<b>2</b>
<b>6. Political stability (WB)*</b> 0-100 (100 = high stability)	10.8	11.3	14.2	<b>14.4</b>	-	-	-

\* Latest assessments of research institutes, as of January 2009.

**Appendix 2: Democracy Index 2009 Compared with the Democracy Indices 2003-2008**  
(full sample; percentages)

<b>1. The Institutional Aspect</b>								
<b>Characteristic in the Index</b>	<b>Survey questions</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>A. Perception of the implementing of the accountability principle</b>								
Actions of elected officials relative to the people's preferences	To what extent do you agree or disagree that a politician does not tend to take into account the view of the ordinary citizen? (disagree)	38	38	42	38	30	32	<b>37</b>
<b>B. Political participation</b>								
1. Level of political participation								
Staying informed	How often do you stay 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	<b>78</b>
2. Perception of the implementing of the value of political participation								
Evaluating participation level	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	<b>50</b>
Sense of influence	To what extent can you or your friends influence government policy? (can)	20	18	31	27	24	19	<b>18</b>
<b>C. Integrity in government</b>								
Evaluating extent of corruption in Israel	In your opinion, is there more or less corruption in Israel than in other countries? (less)	11	15	22	14	18	24	<b>11</b>

2. The Rights Aspect								
Characteristic in the Index	Survey questions	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>A. Political and civil rights</b>								
Attitudes toward political and civil rights								
Freedom of religion	Every couple in Israel should be allowed to marry in any way they wish. (agree)	63	60	64	61	54	55	<b>62</b>
Perception of the implementing of rights in Israel in a comparative perspective	In your opinion, is there more or less protection of human rights in Israel than in other countries? (less)	27	40	33	39	36	37	<b>26</b>
	And freedom of expression? (less)	15	17	24	19	21	24	<b>12</b>
<b>B. Equality for minorities</b>								
Readiness for equal rights between Jews and Arabs	To what extent do you support or oppose each one of the following: Arab parties (including Arab ministers) joining the government? (support)	38	45	44	41	30	36	<b>37</b>
	Full equality of rights between Jewish and Arab Israeli citizens? (support)	53	64	59	60	50	56	<b>54</b>
	Agreement of a Jewish majority is required on decisions fateful to the country, such as returning territories. (opposed)	26	23	34	29	33	38	<b>27</b>
	The government should encourage Arab emigration from the country. (opposed) [Jews only]	43	41	50	38	45	44	<b>47</b>
Perception of the actual implementation of equality	Israeli Arabs suffer from discrimination as opposed to Jewish citizens. (agree)	55	64	56	54	55	47	<b>44</b>

<b>3. The Stability Aspect</b>								
<b>Characteristic in the Index</b>	<b>Survey questions</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>A. Satisfaction with the government</b>	What do you think is Israel's position in general? (not good)	63	54	35	40	50	34	<b>31</b>
<b>B. Assessing stability in Israel</b>								
	In your opinion and compared to other democratic countries, is the political system in Israel stable or unstable? (unstable)	63	-	46	53	60	57	<b>54</b>
<b>C. Protest and opposition</b>								
Opposition to violence	Using violence to attain political aims is never justified. (agree)	82	78	82	82	74	61	<b>74</b>
<b>D. Trust in institutions</b>								
Degree of trust in various institutions	To what degree do you have trust in the following people or institutions? Political parties (have trust)	32	27	22	22	21	15	<b>21</b>
	Prime minister (have trust)	53	45	48	43	21	17	<b>35</b>
	The media (have trust)	49	51	50	44	45	37	<b>34</b>
	Attorney General (have trust)	58	66	60	51	45	35	<b>47</b>
	Supreme Court (have trust)	70	79	72	68	61	49	<b>52</b>
	The police (have trust)	66	66	57	44	41	32	<b>40</b>
	The president (have trust)	68	73	65	67	22	47	<b>60</b>
	The Knesset (have trust)	52	46	40	33	33	29	<b>38</b>
	The IDF (have trust)	84	86	78	79	74	71	<b>79</b>
	Government ministers (have trust)	55	41	42	39	31	25	<b>33</b>
<b>E. Social trust</b>	In general, do you think that people can be trusted or that one should be very cautious in relationships with others? (trusted)	29	33	44	26	31	31	<b>28</b>

3. The Stability Aspect – continued								
Characteristic in the Index	Survey questions	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>F. Social cleavages</b>								
Assessing the level of tension between groups in Israel vis-à-vis other countries	In your opinion, is there more or less tension in Israel between groups in the society than in other countries? (less)	7	15	20	15	24	29	<b>10</b>
<b>G. Connection to the community</b>								
Proud to be an Israeli	To what extent are you proud to be an Israeli? (proud)	84	79	83	86	76	80	<b>80</b>
Desire to remain in Israel	Do you want to live in Israel for the long term? (want)	88	87	89	90	79	83	<b>87</b>
Feels part of Israel and its problems	To what extent do you feel yourself to be part of the State of Israel and its problems? (feels part)	79	73	77	69	59	56	<b>66</b>

4. Democracy: Support and Satisfaction								
Characteristic in the index	Survey questions	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Support for democracy	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	<b>39</b>
Satisfaction with Israeli democracy	In general, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the functioning of Israeli democracy? (dissatisfied)	49	55	51	46	66	57	<b>61</b>

### Notes

1. All the findings are quoted in percentages.
2. The data present the two “high-end” categories concerning democracy for questions with four or five categories (that is, 1-2 or 3-4 or 4-5), and the high-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 appear in the Democracy Survey 2009 in comparison with the previous six 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 Jews in the sample, square brackets appear beside the question.
5. The size of the sample in 2009 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; the size of the sample in 2007 was 1,203, sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; the size of the sample in 2006 was 1,204, sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; the size of the sample in 2005 was 1,203, sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; the size of the sample in 2004 was 1,200, sampling error was  $\pm 2.9$  with a 95% confidence level; the size of the sample in 2003 was 1,208, sampling error was  $\pm 3.1$  with a 95% confidence level.

**Appendix 3: Distributions in the Democracy Survey, March 2009** (percentages)

1. To what extent are you interested in politics?
  - a. To a large extent 29
  - b. To some extent 36
  - c. To a small extent 23
  - d. Not at all 12

To what extent can a citizen like you influence what happens in these frameworks?

	To a large extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all
2. Educational institution	19	31	27	23
3. Army unit	14	23	27	36
4. Workplace	20	32	24	24
5. Residential community	19	31	26	24

6. In your opinion, is the State of Israel presently democratic to a suitable degree, too democratic or not democratic enough?
  - a. Far too much 7
  - b. Too much 21
  - c. The right measure 35
  - d. Too little 27
  - e. Far too little 10

And what about adherence to these principles?

	Far too much	Too much	The right measure	Too little	Far too little
7. Religious freedom	11	16	46	20	7
8. Human rights	7	11	46	27	9
9. Freedom of speech	14	22	47	12	5

10. Would you want your children and grandchildren to live in Israel?
  - a. Definitely yes 70
  - b. I think so 18
  - c. I don't think so 7
  - d. Definitely not 5

In your view, how important is each one of the following reasons in making people want to leave Israel?

	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not so important</b>	<b>Quite important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
11. Desire for a higher standard of living	16	21	34	29
12. Concern about the security situation	18	22	34	26
13. Prevailing norms of behavior in Israel	25	31	27	17

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

	<b>1 Definitely disagree</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4 Definitely agree</b>
14. It makes no difference who you vote for. It does not change the situation.	34	16	20	30
15. I support freedom of speech for everyone, regardless of their views.	11	17	22	50
16. A speaker should be forbidden to express sharp criticism of the State of Israel in public.	24	18	20	38
17. Men are better political leaders than women.	46	21	16	17
18. It is equally important for women and men to have a career.	9	12	20	59
19. The powers of the prime minister should be expanded at the expense of other branches of government.	38	22	20	20
20. Jewish citizens should have more rights than non-Jewish citizens.	42	20	16	22
21. All citizens are responsible for their government's actions.	31	22	21	26
22. Only citizens who contribute to the country are entitled to civil rights.	29	17	21	33

23. What is your level of trust in the resilience and future existence of Israel?
- |                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| a. Definitely trust    | 33 |
| b. Trust               | 33 |
| c. Quite trust         | 18 |
| d. Do not quite trust  | 10 |
| e. Do not trust        | 3  |
| f. Do not trust at all | 3  |

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

	No trust at all	Little trust	Some trust	A lot of trust
24. The Courts	26	22	31	21
25. The Attorney General	26	21	32	21
26. The State Comptroller	21	16	31	32
27. The Chief Rabbinate	34	29	24	13
28. The party you voted for in the last elections	18	20	38	24

29. In your opinion, to what extent is there corruption in Israel?
- |                      |    |
|----------------------|----|
| a. Not at all        | 1  |
| b. To a small extent | 10 |
| c. To some extent    | 37 |
| d. To a large extent | 52 |

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

	Very desirable	Desirable	Not so desirable	Not at all desirable
30. A strong leadership that does not need to take the Knesset or election campaigns into account	17	25	22	36
31. A government of experts who make decisions based on their understanding of what's good for the country.	21	37	22	20
32. A military regime	8	14	16	62
33. A democratic regime	56	32	7	5

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

	1 Definitely disagree	2	3	4	5 Definitely agree
34. Politicians are in politics only for the sake of personal gain.	13	17	20	30	20
35. Elections are a good way of making governments relate to the people's view.	10	13	19	35	23
36. It is better for the man to work outside and for the woman to take care of the home and the family.	38	22	14	15	11
37. Israeli Arabs should be denied the right to vote for and be elected to the Knesset.	33	25	15	13	14
38. To reach the top in politics you have to be corrupt.	22	21	19	22	16

39. There is much talk about left and right in politics. Where would you rank yourself along a left-right continuum, when 1 is the right end and 7 the left end?

1 – Right	2	3	4	5	6	7 – Left
13	12	18	29	14	5	9

40. What is your view on the evacuation of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria in a final status agreement with the Palestinians?

a. There should be no evacuation under any circumstances.	43
b. Willing to evacuate all the small and isolated settlements.	35
c. Willing to evacuate all settlements, including the large settlement blocs.	22

41. In a final status agreement, to what extent would you agree to Israel transferring Jerusalem's Arab neighborhoods to the Palestinians?

a. Definitely agree	26
b. Quite agree	18
c. Somewhat disagree	16
d. Definitely disagree	40

In your view, to what extent is there equality of rights in Israel in the following areas:

	To a large extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all
42. Rule of law	29	48	17	6
43. Equality before the law	21	46	21	12

Some claim that the following are very important for truly being an Israeli. Others claim they are not important. In your view, to what extent are the following important or not important?

	Very important	Quite important	Not so important	Not at all important
44. To be born in Israel	30	23	26	21
45. To live in Israel for many years	52	29	13	6
46. To speak Hebrew	62	24	9	5
47. To be a Jew	49	22	15	14
48. To respect the laws of the country	74	19	4	3
49. To serve in the IDF	64	20	7	9
50. To know and partake of Israeli popular culture	37	31	20	12

51. If you were about to enlist in the army 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           | 12 |
| c. I would enlist and let the IDF determine my placement | 32 |
| d. I would enlist and ask to serve as a combatant        | 22 |
| e. I would enlist and volunteer for an elite combat unit | 20 |

What is your attitude toward the following groups?

	Very positive	Quite positive	Quite negative	Very negative
52. Right-wing activists	22	37	20	21
53. Left-wing activists	10	30	29	31
54. Ultra-Orthodox Jews	13	31	27	29
55. Arab citizens of Israel	15	33	28	24
56. The homo-lesbian community	16	35	17	32

57. If you were asked to evaluate the contribution of FSU immigrants to Israeli society and to the State of Israel, you'd say that the immigrants:
- Give more than what they receive 27
  - Give and receive in equal measure 48
  - Receive less than what they give 25

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Agree to a large extent	Agree to some extent	Somewhat disagree	Definitely disagree
58. In the wake of immigration from the FSU, crime has escalated in Israel.	33	33	19	15
59. Looking back, it would have been better if FSU immigrants had not come at all.	17	18	17	48
60. FSU immigrants are educated people	39	43	14	4
61. FSU immigrants are usually patriotic Israelis.	22	34	26	18
62. The Jewishness of most FSU immigrants is questionable.	31	35	22	12
63. Non-Jewish FSU immigrants should be encouraged to convert.	29	28	18	25
64. Investment in the encouragement of FSU immigration to Israel should continue.	34	32	16	18

65. (To half of sample 1) Would you agree to a member of your family marrying an American citizen who is not Jewish?
- Definitely yes 22
  - I think so 21
  - I don't think so 15
  - Definitely no 42
66. (To half of sample 2) Would you agree to a member of your family marrying a FSU immigrant who is not Jewish?
- Definitely yes 19
  - I think so 20
  - I don't think so 14
  - Definitely no 47

67. Would you agree or disagree with this statement: “Most young people living now in the FSU who are entitled to come would be better off immigrating to Israel.”
- a. Agree 37
  - b. Quite agree 27
  - c. Somewhat disagree 22
  - d. Definitely disagree 14

68. (To immigrants) Do you have any close Israeli friends who are not FSU immigrants?
- a. Have 58
  - b. Don't have 42

69. (To non-immigrants) Do you have any close friends who are FSU immigrants?
- a. Have 51
  - b. Don't have 49

70. (To immigrants only) What is your main media source for information on Israeli politics?
- a. Hebrew media (TV/Internet/Radio) 35
  - b. Russian media 60
  - c. Both 4
  - d. Other 1

71. (Immigrants only) Generally, what marks would you give to Russian-speaking politicians on their work for the FSU immigrant public?

1 – Bad	2	3	4	5 – Excellent
12	12	48	21	7

72. (Immigrants only) To what extent have you realized in Israel the aspirations and expectations you had before your immigration?
- a. To a large extent 21
  - b. To some extent 36
  - c. To a small extent 14
  - d. Not at all 10
  - e. I had no aspirations or expectations 19

73. To what extent do you feel that you realize yourself in your current profession?
- a. To a large extent 43
  - b. To some extent 31
  - c. To a small extent 15
  - d. Not at all 11

74. To what extent does your level of education fit the demands of your current job?  
(For respondents who say they don't work, ask about their last job **in Israel**.)
- |                                                          |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| a. Fits to a large extent                                | 60 |
| b. My level of education is higher than my job's demands | 30 |
| c. My level of education is lower than my job's demands  | 10 |
75. (For immigrants only) If you compare conditions in your current home (quality, crowdedness) to the one you had in your country of origin, do you feel that:
- |                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| a. My home in Israel is better | 38 |
| b. No difference               | 34 |
| c. My home in Israel is worse  | 28 |
76. Do you expect your standard of living to rise in the next few years?
- |                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| a. Definitely yes   | 34 |
| b. I think so       | 37 |
| c. I don't think so | 21 |
| d. Definitely no    | 8  |
77. (For immigrants only) Would you define yourself as:
- |                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| a. Jewish on both sides       | 76 |
| b. Jewish on my mother's side | 9  |
| c. Jewish on my father's side | 8  |
| d. Not Jewish                 | 7  |
78. To what extent do you usually observe religious tradition?
- |                                          |    |
|------------------------------------------|----|
| a. I do not observe tradition at all     | 20 |
| b. I observe tradition slightly          | 42 |
| c. I observe tradition to a large extent | 23 |
| d. I observe tradition meticulously      | 15 |
79. To what social class do you belong?
- |                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| a. Upper class        | 9  |
| b. Upper-middle class | 21 |
| c. Middle class       | 58 |
| d. Lower-middle class | 8  |
| e. Lower class        | 4  |

80. (To immigrants only) To what social class did your family belong before your immigration?
- |                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| a. Upper class        | 15 |
| b. Upper-middle class | 17 |
| c. Middle class       | 52 |
| d. Lower-middle class | 10 |
| e. Lower class        | 6  |

**Notes**

1. All the findings are quoted in percentages.
2. The size of the sample in 2009 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; the size of the sample in 2007 was 1,203, sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; the size of the sample in 2006 was 1,204, sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; the size of the sample in 2005 was 1,203, sampling error was  $\pm 2.8$  with a 95% confidence level; the size of the sample in 2004 was 1,200, sampling error was  $\pm 2.9$  with a 95% confidence level; the size of the sample in 2003 was 1,208, sampling error was  $\pm 3.1$  with a 95% confidence level.

## Appendix 4: The Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch, May 2009

### The Executive Branch

#### The 32<sup>nd</sup> Government of Israel (as of 1 May 2009)

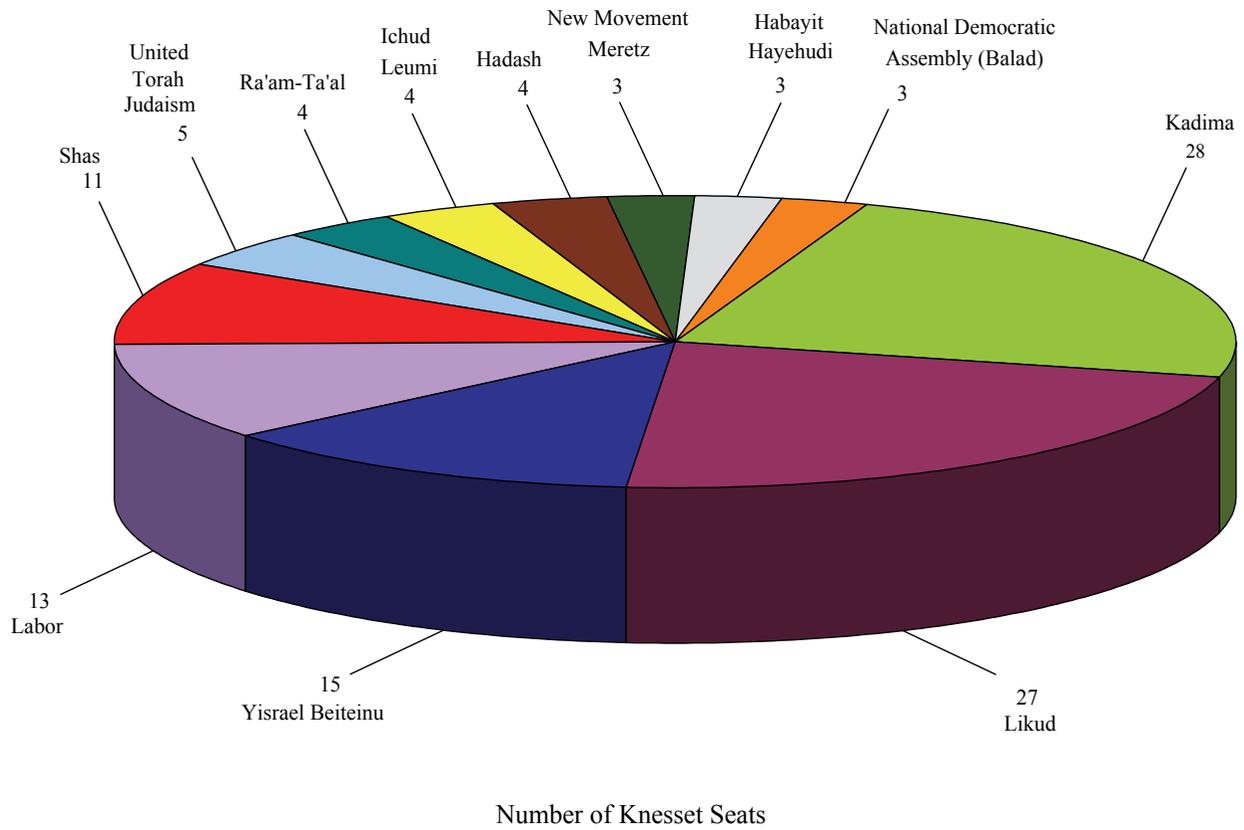
Ministry	Minister	Faction
Prime Minister	Benjamin Netanyahu	Likud
Vice Prime Minister	Moshe (Bogi) Ya'alon	Likud
Vice Prime Minister	Silvan Shalom	Likud
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister	Avigdor Liberman	Yisrael Beitenu
Minister of Defense and Deputy Prime Minister	Ehud Barak	Labor
Minister of Economic Strategy	Benjamin Netanyahu	Likud
Minister of Finance	Yuval Steinitz	Likud
Minister of Justice	Yaakov Neeman	Not Knesset member
Minister of Internal Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister	Eliyahu Yishai	Shas
Minister of Transportation and Road Safety	Yisrael Katz	Likud
Minister of National Infrastructures	Uzi Landau	Yisrael Beitenu
Minister of Housing and Construction	Ariel Atias	Shas
Minister of Health	Benjamin Netanyahu	Likud
Minister of Public Affairs and the Diaspora	Yuli-Yoel Edelstein	Likud
Minister of Education	Gideon Sa'ar	Likud
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development	Shalom Simhon	Labor
Minister of Science and Technology	Daniel Hershkowitz	Habayit Hayehudi
Minister of Welfare and Social Services	Isaac Herzog	Labor
Minister of Tourism	Stas Misezhnikov	Yisrael Beitenu
Minister of Industry, Trade and Labor	Benjamin (Fuad) Ben-Eliezer	Labor
Minister of Communications	Moshe Kahlon	Likud
Minister of Culture and Sport	Limor Livnat	Likud
Minister of Public Security	Yitzhak Aharonovitch	Yisrael Beitenu
Minister of Environmental Protection	Gilad Erdan	Likud
Minister of Immigration Absorption	Sofa Landver	Yisrael Beitenu
Minister of Minority Affairs	Avishai Braverman	Labor
Minister of Improvement of Government Services	Michael Eitan	Likud

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Minister</b>	<b>Faction</b>
<b>Minister of Intelligence and Atomic Energy and Deputy Prime Minister</b>	Dan Meridor	Likud
<b>Minister of Strategic Affairs</b>	Moshe (Bogi) Ya'alon	Likud
<b>Minister of Pensioner Affairs</b>	Benjamin Netanyahu	Likud
<b>Minister for Regional Development</b>	Silvan Shalom	Likud
<b>Minister for the Development of the Negev and the Galilee</b>	Silvan Shalom	Likud
<b>Minister of Religious Affairs</b>	Yakov Margi	Shas
<b>Ministers without Portfolio</b>	Ze'ev Benjamin Begin Meshulam Nahari Yossi Peled	Likud Shas Likud
<b>Deputy Minister of Finance</b>	Yitzhak Cohen	Shas
<b>Deputy Minister of Defense</b>	Matan Vilnai	Labor
<b>Deputy Minister of Health</b>	Yakov Litzman	Yahadut Hatorah
<b>Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs</b>	Daniel Ayalon	Yisrael Beitenu
<b>Deputy Minister of Education</b>	Meir Porush	
<b>Deputy Minister of Industry, Trade and Labor</b>	Orit Noked	Labor
<b>Deputy Minister of Pensioner Affairs</b>	Leah Nass	Likud
<b>Deputy Minister for the Development of the Negev and the Galilee</b>	Ayoob Kara	Likud
<b>Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office</b>	Gila Gamliel	Likud

Figure A-1

### The Legislative Branch

#### Distribution of Seats in the 18<sup>th</sup> Knesset after the 2009 Elections



**Appendix 5: Key Dates, May 2008 – April 2009****MAY 2008**

- Corruption** 4 Indictment of former Minister of Finance Abraham Hirschson (Kadima). Hirschson is charged with theft, aggravated fraud, breach of trust, money laundering, and forgery of corporate documents.
- Parties** 5 MKs Moshe Sharoni, Elhanan Glazer, and Sara Marom Shalev, who seceded from the Gil faction, announce the creation of a new faction – “Justice for the Elderly” – and an alliance with the “Social Justice” movement headed by businessman Arcadi Gaydamak.
- 19 Gil seceders remove from the agenda their request to split the party due to public criticism of the terms of their alliance with Social Justice, led by Arcadi Gaydamak.
- State Comptroller** 20 The State Comptroller publishes his 2008 Report, which includes discussions on violence in schools and the government’s handling of Darfur refugees.
- Religion and State** 21 R. Haim Druckman, head of the State Conversion Authority, is dismissed following a decision of the High Rabbinical Court to invalidate all the conversions performed during R. Druckman’s term of office since 1999. In response, Religious-Zionists call for the establishment of separate conversion tribunals.
- Parties** 25 MK Ephraim Sneh (Labor) announces his resignation from the party and from the Knesset to create a new movement – “Israel Hazakah” [Strong Israel].
- Corruption** 27 American businessman Morris Talansky gives pre-trial testimony in the Jerusalem District Court concerning accusations of fraud against Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. Public opinion polls show that a majority of the public do not believe the Prime Minister and calls for his resignation.
- Religion and State** 29 The High Court of Justice orders the State to defend, within five months, the extension of the Tal Law for another five years.

**JUNE 2008**

- Public Figures** 1 Death of Yosef (Tomi) Lapid, journalist, former minister and MK (Shinui).
- Parties** 2 The House Committee of the Knesset ratifies the split of Gil, the pensioners’ party.
- Government** 15 The government decides to extend the (temporary) Citizenship and Entry Law. This decision requires ratification by the House Committee of the Knesset.

- Israel-Palestine Relations** 19 A truce (*tahadyiah*) is proclaimed between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.
- Legislation** 25 The Knesset enacts the “Dromi Law,” which exempts from criminal liability a person who uses force against a burglar entering his or someone else’s house, business, or farm.
- POW Exchange** 29 The government approves the prisoners’ exchange deal with Hizbullah, which enabled the return of the bodies of Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser.
- Corruption** 29 MK Tsahi Hanegbi (Kadima) testifies in the Jerusalem Magistrate Court that he did not know political appointments were forbidden.
- Elections** 30 The Knesset passes the second and third reading of an amendment to Basic Law: The Knesset, which states that a person who has visited an enemy country during the seven years preceding a general election cannot be elected to the Knesset unless he or she proves that the purpose of his or her visit was not to support the armed struggle against Israel.

#### JULY 2008

- Parties** 2 MK Dani Yatom (Labor) announces his withdrawal from public life. He is replaced by Leon Litinetsky, who represents FSU immigrants.
- Elections** 21 Members of the Kadima Council change their party’s regulations and decide that elections for the party leadership will take place on 17 September.
- Religion and State** 23 A law exempting unique cultural education institutions from core curriculum studies passes the second and third reading.
- Judicial Branch** 28 The Knesset passes the second and third reading of a bill requiring a special majority for electing Supreme Court Justices in the Judges’ Election Committee.
- Parties** 30 Prime Minister Ehud Olmert calls a press conference and announces the end of his political career.

#### AUGUST 2008

- Corruption** 17 MK Abraham Hirschson (Kadima) admits he received monies from the National Workers’ Federation.
- Judicial Branch** 27 Chief Justice Dorit Beinisch gives orders to consider the feasibility of establishing a national court of appeals.

**SEPTEMBER 2008**

- Rights** 4 The HCJ orders the police to approve a route within Um-el-Fahm for a march of right-wing activists, Itamar Ben-Gvir and Baruch Marzel.
- Corruption** 7 The Police recommend that the Attorney General should file charges against Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.  
8 Justice Minister Daniel Friedmann accuses the police of removing Prime Minister Olmert from office.
- Elections** 17 Primaries for Kadima leadership.
- Religion and State** 17 National Labor Court Judge Steve Adler states that the Haredi Federation of Workers, representing 8,000 teachers, is not democratic and, therefore, has no right to exist.
- Elections** 19 Prime Minister Ehud Olmert resigns.
- Judicial Branch** 22 Supreme Court Justices in the Judges' Election Committee halt a meeting of the Committee claiming it lacks authority because it is acting on behalf of a caretaker government.
- Political Violence** 25 Israel Prize laureate Zeev Sternhall is hurt in the explosion of an explosive device placed at the entrance to his home.

**OCTOBER 2008**

- Municipalities** 5 The Administrative Affairs Court rules that former MK Arye Deri (Shas) cannot be a candidate in elections for the Jerusalem mayoralty.
- Parties** 15 Minister Rafael Eitan, Chairman of the Gil Party, and Moshe Sharoni, Chairman of the Justice for the Elderly faction, announce at a press conference that they are uniting.
- Religion and State** 23 MK Ophir Pines-Paz (Labor) asks Defense Minister Ehud Barak to launch an investigation after *Haaretz* revealed that the military rabbinate promotes religious and political aims in the IDF.
- Elections** 26 Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni (Kadima) informs President Shimon Peres that she has failed in her attempts to form a government and recommends calling general elections as soon as possible.
- Parties** 28 MK Yossi Beilin (Meretz) announces his withdrawal from politics.
- Israel-Egypt Relations** 29 Given that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak does not visit Israel, Yisrael Beitenu chairman Avigdor Liberman condemns Israeli leaders who visit Egypt to meet with him. In a Knesset speech, Liberman says that, if Mubarak is unwilling to visit Israel, "let him go to hell." President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert hurry to extend a public apology for his remark.

**Elections**            **30** The Knesset decides that elections to the 18<sup>th</sup> Knesset will take place on 10 February 2009.

#### NOVEMBER 2008

**Rabin's Murder**            **2** On the eve of the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the murder of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the head of the General Security Services, Yuval Diskin, warns that elements on the extreme right will harm political figures and will use violence to halt political processes.

**Religion and State**            **6** The Pluralistic Conversion Forum announces the establishment of alternative conversion courts unconnected to the Chief Rabbinate, which will enable secular, Reform, and Conservative conversions.

**Elections**            **14** A new organization emerges, aiming to expand support for Meretz and create a new left-wing bloc.

**Parties**            **15** Minister Ami Ayalon announces he is leaving the Labor Party.

**Elections**            **18** The National Religious Party and the Ichud Leumi merge and create a new party – Habayit Hayehudi.

**Parties**            **18** MK Uzi Landau announces he is leaving the Likud and joining Yisrael Beitenu.

**25** In response to a petition of Young Labor, the Labor Party Appeal Authority annuls quotas in the Knesset list for the 2009 elections.

**27** MK Avraham Ravitz (Degel Hatorah) announces his withdrawal from politics.

#### DECEMBER 2008

**Elections**            **4** Primaries for Labor candidates for Knesset elections.

**Corruption**            **4** State Attorney Moshe Lador announces he is closing the investigation against Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on the sale of state shares in Bank Leumi.

**Elections**            **8** Primaries for Likud candidates for Knesset elections

**Jewish-Arab Relations**            **9** Disturbances in Acre between Jewish and Arab residents on the eve of Yom Kippur.

**Corruption**            **10** The National Fraud Investigation Unit concludes the investigation of suspicions of forgery and fraud in the 2007 elections of the Labor Party Chairman, and raises suspicions of forged signatures in the voters' register.

**Elections**            **14** Primaries for Meretz candidates for Knesset elections.

- Corruption** 14 Former MK Inbal Gabrieli (Likud) testifies in the offices of the National Fraud Investigation Unit on the apparent double vote of Finance Minister Ronnie Bar-On in his previous term as a Likud MK.
- Elections** 17 The public council of Habayit Hayehudi chooses the Knesset list of candidates.  
18 Primaries for Kadima candidates for Knesset elections.
- Operation Cast Lead** 27 Beginning of Operation Cast Lead: the Israeli Air Force attacks about 100 targets in the Gaza Strip.
- Elections** 27 The parties announce they are freezing their election campaign because of the “Operation Cast Lead.”  
28 Thirty-four parties submit lists of candidates for the 2009 Knesset elections.  
28 Yaakov Amidror, Chairman of the Public Council of Habayit Hayehudi, resigns and announces the dissolution of the council because of its failure to unite all elements within Religious-Zionism. Habayit Hayehudi splits into three parties: Habayit Hayehudi-New NRP; Ha-Ichud Haleumi, and Ahi.
- Operation Cast Lead** 28 The government decides to activate the Emergency Management Agency and announces the extension of the “special situation” on the home front. In Arab localities, thousands demonstrate against the operation.
- Freedom of Expression** 30 Following rabbinic rulings banning the employment of Arab workers after the terrorist attacks at the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva and in the second tractor attack in Jerusalem, the Attorney General orders an investigation against 29 rabbis on suspicion of racial incitement.

**JANUARY 2009**

- Operation Cast Lead** 3 The IDF launches a ground attack in the Gaza Strip, as part of the operation’s second stage.  
5 European Union representatives arrive in Israel to promote a cease-fire: Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France; the French Foreign Minister, Bernard Kuchner; the Foreign Minister of Sweden; the Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic (current President of the European Union), and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy in the European Union, Javier Solana.  
7 Israel announces the opening of a corridor for transferring humanitarian equipment to Gaza Strip residents.

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|--------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>State<br/>Comptroller</b>   | 7  | State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss publishes a follow-up report on the treatment of Jewish evacuees following the 2005 unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip. The report finds that many remain unemployed and live in temporary housing.                                |
| <b>Corruption</b>              | 11 | Former CEO of the National Workers Federation, Yitzhak Russo, signs a plea bargain – he will be convicted for stealing 300,000 NIS and assisting in the theft of 500,000 NIS, money laundering, breach of trust in a corporation, and fraudulent recording in corporate documents. |
| <b>Elections</b>               | 12 | Following three petitions, the Central Elections Committee declares the Ra'am-Ta'al and Balad lists for elections to the 18 <sup>th</sup> Knesset invalid.                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Operation<br/>Cast Lead</b> | 16 | The High Follow-Up Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel demonstrates at Arara in the Negev against IDF activities in the Gaza Strip.                                                                                                                                              |
|                                | 17 | Israel announces a ceasefire and accepts the Egyptian initiative.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                | 18 | Hamas announces a ceasefire and demands an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the opening of the crossings. The Islamic Jihad and smaller Palestinian organizations join them.                                                                                             |
| <b>Economic<br/>Crisis</b>     | 20 | The Employment Service publishes its report: 17,500 people were dismissed in Israel in December 2008, mostly in the Dan area, and the number of academics looking for work increased by 8.3%.                                                                                      |
| <b>Elections</b>               | 21 | The Supreme Court upholds the appeal of Ra'am Ta'al and Balad against the decision of the Central Elections Committee and revokes the Committee's decision.                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Corruption</b>              | 25 | Seven people close to Avigdor Liberman, Chairman of Yisrael Beitenu, including his daughter and his lawyer, are questioned on suspicions of involvement in the establishment and operation of a network of fictitious companies intended for money laundering.                     |
| <b>Public Figures</b>          | 26 | Death of MK Avraham Ravitz, Chairman of Degel Hatorah and member of the United Torah Judaism faction.                                                                                                                                                                              |

**FEBRUARY 2009**

- |                     |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Human Rights</b> | 5 | B'Tselem publishes its annual report on the violation of human rights in the territories (2008). According to the report, Israeli security forces killed 455 Palestinians in 2008, and Palestinians killed 18 Israeli citizens, 10 members of the Israeli security forces, and one foreign citizen. |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- Civil Rights**      9    The Ministry of the Interior publishes a new ordinance: non-Jewish spouses and same-sex spouses, who are not citizens but live in Israel as common law spouses of Israeli citizens and cannot marry, will be entitled to temporary resident status only three years after arriving in Israel.
- Elections**        10   Elections to the 18<sup>th</sup> Knesset: 5,278,985 Israeli citizens are registered voters’, and 34 parties are competing in the elections.
- 11   Results of Knesset elections – the three large parties are Kadima, with 28 seats; Likud with 27 seats, and Yisrael Beitenu with 13 seats. Both Tzipi Livni, Kadima Chairperson, and Benjamin Netanyahu, Likud Chairperson, proclaim victory.
- 20   President Shimon Peres assigns the task of forming the new government to the Likud Chairperson, Benjamin Netanyahu. Kadima Chairperson, Tzipi Livni, declares that her party will be in the opposition.
- Knesset**            24   First session of the 18<sup>th</sup> Knesset. MKs attend the swearing in ceremony.
- MARCH 2009**
- Economic Crisis**      1    Figures published by the National Security Institute show that February 2009 marked a record in the number of unemployment claims submitted in a single month (relative to the last few years); 75,128 new claims were submitted between November 2008 and February 2009 – a rise of 54% since the same period in the previous year.
- Corruption**        5    The National Fraud Investigation Unit announces it has gathered sufficient evidence for indicting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on charges of fraud and breach of trust in the Investments Center Affair.
- Katsav Affair**      8    Attorney General Meni Mazuz announces he will indict former President Moshe Katsav for rape, forced indecent assault, and disruption of legal proceedings.
- 19   The State Attorney’s office indicts former President Moshe Katsav for rape, indecent assault, sexual harassment, and disruption of legal proceedings.
- Jewish-Arab Relations**    24   Right-wing activists march in Umm el-Fahm in accordance with the HCJ decision of January 2009 on a petition by Itamar Ben-Gvir and Baruch Marzel. In response, a general strike begins in the city. The demonstrations of the residents, who view the march as a provocation, lead to clashes with the police.

