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DEMOCRACY INDEX**

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The views expressed in this book do not necessarily reflect those of the Israel Democracy Institute.

Table of Contents

Principal Findings	11
Introduction	17
Methodology	20
Part One / Israel in the Eyes of its Citizens	25
Chapter 1 / How is Israel Doing?	27
Chapter 2 / Democracy, Government, Citizens	43
Chapter 3 / Electoral and Governmental Reforms	60
Chapter 4 / Public Trust in Institutions	73
Chapter 5 / Israeli Society	93
Chapter 6 / Israel's Legal System	103
Part Two / Israeli Democracy: An International Comparison	129
Chapter 7 / International Indicators	131
Appendices	165
Appendix 1 / Questionnaire and Distribution of Responses	167
Appendix 2 / Distribution of 2021 Survey Results Compared with Previous Years (recurring questions)*	
Appendix 3 / Sociodemographic Breakdown and Self-Definitions (total sample)*	
Research Team	195

* Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 can be found on the website of the Israel Democracy Institute:
www.idi.org.il

Figures

Figure 1.1	Israel's overall situation, 2003–2021 (total sample)	27
Figure 1.2	Israel's overall situation, 2020, 2021 (Jewish and Arab samples)	28
Figure 1.3	"In general, are you optimistic or pessimistic about Israel's future?" over time (optimistic; total sample)	30
Figure 1.4	"To what extent do you feel part of the State of Israel and its problems?" (total sample)	33
Figure 1.5	Feel part of the State of Israel and its problems, over time (total sample)	33
Figure 1.6	"How proud are you to be an Israeli?" (Jewish and Arab samples)	35
Figure 1.7	"How proud are you to be an Israeli?" over time (quite proud and very proud; Jewish and Arab samples)	35
Figure 1.8	"Israel is a good place to live," over time (agree; total sample)	37
Figure 1.9	Prefer to remain in Israel even if offered citizenship in the U.S. or another Western country, over time (total sample)	38
Figure 1.10	Think that Israel ensures the security / welfare of its citizens (total sample)	41
Figure 2.1	Extent to which four democratic principles are upheld in Israel (total sample)	44
Figure 2.2	"The democratic system in Israel is in grave danger" (Jewish and Arab samples)	49
Figure 2.3	"The democratic system in Israel is in grave danger," by political orientation, over time (agree; Jewish sample)	50
Figure 2.4	"The democratic system in Israel is in grave danger," over time (agree; total sample)	50
Figure 2.5	"The democratic system in Israel is in grave danger," by optimism/pessimism regarding Israel's future (total sample)	51
Figure 2.6	"The Israeli media portray the situation here as much worse than it really is," over time (total sample)	52
Figure 2.7	"To handle Israel's unique problems, we need a strong leader who is not swayed by the Knesset, the media or public opinion" (total sample)	53
Figure 2.8	"To handle Israel's unique problems, we need a strong leader who is not swayed by the Knesset, the media or public opinion," over time (agree; total sample)	53

Figure 2.9	Is there a good balance today in Israel between the Jewish and democratic components of the state? over time (total sample)	55
Figure 2.10	Is there a good balance today in Israel between the Jewish and democratic components of the state? 2020, 2021 (Jewish and Arab samples)	56
Figure 2.11	Is there a good balance today in Israel between the Jewish and democratic components of the state? by religiosity, 2020, 2021 (Jewish sample)	57
Figure 2.12	“On the whole, most Knesset members work hard and are doing a good job,” over time (disagree; total sample)	58
Figure 3.1	Extent of support for proposed reforms; somewhat or strongly support (total sample)	62
Figure 3.2	Transferring more powers from government ministries to local government (total sample)	63
Figure 3.3	Transferring more powers from government ministries to local government; by degree of trust in local authority where respondent resides (total sample)	64
Figure 3.4	Using an “open ballot” in Knesset elections (Jewish and Arab samples)	65
Figure 3.5	Requiring a majority of at least 80 Knesset members to change a Basic Law (total sample)	66
Figure 3.6	Incorporating regional representation into Knesset elections (Jewish and Arab samples)	68
Figure 3.7	Granting additional funding to parties where at least one-third of candidates are women (total sample)	69
Figure 3.8	Allowing Israelis living overseas to vote in Knesset elections (total sample)	70
Figure 3.9	Suitability of Israel’s current electoral threshold (Jewish and Arab samples)	72
Figure 3.10	Suitability of Israel’s current electoral threshold, by vote in the last Knesset election (total sample)	72
Figure 4.1	Express quite a lot or very much trust in each of the institutions examined this year (Jewish and Arab samples)	74
Figure 4.2	Expressed quite a lot or very much trust in the eight institutions examined each year, 2003–2021 (Jewish sample)	76

Figure 4.3	Expressed quite a lot or very much trust in the eight institutions examined each year, 2003–2021 (Arab sample)	77
Figure 4.4	Express quite a lot or very much trust in the Chief Rabbinate and the Supreme Court, by religiosity (Jewish sample)	84
Figure 4.5	Believe that the following institutions act objectively and professionally, to a large or very large extent (Jewish and Arab samples)	85
Figure 4.6	Express trust by institution, and assess its performance as objective and professional (Jewish sample)	86
Figure 4.7	Express trust by institution, and assess its performance as objective and professional (Arab sample)	86
Figure 4.8	Average yearly level of trust for all eight institutions studied regularly, 2003–2021 (total sample)	87
Figure 4.9	Multi-year average trust level for each of the institutions studied regularly compared with the multi-year average for all the institutions as a whole, 2003–2021 (total sample)	88
Figure 4.10	Average yearly level of trust for all eight institutions studied regularly, 2003–2021 (Jewish and Arab samples)	89
Figure 4.11	Multi-year average trust level for each of the eight institutions studied regularly, 2003–2021 (Jewish and Arab samples)	90
Figure 4.12	Average yearly level of trust in all eight institutions, 2003–2021, by political orientation (Jewish sample)	91
Figure 4.13	Multi-year average trust level for each institution, 2003–2021, by political orientation (Jewish sample)	92
Figure 5.1	How important are each of these factors to being a true Israeli? Somewhat or very important (Jewish and Arab samples)	94
Figure 5.2	“Jewish citizens of Israel should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens,” over time (agree; Jewish sample)	96
Figure 5.3	“Jewish citizens of Israel should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens,” by religiosity (agree; Jewish sample)	97
Figure 5.4	Groups with the highest level of tension between them, over time (total sample)	99
Figure 5.5	Groups with the highest level of tension between them, by religiosity (Jewish sample)	101
Figure 5.6	What to do with each of these budgetary items: increase, reduce, or leave as is? (total sample)	102

Figure 6.1	Have you had any involvement with the court system in the last few years (as a plaintiff, defendant, or witness)? (total sample)	103
Figure 6.2	Which court have you had involvement with in the last few years? (of those who have been involved with the court system)	104
Figure 6.3	Efficiency of the legal process, and fairness of the judge's ruling (of those who have been involved with the court system)	106
Figure 6.4	In your opinion, are judges in Israel selected based on professional or political considerations? (total sample)	107
Figure 6.5	To what extent are judges in Israel subject to financial or political pressure? (total sample)	109
Figure 6.6	To what extent does the legal system in Israel treat elected representatives in an unbiased manner, regardless of their political affiliation? (total sample)	111
Figure 6.7	Believe quite a lot or very much that the legal system in Israel treats elected representatives impartially, regardless of their political affiliation, by vote in 2021 Knesset elections (total sample)	113
Figure 6.8	"Judges treat everyone who appears before them equally" (total sample)	114
Figure 6.9	Does the State Attorney act on the basis of professional or political considerations? (total sample)	116
Figure 6.10	Agree that the State Attorney acts mainly or solely on the basis of professional considerations, by age group (total sample)	116
Figure 6.11	How would you rate Israel's legal system in terms of corruption? (total sample)	118
Figure 6.12	Link between assessment of corruption in the legal system and perception of the judicial selection process (total sample)	120
Figure 6.13	Assessment of corruption in the legal system, by level of trust in the Supreme Court (total sample)	121
Figure 6.14	How would you rate the degree of power of Israel's Supreme Court? (total sample)	122
Figure 6.15	"To what degree are the decisions of Supreme Court justices affected by their political views?" (total sample)	123

Figure 6.16	Perception of the Supreme Court’s power, by view on effect of justices’ political views on their rulings (total sample)	125
Figure 6.17	“The Supreme Court intervenes too much in decisions of the government and its ministers” (total sample)	125
Figure 6.18	“The Supreme Court should have the power to overturn laws passed by the Knesset if they conflict with democratic principles such as freedom of expression and equality before the law” (Jewish and Arab samples)	127
Figure 7.1	Israel’s ranking in international indicators (percentile)	134
Figure 7.2	Israel’s scores in international indicators	135
Figure 7.3	Distribution of standardized scores in political rights indicator	136
Figure 7.4	Israel’s score in political rights indicator, 2002–2020	137
Figure 7.5	Distribution of standardized scores in civil liberties indicator	138
Figure 7.6	Israel’s score in civil liberties indicator, 2002–2020	138
Figure 7.7	Distribution of standardized scores in freedom of the press indicator	139
Figure 7.8	Israel’s score in freedom of the press indicator, 2002–2020	140
Figure 7.9	Distribution of standardized scores in voice and accountability indicator	141
Figure 7.10	Israel’s score in voice and accountability indicator, 2003–2020	141
Figure 7.11	Distribution of standardized scores in political participation indicator	142
Figure 7.12	Israel’s score in political participation indicator, 2006–2020	143
Figure 7.13	Distribution of standardized scores in egalitarian democracy indicator	143
Figure 7.14	Israel’s score in egalitarian democracy indicator, 2002–2020	144
Figure 7.15	Distribution of standardized scores in participatory democracy indicator	145
Figure 7.16	Israel’s score in participatory democracy indicator, 2002–2020	146

Figure 7.17	Distribution of standardized scores in deliberative democracy indicator	146
Figure 7.18	Israel's score in deliberative democracy indicator, 2002–2020	147
Figure 7.19	Distribution of standardized scores in democratic political culture indicator	148
Figure 7.20	Israel's score in democratic political culture indicator, 2006–2020	149
Figure 7.21	Distribution of standardized scores in functioning of government indicator	150
Figure 7.22	Israel's score in functioning of government indicator, 2006–2020	151
Figure 7.23	Distribution of standardized scores in rule of law indicator	151
Figure 7.24	Israel's score in rule of law indicator, 2002–2020	152
Figure 7.25	Distribution of standardized scores in control of corruption indicator	153
Figure 7.26	Israel's score in control of corruption indicator, 2002–2020	154
Figure 7.27	Distribution of standardized scores in perception of corruption indicator	154
Figure 7.28	Israel's score in perception of corruption indicator, 2002–2020	155
Figure 7.29	Distribution of standardized scores in regulatory quality indicator	156
Figure 7.30	Israel's score in regulatory quality indicator, 2002–2020	157
Figure 7.31	Distribution of standardized scores in equal distribution of resources indicator	158
Figure 7.32	Israel's score in equal distribution of resources indicator, 2002–2020	159

Principal Findings

Chapter 1: How is Israel Doing?

- Roughly one-third (31%) of all interviewees characterize Israel’s overall situation as “good” or “very good”—the lowest percentage in ten years.
- Almost two-thirds (63%) of the total sample feel optimistic about Israel’s future (a finding similar to the 2019 *Democracy Index*). A majority of the Jewish sample (67%) expressed optimism, as opposed to less than half of the Arab interviewees (42%).
- Since 2014, there have been no substantial changes in the proportion of interviewees who feel part of the State of Israel and its problems (76%, compared with 75%–79% in previous years). As in past surveys, a sizeable majority of Jewish interviewees (82.5%) report a sense of belonging, as opposed to less than half of the Arabs surveyed (43%).
- The lion’s share of Jewish respondents are proud to be Israeli (84%), as contrasted with a minority of the Arab sample (only 28% this year, compared with half of the Arab interviewees in 2018).
- A majority of the respondents (76% of Jews and 66% of Arabs) feel that Israel is a good place to live. Overall, the two most recent surveys have registered decreasing support on this question, from 85% of the total sample in 2019 to 74.5% this year.
- Most of the respondents wish to remain in Israel rather than moving to another Western country, even if they were guaranteed citizenship there (Jews, 70%; Arabs, 81%), but these percentages are lower than in past years.
- As in previous surveys, a majority of interviewees hold that the State of Israel is successful at ensuring the security of its citizens (56.5%), whereas only one-third believe that it looks out for their welfare (33%).

Chapter 2: Democracy, Government, Citizens

- We examined to what extent, in the opinion of the respondents, four key principles of a democratic regime are upheld in Israel. A majority (54%) think that the right to live in dignity is not sufficiently maintained, while 43% hold the same view regarding minority rights, 42% with regards to separation of powers, and one-third (32%) regarding freedom of expression. A greater proportion of Arabs than of Jews hold that the principles of minority rights and freedom of expression are insufficiently maintained.

Principal Findings

- A sizeable majority (75%) of Arab interviewees, as opposed to less than half the Jews surveyed (44%), hold that Israel's democratic system is in grave danger. In the Jewish sample, a majority on the Left (63%) think that Israeli democracy is under serious threat, compared with a minority who feel this way in the Center and on the Right (43% and 39%, respectively).
- A majority of interviewees (55%) agree with the statement that "the Israeli media portray the situation here as much worse than it really is." Breaking down the results in the Jewish sample by political orientation reveals that this view is shared by only a minority on the Left (25%), by roughly one-half in the Center (48%), and by about two-thirds on the Right (65%).
- Regarding the assertion that "to handle Israel's unique problems, we need a strong leader who is not swayed by the Knesset, the media or public opinion," we found a steady increase in the share who agreed with the statement, from 41% in 2014 to 56% this year.
- As in previous surveys, we once again found that a plurality of respondents hold that there is not a good balance between the democratic and Jewish components of the State of Israel, and that the Jewish aspect is too dominant (38% of Jews and 82% of Arabs). The most frequently expressed view among national religious and Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) Jews is that the democratic component is too strong (67% and 45%, respectively), while among secular Jewish respondents, two-thirds (63%) think that the Jewish aspect is too dominant.
- A majority of respondents (69%) disagree with the statement that "on the whole, most Knesset members work hard and are doing a good job." This represents the highest level of dissatisfaction since 2011.
- As for the extent of corruption among Israel's leaders, the findings are relatively consistent with those of previous years, with a slight improvement in the perceived level of corruption at the top (48.5%). The Arab interviewees rate the country's leadership as more corrupt than do the Jews.

Chapter 3: Electoral and Governmental Reforms

- The interviewees were presented with six proposals for political reforms, four of them relating to changes in the electoral system and two to governmental issues. The suggestion that earned the greatest support entailed transferring powers from government ministries to local government (67%). A majority of the public (56%) likewise support the use of an "open ballot" in national elections.¹ Roughly one-half are in favor of requiring a majority of

1 This is a ballot that allows the voter, in addition to selecting a party, to rank that party's candidates and thereby influence the order of the party list.

at least 80 Knesset members to modify a Basic Law, and of adding regional representation to Knesset elections (53% and 51%, respectively). The two proposals that garnered the least support (about 40% in each case) involve granting additional state funding to parties in which at least one-third of candidates are women, and permitting Israeli citizens who live overseas to vote in Knesset elections from their country of residence.

- Approximately one-half of those surveyed hold that Israel's electoral threshold is suitable, while one-third feel it is too low and 12% that it is too high. The share of Arabs who hold that the threshold is too high is more than double that of Jews (22% as opposed to 10%).

Chapter 4: Public Trust in Institutions

- In the **Jewish sample**, the IDF continues to enjoy the highest level of trust, even registering an upswing from 82% last year to 90% currently. Next in line are the municipalities/local authorities (with 62%) and the President of Israel (60%). Less than one-half expressed trust in the Supreme Court (48%), the National Insurance Institute, and the police (each with a trust level of 42%). At the bottom of the list, earning the lowest amount of trust, are the political institutions: the parties, the Knesset, and the government (15%, 28.5%, and 29%, respectively). All of Israel's state institutions, with the exception of the IDF, lost some ground in this area relative to last year's *Democracy Index*.
- In the **Arab sample**, the level of trust in state institutions is lower than that in the Jewish population, with no institution crossing the halfway mark. In first place is the National Insurance Institute (49.5%), followed by the religious bodies (the Shari'a and canonical courts) at 48%. The police earned the lowest level of trust, with just 13%.
- Trust in Israel's Supreme Court has shown a steady downturn over the last few years, and has now dropped below the 50% level in the Jewish sample for the first time (from 52% last year to 48% currently). A decline in the level of confidence in this institution was also registered in the Arab sample (from 60% to 44%).
- The municipalities/local authorities enjoy a relatively high level of trust, though there is a substantial disparity between Jews and Arabs in this regard (62% versus 32%, respectively).
- This year, we also examined interviewees' assessments of the objectivity and professionalism of the institutions surveyed. The findings in the Jewish sample regarding performance were very similar to the levels of trust for all these institutions, whereas in the Arab sample, the degree of trust in the police, local government, and the media was found to be lower than the assessment of functioning. For all other institutions, both parameters yielded similar findings among Arab respondents.

Chapter 5: Israeli Society

- We examined perceptions of “Israeliness” based on seven parameters.² Although the views of Jews and of Arabs on what constitutes being Israeli are very different, in both samples the most important factor is seen as respect for the laws of the state (Jews, 93%; Arabs, 84%). Whereas among Jews, all six of the remaining factors are considered important, among Arabs only two were cited as essential to being defined as Israeli: living in Israel for most of one’s life, and speaking Hebrew.
- In the Jewish sample, the highest share of respondents since 2013 feel that Jewish citizens should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens (42%). This position is more widespread on the Right than in the Center or Left (57%, 28.5%, and 5% respectively).
- Israel’s level of social solidarity was rated as fair or lower by the total sample, with an average score of 4.86 on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 = no solidarity at all and 10 = a high level of solidarity). A greater share of Jews than of Arabs assess the level of solidarity as high.
- Heading the list of groups this year viewed as having the highest level of tension between them are Jews and Arabs (46%), marking a sharp increase over last year, when only 28% of those surveyed considered this to be the most severe source of friction. Next in the ranking are tensions between Right and Left in the Jewish population (32%), which placed first in recent years (with 39% in 2020). Jewish respondents from the Left and Center still point to relations between right- and left-wing Jews as being the most fraught with tension (47% and 39%, respectively), while a majority on the Right cite Jews and Arabs as having the greatest friction between them (50.5%).
- Looking at the public’s preferences for carving up the budgetary pie, we found that the top priority was enlarging the healthcare budget (83%), with defense funding at the bottom of the list (only 39% were in favor of increasing it).

Chapter 6: Israel’s Legal System

- Roughly one-fifth of the total sample indicated that they had had personal experience with the court system in recent years (as a plaintiff, defendant, or witness), in most cases (42%) through the Magistrates’ (local) Court.
- The level of satisfaction among those who have had dealings with the legal system in recent years is not high: Only about one-third (33.5%) felt that the process was efficient, and 38% that the judges’ ruling was fair.

2 The seven determinants of Israeliness were: being born in Israel, living in Israel for most of one’s life, speaking Hebrew, being Jewish, respecting the laws of the state, serving in the IDF, and accepting the definition of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

- A majority of those interviewed (61%) hold that judges in Israel are selected mainly, or solely, based on political considerations.
- In the opinion of a substantial majority (75%), judges in Israel are subject to political pressure, with a lower—though still considerable—share (41%) believing that judges are also exposed to financial pressure.
- Roughly one-half (52%) of the total sample hold that Israel’s legal system does not treat elected representatives in an unbiased manner, meaning that judges are influenced by the political affiliation of such officials who face trial. This view is more prevalent on the Right compared with the Center and Left (63%, 39%, and 29%, respectively).
- Only about one-third (33%) of respondents agree that judges treat everyone who appears before them equally.
- Over half (52%) of the interviewees hold that the State Attorney acts on the basis of political considerations, as compared with one-third (32%) who think that it is motivated by professional concerns. A majority on the Left (63%) feel that the State Attorney operates on the basis of professional considerations, in contrast with one-half (47%) from the Center and only a small minority on the Right (22%).
- About one-half (51.5%) of interviewees hold that the legal system in Israel is quite or very corrupt, compared with 40% who responded that it is slightly or not at all corrupt.
- Some 40% of respondents are of the view that Israel’s Supreme Court has too much power, about one-third (33%) that it has the right amount of power, and 14% that it does not have enough power.
- Slightly over one-third (36%) of interviewees believe that judges’ rulings are strongly influenced by their political views, and an additional 28%, that they are moderately affected by their political opinions.
- Roughly one-half (52%) of interviewees agree with the statement that the Supreme Court intervenes too much in decisions made by the government and its ministers, while over one-third (36%) disagree. Agreement with this position is more common among Haredi and national religious respondents (82%) and on the Right (69%).
- A majority of interviewees (56%) expressed support for granting the Supreme Court the power to override laws enacted by the Knesset if they are found to run counter to democratic principles.

Chapter 7: International Indicators

We examined Israel's scores in various measures of democracy for the year 2020 (since the international indicators are always compiled for the preceding year), along with its ranking relative to the other countries surveyed and to its fellow members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), based on 15 international indicators.

- In comparison with 2019, Israel's global ranking improved in three of the indicators (political participation, egalitarian democracy, equal distribution of resources), while remaining unchanged in six indicators (political rights, civil liberties, deliberative democracy, rule of law, perception of corruption, regulatory quality), and declining in six others (freedom of the press, voice and accountability, participatory democracy, democratic political culture, functioning of government, control of corruption).
- When we compare Israel's scores for 2020 with its average scores for the preceding decade (2010–2019), a downward trend emerges: In only two of the indicators is the country's score in 2020 higher than its average for the previous ten years—political participation, where it registered a dramatic increase (+8.9%), and functioning of government, where it showed a slight upturn (+0.5%). By contrast, Israel's current score is lower than the ten-year average in 12 of the indicators, with the sharpest declines in control of corruption (–9.2%), political rights (–7.3%), and equal distribution of resources (–3.6%). The democratic political culture indicator remained stable in 2020 when compared with the average of the previous decade.
- Once again this year, Israel is above the midpoint in the global rankings in all indicators studied, and is even in the highest quartile in eight of them. However, when compared solely with the other 37 OECD states, it is in the upper half of the countries surveyed in only one indicator (political participation), while in six others it is situated in the third quartile, and in eight additional indicators, it is in the lowest quartile.

Introduction

In certain ways, 2021 was a direct extension of the previous two years (the ongoing political crisis, the coronavirus pandemic with its serious medical and economic repercussions, the stalemate in relations with the Palestinians, and so on); but in other respects, spring of this year was marked by changes. We can identify two turning points whose impact appears to be profound, at least at the time of writing. First and foremost was the establishment of the new government, with its multiple parties and viewpoints, headed by Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid (the alternate prime minister). This coalition, whose life expectancy is still unclear, replaced the Likud-Haredi government and ended the tenure of Binyamin Netanyahu as prime minister. After years of unquestioned dominance by the political Right, an opportunity emerged (and was taken) to shift the political scales toward the Center and the Left, while also incorporating elements from the mainstream Right.

Another watershed moment that occurred just prior to the change in government was the breakdown in relations between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel, the impact of which is also still difficult to assess, in the wake of the violent incidents that took place, primarily in the mixed cities (Lod, Ramle, Yaffo, Akko, and others). On a different level, we can also point to other developments: the start of the trial of former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, which placed the legal system as a whole in the public eye; and Operation Guardian of the Walls, which on the one hand made it clear that civilians anywhere in the country are vulnerable to enemy rocket and missile attacks emanating from the south, and presumably also from the north, but on the other, highlighted the operational capabilities (both offensive and defensive) of Israel's security systems.

The impact of these events is clearly discernible in the results of our annual survey, which we conducted later than usual this year (in June rather than March–April; we waited for the political situation to stabilize, as the March 2021 elections did not yield an unequivocal victory for any side). After the new government was sworn in, we found a more negative general assessment of the country's situation, and at the same time, a rise in optimism among voters for Left and Center parties who, following many years of exile in the Opposition, now found themselves represented in the governing coalition. By contrast, we encountered greater pessimism regarding Israel's collective future among voters on the Right, who found themselves banished from the seat of power for the first time in years, their representatives forced to observe the government from the sidelines. When the dust from the election settled, the lack of a clear winner once again raised the need for structural reforms in both the electoral and governmental arenas, despite the challenge for political players with often-opposing interests to reach a consensus as to what form of government might save the day.

In the sensitive relationship between Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens, two contradictory developments have taken place: Due to the failure to establish a government based solely on Jewish parties, for the first time in the history of the state an Arab party is a coalition partner with decisive influence, marking an unprecedented step forward in the ability of the Arab population to shape government policy. Yet, in May, there was an eruption of internecine violence between Jews and Arabs on a level unheard of in recent decades; it not only claimed lives, but also shattered the notion—in any case, not deeply entrenched—that Jews and Arabs could live alongside one another, even if their national visions differed. As demonstrated in the survey findings, the events themselves—and the way that they were handled by the security forces—served to deepen the sense of estrangement from the state's institutions felt by many Arab citizens, and on the Jewish side, contributed to greater exclusionism, with explicit calls for Jewish citizens of Israel to have greater rights than their Arab counterparts.

Nor did the opening of Netanyahu's trial pass unnoticed: Those who hoped or feared that he would somehow manage to escape justice discovered that the legal system may work slowly, but once the wheels of justice start turning, trials cannot be halted again without a formal legal process. Certain segments of the public were satisfied with the progress on this score, seeing it as proof of the professionalism and efficiency of the courts, while for others, it bolstered their view that the legal system is taking its revenge on Citizen Netanyahu, in the name of enemies both known and unknown; and if on him, perhaps on many others as well, who are a good deal weaker than he is.

As for the impact of Operation Guardian of the Walls, we did not examine direct effects in our survey; however, we did see, in response to the question on reasons for pessimism regarding the future, a considerable sense of danger on the security front. This was also alluded to in respondents' answers when asked about factors that might push people to emigrate from Israel. Yet, despite improved public trust in the IDF, we found only limited desire among the public to increase the defense budget, which could signal a willingness to tolerate certain costs to the home front that would have been seen as unacceptable in the past.

As in previous years, 2021's *Democracy Index* is divided into two sections: The bulk of the report (the first six chapters) consists of an analysis of Israeli public opinion on various aspects of the state, as measured in this year's survey. The second section, which is briefer, holds up a mirror to Israeli democracy from the outside, presenting an assessment of its performance by international institutes and think tanks that compile yearly indicators of the quality of government of countries around the world.

More specifically:

The first chapter ("How is Israel Doing?") offers an overview of Israel and its democracy, as seen by the Israeli public. Here, we discuss such questions as optimism or pessimism regarding the future; the desire to remain in Israel, given other options; Israel's ability to ensure the security and welfare of its citizens; the sense of belonging to the country; pride in being Israeli; and related topics.

The second chapter of the report (“Democracy, Government, Citizens”) presents respondents’ opinions on the fulfillment of democratic principles in Israel, whether or not Israeli democracy is in grave danger, and whether the media convey an overly gloomy picture of the country’s situation. Likewise, this chapter addresses the extent of the public’s desire for a strong leader, and perceptions of the balance or imbalance between the Jewish and democratic components of the state, along with assessments of Knesset members’ performance and the degree of corruption “at the top.”

The third chapter (“Electoral and Governmental Reforms”) examines public opinion regarding seven proposed reforms in the electoral system as well as the system of government: adding a regional element to Israel’s national elections; allowing Israelis who have lived overseas for substantial periods of time to vote in Knesset elections; adopting an “open ballot” system on election day; transferring powers from government ministries to local government; providing greater state funding to parties whose lists contain high numbers of women; increasing the minimum majority of Knesset members required to modify a Basic Law; and changing the electoral threshold.

The fourth chapter (“Public Trust in Institutions”) addresses a question which is a major topic of scholarly discourse and public debate, namely, the extent of public trust in the various state institutions, and how it affects (if at all) the functioning of government. In past years, this subject formed part of the second chapter; however, due to the current high level of interest in it, we decided this time to expand the discussion and devote a separate chapter to the issue. This chapter examines levels of trust in various public institutions, including those that occupied center stage in public battles this year, such as the Supreme Court, the government, the Knesset, and the police. This year, we also examined whether, as certain scholars contend, there is a close association between trust in an institution and assessment of its performance. Indeed, we discovered a high (though not total) correlation between trust and perceived performance; however, we were unable to determine whether this was a causal connection, that is, whether the assessment of functioning affects the level of trust, and/or vice versa.

The fifth chapter of the report (“Israeli Society”) deals with the interface between state and society. Here, we present our findings on the question of who is Israeli based on several characteristics, among them being born in Israel, speaking Hebrew, and being Jewish. We also examined: the support (or lack thereof) for granting greater rights to Jewish than to non-Jewish citizens; the perceived level of social solidarity in Israel; focal points of tension in Israeli society; and the public’s budgetary priorities, which are of course connected with perceptions of the challenges facing the Israeli state and society.

The sixth chapter (“Israel’s Legal System”) looks at public opinion concerning various aspects of the legal system, as part of our practice of devoting a special chapter in each year’s *Democracy Index* to a government system or state institution. In this chapter, we present the survey findings regarding the efficiency and fairness of the legal system; the process of judicial selection, and

Introduction

the factors influencing judges' decisions; the degree of neutrality of the prosecutorial and judicial systems; the integrity of the legal system; and the role of the Supreme Court.

As in previous years, **the seventh chapter** of the report showcases Israeli democracy in comparison with that of other countries. It examines Israel's ranking in a variety of annual indicators compiled by key international organizations such as the World Bank, using two types of comparison: first, Israel's ranking relative to other countries; and second, Israeli democracy today compared with previous years. Since most of the indicators present comparisons with many or all of the world's countries, including those not considered particularly democratic, and since Israel wishes to belong to the family of developed nations, we also provide a ranking that does not appear in the original indicators: Israel's standing in comparison with the OECD states alone.

It is our hope that this year's *Israeli Democracy Index* will once again enhance the general discourse by illuminating public opinion in Israel concerning major issues on the national agenda, and will help ground the debate in facts—if not with regards to objective reality, then at least in terms of how the public views that reality.

Methodology

Part I of the report is based on a public opinion poll formulated by the staff of the Israel Democracy Institute's Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research, who also analyzed the data collected.

Two polling firms carried out the field work for the survey: in Hebrew, the Dialogue Institute; and in Arabic, the Afkar Institute. The surveys were conducted between June 15 and June 24, 2021.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire for this year's survey was compiled in May 2021. It consists of 77 content questions, some with multiple subsections. Several of the questions were adapted to specific groups of respondents: for example, interviewees from the Jewish public were asked about their level of trust in the Chief Rabbinate, while those from the Arab population were asked about their confidence in the Shari'a or canonical courts. This is noted clearly in the relevant survey questions in Appendices 1 and 2. A total of 49 questions are recurring items from previous *Democracy Index* surveys. In addition to the content questions, 11 sociodemographic questions were posed in the Hebrew questionnaire, and 8 in the Arabic questionnaire. For all questions, the response option of "don't know" was presented to the interviewees only in the online survey and not by telephone.

The questionnaire was translated into Arabic in advance, and the interviewers for this version were native Arabic speakers.

The sample

A total of 1,188 men and women aged 18 and over were interviewed:

- 1,004 interviewees constituting a representative sample of Jews and others³
- 184 interviewees forming a representative sample of Arab citizens of Israel

To ensure the representativeness of each of the samples, they were weighted by level of religiosity (Jews and Arabs separately), age, and proportion of Jews and Arabs in the adult population of Israel.

The maximum sampling error for a sample of this size is $\pm 2.9\%$ for the total sample ($\pm 3.1\%$ for the Jewish sample, and $\pm 7.3\%$ for the Arab sample).

Data collection

The data were collected primarily via the Internet in addition to phone interviews. The Arabic survey was conducted by telephone only.

	Internet (%)	Telephone (%)	Total (%)
Hebrew survey sample	82.1	17.9	100
Arabic survey sample	–	100	100
Total (full sample)	69.4	30.6	100

The survey in Hebrew was conducted largely via the Internet, with the exception of the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox Jewish) population, who were interviewed mainly by telephone.

3 The category of “others” was adopted by Israel’s Central Bureau of Statistics during the 1990s to denote people who are not Jewish according to halakha (Jewish religious law) but are not Arab. This relates mainly to immigrants from the former Soviet Union who were eligible to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return despite not being considered halakhically Jewish. In the present survey, we treat these individuals as part of the Jewish majority, and examine differences between the group of “Jews and others” and the sample of Arab Israelis.

Religiosity	Internet (%)	Telephone (%)	Total (%)
Haredi	15.6	84.4	100
National religious	94.5	5.5	100
Traditional religious	95.0	5.0	100
Traditional non-religious	98.0	2.0	100
Secular	87.4	12.6	100

Age (Jewish sample)	Internet (%)	Telephone (%)	Total (%)
18–24	94.7	5.3	100
25–34	85.9	14.1	100
35–44	82.3	17.7	100
45–54	88.0	12.0	100
55–64	93.6	6.4	100
65+	53.2	46.8	100

How did we analyze the data?

Along with the variables known from previous studies to shape Israeli public opinion on political and social issues of the type that we examine in the *Democracy Index*, which are included as a rule in our analysis, we determine the specific additional factors that form the basis of our study in a given year only after completing the data collection and testing repeatedly by trial and error. In the 2021 report, we analyzed the responses of the Jewish sample based on self-defined religiosity⁴ and political orientation,⁵ and in the Arab sample (in certain cases), on voting

4 The categories for this variable were: Haredi, national religious, traditional religious, traditional non-religious, and secular.

5 The categories for this variable were: Right, Center, and Left.

patterns in the 2021 Knesset elections. For certain topics in both samples, we also examined how the findings correlated with education, sex, income, or age. As shown in Appendix 3, in the Jewish sample there is a high degree of overlap between some of these variables, chiefly with regard to religiosity and political orientation; but as the congruence is not total, there is reason to examine each of these self-definitions separately.

Navigating the report

To make it easier to navigate the report, two types of references have been inserted in the margins of the text. The first type, located next to every question discussed, refers the reader to the page where that question appears in Appendix 1 (which contains the questionnaire and the distribution of responses for each content question in a three-part format: total sample, Jews, Arabs). The second type of reference appears only for recurring questions, and points to the page where that question appears in Appendix 2 (a multi-year comparison of data). The references appear in the text as follows:

[Israel's overall situation](#)

[Question 1](#)

Appendix 1

Page 167

[Appendix 2](#)

(See IDI website)

In addition, next to each question in Appendices 1 and 2, there is a reference to the page in the text where that question is discussed.

Note: To make for easier reading, we present the data in whole numbers in the text and accompanying figures. In rare instances, we use half-percentage points. In the appendices, however, the data are shown to a higher degree of precision—up to one decimal place. Due to this rounding (which, as stated, is used to assist the reader), there are occasionally very slight differences between the data in the main body of the report and in the appendices.

Part One

Israel in the Eyes
of its Citizens

Chapter 1 / How is Israel Doing?

In this chapter, we discuss the following topics:

- Israel's overall situation today
- Expectations regarding Israel's future
- Sense of belonging to the state
- Pride in being Israeli
- Is Israel a good place to live?
- Israel's success at ensuring the security and welfare of its citizens
- Desire to emigrate to other countries

As in previous years, the first question we posed in 2021's democracy survey was: "How would you characterize Israel's overall situation today?" Presumably as a result of the difficult year experienced by the country in terms of politics, the economy, and health, the distribution of responses reveals a slight decline in positivity in comparison with June 2020. In the total sample, the most common response was "so-so" (42%, compared with 40% last year). This was followed by 31% who defined the situation as "good" or "very good" (compared with 37.5% in 2020) and 26% who labeled the situation as "bad" or "very bad" (as opposed to 22% last year). In fact, the share of respondents who rate Israel's situation as good or very good—which has dropped by 22 percentage points since 2018—is the lowest since 2011, and the proportion who define it as bad or very bad is at the highest level since that year.

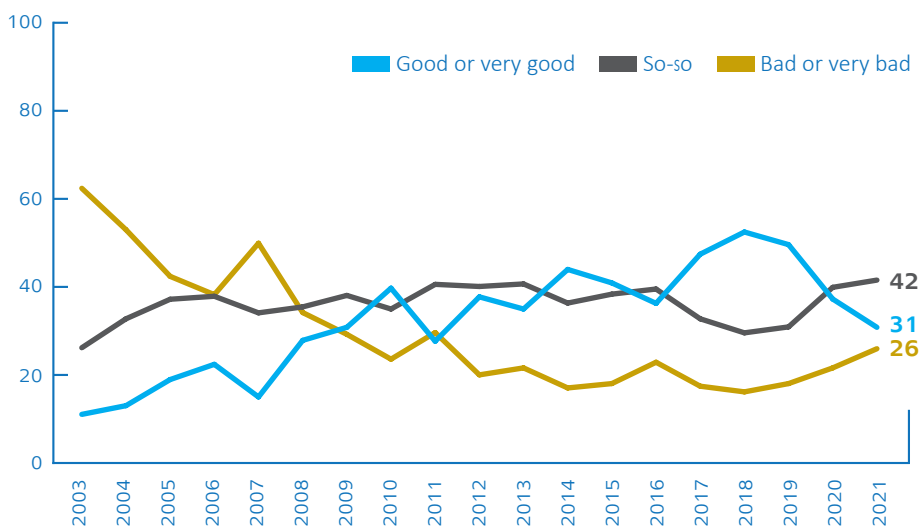
Israel's overall situation

Question 1

Appendix 1
Page 167

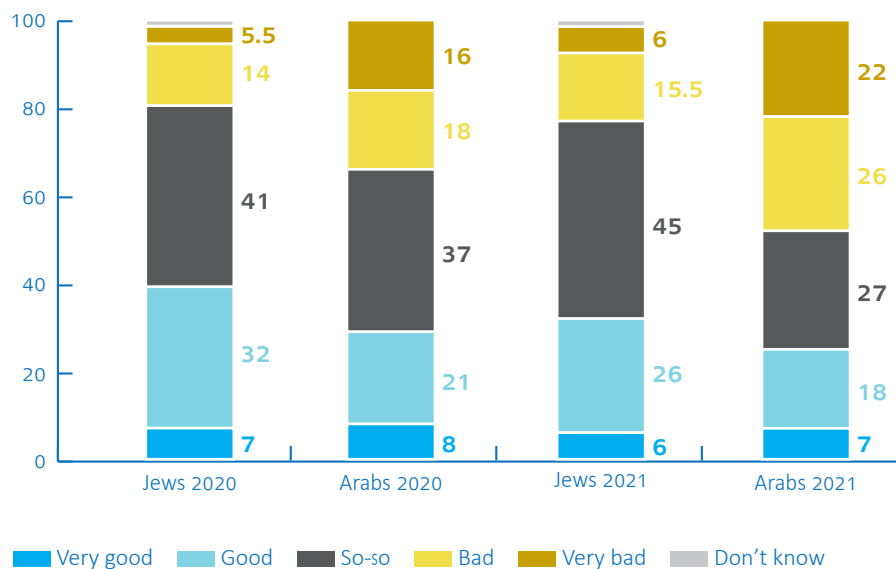
Appendix 2
(See IDI website)

Figure 1.1 / Israel's overall situation, 2003–2021 (total sample; %)



This year's assessments of Israel's overall situation are more unfavorable than last year's in both the Jewish and Arab samples; however, the share of Arabs who define it as bad or very bad is more than double that of the Jews. Indeed, the proportion of Arab interviewees who take a dim view of the current situation is even substantially higher than the share who define it as so-so, not to mention those who characterize it as good or very good. This is in contrast to the Jewish sample, where the share of those who see the state of affairs as bad or very bad is smaller than of those who judge it to be so-so or good/very good, despite the more negative assessment compared with last year.

Figure 1.2 / Israel's overall situation, 2020, 2021 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)



Although the survey was conducted after the new government had been sworn in, the share in the Jewish sample of respondents who considered the country's situation to be good or very good is much lower on the Left—which, for the first time in many years, is now represented in the governing coalition—than in the Center or on the Right, and those who define it as bad or very bad in the former camp is noticeably higher than in the latter two groups.

Table 1.1 (Jewish sample; %)

Assessment of Israel's overall situation	Good or very good	So-so	Bad or very bad	Don't know	Total
Left	17	48	34	1	100
Center	26	55	18	1	100
Right	39.5	40	20	0.5	100

A breakdown of responses in the Jewish sample based on religiosity shows that secular Jews are the group whose assessment of Israel's situation is the most negative, while the national religious take the most positive view. Interestingly, the highest proportions of respondents who characterize the present state of affairs as bad or very bad can be found among the traditional religious and Haredim, perhaps because they suffered greater harm as a result of the coronavirus pandemic or because of the election results (the majority in these groups voted for the Right or the Haredi parties, which, in the latter case, were left out of the ruling coalition for the first time in many years).

Table 1.2 (Jewish sample; %)

Assessment of Israel's overall situation	Good or very good	So-so	Bad or very bad	Don't know	Total
Haredi	39	30	27	4	100
National religious	58	29.5	12	0.5	100
Traditional religious	27	43	29	1	100
Traditional non-religious	32	51	17	-	100
Secular	26	50	24	-	100

Expectations for Israel's future

Question 4

Appendix 1

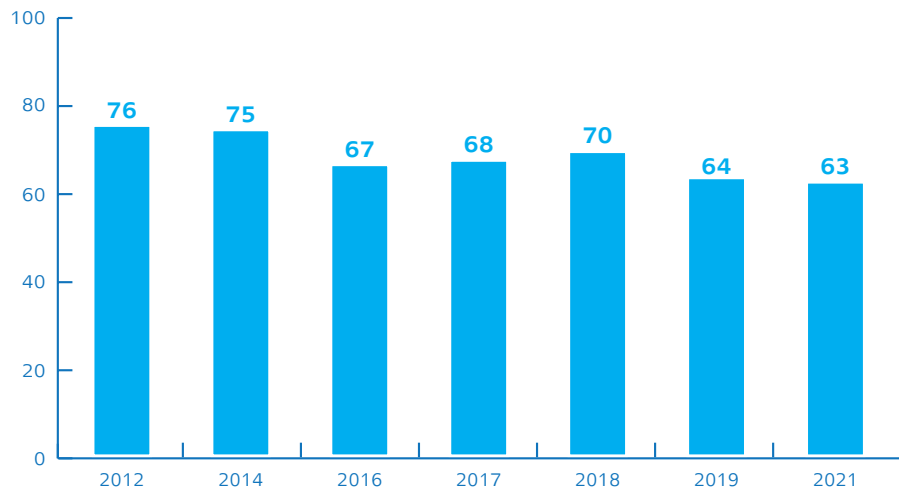
Page 168

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

As shown in the following figure, despite the less-than-glowing assessment of Israel's current situation in all the parameters surveyed, some two-thirds of the total sample expressed optimism this year regarding the country's future.

Figure 1.3 / "In general, are you optimistic or pessimistic about Israel's future?" over time (optimistic; total sample; %)



On this question, we found a sizeable gap between Jews and Arabs: Among Jews, the optimists were in the majority (67%), while among Arabs, only 42% shared this view, with 50% expressing pessimism about the country's future. Breaking down the Jewish sample by political orientation, we found a majority of optimists in all three camps, though somewhat smaller in size on the Left than in the other groups (Left, 59%; Center, 71%; Right, 68%).

We decided this year to let the interviewees tell us in their own words the reasons for their optimism or pessimism regarding Israel's future, phrasing it as an open question: "Specify the factor that contributes most strongly to your optimism about Israel's future." We coded the responses and divided them into categories. As shown in the following table, there are substantial differences between Jews and Arabs in the reasons cited for their optimism:

Table 1.3 (Respondents who expressed optimism about Israel's future; Jewish and Arab samples; %)

Primary reasons for optimism (Jews)	
New government / change of government	24
Faith in God / redemption / Messiah	17
Good people / the human factor	16.5
The economy / hi-tech / development	10
General optimism / positive thinking / hope	8
Security / army / strong country	8
Love of country / Zionism	6
Singular responses + don't know	10.5
Primary reasons for optimism (Arabs)	
General optimism / hope	24
The economy / hi-tech / development	19.5
New government / change of government	18
Security / democracy / state looks after citizens	16
Singular responses + don't know	22.5

A breakdown of responses in the Jewish sample by political orientation showed that 41% of those who identified with the Left gave the primary reason for their optimism concerning Israel's future as the new government or change of government. Among respondents from the Center, 37% offered the same response, compared with just 16% on the Right. Analyzing the responses by religiosity yielded the finding that 53.5% of Haredim consider faith in God, in redemption, or in the Messiah as the basis for their optimism; this reason was cited by 35% of national religious, 24% of traditional religious, 9% of traditional non-religious, and just 3% of secular respondents.

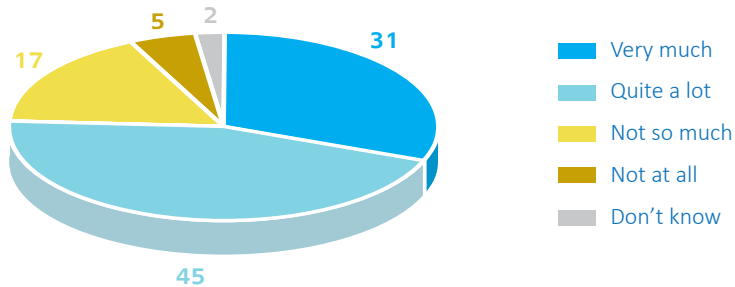
We also asked those interviewees who expressed pessimism regarding the country's future to cite their principal reasons for this feeling. The distribution of responses and the proportion who answered "don't know" suggest that for citizens of Israel today, it is easier to point to reasons for pessimism concerning the future than to reasons for optimism. Once again, there are genuine differences between Jews and Arabs on this question:

Table 1.4 (Respondents who expressed pessimism about Israel's future; Jewish and Arab samples; %)

Primary reasons for pessimism (Jews)	
Political situation / new government / functioning of government	47
Racism / lack of solidarity / violence / social divisions	19
Demographic threats (Haredim/Arabs)	12
Security / wars / external threats / world opinion	11.5
Overall situation / cost of living / economic gaps	6
Singular responses + don't know	4.5
Primary reasons for pessimism (Arabs)	
Racism / social problems / sense of injustice	45
The government / political situation / politicians	29
Economic situation / cost of living / day-to-day situation	20
Singular responses + don't know	6

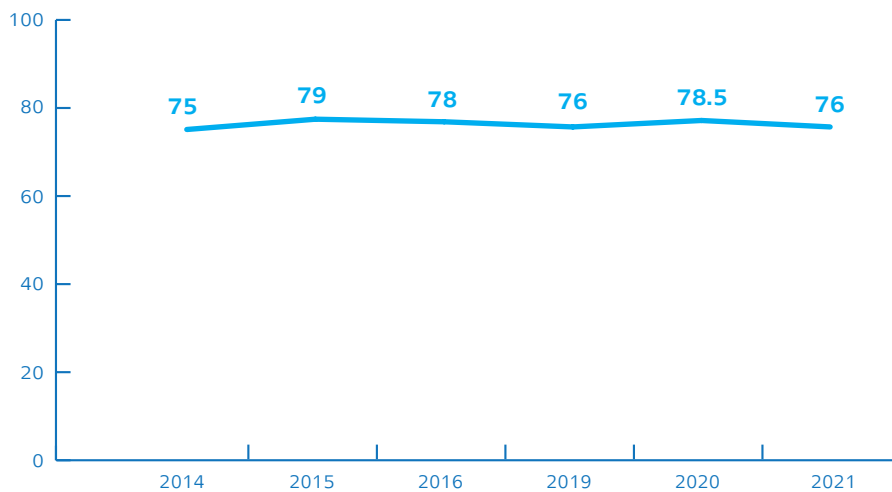
This year, as in previous surveys, a majority (76%) stated that they feel part of the state and its problems.

Figure 1.4 / “To what extent do you feel part of the State of Israel and its problems?” (total sample; %)



The following figure shows the share of interviewees who have indicated feeling part of the state and its problems over the years. Since 2014, there has been virtually no change in the responses to this question among the total sample.

Figure 1.5 / Feel part of the State of Israel and its problems, over time (total sample; %)



Sense of belonging to the state

Question 2

Appendix 1

Page 167

Appendix 2
(See IDI website)

The gap between Jewish and Arab respondents on this question is considerable, and extremely worrisome; whereas among Jews, a sizeable majority feel part of the state and its problems, only a minority of Arabs share this view. Interestingly enough, although the survey was conducted following the violent events in Israel's mixed cities, the distribution of responses to this question among both Jews and Arabs was almost identical to that of last year; in other words, the disparity is not a result of recent events.

Table 1.5 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)

Feel part of the state and its problems			
Jews 2021	Jews 2020	Arabs 2021	Arabs 2020
82.5	85	43	43

Breaking down the results in the Arab sample by voting pattern in the 2021 Knesset elections, we found a substantial difference between Ra'am and Joint List voters, with the former feeling a much greater sense of belonging than the latter, albeit not a majority in either case (Ra'am, 49%; Joint List, 28%).

An analysis of the Jewish sample by political orientation did not yield any noticeable differences. By contrast, a breakdown of this sample by religiosity found a majority in all categories who feel a sense of belonging; among Haredim, however, this majority is smaller than in the other groups: Haredim, 67%; national religious, 88%; traditional religious, 86%; traditional non-religious, 86%; secular, 82%. We did not find sizeable differences in this sample by age, though the youngest age group (18–24) feels part of the state and its problems to a lesser degree than do the other cohorts (70%, versus 80% and over in the other groups).

This year as well, we posed the question: "How proud are you to be an Israeli?" As in previous years, the results from the total sample showed roughly three-quarters of respondents who chose "very much" or "quite a lot." Here too, however, the difference between Jews and Arabs is striking: An outright majority of Jews are proud to be Israeli compared with a majority of Arabs who feel just the opposite.

Pride in being Israeli

Question 3

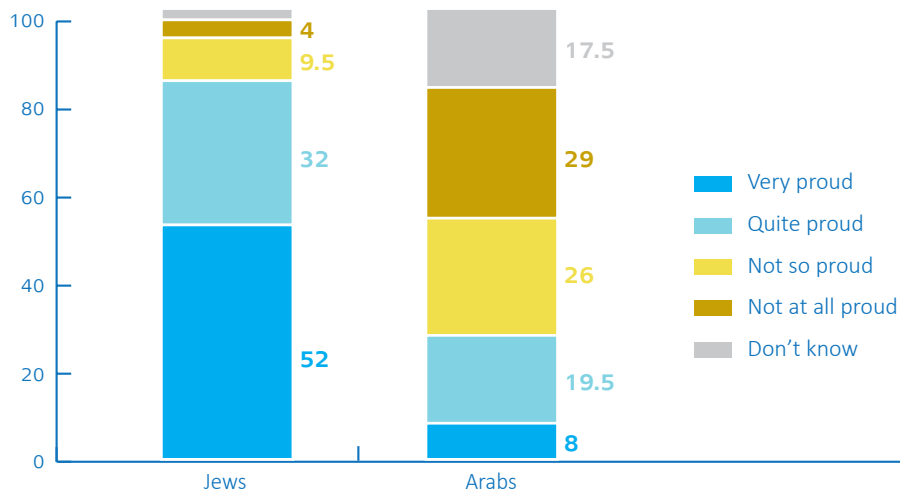
Appendix 1

Page 168

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

Figure 1.6 / “How proud are you to be an Israeli?” (Jewish and Arab samples; %)



These results offer strong cause for concern, because the last time we posed this question (in 2018), roughly one-half of Arab respondents (51%) expressed pride in being Israeli. We have no choice but to wait for next year’s survey to see whether this lower reading resulted from the events of the past year or whether it marks a worsening of the trend of Arab estrangement from the state.

Figure 1.7 / “How proud are you to be an Israeli?” over time (quite proud and very proud; Jewish and Arab samples; %)



Also on the topic of pride in being Israeli, we found differences between Joint List and Ra'am voters. Those who voted for the Joint List are less proud of their Israeli status, though in both groups only a minority said they were proud to be Israeli (Joint List, 17%; Ra'am, 27%).

A breakdown of the Jewish sample by political orientation yielded a majority in all three camps who expressed pride in being Israeli; however, the majority on the Left is noticeably smaller than it is among respondents from the Center or Right.

Table 1.6 (Jewish sample; %)

Very or quite proud to be Israeli	
Left	67
Center	83
Right	90

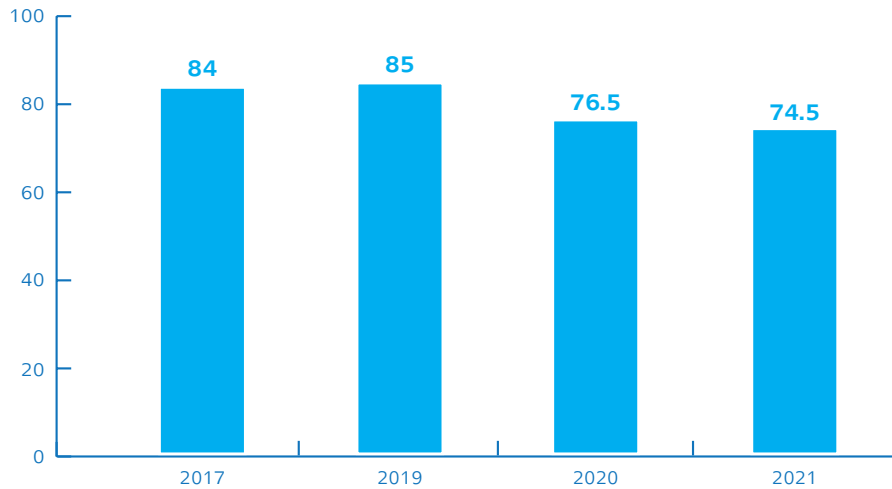
Belonging does not necessarily lead to pride; yet, as the following statistics show, there is a connection between the two. A clear majority of those who expressed pride in being Israeli (85%) also feel part of the state and its problems. Of those who do not feel proud of their "Israeliness," a much smaller share (48%) feel a sense of belonging. Cross-tabulating the data in the opposite direction yielded virtually the same results.

Table 1.7 (total sample; %)

	Very or quite proud to be Israeli	Not so or not at all proud to be Israeli
Feel part of the state and its problems very much or quite a lot	85	48
Feel part of the state and its problems not so much or not at all	13	50
Don't know	2	2
Total	100	100

In four surveys that we conducted over the years, a majority of interviewees agreed either somewhat or strongly that Israel is a good place to live, which is consistent with the generally positive outlook concerning the country's future. But in the two most recent surveys, which were conducted in the throes of political, medical, and economic crises, this majority was smaller than in the earlier polls.

Figure 1.8 / "Israel is a good place to live," over time (agree; total sample; %)



Among both Jewish and Arab respondents, most hold that Israel is a good place to live, though this majority is smaller in the latter group (Jews, 76%; Arabs, 66%). Breaking down the results in the Jewish sample by religiosity, we found a majority in all categories who feel this way, with the largest margin recorded in the national religious group and the smallest among the secular interviewees.

Table 1.8 (Jewish sample; %)

Agree that Israel is a good place to live	
Haredi	87.5
National religious	91
Traditional religious	81.5

Is Israel a good place to live?

Question 13

Appendix 1

Page 172

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

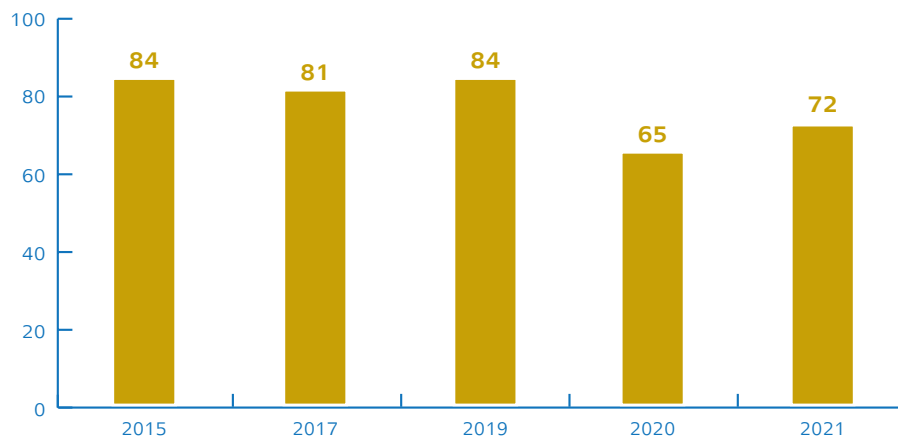
Agree that Israel is a good place to live	
Traditional non-religious	81
Secular	65

While a breakdown of the total sample by age reveals a majority in all age groups who hold that Israel is a good place to live, this majority is smallest in the youngest cohort (18–34, 68%; 35–54, 77%; 55 and over, 80%). When we combined the parameters of age and nationality, we found that whereas a sizeable majority (73%) of Jews aged 18–24 characterized Israel as a good place to live, in the parallel cohort of Arab interviewees only about one-half (51%) took the same view.

What, if anything, can we learn from Israelis' sense of belonging about their desire to remain in Israel?

In this year's survey, we asked for the fifth time: "If you could receive American citizenship, or that of another Western country, would you prefer to live there or to remain in Israel?" As in the previous surveys, a clear majority responded that they preferred to continue living in Israel, even under the attractive conditions proposed in the question; nonetheless, the majority this year and last was smaller than in the past.

Figure 1.9 / Prefer to remain in Israel even if offered citizenship in the U.S. or another Western country, over time (total sample; %)



Move overseas or remain in Israel?

Question 37

Appendix 1
Page 180

Appendix 2
(See IDI website)

The share of Arab interviewees who would prefer to remain in Israel exceeds that of the Jewish respondents (81% versus 70%, respectively). The same holds true for all age groups in both samples, with a greater proportion of the two oldest groups preferring to stay in Israel as compared with the younger cohorts.

Table 1.9 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)

Wish to remain in Israel	Jews	Arabs
18–24	58	71
25–34	66	73
35–44	67	89
45–54	67	90
55–64	75	90.5
65+	83	82

Analyzing the results in the Jewish sample by political orientation, we found that the share who expressed a preference to remain in Israel is lower among those who identify with the Left than among those who align themselves with the Center or Right (57%, 67.5%, and 74%, respectively).

Here too, we expanded on the original question and allowed the interviewees to state in their own words the reasons causing people to consider emigrating from Israel. We coded the responses, and present the distribution below. Note that in the Arab sample, a very high proportion actually answered the opposite question: namely, what keeps people in Israel. No problem was found in the translation, but for some reason the respondents preferred to respond to this unasked question.

**Primary factor
raising questions
about living in
Israel**

Question 38

Appendix 1
Page 181

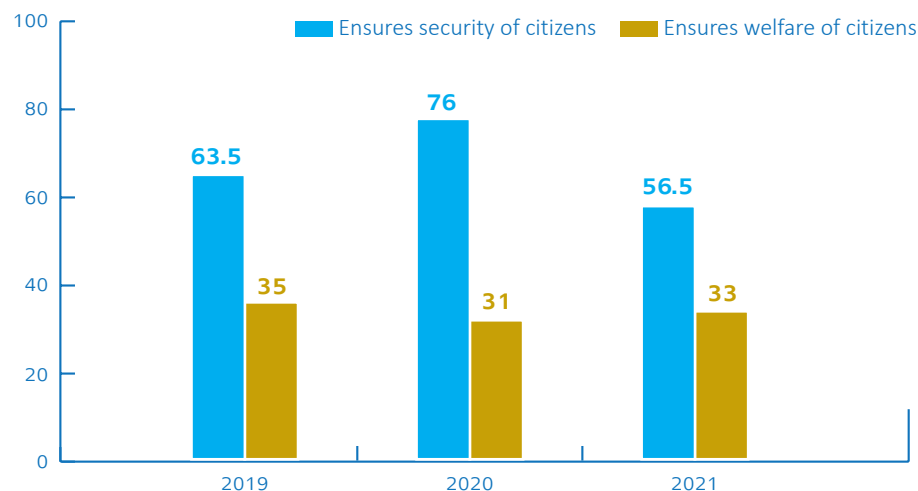
Table 1.10 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)

Primary factors that might cause Israelis to leave the country (Jews)	
Economic situation / cost of living / poor quality of life	38
The government / current administration / corruption / bureaucracy	15.5
Security / wars / terror	12
Hatred between Jews / social tensions / conflict with Arabs	10
Lack of personal security / uncertainty / instability	6
Lack of connection with Zionism / Jewish heritage / Jewish identity	6
Things are better overseas / the grass is always greener on the other side	3
Singular responses + don't know	9.5
Primary factors that might cause Israelis to leave the country (Arabs)	
Economy / standard of living	20
Security problems (not specified whether internal or external)	12
Uncertainty / instability	12
Racism / social problems / feeling of inequality	11
Total possible factors encouraging emigration	55
Ties to the land	28
Palestinian nationalism	6
Total possible factors discouraging emigration	34
Singular responses + don't know	11

Cross-tabulating the responses to the question about remaining in Israel with the sense of belonging to the country, we found that among both those who feel a part of the state and its problems and those who do not, the majority prefer to continue living in Israel. But whereas just 15% of the former group would wish to move overseas under the terms proposed in the question, among the latter (who do not feel that they belong), the share climbs to 24%. An even greater disparity was discovered between pride or lack of pride in being Israeli and the wish to remain in Israel or emigrate: Of those who expressed pride, some three-quarters wish to continue living in Israel, and only 13% would prefer to live elsewhere. By contrast, those respondents from the Jewish sample who are not proud to be Israeli are evenly split between those who wish to continue living in Israel and those who would prefer to live overseas (42% and 41%, respectively).

This year, for the third time, we examined public opinion on how well the State of Israel manages to ensure the security and the welfare of its citizens. Once again, we found that the share who hold that Israel is able to provide security (a majority of those surveyed) greatly exceeds the (minority) share of respondents who believe that it is able to look out for its citizens' welfare. However, while the proportion who feel that Israel ensures their welfare remains low but steady, there was a sharp drop this year in the (higher) share of respondents who hold that the state defends their security, perhaps due to rising awareness of the vulnerability of civilians in the wake of Operation Guardian of the Walls. The decline may also be the result of the change in government, and the fear that Netanyahu's successor will be unable to handle national security issues.

Figure 1.10 / Think that Israel ensures the security / welfare of its citizens (total sample; %)



Israel's ability to ensure the security and welfare of its citizens

Questions 35, 36

Appendix 1

Page 180

Appendix 2
(See IDI website)

While there is not a major difference between Jews and Arabs on the question of the state's ability to ensure the welfare of its citizens, there is a huge gap between the two groups when it comes to the state's success in safeguarding their security, with a majority of Jews feeling protected as opposed to only a minority of Arabs. The reason for this disparity is apparently different interpretations of the term "security": Among Jewish interviewees, it is understood as referring to external threats, whereas among Arabs it also encompasses threats of violence from within.

Table 1.11 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)

Think that Israel ensures the security of its citizens	
Jews	61
Arabs	33

Respondents' income level (below average, average, or above average) was found to influence their perceptions of Israel's ability to ensure both the security and the welfare of its citizens. A majority in each group sees Israel as successful in the realm of security but not with regard to welfare; however, the higher the income of the respondent, the greater the sense of protection by the state in both areas.

Table 1.12 (total sample; %)

	Think that Israel ensures the security of its citizens	Think that Israel ensures the welfare of its citizens
Below-average income	55	26
Average income	54	34
Above-average income	64	38

Interestingly, while we did not uncover differences between men and women on the subject of security, in the area of welfare fewer women than men feel that the state is living up to their expectations (29% and 37%, respectively).

Chapter 2 / Democracy, Government, Citizens

In this chapter, we discuss the following topics:

- Israel's preservation of democratic principles
- Is Israeli democracy in grave danger?
- Do the media present things as worse than they are?
- The desire for a strong leader
- Israel as a Jewish and democratic state
- Knesset members' performance
- Corruption at the top

Any regime that seeks to earn a democratic “stamp of approval” must meet several necessary but not sufficient conditions. We examined to what extent, in the opinion of those surveyed, the following four conditions are upheld in Israel: minority rights, the right to live in dignity, freedom of expression, and separation of powers. As shown in the following figure, the value that is the least honored, in the eyes of the respondents, is the right to live in dignity, followed by minority rights and separation of powers (in virtually identical proportions). By contrast, a relatively small share of interviewees think that freedom of expression is insufficiently maintained. In fact, it is the only value of the four concerning which opinions are split, with an equal share of interviewees holding that freedom of expression is observed too much, too little, or just the right amount.

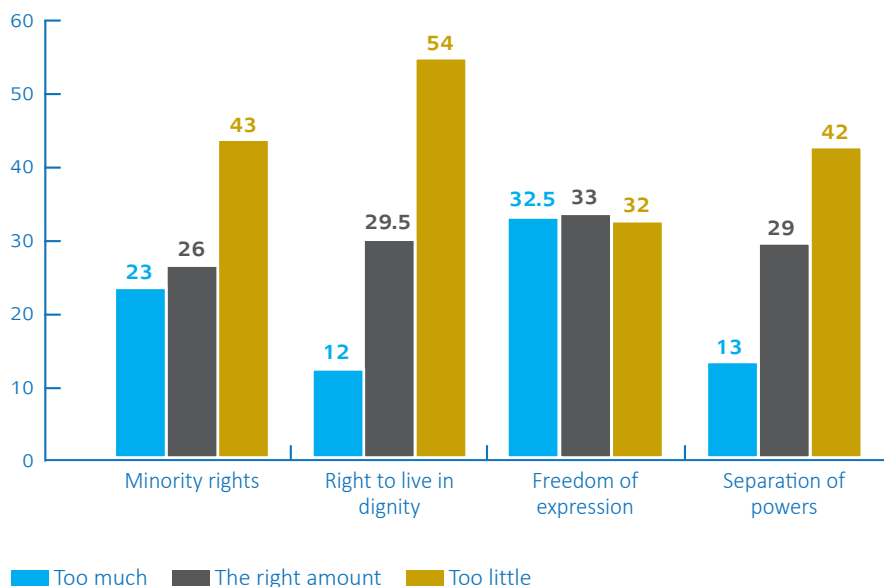
Is Israel upholding democratic principles?

Questions 45–48

Appendix 1
Page 184–185

Appendix 2
(See IDI website)

Figure 2.1 / Extent to which four democratic principles are upheld in Israel (total sample; %)



We examined if there are differences between subgroups in Israeli society in their perceptions of how well these democratic fundamentals are being maintained.

Our findings show that the difference in responses regarding **minority rights** can be explained primarily by the variables of nationality (Jews and Arabs), voting patterns and religion (Arabs), political orientation (Jews), and religiosity (Jews). Whereas a majority of Arab respondents hold that this principle is upheld too little in Israel, only a minority of Jews (albeit a considerable one) feel this way (61% and 40%, respectively). This is consistent with the data presented below concerning the extent to which the Arab public considers Israel to be democratic.

A breakdown of the Arab interviewees by their vote in the most recent Knesset elections (in March 2021) shows that most of those who voted for the Joint List or Ra'am feel that minority rights are insufficiently upheld in Israel today; however, the majority is noticeably greater among Ra'am voters than Joint List voters. Analyzing the Arab interviewees by religion also produced interesting results: 58% of Muslims indicated that minority rights are upheld too little, compared with 61.5% of Christians, and 74% of Druze (who might have been expected to be less critical due to their special status in Israel).

A breakdown of the Jewish sample by political orientation reveals vast differences: On the Left, a majority hold that minority rights are insufficiently respected in Israel, as opposed to slightly

less than half in the Center who feel this way, and only just above a quarter on the Right. A breakdown of the Jewish sample by religiosity also yields an inconsistent picture: The secular respondents, at one end of the spectrum, and the Haredim, at the other, believe the most strongly that the principle of minority rights is upheld too little in Israel, while the national religious are the least inclined to share this view.

Table 2.1 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)

Think that minority rights are insufficiently upheld in Israel	
Nationality	Arabs 61
	Jews 40
Voting pattern in 2021 election (Arabs)	Joint List 67
	Ra'am 86
Political orientation (Jews)	Left 74
	Center 48.5
	Right 26.5
Religiosity (Jews)	Haredi 48
	National religious 16
	Traditional religious 26
	Traditional non-religious 33
	Secular 51

With regard to **freedom of expression**, differences were found in three variables: nationality (Jews and Arabs), political orientation (Jews), and religiosity (Jews). Among Jewish respondents, only a minority think that freedom of expression is not upheld enough in Israel, while of the Arabs surveyed, roughly one-half hold this to be the case. A breakdown of the Jewish sample by political camp showed some differences, though not dramatic ones: The share of respondents

who hold that freedom of expression is insufficiently maintained is greater on the Left than in the Center or on the Right. A breakdown by religiosity shows that the Haredim, to a greater extent than the other groups, feel that freedom of expression is upheld too little in Israel.

Table 2.2 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)

Think that freedom of expression is insufficiently upheld in Israel		
Nationality	Arabs	48.5
	Jews	28
Political orientation (Jews)	Left	34
	Center	30
	Right	26
Religiosity (Jews)	Haredi	46
	National religious	18
	Traditional religious	28
	Traditional non-religious	24
	Secular	29.5

As for **the right to live in dignity**, we found a majority in all groups (and in equal proportions among Jews and Arabs) who hold that this right is insufficiently respected. A breakdown of responses in the Jewish sample by political orientation shows a substantial majority on the Left, a majority in the Center, and a (sizeable) minority on the Right who believe that the right to live in dignity is upheld too little in Israel. When we analyzed the responses by religiosity, we encountered substantial, though not consistent, differences, meaning that there is not necessarily an association between level of religiosity and opinions on this question. Of those who hold that this principle is not maintained to a suitable degree, the lowest share can be found among the national religious, and the highest, among secular Jews.

Table 2.3 (Jewish sample; %)

Think that the right to live in dignity is insufficiently upheld		
Political orientation	Left	73
	Center	61
	Right	45
Religiosity	Haredi	47
	National religious	33
	Traditional religious	44
	Traditional non-religious	52
	Secular	65

Examining the principle of **separation of powers** on the basis of education (total sample) and political orientation (Jewish sample), we found that the higher the level of education, the greater the sense that separation of powers is insufficiently upheld in Israel today. Those with a full or partial academic degree were the most inclined to feel this way. A breakdown of responses by political orientation yielded a majority on the Left and in the Center who hold that separation of powers is not maintained enough in Israel, compared with a minority of those who identify with the Right.

Table 2.4 (total sample and Jewish sample; %)

Think that separation of powers is insufficiently upheld	
Education (total sample)	Partial high school 32
	Full high school with matriculation 36
	Post-secondary (teachers' college, practical engineering, etc.) 38
	Partial academic 50.5
	Full academic 49
Political orientation (Jews)	Left 60.5
	Center 47
	Right 36

We have seen, then, that Israel suffers from a “democratic deficit” in certain respects, though not everyone identifies these shortcomings in the same areas. This leads us to the question of whether the public’s overall perception is that democracy in Israel is in grave danger. The assessments of Jewish and Arab interviewees on this question are very different: In the Jewish sample, only a minority—albeit a substantial one—hold that Israeli democracy is under serious threat, as opposed to a decisive majority among Arab respondents who take this view.

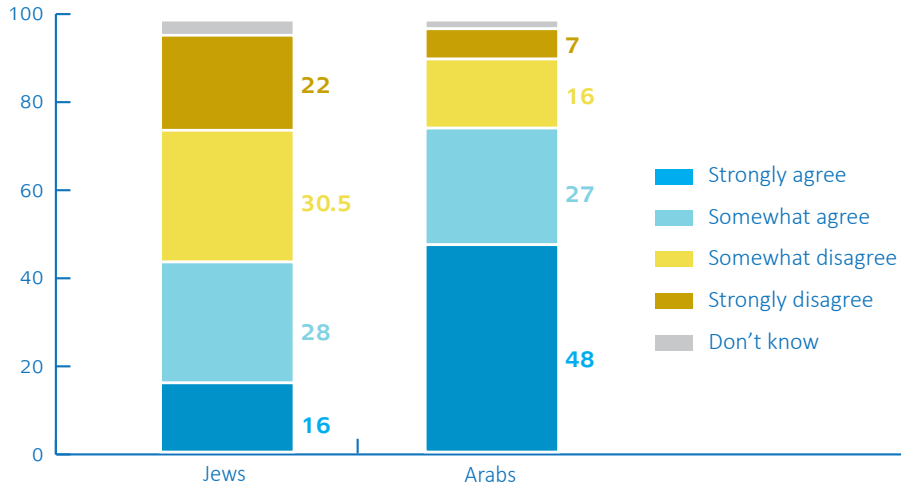
Is Israeli democracy in grave danger?

Question 11

Appendix 1
Page 172

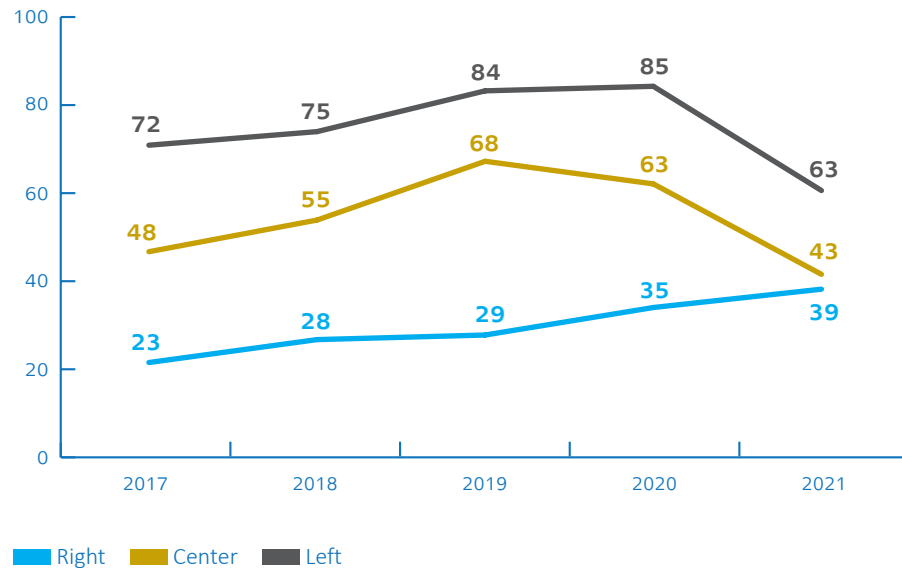
Appendix 2
(See IDI website)

Figure 2.2 / “The democratic system in Israel is in grave danger”
(Jewish and Arab samples; %)



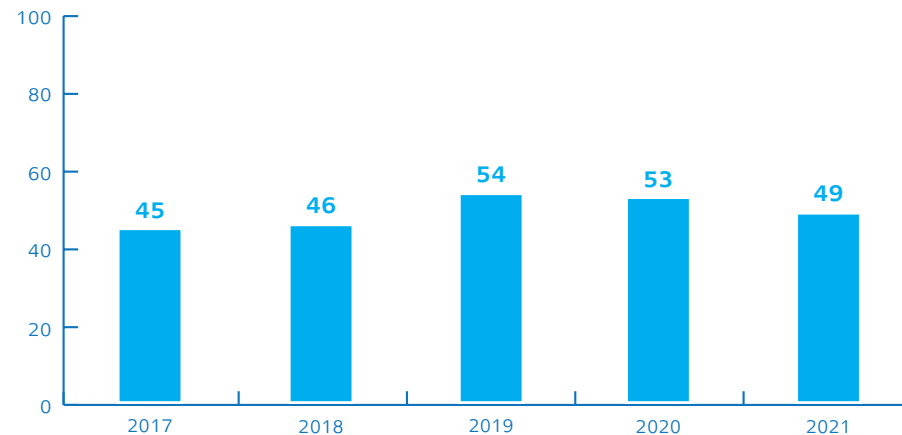
We found noticeable differences as well when analyzing the responses in the Jewish sample by political orientation. On the Left, a clear majority agree that democracy in Israel is in danger, whereas in the Center and on the Right, a minority (though not an insubstantial one) feel this way. It should be noted that there was a steep decline in the sense of danger to Israeli democracy on the Left and in the Center this year, apparently due to the change in government (though a majority on the Left still perceive such a threat).

Figure 2.3 / “The democratic system in Israel is in grave danger,” by political orientation, over time (agree; Jewish sample; %)



And has this perception changed over time? That is to say, has the share of respondents who feel that Israeli democracy is under threat increased or decreased? We cannot point to any clear trend on this question. The annual assessments cluster around the 50% mark, rising and falling over the years, with a decline this year that may be coincidental (as has occurred in the past) or might indicate a change in the public mood as a result of the new government.

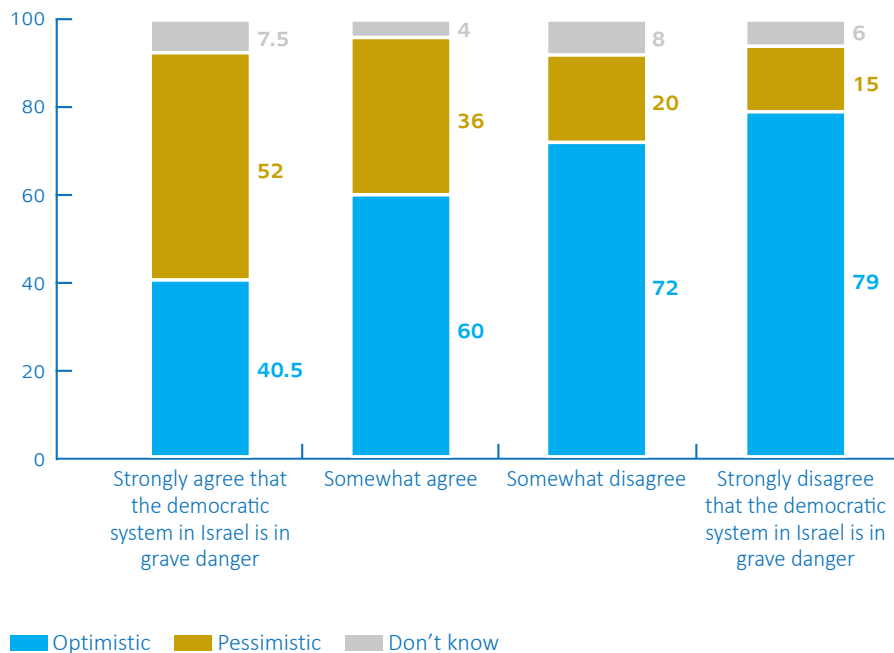
Figure 2.4 / “The democratic system in Israel is in grave danger,” over time (agree; total sample; %)



Cross-tabulating the responses to two questions (whether Israeli democracy is in danger, and whether Israel is a good place to live) yielded a connection between them. While a majority in all groups hold that it is good to live in Israel, 61% feel this way among those who agree strongly that Israel's democratic system is in grave danger, compared with 88% among those who strongly disagree that Israeli democracy is under threat.

There was a similarly clear association between the degree of optimism/pessimism regarding Israel's future and the sense of threat to the country's democracy. Of those respondents who foresee danger to Israel's democratic regime, less than half weigh in on the optimistic side, while of those who do not perceive a threat, a very sizeable majority take a positive view.

Figure 2.5 / "The democratic system in Israel is in grave danger," by optimism/pessimism regarding Israel's future (total sample; %)



Israeli citizens obviously receive most of their information about government and state matters from the media. We therefore wished to know to what extent, in the opinion of the interviewees, the media offer an accurate reflection of current affairs.

Do the Israeli media portray the situation as worse than it is?

Question 12

Appendix 1

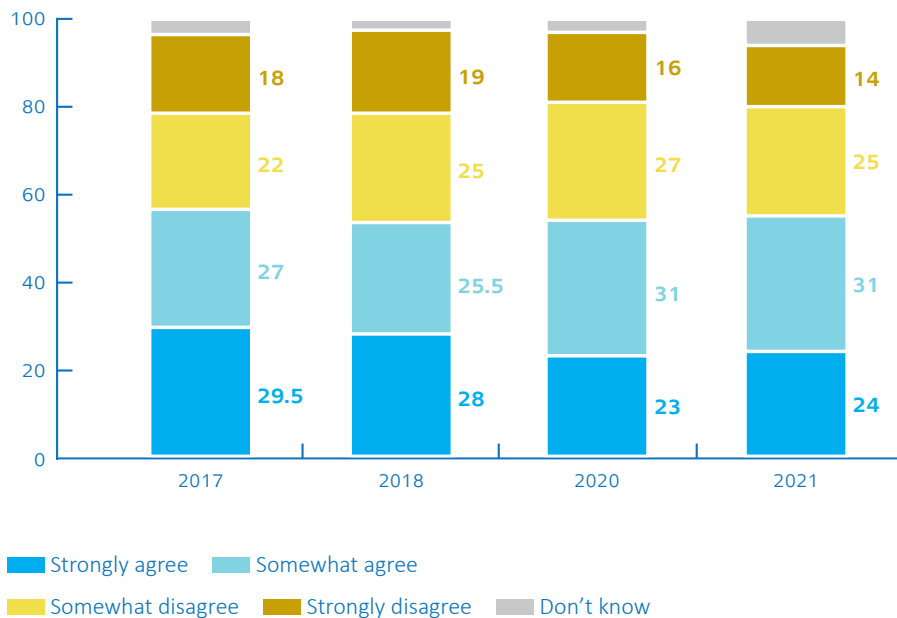
Page 172

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

We posed the question this year, for the fourth time: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: ‘The Israeli media portray the situation here as much worse than it really is?’” Our findings show that respondents’ perceptions have remained largely consistent, with a small majority holding that this is indeed the case.

Figure 2.6 / “The Israeli media portray the situation here as much worse than it really is,” over time (total sample; %)

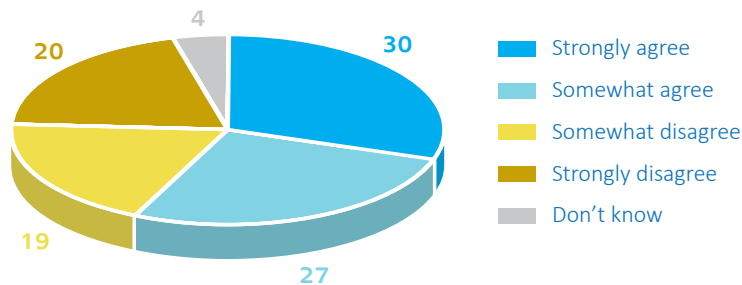


Breaking down the question about media reporting by political orientation in the Jewish sample, we found that on the Left only a minority (25%), and in the Center roughly half (48%), agree that the media present an overly gloomy picture, whereas on the Right the figure rises to about two-thirds of those surveyed (65%). Not surprisingly, these findings tally with respondents’ perceptions of the threat to Israeli democracy: Those on the Left hold that such a danger does indeed exist, and thus do not accuse the media of being unnecessarily pessimistic, while those on the Right, who think that Israeli democracy is not under threat, blame the media for the negative portrayal.

We examined further whether there is a direct link between perceptions regarding the threat to democracy in Israel, on the one hand, and the way that the media present the situation, on the other. Based on our findings, while more than half (58%) of those who think that the democratic regime in Israel is in grave danger agree that the media depict things as worse than they really are, a sizeable majority (71%) of those who hold that Israeli democracy is not under threat feel that the media are unjustifiably ominous in their assessment.

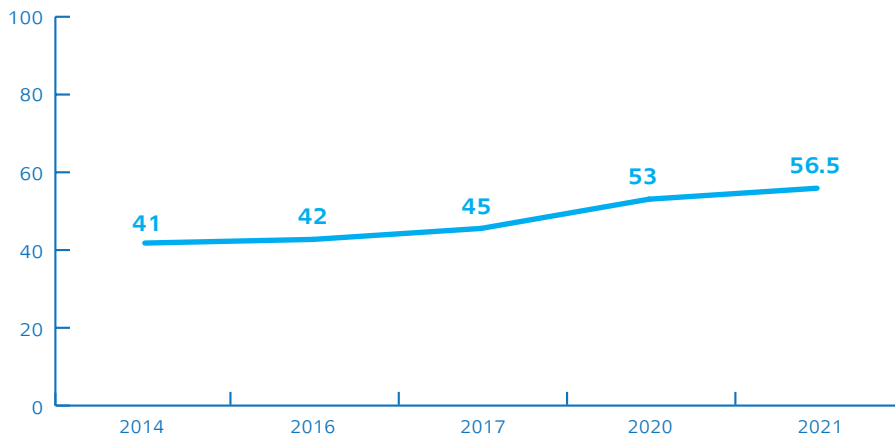
History teaches us that the desire for a strong leader often intensifies in times of political and other crises. We therefore examined the extent of agreement with the following statement: “To handle Israel’s unique problems, we need a strong leader who is not swayed by the Knesset, the media or public opinion.” It emerges that a small majority of the total sample support this assertion.

Figure 2.7 / “To handle Israel’s unique problems, we need a strong leader who is not swayed by the Knesset, the media or public opinion” (total sample; %)



We found a majority who favor the notion of a strong leader among both Jewish and Arab respondents (55% and 61%, respectively). Moreover, there is a steadily rising trend of support: Up until 2017, only a minority agreed with the statement, while in the last two years it has received majority approval.

Figure 2.8 / “To handle Israel’s unique problems, we need a strong leader who is not swayed by the Knesset, the media or public opinion,” over time (agree; total sample; %)



Does Israel need a strong leader?

Question 15

Appendix 1

Page 173

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

Are there specific groups in which support for a strong leader of the type described in the statement is stronger than in others? As we saw above, the extent of agreement is greater among Arab respondents, as in past surveys. A breakdown of responses in the Jewish sample by religiosity shows that agreement is highest among Haredim, and lowest among secular respondents. Analysis by political orientation yields only scant support on the Left for the concept of a strong leader, with solid agreement on the Right.

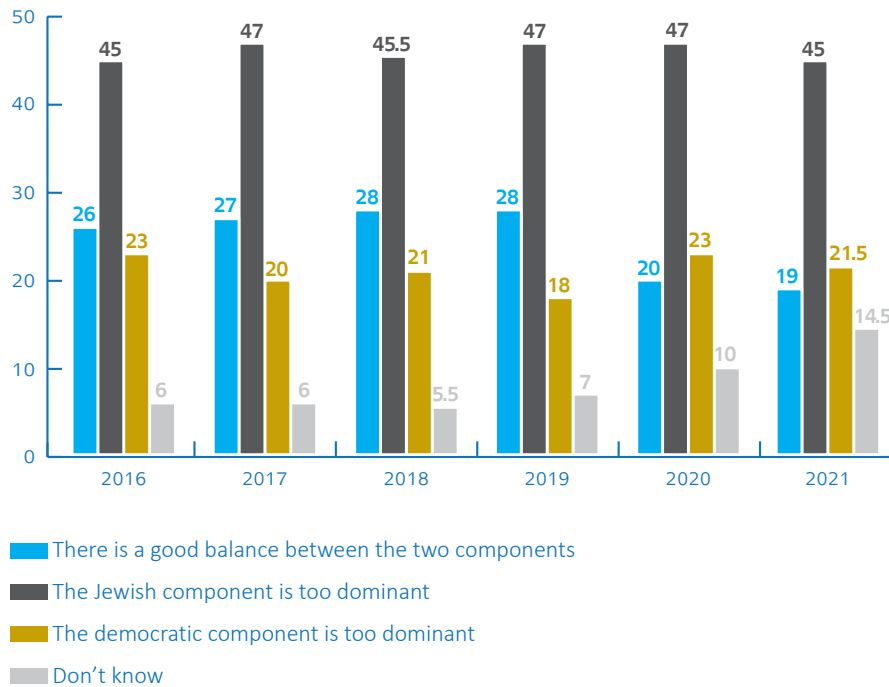
Table 2.5 (Jewish sample; %)

Agree that a strong leader is needed		
Religiosity	Haredi	72
	National religious	56
	Traditional religious	60
	Traditional non-religious	68
	Secular	44
Political orientation	Left	29
	Center	47
	Right	66

We did not find an association between the view that Israeli democracy is in grave danger and support for a strong leader, suggesting that the perceived threat does not have a direct influence on endorsement of this notion.

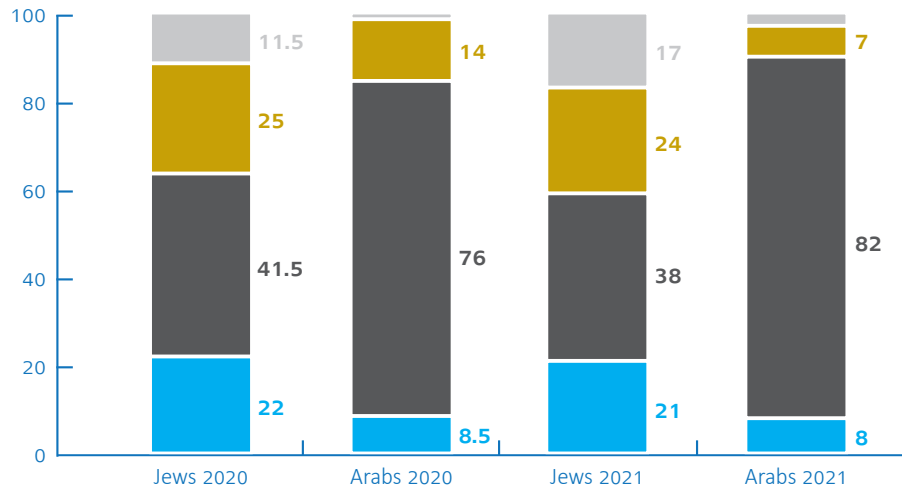
For many years now, the question of whether Israel can simultaneously be both Jewish and democratic has been at the forefront of public debate in the country. We have examined public opinion on this question six times over the years, and each time found a plurality of the total sample who held that the Jewish component is too dominant. At the same time, over the last two years, we have seen a decline in the share of respondents who hold that there is a good balance between the two components, along with a rise in the proportion who answered “don’t know.”

Figure 2.9 / Is there a good balance today in Israel between the Jewish and democratic components of the state? over time (total sample; %)



The following figure illustrates the vast difference on this point between Jews and Arabs. While the largest share in both groups state that the Jewish component is too strong, among Jewish respondents slightly over one-third feel this way, as contrasted with a decisive majority among Arab respondents (38% and 82%, respectively). Another finding of interest is the rise in the share of “don't know” responses among Jewish interviewees, which is not only much greater than among Arab interviewees, but is also noticeably higher this year than last year.

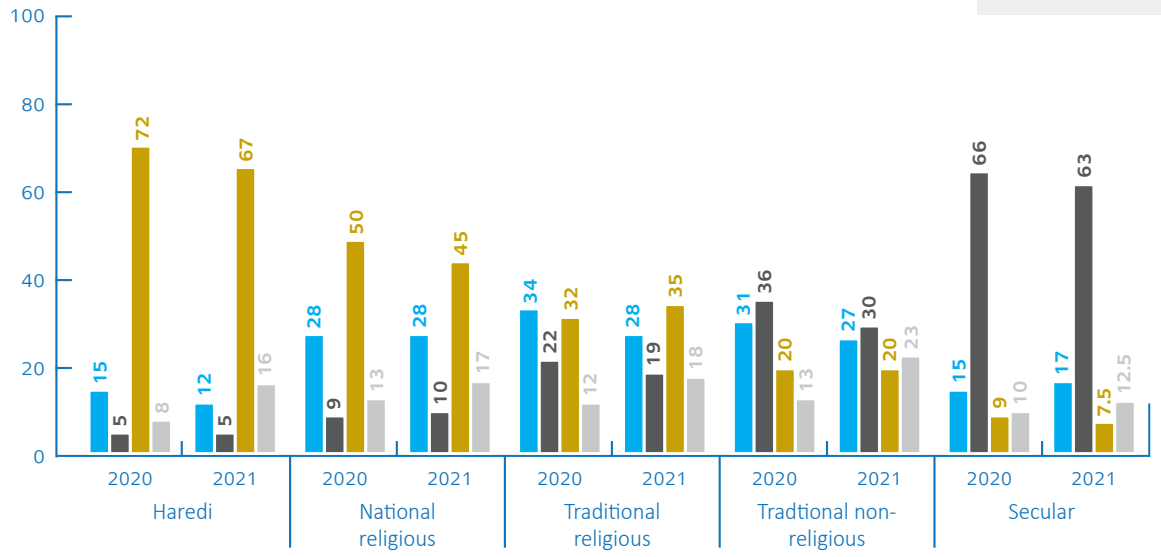
Figure 2.10 / Is there a good balance today in Israel between the Jewish and democratic components of the state? 2020, 2021 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)



- There is a good balance between the two components
- The Jewish component is too dominant
- The democratic component is too dominant
- Don't know

When we broke down the responses in the Jewish sample by religiosity, the results were not surprising: Among Haredi respondents, a sizeable majority hold that the democratic component is overly dominant, while among secular Jews a similar majority believe that the Jewish element is too strong. Here too, it should be noted that relatively high shares of all the groups opted for the response choice “don't know,” which may attest to the gradual realization that the pairing of “Jewish and democratic”—so common in public discourse—is not easy to apply in practice, to say the least.

Figure 2.11 / Is there a good balance today in Israel between the Jewish and democratic components of the state? by religiosity, 2020, 2021 (Jewish sample; %)



■ There is a good balance between the two components

■ The Jewish component is too dominant

■ The democratic component is too dominant

■ Don't know

Citizens and Leaders

In a democratic state, elected leaders are expected to make the citizens their top priority, dedicating themselves to their work and maintaining their integrity in office. We examined the public's assessment of high-ranking Israeli politicians in both these areas.

We asked the interviewees to express their opinion regarding the statement: "On the whole, most Knesset members work hard and are doing a good job." This topic has been examined eight times over the years, and in most cases (with the exception of 2013), including the present survey, a majority of respondents did not agree with this assertion. In fact, this year's assessment is the most negative one since we first began looking at the subject. In other words, the sense among the public is that most Knesset members are not "delivering the goods" in this regard.

Do Knesset members work hard?

Question 14

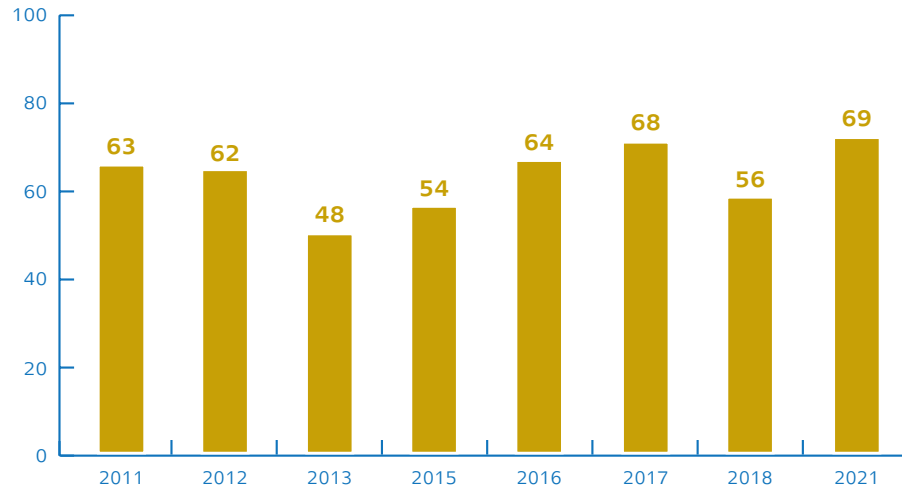
Appendix 1

Page 173

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

Figure 2.12 / “On the whole, most Knesset members work hard and are doing a good job,” over time (disagree; total sample; %)



Cross-tabulating responses to the question of whether Israeli democracy is in grave danger with those concerning Knesset members’ performance, we found that among both those who agree strongly that Israel’s democracy is under threat and those who disagree, a majority hold that most Knesset members are not performing as expected—though with considerable differences in the size of the majority. Of those who see danger on the horizon, 78% are dissatisfied with the work of Knesset members, compared with 61% who feel this way among respondents who do not think that Israel’s democracy is in serious peril.

Breaking down the responses concerning Knesset members’ performance by political orientation (Jewish sample), we found a majority in all groups who disagree with the statement, that is, who are dissatisfied with how Knesset members are functioning; however, this margin is much larger on the Left than in the Center or on the Right (78%, 65%, and 67%, respectively). The difference between Jewish and Arab respondents on this question is minor (Jews, 68%; Arabs, 72%).

This is the eighth survey in which we examine how the public rates Israel’s leadership in terms of corruption on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 = very corrupt and 5 = not at all corrupt). As shown in the following table, the assessment has remained largely consistent from year to year, with only negligible differences between surveys. In general, the public’s rating of corruption falls slightly below the midpoint, with the mean never dipping below 2 or rising above 3 (which is the halfway mark on the scale).⁶

⁶ Note: The lower the mean rating, the greater the degree of perceived corruption.

Corruption at the top?

Question 9

Appendix 1

Page 171

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

Table 2.6 (total sample; %)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Mean rating of corruption in Israel's leadership (from 1 = very corrupt to 5 = not at all corrupt)	2.55	2.37	2.32	2.41	2.48	2.24	2.29	2.42

A comparison between the mean corruption scores from the Jewish and Arab samples reveals that the Arab respondents view the leadership as corrupt to a greater extent than do the Jews (2.21 and 2.46, respectively). When we broke down the results in the Jewish sample by religiosity, we found that the Haredim are the most prone to see corruption at the top, and the national religious respondents, the least (Haredim, 2.19; national religious, 2.78, traditional religious, 2.36; traditional non-religious, 2.43; secular, 2.50). An analysis of the Jewish respondents by political orientation shows that, once again this year, those on the Left perceive the greatest degree of corruption, while those on the Right see the least (Left, 2.30; Center, 2.50; Right, 2.51), meaning that the order of the ranking is similar to that of 2020, though the gap between the groups is smaller (in 2020, the distribution of mean scores was: Left, 1.66; Center, 1.91; Right, 2.64).

Chapter 3 / Electoral and Governmental Reforms

In this chapter, we discuss the following topics:

- Opinions on proposed electoral reforms
- Opinions on proposed governmental reforms
- Opinions regarding the level of the electoral threshold

In response to Israel’s political crisis of the last two years—reflected in four back-to-back Knesset elections, among other things—public debate over the country’s electoral and political systems has increasingly taken center stage. This raises the question of whether reforms are needed to bring stability and mend Israeli politics. Accordingly, we decided this year to devote a separate chapter of the *Democracy Index* to exploring public opinion on a number of proposed reforms to Israel’s electoral and governmental systems.⁷

The interviewees were presented with six proposals for reform, four of them relating to the electoral system:

- Incorporating regional representation into the Knesset elections, that is, dividing the country into districts, with each district electing a certain number of Knesset members
- Using an “open ballot” in Knesset elections, which would allow the voter, in addition to choosing a particular party, to select and rank certain candidates, thereby influencing the order of the party list
- Permitting Israeli citizens who live overseas to vote in Knesset elections from their country of residence
- Granting additional state funding to parties in which at least one-third of candidates are women

The other two proposals relate to governmental reforms:

- Raising the minimum required for changing a Basic Law to 80 Knesset members
- Transferring powers from government ministries to local government

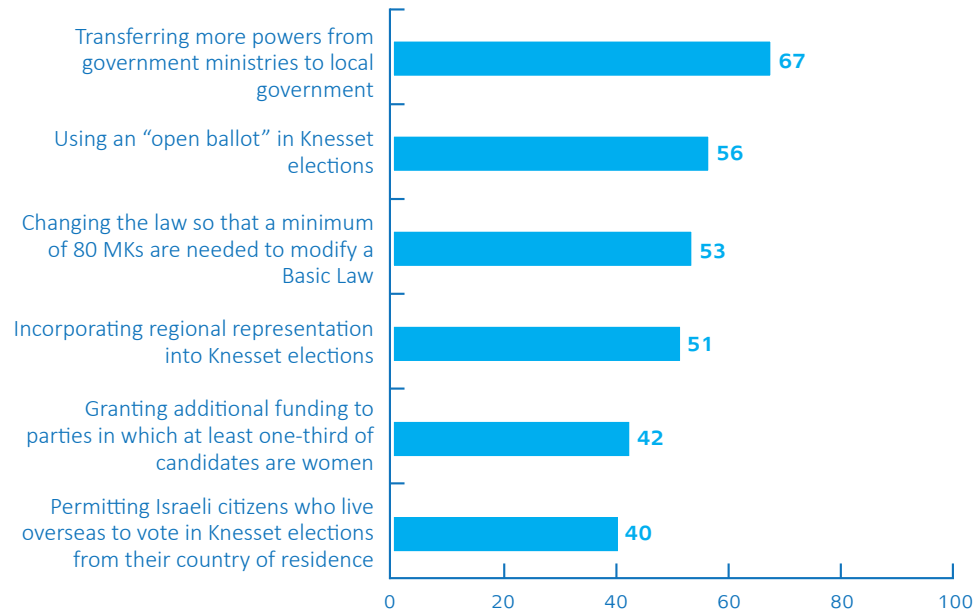
⁷ Most of these reforms have been proposed by the research team of the Israel Democracy Institute’s Political Reform Program.

Before examining these proposals, we should first look at the rationale behind each of them. The suggestions to include regional representation in the Knesset elections, to use an “open ballot,” and to increase funding for parties in which women make up at least one-third of the candidates are intended to strengthen the connection between the public and its elected officials, and the responsiveness of those representatives to the voter. Additionally, their purpose is to bolster the representation of certain groups in the population (for example, women and candidates whose chances of being elected in national votes is relatively low). Offering an opportunity for Israelis who live overseas to vote in Knesset elections from their country of residence, as is customary in many democracies, is aimed at granting them the basic right, as citizens, to influence the character of the country’s government, even if they do not live there permanently or at the time of the election.

Both of the proposals for governmental reform are intended to strengthen governance and to improve the functioning of Israeli democracy and the services provided to citizens. Recent Israeli parliaments have made frequent changes and amendments to the country’s Basic Laws, often to serve narrow political agendas, while relying on a regular majority or, at most, an absolute majority of 61 Knesset members (MKs). To make it more difficult to carry out such changes, a proposal has been raised to increase the majority required for this purpose to at least 80 MKs. As for the suggestion to transfer more power from government ministries to local government, the goal is to streamline the delivery of services to citizens and to reduce the concentration of authority that characterizes Israel’s system of government so as to decentralize political power, as is accepted practice in many democracies.

The figure below presents the degree of support in the total sample for each of the six proposals described. The suggestion that earned the strongest endorsement, in fact by a majority of 67%, involves transferring more powers from government ministries to local government. Slightly more than half the public (56%) support the proposal to use an “open ballot,” and about half back the proposals to raise the majority required to modify a Basic Law to at least 80 Knesset members (53%) and to incorporate regional representation into the Knesset elections (51%). The two suggestions that garnered the least support (roughly 40% each) deal with granting greater funding to parties in which at least one-third of the candidates are women, and allowing Israelis living overseas to vote in Knesset elections from their country of residence.

Figure 3.1 / Extent of support for proposed reforms; somewhat or strongly support (total sample; %)



We will now delve somewhat more deeply into each of the proposed reforms:

Transferring more powers to local government

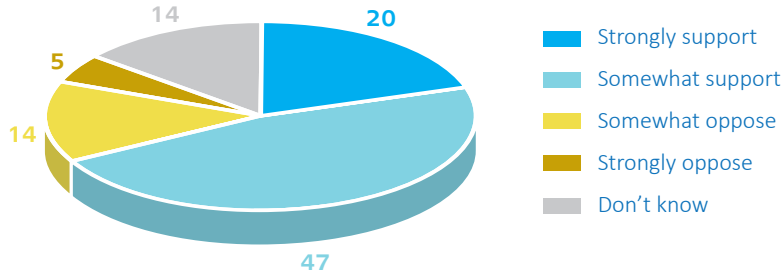
Question 61

Appendix 1

Page 189

As noted, the proposal to transfer more powers from government ministries to municipalities and other local authorities earns the highest rate of support. This can be explained by the high degree of trust in local government as opposed to the low level of trust in the national government, as discussed in chapter 4. In addition (as noted in the same chapter), we found that respondents see the local authorities as operating in a more objective and professional manner than the government. Moreover, the support for this proposal may be a result of the relative satisfaction with the functioning of the local authorities, and with their handling of the coronavirus pandemic, which was often a step ahead of the government's decisions.

Figure 3.2 / Transferring more powers from government ministries to local government (total sample; %)



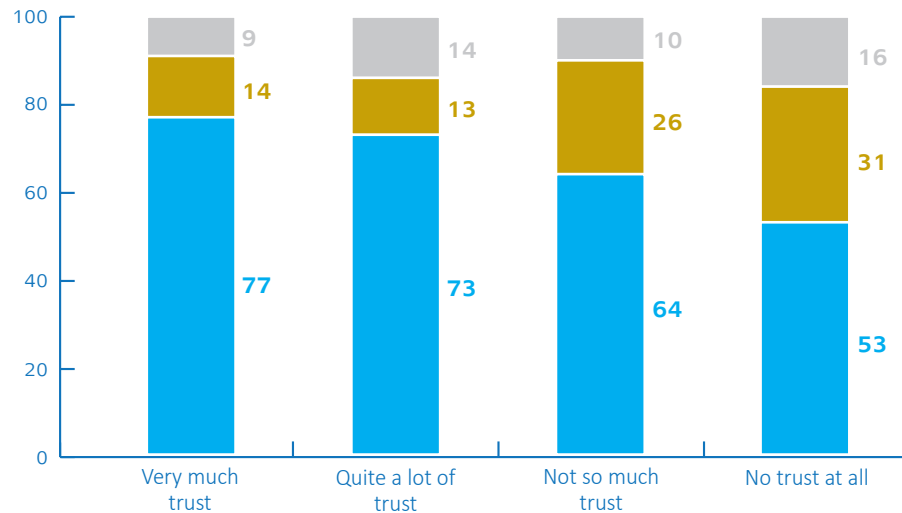
A breakdown of the responses by nationality indicates that there is stronger support in the Jewish public than in the Arab one for the transfer of more powers to local government. This may stem from the greater trust that the Jewish respondents have placed in their local government during the past year.

Table 3.1 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)

Transfer of more powers from government ministries to local government	Support	Oppose	Don't know	Total
Jews	68	16.5	15.5	100
Arabs	60	31	9	100

As expected, an analysis of opinions on this reform by extent of trust in the respondent's own local authority/municipality points to greater support among those who trust their local authority very much than among those who do not trust it at all. By contrast, it was found that the degree of trust in the government does not influence positions concerning this proposed reform.

Figure 3.3 / Transferring more powers from government ministries to local government; by degree of trust in local authority where respondent resides (total sample; %)



- Support transferring more powers from government ministries to local government
- Oppose transferring more powers from government ministries to local government
- Don't know

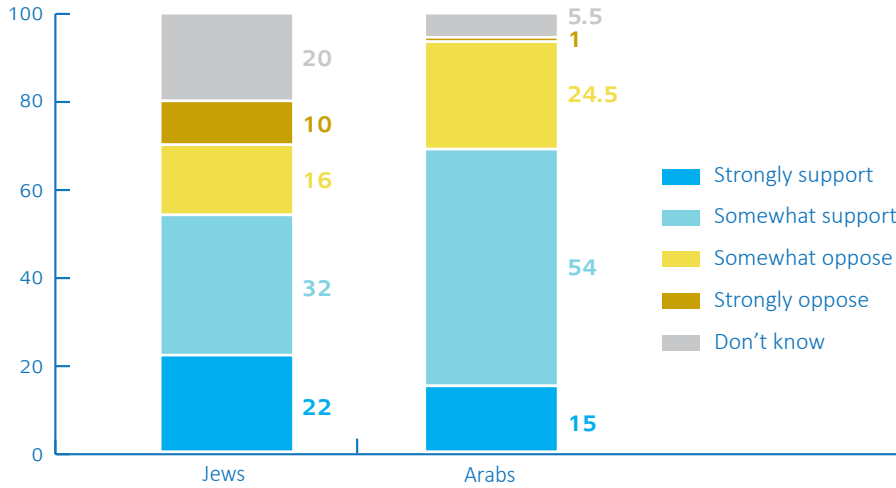
Using an “open ballot”

Question 57

Appendix 1
Page 188

Over half of the total sample indicated support for an open ballot, whereby voters who select a given party can also indicate specific candidates that they prefer, thereby influencing the order of the party's list. Endorsement of this idea is greater among Arab than among Jewish respondents. This may well be due to Arab dissatisfaction with the composition and representativeness of the Arab Knesset lists, or to a perception of voting as a personal expression of trust, which brings with it a desire for greater impact on the makeup of the party list.

Figure 3.4 / Using an “open ballot” in Knesset elections (Jewish and Arab samples; %)



A breakdown of responses in the Jewish sample by religiosity reveals that more Haredi than non-Haredi respondents support the use of an open ballot. This may be due to the fact that, at present, Knesset members from the Haredi lists are all appointed by the religious leadership, while Haredi voters may wish to have some influence on the composition of their party’s Knesset list.

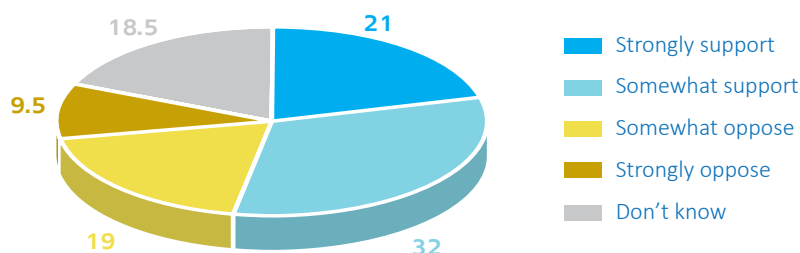
Table 3.2 (Jewish sample; %)

Support proposal to use an “open ballot” in Knesset elections		
Religiosity	Haredi	65
	National religious	50
	Traditional religious	59.5
	Traditional non-religious	48
	Secular	53

Another possible explanation for the greater support for this proposal among Arab and Haredi respondents may be the more personal and less ideological view of representation among these groups.

Roughly one-half of the total sample expressed support for the proposal to change the law so that a majority of at least 80 MKs would be needed to alter a Basic Law.

Figure 3.5 / Requiring a majority of at least 80 Knesset members to change a Basic Law (total sample; %)



This proposal enjoys greater support among Jewish than among Arab respondents. One explanation may be that the Jews (as a majority) wish to make it harder for changes and amendments to be made to the Basic Laws, given the exploitation of these laws for narrow political purposes in the last Knesset. By contrast, the Arab respondents are less interested in raising the number of MKs needed to change a Basic Law, since their chances of securing a majority of 80 Knesset members are next to none. In addition, we see that most of the interviewees who disagreed with the assertion that the Supreme Court intervenes too much in government decisions (see chapter 6) expressed support for this proposal, perhaps due to the need (as they perceive it) to safeguard the work of the Knesset.

Table 3.3 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)

Requirement of at least 80 MKs to change Basic Law		Support	Oppose	Don't know	Total
Nationality	Jews	55	27	18	100
	Arabs	43	39	18	100

Requirement of at least 80 MKs to change Basic Law		Support	Oppose	Don't know	Total
Supreme Court intervenes too much in decisions of the government and its ministers	Somewhat and strongly agree	50	33	17	100
	Somewhat and strongly disagree	64	24	12	100

A breakdown of responses in the Jewish sample by religiosity and by political orientation shows that whereas a majority of secular and traditional non-religious respondents support this proposal, less than half of Haredi, national religious, and traditional religious Jews endorse it. Although we did not find substantial differences by political camp, there is greater support for this suggestion among those who identify with the Left.

Table 3.4 (Jewish sample; %)

Requirement of at least 80 MKs to change Basic Law		Support	Oppose	Don't know	Total
Religiosity	Haredi	40	43	17	100
	National religious	45	31.5	23.5	100
	Traditional religious	47	33	20	100
	Traditional non-religious	59	25	16	100
	Secular	61	20.5	18.5	100
Political orientation	Left	62	20	18	100
	Center	56.5	26	17.5	100
	Right	52	29	19	100

Incorporating regional representation into Knesset elections

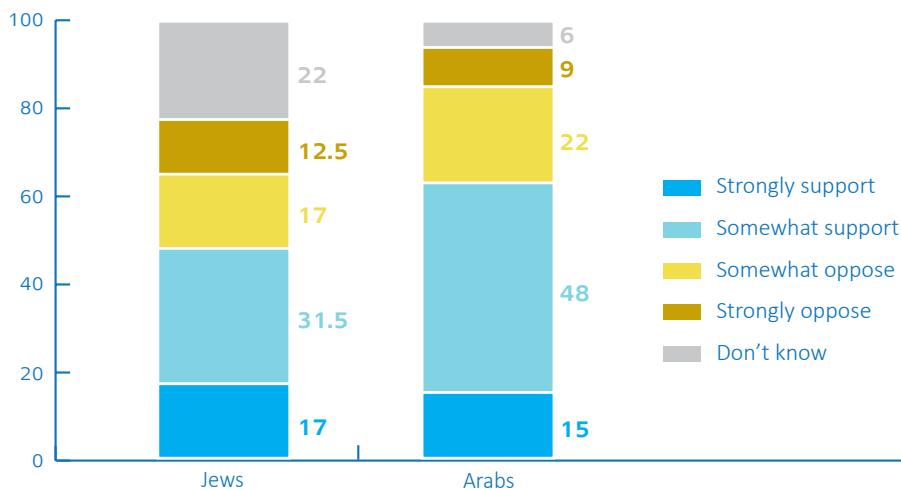
Question 56

Appendix 1

Page 187

About one-half of the total sample support incorporating regional representation into the Knesset elections, but the difference between Jewish and Arab respondents on this question is sizeable: Almost two-thirds of the Arab sample favor such a move as opposed to one-half of the Jewish interviewees. The greater support among the Arab population may stem from their desire for elected officials who will represent the region where their voters live, be more committed to them, work on their behalf, and serve their interests. This explanation is consistent with Arab respondents' strong support for an open ballot in Knesset elections. It should be noted that a similar association between support for regional representation and support for an open ballot was found in the total sample as well.

Figure 3.6 / Incorporating regional representation into Knesset elections (Jewish and Arab samples; %)



The suggestion that greater state funding be provided to parties for which at least one-third of candidates are women earns a low rate of support (42%) compared with the other proposed reforms, while a similar share of respondents oppose it (43%).

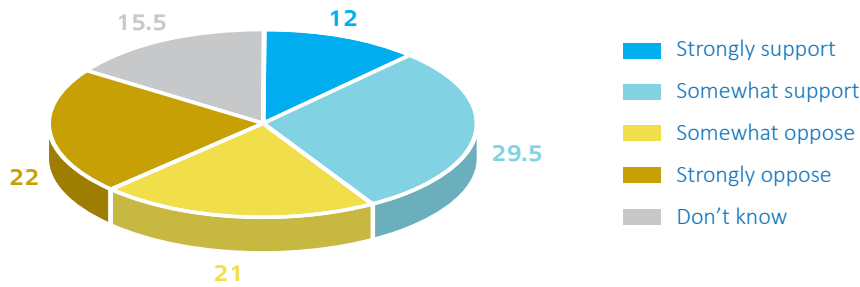
Greater state funding for parties where at least one-third of candidates are women

Question 59

Appendix 1

Page 188

Figure 3.7 / Granting additional funding to parties where at least one-third of candidates are women (total sample; %)



Not surprisingly, women support this proposal to a greater extent than do men. A breakdown of responses from the Jewish sample by religiosity and political orientation shows that while almost one-half of secular respondents favor additional funding for parties based on the composition of their list, in the other religious groups only about one-third (traditional religious) or less (traditional non-religious, national religious, and Haredi) share this view. On the Left, a majority back this proposal, as opposed to less than half in the Center and a small minority on the Right. This may be due to a more egalitarian perspective among secular and politically left-leaning respondents on the question of gender representation. It should also be noted that there have never been women representatives in the Haredi parties, so that making funding contingent on a high proportion of women candidates may be harder for this population to accept.

On this question, we found very strong support among Arab respondents for such a precondition (Arabs, 74%; Jews, 35%). Since this contradicts earlier findings, we will wait for additional surveys to validate this year's results, and if they are confirmed, we will suggest possible explanations in future.

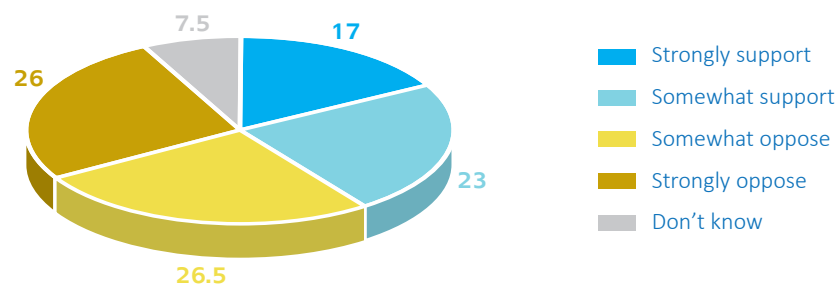
Table 3.5 (Jewish sample; %)

Greater funding for parties where at least one-third of candidates are women		Support	Oppose	Don't know	Total
Sex	Men	29	55	16	100
	Women	41	41	18	100

Greater funding for parties where at least one-third of candidates are women		Support	Oppose	Don't know	Total
Religiosity	Haredi	20	69	11	100
	National religious	20	65	15	100
	Traditional religious	36	45	19	100
	Traditional non-religious	28	51	21	100
	Secular	46.5	39	14.5	100
Political orientation	Left	57	31	12	100
	Center	42	42	16	100
	Right	27	56	17	100

The proposal to allow Israelis living abroad to vote in Knesset elections was the least popular of the suggested reforms. In fact, slightly more than half of the interviewees opposed it. On this subject, the level of support was equal in both the Jewish and Arab samples.

Figure 3.8 / Allowing Israelis living overseas to vote in Knesset elections (total sample; %)



Right to vote in Knesset elections for Israelis living overseas

Question 58

Appendix 1
Page 188

Breaking down the responses in the Jewish sample by religiosity, we found that while a sizeable majority of Haredim support eligibility to vote for Israelis living abroad, only a minority in the other groups feel this way. This may be due to the desire of Haredim to strengthen the electoral power of Jews in general, and the Haredi parties in particular, by granting the right to vote to Haredim with Israeli citizenship who are living abroad and serving as religious emissaries in various countries. No substantial differences were found in the distribution of responses to this question when breaking down the results by political orientation.

Table 3.6 (Jewish sample; %)

Granting the right to vote in Knesset elections to Israelis living overseas		Support
Religiosity	Haredi	61
	National religious	40
	Traditional religious	42
	Traditional non-religious	35
	Secular	38

An additional update to the electoral system that we asked about relates to the voting threshold. Until the elections for the 13th Knesset (in 1992), a party had to receive at least 1% of the votes cast by eligible voters in order to be elected. In the run-up to that election, the electoral threshold was raised to 1.5%. In May 2004 (16th Knesset), the threshold was raised to 2%, and in March 2014 (19th Knesset), it was raised again, to its present level of 3.25% of all eligible votes. We wished to know what the public thinks about the level of the electoral threshold.

According to our findings, roughly one-half of the total sample hold that the electoral threshold is fit for purpose, as contrasted with less than one-third who believe that it is too low and 12% who feel that it is too high. A breakdown of the results by nationality shows that a greater share of Arab than of Jewish respondents think that Israel's electoral threshold is "about right"; moreover, the share of Arab interviewees who consider it to be too high is double that of Jewish interviewees.

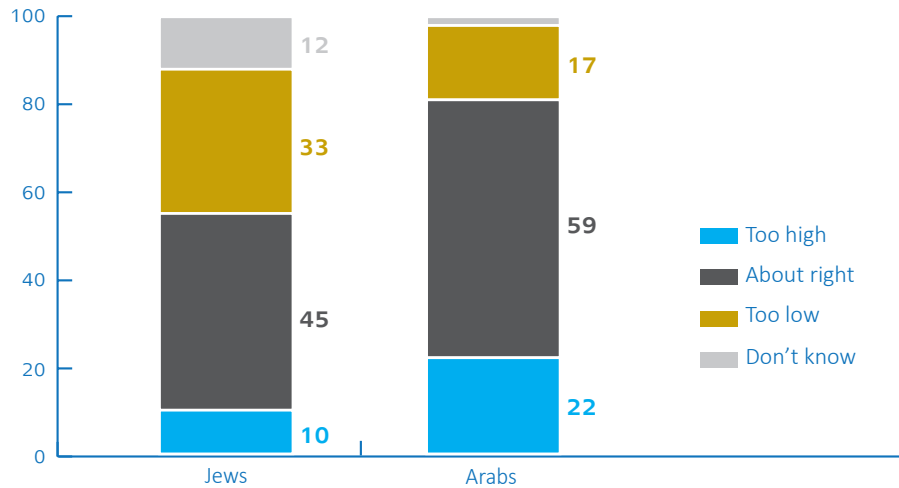
Suitability of the electoral threshold

Question 62

Appendix 1

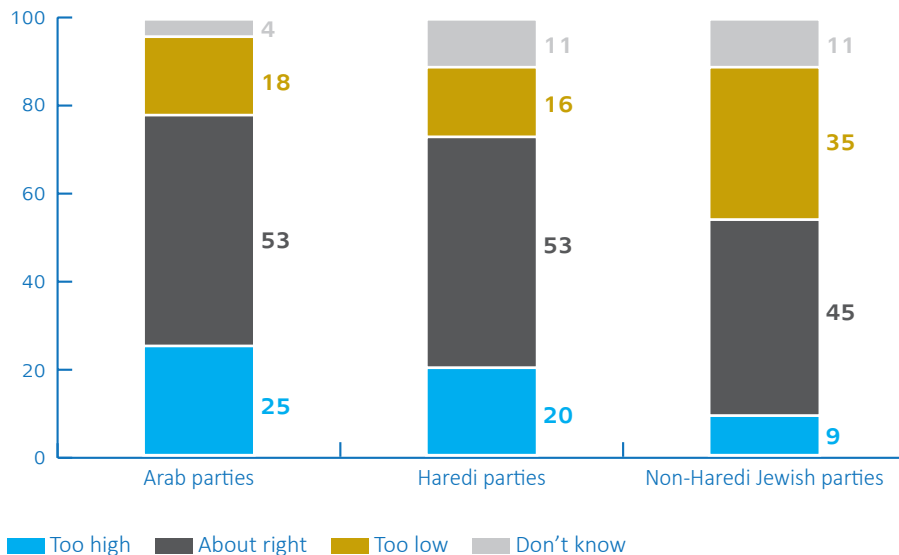
Page 189

Figure 3.9 / Suitability of Israel's current electoral threshold
(Jewish and Arab samples; %)



Breaking down the results by voting patterns in the last Knesset election (March 2021), we found that those who voted for the Arab and Haredi parties are more inclined than those who voted for the non-Haredi Jewish parties to think that Israel's electoral threshold is too high. This gap can be explained by the desire of the smaller parties, or parties that represent niche groups or minorities, to ensure their electoral representation, which would be jeopardized if the threshold were raised.

Figure 3.10 / Suitability of Israel's current electoral threshold,
by vote in the last Knesset election (total sample; %)



Chapter 4 / Public Trust in Institutions

In this chapter, we discuss the following topics:

- Levels of trust in institutions
- Assessment of institutions' performance
- Change in degree of trust in institutions over time

Throughout the years, but all the more so in the recent past, the subject of public trust in state institutions has been at the forefront of civil and political debate in Israel, based on the premise that it is a cornerstone of any democratic regime. But under a democratic system, there is also room for some misgivings among citizens regarding the government and its actions.⁸

Over and above its significance as a key civic value, public trust in institutions also has practical ramifications, as it holds the key to the people's willingness to comply with guidelines issued by the elected leadership—as the coronavirus period has made plain, if anyone was still in doubt. It has become crystal clear that in democratic countries where trust in state institutions is high, compliance with the leadership's directives is also high, and vice versa; in democratic countries where the level of trust is low, citizens are less likely to fall in line. For this reason, we devote a great deal of attention to this topic in all our annual surveys, and make an effort each time to consider it from a fresh perspective.

In 2020, we measured public trust on two occasions—in June and in October—at the height of the coronavirus pandemic. In the analysis below, we will relate only to the data from June, since the October figures were exceptionally low, apparently due to the despondency and frustration that prevailed in Israel at the time as a result of the medical, economic, and political situation.

What do we know about the Israeli public's current level of trust in the institutions of government? As shown in the following figure, the Jewish respondents express a higher degree of trust than do the Arabs in all the state institutions surveyed with the exception of two: the National Insurance Institute (where both the present survey and last year's findings showed greater trust on the part of Arabs compared with Jews), and the religious establishment (where Arab interviewees similarly expressed a higher level of trust).⁹

8 It should be noted that a number of studies over the past several years have shown that there is not necessarily a link between the type of regime and the degree of trust in the political establishment. See, for example: Tom W. G. van der Meer, "Political Trust and the 'Crisis of Democracy,'" *Politics*, January 25, 2017.

9 We asked the Jewish respondents about the Chief Rabbinate, and the Arab respondents about the Shari'a court/Christian canonical court.

Trust in institutions

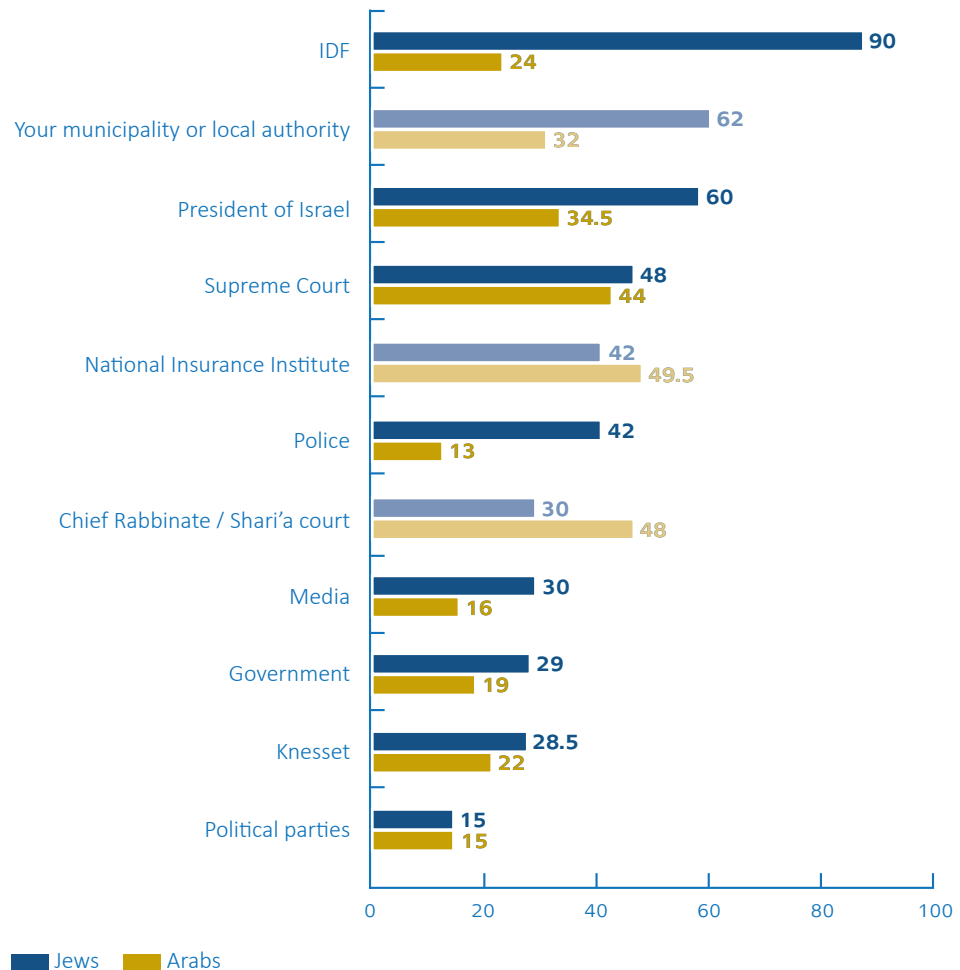
Questions 17–27

Appendix 1
Page 174–177

Appendix 2
(See IDI website)

In the Jewish sample, only three institutions (the IDF, municipality/local authority, and the President of Israel) crossed the halfway mark with trust ratings of “quite a lot” or “very much”; in other words, only a minority expressed confidence in most of the institutions studied. As usual, the IDF garnered the highest ratings, and once again the country’s democratic institutions (the government, Knesset, and political parties) were at the bottom of the scale.

Figure 4.1 / Express quite a lot or very much trust in each of the institutions examined this year (Jewish and Arab samples; %)



Note: The darker bars in the graph indicate the eight institutions that we examine each year; those with lighter colors represent institutions that we do not ask about in every survey.

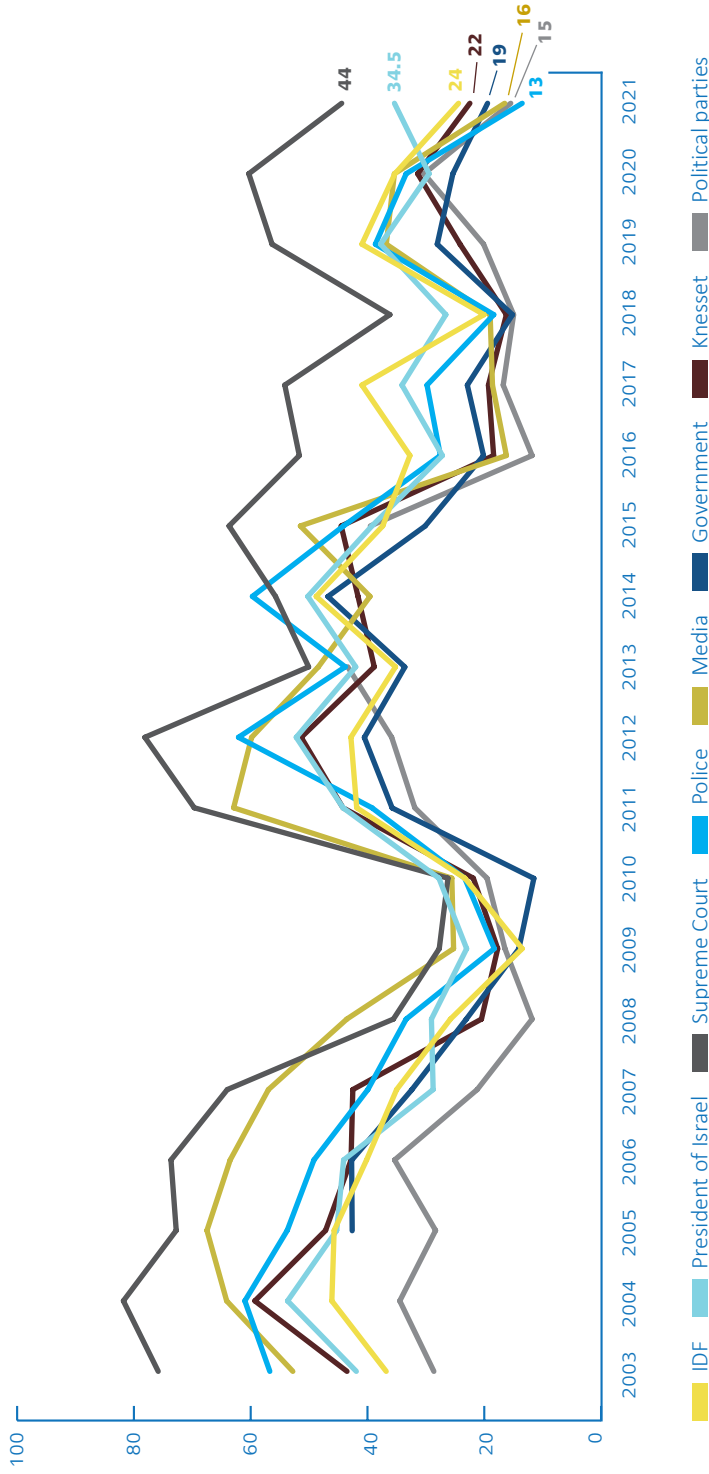
In the Arab sample, no institution earned the trust of more than 50% of those surveyed. In first place in this sample was the National Insurance Institute, followed by both Arab religious bodies (which are not examined on a regular basis in the *Democracy Index* surveys). Of those institutions that we assess every year, the Supreme Court heads the list in terms of trust (and it too, is in a steady decline), while the police are in the lowest position, with the Arab population's trust in it almost totally dissipated.

**The average percentage who expressed trust this year
across the eight institutions studied regularly (Jewish sample): 42.6**

**The average percentage who expressed trust this year
across the eight institutions studied regularly (Arab sample): 23.4**

The figure below presents the share of the Jewish sample who expressed trust for all the institutions surveyed regularly over the course of 2003 to 2021. The figure shows that, with the exception of the IDF (whose trust levels this year returned to the very high levels of the past), and the government (where the share who expressed trust remained steady), the remainder of the bodies studied lost some ground in this area, even by comparison with 2020, which was an especially poor year in terms of public trust in state institutions.

Figure 4.3 / Expressed quite a lot or very much trust in the eight institutions examined each year, 2003–2021
(Arab sample; %)



As stated, the Arab population's level of trust in most of the institutions studied regularly is lower, and more prone to fluctuation, than that of the Jews. Moreover, this year saw a further decline across the board in the share who expressed "quite a lot" or "very much" trust, apart from a slight upswing in the degree of trust in the president of the state.

The table below offers a different form of comparison between this year and 2020, but the pattern is very clear: the level of trust has dropped since last year (the multi-year trend will be discussed later in this chapter).

Table 4.1 (%)

	Jewish sample			Arab sample		
	2020	2021	Change	2020	2021	Change
IDF	82	90	⬆️	35	24	⬇️
President of Israel	63	60	⬇️	29	34.5	⬆️
Supreme Court	52	48	⬇️	60	44	⬇️
Police	44	42	⬇️	33	13	⬇️
Media	33	30	⬇️	35	16	⬇️
Knesset	32	28.5	⬇️	31	22	⬇️
Government	29	29	=	25	19	⬇️
Political parties	17	15	⬇️	30	15	⬇️

Trust in each of the institutions studied regularly

The IDF

We saw earlier that trust in the IDF rose this year over last year, returning to its past levels. Nonetheless, the share who express confidence in Israel's army differs greatly between Jews and Arabs: It is extremely high among Jews, and remains very low among Arabs (dropping even further recently). When it comes to the Jews, then, does everyone trust the IDF? A breakdown by religiosity shows a sizeable majority in all groups who have trust in this body, though the

level is lowest among the Haredim, at 77% (compared with 99% of national religious, 88.5% of traditional religious, 92% of traditional non-religious, and 92% of secular Jews). An analysis of the Jewish respondents by political orientation also yields a large majority in all three camps, with only minor differences between them (Left, 84%; Center, 90%; Right, 92%).

The President of Israel

Once again this year, the level of trust in the outgoing president, Reuven Rivlin, dipped somewhat in the Jewish sample (from 63% in 2020 to 60% this year). By contrast, the Arab sample registered a slight rise compared with last year (from 29% to 34.5%). We are unable to offer an explanation for this finding based on the survey data. A breakdown of the Jewish sample by political orientation reveals that the president is almost twice as popular on the Left as on the Right, and that the Center is closer to the Left on this issue (Left, 83%; Center, 77%; Right, 48%). Rivlin's average trust rating on the Left throughout his tenure was higher than that of his predecessor, Shimon Peres (87% versus 81%), but lower than Peres's average on the Right (57% for Rivlin as contrasted with 67% for Peres). A breakdown of the results by voting pattern in the most recent Knesset elections (March 2021) shows that the highest levels of trust in President Rivlin were found among voters for Blue and White (87%) and Yesh Atid (85.5%), and the lowest, among supporters of the Religious Zionist Party (27%) and United Torah Judaism (30%).

Supreme Court

An especially worrisome finding is that trust in the Supreme Court, which has weakened steadily over the last few years, dropped below the 50% mark in the Jewish sample for the first time in many years (in 2008, it fell to 49.6% in a one-time occurrence, but immediately rose the following year). Slightly less than half of the Jewish interviewees (48%), and a somewhat lower share of the Arab sample (44%), express trust today in the Supreme Court. A breakdown of the Jewish sample by political orientation highlights substantial differences: On the Left, 86% have trust in this institution, as opposed to 64% in the Center and just 32% on the Right. A breakdown of the responses by religiosity offers even more cause for concern: Among Haredi, national religious, and traditional religious respondents, the share who express trust in this major democratic institution is very low (5%, 16%, and 34%, respectively). Only half of traditional non-religious Jews trust the Supreme Court, though a sizeable majority of secular respondents (69%) feel this way. Stated otherwise, the Supreme Court is the darling of the Center-Left and secular Jews—bad tidings for a body that is supposed to be non-partisan and accepted by citizens of all stripes.

Appendix 1
Page 175

Appendix 2
(See IDI website)

Appendix 1
Page 174

Appendix 2
(See IDI website)

Appendix 1

Page 174

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

Appendix 1

Page 174

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

Appendix 1

Page 175

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

The police

Trust in Israel's police (in the total sample of respondents) continued its downward spiral this year. In comparison with 2020, the Jewish sample showed a small downturn (from 44% to 42%), but in the Arab sample the data reveal a total collapse of trust (from 33% to 13%). In other words, the Arab population has virtually no trust in Israel's police force at the present time. This is not surprising given the rampant violence in Arab communities, which the police have not managed to address successfully. A breakdown of the Jewish sample by religiosity indicates that trust in the police within the Haredi community is lacking both in absolute terms and relative to the other religious groups (Haredim, 24%; national religious, 36%; traditional religious, 43%; traditional non-religious, 46%; secular, 45%). In fact, in all of the analyses that we conducted, we were unable to find even one group in the Jewish sample where a majority expressed trust in the police.

The media

The traditional media (print and broadcast journalism, television, and radio) are still the primary source of information for the Israeli public.¹⁰ Despite this, our surveys throughout the years have found that the media is among the institutions near the bottom of the scale in the total sample in terms of trust. This year saw a further decline in the share of respondents who expressed trust in the media (from 33% to 27% of the total sample). However, this finding masks a broader phenomenon: It seems that there are those who have a large degree of confidence in the media, and at the same time, others who place almost no trust in it at all. The variable that emerged as the most influential in this regard in the Jewish sample is political orientation. Thus, while a substantial share (60.5%) of those who align themselves with the Left express trust in the media, only 40% of those who identify with the Center feel similarly, along with just 17% of respondents who place themselves on the Right. Among Arab interviewees as well, we found a very small share who trust the media (16%).

The Knesset

Israel's parliament, like many legislatures in other countries, has not enjoyed a high level of public trust over time, and this year its rating dropped still further (from 32% to just 27.5% of the total sample). This is particularly serious from a democratic standpoint: Whereas the institutions that we have discussed until now are not elected by the public, the legislators are the representatives of the people, and they were voted into office in elections held shortly before the survey was conducted. The share of the Jewish sample who expressed trust in the

¹⁰ Tehilla Shwartz-Altshuler, "Public Trust in the Media Continues to Climb," *Israel Democracy Institute website*, May 2021.

Knesset stands at 28.5%, while in the Arab sample, the level is even lower, at 22%. A breakdown of the Jewish sample by political orientation yielded only slight differences: On the Left, 32.5% trust the Knesset; in the Center, 29%; and on the Right, 28%. It is interesting to compare this year's findings with last year's survey, which was carried out immediately following the announcement of the Netanyahu-Gantz government: The Left vaulted this year from a trust level of 19.5% to 32.5%; the Center rose slightly from 26.5% to 29%; and the Right dropped from 38% to 28%.

The government

As explained in the Introduction, the survey on which this report is based was conducted just after the fall of Netanyahu's government and the swearing-in of the new government led by Naftali Bennett. Perhaps for this reason, or as part of an overall downward trend in trust (primarily in the right-wing bloc), the share of the total sample who expressed trust in the government dipped from 28% last year to 27% this year. Here too, there is a gap between Jews and Arabs, and the level of trust among the former exceeds that of the latter (29% and 19%, respectively). The disparity between political camps in their level of trust in the government fits the expected pattern; though trust is low in all the camps, there is greater trust in the government on the Left and in the Center than there is on the Right (34%, 35%, and 25%, respectively). It should be noted that in the previous survey, the share of respondents who expressed trust in the Netanyahu-Gantz government was only 8% on the Left, 19% in the Center, and 39% on the Right. That is to say, the level of trust among Left and Center respondents rose since last year, while on the Right it declined. A breakdown of the Jewish sample shows that the lowest degree of trust is found among the Haredim (just 10%, compared with national religious, 31.5%; traditional religious, 32%; traditional non-religious, 23.5%; and secular, 35%).

The political parties

Although there are those who still believe that the political parties can be revived as the central link between citizens and the country's democratic state institutions (in addition to serving as the legal avenue for electing candidates to their positions), our surveys show each year that this is most likely a case of beating a dead horse. The level of trust in the parties as an institution is extremely low, and has declined still further since last year, from 19% to 15% in the total sample. We did not find a difference this year between Jews and Arabs in this regard, nor were there substantial differences between political camps in the Jewish sample. A breakdown of the Jewish sample on the basis of religiosity shows a low level of trust among all groups, with the highest trust rating (20%) among those who defined themselves as Haredi, and the lowest (10%) among the traditional non-religious. In other words, the political parties in their present form are perceived by an overwhelming majority of the public as a political institution unworthy of trust.

Appendix 1

Page 176

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

Appendix 1

Page 176

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

Trust in the institutions not studied regularly

Respondents' municipality/local authority

We have measured interviewees' level of trust in their municipality/local authority a total of five times to date:

Table 4.2 (total sample; %)

	2016	2018	2019	2020	2021
Expressed quite a lot or very much trust in their municipality / local authority	51.5	53	56	61	57

The above findings show that the municipalities/local authorities enjoy a relatively high, and quite consistent, level of trust on the part of their residents. This year, the share who expressed trust in them in the Jewish sample was much higher than that in the Arab sample (62% and 32%, respectively). Compared with last year, the findings among Jewish respondents have remained steady (63% in 2020), but among Arab interviewees there was a substantial drop, from 48% last year. This may stem from a poor appraisal of the performance of the local Arab authorities in the context of the coronavirus pandemic and the severe violence in communities with large Arab populations. A breakdown of the Jewish sample by religiosity shows that a majority in all groups express trust in the local authorities where they reside, but the positive rating is highest among the national religious (at 75%) and lowest among the traditional non-religious (57%).

The National Insurance Institute

We have examined the level of trust in the National Insurance Institute three times to date:

Table 4.3 (total sample; %)

	2015	2020	2021
Expressed quite a lot or very much trust in the National Insurance Institute	40	46.5	43

As with local government, the proportion of the total sample who expressed trust in the National Insurance Institute has remained steady, though not high, over the years. This year, as

in 2020, the share who placed their trust in this institution in the Arab sample was higher than that in the Jewish sample (49.5% and 42%, respectively).

Breaking down the responses by sense of belonging to stronger or weaker social groups, we found that those who associate themselves with the former give the National Insurance Institute a higher trust rating than those who identify with the latter, who presumably are more in need of the institution's services (45% versus 37%, respectively). An interesting finding when analyzing the data based on religiosity is the relatively high degree of trust placed by Haredi respondents in the National Insurance Institute (59%) compared with other groups (national religious, 46%; traditional religious and traditional non-religious, 34%; secular, 42.5%).

The Chief Rabbinate

We have measured the extent of public trust in the Chief Rabbinate a total of nine times over the years, as follows:

Table 4.4 (Jewish sample; %)

	2003	2004	2005	2009	2011	2013	2014	2017	2021
Expressed quite a lot or very much trust in the Chief Rabbinate	46	42	38	35	43	43	29	20	30

The share who express quite a lot or very much trust in the Chief Rabbinate is not consistent, and ranges over the years from 20% to 46%, a high point that still reflects only a moderate level of trust. However, once again, examining the Jewish sample as a single entity masks tremendous differences between groups within it. Thus, an analysis of the responses by religiosity shows that 77% of Haredim express trust in the Chief Rabbinate as opposed to 67% of national religious, 44% of traditional religious, 22% of traditional non-religious, and just 9% of secular respondents. This compares starkly with the trust expressed by these same groups in the Supreme Court, as shown in the figure below. In effect, the breakdown of responses regarding the Chief Rabbinate is the inverse of that for the Supreme Court, in which a large minority of secular respondents expressed trust, compared with only a small minority of national religious and Haredi respondents.

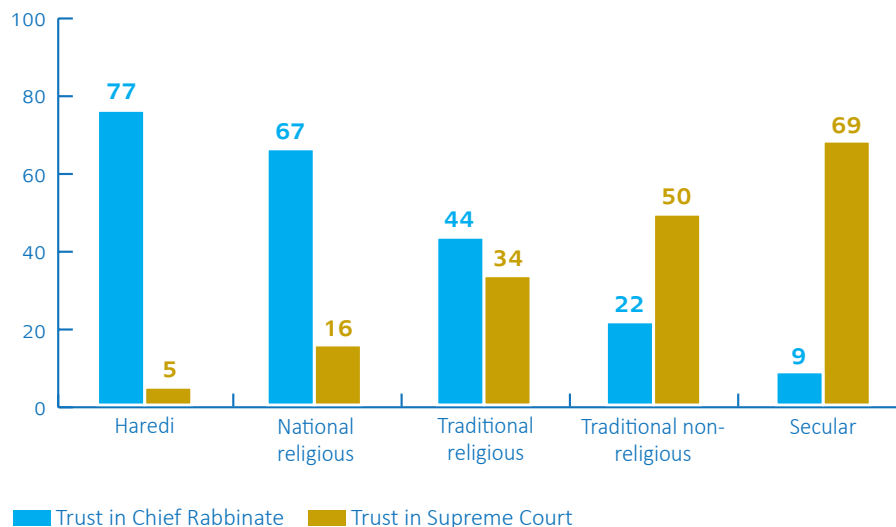
Appendix 1

Page 177

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

Figure 4.4 / Express quite a lot or very much trust in the Chief Rabbinate and the Supreme Court, by religiosity (Jewish sample; %)



Regarding those religious institutions that are relevant to the Arab public, two assessments were carried out among Christian and Muslim respondents, in 2017 and again this year. In both instances, the share of Arab interviewees who expressed trust in their respective religious bodies exceeded that of the Jews. In 2017, 59% of the Arab sample stated that they have quite a lot or very much trust in the Shari'a court or the canonical court, and 48% in 2021, indicating a sizeable drop in trust in the non-Jewish religious institutions. Whether this signifies a waning of trust in these bodies themselves, or reflects the overall trend of decline in trust in all the institutions surveyed above, remains an open question.

The argument has been made that public trust is closely connected with perceptions of performance of the institution in question. We therefore examined how the interviewees assess the functioning—or in other words, the degree of professionalism and objectivity—of each of the institutions discussed in the context of trust.

Here too, we encountered very sizeable differences between Jewish and Arab interviewees, with the latter offering less favorable assessments in all cases. The largest disparity between the two samples related to the IDF, a finding that is not self-evident; even if the Arab respondents do not trust the army, there is no real reason why they should question its objectivity or professionalism. The second-largest gap between the two populations relates to the police, and the smallest, to the Knesset.

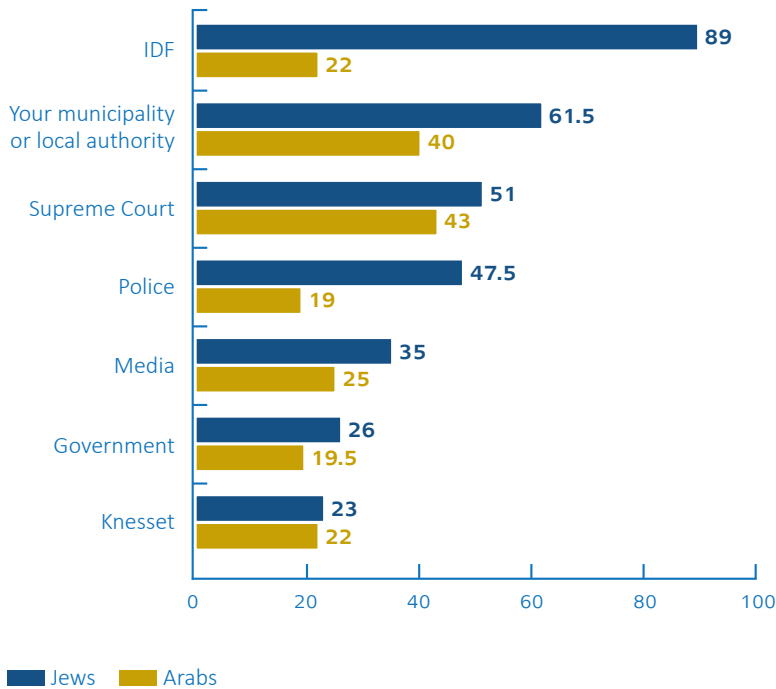
Performance of the institutions

Questions 28–34

Appendix 1

Page 177–179

Figure 4.5 / Believe that the following institutions act objectively and professionally, to a large or very large extent (Jewish and Arab samples; %)



When we place the share of respondents in the Jewish sample who express trust in each of the institutions studied alongside those who see their performance as objective and professional, the differences between the two variables are negligible. We found certain differences concerning the Supreme Court, the police, and the media, in which cases the assessment of functioning was higher than the level of trust. For the government and the Knesset, the degree of trust slightly exceeded the performance rating. In the Arab sample, we found that trust in the police—and even more so, in the respondent's local authority and the media—was noticeably lower than the perception of performance; but overall, the gaps were not substantial. We are unable to determine cause and effect here: Does the view of performance determine the level of trust, or does the degree of trust influence the assessment of performance? Either way, our examination has proven that the two factors are closely, if not wholly, interrelated.

Figure 4.6 / Express trust by institution, and assess its performance as objective and professional (Jewish sample; %)

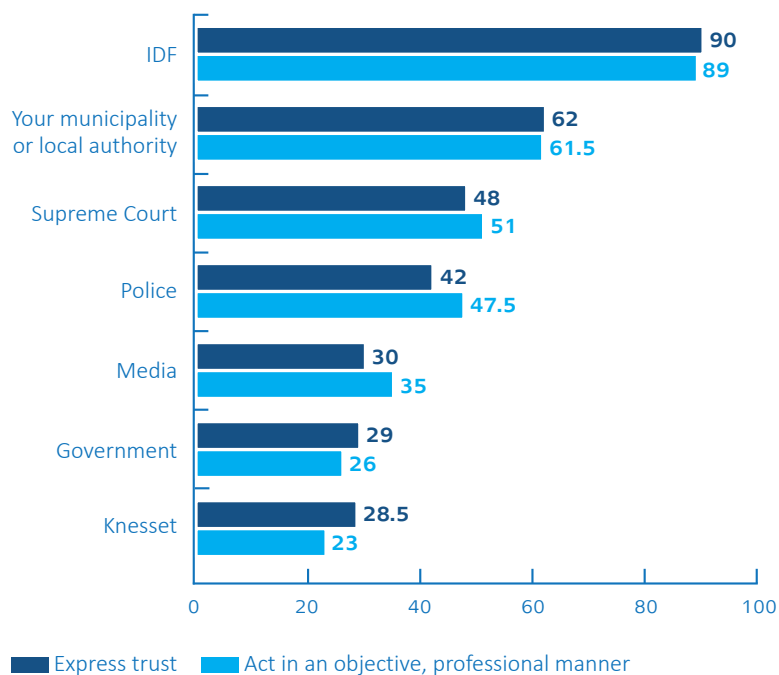
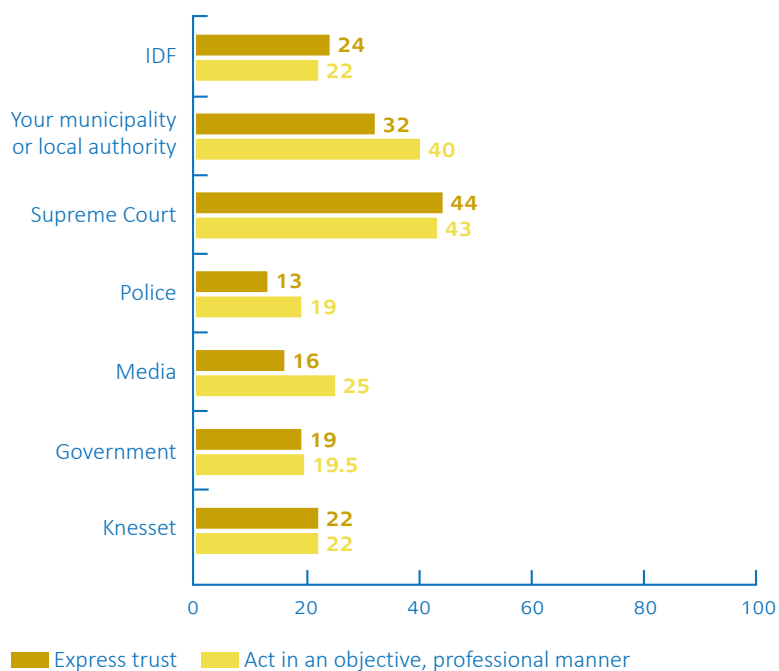


Figure 4.7 / Express trust by institution, and assess its performance as objective and professional (Arab sample; %)

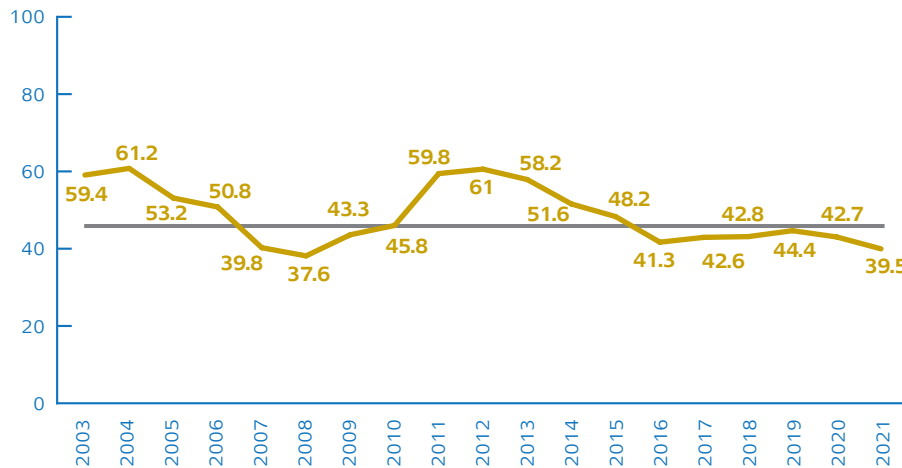


Is trust on the decline?

Among the questions that always arise when the *Democracy Index* survey is published each year is whether we can speak of an overall decline in trust in the state's institutions in recent times. For this reason, we took all eight of the institutions that we study on a regular basis and calculated the overall average level of trust for each year from 2003 to 2021 (as shown in the figure below).

This year's average level of trust (39.5%) is close to the low point of 37.6% in 2008. The highest levels were in 2004 (61.2%) and 2012 (61%). In the graph below, the straight line represents the multi-year average of the annual average scores (48.6%). The points on the curved line intersecting it indicate that the annual averages have dropped below the multi-year average for the last several years, though there have also been such cases in the past that were followed by an upswing. It is too early to determine whether this pattern will repeat itself in future.

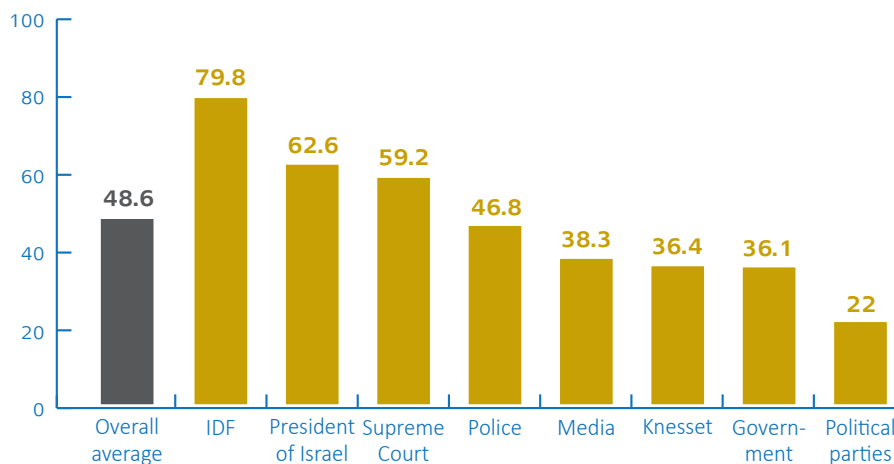
Figure 4.8 / Average yearly level of trust for all eight institutions studied regularly, 2003–2021 (total sample; %)



Note: The straight line in the figure represents the multi-year average of the annual average scores.

The following figure presents the multi-year average trust level for each of the institutions studied on a regular basis as compared with the multi-year average for all the institutions taken as a whole. The multi-year averages for the media, the Knesset, the government, and the political parties are lower than the overall multi-year average for all the institutions. The multi-year average score of the police is virtually identical to that of all the institutions taken together, whereas the multi-year averages of the IDF, the President of Israel, and the Supreme Court are higher than the multi-year average of all the institutions as a whole.

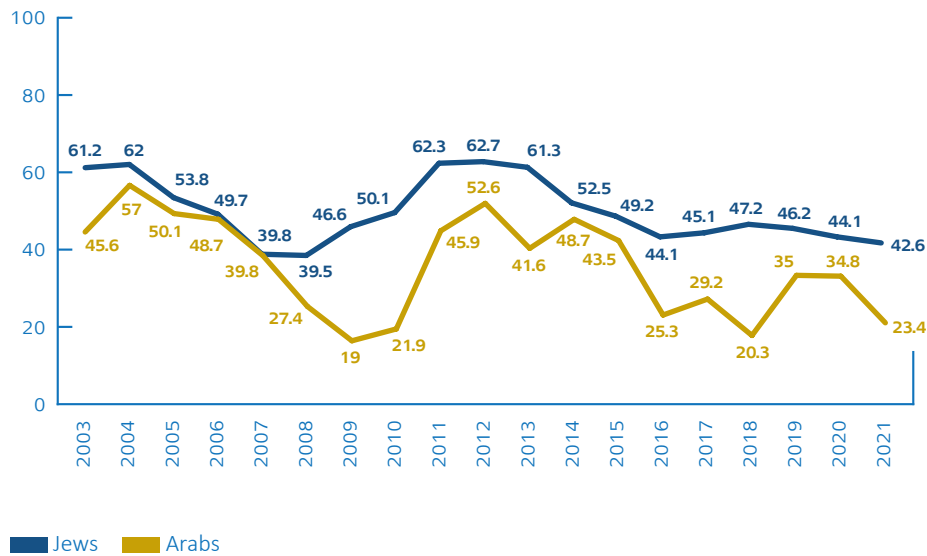
Figure 4.9 / Multi-year average trust level for each of the institutions studied regularly compared with the multi-year average of all the institutions as a whole, 2003–2021 (total sample; %)



Due to the consistently large gaps in trust between Jewish and Arab respondents, we also analyzed the average trends over time for each of these populations separately. The figure below shows a sharp drop in the average yearly trust levels among the Jewish public between 2005 and 2008, followed by an upward correction, after which there was a moderate but steady downturn from 2013 to 2021. In the Arab public, there were greater fluctuations, though here too we can point to a steep drop between 2006 and 2009 followed by a slight correction and then a further decline from 2019 to the present (it should be recalled that the Nation State Law was enacted after the 2018 democracy survey, meaning that if this legislation had an effect, it was felt only in 2019).

The high point in the average yearly trust level among the Jewish public was in 2012, and the low point in 2008, apparently in the wake of the dismal conclusions reached following the Second Lebanon War and the resulting loss of public trust in the government. Among the Arab population, the average yearly trust score in all the institutions as a whole reached its highest level in 2004, and its lowest in 2009. In all our assessments, the averages for the Arab public are lower than those for the Jewish public, and there has also been a noticeable drop in the overall average trust level in the Arab sample since 2019.

Figure 4.10 / Average yearly level of trust for all eight institutions studied regularly, 2003–2021 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)

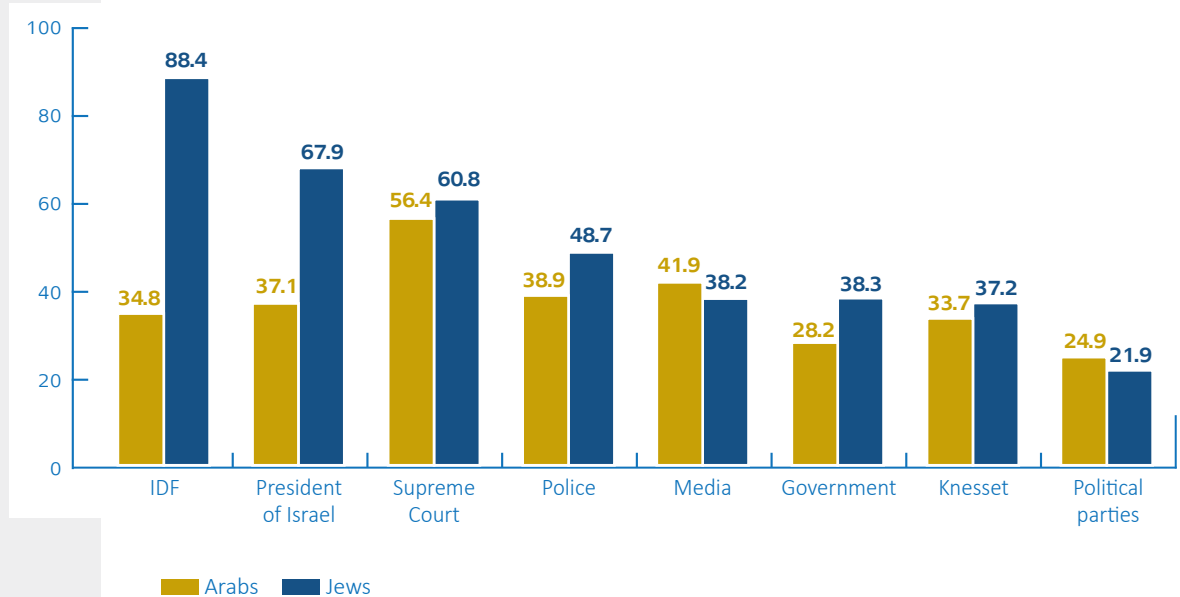


Multi-year average level of trust for all eight institutions in the Jewish sample: 50.5

Multi-year average level of trust for all eight institutions in the Arab sample: 37.4

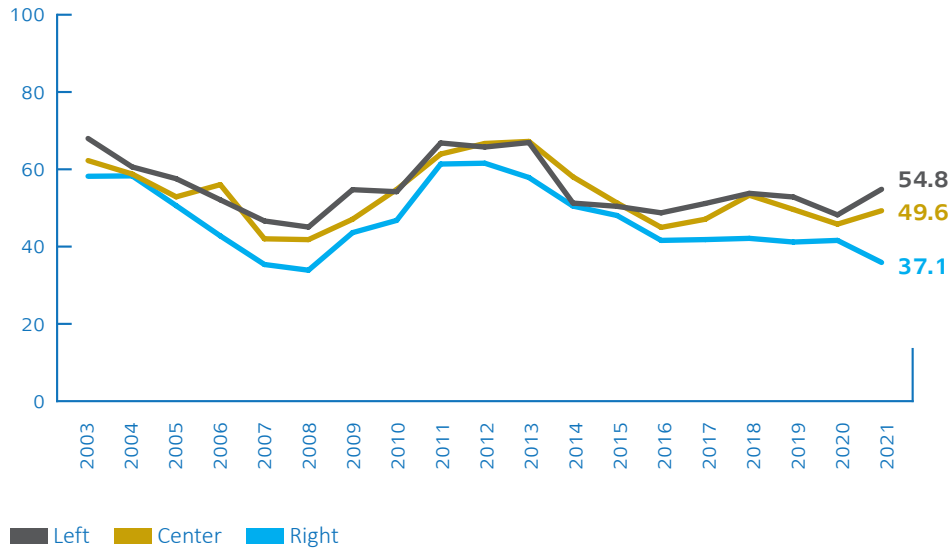
Another way of looking at the multi-year average trust level among of both these populations is by examining each institution separately. The following figure shows that the multi-year average in the Jewish sample is higher than that in the Arab sample with regard to six of the institutions surveyed (the IDF, Supreme Court, president, police, Knesset, and government), and slightly lower than the Arab sample in the case of the media and political parties. The disparities in the averages between the Jewish and Arab samples are especially high with reference to the IDF and the president of the state.

Figure 4.11 / Multi-year average trust level for each of the eight institutions studied regularly, 2003–2021 (Jewish and Arab samples; %)



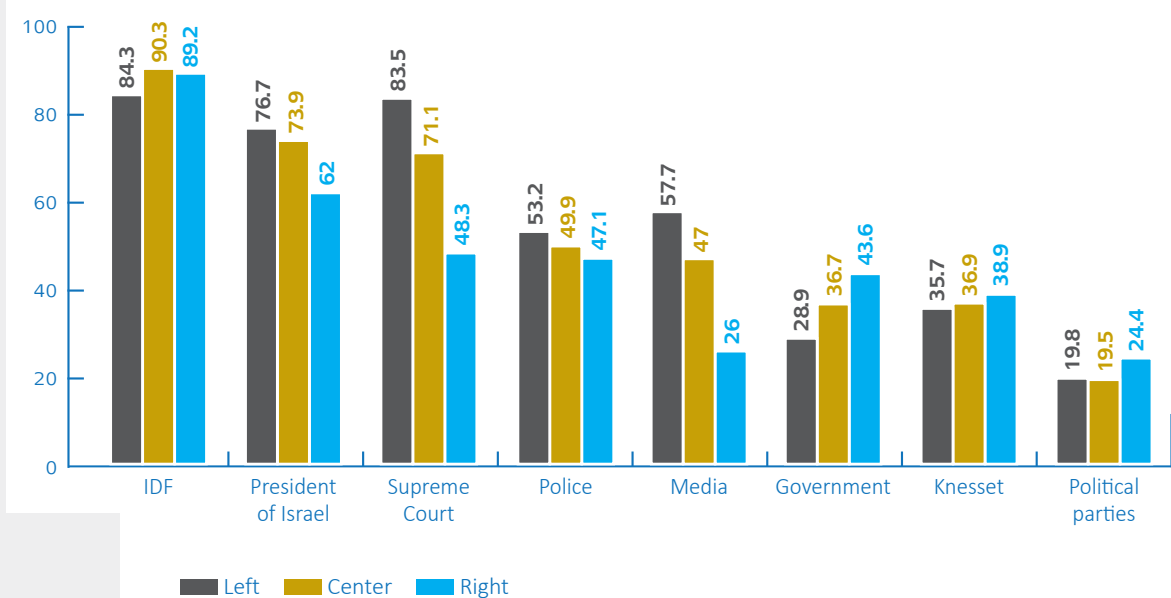
If we analyze the average yearly trust levels in the Jewish sample for all eight institutions by political orientation, we find that the differences between camps are not large, though the overall yearly average on the Right is consistently lower than that of the Center or Left. In the latter two groups, we see a decline in trust between 2018 and 2020. Following the establishment of the Bennett-Lapid government, there is a discernible rise in the level of trust in state institutions within both these camps, with a parallel drop on the Right.

Figure 4.12 / Average yearly level of trust in all eight institutions, 2003–2021, by political orientation (Jewish sample; %)



Reviewing the yearly average trust levels for each of the political camps for each of the institutions surveyed, we find that on the Right, the level of trust in the political parties, the Knesset, and the government is greater than that in the Center or on the Left. In the case of the media and the Supreme Court, the same parameter is much lower on the Right than in the other camps. The IDF, the police, the political parties, and the Knesset are the institutions with the highest degree of consensus among the three camps in terms of trust, and the Supreme Court is where the gap between the two poles (Right and Left) is the largest.

Figure 4.13 / Multi-year average trust level for each institution, 2003–2021, by political orientation (Jewish sample; %)



To summarize, we can state that this year once again there was some erosion of trust in most of the institutions surveyed, though we have already reached low points such as these in the past which were then followed by corrective upswings. In addition, the gap between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel with regard to trust in state institutions is not shrinking, and is even expanding in certain cases. The Haredim constitute an anomaly in several regards compared with the other groups in the category of religiosity. Further, the rankings of the various institutions in terms of the levels of trust they enjoy have remained more or less stable over the years in the Jewish sample, while they have been less consistent in the Arab sample.

Chapter 5 / Israeli Society

In this chapter, we discuss the following topics:

- Who is an Israeli?
- Greater rights for Jewish citizens?
- Social solidarity in Israel
- Tensions between groups in Israeli society
- Budgetary priorities

This year, we attempted to explore the public’s perceptions of “Israeliness.” In an effort to understand which characteristics are seen as essential to being Israeli, we presented respondents with a list of seven attributes: being born in Israel, living in Israel for most of one’s life, speaking Hebrew, being Jewish, respecting the laws of the state, serving in the IDF, and accepting the definition of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

As shown in the figure below, the view of what constitutes an Israeli differs greatly between Jews and Arabs. The fundamental differences between the two groups on this issue, as they emerge from the survey, may stem from one or both of the following reasons: (a) the fact that the research team is made up of Jews led us to select characteristics that fit the Jewish population but not necessarily the Arab one; and (b) the question of who is an Israeli is unresolved, or not fully defined, among Arab citizens of Israel.

The findings indicate that Jews see Israeliness as a “package” made up of numerous components, on which there is a broad consensus. This is much less true for the Arab population, perhaps because more of the factors that we presented are not relevant to them, and they identify other signifiers of Israeliness. Not surprisingly, the greatest disparities between the two groups are on the subjects of military service and of being Jewish as a precondition for being Israeli. There is also a sizeable gap on the issue of recognizing Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, while the smallest margin of difference relates to being born in Israel. Interestingly, among both Jews and Arabs (at least in terms of the survey responses), the most important factor is respecting the laws of the land. Another intriguing finding is that, in the eyes of the Jewish respondents, the ability to speak Hebrew is the second-most-important marker of being Israeli—ranked even higher than service in the IDF. By contrast, in second place among Arab interviewees is the variable of long-term residence in Israel—a criterion that is easier for them to meet than qualities such as fluency in Hebrew, and certainly, being Jewish or defining Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

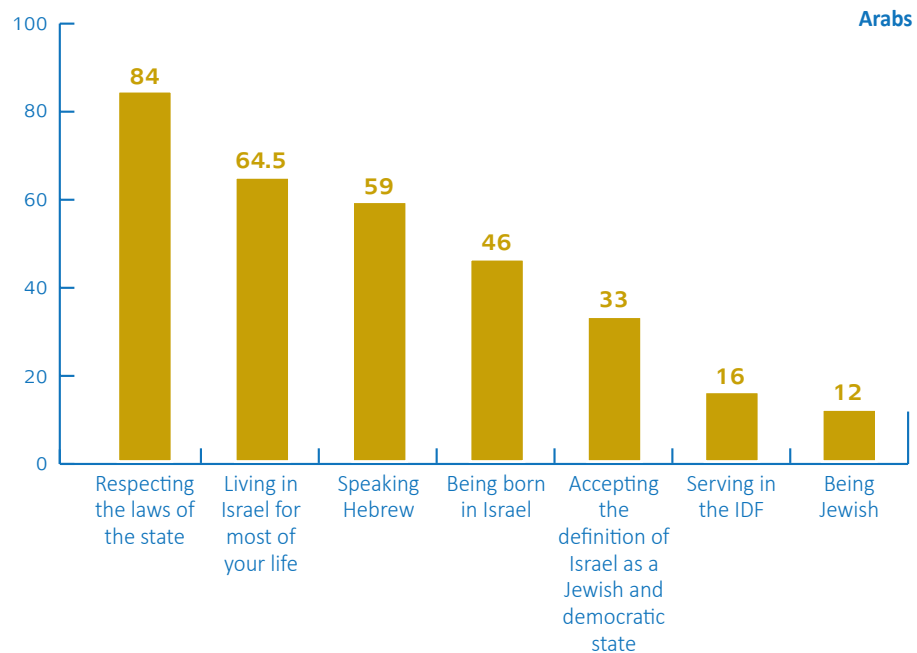
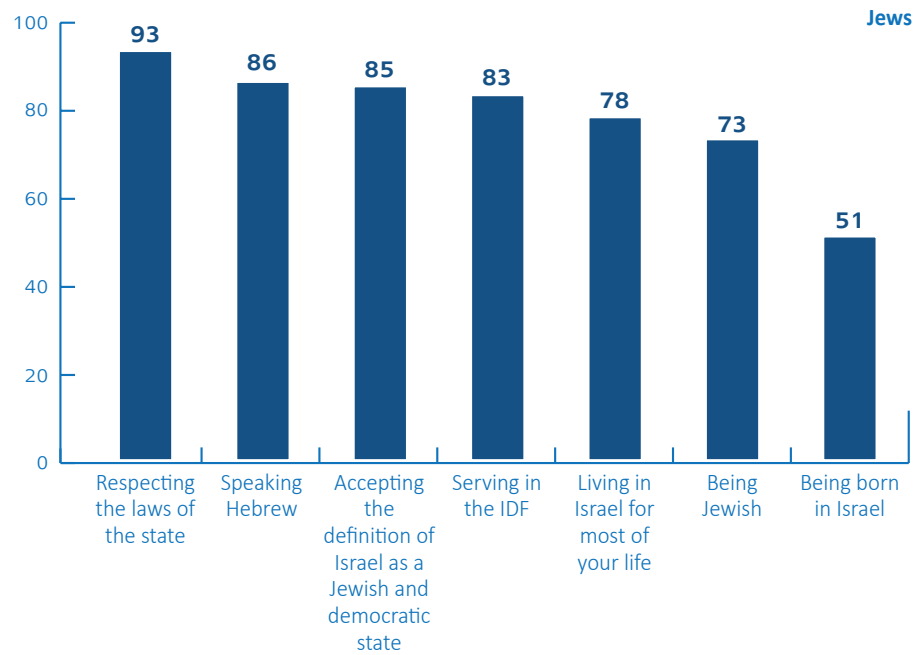
Who is an Israeli?

Questions 49–55

Appendix 1
Page 185–187

Appendix 2
(See IDI website)

Figure 5.1 / How important are each of these factors to being a true Israeli? Somewhat or very important (Jewish and Arab samples; %)



When we broke down the responses of the Jewish sample by religiosity, we found substantial differences regarding the link between being Jewish and being Israeli. As shown in the table below, in each of the groups apart from the secular Jews, the overwhelming majority see a necessary connection between these two attributes. Likewise, the link between IDF service and being Israeli is strongly affected by location on the religious spectrum; thus, only a minority of Haredi respondents consider it meaningful as contrasted with a very large majority in the other religious groups.

Table 5.1 (Jewish sample; %)

To be a true Israeli, the following factors are somewhat or very important	Haredi	National religious	Traditional religious	Traditional non-religious	Secular
Being Jewish	92	93	93	81.5	52
Serving in the IDF	45	91	90	93	84

An analysis of the Jewish sample by political orientation also shows different attitudes concerning the connection between being Jewish and being Israeli: On the Left, only a minority hold that the two are necessarily linked, as opposed to a majority in the Center and on the Right. With regard to serving in the IDF and to accepting the Jewish-democratic definition of Israel, a majority in all three camps see these as connected with being Israeli, but in both cases, the margin is smaller on the Left.

Table 5.2 (Jewish sample; %)

To be a true Israeli, the following factors are somewhat or very important	Left	Center	Right
Being Jewish	31	63.5	88
Serving in the IDF	76	84.5	85
Accepting the definition of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state	69	87	90

As in past surveys, here too we found that the younger the age group in the Jewish sample, the less importance they ascribe to military service as a condition for being truly Israeli (age 18–24, 73%; 25–34, 77%; 35–44, 84%; 45–54, 85%; 55–64, 86%; 65+, 94%).

Greater rights for Jews?

Question 16

Appendix 1

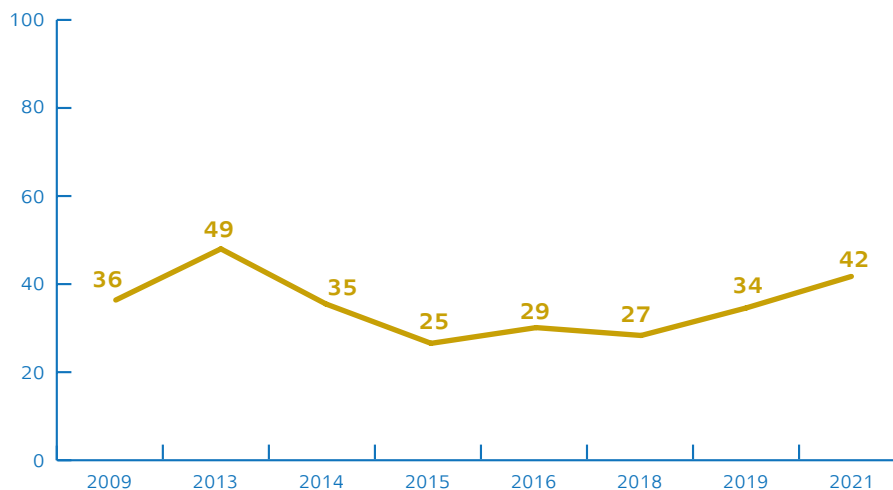
Page 173

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

One of the benchmarks of the quality of democracy in a given country is the extent to which all citizens are treated equally by the authorities. However, it seems that there are substantial segments of the Jewish public who hold that Jews in Israel should have greater rights than Arabs, apparently based on the fact that Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people. As shown in the figure below, the proportion of respondents who support this view has not held steady over time. This year, over 40% are in favor of such discrimination on the basis of nationality—the second-highest share since we began asking this question twelve years ago. This finding may be a result of the violent events that took place between Jews and Arabs in May, shortly before this survey was conducted, but it may also point to the beginning of a trend. This will only become clear following additional surveys in future.

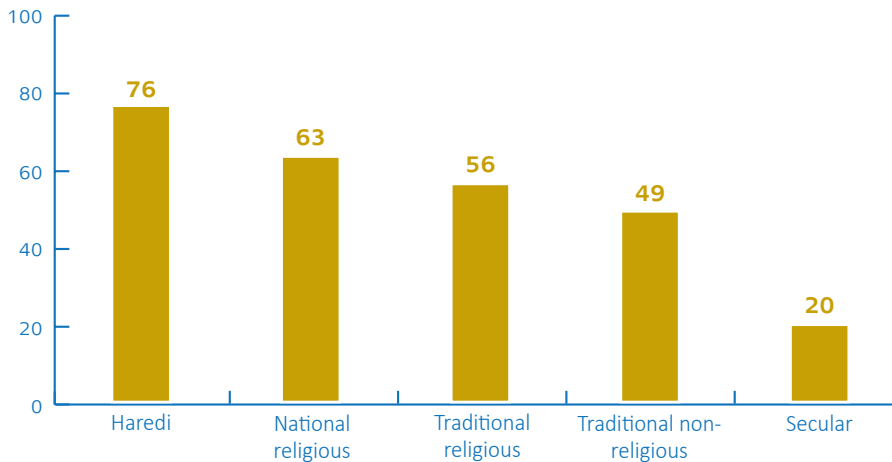
Figure 5.2 / “Jewish citizens of Israel should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens,” over time (agree; Jewish sample; %)



When we examined which groups in the Jewish sample tend to espouse this position more strongly, we found a majority of 57% on the Right who agree that Jews should be granted greater rights (a dramatic increase from 38% in 2018), as compared with 28.5% in the Center (up from 16% in 2018) and a negligible minority of just 5% on the Left (virtually unchanged from 2018).

A breakdown of the responses in the Jewish sample by age group reveals that the younger cohorts are more firmly in favor of additional rights for Jews (18–34, 46%; 35–54, 45%; 55+, 35%), though we encountered greater differences when analyzing the findings in the Jewish sample on the basis of religiosity (as shown in the figure below). Among Haredi, national religious, and traditional religious respondents, a clear majority support greater rights for Jewish than for non-Jewish citizens.

Figure 5.3 / “Jewish citizens of Israel should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens,” by religiosity (agree; Jewish sample; %)



Cross-tabulating the responses regarding the balance between the democratic and Jewish components of the state with those on the question of support for greater rights for Jews, we saw substantial differences: Among those who feel that there is a good balance between the two components, the majority (56%) do not agree that Jews should enjoy additional rights. We found an even larger majority (78%) who disagree with this claim among respondents who feel that the Jewish component in Israel today is too dominant. By contrast, of those who responded that the democratic component is too strong, the majority (68%) support granting greater rights to Jews than to non-Jews.

This year as well, we asked respondents to rate the level of solidarity (sense of “togetherness”) in Israeli society (Jews, Arabs, and other citizens), where 1 = no solidarity at all and 10 = a high level of solidarity. Public opinion on this question has remained largely stable over the years, with the exception of a jump in June 2020, not long after the start of the coronavirus pandemic, when it seemed like (almost) all of us were in the same boat. This year, the average solidarity score was 4.86, that is, similar to the ratings in the early part of the previous decade,

Level of solidarity in Israeli society

Question 6

Appendix 1

Page 170

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

but lower than the level in last year's survey and in 2015. Again, there is reason to assume that the current decline stems from the ongoing pandemic (despite the initial rise in solidarity), and to the events in May of this year, though the disparity with previous ratings is not substantial.

Table 5.3 / Level of social solidarity in Israel (total sample)

	2011	2014	2015	2020	2021
Average score between 1 and 10	4.78	4.71	5.13	5.35	4.86

The average solidarity score in the Jewish sample exceeds that in the Arab sample (5.01 and 4.09, respectively), implying that Jews are more inclined to see Israeli society as having a sense of togetherness than are Arabs. Within the Jewish sample, those who identify with the Left consider Israeli society to have less solidarity than do those in the Center or on the Right (4.79, 5.07, and 5.07, respectively). When the responses are broken down by religiosity, we find that Haredi respondents assigned the lowest solidarity ratings, while the national religious gave the highest (Haredi, 4.38; secular, 4.90; traditional non-religious, 5.11; traditional religious, 5.30; national religious, 5.46).

Once again this year, we asked interviewees which groups in Israeli society today have the highest level of tension between them. After years in which a growing share of respondents pointed to tensions between the Right and Left as being the greatest source of friction, this year saw a steep jump in the proportion who see Jews and Arabs as the major focal point of tension (from 28% in 2020 to 46% this year, in the total sample). At the same time, the proportion who think that tensions are greatest between Right and Left dropped from 39% to 32%, and between religious and secular Jews, from 17.5% to 11.5%. Those who judged tensions between rich and poor to be the most severe also dipped slightly (from 8.5% to 3%), perhaps as a result of the economic crisis brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

Primary sources of tension in Israeli society

Question 8

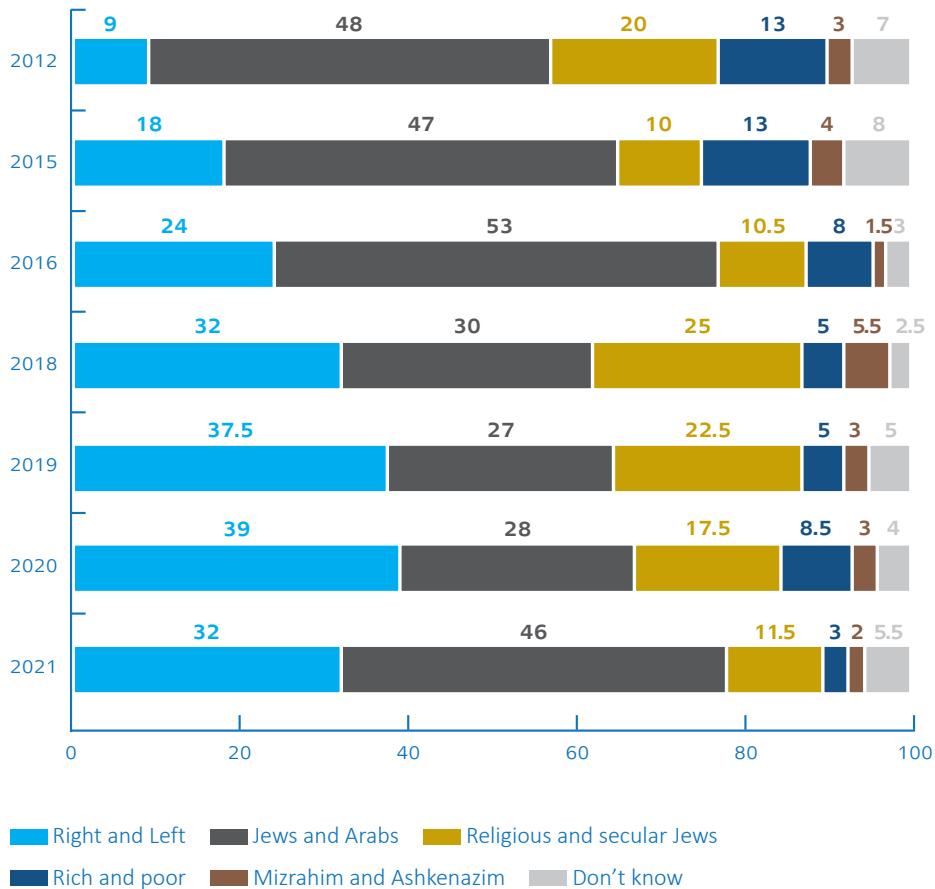
Appendix 1

Page 171

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

Figure 5.4 / Groups with the highest level of tension between them, over time (total sample; %)



We found further that the share of Arabs who see Jews and Arabs as having the highest level of tension between them is much greater than the corresponding share of Jews (64% and 42.5%, respectively).

A very interesting finding relates to the difference in perceptions of the primary source of tension on the basis of political orientation. In the Jewish sample, the Left and Center still point to tensions between Right and Left as being the most pronounced, whereas on the Right, the majority consider the friction between Jews and Arabs to be the most intense.

Table 5.4 / Groups with the highest level of tension between them, by political orientation (Jewish sample; %)

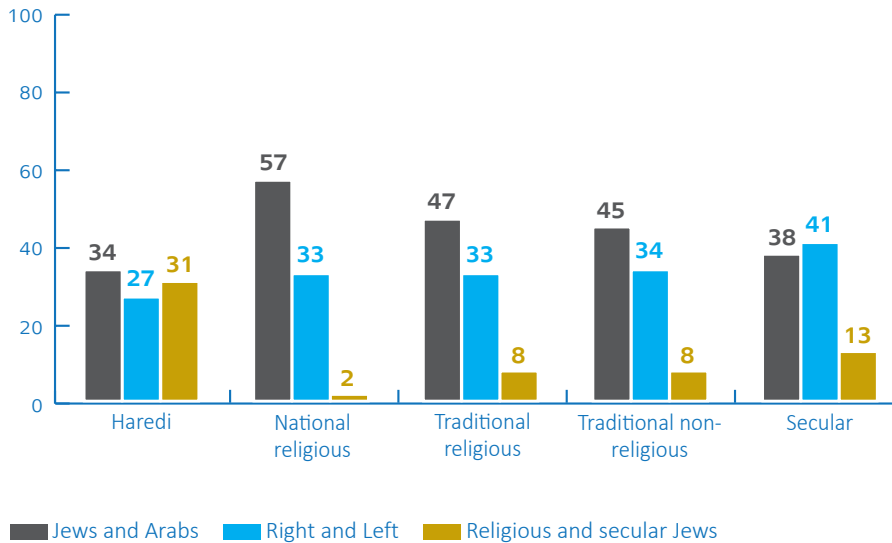
	Right and Left	Jews and Arabs	Religious and secular	Rich and poor	Ashkenazim and Mizrahim	Don't know	Total
Left	47	27	17	2.5	2	4.5	100
Center	39	33	12.5	4	5	6.5	100
Right	32	50.5	10	3	1	3.5	100

A breakdown of the results in the Jewish sample by religiosity shows that in all groups, with the exception of secular Jews, tensions between Arabs and Jews are ranked as the most severe. Among secular respondents, the highest share point to relations between Right and Left tensions as the primary source of tension.

In second place among Haredim were tensions between religious and secular Jews, and among secular Jews, friction between Jews and Arabs, while national religious respondents and both groups of traditional Jews felt similarly about relations between the Right and Left.

Of special interest is the gap between national religious and Haredi respondents regarding the level of tension between religious and secular Jews: Among the national religious, only a very small minority identify this as the primary source of friction in Israeli society, while among Haredim, almost one-third view it as such. In a similar vein (as shown in the figure below), while all the other groups display disparities in their ranking of the top three sources of tension, the Haredim rate each of these flashpoints as the most severe in about equal measure. In other words, the Haredim—to a greater extent than the other groups—are divided over what constitutes the major focal point of tension in Israeli society.

Figure 5.5 / Groups with the highest level of tension between them, by religiosity (Jewish sample; %)



We wished to discover the public's priorities when it comes to divvying up the state budget. Although we made it clear in the first part of the question that adding to one item means taking away from another, the interviewees preferred to increase spending on almost all the items across the board, as if the budgetary pie were unlimited in size. Health topped the scale of priorities for greater funding, with defense at the bottom of the list. On this last point, we found a sizeable difference between Jews and Arabs: 42% of Jews favor increasing the defense budget (with 35% preferring to leave it as is, and 19% to reduce it), whereas just 27% of Arabs would like to enlarge it (25% opting to leave it as is, and 39.5% to cut it). In the Jewish sample, respondents on the Left are less willing than the other camps to increase the defense budget (only 23%, compared with 38% in the Center and 48.5% on the Right). It should be noted that the share of the Jewish public who wish to add to the defense budget is noticeably lower than the corresponding findings for the other allocations we asked about.

With reference to domestic security, it is noteworthy that the Arabs—who suffer more from crime and violence in their communities—actually show less support than the Jews for increasing this portion of the budget (48% versus 60%, respectively).

It was somewhat surprising to discover that the differences between age groups on the issue of upping the housing budget are not great: In all cohorts (including the very youngest), roughly 60%–73% support greater spending in this area, despite the fact that young people generally face more serious housing problems than do the older groups.

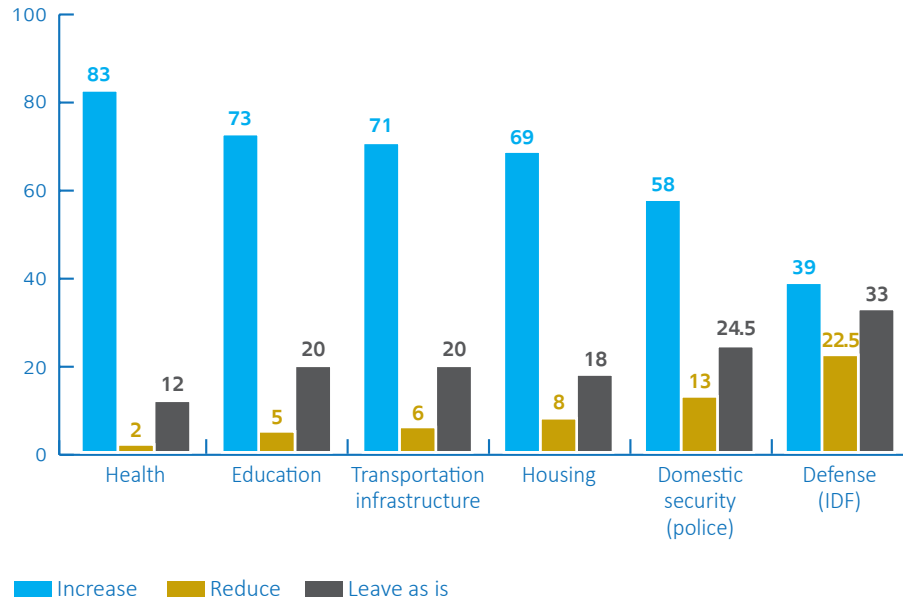
Budgetary priorities

Questions 39–44

Appendix 1
Page 182–183

Appendix 2
(See IDI website)

Figure 5.6 / What to do with each of these budgetary items: increase, reduce, or leave as is? (total sample; %)



Chapter 6 / Israel's Legal System

In this chapter, we discuss the following topics:

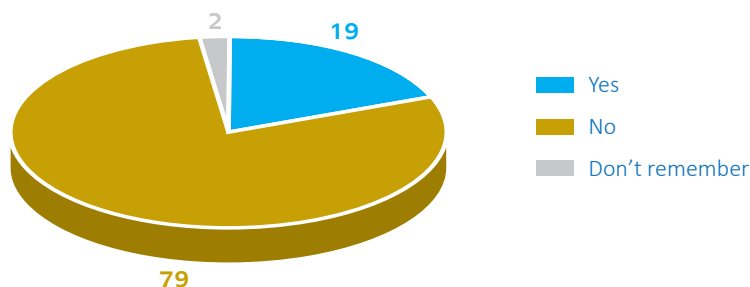
- Efficiency and fairness of the court system
- The judicial selection process, and its effect on performance
- Impartiality in prosecution and judgment
- Integrity of the legal system
- Israel's Supreme Court

Each year, our survey focuses on the public's views regarding one or more government systems. This time, we have chosen to shine a spotlight on perceptions of the legal system. Let us state from the outset that the following is not an objective appraisal of the professionalism, performance, or integrity of Israel's legal system; rather, it describes how the system is perceived, for better or for worse, by the Israeli public. We should note further that the courts' image is, for the most part, not based on individual experience but (presumably) on news reports, conversations with those who have been involved with the legal system, or social media discourse, since (as we will soon see), most of the public has not had personal contact with the legal system.

Fairness and efficiency of the legal system

To begin, we examined which proportion of the population has had direct contact with the legal system during the last several years, as a witness, plaintiff, or defendant. Roughly one-fifth of the interviewees reported having had such involvement in the recent past.

Figure 6.1 / Have you had any involvement with the court system in the last few years (as a plaintiff, defendant, or witness)? (total sample; %)



Personal experience with the legal system

Question 63

Appendix 1

Page 190

Which court did you have contact with in recent years?

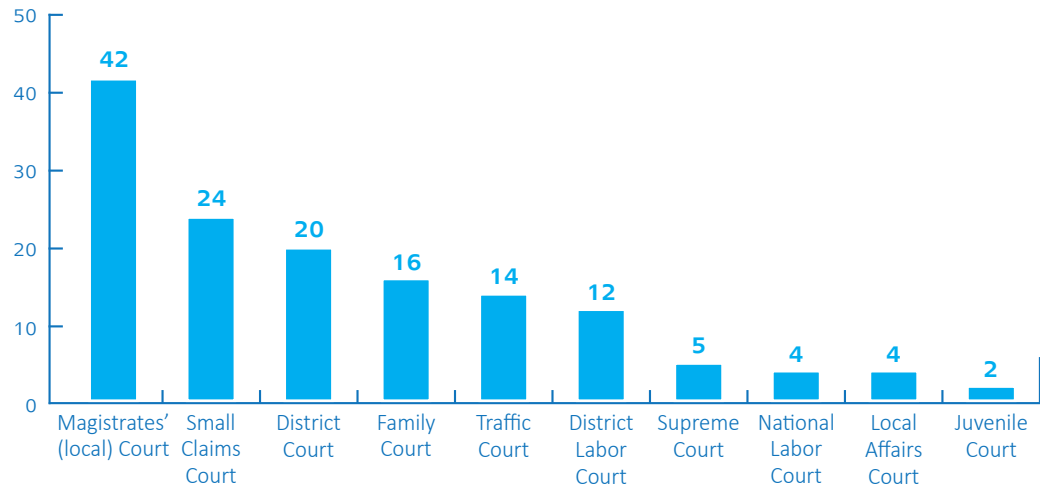
Question 64

Appendix 1

Page 190

Of those who responded that they have had contact with the legal system in the past several years, the largest share of interviewees had dealings with the Magistrates' (local) Court, followed in frequency by the Small Claims Court and the District Court. The least amount of contact was with the National Labor Court, the Local Affairs Court, and the Juvenile Court.

Figure 6.2 / Which court have you had involvement with in the last few years? (of those who have been involved with the court system; %)



A greater share of Jews than of Arabs reported having had contact with a court. Differences were also found when analyzing the results by age group: A smaller share of young people (up to age 34) than of other age groups had personal experience with the court system. Negligible gaps were found between men and women, and between different ethnic affiliations in the Jewish sample.

Table 6.1 (total sample and Jewish sample; %)

Had personal experience with the court system in recent years		
Nationality	Jews	21
	Arabs	12

Had personal experience with the court system in recent years		
Age	18–34	13
	35–54	24
	55+	21
Sex	Men	21
	Women	17
Ethnic affiliation (Jews)	Ashkenazi	21
	Mizrahi	19
	Mixed (Ashkenazi and Mizrahi)	21.5
	FSU immigrant	18

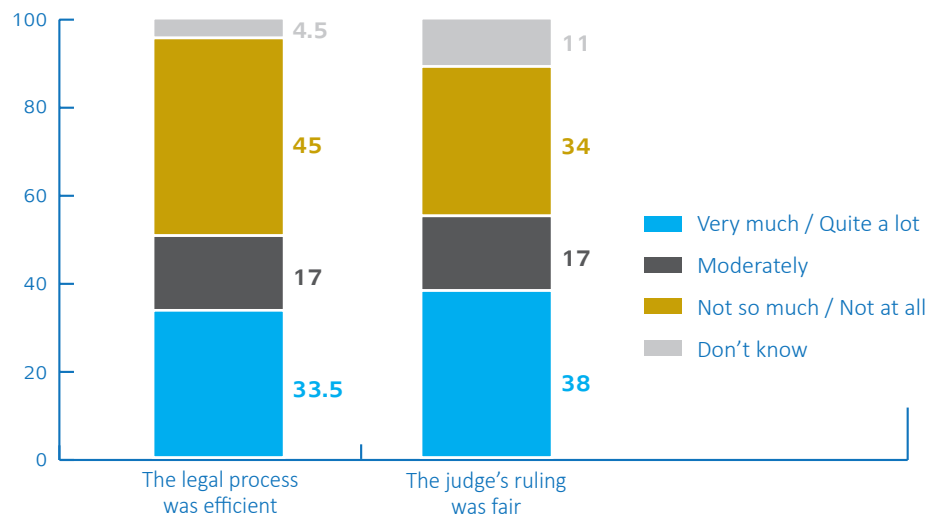
When we asked those who had been involved with the court system in recent years how they rated the legal process and the judge's ruling, the level of satisfaction was not high: Only about one-third reported that the legal process was efficient, and a slightly higher share indicated that the judge's ruling was fair.

Efficiency of the legal process, and fairness of the judge's ruling

Questions 65, 66

Appendix 1
Page 190–191

Figure 6.3 / Efficiency of the legal process, and fairness of the judge's ruling (of those who have been involved with the court system; %)



Of the Arab respondents who have had dealings with the court system, the share who considered it efficient exceeded that of the Jews (43.5% versus 32%, respectively). Smaller differences, and in the opposite direction, were found on the question of fairness of the judges (Jews, 38.5%; Arabs, 35%). In other words, Arabs think that the legal system is more efficient but less fair than do Jews.

We found substantial differences when breaking down the results by political orientation (of Jewish respondents who were involved with the court system): Of those who align themselves with the Right, 29% reported that the legal process was efficient, compared with 38% on the Left and 40% in the Center. Only 32.5% of respondents on the Right indicated that the judge's ruling was fair, as contrasted with 47% in the Center and 51.5% on the Left, respectively.

We found a close association between perceptions of the efficiency of the legal process and of the fairness of the judge's ruling: Of those who reported that the process was handled efficiently, the vast majority saw the judge's decision as fair. Conversely, of those who noted that the legal process was only moderately efficient, slightly over one-quarter found the judge's ruling to be fair—a view shared by just one-eighth of those who felt that the process was inefficient.

Table 6.2 (total sample; of those who have been involved with the court system; %)

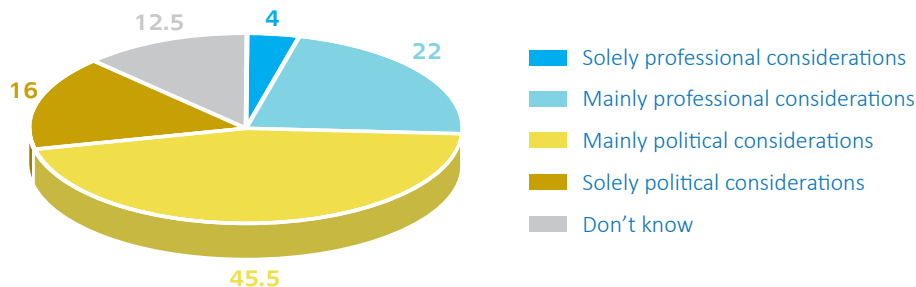
	Judge's ruling was very fair	Judge's ruling was moderately fair	Judge's ruling was not fair	Don't know	Total
Legal process was very efficient	81.5	10.5	5	3	100
Legal process was moderately efficient	27.5	35	27.5	10	100
Legal process was not efficient	13	17	62	8	100

Judicial selection process, and impartiality in judgment

In the last few years, the matter of judicial selection has taken center stage in Israeli discourse more than once. We wished to know the public's views on this process.

We posed the question: "In your opinion, are judges in Israel selected based on professional or political considerations?" A considerable majority of the interviewees hold that the selection of judges in Israel is based solely or mainly on political considerations, as opposed to just one-quarter who think that the criteria are mainly or solely professional in nature. Remarkably, only 4% believe that judges in Israel are selected based strictly on professional merit.

Figure 6.4 / In your opinion, are judges in Israel selected based on professional or political considerations? (total sample; %)



Considerations affecting judicial selection

Question 67

Appendix 1
Page 191

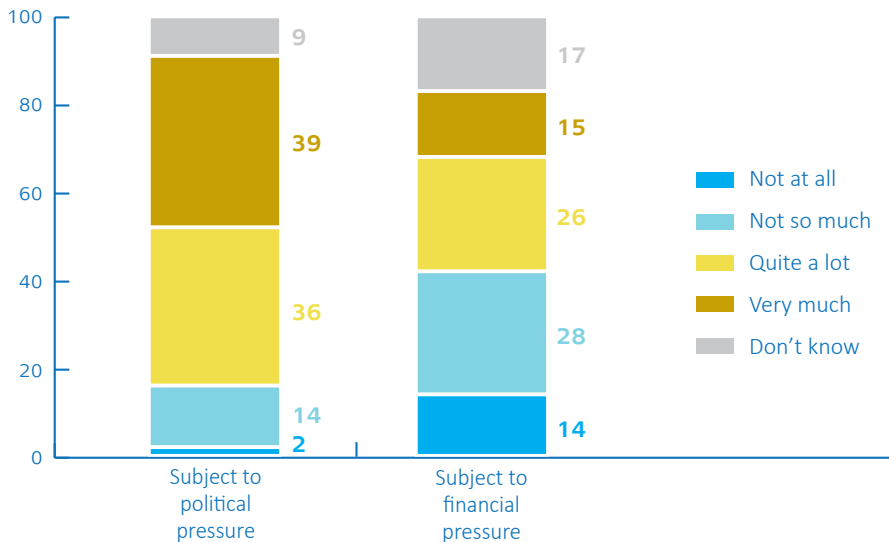
The differences between Jewish and Arab respondents on this question were not great. By contrast, we found substantial differences within the Jewish sample when breaking down the results by religiosity and political orientation. In all groups on the religious spectrum, the share who hold that judicial selection is shaped by political considerations exceeds that of respondents who feel that it is based on professional criteria; however, among Haredi respondents, the difference between the two is vast (with the overwhelming majority believing that judges are selected for political reasons), whereas among secular respondents, the disparity is slight. An analysis of the results by political orientation shows that only on the Left are there more respondents who hold that judicial selection is guided by professional considerations than who take the opposite view. By contrast, over two-thirds of respondents on the Right believe that judges are selected based mainly on political considerations. The Center falls somewhere in between the two on this question.

Table 6.3 (Jewish sample; %)

		Judges are selected based solely/mainly on professional considerations	Judges are selected based solely/mainly on political considerations
Religiosity	Haredi	6	87
	National religious	15	77
	Traditional religious	24	65
	Traditional non-religious	24.5	58
	Secular	37.5	46.5
Political orientation	Left	46	40
	Center	36	48
	Right	19	69

We wondered if the Israeli public thinks that financial or political pressure is brought to bear on judges once they have been selected. It emerges that, in the eyes of the majority, judges are subject to both political and financial pressure, with the former seen as more common than the latter. In fact, just 2% of respondents stated that judges are not exposed to political pressure at all, and only 14%, that they are not placed under any financial pressure.

Figure 6.5 / To what extent are judges in Israel subject to financial or political pressure? (total sample; %)



A breakdown of the results by nationality reveals that the share of Jewish respondents who hold that judges are subject to political pressure is significantly greater than that of Arab respondents, whereas on the question of financial pressure, their views are similar. Analysis by age group shows that the oldest cohort (55+) are the least inclined to believe that either political or financial pressure is exerted on judges. Breaking down the Jewish sample by religiosity did not yield differences with regard to political pressure, but disparities were found in the perception of financial pressure, with the secular respondents the least apt to think that judges are subjected to such demands.

Financial and political pressure on judges

Questions 70, 71

Appendix 1

Page 192

Table 6.4 (total sample and Jewish sample; %)

		Judges are subject to quite a lot or very much political pressure	Judges are subject to quite a lot or very much financial pressure
Nationality	Jews	77.5	41
	Arabs	62	44
Age	18–34	76	46
	35–54	79	42.5
	55+	70	35
Religiosity (Jews)	Haredi	78	47
	National religious	79	44
	Traditional religious	79	51
	Traditional non-religious	79	42
	Secular	76	35

From an analysis of the two questions together, it emerges that 39% of respondents hold that judges are subject to quite a lot or very much pressure of both types (political and financial), as contrasted with just 13% who think that they suffer from such pressures not so much or not at all.

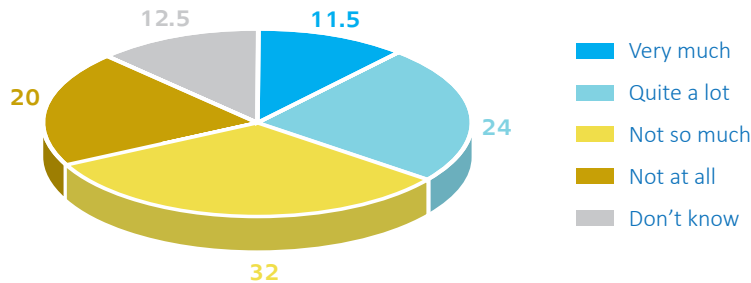
Given the perception in large segments of the Israeli public that judges are selected on the basis of political rather than professional considerations, and that once selected they are subject to political and financial pressures, it is not surprising that a majority of respondents hold that the legal system in Israel does not treat elected representatives impartially, that is, that judges are influenced by the political affiliation of the elected officials who appear before them.

Impartiality in the legal system

Question 69

Appendix 1
Page 192

Figure 6.6 / To what extent does the legal system in Israel treat elected representatives in an unbiased manner, regardless of their political affiliation? (total sample; %)



When the results are broken down by nationality, we do not find differences between Jewish and Arab respondents. By contrast, an analysis of responses in the Jewish sample by political orientation points to noticeable disparities: Whereas a sizeable majority on the Left think that the legal system treats elected representatives without bias, whatever their political affiliation, a virtually identical majority on the Right take the opposite view. A breakdown of the Jewish sample on the basis of religiosity shows that roughly one-half of secular respondents believe that the legal system acts impartially toward elected representatives, whereas just 13% of the national religious respondents feel this way.

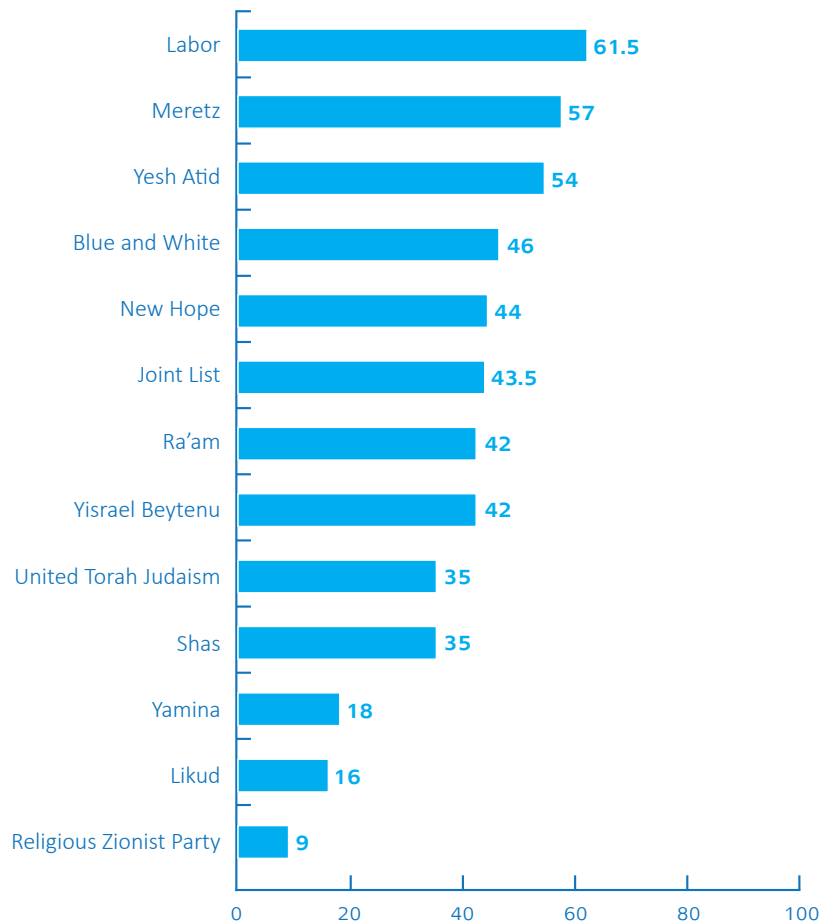
An analysis of the results by age group found that the younger cohorts (up to age 34) are the most convinced that the legal system does not treat elected representatives evenhandedly, while those in the oldest age group (55+) hold the most strongly that the contrary is true. Interviewees with the lowest level of education (up to and including high school matriculation) are the most inclined to think that the legal system does not act equitably, while those with an academic degree are the staunchest in their belief that the system is in fact impartial.

Table 6.5 (total sample and Jewish sample; %)

Believe that the legal system treats elected representatives impartially, regardless of their political affiliation		Quite a lot or not so much	Not so much or not at all
Age	18–34	31	55.5
	35–54	32	53
	55+	45	45
Education	Up to and including matriculation	30.5	54
	Post-secondary / partial academic studies	35	53
	B.A. and above	41	48.5
Religiosity (Jews)	Haredi	41	55
	National religious	13	75
	Traditional religious	26	61
	Traditional non-religious	29	57
	Secular	48	39
Political orientation (Jews)	Left	60	29
	Center	47	39
	Right	26	63

A breakdown of the responses by voting pattern in the most recent Knesset elections (in March 2021) also shows considerable differences. Heading the scale of respondents who hold that the legal system treats elected representatives impartially are voters for the Labor and Meretz parties, with voters for the Religious Zionist Party and the Likud at the opposite end of the rankings.

Figure 6.7 / Believe quite a lot or very much that the legal system in Israel treats elected representatives impartially, regardless of their political affiliation, by vote in 2021 Knesset elections (total sample; %)



Equality in judgment

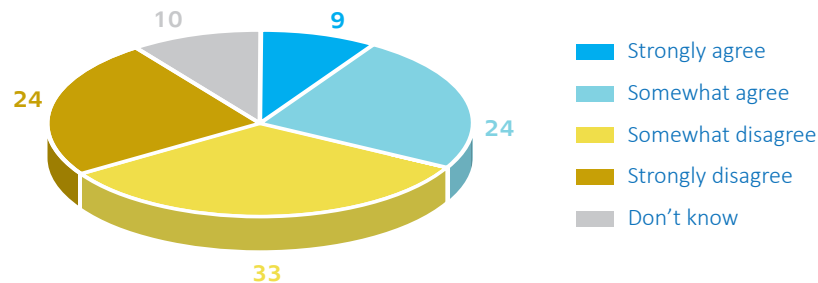
Question 72

Appendix 1

Page 193

In the opinion of the respondents, not only elected representatives but also the general public are treated inequitably by the legal system. Only one-third of those interviewed, in both the Jewish and Arab samples, agree that judges treat everyone who appears before them equally (Jews and Arabs, men and women, Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, etc.).

Figure 6.8 / “Judges treat everyone who appears before them equally” (total sample; %)



There is a difference on this issue, however, between men and women in the Jewish sample: Whereas 40% of men agree that judges provide equal treatment to everyone who appears before them, just 27% of women share this view.

In this case, as in the earlier questions regarding the legal system, the principal variables that account for the positions of the Jewish public are religiosity and political orientation. Thus, among Haredi, national religious, and traditional religious/non-religious respondents, a sizeable majority answered that judges do not treat everyone who appears before them in the same way, while among secular respondents, opinions were evenly divided on this issue. A breakdown by political orientation shows that on the Left and in the Center, respondents' views are split, whereas on the Right a considerable majority hold that judges do not treat everyone on trial equally.

Analyzing the total sample by both age group and level of education yielded a majority in all groups who do not agree that judges offer the same treatment to all, yet there are differences between the various groups: Young people and respondents with the lowest level of education disagree the most strongly that judges treat everyone who appears before them equally, while among older respondents and those with an academic degree, the extent of disagreement is less.

Table 6.6 (total sample and Jewish sample; %)

	Judges treat all who appear before them equally	Agree somewhat or strongly	Disagree somewhat or strongly
Religiosity (Jews)	Haredi	15.5	81
	National religious	20	71.5
	Traditional religious	30	61
	Traditional non-religious	30	61
	Secular	44	45
Political orientation (Jews)	Left	44	45.5
	Center	42	47
	Right	27	65
Age	18–34	28	63
	35–54	33	56
	55+	39	51.5
Education	Up to and including matriculation	29.5	61
	Post-secondary / partial academic studies	31	60
	B.A. and above	39	52

Political vs. professional considerations at the State Attorney

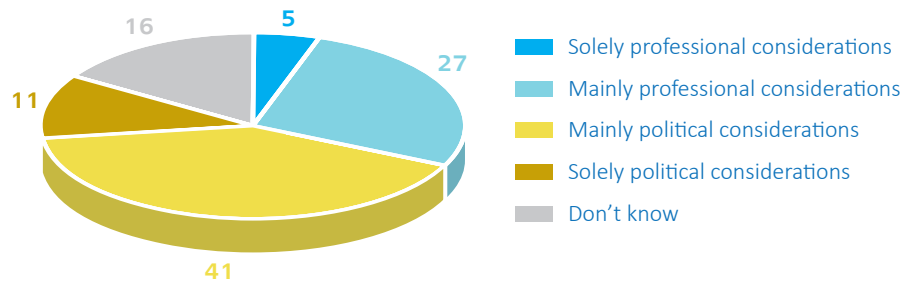
Question 77

Appendix 1

Page 194

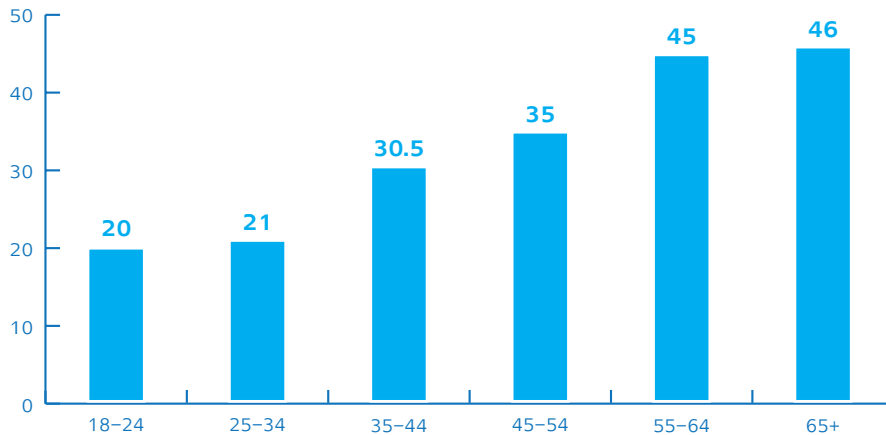
The Israeli public is also highly critical of the State Attorney: Over one-half of interviewees expressed the opinion that the Office is motivated mainly or solely by political considerations, while less than one-third responded that it is guided solely or primarily by professional factors. Here too, only a negligible share of respondents (5%) hold that the State Attorney acts strictly on the basis of professional concerns.

Figure 6.9 / Does the State Attorney act on the basis of professional or political considerations? (total sample; %)



In the Jewish sample, about one-half of respondents hold that the State Attorney acts solely or primarily based on political considerations, while in the Arab sample, roughly two-thirds take this view. A breakdown by age group shows that only about one-fifth of young people (up to age 34) think that the Office operates strictly or mainly in accordance with professional criteria, while close to half of the oldest cohorts (55+) feel this way.

Figure 6.10 / Agree that the State Attorney acts mainly or solely on the basis of professional considerations, by age group (total sample; %)



On this topic as well, an analysis of the Jewish sample by religiosity and political orientation reveals substantial differences: A large majority of Haredi and national religious respondents, along with a small majority of both traditional groups (religious and non-religious), hold that the State Attorney acts solely or largely on the basis of political considerations. By contrast, half of the secular Jews surveyed believe that it is guided by professional considerations, and only one-third, by political concerns. A breakdown of the findings by political orientation shows that almost two-thirds on the Left think that the State Attorney operates solely or mainly based on professional criteria, whereas the same share on the Right hold that it acts only or primarily in accordance with political considerations. As for the Center, almost half of the interviewees took the former position, and one-third, the latter.

Table 6.7 (Jewish sample; %)

		State Attorney acts solely/mainly based on professional considerations	State Attorney acts solely/mainly based on political considerations	Don't know	Total
Religiosity	Haredi	11	79	10	100
	National religious	14	70	16	100
	Traditional religious	25	55	20	100
	Traditional non-religious	31	51	18	100
	Secular	50	34	16	100
Political orientation	Left	63	20	17	100
	Center	47	34	19	100
	Right	22	63	15	100

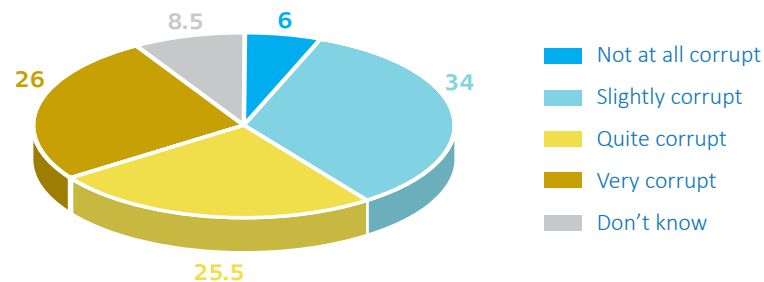
Integrity of the legal system

Question 68

Appendix 1
Page 191

A corrupt legal system is a major problem in any regime, and certainly in a democracy. In the last few years, no small number of public figures and politicians in Israel, primarily on the Right, have asserted that the country's legal system lacks integrity. Several cases of corruption that were exposed within the legal system (or in closely related areas) have only bolstered these claims. Our findings suggest that this message has had quite a strong impact on public opinion in Israel. Roughly one-half of the interviewees responded that the legal system in Israel is quite or very corrupt, with 34% stating that it is slightly corrupt and only 6% labeling it not at all corrupt. In the Arab sample, the share who consider the Israeli legal system to be quite or very corrupt is even higher than that in the Jewish sample (64% versus 49%, respectively), just as Arab respondents perceive a higher level of corruption in Israel's leadership than do Jewish respondents.

Figure 6.11 / How would you rate Israel's legal system in terms of corruption? (total sample; %)



A breakdown of the Jewish sample by political orientation and religiosity shows considerable differences between groups in how they assess the level of corruption in Israel's legal system: A majority on the Right hold that the legal system is quite or very corrupt, as contrasted with slightly over one-third in the Center and roughly one-fifth on the Left. Among Haredim, the share who think that the level of corruption in the legal system is quite or very high comes close to a consensus, while among the national religious, some two-thirds take this view. Among secular respondents, however, the majority think that the system is slightly or not at all corrupt.

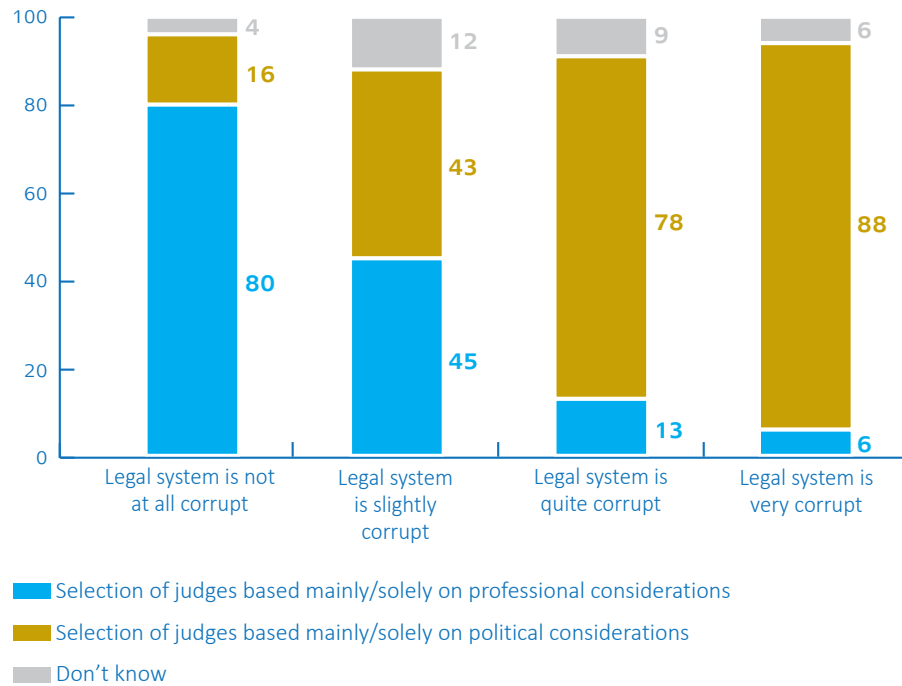
An analysis of the findings by level of education reveals that whereas one-half of respondents with an academic degree hold that the legal system is slightly or not at all corrupt, only about one-third of those with a lower level of education share this opinion. A breakdown by age group shows that while 59% of the younger cohorts (up to age 34) hold that there is corruption in the legal system, only 40.5% of the 55+ age group think that this is the case. Similar disparities emerged when analyzing the results by income level: 58% of respondents whose monthly income is below average, and 52% of those who reported an average income, believe that there is corruption in Israel's legal system—a view shared by only 40% of those with an above-average income.

Table 6.8 (total sample and Jewish sample; %)

		The legal system is slightly or not at all corrupt	The legal system is quite or very corrupt
Religiosity (Jews)	Haredi	12.5	82
	National religious	29	61
	Traditional religious	31	63
	Traditional non-religious	37	53
	Secular	58	32
Political orientation (Jews)	Left	73	18
	Center	52	38
	Right	30	61
Education	Up to and including matriculation	35.5	55.5
	Post-secondary / partial academic studies	35	58.5
	B.A. and above	50	41

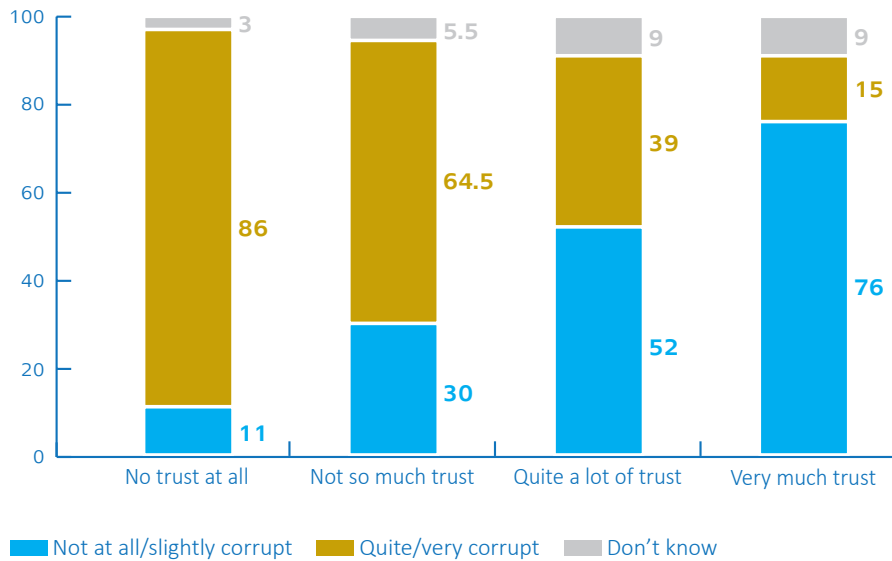
Additionally, we found a strong association between the view that the legal system is corrupt and respondents' perceptions of the judicial selection process. Of those who hold that the system is not at all corrupt, a large majority (80%) responded that judges are selected based mainly or solely on professional considerations. By contrast, among those who consider the legal system to be very corrupt, an overwhelming majority (88%) feel that judges are selected primarily or only on the basis of political considerations.

Figure 6.12 / Link between assessment of corruption in the legal system and perception of the judicial selection process (total sample; %)



Perceptions of the extent of corruption in the legal system are also linked with the level of trust in the Supreme Court. Whereas 86% of those who do not trust the Supreme Court at all stated that Israel's legal system is quite or very corrupt, among those who trust the Supreme Court very much, the picture is just the opposite, with 76% of them indicating that the legal system is slightly or not at all corrupt.

Figure 6.13 / Assessment of corruption in the legal system, by level of trust in the Supreme Court (total sample; %)



Israel's Supreme Court

In chapter 4, we showed that trust in the Supreme Court has been in a downward spiral over the past decade (in 2012, 73% of the total sample expressed trust in this institution, compared with just 47% who gave a similar response this year). The most noticeable decline in trust in the Supreme Court over this period is concentrated in two groups: from 65% to 32% among respondents on the Right in the Jewish public, and from 78% to 44% in the Arab public as a whole.

According to 40% of respondents, the Supreme Court holds too much power, as opposed to just 14% who feel that it has too little. Another one-third indicated that the Supreme Court has the right amount of power.

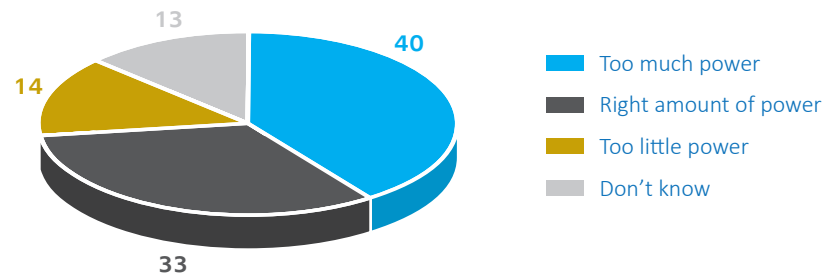
Power of the Supreme Court

Question 73

Appendix 1

Page 193

Figure 6.14 / How would you rate the degree of power of Israel's Supreme Court? (total sample; %)



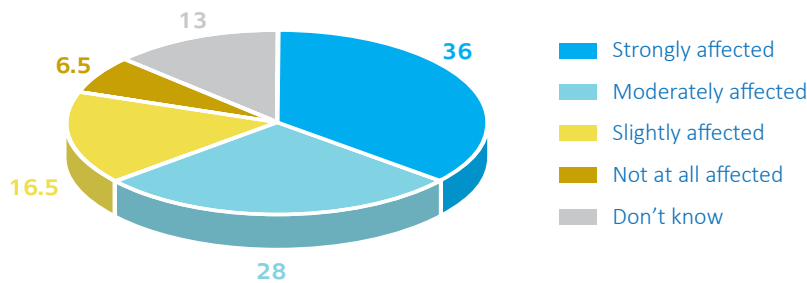
In the Jewish public, the variable that best accounts for respondents' positions regarding the Supreme Court is political orientation. Breaking down the results by this variable, we find that a majority on the Right (as contrasted with a minority from the Center and the Left) hold that the Supreme Court has too much power. On this issue as well, sizeable differences of opinion were found when the findings were analyzed on the basis of religiosity: A considerable majority of Haredi and national religious respondents, almost half of both traditional groups, and only less than a quarter of secular interviewees think that the Supreme Court is too powerful.

Table 6.9 (Jewish sample; %)

		Supreme Court has too much power	Supreme Court has the right amount of power	Supreme Court has too little power	Don't know	Total
Political orientation	Left	11	56	20	13	100
	Center	24	41	18.5	16.5	100
	Right	57	22	10	11	100
Religiosity	Haredi	76	9	8	7	100
	National religious	70.5	9	7	13.5	100
	Traditional religious	47	25	14.5	13.5	100
	Traditional non-religious	46	28	10	16	100
	Secular	22.5	48	17	12.5	100

Are the decisions of Israel's Supreme Court justices influenced by their political views? In the opinion of almost two-thirds of respondents, this is indeed the case, compared with less than one-quarter who think that the rulings are affected only slightly or not at all. In fact, only 6.5% of the interviewees (one in 15 of those surveyed) hold that the decisions of Supreme Court justices are not at all affected by their political outlooks.

Figure 6.15 / “To what degree are the decisions of Supreme Court justices affected by their political views?” (total sample; %)



We did not find differences on this question between Jewish and Arab interviewees. A breakdown of the responses in the Jewish sample by age group shows an association between age and opinions on this issue: Over two-thirds of the younger cohorts (up to age 34) hold that the rulings of Supreme Court justices are influenced by their political views, compared with 58% of those aged 55 and over. Even larger gaps were found when analyzing the responses by religiosity and political orientation in the Jewish sample. A decisive majority of Haredim, and two-thirds of national religious respondents, think that the judges' rulings are strongly affected by their political views, as contrasted with slightly less than one-half of traditional religious, one-third of traditional non-religious, and roughly one-fifth of secular interviewees. A breakdown of the findings by political orientation shows that half of the respondents on the Right believe that the decisions of Supreme Court justices are strongly affected by their political leanings, as opposed to roughly one-quarter from the Center and just 13.5% from the Left.

Decisions of Supreme Court justices as a function of their political views

Question 76

Appendix 1

Page 194

Appendix 2

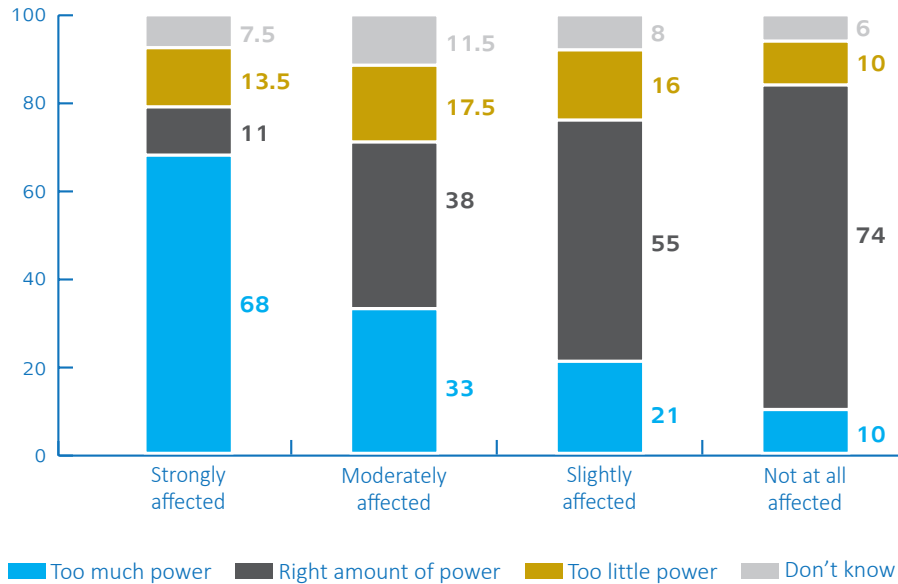
(See IDI website)

Table 6.10 (total sample and Jewish sample; %)

Decisions of Supreme Court justices are affected by their political views		Strongly	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Age	18–34	37	31.5	15	4	12.5	100
	35–54	40	26.5	15	5	13.5	100
	55+	32	26	20	10	12	100
Religiosity (Jews)	Haredi	82.5	12	2	0	3.5	100
	National religious	67	22	5	1	5	100
	Traditional religious	45	24	11.5	6	13.5	100
	Traditional non-religious	33	31.5	17	6	12.5	100
	Secular	21.5	27.5	24	10.5	16.5	100
Political orientation (Jews)	Left	13.5	26	32	14	14.5	100
	Center	24	26	22	10	18	100
	Right	51	26	10	4	9	100

Again, not surprisingly, two-thirds of those who think that the rulings of Supreme Court justices are strongly affected by their political opinions think that the Court has too much power. Conversely, of those who hold that the judges' decisions are not at all affected, only one-tenth hold that the Court is too powerful.

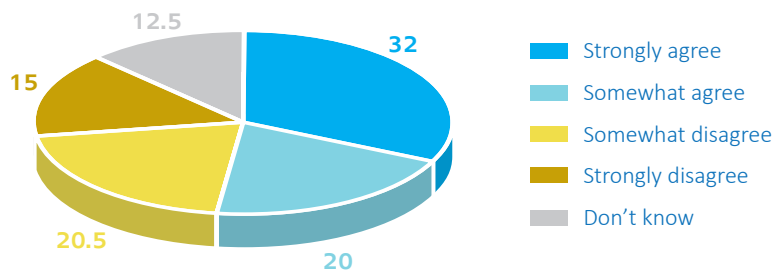
Figure 6.16 / Perception of the Supreme Court's power, by view on effect of justices' political views on their rulings (total sample; %)



Examining the surveys of the last three years, we discovered a slight increase in the share of respondents who think that the rulings of Supreme Court justices are influenced by their political views: In 2018 and 2019, 59% agreed with this statement somewhat or strongly, while today the corresponding finding is 64%.

This year's survey indicates that just over one-half of respondents think that the Supreme Court intervenes too much in decisions made by the government and its ministers, while roughly one-third disagree with this assessment.

Figure 6.17 / "The Supreme Court intervenes too much in decisions of the government and its ministers" (total sample; %)



Supreme Court intervention in government decisions

Question 75

Appendix 1
Page 194

A breakdown of positions on this issue by nationality does not show any major difference between the groups. When the results are broken down by education, we find that among those with an academic degree, opinions are split as to whether Supreme Court intervention is excessive, whereas in the other categories for this variable, a majority agree with this assertion.

As in the previous questions, here too a very sizeable majority of Haredi and national religious respondents, along with two-thirds of traditional religious and over half of traditional non-religious respondents, agree with the statement that the Supreme Court intervenes too much in government decisions. The secular respondents are the only group on the religious spectrum in which a majority disagree with this claim. Similar differences emerge from an analysis of opinions in the Jewish public based on political orientation: Over two-thirds of respondents on the Right agree with this premise, as contrasted with over half from the Center and a substantial majority from the Left who disagree with it.

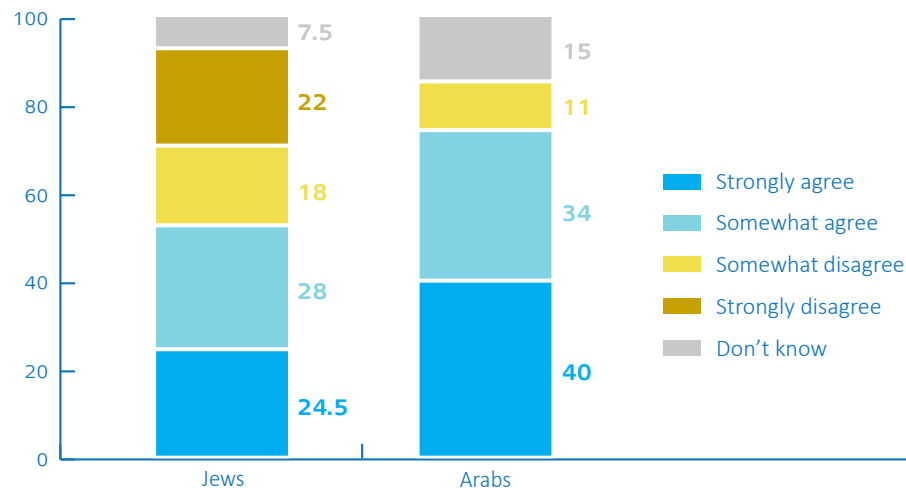
Table 6.11 (total sample and Jewish sample; %)

Supreme Court intervenes too much in decisions of the government and its ministers		Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Total
Education	Up to and including matriculation	58	28	14	100
	Post-secondary / partial academic studies	58	32	10	100
	B.A. and above	44	47	9	100
Religiosity (Jews)	Haredi	82	10	8	100
	National religious	82	12	6	100
	Traditional religious	66	21	13	100
	Traditional non-religious	54	34.5	11.5	100
	Secular	31	58	11	100
Political orientation (Jews)	Left	13	80	7	100
	Center	35	53	12	100
	Right	69	21.5	9.5	100

We asked whether the Supreme Court should have the power to overturn laws passed by the Knesset, if they conflict with democratic principles such as freedom of expression or equality before the law. Although a slim majority (52% of the total sample) hold that the Supreme Court intervenes too much in decisions made by the government and its ministers, at the same time a majority of 56% support the position that the Supreme Court should have the authority to repeal laws enacted by the Knesset if they are found to contradict democratic principles.

Unlike other questions regarding the Supreme Court, where differences between Jews and Arabs were negligible, here there are noticeable disparities: Among Jewish respondents, only slightly over half (52.5%) agree with the above proposition, while among Arab respondents, three-quarters hold this view.

Figure 6.18 / “The Supreme Court should have the power to overturn laws passed by the Knesset if they conflict with democratic principles such as freedom of expression and equality before the law” (Jewish and Arab samples; %)



As with the other questions examining attitudes toward the Supreme Court, here too there were considerable differences between groups in the Jewish sample when analyzed by religiosity and political orientation. A sizeable majority of Haredi and national religious respondents disagree that the Supreme Court should have the authority to abolish laws enacted by the Knesset if they run counter to democratic principles, as contrasted with a large majority of secular respondents who agree with this assertion. In the two traditional groups, opinions are divided, with a slight edge for those in favor of such a move. Breaking down the results by political orientation, we find that on the Left and in the Center, considerable majorities of varying sizes agree with this argument, whereas on the Right roughly one-half disagree with it.

Power of the Supreme Court to overturn laws passed by the Knesset

Question 74

Appendix 1

Page 193

Appendix 2

(See IDI website)

Table 6.12 (Jewish sample; %)

Supreme Court should have the power to overturn laws passed by the Knesset if they contradict democratic principles		Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Total
Religiosity	Haredi	17	76.5	6.5	100
	National religious	22	66	12	100
	Traditional religious	50	43.5	6.5	100
	Traditional non-religious	53	37.5	9.5	100
	Secular	70	24	6	100
Political orientation	Left	85	12	3	100
	Center	63	29	8	100
	Right	40	51	9	100

As opposed to many of the questions in this section, which point to a gradual erosion over the years in the status of Israel's legal system in general and the Supreme Court in particular, a comparison between responses to the present question eleven years ago and today shows a (modest) upturn in the share of respondents who agree that the Supreme Court should have the power to overturn laws enacted by the Knesset if they contradict democratic principles (52.5% in 2010, and 56% currently).

Part Two

Israeli Democracy— An International Comparison

Chapter 7 / International Indicators

Concern about the state of democracy, and the changes it is undergoing, is not unique to Israel. Throughout the world, quality of government is a pressing issue, preoccupying decision-makers and the general public alike. Accordingly, alongside the opinions of the Israeli public on this subject, we present in this section a series of relevant indicators published by international research institutes. These assessments, compiled on the basis of professional surveys, public opinion polls, and official statistics, enable us to examine the state of Israeli democracy today in comparison with the past, with other OECD states, and with other countries around the world. It is important to note that the indicators issued this year (2021) relate to the countries' standing in 2020.

This year, we review 15 indicators in six areas:

1. Democratic rights and freedoms (political rights, civil liberties, freedom of the press)
2. The democratic process (voice and accountability, political participation, egalitarian democracy, participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, democratic political culture)
3. Governance (functioning of government, rule of law)
4. Corruption (control of corruption, perception of corruption)
5. Regulation (regulatory quality)
6. Economic equality (equal distribution of resources)

We engage in two types of comparison: first, Israel's performance relative to other countries; and second, Israeli democracy today compared with its standing over the last two decades. For each indicator, we present four ratings: (1) Israel's **score** this year; (2) Israel's **score** this year compared with the past; (3) Israel's **global ranking** in relation to all the other countries included in the indicator; and (4) Israel's **ranking** among the 38 member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In addition, we show the distribution of scores in each indicator for all the countries surveyed.

A note on methodology: Each of the research institutes uses its own scale to present its scores: 0–10, 0–40, 0–60, 0–1, and so on. To make it easier to compare Israel's scores across the various indicators, we standardized each of the scores on a uniform scale from 0 to 100. The higher the score, the better the quality of democracy in a given country. The table below presents Israel's scores and its ranking in the various indicators.

Let us note an important distinction between scores and rankings: The score is compiled for a given country in a given year, whereas the ranking relates to the country's standing relative to the other countries surveyed. This means that a country's score can remain unchanged year after year, but if the other countries improved or declined in their democratic performance, that country's ranking will change. And conversely, a score can change, but if the scores of all the other countries changed in the same direction, its ranking may remain the same. The score is presented as an absolute number between 0 and 100, whereas the ranking is given in two forms: an absolute number and a percentile.

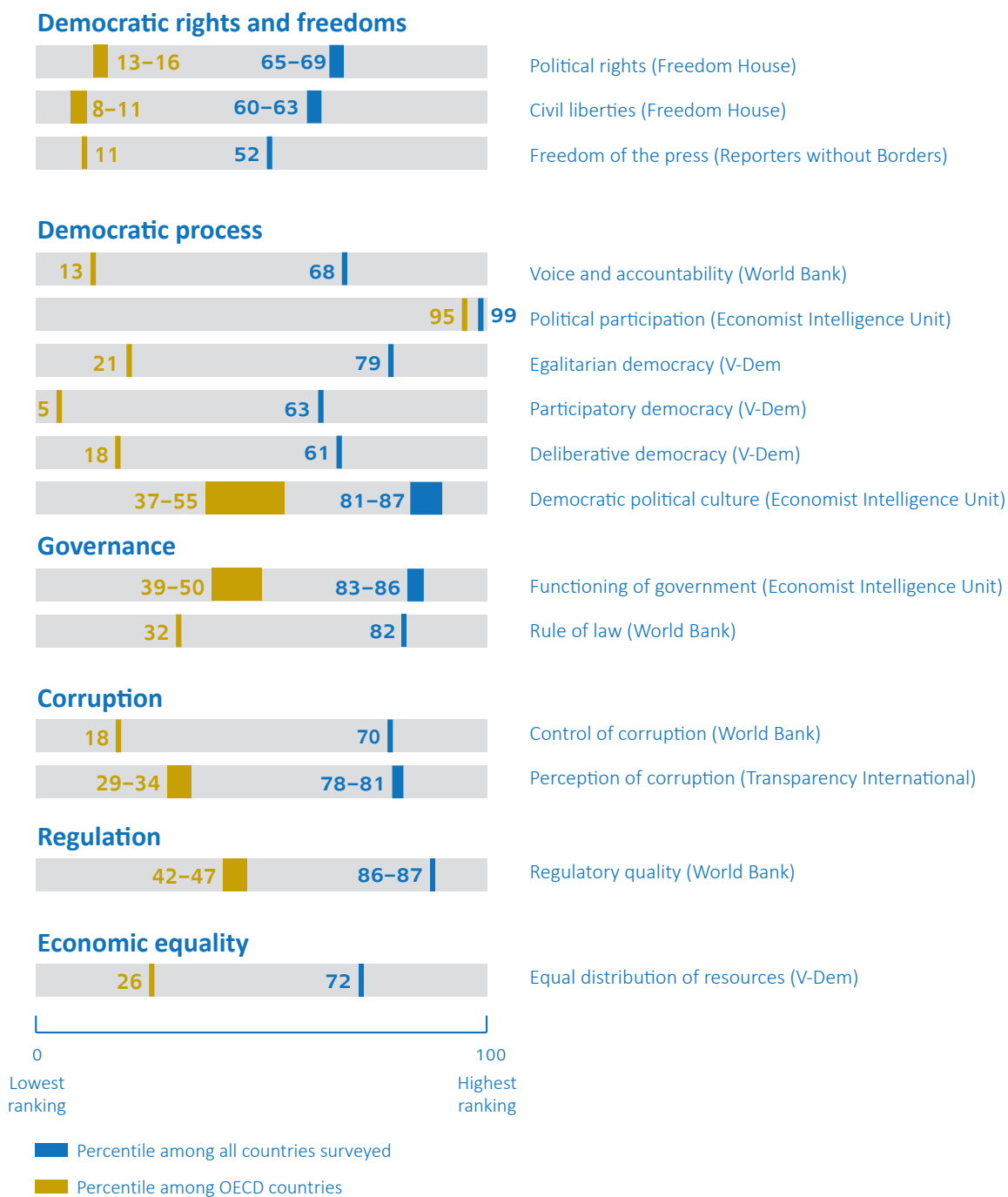
Table 7.1 / Israel's ranking in international indicators

		Global ranking*	Percentile— all countries surveyed	OECD ranking (out of 38 countries)	Percentile— OECD countries	Israel's standardized score (0–100)
Democratic rights and freedoms	Political rights (Freedom House)	65–73/ 210	65–69	32–33	13–16	82.5
	Civil liberties (Freedom House)	78–83/ 210	60–63	34–35	8–11	71.7
	Freedom of the press (Reporters Without Borders)	86/180	52	34	11	69.1
Democratic process	Voice and accountability (World Bank)	66/208	68	33	13	63.2
	Political participation (Economist Intelligence Unit)	2/167	99	2	95	94.4
	Egalitarian democracy (V-Dem)	37/179	79	30	21	80.2
	Participatory democracy (V-Dem)	66/179	63	36	5	57.6
	Deliberative democracy (V-Dem)	69/179	61	31	18	74.1
	Democratic political culture (Economist Intelligence Unit)	21–31/ 167	81–87	17–24	37–55	75.0

* The number following the slash indicates the total number of countries surveyed in the indicator.

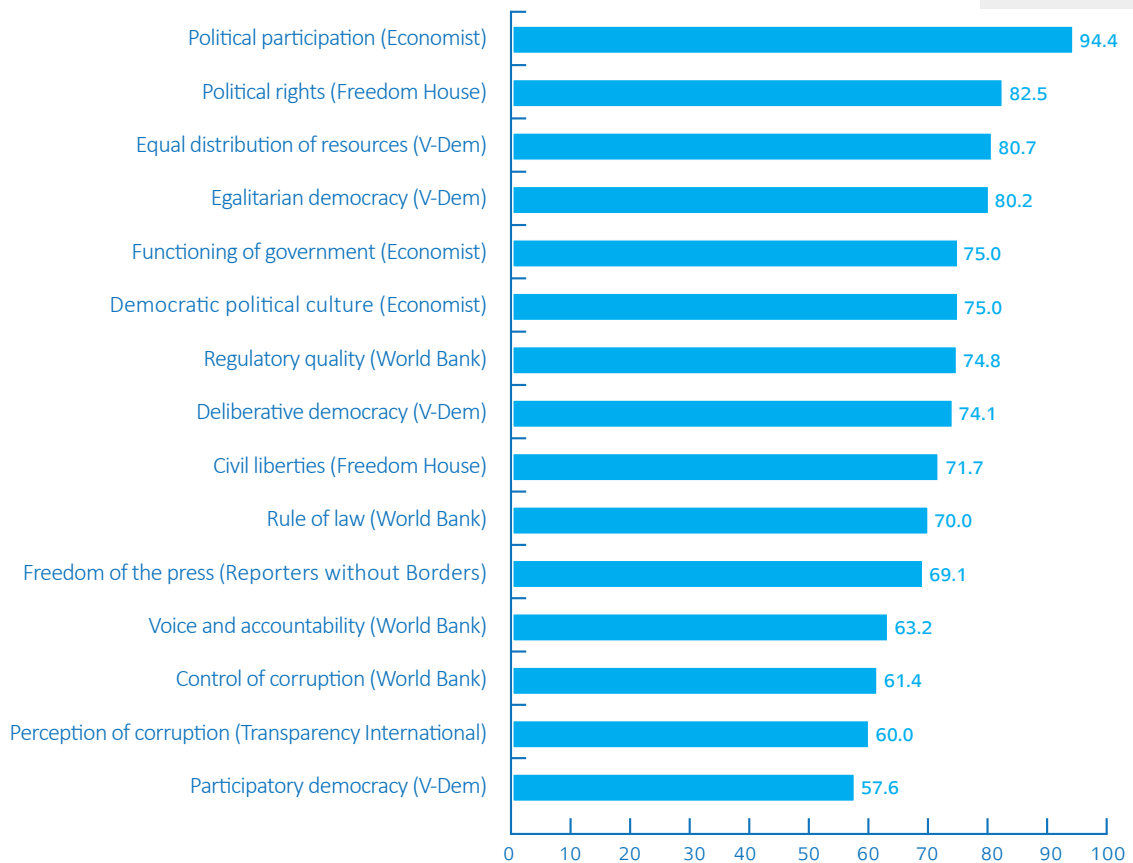
		Global ranking	Percentile— all countries surveyed	OECD ranking (out of 38 countries)	Percentile— OECD countries	Israel's standardized score (0–100)
Governance	Functioning of government (Economist Intelligence Unit)	24–29/ 167	83–86	19–23	39–50	75.0
	Rule of law (World Bank)	37–38/ 209	82	26	32	70.0
Corruption	Control of corruption (World Bank)	62/209	70	31	18	61.4
	Perception of corruption (Transparency International)	35–39/ 180	78–81	25–27	29–34	60.0
Regulation	Regulatory quality (World Bank)	27–29/ 209	86–87	20–22	42–47	74.8
Economic equality	Equal distribution of resources (V-Dem)	50/179	72	28	26	80.7

Figure 7.1 / Israel's ranking in international indicators (percentile)



Once again, Israel's highest score (94.4) is in the political participation indicator of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). In 2020, its performance improved over previous years, yielding Israel's highest grade since the EIU began measuring this parameter 15 years ago. Still, the downward trend in the World Bank's control of corruption indicator has continued, with Israel dropping from 44th in the rankings five years ago to 62nd place this year, positioning it in the third quartile of the OECD states in both corruption indicators (the second one being Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index). The only indicator in which Israel scored lower was participatory democracy, which has been at the bottom of the list in recent years, and for which Israel's score dropped even further this year (to 57.6).

Figure 7.2 / Israel's scores in international indicators



7.1 Democratic Rights and Freedoms

Freedom in the World is a report compiled annually by Freedom House based on expert assessments. It encompasses two indicators that reflect countries' performance in the areas of political rights and civil liberties.

Political rights

Institution: Freedom House

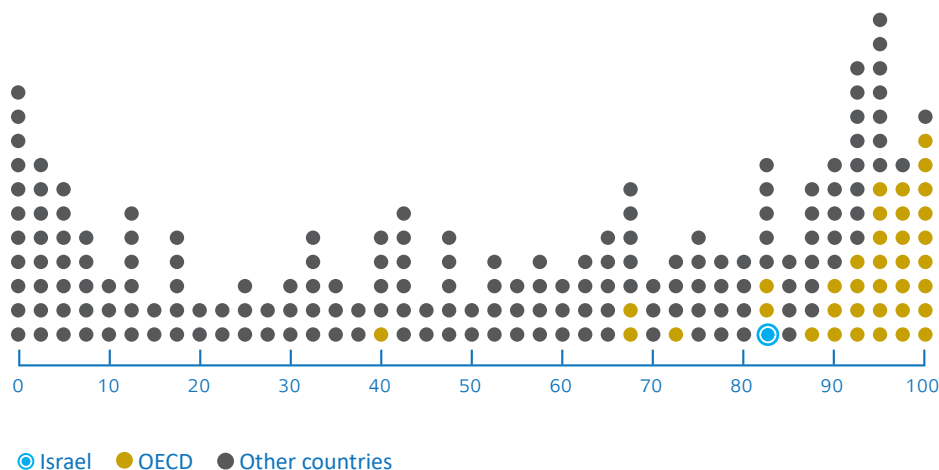
Israel's score: 82.5

No. of countries included in indicator: 210

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 65–73 (65th–69th percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 32–33 (13th–16th percentile)

Figure 7.3 / Distribution of standardized scores in political rights indicator

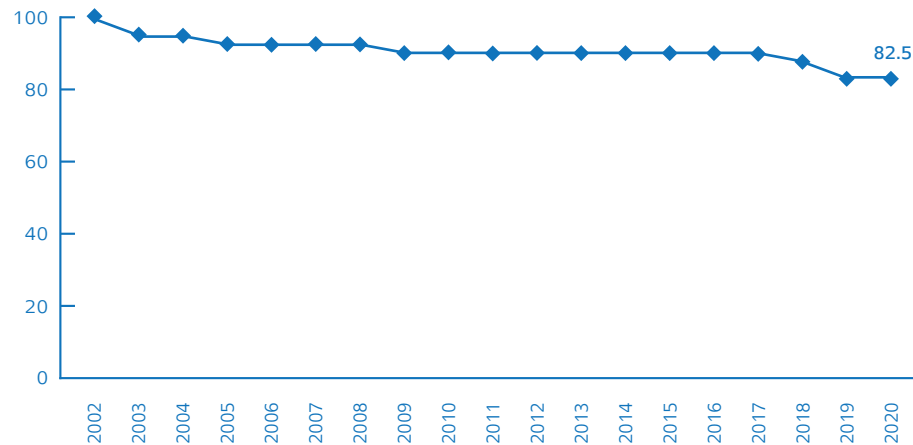


The political rights indicator examines the extent to which a given country meets the following criteria: free and fair elections; unhindered competition between political parties; actual power of elected representatives; and a strong and influential opposition. In addition, it assesses the level of corruption; the safeguarding of minority rights; whether the country is subject to military rule; and whether there is foreign intervention in its affairs.

Israel's score in the political rights indicator remains the same as last year (82.5)—its lowest rating since 2002. This relatively low score stems from a worsening perception of government

performance. Two rounds of elections were held in 2019, both failing to produce a government, and the government that was elected in 2020 then collapsed roughly six months after it was sworn in. The situation was compounded by limitations imposed on public protest (including violent police enforcement and a ban on demonstrations beyond a radius of 1 km from the protester’s place of residence, on the pretext of preventing the spread of COVID-19), and on the work of civil-society organizations. This year’s score places Israel in the 65th–69th percentile in the global ranking, slightly above the United States; however, among OECD states, it is in 32nd–33rd place out of 38 (13th–16th percentile).

Figure 7.4 / Israel’s score in political rights indicator, 2002–2020



Civil liberties

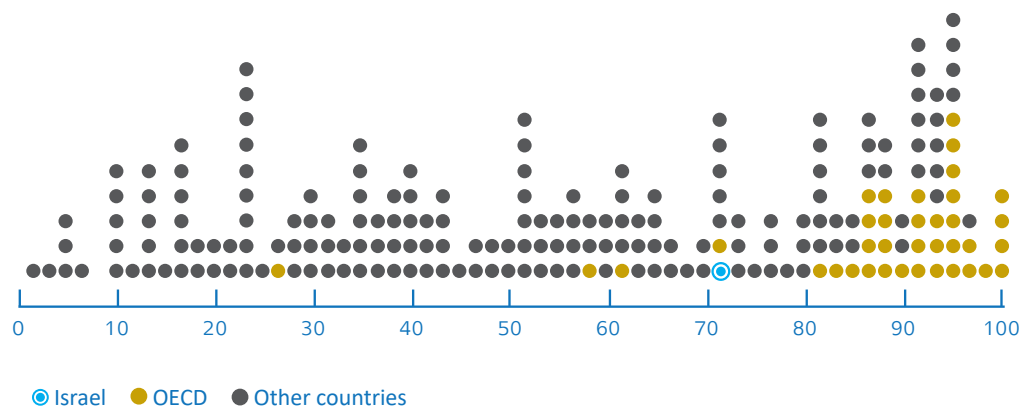
Institution: Freedom House

Israel’s score: 71.7

No. of countries included in indicator: 210

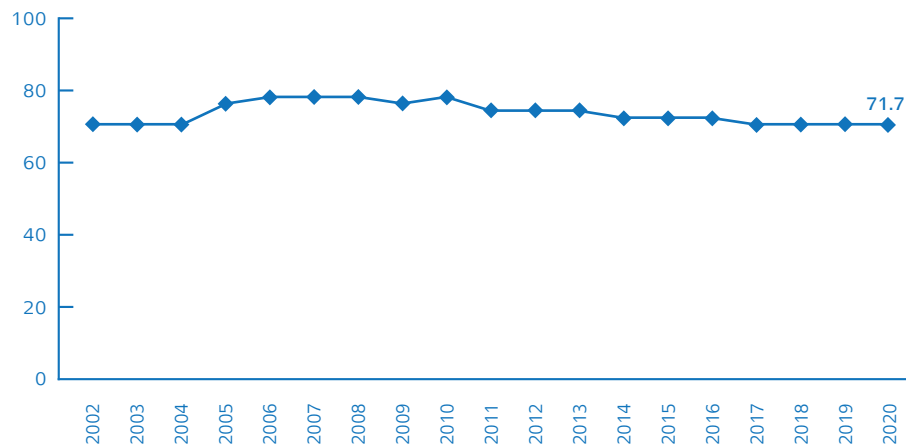
Israel’s ranking among all countries surveyed: 78–83 (60th–63rd percentile)

Israel’s ranking among OECD members: 34–35 (8th–11th percentile)

Figure 7.5 / Distribution of standardized scores in civil liberties indicator

The **civil liberties indicator** reflects the extent to which a country upholds such democratic rights as freedom of expression, the press, movement, religion, and association, along with academic freedom and marital and family rights. Also assessed in this indicator are independence of the judicial system; personal security; equality before the law; absence of political violence; property rights; and gender equality.

Israel's score in the civil liberties indicator has remained unchanged since 2017, at 71.7. Of the countries included in this indicator, Israel ranks in the 60th–63rd percentile, that is, in the second quartile. Among OECD members, Israel's score is conspicuously low, placing it in the 8th–11th percentile (near the bottom of the fourth quartile), ahead of only Turkey, Mexico, and Colombia.

Figure 7.6 / Israel's score in civil liberties indicator, 2002–2020

Freedom of the press

Institution: Reporters Without Borders

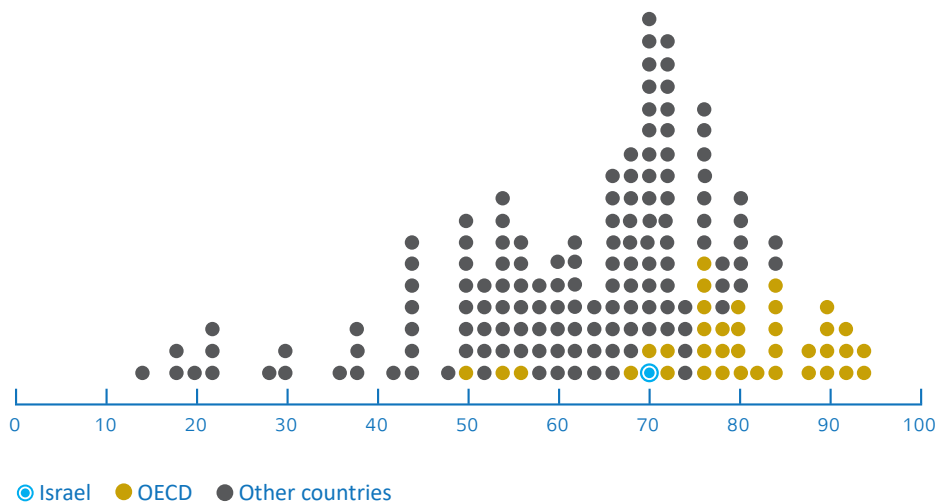
Israel's score: 69.1

No. of countries included in indicator: 180

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 86 (52nd percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 34 (11th percentile)

Figure 7.7 / Distribution of standardized scores in freedom of the press indicator

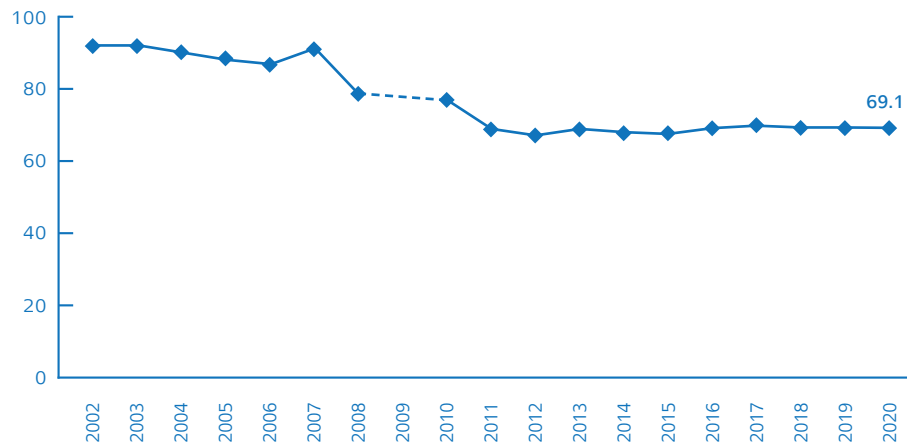


The *World Press Freedom Index*, published by Reporters Without Borders, assesses reporters' freedom of activity in 180 countries around the globe. It is calculated based on an analysis of objective quantitative data—for example, the number of incidents of abuse or acts of violence against journalists over the past year—combined with the opinions of media experts in such areas as media independence, representation of different opinions, censorship, and transparency.

Israel's score of 69.1 is virtually unchanged from last year, and marks its lowest grade since 2015. In comparison with the other countries surveyed, Israel places at the bottom of the second quartile, ranking 86th out of 180. Relative to the OECD states, however, its position is lower, in the fourth quartile (11th percentile), topping only Hungary, Colombia, Mexico, and Turkey. The low score is due to military censorship in Israel, government hostility to journalists, difficulties faced by foreign journalists in renewing their permits to work in the West Bank and

Gaza Strip, and infringements on the rights of Palestinian journalists, including administrative detentions and firing on reporters covering demonstrations.

Figure 7.8 / Israel's score in freedom of the press indicator, 2002–2020



7.2 Democratic Process

Voice and accountability

Institution: World Bank

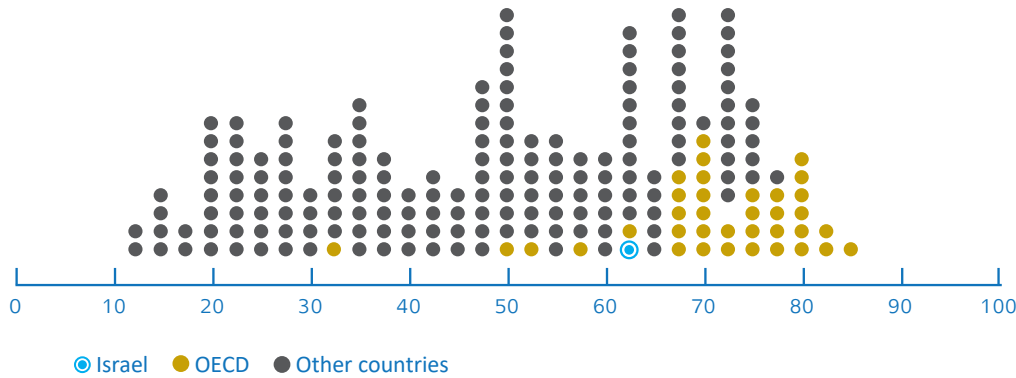
Israel's score: 63.2

No. of countries included in indicator: 208

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 66 (68th percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 33 (13th percentile)

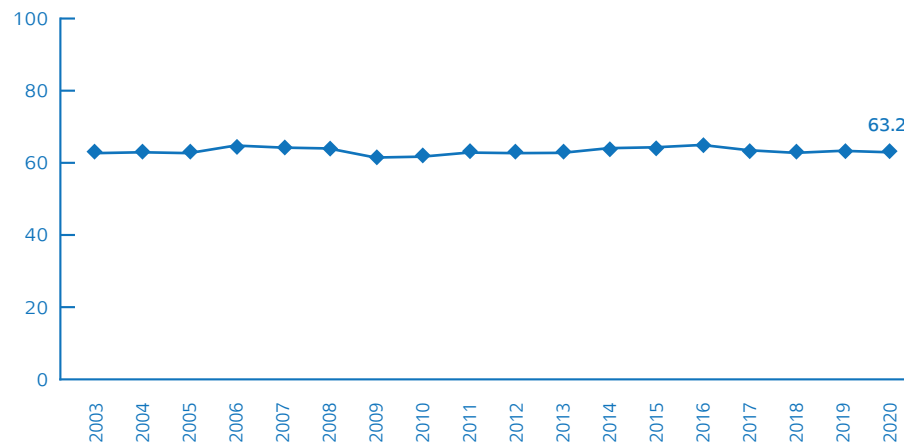
Figure 7.9 / Distribution of standardized scores in voice and accountability indicator



The **voice and accountability indicator** of the World Bank is based on the assessment of experts, public opinion polls, and official statistics. It examines the extent to which citizens are able to influence the composition and policies of the government, as well as levels of freedom of expression, association, and the press.

Israel scored 63.2 in voice and accountability this year, similar to its performance over the last three years; nonetheless, its global ranking dropped five places this year (from 61 to 66), positioning it in the second quartile (68th percentile). In comparison with the OECD states, Israel ranks in the fourth and lowest quartile (13th percentile), above only Poland, Hungary, Colombia, Mexico, and Turkey.

Figure 7.10 / Israel's score in voice and accountability indicator, 2003–2020



Political participation

Institution: Economist Intelligence Unit

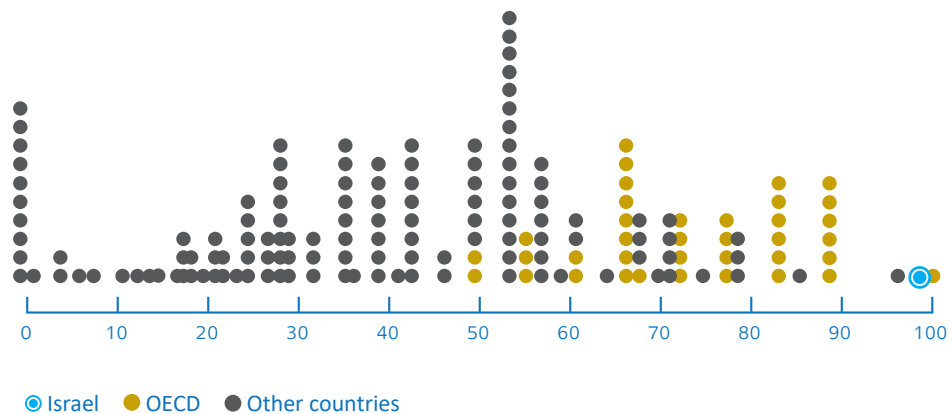
Israel's score: 94.4

No. of countries included in indicator: 167

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 2 (99th percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 2 (95th percentile)

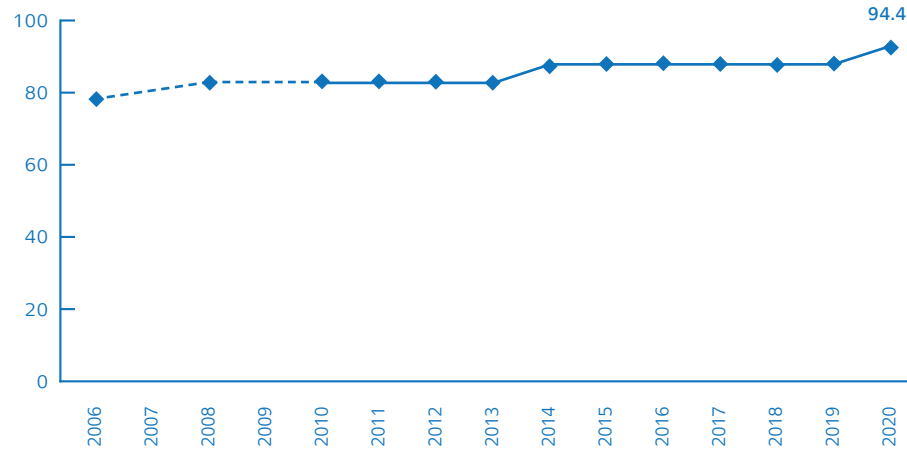
Figure 7.11 / Distribution of standardized scores in political participation indicator



The **political participation indicator** of the Economist Intelligence Unit is based on a combination of expert assessments, public opinion polls, and official statistics that consider the following parameters: voter turnout; voting rights and right of association for minorities; the proportion of women in parliament; party membership rates; citizens' level of interest in current affairs in general and the political system in particular; political engagement; readiness to participate in legal demonstrations; and government encouragement of political participation.

Israel scored extremely high in political participation (94.4), even topping last year's grade. This puts it in second place globally (99th percentile), meaning that the level of political participation of Israeli citizens surpasses that of all the established democracies with the exception of Norway. Israel also ranks near the head of the list of OECD countries (95th percentile). Its improved score this year stems from high levels of voter turnout in national elections—a finding that is particularly striking given the fact that three such elections took place over the course of 2019–2020.

Figure 7.12 / Israel's score in political participation indicator, 2006–2020



Egalitarian democracy

Institution: V-Dem Institute

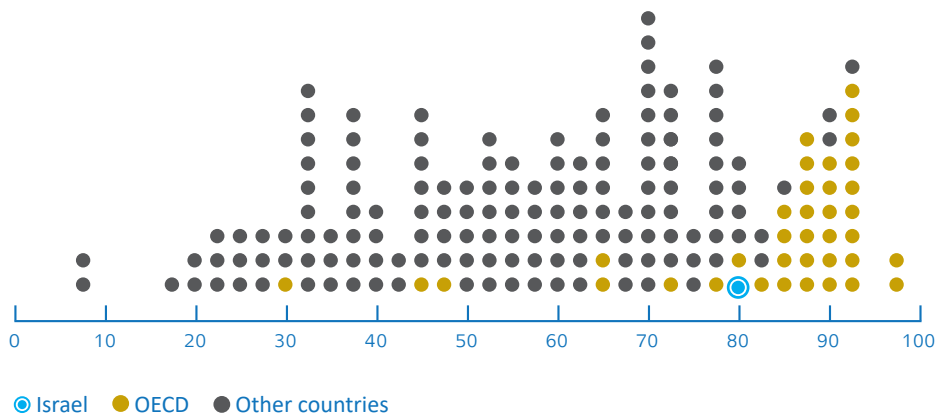
Israel's score: 80.2

No. of countries included in indicator: 179

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 37 (79th percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 30 (21st percentile)

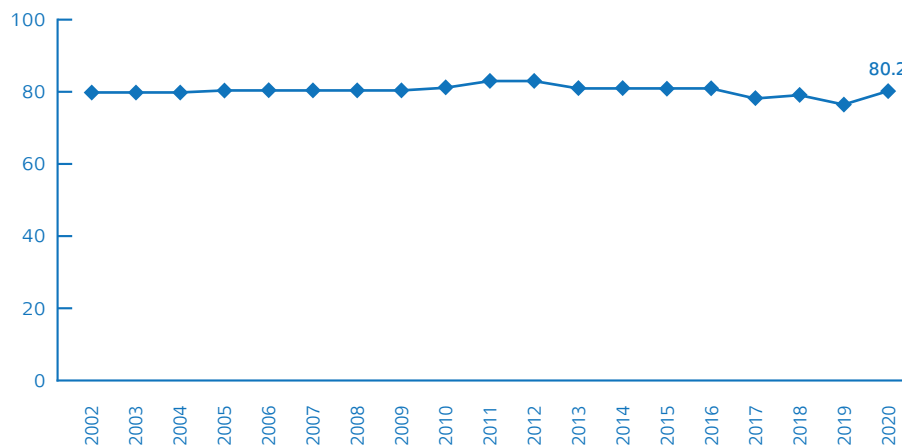
Figure 7.13 / Distribution of standardized scores in egalitarian democracy indicator



The **Egalitarian Component Index**, one of several democracy indicators compiled by the V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) Institute, is based on a worldwide survey of experts. Its underlying principle is the belief that equal distribution of resources among different population groups contributes to political equality. Thus, the indicator examines to what extent all groups in a given society have an equal chance to play a role in the political sphere, run for office, express their opinions, and influence decision-making.

Israel's current score in this index is 80.2, slightly higher than last year's grade. Its global ranking rose correspondingly by six places (taking it from the 76th percentile to the 79th). In comparison with the OECD states, Israel is still situated in the lowest quartile (21st percentile).

Figure 7.14 / Israel's score in egalitarian democracy indicator, 2002–2020



Participatory democracy

Institution: V-Dem Institute

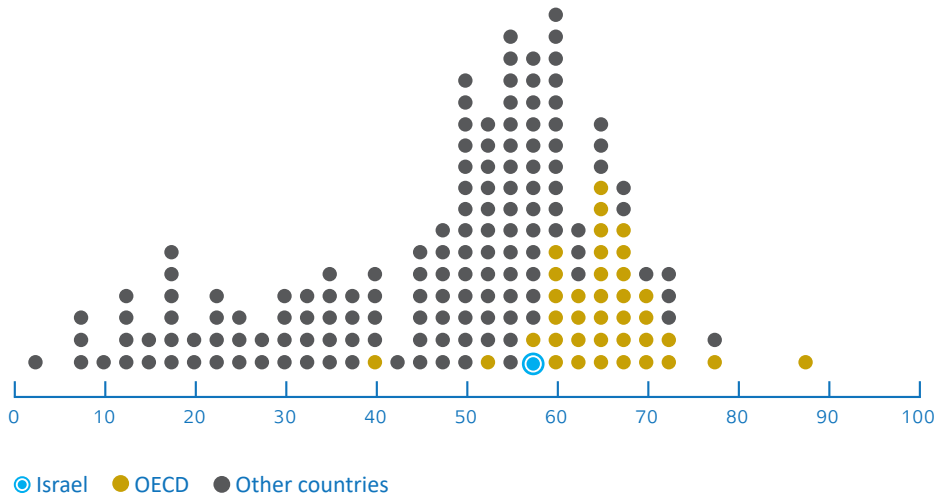
Israel's score: 57.6

No. of countries included in indicator: 179

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 66 (63rd percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 36 (5th percentile)

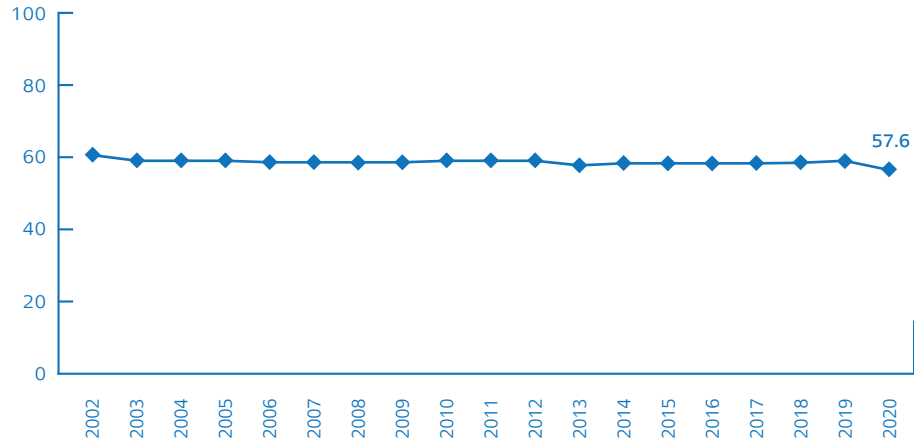
Figure 7.15 / Distribution of standardized scores in participatory democracy indicator



V-Dem Institute's **Participatory Component Index** (PCI) is based on the premise that in a substantive democracy, citizens' political involvement should not be confined to voting in elections every few years but must also include active, ongoing participation in a range of spheres of political and social activity. Thus, the PCI measures citizens' participation in civil-society organizations as well as in regional and local government.

Israel's score this year is 57.6, a falloff of 3% from last year. Although the decline was slight, it lowered the country's global ranking to the 63rd percentile (reflecting a drop of six places in the last three years). This was coupled with a fall to 36th place out of 38 in the list of OECD states, with only Mexico and Turkey faring worse.

Figure 7.16 / Israel's score in participatory democracy indicator, 2002–2020



Deliberative democracy

Institution: V-Dem Institute

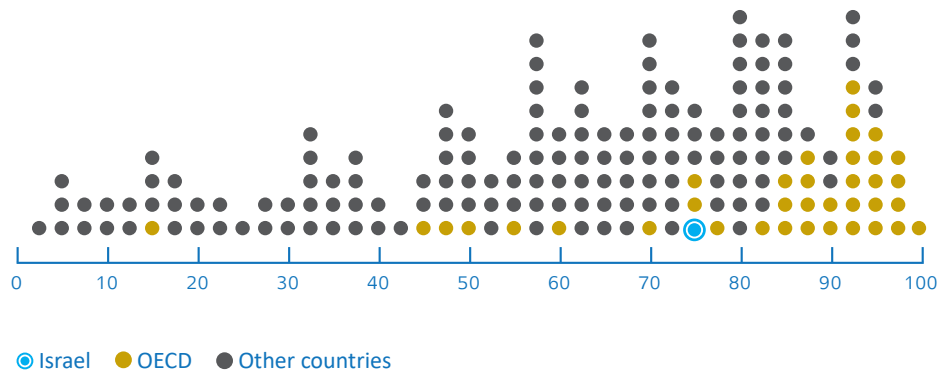
Israel's score: 74.1

No. of countries included in indicator: 179

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 69 (61st percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 31 (18th percentile)

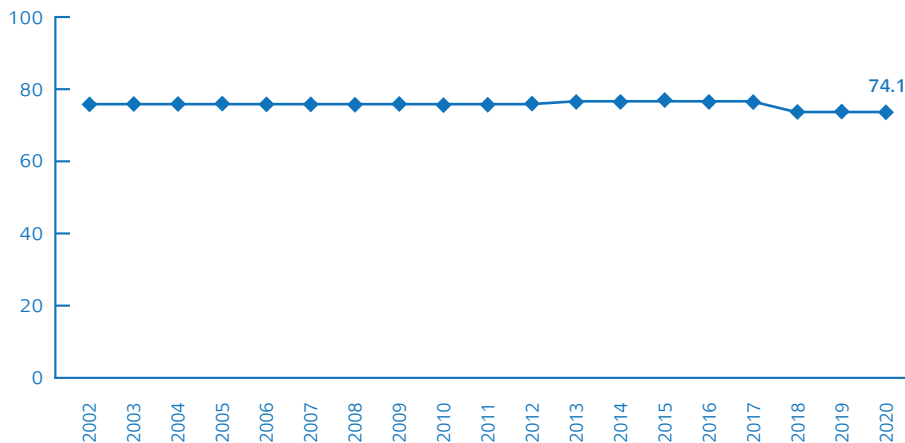
Figure 7.17 / Distribution of standardized scores in deliberative democracy indicator



The **Deliberative Component Index** (DCI) of the V-Dem Institute centers on the political decision-making process. A deliberative democracy is one in which political decisions are made in a public process focused on the common good, as opposed to being shaped by partisan or narrow political interests, or imposed from the top down. Democratic deliberation is measured by the extent to which political elites share with the public the reasoning behind their positions on key issues under discussion, acknowledge opposing views, and are open to respectful dialogue with those who disagree with them.

Israel's score this year in the DCI is 74.1, similar to those of the last two years. In this indicator as well, Israel remains in the second quartile (61st percentile) in the global ranking, and continues its poor showing among OECD states, placing in the lowest quartile (18th percentile).

Figure 7.18 / Israel's score in deliberative democracy indicator, 2002–2020



Democratic political culture

Institution: Economist Intelligence Unit

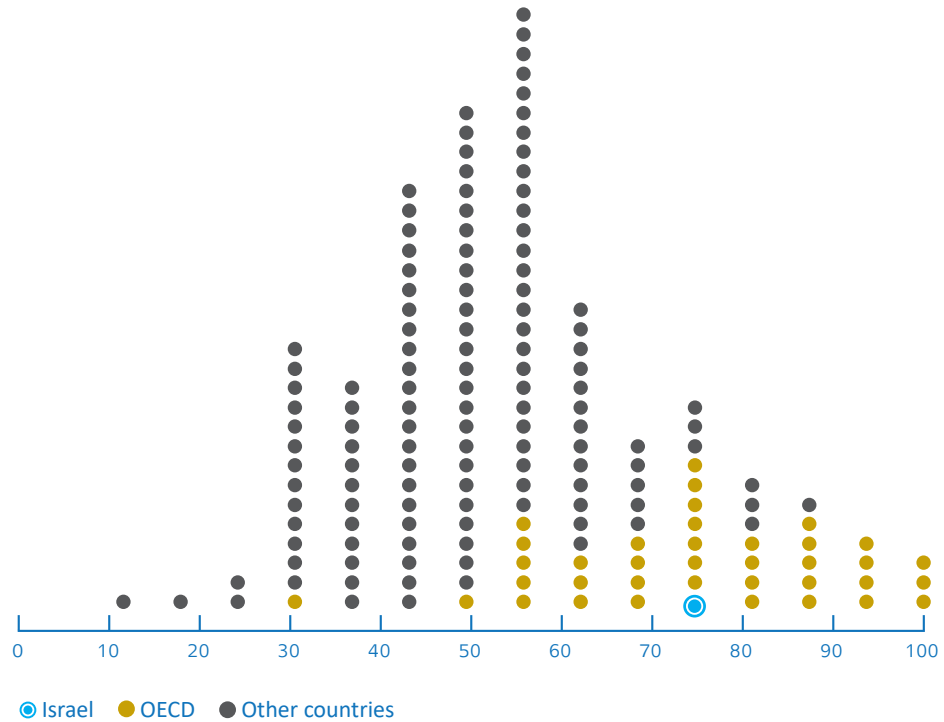
Israel's score: 75.0

No. of countries included in indicator: 167

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 21–31 (81st–87th percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 17–24 (37th–55th percentile)

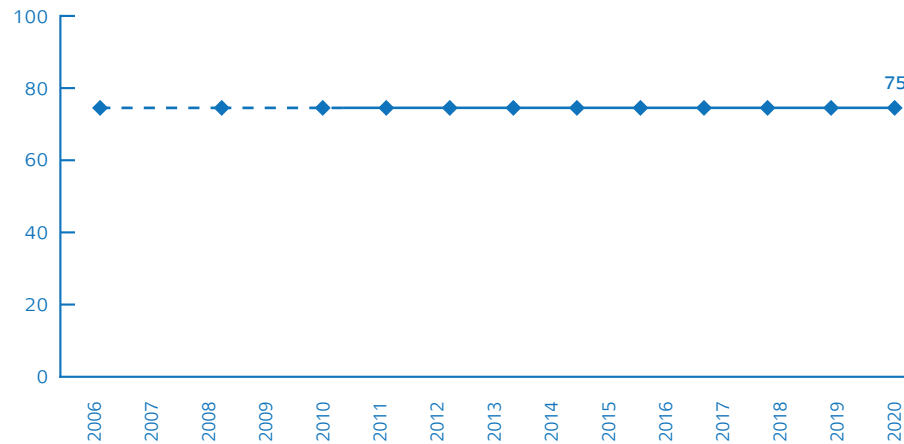
Figure 7.19 / Distribution of standardized scores in democratic political culture indicator



The **democratic political culture indicator**, compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit, is based on expert assessments and public opinion polls. It considers the following parameters: citizens' support for a democratic system, and their opposition to a "strong leader," a military regime, or technocratic leadership; the perception (or lack thereof) that democracy is beneficial to public order and economic prosperity; and the separation of church and state.

Once again this year, Israel's score is 75, a grade that has remained unchanged since this indicator was first compiled in 2006. Nevertheless, Israel slipped in the global rankings this year (from the 17–28 slot to 21–31). Its position also dropped slightly among OECD states (from 15–22 to 17–24), placing it near the midpoint of the list, on a par with Italy, Greece, the United Kingdom, and Costa Rica.

Figure 7.20 / Israel's score in democratic political culture indicator, 2006–2020



7.3 Governance

Functioning of government

Institution: Economist Intelligence Unit

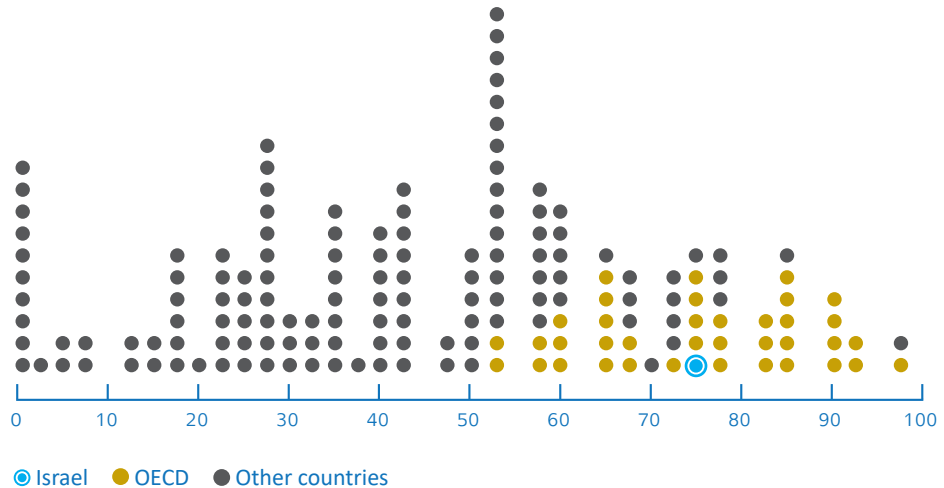
Israel's score: 75.0

No. of countries included in indicator: 167

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 24–29 (83rd–86th percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 19–23 (39th–50th percentile)

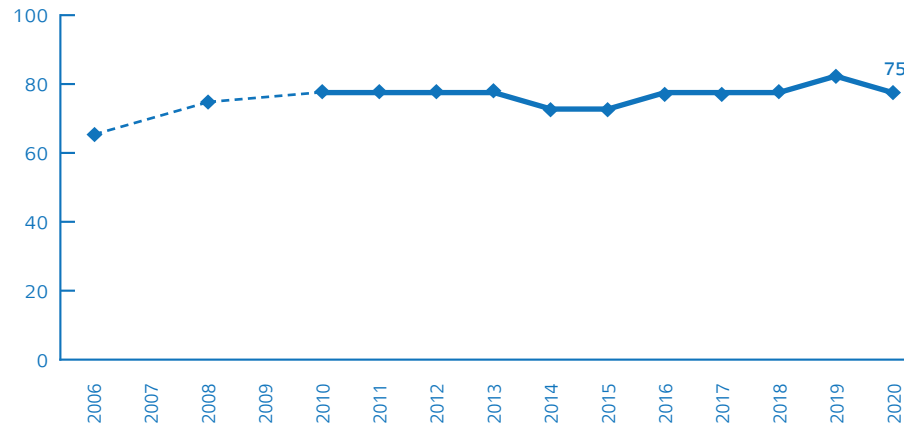
Figure 7.21 / Distribution of standardized scores in functioning of government indicator



The Economist Intelligence Unit's **functioning of government indicator** is based on expert assessments, public opinion polls, and official statistics that reflect the level of democratic functioning and the effectiveness of government institutions in numerous areas. These include the government's ability to set policy, free of pressure from vested interests; separation of powers, based on a system of checks and balances; parliamentary oversight of government; involvement of the military or other extrapolitical entities in politics; the degree of government transparency and accountability; the extent of government corruption; and the level of public trust in state institutions.

Israel's score of 75 represents a drop of 3.5 points from last year, and a return to its average of the past decade. This positions Israel at the bottom of the highest quartile in the global rankings (in the 24–29 slot out of 167). Among the OECD states, Israel is situated in the third quartile, alongside the United Kingdom, Austria, France, and Portugal.

Figure 7.22 / Israel's score in functioning of government indicator, 2006–2020



Rule of law

Institution: World Bank

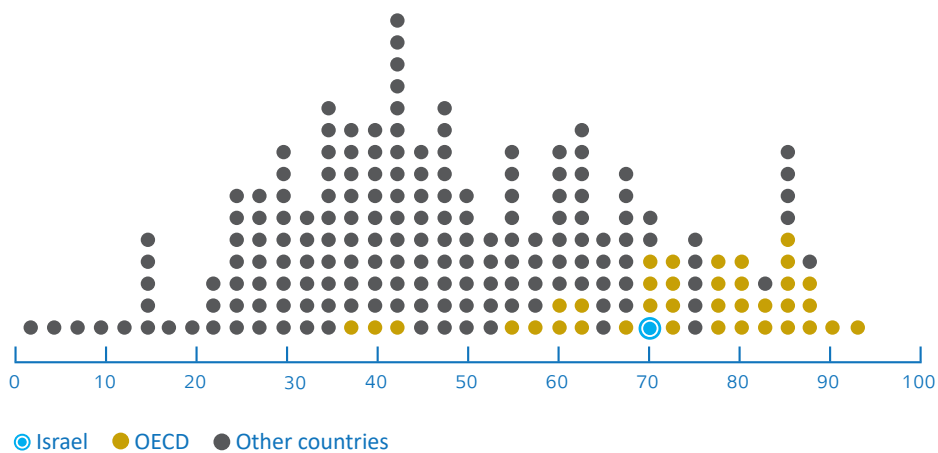
Israel's score: 70.0

No. of countries included in indicator: 209

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 37–38 (82nd percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 26 (32nd percentile)

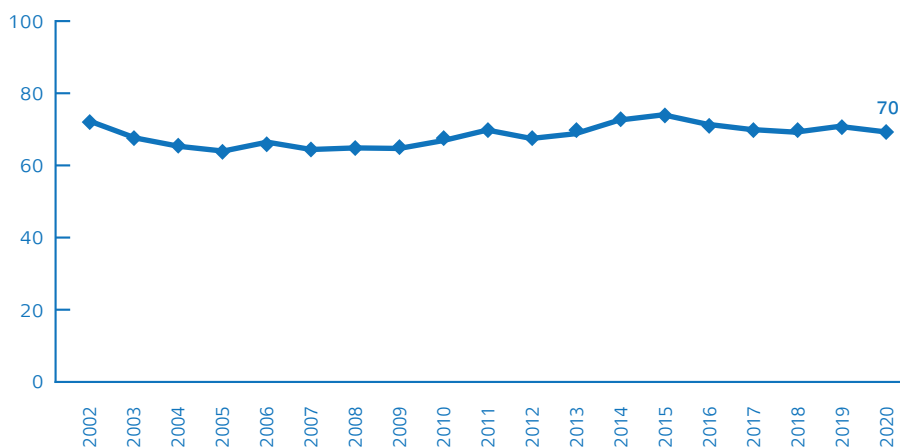
Figure 7.23 / Distribution of standardized scores in rule of law indicator



The World Bank's **rule of law indicator**, based on a combination of expert assessments, public opinion polls, and statistical data, measures the extent to which citizens and government bodies have confidence in, and abide by, the country's laws. In addition, it examines the areas of contract enforcement, property rights, functioning of the police force and the legal system, and prevention of crime and violence.

Israel's score this year was 70, slightly below its average over the last decade. The minor downturn of one point from last year did not affect its place in the global ranking, where it remains in 37th–38th place (in the highest quartile). Among OECD states, it is in the 26th slot out of 38, placing it in the third quartile (32nd percentile).

Figure 7.24 / Israel's score in rule of law indicator, 2002–2020



7.4 Corruption

Control of corruption

Institution: World Bank

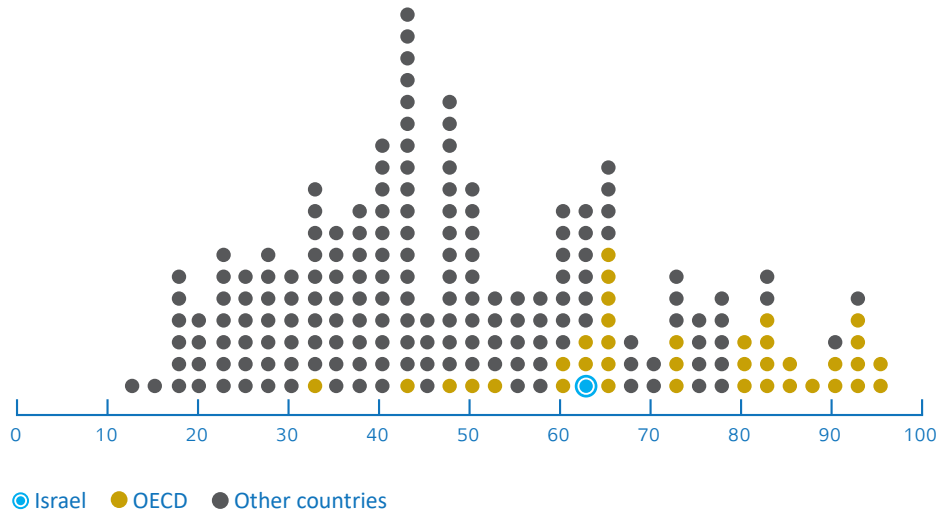
Israel's score: 61.4

No. of countries included in indicator: 209

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 62 (70th percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 31 (18th percentile)

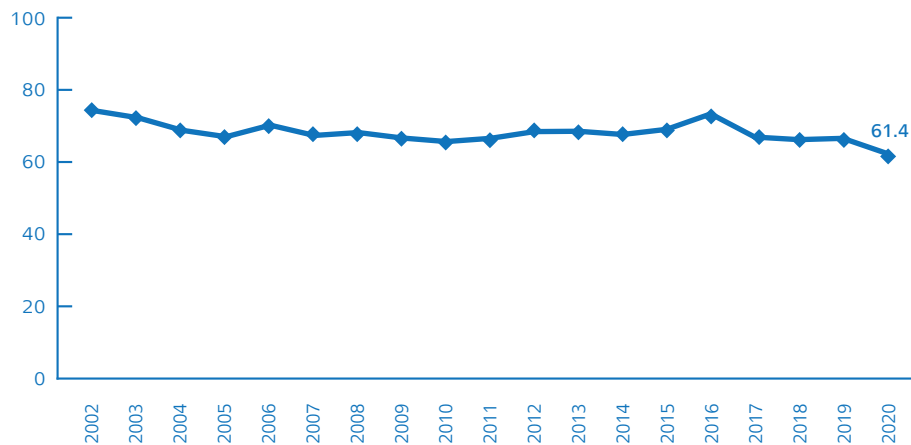
Figure 7.25 / Distribution of standardized scores in control of corruption indicator



The **control of corruption indicator**, issued annually by the World Bank, reflects the public's perception of the extent to which political power is exercised for private gain. A wide range of variables are examined, from the incidence of corruption at the local and regional level to the influence of elites and private interests on the conduct of the state and its leaders. The data, which are drawn from various sources (research institutes, NGOs, international organizations, and private companies), are combined with the opinions of experts in assorted fields and a survey of the general public. The higher the score in this indicator, the lesser the extent of corruption.

Israel's score this year in the control of corruption indicator is 61.4—a decline of 4.7 points from last year—marking the steepest drop in all 15 indicators surveyed this year, and a plunge of 20 places in the global ranking over the last four years (from 42 to 62). In the OECD ranking, Israel has fallen from the 22nd slot four years ago to the 31st today, ahead of only Italy, Slovakia, Hungary, Greece, Colombia, Turkey, and Mexico.

Figure 7.26 / Israel's score in control of corruption indicator, 2002–2020



Perception of corruption

Institution: Transparency International

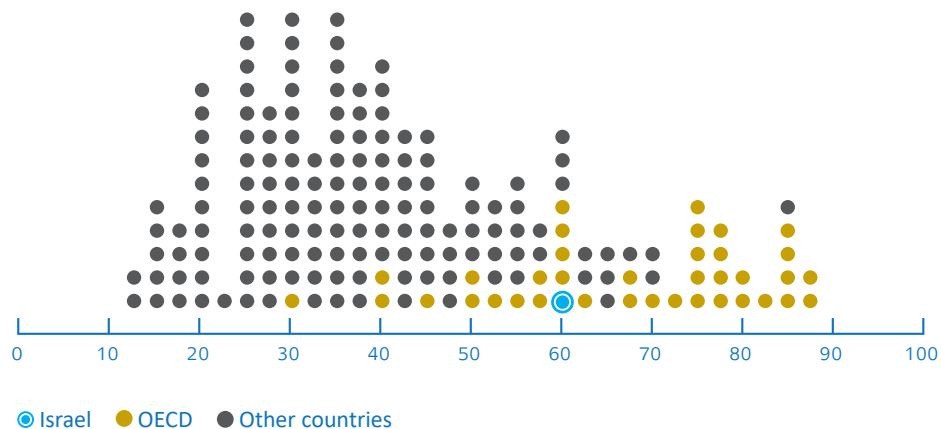
Israel's score: 60.0

No. of countries included in indicator: 180

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 35–39 (78th–81st percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 25–27 (29th–34th percentile)

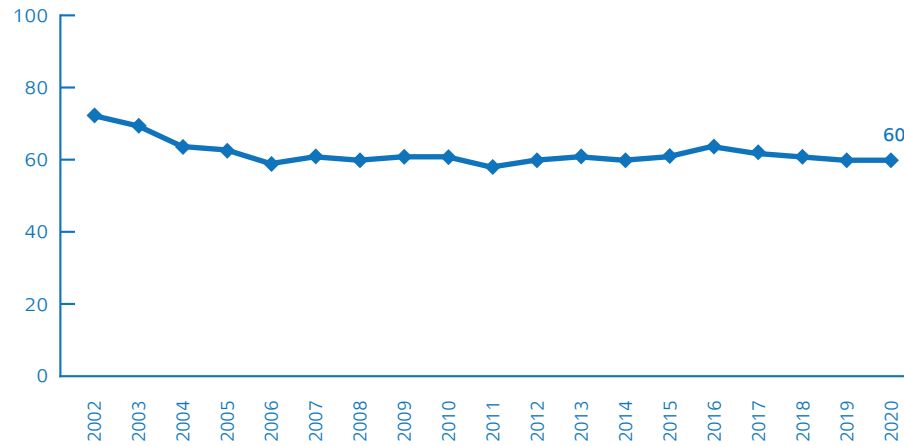
Figure 7.27 / Distribution of standardized scores in perception of corruption indicator



The **Corruption Perceptions Index**, produced by Transparency International, is based on an analysis of indicators published by 12 independent research institutes around the world. It presents expert assessments of the extent of corruption in the public sector, with an emphasis on abuse of power for personal gain; bribery; mechanisms to expose corruption and prosecute corruption suspects; protection of whistleblowers; and nepotism in the civil service.

Israel's score of 60 remains unchanged from last year, along with its global ranking in the top quartile (78th–81st percentile). Among OECD states, Israel dropped one place (shifting it to the 29th–34th percentile), on a par with Lithuania and Slovenia.

Figure 7.28 / Israel's score in perception of corruption indicator, 2002–2020



7.5 Regulation

Regulatory quality

Institution: World Bank

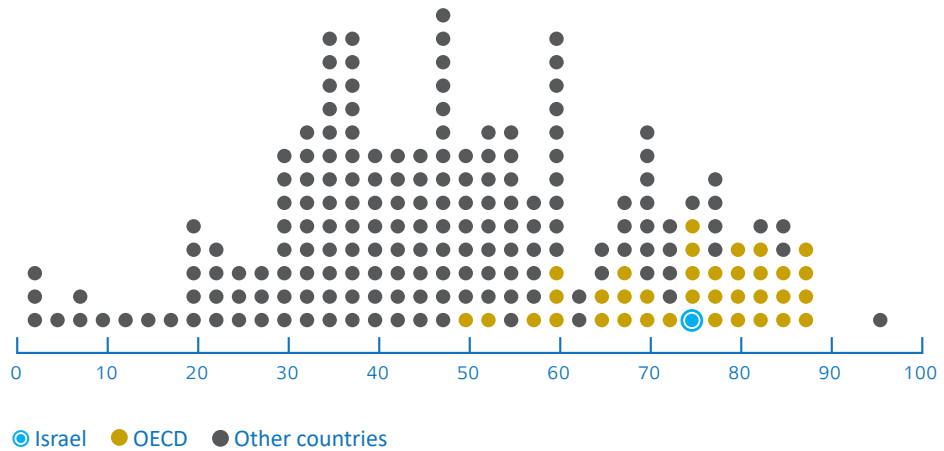
Israel's score: 74.8

No. of countries included in indicator: 209

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 27–29 (86th–87th percentile)

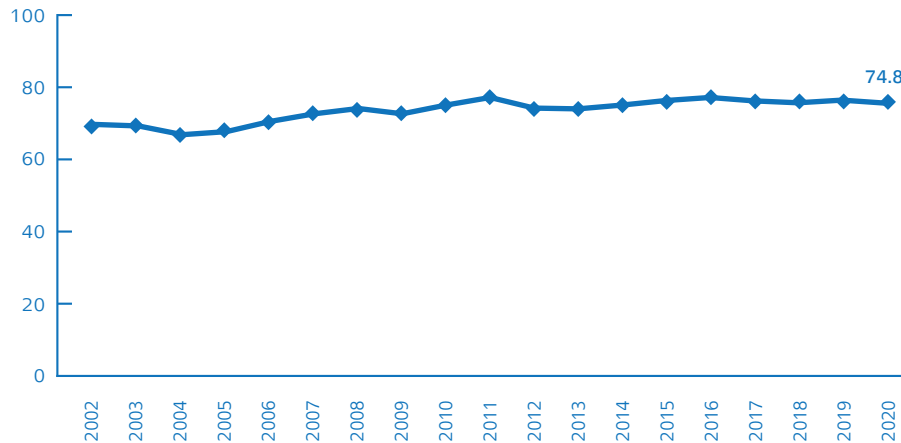
Israel's ranking among OECD members: 20–22 (42nd–47th percentile)

Figure 7.29 / Distribution of standardized scores in regulatory quality indicator



One of six indicators produced by the World Bank, the **regulatory quality indicator** assesses the extent to which the government formulates regulations and implements policies that promote private-sector development. It examines various aspects of regulation, such as price controls, discriminatory taxation, efficiency of tax collection, ease of doing business, and competitiveness of the local market.

Israel's score this year is 74.8, marking a slight decline from last year and a return to its ten-year average. On the whole, its global ranking in this parameter remains strong, and is in fact the second-highest among the 15 indicators that we surveyed. Yet while Israel retained its overall slot in the top quartile (86–87th percentile), in a repeat of last year it is positioned in the third quartile among OECD states, placing 20–22 out of 38, alongside the United States and the Czech Republic.

Figure 7.30 / Israel's score in regulatory quality indicator, 2002–2020

7.6 Economic Equality

Equal distribution of resources

Institution: V-Dem Institute

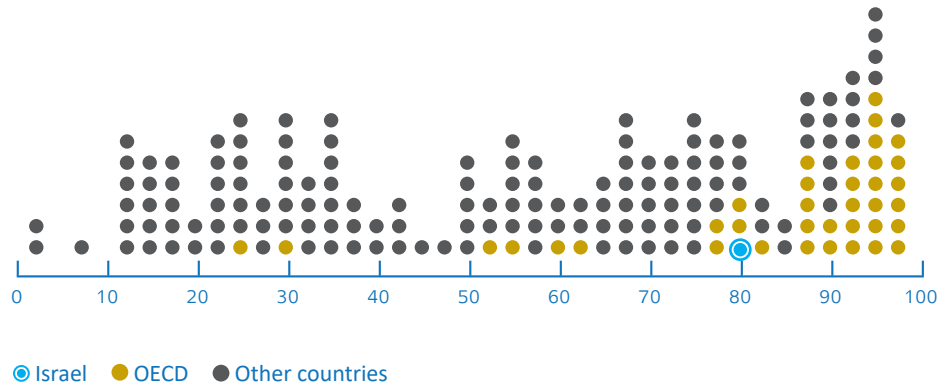
Israel's score: 80.7

No. of countries included in indicator: 179

Israel's ranking among all countries surveyed: 50 (72nd percentile)

Israel's ranking among OECD members: 28 (26th percentile)

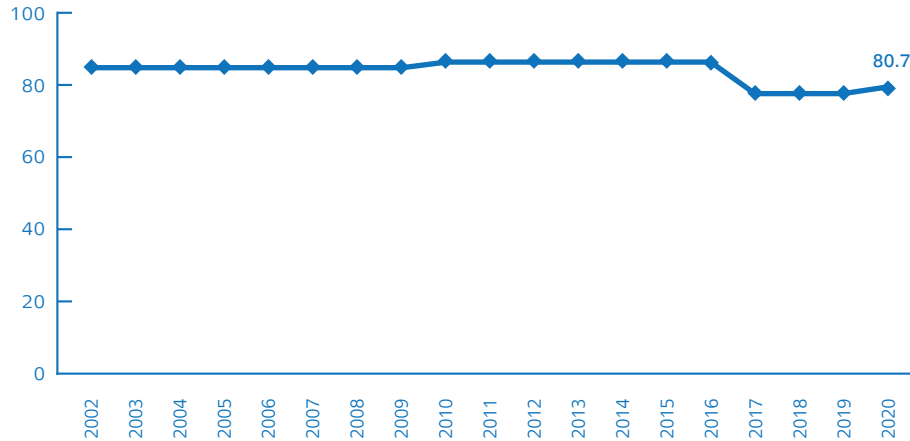
Figure 7.31 / Distribution of standardized scores in equal distribution of resources indicator



The **equal distribution of resources index** is a democracy indicator produced by the V-Dem Institute. It examines the extent to which basic resources necessary to exercise democratic rights and freedoms are made available to citizens. This indicator addresses, among other factors, levels of poverty and economic disparities; equality of access to food, education, and healthcare; distribution of sociopolitical power between different groups; and the correspondence between these power differentials and economic gaps.

Israel's score this year in the equal distribution of resources index is 80.7, a slight increase in comparison with the last three years but still far from its average for the previous decade (83.3). Relative to the countries surveyed, Israel's ranking rose four places this year, to 50 (72nd percentile). Likewise, its ranking improved among OECD states (from 30 to 28), below Australia but above Latvia and Poland.

Figure 7.32 / Israel's score in equal distribution of resources indicator, 2002–2020



7.7 Overview of International Indicators

On the whole, the quality of Israeli democracy once again earns mixed reviews in various areas compared with last year. Despite the sense more than once during 2020 that democracy in Israel was dealt a blow—whether due to the coronavirus pandemic, which resulted in assorted civil rights and freedoms being curtailed, or to political instability—overall, the erosion in democratic performance was only moderate, with gains in three of the 15 indicators, some loss of ground in six of them, and stability (or stagnation) in the other six.

Table 7.2 / Israel's global ranking in 2020 indicators compared with 2019

	Indicator	2020 standardized score	2020 ranking	2020 percentile	2019 ranking	2019 percentile	Change
Democratic rights and freedoms	Political rights (Freedom House)	82.5	65–73 (out of 210)	65–69	65–72	66–69	=
	Civil liberties (Freedom House)	71.7	78–83 (out of 210)	60–63	78–84	60–63	=
	Freedom of the press (Reporters Without Borders)	69.1	86 (out of 180)	52	88	51	▼
Democratic process	Voice and accountability (World Bank)	63.2	66 (out of 208)	68	61	70	▼
	Political participation (Economist Intelligence Unit)	94.4	2 (out of 167)	99	2–6	96–99	▲
	Egalitarian democracy (V-Dem)	80.2	37 (out of 179)	79	43	76	▲
	Participatory democracy (V-Dem)	57.6	66 (out of 179)	63	65	64	▼
	Deliberative democracy (V-Dem)	74.1	69 (out of 179)	61	69	61	=
	Democratic political culture (Economist Intelligence Unit)	75.0	21–31 (out of 167)	81–87	17–28	83–90	▼

	Indicator	2020 standardized score	2020 ranking	2020 percentile	2019 ranking	2019 percentile	Change
Governance	Functioning of government (Economist Intelligence Unit)	75.0	24–29 (out of 167)	83–86	19–27	84–89	▼
	Rule of law (World Bank)	70.0	37–38 (out of 209)	82	38	82	=
	Control of corruption (World Bank)	61.4	62 (out of 209)	70	45	78	▼
	Perception of corruption (Transparency International)	60	35–39 (out of 180)	78–81	35–38	79–81	=
Regulation	Regulatory quality (World Bank)	74.8	27–29 (out of 209)	86–87	28	87	=
Economic equality	Equal distribution of resources (V-Dem)	80.7	50 (out of 179)	72	54	70	▲

▲ improvement in Israel's ranking compared with 2019

= no change in Israel's ranking compared with 2019

▼ decline in Israel's ranking compared with 2019

If we compare Israel's scores this year in each of the 15 indicators with the average of its scores over the last decade (Table 7.3), the portrait that emerges is slightly less favorable: In only two of the indicators is Israel's score this year higher than the ten-year average—political participation, showing a steep climb of +8.9%; and functioning of government, with only a small increase of +0.5%. In the democratic political culture indicator, this year's score matches the decade average, while in the remaining 12 indicators it is lower, with particularly sharp drops in control of corruption (–9.2%) and political rights (–7.3%).

Table 7.3 / Israel's scores in 2020 indicators compared with average over previous decade

	Indicator	2020 score	Average score, 2010–2019	Change (in %)
Democratic rights and freedoms	Political rights (Freedom House)	82.5	89.0	7.3 ▼
	Civil liberties (Freedom House)	71.7	73.8	2.8 ▼
	Freedom of the press (Reporters Without Borders)	69.1	69.4	0.4 ▼
Democratic process	Voice and accountability (World Bank)	63.2	63.5	0.5 ▼
	Political participation (Economist Intelligence Unit)	94.4	86.7	8.9 ▲
	Egalitarian democracy (V-Dem)	80.2	80.3	0.1 ▼
	Participatory democracy (V-Dem)	57.6	59.1	2.5 ▼
	Deliberative democracy (V-Dem)	74.1	76.3	2.9 ▼
	Democratic political culture (Economist Intelligence Unit)	75.0	75.0	=
Governance	Functioning of government (Economist Intelligence Unit)	75.0	74.6	0.5 ▲
	Rule of law (World Bank)	70.0	70.5	0.7 ▼
	Control of corruption (World Bank)	61.4	67.6	9.2 ▼
	Perception of corruption (Transparency International)	60.0	60.8	1.3 ▼

	Indicator	2020 score	Average score, 2010–2019	Change (in %)
Regulation	Regulatory quality (World Bank)	74.8	75.0	0.3 ▼
Economic equality	Equal distribution of resources (V-Dem)	80.7	83.3	3.1 ▼

- ▲ improvement in Israel's score compared with average of the previous decade
- ▬ no change in Israel's score compared with average of the previous decade
- ▼ decline in Israel's score compared with average of the previous decade

Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Questionnaire and Distribution of Responses (Total Sample, Jewish Sample, Arab Sample; %)

1. How would you characterize Israel's overall situation today?

	Very good	Good	So-so	Bad	Very bad	Don't know	Total
Jews	6.3	26.1	44.8	15.5	6.4	0.8	100
Arabs	6.6	17.9	27.0	26.5	21.9	0.0	100
Total sample	6.3	24.8	41.9	17.3	9.0	0.6	100

Discussion
on p. 27

2. To what extent do you feel part of the State of Israel and its problems?

	Very much	Quite a lot	Not so much	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Jews	36.0	46.5	12.9	3.1	1.5	100
Arabs	7.1	35.7	36.7	15.8	4.6	100
Total sample	31.2	44.7	16.9	5.2	2.0	100

Discussion
on p. 33

General notes:

- For all questions, the response option of “don't know” was presented to the interviewees only in the online survey and not by telephone.
- In certain cases, the “Don't know/refuse” value was rounded up by 0.1% in order to bring the total to 100%.

Discussion
on p. 34

3. How proud are you to be an Israeli?

	Very much	Quite a lot	Not so much	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Jews	52.3	32.2	9.5	4.1	1.9	100
Arabs	8.2	19.5	26.2	29.2	16.9	100
Total sample	45.0	30.1	12.2	8.3	4.4	100

Discussion
on p. 30

4. In general, are you optimistic or pessimistic about Israel's future?

	Very optimistic	Quite optimistic	Quite pessimistic	Very pessimistic	Don't know	Total
Jews	15.1	51.8	22.1	4.3	6.7	100
Arabs	5.6	36.7	38.3	11.7	7.7	100
Total sample	13.6	49.3	24.8	5.6	6.8	100

Discussion
on p. 31

5a. (For those who responded "quite" or "very optimistic") Specify the factor that contributes most strongly to your optimism about Israel's future

Primary reasons for optimism (Jews)	
New government / change of government	24
Faith in God/redemption/Messiah	17
Good people / the human factor	16.5
The economy / hi-tech / development	10
General optimism / positive thinking / hope	8
Security / army / strong country	8
Love of country / Zionism	6
Singular responses + Don't know (combined)	10.5

Primary reasons for optimism (Arabs)	
General optimism / hope	24
The economy / hi-tech / development	19.5
New government / change of government	18
Security / democracy / state looks after citizens	16
Singular responses + Don't know (combined)	22.5

Discussion
on p. 31

**5b. (For those who responded “quite” or “very pessimistic”)
Specify the factor that contributes most strongly to your pessimism
about Israel’s future**

Discussion
on p. 32

Primary reasons for pessimism (Jews)	
Political situation / new government / functioning of government	47
Racism / lack of solidarity / violence / social divisions	19
Demographic threats (Haredim/Arabs)	12
Security / wars / external threats / world opinion	11.5
Overall situation / cost of living / economic gaps	6
Singular responses + Don't know (combined)	4..5

Discussion
on p. 97

Primary reasons for pessimism (Arabs)	
Racism / social problems / sense of injustice	45
The government / political situation / politicians	29
Economic situation / cost of living / day-to-day situation	20
Singular responses + Don't know (combined)	6

6. How would you rate the level of solidarity (sense of “togetherness”) of Israeli society (Jews, Arabs, and all other citizens), where 1 = no solidarity at all and 10 = a high level of solidarity?

	1- No solidarity/ sense of togetherness at all	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10- High level of solidarity	Don't know	Total	Mean
Jews	8.7	5.5	11.8	13.2	16.8	14.5	15.5	8.5	2.1	2.0	1.4	100	5.01
Arabs	25.9	6.6	7.6	10.2	26.4	7.6	5.6	4.6	0.5	5.1	0.0	100	4.09
Total sample	11.5	5.7	11.1	12.7	18.5	13.4	13.8	7.8	1.8	2.5	1.2	100	4.86

7. Societies throughout the world are divided into stronger and weaker groups. Which group in Israeli society do you feel you belong to?

	Strong group	Quite strong group	Quite weak group	Weak group	Don't know	Total
Jews	17.3	54.4	15.2	3.4	9.6	100
Arabs	40.0	11.8	7.2	37.4	3.6	100
Total sample	21.0	47.5	13.9	9.0	8.6	100

8. In your opinion, which of the following groups have the highest level of tension between them?

Discussion on p. 98

	Mizrahim and Ashkenazim	Religious and secular Jews	Right and Left	Rich and poor	Jews and Arabs	Don't know	Total sample
Jews	2.3	11.8	36.0	3.0	42.5	4.4	100
Arabs	2.6	9.7	11.7	4.6	64.3	7.1	100
Total sample	2.4	11.5	32.0	3.2	46.1	4.9	100

9. How would you rate Israel's current leadership in terms of corruption, where 1 = very corrupt and 5 = not at all corrupt?

Discussion on p. 58

	1- Very corrupt	2	3	4	5- Not at all corrupt	Don't know	Total	Mean
Jews	24.2	23.0	24.9	13.0	4.9	9.9	100	2.46
Arabs	42.9	12.2	23.5	6.6	8.7	6.1	100	2.21
Total sample	27.3	21.2	24.6	12.0	5.6	9.3	100	2.42

10. Israel is defined as a Jewish and democratic state. Do you feel there is a good balance today between the Jewish and democratic components?

Discussion on p. 54

	There is a good balance between both components	The Jewish component is too dominant	The democratic component is too dominant	Don't know	Total
Jews	21.2	37.8	24.4	16.6	100
Arabs	8.2	81.6	7.1	3.1	100
Total sample	19.0	45.0	21.5	14.5	100

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

Discussion
on p. 48

11. The democratic system in Israel is in grave danger.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Jews	15.7	27.9	30.4	22.3	3.7	100
Arabs	48.0	27.0	15.8	7.1	2.0	100
Total sample	21.0	27.8	28.0	19.8	3.5	100

Discussion
on p. 52

12. The Israeli media portray the situation here as much worse than it really is.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Jews	23.8	30.4	24.8	14.7	6.3	100
Arabs	24.5	36.2	26.0	8.2	5.1	100
Total sample	23.9	31.4	25.0	13.6	6.1	100

Discussion
on p. 37

13. Israel is a good place to live.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Jews	32.8	43.2	17.9	4.2	1.8	100
Arabs	19.3	46.7	22.3	6.1	5.6	100
Total sample	30.6	43.9	18.6	4.5	2.4	100

14. On the whole, most Knesset members work hard and are doing a good job.

Discussion
on p. 57

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Jews	3.8	22.0	37.5	30.8	5.8	100
Arabs	5.6	20.0	51.8	20.5	2.1	100
Total sample	4.1	21.6	39.9	29.1	5.2	100

15. To handle Israel's unique problems, we need a strong leader who is not swayed by the Knesset, the media or public opinion.

Discussion
on p. 53

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Jews	30.7	24.7	17.8	22.2	4.6	100
Arabs	24.0	37.2	23.0	8.7	7.1	100
Total sample	29.6	26.8	18.6	20.0	5.1	100

16. Jewish citizens of Israel should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens.

Discussion
on p. 96

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Jews	23.4	18.4	20.2	32.9	5.1	100
Arabs	3.1	10.8	27.2	53.3	5.6	100
Total sample	20.0	17.2	21.3	36.2	5.2	100

To what extent do you trust each of the following individuals or institutions?

Discussion
on p. 80

17. The media

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	33.4	34.9	23.6	6.0	2.1	100
Arabs	31.1	52.0	10.7	5.1	1.0	100
Total sample	33.0	37.7	21.5	5.9	1.9	100

Discussion
on p. 79

18. The Supreme Court

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	25.5	23.2	23.9	23.9	3.5	100
Arabs	21.9	28.6	33.7	10.2	5.6	100
Total sample	24.9	24.1	25.5	21.6	3.9	100

Discussion
on p. 80

19. The police

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	16.2	39.9	32.9	9.1	1.9	100
Arabs	53.8	31.8	9.7	3.6	1.0	100
Total sample	22.4	38.5	29.0	8.2	1.8	100

20. The President of Israel

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	15.1	17.4	26.4	33.6	7.5	100
Arabs	29.9	22.3	23.4	11.2	13.2	100
Total sample	17.5	18.2	25.9	30.0	8.4	100

Discussion
on p. 79

21. The Knesset

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	21.9	45.8	24.3	4.2	3.8	100
Arabs	34.4	35.9	19.0	3.1	7.7	100
Total sample	23.9	44.2	23.4	4.1	4.4	100

Discussion
on p. 80

22. The IDF

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	2.4	6.1	27.3	62.3	1.8	100
Arabs	44.1	20.0	17.9	6.2	11.8	100
Total sample	9.2	8.5	25.8	53.0	3.5	100

Discussion
on p. 78

Discussion
on p. 81

23. The government

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	30.4	35.0	23.4	5.6	5.5	100
Arabs	42.3	27.6	14.3	4.6	11.2	100
Total sample	32.4	33.8	21.9	5.4	6.5	100

Discussion
on p. 81

24. The political parties

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	32.8	46.8	12.5	2.1	5.8	100
Arabs	38.6	38.1	13.7	1.0	8.6	100
Total sample	33.7	45.4	12.7	2.0	6.3	100

Discussion
on p. 82

25. The National Insurance Institute

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	18.2	34.7	30.6	11.0	5.4	100
Arabs	18.6	28.4	37.1	12.4	3.6	100
Total sample	18.3	33.6	31.7	11.3	5.2	100

26. Your municipality or local authority

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	9.6	25.3	42.9	19.2	3.0	100
Arabs	29.9	33.5	22.8	9.1	4.6	100
Total sample	12.9	26.7	39.6	17.6	3.2	100

Discussion on p. 82

27. (Jewish respondents) Chief Rabbinate; (Muslim and Druze respondents) Shari'a court; (Christian respondents) canonical court

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	41.7	22.0	19.1	10.9	6.4	100
Arabs	14.4	19.0	36.4	11.3	19.0	100
Total sample	37.2	21.5	21.9	11.0	8.4	100

Discussion on p. 83

In your opinion, to what extent do these institutions act in an objective, professional manner?

28. The media

	To a very large extent	To a large extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Jews	6.5	28.1	33.4	29.5	2.5	100
Arabs	5.1	19.5	46.2	26.2	3.1	100
Total sample	6.2	26.8	35.5	28.9	2.7	100

Discussion on p. 84

Discussion
on p. 84

29. The Supreme Court

	To a very large extent	To a large extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Jews	21.5	29.5	23.3	20.3	5.4	100
Arabs	9.2	34.2	32.7	18.9	5.1	100
Total sample	19.5	30.3	24.8	20.1	5.4	100

Discussion
on p. 84

30. The police

	To a very large extent	To a large extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Jews	8.7	38.8	37.1	11.8	3.6	100
Arabs	5.1	13.8	34.7	43.9	2.6	100
Total sample	8.1	34.6	36.8	17.1	3.5	100

Discussion
on p. 84

31. The Knesset

	To a very large extent	To a large extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Jews	3.0	19.9	50.5	22.1	4.5	100
Arabs	4.6	17.9	37.2	34.2	6.1	100
Total sample	3.3	19.6	48.4	24.1	4.8	100

32. The IDF

	To a very large extent	To a large extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Jews	56.1	32.5	6.7	2.4	2.3	100
Arabs	5.6	16.2	30.5	34.0	13.7	100
Total sample	47.8	29.8	10.6	7.7	4.2	100

Discussion
on p. 84

33. The government

	To a very large extent	To a large extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Jews	4.7	21.3	45.0	22.4	6.5	100
Arabs	2.6	16.9	35.4	34.9	10.3	100
Total sample	4.4	20.6	43.5	24.4	7.1	100

Discussion
on p. 84

34. Your municipality or local authority

	To a very large extent	To a large extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Jews	17.5	44.0	26.1	8.0	4.4	100
Arabs	8.2	32.1	28.6	25.5	5.6	100
Total sample	16.0	42.0	26.5	10.8	4.6	100

Discussion
on p. 84

Discussion
on p. 41

35. In your opinion, to what extent does the State of Israel ensure the security of its citizens?

	To a very large extent	To a large extent	Not so much	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Jews	11.0	50.3	32.3	3.7	2.7	100
Arabs	8.2	24.5	43.4	21.4	2.6	100
Total sample	10.5	46.0	34.2	6.6	2.7	100

Discussion
on p. 41

36. To what extent does it ensure the welfare of its citizens?

	To a very large extent	To a large extent	Not so much	Not at all	Don't know	Total
Jews	3.5	27.6	52.5	12.4	3.9	100
Arabs	7.2	34.4	46.2	9.7	2.6	100
Total sample	4.1	28.7	51.5	12.0	3.8	100

Discussion
on p. 38

37. If you could receive American citizenship, or that of another Western country, would you prefer to live there or to remain in Israel?

	I would prefer to live there	I would prefer to remain in Israel	Don't know	Total
Jews	17.6	69.8	12.6	100
Arabs	14.7	80.7	4.6	100
Total sample	17.1	71.7	11.2	100

38. What do you see as the primary factor causing people to question if they wish to remain in Israel?

Primary factors that might cause Israelis to leave the country (Jews)	
Economic situation / cost of living / poor quality of life	38
The government / current administration / corruption / bureaucracy	15.5
Security / wars / terror	12
Hatred between Jews / social tensions / conflict with Arabs	10
Lack of personal security / uncertainty / instability	6
Lack of connection with Zionism / Jewish heritage / Jewish identity	6
Things are better overseas / the grass is always greener on the other side	3
Singular responses + Don't know (combined)	9.5
Primary factors that might cause Israelis to leave the country (Arabs)	
Economy / standard of living	20
Security problems (not specified whether internal or external)	12
Uncertainty / instability	12
Racism / social problems / feeling of inequality	11
Total possible factors encouraging emigration (above)	55
Ties to the land	28
Palestinian nationalism	6
Total possible factors discouraging emigration (above)	34
Singular responses + Don't know (combined)	11

Discussion
on p. 101

Assuming that the state budget remains at a fixed amount (such that adding to one item means taking away from another), how should allocations be handled for each of the following:

39. Defense (IDF)

	Reduce greatly	Reduce somewhat	Leave as is	Increase somewhat	Increase greatly	Don't know	Total
Jews	3.4	15.7	35.1	21.9	19.9	4.0	100
Arabs	20.5	19.0	24.6	20.0	6.7	9.2	100
Total sample	6.3	16.3	33.3	21.6	17.7	4.9	100

Discussion
on p. 101

40. Domestic security (police)

	Reduce greatly	Reduce somewhat	Leave as is	Increase somewhat	Increase greatly	Don't know	Total
Jews	2.3	7.8	25.6	36.5	23.5	4.3	100
Arabs	13.3	12.3	19.0	28.7	19.0	7.7	100
Total sample	4.1	8.6	24.5	35.2	22.8	4.8	100

Discussion
on p. 101

41. Health

	Reduce greatly	Reduce somewhat	Leave as is	Increase somewhat	Increase greatly	Don't know	Total
Jews	0.7	2.0	12.5	34.8	47.2	2.8	100
Arabs	0.0	0.5	9.7	21.9	64.8	3.1	100
Total sample	0.6	1.8	12.0	32.6	50.1	2.9	100

42. Transportation infrastructure

	Reduce greatly	Reduce somewhat	Leave as is	Increase somewhat	Increase greatly	Don't know	Total
Jews	0.8	6.0	22.0	34.6	33.2	3.3	100
Arabs	0.0	1.0	8.2	26.7	62.1	2.1	100
Total sample	0.7	5.2	19.7	33.3	38.0	3.1	100

Discussion
on p. 101

43. Housing

	Reduce greatly	Reduce somewhat	Leave as is	Increase somewhat	Increase greatly	Don't know	Total
Jews	1.4	8.2	20.8	26.0	39.5	4.1	100
Arabs	0.5	1.0	6.6	17.3	69.9	4.6	100
Total sample	1.2	7.0	18.4	24.6	44.6	4.2	100

Discussion
on p. 101

44. Education

	Reduce greatly	Reduce somewhat	Leave as is	Increase somewhat	Increase greatly	Don't know	Total
Jews	1.5	3.6	22.9	28.3	41.2	2.4	100
Arabs	0.5	1.5	3.6	19.6	71.6	3.1	100
Total sample	1.3	3.3	19.8	26.8	46.2	2.6	100

Discussion
on p. 101

To what extent are the following principles upheld in Israel today?

Discussion
on p. 43

45. Minority rights

	Far too much	Slightly too much	The right amount	Slightly too little	Far too little	Don't know	Total
Jews	10.6	12.0	29.0	26.6	13.0	8.8	100
Arabs	14.9	9.2	12.3	25.1	35.9	2.6	100
Total sample	11.3	11.5	26.2	26.3	16.8	7.8	100

Discussion
on p. 43

46. The right to live in dignity

	Far too much	Slightly too much	The right amount	Slightly too little	Far too little	Don't know	Total
Jews	1.3	8.4	31.4	32.5	21.4	5.1	100
Arabs	15.4	8.7	20.5	17.9	35.4	2.1	100
Total sample	3.6	8.4	29.5	30.1	23.7	4.7	100

Discussion
on p. 43

47. Freedom of expression

	Far too much	Slightly too much	The right amount	Slightly too little	Far too little	Don't know	Total
Jews	17.2	16.7	34.1	18.9	9.5	3.5	100
Arabs	15.8	9.2	24.5	24.5	24.0	2.0	100
Total sample	17.0	15.5	32.6	19.9	11.9	3.3	100

48. Separation of powers

	Far too much	Slightly too much	The right amount	Slightly too little	Far too little	Don't know	Total
Jews	3.4	7.6	29.7	22.6	19.7	17.1	100
Arabs	11.7	9.2	24.5	24.5	16.3	13.8	100
Total sample	4.9	7.9	28.8	22.9	19.1	16.5	100

Discussion on p. 43

Some people claim that the following attributes are very important to being a true Israeli, while others argue that they are not. In your opinion, how important are each of these factors:

49. Being born in Israel

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know	Total
Jews	25.4	25.4	27.8	19.8	1.6	100
Arabs	14.2	31.5	38.1	10.2	6.1	100
Total sample	23.6	26.4	29.5	18.2	2.3	100

Discussion on p. 93

50. Living in Israel for most of your life

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know	Total
Jews	42.1	36.2	13.5	6.6	1.6	100
Arabs	16.2	48.2	22.3	8.6	4.6	100
Total sample	37.9	38.2	15.0	6.9	2.1	100

Discussion on p. 93

Discussion
on p. 93

51. Speaking Hebrew

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know	Total
Jews	52.1	33.7	7.9	5.0	1.3	100
Arabs	15.3	43.4	25.5	14.3	1.5	100
Total sample	46.0	35.4	10.8	6.5	1.3	100

Discussion
on p. 93

52. Being Jewish

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know	Total
Jews	47.2	25.6	14.4	11.0	1.8	100
Arabs	1.5	10.7	35.2	46.9	5.6	100
Total sample	39.7	23.2	17.9	16.9	2.4	100

Discussion
on p. 93

53. Respecting the laws of the state

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know	Total
Jews	71.0	22.0	3.9	1.8	1.3	100
Arabs	28.6	55.1	8.2	5.6	2.6	100
Total sample	64.0	27.4	4.7	2.4	1.5	100

54. Serving in the IDF

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know	Total
Jews	52.9	30.3	9.9	4.9	1.9	100
Arabs	3.1	13.3	36.7	38.8	8.2	100
Total sample	44.8	27.5	14.3	10.5	2.9	100

Discussion on p. 93

55. Accepting the definition of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know	Total
Jews	60.4	24.8	7.9	4.3	2.6	100
Arabs	6.1	26.5	30.6	28.1	8.7	100
Total sample	51.4	25.1	11.6	8.3	3.6	100

Discussion on p. 93

Do you support or oppose each of the following proposals:

56. Incorporating regional representation into the Knesset elections (dividing the country into districts, with each district electing a certain number of MKs)

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know	Total
Jews	17.4	31.4	16.9	12.5	21.8	100
Arabs	15.2	48.2	21.8	8.6	6.1	100
Total sample	17.1	34.2	17.7	11.9	19.2	100

Discussion on p. 68

Discussion
on p. 64

57. Using an “open ballot” in Knesset elections that allows for ranking candidates from a party’s list in addition to voting for the party as a whole, thereby influencing the order of the list

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don’t know	Total
Jews	22.1	31.7	16.2	9.9	20.2	100
Arabs	14.8	53.6	24.5	1.0	6.1	100
Total sample	20.9	35.3	17.6	8.4	17.8	100

Discussion
on p. 70

58. Permitting Israeli citizens who live overseas to vote in Knesset elections from their country of residence

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don’t know	Total
Jews	19.0	21.4	24.8	27.1	7.8	100
Arabs	9.2	31.1	35.2	19.9	4.6	100
Total sample	17.4	22.9	26.5	26.0	7.2	100

Discussion
on p. 68

59. Granting additional funding to parties in which at least one-third of the candidates are women

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don’t know	Total
Jews	11.9	23.4	22.3	25.8	16.5	100
Arabs	14.3	59.7	14.8	2.0	9.2	100
Total sample	12.2	29.4	21.0	21.9	15.4	100

60. Changing the law so that a minimum of 80 MKs are needed to modify a Basic Law (at present, a majority of 61 is sufficient)

Discussion on p. 66

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know	Total
Jews	23.6	31.0	17.0	9.7	18.7	100
Arabs	8.2	35.2	30.6	8.7	17.3	100
Total sample	21.0	31.8	19.2	9.5	18.5	100

61. Transferring more powers from government ministries to local government

Discussion on p. 62

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know	Total
Jews	22.3	46.1	11.5	5.0	15.1	100
Arabs	7.1	53.1	26.0	5.1	8.7	100
Total sample	19.8	47.2	13.9	5.0	14.0	100

62. The electoral threshold in Israel is 3.25%, meaning that a party that does not receive 3.25% of the votes cast (equal to 4 seats) does not gain representation in the Knesset. In your opinion, is this percentage:

Discussion on p. 71

	Too high	About right	Too low	Don't know	Total
Jews	10.4	44.8	32.8	12.0	100
Arabs	21.9	58.7	16.8	2.6	100
Total sample	12.3	47.1	30.2	10.5	100

Discussion
on p. 103

63. Have you had any involvement with the court system in the last few years (as a plaintiff, defendant or witness)?

	Yes	No	Don't remember	Total
Jews	20.6	77.5	1.9	100
Arabs	12.3	86.2	1.5	100
Total sample	19.2	78.9	1.8	100

Discussion
on p. 104

64. If so, which court [more than one response can be selected]? (percentage of those respondents who answered "yes" to question 63)

	The Supreme Court	District Court	Magistrates' (Local) Court	National Labor Court	District Labor Court	Juvenile Court	Traffic Court	Family Court	Small Claims Court	Local Affairs Court	Total
Jews	4.8	18.7	41.3	3.9	11.0	1.8	14.9	17.4	26.3	4.1	100
Arabs	9.1	31.8	50.0	9.1	18.2	--	4.5	4.5	--	--	100
Total sample	5.3	20.0	42.2	4.5	11.7	1.6	13.8	16.1	23.6	3.7	100

Discussion
on p. 105

(For respondents who answered "yes" to question 63)

65. The legal process was: (percentage of those respondents who answered "yes" to question 63)

	1-Very efficient	2	3	4	5- Not at all efficient	Don't know	Total
Jews	16.7	15.7	16.2	15.7	31.4	4.4	100
Arabs	30.4	13.0	26.1	8.7	21.7	0.0	100
Total sample	18.2	15.3	17.3	15.0	30.2	3.9	100

66. The judge’s ruling was: (percentage of those respondents who answered “yes” to question 63)

Discussion on p. 105

	1-Very fair	2	3	4	5- Not at all fair	Don’t know	Total
Jews	22.7	15.8	16.3	13.8	21.2	10.3	100
Arabs	21.7	13.0	26.1	8.7	21.7	8.7	100
Total sample	22.6	15.5	17.2	13.2	21.2	10.3	100

67. In your opinion, are judges in Israel selected based on professional or political considerations?

Discussion on p. 107

	Solely professional considerations	Mainly professional considerations	Mainly political considerations	Solely political considerations	Don’t know	Total
Jews	3.5	23.4	44.6	14.6	13.9	100
Arabs	8.2	13.9	50.0	21.6	6.2	100
Total sample	4.3	21.9	45.5	15.7	12.6	100

68. How would you rate the legal system in Israel in terms of corruption, where 1 = not at all corrupt and 4 = very corrupt?

Discussion on p. 118

	Not at all corrupt	Slightly corrupt	Quite corrupt	Very corrupt	Don’t know	Total
Jews	6.5	35.4	25.3	23.8	9.1	100
Arabs	5.7	28.1	28.1	35.9	2.1	100
Total sample	6.3	34.2	25.7	25.8	8.0	100

Discussion
on p. 110

69. To what extent does the legal system in Israel treat elected representatives in an unbiased manner, regardless of their political affiliation?

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	20.5	30.9	23.7	12.7	12.2	100
Arabs	15.5	36.3	26.9	5.7	15.5	100
Total sample	19.7	31.8	24.2	11.5	12.7	100

Discussion
on p. 109

70. In your opinion, to what extent are judges in Israel subject to political pressure?

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	1.8	12.6	33.6	43.9	8.1	100
Arabs	2.1	22.2	47.9	13.9	13.9	100
Total sample	1.9	14.1	36.0	39.0	9.0	100

Discussion
on p. 109

71. To what extent are judges in Israel subject to financial pressure?

	Not at all	Not so much	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know	Total
Jews	14.2	28.2	24.2	16.7	16.7	100
Arabs	10.9	27.1	35.4	8.9	17.7	100
Total sample	13.7	28.0	26.0	15.4	16.9	100

72. To what extent do you agree or disagree that judges treat everyone who appears before them equally (Jews/Arabs, men/women, Mizrahim/Ashkenazim, etc.)?

Discussion on p. 114

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Jews	9.1	24.3	32.7	24.8	9.1	100
Arabs	9.8	23.3	32.1	22.3	12.4	100
Total sample	9.2	24.2	32.6	24.4	9.7	100

73. How would you rate the degree of power of Israel's Supreme Court at present?

Discussion on p. 121

	About right	Too much power	Too little power	Don't know	Total
Jews	32.1	41.7	13.2	13.0	100
Arabs	35.4	32.8	19.3	12.5	100
Total sample	32.6	40.3	14.2	12.9	100

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

74. The Supreme Court should have the power to overturn laws passed by the Knesset if they conflict with democratic principles such as freedom of expression or equality before the law.

Discussion on p. 127

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Jews	24.5	28.0	17.8	21.9	7.8	100
Arabs	40.4	33.7	10.9	0.0	15.0	100
Total sample	27.1	29.0	16.7	18.3	8.9	100

Discussion
on p. 125

75. The Supreme Court intervenes too much in decisions made by the government and its ministers.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Jews	33.5	18.1	20.3	17.6	10.5	100
Arabs	25.4	31.1	21.8	3.1	18.7	100
Total sample	32.2	20.2	20.4	15.3	11.9	100

Discussion
on p. 123

76. To what degree are the decisions of Supreme Court justices affected by their political views?

	Strongly affected	Moderately affected	Slightly affected	Not at all affected	Don't know	Total
Jews	38.6	25.6	16.4	6.8	12.6	100
Arabs	24.7	39.7	17.0	5.2	13.4	100
Total sample	36.3	27.9	16.5	6.5	12.7	100

Discussion
on p. 116

77. In most cases, does the State Attorney act on the basis of professional or political considerations?

	Solely professional considerations	Mainly professional considerations	Mainly political considerations	Solely political considerations	Don't know	Total
Jews	5.0	29.3	40.4	8.9	16.3	100
Arabs	6.3	16.7	45.8	19.3	12.0	100
Total sample	5.2	27.2	41.3	10.6	15.6	100

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The Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) is an independent center of research and action dedicated to strengthening the foundations of Israeli democracy. IDI works to bolster the values and institutions of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. A non-partisan think-and-do tank, the Institute harnesses rigorous applied research to influence policy, legislation, and public opinion. The Institute partners with political leaders, policymakers, and representatives of civil society to improve the functioning of the government and its institutions, confront security threats while preserving civil liberties, and foster solidarity within Israeli society. The State of Israel recognized the positive impact of IDI's research and recommendations by bestowing upon the Institute its most prestigious award, the Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement.

The Viterbi Family Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research conducts rigorous empirical research on the attitudes of the Israeli public regarding the functioning of the country's democratic system and the commitment of Israeli society to core democratic values. Data Israel: The Louis Guttman Social Research Database, maintained by the Center, presents current and historical survey data and other materials collected since 1949 by the Center for Applied Social Research founded by Prof. Guttman, which have been donated to the Israel Democracy Institute. The Viterbi Center strives to enrich the public discourse in Israel on social and policy issues by generating, analyzing, and publicizing authoritative information, and placing it at the disposal of researchers, journalists, and interested members of the public in Israel and around the world.

The Israeli Democracy Index offers an annual assessment of the quality of Israeli democracy. Every year since 2003, an extensive survey has been conducted on a representative sample of Israel's adult population. The project aims to explore trends in Israeli society on fundamental questions relating to the realization of democratic goals and values, and the performance of government systems and elected officials. Analysis of the survey results is intended to enhance public debate on the status of democracy in Israel, and create a comprehensive source of relevant information.

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82 NIS

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