The Israeli Democracy Index

2015

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MAIN FINDINGS

THE ISRAEL
DEMOCRACY
INSTITUTE

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The Israel Democracy Institute is an independent, non-partisan think-and-do tank dedicated to strengthening the foundations of Israeli democracy. IDI supports Israel's elected officials, civil servants, and opinion leaders by developing policy solutions in the realms of political reform, democratic values, social cohesion, and religion and state.

IDI promotes the values and norms vital for Israel's identity as a Jewish and democratic state and maintains an open forum for constructive dialogue and consensus-building across Israeli society and government. The Institute assembles Israel's leading thinkers to conduct comparative policy research, design blueprints for reform, and develop practical implementation strategies.

In 2009, IDI was recognized with Israel's most prestigious award— The Israel Prize for Lifetime Achievement: Special Contribution to Society and State. Among many achievements, IDI is responsible for the creation of the Knesset's Research and Information Center, the repeal of the two-ballot electoral system, the establishment of Israel's National Economic Council, and the launch of Israel's constitutional process. The Institute's prestigious International Advisory Council, founded by former US Secretary of State George P. Shultz, is chaired by Professor Gerhard Casper, former President of Stanford University.

The Guttman Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research at IDI holds the largest, most comprehensive database on public opinion surveys in Israel. Over a span of sixty years, the Center, based in Jerusalem, has applied rigorous, innovative, and pioneering research methods enhanced by its unique "continuing survey." It has documented the attitudes of the Israeli public regarding thousands of issues, in all aspects of life, in over 1,200 studies that have been conducted since 1947: from everyday concerns to politics, culture, ideology, religion, education, and national security.

The Israeli Democracy Index is a public opinion poll project conducted by IDI's the Guttman Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research. Since 2003, an extensive survey has been conducted annually on a representative sample of Israel's adult population (1,000 participants). Each survey presents an estimate of the quality of Israeli democracy for that year. On the whole, the project aims at assessing trends in Israeli public opinion regarding the realization of democratic values and the performance of government systems and elected officials. Analysis of its results may contribute to public discussion of the status of democracy in Israel and create a cumulative empirical database to intensify discourse concerning such issues.

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Executive Summary

The key findings and insights in the pages that follow are drawn from an analysis of data from the 2015 survey and are ordered in six subject categories:

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2. Government performance, character of the state, and relationship between government and citizens
3. Democratic rights and freedoms
4. Attitudes toward the"other," in particular the Arab citizens of Israel
5. The Rabin assassination from a twenty-year perspective
6. Israel 2015: An international comparison

1. The Present Personal and National Situation

On the whole, Israelis describe their personal situation as favorable, with 74.7% of the total sample characterizing it as "good" or "very good." At the same time, among certain Jewish groups on the margins of Israeli society a smaller proportion describe their personal situation in positive terms (58.4% of Jewish respondents who associate themselves with the weaker elements of society feel this way, as opposed to 84.5% of those who identify with the stronger groups). As in the general population, a majority of Arab respondents also classify their situation as "good" or "very good," though by a smaller share than the Jewish respondents (65.1% and 76.5%, respectively). Unlike many other questions in the survey, respondents' political orientation had no effect on their assessment of their personal situation. This was also true of age, and of self-described level of religiosity.

In contrast to the personal situation of the respondents, the overall "state of the state" is characterized by the total sample as moderate at best (41.2% deemed it "good" or "very good"; 38.7% deemed it "so-so"; and 18% deemed it "bad" or "very bad"). There are stark differences on this point among Jewish respondents of different political orientations, with voters on the right seeing the country's overall situation in a more positive light (54.3% choosing "good" or "very good," as opposed to 41.3% in the

center and 18.5% on the left). The share of Arab respondents who characterize the country's situation as "good" or "very good" is only 28.8% (compared with 43.7% of Jews).

Notwithstanding bitter disputes over security (Operation Protective Edge) and socioeconomic issues (housing prices, and the gaps between Israel's center and periphery, for example), the sense of being part of the state and its problems remained very high this year among the Jewish public, at 88.1%. Arab respondents, by contrast, felt less connected this year than last (32.4%, compared with 58.9%).

A large majority of Jewish and Arab respondents alike (roughly 84% in each group) report that they are not interested in emigrating to a Western country, even under such favorable circumstances as receiving citizenship and hence having access to employment. Nonetheless, among the younger age cohort, and among those who associate themselves with weaker groups in Israeli society, the survey found a slightly greater willingness to emigrate than among the older groups and among those who align themselves with stronger social groups, respectively.

The level of solidarity of Israeli society is seen as low to moderate: on a scale of 1 to 10, the average score given is 5.3 among Jewish respondents, and 4.5 among Arabs. In this context, we also examined the question of discrimination. The survey findings show relatively broad agreement with the view that Arabs in Israel are discriminated against compared with Jews (Jewish respondents: 54.1%; Arab respondents: 86.9%). There is less agreement on the question of whether Mizrahim (Jews of Asian/African origin) are discriminated against relative to Ashkenazim (Jews of European/American origin): 55.8% of Arab respondents, versus 27.7% of Jewish respondents, think this discrimination exists.

2. Government Performance, Character of the State, and Relationship Between Government and Citizens

Most of the Israeli public show an impressive understanding of the importance of the political process. A majority of the total sample hold that voting for one party over another can make a difference (69.1%), and that the composition of the Knesset is an

accurate reflection of the divisions between groups and the range of opinions in Israeli society (58.2%). Moreover, a majority of Jewish respondents report that they discuss politics frequently with their friends, whereas only about one third of the Arabs surveyed said the same. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, according to which younger people are uninterested in politics, the proportion of respondents in the younger age groups who say that they discuss political issues with their friends is similar to that found in the older age groups.

The above notwithstanding, the prevailing view of government performance is highly critical. A majority hold that government corruption is common in Israel (total sample: average score of 2.4, where 1 = very corrupt and 5 = not at all corrupt), with slight differences between Jewish and Arab respondents. Most respondents (54.4% of the total sample) also feel that Knesset members do not work hard and are not doing their job as well as they should. A high percentage of those surveyed (77.7% of the total sample) feel unable to truly influence government policy, and there is a pronounced lack of trust in key political institutions: only 19.1% of the total sample trust the political parties "very much" or "quite a lot," with corresponding figures of 35.4% for the Knesset, and 36.2% for the government.

In contrast to the low degree of trust in Israel's political parties, Knesset, and government (which is shared, to a large extent, by both the Jewish and Arab populations), the IDF and the President of Israel enjoy a high level of trust, but only among Jewish respondents. The Supreme Court and Israel's health funds (HMOs) are also trusted to a great extent by the Jewish public. Among Arab respondents, the government and public bodies that enjoy the highest rate of trust are the health funds, the National Insurance Institute, and the Supreme Court. Thus it would appear that the Israeli public distinguishes between institutions that "deliver the goods" and those that do not live up to expectations.

So what sort of state do Israelis want? The inherent tension in the dual definition of the State of Israel as "Jewish and democratic" emerges in Israeli public discourse in various contexts, and has grown even stronger in recent years. Based on this year's survey, the preference for this dual definition is continuing to decline,

with virtually equal proportions of Jewish respondents attaching greater importance to either the Jewish or the democratic component (36.6% and 35.3%, respectively). Only about one quarter (26.7%) of Jewish respondents feel that both elements are equally important, in contrast to the majority who held this position up until a few years ago. As in the past, the preference for the Jewish aspect is stronger among the Orthodox, the ultra-Orthodox, respondents on the right, and young people, while the democratic element is seen as more important by respondents on the left, secular Jews, and the older age groups.

3. Democratic Rights and Freedoms

The findings indicate that large segments of the Israeli public are more inclined toward the civic-republican view of citizenship, which emphasizes individuals' obligations toward the political community as the source of their rights, and less toward the liberal-individualist view, which sees the democratic rights of the individual as an intrinsic value, not dependent on the fulfillment of communal or national obligations. In general, the republican approach is more apparent in the positions of those respondents who self-identify as right-wing, young, and Orthodox or ultra-Orthodox, whereas the liberal approach is reflected primarily in the views of respondents on the left, older respondents, secular Jews, and Arabs.

Another general finding is the sizeable gap, evident again this year, between the widespread support for democratic values in the abstract, and the limited support—or even opposition—expressed when it comes to translating these values into practice. Such is the case, for example, with regard to the democratic principle of equality. True, a majority of the Jewish public (71.3%) are opposed to granting Jews greater rights than non-Jewish citizens; but at the same time, most Jews (60.8%) favor limiting the right to vote for, and be elected to, the Knesset to those willing to make a declaration of loyalty to the state and its symbols. Obviously, a large majority of Arab respondents (83.8%) are opposed to such a requirement. As in previous years, most Jewish respondents indicate that decisions crucial to the state, whether on peace and security or on governance and the economy, should be made strictly by a Jewish majority.

The same holds true for freedom of expression. On the one hand, a majority of the Israeli public (69.2% of Jews and 76.2% of Arabs) are against legislation that would ban harsh public criticism of the state. This opposition crosses all political lines, though it is more pronounced on the left than in the center or on the right of the political map. Yet when security considerations are weighed against freedom of expression, the results for the Jewish public change completely. For example, a majority (59.1%) hold that the state should be allowed to monitor what citizens publish on the Internet (surprisingly, younger Jewish respondents are more strongly in favor of this than older ones). Similarly, with regard to human and civil rights organizations, image and security concerns outweigh support for basic democratic rights: a majority of Jews (with the exception of those who align themselves with the left), believe that these organizations cause damage to the state. Not surprisingly, most Arab respondents are opposed to both statements: that the state should be allowed to monitor what citizens publish on the Internet, and that human and civil rights organizations cause damage to the state.

4. Attitudes Toward the "Other," in Particular Arab Citizens of Israel

There is no question that Israeli society has become more heterogeneous over the years—demographically, ideologically, and politically. When asked to rank the level of friction between various groups, 67.1% of the total sample rated tensions between Jews and Arabs as "high," compared with 58% last year. This was followed (in descending order) by tensions between right and left (defined as "high" by 59.7% of all respondents, a sharp increase from last year's figure of 45.3%); rich and poor (50.6%); religious and secular Jews (47.5%); and Mizrahim and Ashkenazim (24%). Based on the total sample, the level of tension in the last three areas has dropped slightly relative to last year.

This leads us to the question of how Israelis conduct themselves in such a tense environment, and in particular to what extent they are willing to accept the "other" in their daily lives and in politics. The survey presents a complex picture. At both the theoretical and practical levels, we found a relatively high level of willingness to accept the proximity of the "other" (for instance

as neighbors). Each sector of the population, it turns out, has its own "undesirables": for Jewish respondents, the most disturbing prospective neighbors would be foreign workers (48.5%) and Arab families (36.1%), while Arab respondents would be most troubled by having ultra-Orthodox Jews (42.6%) or a homosexual couple (40.4%) as neighbors. In other areas related to contact with "others" in daily life, a relatively optimistic portrait emerges. In the context of medical treatment, the prevailing opinion among both Jewish and Arab respondents is that the national identity of the doctor is not important. So too when it comes to education: a majority of respondents in both sectors agree to having teachers from the other group in their schools. On this issue, secular Jewish respondents show themselves to be more accepting than Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox Jewish respondents.

Nonetheless, this theoretical willingness to come to terms with the presence of the "other" is eroded when confronted by security and other concerns. Accordingly, we found strong opposition (72.2%) among the Jewish public to allowing Palestinians from the West Bank who are married to Arab citizens of Israel to live in the country. Moreover, in contrast to the relative openness with regard to neighbors and medical or educational services, mixed marriages between Jews and Arabs met with disapproval from both groups. Similarly, we found considerable support among both Jewish and Arab respondents (36.8% and 38.8%, respectively) for organizations that engage in various activities to prevent Jewish women from marrying Arab men.

In another example of Jewish attitudes toward Arab citizens, a majority of Jewish respondents (55.7%) find a contradiction between Arab citizens' sense of belonging to the Palestinian people and their civic loyalty to the State of Israel (a large majority—75.6%—of Arab respondents see no inconsistency here). It should be emphasized that there is a large difference of opinion on this question among Jewish respondents, according to political orientation: roughly two-thirds of respondents who self-identify as being on the left do not see a contradiction in this case.

This skepticism toward Arab citizens' loyalty to the state is apparently based on the fear of many Jewish respondents (42.3%) that Arab citizens have not reconciled themselves to the existence

of the state of Israel, and support its destruction. Likewise, 39% of Jewish respondents feel that Arab citizens constitute a security threat. Given these findings, it is not surprising that 37.5% of Jews respondents support the idea that the government should encourage Arabs to emigrate from Israel. Further, a majority of Jews (56.6%) oppose the presence of Arab parties in the government and the appointment of Arab ministers. As for preferential funding of Jewish localities over Arab ones, the majority of respondents are opposed, although a substantial minority of Jews (41%) are in favor, mostly among the ultra-Orthodox, the Orthodox, and the right.

The proportion of Jews who oppose increased state funding for Arab culture is slightly greater than that of those in favor (47.1% versus 42.4%, respectively). Here too, we find the expected differences along the spectrums of political identification, foreign policy and national security orientation, and religious affiliation, meaning that the right and the Orthodox are more strongly opposed than are the left and the secular. Nonetheless, it would appear that most Jews support greater intercultural understanding when it comes to the roles accorded Hebrew and Arabic. For example, we found a majority of Jews who favor including Arabic on public signs and government forms (61.1%), and who support teaching Arabic in Jewish schools (63%). The extent of support among Arab respondents for teaching Hebrew in Arab schools is greater than that of Jewish respondents for teaching Arabic in Jewish schools; and, of course, there is greater support among Arab respondents than among Jewish respondents for the use of Arabic on signs and official forms.

As for commensurate representation of Arabs in the civil service, a majority of Jewish respondents (54.9%)—and, of course, a larger majority of Arab respondents (85.4%)—are in favor. Obligating young Arabs to perform some form of national service, whether civilian or military, is a step supported by a sizeable majority of Jewish respondents (74.1%) and opposed by a similar majority of Arab respondents (71.8%). Jewish respondents on the left favor such service to a greater extent than do those on the right or in the center.

The overall picture, then, is very complex, encompassing trends that are not necessarily consistent with one another. What is clear is that as long as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with its attendant security concerns, remains unresolved, the chances are poor that the Jewish majority will be inclined to grant equal civil status to the Arab minority.

5. The Rabin Assassination from a Twenty-Year Perspective

Twenty years after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the centrality of this tragic event in Israel's collective memory appears to be waning. Only a negligible minority of respondents (3.6%) cited it as the most significant event in the history of Israel as a democratic state on their own initiative, without it being offered as an option. In a previous survey conducted in 2005, ten years after the assassination, 77% of respondents replied that Rabin's murder was the most important event in Israel's history; although at that time the question was asked as a closed question, with this option presented by the interviewers, raising the chances that it would in fact be defined as a pivotal event.

There also seems to be an emerging tendency to diminish the political significance of Rabin's legacy and of the annual memorial day marking his assassination. Jewish respondents are split between those who state that his legacy is clear to them, and those who state that it is not. Most Jews who self-identified with the right are uncertain of Rabin's legacy, as are a majority of Arab respondents. The responses to an open-ended question on Rabin's legacy indicate that more than half of those who claim to have a clear understanding of it see its essence as being peace, the pursuit of peace, or concessions for peace. The remainder of this group offered a wide range of responses, among them combinations of peace and security, tolerance and non-violence, and more. A minority stated that Rabin's legacy can be summed up as defeatism and excessive compromise.

When asked what they believe should be the primary focus of the day commemorating Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, Jewish respondents opted mostly for the less contentious options offered—such as the unity of the Jewish people in Israel (the

most frequent answer on the right) or tolerance and democracy (the most common response on the left)—rather than Rabin's life and contribution to the state, or the necessity of making concessions for peace. Even among those Jewish respondents who position themselves on the left of the political spectrum, peace is seen as only marginally important in this context. The clear preference among Arab respondents is to focus on the necessity of concessions for peace as the key aspect of the annual Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Day.

When Jewish respondents were asked to assess Rabin's peace policy retrospectively in light of the repeated failure to achieve a peace agreement, it emerged that only a small majority (51.8%) hold that the right's criticism of Yitzhak Rabin's policies at the time was not justified, while a majority of respondents on the right believe that it was. The proportion of Jewish respondents who agree that the left also contributed to the rifts in Israeli society following Rabin's assassination, by collectively holding all right-wing and religious Jews responsible, is somewhat greater (at 48%) than the share who do not take this view (40.6%). Those who agree with this statement are primarily on the right, although it is noteworthy that a sizeable minority from the political center, and even some respondents from the left, tend to agree with the statement. The Arab public is split evenly down the middle on this question.

And what of the future? Among both Jewish and Arab respondents, opinions are divided over the likelihood of another political assassination of a Jewish leader by a Jew, with 41.9% of the total sample considering it likely, as against 45.8% who think it unlikely. This figure is much lower than in 2005, roughly a decade after the assassination, when 83.5% reported that they feared another political murder in Israel. Still, some two-thirds of Jewish respondents on the left, and half of those who align themselves with the center, believe today that the chances of another political murder are high, as opposed to less than a third who share this opinion on the right.

Regarding the severity of the punishment of Rabin's murderer, more than half of the Jewish respondents, and half of the Arab respondents, hold that Yigal Amir should remain in prison for the rest of his life; however, exactly one third of the total sample

believe that he should be treated like any other murderer and should serve a fixed-term sentence set according to the same standards applied to others. Among the Jewish respondents, the younger their age, the smaller the percentage who feel that Yigal Amir should spend the rest of his life in jail. Support for keeping him in jail for life is high primarily among the left and center, and lower on the right.

On the question of support for political violence as a legitimate tool, an overwhelming majority are opposed to taking up arms to prevent the government from carrying out its policies. However, almost one-tenth of those surveyed (both Jewish and Arab) agree that in certain situations the use of arms is warranted to thwart an unjust policy. Support for this stance is greater among young Jewish respondents than among older Jewish respondents. Among Jews who classify themselves as "traditional religious," the level of support is almost double that among secular Jews, and a similar difference can be found between those on the right and those on the left. In addition, a small but not negligible minority of respondents justify the murder of Yitzhak Rabin in retrospect, stating that it prevented great harm to Israel's security by stopping the signing of a peace agreement with the Palestinians. In other words, despite the firm opposition of all sectors of the population to political violence or its justification, there are small but significant pockets on the margins who support such violence either before or after the fact—a worrisome finding that demands attention.

6. Israel 2015: An International Comparison

This year, we examined eight international indicators that relate to various aspects of government performance, and of civil and social functioning. The international comparisons show that Israel undoubtedly meets the rather sparse requirements for the definition of a democratic state. Israel also earns a high score for the level of political involvement of its citizens, and upholds freedom of the press to a moderate-to-high extent. Another encouraging finding is the very high rate of life satisfaction among Israelis.

In the area of government performance, Israel received a moderate score this year. In other words, the situation in Israel is not at the bottom of the scale relative to other countries, but there is definitely room for improvement, for example, in the capacity of the parliament (Knesset) to oversee the government, in the government's ability to set policy, in the degree of the government's transparency and accountability to its citizens, and in the level of public trust in government institutions.

In other aspects of democracy, Israel received moderate to low scores (for example, a moderate score for the level of corruption, and a low score for the preservation of civil liberties). Additionally, it was found that the government's social policy in the areas of education, health, family, and (in)equality needs to be improved, particularly with respect to gaps between rich and poor, Jews and Arabs, Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, and men and women.

Thus there is no question that there is room for improvement in certain aspects of Israel's democratic system. All the same, the international indexes—which are based on extensive data from a variety of sources, and on the opinions of experts (many of whom cannot be suspected of favoring Israel)—award the country a place comfortably in the middle range within the family of democratic nations.

Introduction

Structure of the Report

The *Israeli Democracy Index 2015* is the 13th in a series of reports initiated by the late Prof. Asher Arian and published since 2003. The primary purpose of this research project is to examine structural, procedural, and conceptual aspects of Israeli democracy on a regular basis. As in past years, the data in this report were analyzed with reference to major events and issues in Israeli public discourse at the point in time when the survey was conducted (spring of 2015), as well as to relevant data from the past.

This year's report is divided into six chapters, as follows:

1. **How is Israel Doing?** provides a backdrop for the political and social questions presented in the report.

2. **The Rabin Assassination: Twenty Years Later** examines the place of the assassination in collective Israeli memory, and the conclusions drawn—or not drawn—from it.

3. **State and Governance** addresses various aspects of the political and government system, as in previous years.

4. **The Social Realm** presents public views on social cohesiveness, and on the functioning of Israeli society in both its real and ideal forms.

5. **The Civil and Social Status of Arab Citizens of Israel** focuses on relations between the state and the Jewish majority, on the one hand, and the Arab national minority, on the other.

6. **Israel 2015: An International Comparison** reviews eight international indicators in the areas of democracy, governance, rights, and society; Israel's ranking in each of the indicators is given relative to 27 other countries, and is compared to that of previous years.

Please note that this English edition of the *Israeli Democracy Index 2015* is an abridged version of the Hebrew original. The full Hebrew text includes additional data and more in-depth analysis.

Methodology

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire for this year's *Israeli Democracy Index* survey was compiled in February–March 2015. It consists of 56 content questions and 12 sociodemographic questions.[1] Of the content questions, 32 are recurring questions from previous years (for the full questionnaire, see the Appendix).

Prior to its administration, the questionnaire was translated into Russian and Arabic, and the interviewers who administered these versions were native speakers of those languages. Interviews were conducted with 163 respondents in Arabic and with 88 in Russian.

Data Collection

The interviews of the Jewish sample were conducted by telephone between the dates of April 13 and May 10, 2015, and of the Arab sample, between April 29 and May 10, 2015.

Most of the interviews were conducted over landlines, but to offset the difficulty of reaching young respondents we also carried out 210 cell phone interviews.

The Sample

This year's sample consisted of 1,019 respondents, 856 of whom defined themselves as "Jews" or "others"[2] and 163 of whom categorized themselves as "Arabs." The maximum sampling error for a sample of this size is ±3.2% for the total sample (±3.4% for the Jewish respondents, and ±7.8% for the Arab respondents).

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1 Due to their emotionally-charged content or specific relevance, certain questions were posed to Jewish respondents only (for example, question 5, which examines the respondent's self-definition as a Zionist). Certain questions were presented in parallel versions to both Jewish and Arabs respondents; for example, Arabs were asked about their willingness to accept a Jewish family as neighbors, while Jews were asked about their readiness to have an Arab family as neighbors.

2 The definition of "others" was adopted by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics some thirty years ago to denote individuals who are not Jewish according to halakha (Jewish religious law) but who self-identify sociologically with the Jewish majority and are not Arabs. For the most part, this refers to immigrants from the former Soviet Union, who are eligible to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return but are not considered halakhically Jewish.

The survey data were weighted by self-defined religiosity (for Jewish respondents) and by age, based on figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics (hereafter: CBS).

Navigating the Report

To make it easier to navigate the report, three references have been included in the left margin of the text: Section headings that indicate the topic being discussed, a reference to the relevant question in the questionnaire, and an indication of the page in the Appendix where the question and the distribution of responses to it can be found. (The Appendix presents the full questionnaire with the distribution of the responses for all questions, with separate tables for the total sample, the Jewish sample, and the Arab sample where relevant.) These three references appear in the text as follows:

Israel's overall situation
Question 1
Appendix, p. 106

In the Appendix itself, references have been included for each question to indicate the page in the Index where the findings are discussed.

We hope that the wealth of data presented in this report, which can of course be analyzed in additional ways and from multiple perspectives, will help readers gain a better understanding of the map of public opinion in Israel on issues related, directly or indirectly, to Israel's democratic character. It is also our wish that the data assist scholars in their writing and research. For this reason, we are making the raw data used in the Index available to the public (in SPSS) via the Guttman Center for Survey webpage on the Israel Democracy Institute website (en.idi.org.il).

Chapter 1
How is Israel Doing?

Israel's overall situation

Question 1

Appendix, p. 106

As in previous years, we opened the survey with a question about Israel's overall situation. The findings indicate that the public is relatively contented: the most frequent response in the total sample (38.7%) is that Israel's situation is "so-so," with the share who describe it as "good" or "very good" (a total of 41.2% of the total sample) clearly outstripping the proportion who define it as "bad" or "very bad" (18%).

Figure 1.1 How would you characterize Israel's overall situation today? (total sample; percent)
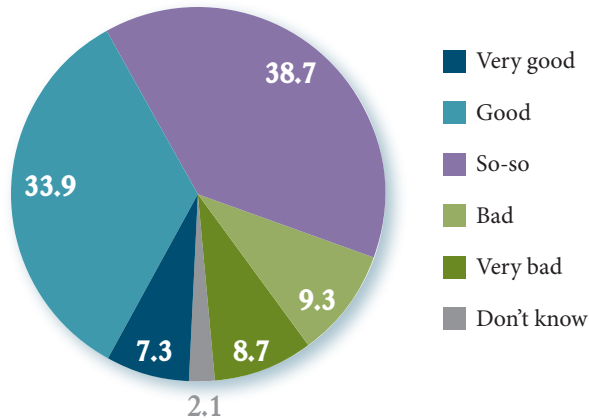
While a comparison of this year's findings with those of 2014 shows a slight drop in the share of respondents who describe the situation as "good" or "very good" (41.2% this year compared with 44.3% last year), in general the upward trend of recent years, which we noted in previous issues of the Index, remains unchanged.

Breaking down the responses to this question by **nationality** (Jews, Arabs), we find a somewhat similar pattern in the two groups: in both populations, the prevailing assessment is that

Israel's situation in general is "so-so." Nonetheless, the share of Jews who consider the situation as "good" or "very good" is clearly greater than the corresponding figure among Arab respondents (43.7% as opposed to 28.8%, respectively). Accordingly, the proportion of Arabs who categorize the situation as "bad" or "very bad" is greater than that of Jewish respondents (29.1% versus 16%, respectively).

Among Jewish respondents, a breakdown of the responses by **political orientation** yields striking differences. As shown in Table 1.1, the assessment of the situation as "good" or "very good" is much more common among those who locate themselves politically on the right (54.3%) than it is among those who identify themselves with the left (18.5%). The political center, as expected, falls somewhere in between the two (at 41.3%).

Table 1.1 (percent)

	Left	Center	Right
Israel's overall situation			
Good or very good	18.5	41.3	54.3
So-so	50.4	40.9	33.1
Bad or very bad	28.9	15.9	11.7
Don't know	2.2	1.9	0.9
Total	100	100	100

As in the past, this year we found sizeable differences in the responses to this question among Jewish respondents according to their self-identification with **stronger or weaker groups** in Israeli society. Most of those who associate themselves with stronger groups see Israel's overall situation as "good" or "very good" (50.2%), as opposed to only one-third among those who place themselves with weaker groups (32.7%). Moreover, the proportion of respondents who characterize the situation as "bad" or "very bad" in the weaker groups is almost double that of the respondents who share this opinion in the stronger groups (24.1% as opposed to 13%).

Personal situation

Question 2

Appendix, p. 106

We moved on to examining how the respondents view their personal situation. Again this year, this personal assessment is much more positive than the assessment of the country's situation. In the total sample, a majority of respondents (52.1%) described their situation as "good," and another 22.6% as "very good" (for a total of 74.7%). Only about one-fifth (19.8%) classified it as "so-so," with another 4.8% opting for "bad" or "very bad." These figures are consistent with last year's findings and with those of other surveys, all of which point to a high level of personal satisfaction among Israelis.[3]

Figure 1.2 How would you describe your personal situation? (total sample; percent)
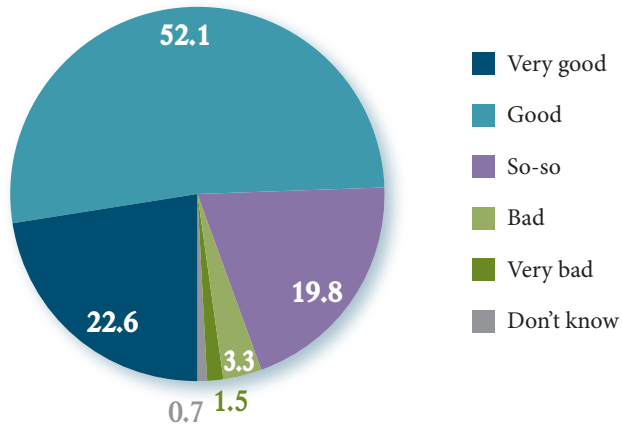
Analysis by **nationality** also showed a similar pattern among Jewish and Arab respondents when it comes to personal satisfaction, with the majority categorizing their situation as "good" or "very good" (Jews: 76.5%; Arabs: 65.1%).

3 See for example "World Happiness Report: Switzerland Leads but Israelis Also Satisfied with Life." *The Marker*, April 24, 2015 (Hebrew).

Breaking down the responses to this question by **political orientation** and (for Jewish respondents) **religiosity**—variables that were found to be influential on the responses regarding Israel's overall situation—did not produce major differences between political blocs, or between religious classifications. By contrast, we found substantial differences among Jewish respondents in terms of **self-identification with stronger or weaker groups** in society: those who associate themselves with stronger groups in Israeli society view their situation as much better than do those who feel that they belong to weaker groups.

We cross-tabulated the respondents' responses to the two questions: the "overall state of the state," and their own personal situation. As in 2014, we found a strong correlation between respondents' assessments of their personal situation and that of the country as a whole. As shown in the diagonal in table 1.2 (below), of those respondents who characterize their own situation as good, the largest group (48.4%) also see the country's situation as good; likewise, a majority (55.4%) of those who see their situation as so-so feel similarly about the state of the nation, while most (53.1%) of those who view their own situation as bad also hold that the country's situation is bad.

Table 1.2 (percent)

	Personal situation is good	Personal situation is so-so	Personal situation is bad
Israel's situation is good	**48.4**	20.3	20.4
Israel's situation is so-so	35.1	**55.4**	26.5
Israel's situation is bad	15	20.8	**53.1**
Don't know	1.5	3.5	–
Total	100	100	100

Sense of being part of the State of Israel and its problems

Question 7
Appendix, p. 109

A large majority of Jewish citizens (totaling 88.1%) feel a part of the state and its problems either "very much" (48.2%) or "quite a lot" (39.9%). This represents an increase over the last two years (2014, 78.4%; 2013, 66.6%). Among Arab citizens, the sense of connection is noticeably weaker: only a third of respondents (32.4%) reported this year that they feel a part of the state and its problems (of whom a mere 8% responded "very much," and 24.4% "quite a lot"). This marks a considerable drop compared with last year (58.9%). In other words, if our findings are accurate, the Jewish and Arab populations in Israel are drawing further and further apart in terms of their sense of belonging to the state.

Figure 1.3: To what extent do you feel part of the State of Israel and its problems? (by nationality; percent)

Jews: 1.6 · 2.1 · 8.2 · 39.9 · 48.2
Arabs: 0.8 · 21.1 · 45.7 · 24.4 · 8.0

Very much   Quite a lot
Not so much   Not at all   Don't know
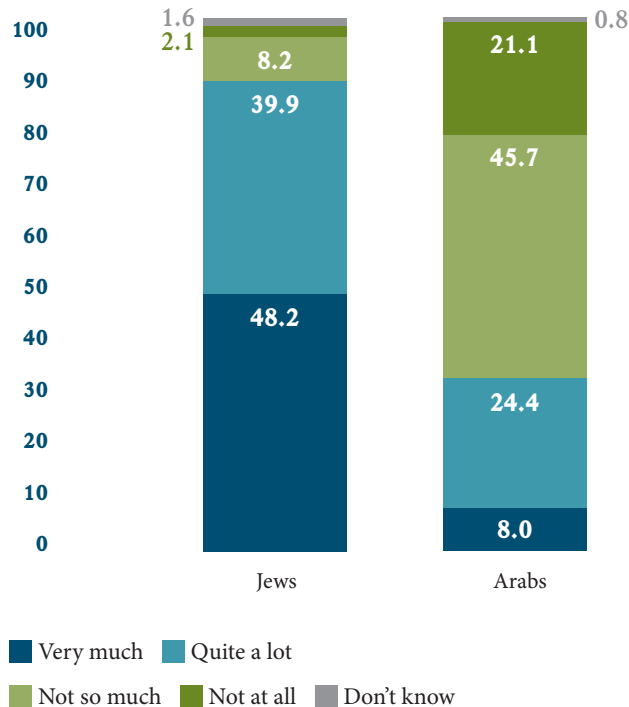
Breaking down the replies of Jewish respondents by **political orientation**, we found that the differences between camps on this issue are negligible. The same is true of **religiosity**. Self-identification with **stronger or weaker groups in society** was not shown to be an influential variable in this context. These findings are consistent with the clustering of a majority of Jewish respondents around the higher levels of connection with the state.

A breakdown of responses in the Arab sample by **voting patterns** (Zionist parties or the Joint Arab List) raises an interesting and salient difference. Of the Arab respondents who voted in 2015 for Zionist parties (11.9% of those who reported voting), a clear majority (68.8%) feel a sense of belonging to the state and its problems, while the greater portion (76.9%) of those who voted for the Joint Arab List (78.2% of those who reported voting in the 2015 elections) report that they feel connected to the state "not so much" or "not at all."

Are you interested in staying in Israel or emigrating?

Question 28

Appendix, p. 120

We wanted to know the extent to which the strong sense of belonging to the state and its problems among Jewish respondents, and the weaker sense of connectedness among Arab respondents, might be reflected in a desire to move to other countries, or alternatively, in a preference for staying put. To make things more challenging, this year we formulated a question that makes the possibility of emigration more tempting, by including a theoretical offer of citizenship: "If you had the opportunity to become a citizen of the United States or any other Western country, would you prefer to move there or to remain in Israel?"

Figure 1.4: Desire to emigrate or to remain in Israel (by nationality; percent)
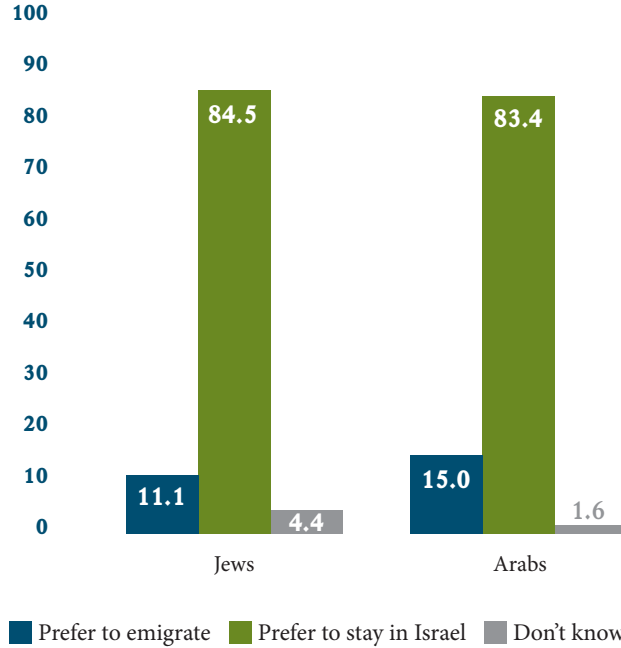
A substantial (and similar) majority of Jewish and Arab respondents alike prefer to remain in Israel, even if offered citizenship in a desirable country. To a large extent, this figure is comparable to responses that we received in the past when the question of emigration versus staying in Israel was worded in a less attractive way. In fact, in all the surveys—regardless of the specific phrasing—the share of both Jewish and Arab respondents who reported a desire to remain in Israel clearly surpassed the proportion of those who reported a desire to emigrate.

Chapter 2
The Rabin Assassination: Twenty Years Later

November 2015 will mark 20 years since the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by Yigal Amir. The politically-motivated murder of an elected prime minister by a citizen represents a profound rupture in the democratic functioning of a state. We therefore decided to devote a key chapter in this report to examining the imprint left by the murder on the collective memory of Israelis, and to the lessons learned—or not learned—from it.

The most significant event in Israel's history as a democratic state

Question 3
Appendix, p. 106

We asked the respondents what they considered to be the most significant event in the history of Israel as a democratic state. Our expectation was that the Rabin assassination would figure significantly on the list of major events cited by the respondents, but we were mistaken. Of the entire sample (1,019 respondents), only 32 Jews and five Arabs (that is, 3.6% of the total) identified the assassination as being the most important event in Israel's history as a democracy. Far ahead at the top of the list were the state's declaration of independence and Israel Independence Day.

Figure 2.1: Most significant event in Israel's history as a democratic state (total sample; percent)

Event	Percent
Declaration of state, Independence Day	39.8
Various wars	9.1
Regular democratic events and processes	8.6
Signing of peace treaties	4.0
Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin	3.6
Lack of democracy (racism)	2.3
Government turnovers	1.9
Occupation / Naqba	1.2
Disengagement from Gaza	1.0
Other (each less than 1%)	28.5
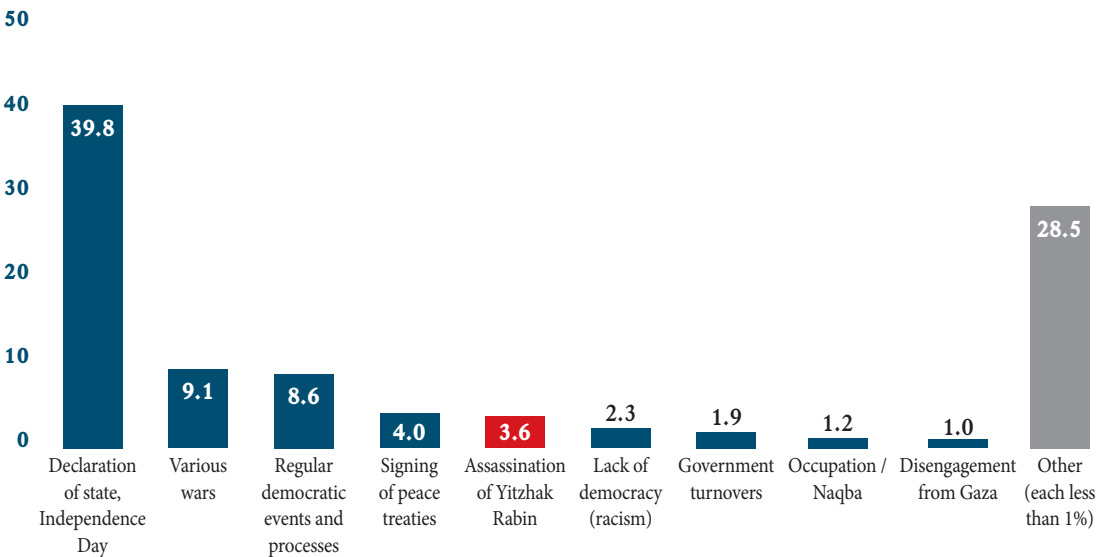
The subsequent question is whether today, either as a specific result of the assassination or not, the Israeli public considers it legitimate to take up arms in order to thwart policies formulated by elected officials and their representatives.

The use of arms to block the enactment of government policy

Question 30

Appendix, pp. 121–123

The following figure shows a virtually wall-to-wall consensus (86.4%) against the use of arms to prevent the implementation of policies decided upon by Israeli authorities. At the same time, some 9% of respondents agree with the statement that there are situations in which it is legitimate to take up arms (in absolute numbers, 9% translates into 540,000 men and women, taking into account the roughly six million eligible voters in Israel).

Figure 2.2: "There are situations in which there is no choice but to take up arms to prevent the government from carrying out its policies" (total sample; percent)
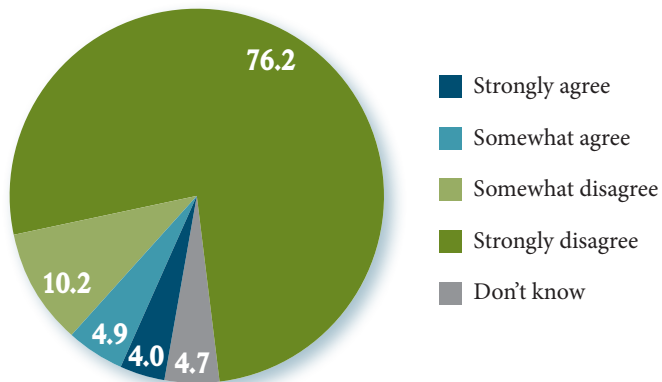
We attempted to find out which groups contain the largest concentrations of people who espouse this view. Analyzing the responses by **nationality**, we did not find any difference between Jewish and Arab respondents. By contrast, among Jewish respondents, a breakdown of the results by **age** suggests that the younger the respondent, the greater the support, on average, for the use of arms.

Table 2.1 (percent)

	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
Agree with the use of arms under certain circumstances	14.3	10.8	9.4	5.4	8.2	4.0

We then broke down the sample of Jewish respondents by **religiosity**. Here too, the differences were minor: the greatest support for the use of arms was found among the Orthodox (10.6%), followed in descending order by traditional non-religious (9.4%), secular (8.2%), traditional religious (7.3%), and ultra-Orthodox (3.7%).

A breakdown of the Jewish respondents by **political orientation** showed that among those who define themselves as right-wing, the share of respondents who support the possible use of arms is low (10.3%); however, this is still double the rate among those on the left of the political spectrum (5.2%).

Likelihood of another political murder

Question 38
Appendix, p. 127

We asked if the Israeli public fears that another politically-motivated murder could take place in Israel. It turns out that this is in fact a widespread concern: 41.9% of the total sample believe that a future murder of a Jewish leader by a Jew is "very likely" or "quite likely"; however, a slightly higher percentage (45.8%) hold that it is "quite unlikely" or "very unlikely."

Figure 2.3: How likely is it that a Jew will commit another political murder of a Jewish leader in Israel? (total sample; percent)

- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Quite unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Don't know

25.4
30.1
11.8
12.3
20.4
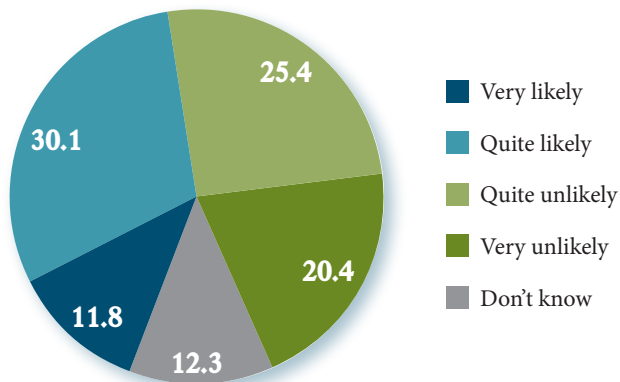
A breakdown of the findings by **nationality** shows a similar pattern of responses among both Jewish and Arab citizens; but analyzing the results from Jewish respondents on the basis of **political orientation** reveals considerable gaps between camps. On the right, 58% hold that the likelihood of another political murder is low, with only 29.8% believing that the chances of such an occurrence are high. In the center, and especially on the left, however, a clear majority feel that there is a strong likelihood of another political assassination (50.2% and 65.6%, respectively), as opposed to 41.6% and 29.1% (respectively) who believe that the chances are low.

Retrospective assessment of the right's criticism of Rabin's policies

Question 31
Appendix, pp. 121–123

We wanted to explore how the Jewish public perceives, in retrospect, Prime Minister Rabin's policies on the Palestinian issue (the Oslo peace process)—a subject with which he was so strongly identified that he was murdered because of it. With this in mind, we asked the respondents their opinion of the statement: "The repeated failure to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians proves that the right's criticism of Yitzhak Rabin's policies in this regard was justified." A slight majority (51.8%) disagree with this assertion; however, a third (34.6%) hold that the criticism by the right was warranted at the time.

Figure 2.4: "The repeated failure to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians proves that the right's criticism of Yitzhak Rabin's policies in this regard was justified" (Jewish respondents; percent)

- 18.6
- 15.3
- 33.2
- 19.3
- 13.6

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
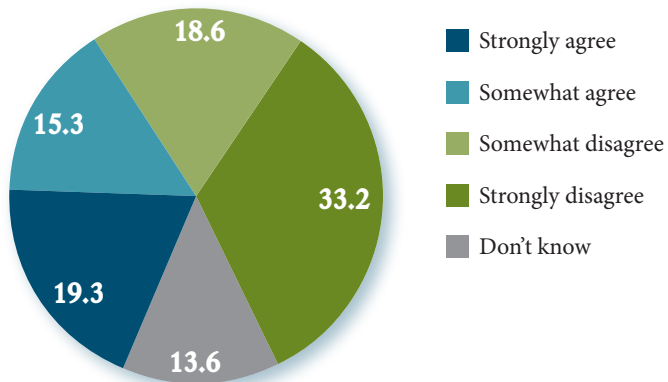
Breaking down the responses to this question by **political orientation** reveals, as expected, sizeable differences. Of those who align themselves with the right, a majority (53.7%) retroactively justify the right's criticism of Rabin's policies, whereas only a small minority of those from the center or the left take a similar view (17.7% and 10.4%, respectively).

Rabin's assassination as averting the danger of a peace agreement

Question 35

Appendix, p. 126

We sought to examine the extent of agreement or disagreement among the Jewish public with an even more strongly-worded statement: "The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin prevented great harm to Israel's security by stopping the signing of a peace agreement with the Palestinians." A clear majority of Jewish respondents (69.4%) reject this argument.

Figure 2.5: "The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin prevented great harm to Israel's security by stopping the signing of a peace agreement with the Palestinians" (Jewish respondents; percent)
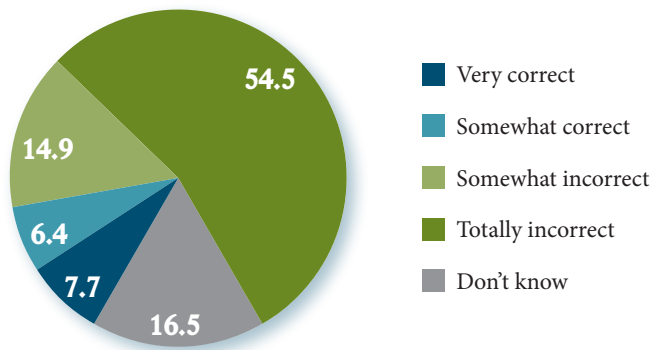
- Very correct
- Somewhat correct
- Somewhat incorrect
- Totally incorrect
- Don't know

54.5
14.9
6.4
7.7
16.5

We broke down the responses to this question among Jewish respondents by **political orientation**. While only a small minority in all camps support this statement, there are still differences between the camps that are noteworthy. On the right, close to one-fifth (19.3%) agree with the statement that the assassination of Rabin prevented harm to Israel's security, compared with less than one-tenth in the center or on the left of the spectrum (9.4% and 8.1%, respectively).

Responsibility of the left for divisions in Israeli society following the assassination

Question 29

Appendix, pp. 121–123

A further question was aimed at examining responsibility for the internal schisms within the Jewish public, which intensified in the wake of the assassination. We asked the respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement: "The left also played a role in deepening the rifts in Israeli society following Yitzhak's Rabin's assassination, by accusing all right-wing and religious Jews of being responsible for his murder." It emerged that this was a common perception: among Jewish respondents, the share of those who agree with this statement (48%) is greater than the proportion who disagree (40.6%). As for the Arab respondents, responses are split more or less evenly between those who support this view and those who oppose it (43.4% and 45.7%, respectively).

Figure 2.6: "The left also played a role in deepening the rifts in Israeli society following Yitzhak's Rabin's assassination, by accusing all right-wing and religious Jews of being responsible for his murder" (Jewish respondents; percent)
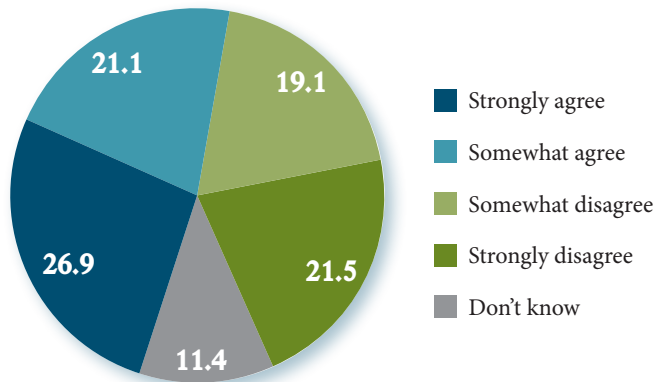
Among Jewish respondents, an analysis of the findings by **political orientation** revealed, not surprisingly, that a majority on the right (62.4%) hold the left to be also responsible for the schisms. Less predictably, a considerable minority of the center (36.5%) and the left (31.1%) also agree with this view.

Rabin's legacy

Question 33
Appendix, p. 125

Given the passionate discourse surrounding Yitzhak Rabin's legacy in the years following his assassination, we sought to explore the nature of the legacy of the late prime minister. First we asked: "People often speak about 'Rabin's legacy.' Is it clear to you personally what that legacy is?" The responses to this question were divided, with a slightly greater proportion of respondents stating that it was unclear to them. Of the total sample, 48.3% said that the legacy left by Rabin is "not at all clear" or "somewhat unclear" to them, while 41.5% said that his legacy is "somewhat clear" or "very clear" to them.

Analyzing the results by **nationality** shows that the Jewish respondents are split almost evenly between those who are certain of what Rabin's legacy is and those who are not (44% and 45.7%, respectively), while a sizeable majority of Arab respondents (62.3%) state that it is unclear to them.

Figure 2.7: Is Yitzhak Rabin's legacy clear or unclear to you? (by nationality; percent)
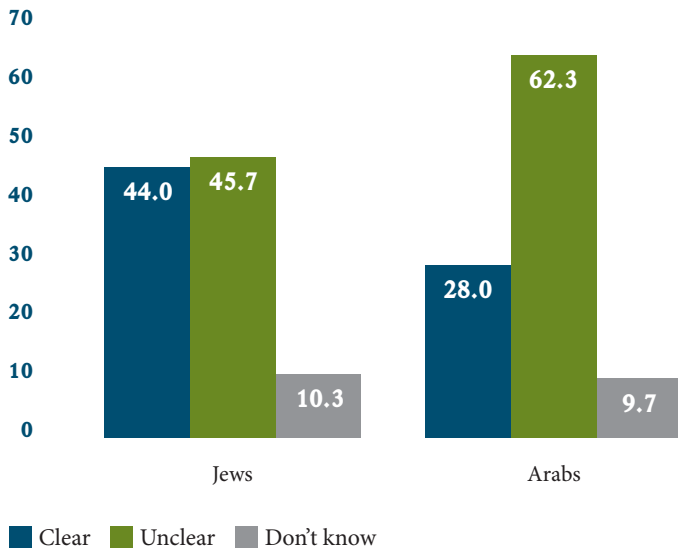
We broke down the Jewish sample by **age** to see whether the lack of clarity is age-related; that is, if respondents who were born or grew up after Rabin's assassination are less aware of his

legacy than those who were already adults during his tenure and when he was murdered. Somewhat surprisingly, we did not find significant differences between the various age groups. By contrast, breaking down the Jewish sample by **political orientation** reveals a decided lack of clarity on the right, where only one third (33.4%) report that Rabin's legacy is clear to them, as opposed to 54.4% in the center and 72.6% on the left. It thus appears that Rabin's legacy is understood mainly by those who agree with his policies.

Key aspects of Rabin's legacy

Question 34

Appendix, p. 126

In a follow-up question to those who responded that Rabin's legacy is "very clear" or "somewhat clear" to them, respondents were asked to sum up the main points of the legacy as they see them (open-ended question). Table 2.2 groups together the major categories of responses to this question.

Table 2.2 (percent)

Main points of Rabin's legacy	
Peace; pursuit of peace; two states; concessions for peace	51.7
Peace and security; war against terror/Arabs as if there is no peace, and pursuit of peace as if there is no terror/war	9.1
Tolerance; non-violence; strengthening unity among Jews in Israel	7.3
Concessions to Arabs; disaster; readiness for territorial compromise	5.9
Contribution to the people / the state	5.4
Jewish-democratic, not bi-national, state	2.5
Security; military leader	2.4
Other (honesty / modesty / socialism)	1.8
There is no "Rabin's legacy" / it's not relevant today	2.1
Don't know	11.8
Total	100

As shown above, the greatest share of respondents think that peace is Rabin's primary legacy, though we have no way of knowing whether the interpretation attached to it by the respondents is positive or negative. Next in frequency (but lagging far behind) is "peace and security."

Content of Rabin memorial days

Question 36

Appendix, p. 126

The lack of clarity surrounding Rabin's legacy is also reflected in the distribution of responses on the preferred focus of the annual memorial day marking Yitzhak Rabin's assassination. Large segments of the Jewish public apparently "take refuge" in less challenging and contentious content for the commemoration of his murder ("unity of the Jewish people in Israel" received 32.3%, and "Rabin's life and personal contribution" received 15.7%, totaling 48% between them). Only a quarter of the respondents recommend emphasizing the values of tolerance and democracy, and a mere 7.9% refer to the necessity of making concessions for peace. Among the Arab public, by contrast, the primary focus (47.1%) is clearly on the need for concessions in order to achieve peace, followed by the values of tolerance and democracy (27.2%).

Figure 2.8: What should be the **primary** focus of the annual memorial days marking Yitzhak Rabin's assassination? (by nationality; percent)

Arabs

Jews
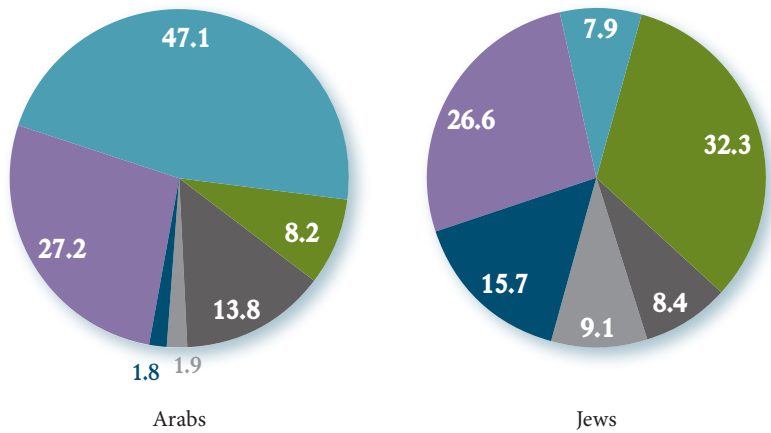
- ■ Rabin's life and personal contribution
- ■ Values of tolerance and democracy
- ■ Necessity of making concessions for peace
- ■ Unity of the Jewish people in Israel
- ■ All of the above / none of the above / other
- ■ Don't know

Breaking down the responses of Jewish respondents by **political orientation** indicates that respondents on the right favor focusing on the unity of the Jewish people in Israel (40.6%), while those on the left emphasize instilling democratic values (42.2%). At the center of the political spectrum, the choice is split between democratic values and unity of the people (35.2% and 30%, respectively).

Life imprisonment or a fixed-term sentence for Yigal Amir

Question 37

Appendix, p. 127

The final question in this context addressed the future of the prime minister's assassin, Yigal Amir. We wished to find out which position the public agreed with more strongly—that Yigal Amir should remain in prison for the rest of his life, or that he should serve a fixed-term sentence set according to the same principles that are applied to any other murderer. A majority of the total sample (56.7%) feel that Amir should remain in prison for life; however, a not inconsiderable proportion (33.3%) favor limiting his sentence; that is, releasing Yigal Amir at some point, in keeping with the same standards as applied for any other murderer.

Figure 2.9: Yigal Amir should remain in prison for life, or he should serve a fixed-term sentence, set according to the same principles applied to any other murderer (by nationality; percent)

Legend:
- Yigal Amir should remain in prison for the rest of his life
- Yigal Amir's sentence should be a fixed term
- Don't know
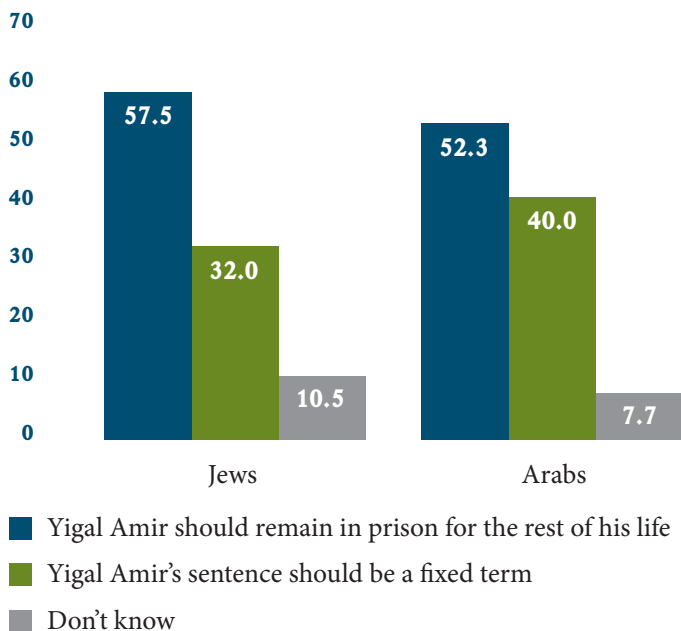
A breakdown of responses among Jewish respondents by **age** indicates that the older age groups feel more strongly than the younger ones that Yigal Amir should spend the rest of his life in prison:

Table 2.3 (percent)

	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
Agree that Yigal Amir should remain in prison for life	43.3	48.7	53.0	62.1	61.1	72.6

Analyzing the results of Jewish respondents by **political orientation**, we found significant differences: while only 46.1% of those who align themselves with the right hold that Amir should spend the rest of his life in prison, 72% of those who identify with the center, and 77.8% of those on the left, share this view.

Chapter 3
State and Governance

Since the survey was conducted shortly after the 2015 Knesset elections, we'll begin our discussion of State and Governance by addressing this central democratic institution.[4]

It doesn't matter who you vote for

Question 19
Appendix, pp. 114–116

We asked the respondents to express their agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "It doesn't matter which party you vote for; it won't change the situation." A large majority (69.1%) of the total sample disagree with this claim; in other words, they feel that there is a real distinction between the parties, that it does matter which party one votes for, and that voting can make a difference.

Figure 3.1: "It doesn't matter which party you vote for; it won't change the situation" (total sample; percent)

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

18.6
15.3
13.5
2.1
50.5

---
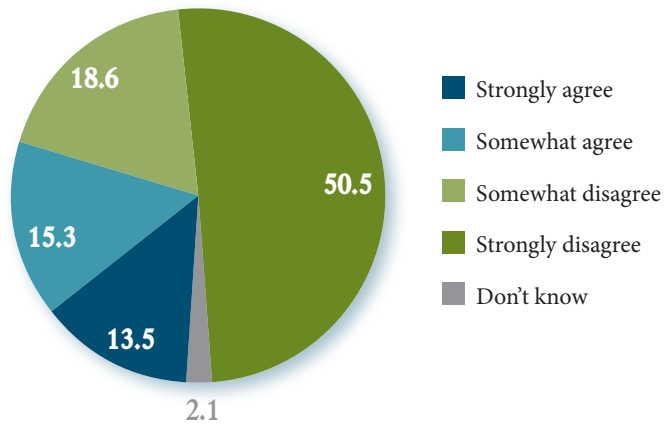
4   The matter of trust in the Knesset will be discussed later in this chapter, when we examine the level of trust in institutions in general.

We broke down the responses to this question by **participation in the last election**. A sizeable difference was found between respondents who reported voting in the 2015 elections and those who stated that they did not vote. Among the non-voters, the proportion of respondents who disagreed with the statement that "it doesn't matter which party you vote for" (that is, who believe that voting can make a difference), was, as expected, lower than the corresponding figure among those who did vote.

Table 3.1 (percent)

	Voted in the Knesset elections	Did not vote in the Knesset elections (despite being eligible to do so)
Disagree with the statement that it doesn't matter which party you vote for	69.7	49.0

Next, we moved on to examining the representativeness of the current Knesset.

Representativeness of the Knesset

Question 13

Appendix, pp. 110–112

We wanted to know if respondents feel that the composition of the Knesset is an accurate reflection of the differences and consensuses that exist among the Israeli public. A majority (58.2%) of the total sample believe that the Knesset is sufficiently representative; nonetheless, it should be noted that one third of the respondents (33.2%) do not share this opinion.

Figure 3.2: "The present makeup of the Knesset is an accurate reflection of the differences and consensuses within the Israeli public" (total sample; percent)

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

31.0
18.9
27.2
14.3
8.6
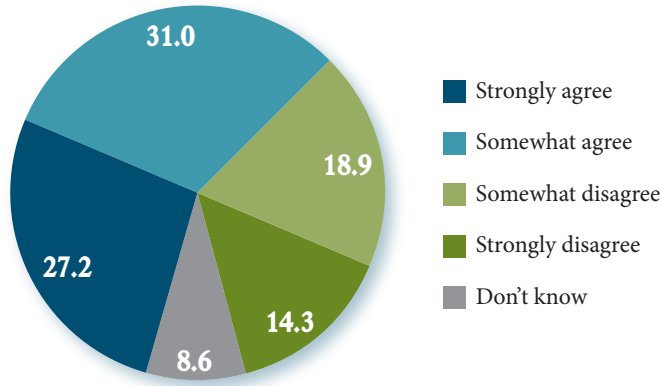
A breakdown of responses to this question by **nationality** points to considerable differences between Jews and Arabs. Though a majority of both groups take a favorable view of the Knesset in terms of representativeness, the share of Arab respondents who do not agree with the statement (46.5%) is much greater than the corresponding figure among Jewish respondents (30.6%).

Among Jewish respondents, analyzing the findings by **political orientation** revealed that the differences between the groups are not great; in all political camps, a majority agreed that the Knesset is an accurate reflection of differences and consensuses in the Israeli public. At the same time, the level of disagreement with this statement is actually highest among respondents who identify with the political center (36.7%, compared with 28.4% on the right and 30.4% on the left).

From here, we moved on to exploring the public's views on Knesset members' performance and the effort that Knesset members invest in fulfilling their duties.

Do most Knesset members work hard?

Question 45

Appendix, pp. 129–131

This year, once again, we asked the respondents to express their agreement or disagreement with the statement: "On the whole, most Knesset members work hard and are doing a good job." A majority of respondents, though not a large one (54.4%), do not agree with the above; that is, they feel that Knesset members are not doing their job properly.

Figure 3.3: "Most Knesset members work hard and are doing a good job" (total sample; percent)
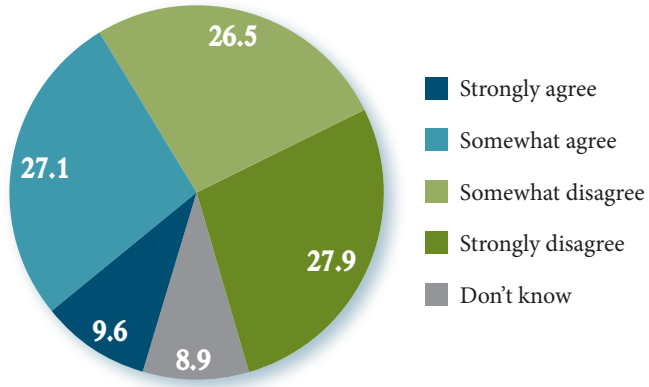
Breaking down the results by **political orientation**, we found marked criticism in all the camps, though the right expressed slightly less disapproval than other groups: 50.2% of those on the right do not agree that most Knesset members work hard, as opposed to 63.8% in the center and 60.5% on the left.

Influence of citizens on government policy

Question 16
Appendix, p. 113

In this survey, as in past years, a very sizeable majority (77.7%) feel unable to influence government policy—a highly problematic state of affairs for Israeli democracy.

Figure 3.4: To what extent are you and your friends able to influence government policy? (total sample; percent)
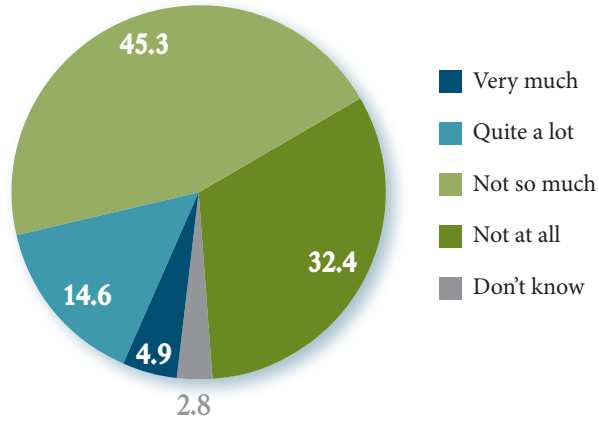
We looked at the extent to which the **political orientation** of Jewish respondents affects their sense of having influence on policy, and found that a majority in all camps feel powerless in this regard.

Table 3.2 (percent)

	Right	Center	Left
Feel able to influence policy "not so much" or "not at all"	72.7	84.5	86.7

Does this mean that Israelis are not preoccupied with political issues? Or in other words, does the perceived lack of influence lead (or not lead) to a lack of interest in politics?

Discussing political issues

Question 55
Appendix, p. 136

We asked the respondents: "Do you discuss politics with your friends?" As shown in the figure below, a much higher proportion of Jewish respondents than of Arab respondents (59% versus 31.4%) report that they frequently discuss politics with their friends.

Figure 3.5: Do you discuss politics with your friends? (by nationality; percent)
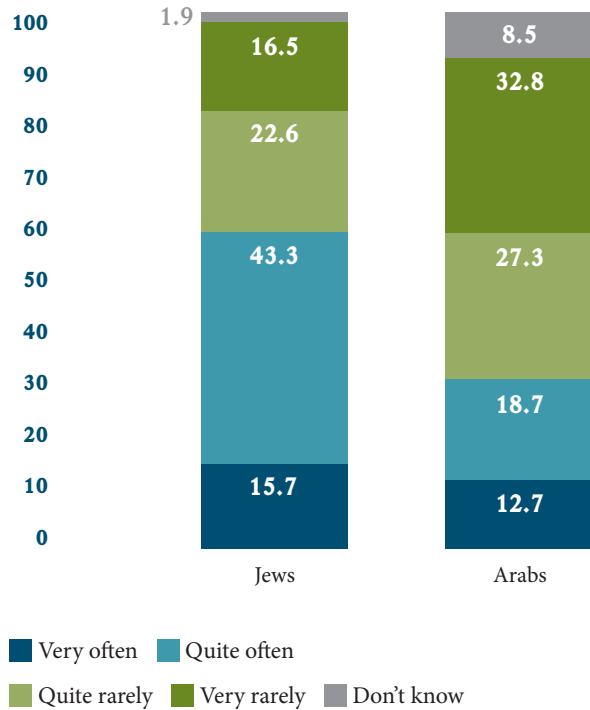
A breakdown of responses to this question by sex (among Jewish respondents) reveals a difference: men, it emerges, report more than women that they talk about political matters with their friends "quite often" or "very often," although the data show a majority in both cases (men, 66.3%; women, 52.2%).

Despite the frequent claim that young people take less of an interest in politics, no substantial differences in responses to this question were found between Jewish respondents in the various **age groups**. However, we did find a difference among Jewish respondents according to **self-identification with stronger or weaker groups in society**: while a clear majority (63.7%) of those who associate themselves with the stronger elements of society report that they discuss politics with their friends "quite often" or "very often," less than half (49.4%) the respondents who self-identify with the weaker groups in society say the same. Still within the Jewish sample, **education** emerged as an even more influential variable: respondents with a higher level of formal education are more inclined to discuss political issues, and those with a full academic degree are more than twice as likely to do so as those with a partial high school education or less.

Does identification with a particular **political camp** have an effect in this context? Based on their responses, a majority in all the camps tend to engage in frequent political discussions, but a slightly greater share of respondents from the center (65.3%) and left (67.4%) than from the right (57.8%) report that they often discuss these issues.

Jewish and democratic?

Question 8
Appendix, p. 109

As in previous years, we posed the following question to the Jewish respondents: "Israel is defined as both a Jewish and a democratic state. Which part of this definition is more important to you personally?" We found that respondents are divided almost equally between those for whom the Jewish component takes precedence (36.6%) and those who see the democratic aspect as more important (35.3%). Those who stated (on their own initiative) that both elements are equally important to them constituted the smallest share this year (26.7%).

Figure 3.6: Israel is defined as both a Jewish and a democratic state. Which part of this definition is more important to you personally? (Jewish respondents; percent)

- ■ Jewish   ■ Democratic   ■ Both are equally important*
- ■ Don't know / Neither is important
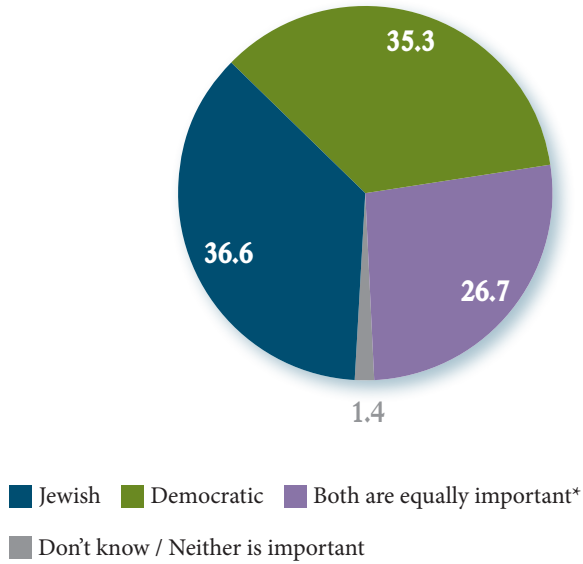
* This response was not presented as an option but was volunteered by respondents.

A comparison of responses to this question by **year** shows a pattern similar to that seen last year; that is, a narrowing of the gap between the proportion of those who favor "Jewish" and those who favor "democratic," at the expense of the share of those who favor the two components equally.

Figure 3.7: Israel is defined as both a Jewish and a democratic state. Which part of this definition is more important to you personally? (Jewish respondents; by year; percent)

Year	Jewish	Democratic	Both equally	Don't know / Neither is important
2015	36.6	35.3	26.7	1.4
2014	38.9	33.5	24.5	3.1
2013	32.3	29.2	37.0	1.5
2012	34.3	21.8	41.9	2.0
2011	29.5	22.9	46.1	1.5
2010	32.4	17.0	48.1	2.5

■ Jewish   ■ Democratic   ■ Both equally

■ Don't know / Neither is important
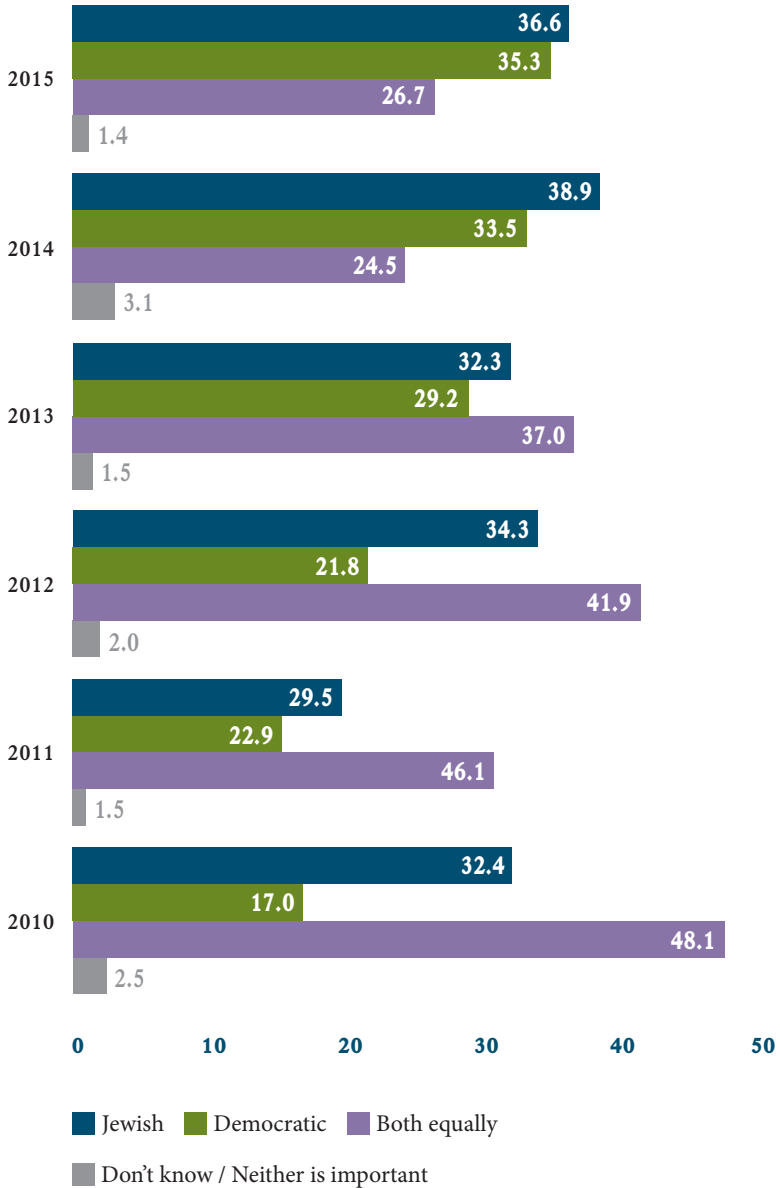
A breakdown of the responses of Jewish respondents by **religiosity** yielded unsurprising results: all of the respondents who define themselves as ultra-Orthodox and most of the respondents who define themselves as Orthodox (70.9%) see the Jewish aspect of the state as the predominant one, while the majority of those who identify as secular (53.4%) consider the democratic component to be the most important.

Breaking down the responses by **age** reveals that the younger groups give precedence to the Jewish component, while the older groups attach greater importance to the democratic aspect.

As in past years, we looked at the relationship between **political orientation** and preference for the Jewish or democratic component. As indicated in the figure below, a majority on the right favor the Jewish component (56.8%) in contrast to the left, where the preferred element is the democratic one (70.1%). In the center, the highest share of respondents—though not a majority—likewise give priority to the democratic component. More than the other two camps, the center favors the combined Jewish-democratic element (32.3%, versus 20.9% on the left and 24.1% on the right).

Figure 3.8: Israel is defined as both a Jewish and a democratic state. Which part of this definition is more important to you personally? (Jewish respondents; by political orientation; percent)
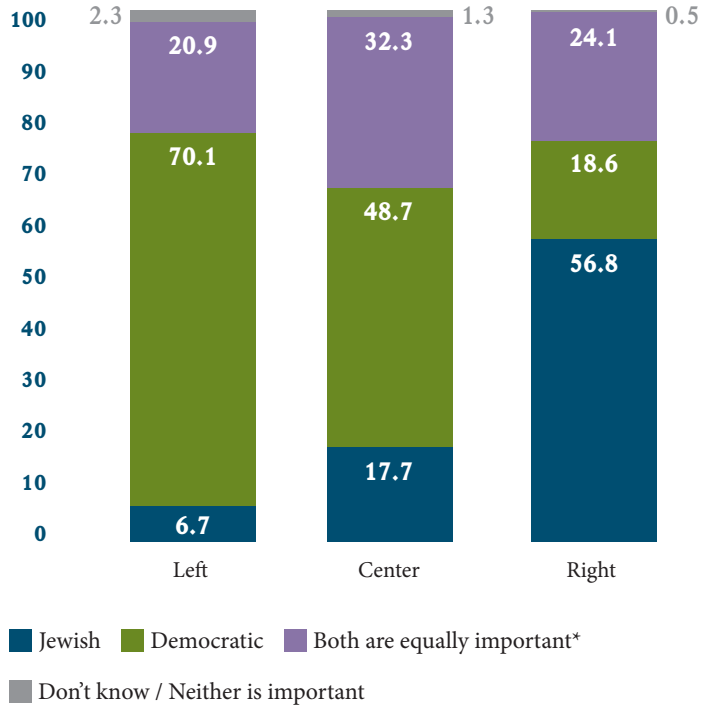
* This response was not presented as an option but was volunteered by respondents.

Should Jewish citizens enjoy greater rights?

Question 21
Appendix, pp. 114–116

In Israel, there are often voices calling for greater rights for Jewish citizens than for non-Jewish citizens (and in fact, in certain spheres, Jewish citizens already enjoy such rights). We asked the respondents to express their opinions on the following statement: "Jewish citizens of Israel should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens"—a statement that is obviously problematic from a democratic perspective. The responses would seem to be good news for Israel's democratic ethos, since a majority of Jews, and of course virtually all the Arab respondents, reject the notion of greater rights for Jews.

Figure 3.9: "Jewish citizens of Israel should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens" (by nationality; percent)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree
	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know

Jews: 3.3, 48.8, 22.5, 12.8, 12.6

Arabs: 1.8, 91.2, 3.1, 1.5, 2.4
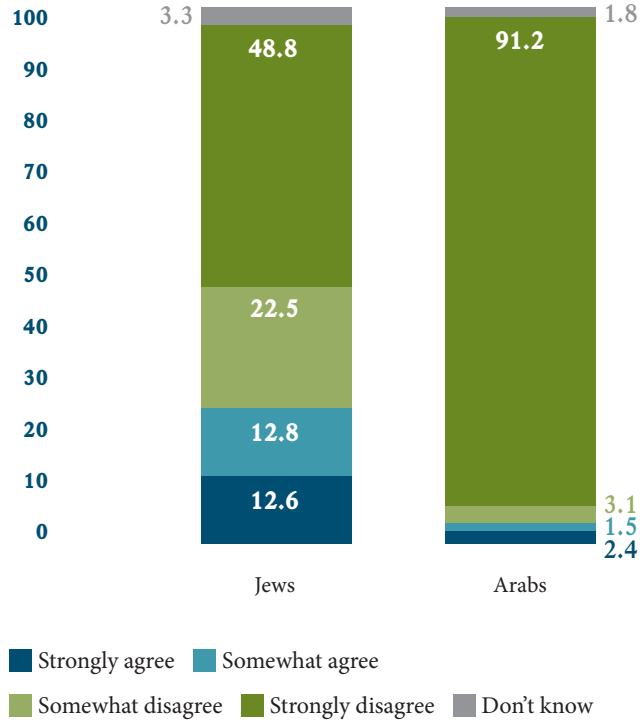
We wondered if, in the context of greater rights for Jews, there is a clear difference between those respondents who favor the **Jewish component** of the definition of the state and those who give priority to the **democratic component**. The answer is yes, though here too a majority of respondents object to greater rights for Jews: among those who see the Jewish component as more important, 56.7% are opposed, compared with 82.5% of those who favor the democratic component.

We then broke down the results from Jewish respondents by **political orientation**, and found a majority in all camps who object to granting greater rights to Jews; however, this majority was significantly larger among respondents on the left and in the center (94.1% and 80.7%, respectively) than among those on the right (61.1%).

Religiosity plays a significant role in shaping opinions on this issue. Among Jewish respondents, the findings indicate that, on the whole, the more religious the respondents, the less likely they are to disagree with granting greater rights to Jews. Among the ultra-Orthodox, only a quarter are opposed to granting greater rights to Jews.

Table 3.3 (percent)

	Ultra-Orthodox	Orthodox	Traditional religious	Traditional non-religious	Secular
Do not agree that Jews should have greater rights	25.0	52.9	63.9	73.4	79.8

In past years, we found a sizeable gap between the general commitment to upholding basic democratic rights, and its expression in practice. Does the commitment in principle stand up to reality this year?

Declaration of loyalty as a condition for voting for or being elected to the Knesset

Question 27
Appendix, p. 120

In order to find out more about the respondents' commitment in practice to democratic rights, we presented them with a proposal raised in the past by former minister Avigdor Liberman that tied the right to vote for and be elected to the Knesset to an obligation: making a declaration of loyalty to the state. The question posed was: "Do you support or oppose the proposal that only those who sign a declaration of loyalty to Israel as a Jewish state, to its symbols, its sovereignty, and to the Declaration of Independence, and who serve in the army or civilian national service, should be eligible to vote for and be elected to the Knesset?" As shown in the figure below, this proposal is supported by a majority of Jewish respondents (60.8%) and strongly opposed by a majority of Arab respondents (83.8%).

Figure 3.10: Do you support or oppose the proposal that only those who sign a declaration of loyalty to Israel as a Jewish state, and who serve in the army or civilian national service, should be eligible to vote for and be elected to the Knesset? (by nationality; percent)

Support   Oppose   Don't know
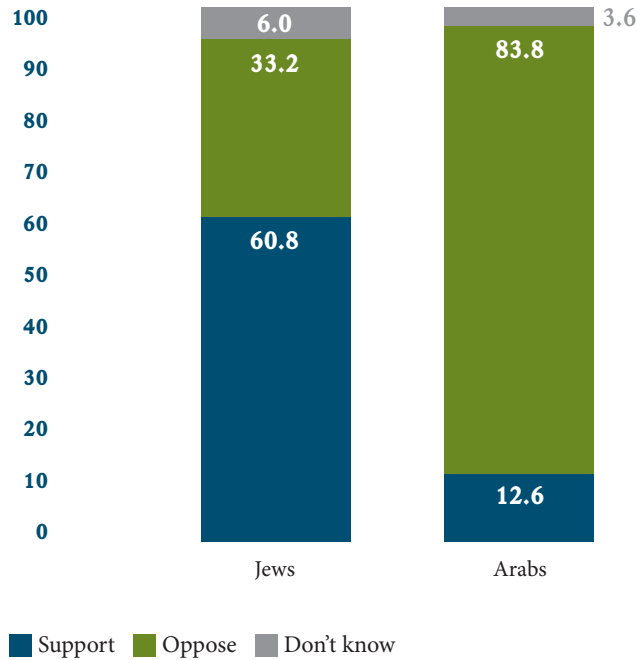
As expected, among Jewish respondents there is a clear connection between identification with a particular **political orientation** and the response to this question. On the right, a solid majority (75.5%) support the proposal for requiring a declaration of loyalty and military or civilian national service, while the center is evenly divided (with 50.2% in favor) and the left shows only a minority, though a substantial one (39.3%), in favor of the proposal.

Breaking down the responses by **religiosity** revealed some differences, but the overall pattern was similar. The shares of those in favor of the proposal, from highest to lowest, are as follows: Orthodox, 72.1%; traditional religious, 67.2%; traditional non-religious, 65.9%; secular, 56.1%; and ultra-Orthodox, 25.9%. The very weak support for the proposal among the ultra-Orthodox, despite their very confrontational stance toward Arab citizens on other issues, can be explained by the fact that they themselves might not be able to meet these requirements: most of them do not perform military service, and they might also be reluctant to declare their loyalty to Israeli sovereignty and the Declaration of Independence.

The distribution of responses to this question demonstrates clearly that this year, as in the past, the professed democratic values of most Jewish Israelis do not stand up well to being tested in practice.

Prohibition against harsh public criticism of the state

Question 9
Appendix, pp. 110–112

We sought the opinion of the respondents on whether Israelis should be legally prohibited from expressing harsh criticism of the state in public. The findings do not point to an "undemocratic" mindset, as a majority (70.4%) of the total sample expressed opposition to this notion.

Figure 3.11: "Israeli citizens should be prohibited from harshly criticizing the state in public" (total sample; percent)
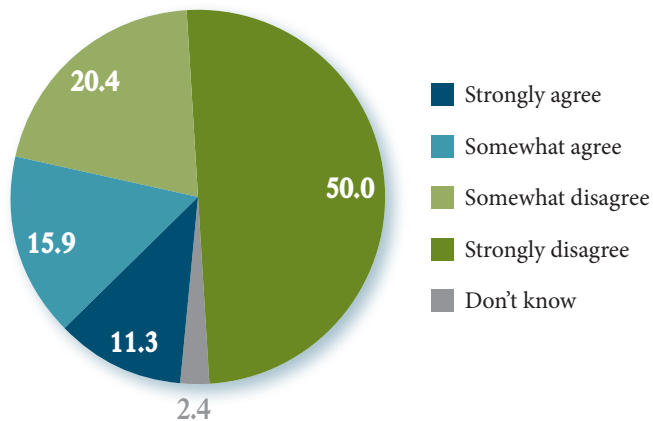
- 20.4
- 50.0
- 15.9
- 11.3
- 2.4

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Among Jewish respondents, breaking down the responses by **political orientation** reveals a majority in all camps who are opposed to a ban on severe public criticism of the state, though the majority is smaller on the right.

Table 3.4 (percent)

	Left	Center	Right
Opposed to prohibiting harsh public criticism of the state	86.0	74.4	63.2

Monitoring of the Internet

Question 18

Appendix, pp. 114–116

This democratic conviction was also found to be critically impaired when we asked the respondents to express their agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "To safeguard Israel's security, it is permissible for the state to monitor what citizens write on the Internet." Perhaps because of the inclusion of the word "security" here, the Jewish public demonstrates a definite willingness (59.1%) to allow the state to intrude on individual freedom of expression on the Internet. By contrast, a majority of Arab respondents (53.8%) are opposed to granting such permission to the state.

As we know, young people are more involved in the online world and are more in command of how things are done on the Internet. We therefore wished to know if they are more sensitive than the older age groups to freedom of expression in cyberspace. Accordingly, we broke down the responses to this question by **age** (among Jewish respondents), yielding somewhat surprising results: the younger age groups actually express greater acceptance of Internet monitoring by the state on security grounds. This is likely consistent with the greater presence of young people in the right-wing camp, which is also more in favor of granting the state this authority for security reasons, as discussed in the paragraph below.

Table 3.5 (percent)

	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
Agree that to safeguard Israel's security it is permissible for the state to monitor what citizens write on the Internet	66.7	63.7	61.0	62.4	48.9	53.6

Analysis by **political orientation** (among Jewish respondents) yields the following results: on the right, a solid majority (69.5%) are willing to permit monitoring of the Internet for security purposes, and a majority in the center (though smaller, at 57.5%) also share this view. By contrast, on the left only a minority—albeit a sizeable one (39.2%)—support this position.

Do human rights organizations harm the state?

Question 22

Appendix, pp. 114–116

Local human and civil rights organizations are frequently among the bodies voicing harsh public criticism of Israel. We therefore looked at whether the respondents agree with the view that these organizations are damaging to the state.

On this question as well, it turns out that the tolerance in theory for public criticism of the state does not always stand up to reality for a sizeable portion of the Jewish public. A majority of Jewish respondents (56.1%) agree with the position that such organizations are damaging to the state. Not surprisingly, we found a substantial majority of Arab respondents (75.2%) who oppose this assertion.

Figure 3.12: "Human and civil rights organizations, such as the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and B'Tselem, cause damage to the state." (by nationality; percent)
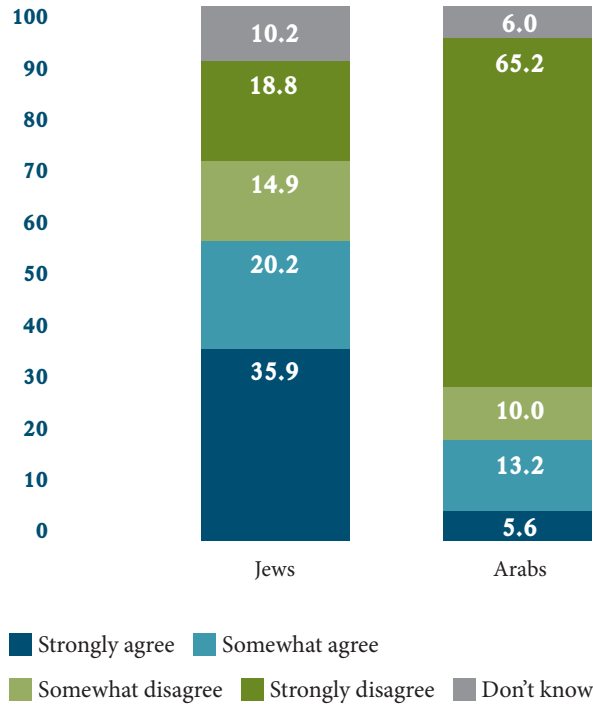
Among Jewish respondents, a breakdown of responses to this question by **political orientation** produces the expected results: on the right, a large majority (70.5%) hold that Israel's human rights organizations cause damage to the state; in the center, this view is shared by a small majority (54.8%), although a majority nonetheless; and only on the left do a minority (26%) take this view.

Trust in individuals and institutions

Question 6

Appendix, pp. 107–108

As in past years, we presented the respondents with a list of institutions and officials, and asked to what extent they trust each of them.

Figure 3.13: To what extent do you trust each of the following individuals or institutions in Israel? ("very much" or "quite a lot"; by nationality; percent)

Institution	Jews	Arabs
The army (IDF)	93.4	37.0
The President of Israel	76.0	38.9
My health fund	70.6	82.2
The Supreme Court	62.2	63.0
The police	42.2	43.7
The government	37.5	29.9
The National Insurance Institute	35.3	65.3
The Knesset	33.8	44.3
The media	32.8	51.1
Political parties	15.1	39.6

■ Jews ■ Arabs
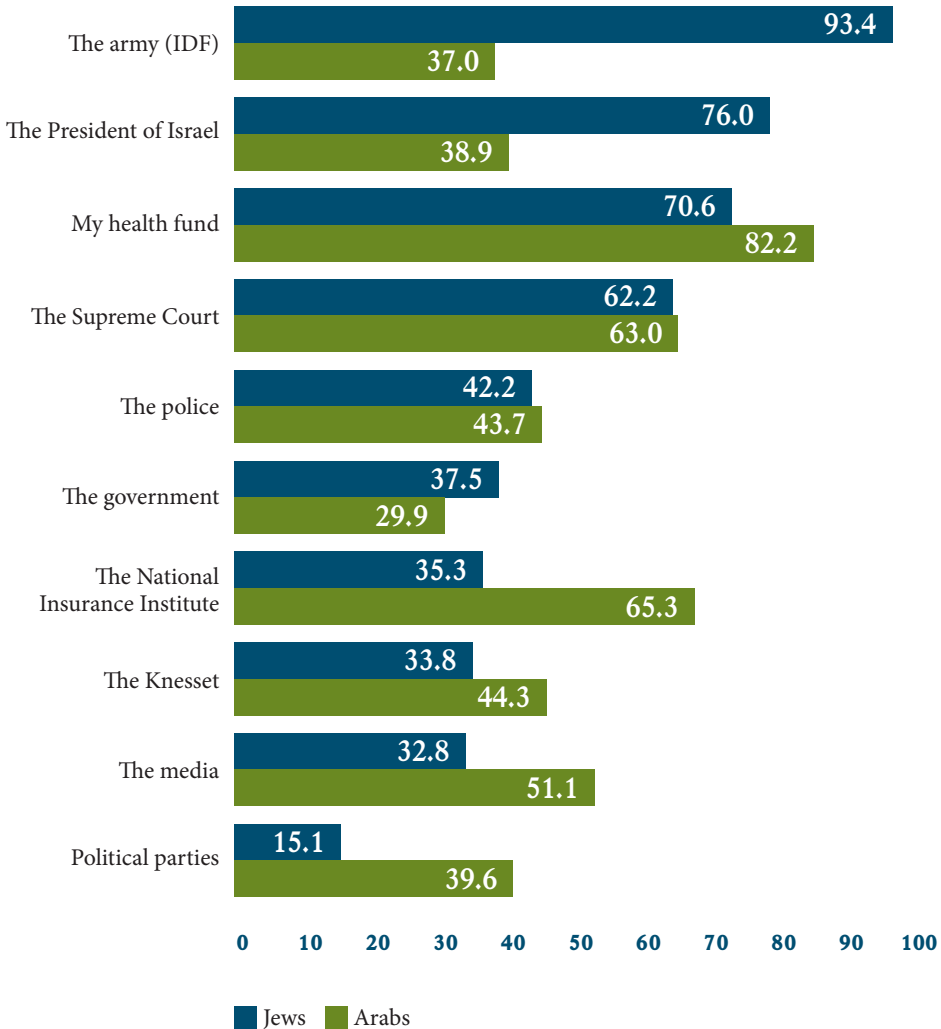
Once again, the institution that enjoys the highest level of trust among Jewish respondents this year is the IDF (93.4%, an increase of roughly 5% over last year), with the President of Israel in second place (76%). Political parties ranked the lowest: only 15.1% of Jewish respondents stated that they trust political parties "very much" or "quite a lot." Israel's health funds earned a place of honor, with a trust rating of 70.6%, but the National Insurance Institute lagged far behind with only 35.3%, in close proximity to the government (37.5%) and the Knesset (33.8%). The Supreme Court fell between the two extremes, with slightly less than two thirds of respondents placing their faith in it (62.2%).

Among Arab respondents, the health funds are at the top of the rankings (82.2%), followed by the National Insurance Institute (65.3%), which scored very low among the Jewish respondents. Of the state institutions in the survey, the Supreme Court enjoys the highest level of trust among the Arab public (63%).

The police force earned a similar trust rating this year among both Arab and Jewish respondents (43.7% and 42.2%, respectively); however, both groups registered lower levels of trust in this institution than last year. In 2014, the police enjoyed the trust of 56.9% of Arab respondents (indicating a considerable drop this year to this year's 43.7%) and 45.1% of Jewish respondents (with a more moderate downturn to this year's 42.2%).

As in past years, the media enjoy a relatively high level of trust among the Arab public (51.1%) compared with a rather low level among Jewish respondents (32.8%). In both groups, these ratings represent an increase in trust over last year, though in the Arab public this trend is more noticeable than in the Jewish: in 2014, only 37% of Arab respondents expressed trust in the media. Among the Jewish public, the fluctuation is smaller, with only 28.4% stating last year that they trust the media "very much" or "quite a lot."

Among the Jewish public, the Israeli media enjoy the trust primarily of the left (57.8%) and center (44.4%), with deep distrust being expressed on the right (only 19.8% of this camp place their faith in the media).

Based on our survey, the current President of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, is more popular among the Jewish public than was former President Shimon Peres in the final year of his term: President Rivlin enjoys the trust of 76% of Jewish respondents this year, compared with a rating of 71.2% in 2014 for then-president Peres. But when Peres served as president, he enjoyed a higher level of trust among the Arab public than does Rivlin today (Peres 2014: 56.1%; Rivlin 2015: 38.9%).

Next we examined the extent of trust expressed by Jewish respondents in the three foundational institutions of Israeli democracy—the Knesset, the government, and the Supreme Court—according to **political orientation**. The findings show that, of the three, the Supreme Court earns the highest level of trust in all camps, with the others trailing far behind: only 14.1% on the left express faith in the government, though this share is doubled in the center (28.4%), and reaches roughly half of those surveyed on the right (49.7%). As for the Knesset, the level of trust is low in all three camps, but is weakest on the left (at 22.9%, compared with 31.8% in the center and 39.4% on the right).

This year, once again, we found very sizeable differences in the extent of trust in the Supreme Court among Jewish respondents according to **religiosity**. Thus while only a tenth of ultra-Orthodox Jews state that they trust the Supreme Court "very much" or "quite a lot," the share rises to a bit under half among Orthodox respondents, and—impressively—to around 70% among the respondents in each of the traditional religious, traditional non-religious, and secular groups.

The following table presents the trends in the level of trust in individuals and institutions compared with last year:

Table 3.6 (percent)

The media	▲
The Supreme Court	▲
The police	▼
The President of Israel	▲
The Knesset	=
The army (IDF)	▲
The government	▼
Political parties	▼

Corruption rating

We asked the respondents to rate the level of corruption in Israel's leadership on a scale of 1 ("very corrupt") to 5 ("not at all corrupt"). The scores, among Arab and Jewish respondents alike, speak for themselves: the average corruption rating for the Arab sample is 2; that is, very close to a score of 1 ("very corrupt"), while the average score among Jews is only slightly higher at 2.4, still below the midpoint (3). In other words, both the Jewish and Arab publics consider the country's leadership to be quite, or even very, corrupt, which may explain the rather low level of trust that they place in it.

Figure 3.14: How would you rate Israel's leadership in terms of corruption, where 1 = very corrupt and 5 = not at all corrupt? (by nationality; percent)

Jews   Arabs
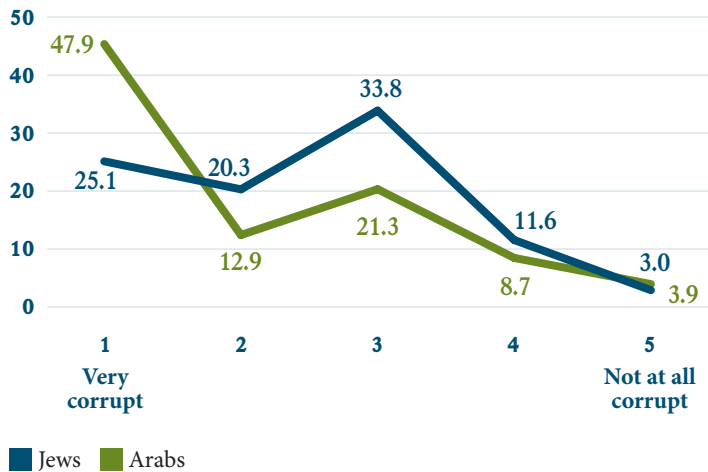
Chapter 4
The Social Realm

As in previous years, this year's survey explored various aspects of Israeli society, in order to ascertain the extent to which it fulfills democratic principles in practice, and the extent to which those principles are reflected in Israelis' worldviews and feelings.

Sense of solidarity in Israeli society

Question 24

Appendix, p. 117

First, we were interested in discovering the level of solidarity (sense of "togetherness") in Israel as perceived by the respondents. We therefore asked them to rank the level of solidarity in Israeli society on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 = no solidarity at all and 10 = a high level of solidarity. This year's findings were not encouraging: the average score for the total sample was 5.1, denoting a moderate level of solidarity. Breaking down the findings by **nationality** yielded an average score of 5.3 in the Jewish sample and 4.5 among Arab respondents. In other words, Israelis today do not feel that they are living in a society characterized by solidarity.

As in past years, breaking down the results among Jewish respondents by self-identification with **stronger or weaker groups in society** reveals a slight difference: those respondents who associate themselves with stronger groups in society see Israeli society as characterized by greater solidarity than do those who identify with weaker groups (average score of 5.5 versus 4.9).

Is the assessment of social solidarity related in some way to the respondents' sense of belonging to the state and its problems? It would appear that the answer is yes. Among Jewish respondents who reported feeling part of the state and its difficulties to a greater extent, the average solidarity rating was 5.3, while among those with a weaker connection the average rating was 4.7.

We also found a strong correlation between sense of solidarity and the preference to remain in Israel: the average solidarity rating among Jewish respondents who are interested in emigrating to other countries was 4.4, compared with an average of 5.4 among those who expressed a desire to stay in Israel.

Discrimination against minorities?

Question 14
Appendix, pp. 110–112
Question 44
Appendix, pp. 129–131

We wanted to know whether certain groups in Israel are seen as being discriminated against. The two groups we examined this time were Mizrahim (Jews of Asian/African origin) as compared with Ashkenazim (Jews of European/American origin), and Arabs as compared with Jews. Of the total sample, a majority of respondents (59.2%) reject the notion that Mizrahim are discriminated against, as opposed to almost one-third (32.2%) who hold that Mizrahim do in fact suffer discrimination. The distribution of opinions regarding discrimination against Arabs follows the opposite pattern: 59.3% of the total sample agree that Arabs are discriminated against, in contrast to 33.9% who disagree with this claim.

Figure 4.1: Discrimination against Mizrahim compared with Ashkenazim, and discrimination against Arabs compared with Jews (total sample; percent)

Mizrahim compared with Ashkenazim: There is discrimination 32.2, There isn't discrimination 59.2, Don't know 8.6

Arabs compared with Jews: There is discrimination 59.3, There isn't discrimination 33.9, Don't know 6.8

■ There is discrimination   ■ There isn't discrimination   ■ Don't know
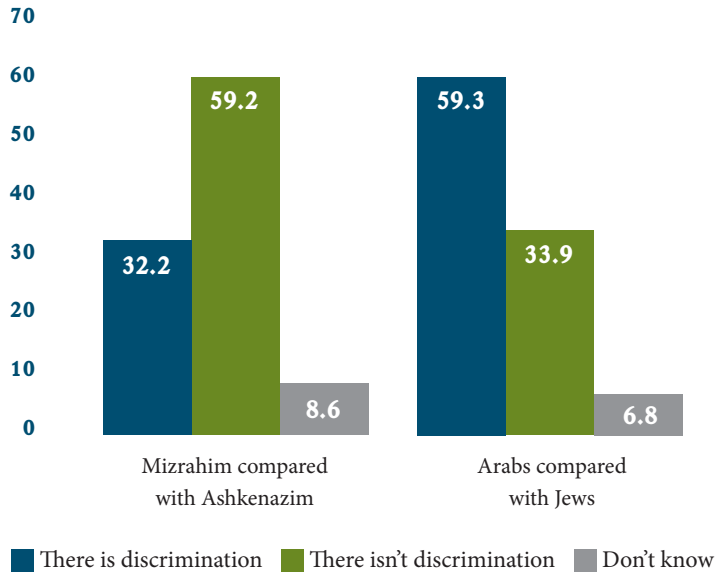
Next, we broke down the responses by **nationality**. In each of the two cases—Mizrahi-Ashkenazi and Arab-Jewish—a much greater proportion of Arabs than of Jews believe that there is discrimination in Israel. Moreover, a majority of the Arab public feel that discrimination exists in both instances, whereas the majority of Jewish respondents only agree that there is discrimination against Arabs. Barely more than a quarter of the Jewish respondents think that Mizrahim are discriminated against relative to Ashkenazim.

Table 4.1 (percent)

	Agree that there is discrimination
Arab respondents	
Arabs compared with Jews	86.9
Mizrahim compared with Ashkenazim	55.8
Jewish respondents	
Arabs compared with Jews	54.1
Mizrahim compared with Ashkenazim	27.7

When we broke down the responses from Jewish respondents further, this time by **ethnicity** (Mizrahi, Ashkenazi, or mixed), it emerged that there is a sizeable gap between these groups in their perceptions of discrimination. The findings indicate that those who define themselves as Ashkenazim are the least inclined to agree that Mizrahim are discriminated against in Israel (16.4%). Among those who categorize their ethnicity as mixed, a slightly higher share (23.8%) agree that such discrimination exists. And those who define themselves as Mizrahim show the strongest agreement with this assertion (42.2%). By contrast, when it comes to discrimination against Arabs, Ashkenazim are the group that agree to the greatest extent (58.2%) that such discrimination takes place, followed by those who define themselves as Mizrahim (52%), and lastly, the group of mixed ethnicity (48.5%). In other words, the sensitivity to the presence of discrimination not only differs from one ethnic group to another, but each group may identify discrimination in one case and not in another.

Figure 4.2: Discrimination against Mizrahim compared with Ashkenazim, and discrimination against Arabs compared with Jews (Jewish respondents who believe discrimination exists, by ethnic group; percent)

■ There is discrimination against Arabs

■ There is discrimination against Mizrahim
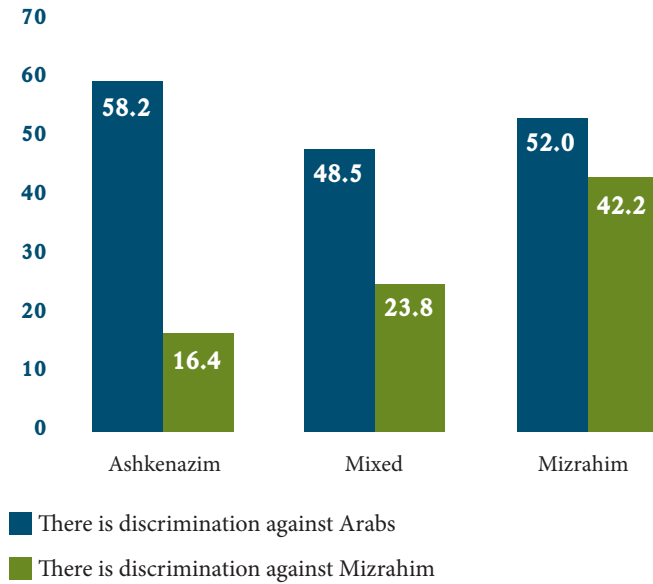
The following table presents the opinions of Jewish respondents regarding the existence of discrimination—against both Arabs and Mizrahim—according to **political orientation**. The figures show that in all camps, the share of respondents who feel that Arabs are discriminated against compared with Jews is greater than the share of those who feel that Mizrahim are discriminated against compared with Ashkenazim. The data indicate further that the gap in perspectives between the camps is much smaller in the case of discrimination against Mizrahim, than in the case of discrimination against Arabs.

Table 4.2 (percent)

	There is discrimination against Arabs	There is discrimination against Mizrahim
Right	44.0	30.8
Center	62.6	25.1
Left	80.0	23.9

We moved on to reviewing social tensions in Israel, as perceived by the respondents.

Major focal points of tension in Israeli society

Question 25
Appendix, pp. 118–119

We asked about the areas seen as the major points of tension in Israeli society, asking respondents to evaluate the level of tension in each: relations between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim; religious and secular; right and left (on foreign policy and national security issues); rich and poor; and Jews and Arabs. With the exception of ethnic tensions (Ashkenazim-Mizrahim), which were defined by the largest share (41.9%) as moderate, the level of tension in other areas was most often characterized as high, though not necessarily by an actual majority of respondents. In other words, Israeli society is seen by its members as riddled with severe tensions, which presumably explains the middling assessment of the country's social solidarity, as discussed above.

Figure 4.3: Level of tension in major focal points of tension in Israeli society (total sample; percent)
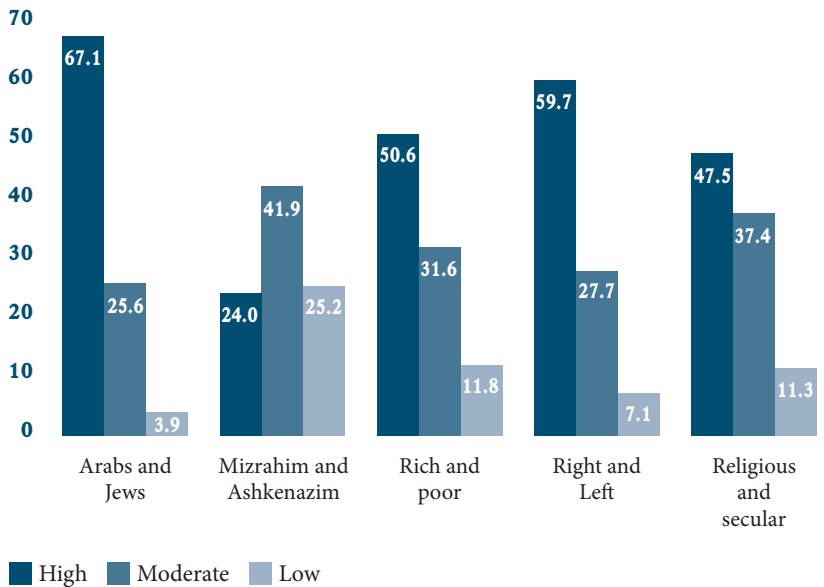
The perceived level of tension between right and left increased substantially this year; this is also the case—and it may be related—with the tension between Jews and Arabs (though a smaller share rated it as high this year than in 2012, when the greatest share to date of those rating it high was recorded). The rating of the level of ethnic tensions between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim has remained steady over the years. The perceived levels of tension between religious and secular, and between rich and poor, have declined slightly.

Table 4.3 (percent)

High level of tension between:	2012	2014	2015
Mizrahim and Ashkenazim	23.3	24.5	24.0
Religious and secular Jews	59.7	52.2	47.5
Right and left	51.8	45.3	59.7
Rich and poor	55.7	54.5	50.6
Jews and Arabs	70.6	58.0	67.1

A breakdown of responses by **nationality** shows the same pattern of responses among Jews and Arabs with respect to all areas of tension, including tension between Jews and Arabs (categorized as high by 67.5% of Arab respondents and 67% of Jewish respondents).

We looked at how the tension between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim is perceived by Jews from various **ethnic descents**. As we saw on the issue of whether or not Mizrahim are discriminated against in Israeli society, here too the findings indicate that fewer Ashkenazim than Mizrahim characterize the level of ethnic tension in Israel as high (20.7% versus 30.5%, respectively).

Breaking down Jewish respondents' perceptions of the level of tension between religious and secular Jews by **religiosity**, we found that the perceived level was higher among the groups at either end of the spectrum: both the secular and the ultra-Orthodox classified this tension as high (55.9% and 55.6%, respectively).

When tensions between right and left were analyzed by **political orientation**, we found that a majority in all groups defined the level of tension as high, but this majority was greatest on the left (71.6%) and lowest in the center (55.8%), with the right falling in between (63.1%).

Is there a difference in the perception of tensions between rich and poor based on **income**? It turns out that there is no systematic correlation between the two: in fact, respondents who reported incomes close to the national average tended to label the level of tension in this area as high to a greater extent than did those with incomes above or below the average.

Area of greatest tension in Israeli society

Question 26
Appendix, p. 119

Respondents were asked in which area the level of tension is highest. As this year's figures show unequivocally (in keeping with years past), the tension between Arabs and Jews is seen as the most severe, though a much greater share of Arab respondents than Jews take this view (64.1% as opposed to 43.7%). In fact, when ranking the pairings studied, all the others pale in comparison with Jewish-Arab tensions.

Figure 4.4: Groups with the highest level of tension in Israeli society (by nationality; percent)

- Mizrahim and Ashkenazim
- Religious and secular
- Right and left
- Rich and poor
- Jews and Arabs
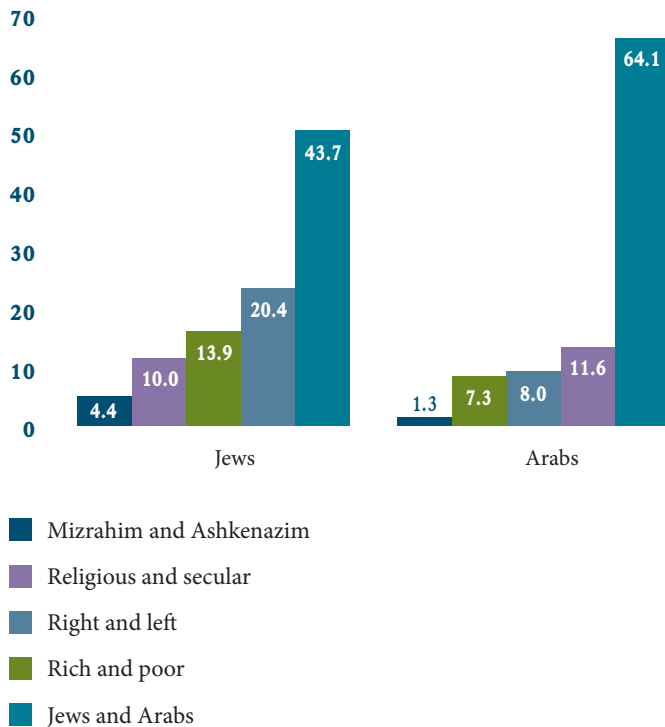
Neighborly relations

Question 32

The willingness to have someone as a neighbor is an excellent indicator of tolerance toward "others," which is a basic democratic value. We therefore examined which types of people Israelis would mind having as neighbors. We asked the respondents if it would bother them to live next to eight groups of "others": secular people who are not religiously observant; ultra-Orthodox Jews (these first two options represent the two extremes in the religious-secular tension discussed above); an Arab family, or alternatively, a Jewish family (both sides of the tension between Jews and Arabs); people with mental health disorders in rehabilitation in the community; an Ethiopian-Israeli family; foreign workers; a homosexual couple; and people with intellectual disabilities.

The findings point to considerable differences between Jews and Arabs on this question, meaning that each group has its own "undesirable others." In the eyes of the Jewish respondents, the most unwelcome neighbors would be foreign workers (48.5%), and in second place, an Arab family (36.1%). It is worth noting that only 11.4% of Arab respondents would be bothered by living next to a Jewish family. By contrast, and in keeping with previous years' results, the Arab respondents would be most concerned about living next to ultra-Orthodox Jews (42.6%), followed by a homosexual couple (40.4%). An interesting finding is that Jews, more than Arabs, are reluctant to live next to people with mental illness in rehabilitation in the community (31.5% as opposed to 20.9%, respectively), whereas Arabs are much more concerned than Jews about living next to people with mental retardation (36.4% versus 12.4%, respectively).[5]

Much has been said in the past about intolerance toward foreigners among Jewish right-wing groups. We therefore examined attitudes toward having foreign workers as neighbors according to **political orientation**, and indeed found significant differences. On the right, a majority (60.9%) state that it would bother them to have such neighbors, as opposed to a sizeable minority in the center (42.1%) and a much smaller minority on the left (25.4%).

5 Note that in order to ensure that the meaning was clear to respondents, the Hebrew terms equivalent to "mental illness" and "mental retardation" were used to describe people with mental health disorders and people with intellectual disabilities, respectively.

Figure 4.5: Would it bother you to have as your neighbor...? (It would bother me; by nationality; percent)
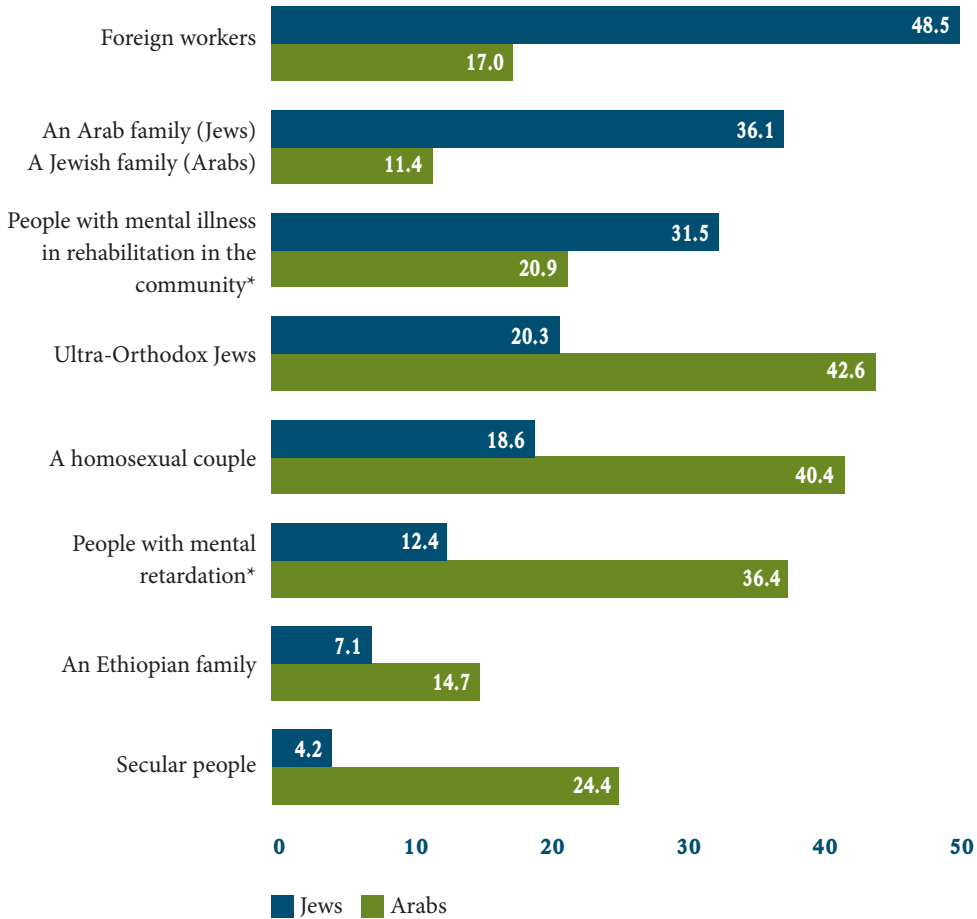
*   See the note on the previous page regarding the terminology used in this question.

Breaking down the figures by **religiosity** (among Jewish respondents), we found that in nearly every group, the "other" whom the majority would not like to have as neighbors are foreign workers. The exception was the secular group, which had the highest share (49%) of respondents who stated that it would not bother them to live next to foreign workers, although here too there is a considerable minority (41%) who would be disturbed

by such neighbors. No significant differences were found based on the income level of the respondents or self-identification with stronger or weaker groups in society.

On the question (for Jewish correspondents) of living next to an Arab family, the differences between **political orientations** are striking. On the right, a majority (52.5%) state that such a possibility would bother them, compared with roughly one-fifth among respondents who identify with the center (21.6%), and a small minority on the left (7.4%).

Analysis of the same question by **religiosity** among Jewish respondents also reveals substantial differences: unease at the prospect of living next to an Arab family was most pronounced among those who identify themselves as ultra-Orthodox (82.1%), and least pronounced among those who define themselves as secular (24.4%), with rates among the other groups somewhere in between (67.4% among Orthodox respondents, 39.3% among the traditional religious, and 36.1% among the traditional non-religious).

Among Jewish respondents, examining the attitudes toward having an Ethiopian-Israeli family as neighbors by **political orientation**, we found negligible differences. Analysis by **religiosity** revealed that the ultra-Orthodox are the only group in which a considerable portion would be bothered by the prospect of living near an Ethiopian-Israeli family: 18.5% reported that they would be bothered, as opposed to roughly 5% for all other types of religious orientation.

Chapter 5
The Civil and Social Status of Arab Citizens of Israel

We begin this chapter with a set of questions focused on an extremely sensitive topic: Arab citizens of Israel and the security issue. We have chosen to open the discussion with this weighty topic specifically, since, to a large extent, it shapes the discourse on the civil status of Arab citizens of Israel in all other areas.

Belonging to the Palestinian people, and loyalty to the State of Israel

Question 47
Appendix, p. 132

We began with the question: "In your opinion, is it possible for an Arab citizen of Israel who considers himself an integral part of the Palestinian people to be a loyal citizen of the State of Israel?" The findings indicate that there are profound differences of opinion on this point between the Jewish and Arab populations. A majority of Arab respondents (75.6%) answered that it is possible to be an inseperable part of the Palestinian people and to be a loyal citizen of Israel; by contrast, a majority of Jewish respondents (55.7%) took the opposite view. This means that over half of the state's Jewish majority would present the Arab minority with a binary choice in which they must decide whether to feel part of the Palestinian people, or—alternatively, and not simultaneously—to be loyal citizens of the State of Israel. By contrast, the fact that three-quarters of the Arab respondents replied in the affirmative shows that there is little support among the Arab public for the view that this is an either-or situation; that is, that Arab citizens of Israel must decide if they are Palestinians or if they wish to make a civic commitment to the State of Israel.

Figure 5.1: Is it possible for an Arab citizen of Israel who considers himself an integral part of the Palestinian people to be a loyal citizen of the State of Israel? (by nationality; percent)

Legend:
- Definitely possible
- Think it is possible
- Don't think it is possible
- Definitely not possible
- Don't know
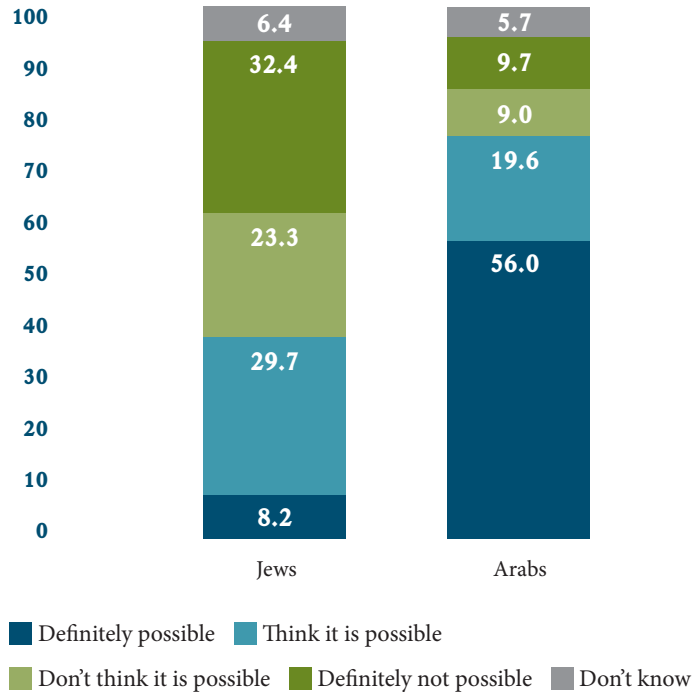
A breakdown of the findings among Jewish respondents by **political orientation** reveals that only about one-quarter (26.2%) of those on the right hold that such a thing is possible, compared with about one-half in the center (48.7%) and two-thirds on the left (65.9%).

Analyzing the figures for Jewish respondents according to **religiosity** points to systematic differences. The share of those who believe that such a combination is possible increases along the continuum from ultra-Orthodox to secular, as follows: ultra-Orthodox, 14.8%; Orthodox, 22.1%; traditional religious, 36.9%; traditional non-religious, 38.6%; secular, 46.9%.

A breakdown of the findings among Jewish respondents by **preference for the Jewish or democratic component in the definition of the state** reveals substantial differences. Almost

twice as many of those who favor the democratic aspect of Israel's dual definition than those who favor its Jewish component believe that it is possible both to feel part of the Palestinian people and to be a loyal citizen of Israel (47.9% versus 26.2%, respectively).

Have Arab Israelis reconciled themselves to Israel's existence?

Question 12
Appendix, pp. 110–112

Next, we sought opinions on the troubling statement: "Most Arab citizens of Israel have not reconciled themselves to the state's existence, and support its destruction." Among Jewish and Arab respondents alike, a majority disagree with this assertion. Nonetheless, the size of this majority differs greatly between the two groups. The Jewish respondents are split, with a majority (52.3%) who do not agree with the statement, but a very large minority (42.3%) who do. Among the Arab respondents, over two-thirds (69.7%) disagree, while roughly one-quarter (24.3%) agree.

Figure 5.2: "Most Arab citizens of Israel have not reconciled themselves to the state's existence, and support its destruction" (by nationality; percent)

	Jews	Arabs
Don't know	5.4	6.0
Strongly disagree	23.9	51.9
Somewhat disagree	28.4	17.8
Somewhat agree	18.3	12.9
Strongly agree	24.0	11.4

Legend: Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree, Don't know
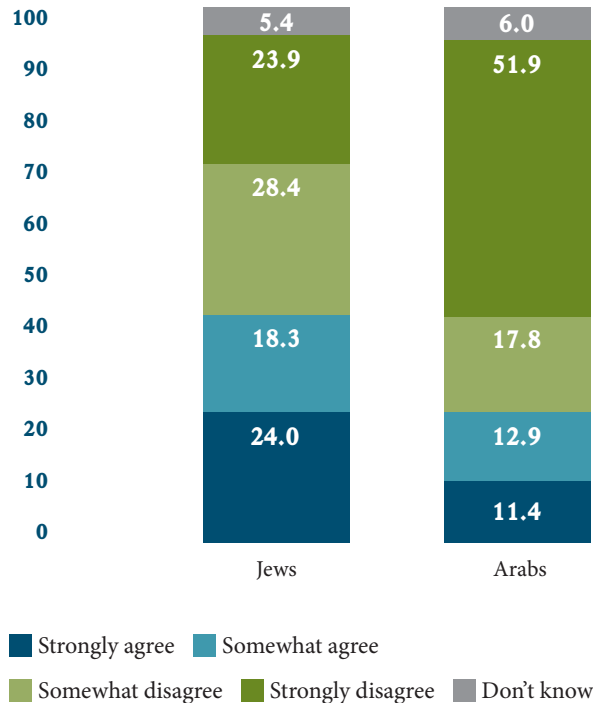
Analysis of the responses of the Arab respondents by **voting pattern** shows a very sizeable difference between those who voted for Zionist parties and those who voted for the Joint Arab List. The share of those who agree with the above statement among Joint List voters is more than double the share among those who voted for one of the Zionist parties (26% versus 12.6%, respectively).

Among Jewish respondents, breaking down the responses by **political orientation** yielded unsurprising results: a majority (58.8%) on the right, as opposed to a fair minority in the center (28%) and a smaller minority on the left (17%), agree with this statement regarding the inclinations of Arab citizens of Israel.

A breakdown of the findings by **religiosity** (among Jewish respondents) also points to sizeable differences. A majority of Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox respondents agree with the statement that Arab citizens of Israel have not reconciled themselves to Israel's existence and would support its destruction (63.3% and 77.8%, respectively) in contrast to the traditional-religious, traditional non-religious, and secular respondents, only a minority of whom agree with this assertion (40.2%, 40.9%, and 34.6%, respectively), though again these are not inconsiderable minorities.

We then explored the connection between responses to the question in chapter 4 regarding discrimination against Arab citizens of Israel and the present question about their attitude toward the State of Israel. In other words, we wished to know whether those who ascribe negative intentions to Arabs are less inclined to believe that they are subject to discrimination. The distribution of responses indicates that there is a correlation between the two. Thus a majority (59.7%) of those who do not agree that Arab citizens of Israel wish to see the country destroyed agree with the statement that Arab citizens of Israel are discriminated against compared to Jews. By contrast, among those who agree that Arab citizens of Israel support the state's destruction, opinions are split more or less evenly between those who agree and those who disagree with the claim that Arabs face discrimination (48.2% and 44.4%, respectively).

Are Arab citizens of Israel a security risk?

Question 53
Appendix, p. 134

We questioned the Jewish respondents (only) regarding the security risk, if any, posed by Arab citizens of Israel, asking for assessments of the statement that "Arab citizens pose a security risk to Israel." The findings indicate that while a considerable minority of the Jewish public (39%) agree with this assertion, a majority (54.6%) do not.

Figure 5.3: "Arab citizens pose a security risk to Israel" (Jewish respondents; percent)

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

37.5 | 20.9 | 18.1 | 6.4 | 17.1
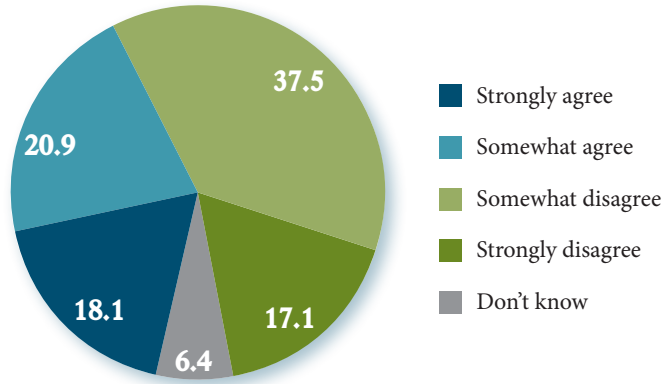
A breakdown of the results by **political orientation** produced a sharply divided—though not unexpected—picture: on the right, a majority (56.1%) agree with the statement that Arab citizens pose a security risk, as opposed to roughly a quarter of those who align themselves with the center (25.8%) and a tenth of those who identify with the left (9.5%).

Jewish doctor or Arab doctor?

Question 40
Appendix, p. 128

We asked: "When you need medical care, do you prefer being treated by a Jewish doctor, an Arab doctor, or either one?" It turns out that both groups, Jewish and Arab, are in agreement, albeit with a different size of majority, that the national identity of the doctor is unimportant: 77.8% of Jews and 91.4% of the Arabs report that it makes no difference to them whether the doctor treating them is Arab or Jewish (with 19.7% of Jews preferring a Jewish doctor, and 5.3% of Arabs preferring an Arab doctor).

Jewish teacher?
Arab teacher?

Questions 48–49
Appendix, p. 132

While members of both groups show a high degree of acceptance when it comes to medical care, we wondered if the same holds true for teachers in their children's schools. Accordingly, we examined the respondents' stance regarding Arab teachers in Jewish schools and Jewish teachers in Arab schools. Here too, the respondents demonstrated a high, even surprising, degree of openness. A large majority in both groups—83.5% among Arabs and 74.4% among Jews—stated that it would not bother them if teachers from the other group were to teach in their children's schools.

Among the Jewish respondents, a breakdown by **religiosity** produced very large differences on this question as well, with most of the opposition to the presence of Arab teachers in the classroom being concentrated in the groups that defined themselves as either ultra-Orthodox or Orthodox.

Table 5.1 (percent)

	Ultra-Orthodox	Orthodox	Traditional religious	Traditional non-religious	Secular
It would bother me if Arab teachers taught in Jewish schools	92.6	48.8	17.1	16.8	12.4

Support for organizations that oppose intermarriage?

Question 56
Appendix, p. 136

We wanted to know the opinion of both Jewish and Arab respondents regarding the activities of such organizations as Lehava[6] which engage in radical activities, some of them even violent, to prevent Jewish women from marrying Arab men. Surprisingly, it emerged that opinions on this issue are similar in both the Jewish and the Arab samples: in each, roughly half the respondents are opposed to organizations acting to prevent mixed marriages (55.8% of Arab respondents and 50% of Jewish respondents). But here too, there are sizeable minorities of more

6 The organization for the "Prevention of Assimilation between Arabs and Jews in the Holyland," an extremist, right-wing Jewish nonprofit organization that seeks to prevent coexistence between Arabs and Jews, in particular—but not limited to—intermarriage.

than one-third (38.8% of Arab respondents and 36.8% of Jewish respondents) who support taking action against intermarriage between Arabs and Jews, despite the fact that the question referred in so many words to a violent, extremist fringe organization. In other words, according to our findings—and of course this issue warrants further exploration—both sides are opposed to mixed marriages and show strong support for activities aimed at preventing Arab men and Jewish women from forming couples.

Figure 5.4: Do you support or oppose organizations, such as Lehava, that engage in various activities to prevent Jewish women from marrying Arab men? (by nationality; percent)
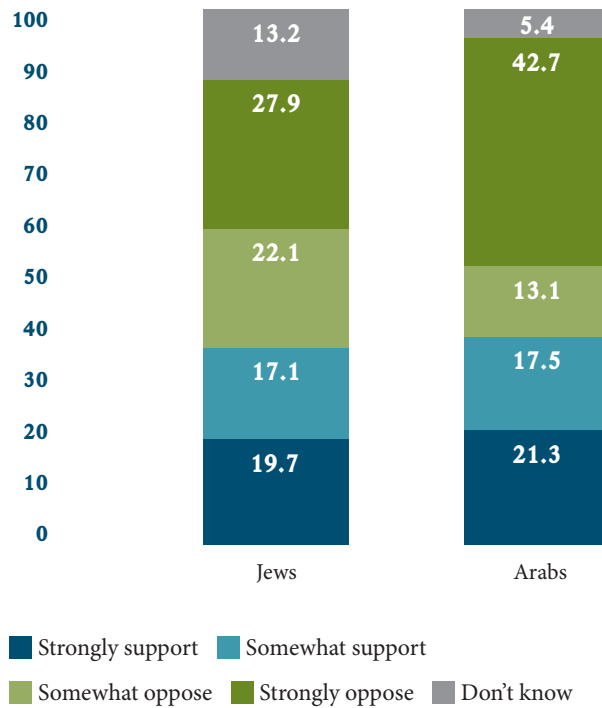
For Jewish respondents, we analyzed responses to this question using two variables: **political orientation** and **religiosity**, as shown in the following table:

Table 5.2 (percent)

	Support organizations that work to prevent marriages between Jewish women and Arab men
Political orientation	
Right	53.2
Center	27.5
Left	12.6
Religiosity	
Ultra-Orthodox	88.9
Orthodox	70.9
Traditional religious	45.0
Traditional non-religious	37.3
Secular	25.2

Until now, we have addressed relations between Jews and Arabs in a social context. Here we shift our discussion to the subject of institutional relations between the Arab minority and the State of Israel.

Inclusion of Arab parties in the government and appointment of Arab ministers

Question 39
Appendix, p. 128

We asked: "Do you support or oppose having Arab parties in the government, including Arab ministers?" From a breakdown of the data by **nationality**, it emerges that the gap on this issue between Jews and Arabs is very large: A majority of the Jewish public in Israel are opposed (56.6%), with only one third (34.8%) in favor. Among Arab citizens, on the other hand, there was a substantial majority (85%) who support the inclusion of Arab parties in a governing coalition and the appointment of Arab ministers.

Among Jewish respondents, breaking down the responses to this question by **political orientation** revealed strong opposition on the right to including Arab parties and appointing Arab ministers (75.5%), more moderate opposition in the center (45.1%), and

only a minority, though not negligible (22.4%), on the left who are against it.

We examined the correlation between attitudes regarding Arab citizens of Israel being a security risk, and willingness to have them in government. A majority (76.6%) of those who agree with the statement that Arab citizens of Israel constitute a security risk also oppose the inclusion of Arab parties in the government and the appointment of Arab ministers. Among those who reject the argument that Arab citizens of Israel pose a security risk, opinions are split almost down the middle, with slightly more opposed to including Arab parties in the government and appointing Arab ministers than are in favor (48.2% versus 44.1%, respectively).

Does the negative attitude of the bulk of the Jewish public toward inclusion of Arabs in the government also imply that decisions crucial to the state should be made only by a Jewish majority?

Should crucial decisions require a Jewish majority?

Questions 41, 42

Appendix, pp. 129–131

This year we once again included statements presented several times in the past, which asked the respondents to express their agreement or disagreement with the following: "Decisions crucial to the state on issues of peace and security should be made by a Jewish majority" and "Decisions crucial to the state regarding governance, economy or society should be made by a Jewish majority." As in previous years, we found that a majority of Jews support both statements, though this majority is more sizeable with regard to peace and security issues (73.6%) than it is with respect to governance, society, and the economy (53.6%). In other words, even in the context of issues that are strictly civil (governance, economy, and society), in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should ostensibly not be an issue, there is support among the Jewish public for excluding Arab citizens of Israel from strategic decisions.

Figure 5.5: "Decisions crucial to the state on issues of peace and security / governance, economy or society should be made by a Jewish majority" (Jewish respondents; percent)
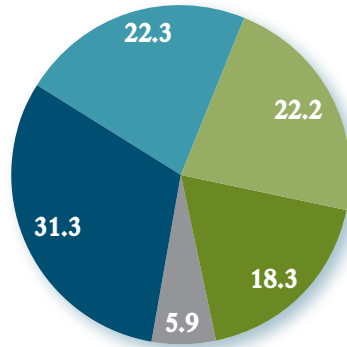
Governance, economy or society

- ◼ Strongly agree
- ◼ Somewhat agree
- ◼ Somewhat disagree
- ◼ Strongly disagree
- ◼ Don't know
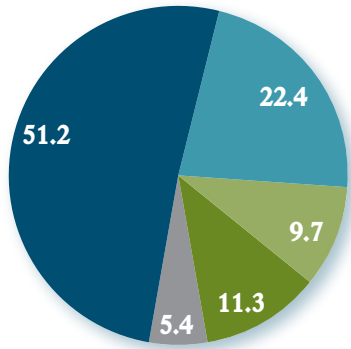
Peace and security

Encouraging Arab emigration

Question 20
Appendix, p. 115

If the Jewish majority believe that it is not possible for Arab citizens of Israel to both feel part of the Palestinian people and be loyal citizens of the state, and if there is unwillingness to allow them to take part in crucial decisions, is it preferable that Arabs not be in Israel and be encouraged to emigrate? The findings indicate that slightly more than half the Jewish respondents (55.4%) do not agree that the government should encourage Arabs to emigrate. Nonetheless, the fact cannot be ignored that a considerable minority (37.5%) feel that such a step on the part of the state is in fact desirable.

Figure 5.6: "The government should encourage Arab emigration from Israel" (Jewish respondents; percent)
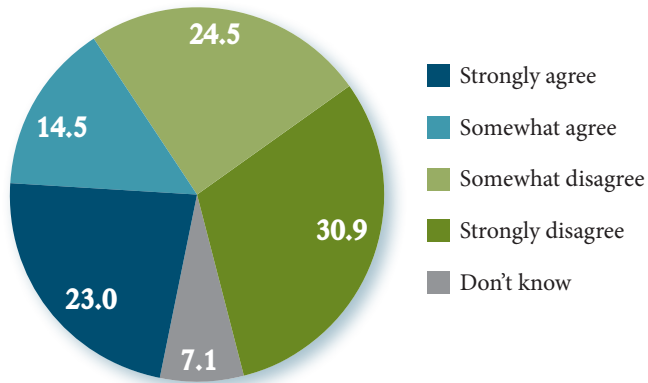
As for the connection between the perception of Arab citizens of Israel as a **security risk** and encouraging emigration, the findings show a correlation between the two questions. A majority of those who consider Arab citizens to be a security risk (59.5%) agree with the statement that Arab citizens should be encouraged to emigrate from Israel, while among those respondents who do not view them as a risk, a minority (22.9%) agree with the statement.

A breakdown of responses by preference for the **Jewish** or the **democratic component** in the definition of the nature of the State of Israel reveals, as expected, that there is a far greater share in support of encouraging emigration of Arabs among those respondents who favor the Jewish component than among those respondents who prefer the democratic component (56.5% versus 26.8%, respectively).

Representation of Arabs in the civil service

Question 52
Appendix, pp. 133–135

With regard to representation of Arabs in the civil service, Jewish respondents reveal greater tolerance than they do to the proposal that Arab citizens be included in the government or participate in crucial decisions. The majority (54.9%) agree with the statement that "the state should ensure that Arab citizens of Israel are represented in the civil service in accordance with their percentage of the population." Naturally, there is broad support for this view among the Arab public (85.4%).

The differences based on **political orientation** among Jewish respondents when it comes to Arab representation in the civil service are considerable: on the left, support for commensurate representation is almost double that the support found on the right (86.5% as opposed to 44.3%). The center falls in between the two, with 61.8%.

Larger budgets for Jewish localities than for Arab ones

Question 11
Appendix, pp. 110–112

We sought the reaction of the respondents to the statement: "It is acceptable for Israel, as a Jewish state, to allocate more funding to Jewish localities than to Arab ones." This is a clearly undemocratic assertion, and the fact that a majority (54.5%) of Jewish respondents disagree with it may leave room for cautious optimism.

Figure 5.7: "I find it acceptable for Israel, as a Jewish state, to allocate more funding to Jewish localities than to Arab ones" (Jewish respondents; percent)

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
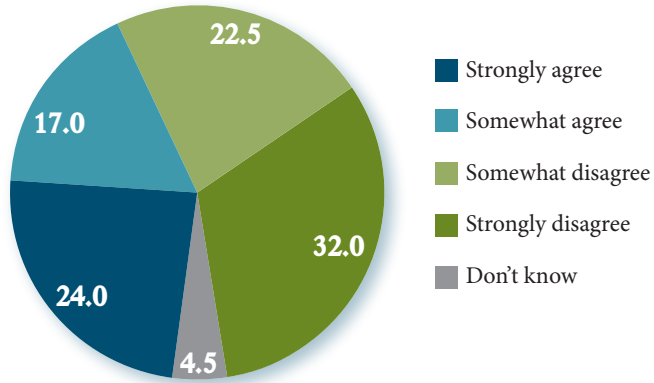
We attempted to find out which segments of the population have a large share in favor of giving budgetary priority to Jewish localities. According to various breakdowns (of Jewish respondents), a majority in support of this view can be found among respondents on the right (55.3%), among the ultra-Orthodox and Orthodox (61.2% and 57.4%, respectively), and among those who voted for Yisrael Beytenu (53%), Likud (54%), United Torah Judaism (76.4%), and Shas (a remarkable 82.6%).

Fostering Arab culture and heritage

Question 51
Appendix, pp. 133–135

Since the state allocates vast resources to cultivating Jewish and Zionist heritage, we wanted to know if the respondents feel that greater effort should be made to designate more funding for fostering the culture and heritage of Arab citizens of Israel.

Our findings show that more Jews are opposed to fostering Arab culture and heritage than are in favor (47.1% versus 42.4%, respectively). Among Arabs, an overwhelming majority (90.8%) support greater budgetary allocations by the state to foster Arab culture and heritage.

Figure 5.8: "The state should allocate more funds to foster the culture and heritage of Arab citizens of Israel" (by nationality; percent)
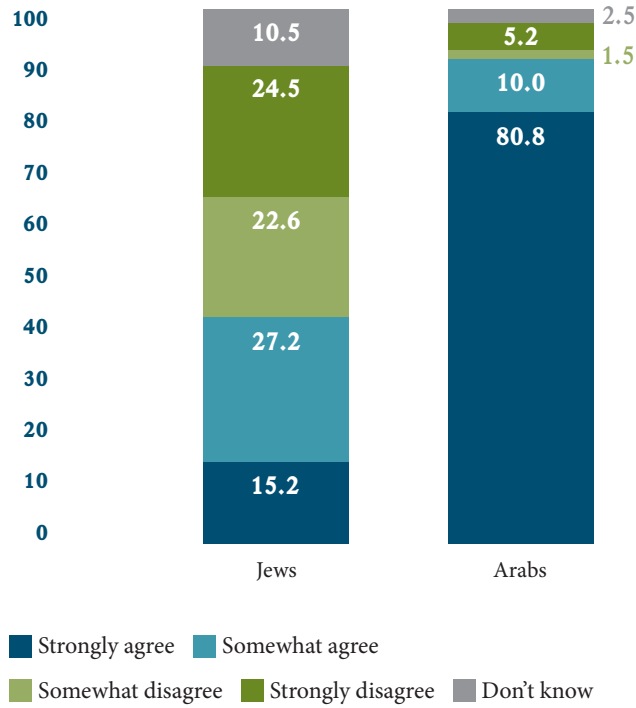
Breaking down the responses by **political orientation** (among Jewish respondents), we found that the right is conspicuously opposed to increased state funding for Arab heritage and culture (slightly fewer than one-third support it), as compared with a clear majority (71.1%) on the left who are in favor. Here too, the center lies in between the two extremes, with a small majority (51.9%) who express support for the statement.

Arabic on forms and signs

Question 10

Appendix, pp. 110–112

We asked the opinion of the respondents concerning the statement: "All public signs and government forms should also be written in Arabic, since roughly one-fifth of Israel's citizens are Arabs." Among Arab respondents, there is virtually across-the-board support for the position that signs and forms should be written in Arabic in addition to Hebrew (87.3%). A majority of the Jewish public (61.1%) are also in favor, as opposed to roughly one-third (35.6%) who do not share this view.

Figure 5.9: "All public signs and government forms should also be written in Arabic, since roughly one-fifth of Israel's citizens are Arabs" (by nationality; percent)

Agree   Disagree   Don't know
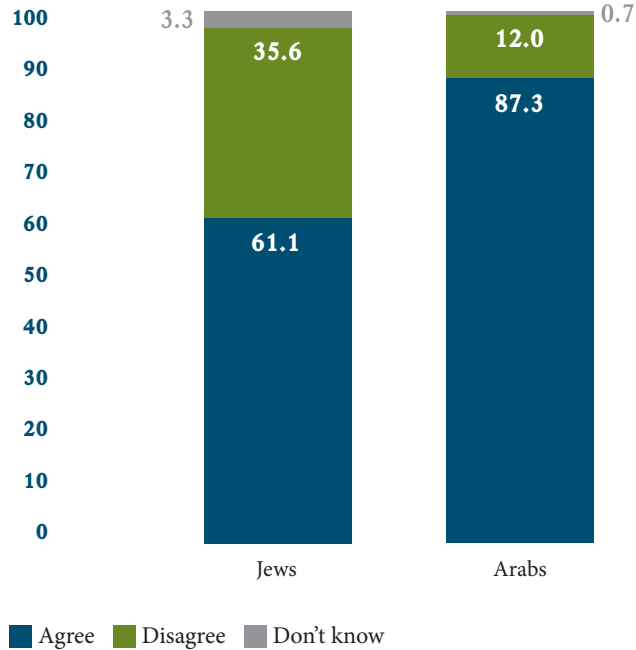
Teaching of Arabic and Hebrew in schools

Questions 46.1, 46.2
Appendix, pp. 130–131

We continued to examine the language issue, this time asking a question with two variants: To what extent do respondents agree or disagree with the statement that "it is important for every Arab child in Israel to learn Hebrew from the early grades in elementary school" (for Arab respondents), or that "it is important for every Jewish child in Israel to learn Arabic from the early grades in elementary school" (for Jewish respondents)?

Figure 5.10: "It is important for every Arab child in Israel to learn Hebrew from the early grades in elementary school" (Arab respondents) / "It is important for every Jewish child in Israel to learn Arabic from the early grades in elementary school" (Jewish respondents) (by nationality; percent)

Arabs: 72.0, 12.9, 5.8, 6.8, 2.5

Jews: 27.6, 13.8, 20.5, 35.4, 2.7

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know
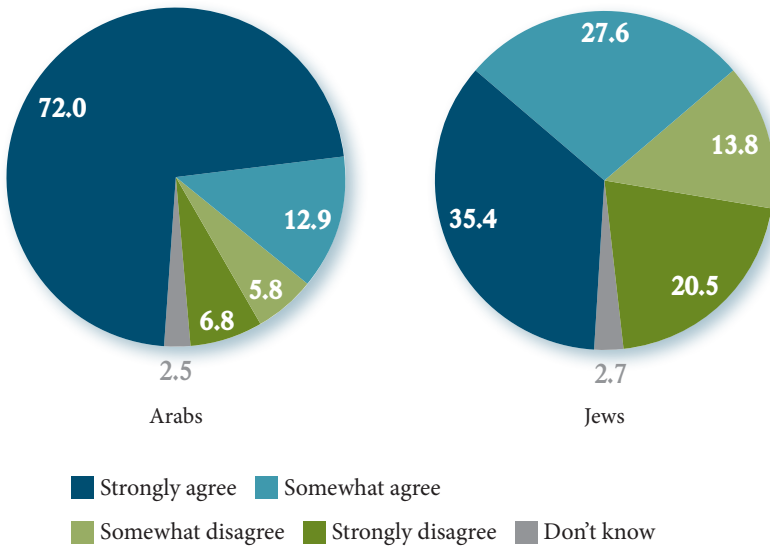
As with the use of Arabic on signs and official forms, here too we found a large Arab majority (84.9%) who support the teaching of Hebrew in Arab schools. Similarly, a majority of Jews—albeit a considerably smaller one (63%)—favor the study of Arabic in Jewish schools.

National civilian or military service for Israeli Arabs

Question 50
Appendix, pp. 133–135

Over the past few years, there has been a heated public debate on whether young Arab citizens of Israel should be obligated to perform some form of civilian or military national service. Opinions on the subject are divided and well known, and are beyond the purview of this report. Nonetheless, our findings show that a majority of Jews support such a requirement (74.1%), whereas a majority of Arab respondents are opposed to it (71.8%).

Figure 5.11: "All Arab citizens of Israel should be obligated at age 18 to perform some form of national service, whether civilian or military, as they choose" (by nationality; percent)
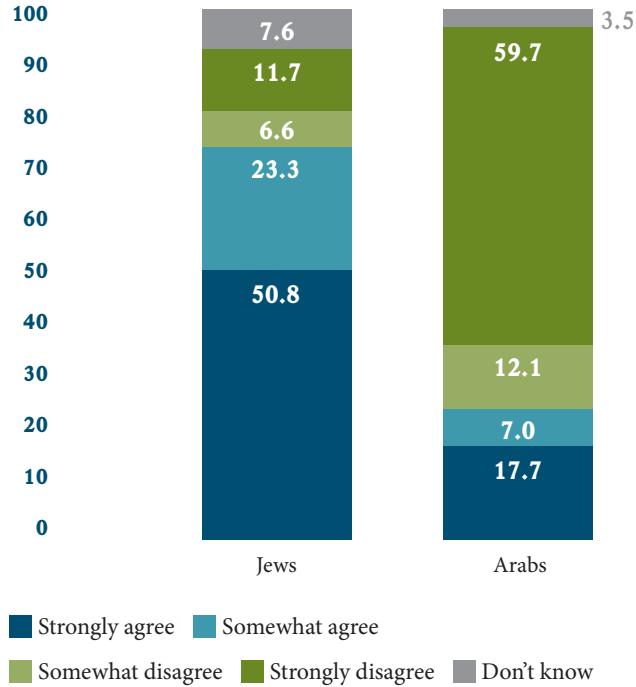
Breaking down the responses by **political orientation** (among Jewish respondents), we found a very sizeable majority on the left in favor of such an obligation (88.2%), although both the other camps also demonstrated considerable support (81.4% in the center, and 69.4% on the right). The right may be more hesitant about the conscription of Arabs for military service due to their perception of Arabs as a security risk, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Permission for Palestinian spouses to live in Israel

Question 23
Appendix, pp. 114–116

The final question in this chapter deals with a painful subject involving a small portion of the Arab public in Israel, which nonetheless has great symbolic significance, namely, whether Palestinians married to Arab citizens of Israel have the right to reside in Israel. We asked the respondents to express their agreement or disagreement with the statement: "Palestinians from the West Bank who are married to Arab citizens of Israel should be allowed to live in Israel." A large majority of Jews (72.2%) reject this idea, as compared with a similar majority of Arabs (74%) who support it.

Chapter 6
Israel 2015: An International Comparison

Explanation of Indicators

This year, we examine eight indicators that assess the democratic performance of selected countries in three principal areas: governance, civil liberties, and society.

Table 6.1

Indicator	Institution and Publication
1. Political rights and civil liberties	Freedom House: *Freedom in the World*
2. Freedom of the press	Freedom House: *Freedom of the Press*
3. Functioning of government	Economist Intelligence Unit: *Democracy Index*
4. Political participation	Economist Intelligence Unit: *Democracy Index*
5. Civil liberties	Economist Intelligence Unit: *Democracy Index*
6. Perception of corruption	Transparency International: *Corruption Perceptions Index*
7. Life satisfaction	OECD: *Better Life Index*
8. Social policies	Bertelsmann Stiftung: *Sustainable Governance Indicators*

We examine the democracy indicators along two axes:

> Israel's ranking in 2015 in comparison with other countries;

> Israel's scores in 2015 as compared with 2014.

Axis 1: Israel's Ranking in Comparison with other Countries

Figure 6.1 presents Israel's ranking in 2015 in the eight democracy indicators as compared with 27 other countries.[7] The number 1 slot denotes the **best** performance in a given aspect of democracy, while number 28 indicates the **most flawed** performance in that area.

Figure 6.1: Israel's Ranking in the Democracy Indicators

Indicator	Ranking
Political rights and civil liberties	14
Freedom of the press	13
Functioning of government	10–15
Political participation	2
Civil liberties	19–20
Perception of corruption	11–12
Life satisfaction	3 (out of 19)
Social policies	12–13 (out of 17)

1	5	10	15	20	25	28
High ranking						**Low ranking**

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7 In the Life Satisfaction category of the *Better Life Index*, the comparison is between Israel and 18 other member states of the OECD. In the social policies area of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's *Sustainable Governance Indicators*, the comparison is between Israel and 16 other countries.

1. **Political rights and civil liberties:** Israel is ranked at the midpoint of the scale, in position 14, ahead of Hungary, Argentina, Brazil, and Greece, and trailing behind most Western countries. Syria and Saudi Arabia are at the bottom of the scale.

2. **Freedom of the press:** Israel falls near the middle of the scale, in the 13th slot, ahead of Italy and Hungary but behind Japan and Spain. Norway is at the top of the rankings, and Syria has the lowest rating of the countries surveyed.

3. **Functioning of government:** Israel is positioned around the midpoint of the scale (positions 10–15) alongside Spain, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, India, and France. Here too, Norway heads the list, with Syria in last place.

4. **Political participation:** Israel is in second place, ahead of most Western democracies. Norway is ranked first in this area, and Saudi Arabia last.

5. **Civil liberties:** Israel falls in the rather low 19–20 slot, alongside Venezuela. At the head of the list are Norway, New Zealand, and Canada, with Syria in last place.

6. **Perception of corruption:** Israel is located slightly above the midpoint of the scale (at 11–12), together with Spain. New Zealand is in first place, and Venezuela is at the bottom of the list.

7. **Life satisfaction:** Israel is ranked very highly, in third place, with Switzerland ranked first and Greece last.

8. **Social policies:** Of the 17 countries included in this indicator, Israel ranks rather low, in positions 12–13, alongside Spain. Norway, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom head the rankings, with Greece, Turkey, and Hungary in the lowest slots.

This year, Israel is once again ranked at the midpoint or higher in most of the democracy indicators. It stands out favorably in measures of life satisfaction and political participation, while showing a less-than-distinguished performance when it comes to civil liberties and social policies.

As for Israel's position relative to previous years, the country rose in three indicators (political participation, civil liberties, and life satisfaction), although the increases were moderate. In the indicators of government functioning and social policies, Israel's ranking dropped slightly in 2015 compared with 2014.

Table 6.2

Indicator	2015 Ranking	2014 Ranking	Change
1. Political rights and civil liberties	14 (of 28)	14–15 (of 28)	=
2. Freedom of the press	13 (of 28)	13 (of 28)	=
3. Functioning of government	10–15 (of 28)	7–11 (of 28)	▼
4. Political participation	2 (of 28)	3 (of 28)	▲
5. Civil liberties	19–20 (of 28)	20–21 (of 28)	▲
6. Perception of corruption	11–12 (of 28)	11 (of 28)	=
7. Life satisfaction	3 (of 19)	6–7 (of 19)	▲
8. Social policies	12–13 (of 17)	11–12 (of 17)	▼

▲ Improvement in Israel's ranking compared with previous assessment

= No change in Israel's ranking compared with previous assessment

▼ Decline in Israel's ranking compared with previous assessment

Axis 2: Israel's Scores in 2015 as Compared with 2014

As shown in the following table, there was a slight drop in Israel's scores in the indicators of government functioning, perception of corruption, and social policies. Three areas showed improvement over 2014: political participation, civil liberties, and life satisfaction (the last of which registered the greatest upturn).

Table 6.3

Indicator	2015 score	2014 score	Scale	Change
1. Political rights and civil liberties	6.5	6.5	1–7 (7 = full political rights and civil liberties)	=
2. Freedom of the press	70	70	0–100 (100 = full freedom of the press)	=
3. Functioning of government	7.14	7.5	0–10 (10 = highest level of democratic functioning)	▼
4. Political participation	8.89	8.33	0–10 (10 = highest level of participation)	▲
5. Civil liberties	5.88	5.59	0–10 (10 = civil liberties fully upheld)	▲
6. Perception of corruption	60	61	0–100 (100 = absence of corruption)	▼
7. Life satisfaction	9.6	7.8	0–10 (10 = highest level of life satisfaction)	▲
8. Social policies	5.7	5.8	1–10 (10 = best social policies)	▼

▲ Improvement in Israel's score compared with previous assessment

= No change in Israel's score compared with previous assessment

▼ Decline in Israel's score compared with previous assessment

Overview of International Indicators

An examination of the eight indicators above yields the following picture: On the one hand, Israel certainly meets the basic requirements for classification as a democracy. Also, the country earns a high score in terms of political participation of its citizens, as reflected in voter turnout, willingness to participate in demonstrations, and the like. Our own survey had similar findings. As we saw in chapter 3, a majority of the respondents identified with the position that voting in elections can change the existing situation, and most reported that they had voted in the previous elections. Thus, despite the sense among Israelis that they are not always able to influence their elected representatives and government policy, Israelis nonetheless exercise the rights and obligations connected to the electoral process in various ways.

Another encouraging finding is the very high level of life satisfaction among citizens of Israel as compared with other countries. In other words, despite the difficulties confronting them, and the country as a whole, Israelis are generally happy with their lot—a conclusion that inspires a certain optimism regarding their ability to grapple with the challenges posed by life in Israel. The high score in this area is also corroborated by our survey (see chapter 1, above), with a great many of respondents reporting that their personal situation is good and that they feel a part of the State of Israel and its problems.

We found further that, based on international indicators, Israel upholds freedom of the press to a moderate-to-high degree. How, then, are we to interpret the very low level of trust in the media, as expressed in our survey (chapter 3)? This question obviously calls for further research, but it would seem that our findings in this context are not necessarily related to freedom of the press, and might instead be explained by other factors—perhaps by Israelis' perception of the media as biased in favor of a certain political stance or specific interest groups.

While Israel received only a moderate score on government functioning, many other countries placed lower in the comparative ranking. Stated otherwise, based on international indicators, Israeli government functioning is not at the bottom of the scale, yet improvement is needed in several areas: the Knesset's oversight of the government; the ability of the government to set policy; the degree of transparency and accountability of the government vis-à-vis its citizens; and the level of public trust in government institutions. Interestingly enough, Israeli public opinion—as reflected in this year's survey (chapter 3) as well as those of previous years—is more critical than the international rankings would warrant. Many respondents expressed a very low level of trust in government institutions, primarily those entrusted with voter representation, decision making, and policy implementation: the Knesset, the government, and the political parties. A majority of respondents also disagreed with the statement that "Knesset members...are doing a good job." Evidently, the Israeli public is more frustrated in this regard than the "objective" data (which form the basis of the international comparisons) would have us believe.

However, in other aspects of democracy, Israel's scores are less heartening. Its level of corruption as expressed in international indicators is not terrible; but there is room for improvement in terms of ethics and integrity. Here too, we found that the opinions of Israeli respondents in the present survey (chapter 3) are more negative than the international comparative assessment, since a great many of our respondents held that Israel's leadership is quite or very corrupt.

An additional area in which Israel does not perform too well in the international indicators, year after year, is the extent to which the civil rights of its residents are upheld. This is not examined directly by our survey this year; yet the readiness of a considerable minority—and in some cases, a majority—of Jewish Israelis to discriminate against Arab citizens of the state in various areas (chapter 5) is not encouraging, and substantiates (at least indirectly) Israel's poor showing in the international democracy indicators.

Finally, in comparison with the other countries surveyed, the social policies of Israel's government in the areas of education, health, family, inequality, and so on are in need of improvement. This is particularly true of the level of social inclusion, as reflected in the inequalities between rich and poor, Jews and Arabs, Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, and men and women. This is corroborated by our survey (chapter 4), with a very large share of Israelis identifying a high level of tension between Jews and Arabs, religious and secular, and rich and poor, and many asserting that Arabs in Israel, and to a lesser extent Mizrahim as well, are discriminated against.

To sum up, the international indicators, which are based on an extensive collection of data from a variety of sources, place Israel squarely in the mid-range of the democratic nations. There is no question that Israeli democracy needs work in many areas; yet the periodic wringing of hands, and the widespread sense that democracy here is on the decline, seem to be needlessly pessimistic when Israel is examined empirically in comparison with other countries.

Israel's ranking on the eight international indicators studied can be seen in the figures on the following pages.

Figure 6.2 Political Rights and Civil Liberties

Country	Score
Italy	7
United States	7
Belgium	7
United Kingdom	7
Germany	7
Japan	7
Norway	7
New Zealand	7
Spain	7
Czech Republic	7
France	7
Canada	7
Switzerland	7
Israel	6.5
Hungary	6
Argentina	6
Brazil	6
Greece	6
India	5.5
Turkey	4.5
Lebanon	3.5
Venezuela	3
Jordan	2.5
Egypt	2.5
Russia	2
China	1.5
Syria	
Saudi Arabia	

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

No rights and liberties   **Full rights and liberties**

Figure 6.3 Freedom of the Press

Country	Value
Norway	
Belgium	
Switzerland	
Germany	
Canada	
New Zealand	
Czech Republic	
United States	
France	
United Kingdom	
Japan	
Spain	
Israel	70
Italy	
Hungary	
India	
Brazil	
Greece	
Argentina	
Lebanon	
Turkey	
Jordan	
Egypt	
Venezuela	
Russia	
Saudi Arabia	
China	
Syria	

0   20   40   60   80   100

No freedom of press   **Full freedom of press**

Figure 6.4 Functioning of Government

Country	Value
Norway	
Switzerland	
Canada	
New Zealand	
Germany	
Belgium	
Japan	
United States	
Brazil	
Israel	7.14
Spain	
United Kingdom	
Czech Republic	
India	
France	
Italy	
Hungary	
Argentina	
Turkey	
Greece	
China	
Venezuela	
Jordan	
Saudi Arabia	
Russia	
Egypt	
Lebanon	
Syria	

0   2   4   6   8   10

Low level of functioning   **High level of functioning**
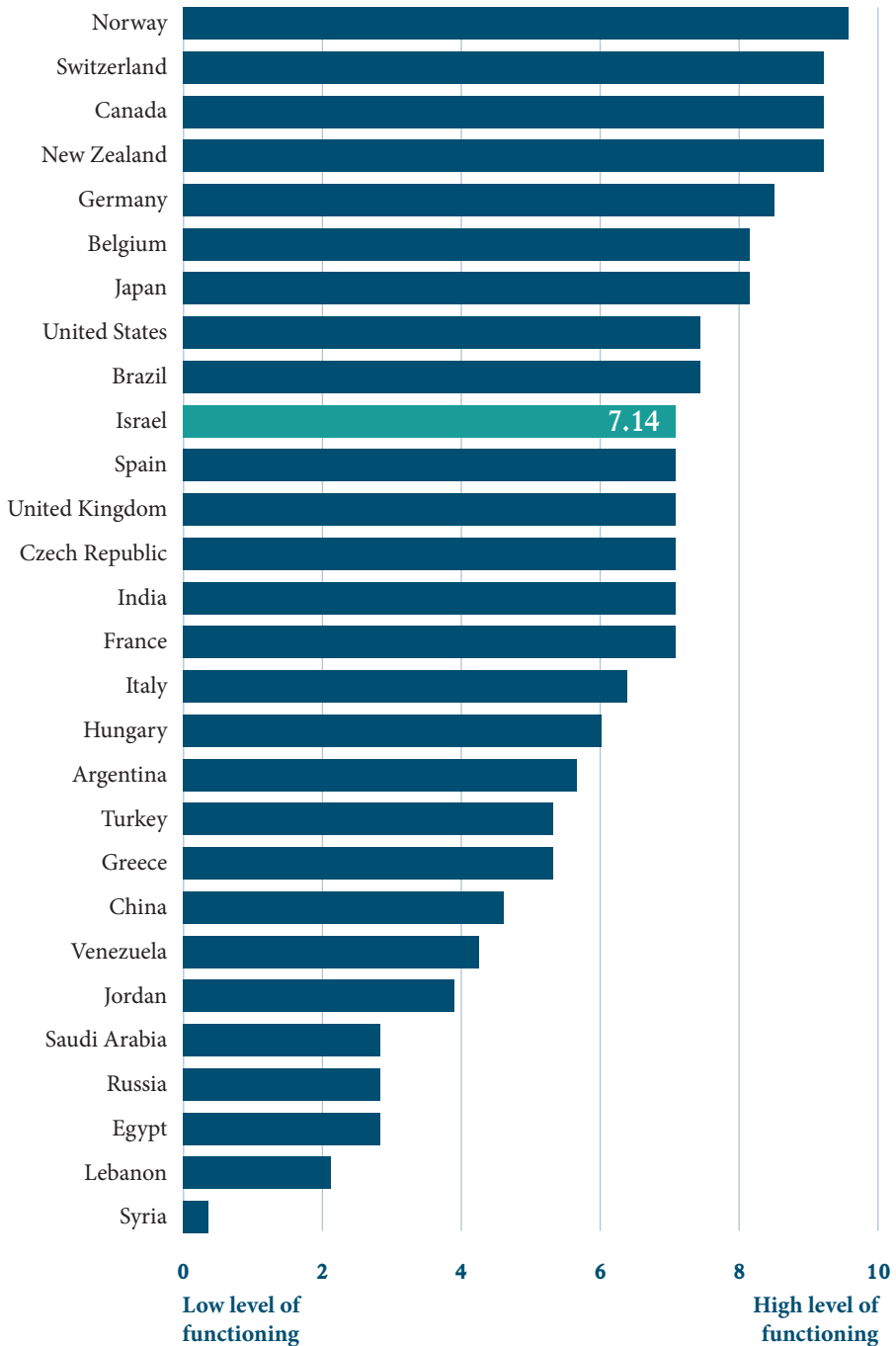
Figure 6.5 Political Participation

Country	Value
Norway	
Israel	8.89
New Zealand	
Switzerland	
Canada	
Germany	
France	
United States	
Italy	
Lebanon	
India	
Spain	
United Kingdom	
Czech Republic	
Greece	
Japan	
Belgium	
Argentina	
Venezuela	
Egypt	
Russia	
Turkey	
Brazil	
Hungary	
Jordan	
China	
Syria	
Saudi Arabia	

0   2   4   6   8   10

**Low political
participation**

**High political
participation**
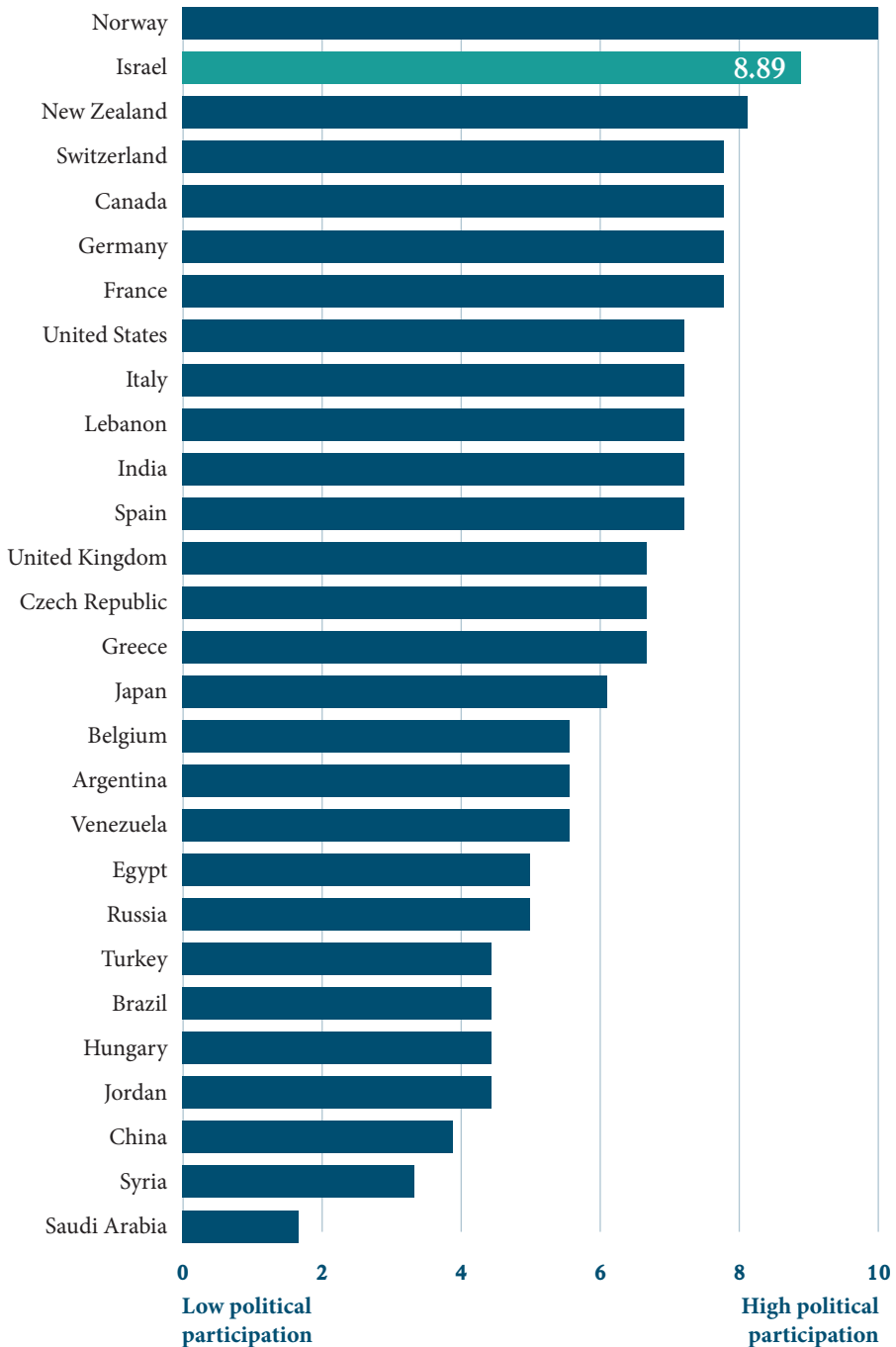
Figure 6.6 Civil Liberties

Norway	
New Zealand	
Canada	
Belgium	
United Kingdom	
India	
Greece	
Japan	
Spain	
Czech Republic	
Switzerland	
Brazil	
Germany	
France	
Italy	
United States	
Hungary	
Argentina	
Venezuela	
Israel	5.88
Lebanon	
Russia	
Turkey	
Jordan	
Egypt	
China	
Saudi Arabia	
Syria	

0   2   4   6   8   10

No respect for civil rights   **Full respect for civil rights**
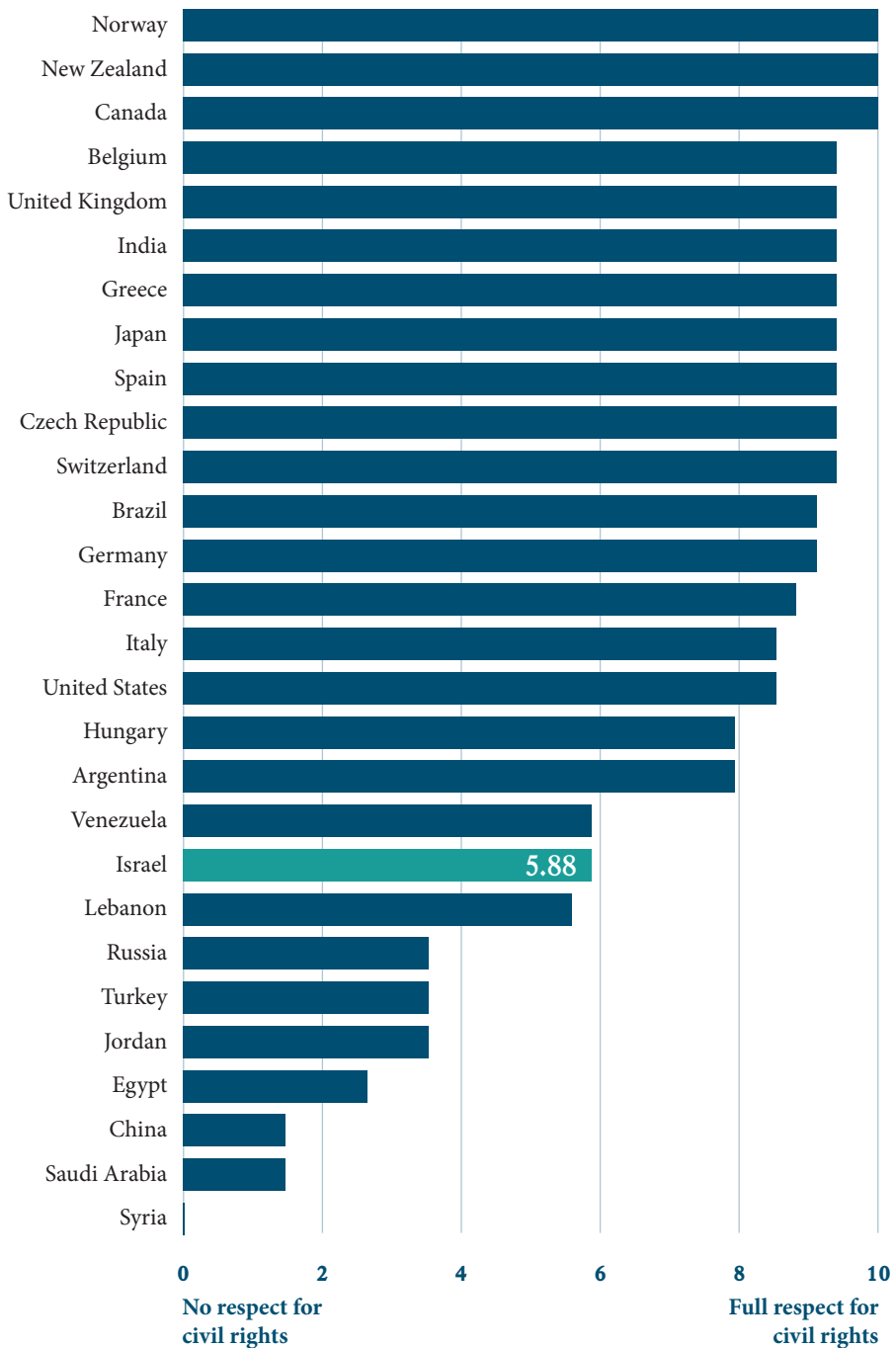
Figure 6.7 Perception of Corruption

Country	Value
New Zealand	
Norway	
Switzerland	
Canada	
Germany	
United Kingdom	
Belgium	
Japan	
United States	
France	
Israel	60
Spain	
Hungary	
Czech Republic	
Saudi Arabia	
Jordan	
Turkey	
Italy	
Brazil	
Greece	
India	
Egypt	
China	
Argentina	
Lebanon	
Russia	
Syria	
Venezuela	

0   20   40   60   80   100

High perceived corruption   **Low perceived corruption**
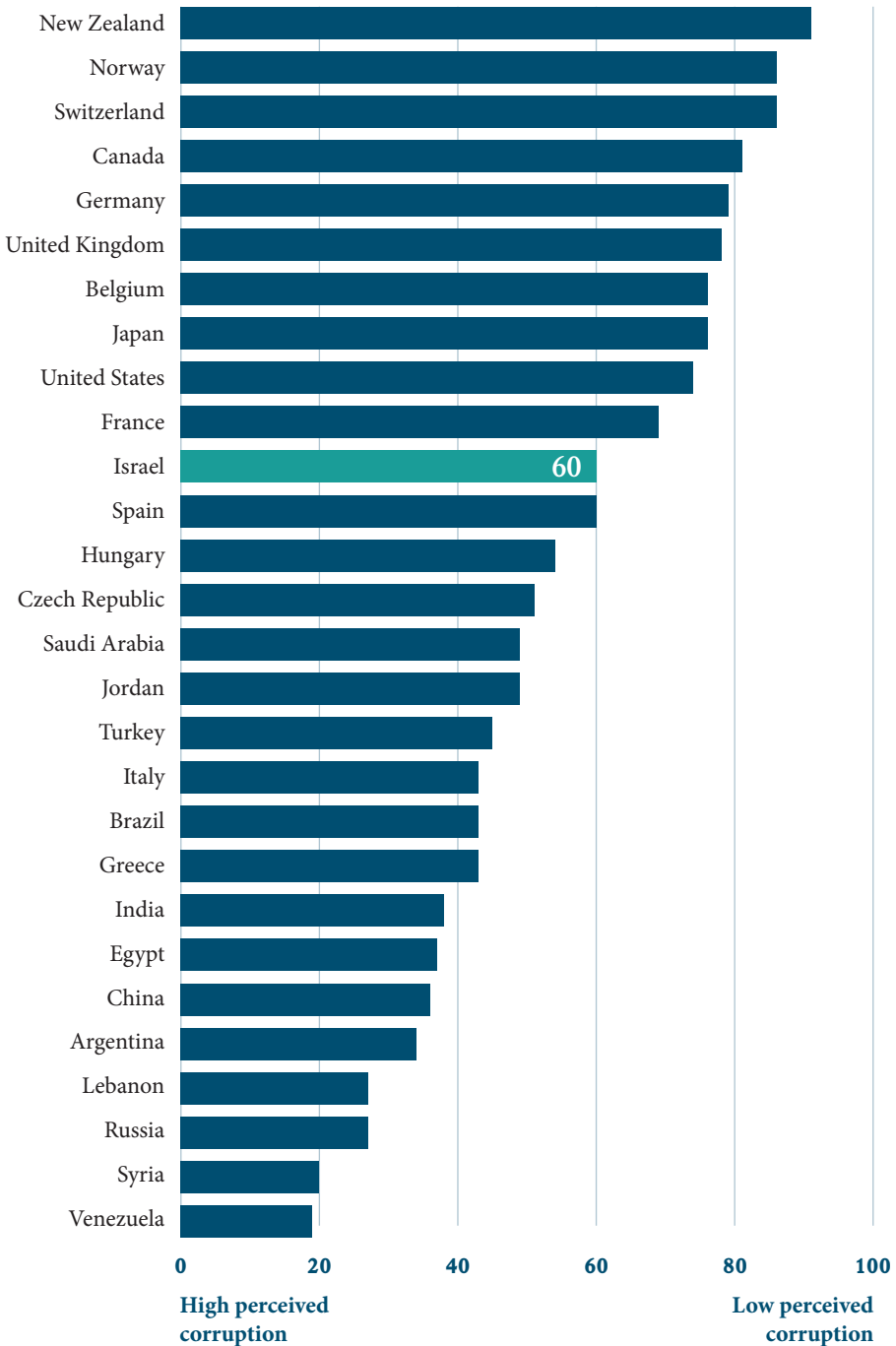
Figure 6.8 Life Satisfaction

Switzerland	
Norway	
Israel	**9.6**
Canada	
New Zealand	
United States	
Brazil	
Germany	
Belgium	
United Kingdom	
Czech Republic	
France	
Spain	
Russia	
Italy	
Japan	
Turkey	
Hungary	
Greece	

0   2   4   6   8   10

Low satisfaction   **High satisfaction**

Figure 6.9 Social Policies

Country	Value
Norway	
New Zealand	
United Kingdom	
Canada	
Switzerland	
Germany	
France	
Belgium	
Czech Republic	
United States	
Japan	
Spain	
Israel	5.7
Italy	
Greece	
Turkey	
Hungary	

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Low quality policies

High quality policies

Appendix
Questionnaire and Distribution of Responses (Percent)

Interviewer's Introduction: "Shalom, my name is _____ and I'm calling you on behalf of the Research Institute. We're conducting an opinion poll on the subject of society and the state. Your opinion is very important to us, and we would appreciate your participation in this survey. We assure you that your responses will be kept strictly confidential, and will be used for research purposes only."

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

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Very good	7.3	7.7	5.4
Good	33.9	36.0	23.4
So-so	38.7	38.4	40.1
Bad	9.3	8.6	13.2
Very bad	8.7	7.4	15.9
Don't know / Refuse*	2.1	1.9	2.0
Total	100	100	100

* Throughout the survey, this response was recorded if the respondent replied "I don't know," or was unwilling to select one of the options offered.

2.   **And what about your personal situation?**

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Very good	22.6	20.4	34.2
Good	52.1	56.1	30.9
So-so	19.8	18.1	28.9
Bad	3.3	3.0	4.5
Very bad	1.5	1.6	1.5
Don't know / Refuse	0.7	0.8	0
Total	100	100	100

3.   **What do you consider to be the most significant event in Israel's history as a democratic state?** (Open-ended question)

_____

4. **People attach different meanings to the term "Zionism." What is the most important meaning of the term in your eyes?**
    (Open-ended question; primary answer recorded) _____

    _____

5. **Do you define yourself personally as:***

Very Zionist	48.8
Somewhat Zionist	37.3
Not so Zionist	6.7
Not at all Zionist	3.5
Don't know / Refuse	3.7
Total	100

* This question was asked of Jewish respondents only.

6. **To what extent do you trust each of the following individuals or institutions in Israel?**

A. Total Sample

		Not at all	Somewhat	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know / Refuse	Total
6.1	The media	21.0	41.9	30.2	5.5	1.4	100
6.2	The Supreme Court	12.1	19.9	37.0	25.4	5.6	100
6.3	The police	19.1	34.7	34.2	8.2	3.8	100
6.4	The President of Israel	10.3	12.0	37.3	32.8	7.6	100
6.5	The Knesset	21.5	39.4	29.3	6.1	3.7	100
6.6	The army (IDF)	7.7	6.0	27.0	57.5	1.8	100
6.7	The government	23.8	37.0	28.1	8.1	3.0	100
6.8	My health fund	6.4	18.0	49.5	23.0	3.1	100
6.9	The National Insurance Institute	21.3	30.9	30.5	9.6	7.7	100
6.10	Political parties	28.3	42.3	16.2	2.9	10.3	100

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

B. Jews

		Not at all	Somewhat	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know / Refuse	Total
6.1	The media	20.0	45.7	27.9	4.9	1.5	100
6.2	The Supreme Court	11.5	20.4	35.7	26.5	5.9	100
6.3	The police	15.7	38.0	34.1	8.1	4.1	100
6.4	The President of Israel	5.2	10.8	39.4	36.6	8.0	100
6.5	The Knesset	19.1	43.4	28.3	5.5	3.7	100
6.6	The army (IDF)	1.2	4.5	28.2	65.2	0.9	100
6.7	The government	20.2	39.7	29.4	8.1	2.6	100
6.8	My health fund	6.0	19.8	51.2	19.4	3.6	100
6.9	The National Insurance Institute	21.4	34.7	27.8	7.5	8.6	100
6.10	Political parties	26.5	46.4	13.1	2.0	12.0	100

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

C. Arabs

		Not at all	Somewhat	Quite a lot	Very much	Don't know / Refuse	Total
6.1	The media	26.3	21.8	42.5	8.6	0.8	100
6.2	The Supreme Court	15.5	16.9	43.7	19.3	4.6	100
6.3	The police	36.9	17.5	34.8	8.9	1.9	100
6.4	The President of Israel	37.4	18.7	25.9	13.0	5.0	100
6.5	The Knesset	34.3	18.3	34.8	9.5	3.1	100
6.6	The army (IDF)	42.0	14.2	20.3	16.7	6.8	100
6.7	The government	42.8	22.6	21.5	8.4	4.7	100
6.8	My health fund	8.3	8.5	40.3	41.9	1.0	100
6.9	The National Insurance Institute	20.8	10.9	44.6	20.7	3.0	100
6.10	Political parties	37.4	20.7	32.1	7.5	2.3	100

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

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Very much	41.8	48.2	8.0
Quite a lot	37.4	39.9	24.4
Not so much	14.2	8.2	45.7
Not at all	5.2	2.1	21.1
Don't know / Refuse	1.4	1.6	0.8
Total	100	100	100

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

Jewish	36.6
Democratic	35.3
Both are equally important (Not read)**	26.7
Neither is important (Not read)**	0.3
Don't know / Refuse	1.1
Total	100

*   This question was asked of Jewish respondents only.

**   Throughout the questionnaire, "not read" refers to responses that were not presented
as options, but were recorded when volunteered by respondents.

9–15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

A. Total Sample

		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
9.	Israeli citizens should be prohibited from harshly criticizing the state in public. Discussion on p. 55	50.0	20.4	15.9	11.3	2.4	100
10.	All public signs and government forms should also be written in Arabic, since roughly one-fifth of Israel's citizens are Arabs. Discussion on p. 87	19.6	12.2	27.8	37.5	2.9	100
11.	I find it acceptable for Israel, as a Jewish state, to allocate more funding to Jewish localities than to Arab ones. Discussion on p. 84	37.7	19.7	15.6	22.9	4.1	100
12.	Most Arab citizens of Israel have not reconciled themselves to the states's existence, and support its destruction. Discussion on p. 75	28.3	26.7	17.4	22.0	5.6	100
13.	The present makeup of the Knesset is an accurate reflection of the differences and consensuses within the Israeli public. Discussion on p. 42	14.3	18.9	31.0	27.2	8.6	100
14.	Mizrahim in Israel are discriminated against compared with Ashkenazim. Discussion on p. 64	34.7	24.5	18.2	14.0	8.6	100
15.	In Israel, those who are not Zionists should not be hired for government positions.	40.9	16.9	18.3	18.5	5.4	100

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

B. Jews

		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
9.	Israeli citizens should be prohibited from harshly criticizing the state in public. Discussion on p. 55	46.6	22.6	16.1	12.0	2.7	100
10.	All public signs and government forms should also be written in Arabic, since roughly one-fifth of Israel's citizens are Arabs. Discussion on p. 87	21.5	14.1	31.5	29.6	3.3	100
11.	I find it acceptable for Israel, as a Jewish state, to allocate more funding to Jewish localities than to Arab ones. Discussion on p. 84	32.0	22.5	17.0	24.0	4.5	100
12.	Most Arab citizens of Israel have not reconciled themselves to the states's existence, and support its destruction. Discussion on p. 75	23.9	28.4	18.3	24.0	5.4	100
13.	The present makeup of the Knesset is an accurate reflection of the differences and consensuses within the Israeli public. Discussion on p. 42	11.9	18.7	30.8	28.7	9.9	100
14.	Mizrahim in Israel are discriminated against compared with Ashkenazim. Discussion on p. 64	38.3	26.9	16.6	11.1	7.1	100
15.	In Israel, those who are not Zionists should not be hired for government positions.	33.1	19.0	20.5	21.0	6.4	100

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

C. Arabs

		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
9.	Israeli citizens should be prohibited from harshly criticizing the state in public.	67.8	8.4	14.7	7.4	1.7	100
	Discussion on p. 55						
10.	All public signs and government forms should also be written in Arabic, since roughly one-fifth of Israel's citizens are Arabs.	9.7	2.3	8.5	78.8	0.7	100
	Discussion on p. 87						
11.	I find it acceptable for Israel, as a Jewish state, to allocate more funding to Jewish localities than to Arab ones.	67.3	5.1	8.0	17.5	2.1	100
	Discussion on p. 84						
12.	Most Arab citizens of Israel have not reconciled themselves to the states's existence, and support its destruction.	51.9	17.8	12.9	11.4	6.0	100
	Discussion on p. 75						
13.	The present makeup of the Knesset is an accurate reflection of the differences and consensuses within the Israeli public.	26.6	19.9	31.8	19.4	2.3	100
	Discussion on p. 42						
14.	Mizrahim in Israel are discriminated against compared with Ashkenazim.	15.4	11.7	26.4	29.4	17.1	100
	Discussion on p. 64						
15.	In Israel, those who are not Zionists should not be hired for government positions.	81.5	5.5	6.8	5.4	0.8	100

16. To what extent are you and your friends able to influence government policy?

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Very much	4.9	5.0	4.2
Quite a lot	14.6	14.5	14.9
Not so much	45.3	48.0	31.0
Not at all	32.4	29.7	46.8
Don't know / Refuse	2.8	2.8	3.1
Total	100	100	100

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

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Strong group	21.7	23.1	14.4
Quite strong group	38.0	42.0	16.7
Quite weak group	16.6	16.0	19.6
Weak group	17.7	12.2	46.6
Don't know / Refuse	6.0	6.7	2.7
Total	100	100	100

18–23. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

A. Total Sample

		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
18.	To safeguard Israel's security, it is permissible for the state to monitor what citizens write on the Internet. *Discussion on p. 56*	22.9	15.1	26.8	29.7	5.5	100
19.	It doesn't matter which party you vote for; it won't change the situation. *Discussion on p. 41*	50.5	18.6	15.3	13.5	2.1	100
20.	The government should encourage Arab emigration from Israel. *(This question was asked of Jewish respondents only. See table on page 115.)*	–	–	–	–	–	–
21.	Jewish citizens of Israel should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens. *Discussion on p. 51*	55.6	19.4	11.0	11.0	3.0	100
22.	Human and civil rights organizations such as the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and B'Tselem cause damage to the state. *Discussion on p. 57*	26.2	14.1	19.1	31.1	9.5	100
23.	Palestinians from the West Bank who are married to Arab citizens of Israel should be allowed to live in Israel. *Discussion on p. 90*	47.5	16.7	12.6	13.6	9.6	100

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

B. Jews

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
18. To safeguard Israel's security, it is permissible for the state to monitor what citizens write on the Internet. Discussion on p. 56	18.7	16.4	26.9	32.2	5.8	100
19. It doesn't matter which party you vote for; it won't change the situation. Discussion on p. 41	47.9	20.7	16.2	12.7	2.5	100
20. The government should encourage Arab emigration from Israel.* Discussion on p. 83	30.9	24.5	14.5	23.0	7.1	100
21. Jewish citizens of Israel should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens. Discussion on p. 51	48.8	22.5	12.8	12.6	3.3	100
22. Human and civil rights organizations such as the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and B'Tselem cause damage to the state. Discussion on p. 57	18.8	14.9	20.2	35.9	10.2	100
23. Palestinians from the West Bank who are married to Arab citizens of Israel should be allowed to live in Israel. Discussion on p. 90	53.2	19.0	11.1	6.0	10.7	100

* This question was asked of Jewish respondents only.

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

C. Arabs

		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
18.	To safeguard Israel's security, it is permissible for the state to monitor what citizens write on the Internet. Discussion on p. 56	45.4	8.4	26.2	16.9	3.1	100
19.	It doesn't matter which party you vote for; it won't change the situation. Discussion on p. 41	63.9	7.5	10.1	17.2	1.3	100
20.	The government should encourage Arab emigration from Israel. *(This question was asked of Jewish respondents only. See table on page 115.)*	–	–	–	–	–	–
21.	Jewish citizens of Israel should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens. Discussion on p. 51	91.2	3.1	1.5	2.4	1.8	100
22.	Human and civil rights organizations such as the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and B'Tselem cause damage to the state. Discussion on p. 57	65.2	10.0	13.2	5.6	6.0	100
23.	Palestinians from the West Bank who are married to Arab citizens of Israel should be allowed to live in Israel. Discussion on p. 90	17.7	4.9	20.0	54.0	3.4	100

24. 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?

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
1 – No solidarity at all	7.6	6.8	12.3
2	5.6	5.3	7.2
3	9.6	9.0	12.7
4	10.5	9.4	16.5
5	21.6	21.8	20.5
6	12.7	12.6	13.2
7	14.2	15.9	5.6
8	10.3	11.6	3.6
9	1.0	1.1	0.4
10 – High level of solidarity	2.8	2.4	5.1
Don't know / Refuse	4.1	4.1	2.9
Total	100	100	100
Mean (between 1–10)	5.1	5.3	4.5
Standard Deviation	2.2	2.2	2.3
Number of Respondents	978	820	158

25. For many years, the following were considered to be the major focal points of tension in Israeli society. How would you characterize the level of tension between these groups today?

A. Total Sample

	High	Moderate	Low	None (Not read)	Don't know / Refuse	Total
25.1 Mizrahim and Ashkenazim	24.0	41.9	25.2	3.0	5.9	100
25.2 Religious and secular Jews	47.5	37.4	11.3	0.7	3.1	100
25.3 Right and left (on foreign policy and national security issues)	59.7	27.7	7.1	1.1	4.4	100
25.4 Rich and poor	50.6	31.6	11.8	2.4	3.6	100
25.5 Jews and Arabs	67.1	25.6	3.9	0.5	2.9	100

For many years, the following were considered to be the major focal points of tension in Israeli society. How would you characterize the level of tension between these groups today?

B. Jews

	High	Moderate	Low	None (Not read)	Don't know / Refuse	Total
25.1 Mizrahim and Ashkenazim	24.2	41.1	27.5	2.9	4.3	100
25.2 Religious and secular Jews	46.9	38.2	11.4	0.6	2.9	100
25.3 Right and left (on foreign policy and national security issues)	60.0	27.3	7.4	0.8	4.5	100
25.4 Rich and poor	51.5	31.5	10.6	2.3	4.1	100
25.5 Jews and Arabs	67.0	26.0	3.3	0.6	3.1	100

For many years, the following were considered to be the major focal points of tension in Israeli society. How would you characterize the level of tension between these groups today?

C. Arabs

		High	Moderate	Low	None (Not read)	Don't know / Refuse	Total
25.1	Mizrahim and Ashkenazim	23.1	46.2	13.0	3.6	14.1	100
25.2	Religious and secular Jews	50.6	33.2	10.5	1.2	4.5	100
25.3	Right and left (on foreign policy and national security issues)	58.0	30.0	5.2	2.6	4.2	100
25.4	Rich and poor	46.1	31.9	18.0	2.6	1.4	100
25.5	Jews and Arabs	67.5	23.5	7.1	–	1.9	100

26. In your opinion, which groups have the highest level of tension between them? (The order of the response options was rotated.)

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Mizrahim and Ashkenazim	3.9	4.4	1.3
Religious and secular Jews	10.3	10.0	11.6
Right and left (on foreign policy and national security issues)	18.4	20.4	8.0
Rich and poor	12.8	13.9	7.3
Jews and Arabs	47.0	43.7	64.1
All the same / No difference in level of tension (Not read)	7.6	7.6	7.7
Total	100	100	100

27. **Do you support or oppose the proposal that only those who sign a declaration of loyalty to Israel as a Jewish state, to its symbols, its sovereignty, and the Declaration of Independence, and who serve in the army or civilian national service, should be eligible to vote for and be elected to the Knesset?**

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Strongly support	32.0	37.3	3.9
Somewhat support	21.2	23.5	8.7
Somewhat oppose	15.8	16.0	14.7
Strongly oppose	25.5	17.2	69.1
Don't know / Refuse	5.5	6.0	3.6
Total	100	100	100

28. **If you had the opportunity to become a citizen of the United States or any other Western country, would you prefer to move there or to remain in Israel?**

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
I would prefer to move there.	11.7	11.1	15.0
I would prefer to remain in Israel.	84.3	84.5	83.4
Don't know / Refuse	4.0	4.4	1.6
Total	100	100	100

29–31. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

A. Total Sample

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
29. The left also played a role in deepening the rifts in Israeli society following Yitzhak's Rabin's assassination by accusing all right-wing and religious Jews of being responsible for his murder. Discussion on p. 35	27.7	19.6	18.9	22.5	11.3	100
30. There are situations in which there is no choice but to take up arms to prevent the government from carrying out its policies. Discussion on p. 31	4.0	4.9	10.2	76.2	4.7	100
31. The repeated failure to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians proves that the right's criticism of Yitzhak Rabin's policies in this regard was justified. Discussion on p. 33	20.4	14.6	18.5	32.7	13.8	100

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

B. Jews

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
29. The left also played a role in deepening the rifts in Israeli society following Yitzhak's Rabin's assassination by accusing all right-wing and religious Jews of being responsible for his murder. Discussion on p. 35	26.9	21.1	19.1	21.5	11.4	100
30. There are situations in which there is no choice but to take up arms to prevent the government from carrying out its policies. Discussion on p. 31	3.7	5.1	8.6	77.3	5.3	100
31. The repeated failure to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians proves that the right's criticism of Yitzhak Rabin's policies in this regard was justified. Discussion on p. 33	19.3	15.3	18.6	33.2	13.6	100

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

C. Arabs

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
29. The left also played a role in deepening the rifts in Israeli society following Yitzhak's Rabin's assassination by accusing all right-wing and religious Jews of being responsible for his murder. Discussion on p. 35	31.6	11.8	17.8	27.9	10.9	100
30. There are situations in which there is no choice but to take up arms to prevent the government from carrying out its policies. Discussion on p. 31	5.2	3.5	18.3	70.5	2.5	100
31. The repeated failure to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians proves that the right's criticism of Yitzhak Rabin's policies in this regard was justified. Discussion on p. 33	26.2	10.8	18.5	29.9	14.6	100

32. Would it bother you to have as your neighbor...?

A. Total Sample

		It would bother me	It would not bother me	Don't know / Refuse	Total
32.1	Secular people who are not religiously observant	7.4	91.7	0.9	100
32.2	Haredim (ultra-Orthodox Jews)	23.9	73.0	3.1	100
32.3	*(To Arabs:)* A Jewish family	–	–	–	–
32.4	People with mental illness* living in the community	29.8	63.9	6.3	100
32.5	An Ethiopian family	8.4	88.4	3.2	100
32.6	Foreign workers	43.5	49.1	7.4	100
32.7	A homosexual couple	22.1	75.6	2.3	100
32.8	People with mental retardation*	16.2	79.3	4.5	100
32.9	*(To Jews:)* An Arab family	–	–	–	–

Would it bother you to have as your neighbor...?

B. Jews

		It would bother me	It would not bother me	Don't know / Refuse	Total
32.1	Secular people who are not religiously observant	4.2	94.9	0.9	100
32.2	Haredim (ultra-Orthodox Jews)	20.3	76.6	3.1	100
32.9	A Jewish family *(This was only asked of Arab respondents. See table on p. 125)*	–	–	–	–
32.4	People with mental illness* living in the community	31.5	61.6	6.9	100
32.5	An Ethiopian family	7.1	89.6	3.3	100
32.6	Foreign workers	48.5	43.1	8.4	100
32.7	A homosexual couple	18.6	78.9	2.5	100
32.8	People with mental retardation*	12.4	82.7	4.9	100
32.9	An Arab family	36.1	55.8	8.1	100

* In order to ensure that the meaning was clear, the Hebrew terms equivalent to "mental illness" and "mental retardation" were used to describe people with mental health disorders and people with intellectual disabilities, respectively.

Would it bother you to have as your neighbor...?

C. Arabs

		It would bother me	It would not bother me	Don't know / Refuse	Total
32.1	Secular people who are not religiously observant	24.4	74.7	0.9	100
32.2	Haredim (ultra-Orthodox Jews)	42.6	54.1	3.3	100
32.3	A Jewish family	11.4	86.3	2.3	100
32.4	People with mental illness* in rehabilitation in the community	20.9	76.1	3.0	100
32.5	An Ethiopian family	14.7	82.4	2.9	100
32.6	Foreign workers	17.0	80.8	2.2	100
32.7	A homosexual couple	40.4	57.9	1.7	100
32.8	People with mental retardation*	36.4	61.3	2.3	100
32.9	An Arab family (*This was only asked of Jewish respondents. See table on p. 124*)	–	–	–	–

* In order to ensure that the meaning was clear, the Hebrew terms equivalent to "mental illness" and "mental retardation" were used to describe people with mental health disorders and people with intellectual disabilities, respectively.

33. People often speak about "Rabin's legacy." Is it clear to you personally what that legacy is?

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
It is not at all clear	32.7	29.1	52.0
It is somewhat unclear	15.6	16.6	10.3
It is somewhat clear	25.1	25.6	22.0
It is very clear	16.4	18.4	6.0
Don't know / Refuse	10.2	10.3	9.7
Total	100	100	100

(For respondents who answered "somewhat clear" or "very clear" in response to the previous question:)

34. **Please summarize Yitzhak Rabin's legacy in one or two sentences** (open-ended question).

_____

35. **Do you feel that the following statement is correct or incorrect: The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin prevented great harm to Israel's security by stopping the signing of a peace agreement with the Palestinians.***

	Jews
Very correct	7.7
Somewhat correct	6.4
Somewhat incorrect	14.9
Totally incorrect	54.5
Don't know / Refuse	16.5
Total	100

* This question was asked of Jewish respondents only.

36. **In your opinion, what should be the primary focus of the annual memorial day marking Yitzhak Rabin's assassination?**

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Rabin's life and personal contribution	13.5	15.7	1.8
The values of tolerance and democracy	26.7	26.6	27.2
The necessity of making concessions for peace	14.1	7.9	47.1
The unity of the Jewish people in Israel	28.4	32.3	8.2
Other (Not read)	1.9	0.9	7.0
All of the above equally (Not read)	2.9	3.5	–
None of the above (Not read)	4.5	4.0	6.8
Don't know / Refuse	8.0	9.1	1.9
Total	100	100	100

37. Which statement do you agree with more: that Yigal Amir, the murderer of Yitzhak Rabin, should remain in prison for the rest of his life; or that he should serve a fixed-term sentence, set in accordance with the same principles applied to any other murderer.

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
I agree more with the first opinion, that Yigal Amir should remain in prison for the rest of his life	56.7	57.5	52.3
I agree more with the second opinion, that Yigal Amir should serve a fixed-term sentence, set in accordance with the same principles applied to any other murderer	33.3	32.0	40.0
Don't know / Refuse	10	10.5	7.7
Total	100	100	100

38. In your opinion, how likely is it that there will be another political murder of a Jewish leader in Israel, committed by a Jew?

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Very likely	11.8	9.7	22.4
Quite likely	30.1	31.4	23.4
Quite unlikely	25.4	26.7	18.3
Very unlikely	20.4	20.0	22.6
Don't know / Refuse	12.3	12.2	13.3
Total	100	100	100

39. Do you support or oppose having Arab parties in the government, including Arab ministers?

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Strongly oppose	27.9	32.3	5.0
Somewhat oppose	21.4	24.3	6.4
Somewhat support	25.7	27.3	17.1
Strongly support	17.1	7.5	67.9
Don't know / Refuse	7.9	8.6	3.6
Total	100	100	100

40. When you need medical care, do you prefer being treated by a Jewish doctor, an Arab doctor, or either one?

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Jewish doctor	16.9	19.7	1.7
Arab doctor	1.5	0.8	5.3
It doesn't matter to me whether the doctor is Jewish or Arab	80.0	77.8	91.4
Don't know / Refuse	1.6	1.7	1.6
Total	100	100	100

41–46. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

A. Total Sample

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
41. Decisions crucial to the state on issues of peace and security should be made by a Jewish majority. Discussion on p. 81	20.5	10.0	20.6	44.0	4.9	100
42. Decisions crucial to the state regarding governance, economy or society should be made by a Jewish majority. Discussion on p. 81	27.3	20.7	19.7	26.8	5.5	100
43. The Supreme Court's authority to rescind laws passed in the Knesset by the elected representatives of the people should be revoked.	40.4	15.6	15.2	16.8	12.0	100
44. Arab citizens of Israel are discriminated against compared with Jewish citizens of the state. Discussion on p. 64	20.1	13.8	27.2	32.1	6.8	100
45. On the whole, most Knesset members work hard and are doing a good job. Discussion on p. 44	27.9	26.5	27.1	9.6	8.9	100
46.1 It is important for every Jewish child in Israel to learn Arabic from the early grades in elementary school. *(This was asked only of Jewish respondents. See table on p. 130)*	–	–	–	–	–	–
46.2 It is important for every Arab child in Israel to learn Hebrew from the early grades in elementary school. *(This was asked only of Arab respondents. See table on p. 131)*	–	–	–	–	–	–

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

B. Jews

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
41. Decisions crucial to the state on issues of peace and security should be made by a Jewish majority. Discussion on p. 81	11.3	9.7	22.4	51.2	5.4	100
42. Decisions crucial to the state regarding governance, economy or society should be made by a Jewish majority. Discussion on p. 81	18.3	22.2	22.3	31.3	5.9	100
43. The Supreme Court's authority to rescind laws passed in the Knesset by the elected representatives of the people should be revoked.	37.0	17.6	14.9	17.3	13.2	100
44. Arab citizens of Israel are discriminated against compared with Jewish citizens of the state. Discussion on p. 64	22.6	15.7	29.9	24.2	7.6	100
45. On the whole, most Knesset members work hard and are doing a good job. Discussion on p. 44	27.1	27.4	27.5	9.0	9.0	100
46.1 It is important for every Jewish child in Israel to learn Arabic from the early grades in elementary school Discussion on p. 88	20.5	13.8	27.6	35.4	2.7	100
46.2 It is important for every Arab child in Israel to learn Hebrew from the early grades in elementary school. *(This was asked only of Arab respondents. See table on p. 131)*	–	–	–	–	–	–

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

C. Arabs

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
41. Decisions crucial to the state on issues of peace and security should be made by a Jewish majority. Discussion on p. 81	68.7	11.7	10.9	6.2	2.5	100
42. Decisions crucial to the state regarding governance, economy or society should be made by a Jewish majority. Discussion on p. 81	74.8	12.8	5.9	3.6	2.9	100
43. The Supreme Court's authority to rescind laws passed in the Knesset by the elected representatives of the people should be revoked.	58.2	5.6	17.1	14.2	4.9	100
44. Arab citizens of Israel are discriminated against compared with Jewish citizens of the state. Discussion on p. 64	6.6	3.9	12.9	74.0	2.6	100
45. On the whole, most Knesset members work hard and are doing a good job. Discussion on p. 44	32.3	21.7	25.1	13.3	7.6	100
46.1 It is important for every Jewish child in Israel to learn Arabic from the early grades in elementary school. *(This was asked only of Jewish respondents. See table on p. 130)*	–	–	–	–	–	–
46.2 It is important for every Arab child in Israel to learn Hebrew from the early grades in elementary school Discussion on p. 88	6.8	5.8	12.9	72.0	2.5	100

47. In your opinion, is it possible for an Arab citizen of Israel who considers himself an integral part of the Palestinian people to be a loyal citizen of the State of Israel?

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
It is definitely possible	15.8	8.2	56.0
I think it is possible	28.1	29.7	19.6
I don't think it is possible	21.0	23.3	9.0
It is definitely not possible	28.8	32.4	9.7
Don't know / Refuse	6.3	6.4	5.7
Total	100	100	100

48. Would it bother you or not bother you if Arab teachers taught in Jewish schools?*

	Jews
It would bother me	20.8
It would not bother me	74.4
Don't know / Refuse	4.8
Total	100

*   This question was asked of Jewish respondents only.

49. Would it bother you or not bother you if Jewish teachers taught in Arab schools?*

	Arabs
It would bother me	14.3
It would not bother me	83.5
Don't know / Refuse	2.2
Total	100

*   This question was asked of Arab respondents only.

50–53. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

A. Total Sample

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
50. All Arab citizens of Israel should be obligated at age 18 to perform some form of national service, whether civilian or military, as they choose. Discussion on p. 89	45.5	20.7	7.5	19.4	6.9	100
51. The state should allocate more funds to foster the culture and heritage of Arab citizens of Israel. Discussion on p. 85	25.6	24.5	19.2	21.4	9.3	100
52. The state should ensure that Arab citizens of Israel are represented in the civil service in accordance with their percentage of the population. Discussion on p. 84	31.3	28.4	15.1	16.4	8.8	100
53. Arab citizens pose a security risk to Israel. *(This was asked of Jewish respondents only. See table on page 134.)*	–	–	–	–	–	–

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

B. Jews

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
50. All Arab citizens of Israel should be obligated at age 18 to perform some form of national service, whether civilian or military, as they choose. Discussion on p. 89	50.8	23.3	6.6	11.7	7.6	100
51. The state should allocate more funds to foster the culture and heritage of Arab citizens of Israel. Discussion on p. 85	15.2	27.2	22.6	24.5	10.5	100
52. The state should ensure that Arab citizens of Israel are represented in the civil service in accordance with their percentage of the population. Discussion on p. 84	23.3	31.6	16.8	18.3	10.0	100
53. Arab citizens pose a security risk to Israel.* Discussion on p. 77	18.1	20.9	37.5	17.1	6.4	100

* This question was asked of Jewish respondents only.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

C. Arabs

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know / Refuse	Total
50. All Arab citizens of Israel should be obligated at age 18 to perform some form of national service, whether civilian or military, as they choose. Discussion on p. 89	17.7	7.0	12.1	59.7	3.5	100
51. The state should allocate more funds to foster the culture and heritage of Arab citizens of Israel. Discussion on p. 85	80.8	10.0	1.5	5.2	2.5	100
52. The state should ensure that Arab citizens of Israel are represented in the civil service in accordance with their percentage of the population. Discussion on p. 84	73.5	11.9	5.6	6.6	2.4	100
53. Arab citizens pose a security risk to Israel. *(This was asked of Jewish respondents only. See table on p. 134.)*	–	–	–	–	–	–

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

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
1 – Very corrupt	28.7	25.1	47.9
2	19.1	20.3	12.9
3	31.8	33.8	21.3
4	11.1	11.6	8.7
5 – Not at all corrupt	3.2	3.0	3.9
Don't know / Refuse	6.1	6.2	5.3
Total	100	100	100
Mean (between 1–10)	2.4	2.4	2.0
Standard Deviation	1.1	1.1	1.2
Number of respondents	956	802	154

55. Do you discuss politics with your friends?

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Very rarely	19.1	16.5	32.8
Quite rarely	23.3	22.6	27.3
Quite often	39.4	43.3	18.7
Very often	15.2	15.7	12.7
Don't know / Refuse	3.0	1.9	8.5
Total	100	100	100

56. Do you support or oppose organizations such as Lehava that engage in
various activities to prevent Jewish women from marrying Arab men?

	Total Sample	Jews	Arabs
Strongly support	19.9	19.7	21.3
Somewhat support	17.1	17.1	17.5
Somewhat oppose	20.6	22.1	13.1
Strongly oppose	30.3	27.9	42.7
Don't know / Refuse	12.1	13.2	5.4
Total	100	100	100

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