Auditing Israeli Democracy – 2007
Cohesion in a Divided Society

Asher Arian, Nir Atmor, Yael Hadar

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The Israel Democracy Institute

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THE 2007
ISRAELI DEMOCRACY INDEX

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All Indices of Democracy are now online and available for free download at www.idi.org.il.

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Acknowledgements

The 2007 Israeli Democracy Index is dedicated to Captain Zur Zarhi from Nahalal, a beloved friend who went to war and did not come back.

Zur fell in the Second Lebanon War on August 13, 2006. He was 27 years old.

Summary

Social cohesion has always been a prominent characteristic of Israeli society. In ordinary times, and particularly in times of trouble, values of mutuality, solidarity, and cohesiveness have stood out. In recent years, however, and particularly in the months that followed the Second Lebanon War, feelings of weariness, affront, and disgust with political processes in general and with the political system in particular have become widespread in Israel. The reasons for this low point in the general mood are many and diverse. Besides terrorism attacks and the continued struggle with the Palestinians, the results of the war in the summer of 2006 are a source of concern to many Israelis. Another troubling issue is their disgust with the corruption that, in their view, has spread everywhere. The level of satisfaction with the rule of law, the public administration, and the political leadership has gradually been shrinking year after year, and the tensions within society remain sharp and far from healing. A finding showing that 80% of the respondents are concerned about Israel's current situation will suffice to describe the sensitive plight of Israeli democracy in 2007, which emerges as fluid and fragile and needing strengthening and support.

And yet, the 2007 Democracy Index also includes several encouraging findings. The Index shows that most citizens are very proud to be Israeli, despite the current feelings. More than they are proud of their citizenship, they are convinced of their intention to remain in the country in the long term. When they cast doubts on this, 76% explain their hesitation as based on security and economic reasons. Most respondents report they perceive themselves as an inseparable part of the State of Israel and its problems and are ready to fight for the country should the need arise. Most respondents are interested in politics and talk with their friends and family about political issues. Beside their pride about the country and their concern with it, most of them are in a good or very good mood, and think they will be able to adapt to the current situation; 74% have trust in the IDF despite the results of the war in the summer of 2006, and only 13% hold that the defense budget should be cut. The rest hold it should either be increased or kept as is.

Israel is characterized by deep social and ideological cleavages, and the relationships between various population groups are discussed at length in this book: 87% of the participants in the survey pointed out that relationships between Arabs and Jews are not good or not at all good; 79% said that relationships between rich and poor in the country are not good; 66% held that relationships between religious and secular Jews are not good. The level of trust in other people has considerably weakened in recent years: only 31% of the respondents reported they have trust in one another. And yet, 65% believe that people in Israel are prepared to compromise on issues important to them to reach an agreed basis that will enable everyone to live together.

As in previous indices, participants in the 2007 Democracy Index were asked for their views on the country's institutions. The trust that Israeli citizens have in politicians has considerably declined in recent years. The most prominent figure in the 2007 Index points to a decline of 22% in the level of

trust that people have in the Prime Minister (21%) as opposed to last year (43%). Trust in the Knesset and in political parties remained as it had been in 2006 – extremely low; 86% of the respondents note that the way the government deals with the country's problems is not good: only 30% trust the declarations of political echelons on matters of security; 70% agree that politicians do not tend to take into account the view of the ordinary citizen. The considerable drop in voter turnout in the 2006 elections (63.5%) compared to previous elections is another indication of the public's disappointment and frustration with the establishment. All these emphasize the flaws and inadequacies in the functioning of Israel's political system.

In an international comparison, however, Israel's situation has improved vis-à-vis previous evaluations and by comparison with other countries. The 2007 Democracy Index shows that, out of 20 quantitative measures that were updated, 9 show improvement and 6 remained as they had been last year. It bears mention that the measures showing deterioration are those of political corruption, which point to a worsening trend in the evaluation of Israel over the last five years. The effectiveness of the administration was also found to be weaker in an international comparison, as well as the aspect of government stability, which has consistently received low evaluations by comparison with other countries.

The *2007 Israeli Democracy Index: Cohesion in a Divided Society* deals with a cluster of issues at the center of public discourse in Israel: the relationships between groups in society and questions of cohesion and social solidarity. The 2007 Democracy Index also seeks to examine, as did previous indices, the strength of Israeli democracy and the level of public support for it. This year, a considerable decline was recorded in the rate of those satisfied with its functioning: 66% declared they are not satisfied with the way Israeli democracy functions – a rise of 12% vis-à-vis last year. The implications of this figure and of other grave signs in Israeli democracy should raise concern among those involved in politics, but not only among them.

Part One

The Democracy Index 2007

A. Description of the Research and Its Goals

As it does every year, Israeli democracy has again submitted to periodic examination and evaluation in the context of the Democracy Index project. The study seeks to present a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of Israeli democracy, its functioning, and performance. The aim is to create a broad database that will promote discourse on this subject and further awareness, pointing out issues requiring attention and further improvement in Israeli democracy. Since "democracy" is a complex concept, marked by controversial borders and including many definitions, the Democracy Index focuses on the examination of three significant aspects that characterize every democracy and determine its character: the institutional aspect, the rights aspect, and the stability aspect. Each one of these three aspects (clusters) is divided into a collection of basic features that serve as the basis for evaluating the quality of democracy in every country (Figure 1).

Figure 1

The Structure of the Index
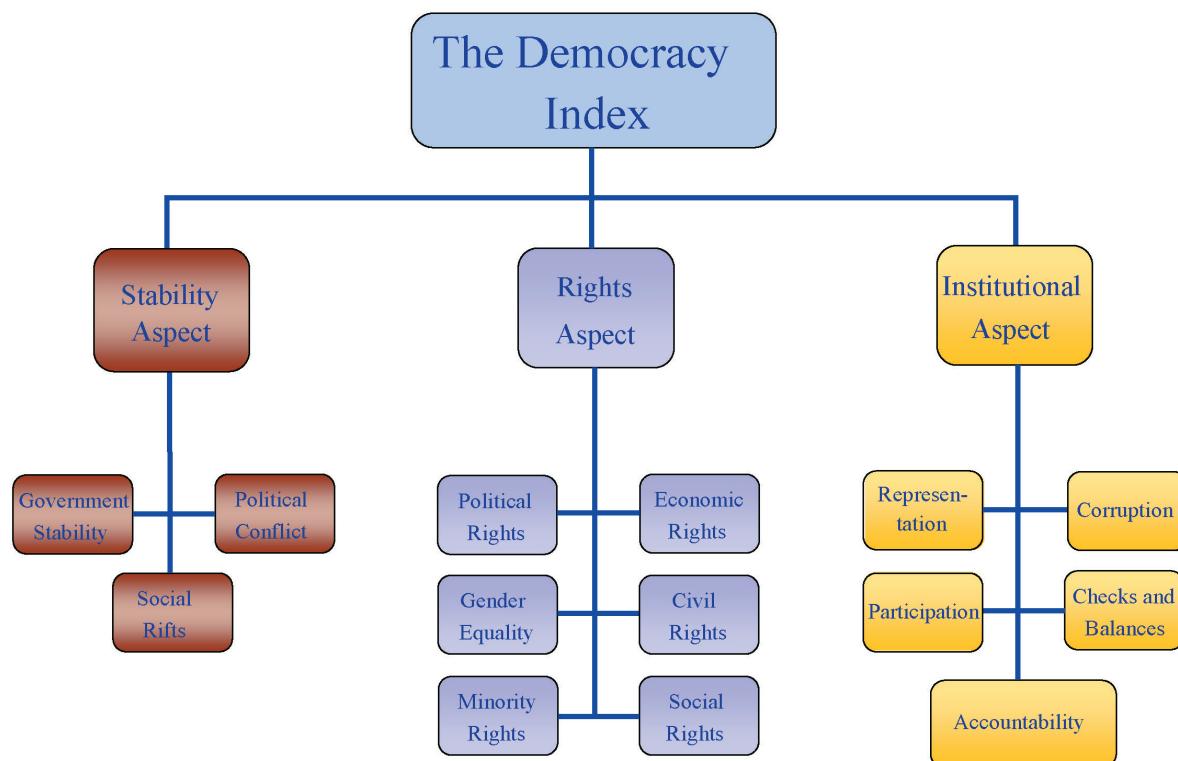
The first cluster, the institutional aspect, relates to the system of formal institutions at the basis of the democratic regime, to the division of power between them, and to the reciprocal relationships between the elements that constitute the political system – elected representatives and public officials. This aspect includes five central characteristics: representativeness, participation, government accountability, checks and balances, and the administration's integrity (or, vice-versa, its level of political corruption).

The second cluster, the rights aspect, relates to an essential and formal principle in democracy – the protection of human dignity and liberty, respect for basic rights and their protection. These include political rights, civil rights, social rights, economic rights (freedom of property), gender equality, and equality for minorities.

The third cluster, the stability aspect, differs from the two previous ones because stability is not an integral part of democracy's characteristics, and regimes that are not necessarily democratic can also be stable. Nevertheless, democracies do strive to attain stability, and its absence could influence a democracy's quality, prosperity, and survival over time. The stability aspect includes three main features: the stability of the government, political conflicts, and social cleavages.

The (14) characteristics detailed above were examined on two levels. We first tested the situation of Israeli democracy according to a series of quantitative measures and evaluations of international research institutes. We adopted a dual comparative perspective: one, international – Israel's situation vis-à-vis that in 35 democracies throughout the world; the other, historical – Israel's situation over the years. We then examined these characteristics in a public opinion survey that considered to what extent, according to public perception, these three aspects prevail in Israel in 2007.[1] For this purpose, we conducted a comprehensive public opinion survey in February 2007 within a representative sample of Israel's adult population.

The book is divided into two parts. Part One, which seeks to present a multi-dimensional picture of the quality of Israeli democracy, is divided into two sections. The first section is an update of the Democracy Index 2007, presenting the most recent data on the democracy indicators, including many quantitative indicators developed in international research institutes that have conducted follow-up and evaluation studies in dozens of countries over the years. The research institutes offer, each one in its field, operative definitions of concrete characteristics – such as a quantitative evaluation of integrity or of economic freedom in different countries and over time. These evaluations rely mainly on the integration of primary and secondary sources and on inside and outside experts. As we do every year, we gathered the evaluations of the main research institutes to point out general trends – improvement, deterioration, or lack of change in the situation within Israel and vis-à-vis other countries. We updated 20 ratings out of the 37 included in

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1   For full details of the 14 characteristics that include 31 ratings, see Asher Arian, David Nachmias, Doron Navot, and Danielle Shani, *The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index: Measuring Israeli Democracy* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2003).

the Democracy Index.[2] Each of the 20 ratings was examined for changes in the evaluation of Israel's situation over the last decade and also vis-à-vis other democracies. Full details of the evaluations Israel received in each of the 37 international ratings included in the Democracy Index, as well as the changing trends since 2003, appear in Appendix 1. The second section is the Democracy Index. This is a public opinion survey including questions repeated since 2003. The questions examine the assessments and attitudes of the public toward Israeli democracy – the implementation of democracy in Israel, and the levels of support for and satisfaction with it. The distribution of answers to questions recurring in the study since 2003 and the trends of change are in Appendix 2.

Part Two is devoted this year to the values and attitudes of the Israeli public in 2007 on the question of social cohesion, in light of changes in recent years and given last year's events. The Index reviews and evaluates public attitudes on these issues and discusses them in depth. It focuses on attitudes and feelings, on perceptions and loyalties, and on the relationships between groups in Israeli society.

Israel is divided on essential issues that shape its character. The question of solidarity in a society pervaded by contrasts between rich and poor, between new immigrants and old-timers, between religious and secularists, between Jews and Arabs, and so forth, puts Israeli democracy constantly to the test. The current study is part of a broad group of works that have studied the social cleavages in Israeli democracy from several perspectives.[3] Rather than presenting the cleavages, we intend to deepen the examination of moods in Israeli society concerning the compromise attempts, the efforts to further tolerance, and the search for agreement on the values that unite Israeli society in 2007.

The current Democracy Index, then, deals with political viewpoints and with cohesive attitudes. For this purpose, the survey asked questions about the attitudes, the feelings, and the perceptions of the respondents about various aspects of Israeli society and about their readiness to reach agreement on controversial issues. We compared the updated data of the current Index with a series of public opinion surveys conducted by the Guttman Center in previous years.

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2   This year, we updated 14 out of the 31 ratings included in previous Democracy Indices. Besides the ones updated every year, this year we added six international indicators of the World Bank (henceforth WB) that appear in the Worldwide Governance Indicators project. The data of the WB were updated to September 2006, and the scores presented relate to 2005. The six indicators are: voice and accountability; political stability and absence of violence; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law, and control of corruption. For a detailed explanation about the methodology and the sources on which the WB relied, see D. Kaufmann, A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi, *Governance Matters V: Governance Indicators for 1996–2005* (Washington: The World Bank Institute, September 2006) and the website of the World Bank, www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance. (All websites mentioned herein were accessed in May 2007.)

3   See, for instance, Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY, 1989); Yochanan Peres and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar, *Between Consent and Dissent: Democracy and Peace in the Israeli Mind* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 1998).

B. The Democracy Indicators

1. A Summary Outline

Indicators recorded considerable improvement in the situation of Israeli democracy in 2007, as opposed to findings from previous years. The data show that, since 2006, Israel's position improved in 9 out of 20 quantitative indicators that were updated, 5 ratings worsened, and 6 recorded no change from last year. The international comparison also shows a balanced picture. In the past, we had found that the strong point of Israeli democracy was the formal, institutional aspect, the rights aspect proved more problematic, and its vulnerable point was the instability typical of the political and governance system. In some measures, Israel is ranked in high positions resembling western democracies (mainly in ratings that examine the representativeness aspect) whereas in others (such as those measuring social tension) it is located at the bottom, as detailed below.

2. Israel 2007 as Reflected in the Indicators

(a) Israel 2007 in an International Comparison

Figure 2 presents a graph ranking Israel vis-à-vis the 35 democracies included in the study.[4] The horizontal axis represents the international indicators updated this year and the previous Democracy Indices according to the three aspects – the institutional aspect, the rights aspect, and the stability aspect. The vertical axis represents Israel's ranking vis-à-vis the other democracies – 1 indicates a high ranking and 36 indicates a low ranking. The higher Israel's place, the higher the evaluation of the measured characteristic and the greater its contribution to the quality of Israeli democracy. In some cases, Israel shares a score with other countries and thus wavers between two rankings (numbers appear in parentheses). Thus, for instance, in the law and order indicator included in the rights aspect at the center of the Figure, Israel appears between the 12th and 23rd place (12-23), meaning that 11 countries received the same score.

In the institutional aspect, which examines the formal facet of democracy, 7 ratings were updated this year. We have dealt at length in the past with the procedural facet of the institutional aspect, meaning the characteristics pointing to the conduct of free and regular elections, and with the representativeness indicators, where Israel receives high scores in international comparisons.[5] But the institutional aspect also relates to the behavior of the players – meaning the elected representatives and the public officials – operating within these formal institutions. In this context, Israel obtains middling scores in an international

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4   Figure 2 includes 23 ratings: 16 were updated in 2007, 7 additional indices appeared in the latest Democracy Indices but were not updated last year. They were added to the Figure so as to present a fuller and clearer picture.

5   For further analysis, see Asher Arian, Nir Atmor, and Yael Hadar, *The 2006 Israeli Democracy Index – Auditing Israeli Democracy: Changes in Israel's Political Party System: Dealignment or Realignment?* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2006).

comparison of corruption indicators. In 3 ratings of different research institutes comparing corruption scores internationally, Israel is ranked in the same place (20th out of 36 democracies in the sample). In the government effectiveness indicator, Israel ranks 23rd, whereas in the WB indicators of voice and accountability and regulatory quality it ranks, respectively, 26th and 30th in the comparison with other democracies. In 2006, a considerable decline was recorded in the voter turnout figure, placing Israel in the 24th place. In the index of army involvement in politics, Israel ranks at the bottom of the scale, that is, the barrier between the political and military echelons is blurred in Israel relative to the other democracies examined.

Figure 2

Israel's Ranking in the Democracies' Sample According to 23 Criteria
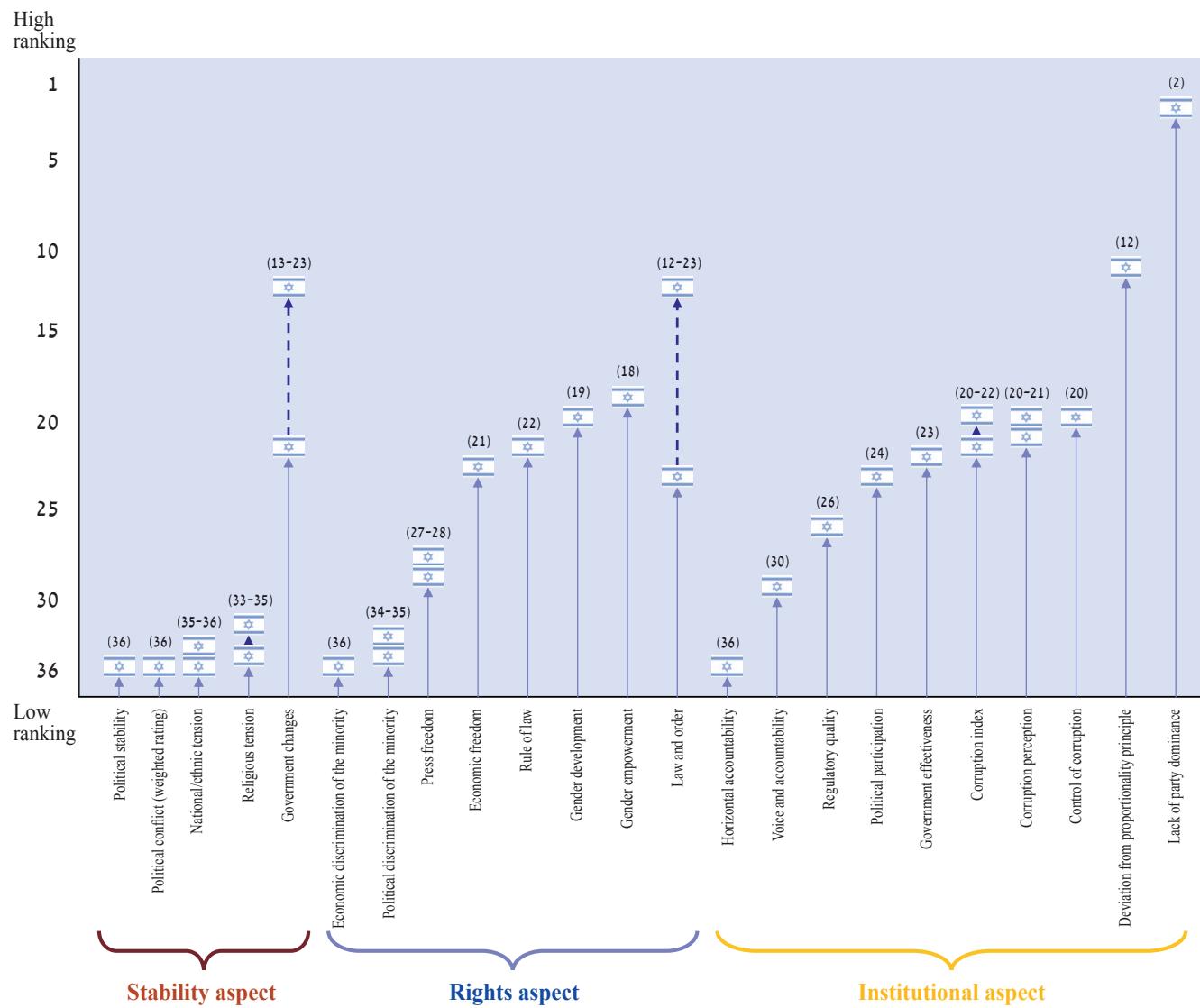
The rights aspect, which relates to democracy's second cluster – including the protection of human dignity and liberty, the rights of the minority, and the rule of law in both the essential and the formal sense – presents a mixed picture. 10 ratings were updated in 2007 – 6 in the international comparison and 4 outside it. Evaluations of Israel did not point to reversals. Generally, Israel's situation in some of the ratings (such as law and order) is good and similar to that of most western democracies. In the gender equality and economic freedom ratings, Israel is ranked in the middle of the scale. In some of the ratings, Israel is ranked at the bottom, especially in those bearing on the discrimination of minorities on economic, political, and cultural grounds.[6]

Israel's vulnerable point in international evaluations, both in the past and in the present, is found in its stability ratings. In 2007, Israel ranks last in the social tension ratings. In the rating of national/ethnic/linguistic tensions, Israel remains at the bottom of the table, beside Thailand. In the religious tension rating, it retained the same score as last year, but its relative place rose by one rung to 33rd-35th place, due to Thailand's drop to the last one. On the WB political stability indicator (which relates to internal threats and dangers, including terrorism) Israel offers an unflattering picture. Here too, Israel ranks last in the list of 36 countries in the sample. In the political conflict rating (which was not updated this

year), Israel is placed at the bottom of the ranking. In fact, the only redeeming feature recorded last year concerned the government stability rating, where Israel resembles many other democracies in the preservation of relative stability (its 30th government remained in power for three years). Note that a democratic regime, as history shows, is not necessarily the most stable one. And yet, in the absence of a reasonable level of stability in a society and in its governance, the government will find it difficult to function; and, in a democratic system, social cleavages will expose it even more intensely to the threat of losing the public's trust.

(b) Israel 2007: Changes from Previous Ratings

The 2007 Index shows improvement in 9 out of 20 ratings vis-à-vis last year's evaluations. 5 ratings point to a deterioration in Israel's situation, and 6 show no change. Of the 9 ratings showing improvement, 7 are in the rights aspect, 1 in the institutional aspect, and 1 in the stability aspect. Of the 6 ratings showing no change, 2 are in the institutional aspect, 2 in the rights aspect, and 2 in the stability aspect. Of the 5 ratings pointing to deterioration in the evaluation of Israel's situation this year, 4 are in the institutional aspect and 1 in the rights aspect.

Table 1 presents the updated ratings according to the change vector: improvement, lack of change, or deterioration vis-à-vis 2006. The institutional aspect, as noted,

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

includes 15 international ratings, 7 of which were updated this year.[7] Four of this year's ratings show deterioration in the evaluation of Israel's situation: the Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International (henceforth TI)[8] shows serious worsening in Israel's situation vis-à-vis previous ratings. From 2001 onward, we have witnessed a gradual downward trend in Israel's scores in the international rating: from 7.6 in 2001 to 5.9 in November 2006 (for further discussion see below). A drop vis-à-vis last year was also recorded in the 3 WB indicators – control of corruption, government effectiveness, and regulatory quality. The only improvement in all the ratings of the institutional aspect was recorded in the WB voice and accountability indicator. Two measures showed no change: horizontal accountability (developed by the ICRG),[9] which examines the extent of the army's involvement in politics, and the ICRG corruption measure (as opposed to the drop recorded in the TI Corruption Perceptions Index). This issue too is discussed below in greater detail.

Ten of the 16 international ratings in the rights aspect were updated this year. 7 showed improvement vis-à-vis last year, two showed no change, and one worsened. An improvement was recorded in the two ratings used to examine the status of women included in the World Development Indices published yearly in the United Nations Human Development Report.[10] Improvement was also recorded in the Index of Economic Freedom published by the Heritage Foundation in January 2007. This year, the measuring scale changed its range of scores – from 0-5 to 0-100. The Heritage Foundation also published an adjusted update of previous years' scores, leading to an improvement in Israel's situation vis-à-vis last year (according to the new scale). An improvement was also recorded in the WB rule of law indicator and in the two GINI coefficients measuring social inequality (for further discussion of this issue, see Part Two). In the area of press freedom, Israel retains its score of 28, and in the law and order rating it has been scoring 5 out of 6 for over a decade.

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7   See Arian et al., *The 2006 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 5 above). This index was published close to the elections, and ratings related to the elections, including political participation (voter turnout) and representativeness (ratings of deviation from the proportionality principle and party dominance) were updated. The other ratings in the institutional aspect have not been changed since the latest update.

8   The Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International is published yearly in November and ranges between 0 (high political corruption) and 10 (no political corruption). The Index is based on experts' assessments – policy analysts, academics, journalists, senior executives, and business people – who estimate the extent of corruption in their own and other countries. For further discussion see www.transparency.org.

9   International Country Risk Guide. In the 2007 Democracy Index, we used 5 ICRG ratings: horizontal accountability, corruption, law and order, and two tension ratings (religious and national/ethnic/linguistic). For further information, see the project's website: www.prsgroup.com/icrg/icrg.html.

10 The Gender-Related Development Index, which measures inequality in the abilities and achievements of men and women, and the Gender Empowerment Measure, which traces the equality of opportunities between men and women throughout the world. For a detailed explanation of the methodology and the sources on which the UN relies, see Human Development Report 2006: http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/report.cfm.

Table 1

Israel 2007 as Reflected in the Indicators: Changes since the 2006 Index*

The Rating	Israel's score in 2007	Israel's score in the previous evaluation	The Scale	Change
Rate of prisoners per 100,000 population excluding security prisoners	158	180	0-100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	↑
GINI coefficient for disposable income	0.3874	0.3878	0-1 (0 = full equality)	↑
GINI coefficient for income	0.5224	0.5255	0-1 (0 = full equality)	↑
Gender development rating	0.925	0.911	0-1 (0 = inequality)	↑
Gender empowerment rating	0.656	0.622	0-1 (0 = inequality)	↑
Economic freedom index	68.4	66.7	0-100 (100 = full freedom)	↑
Voice and accountability	66.7	62.3	0-100 (100 = high score)	↑
Political stability	14.2	11.3	0-100 (100 = high score)	↑
Rule of law	73.4	73.1	0-100 (100 = high score)	↑
Press freedom	28	28	0-100 (0 = full freedom)	=
Horizontal accountability	2	2	0-6 (0 = high military involvement)	=
Religious tensions	2.5	2.5	0-6 (0 = high tension)	=
National/ethnic/ linguistic tensions	2	2	0-6 (0 = high tension)	=
Law and order rating	5	5	0-6 (0 = limited law and order protection)	=
Corruption index	3	3	0-6 (0 = high corruption)	=
Corruption perceptions index	5.9	6.3	0-10 (0 = high corruption)	↓
Government effectiveness	78.0	86.1	0-100 (100 = high score)	↓
Control of corruption	73.9	78.4	0-100 (100 = high score)	↓
Regulatory quality	75.2	76.4	0-100 (100 = high score)	↓
Rate of prisoners per 100,000 population including security prisoners	295	265	0-100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	↓

* Ratings are presented according to the change vector (improvement, no change, and deterioration) and according to the order of the characteristics as set in the index.

↑ Israel scored better in the assessment of its shift toward an essential democracy.

↓ Israel scored worse in the assessment of its shift toward an essential democracy.

One way of testing respect for civil rights is to measure the number of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants: the higher the rate of prisoners, the greater the rigidity of the law enforcement system and the restrictions it imposes. On this matter, we report two measures: the rate of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants, including security prisoners, and the rate of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants, excluding security prisoners. In March 2007, Israel held 20,959 prisoners, including 9,745 security prisoners who are not Israeli citizens.[11] Figures are higher than in February 2006, when Israel held 18,550 prisoners, including about 6,000 security prisoners. The data show that the ratio of prisoners (including security prisoners) in 2007 is 295 for every 100,000 inhabitants, higher than that of 2006 and of previous years.[12]

Of 6 measures in the stability aspect, 3 were updated this year; 2 of these measures – government changes and an incomplete term of office – were updated in the 2006 Democracy Index. Since it was sworn in on 4 May 2006 and until the writing of this report, the 31st government has remained in place except for a few changes.[13] The two social tension ratings – religious and national/ethnic/linguistic tensions – have not changed in the last three years, and the ICRG scores have remained the same. The World Bank political stability indicator – which also examines political conflicts in each country – did record a slight improvement in the evaluation of Israel as opposed to last year, although the change is negligible, from a score of 11.3% to 14.2%. Israel is last in the 35 countries ranking, obviously due to the Israel-Palestinian conflict as well as to external and internal threats.

3. Selected Findings
(a) The Institutional Aspect
I. Political Corruption

Political corruption, or lack of integrity, is found in both democratic and non-democratic countries. Political corruption is usually defined as the abuse of public office for personal gain in contradiction to fundamental principles, and particularly the principle of the rule of law. Political corruption, in all its variations, poses a hard challenge to empirical research and is a controversial issue in the professional literature. Nevertheless, one accepted way of evaluating political corruption empirically is to use public opinion surveys aiming to test people's attitudes toward the extent of corruption in their own or other countries.

Political corruption is a bane of Israeli democracy that, in recent years, has moved to center stage in public discourse and in media coverage. Government corruption violates public trust in elected officials and in the administration, undermines the legitimacy of the government, and infringes the arrangements of the democratic regime. In the 2007 Democracy Index, political

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11 This number refers to security prisoners residing in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. Data for this measure were obtained from the spokesperson's office of the Prisons Authority on 1 March 2007. No international comparison was carried out on this variable.

12 The ratio of prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants in 2003 was 173, in 2004 – 189, in 2005 – 252, and in 2006 – 265.

13 For further details, see Appendix 4: Calendar of Events.

corruption was assessed through the evaluations of three international research institutes: the ICRG Political Corruption Index,[14] the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International (TI), and the Control of Corruption indicator of the World Bank.

Transparency International is a global social organization, and its aim is a clean world. The organization works against manifestations of corruption, promotes transparency and integrity throughout the world, and raises international awareness of the issue. Among its activities is the yearly publication of the International Corruption Perception Index, which includes a relative ranking of 163 countries. The measure integrates results of 12 surveys conducted by 9 international research institutes. The score each country receives is based on the evaluations of experts (policy analysts, academics, journalists, business people, and middle range and senior executives in local companies). Average scores range between 0-10, so that 0 attests to high political corruption and 10 to very low corruption levels. To complete the picture, we also resorted this time to another international measure published yearly by the World Bank – the Control of Corruption indicator.[15] It ranges between 0, indicating low control of corruption, to 100, indicating full control of corruption. To enable comparison between the measures, we divided the scores by 10 and placed both rates in one figure.

Figure 3 shows that, in both corruption measures, Israel ranks 20th in a list of 36 countries, between Estonia and Cyprus. In the TI measure, Israel obtained an average score of 5.9,[16] and in the WB Control of Corruption measure, it scored 73.9%. Finland, New Zealand, and Denmark, where integrity is highest, share first place. At the bottom of the scale are Argentina, Mexico, and India, where corruption is widespread.

An interesting point is the trend of change in the perception of corruption in Israel over the years. Figure 4 presents the score that Israel received in the two corruption measures in 1996-2006. The Corruption Perception Index of TI shows a gradual worsening since 2001, when Israel obtained a score of 7.6 and was ranked 14th out of 36 countries. At the end of 2006, Israel was in 20th place, with a score of 5.9. In the WB control of corruption measure, a sharp drop was recorded in the assessments of Israel in the last decade. In 1996, Israel received a high score – 90.7%. Indeed, Israel ranked 16th in a list of 36 countries, but preceded France, Spain, and Japan. In the decade that has elapsed since, a considerable drop was recorded in the World Bank's assessment of Israel, which obtained a score of 73.9%. Indeed, Israel's ranking in both measures of corruption is still better than that of

14 The measure includes 7 categories, ranging between a score of 0, pointing to the highest measure of corruption, and a score of 6, pointing to lack of corruption. The assessment of Israel in the ICRG measure has remained stable at a score of 3 for the last three years.

15 The Control of Corruption indicator of the World Bank was published in September 2006, and its assessments relate to the end of 2005. For further details, see World Bank (note 2 above).

16 The TI report was published on 6 November 2006. For further details see the organization's website, www.ti-israel.org.

Italy, Greece, and several Eastern European countries, but the bleak picture that emerges from Figure 4 points to a trend of decline in the last decade.[17]

II. Accountability

Political accountability is a vital, normative principle in every democracy. It attests to the obligation of elected officials to inform and report to the voters, and to submit explanations for their decisions. It also attests to their obligation to act in the name and for the sake of the sovereign – the voting public. The legitimacy of elected officials is largely dependent on the norms they adopt in their behavior and on the level of reporting about their functioning and the fulfillment of their duties. Another essential principle is to bear responsibility for failures and for unusual events, including successes, in their area of responsibility. [18]

Figure 3

Political Corruption: An International Comparison

Corruption Perceptions Index (TI) and Control of Corruption Indicator (WB)*

■ Control of Corruption indicator   ■ Transparency International Index

*   For illustration purposes, the WB scores were divided by 10.

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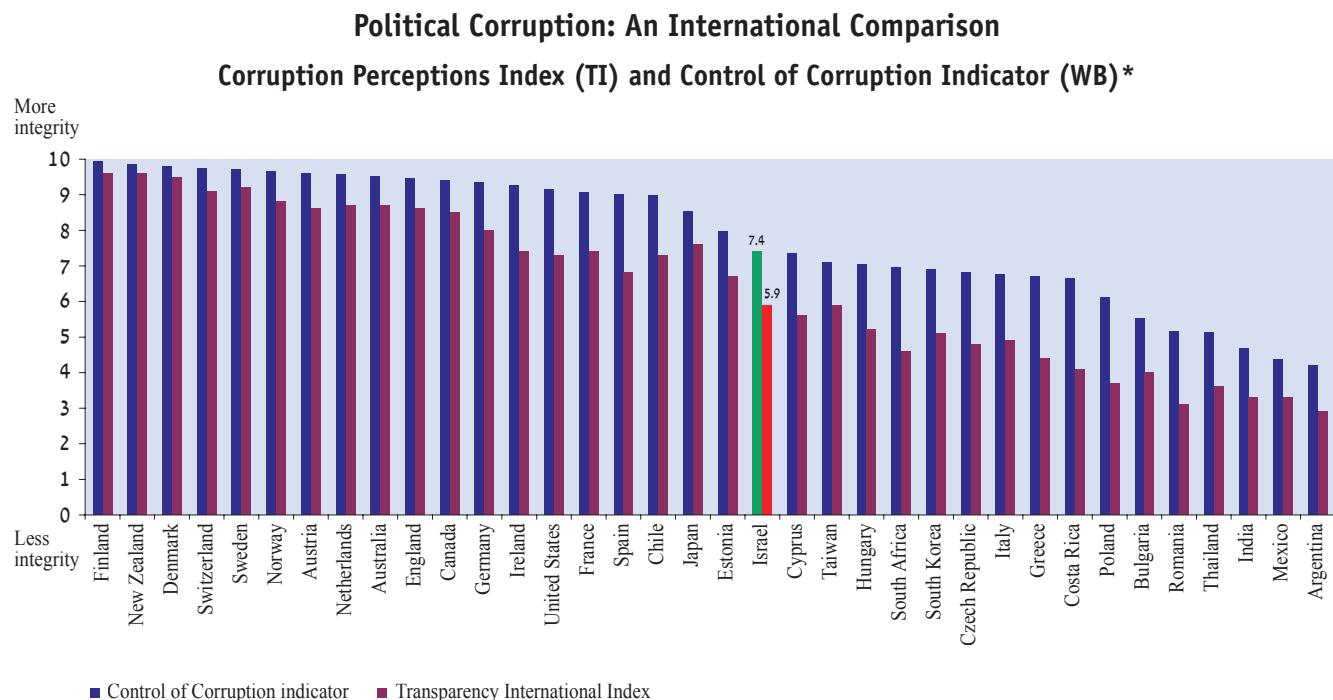
17 Note again that the World Bank ratings were published in September 2006, and their assessments relate to 2005. That is why Figure 4 has no column assessing 2006.

18 A distinction is usually drawn in the literature between vertical accountability (incumbent on elected officials) and horizontal accountability (incumbent on non-elected officials). For further discussion, see Arian et al., *The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 1 above), pp. 27-32; and Phillipe C. Schmitter, "The Ambiguous Virtues of Accountability," in *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, ed. Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp. 18-31.

Figure 4

Integrity in Two Measures of Political Corruption, 1996-2006
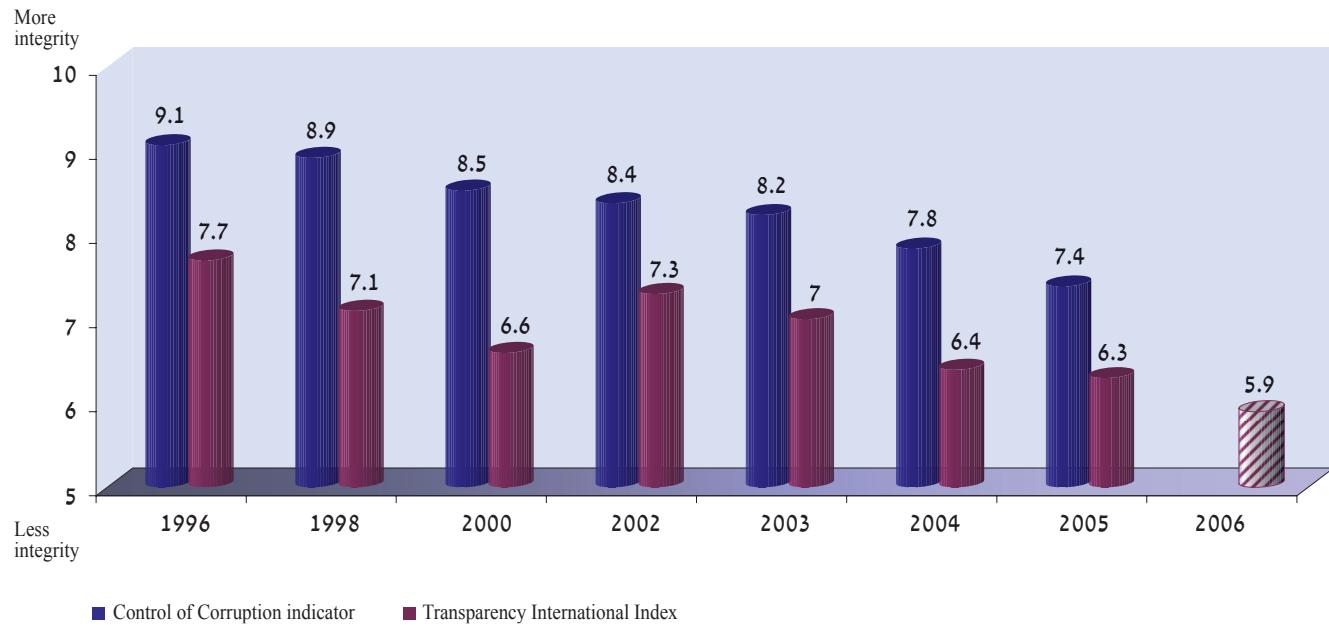
One of the accepted measures in this field is the voice and accountability indicator, published yearly by the World Bank. These evaluations rest on the average score assigned by about ten international research institutes, and on experts' evaluations in the various countries. All these evaluations are collated in a measure ranging from 0 (the lowest level of voice and accountability) to 100 (the highest level).

As Figure 5 shows, Israel is in the 30th place in a ranking of 36 countries with a score of 66.7%, between South Korea and Bulgaria. This ranking points to a slight improvement (a rise of two places) as opposed to last year, when Israel was in 32nd place. At the end, representing the highest level of representativeness and accountability are Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. At the opposite end are India and Mexico, and in the last place – Thailand.

Figure 5 attests to Israel's low ranking in this area. Figure 6 presents the World Bank's assessments of Israel, pointing to a continuing decline in recent years. In 1996, the year the World Bank began publishing the six indicators of governance, Israel obtained a high score – 80.3, ranking 19th in the list of 36 countries discussed here. It has since dropped 20 points, and, in 2004, Israel was in 32nd place. The last evaluation showed a slight improvement over the assessments that Israel has received since 2002, but its score is still extremely low.

Figure 5

Voice and Accountability: An International Comparison

High voice
and accountability

Low voice
and accountability
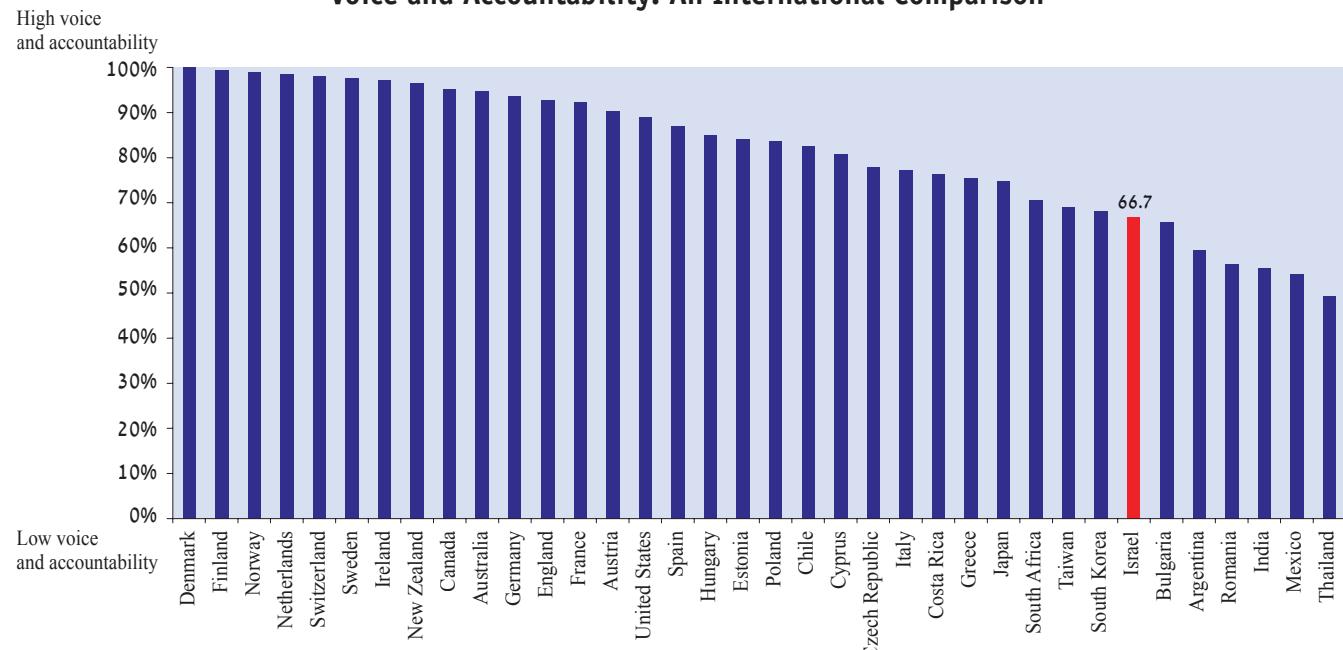
Figure 6

Voice and Accountability, 1996-2005

High voice
and accountability

Low voice
and accountability
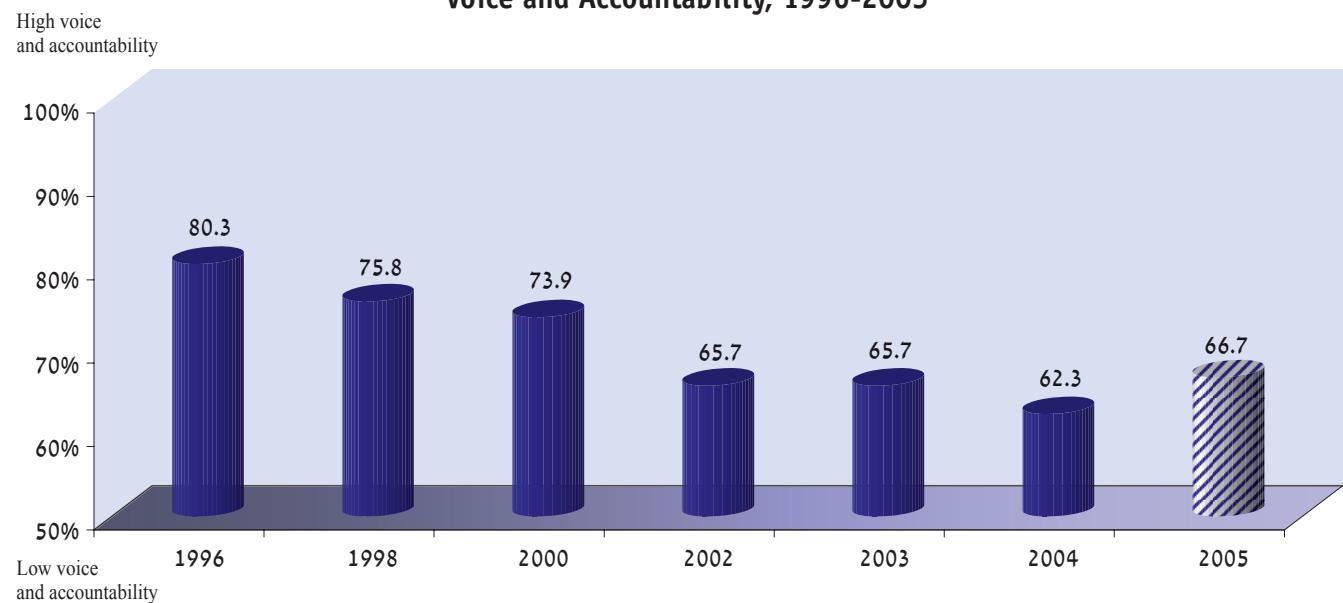
(b) The Rights Aspect

I. Economic Rights

The Index of Economic Freedom is a measure developed by the Heritage Foundation, an American institute supportive of a free market policy. Researchers at the Foundation have declared that they adhere to neo-liberal principles – minimal government coercion or intervention in the country's economy. This measure has been published since 1995 and comprises 161 countries.[19] This measure is an average of ten economic indicators that influence economic freedom, and is meant to evaluate the institutional environment for economic activity in each country: trade policy, fiscal policy, government intervention in the economy, monetary policy, foreign investment and flow of capital, banking and financing, salaries and prices, property rights, regulation, and black market activity. The Index of Economic Freedom was published in January 2007, but with a change in the methodology that had been adopted in the past.[20] The scale in the current index ranges from 0 to 100, with 0 indicating lack of economic freedom, and 100 maximum economic freedom. As Figure 7 shows, the countries enjoying the highest levels of economic freedom are Australia, the United States, and New Zealand, while Greece, Argentina, and India close the list and are defined as "mostly unfree." Israel 2007 ranks 23rd out of 36 countries, with a score of 68.4% (as opposed to the 21st ranking it obtained in the 2006 Index of Economic Freedom). According to the new criteria, Israel is defined as "moderately free," and is located between Hungary and South Korea. Indeed, Israel ranks together with Italy and France, but most countries in the sample enjoy greater economic freedom than Israel.

Israel's situation over the years points to an improvement in the level of economic freedom, reaching a peak in 2007 (Figure 8). An analysis of the ten categories comprising the Index of Economic Freedom shows that Israel obtained its highest score in the area of monetary freedom (84.2%). Despite the privatization policy adopted in recent years, however, it obtains lower scores in the area of government intervention in the economy (60%). Concerning the fiscal burden, Israel scores below the world average (72%).[21]

II. Civil Rights: Law and Order

One of the pillars of democratic government is the principle of the rule of law, whereby the system of law enforcement is autonomous and independent, and ensured of the citizens' compliance. The law and order rating of the ICRG combines these two aspects (enforcement and compliance) into one score on a 0-6 scale, so that 0 expresses the lack of law and order, and 6 expresses the highest level of law and order protection.

Ever since 1990, Israel has obtained the same score – 5. This score attests not only to the existence of an organized governmental

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19 The Index is published every January. For further details see www.heritage.org/index.

20 Until 2006, the index had been reported in a scale of 1-5, with 1 indicating high economic freedom and 5, lack of freedom. For further details, see Arian et al., *The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 1 above).

21 For further details on the ratings of economic freedom in Israel see:
www.heritage.org/index/country.cfm?id=Israel.

and institutional system, but also to a norm of respect for the law and its dictates among the citizens. As opposed to other democracies, however, Israel's score is in the middle, considering that the median score of 5 is shared by 12 countries, including the United States, Germany, and Switzerland. The lowest score – 2.5 – was assigned to Thailand, South Africa, Bulgaria, and Argentina, and points to the weakness of law enforcement in these countries and to the negative attitude of their citizens toward the principle of respect for the law.

Another accepted measure, which complements the law and order rating, is the WB indicator of rule of law.[22] This is an average score of many indicators testing the protection of, and respect for, the rule of law and the level of trust in law enforcement systems, in the judiciary, and in the police. This measure ranges between 0 (low evaluation of the rule of law) and 100 (high evaluation of the rule of law). Israel scores 73.4% in this measure, and ranks 22nd (Figure 10). A glance at Israel's situation over the last decade points to a steep decline: from 84.2% in 1996 to 80.8% in 2002, to 75.5% in 2003, to 73.4% in 2005 (slightly above 2004).

(c) The Stability Aspect

Unlike the institutional aspect and the rights aspects, the stability aspect is not a compulsory condition for a democratic regime. Many democracies have survived for long years despite essential difficulties and problems of social or government stability. Israel is an extreme example of a society

Figure 7

Economic Freedom: An International Comparison
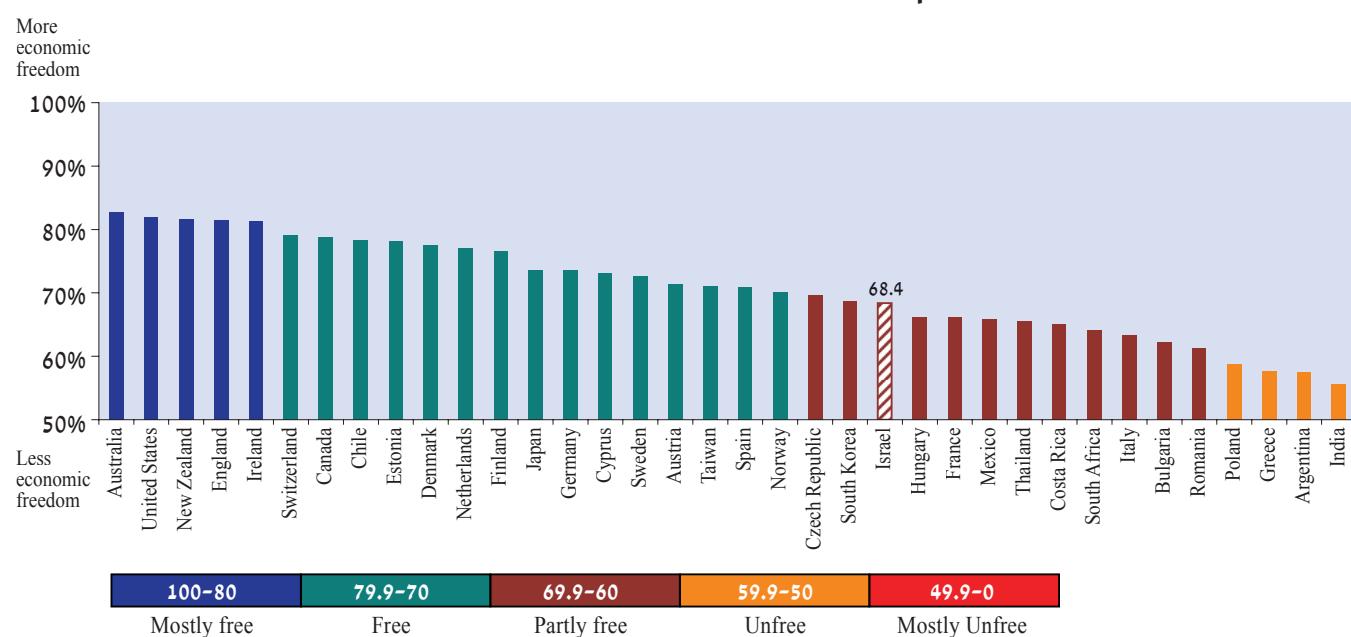
22 For further details, see World Bank (note 2 above).

divided by numerous and intense cleavages, but is still one of the many democracies that successfully preserve governance stability despite its built-in tensions.[23] Political stability, however, considerably influences the quality and functioning of democracy. The lack of a reasonable measure of stability in society and in the political and government system affects the democratic system and its public legitimacy.

For the 2007 Democracy Index, we updated three measures dealing with the stability aspect: the two measures examining social tension in the ICRG rating, and the World Bank indicator examining political conflicts.[24] The two measures of social tension include 7 categories (in a scale from

0 – high tension – to 6 – low tension). The political conflict measure ranges between 0 and 100 (0 indicates very acute conflict).

The ICRG measure examines social tensions on religious and national/ethnic/linguistic grounds. The religious indicator examines the tension between religious groups in the country, which may come to the fore in religious oppression, religious coercion, or in an attempt to create a religious government hegemony. Israel is placed at the bottom of the 36 ranked countries (meaning it is characterized by a very high level of tension). A score of 2.5 places it in the 33rd-35th place, which it shares with India and the Netherlands. This is the score Israel has obtained since 1997.[25]

Figure 8

Economic Freedom, 1995-2007
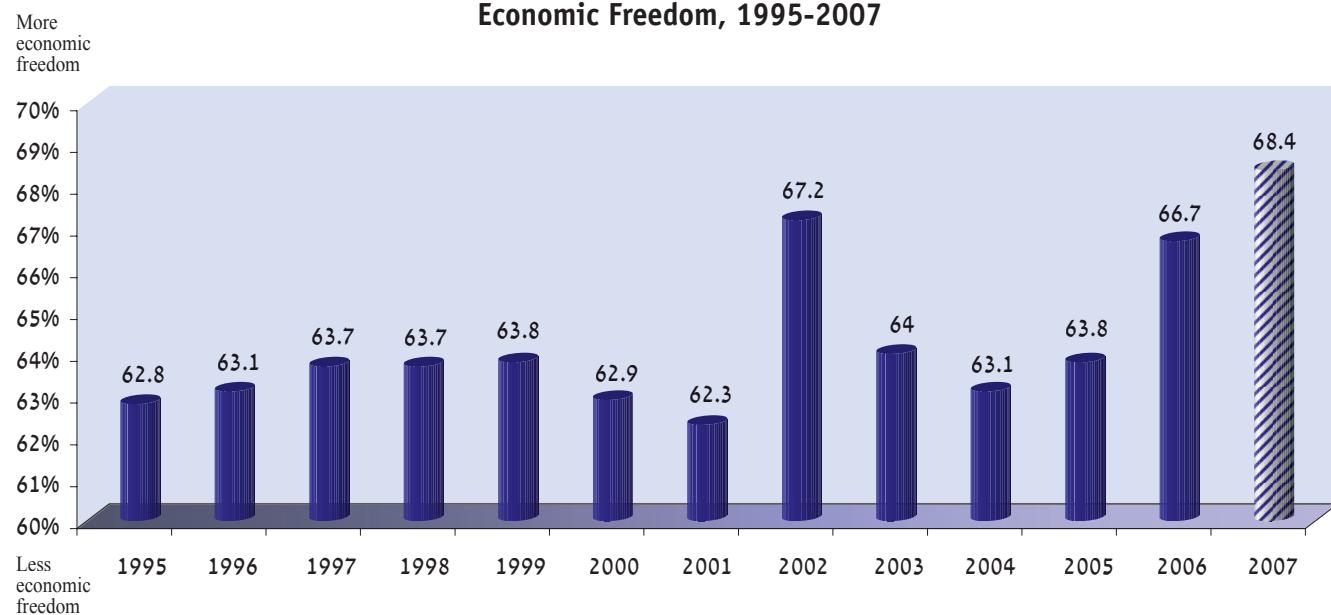
23 For a key study that compared 11 democracies in divided societies, see Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

24 In the 2006 Index, we expanded on issues bearing on the stability of the political system and particularly on two ratings: government changes and incomplete term of office. For details, see Arian et al., *The 2006 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 5 above), pp. 31-32.

25 An improvement was recorded in 2004, when Israel's score was 3. In 2005, it returned to the 2.5 score, which is also the score it was assigned this year.

Figure 9

Law and Order: An International Comparison

Figure 10

Rule of Law: An International Comparison
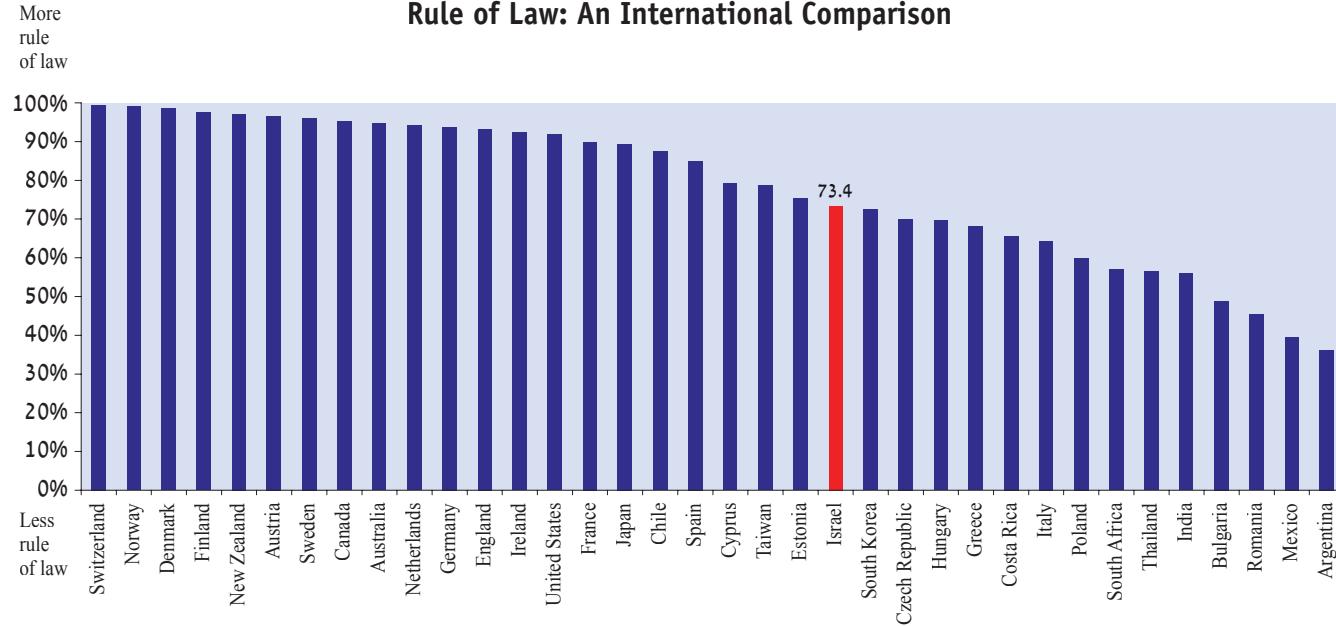
Figure 11

Rule of Law, 1996-2005

More
rule
of law
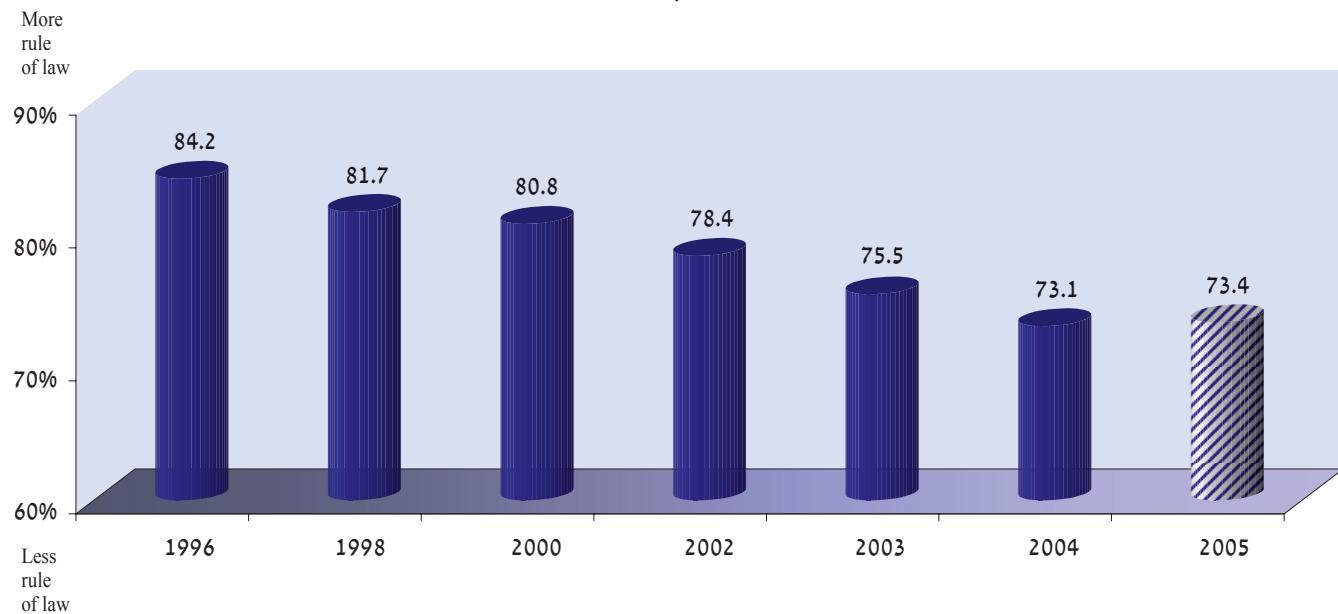
Israel is also at the bottom of the scale on the national/ethnic/linguistic index of tension (places 35th-36th), with a score of 2 it shares with Thailand. The Netherlands, which in the previous Index had the same score as India and Israel, is ranked this year in the middle of the scale, in places 13th-16th in the ranking of the 36 countries. This is a stable score Israel has been receiving since 2001, but extremely low in an international comparison.[26] The findings of the public opinion survey attest that the public assesses the situation as better than the current description. This issue is comprehensively discussed in Part Two.

The third rating is the political stability indicator developed by the World Bank. It assesses the level of internal conflicts in the country and the domestic risks and threats, including terrorism. The indicator comprises 9 sub-ratings of several research institutes, and each one was assigned a different weight in the final score of political stability. This rating is based on a 0-100 scale (100 means very high political stability).

Figure 12 shows that Israel is last in the countries ranking, with a score of 14.2%.[27] Furthermore, the gap between Israel and the other countries (even those close) is very large. India and Thailand rank after Israel at the bottom of the scale, with scores of close to 30%. At the other end of the scale are countries with very low probability of political instability – Finland, Switzerland, and Norway.

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26 For a detailed discussion of the two ratings on social cleavages, see Arian et al., *The 2005 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 6 above), pp. 36-43.

27 The most updated figure relates to 2005, but was only published in September 2006.

Figure 13 shows Israel's low scores in the WB political stability indicator over the years. In 1996, for instance, Israel obtained a score of 22.2. In 2000-2002, following the events of October 2000 and the outbreak of the second intifada, a significant drop was recorded in this measure (from 20.8 to 10.4). The political stability score rose slightly in 2004 and 2005 against the background of the disengagement implementation but still remained very low, and continues to be the Achilles heel of Israeli democracy.

Figure 12

Political Stability: An International Comparison

Figure 13

Political Stability, 1996-2005
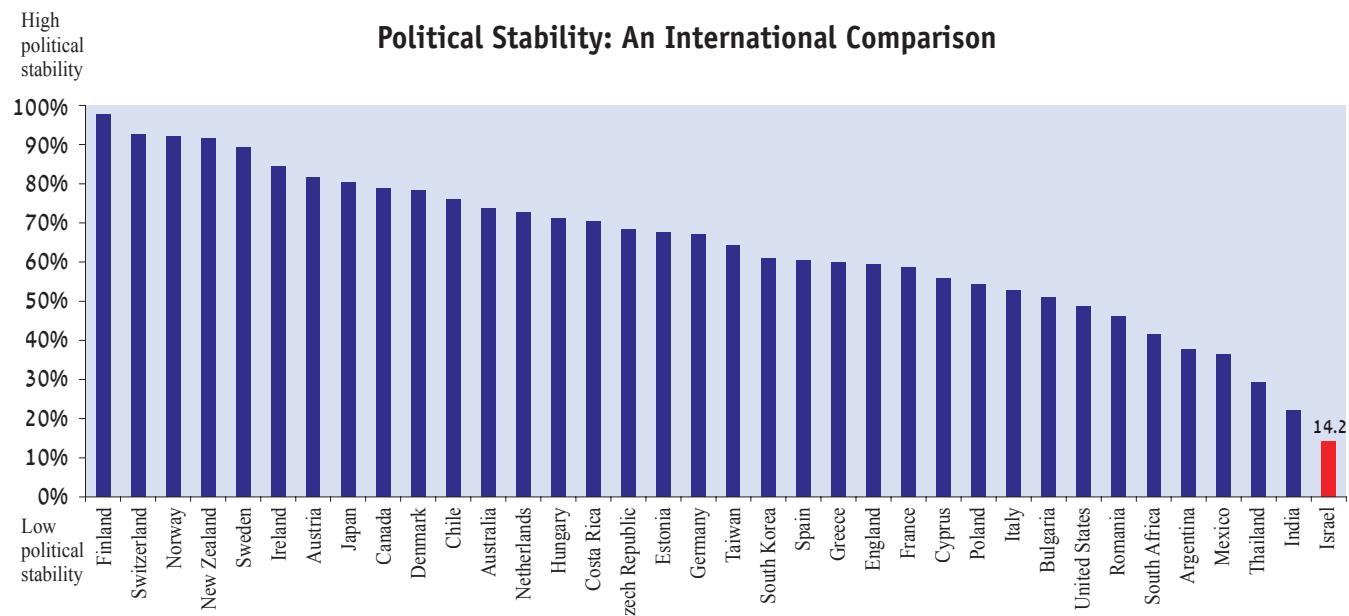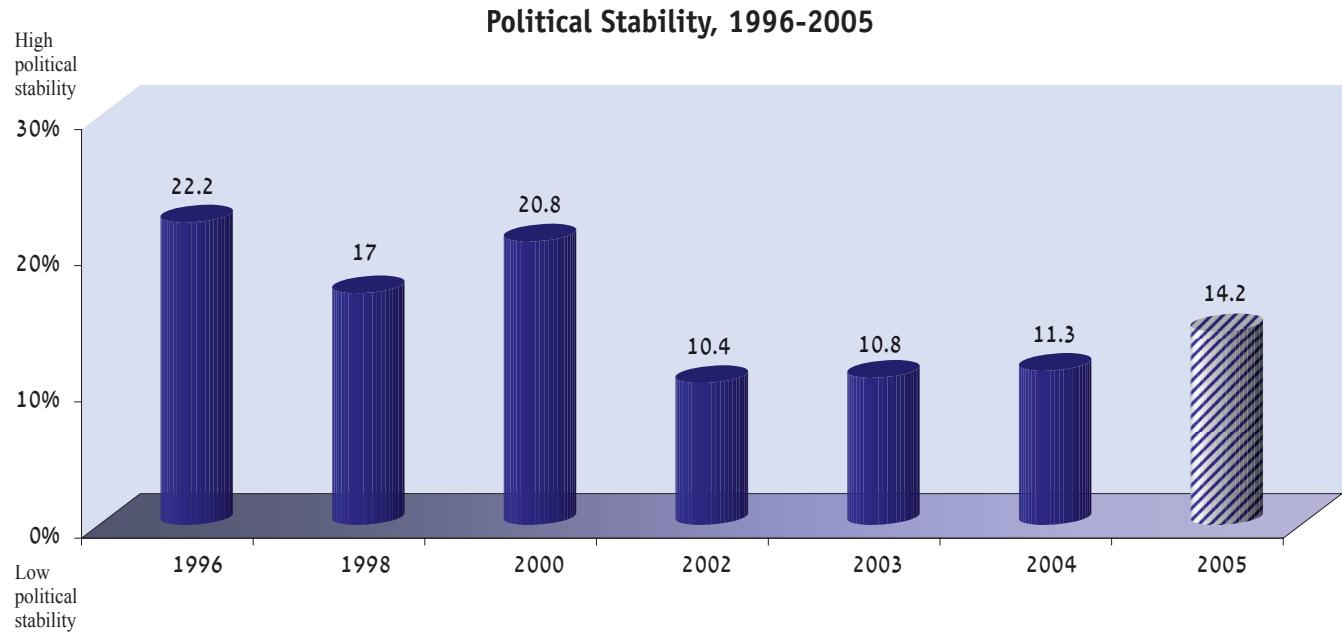
C. The Democracy Survey 2007

1. A Summary Outline

Besides relying on the objective international ratings presented above, we conducted a public opinion survey aiming to examine the public's assessments and their attitudes toward Israeli democracy. The survey was conducted in February 2007 among a representative sample of Israel's population, Jewish and Arab. The sample included 1,203 subjects, and interviews were conducted in three languages – Hebrew, Arabic, and Russian.[28]

Responses reveal that most of the public is dissatisfied with the functioning of Israeli democracy, and trust in state institutions – the Prime Minister, the President, the Supreme Court, and so forth (see details below) – is lower than last year (2006). Furthermore, public opinion holds that corruption in Israel is a broad phenomenon and estimates that people in government are tainted by corruption.

Generally, respondents define the situation of Israel as not good. But citizens are in a good mood despite the low evaluation – general and particular – of various aspects of Israeli democracy. Most respondents are not overly worried, and a decisive majority holds that they will be able to adapt to the current situation. These data attest to the resilience of Israeli society: according to the citizens, the situation is not encouraging, but they can proceed with the routine of their lives.

The survey shows that the Israeli public indeed tends to be interested in politics but does not feel that it has an influence on government policy or that its views are of interest to politicians. A drop was also recorded in the general satisfaction with the functioning of Israeli democracy. Nevertheless, most of the public reports a sense of belonging to the community and a deep identification with the country, together with a sense of pride about being part of Israel and a willingness to remain in the country.

This year, the public's evaluation of the quality of democracy in Israel recorded a drop in the three aspects examined – the institutional aspect, the rights aspect, and the stability and cohesion aspect (for details, see below). A drastic drop was recorded in some items due to specific events (see Appendix 4 below) including, among others: the elections and the victory of the Kadima party led by Ehud Olmert; the creation of a coalition government with the Labor party; the Second Lebanon War; and the resignation of Chief of Staff Dan Halutz.

2. Public Perception of Democracy's Implementation in Israel 2007

The perception of democracy's implementation touches on the public assessment of the way democracy comes to the fore in a comparison with other countries and in the self-evaluation of the citizens' ability to influence the implementation of democratic principles.

Concerning the institutional aspect, five key dimensions were examined: political participation, representativeness, the perception of the scope of corruption,

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28 The survey was conducted by the Mihshuv Institute. The maximum sampling error, at confidence levels of 95%, is +/-2.8.

accountability, and the citizen's ability to influence policy. The dimension most highly valued by the Israeli public is political participation: about 66% of the public estimates that the level of political participation in Israel is similar to or higher than that usual in other countries. But this evaluation does not pass the test of the international comparison, which only takes into account the data relating to voter turnout. Israel is not among the countries where voter turnout is particularly high and ranks only 24th among the 36 countries that were studied,[29] with 63.5% turnout in the March 2006 election.

The second dimension in the ranking is representativeness; 56% of the respondents estimate that the balance of power in the Knesset conveys, to a large or to some extent, the distribution of views in the public. An international comparison of this dimension indicates that the public assessment matches Israel's ranking in the list of countries, as a result of the proportional electoral system in use in Israel.[30]

As for integrity in Israeli politics: 44% hold that the level of political corruption in Israel is similar to that in other countries or lower. This is a prominent topic on the public agenda, and the public's assessments match the international findings about the level of corruption in Israel (noted above).

On the question about accountability – "To what extent do you agree that a politician does not tend to take into account the view of the ordinary citizen?" – we found that only 30% of the public in Israel 2007 ascribes elected officials a high readiness to assume responsibility. The last dimension, which received the lowest rating, is the public's ability to influence government policy: only 24% of the public holds that they can do so.

In the rights aspect, four key aspects were examined: freedom of expression, human rights, equality between Jews and Arabs, and social and economic equality. Assessments here split into two. On the one hand, most of the public estimates that Israel has freedom of speech (79%) and human rights prevail at least as much as in other countries (64%). But only 15% of the respondents hold that social-economic equality prevails in Israel. This finding is compatible with the GINI coefficient, which points to greater gaps in income distribution in Israel in recent years.[31] Furthermore, these gaps are among the largest in the world.[32] As for equality between Jews and Arabs in Israel: 45% estimate that such equality does prevail, even though international ratings show that the political discrimination of minorities in Israel is among the highest in the world.[33]

Concerning the stability and cohesion aspect, three dimensions were examined: stability, the evaluation of democracy's functioning, and social tensions. 40% of the public holds that the political system in Israel

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29 Arian et al., *The 2006 Israeli Democracy Index*, (note 5 above), p. 55.

30 The two ratings measuring representativeness are party dominance rating and deviation from the proportionality principle. For these data, updated to 2006, see ibid, pp. 71-72.

31 The GINI coefficient measures the difference between the actual distribution of income and a theoretical-hypothetical situation in which every individual in the population receives exactly the same income. The aim of this coefficient is to measure the extent of social inequality in society.

32 This topic is discussed at length in Part Two.

33 See Arian et al., *The 2005 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 6 above), p. 37.

is relatively stable, 34% are satisfied with the functioning of Israeli democracy, and 59% estimate that tensions in Israeli society are identical to those in other countries or lower. Hence, the public's assessment of this aspect is not particularly high: more than half of the citizens do not think that stability prevails and are dissatisfied with the functioning of Israeli democracy. Nevertheless, less than half answered that high tension prevails between various groups in the society relative to other countries.

To obtain a more complete picture of the public's evaluation of Israeli democracy, the data presented in Figure 14 are compared with the 2003 Democracy Index.

In the institutional aspect, a rise was recorded in the public's assessment of its ability to influence policy, and, by contrast, a drop was recorded in the public's evaluation of the scope of political participation, representativeness, extent of corruption, and accountability.

In the rights aspect, the public's evaluation is that the implementation of freedom of speech in Israel has dropped and, to an even greater extent, so has the protection of human rights. As for social and economic equality, as well as equality between Jews and Arabs, public evaluations have hardly changed.

In the stability aspect and cohesion aspect, the Israeli public evaluates that the stability of the political system has increased, but social tensions have deepened. As for the functioning of democracy, the public's satisfaction has dropped sharply when compared to 2003.

In sum, the perception dominating public opinion in 2007 is that of a drop in democracy's implementation in the institutional and rights aspects, as well as in the stability and cohesion aspect. Looking back over the last four years, the Israeli public senses erosion in the

implementation of democratic principles. This is a negative trend in the public perception of democracy. A plausible assumption is that recent events are the basis for these feelings: the establishment of Kadima, which heads the coalition; the appointment of Amir Peretz, leader of the Labor party, the second largest party in the government, as minister of defense; and the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006. Even if no concrete significant change has affected the functioning of Israeli democracy, the public estimates that the country is less democratic than in the past.

3. Democratic Attitudes in the Israeli Public in 2007

Along with the public's evaluation and its perception of democracy's implementation, the Democracy Index examined whether the Israeli public adheres to democratic norms and values and to what extent these values and norms are manifest in the three aspects. Adherence to democratic attitudes refers to the citizens' actual support for specific values, as opposed to their perception of democracy's implementation, which refers to their theoretical assessment of the various aspects. In the institutional aspect, we examined the scope of interest in politics; in the rights aspect, we examined attitudes toward equality for Arabs, freedom of religion, gender equality, equal rights for all, and freedom of expression; in the stability aspect, we examined social trust, the degree of identification with Israel, and opposition to violence. Figure 15 points to changes in the Israeli public's democratic attitudes in 2007 as opposed to 2003.

In the institutional aspect, involvement with politics in Israel emerged as extremely high: 56% of the respondents attest that they talk about politics with their friends and family.

Although this figure is lower than in previous years, it is still high.

In the rights aspect, 78% agree that "All must have the same rights before the law,

regardless of political outlook. Nevertheless, when attitudes are examined vis-à-vis specific rights, support for this statement declines. Thus, less than half of the Israeli public

Figure 14

Perception of Democracy's Implementation: Israeli Public 2003 and 2007*
High Score = assessment that the democratic principle prevails in Israel (percentages)

Institutional
- Political participation: 2007: 66, 2003: 78
- Representativeness: 2007: 56, 2003: 67
- Corruption Perceptions Index: 2007: 44, 2003: 48
- Accountability: 2007: 30, 2003: 39
- Ability to influence policy: 2007: 24, 2003: 20

Rights
- Freedom of expression: 2007: 79, 2003: 85
- Human rights: 2007: 64, 2003: 73
- Equality between Jews and Arabs: 2007: 45, 2003: 45
- Socio-economic equality: 2007: 15, 2003: 18

Stability
- Stability: 2007: 40, 2003: 37
- Well-functioning democracy: 2007: 34, 2003: 51
- Social tension: 2007: 59, 2003: 41

■ 2003   ■ 2007

*   These are the variables for the aspects and categories that were weighted: perception of the scope of corruption – In your opinion, is there more or less corruption in Israel than in other countries? (less than in others or as in others: 1-3); representativeness – To what extent does the balance of powers in the Knesset express, in your opinion, the distribution of views in the larger public? (to a large or to a certain extent: 1-2); political participation – In your opinion, do citizens in Israel participate in politics more or less than they do in other countries? (more than in others or as in others: 3-5); evaluating the ability to influence policy – To what extent can you or your friends influence government policy? (to a large or to a certain extent: 1-2); accountability – To what extent do you agree or disagree that a politician does not tend to take into account the view of the ordinary citizen? (disagree: 1-2); freedom of expression – In your opinion, is there more or less freedom of expression in Israel than in other countries? (more or as in other countries: 3-5); human rights – In your opinion, is there more or less protection of human rights in Israel than in other countries? (more or as in others: 3-5); equality between Jews and Arabs – Israeli Arab citizens are discriminated against as opposed to Jewish citizens (not at all or to a small extent: 1-2); social and economic equality – Social and economic equality is lacking in Israel (disagree: 1-2); satisfaction with the functioning of democracy – In general, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the functioning of Israeli democracy? (satisfied: 3-4); social tension – In your opinion, is there more or less tension in Israel between groups in society than in other countries? (less or as in others: 1-3); stability – In your opinion, is the political system in Israel stable or not as compared with other democratic countries? (stable or as stable as in others: 1-3).

agrees that a speaker should be allowed to express sharp criticism of the State of Israel in public, and only 50% agree with the need for full equality of rights for all citizens, Jews and Arabs. Concerning gender equality, no essential change was recorded over the years, and it remains at 62%. Concerning freedom of religion, however, a sharp decline is evident: 54% of the public supports freedom of religion, a significant decline vis-à-vis the situation in 2003 (63%).

In the stability and cohesion aspect, Israeli citizens express high identification with the country (59%), but this is a significant drop in comparison with previous years (79%).

A drop was also recorded in the level of opposition to violence, but social trust rose slightly, although the situation is still not encouraging (for further details, see Part Two).

In sum, except for social trust, which shows a negligible rise in 2007 as opposed to 2003, we are witnessing erosion in the democratic attitudes of the Israeli public in all the measures examined. In some – including interest in politics, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, identification with Israel, and opposition to violence – a sharp drop in adherence to democratic attitudes was recorded. Concerning other measures,

Figure 15

Democratic Attitudes: Israeli Public 2003 and 2007*

High score = expressing attitudes fitting democratic norms (percentages)
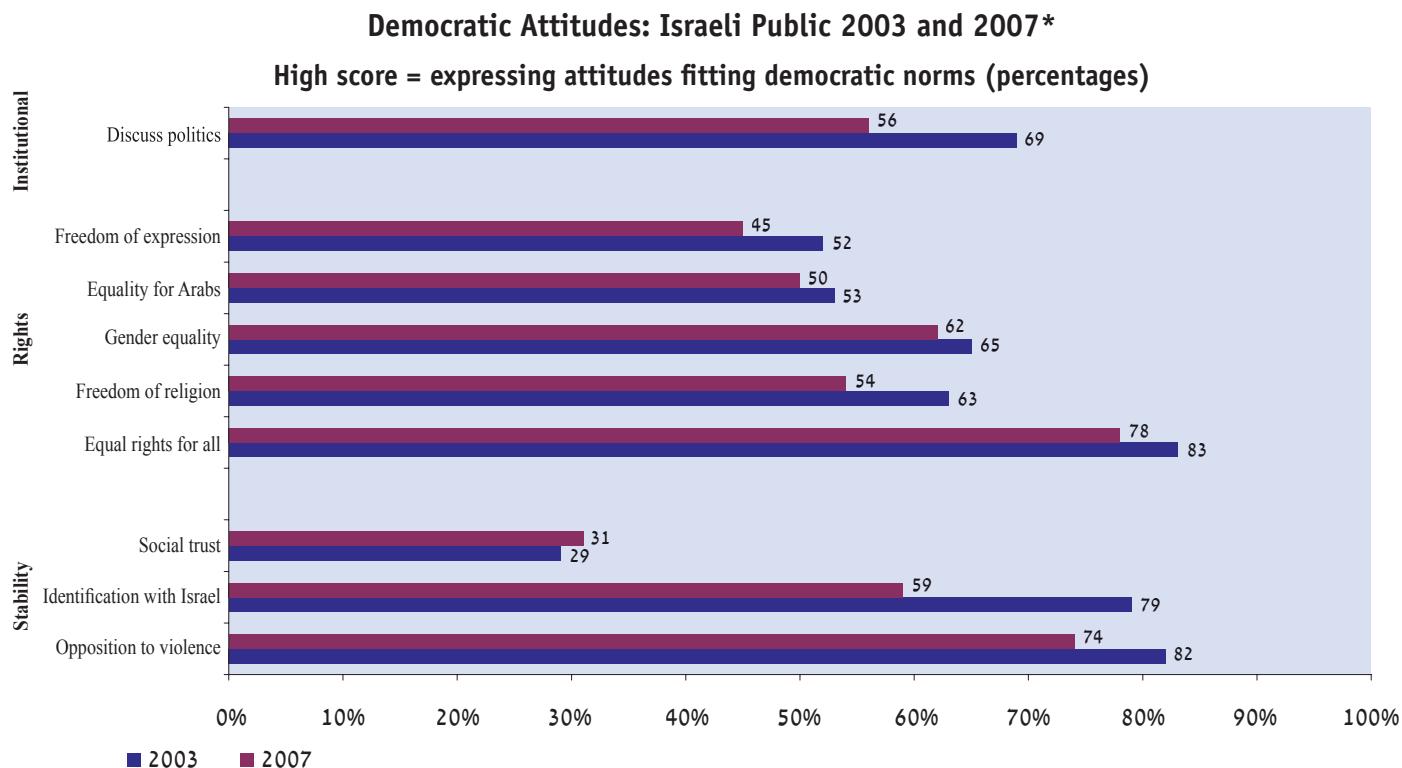
* These are the variables for the aspects and the categories that were weighted: discussing politics – To what extent do you tend to talk with your friends and family about political issues? (talk: 1-2); freedom of expression - A speaker should be forbidden to express sharp criticism in public (opposed: 1-2); equality for Arabs – To what extent do you support or oppose full equality of rights between Jewish and Arab Israeli citizens (support: 3-4); freedom of religion – Every couple in Israel should be allowed to marry in any way they wish (agree: 3-4); equal rights for all – All must have the same rights before the law, regardless of their political outlook (agree: 4-5); social trust – In general, do you think that people can be trusted or that one should be very cautious in relationships with others? (trusted: 1-2); identification with the State of Israel – To what extent do you feel yourself to be part of the State of Israel and its problems? (feels part: 1-2); opposition to violence – Using violence to attain political aims is never justified (agree: 3-4).

the drop was more moderate, but the general trend was negative. These data, together with the data concerning the perception of democracy's implementation, point to a trend that is not positive and should raise questions among all parties involved in the shaping of the democratic culture, the democratic values, and the norms of Israeli citizens.

4. Selected Findings

(a) The Institutional Aspect

I. Perception of Democracy's Implementation in the Institutional Aspect: Groups in the Israeli Public

The institutional aspect relates to the country's institutions and examines their functioning and that of the individuals active within them. The implementation of democracy in this aspect was examined in three groups of the population: Jewish old-timers, immigrants from the CIS, and Arabs. Figure 16 shows the different evaluations of members of these groups concerning measures comprising this aspect. One interesting finding is that Arabs evaluate political participation less than Jewish old-timers and immigrants from the CIS, but evaluate other ratings at least as highly as Jewish old-timers. Furthermore, immigrants from the CIS evaluate political participation in Israel as greater or at least equal to that in other countries. In their view, the extent of corruption in Israel is similar or even lower to that in other countries. Jewish old-timers do not stand out in their evaluation of a particular dimension in contrast with members of other groups. Rather, the opposite is true: concerning two dimensions – their perception of the scope of corruption, and accountability – the assessments of Jewish old-timers are the lowest of all groups.

Figure 16

Assessing Democracy's Implementation in the Institutional Aspect within Groups in the Israeli Public: Jewish Old-Timers, Immigrants from the CIS, and Arabs*

High score = assessment that this democratic principle prevails in Israel (percentages)
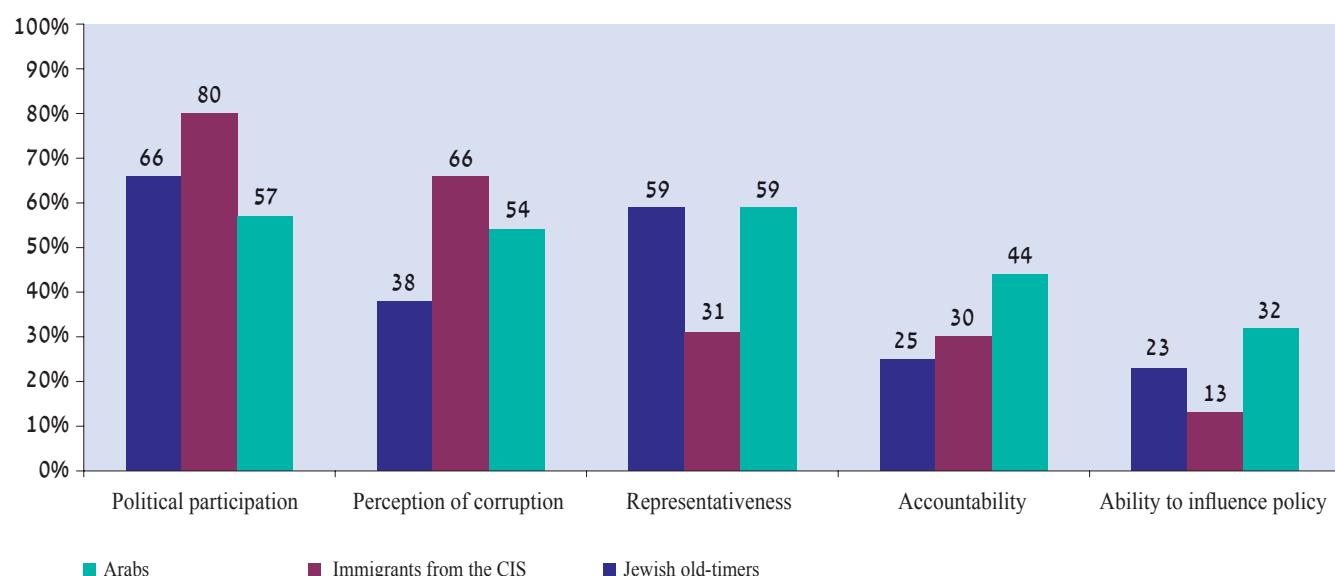
* Responses were distributed according to the language of the interview.

II. Accountability

The Democracy Index examined the implementation of the accountability principle. This principle measures the extent to which citizens believe that elected officials take into account citizens' preferences in their actions, and the extent to which decision-makers are perceived as individuals who see themselves as bearing responsibility and being committed to their roles. The question was: "To what extent do you agree that a politician does not tend to take into account the view of the ordinary citizen?" Findings show that the accountability principle in its deep meaning is not implemented (Figure 17). Most citizens perceive elected officials as people who do not act to implement the public's preferences. In 2007, 71% answered that they agree or definitely agree with the claim that politicians do not tend to take into account the view of the ordinary citizen, as opposed to 39% who had said so in 1969. Figure 17 reveals a rising trend in the rate of citizens holding that the principle of bearing responsibility does not prevail in Israel. Today, only a minority of 29% holds that politicians tend to take into account the views of ordinary citizens. This rate calls for concern because one of the principles at the basis of democracy, even a representative democracy of the type common in the modern world, is that decision-makers represent the citizens that elect them. As such, they are supposed to take into account the citizens' views, and the citizens are supposed to believe that their representatives are attentive to their plight, whatever it may be. This reality, whereby most citizens do not feel that politicians take their views into account, could lead to alienation between citizens and elected officials, gravely endangering the quality of democracy. Although these are citizens' assessments rather than facts proving that politicians in Israel fail to take the public's views into account, they do attest to a negative phenomenon.

Figure 17

Accountability, 1969-2007

"A politician does not tend to take into account the view of the ordinary citizen"
Agree and definitely agree (Jewish sample only; percentages)
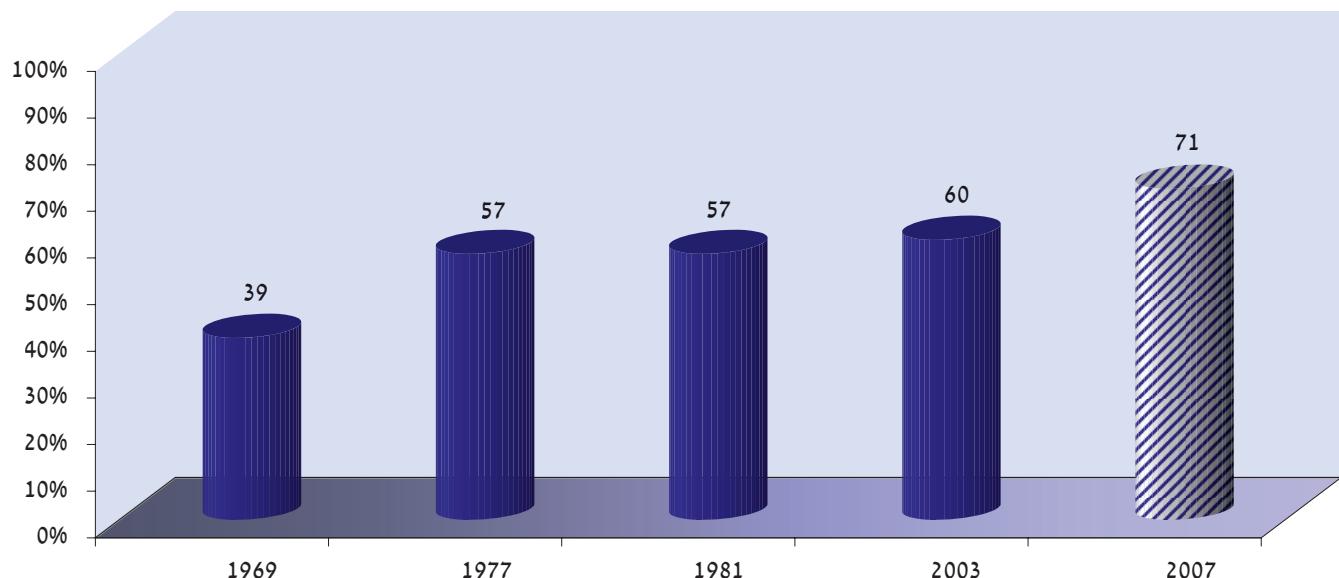
III. Political Influence

As noted in Figure 14 above, members of the Israeli public estimate that they participate in politics more than their counterparts in other democracies, or at least as much; 36% of the respondents estimated that the level of political participation in Israel is, to a small extent or to some extent, higher than that in other countries; 30% held that the level of participation is the same, and only 34% estimated that the level of participation in Israel is lower than in other countries. The distribution of the responses, however, attests to a sense of lack of influence. Notwithstanding these evaluations, only 22% of the Jewish respondents hold that they can affect government policy, as opposed to 78% who said that their influence on government policy is slight or non-existent. A historical comparison does not point to a clear and uniform trend, although the sense of being able to influence policy has obviously greatly decreased in recent years, contrary to the period between the 1970s and the early 1990s, when influence was sometimes double that of recent years (Figure 18).

In an international comparison, as shown in Figure 19, Israel ranked 14th among the 29 countries examined; 53.4% of the respondents agree or definitely agree with the claim that people like them have no possibility of influencing government actions. Israel is placed between England and Sweden, and its situation in this regard is not extreme. But even if its situation is not among the worst in an international comparison, the historical comparison with the evaluations of the Israeli public (Figure 18) points to a negative development.

Figure 18

Sense of Political Influence, 1973-2007

"To what extent can you and your friends influence government policy?"
To a large or to some extent (Jewish sample only; percentages)

Figure 19

Sense of Political Influence: An International Comparison

"People like me don't have any say about what the government does"[34]
(strongly agree and agree)
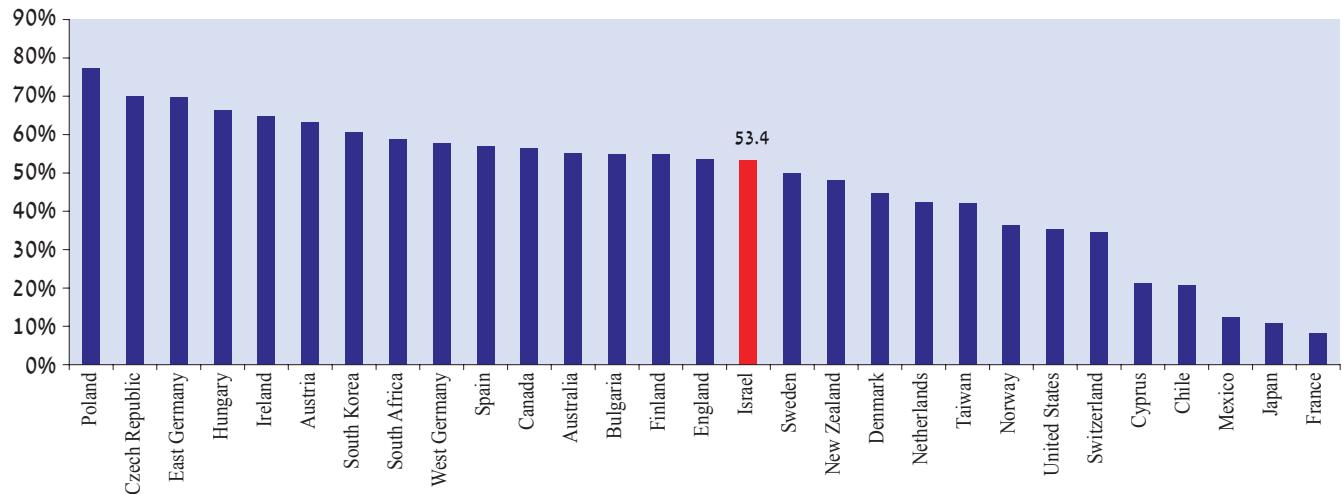
(b) The Stability Aspect
I. Trust in Institutions

One of the most important measures for evaluating the stability and cohesion of Israeli democracy touches on the public's level of trust in key institutions. Like we do every year, we evaluated five key institutions and two official positions: the IDF, the Supreme Court, the President, the police, the Prime Minister, the Knesset, and the political parties (Figures 20 and 21). In 2007, a general downward trend in the levels of trust in these institutions vis-à-vis previous years can be detected. A sharp drop was also recorded in the public's degree of trust in the President (to 22%), as well as a decline in the level of trust in the Prime Minister, the IDF, the Supreme Court, and the police. The two institutions retaining the same level of public trust are the political parties and the Knesset, although, in both cases, trust levels are very low. We may assume that the public's dissatisfaction with these institutions ensues from a sense that the people officiating in key positions are unsuitable and that the public was dissatisfied with the conduct of the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006. The hard feelings toward the leadership and other institutions translate into lack of trust in them, as Figures 20 and 21 show. A further question was posed this year concerning the level of trust in the IDF's Chief of Staff. Only 51% trust the Chief of Staff to a large or to some extent, as opposed to 49% who do not trust him at all or trust him to a small extent (these data do not appear in the Figure).

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34 Data are retrieved from the international survey conducted by ISSP in 2004. For further details see www.issp.org.

Figure 20

Trust in Key Institutions: IDF, Supreme Court, Police, 2003-2007

"To what degree do you have trust in the following people or institutions?"
To a large degree and to some degree (percentages)
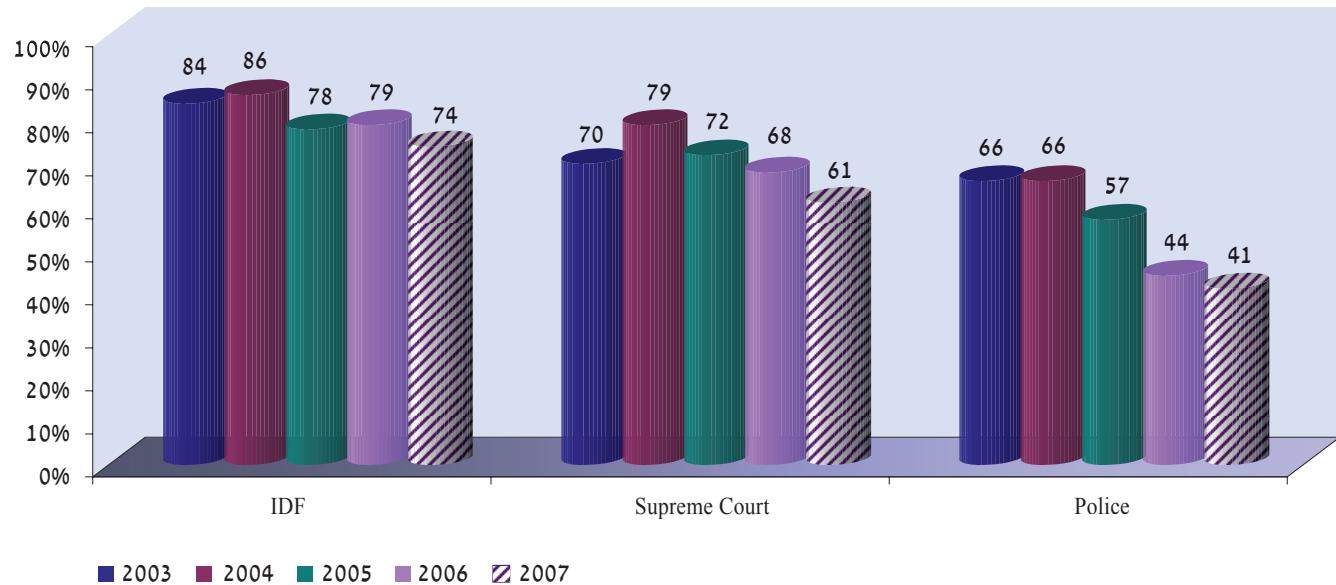
Figure 21

Trust in Key Institutions: President, Prime Minister, Knesset, Political Parties, 2003-2007

"To what degree do you have trust in the following people or institutions?"
To a large degree and to some degree (percentages)
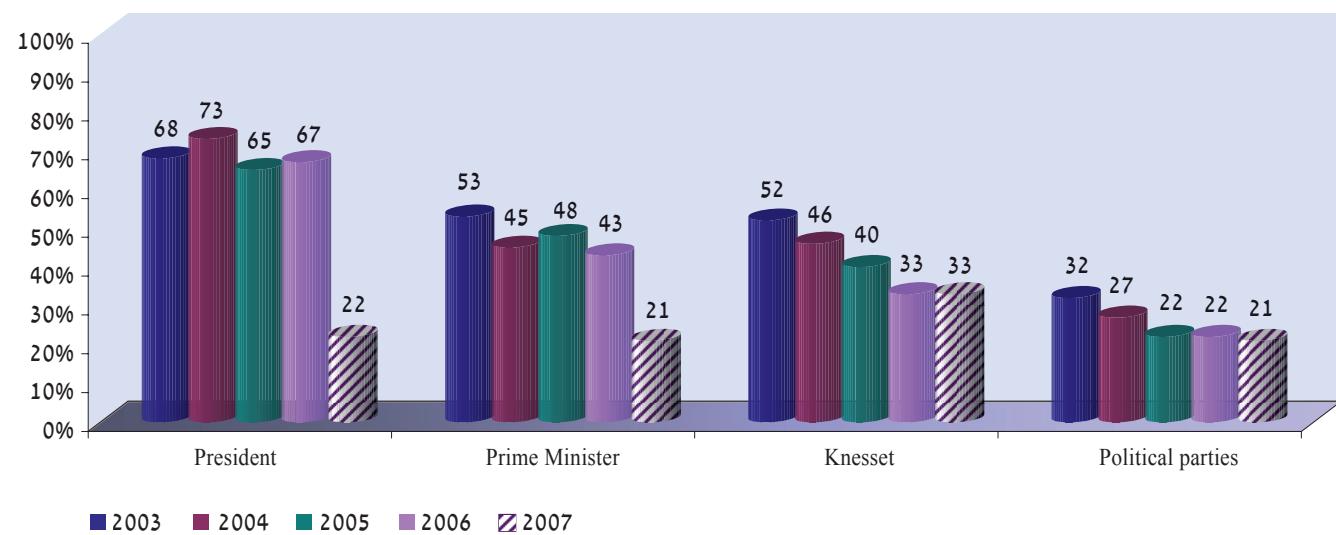
Specific questions were asked this year on the performance of three key figures in Israeli politics: the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, and the Minister of Finance. The results match the low level of public trust for institutions and public officials in general. Only 10% hold that the Prime Minister fulfills his role well or very well, only 13% hold that the Minister of Finance fulfills his role well or very well, and only 7% hold that the Minister of Defense fulfills his role well or very well. These are extremely worrisome figures.

II. Protecting Democracy

Further evidence of the degree of trust in certain institutions was provided by responses to the question "What is the institution that best protects Israeli democracy?" (Figure 22). Despite the drop in trust in the Supreme Court, it is still perceived as the institution that best protects Israeli democracy (39%). The Supreme Court is followed by the media (34%), the Prime Minister (14%), and the Knesset (13%). The public seems to appoint non-elected institutions as "democracy protectors." By contrast, only a small section of the public considers elected institutions, whether directly or indirectly, as the protectors of democracy. In other words, the public holds that its elected officials protect democracy less well than public servants and media figures.

Figure 22

Protecting Democracy, 2003-2007

"The institution that best protects Israeli democracy" (percentages)

Legend: ■ Supreme Court ■ Media ■ Prime Minister ■ Knesset
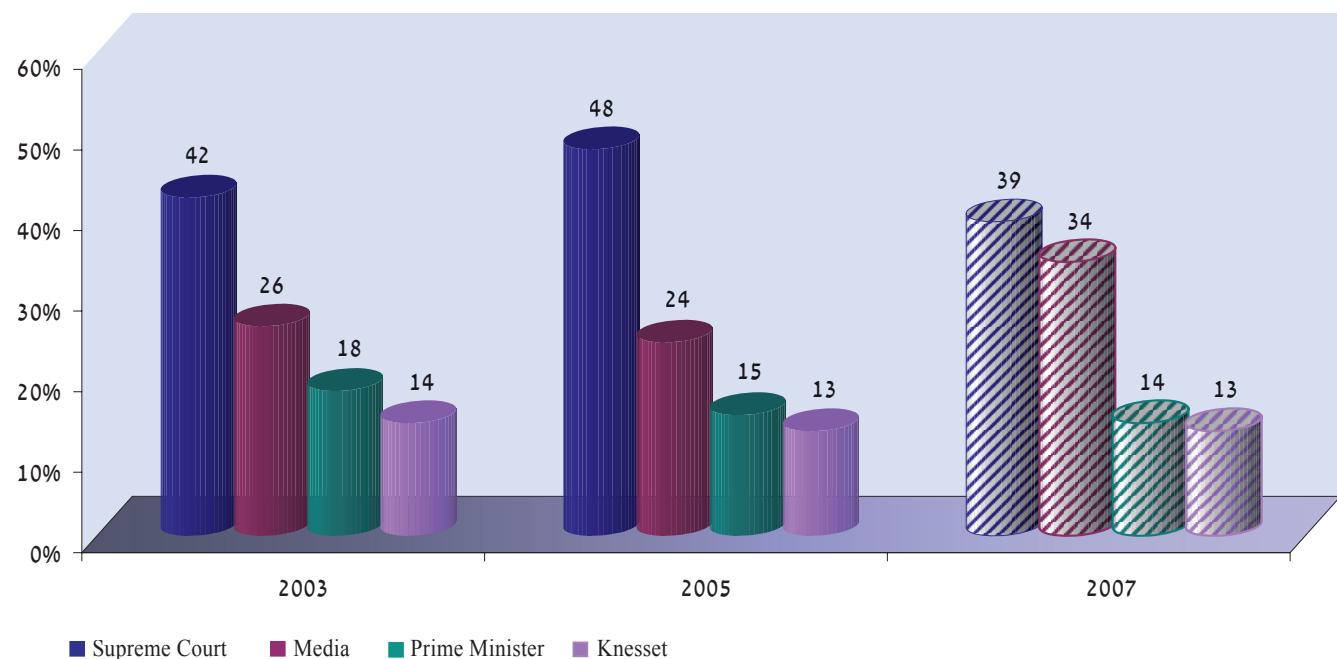
Note that a rise of 10% was recorded in the rate of those evaluating that the media is the institution that best protects Israeli democracy. This is an interesting finding, given the extensive critique of the media as a body covering events in an irresponsible manner. Indeed, only 45% trust the media, and 55% of the respondents trust it to a small extent or not at all. And yet, this is a significant rise in the rate of those holding that it is the institution that best protects democracy. Let us compare these data with those concerning the Supreme Court: 39% hold that this is the institution that best protects Israeli democracy, 61% trust it to some or to a large extent, and only 39% trust it only to a small extent or not at all.

5. Democracy: Support and Satisfaction

(a) Support for Strong Leaders in Israel

From 1981 onward, Democracy Indices have asked a question about support for democracy in Israel.[35] In 2006, 76% of the respondents supported democracy.[36] Yet, together with their support for the democratic system, a majority of the Israeli public also supports "strong leaders." In 2007, 73% of the Jewish respondents said that they agree or definitely agree with the claim "strong leaders can be more useful to the country than all the discussions and the laws," as opposed to 27% who disagreed with it. When we examine the trend over time, we see that this is the highest

recorded rate of support for strong leaders since 1969. This figure, added to other data in the 2007 Democracy Index, sharpens the sense of mistrust in Israeli democracy and its institutions. In an international comparison, Israel is in 32nd place in a list of 35 countries, beside Mexico, India, and Romania. Rates of support for "strong leaders" in countries such as Denmark, Iceland, and Greece are far lower.[37] Support for "strong leaders" contradicts the democratic principle based on set rules and on a government of representatives. The lack of trust in the country's rulers is dangerous, since it could lead to actions and proposals intended to change the rules of the game and turn Israel into a non-democratic state or institute a different kind of democracy (Figure 23).

(b) Satisfaction with the Government

The State of Israel has contended with many security crises since its foundation. Many of its citizens have served in the army, have participated in military operations, and have experienced terrorist attacks. The Second Lebanon War in 2006 appears to have affected the Israeli public's evaluation of Israel's situation in general (Figure 25). 50% of the Jewish respondents hold that Israel's situation in 2007 is bad or not good, as opposed to 32% who thought so in 2006 – a very strong drop (18%). Retrospectively, respondents had previously evaluated Israel's

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35 The precise wording of the question was: "To what extent do you agree or disagree that democracy is the best form of government?" In the Jewish sample, in 1981, 84% answered "agree" or "strongly agree"; in 1984 – 91%; in 1988 – 87%; in 1999 – 90%; in 2003 – 77%. See Arian et al., *The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 1 above).

36 Arian et al., *The 2006 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 5 above), p. 44.

37 Ibid, p. 84.

situation as worse in some years (2001-2004) but, since 2005, the evaluation of Israel's situation had improved. The sharp rise in the rate of those evaluating Israel's situation as bad or not good, when added to the previous data in this chapter, points to a trend in Israeli democracy that is not positive.

This year, we asked several additional questions: "What is your mood like these days?"; "Are you worried these days?"; "Do you think you can adapt to the current situation?" The answers to these questions in 2007 are encouraging: 11% of the respondents answered that their mood is not good, 26% answered that they are always or almost always worried, but 79% estimate or are even sure they will be able to adapt to the current situation. These data

are surprising given the findings presented in this chapter. Despite the low public and personal evaluations of Israeli democracy, citizens are in a good mood, most of them are not particularly worried, and a decisive majority holds they will be able to adjust to the current situation. These data attest to the resilience of Israeli society: citizens evaluate the current situation as not encouraging, but they can continue with the routine of their lives, and even do so well.

Data from 1973 onward reveal that the current gap between the evaluation of Israel's situation as good and the ability of its citizens to adapt to the current situation is, at 57%, the largest so far. Furthermore, the gap between Israel's current situation and the prevalent mood is the largest in all the

Figure 23

Support for Strong Leaders, 1969-2007

**"Strong leaders can be more useful to the country than
all the discussions and the laws"
Agree and definitely agree (Jewish sample only; percentages)**
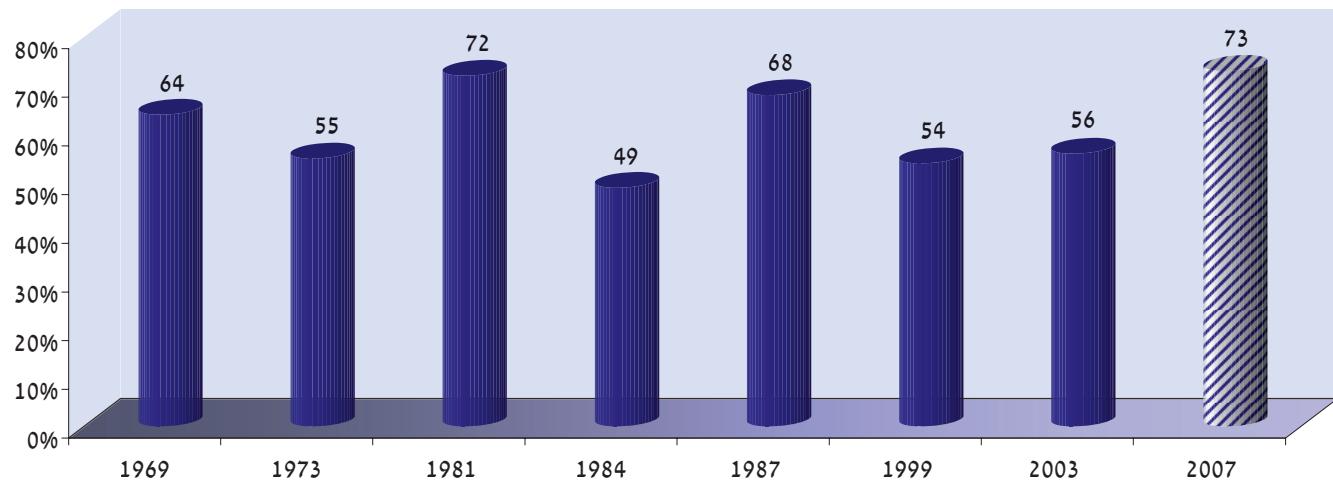
years tested so far – 46%. A comparison with 1973 and 1974,[38] before the Yom Kippur War and the election campaign that followed it, yields different results. The rate of Jews who then evaluated Israel's situation as good was higher (20%), 15% less reported a good mood, but a high rate (81%) answered they would be able to adapt to the current situation – a figure similar to that recorded in 2007. The 2007 figures, then, deviate from those of previous years and attest that,

despite the harsh reality, the citizens' mood is good and they believe in their ability to adapt to the situation (Figure 24).

(c) Satisfaction with the Functioning of Democracy

To evaluate the citizens' general level of satisfaction with the functioning of democracy, we asked the following question: "To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way in which

Figure 24

Personal Feelings Considering the Current Situation, 1973-2007*

Your mood these days: Good or very good
Can you adapt to the current situation? Yes
Israel's situation in general: Good or very good
(Jewish sample only: percentages)
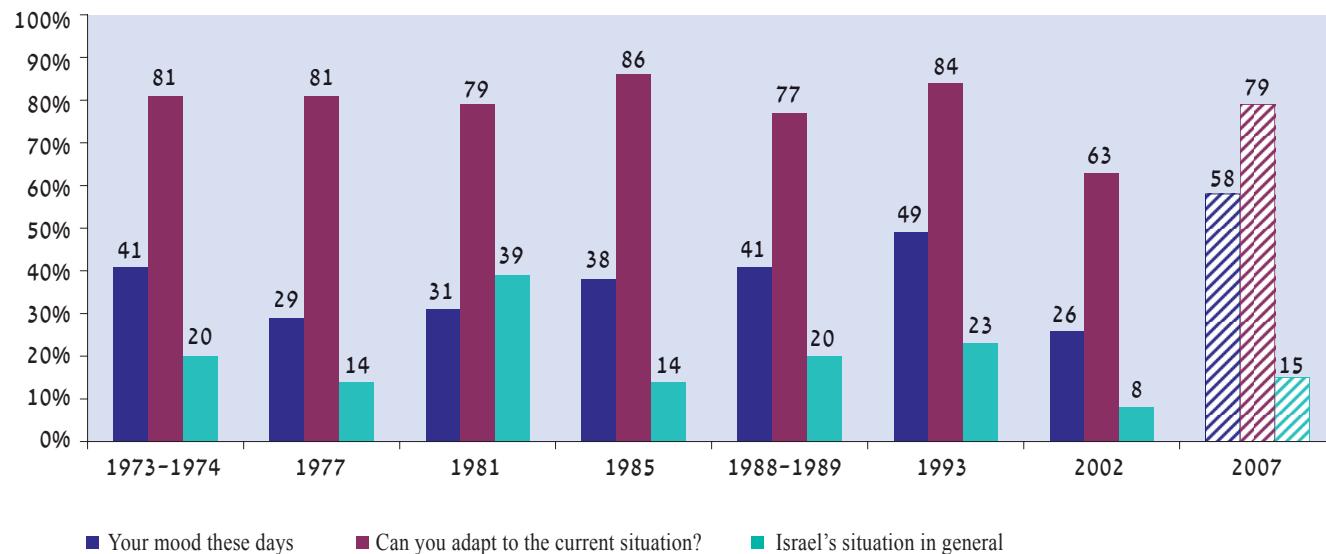
■ Your mood these days   ■ Can you adapt to the current situation?   ■ Israel's situation in general

* The years 1973-1974 and the years 1988-1989 are cited together because not all the questions to which the data relate were asked in the same year. The data for 1973 were collected in August-September 1973; the data for 1974 were collected in April 1974. The data for 1988 were collected in February 1988; the data for 1989 were collected in April and June 1989.

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38 The data for 1973 relate to questions about the mood in those days and the situation of Israel in general. The data for 1974 relate to the question "Do you think you can adapt to the current situation?"

Israel's democracy functions?" Figure 26, which presents the respondents' answers over time, points to a trend of increasing dissatisfaction. We may assume a series of reasons for this that include, *inter alia*, the functioning of government institutions, the security situation, social gaps, and personal reasons. The fact that only 34% of the citizens are satisfied with the functioning of democracy should awake concern among decision-makers in the country in particular, and among its citizens in general. Over the last twenty years, at least half of the Jewish public has expressed satisfaction with the functioning of Israeli democracy, whereas this year – 2007 – we see a real drop in this regard. Dissatisfaction with the functioning of Israeli democracy is a crucial datum that must be addressed. In a democratic country, where citizens elect their representatives, decision-makers are expected to create, or

at least preserve, a state that operates to the citizens' satisfaction.

In sum, according to the 2007 Democracy Index, the public estimates that Israel is less democratic than in the past. Moreover, the citizens' inclination to believe in democratic principles and democratic norms and their readiness to act according to them have also declined. In some of the ratings, we see clear traces of deterioration in the quality of Israeli democracy. We learn this from the decline in the citizens' trust in the country's institutions and in their lowered support for democracy's fundamental principles. Together with the dissatisfaction with the functioning of Israeli democracy and the sharp decline in the rate of citizens defining Israel's situation as good, these findings attest to a negative trend in the attitudes of Israeli citizens toward Israeli democracy.

Figure 25

Satisfaction with the Situation of Israel, 1997-2007

"What, in your view, is Israel's situation in general?"
(Jewish sample only; percentages)

Not good and bad ■ So-so ■ Good and very good
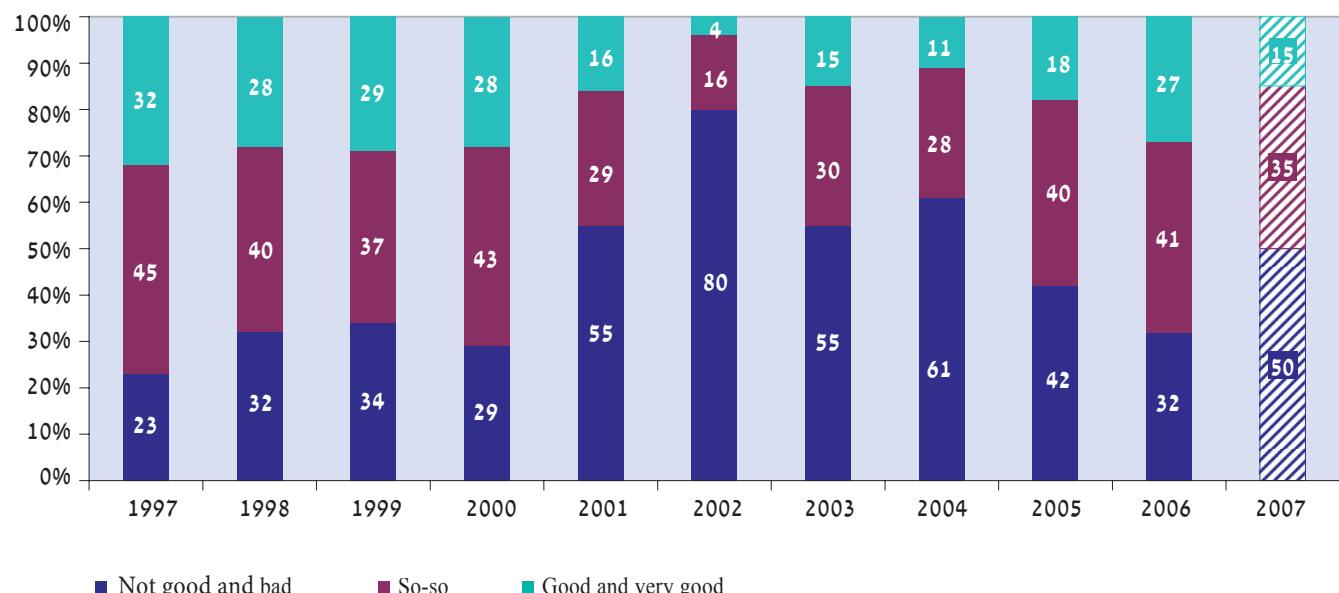
Figure 26

Satisfaction with Israeli Democracy, 1987-2007

"In general, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way in which Israel's democracy functions?"
Satisfied or very satisfied (Jewish sample only; percentages)
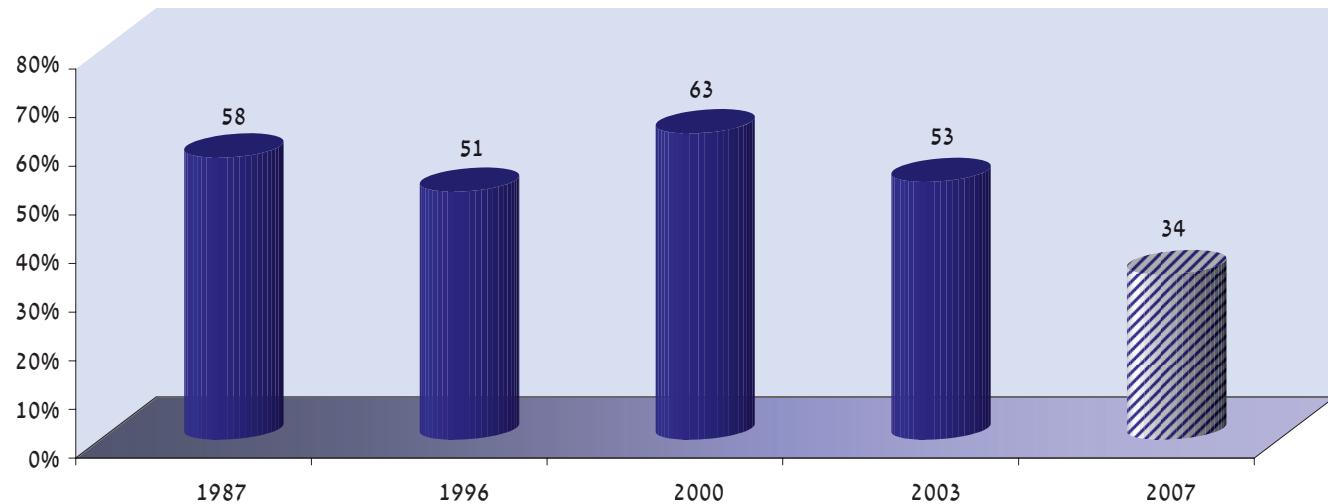
Part Two

Cohesion in a Divided Society

A. Background: Cohesion in Israel

Israeli society is characterized by high heterogeneity, with class, religious, national, ethnic, and cultural differences separating the groups comprising it. The significant cleavage is between two key national identities – Jews and Arabs – that split into subgroups with separate identities. Jews divide into secularists and religious, Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, new immigrants and old-timers. Non-Jews split into Christian Arabs, Muslim Arabs, Druze, Circassian, and Bedouin. Each of these subgroups is unique, and there are objective differences between them (supported by data and by variance between the groups) in the realms of economics, education, and social class, as well as in their political, national, and religious views. Given this division, Israel is usually defined as a society characterized by deep social differences.[39]

Social solidarity is a desirable aim for a country. As ties between its citizens strengthen, so do their chances to conduct a shared life in a good and stable society. This aim can be achieved through shared democratic principles. A stable society can develop economically, culturally, and scientifically for the benefit of all its members.

Many studies deal with social divisions in Israel, including economic inequality and educational gaps, and with their subjective dimensions, including the alienation between various groups and the religion and state conflict. We will focus on five main cleavages, more or less central at different times: rich and poor, Jews and Arabs, religious and secularists, Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, new immigrants and old-timers. The beginning of this division dates back to the *Yishuv* period and its manifestations and their intensity have changed from time to time, with different effects on the political and social processes in Israeli society. Some of the divisions overlap, meaning they correlate with one another.[40] Thus, for instance, the Jewish-Arab cleavage does not merely reflect a national dimension but also socio-economic inequalities. Borders and gaps between the groups are thereby sharpened, hindering mediation and compromise, creating stereotypical perceptions of the "other," and leading to increasing tensions between society's various groups. Over the years, the results are deeper gaps in response to systemic changes in the political, economic, and social realms.

39 Horowitz and Lissak, *Trouble in Utopia* (note 3 above); Sammy Smooha, "Class, Ethnic, and National Cleavages and Democracy in Israel" [Hebrew], in *Israeli Society: Critical perspectives*, ed. Uri Ram (Tel Aviv: Breirot, 1993), pp. 172-203; Issam Abu-Ria and Ruth Gavison, *The Jewish-Arab Rift in Israel: Characteristics and Challenges* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 1999).

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

41 Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *The Transformation of Israeli Society: An Essay in Interpretation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1985), pp. xi-xii.

Struggles over its fundamental values have been a persistent feature throughout Israel's existence. In the pre-State period, the cohesive value was pioneering,[41] and in the early years of the state, Zionism fulfilled this role in Israeli-Jewish identity. In the last three decades, however, the consensus about the contents of this identity has changed, particularly regarding the order of priorities. Some claim that Zionism has turned from a cohesive into a dividing value. In the past, Zionism's fundamental values were nationalism and socialism, whereas today, the contents of Israeli identity are entangled in a complex mixture. Ultra-Orthodox groups, immigrants from the CIS – each group defines in its own way the identity contents that single it out. Trends and streams also characterize the social and academic discourse, with "post-Zionists" or "anti-Zionists" casting doubt on Israel's right to exist and even on the very need for it as a Jewish state. Given these circumstances, some see democratic values as the element that will serve to enhance social cohesion. The claim is that democratic "rules of the game" encourage groups in the society to live together, to compromise, and to reach consensus on its many controversial issues.[42] This approach, however, is not self-evident. Israeli democracy is fluid, and in many senses even weak.

Nevertheless, several unique characteristics can be identified leading to cohesion in Israeli society. Despite its high heterogeneity, we discern many signs of social solidarity, both in ordinary times and during periods of crises. The Second Lebanon War is one instance of Israeli society's mobilization for war and in support of the civilian population. The actions of the civil society, including social and voluntary organizations, are also evidence of mutual responsibility. External threats were and still are a cohesive factor. Although the country's security situation and the many wars have been disruptive, they have also served to entrench a deep sense of "a people that dwells alone."[43] Judaism is a further cohesive element for most inhabitants and its key role in Israel's existence, despite religious-secular disputes, is undeniable.[44] Although half of the Jewish people live in the Diaspora, they are active and involved and also contribute to Israel's cohesion and solidarity. The institutionalization of Israel's political institutions has also furthered cohesion, since it has allowed continuity over the years.[45] The question that concerns us at the opening of this section, then, is to what extent is cohesion between these groups a deep-seated feature of Israeli society, and what are its directions.

At the center of this chapter is a description and analysis of the attitudes to the cleavages

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42 Peres and Yuchtman-Yaar, *Between Consent and Dissent* (note 3 above), pp. 9-10.

43 Asher Arian, *Security Threatened: Surveying Israeli Opinion on Peace and War* (Tel Aviv & Cambridge: Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University & Cambridge University Press, 1995).

44 Shlomit Levy, Hanna Levinsohn, and Elihu Katz, *A Portrait of Israeli Jewry: Beliefs, Observances, and Values among Israeli Jews* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute and the Avi Chai Foundation, 2002).

45 Itzhak Galnoor, "The Crisis in Israel's Political System" [Hebrew], in *Israel Towards the Year 2000: Society, Politics, and Culture*, ed. Moshe Lissak and Baruch Knei-Paz (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996), pp. 146-147.

and to the indications of cohesion in Israel. We hold that, despite the many points of friction between the various groups in society, "the uniqueness of the democratic-liberal approach is the aspiration to create a regime and a political culture that will enable individuals and, as far as possible, groups with different or even contradictory values and aims, to live, to express themselves, and to operate beside one another on the basis of shared rules."[46] These clear rules for regulating the country's social tensions entail a commitment to compromises between the society's many groups. Yet, the discouraging data bearing on Israeli society and its internal conflicts cannot be ignored.

As in the discussion about the quality of democracy, in this section too we examine social cohesion in Israel in comparison with developments in other countries and in Israel over time. We examined Israel's situation in light of the answers given by respondents in Israel and in international public opinion surveys. The international comparison relates to the same 35 countries included in the Democracy Indices, according to updated figures from public opinion surveys conducted by World Values Survey (henceforth WVS)[47] and the International Social Survey Program (henceforth ISSP).[48]

The comparison over time, relating to changes in public opinion over the years, relies mainly on data retrieved from the public opinion surveys preserved at the Guttman Center of the Israel Democracy Institute and on a survey conducted in February 2007, for which detailed results appear in Appendices 2 and 3 below.

The cleavages and cohesion of Israeli society were examined in three stages. We first examined the extent of interpersonal and social trust in Israel, recognizing the importance of this measure for the functioning and stability of a democratic society. We then examined questions bearing on the relations between the various groups, focusing on the features typical of Israeli society's five cleavages.[49] Finally, we examined social cohesion in Israel, that is, the readiness of Israeli citizens to bridge disputes and reach compromises on political and topical questions. The readiness of citizens to contribute to the community, the public's readiness to take an active part in the building of a cohesive society, the pride in the connection to Israel, the desire to remain and live in Israel, and the sense of being part of Israel and its problems – all serve as indicators of social cohesion.

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46 Peres and Yuchtman-Yaar, *Between Consent and Dissent* (note 3 above), p. 23.

47 For further details, see the Institute's website, www.worldvaluessurvey.org.

48 The data retrieved from the ISSP are based on the Citizenship Survey conducted in 2004. For further information, see www.issp.org.

49 We do not relate concretely to the right-left cleavage, although it is considered one of the cleavages of Israeli society. For further discussion, see Arian et al., *The 2006 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 5 above).

B. Social Trust in Israel

Social trust is a key layer in the principle of social capital, which is the sum total of social ties enabling cooperation, reciprocity, and contacts between individuals. The aim of these ties is to create social cohesion for the benefit of all.[50] Human and cultural capital does not relate to material and economic resources, but to networks of social norms, although a connection has already been found between the level of social trust in a country and its economic situation.[51] The assumption is that the quantity and quality of mutual social relations contribute to a society's stability and cohesion and to the strengthening of the democratic regime as such.

Social trust in Israel, that is, mutual personal trust, is lower both absolutely and relatively than the trust placed in most public institutions. This is the conclusion that emerges from a comparison of responses to the question about social trust and confidence in institutions and from the comparison of Israel's rank with that of other countries. One of the most common questions for measuring social trust is: "In general, do you think that people can be trusted or that one should be very cautious in relationships with others?" The distribution of the responses in an international comparison and relative to previous years appears in Figures 27 and 28.

The 2007 Democracy Index shows that only about one third (31%) of Israel's citizens trust one another: only 5% of all the respondents answered that people can be trusted almost always, 26% said that people can usually be trusted, 40% answered that one should generally be cautious regarding people, and 29% said that one should almost always be cautious regarding people. A decisive majority (69%) then holds that people cannot be trusted.

Figure 27, which presents social trust in Israel from 1980 onward, shows that the level of social trust in Israel has always been low. Most of the Jewish public is naturally distrustful. And yet, the figure for 2007 is the highest in recent years (32%). Among the Arab population, social trust is even lower: only 22% hold that people can be trusted, as opposed to 78% who think that people should be cautious about those surrounding them. Immigrants from the CIS also have very low levels of social trust: only 25% of them hold that people can be trusted, as opposed to 75% who hold that people should be suspected.

The data on low social trust are strengthened even further by the comparison between findings in Israel and those in international public opinion surveys.[52] As Figure 28 shows, in most democracies for which data are available, the proportion of

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50 Robert D. Putnam, "Turning In, Turning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America," *Political Science and Politics* 28 (1995), pp. 664-668.

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

52 Data are based on the ISSP survey conducted in 2004. See note 48 above.

citizens who feel they can trust the people surrounding them is higher than in Israel. Denmark (77%) and Norway (73.4%) head the list, while Chile (12.3%) and Poland (16.1%) close it. Israel and Japan (32% each) are ranked together in 21st and 22nd place. The low level of mutual personal trust in Israel is backed by data from both the historical and international comparisons.

Another question pointing to the level of social trust is: "In your opinion, what is more important to Israel's citizens, their personal interests or the interests of the country as a whole?" The distribution of responses points to a clear trend over the years: the rate of Jews who hold that the interests of the country are more important has declined (Figure 29). In 1981, 64% answered that the interests of the country are more important than the individual's personal ones, but only 27% thought so in 2007. At the same time, a sharp rise was recorded in the rate of those placing the individual's personal interests above those of the country: 6% in 1981, 9% in 1992, 7% in 1996. A dramatic rise was recorded in the last decade: the rate of respondents answering that the individual's interests are more important (36%) is far higher than the rate of respondents who place the country's interests above all (27%). These data point to the declining importance of the country's interests in the public's perception. The rise of personal interests point to a weakened sense of partnership and of trust in the country's institutions and its goals.

Figure 27

Personal Social Trust, 1980-2007

"In general, do you think that people can be trusted or that one should be very cautious in relationships with others?"
Trusted usually or almost always (Jewish sample only; percentages)
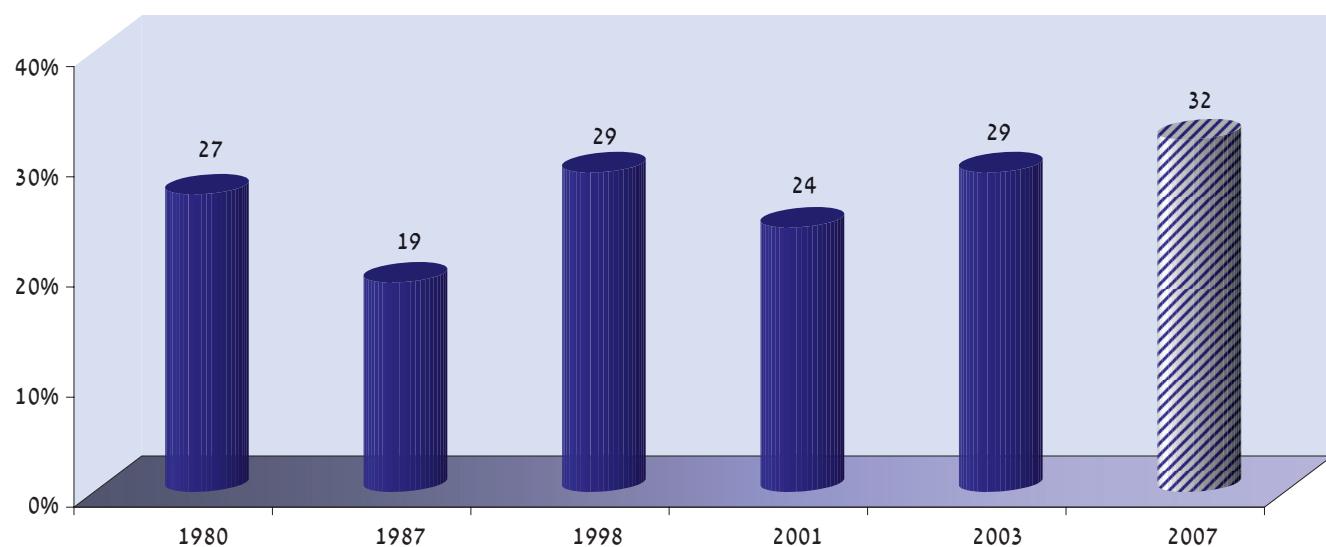
Figure 28

Personal Social Trust: An International Comparison

**"In general, do you think that people can be trusted or that one should be very cautious
in relationships with others?"
Trusted usually or almost always (percentages)**
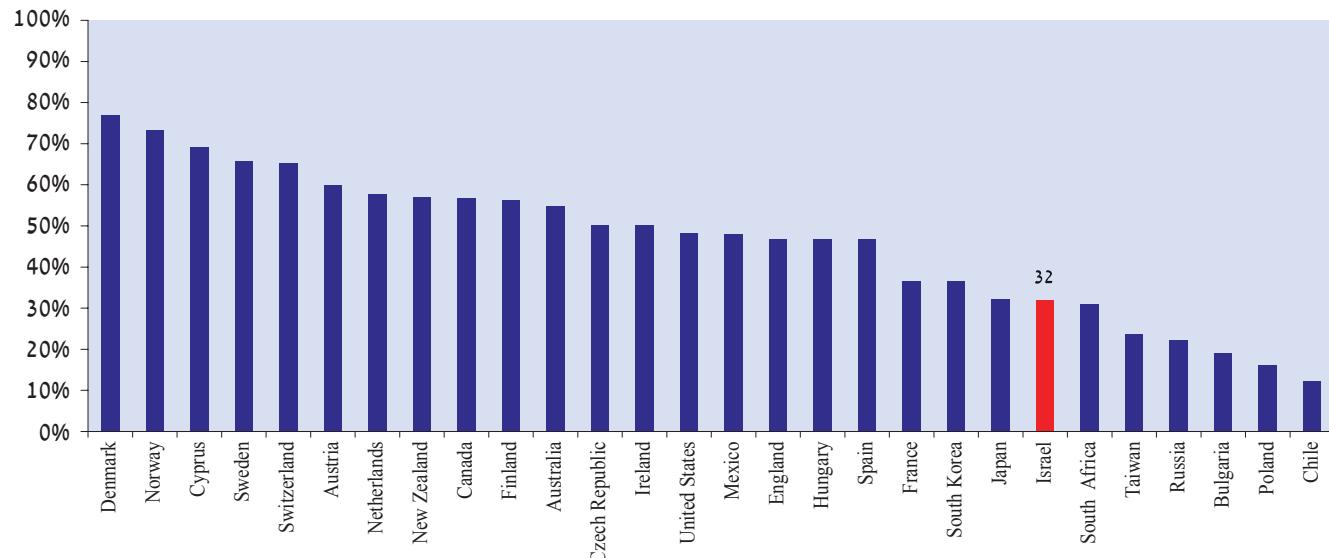
Figure 29

Social Trust, 1981-2007

**"In your opinion, what is more important to Israel's citizens,
their personal interests or the interests of the country as a whole?"
(Jewish sample only; percentages)**

■ The individual's are far more important   ■ To the same extent   ■ The country's are far more important
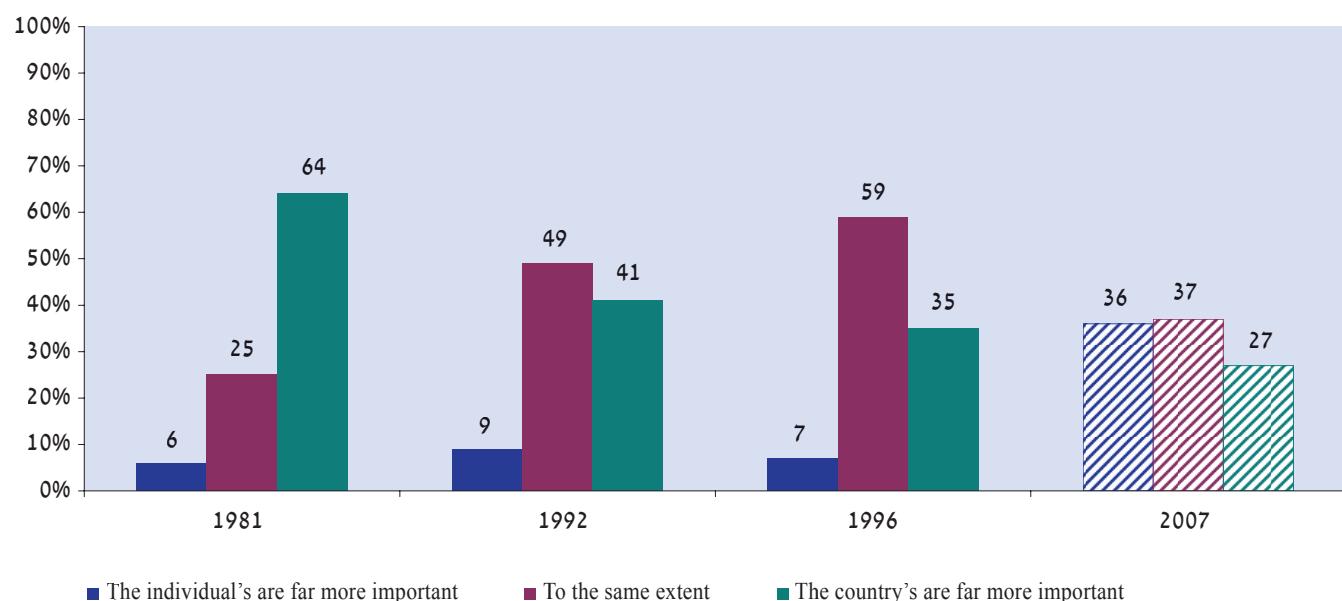
Figure 30 presents the answers to three questions that have so far been presented according to separate social groups in the population: "What is more important to the country's citizens?"; "What is more important to the country's leaders?"; "How much trust do people have?" Data show that only 25% hold that the interests of the country are more important to its citizens; 15% think that the interests of the country are important to the leaders (in the Jewish sample, responses are similar – 27% and 15%, respectively). 15% of Israel's Arabs hold that the country's interests are the foremost concern of the country's leaders, and 17% of them hold that the general interest is important to the country's citizens. The lowest level of trust was reported by immigrants from the CIS: only 11% hold that the country's concerns are important to the citizens, and only 6% that they are important to the leaders. Generally, the low figures point to a considerable problem of trust, both among the citizens and between the citizens and their leaders.

Figure 30

Social Trust: Groups in Israeli Society*

"In general, do you think that people can be trusted or that one should be very cautious in relationships with others?"
Trusted usually or almost always
"In your opinion, what is more important to Israel's citizens, their personal interests or the interests of the country as a whole?"
"In your opinion, what is more important to Israel's leaders, their personal interests or the interests of the country as a whole?"
The country's interests are much more important (percentages)
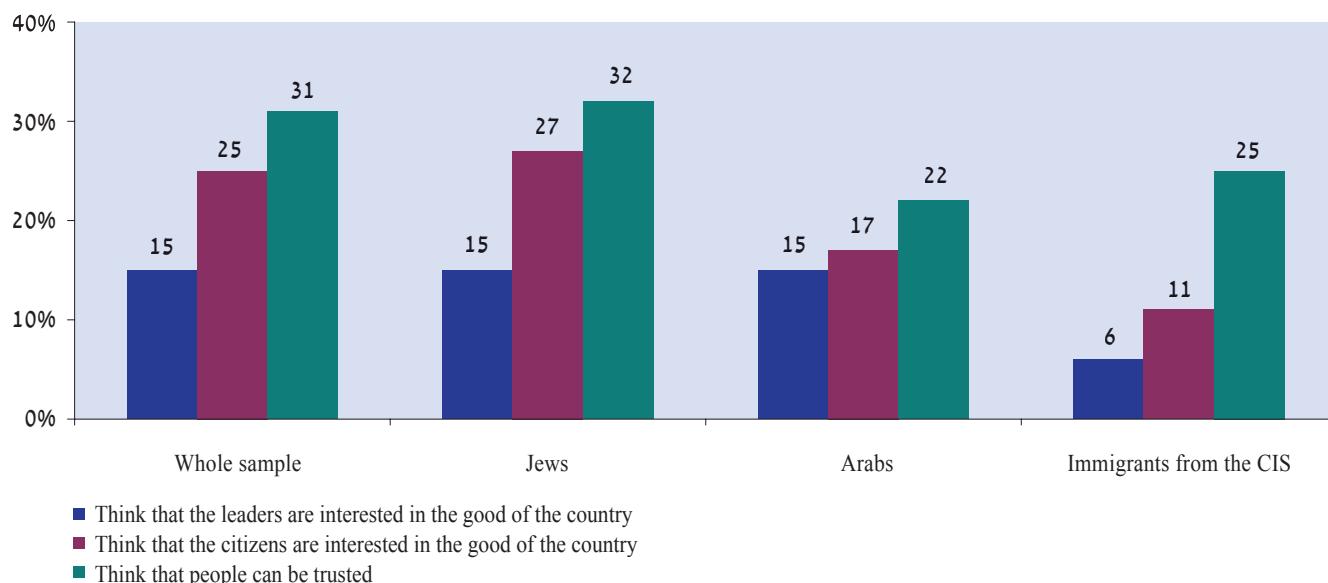
*   Responses were distributed according to the language of the interview.

C. Relationships between Groups in Israel 2007

A discussion of the public's moods, of the quality of democracy, and of social cohesion cannot ignore the society's cleavages and groups. In the previous section, we focused on the extent of mutual trust. We will now consider the relations and tensions between the various groups through an examination of the five main cleavages in Israel: the Arab-Jewish, the socio-economic, the religious-secular, and also the new immigrants–old-timers and Ashkenazi-Mizrahi cleavages.

According to the Democracy Index 2007, the public does not perceive the relations between groups in society as good. A majority holds that the most serious cleavage is that between Jews and Arabs in Israel: 87% of the citizens hold that these relationships are not good. The second most serious division in 2007 is that between rich and poor: 79% of all respondents hold that the relationships between rich and poor are not good. The division between religious and secular is third in the scale – 66% of the Jewish sample answered that relations between religious and secular are not so good or not at all good. With the fourth – new immigrants and old-timers – 62% of the respondents indicated that the relationships between new immigrants and old-timers are not good or not at all good. And, regarding the last cleavage – 55% of the Jewish sample indicated that the relationships between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim are not good (Figure 31).

Follow-up on these cleavages in recent years failed to show any real improvement in any of them. In response to the question "In your opinion, is there more or less tension in Israel between groups in the society than in other countries?" 41% of the respondents said that inter-group tension in Israel is greater than in other countries, 35% noted that inter-group tension is similar to that in other countries, and 24% estimated that it is lower than in other countries. As noted in the measures of national/linguistic/religious tensions (Figure 2 above), Israel's rank in an international comparison is very low. But what is the structure of inter-group relationships in Israel? And can social cohesion improve despite the friction points in society?

1. The Jewish-Arab Cleavage

The Jewish-Arab conflict is over a hundred years old. The relationships between Jews and Arabs in Israel are complex, with exclusive narratives and conflicting historical memories, and characterized by suspicion and mistrust. Thus, for instance, the number of communal, social, political, economic, and cultural organizations in Israel engaged in shared Jewish-Arab activities is extremely low.[53] Israel's complex reality has led to the development of two separate and largely opposed civic societies.

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53 Abu-Ria and Gavison, *The Jewish-Arab Rift in Israel* (note 39 above), p. 22.

The present discussion does not aim to map out the key issues dividing Jewish and Arab citizens[54] or to offer ways of managing the conflict. Rather, its focus is the assessment of these relationships, in an attempt to reach conclusions concerning the possibility of reaching agreement on questions of mutual trust and the parties' support for consensuality and compromise. In this spirit, the discussion that follows is divided into three central aspects of the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Israel: the pattern of the relationship, inequality and discrimination, and stereotypes.

Figure 31

Relationships between Groups, 2007*

Not good or not at all good (percentages)
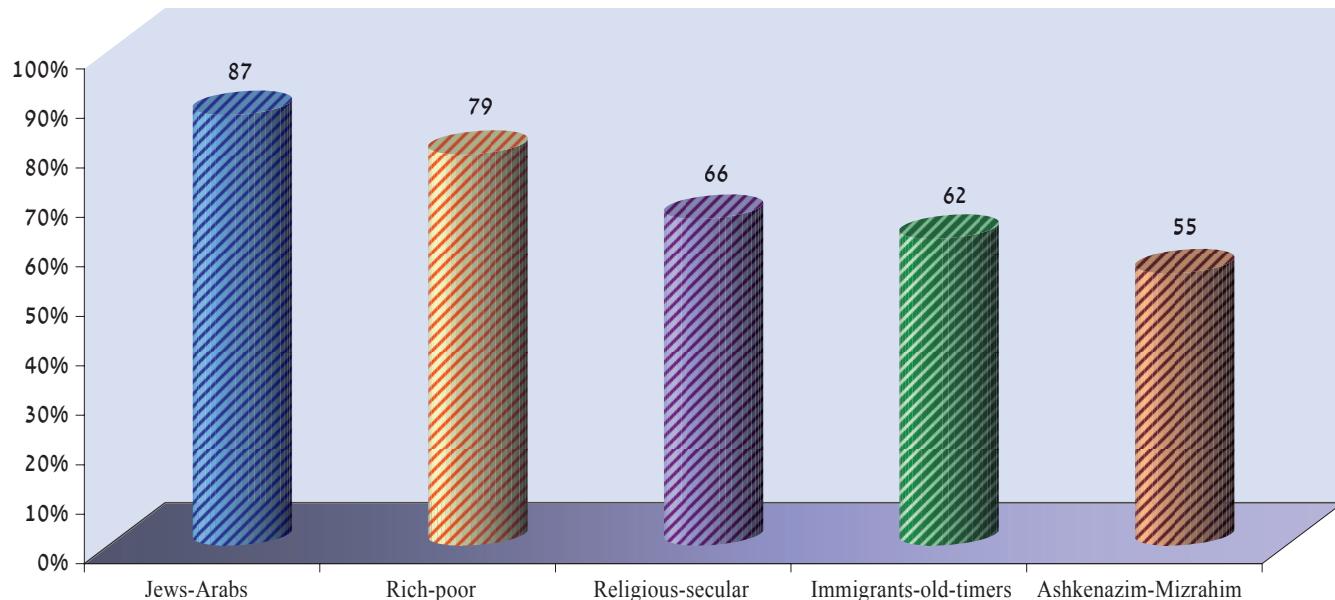
*   For questions about the Arab-Jews and rich-poor relationships, the sample used represents the entire population. Concerning the religious-secular, Ashkenazi-Mizrahi, and new immigrants–old-timers relationships – the sample includes only Jews.

54 A long list of publications is available on this question. See, for instance, Sammy Smooha, *Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel 2004* (Haifa: The Jewish-Arab Center, Haifa University, 2005); Uzi Benziman, ed., *Whose Land Is It? A Quest for a Jewish-Arab Compact in Israel* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2006).

(a) The Pattern of the Relationship

A discussion of the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Israel is, fundamentally, a discussion of the relationship between majority and minority groups. Jews are the majority group in Israel (76%); Arabs (Muslims, Christians, Druze, and other religions) make up the remaining 24%.[55] Add to this the socio-economic gaps, particularly given that about half of Israel's non-Jewish population (49.9%) is defined as poor. This is a high proportion by any criterion, and particularly by comparison to the figure of 16% defined as poor in the Jewish population.[56] The outstanding reason for the poverty of Israeli Arabs is their high birthrate, along with problems of unemployment, particularly among Arab women.[57] These circumstances do not help to ease tensions already prevalent between Jews and Arabs in Israel, and largely reflect the persistent gap in employment and salary levels between the two groups.

To examine Jewish-Arab relationships, we asked: "In your opinion, are relationships between Jews and Arabs good or not good?" 87% of the respondents in the Democracy Index 2007 said that relationships are not good or not at all good. This figure, which has been consistent over the last five years, is very high. Out of the five cleavages examined, as noted, Israelis view the Jewish-Arab one as the most serious.

When considering the responses to issues bearing on the Jews-Arabs relationship in the 2007 Index, the differences between Jewish and Arab respondents are worth noting. The available data enable such a comparison from 2000 onward. Figure 32 clearly shows that, in the last seven years, the rate of those assessing this relationship as problematic is much higher among Jews than among Arabs. In 2000, 83% of the Jewish respondents said that the relationship is not good, as opposed to 50% of the Arab respondents. After the clashes in October 2000, the rates of those defining the relationship as not good rose on both sides (93% among Jews and 76% among Arabs). The rates remained very similar in the 2003 Democracy Index, but a drop was recorded among Arab supporters of this view in the 2007 Index (66%). An interesting aspect worth considering in this context is the gap between the ambivalent feelings of Jews and those of Israeli Arabs: in 2000, the gap was particularly large (33%), and it considerably narrowed in 2001 (17%). It grew slightly in 2003 (20%), and a further rise was recorded in 2007 (25%).

Arab-Jewish relations are also affected by basic mistrust and suspicion, originating in ideological elements (Israel's character as a Zionist state), political (Israel's security vs. the association with the Palestinian people and the Arab nation), and religious (Judaism vs. Islam). Mistrust is mutual.

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55 *Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2006*, Central Bureau of Statistics, Table 2.1, p. 85.

56 Data from the Annual Caesarea Forum, June 2006. For further information, see *Caesarea Forum XIV - Reducing Poverty in Israel: Formulation of Recommendations for a Multi-Year Plan (Draft)* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2006), p. 20 (see the Institute's website: www.idi.org.il).

57 Bank of Israel, *Bank of Israel 2006 Annual Report* (Jerusalem: Bank of Israel, 2007) (www.bankisrael.gov.il).

Figure 32

Arabs-Jews Relationship Pattern According to Nationality, 2000-2007

"In your opinion, are relationships between Israeli Arabs and Jews good or not good?"
Not good or not at all good (according to nationality, percentages)

■ Jews ■ Arabs
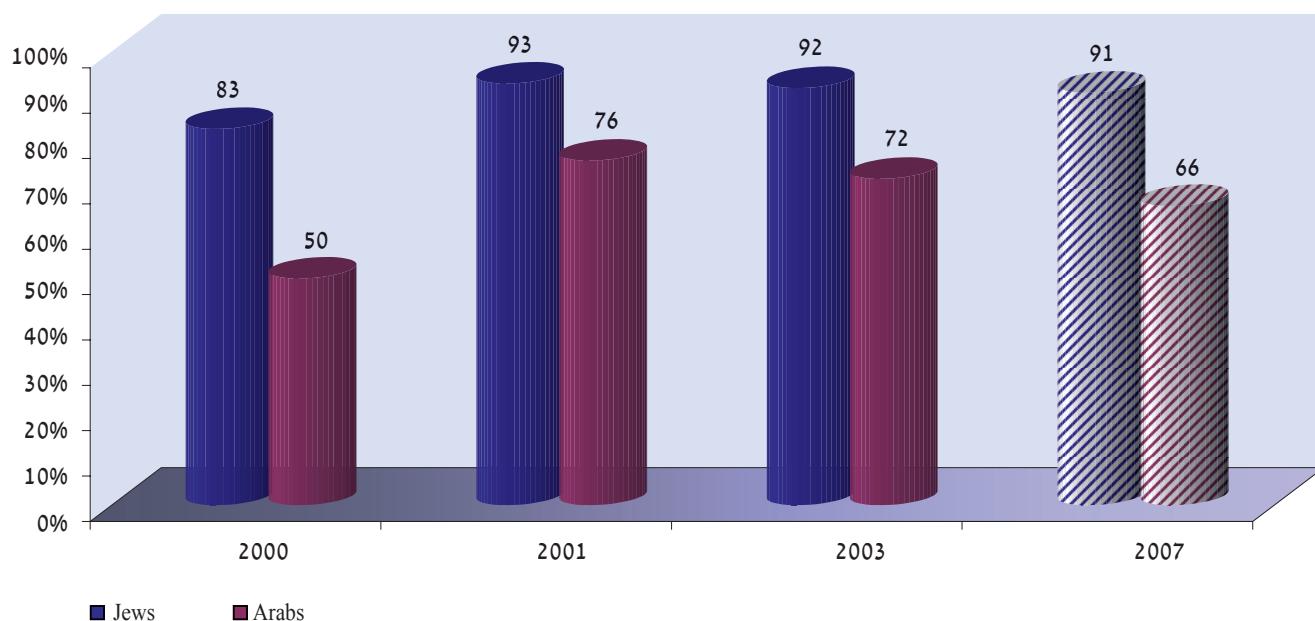
Israeli Arabs suspect the government due, *inter alia*, to policies involving land expropriations, discriminatory practices in employment and budgetary allocations, and to the limitations imposed on them.[58] Findings of the Democracy Index attest to this: 54% of Israeli Arabs said "You cannot trust most Jews" (31% definitely agreed and 23% agreed); 46% did not agree or did not agree at all with this statement (30% did not agree at all, 16% did not agree).

Jews' mistrust of Arabs is also high and based, *inter alia*, on the assumption that they are not loyal to the country, on their abstention from army service, and on the view that they constitute a hostile minority that also includes individuals occasionally involved in terrorist activities. In the Democracy Index 2007, 66% of Jews said "You cannot trust Arabs." In a more focused question – "Should Arab parties, including Arab ministers, join the government?" - the figures are even more remarkable: 78% of Jews are opposed to this, vis-à-vis only 22% who support or very much support such a move (despite MK Raleb Majadale of the Labor Party having joined the government as minister of science, technology, culture,

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58 For further details, see *Report of the Or Commission: Official Commission of Inquiry into the Clashes between the Security Forces and Israeli Citizens*, August 2003, http://elyon1.court.gov.il//heb/veadot/or/inside_index.htm.

and sport in February 2007). This is the lowest figure recorded since the early 1990s. Figure 33 presents similar patterns in previous years, though more moderate. In January 1993, 33% of Jews supported Arabs joining the government, and in 2000 – 46%. After the beginning of the second intifada, the supporters' rate dropped to 33% and remained stable until 2003. The lowest rate of support, as noted, was recorded in 2007. These figures show that shifts in the levels of support over the years are necessarily linked to the progress of political negotiations.[59]

(b) Inequality and Discrimination
Economic and social gaps between the Jewish and Arab populations in Israel are evident in economic and social realms – education, employment, and living standards. Regardless of whether the situation of Arabs reflects a policy of deliberate discrimination, the data point to large gaps.[60]

According to data from the Ministry of Education, 40.2% of Arab students were eligible for matriculation diplomas in the 2004-2005 school year, as opposed to 62.3% of Jewish students. Over recent decades,

Figure 33

Political Equality for the Arab Minority, 1993-2007

"Arab parties, including Arab ministers, should join the government"
Support or very much support (Jewish sample only, percentages)

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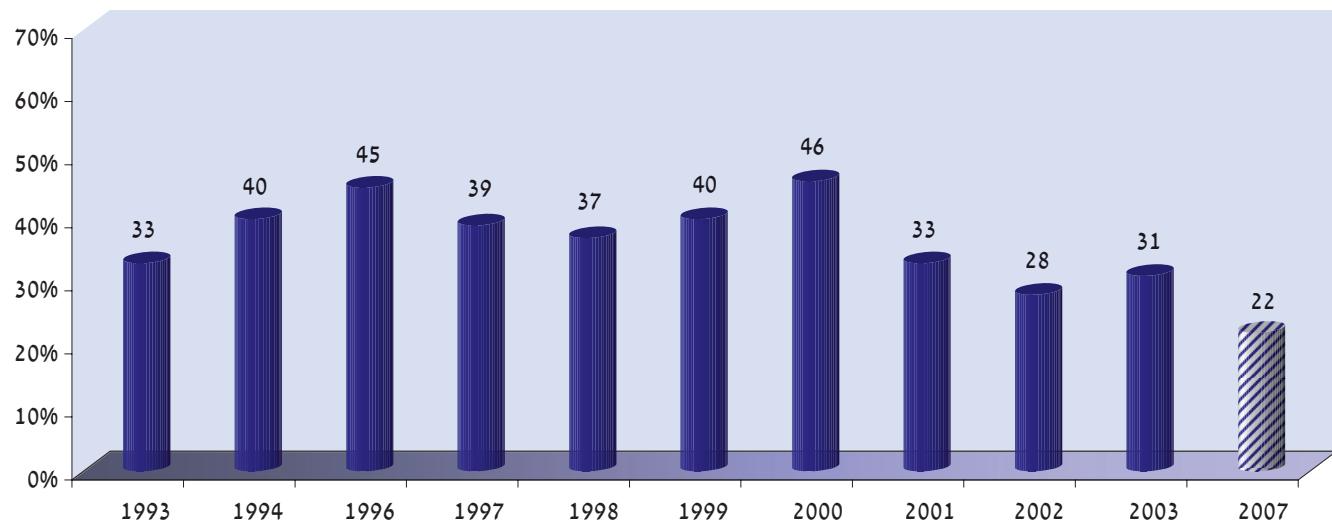
59 See also the *Peace Index*, The Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, www.tau.ac.il/peace.
60 Abu-Ria and Gavison, *The Jewish-Arab Rift in Israel* (note 39 above).

the rate of Arab students at universities has indeed increased,[61] but is still lower than that of Jews.[62] Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics show that 91.6% of B.A. graduates are Jews, as opposed to 9.4% non-Jews. The rate of non-Jews pursuing graduate studies is 50% smaller. After taxes and compensatory payments, 24.4% of Israel's inhabitants (1,630,100) and 20.2% of Israel's families (404,500) were poor.[63] Among non-Jewish citizens, 51.2% of the families in 2006 were poor, as opposed to 15.4% of the Jewish families.

Open discrimination is also evident. First, the Law of Return encourages Jewish immigration, and other laws also ensure Jews (or their relatives) an unlimited right to immigrate to Israel and obtain citizenship and absorption grants upon arrival. In recent years, tension has intensified around the question of family reunification involving Israeli Arabs and their Palestinian spouses. In 2003, the Knesset enacted the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law, which includes a section on "family reunification." This section prevents reunification for families of Palestinians and Israeli citizens. The government extended the temporary provision on this question in 2006, and the High Court of Justice rejected a petition against the law in 2007.

Views within the Jewish public concerning inequality and discrimination of Israel's Arab population assume various forms; 55% said they agree or definitely agree with the statement, "Israeli Arabs are victims of discrimination, unlike Jewish citizens." In 2007, then, 45% of Jewish respondents hold that Arabs do not suffer from discrimination, as opposed to 2003, when 51% of the respondents accepted this claim.[64] Among Arab respondents, 80% agree or definitely agree with the claim that Israeli Arabs are victims of discrimination. 20% of the Arab respondents did not agree or definitely did not agree with this claim.

The 2007 Democracy Index also presents a trend of moderation in the attitudes of Jews toward Israeli Arabs. When examining equality between Israeli Arabs and Jews, we considered the question of supporting "full equality of rights between Jewish and Arab Israeli citizens" (Figure 34). In 2007, 56% of the respondents support or very much support full equality between the two population groups. This is a moderate rise vis-à-vis the 2003 Democracy Index, when 47% of Jews had supported full equality of rights between Arabs and Jews. Nevertheless, compared to the 1999 and 2000 figures (73% and 65% respectively), the rate of support in 2007 is lower than those recorded seven and eight years ago. Furthermore, approximately 50% of the Jews view Israel's Jewish and Zionist character as a justification for limiting the rights of Israeli Arabs.

61 Al-Haj Majid, *Education among the Arabs in Israel: Control and Social Change* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem-The Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, 1996).

62 A distinction between Jews and Arabs gives only a partial picture. Within the Arab community, significant gaps are evident between the achievements of Muslims and Christians in various educational areas. For further details, see Ibid.

63 National Insurance Institute of Israel, *Report on Poverty and Income Gaps 2005-2006* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: National Insurance Institute of Israel-Research and Planning Administration, January 2007). See www.btl.gov.il.

64 Arian et al., *The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index*, (note 1 above).

Figure 34

Equal Rights for the Arab Minority, 1985-2007

"Full equality of rights between Jewish and Arab Israeli citizens"
Support or definitely support (Jewish sample only; percentages)
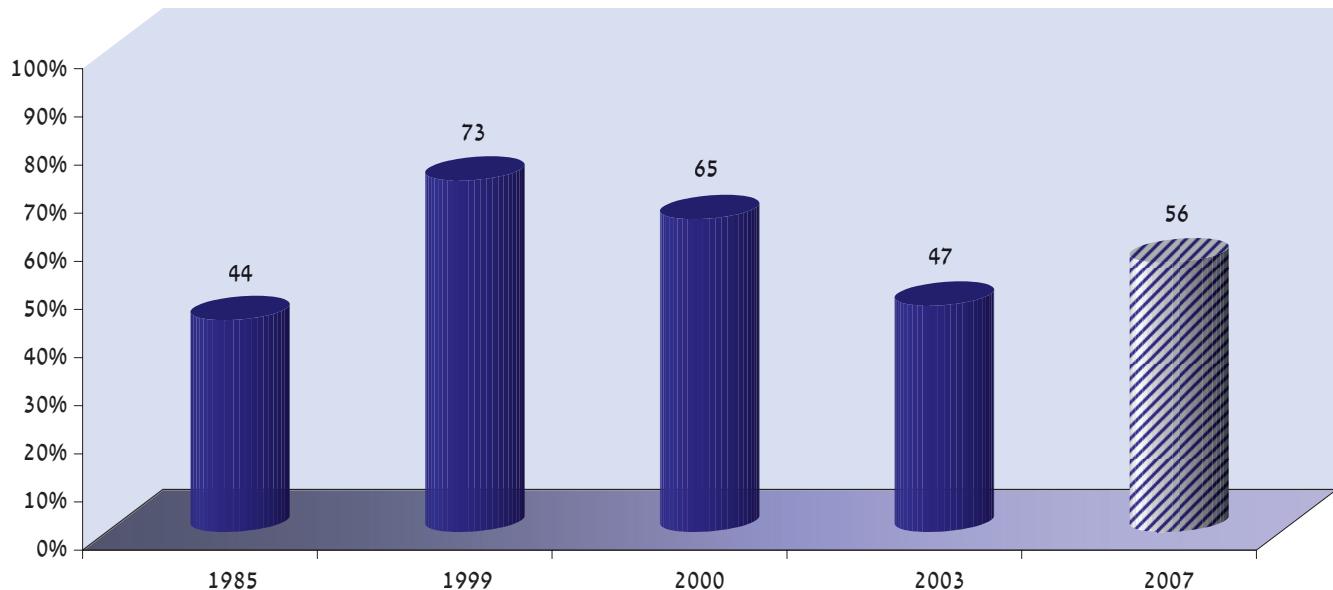
(c) Stereotypes

Jews and Arabs in Israel hold stereotypes and negative views of one another. In 2007, 51% of the Arab respondents agreed or definitely agreed with the statement "Jews are racists" (31% definitely agreed and 20% agreed). The remaining 49% did not agree or definitely disagreed with this statement; 54% of Arab respondents in 2007 agreed with the statement "Jews are inclined to violent behavior" (23% agreed; 31% definitely agreed), whereas 46% did not agree (30% do not agree at all; 16% do not agree).

Similar questions attest to the attitudes of the Jewish public toward the Arab minority.

In the Democracy Index 2007, Jewish respondents were asked about their agreement with the statement "Arabs are inclined to violent behavior"; 75% of the Jewish respondents agreed or definitely agreed, whereas 25% disagreed; 55% of the Jewish respondents agreed or definitely agreed with the statement "Arabs cannot attain the Jews' level of cultural development," as opposed to 45% who did not agree or definitely did not agree with it. Lower figures were recorded concerning the claim that "Arabs are not intelligent"; 43% agreed with this statement and 57% disagreed.[65]

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65 For similar figures and further discussion of these questions see Smooha (note 54 above).

A recurring question in the Democracy Indices as well as in other surveys concerns the saying "The government should encourage Arab emigration from the country." Figure 35 presents the rate of those opposed to the encouragement of Arab emigration. 45% of respondents in 2007 did not agree or definitely did not agree with this proposition. In 2006, the rate of opponents was lower – 38% of the Jewish respondents. Note, however, that most of the public has supported and continues to support the idea that the government should encourage Arabs to emigrate from Israel. In 2007, 55% of the Jewish respondents agreed or definitely agreed with this idea.

2. The Social-Economic Cleavage

One of the deepest social divisions in Israel in the current decade is the economic cleavage. Its depth is related, *inter alia*, to the economic and social policy of Israeli governments and to economic growth.

Positive changes have been recorded in the Israeli economy in recent years in general and in 2006 in particular. The effects of the Second Lebanon War of July and August 2006 on the Israeli economy were moderate and temporary. Since the beginning of the new millennium, the standard of living has leaped quite considerably. The gross national product has increased since 2004 at an average annual rate of 5%[66] and by a total

Figure 35

Opposition to the Encouragement of Arab Emigration, 1987-2007

"The government should encourage Arab emigration from the country"
Disagree and strongly disagree (Jews only; percentages)

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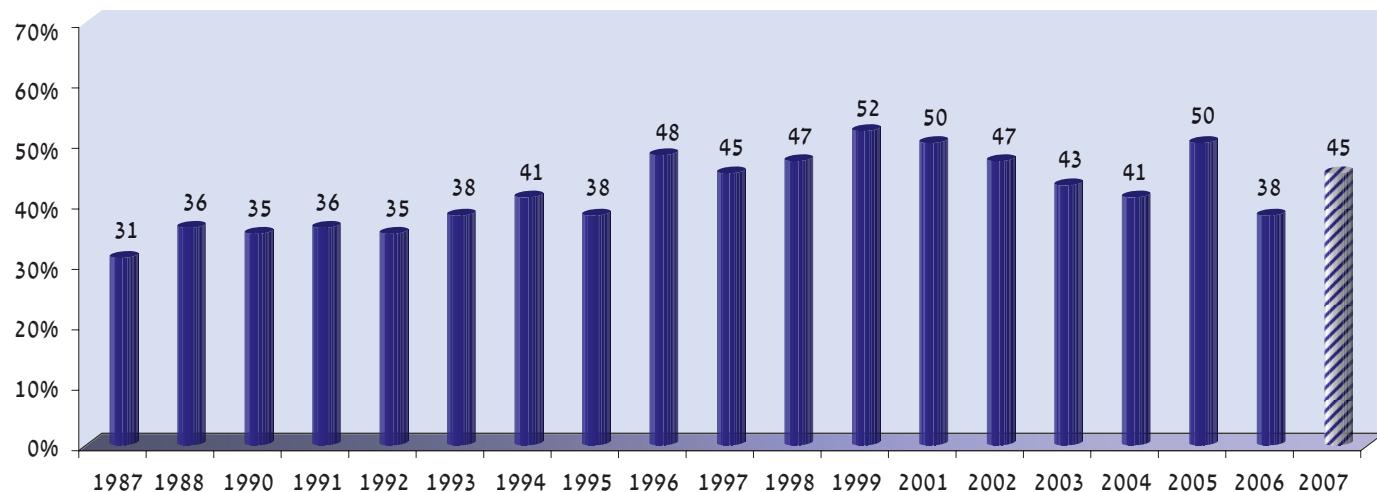
66 The gross national product equals the net value of all the goods and services produced in Israel. For further discussion see Central Bureau of Statistics, *Press Release: Israel's National Accounts – 2006* (Jerusalem: Ministry of Finance, 14 March 2007).

of 15% over the last three years. The gross national product per capita increased during this period at an average annual rate of about 3.2% and by about 10% over these three years. Unemployment has dropped to 7.7%, the lowest level in ten years.[67] A comparison with OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries shows that Israel's rate of economic growth in 2006 was 0.7% higher than the average rate of growth in the thirty countries in the organization.[68]

Together with this positive trend in the Israeli economy, poverty indices have also seriously worsened. In 1995-2006, the rate of families whose income places them below the poverty line grew from 16.8% in 1995 to 20.2% in 2006.[69] Indeed, poverty indices remained stable in 2005-2006, particularly among children and among the elderly (for the first time since 1998), and the latest update of the National Insurance Institute shows a decline from 20.6% in 2005 to 20.2% in 2006. Poverty figures, however, are still high, by international standards as well.

For many years, Israel viewed itself as a welfare state, perceiving as one of its key roles the reduction of social inequality through such means as taxation, subsidies, welfare budgets, and suitable legislation and policy. The economic growth that has characterized

Israel since the late 1980s, alongside the capitalist principles of global economy, have dealt a blow to welfare policies, increasingly evident in the gaps between social classes. Comparative criteria show that inequality and poverty in Israel result from several causes: structural obstructions (such as single parent families or large families); the economic structure (such as low basic salaries); unemployment rates (and the dependence on a guaranteed minimal income); dependence on government stipends; educational gaps; gender; and so forth.[70] We will discuss the scope of this phenomenon in Israel in an international comparison and according to public opinion.

One measure commonly used in the literature for assessing social inequality is the GINI coefficient. This coefficient measures the difference between the actual distribution of income and a theoretical situation assuming the same income for all the country's citizens. The values of this coefficient enable us to assess the trends of change in Israel – improvement or deterioration – over time and in comparison with other countries. The measure has two dimensions: the distribution of income (whether from work or from capital) and, alternatively, the distribution of disposable income (the income available for spending after deducting taxes and government

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67 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Press Release: 2006 Labor Force Survey Data-Yearly and Quarterly Average* (Jerusalem: Ministry of Finance, 28 February 2007).

68 Central Bureau of Statistics, *Press Release: Israel's National Accounts – 2006*, 14 March 2007.

69 National Insurance Institute of Israel, *Report on Poverty and Income Gaps 2005-2006* (note 63 above). The Bank of Israel published similar figures in April 2007. According to 2006 figures from the Bank of Israel, the poverty rate was 24.4%, pointing to a slight drop from the 24.7% rate of 2005 but still high by comparison with previous years and with world figures. For further details see *Bank of Israel 2006 Annual Report*.

70 *The Caesarea Forum XIV* (note 56 above).

stipends). The coefficient value range is 0-1; 0 indicates maximum equality in the distribution of income and 1 absolute inequality.[71]

Figure 36 presents the levels of inequality in the 36 democracies included in the sample, according to the 2006 Human Development Report (HDR).[72] The country with the highest level of equality is Denmark, where the GINI coefficient for disposable income is 0.247. South Africa is the country with the highest level of inequality, with a GINI coefficient for disposable income of 0.578. According to the GINI coefficient for disposable income in the HDR, Israel ranks very low in the equality scale: eighth in inequality out of the 36 countries in the sample, with a score of 0.392.

Another widespread measure for assessing income gaps compares the income of the highest and lowest deciles, with scores ranging from 0 (showing small gaps between the deciles) to 100 (showing the maximum gap between them). As in the international comparison of the GINI coefficient, the HDR 2006 also places Israel in eighth place out of the 36 democracies examined, with a score of 13.4, double that of the Scandinavian countries, for instance (Figure 37).

Figure 36

Inequality – GINI Coefficient: An International Comparison

GINI coefficient for disposable income (percentages)*
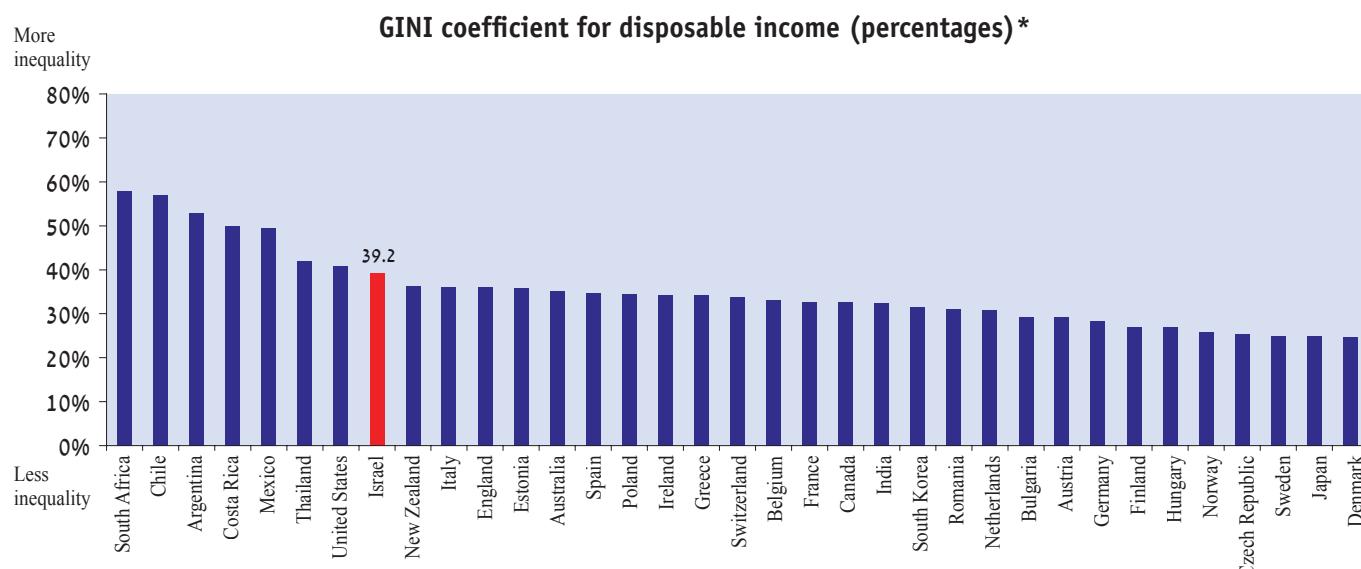
*   For illustration purposes, values were multiplied by 100.

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71 Absolute inequality is a hypothetical measure whereby the entire population, except for one person, has no income. For further discussion, see Arian et al., *The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 1 above).

72 The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index presented data from the Luxemburg Income Study, but these figures have not been updated since July 2001. Hence, we present data from the Human Development Report published in September 2006. See Ibid.

Figure 37

Inequality – Rich-Poor Relationships: An International Comparison
Not good and not at all good (percentages)

More
inequality

Less
inequality

Chart showing percentages by country, from highest to lowest: Chile (~40.5), Argentina (~34.5), South Africa (~33), Costa Rica (~30), Mexico (~24.5), United States (~16), England (~14), Israel 13.4, Thailand (~12.5), Australia (~12.5), New Zealand (~12.5), Italy (~11.5), Estonia (~10.5), Spain (~10), Greece (~10), Ireland (~9.5), Canada (~9.5), Netherlands (~9), France (~9), Switzerland (~9), Poland (~8.5), Belgium (~8), Denmark (~8), South Korea (~7.5), Romania (~7), India (~7), Bulgaria (~7), Austria (~7), Germany (~6.5), Sweden (~6), Norway (~6), Finland (~5.5), Hungary (~5.5), Czech Republic (~5), Japan (~4.5). Israel bar highlighted in red at 13.4.

The Central Bureau of Statistics and the National Insurance Institute are the bodies charged with measuring inequality in the distribution of income in Israel, and they publish the GINI coefficient data.[73] Their figures show that inequality has been growing consistently in Israel over the years: between the 1950s and today, the inequality coefficient in Israel has doubled.[74] In the last decade, both measures have worsened, despite a certain improvement recorded in 2005 and 2006: the GINI coefficient for disposable income in 2006 was 0.3874, while the GINI coefficient for the distribution of income in the same year was 0.5224 – a certain improvement over the previous year.[75] These data and an international comparison show that income gaps in Israel are far higher than in other countries, and are even increasing.

The public opinion survey examined the Israelis' assessment of social and economic gaps. Respondents were divided on the matter of the best social-economic policy for Israel. In an attempt to clarify the public's fundamental position on this question, we asked about the measure of agreement with the claim: "Social and economic equality in Israel is insufficient." In 2007, a significant

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73 Central Bureau of Statistics, *2005 Income Survey* (Jerusalem: Ministry of Finance, 24 July 2006). See www.cbs.gov.il; *Report on Poverty and Income Gaps 2005-2006* (note 63 above).

74 The GINI coefficient (according to the data of the Central Bureau of Statistics) was as follows: in 1950, 0.182; in 1970, 0.306; in 2000, 0.380; in 2005, 0.386. For further information, see Iris Gerby and Gal Levi, *Policy Paper No. 21: The Socioeconomic Divide in Israel* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2000).

75 *Report on Poverty and Income Gaps 2005-2006* (note 63 above).

majority (72%) agreed with this statement, as opposed to 15% who opposed it. The rest (13%) said they were not sure. This figure is lower than that in the 2003 Democracy Index (80%), but still high in comparison with the results of public opinion surveys conducted in Israel since the early 1970s.[76] Another question that recurs in recent surveys is: "In your opinion, are relationships between the rich and the poor good or not good?" The distribution of answers in the 2007 Democracy Index shows that, according to 79% of the respondents, rich-poor relationships are not good or not at all good. This is a high figure, stable over the last five years, with marginal deviations (Figure 38).[77]

A competitive economy, the consumerism of an affluent society, and the weakening of the welfare state characterize Israel's economy and the policy of its governments in recent years. One of the questions that arise when examining the socio-economic policy of the government is: "Do you support a socialist or a capitalist approach?" Figure 39 shows that, since the 1960s, Israeli citizens are divided on this question. Until 1984, most Israelis had supported a socialist approach. Between 1988 and 1996, however, a shift toward support for capitalist policies was recorded, against a background of economic growth in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The fall of the Communist block at the end of the 1980s and developments interpreted as the victory

Figure 38

Rich-Poor Relationships, 2003-2007

Not good and not at all good (percentages)

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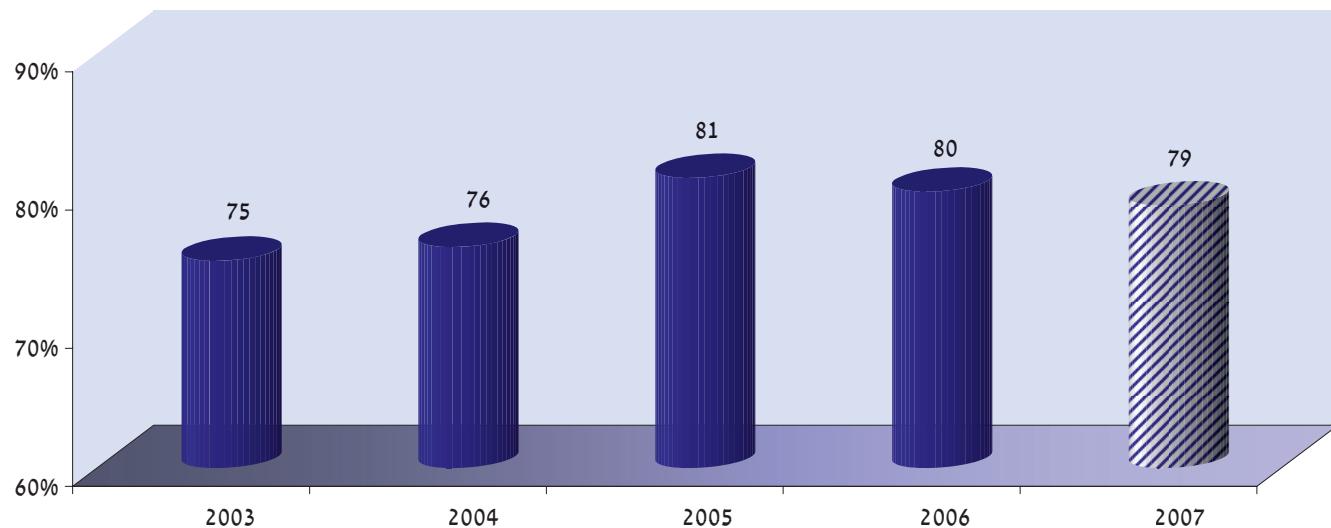
76 Arian et al., *The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 1 above).
77 Ibid.

of capitalism also contributed to the preference of Israelis for capitalist values. A drop in this preference was recorded in 2000, and a rise in the support for a socialist policy was also recorded in 2007: 58% as opposed to 42% who support a capitalist policy. This is the highest preference for a socialist economy in over twenty years. This preference stood out in the 2006 elections, particularly in the platform of the Labor party.[78]

3. The Religious-Secular Cleavage

Tensions on religion and state issues and religious-secular tensions preceded the establishment of the state. The religious-secular cleavage originates in changes in the political and social consensus that had been reached in the past, known as the "status quo on political and social issues between religious and secularists." This consensus had been based on the mistaken assumption, postulated by each side for its own reasons, that the rival camp represents a transient historical phenomenon.[79] *Prima facie*, arrangements concerning religion and state relationships were preserved, but tensions remained hidden and each side sustained its ceaseless pursuit for a monopoly on matters bearing on conjugal law, burial, army service, and the definition of "who is a Jew?" One of the more prominent examples of this tension in recent years concerns mixed marriages. Many couples cannot marry in a religious

Figure 39

Capitalist vs. Socialist Economy, 1962-2007

"Do you support a socialist or a capitalist approach?"
(Jewish sample only; percentages)

	1962	1969	1977	1981	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2003	2007
More socialist	66	63	65	63	61	43	41	46	56	53	58
More capitalist	34	37	35	37	39	57	59	54	46	47	42

■ More capitalist   ■ More socialist
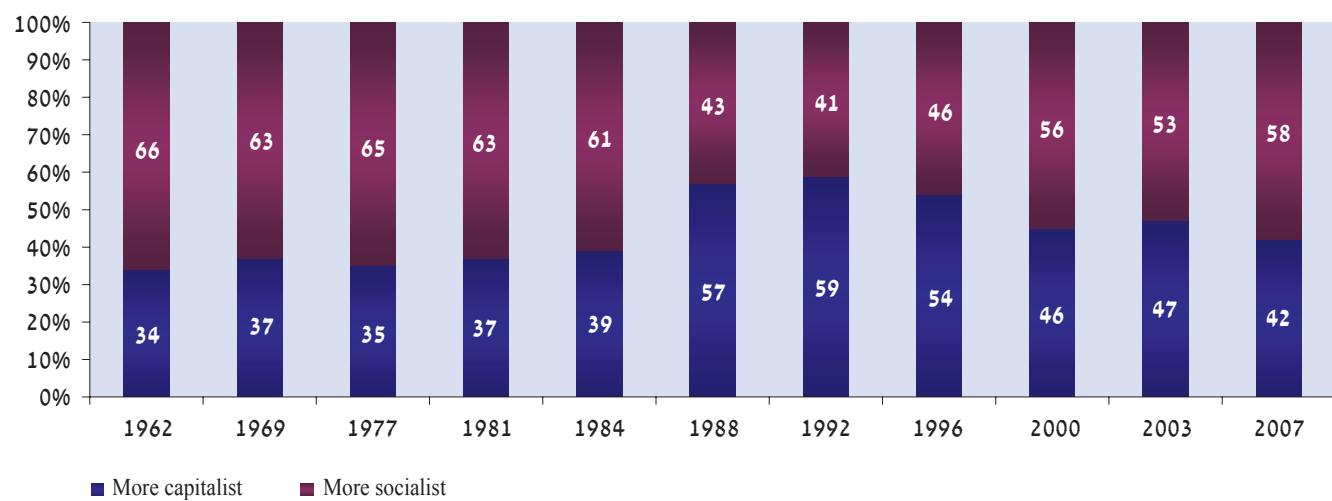
78 Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, eds., *Elections in Israel – 2006* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, forthcoming).

79 Aviezer Ravitzky, *Policy Paper 1E – Religious and Secular Jews in Israel: A Kulturkampf?* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2000).

ceremony because Israeli law does not allow civil marriage or marriage between members of different religions. Although this polarization is not new, it has now surfaced on the public, cultural, and political agenda, reopening questions as to whether the current agreements and arrangements are suited to the current reality.

One of the claims is that Israel has turned from a consensual democracy, which enables compromises and cooperation, into a crisis democracy, where compromises between the religious and non-religious population are not possible. This claim illustrates the gravity of the religious-secular cleavage in Israel.[80] Another claim is that the cleavages are cumulative – besides the controversies on religion and state issues, most secular Jews are left-winged whereas a majority of religious Jews are right-winged. Findings point to a deterioration in the relationship between these groups over the years. In 2000, most of the public (80%) assessed relations between religious and non-religious Jews as not good. We examine the depth of this cleavage in the perception of the public in the 2007 Democracy Index in comparison with previous public opinion surveys, and ask how citizens of different religious orientations relate to government institutions.

(a) Self Definition

Tradition has preserved a steady standing with the Jewish public. This is an interesting finding given the large immigration wave from the CIS that arrived in Israel in the 1990s. 7% of the respondents in 2007 report that they observe tradition meticulously, 25% observe tradition to a large extent, 47% observe tradition slightly, and 21% do not observe tradition at all (Figure 40).[81]

(b) Living According to Religious Tradition

The Democracy Index asked: "In your opinion, should the government of Israel make sure that life in the country is conducted according to Jewish religious tradition?" Since 1981, no less than 30% have said they wanted this. In 2007, 59% hold that the government should make sure of this, whereas 41% hold that conducting life according to Jewish tradition should not be a government concern. Signs of change, then, are evident: many Jews are interested in closeness to religion and to tradition and expect government policy to ensure this. Figure 41 presents the attitude of the respondents, over the years, to life according to Jewish tradition. One possible explanation of these findings could be that ultra-Orthodox and religious parties have been less prominent in politics in the last decade, and the public is less afraid of religious coercion. Since these political parties are removed from government, the public does not feel threatened and does not express strong opposition to the notion of living according to religious tradition.

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80 For further discussion see Baruch Zisser and Asher Cohen, "From a Consensual Democracy to a Crisis Democracy: The Struggle for Israel's Collective Identity" [Hebrew], *Politika* 3 (1999), pp. 9-30.

81 Levy et al., *A Portrait of Israeli Jewry* (note 44 above).

Figure 40

Observance of Jewish Tradition, 1981-2007

"To what extent do you observe religious tradition?"
(Jewish sample only; percentages)

Legend: ■ I do not observe at all　■ I observe slightly　■ I observe to a large extent　■ I observe meticulously
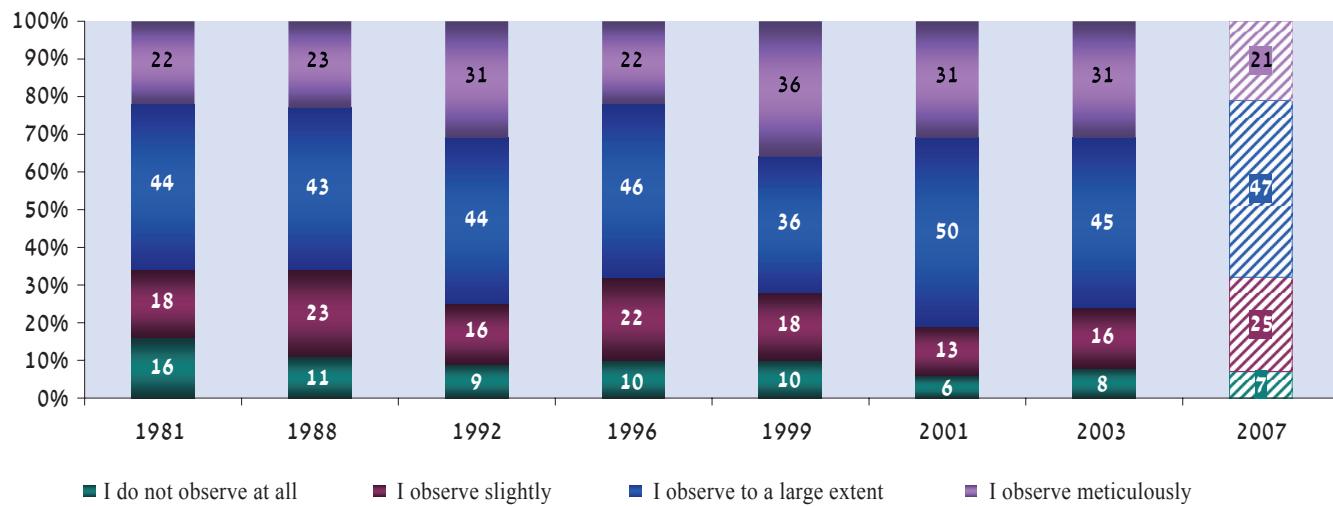
Figure 41

Living According to Jewish Religious Tradition, 1981-2007

"In your opinion, should the government of Israel make sure that life in the country is conducted according to Jewish religious tradition?"
Definitely and perhaps make sure (Jewish sample only; percentages)
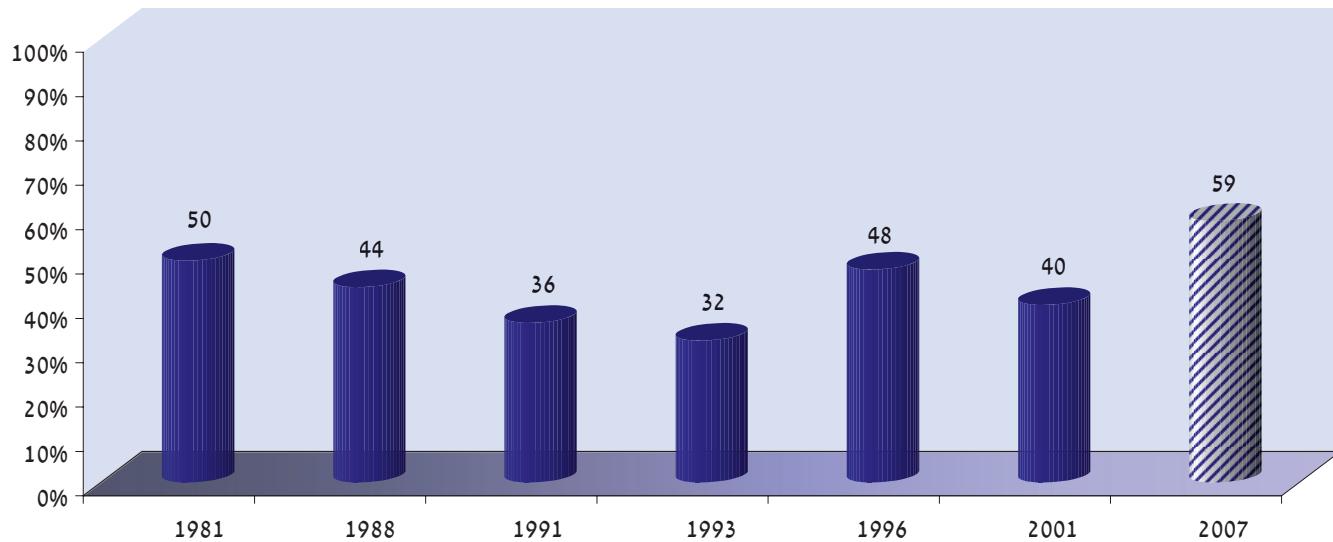
Respondents were also asked for their view on the statement: "Every couple in Israel should be allowed to marry in any way they wish." Between 2003 and 2005, about 60% agreed with this statement. In the 2007 Democracy Index, 54% of the respondents agreed, 36% hold this should not be allowed, and about 10% have no definite view on this matter.

(c) Relationship between Religious and Non-Religious Jews

Figure 42 presents data on the Jewish public's definition of the relationship between religious and non-religious Jews as "not good" or "not at all good." This has been the view of a majority of the Jewish public over the years. In 2007, an improvement was recorded: the rate of respondents claiming that the relationship between the two groups is not good was 66% – a considerable drop from 2003 (76%), but still a majority.

We also tested for a correlation between people's (self-defined) level of religiosity and their assessment of the relationship between religious and secular Jews. A clear trend was evident: the more religious the person, the better his or her assessment of the relationship with secular Jews. 70% of secular Jews assess the relationship between the groups as not good, as opposed to 30% who assess them as good; 66% of traditional Jews assess the relationship between the groups as not good; among the religious, 56% hold that the relationship is not good, whereas 47% of the ultra-Orthodox define the relationship between religious and non-religious Jews as not good. These data point to the known trend whereby the minority group perceives the situation as better and feels less threatened than the majority group.[82]

Figure 42

Relationship between Religious and Non-Religious Jews, 1972-2007

Not good or not at all good (Jewish sample only; percentages)

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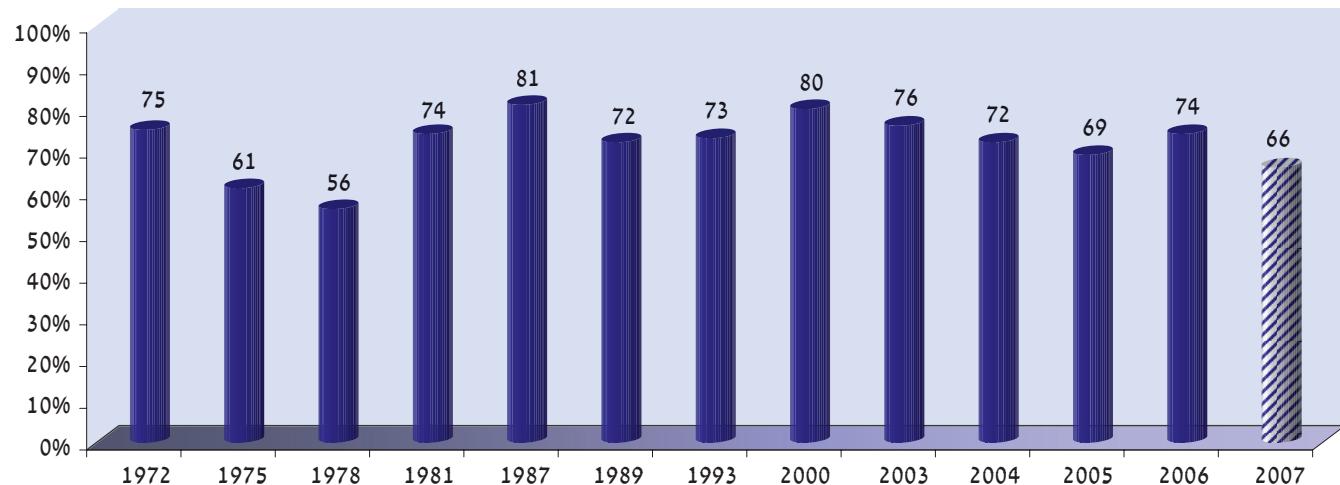
82 Carol Gordon, "Mutual Perception of Religious and Secular Jews in Israel," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 33 (1989), pp. 632-651.

In sum, although a majority of the public views the relationship between the two groups as not good, an improvement is evident. Moreover, the majority wishes the government to ensure that life will be conducted according to Jewish religious tradition.

4. The New Immigrants–Old-Timers Cleavage

A tenet of Zionist ideology held that the Land of Israel would be built by Jewish immigrants, and this principle has been faithfully implemented. Tensions and contradictions, however, have surfaced in the course of realizing this idea. Signs of mutual alienation (feelings of discrimination among the new immigrants or a sense of estrangement among the old-timers) accompanied the ethos of the ingathering of exiles and the melting pot policy striving to integrate and absorb the new immigrants. The gaps between the ideal and the daily reality hindered these attempts and highlighted cleavages and division between the groups. The large-scale immigration from dozens of countries and hundreds of communities brought with it social, economic, and cultural changes, which influenced the relationships between immigrants and old-timers and more than once led to tensions and struggles.

The large waves of immigration in the first decade of the state created a demographic turning point in the Jewish population. About a million immigrants arrived in Israel until 1960 – half of them from Islamic countries

and half from Europe.[83] The immigrant population was far larger than the absorbing population. Sources of tension between the immigrants and the old-timers, then, are planted deeply in the pre-state *Yishuv* period, when the prevalent ideology had been the negation of exile. Tensions worsened with the immigration waves from Islamic countries in the early 1950s, and the social, economic, and cultural differences between them and the old-timers could not be ignored. The cultural background of the immigrants contrasted strongly with that of the local inhabitants, and led to the immigrants' stigmatization. The collective Israeli-Zionist identity perceived the essentially different symbols, norms, values, and behavior patterns of the immigrants as contradicting the realization of the national identity and the emergence of an Israeli culture. This contradiction also inspired fears of the symbols the immigrants had brought with them from their countries of origin and a tendency to reject them. The Labor movement, which represented the collective identity, also saw their large numbers as a political threat. And indeed, as they integrated, the immigrants began wielding real political power in Israeli society, both within the existing parties and in independent political bodies.

Over the years, these tensions dispelled. With the immigration from Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, public discussion of the relationship between new immigrants and old-timers resurfaced. Between 1990 and 2005, 1,100,000 new

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83 *Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2006*, Table 4.2 (note 55 above), p. 238.

immigrants came to Israel, among them about 860,000 from the CSI.[84] These immigrants expanded the population of Israel by 35%.[85] Unlike previous waves of immigration, this immigrant population has several unique characteristics: their immigration was motivated by a fear of antisemitism and by political, economic, and social crises in the post-Communist CSI countries.[86] Although they number a high proportion of scientists and academics among them, new immigrants often belong to the low socio-economic class of Israeli society, a definition that to some extent overlaps the class cleavage. Many of the immigrants are secular, and quite a few are not Jews according to halakhic definitions. The 1990s immigration is also marked by a high rate of non-Jewish spouses and single-parent families. Immigrants, therefore, face not only economic and religious problems, but also experience social and economic discrimination.

The problems in the absorption of Ethiopian Jews in the 1980s and early 1990s and the ambivalent attitude of the State of Israel toward Ethiopian immigrants must also be considered in light of this background. Due to doubts about their Judaism, the application of the Law of Return to them was made possible only after the 1973 ruling of Rav Ovadia Yosef (then Chief Sephardic Rabbi), stating that Ethiopian Jews are indeed Jews and action should be taken to bring them to Israel.[87] The decision in 1975 was that the Law of Return applies to Ethiopian Jews, and Jews from Ethiopia have been arriving in Israel since 1981. 17,000 Ethiopian Jews came in the 1980s,[88] about 6,700 of them in Operation Moses (November 1984 – January 1985). In the 1990s, another 45,000 immigrants arrived from Ethiopia, about 14,000 of them in Operation Solomon (May 1991).

In several characteristics, immigrants from Ethiopia resembled many of the immigrants from Islamic countries in the 1950s. Most had been farmers in their native country, and they came without the professional and technological training appropriate for the Israeli reality of the 1980s and 1990s. Their educational level was also mostly low. A further problem was the issue of their permanent housing and their dispersal in temporary dwellings (caravans) in neglected areas. Changes in the patriarchal family structure, particularly a decline in the father's role as the main breadwinner, added to their social difficulties, created integration problems, and led to strong criticism of the absorption policy.[89]

84 Ibid, Table 4.4, p. 241.

85 In 1990, the Jewish population of Israel numbered 3,947,000, and in 2006 – 5,313,800. See ibid., Table 2.1, p. 86.

86 Motivations may be assumed to have been pragmatic rather than ideological. See Moshe Sicron and Elazar Leshem, eds., *Profile of an Immigration Wave* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998), p. 299.

87 Questions about the legitimacy of their Judaism have troubled Ethiopian immigrants and hindered the arrival of members of the Falash mura tribe.

88 *Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2006*, Table 4.4, (note 55 above), p. 241.

89 Devorah Hakohen, ed., *Ingathering of Exiles: Myth and Reality* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1998).

Academic research on the new immigrants-old-timers cleavage began in 1974-1975. Taking into account the limitations of the data available, a comparison reveals that cleavage has hardly changed (Figure 43). According to the 2007 Democracy Index, 62% of Jews define the relationship as not good or not at all good as compared, for instance, with 2003, when 51% of the respondents noted that relationships are not good.

Answers in the 2007 Index on the relationship between new immigrants and old-timers according to the respondents' country of origin lead to a similar picture. The data do not point to significant differences between the responses of Israeli-born respondents, those born in Europe and America ("Ashkenazi"), Asia-Africa ("Mizrahi"), or the CSI ("Russians"); 64% of

Mizrahi respondents report bad relationships between immigrants and old-timers, and 60% of immigrants from the CSI speak of bad relations. The gap is small and points to a general feeling prevalent in the public.

5. The Ethnic Cleavage
The ethnic cleavage is recurrently placed on the public agenda. Its roots are in the immigration waves of the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the dichotomous distinction between immigrants from Europe and America ("Westerners" or "Ashkenazim") as opposed to immigrants from Asia and Africa ("Mizrahim" or "Sepharadim") began to develop. The research literature has considered this topic at length, and we will not enter this discussion in the present context.[90] Our concern is the social and

Figure 43

Relationships between New Immigrants and Old-Timers, 1975-2007

Not good or not at all good (Jewish sample only; percentages)
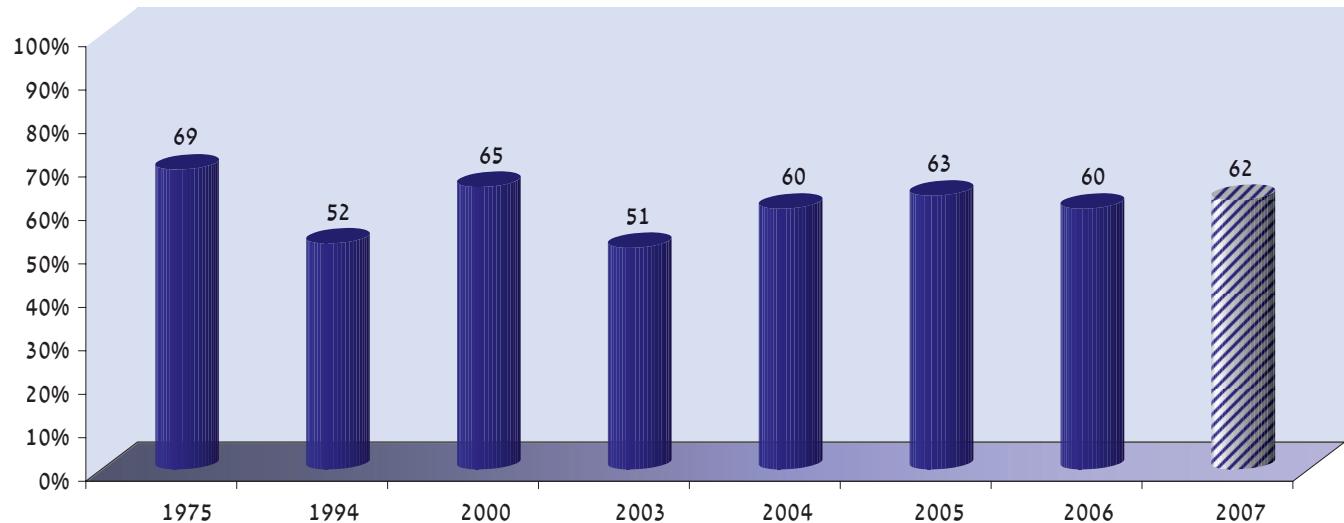
90 See, for instance, Devorah Hakohen, "Immigration and Absorption" [Hebrew], in *Trends in Israeli Society*, ed. Ephraim Yaar and Zeev Shavit (Tel Aviv: Open University, 2001), pp. 365-486; Moshe Lissak, *The 1950's Immigration: The Melting Pot Cracked* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1999).

political importance of this cleavage and the pattern of the relationship between the groups.

The two main approaches used to analyze the relationship between immigrants and old-timers and between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim are the cultural approach and the balance of power approach. These outlooks split into many questions, but all agree that the absorption of immigrants from Islamic countries in the 1950s resulted in the institutionalization of the ethnic cleavage in Israeli society. The balance of power approach focuses on the power relationships that evolved between the immigrants and the old-timers. The "melting pot" policy adopted by the establishment did not take into account the immigrants' characteristics as cultural communities, each with its own identity. The balance of power approach emphasizes the contempt, the arrogance, and the discrimination displayed by the establishment in absorbing immigration during the 1950s, which led to the development of a conflict between Mizrahim and Ashkenazim. By contrast, the cultural approach stresses the weight of the objective historical conditions and of the economic and educational circumstances, highlighting the cultural differences between immigrants and old-timers as the roots for the gaps and tensions between them.[91] Both approaches share the understanding that immigrant absorption in the 1950s created resentments evident until this day – in educational, cultural, as well as in political realms.

The ethnic cleavage, then, has not shown improvement over time. In fact, the figures actually point to a deterioration. 55% of the Jewish respondents hold that relationships between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim are not good or not at all good. This is the second worst figure in thirty years. Figure 44 shows that, over the years, less than half of the Jewish respondents have assessed the relationship between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim as not good. The best situation prevailed in 1989, when only 21% of the Jewish respondents thought that ethnic relationships were not good. In this context, the political reversal of 1977 that brought the Likud to power deserves mention. It is at this point that the ethnic cleavage attained political expression. The current public assessment is that relationships in this realm have worsened.

An analysis of the relationship between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim in 2007 according to the respondents' countries of origin shows a similar picture. As opposed to 42% of the respondents from Europe and America who define the relationship between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim as not good, 59% of respondents from Asia and Africa hold a similar view. This is a gap of 17% between the two groups pointing to the deep contrast in the perception of the cleavage; 55% of the Israeli-born respondents assessed the relationship as problematic, whereas immigrants from the CIS emphasize even more strongly the weaknesses of the relationship between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim: 63% of them

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91 Sammy Smooha, "Jewish Ethnicity in Israel as a Concrete and Ongoing Phenomenon" [Hebrew], in *Mizrahi Voices: Toward a New Mizrahi Discourse on Israeli Society and Culture,* ed. Gai Abutbul, Lev Grinberg, and Pnina Mutsafi-Heller (Tel Aviv: Masada, 2005), pp. 157-164.

noted that the relationship between the two groups is not good. The gap between the immigrants from the CIS and those from Europe and America is even greater – 21% (Figure 45).

Figure 44

Relationship between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, 1972-2007

Not good and not at all good (Jewish sample only; percentages)
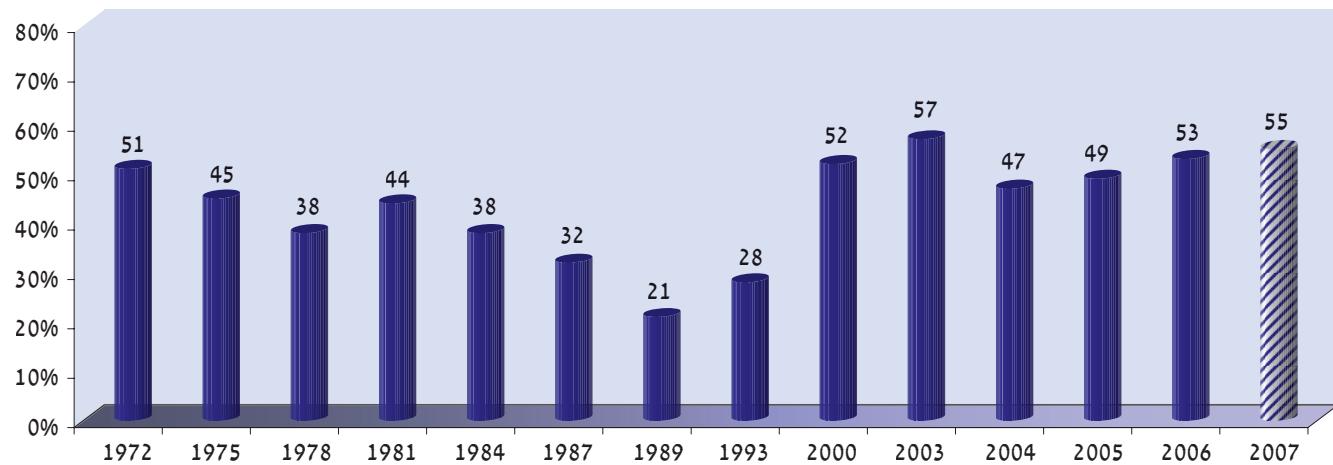
Figure 45

Relationship between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim According to Country of Origin

Not good and not at all good (Jewish sample only; percentages)
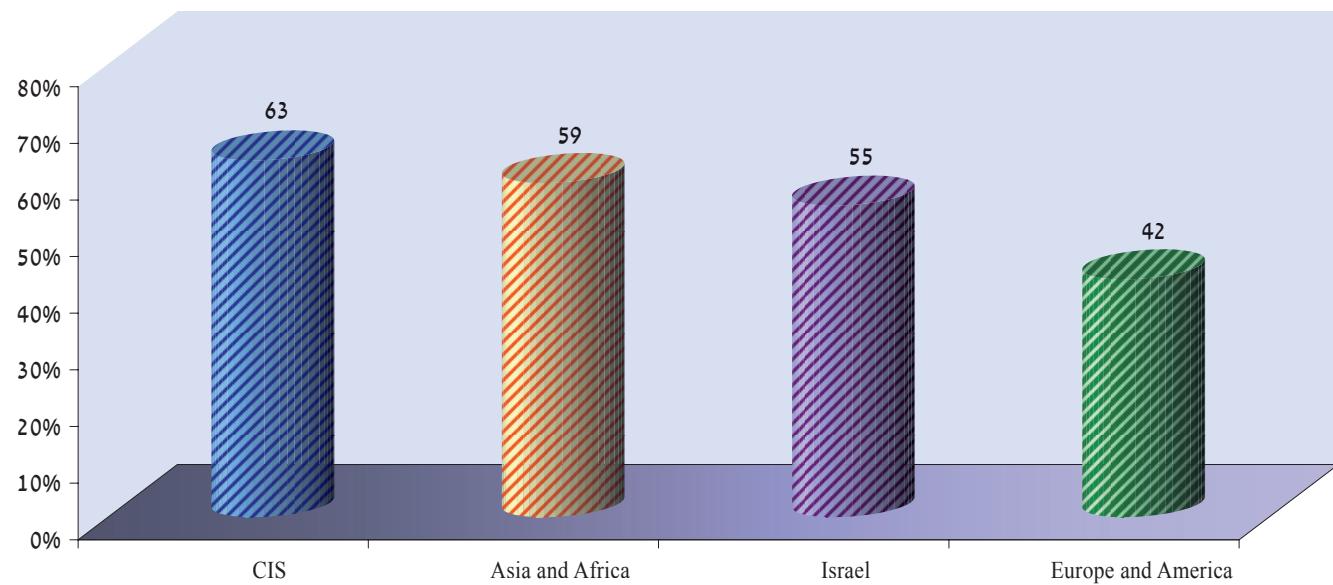
D. Social Cohesion in Israel

We have so far reviewed the measure of social trust and the social cleavages pointing to a weakness in Israeli society. In this section, we focus on social cohesion regarding four main topics: (1) Perceptions of the readiness to compromise. (2) Self-identity and self-definition. (3) Contribution to society: the IDF and defense. (4) Sense of being part of the country.

1. Perceptions of Readiness to Compromise

A key measure when examining social cohesion is the readiness of groups in society to compromise. The 2007 Democracy Index included a question: "To what extent are members of a certain group ready to compromise on issues important to them in order to reach an agreed basis that will enable everyone to live here together?" The sample included both Arabs and Jews. The results indicate that most of the public estimates that left-winged, secular, and Jewish sections of the population will be ready to compromise in order to reach an agreed basis that will enable everyone to live here together. As for the right-winged, the religious, and the Arabs – less than half of the respondents estimated that they will be ready to compromise (Figure 46). Note that we are speaking of groups unequal in size, and the gap is particularly noticeable between Jews and Arabs: Jews are about three quarters of the population and of the sample, and Arabs

– about a quarter.[92] Furthermore, the secular group is much larger than the religious group, and the right winged group is larger than the left-winged.

Assessments in both groups – Jews and Arabs – concerning the Jews' readiness to compromise are similar (71% and 68%, respectively). An analysis of the responses of Jews and Arabs concerning the Arabs' readiness to compromise shows a gap: 38% of the Jews hold that Israeli Arabs are ready to compromise, whereas 83% of Israeli Arabs attest about themselves that they are ready to compromise (Figure 47). Arabs estimate that they are ready to compromise far beyond the readiness that Jews ascribe to them. This figure matches the fact revealed in Figure 31, stating that the Jewish-Arab cleavage is considered the most serious of the five cleavages in Israeli society.

Israeli Arabs assess their readiness to compromise as far higher than perceived by Jews. This finding strengthens the significance of the many gaps between Arabs and Jews, and of the many stereotypes that build the perception of the "other" in the creation of the cleavage and the shaping of policy on this issue. In many conflicts, the stronger (majority) group ascribes the source of the problem to the minority group, which does not share this perception. Logic and the pertinent literature suggest that, insofar as groups become better acquainted, the basis for mediation and compromise will widen.[93]

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92 *Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2006*, Table 2.1 (note 55 above), p. 85.
93 H. C. Kelman, "Group Processes in the Resolution of International Conflicts: Experiences from the Israeli-Palestinian Case," *American Psychologist* 52 (1997), pp. 212-220.

Figure 46

Readiness to Compromise

"In your opinion, to what extent are members of the group ready to compromise on issues important to them in order to reach an agreed basis that will enable everyone to live here together?"
To a large extent and to some extent (percentages)
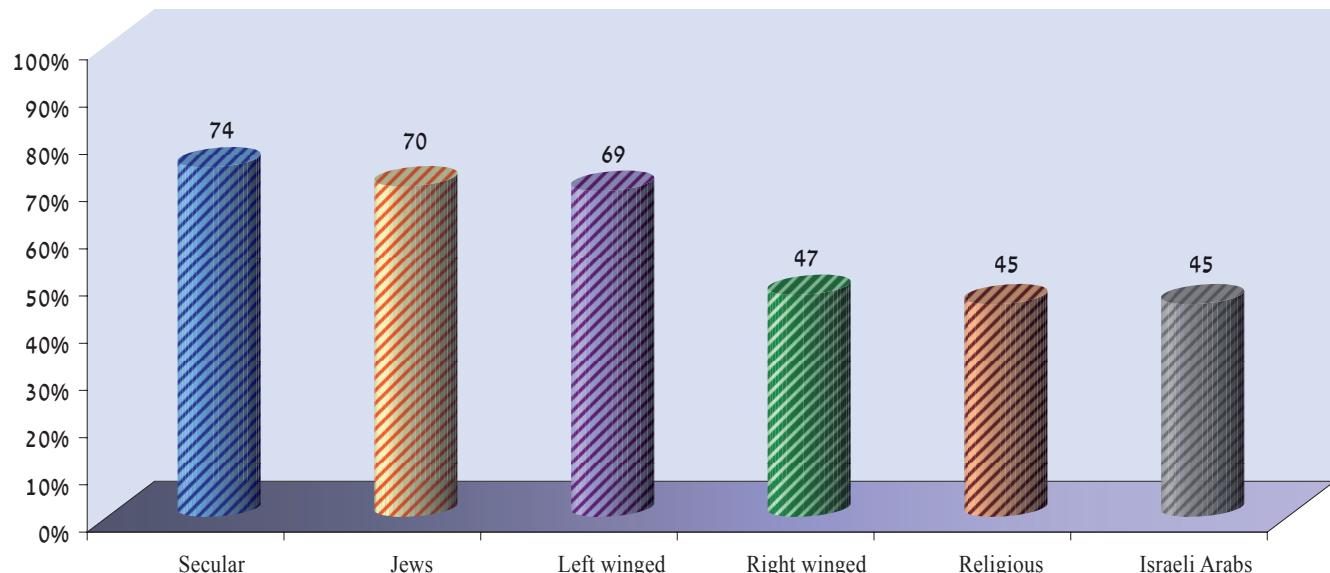
The assessment of the readiness to compromise in order to live together – according to each self-definition and on the left-right continuum – points to differences between left and right. The stronger the left leanings, the lower the individual's assessment of the right-wing's readiness to compromise. And vice-versa: the more to the right individuals place themselves on the political map, the higher their assessment of the right's readiness to compromise. As for the left's readiness to compromise, no particular trend is evident. People from all ends of the political spectrum claim that the left is ready to compromise to a large extent (Figure 48). Nevertheless, differences emerge in the assessment of left-winged individuals' readiness to compromise relative

to right-winged individuals, as evident from Figure 46. Left-winged individuals belong to groups whose readiness to compromise is assessed as higher by the population in general (69%), as opposed to people on the right, who belong to groups whose readiness to compromise is assessed as lower by the population in general (47%).

Another aspect of the readiness to compromise considers the respondents' religious and political affiliations. Figure 49 highlights that secular individuals are seen as more ready to compromise than others. Those who observe tradition meticulously assessed the readiness to compromise of secular individuals as lower, but the figure is still high (65%).

Figure 47

Readiness to Compromise According to Self-Definition and Nationality

"In your opinion, to what extent are members of the group ready to compromise on issues important to them in order to reach an agreed basis that will enable everyone to live here together?"
To a large extent and to some extent (percentages)

Israeli Arabs are ready to compromise: Israeli Arabs 83, Jews 38
Jews are ready to compromise: Israeli Arabs 68, Jews 71

■ Israeli Arabs   ■ Jews
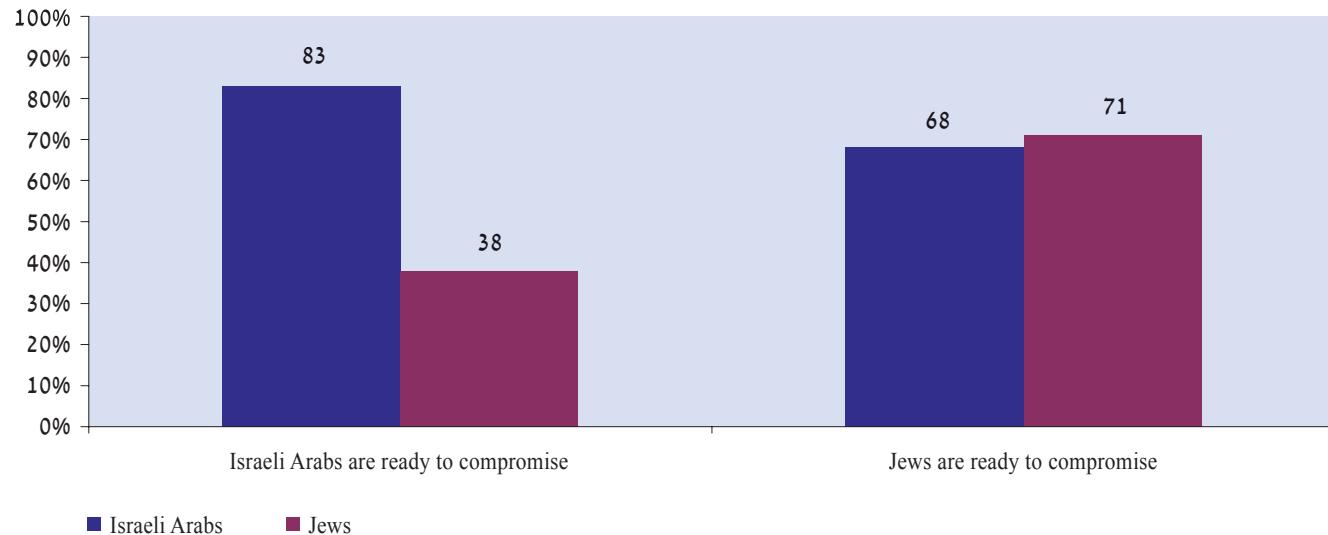
Figure 48

Readiness to Compromise According to Self-Definition on the Right-Left Continuum*

"In your opinion, to what extent are members of the group ready to compromise on issues important to them in order to reach an agreed basis that will enable everyone here to live together?"
1=Right; 7=Left; to a large extent and to some extent (percentages)
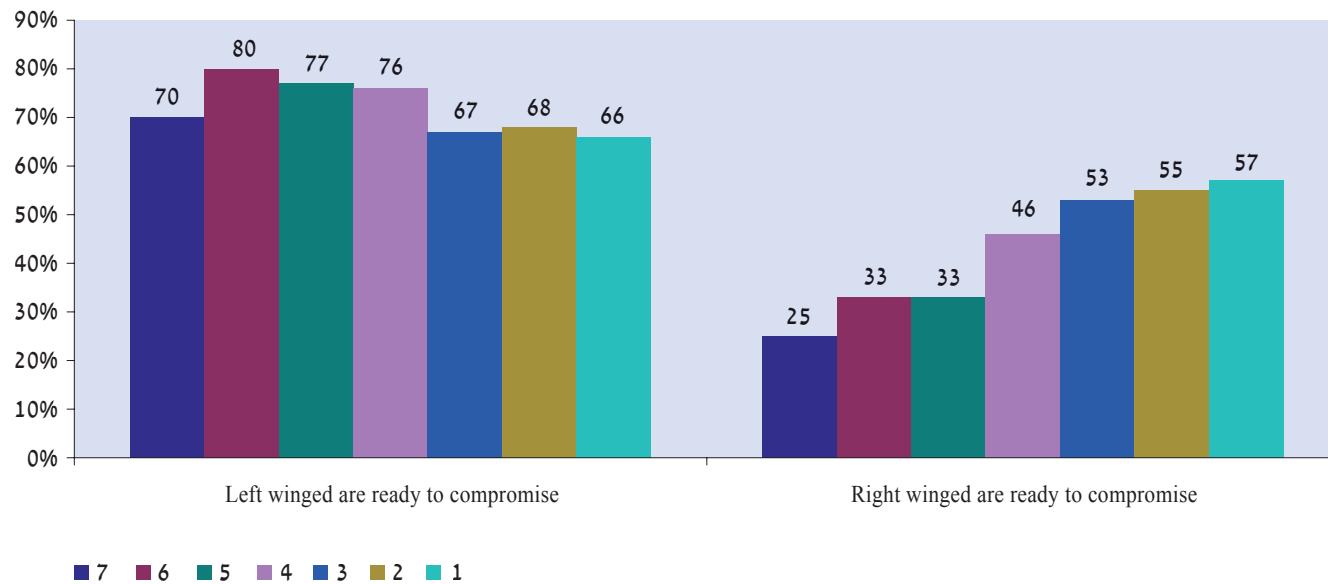
Left winged are ready to compromise: 70, 80, 77, 76, 67, 68, 66
Right winged are ready to compromise: 25, 33, 33, 46, 53, 55, 57

■ 7   ■ 6   ■ 5   ■ 4   ■ 3   ■ 2   ■ 1

*   Responses were distributed so that 100% represents the respondents who defined themselves on the right-left continuum. The percentages that appear in the Figure represent the rate of respondents ranked, for instance, as 1, who answered that members of a particular group agree to compromise to a large extent or to some extent.

Figure 49

Readiness to Compromise According to Level of Religious Observance*

"In your opinion, to what extent are members of the group ready to compromise on issues important to them in order to reach an agreed basis that will enable everyone to live here together?"
To a large extent and to some extent (percentages)

Religious are ready to compromise   Secular are ready to compromise

- I observe slightly   I observe meticulously
- I do not observe at all   I observe to a large extent
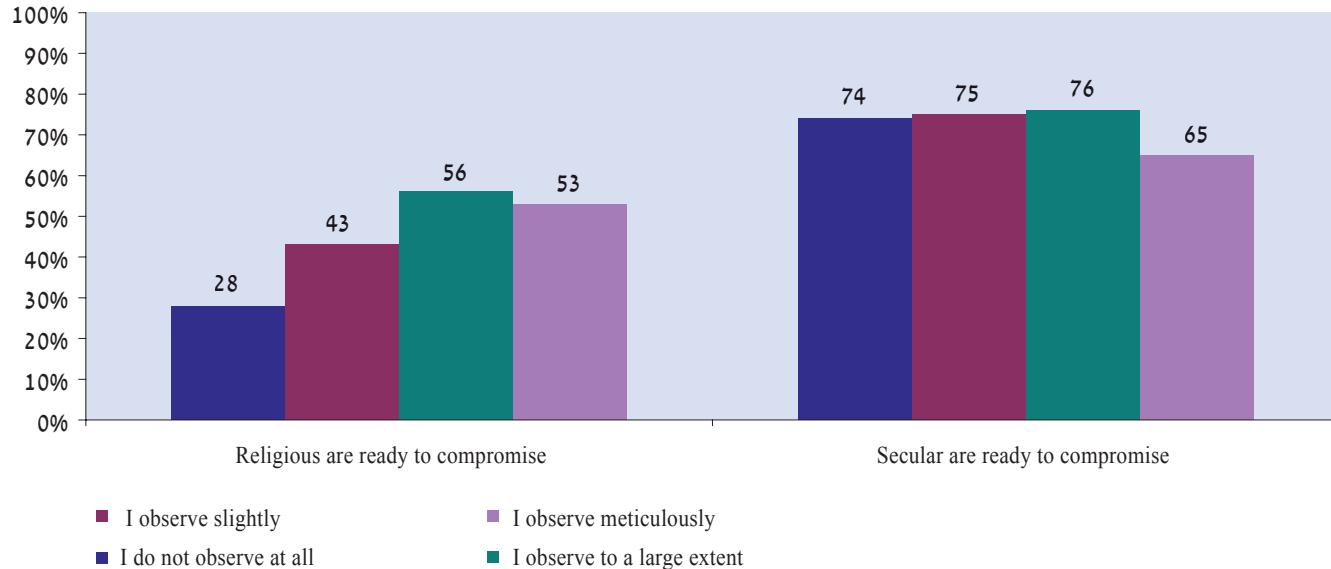
*   Responses were distributed so that 100% represents the respondents who defined themselves according to their level of religious observance. The percentages that appear in the Figure represent the rate of respondents ranked, for instance, as "I observe tradition slightly," who answered that members of a particular group agree to compromise to a large extent or to some extent.

Two main conclusions emerge from this analysis. The first is that, according to the public in general, three groups – Jews, secular, and left-winged – are more ready to compromise in order to enable everyone to live together on an agreed basis, contrary to Arab, religious, and right-winged groups. The second conclusion is that members of all groups ascribe to themselves a higher readiness to compromise than that which other groups ascribe to them. We learn this from the data about the Israeli Arabs' self-assessment of their own readiness to compromise, as well as from the figures about the right-winged and most religiously observant groups. In other words, Israeli Arabs assess themselves as far more ready to compromise than Jews assess them, right-winged individuals assess themselves as more ready to compromise than left-winged individuals assess them, and observant Jews assess the readiness of religious individuals to compromise as higher than the readiness that non-observant individuals ascribe to them.

Mutual lack of acquaintance is the main reason for the negative assessments about the readiness to compromise that members of one group ascribe to the other. The conclusion, then, is that increasing the groups' mutual acquaintance will lead to greater cohesion.

2. Self-Identity and Self-Definition

When examining the extent of cohesion in Israel, we considered how Israeli citizens define themselves. The aim was to assess the broadest common denominator for members of various groups, and the identity that best defines them. Insofar as we find that the respondents' self-definition is similar or identical, we will conclude that a broader common denominator exists between them, and insofar as the gaps and the variance are greater, we will conclude that the common denominator is narrower. The existence of a broad common denominator could be a sign of cohesion.

Data show that 47% of the respondents define themselves, first and foremost, as "Jews"; 39% define themselves as "Israelis." Ethnicity and religiosity receive a low assessment in the first self-definition of Jews (Figure 50). In second place (39%), Jews view themselves as "Israelis"; about one-fifth of the Jewish population defines itself according to religion. A considerable segment of the Jewish population does not define itself as either Jew or Israeli, although these are the definitions that the Jewish public ranked in the first places.

The Jewish public's self-definition was also built according to the level of religiosity. Figure 51 shows that 78% of the ultra-Orthodox population defines itself first and foremost as Jews; 73% of the religious see themselves first as Jews; 55% of traditional Jews defined themselves first as Jews, and only 34% of secular Jews identify themselves first as Jews. None of the ultra-Orthodox respondents chose "Israeli" as a first definition, but 16% of those defining themselves as religious, 35% of those defining themselves as traditional, and 49% of secularists did so.

Figure 50

Identity: Self-Definition

(Jewish sample only; percentages)
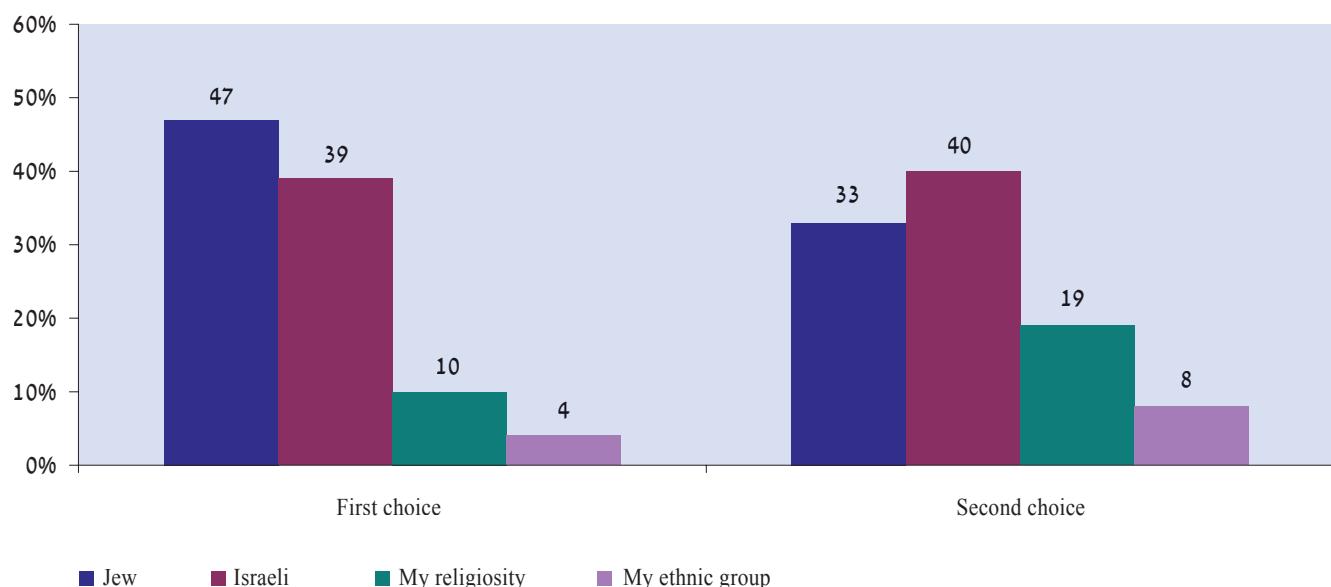
Figure 51

**Identity: Self-Definition According to Self-Ascription
of Religious Orientation (first choice only)
(Jewish sample only; percentages)**
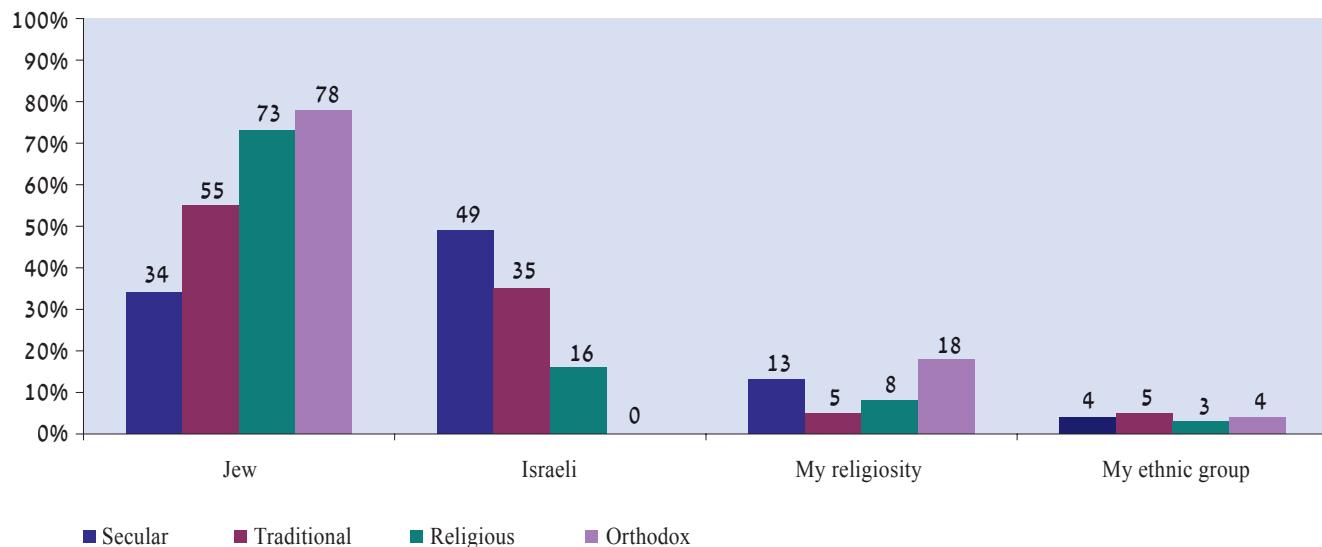
As for the second choice in the self-definition ranking: 24% of the ultra-Orthodox define themselves as Israelis, as opposed to 43% of the religious, 46% of the traditional, and 36% of secular Jews. The answer "my religiosity" was a prominent second choice among the ultra-Orthodox: 47% define themselves according to this criterion, more central in their view than the definition "Israeli." 32% of the religious chose to define themselves according to their measure of religiosity, as do 12% of the traditional and 17% of secular Jews (Figure 52).

When examining self-definition among Israeli Arabs, we found that they define themselves first and foremost as Arabs (45%). 24% of the respondents defined themselves first and foremost as Palestinians,

19% defined themselves according to their religion, and for 12%, Israeli was their first choice. In second place, 39% of Arab respondents defined themselves as Palestinians, 33% as Arabs, 14% according to their religion, and for 14%, Israeli was their second choice (Figure 53).

When we consider the self-definitions of Israeli citizens, we find no broad common denominator covering the entire population. We learn this both from the self-definition of their identity by members of various groups in the Jewish population and from the gaps between Jews and Arabs in the areas defined above. The various definitions of identity adopted by the country's citizens present a rather pluralistic picture, but also one of deep cleavages and lack of social cohesion.

Figure 52

**Identity: Self-Definition According to Self-Ascription
of Religious Orientation (second choice only)
(Jewish sample only; percentages)**

Legend: ■ Secular ■ Traditional ■ Religious ■ Orthodox
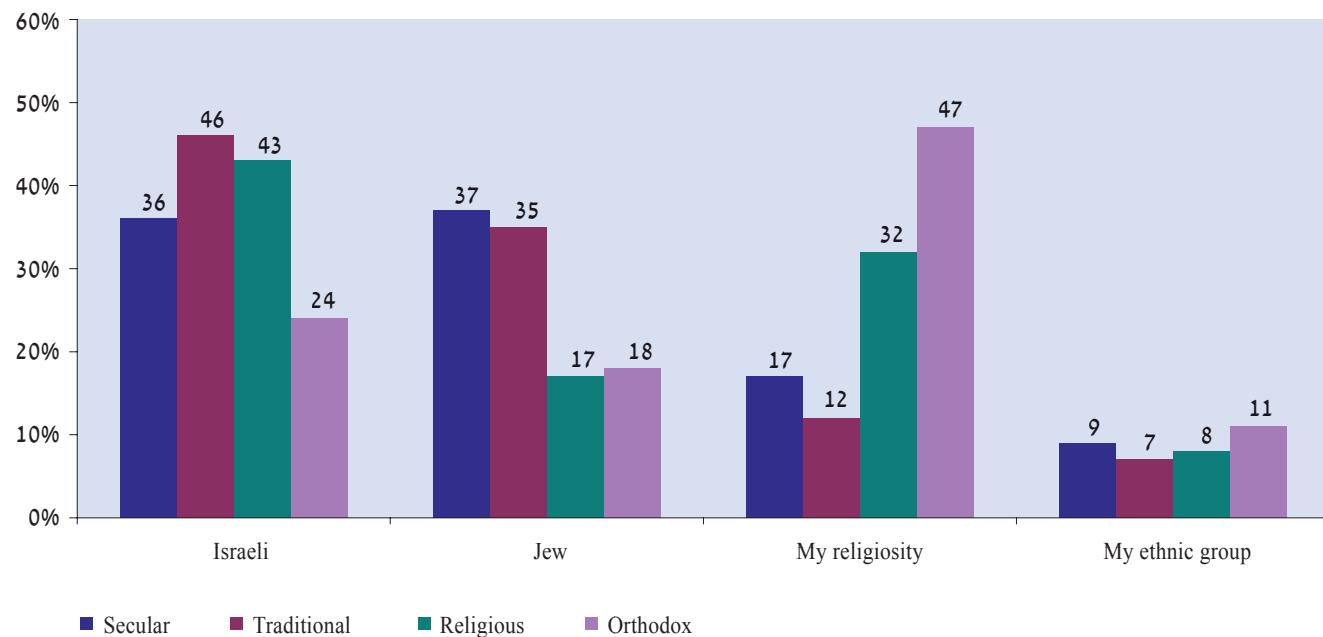
Figure 53

Identity: Self-Definition – Israeli Arabs

(Arab sample only; percentages)

Legend: ■ Arab ■ Palestinian ■ My religiosity ■ Israeli
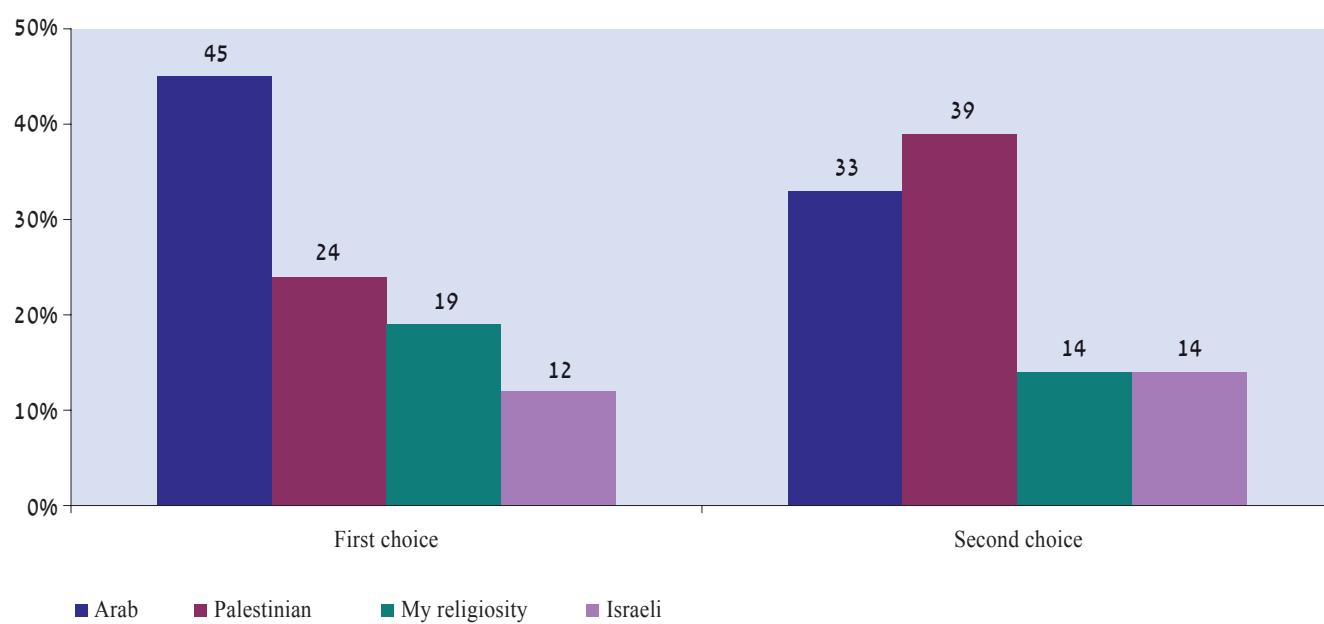
3. Contribution to Society: The IDF and Defense

Israel is commonly viewed as "a nation in uniform" – a special tie links society and the army, with blurred borders between them. Historical circumstances and external threats have ensured the army a significant role in society. Many sociologists, therefore, view Israeli society and politics as militaristic entities, with military – rather than civic – thinking characterizing decision-making processes and political culture.[94]

Israel differs from other western countries in that its army plays a central role not only in individual and family life, but also in the life of the society. The army is a key institution, perceived as the body that safeguards national existence. It receives the lion's share of the country's resources and 9% of the gross national product. National security considerations dominate all areas of life, and even decisions bearing on infrastructure planning involve serious security considerations.[95] The mutual ties binding the army and society cannot be severed. More than in the past, however, the army has been criticized in recent years by various elements, including protest groups and others refusing to serve, as well as by challenges from within.

Army service had been a widespread norm in Israel, but has weakened over the years. At the same time, the motivation to serve in the army in wartime is very high by international standards. "If war breaks out, will you be ready to fight for the country?" – this question was included in the 2007 Democracy Index, and also appears in many international public opinion surveys. 70% of the population report that they will be ready to enlist in the army, and 30% declare they will not enlist for war. Of the Jewish sample only, 79% declare that they will be ready to fight for the country if war breaks out. In an international ISSP survey conducted in 2004,[96] Israel was in first place: 78.6% of the respondents declared they would be ready to fight for the country when called to do so (Figure 54).

"If you were now about to go to the army, what would you do?" – 36% would wish to serve in combat units, 30% would leave the decision about their army service to the IDF, 18% declare they would make an effort to avoid army service, and 16% would enlist for non-combatant roles. The distribution of answers to a hypothetical question concerning a child about to go to the army was similar. These data strengthen the report that the motivation of people about to enlist in the army has remained high.[97] Note that the international figure relates to all Israeli citizens, and includes Arabs and the ultra-Orthodox who usually do not enlist.

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94 For further discussion see Yagil Levy, *The Other Army of Israel: Materialist Militarism in Israel* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 2003); Uri Ben-Eliezer, *The Making of Israeli Militarism* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1998).

95 For further discussion see Sammy Smooha, "Is Israel Western?" [Hebrew], in *Israel and Modernity: In Honor of Moshe Lissak*, ed. Uri Cohen et al. (Sde Boker: Ben Gurion University, 2006), pp. 49-83.

96 ISSP Institute (note 48 above).

97 For further discussion see Asher Arian, Shlomit Barnea, Pazit Ben-Nun, *The 2004 Israeli Democracy Index: Attitudes of Youth* (Jerusalem: The Israel Democracy Institute, 2004).

Figure 54

Army Service: An International Comparison

"In your opinion, to what extent is it important to be ready to serve in the army?"
"Be ready to serve when called" (options 6, 7: important to be ready to serve)
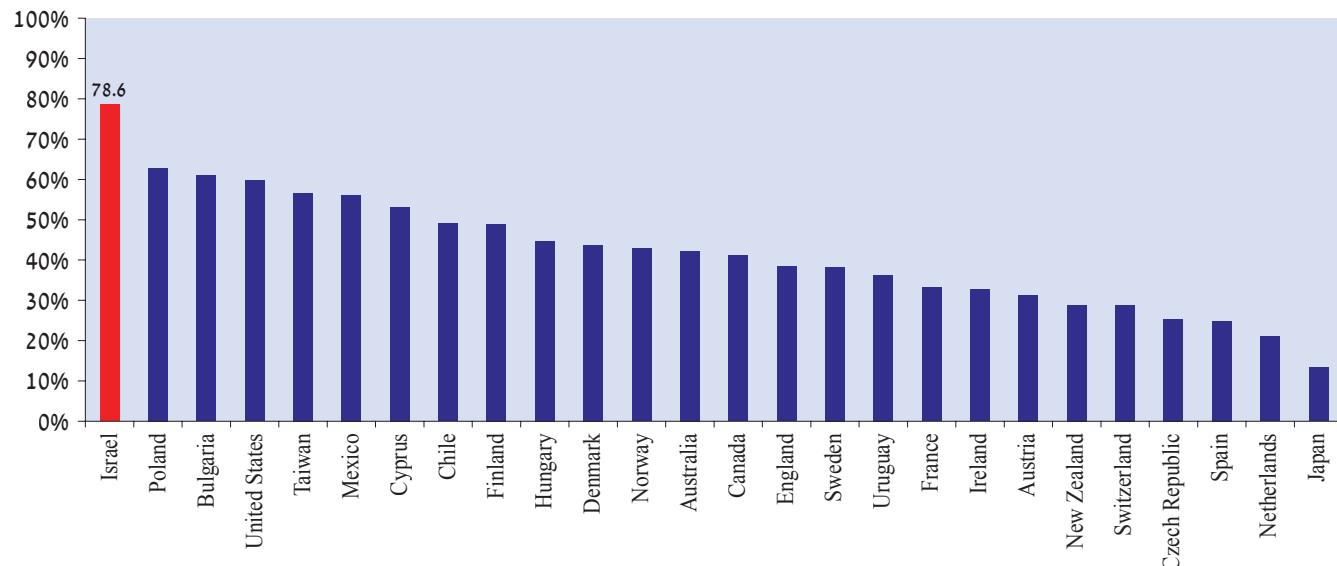
The motivation to serve in the army, then, remains high, although it does not include all the country's citizens.

Respondents were asked: "Are youths ready today to do what is necessary to ensure the country's defense?" 52% of the public holds that youths are less ready to do so today than in the past, while 17% estimate that youths are ready to do more than in the past. 24% assess that the readiness of youths to do what is necessary for the country's defense remains as it had been.

A complex picture emerges from these data. Despite the high readiness to serve in the army in the context of an international comparison, the public feels that "today's" youth differs from the youth "of yore." Respondents were asked to evaluate several characteristics of today's youth vis-à-vis the past, and responses suggest a complex attitude. Assessments note that youths are more violent (58%), less law abiding (51%), believe less in equality between Jews and Arabs (48%), and believe less in democratic principles (41%). Unquestionably, the broad, adult public generally has low trust in youths (Figure 55). This is paradoxical, since the adult public is composed of these youths' parents and grandparents. The youth are a reflection of the public in general, and a negative evaluation of their values should place on the public agenda the issue of imparting values from generation to generation.

The yearly discussions surrounding the defense budget evoke wide polemic. Public criticism has addressed the army's wastefulness, its high salaries, and its inflated pension arrangements. Many claim that the defense budget in general comes at the expense of such issues as education, health, infrastructure, and employment.

Figure 55

Characteristics of Youths: An Evaluation

(percentages)
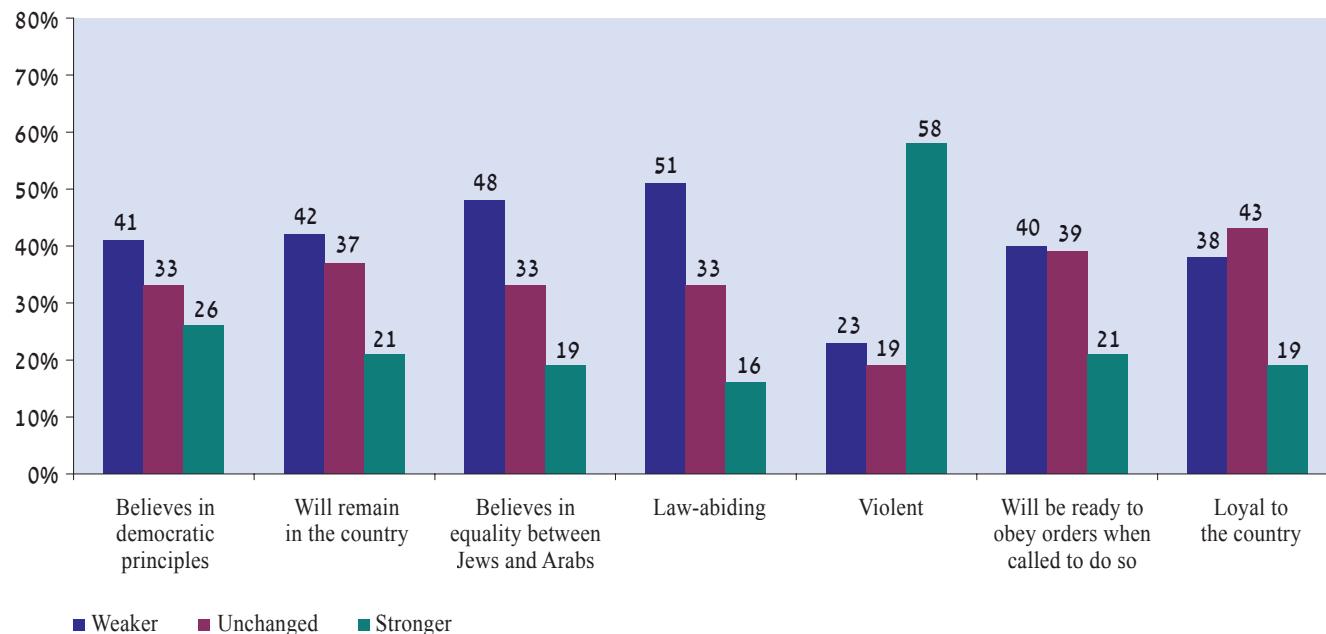
On the opposite side are the demands of the defense establishment for budget additions, given the security and strategic threats and the ongoing expenses. In 2006, Israel's defense budget was 50.6 billion NIS, about 17% of the state budget.[98] It relies on two sources: 70% comes from the state budget (including 2.5 billion dollars from income generated by the defense system), and about 30% as a grant and as military aid from the United States (about 2.4 billion dollars in 2007).[99]

The 2007 Democracy Index asked several questions about the defense budget. The first was: "Are you ready or not ready to have taxes raised in Israel, so that you too will pay more taxes, in order to allocate the money to defense matters?" Some 29% of the Jews are ready to pay more taxes for the sake of the defense budget. But when the question is examined over time, a clear declining trend is discernible. In 1986, 48% of Jews indicated that they are ready to pay more taxes; in 2001, 33% were ready; and in 2007, the proportion dropped to 29%. Another question points to a similar trend: "In your opinion, is most of the public ready or not ready to have taxes raised in Israel, so that they too will pay more taxes, in order to allocate the money to defense matters?" In 2007, only 12% of

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98 This figure does not include the budget of the Mossad, the GSS, the Border Police, the Home Front Command, and the assistance to the defense industries. Zvi Zarhiah, "Budget Defense Approved for Voting: 50.6 billion NIS," *Haaretz*, 31 December 2006.

99 Budget Division, *State Budget 2007*, www.mof.gov.il/budget2006/fbudget.htm.

the Jewish respondents held that most of the public in Israel is ready for that. To the question, "Is it justified or unjustified to cut down social services to increase the defense budget?" 18% of Jews answered it is justified, as opposed to 82% who held that it is not. We also examined the public's assessment of changes in the defense budget. In 2007, 44% held that the budget should be increased, 43% held that it should be kept as is, and only 13% held it should be cut.

4. A Sense of Being Part of the Country

Beside the extensive data pointing to tensions and social cleavages, other measures point to a sense of connection and cohesion in Israel. These measures – together with the data on social trust, contribution to the society, and readiness to compromise – point to the level of cohesion. As noted, the cleavages in Israeli society are many and deep, but the measures examined in this chapter point to some measure of cohesion in society.

(a) Proud of being Israeli

Some 77% of the respondents answered the question "To what extent are you proud to be an Israeli?" by stating that they are proud (47% very proud and 30% quite proud). The remaining 33% are not so proud of being Israeli or not at all proud. The scope of this sense of pride is particularly fascinating given the data presented in the description of the cleavages and the expressions of mistrust in some of Israel's institutions. Over the last five years, however, some erosion has been recorded in the respondents' pride in being Israeli (Figure 56). Israeli Jews are much more proud to be Israelis than Israeli Arabs: only 31% of the Arabs are proud to be Israeli, as opposed to 85% of the Jews.

Figure 56

Proud to be Israeli, 2003-2007

"To what extent are you proud to be an Israeli?"
Proud and very proud (percentages)
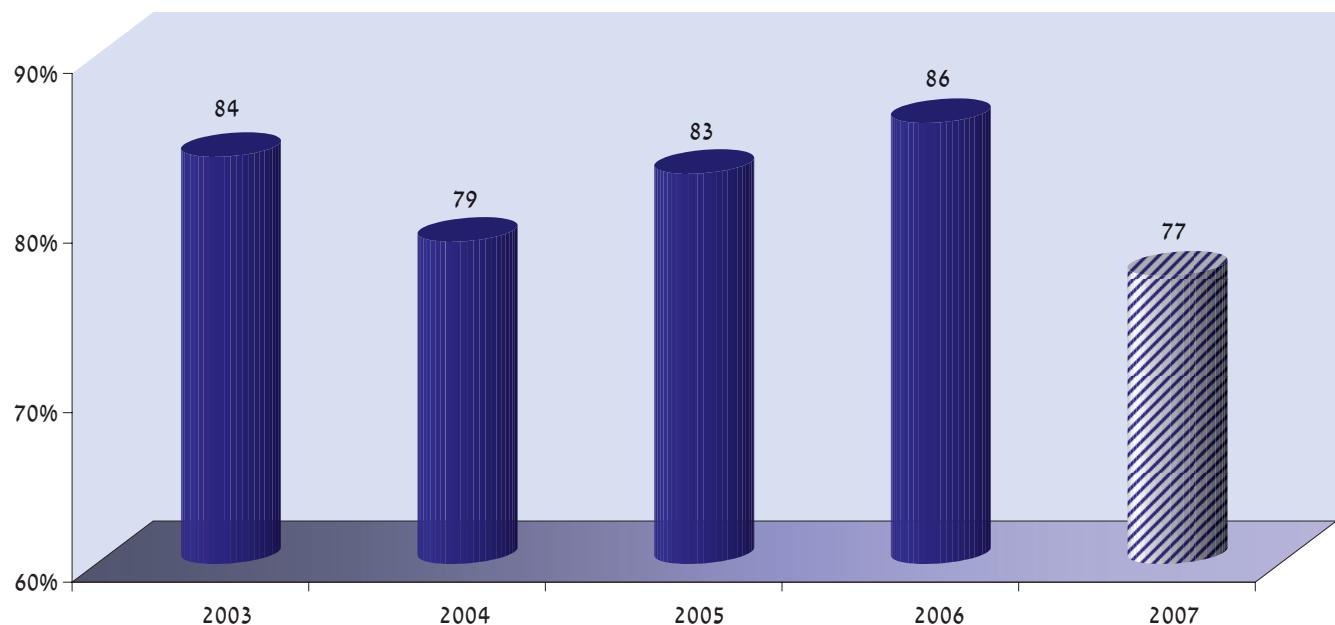
On the question of pride, essential differences separate secular, traditional, religious, and ultra-Orthodox Jews. 83% in the secular group are proud to be Israeli, as opposed to 89% of the traditional group and 90% of the religious group. Even 70% of the ultra-Orthodox answered that they are proud to be Israeli (Figure 57).

(b) Connection to the Jewish People and to the State of Israel

In the Index, we attempt to clarify whether the public feels itself an inseparable part of the State of Israel and its problems. In 2007, 59% of the respondents said they feel themselves part or very much part of Israel, and 15% attested to a low or very low sense of connection (Figure 58). These figures show that a significant drop has been recorded in recent years. Whatever the explanation of these findings – the transition from collectivism to individualism,[100] the public's disappointment with the results of the Second Lebanon War, or other reasons – these findings are not encouraging. Although most of the Israeli public still sees itself as part of the State of Israel and its problems, the erosion in the sense of connection is evident in the data.

Figure 57

Proud to be Israeli According to Self-Definition of Religiosity

Proud (Jewish sample only; percentages)

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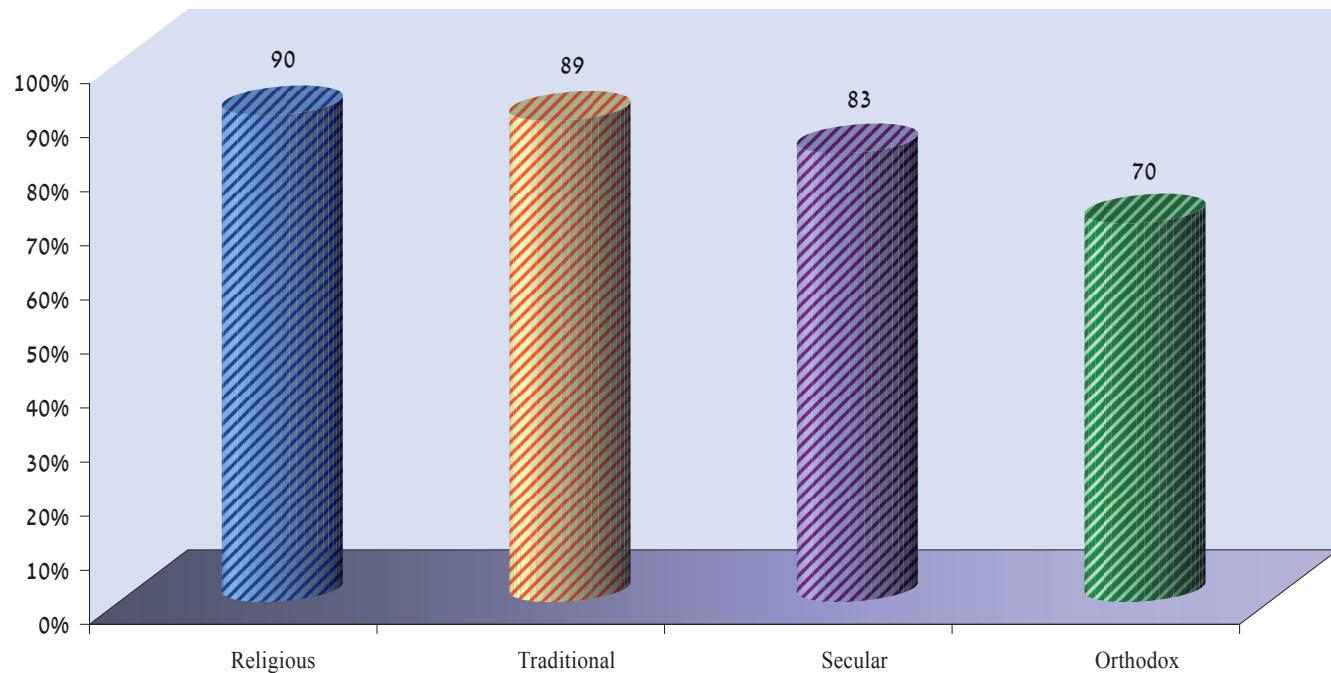
100 Oz Almog, *Farewell to "Srulik": Value Changes in the Israeli Elite* [Hebrew] (Haifa: University of Haifa and Zmora-Bitan, 2004), 19-33.

Figure 58

Connection to Israel, 2003-2007

**To what extent do you feel yourself a part of the State of Israel and its problems?
To a very large and to a large extent (percentages)**
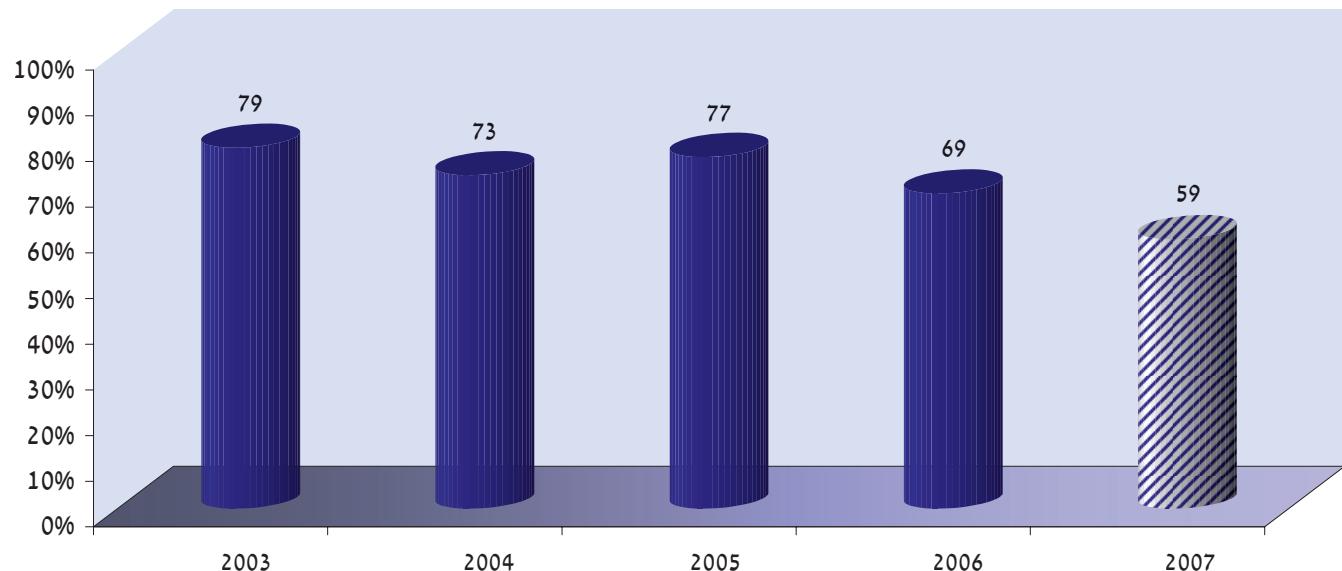
The 2007 democracy survey asked several questions touching on the Jewish people in Israel and in the Diaspora. The first was: "Do you feel yourself part of the Jewish people in the world?" The second: "In your opinion, do Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora share a common destiny?" Responses attest to a strong and stable association between Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora: 94% of the Jewish respondents feel that they are part of the Jewish people, and 68% hold they share a common destiny with Diaspora Jews. These data differ only slightly from those of previous years (Figure 59).[101]

(c) Desire to remain in Israel for the long term

Beyond pride in their citizenship, Israelis also declare their desire to live in Israel and are convinced of their intention to do so in the future. The following question appears in the Index since 1986: "Do you want to remain in Israel for the long term, or not?" Figure 60 presents data for those answering "convinced I want to" and "want to but not convinced." In 2007, 64% answered that they are convinced of their desire to live in Israel for the long term, 15% want to but are not convinced, and 8% are convinced they

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101 Arian et al., *The 2003 Israeli Democracy Index* (note 1 above).

Figure 59

Connection to the Jewish People, 1991-2007

**Feels part of the Jewish people in the world
Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora share a common destiny*
(Jewish sample only; percentages)**

■ Feels part of the Jewish people in the world   ■ Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora share a common fate
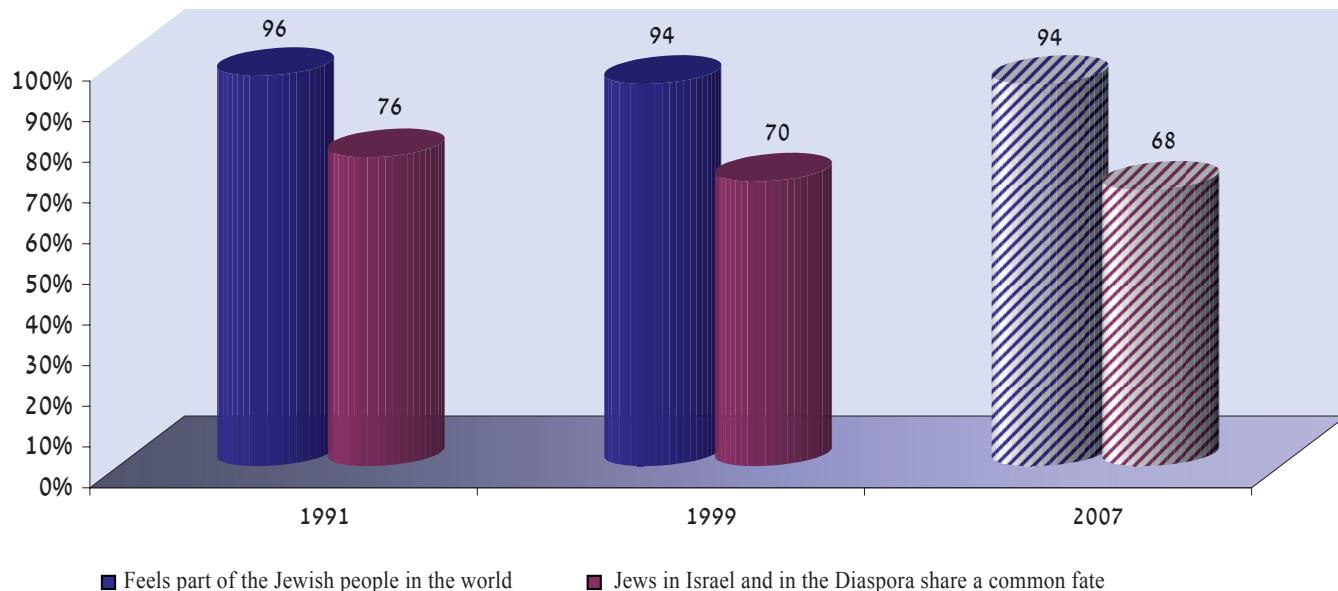
*   Data on these questions for 1991 and 1999 are retrieved from Levy et al., *A Portrait of Israeli Jewry*, Appendices 5a, 6a (note 44 above).

do not want to. Compared to recent years, the rate of citizens who are convinced of their desire to remain in Israel has dropped, but the picture over the last twenty years still points to a large majority convinced that they wish to remain in Israel. Despite the many problems – the difficult security situation, the social and economic difficulties – most of the public still expresses a desire to live in Israel. Another question concerned the citizens' assessment of Israel's resilience and their faith in its continued existence. A large majority (84%) holds that, to some extent, to a large extent, and to a very large extent, Israel will continue to exist despite the problems and the crises.

We also asked those in the Jewish sample who have doubts concerning their desire to live in Israel about the main reason for their doubts. In the 2007 Democracy Index, 40% of the respondents pointed to the security situation as the reason for their doubts, 36% to the economic situation, 14% related to the social situation, and only 3% explained their feelings were based on the status of religion in the country and on the regime's anti-democratic tendencies. This marks a change in the order of these factors from the 1986 and 2003 findings (Figure 61). In 1986, the economic situation was the reason for the strongest doubts (73%), and so it was in 2003 (52%). By contrast, the security

situation in 1986 was marginally significant: only 14% pointed to this issue as the main factor hindering their desire to live in Israel, as opposed to 35% in 2003. In 2007, the reasons were reversed: the security situation is perceived as the main factor undermining the desire to live in Israel in the future.

In sum, most of the public in Israel 2007 feels proud to be Israeli, although a drop of 9% has been recorded since last year. Moreover, most of the public feels part of Israel and its problems, though here too we found a drop of 10% from the 2006 figures. The sense of connection to the Jewish people within Israel's Jewish population is high, and so is the desire to remain in Israel for the long term. The rate of those convinced they wish to remain in Israel has declined, but still includes most of the Jewish population. The aspects that were examined concerning the sense of connection to Israel therefore point to a decline, but still indicate a strong desire to be part of the country.

Figure 60

Remaining in Israel, 1986-2007

"Do you want to remain in Israel for the long term, or not?"
"Convinced I want to" "Want to but not convinced"
(Jewish sample only; percentages)

Convinced I want to   Want to but not convinced
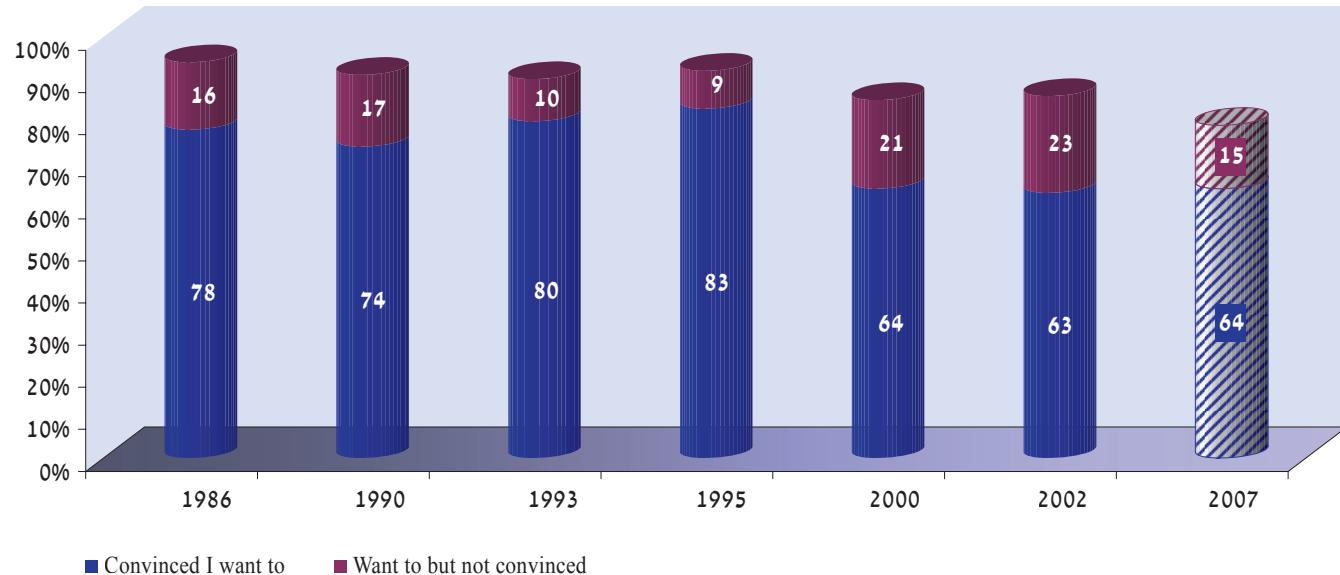
Figure 61

Reasons for Doubting Life in Israel, 1986-2007

"What is the main reason for doubting the desire to live in Israel?" *
(Jewish sample only; percentages)

■1986 ■2003 ▨2007
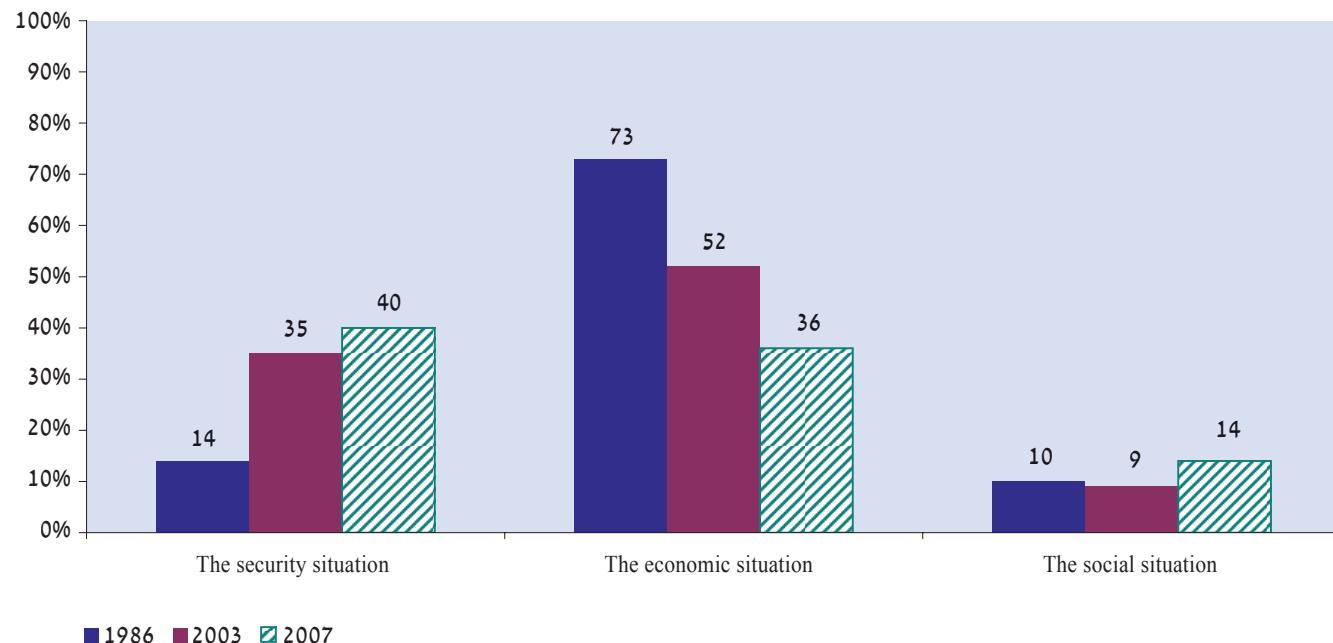
* Five possible answers were provided. Additional options, besides those presented, include the status of religion and anti-democratic tendencies. In every one of the years presented, figures for these two options add up to 3% at most and, for this reason, they are not presented in the Figure. The total is therefore less than 100%.

Epilogue

The 2007 Israeli Democracy Index yields a worrisome conclusion: Israeli democracy is in deep crisis, and the public's satisfaction with its mode of functioning has strongly deteriorated in the last year. Disappointment with government institutions in general and with the leadership in particular has grown in the last five years. These attitudes express a deepening crisis between the public and the political system. When trust in public officials and in the representative institutions is eroded, the formal democratic institutions are insufficient to ensure support in the regime and satisfaction with it.

Data concerning interpersonal relationships also reflect an absence of trust, lack of mutuality, and flawed intergroup relations. Many hold that personal concerns are more important than state issues, cleavages and tensions between the groups are not diminishing, and the rate of those convinced that they will remain in the country for the long term is also declining. The 2007 Democracy Index highlights anew that social cleavages in Israel are very deep, and relationships between the groups comprising the society are not improving.

Democracy in Israel is fraught with many problems, most of them not new: social inequality, poverty, tensions between religions and nationalities. All make it extremely fluid and prone to dramatic change. And yet, the 2007 Democracy Index highlights the fact that the sense of connection to the community and social cohesion are still entrenched. High rates among the Jewish respondents, though lower than in the past, are proud to be Israeli and feel themselves part of the State of Israel and of the Jewish people. A majority also believe in the continued existence of the State of Israel in the future, despite the crises. These data indicate that, notwithstanding the deep social cleavages and despite the many problems, the public still desires to go on living in Israel, feels part of it, and is even ready to fight and make sacrifices for the country. In other words, together with the sense of alienation, the tension, and the weakening of social contacts, other aspects are also evident: pride in being Israeli and a readiness to fight for the country show some degree of social cohesion despite the recent crises.

The 2007 Israeli Democracy Index assesses the quality of democracy's functioning and the performance of democracy in Israel. The study compares Israel's situation over the years and draws an international comparison with 35 other democratic countries. The many figures and comparisons presented here show the many dimensions and facets of Israeli democracy and try to identify its strong and weak points, both in the assessments of international research institutes and according to attitudes in the Israeli public. The situation of Israeli democracy in 2007 in an international comparison, as reflected in the indicators, differs somewhat from that presented in 2006. In a historical comparison, Israel's situation vis-à-vis 2006 improved in 9 of the 20 updated indicators, worsened in 5, and remained the same in 6. In an international comparison, however, Israel has so far failed to adopt the characteristics of an essential democracy, and in many indicators, it is evaluated at the bottom of the countries' ranking.

Israeli democracy is not self-evident. The public displays considerable cohesion in the face of external and domestic threats, but mistrust of government institutions and of the political leadership is growing, and the doubts cast on their ability to lead and on their integrity raise a serious problem of legitimacy. These feelings could hasten processes that weaken democracy, such as refraining from participation in elections, lacking the readiness to contribute to society and the country, and even non-compliance with laws or their rejection as illegitimate. These patterns of behavior could harm the resilience of Israeli society and its power of endurance in the coming years.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of the Democracy Indices, 2003-2007[1]

1. The Institutional Aspect						
Rating	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**Change compared to last assessment**
1. Vertical accountability 1-3 (1 = unregulated elections)	3	–	3	–	–	–
2. Horizontal accountability 0-6 (0 = high army involvement in politics)	3	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	=
3. Deviation from the proportionality principle 0-100 (0 = perfect proportionality)	2.55	–	–	2.72	–	–
4. Party dominance 100 – [100* number of seats in the lower house] (100 = high dominance, low representativeness)	300	315	324	413.8	–	–
5. Level of constraints on the executive in implementing policy 1-7 (1 = unlimited authority)	7	–	7	–	–	–
6. Scope of constraints on the executive to change policy 0-1 (0 = no limitations)	0.7864	–	v	–	–	–
7. Voter turnout in national elections 0-100 (100% = full turnout)	67.8	–	–	63.5	–	–
8. Voter turnout out of registered voters 0-100 (100% = full turnout)	74.4	–	–	70.8	–	–
9. Voter turnout in local elections 0-100 (100% = full voting)	57.4	50	–	–	–	–
10. Corruption Perceptions Index (TI) 0-10 (0 = high level of corruption)	7.3	7	6.4	6.3	5.9	↓
11. Corruption Index (ICRG) 0-6 (0 = high level of corruption)	3	4	3	3	3	=
12. Voice and accountability (WB) 0-100 (100% = high accountability)	65.7	62.3	66.7	–	–	↑
13. Control of corruption (WB) 0-100 (100% = high control)	82.4	78.4	73.9	–	–	↓
14. Regulatory quality (WB) 0-100 (100% = high control)	76.4	76.4	75.2	–	–	↓
15. Government effectiveness (WB) 0-100 (100% = high government effectiveness)	80.9	86.1	78.0	–	–	↓

2. The Rights Aspect						
Rating	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**Change compared to last assessment**
1. Competitiveness in participation 1-5 (1 = suppress opposition activities)	5	–	5	–	–	–
2. Press freedom 0-100 (0 = full freedom)	30	27	28	28	28	=
3. Human rights violations 1-5 (1 = protection of human rights)	4	–	–	–	–	–
4. Prisoners per 100,000 population 0-100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	132	143	172	180	158	↑
5. Prisoners per 100,000 population, including security prisoners 0-100,000 (0 = few prisoners)	173	189	252	265	295	↓
6. Law and order 0-6 (0 = low respect for law and order)	5	5	5	5	5	=
7. Freedom of religion 1-7 (1 = total freedom)	3	–	–	–	–	–
8. GINI rating for disposable income[2] 0-1 (0 = full equality)	0.3685	0.3799	0.3878	0.3874	–	↑
9. GINI rating of income distribution[2] 0-1 (0 = full equality)	0.5265	0.5234	0.5255	0.5224	–	↑
10. Economic Freedom Index[3] 0-100 (100% = broad economic freedom)	64.0	63.1	63.8	66.7	68.4	↑
11. Gender development rating 0-1 (0 = lack of equality)	0.891	0.900	0.906	0.911	0.925	↑
12. Gender empowerment rating 0-1 (0 = lack of equality)	0.596	0.612	0.614	0.622	0.656	↑
13. Political discrimination of the minority 0-4 (0 = no discrimination)	3	–	3.5	–	–	–
14. Economic discrimination of the minority 0-4 (0 = no discrimination)	3	–	3.5	–	–	–
15. Cultural discrimination of the minority 0-12 (0 = no discrimination)	1	–	0	–	–	–
16. Rule of law (WB) 0-100 (100% = high control)	75.5	73.1	73.4	–	–	↑

3. The Stability and Cohesion Aspect						
Rating	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**Change compared to last assessment**
1. Government changes Number of government changes 1996-2006.	5	–	5	4	–	–
2. Incomplete term of office 0-100 (100% = full term)	77.42	–	–	82.22	–	–
3. Weighted Political Conflict Index 0-infinity (0 = no conflict)	3,100	–	10,462	–	–	–
4. Religious tensions 0-6 (0 = high tension)	2	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	=
5. National/ethnic/linguistic tensions 0-6 (0 = high tension)	2	2	2	2	2	=
6. Political stability (WB) 0-100 (100% = high stability)	10.8	11.3	14.2	–	–	↑

1. Measures updated this year are those showing arrows or equal signs.
2. The index was published in January 2007, and is correct for 2006. This GINI coefficient, unlike previous ones, includes the population of East Jerusalem.
3. The scale was changed in 2007, and the figures presented here are those reported by the Heritage Foundation.

Appendix 2: The Democracy Index 2007 Compared to the Democracy Indices 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006

(Full sample; percentages)

1. The Institutional Aspect						
Characteristic in the Index	**Questions in the survey**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
A. Implementing the accountability principle:						
Actions of elected officials relative to the people's preferences	To what extent do you agree or disagree that a politician does not tend to take into account the view of the ordinary citizen? (disagree)	38	38	42	38	**30**
B. Political participation						
1. Level of political participation						
Staying informed	How often do you stay informed about what's going on in politics through TV, the radio, or the press? (every day or several times a week)	87	79	81	82	**82**
Talking about politics	To what extent do you tend to talk with your friends and family about political issues? (talk)	69	64	65	67	**56**
2. Implementing the value of political participation						
Evaluating participation level	In your opinion, do citizens in Israel participate in politics more or less than they do in other countries? (more)	40	49	37	38	**34**
Sense of impact	To what extent can you or your friends influence government policy? (can)	20	18	31	27	**24**
C. Representativeness						
	To what extent does the balance of powers in the Knesset express, in your opinion, the distribution of views in the larger public? (express)	67	–	61	61	**56**

1. The Institutional Aspect - Continued						
Characteristic in the Index	**Questions in the survey**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
D. Integrity in government						
Stance concerning corruption of VIPs in government	In general, what do you think is more important to the country's leaders, their personal interests or the interests of the country as a whole? (the country as a whole)	15	15	11	10	**15**
Evaluating the extent of corruption in Israel	In your opinion, is there more or less corruption in Israel than in other countries? (less)	11	15	22	14	**18**

2. The Rights Aspect						
Characteristic in the Index	**Questions in the survey**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
A. Political and civil rights						
Attitudes toward political and civil rights						
	All must have the same rights before the law regardless of political outlook (agree)	83	–	79	86	**78**
Freedom of religion	Every couple in Israel should be allowed to marry in any way they wish (agree)	63	60	64	61	**54**
Implementing rights in Israel in a comparative perspective: perceptions	In your opinion, is there more or less protection of human rights in Israel than in other countries (less)	27	40	33	39	**36**
	And freedom of expression? (less)	15	17	24	19	**21**
B. Social and economic rights						
Support for social-economic policy	Concerning the structure of economic life in Israel, do you support a socialist or a capitalist approach? (socialist)	54	60	58	59	**59**
Implementing social and economic rights: perceptions	Social and economic equality in Israel is insufficient (agree)	82	88	80	84	**72**
C. Equality for minorities						
Readiness to have equal rights between Jews and Arabs	To what extent do you support or oppose each one of the following: Arab parties (including Arab ministers) joining the government (support)	38	45	44	41	**30**
	Full equality of rights between Jewish and Arab Israeli citizens (support)	53	64	59	60	**50**

2. The Rights Aspect - Continued						
Characteristic in the Index	**Questions in the survey**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
	Agreement of a Jewish majority is required on decisions fateful to the country, such as returning territories (opposed)	26	23	34	29	**34**
	The government should encourage Arab emigration from the country (opposed) [Jews only]	43	41	50	38	**45**
The actual implementation of equality: perceptions	Israeli Arabs suffer from discrimination as opposed to Jewish citizens (agree)	55	64	56	54	**55**

3. The Stability and Cohesiveness Aspects						
Characteristic in the Index	**Questions in the survey**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
A. Satisfaction with the government	What do you think is Israel's position in general? (not good)	63	54	35	40	**50**
	What is your opinion about the way the government deals with the country's problems today? (not good)	78	78	67	74	**86**
B. Assessing stability in Israel						
	In your opinion and compared to other democratic countries, is the political system in Israel stable or unstable? (unstable)	63	–	46	53	**60**
C. Protest and opposition						
Opposition to violence	Using violence to attain political aims is never justified (agree)	82	78	82	82	**74**
D. Trust in institutions						
Degree of trust in various institutions	To what degree do you have trust in the following people or institutions? Political parties (have trust)	32	27	22	22	**21**
	The Prime Minister (have trust)	53	45	48	43	**21**
	The media (have trust)	49	51	50	44	**45**
	The State Attorney (have trust)	58	66	60	51	**45**
	The Supreme Court (have trust)	70	79	72	68	**61**
	The police (have trust)	66	66	57	44	**41**
	The President (have trust)	68	73	65	67	**22**
	The Knesset (have trust)	52	46	40	33	**33**
	The IDF (have trust)	84	86	78	79	**74**
	The Government (have trust)	55	41	42	39	**31**
The institution that best protects Israeli democracy	Who best protects Israeli democracy – the Prime Minister, the Supreme Court, the Knesset, or the media?					

3. The Stability and Cohesiveness Aspects - Continued						
Characteristic in the Index	Questions in the survey	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	The Prime Minister	18	9	15	15	**14**
	The Supreme Court	42	47	48	47	**39**
	The Knesset	14	14	13	13	**13**
	The media	26	30	24	25	**34**
E. Social trust	In general, do you think that people can be trusted or that one should be very cautious in relationships with others (trusted)	29	33	44	26	**31**
F. Social cleavages	In your opinion, are the relationships between religious and secular Jews good or not good? (good) [Jews only]	24	28	31	26	**34**
	And the relationships between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim? (good) [Jews only]	43	53	51	47	**45**
	And between Israeli Arabs and Jews? (good)	11	16	11	14	**13**
	And between new immigrants and old-timers? (good) [Jews only]	49	40	37	40	**38**
	And between the rich and the poor? (good)	25	24	19	20	**22**
Assessing the level of tension between groups in Israel vis-à-vis other countries	In your opinion, is there more or less tension in Israel between groups in the society than in other countries? (less)	7	15	20	15	**24**
G. Connection to the community						
Pride in being an Israeli	To what extent are you proud to be an Israeli? (proud)	84	79	83	86	**77**
Desire to remain in Israel	Do you want to remain in Israel for the long term, or not? (do want)	88	87	89	90	**80**
Feels part of Israel and its problems	To what extent do you feel yourself to be part of the State of Israel and its problems? (feel part)	79	73	77	69	**59**

4. Democracy: Support and Satisfaction						
Characteristic in the Index	**Questions in the survey**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
Support for democracy	A few strong leaders can be more useful to the country than all the discussions and the laws (disagree)	44	42	43	40	**31**
Satisfaction with Israeli democracy	In general, to what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the functioning of Israeli democracy? (dissatisfied)	49	55	51	54	**66**

Notes

1. The data represent the two "high" categories concerning democracy in questions with four or five categories (that is, 1-2 or 3-4 or 4-5) and the high category in questions with 2-3 categories (that is, 1 or 2 if the question is dichotomous and 1 or 3 if there are three categories).
2. Only questions that were asked in February 2007 and at least in three more of the four other years appear.
3. When only Jews were asked the question, square brackets appear beside the question.
4. The size of the sample in 2007 was 1,203, sampling error was +/-2.8 with a 95% confidence level; in 2006 the size of the sample was 1,204, sampling error was +/-2.8 with a 95% confidence level; the size of the sample in 2005 was 1,203, sampling error was +/-2.8 with a 95% confidence level; the size of the sample in 2004 was 1,200, sampling error was +/-2.9 with a 95% confidence level; the size of the sample in 2003 was 1,208, sampling error was +/-3.1 with a 95% confidence level.

Appendix 3: Distributions in the Democracy Survey, February 2007
(percentages)

1. What is your mood like these days?
    1. Good all the time or almost all of the time 16
    2. Good most of the time 42
    3. Sometimes good, sometimes not good 31
    4. Not good most of the time or not good almost all of the time 11

2. Are you worried these days?
    1. Always 11
    2. Almost always 15
    3. Often 19
    4. Sometimes 35
    5. Almost never or never 20

3. Do you think you will be able to adapt to the current situation?
    1. I am sure I will 24
    2. I think I will 55
    3. I think I will not be able to 14
    4. I am sure I will not 7

4. In general, how do you evaluate your recent state of health?
    1. Very good 27
    2. Good/quite good 49
    3. Not so good 17
    4. Not good 5
    5. Not at all good 2

	1 Very well	2 Well	3 Quite well	4 Not so well	5 Not at all well
5. In your opinion, how is the Prime Minister fulfilling his function?	3	7	17	36	37
6. And the Minister of Defense?	2	5	13	30	50
7. And the Minister of Finance?	3	10	26	32	29

8. In your opinion, which of the following is the main factor for doubting whether to remain in Israel among the people who have such doubts?
    1. The security situation   38
    2. The economic situation   38
    3. The social situation   14
    4. The rise of anti-democratic tendencies   2
    5. The status of religion in the country   2

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

	1 Definitely disagree	2	3	4 Definitely agree
9. Arabs will not reach the cultural standard of Jews [not asked of Arabs]	21	24	23	32
10. Jews are racists [not asked of Jews]	27	22	20	31

11. Do you think there will be another war with Arab countries in the coming years?
    1. Yes, within the next few weeks or months   18
    2. Yes, perhaps in one or two years   39
    3. Yes, perhaps within 3 to 5 years   17
    4. Yes, perhaps in 6 to 10 years   5
    5. Perhaps only in 10 years or more   3
    6. There will not be another war with Arab countries   8
    7. Don't know   10

12. If war breaks out, will you be ready to fight for the country?
    1. Yes   70
    2. No   30

13. Concerning the territories Israel has occupied since the Six-Day War, what in your opinion is the biggest concession that should be made so as to reach peace?
    1. Give up all these territories so as to reach a peace agreement   12
    2. Give up almost all of the territories, with only minor adjustments   9
    3. Give up part of the territories   16
    4. Give up only a small part of the territories   16
    5. Not give up any territory at all   46

14. If you were about to go to the army now, what would you do?
    1. I would make an effort to avoid army service   18
    2. I would enlist, but only as a non-combatant   16
    3. I would enlist and let the IDF determine my placement 30
    4. I would enlist and ask to serve as a combatant   23
    5. I would enlist and volunteer for an elite combat unit 13

15. If you were a parent of a son about to go to the army, what would you advise him to do?
    1. Make an effort to avoid army service   17
    2. Enlist, but only as a non-combatant   21
    3. Enlist and let the IDF determine his placement   27
    4. Enlist and ask to serve as a combatant   23
    5. Enlist and volunteer for an elite combat unit   12

16. To what extent do you trust the declarations of top army echelons on matters of security?
    1. Definitely trust   9
    2. Quite trust   30
    3. Not so much   37
    4. Not at all   24

	1 Very much	2 Worried	3 Not so much	4 Not worried	5 Not at all
17. To what extent do you worry about Israel's situation?	43	36	14	5	2
18. To what extent do you worry about acts of terrorism in Israel?	55	28	10	5	3
19. To what extent do you worry about the readiness of the IDF if another war were to break out?	36	30	17	11	6

20. To what extent do you trust the declarations of political echelons on matters of security?
    1. To a large extent   5
    2. To some extent   24
    3. To a small extent   41
    4. Not at all   30

21. To what extent do you have trust in Israel's power of endurance and in its future existence?
    1. Very high trust   25
    2. High trust   30
    3. Some trust   29
    4. Low trust   11
    5. No trust at all   5

22. Do you see yourself as a Zionist? [Not asked of Arabs]
    1. Definitely yes: 45   2. Yes: 37   3. No: 14   4. Definitely not: 2

23. Do you feel yourself part of the Jewish people in the world? [Not asked of Arabs]
    1. Definitely yes: 55   2. Yes: 39   3. No: 5   4. Definitely not: 1

24. In your opinion, do Jews in Israel and in the Diaspora share a common destiny?
    1. Definitely yes: 28   2. Yes: 41   3. No: 25   4. Definitely not: 6

25. In your opinion, what is more important for the citizens of Israel, their personal interests or the interests of the country as a whole?
1. The interests of the country are far more important	25
2. Personal interests and the interests of the country are equally important	36
3. Personal interests are far more important	39

26. In your opinion, to what extent is there corruption in Israel?
1. Not at all	1
2. To a small extent	6
3. To some extent	18
4. To a large extent	75

27. Is the current income of your family sufficient to cover most of your needs?
1. Definitely sufficient for all needs	16
2. Sufficient for most needs	40
3. Sufficient for some needs and not for others	22
4. Insufficient for most needs	22

28. Some would say that people in Israel should now be asked to be ready to make many concessions and lower their standard of living (buy less, pay more taxes, etc.). Do you agree with this?
1. Yes, people should definitely be ready for many concessions	11
2. They should perhaps be ready for many concessions	16
3. Perhaps they should not be ready for many concessions	16
4. No, people should definitely not be ready for many concessions	57

29. In light of the current situation, do you feel that the government requires from you personally:
1. Too many concessions	47
2. The right measure of concessions	39
3. Too few concessions	14

30. In your opinion, should the defense budget be cut, kept as is, or increased?
1. Increased	44
2. Kept	43
3. Cut	13

31. In your opinion, is it justified or unjustified to cut down social services (such as health and education) to increase the defense budget?
    1. Definitely justified   3
    2. Justified   15
    3. Not justified   49
    4. Definitely unjustified   33

32. Are you ready or not ready to have taxes raised in Israel, so that you too will pay more taxes, and allocate the money to defense matters?
    1. Ready: 27   2. Not ready: 73

33. In your opinion, is most of the public ready or not ready to have taxes raised in Israel, so that they too will pay more taxes, and allocate the money to defense matters?
    1. Ready: 12   2. Not ready: 88

34. To what degree do you have trust in the Chief of Staff?
    1. Not at all   25
    2. To a small extent   23
    3. To some extent   31
    4. To a large extent   21

35. Are you a member or do you participate in any social organization active in the promotion of social welfare?
    1. Yes   19
    2. No   81

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

	1 Definitely disagree	2 Disagree	3 Not sure	4 Agree	5 Definitely agree
36. To reach the top in today's politics in Israel you have to be corrupt	18	21	17	23	21
37. To me, not to serve in the army is to dodge an obligation	8	17	18	30	27
38. A speaker should be forbidden to express sharp criticism of the State of Israel in public	20	25	19	23	13
39. I see army service as a waste of time	43	30	12	10	5
40. Men are better political leaders than women	32	30	14	17	7

41. People disagree today on whether youths are ready to do what is necessary to ensure the country's defense. What is your opinion, are youths less ready today than in the past, more ready, or just as ready?

    1. Less ready than in the past   49
    2. More ready   21
    3. Just as ready   23
    4. Don't know   7

In your opinion, have the following characteristics become stronger or weaker among Israeli youths?

	1 Stronger	2 Unchanged	3 Weaker
42. Believe in democratic principles	26	33	41
43. Will be ready to obey orders when called to do so	21	39	40
44. Will stay in Israel	21	37	42
45. Believe in equality between Jews and Arabs	19	33	48
46. Law abiding	16	33	51
47. Violent	58	19	23
48. Loyal to Israel	19	43	38

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

	1 Definitely disagree	2	3	4 Definitely agree
49. You cannot trust Arabs [to Arabs: Jews]	20	16	21	43
50. Using violence to attain political aims is never justified	13	13	23	51
51. Arabs [Jews] are inclined to violent behavior	10	16	33	41
52. Arabs are not intelligent [not asked of Arabs]	27	30	22	21

53. In your opinion, to what extent are people in Israel ready to compromise on issues important to them in order to reach an agreed basis that will enable everyone here to live together?

    1. To a large extent   16
    2. To some extent   49
    3. To a small extent   27
    4. Not at all   8

What about each of the following groups? To what extent, in your opinion, are members of the group ready to compromise on issues important to them in order to reach an agreed basis that will enable everyone here to live together?

	1 To a large extent	2 To some extent	3 To a small extent	4 Not at all
54. Israeli Arabs	16	29	29	26
55. Jews	24	47	22	7
56. Religious	15	30	33	22
57. Right-winged	14	33	31	22
58. Secular	23	51	21	5
59. Left-winged	34	35	22	9

60. There is much talk about left and right in politics. Where would you rank yourself along a left-right continuum, when 1 is the right end and 7 the left end?
    1. 25   2. 13   3. 14   4. 26   5. 11   6. 4   7. 7

61. In your opinion, should the government of Israel make sure that public life in the country is conducted according to Jewish religious tradition or not?
    1. The government should definitely make sure of it   32
    2. The government should perhaps make sure of it   29
    3. I don't think the government should see to it   22
    4. The government should definitely not be concerned with it   17

62. To what extent do you usually observe religious tradition?
    1. I do not observe tradition at all   18
    2. I observe tradition slightly   43
    3. I observe tradition to a large extent   30
    4. I observe tradition meticulously   9

63. Did you serve in the territories in the course of your regular or reserve army service?
    1. Yes   21
    2. No   42
    3. I did not serve in the army 35
    4. Refused   2

Notes

1. All the results are percentages, applying to the entire Israeli population; distributions are calculated only for valid answers.

2. The survey was conducted in February 2007, among a representative sample of Israel's adult population (18 and over), Jews and Arabs. The sample included 1,203 respondents, interviewed by phone in Hebrew, Arabic, and Russian. The fieldwork was conducted by the Mihshuv Institute, directed by Dr. Rachel Israeli. The sampling error at a 95% level of confidence is +/-2.8%. When conducting the interviews, equal representation was ensured to men and women, and the required steps were also taken to ensure adequate representation of the ultra-Orthodox sector and of immigrants from the CSI.

3. When only Jews were asked the question, square brackets appear beside the question.

Appendix 4: Calendar of Events, January 2006 – May 2007

The Executive Power
The 31st Government of Israel (as of 1 May 2007)

Ministry	Minister	Faction
Prime Minister	Ehud Olmert	Kadima
Deputy Prime Minister	Shimon Peres	Kadima
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Acting Prime Minister	Tzipi Livni	Kadima
Minister of Defense	Amir Peretz	Labor-Meimad
Minister of Finance	Abraham Hirchson	Kadima
Minister of Justice	Daniel Friedmann	Not Knesset member
Minister of Internal Affairs	Ronnie Bar-On	Kadima
Minister of Transportation and Road Safety	Shaul Mofaz	Kadima
Minister of Industry, Trade and Labor	Eliyahu Yishai	Shas
Minister of Communications	Ariel Atias	Shas
Minister of Education	Yuli Tamir	Labor-Meimad
Minister of Health	Yacov Ben Yizri	Gil Pensioners Party
Minister of Internal Security	Abraham Dicter	Kadima
Minister of Tourism	Yitzhak Aharonovitch	Yisrael Beitenu
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development	Shalom Simhon	Labor-Meimad
Minister of Science, Culture and Sport	Raleb Majadele	Labor-Meimad
Minister of Strategic Affairs	Avigdor Liberman	Yisrael Beitenu
Minister of Environmental Protection	Gideon Ezra	Kadima
Minister of Pensioner Affairs	Rafi Eitan	Gil Pensioners Party
Minister of Immigration Absorption	Ze'ev Boim	Kadima
Minister of Social Affairs and Services	Isaac Herzog	Labor-Meimad
Minister of Housing and Construction	Meir Sheetrit	Kadima
Minister of National Infrastructure	Binyamin Ben-Eliezer	Labor-Meimad
Ministers without Portfolio	Jacob Edery Yitzhak Cohen Meshulam Nahari	Kadima Shas Shas
Deputy Minister of Defense	Ephraim Sneh	Labor-Meimad

Changes in Government Ministers

4 May 2006   Swearing in of 31st government.

22 August 2006   Minister of Justice Haim Ramon (Kadima) resigns from the government after his indictment for an act of sexual harassment against a soldier serving at a government ministry. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert appoints Minister Meir Sheetrit as Acting Minister of Justice until the conclusion of Ramon's trial.

29 November 2006   Tzipi Livni (Kadima) is appointed Minister of Justice.

30 October 2006   The Minister of Science, Culture and Sport, Ophir Pines-Paz (Labor-Meimad) resigns from the government after the Yisrael Beitenu faction joins. At a press conference he calls, he notes: "I cannot agree with a situation where a minister who preaches racism is a member of the government."

29 January 2007   The Knesset confirms the appointment of Raleb Majadele (Labor-Meimad) as Minister without Portfolio.

5 February 2007   Daniel Friedmann (who is not a Knesset member) is appointed Minister of Justice. He replaces Tzipi Livni, who has temporarily served in the post.

21 February 2007   Minister of Tourism Isaac Herzog is appointed Minister of Social Affairs and Services. Minister without Portfolio Raleb Majadele (Labor-Meimad) is appointed Minister of Science, Culture and Sport.

22 April 2007   Minister of Finance Abraham Hirchson (Kadima) Suspends himself for three months pending an investigation suspecting him of fraud. His duties are assumed by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

1 May 2007   Minister without Portfolio Eitan Cabel (Labor-Meimad) resigns from the government in protest against the findings pulished in the interim report of the Winograd Commission.

The Judicial Power

7 September 2006   Chief Justice Dorit Beinisch replaces Aharon Barak.

The Legislative Power

Political parties in the 17th Knesset after the 2006 elections
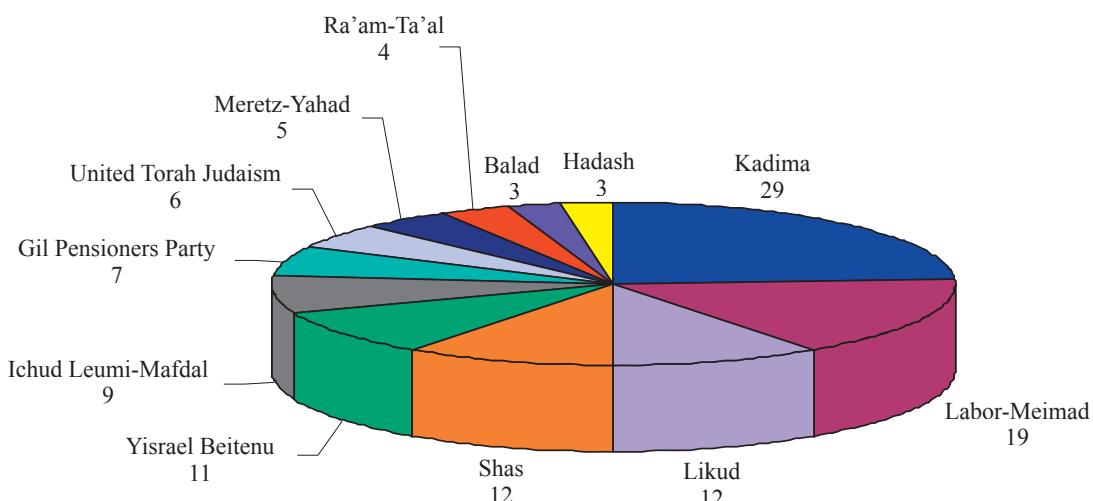
Key Dates: January 2006 – May 2007

January 2006

Knesset	**9**	MK Avraham (Baiga) Shochat (Labor-Meimad) resigns after eighteen continuous years in the Knesset.
Parties	**12**	Preliminary elections in Shinui. The Party Council chooses MK Yosef (Tommy) Lapid to head the list. Surprisingly, Ron Loewenthal defeats MK Avraham Poraz and is ranked after Lapid.
Parties	**12**	Preliminary elections in the Likud that, surprisingly, elect MK Moshe Kahlon to head the list, followed by MKs Gilad Erdan and Gideon Sa'ar. MK Kahlon places third in the Likud Knesset list, after Binyamin Netanyahu and Silvan Shalom, who have *a priori* been ensured first and second place.
Government	**15**	Attorney General Menachem Mazuz determines that Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert cannot appoint Shimon Peres, Dalia Itzik, and Haim Ramon as ministers in the transition government.
Knesset	**15**	MKs Shimon Peres and Dalia Itzik resign from the Knesset. MK Haim Ramon submits his resignation the next day (16 January).
Parties	**16**	Primaries in Meretz. MK Chaim Oron is elected first and places second in the Meretz Knesset list, after Chairman Yossi Beilin.
Knesset	**16**	MK Binyamin Netanyahu, the Likud Chairman, is appointed opposition leader instead of MK Amir Peretz.
Elections	**17**	Primaries in the Labor party. Isaac Herzog is elected first and places second in the Knesset list, after Labor Chairman Amir Peretz. MK Ophir Pines-Paz is elected second and Prof. Avishay Braverman (not a Knesset member) is elected third.
Parties	**25**	Tommy Lapid resigns Shinui's chairmanship and retires from politics.
Parties	**31**	Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert presents the Kadima list competing in the elections for the 17th Knesset.

February 2006

Corruption	**2**	Attorney General Menachem Mazuz decides to indict Minister Tzachi Hanegbi for his part in the political appointments affair at the Ministry of the Environment. The indictment charges Hanegbi with offenses of fraud and breach of trust, election bribery, and perjury.
Parties	**7**	Secessionists from Shinui create a new party, headed by Avraham Poraz and named HETS [Arrow] (Hebrew acronym for Secular Zionist party).
Knesset	**8**	The Knesset ratifies the creation of a parliamentary commission of inquiry to investigate the violent confrontation at Amona, where more than 200 police personnel and settlers were injured; 37 MKs support the decision (from Likud, Shas, Ichud Leumi, Mafdal, and United Torah Judaism) and 32 oppose it (from Kadima, Labor-Meimad, Meretz, and the Arab parties).

Corruption	13	MK Naomi Blumenthal is convicted at the Tel Aviv Magistrate Court on offenses of bribery and obstruction of justice in what has become known as the "Sheraton City Tower affair."
Corruption	14	MK Omri Sharon is sentenced to nine months imprisonment, a nine months suspended sentence, and a fine of 300,000 NIS for his conviction on the affair of laundering illegal campaign contributions. Judge Edna Beckenstein sharply criticizes Omri Sharon in her ruling, but postpones the carrying out of the sentence for six months due to Ariel Sharon's condition.

March 2006

Elections	1	The Likud Central Committee changes its formula for choosing candidates to the Knesset list and adopts a primaries system.
Elections	7	Election campaign broadcasts begin in the media (radio and TV).
Elections	16	Israelis abroad begin voting for 17th Knesset elections. Registered Israeli voters abroad number about 4,500.
Elections	19	The Central Elections Committee publishes the candidates' lists.
Elections	28	Knesset elections take place, with 5,014,622 registered voters.
Elections	29	Publication of initial results: Kadima – 29 seats, Labor 19. Significant decline of voter turnout: 63.5% of registered voters participated in the elections, 5% less than in the 2003 elections.

April 2006

Elections	6	Publication of final results for elections to 17th Knesset.
Government	6	After a round of meetings and consultations with representatives of the new Knesset factions, President Katsav asks Ehud Olmert to form a government.
Knesset	17	Swearing in of 17th Knesset.
Knesset	23	MK Uriel Reichman resigns after being told he would not be appointed Minister of Education. Shai Hermesh replaces him in the Knesset.

May 2006

Government	4	The 31st government, headed by Ehud Olmert, is sworn in at the Knesset.
Knesset	4	Ratification of Dalia Itzik's appointment as Speaker of the Knesset. Itzik is the first woman in this position.
Knesset	30	MK Menahem Ben-Sasson is appointed Chairman of the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee.

June 2006

Government	5	Ministers Haim Ramon and Ronnie Bar-On are appointed as government representatives to the Judicial Appointments Commission.
Knesset	6	The Knesset ratifies the Economic Arrangements Law for the 2006 budget.
People	21	Caesarea Forum. The Minister of Finance declares: "They are trying to hurt me and my family."

July 2006

President	8	Journalist Amnon Abramowitz, in TV Channel 2, reveals that President Katsav complained to Attorney General Menachem Mazuz of an extortion attempt by one of his former employees.
Second Lebanon War	12	Military conflagration erupts in the north. Two Israeli soldiers kidnapped by Hezbollah. The Second Lebanon War begins.
People	29	The Ramon affair: Attorney General Menachem Mazuz freezes some of the powers of Minister of Justice Haim Ramon due to an investigation against him on suspicion of a sexual harassment offense.

August 2006

Second Lebanon War	14	Agreement on a ceasefire in South Lebanon.
Corruption	15	The Attorney General decides to indict Tzahi Hanegbi, Chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee of the Knesset and former Minister of the Environment, on charges of political appointments at the ministry.

September 2006

Supreme Court	14	Justice Dorit Beinisch is sworn in as Chief Justice.

October 2006

Government	22	As Yisrael Beitenu joins the coalition, the government approves the proposal of MK Avigdor Liberman to institute a presidential regime in Israel.
Government	30	Minister Ophir Pines-Paz (Labor-Meimad) announces his resignation after Yisrael Beitenu joins the government.

November 2006

Knesset	20	Natan Sharansky (Likud) resigns from the Knesset. He is replaced by Haim Katz.

December 2006

Parties	14	The Central Committee of the Labor Party sets a date for the internal elections to choose the party's leader: 28 May 2007.
People	31	Saddam Hussein, Irak's former ruler, is executed.

January 2007

Governance	1	The Magidor Committee submits its recommendations to the President. Among them, 60 MKs will be elected in 17 areas (each choosing 2-5 representatives) and the other 60 according to the current system of country lists.

January 2007

People	**2**	Teddy Kollek dead at 95. Kollek was mayor of Jerusalem for 28 years. Buried on 4 January in the Leaders of the Nation Burial Ground.
Corruption	**2**	A corruption scandal erupts in the Israel Tax Authority. Many suspects are arrested, including the Israel Tax Authority Director, Jacky Matza, and Ehud Olmert's bureau chief, Shula Zaken.
Budget	**3**	The state budget for 2007, NIS 295.4 billion, passes second and third reading in the Knesset.
Parties	**7**	Ehud Barak announces his intention to compete in the elections for the Labor party leadership in May 2007.
Elections	**9**	A Knesset bill forbidding the publication of polls from the Friday preceding elections passes a third reading.
Government	**10**	The leader of the Labor party, Amir Peretz, decides to appoint MK Raleb Majadele as the seventh minister representing the party at the Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport. Majadele is the first Arab minister in Israel's 59 years of existence.
People	**16**	Death of MK Yuri Shtern (1949-2007). Served in the Knesset 1996-2007.
Elections	**16**	Elections for the Givatayim municipality: Reuven Ben-Shachar, the Kadima candidate, is elected after years of Labor dominance.
IDF	**17**	Chief of Staff Dan Halutz submits his resignation to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Defense.
Knesset	**23**	David Rotem joins the Knesset, instead of Yuri Shtern.
President	**25**	The Knesset Committee ratifies the President's request for temporary cessation.
Government	**29**	The Knesset approves Majadele's appointment as Minister without Portfolio by a significant majority (59 for, 23 against, and 2 abstentions).
People	**31**	Haim Ramon is convicted in the Magistrate's Court on the charge of an indecent act.

February 2007

IDF	**4**	The government ratifies the appointment of Gabi Ashkenazi as 19th IDF Chief of Staff, to take effect on 14 February.
Government	**7**	Prof. Daniel Friedmann is appointed Minister of Justice.
Government	**18**	The government extends the Tal Law for five years.
Police	**18**	Following the publication of the Zeiler Report, Police Chief Commissioner Moshe Karadi announces his resignation. Minister of Internal Security Abraham Dicter announces the appointment of Yaakov Gannot as the next Chief Commissioner and of Miki Levi as his deputy.
Knesset	**21**	The Constitution, Law and Justice Committee approves the "replacement MK" bill.

Government	22	Minister of Tourism Isaac Herzog announces his agreement to renounce the tourism portfolio and become Minister of Social Affairs and Services, and Raleb Majadele becomes Minister of Science, Culture and Sport.
Knesset	25	Dan Naveh (Likud) resigns from the Knesset and is replaced by Yuli Edelstein.
Corruption	25	The affair about the academic degrees of MK Esterina Tartman (Yisrael Beitenu). Just before her appointment as Minister of Tourism replacing Minister Isaac Herzog (Labor), Tartman withdraws her candidacy after publications in the media showed she had provided incorrect information concerning her academic degrees.

March 2007

Economy	1	Unemployment in Israel drops to the lowest level in the last decade – 7.7% of the civilian working force.
Prime Minister	15	Olmert: "I am an unpopular prime minister…but I am here to work."
Police	27	Yaakov Gannot withdraws his candidacy for Police Commissioner.

April 2007

Police	10	Minister of Internal Security Abraham Dicter decides to appoint Major General Dudi Cohen as Police Commissioner.
President	18	President Moshe Katsav asks the Knesset Committee to prolong his temporary cessation.
Knesset	22	MK Azmi Bishara (National Democratic Assembly), the party chairman, submits his resignation to the Knesset at the Israeli embassy in Cairo. He is replaced by Adv. Said Naffaa.
Government	22	Minister of Finance Abraham Hirchson (Kadima) informs the Prime Minister of a three months cessation following his criminal investigation and in the wake of public pressure.
Israel	24	Israel celebrates the 59th anniversary of its independence.
Winograd Commission	30	The Commission of Inquiry into the Events of the Second Lebanon War 2006 (The Winograd Commission) submits an interim report to the government, which sharply criticizes the failure of the campaign and the functioning of the political leadership.

May 2007

Government	1	Minister without Portfolio Eitan Cabel (Labor-Meimad) resigns from the government after the interim report of the Winograd Commission. MK Avigdor Itzchaky (Kadima), coalition Chairman, also resigns following the report's publication.