

Survey, Israel Democracy Institute, January 2019

Prof. Tamar Hermann and Or Anabi

The 2019 election campaign has begun and the Israel Democracy Institute has launched a series of three short research reports based on monthly surveys.

How Does the Public View the Left, the Center, and the Right?

An important role in the heated - if not fiery - public conversation now being conducted in Israel is played by flattering and unflattering images of the three political camps: left, center, and right. We asked: “What, in your eyes, are the three main characteristics of the left/the center/the right?” The following table presents the three main characteristics of each camp as perceived by those who situated themselves in the same camp and by those who situated themselves in the other two camps. (Because the respondents were able to give up to 3 answers, the overall sum of the percentages can exceed 100%).

Table 1:

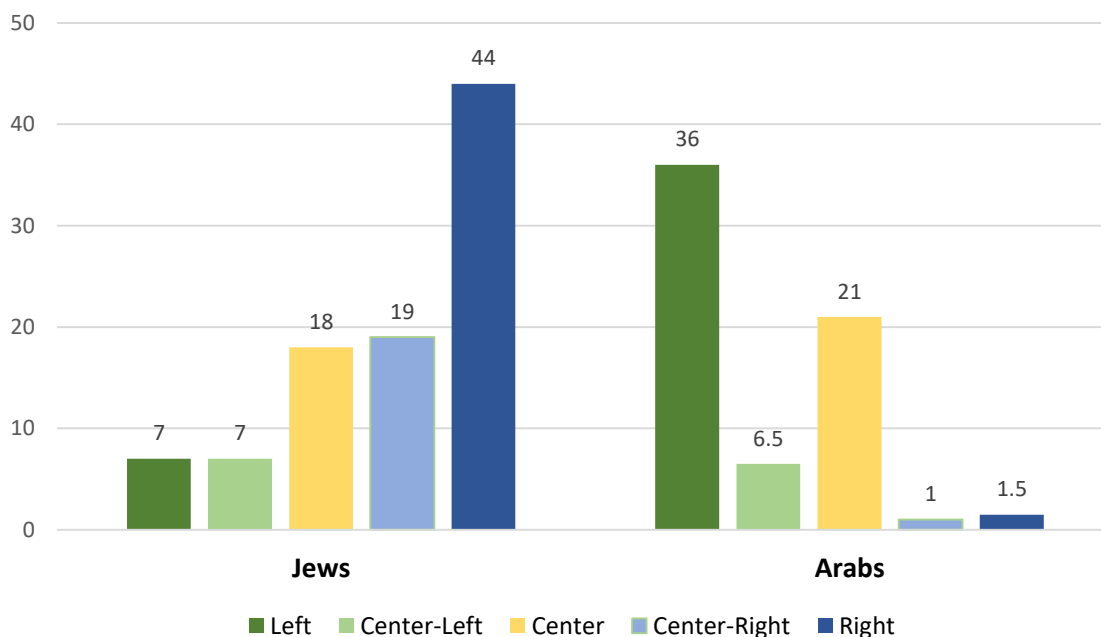
	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place
Images of the right				
<i>The right in its own eyes</i>	Love of the land, the state and the nation, Greater Israel, Ideology (54%)	Security, strength, toughness (52%)	Religion, Judaism, nationalism (37%)	Capitalism, free-market economy (17%)
<i>The right in the eyes of the center</i>	Security, strength, toughness (49%)	Corruption, bribery, lies (29%)	Radicalism, fanaticism, messianic (25%)	Capitalism, free-market economy (20.5%)
<i>The right in the eyes of the left</i>	Corruption, bribery, lies (43%)	Security, strength, toughness (30%)	Radicalism, fanaticism, messianic (30%)	Negative personal traits + curses (stupid, fool, delusional) (26%)
<i>The right in the eyes of the Arabs</i>	Racism, discrimination, hatred of Arabs (69%)	Radicalism, fanaticism, messianic (31%)	Corruption, bribery, lies (31%)	

	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place
Images of the center				
<i>The center in its own eyes</i>	Lacks a clear position, zigzags, just talk, no leadership, fragmented (66%)	Concern for the public good: Dedicated, patriotic, unity (18%)	Equality, democracy, liberalism, justice (17%)	Positive traits-trustworthy, reliable, excellent (13%)
<i>The center in the eyes of the right</i>	Lacks a clear position, zigzags, just talk, no leadership, fragmented (52%)	Negative traits-delusional, self-righteous (17%)	Positive traits-concern for the outlying areas, freedom of religion, practical effectiveness (14.5%)	Neutral, balanced (12.5%)
<i>The center in the eyes of the left</i>	Lacks a clear position, zigzags, just talk, no leadership, fragmented (75%)	Positive traits-trustworthy, reliable, excellent (20%)	Negative traits-delusional, self-righteous (19%)	Neutral, balanced (10%)
<i>The center in the eyes of the Arabs</i>	Lacks a clear position, zigzags, just talk, no leadership, fragmented (31%)	Equality, democracy, liberalism, justice (29%)	Positive traits-trustworthy, reliable, excellent (29%)	
Images of the left				
<i>The left in its own eyes</i>	Equality, democracy, liberalism, justice (44%)	Two states for two peoples, peace, territorial concessions (34%)	Positive traits-trustworthy, reliable, excellent (32%)	Socialism, Welfare (19.5%)
<i>The left in the eyes of the right</i>	Contrary, hates other Jewish groups (the opposing political side, orthodox, the state ...), traitors, divisiveness, incitement (55%)	Negative personal traits + curses (stupid, fool, delusional) (35%)	Two states for two peoples, peace, territorial concessions (25%)	Arabs, Arab-lovers, support the enemy (18%)
<i>The left in the eyes of the center</i>	No leadership, divided (35%)	Two states for two peoples, peace, territorial concessions (32%)	Contrary, hates other Jewish groups (the opposing political side, orthodox, the state ...), traitors, divisiveness, incitement (32%)	Negative personal traits + curses (stupid, fool, delusional) (26%)
<i>The left in the eyes of the Arabs</i>	Equality, democracy, liberalism, justice (43%)	Concern for the public good: Dedicated, patriotic, unity (21%)	Contrary, hates other Jewish groups (the opposing political side, orthodox, the state ...), traitors, divisiveness, incitement (20%)	Negative personal traits + curses (stupid, fool, delusional) (20%)

And What Is the Size of Each Political Camp?

We asked the interviewees to situate themselves on a seven-rung scale on which 1+2 = left, 3 = center-left, 4 = center, 5 = center-right, and 6+7 = right. The following graph shows the distribution, which clearly skews to the right in the Jewish public and to the left in the Arab public. Another interesting finding is the high rate of those in the Arab public who are unable to situate themselves politically on the left-right spectrum (some 33%).

Graph 1 (%):



And Who Is in Each Camp?

In the past we found a very strong relationship in the Jewish public between self- placement on the secular- haredi spectrum and location on the left-center-right political spectrum. The following table shows what the current survey found.

Table 2 (Jews, %):

	Left	Center-Left	Center	Center-Right	Right
Haredi	2	4	2	29	60
Religious	0	0	11	6	81.5
Traditional-religious	0	5	8.5	14	71
Traditional-nonreligious	3	7	17	23	46
Secular	13	10	26	20	25

And how do the voters for the different parties define themselves? Note that because of the small numbers of voters in our sample and the many possibilities on the spectrum, these data require further refinement.

Table 3 (Jews, %):

	Left	Center- Left	Center	Center- Right	Right
The Likud, led by Benjamin Netanyahu	--	--	4	14	80
Israel Resilience, led by Benny Gantz	9	18	26.5	32.5	15
Yesh Atid, led by Yair Lapid	6	6	40.5	29	15.5
Labor, led by Avi Gabbay	39	44	11	6	--
Hatnuah, led by Tzipi Livni	--	50	33	--	--
The New Right, led by Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked	--	3	7	7	77
Bayit Yehudi, led by Eli Ben-Dahan and Motti Yogev	--	--	--	--	100
The National Union, led by Bezalet Smotrich	--	--	--	--	100
Kulanu, led by Moshe Kahlon	--	--	20	20	60
Yisrael Beiteinu, led by Avigdor Liberman	--	--	22	26	48
Meretz, led by Tamar Zandberg	60	33	--	7	--
Torah Judaism (Agudat Yisrael and Degel Hatorah)	--	--	4	34.5	61.5
Shas, led by Aryeh Deri	--	--	10	30	60
Yahad, led by Eli Yishai	--	--	--	--	100
Gesher, led by Orly Levy-Abekasis	16	5	21	32	26
Telem, led by Moshe Ya'alon	--	33	33	--	33
Achi Yisrael, led by Adina Bar-Shalom	--	--	67	--	33
Blank ballot + Won't vote + Haven't decided + Decline to answer	5	9	26	17	26

We want to participate!

As the date of the primaries for the parties that hold them draws near and the parties complete their candidate lists, we gauged the public's view of the best method for forming a party's candidate list. What emerges is a clear-cut preference for primaries. The table below ranks the preferences from the highest (the primaries) to the lowest (a small nomination committee). Interestingly, in second place is the "least democratic" method - the party leader puts together the list.

Table 4 (%):

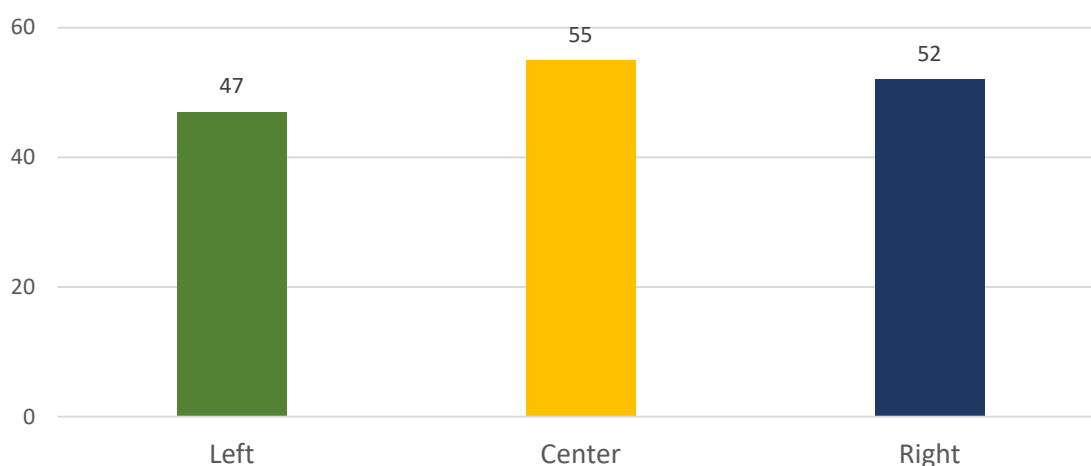
Primaries, with all members of the party taking part in choosing the list	49
The head of the party determines the list	10.5
The members of the party's central committee choose the list	8.5
A small nomination committee determines the list	8
They're all the same/ None of the methods/ Don't know	24.5

A segmentation of the answers to this question by voting intention in the upcoming elections revealed that, among the voters for all the parties, the highest rate - and sometimes a substantial majority - supports primaries as the preferred method. The highest rate of supporters of primaries was found among potential voters for the Labor Party (94%) and the lowest rate among voters for Eli Yishai's party- Yahad, which did not pass the electoral threshold in the previous elections (29%) - exactly the same as the rate of supporters for having the party leader decide on the list of candidates. The same preferences were found among Kulanu voters.

This desire to take part in choosing the candidates was also reflected in high support for a semi-open primary ballot in the elections themselves. We asked: "There are countries in which **at the time of voting** in the ballot box, the voters can **rank the candidates** of the party they voted for from second place onward (not including the leader of the party), meaning that when voting for a party one also determines the order of its candidates. What is your opinion of this method?" A majority of 57% of the entire public answered that they viewed this method favorably. We did not find disparities between the different camps on this issue.

Again in the same vein of a broadening of participation, a majority of 52% of the Jewish public thinks the right to vote should also be given to Israelis living abroad. Among the Arabs, those in favor have a small lead (40% compared to 36%). As the following graph shows, here we found some disparities, though not very large, when we analyzed the answers according to political camp. The considerable rate of those who define themselves as left-wing and support such an extension is surprising in light of the often-heard claims that such an extension would mainly serve the right-wing camp.

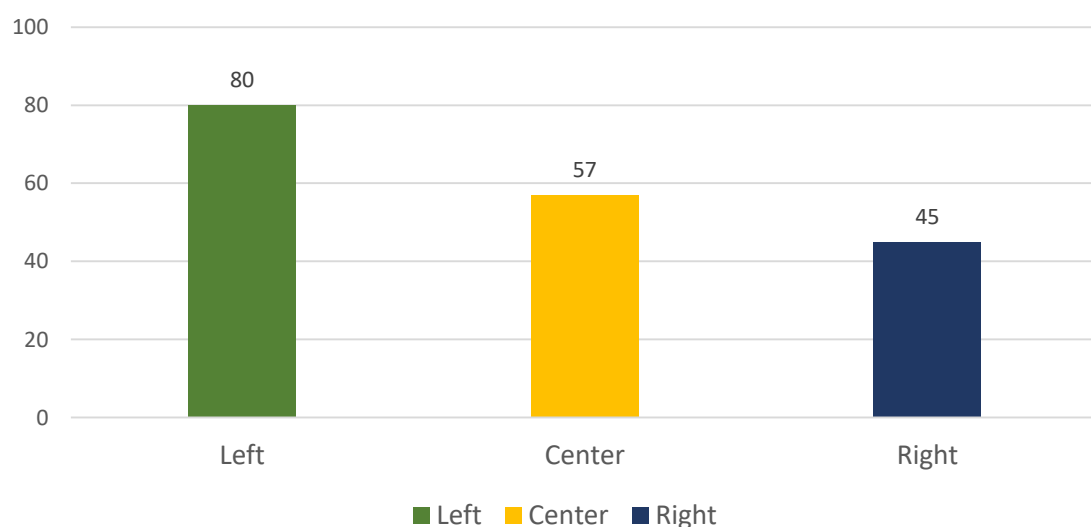
Graph 2 (Jews, %):



The Feminine Power

As the elections approach, we also wanted to know whether the presence of women on a list is important to the Israeli voters. We asked: “Is it important or not important to you that the list of the party you will vote for will include a large number of women in realistic slots?” Fifty-two percent of the Jewish public said it was important to them, though it should be taken into account that we did not ask whether the absence of women would lower the chances that the respondent would vote for a party on whose list women were not given realistic slots. As the following graph shows, the gaps between the political camps on this issue are very large.

Graph 3 (Jews, %):



The disparities on this issue by self-definition on the secular-haredi spectrum are even larger, as shown in the following table, which specifies the rates, by religiosity, of those for whom the presence of women on the list is important.

Table 5 (Jews, %):

Haredi	29
Religious	35
Traditional-religious	61
Traditional-nonreligious	60
Secular	53

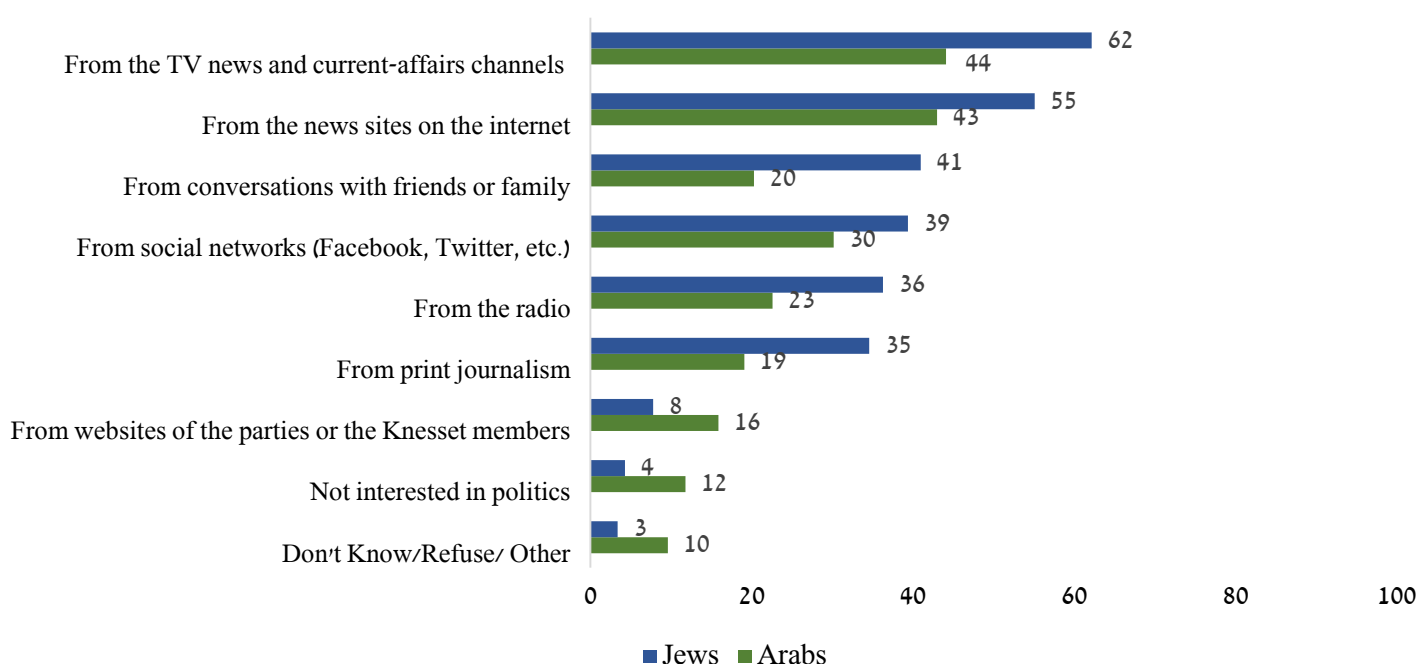
We further found (and were not really surprised) that the issue of women's representation is less important to men than to women (Jewish public: men 43%, women 56%).

Who should form the government? (The “large-party law”): A sizable majority of the Jewish public (60%) thinks that the president should entrust the formation of the government to the leader of the party that has won the largest number of votes in the elections. In the Arab public, however, the opinions on this issue are divided. We did find a majority in all three political camps (Jews), but this majority is smaller on the left (51%), while in the center it comes to 57% and on the right the support for the large-party law, which the Likud is now trying to promote, stands at 65.5%.

Sources of Political Information

Recently much has been said about the social networks' alleged (hostile?) “takeover” of the electoral discourse. We looked into where the interviewees say they get most of their political information. It may surprise many to learn that even today television is still, according to the interviewees, the main source of information for political issues.

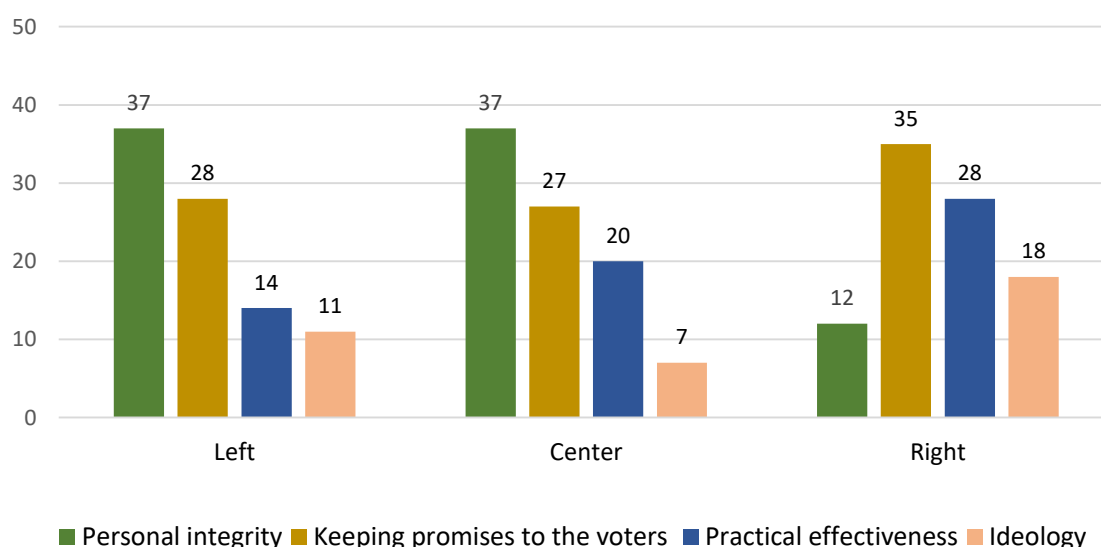
Graph 4 (%):



The Main Thing Is Keeping Promises!

Against the backdrop of the increased weight of party leaders in the voters' considerations, we wanted to know what they see as a political leader's most important characteristic. We found that, for the Jewish public, what is most important is that the leader keeps his promises to the voters (33%). In second place is the ability to make decisions (24%). After that come personal integrity and ideology (20% and 14% respectively). As graph 5 shows, the gap on this issue between the right on the one hand, and the center and the left on other, is considerable.

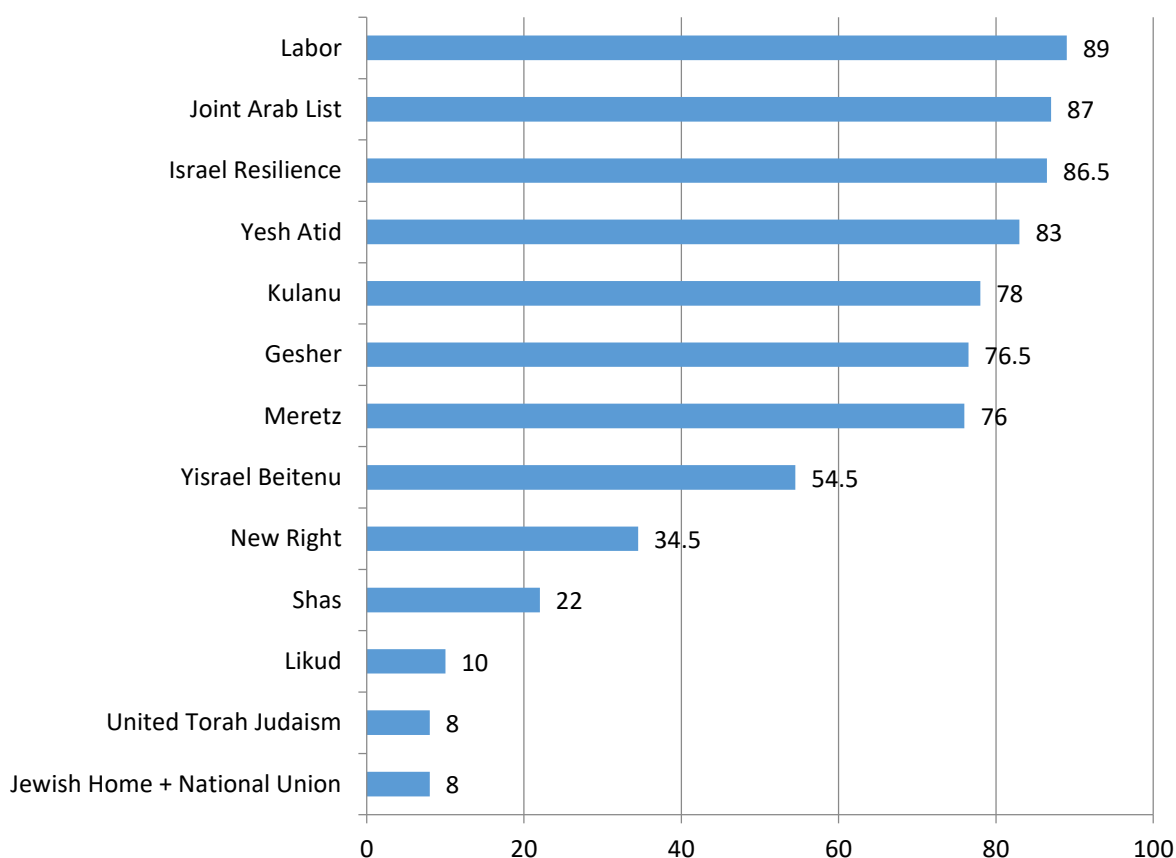
Graph 5 (Jews, %)



The End of the Road for Netanyahu?

Our last question concerns the issue now at the heart of the political debate - whether the prime minister should resign if the attorney-general serves an indictment against him, pending a hearing. The Jewish public is currently divided on this question, with somewhat of a lead for those who think that in such a situation he should resign (49.5% vs. 40% who think the opposite). Among the Arabs a large majority (67%) considers that in such a situation Netanyahu should step down. A segmentation by blocs yielded a foreseeable result: on the left a consensus of about 90% says he should step down, in the center 73%, and on the right only 35%. The graph below shows the rates of those who think or are sure Netanyahu should resign if the attorney-general decides to indict him, pending a hearing.

Graph 6 (%):



This survey was a project of the Guttman Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research at the Israel Democracy Institute. It was conducted by telephone and on the internet by the Midgam Research Institute on January 22-24, 2019. The sample included 600 interviewees who constitute a representative national sample of the entire adult population of Israel aged 18 and over. The maximum measurement error for the entire sample is $\pm 4.1\%$ at a confidence level of 95%.

For the full data file see: www.dataisrael.idi.org.il