

**The Israel Democracy Institute**  
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**Session 3**

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Prof. Tamar Hermann: We are on the last session for today. We have the privilege of having Dr. Yehuda Ben Meir with us. He will be the second speaker on this session. The first speaker will be Yossi Shain.

Prof. Yossi Shain: Thank you so much Tami. And I want to thank Tami twice because when Tami invited me to this conference I was involved with something else. And I was thinking about the subject she was dealing with and I started to look into it and it was totally consuming. It is dedicated to you. As if I came back to graduate school.

My paper today or my discussion today will be what I call the language of corruption and its cost to democracy. I will deal with the subject of political leadership and to what extent the underlining of political leadership is undermining democracy and who is in charge. Who has in fact dealt such a blow to political leadership and why this blow comes with impunity in some respects and what needs to be done. The Israeli question came to my mind and troubles me for quite some time. I went through the books, to the ancients of course and to the Roman Empire. Many of the questions that were raised here today are discussed there in some length in terms of what is at stake and what needs to be done- How can we improve so politics comes back to where it is due and becomes important once again. This begins with leaders.

So let me begin. In the last few years we are witnessing a new kind of syndrome. It is not directly related to the all Jewish question of existential threat from the outside world but rather to domestic failures. Charges of misconduct, corruption investigations, allegations of court convictions of elected officials have been constantly rocking the Israeli political and public life. It is shaking the confidence of the common man in the system to the point that some are even questioning the viability of the country's domestic status. The cases are numerous: from reports on our President, Finance Minister, Minister of Justice- who kisses a girl, had to leave office and then returned after there was no infamy- to the Prime Minister Olmert. As some people say, in Olmert case there was kind of a strange air of normalcy because his predecessors Ariel Sharon, Ehud Barak and Benjamin Netanyahu were also faced with police investigations in financial matters though none led to indictments. These cases present only the tip of the iceberg of numerous of cases of apparent moral failing, bribery charges or convictions related to financial misconduct in the electoral

system. In the midst of very serious challenges that are presented to Israel by arch enemies in the Muslim world including a direct threat by Iranian President Mohamad Achmedin Nagad that Israel should be wiped of the map, the Israeli public often seems to be more exhausted and disenchanted by numerous ethical failures of public officials resulting in ineffective government and loss of confidence in parliamentary democracy. The notion that Israeli democracy and society and especially the political system is bereft of corruption is constantly opposed by politicians themselves, disenchanted bureaucrats, leading journalists who are affected. Civil society activists and members of the judiciary and law enforcement systems including former Supreme Court judges, the Attorney General himself, state employees, retired police officers who are constantly on the media as experts on scandals and even the Police Chief who said recently in an interview in Rosh Hashana that corruption is the biggest strategic threat to Israel. When I read this I knew something is really wrong. At a time when the government is condemned by the Police Chief. Of course the new genius of corruption hunters, Mr. Arie Shavit wrote in Haaretz what was a rhetorical banner. When the truth comes out and Israelis discover who controlled the country for the past two and half years, the Police Commissionaire will turn out to be a local hero along with investigators Shlomi Aloni and Kaplan and of course the hero Menachem Mazus the Attorney General. They all stood up against the rocking political system and the corruption that involved the entire government including Tzipi Livni who saved her criticism for a courageous Police Commissionaire instead of a corrupt Prime Minister etc. etc. I was even more stunned when I saw Haaretz magazine The Marker. The Marker came with a hundred most influential Israelis. You know who they are? Number one the Attorney General, number two the State Controller, number three the State Defender, number four and five the two Police Officers who investigate Olmert and number six, Dorit Bainish the Chief Justice. Number 11 only was a politician the Minister of Finance and only number 62 the Minister of Justice Mr. Friedman himself who is controversial on the issue. No other politician was reported to be influential in Israel. Only corruption hunters. Maybe this is because an anti corruption campaign. One must ask oneself what and who are behind these campaigns and for what purpose. And it is a cost to democracy. These questions are particularly important in the state of Israel where politics is extremely volatile. The danger of war is immanent. In Israel the rhetoric of corruption has become increasingly loose and even abusive. That it seems to weaken and even undermine the political arena and its ability to face challenges.

It is my contention that the abusive process of purification in the Israeli society and especially the indictment of the political leaders and public figures with dishonesty, ineptness, lack of character and other moral failures may have reached such a level, that the cost of under corruption language may even extinct the damage of corruption itself. Indeed these observations are controversial. And these may be rejected outright by corruption fighters. And yet it is reinforced by cross cultural data that I collect all over the world now that shows that negative relationship between the reality of corruption are superimposed on such reality by political elite and establishment and the publicity according to actual cases of corruption and to such inflated rhetoric. Like in many other democratic countries, in Israel the moral disgust with corruption is so high among public and policy reformers that anti corruption policies are never subject to a study. The moral costs of corruption are perceived as so high, that any cost of anti corruption polices are welcome. It is the moral character of the issue that keeps anti corruption campaign beyond the usual procedures for policy and

accountability. The anti corruption discourse remains normative. This perception is just a new corruption frenzy. It is an important junction political and moral history that requires comparative explanations regarding the relations ethics and democracy. To be sure ethical outlook is part and parcel of many democratic societies beyond the idea of personal transgression. Many times they are the outcome of sincere desire to improve the ethical standards of the executive branch. They also reflect cultural, ethical and generational shift in society. But they are also the result of sensationalism. In all instances we must keep in mind that ethical crisis related to personal behavior of leaders and public officials are affecting and being affected by large questions of morality in society including questions of sovereignty, religious matters, family values and the importance and definition of the rule of law. The issue of corruption of political leaders therefore poses a special challenge to national aspect of the state and the ability of the democratic system to make critical decisions. Because of its border ethical links and part from serious transgressions by elected leaders and high officials language of corruption has become an obsession. My thoughts are about the language of corruptions in democracy not about corruption itself. It deals with an impact of ethical questions in the public trust of political leaders and high officials by way of examining the foundation and legitimacy of democracy and it shifts with time. I would probe this question of ethics and rhetoric in Israel's public life from a broad comparative perspective. The question I will ask today and will answer only in short. What are the historical and philosophical roots of the anti corruption and the ethics world? How concerns and anti corruption rhetoric about leaders, public officials and political institutions have become at center stage in so many democracies, Israel of course included? To what extent democratic process itself contributes to the pervasiveness of anti corruption discourse? Who is likely to benefit from this?

Like in Israel, many democracies new and well established live in a world of dangerous disaffection and this engagement on the part of citizens who fight corruption threatens to tear them apart. Public disenchantment and mistrust with politics and politicians is now commonplace and corruption spelled out is evident in numerous democracies where heads of state, high officials and legislators are constantly under investigation. There are people here from France, Germany and England I took only examples from them but I can mention also Italy, the champion of corruption allegations. Berlusconi is a point in case, charges of bribery against former German chancellor Helmut Kohl, investigation of bribery payments to President Jacques Chirac in France, and the counter accusations and legal investigations of Tony Blair and Labor Association, all are deep in cynicism about politics and politics is associated with moral failures. Certainly political corruption, reality perception have been one of the most disturbing predicament of democracy. Yet to paraphrase an insightful observer of Indian politics when it comes to corruption, it is unclear whether it is fact itself or more importantly the talk of it. Without doubt it is often difficult to distinguish between the eroding effect of real corruption and the corroding feature of anti corruption rhetoric. Moses Naim the editor of Foreign Policy has written recently that today the world corruption is undermining democracy, helping the wrong leaders get elected and discouraging society from facing urgent problems. He argues that corruption is too easily becoming universal if we could only curtail the culture of grab and greed we are told many intractable problems could easily be solved. But although it is true that corruption is crippling, putting an end to it would necessarily stall the deeper problems that afflict society.

In a most elaborate study on the subject of Israel, Doron Navot writes and he wrote it in the Israel Democracy Institute, the pervasive use of the language of corruption in Israel that presents the politics and politicians as weak and dishonest has come as self fulfilling prophecy. Those who benefit from the state of affairs are the Left politicians. The anti corruption fight is dominated by corruption hunters and an aggressive media. This rhetoric is also nurtured by a visceral and clinical coverage of politics that magnifies the suspicions. This is not the first time that democracy has experienced such a fight or appeared in anti corruption rhetoric. Denunciation of politicians of dishonest behavior and immorality are inherent to the language of politics. Yet in the absence of substitute ideology to democratic rule the language of corruption is dominant. In Israel of course is built into the system of democracy and elected government and coalition building. We have words to describe it – disgusting coalition. We are constantly selling. Tzipi Livni who did not build a coalition – I did not sell, everybody is not selling. Shares are being sort of like a given. Ideologies are being sold. Politics itself, the very idea of building a coalition is described as corruption.

Critics of immorality of our time are dominated by Rightist politicians. Some of them use anti corruption language as a way of diffusing opposition. These politicians tend to shout clean out the system but are often seeking only cosmetic reform. Republican candidate John McCain took pride in a slogan that he will clean up Washington and Wall Street. Indeed in the 2008 elections, anti corruption language was used to the point of being anti productive and inhibiting. Candidates are doubly afraid of making mistakes if he or she does make an innocent mistake that can be used as political reference in the confirmation process to question their integrity. Anti corruption rhetoric is also propagated by powerful and evil driven bureaucrats who foster negative politics. We have a tendency to think and often spread the conviction that politics is governed by law, quality, leadership. This alleged reality is of course leaving to an imperative for moralistic intervention by the legal system. To be sure the language of corruption have in court a growing judicial activism which is one of the most significant developments in democracies in late twenty century. It also encourages the confusing of morality and legality. And this is a very important point about the notion of legality and morality. The idea that politicians are corrupt or politicians are on a low level was adopted by the Court and in fact was nurtured by it. It created in Israeli Court a sense it must import a Juristic morality and values that of other branches of government. And indeed when you see judges speak in Israel they are the defenders of democracy. Attorney General Mani Mazuz had addressed Law School and he said that Israel is suffering from a leadership crisis, an erosion in the leadership that destabilizes Israeli democracy and encourages illegalism. The public desperation of leadership is warranted because of the absence of political role models among its leaders.

The anti corruption rhetoric has been embellished by scoop and scandal. You have oriented media which is dedicated to sensational headlines. In his book 'Media Madness' James Bowen has written that the media strong commercial interest as well as the claim to objectivity lies with the promotion of scandal. The resources of big media give it a big advantage over the small amateur kind of reporters. Everybody is investigated in Israel. From the local mayors in Israel. In democracy the corruption discourse in the media with its language of hyperboly is also a product of the hazard

organizations that democracy would not in and of itself become a panacea to all major economic and social problems. The constraints of the democratic process and the shortcomings of political leaders import the corruption discourse in democracy and contaminates the political arena. The media in democracy plays a key role in this process with its economic and political masters the media exposes the corruption. Anti corruption rhetoric is also cultivated by self oriented agents who come mainly from civil society. Such groups and individuals are often part of the growing international infra structure, it agitates against corrupt officials. They also include members of the academy and the intellectual elite and indeed there are also relations. The Movement of Good Government is the Israeli anti corruption movement, and it has 50 thousand members. This is the era of the corruption eruption. The World Bank in particular had guidelines because they were accused of corruption. Corruption is transnational. They now everybody has to have a branch. Every country has a branch.

Critics have questioned the anti corruption rhetoric and the results of anti corruption campaign. One of the most articulate critics of anti corruption rhetoric in Europe in the international arena maintains that this language serves as a major excuse for neoliberal policy in the civil economy and government. As political tools this language encourages public perception of a corruption which is a far cry from the actual state of affairs. Finally corruption rhetoric is the language of popular semi loyal groups and it is very important for us. They manipulate a corruption language to question elected leaders and democracy altogether in the name of higher values and may turn to violent means in order to justify their cause. In Israel it is of course political opponents of Prime Minister Sharon and Ehud Olmert in Parliament and in particular the critics among Right Wing settlers community and one must understand there are very interesting strange bedfellows here. You have Aryeh Eldad (Ichud Leumi) on the one hand and Sheli Yechimovitz (Havoda) on the other hand. They are sitting together and are celebrating corruption. It is a very important issue of the Right Wing. They argue that the motivation of Sharon and Olmert to return territories and negotiate with Israel's enemy was really a ploy to draw Israel's public attention away from bribery and corruption scandals in those two Prime Ministers respectively. The detractors also argue that the Prime Minister corrupt policy verging on treason was direct extension of their personal vanity. Time and again Israelis hear harsh expressions from right and left about the corruption and wickedness of our political leaders. These leaders lack both moral courage and the strategic wisdom to defend the country. And that is a direct assault on the very idea what you talked about before of sovereignty. The notion that leadership defends the country. Corruption fighters often reinforce each other rhetoric. They are good with words and can mobilize the public outrage against political leaders and public officials and yet they are found in analytical framework and they are far removed from the universal of rational bureaucracy that they claim to be representing. They often rush to judgments for the sake of instant sensationalism and headlines at the expense of judicial investigation. They push for ethical programs. They come with grips on human institutions and relations and tend to admonish or even criminalize mild immoral behavior. They force leaders and high officials to become more attuned to the public and yet only for the sake of avoiding the appearance of impropriety. They often speak with certainty about issues they know very little about including issues of high national security importance. They demand leaders to be extremely efficient as policy makers and fully accountable but at the same time have the power to paralyze decision making. Indeed the anti corruption fighters encourage avoiding action while rewarding passive

cleanliness. Morality hunters in democratic public life operate without paying any price with their unsubstantiated charges. They control the language of freedom and peace and at the same time employ a thrill. In fact they tend to weaken the public trust in politicians undermining legal establishment which becomes a victim of its own accepted yielding to anti corruption fighters and above all encourage the culture of appearance. In a fascinating study of the destructive impact on politics of appearance in the United States Glenn Reynolds observed appearance ethics and the entire super structure that goes with it has a number of traits. It appeals to participants in the system in spite of the large disadvantages for society. Indeed once appearance questions had been refined sufficiently, negative comments are not to produce a bad appearance. The question is whether or not appearance undermines confidence as much as bad reality. Good appearance does not build confidence as much as good reality. So system that rewards or punishes the cultivation of appearance tends not to build confidence or even preserve it over the long term. But on day to day basis an approach based on appearance is ideally suited to our culture and to the journalistic profession increasingly dominated by Journalism graduates who never studied anything substantive before entering their profession.

In my analysis of this question I am trying to ask where does all this come from? How did we arrive at this stage of democracy? This is a very big question. I will just give several samples. First of all, the whole discussion of antiquity from Plato and Aristotle was all about how system maybe corrupted and the subject of virtue was essential. And that has to be understood that virtue in terms of democracy, and the decline of virtue was very much not about individuals even though individuals were there but about certain issues pertaining to what they talked about, the worlds of contemplation and the world of justice. This issue again became very much part and parcel of the discussion especially in the Roman Empire. You have a beautiful discussion, I talk about Maciavelli, the whole language of the art of the state and the whole discussion of the humanist. You see Maciavelli has a whole chapter where he makes a distinction between charges and accusations. Accusations have merit and charges how they pollute the political system. It became even more important on the issue of Rome. Because if you look at Gibbons on the fall of Rome his thesis is that Rome fell because of corruption. This was the 18<sup>th</sup> century discussion of Republicanism. And the new studies on the topic do not show that Rome fell because of corruption. It is rather the discussion of corruption in the 18<sup>th</sup> century because there was a whole debate about to what extent democracy will corrupt marriage because the aristocracy was about to decline. This issue takes a different turn when you have a whole discussion starting on leadership with honor. Honor becomes a very important subject. The question was to what extent we can have honor for those without pedigree. Where the new leaders of democracy will get their honor? And the subject of honor becomes very much imbued in the title subject of leadership that I deal with in terms of what happened to it. Because if there was no honor that is built-in and people are not working with it, then to what extent people who are not with pedigree can govern. We should be aware of the fact that the system of the civil society who brings money in will not corrupt people but rather open democracy.

Nevertheless, Washington and Jefferson refused to accept money as presidents because this is not good for the country. They wanted to keep this notion of the pedigree. And the debate over aristocracy is really dominating Erikson and of course Edmund Burke and others. Burke has a whole discussion of corruption especially

because this is relevant to us with Hastings and the East India Company. You go to the East India Company. What are we doing there? We come and pillage, we change the culture, we bring money with us. He is starting to talk about how we have to be careful not to change the system or values. And therefore it became an entire struggle over the system of values. And the system of values is very much in debate in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is a debate between Hobbs and Maciavelli. Maciavelli and Hobbs' readers are trying to rescue the notion of morality. But later on they do not know what to do with it when it comes to a leader. Hegel tried to solve it by saying that state is ethics and we have to bring leaders to be heroes again. This whole discussion is exploding in the 20<sup>th</sup> century again. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the proliferation of democracy not because of its decline more and more people started to undermine leadership which still as we know has to make a quintessential decision of politics. Us versus them. And all the other agencies that are fighting with them are positioned in Israel as well. They fight politicians and of course are being damaged. So this whole notion of civil society, the state and the political society have to take into consideration that the state itself is constantly subject to the decisions made by leaders and therefore when we use such language we have to be careful because we do not want to undermine democracy. We do not want to undercut the very notion that leaders are important in society. Thank you.

Prof. Tamar Hermann: I know that we have agreed that we will have questions immediately after the presentation but our next speaker must run to Tel Aviv so he cannot stay with us. So we will move directly to Dr. Yehuda Ben Meir.

Dr. Yehuda Ben Meir: Thank you. I am very happy that I am speaking right after the interesting presentation by Professor Shain because what I want to talk about more or less follows directly to what he said. Some of it is a direct consequence to some of the points that he pointed out. I would come to that and to his main thesis towards the end. It is hard argue the fact that Israel is undergoing a deep crisis of confidence among the population, among the citizens. The crisis of confidence is evident with regard to almost the entire gamut of the institutions of the state. The crisis of confidence is manifest first and foremost with regard to the political establishment. The government as a whole, the key ministers, the Knesset and the political parties in general. Basically the entire infra structure of the democratic society is at stake. This phenomenon is not uniquely Israeli but really reflects a malaise, a deep malaise which is prevalent throughout the free world. This is manifest by a number of factors. You see a factor of decreasing popularity ratings of most elected leaders within a relatively short period after they are elected. It is almost universal. People go to the elections, they win the elections and very short time passes and there is decline. This is the general picture that we find as well as decreasing rates of participation in national elections. Obama's appeal to American voters and his ability to generate so much enthusiasm especially among young Americans was based on his call for change and the promise to reform Washington. The desire for change and for reform was so great that it even overcame the race factor which was though might be a predominant factor in the United States.

However in Israel at least, the crisis of confidence is not limited to the political establishment. First and foremost which in itself would be certainly a problem worth discussing and analyzing but it flows over the entire gamut and all major institutions of the state. This general statement is supported by a wealth of data. I am going just to

give bits of examples to point this out. A program which Professor Asher Arian initiated and ran for many years National Security Public Opinion Project at the Center of Strategic Studies which continues after he left. There is a study on representative sample of a non Jewish population in Israel and as part of this project on March 2007 nine months after the Second Lebanon War, the people were asked whether they can depend on the government to make right decisions on questions of national security which has a direct bearing of course on every individual in Israel. Only 34% answered in the affirmative. And this clearly demonstrates the basic lack of confidence in the political leadership. Only a third said that they can depend on the political leadership. Not on economic questions or social questions which are usually matters of more disagreement. This can be compared with a question when they were asked to what degree they can depend on the IDF to defend the country, 83% answered in the affirmative. As someone pointed out correctly one of the reasons may be that the IDF is one of the very few monopolies left in the society. So the people do not have that much of a choice because there is no an alternative to the IDF and if they are not going to depend on the IDF they would be in a serious psychological problem. But the political leadership of course by definition is changeable, part of the process, part of the system. So therefore is no great concern to those two thirds who cannot depend on it because they say eventually we will change the leaders. A poll taken in July 2008, people were asked to give grades to the Knesset, to the police, to a number of key institutions. And people were asked on a one to five scale, one being very bad, five being very good and the Knesset got 2.36 below the medium point. The police got 2.94 again below the 3, and even the Attorney General which is an institution that normally enjoys high prestige considered as a major corruption fighter received only 3.9. The most convincing evidence of course of the extent of the crisis of confidence in Israeli society is supplied by the Democracy Index published by the IDI. In the index published on 2008, there is an unprecedented decline in confidence in the Supreme Court, which at one time enjoyed high levels of confidence. It competed with the IDF. These were the two national institutions that traditionally enjoy a huge high rate of confidence: high eighties, low nineties. And this study found that confidence in the Supreme Court dropped from 61% in 2007 to 49% in 2008. Other national institutions did much worse. The police for instance, which again confidence in the police is very essential, went down from 41% to 33%. The Knesset went down from 33% to 29% how much lower you can get? And for the media it went from 45% to 37%. Confidence in the political parties which in the final analysis is the heart of the democratic system reached 50%. Once again the only exception to the rule was the IDF, it went down from 74% to 71%. Still quite high. 90% of the population that is more than consensus viewed the country as being painted by corruption. 60% said that the country is very much corrupt, 30% said a lot of corruption. All this goes to show how great is the crisis of confidence in all the national institutions except in the army perhaps and first and foremost in the political system.

We get one more example to show how high the degree of cynicism has reached and a basic lack of confidence in the political leadership, from a study done by Mina Tzemach in late February. This, I remind you was before Talanesky, before all the things that eventually led to Olmert's down fall. Israelis were asked what motivates the Israeli leadership to conduct the talks with the Palestinians. And they had two possibilities: one being political considerations, the other being that the leaders believe in the talks. 78% said political considerations. Only 19% believed that the

leadership was engaging in talks crucial to Israel's future initiated by the United States and by the Quartet, because they believed in them.

In a study done just last month on Israelis aged 18 to 35 and they were asked whether they thought they were going to vote in the upcoming national elections on February 10<sup>th</sup>, only 51% said they were sure that they will go to vote. And we know that people normally in these questions that the percentage who say they are going to vote is always much less than those who actually vote for a variety of reasons. Half are not going to vote to exercise the basic right. We have a huge amount of data to prove that this exists.

What are some of the ramifications of it? Some of the ramifications basically show a lack of confidence in the democratic system as a whole, dangers to the future of democracy because if you do not have confidence in any of the national institutions not only the political establishment but the Supreme Court, the judiciary, the police, all these institutions this eventually can affect your behavior and your identification and again one of the ramifications which you see in a study by the Israel Democracy Institute in which people were asked to what degree they feel part of the state. And according to the study from 1979 till 2005 that is a 25 year period, a long period, a lot of things happened in the 25 years, governments came and fell, with the economic crisis, with the economic boom and with the Intifada etc. 85% said that they felt part of the state. In 2008 it dropped to 65% of non immigrant Israelis, with immigrants it was lower, for the basic Israeli Jewish population it dropped down to 65%. That is a huge drop. It is again one of the ramifications of this great crisis of confidence which begins to have its effect in the entire gamut.

What are the causes? One cause naturally might be of course the objective factors which we have in Israel and we have all over the world. You read every day about scandals. Whether it is an economic corruption. There may be a cause which many social scientists have discussed as a problem in world democracies a problem of an explosion of expectations. The expectations of democratic societies because of the global village, so to speak, because of the effects of the modern media etc. focus on what things could be and therefore the expectations are not met. Any attempt to fathom or to understand the causes must address the role of the media. And I am not one of those people who believe that all the ills of society should be ascribed to the media but on the other hand we seriously have to examine the role of the media which sets the agenda and which paints the picture and what this role has in creating this grave crisis of confidence in all its possible disastrous consequences. And I have some support for the theory that the role of the media in painting a picture of reality lies at the heart of much of the crisis of confidence. There is one strong support for this theory and this is found in the discrepancy between how people see their individual situation and how they see that of the country. In the final analysis the situation of the country must be in some correlation with the situation of the citizen. In a study that we did on February 2007 we found a distinct difference between the assessment of the overall of the country and the assessment of one's personal state. When asked to estimate the overall state of the country and one's personal state 5 years from now for the country was a little better then the previous study and when asked how do you think your individual state is going to be 5 years from now people said my situation will be fine. The country has gone to the dogs. How can the country go to the dogs if people seem to having a good time?

More proof of this we find in a study that Prof. Hermann conducted in September just 2 months ago. There again a sample of adult Israeli Jews were asked the degree of satisfaction with their personal situation and how satisfied are they with the national situation. And the discrepancy was huge. 78.5% of the Jewish population in Israel were found on the 5 higher ranks from 6 to 10 regarding their personal situation. 80% thought that their personal situation is good, from good to very good. When regarding the national situation just the opposite. 53% a majority, were on the 4 lower rungs and only 43% were on the lower rung. So if 80% of the population sees their own personal situation as good, they are happy and favorable then how can it be that the overall situation of the country is so bad? And the only answer that I can give to this is the fact that one does not infer from his personal situation from the media. He does not need the media to know his personal situation. His personal situation he infers from his experience and from his direct knowledge. But how does he know the state of the country? For that he must learn from the media. He reads the papers and he watches televisions and he infers that the country is in a very bad state. Corruption and mismanagement etc etc. So you have these great contradictions which in my analysis must be something very astute in the media presentation. In conclusion certainly there is a key role that the media is playing here in misrepresenting what is going on and results in a tremendous crisis of confidence regarding the entire establishment with all the concurrent dangers that it poses.

Prof. Tamar Hermann: If you have any questions now is the right moment.

Prof. Wolfgang Merkel: Yehuda I have a systematic question. We should know more about the relations between public opinion and political behavior. There seems to be quite a discrepancy and one of your arguments in your presentation was there is a decreasing rate of confidence in politicians right after the elections. But we have the phenomenon in Western democracy that these politicians get re-elected. So we have to explain it. Why do they get re-elected again? And this is not a single phenomenon. It is across the western democracies. If you are prime minister or chancellor or president you have an extremely good chance to get re-elected. This contradicts to some extent this public opinion pole. Therefore I think we should look more carefully what does public opinions really tell us about the state of democracy or the challenge to democracy.

Dr. Yehuda Ben Meir: I will say two things. First of all politicians get re-elected. On the other hand we do have a factor today which we did not have a long time ago which is the longevity of politicians in office. Today the change in government from party in power and the opposition is maybe a quicker change. A second explanation maybe again because of not so high voters' participation you have a lot of people that are disillusioned. The reason they are not changing the politicians is that they did not come to vote. When they are asked why they do not go to vote they answer that there is nobody to vote for. So I think the question is good. There is a difference between political data and public opinion which qualifies public opinion correctly. Political behavior is actual behavior. Even political behavior we should study deeper.

Dr. Danny Filc: You assume there is a contradiction between feeling personally good and bad about the country. Then you need another explanation to this discrepancy. But maybe there is dissociation. Because you are assuming some kind of Aristotelian

Republican claim that you cannot be happy if the community is not a happy one. Maybe for many people it is not so. They can differentiate between their feelings about the country and their feelings about personal life and they do not find a contradiction. You asked why the media present this kind of picture? There are two alternatives. Either because there is a kind of media conspiracy, and you did not support that kind of thing, or because it sells. But if it sells it sells because it answers to some kind of previous perception or will of the people who are buying the media claiming that the state is in a very bad shape. Why should people feel good about themselves buy newspapers telling that everything is in a terrible shape?

Dr. Yehuda Ben Meir: The media is catering to a certain feeling of the community. The people want to hear about corruption. They are happy when the news opens the first thing about something that is wrong. One reinforces the other. It is a vicious circle. He does not know what is the situation of the country as a whole. Because he does not read the studies. He is not going and asking everyone. He does not know. But the reason he believes the media is because that is his only source of information regarding the overall situation. They were not asked whether they were in favor of the policies in the country. That is something else. The question was how do you see the state of the country. Regarding the economic situation people say their situation is good and when asked about the country they say it is very bad.

Prof. Asher Arian: There are more sources of information than just the media. You talk to your neighbor. Let me point out that these questions were asked in the sixties and in the sixties the pattern was reversed where the personal situation was awful but the state was with a reservoir of hope. It was also the leadership that the media covered in a more favorable way. Part of the problem is the openness and transparency of the media today. We live in a different world.

Dr. Yehuda Ben Meir: Not only that. If you listened to the way people were interviewed 20 years ago and today. And if you ask the people why, they answer because it is fair. There are interviews in the television and the criticism that appear the next day in the newspapers is that the interviewer was not tough enough. This is not a conspiracy but an aura.

Prof. John Lloyd: Since I am the only representative of the media here, whatever the media is, there are many voices in the media. So I wanted to come in when the two immanent professors both say it is our fault. I want to partly agree with them and partly disagree. The agreement first. About the sixties. There was a novel written by Anthony Trollop who is a political scientist called 'The Warden' in which there is a portrait of one of the first investigative reporters. This was a guy who has revealed corruption in the Church of England and it is quite clear that Trollop thought the man he was investigating was despicable. The investigating reporting was an invasion of privacy. Almost a hundred years later Woodward and Bernstein who were the iconic figures for my generations of journalists who came into the journalism in the seventies, iconic because they were bringing down the most powerful politician in the world. They did not do it alone. But they had played a major part. They gave journalists not just the sense of mission but a sense of power and of course the sense of money because wages went up. But status came up enormously in every democratic country because these two young men who had no particular contacts in the political world toppled the president of the United States. And it is certainly true

that since then investigative reporting, newspapers, T.V channels and so on it was a big thing. To be a reporter was great, to be an investigative reporter was very appreciated. And what do you do when you create something like that? You have to find corruption to be investigative about. The world is probably full of corrupt people. I made some of these points in a book I wrote few years ago which made me unpopular among my colleagues in Britain in journalism and it was called 'What the Media are Doing to Our Politics'. I recommend it. So it is true. It is true we have become hyper critical, hyper investigative and also we have now become the main, indeed the monopoly cavaliers of messages of the political craft. The Labor movement needs us to carry the messages. They need us. Especially they need television. Power corrupts absolutely. We are corrupted by being needed so much. But let me ask the question: what do we do? What about corruption? In professor Shain presentation corruption does not exist, it is all done by the media. Corruption does exist. Corruption does not come out of the head of the reporter. I lived six years in Russia. Part of the problem in the Russian media is that they reveal stuff and nobody does anything. And what are the large problem about revelations of corruption in Russia was just that so many people got fed up. The problem is not so much the investigating of corruption but the lack of any kind of response to it. So there is a real question, what do journalists do about corruption because what we say about ourselves and in a way our democratic excuses is we are here to hold politicians to account. Many things fall apart, the judiciary, politicians themselves, and so on but democratic theory is there and practice, the media are there in their civic role, we have a commercial role which is usually more important to them but in their civic role they hold power to account. There is a wonderful book by an American called Michael Shutham whose book is called 'Why We Need an Unlovable Press' and I recommend it to you. It says why the kind of annoying irritating maneuvers which the press gets up to are essential to a vital democracy and why even with the excesses you need this under the saddle of power to keep on making people in power think who is watching me? I can get away with it with the opposition because they want to do the same when they are in power, the judiciary might be too slow, but somewhere there is some bloody reporter who is going to get a hold of it. And you need that. You just need it.

Prof. Yossi Shain: To give a lecture the way I did is of course a risky business. It has to be balanced and we deal with one aspect of it. One should not in any way or fashion think that politics does not yield corruption. And one has to understand where corruption stems from and how it is nevertheless the scrutiny that needs to be done is really to understand what is going on in terms of the struggle over values in society. We have a division of labor that somehow has dissipated and disappeared. We have the ecclesiastic class who is supposed to think about morality. We have political leaders that are supposed to speak about morality. We have the judicial and of course judges that are supposed to speak about morality, and we have public opinion. Public opinion, journalists, intellectuals etc. Once you undercut the very essence of politics as liable for immorality you have a totally different discussion because you undercut the state itself to do certain things. Now the media has captured a certain place in terms of discussing morality. Everything that is discussed in society in many ways because the ecclesiastic class has disappeared. The media is now controlling and how does it deal with morality? It deals with morality with total failures of these classes. Rather than trying to tell us what needs to be done and in that respect is a big question. The fact that every magazine, every journal, this is what makes them tick, they have to find scandals is becoming impossible and they have to discern because

they are injuring themselves about liabilities and about respectability. When you talked about Watergate it elevated the stature of journalism. Today you see all those scandals with journalists. If it is in the New Republic, in the New Yorker, in the New York Times etc. because they have to catch something which is scandalous. This undermines the very idea of investigative journalism which in itself enters democracy. I have no doubt about it. This tension with leaders. How do you cut better relations? every country has to do it itself because it is not everywhere. And morality which we know very well in Paris when you have a lover in the palace no one will talk about it. In America when you have a lover in the White House you get a full book of a thousand pages by Kenneth Star.

Dr. Ben Meir talked about the fact that politicians are declining in stature very quickly after being elected. It is a beautiful discussion in 19<sup>th</sup> century on what public opinion would do to the middle class. Public opinion is a fickle matter here. You see that indeed when they come to power they decline very quickly but soon thereafter you see their rise. You see it with Sarkozy now. There was a plunging time for Sarkozy and now he is rising. It is unstable and it is something which is unpredictable in that respect.

Prof. Astrid von Busekist: This thing about living in scandal. In France we have very different appreciation of what needs to be public and what needs to be private. It is often structural. In France we have a division of labor within the media. We have the media that only lives on scandal in an intelligent way and we have the rest of the media. French media is not very representative and they are getting worse and worse compared to the German media or the Spanish media. There is this division of labor within the media state and this way we get another picture of what is understood as scandalous and if it has to be on the front page or not.

Prof. John Lloyd: Isn't that changing now in France? One sees things in the mainstream press you did not see before.

Prof. Yossi Shain: You see what you referred to in Italy. And I was looking at Italy. There is this exhaustion of the media discovering scandals so then the public is becoming already synthesized of some sort. It does not know what right and what is wrong. There are 13 accusations. So is with Berlusconi. So what you have you cannot really sort out what is true and what is false. What you see is kind of a fatigue factor of scandals. We will see the decline phenomenon. You know give them the break. Let them govern. Let them rule. Leave the politicians alone. They should govern. Do not intervene. If they were elected let them rule. Because there is a dilemma here. We want a stable government. We even thought of presidentialism. We are constantly undermining the state leadership that needs to deliver wars and peace and all those things. I sense that in many democracies that this is a key factor. It may be a wave that will disappear. Because we did not have it. If you look at all the books on democracy you do not have the word corruption in the index. Coming to the eighties and the nineties there is a corruption eruption. And you say what is going on here? There is an industry here. And Israel of course is part of the democratic world so the question is what has happened here and it is a very good question. I have some answers. And the media has something to do with that.

Prof. Tamar Hermann: Benny the floor is yours.

Prof. Benjamin Gidron: I would like to present some data and I want to start by saying that the third sector does not equate civil society. Civil society is a complex concept on which there is a lot of debate and the third sector is a much more defined entity and it includes organizations that are either business organizations or public organizations. And when I say public I mean both on the local level and the national level. So this is of course leads us to a very varied heterogeneous group of organizations and of course those who suggest that the concept is fraud I am the first one to agree with them. But it was a necessary step in the research and the study of this group of organizations to map such a concept. And now after we have the data about it we can subdivide it into all kinds of categories. In the Israeli case we see that the organizations in this sector have two major roles in society. The first one is to complement the welfare state and this is a traditional role and the second one is to serve as a framework for the development of civil society organizations and this is much more of a recent role although of course civil society organizations existed long before. I would like to present some of the contours of the sector along both dimensions and I will start with the first one. First of all the size of the sector, As you can see in 2004 the number has almost doubled since 1991. As I said these are full time equivalents which means that the actual number of people working in the sector is much larger. This really shows the continued growth of the sector in Israel and this is not a phenomenon limited to Israel. This kind of phenomenon has been taking place all over the world practically. These are salaried positions. The volunteers add maybe 10% if you accumulate all the hours. If we look at the expenditure side we also see a tremendous growth. In 2004 the figure was 20 billion shekels. And altogether as the rate of GEP in Israel is about 11% and in terms of the work force is 17.5% which suggests that this is a very large sector in the Israeli society and economy. And we will see in the next graph that it is particularly prominent in two sectors, in education and in health. Both the higher educational system and the ultra orthodox educational system get funding from the state. The question is what do they belong to the third sector. And this has to do with politics. If we look at the third sector and we see those dominant areas of activity we see that this is a remanent from the past and no politician thus far has tried to change it. These are public services. Here is the economic structure of third sector along all the areas of activity. We have culture and recreation, we have health and education and welfare. All those classical areas of the welfare state. In all these areas there is significant government funding. Economically they are very large as compared to all the other areas like advocacy, like religion, like the environment. In terms of economics they have a miniscule share of the overall sector. Most of the sector is concentrated in the classical areas of the welfare state and all these organizations that receive government funding are basically satellite of the welfare state and in the past used to be in close proximity to the government and did not criticize the government and was seen as part of the public sector. Here we see the income of the sector. Most of the funding of the sector comes from the public purse but philanthropy is growing from 15% to 19%. About half of these philanthropic funds come from abroad. In summary of the economic data we have a large sector and this is explained by the traditional role of complementing the welfare state mostly with public funds. Recently with privatization government support is in the form of contracts rather than grants.

Let us move here to the next series of data. Here we counted organizations. Every year since 1980 when the law of associations came into effect, here we see data of

registry of associations. We have between 1700 associations that are registered every year. This is an expression of civil society. Most of the associations are founded by grass roots people, by people who decide to run a soup kitchen but also to keep the environment or to care for the handicapped. Here we measured the number of associations. The associations have become household feature in Israel in the past 25 years. Here we see the geographic distribution according to municipalities. The periphery also discovered the third sector. Because of privatization the government is increasing its activities. You look at the geography in terms of regions. We have Jewish organizations, Arab organizations, Druze organizations. Most organizations are neutral and not affiliated to a certain segment of the society. The Arab organizations have risen in those 25 years and this is another indication that the third sector is finding its way to the periphery of the country. This is a graph about the distribution according to areas of activity. Here we see the areas of activity and the picture is much more diversified into religion and culture. There are commemoration organizations. Unfortunately we have a lot of things to remember. Holocaust survivors. Foreign soldiers and so on. There are organizations that have an international branch. Here we see the decline in the number of organizations registered as religious. I guess there are enough synagogues already. There is an increase in the area of education, advocacy and law.

To summarize this data we can say that the activity of creating new organizations is an indication of civil society blooming. It is dynamic and diversified through the society. The data clearly shows that the trend of creating such organizations is developing in the periphery. It is explained by the population growing awareness as well as the privatization of government services that need to be delivered. Instead of giving you my opinion I would like to leave some question marks here. We see a major shift in government policy towards these organizations and giving grants. The bureaucracy does not yet have yet the tools to enforce its standards and this is a problem of synchronization of this kind of a system. In terms of civil society the data shows developed identities for the marginal groups. It creates new politics. Is the associations' revolution taking place in Israeli society? Is it really a uniting or dividing force? I will maintain that in the 1950's and 1960's there was an illusion of a united society and this kind of system where we have different groups following their own interests and identities better represents the diversified nature of Israeli society. The last question is what will be the role of the third sector in the next decade in light of the reality of conflicts. The need of civil society to create bridges is apparent. Thank you.

Prof. Yossi Shain: Some years ago I did a very large study of transnational money and how it affects identity, and I was studying kinships networks and one of the things that I saw that they ask for money was a very important vehicle for creating civil society in many new democracies but also in well established ones. In many of the discussions that I used to have in the United States with American Jewry and UJA this was one of the agendas creating civil society in Israel. This phenomena you can see in different places where there is commitment where there is a transnational relations. In India, Turkey, Latin America. To what extent you find civil society is a diaspora driven phenomenon?

Prof. Benjamin Gidron: The Friends Of phenomena is a way to channel money from the diaspora tax free to Israeli institutions but the institutions are usually hospitals,

universities, museums and religious institutions. The development in the last 25 years one of the major forces that triggered it was the New Israel Fund. Up until then most of the funds that were collected by Jews in the diaspora were funneled through the Jewish Agency and were really controlled by the Israeli government. They did not fund women's organizations or Arab organizations and the New Israel Fund for the first time built a new source of funding for such issues.

Prof. Wolfgang Merkel: Your analysis suggests that there is a positive correlation between the decline of the welfare state and the increase of the at least expenditures of the third sector and the founding of these organizations. Do you know more about the causal relationship and do you know more, I was thinking about international comparisons. Is there a relation between strong welfare state and low third sector budget? If I look to Scandinavia for example we have many civic organizations but there is not very much money involved. And we have strong welfare state and these are quite different sectors.

Prof. Benjamin Gidron: You are absolutely right. The other countries which have a large third sector are Holland, Belgium and I forgot the third one. In Holland there is a tradition of providing services and has to do with the social origins of this society. This has to do with the relations between the labor unions, the Catholic Church and the state. There was a need to have some kind of an agreement with those entities and to give them part from the welfare system. In Germany for example lots of the welfare services are church organizations founded by the state. These are arrangements that go back to the early part of the last century in many European countries. These are the places where there is a strong large third sector. In most countries most of the services are provided by the state. To have a large third sector is not good or bad. It only depicts the idea that this goes back to history to some political arrangement that was carved when the state was created.

Prof. Tamar Hermann: Thank you guys for a very interesting day.

**End of Session 3**