



Israeli Public Opinion

No. 2 July 1998

The B.I. and Lucille Cohen Institute for Public Opinion Research

National Pride - Slogans & Reality

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For its 50 anniversary the State of Israel coined the slogan "Together in Hope, Together in Pride". With that slogan in the background, this report is concerned with the research findings on the attitudes and sense of national pride in Israel from a comparative perspective.

The study conducted in Israel is part of a big international survey conducted in many countries under the auspices of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP). Its aim is a comparative examination of public opinion concerning central social issues. Public opinion surveys are conducted every year focusing on one central issue in more than 20 countries. This makes it possible to examine the attitudes of the Israeli public and compare them with the findings in other countries. In 1995-1996 the issue of concern was "national identity", and the combined results from all the participant countries are being published now for the first time. The Israeli survey used a representative sample of the adult population (18+), who resided in urban communities of more than 5,000 people, and was conducted via face-to-face interviews. The sample included 1041 Jewish and 500 Arab respondents.*

This report is based on one part of the survey which focuses on the attitudes and sense of national pride in Israeli society. The results are organized within 3 frameworks which compliment each other and give us a comprehensive view of the sense of national pride. The first framework places the attitudes of the Israeli population within the international perspective, in order to provide a comparative context. The second framework takes account of the national-cultural composition of the Israeli society, and provides a comparative analyses of the attitudes of the Jewish population and the Arab population in Israel.

The third framework focuses on the heterogeneous composition of the Jewish population in Israel. Attitudes and the sense of national pride are examined in this part with respect to the Right - Left political continuum.

*A more detailed description to be found in the methodological appendix.

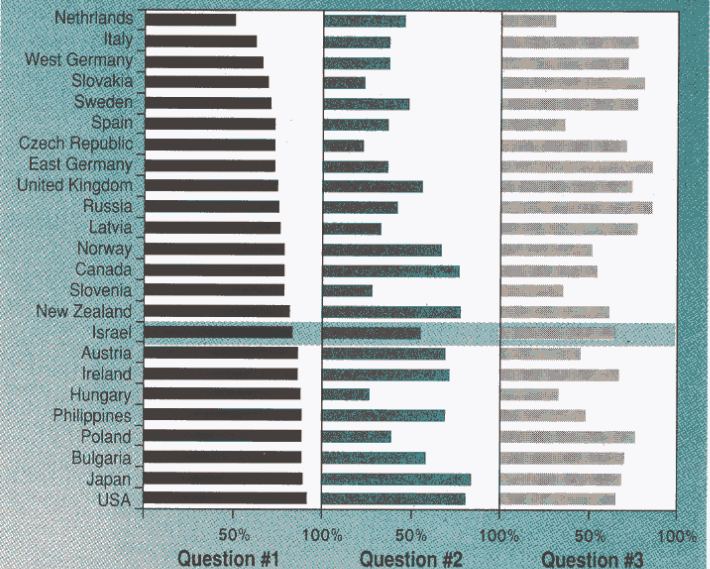
National Pride in Israel Within an International-Comparative context.

As there are clear and obvious differences between the attitudes of Jews and Arabs in Israel, it would not be right to combine the findings of both samples and present them as the attitude of Israeli society at large. Therefore, the attitudes and sense of pride presented within the international comparative setting will be those of the Jewish population alone.

Feelings of National Belonging

As seen in Table 1, a majority of the Jewish subjects, close to 85%, would rather be a citizen of Israel than of any other country

Table 1:
Feeling of National Belonging (percentage)



The Questions

1. I would rather be a citizen of my country than of any other country in the world.
2. Generally speaking, my country is a better country than most other countries.
3. There are some things about my country that make me feel ashamed of it.



in the world.** Less than 5% would prefer not to be citizens of the State of Israel. Similarly, in the USA, Ireland, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Japan and the Philippines, between 85% to 90% preferred to be citizens of their own country than citizens of any other country in the world. In Slovenia, New Zealand, Norway and Canada about 80% preferred their own countries, while in the United Kingdom less than 75% preferred their country to any other in the world. In Sweden, Germany and Italy less than 70% preferred their country. The lowest rate was found in the Netherlands, 50%. Among the 24 countries that participated in the study, Israel is in the group of 9 countries in which an overwhelming majority presented a patriotic attitude of preferring their own country to any other country in the world (85% and above).

This clear preference of Israeli citizenship over any other alternative is even more impressive considering that only 55% of Israeli Jews agreed with the statement: Generally speaking, Israel is a better country than most other countries. Over 25% were indifferent (did not agree or disagree with the statement). In Bulgaria and the United Kingdom the percentage is similar to that in Israel. In Japan (84%), USA (81%), Canada, New Zealand and Ireland the percentage was much higher. Austria and Norway had higher percentages too. In all of the Eastern European countries (except Bulgaria) and in many West European countries (Germany, Italy, Holland, Sweden and Spain) the percentage of those agreeing with this statement was lower than in Israel. On this statement, Israel is ranked 11th out of 24.

65% of the Jewish population in Israel agreed with the statement that: There are some things about Israel today that make them feel ashamed of Israel. Less than 20% do not feel that way.

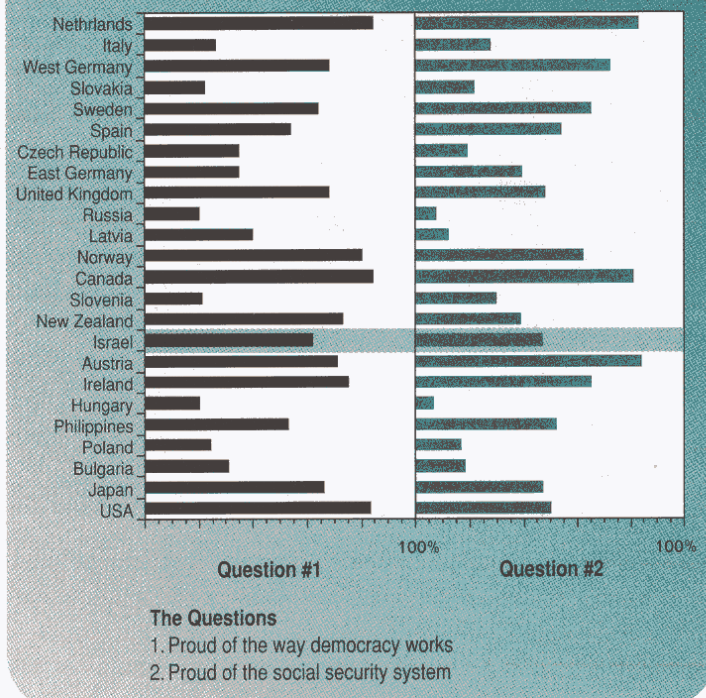
From a comparative point of view this is not an exceptional finding. A similar rate of respondents (about two thirds) in the USA, New Zealand, Japan, Bulgaria and Ireland said: "they feel that there are some things related to their country which make them feel ashamed of it". In 9 out of the 24 countries that took part in this study the proportion of citizens that feel ashamed about things relating to their country is lower than the proportion in Israel (65%). Amongst them Austria and Canada (54%), the Netherlands (30%), Norway, Spain, the Philippines, Slovenia and Hungary. In most East European countries as well as in Italy, Sweden, United Kingdom, Germany and Japan the percentages of people that felt ashamed about things related to their country were between 70% to 85%.

Feeling Proud of Democracy and the Social Security System

In order to find the source of the pride that citizens have in their country, the respondents were asked to indicate how proud they were of their political and social systems and of the achievements of their country.

**The exact wording of all questions and responses can be found in the methodological appendix.

Table 2:
Proud of Democracy and Social Security System (percentage)



As Table 2 shows, 60% of Jewish Israelis are proud of the way democracy works in Israel, this includes 17.5% who are very proud. Even so, more than 30% felt they were not proud of the way democracy works in Israel. This places Israel below most West European and Anglo-Saxon countries. Only in Italy and Spain there was a lower percentage of participants who were proud of the way democracy functioned in their country. The rate in East European countries was lower than 40%, compared with a rate of more than 80% in the USA, Canada, the Netherlands and Norway.

Less than half of Jewish Israelis are proud of the social security system in the State of Israel (47%). Almost all the rest stated that they are not proud of the welfare system in Israel. On the subject of pride in the welfare system Israel finds itself in the company of capitalist societies such as the USA and the United Kingdom and the Far Eastern countries of Japan and the Philippines. In Western Europe, except Italy, and in the Scandinavian countries the percentage of those who are proud of the welfare system in their country is much higher than in Israel. Even in Canada and Ireland which are not outright welfare states, the rate of pride is higher than in Israel. In contrast, all East European countries have a very low rate. Less than 40%.

Feeling Proud About the Achievements of the Country

Table 3 shows that 88% of Jewish Israelis are proud of the scientific and technological achievements of the country. This places Israel in 4th place after the USA, Canada and New Zealand. The percentage of citizens proud in the scientific and technological achievements of their country is 60% or lower in Latvia, Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic and the Philippines.

International success in sports is one of the sources uniting citizens in a feeling of pride in their country. Two questions were asked concerning this subject: the first inquired about the degree of pride in the country's actual achievements in sports, the second, a more general question, related to the belief that success in sports contributes to national pride. Jewish Israelis are clearly not proud of Israel's achievements in sports. Israel is ranked last among all countries in the study, with less than 40% proud of Israel for its success in sports, far below the other countries. Nevertheless, 80% of Jewish Israelis agreed with the statement that when the country does well in international sports, it makes them proud of being Israelis. It is therefore not a lack of interest or indifference to the success in sports, but a reaction to the paucity of any considerable success that contributes to the feeling.

In general, it can be said that scientific and technological achievements and success in sports are sources of national pride

in many countries. What is striking is the fact that in Israel there is such a difference between the attitude towards science and technology as a source of national pride (close to 90%) and success in sports (less than 40%).

In reviewing the results presented in this section we may conclude that Jewish Israelis do not exhibit more patriotic attitudes or greater pride in their country than citizens of other countries. Neither do Israelis stand out as lacking a sense of national pride.

On the international-comparative scale of the 24 countries Israel is ranked in the middle with respect to the proportion of respondents that are proud of their country and rate of agreement with the statements about national pride. Concerning most of the issues Israel was placed between the 9th and the 13th place. The two exceptions were the high rates of pride in scientific and technological achievements, and the very low rates of pride in achievements in sports.

A Comparison between the Jewish & Arab Population

Since Israel is both a democratic and a Jewish State, the concepts of national identity and national pride have different meanings within the dominant Jewish population and the Arab population, which is a cultural and national minority.

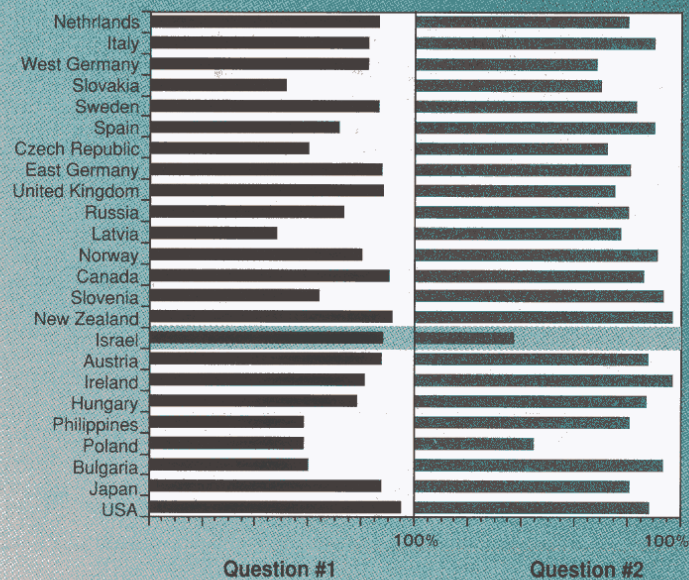
In this part of the report we shall present the attitudes and feelings of pride from both the view point of the Jews and that of the Arabs. The data is based on the answers of 1043 Jewish and 500 Arab respondents.

Before turning to the different attitudes we would like to point out that among the Arabs there was a higher rate of respondents that preferred not to express an opinion on several of the questions. In some questions the percentage of no answers among the Arabs was 15%. We will return to this later on, but it seems that the unwillingness to state their attitude is itself an expression of the identity dilemma faced by an ethnic minority. The Arabs are a minority in the Jewish State, a minority that is denied equal access to resources, and moreover, is not involved in the shaping of the national identity. This situation causes many in the Arab population to feel that they do not belong to, and cannot identify with, the sources of national-Israeli pride.

The Feeling of National Belonging.

As we can see from Table 4, 68% of the Arabs in the State of Israel would rather be a citizens of Israel than of any other country in the world. This should be compared with close to 85% in the Jewish population. About 23% of the Arabs had no opinion concerning this statement, didn't agree but did not disagree. 7% disagreed. In the Jewish population only 11.5% chose the neutral position, and about 4% disagreed with the statement. These figures can be interpreted as a protest about the situation of the

Table 3:
Proud about the Achievements of the Country
(percentage)



The Questions

1. Proud of the scientific and technological achievements of the country.
2. Proud of the country achievements in sports.

Arab minority. Formally they are citizens, but they are not equal partners of the Jews.

This feeling of not belonging can be seen in the responses to the statement that people should support their country even if it is in the wrong. Among the Arabs 34% agreed with the statement, compared to 52% among the Jews. It was interesting, therefore, to note the responses to the statement there are things related to Israel today which make me feel ashamed of it. The percentage of respondents agreeing with this statement among the Arabs was lower than among the Jews, 50% and 65% respectively. But nearly half of the Arab participants preferred not to answer this question, or chose a neutral answer. Among the Arabs 6% disagreed with the statement compared with 19% among the Jews. It seems then, that most of the Arabs chose not to answer this question directly, and this might be a result of a situation in which the Israeli Arab citizens are torn between their "state" and their "people".

Pride in Democracy and the Israeli Social Security System

As we can see in table 5, about 50% of the Arab respondents feel proud of the way democracy works in Israel, compared with over 60% among the Jews.

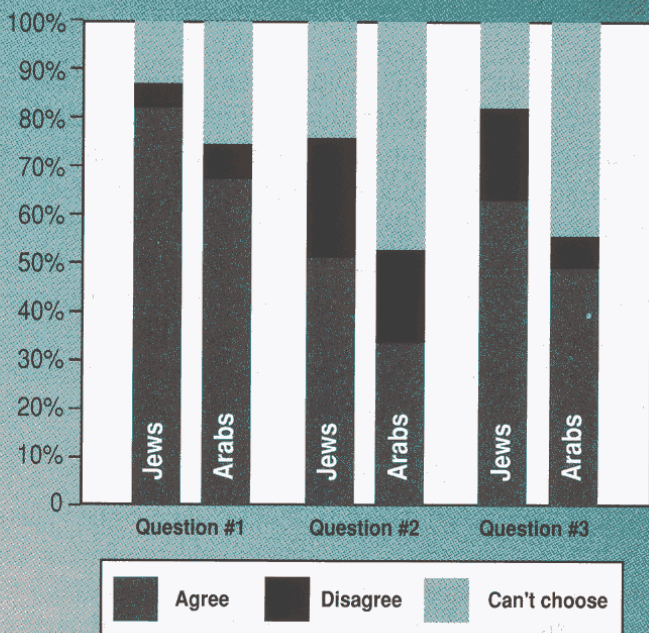
While the Arabs are less proud of the workings of democracy in Israel, there are more Arabs than Jews who are proud of the Israeli social Security system, 55% and 47% respectively. The difference is even more significant when we examine the proportion of Jews compared to Arabs who do not feel any pride - 37% among the Arabs and more than 50% among the Jews. It is possible that the expectations of the Arab population are much lower than the Jewish one, and therefore the rate of those who feel pride in the social security system is higher.

Fewer Arabs feel proud about the fair and equal treatment of the state to all groups in society. About 30% of Arabs, compared with 40% of the Jews, are proud of the fair and equal treatment of the state to groups in society. As a minority that does not fully enjoy the benefits Israel's democratic system, it is not surprising that the Arabs find fewer reasons, than Jews, to be proud of the workings of democracy in Israel.

Feeling Proud about the Achievements of the State.

The Jews are more proud in the scientific and technological achievements of the State of Israel, 88%, than the Arabs, 69%. When asked about other spheres such as sports, literature, art, the pattern of differences was the same. A particularly large gap

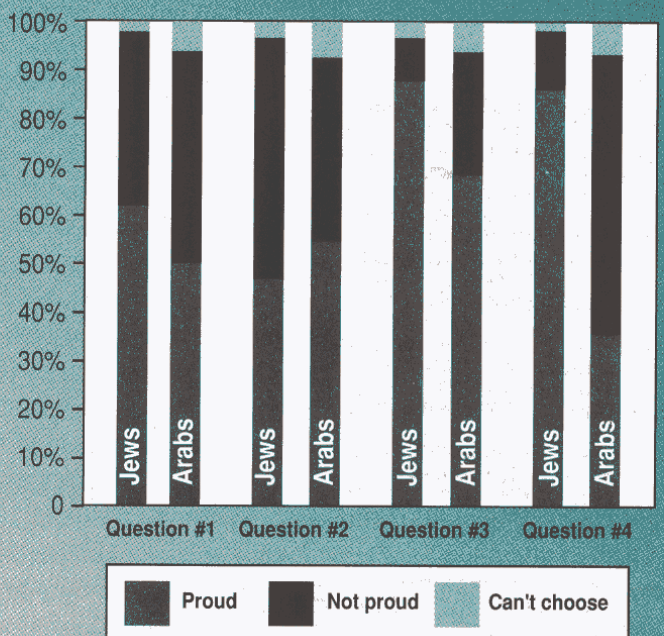
Table 4:
Feeling of National Belonging in the Arab & Jewish Populations



The Questions

1. I would rather be a citizen of my country than of any other country in the world.
2. People should support their country even if the country is in the wrong.
3. There are some things about my country that make me feel ashamed of it.

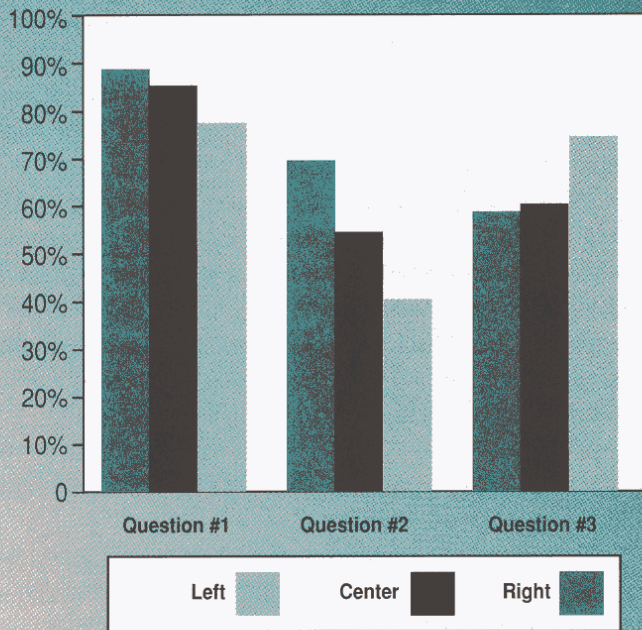
Table 5:
Arab & Jewish Population's Pride about the achievements of the country (percentage)



The Questions

1. The way democracy works
2. Its' social security system
3. Its' scientific and Technological achievements
4. Its' armed forces

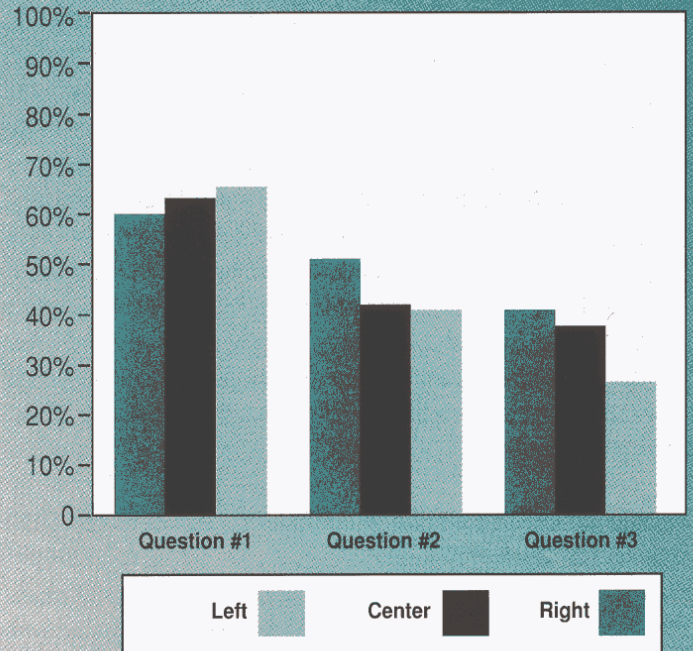
Table 6:
Feeling of National Belonging (percentage)



The Questions

1. I would rather be a citizen of my country than of any other country in the world.
2. Generally speaking, (Israel) is a better country than most other countries
3. There are some things about Israel today that make me feel ashamed of it.

Table 7:
Proud of Democracy and Social Security System (Percentage)



The Questions

1. The way democracy works
2. Its' social security system
3. Its' fair and equal treatment of all groups in society

was found with respect to the armed forces, 88% of the Jews were proud of them, while among all Arabs, only 36% were.

Two points should be made in summing up the comparison between Jews and Arabs in Israel: the rate of those expressing identification with the body politic, and pride in the achievements of the state is lower among the Arabs than among the Jews in Israel just about in all the issues examined. Formally the Arabs are citizens with equal rights, but they are not seen as fully fledged partners in the shaping of the Israeli body politic. It is not surprising, therefore, that they are more reticent and that their pride in the state is only partial.

The other point is, that although they are relegated to a subordinate position within Israeli society, many Arabs, some times the majority of respondents, express attitudes of identification with the state and pride in its achievements. One can infer from these attitudes that although they are pushed to the margins of Israeli society, the Arabs consider Israel to be their country. Furthermore, these attitudes express the wishes of many to be part of society and to consider its achievements as their own.

Political Attitudes and National Pride Among Israeli Jews.

Cleavages are rife within the Jewish population in Israel and one of the main fault lines is the political one, which runs from Right to Left. This continuum is largely defined in terms of security issues and willingness for compromise with the Palestinians and surrounding Arab nations. In this chapter we shall examine the attitudes and sense of pride among Jews of different political hues. The respondents in the survey were divided into 3 groups according to their own definition. Among the Jewish participants 382 (40%) defined themselves as Right or inclined to the Right, 267 (28%) defined themselves as Center, and 315 (32%) defined themselves as Left or inclined to the left.

As can be seen in Table 6, 88% of those who define themselves as Right, prefer to be citizens of Israel than of any other country in the world, as compared with 77% of those who define themselves as Left. 74% of the Left agreed that there are things in the State of Israel that make them feel ashamed of it, as compared with 58% of the Right. On both these issues the response of those defining themselves as Center was similar to that of the Right.

69% of the Right consider Israel to be, in general, a better country than most countries in the world, 54% of Center and 40% of Left agreed with this statement.

It is clear that there is an association between political position and the sense of national pride. People defining themselves as Right tend to express more national pride than people who are on the Left-hand side of the political spectrum. They view Israel in a more positive light and find fewer reasons to be ashamed of it. **One may conclude that the data underscore the stronger national sentiment of a population with Right wing inclinations.**

The above-mentioned differences in attitudes take on particular significance in view of the fact that there were hardly any differences between Right and Left in the pride they felt about the achievements of the state. This can be seen in Table 7. About 60% of the respondents, of any political hue, felt proud of the way democracy functions in Israel, 90% were proud of the achievements in science and technology. About 84% of the Left and 89% of the Right were proud or very proud of the armed forces (this is not shown in the Table). Significant differences between Right and Left were found only in social matters. A higher percentage of Right, 52%, were proud of the achievements of the welfare system, compared to 43% in Center-Left. A similar pattern was found concerning equality. 43% of Right were proud of the fair and equal treatment of all groups in the state, while only 30% of Left felt the same.

Summing up, findings about sense of national pride among the Jewish population in Israel, in comparison with other countries, show that in most areas, Israel is in a medial position amongst countries whose citizens feel rather proud of their country's achievements and have a strong feeling of belonging to the country. In most issues Israel was in the middle compared to the other 23 participating countries. The Arab citizens of Israel who are a minority expressed feeling of belonging to and pride in Israel, albeit to a lesser degree than the Jewish population. Amongst the Jewish population

of Israel pride in the achievements of Israel are shared by people across the entire political spectrum. Yet, those on the Left exhibit a lower sense of pride, than those of the Rights, in the workings of democracy and the equal treatment of all groups in Israel. As expected they are also less nationalist and more critical of the state.

Methodological Appendix

Sampling - The participants in the study were sampled in a multi-staged sampling frame. In the first stage all the urban areas were divided on the basis of geographical area and size of community. A number of communities were sampled from each category. In the second stage a quota of respondents was set for each sampled community. These were then randomly selected from the community population. All in all, respondents were interviewed in 26 Jewish communities and 32 non-Jewish ones. The data were collected by "Modi'in Ezrachi".

These are the questions referred to in Tables 1,4,6.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Agree strongly, Agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree, Disagree strongly, Can't choose).

- I would rather be a citizen of (Israel) than of any other country in the world.
- There are some things about (Israel) today that make me feel ashamed of (Israel).
- Generally speaking, (Israel) is a better country than most other countries. (table 4 does not refer to this question)
- People should support their country even if the country is in the wrong.

These are the questions referred to in Tables 2,3,5,7 :

How proud are you of Israel in each of the following:

(Very proud, Somewhat proud, Not very proud, Not proud at all, can't choose).

- The way democracy works (Tables 2,5,7)
- Its social security system (Tables 2,5,7)
- Its scientific and technological achievements (Tables 3,5)
- Its achievements in sports (Table 3)
- Israel's armed forces (Table 5)
- Its Fair and equal treatment of all groups in society (Table 7)

The B.I. and Lucille Cohen Institute for Public Opinion Research

The B.I. and Lucille Cohen Institute is the only public opinion research institute located in a university setting in Israel. As such it is charged with the task of pursuing theoretical and methodological capabilities that will contribute to the study of attitudes and opinions in Israeli society.

Its objectives are: (1) To develop a survey program on attitudes concerning Israeli polity and society. (2) To assemble trend information in order to follow the dynamics of public opinion in Israel. And (3) To experiment with survey methodology in order to improve survey techniques. The institute has recently launched the "Political Tolerance" survey, and it represents Israel in the "International Social Survey Program" (ISSP).

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