

The 2006 Social Survey

1. Introduction

The following chapter details the findings of the seventh Social Survey of the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel.¹ The survey, based on a public opinion poll, illuminates the Israeli public's sense of well-being and social confidence as well as its attitudes towards various social issues. This year, as every year, several questions were asked again in identical phrasing in order to provide an indication of trends in public attitudes. Also, as in previous years, several new questions were introduced pertaining to the public's welfare. These questions were chosen due to their centrality in recent public debate. The survey provides an important addition and complement to the social picture provided by the Center's annual report and analysis of social expenditure.

Three surveys were conducted this year (February, July, and September). Each of the survey periods chosen represents a theoretically different period of the year in terms of social, economic, security, and political affairs. Since 2006 was a year of rapidly shifting developments, it is of interest to determine to what extent the changes influenced the public sense of social confidence as reflected in the Taub Index and the other social indicators examined in the survey. The February survey was conducted while Ariel Sharon was still prime minister and the outlooks on the continuation of economic and political recovery were positive. The July survey was conducted after Ehud Olmert formed a new government following an election campaign that emphasized the "social agenda." The September survey took

¹ The survey is conducted annually by Hanoach and Rafi Smith Research and Consulting, Ltd.

place after the Second War in Lebanon and the beginning of a return to routine life.

Generally speaking and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the results of the polls point to the continuation of the trends observed in 2005. Two main trends stood out in the survey results:

First, the respondents' sense of their own social confidence continued to improve, albeit slowly. This was reflected in answers to questions regarding respondents' current situation, where they stood relative to the past, and what they expected in the future.

However, the proportion of those responding that their "income does not suffice for basic needs," or is "barely sufficient" continued to be at a level of around one-third of all respondents. (To be more precise, there was a small decline between 2005 and 2006: from 36 percent to 32 percent.) The fraction of respondents who reported being worse off than in previous years was also generally stable at a high level that showed only a small decline, from 38 percent in 2005 and 35 percent in 2006.

Second, despite the events on the security, economic and political fronts, the public believes that the treatment of social issues is more important than dealing with those related to security. Presumably, this is due to the high percentage – one-third of the public – who continue to suffer from reductions in social benefits. This stands out especially in the responses of participants in the post-war survey. (See details in Sections 7 and 8.)

2. The Taub Index of Social Confidence

Last year, the Taub Index provided a dynamic picture of the sense of social confidence since it was examined at three points over the year. The Taub Index aggregates the responses to a group of questions that pertain directly to a variety of basic components of the sense of social well-being – including changes in standard of living, the sense of being exposed to violence, basic economic security, and fear of becoming unemployed.

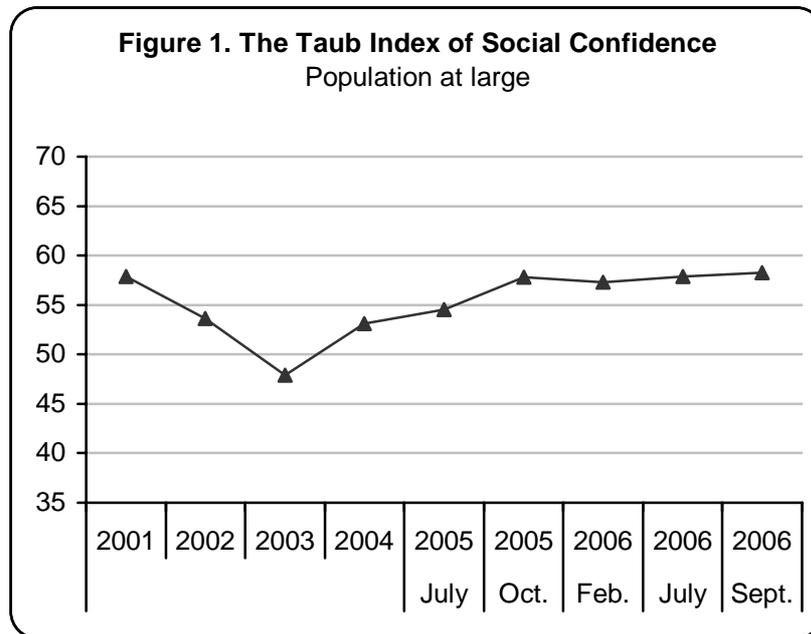
The average Taub Index score² of the entire survey population was 57.8 in 2006 as against 56.2 in 2005³. It is also noteworthy that the index rose slowly but steadily during 2006, from 57.3 to 58.3.

The 2006 Index returned to the 2001 level, the first year it was measured. In 2002-2003, the Index dropped to 47.9 as the public's social confidence was undermined by a deepening recession, rising unemployment rates, and cutbacks in social service budgets, foremost those relating to income-maintenance. The trend has turned around since 2004, reflected in the steady rise in the Index despite the recent hostilities in Israel's North. The continuity and consistency of the data indicate that, as a rule, the public's sense of social confidence in 2006 resembled the level in 2001, a year considered one of the best in recent decades in terms of economic and security trends.⁴

² Below, wherever the Taub Index is referred to or to questions that were asked several times during a particular year, the single number represented as the finding for that year is the average of the responses to the questions.

³ The scale is from 0 to 100; 100 denotes an optimum situation of high social confidence and 0 denotes low feelings of social confidence.

⁴ 2001 was the year preceding the economic plan that policymakers adopted in 2002 to revitalize economic growth and reduce the size of the public sector in the economy.



These data pertain to the entire survey population and mask large differences in levels of social confidence among different population groups. The Index for the population group that reported an income level “far above average” was 68.6 in 2005; the level reported by the population that claimed its income to be “far below the average” was only 45.2. In 2006, the corresponding figures were 70.7 and 46.9. Furthermore, the clear and significant upward trend that took shape in 2006 in regard to the lowest income group (49.4 vs. 43.6) stopped in September as the Index declined to 47.6 – a phenomenon not observed for those in the highest income groups. On the contrary: among the latter group, the index declined between February and July (from 71.8 to 68.4) and rose again between July and September, to 72.7. Overall, the narrowing of gaps in social confidence among income groups, as evidenced in the July survey, reversed direction in the September survey.

Figure 2. The Taub Index of Social Confidence by income groups

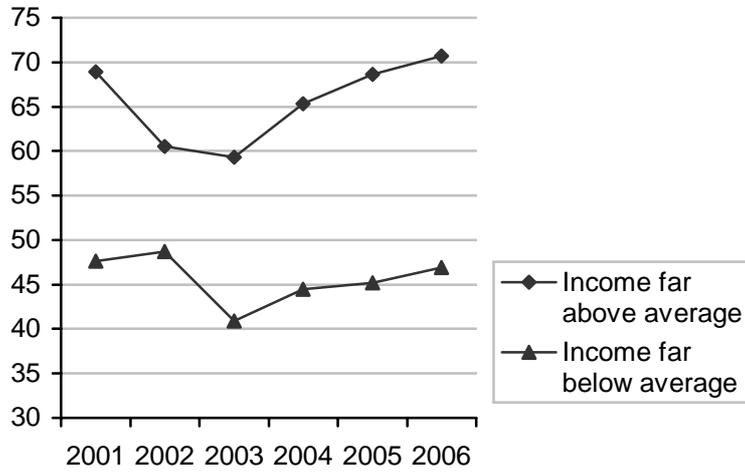
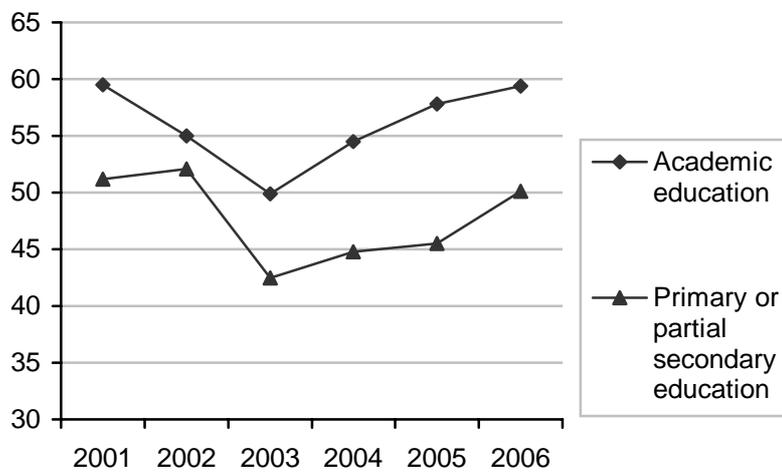


Figure 3. The Taub Index of Social Confidence by level of education



The differences among population groups by education level were much less noticeable. Throughout the survey period, the sense of confidence of those with a low level of education declined between 2001 and 2003 and afterwards rose consistently but not enough to return to the 2001 level. The sense of social confidence among those with an academic level education went through a similar process, rising to the 2001 level in 2006. It is also worth noting that during 2006 the sense of social confidence among those with an academic education decreased slightly and that of the poorly educated stayed constant and actually rose a bit.

Despite many differences in sub-groups' attitudes, the most significant finding was the consistent rise in the Taub Index between 2004 and 2006 among all groups. However, there were some interesting variations: the social confidence of the *haredi* ("ultra-Orthodox") population fell in 2003, recovered almost totally during the ensuing three years, but remained constant in 2006. This may be attributed to the drastic cutbacks that were made in child allowances in 2003, the subsequent partial restoration of the allowances, and this population group's adjustment to the situation.

Similar trends were found in the Arab population. As a group, their social confidence declined until 2003, recovered gradually from 2004 onward, and continued to improve in 2006. Here, too, the findings may be linked to the cutbacks in child allowances and the toughening of terms for unemployment compensation. Immigrants showed a totally different picture: their most difficult year was 2002 and their sense of social confidence was higher in 2006 than in all previous years. The improvement may be attributable to an easing of unemployment in 2005-2006.

**Taub Index: Differences in Sense of Social Confidence,
Selected Groups**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<i>Haredim</i>	56	60	50	58	58	58
Arabs	51	49	44	46	52	53
Immigrants	54	47	50	49	50	57

The differences among age groups and between women and men were not especially large. With regard to differences by age, however, younger people (18–24) expressed higher levels of social confidence whereas the lowest levels of social confidence were expressed by those of working age (30–64). Surprisingly, those aged 65+ reported a higher level of social confidence than members of working-age groups during almost all of the survey period. This may have to do with the reality of life on a pension: on the one hand, retirees are dependent on their pensions and on the National Insurance old-age benefit, which is not large. On the other hand, they have few concerns regarding unemployment or economic failure.

Thus, the 2006 surveys indicate a very slow but steady improvement in the public's sense of social confidence despite continuing large social gaps.

3. Standard of Living

In all of the Taub Center surveys, respondents were asked several questions about changes in their standard of living: what they thought about their current standard of living, how it compares with the recent past, and their expectations for the future.

The first question was *“To what extent does your income allow you and your family to meet basic needs?”*

The responses showed that the proportion of "weak" households, those reporting socio-economic difficulties,

increased in 2001–2005 but declined in 2006. This past year, the share of households reporting that their income was not sufficient, or hardly sufficient, for basic needs declined from 36 percent to 32 percent. In a complementary finding, a larger share of households reported that their income was sufficient for basic needs with little or no difficulty. The 2006 survey undoubtedly revealed a change for the better relative to recent years but not relative to 2001.

“Does your income allow you and your family to meet basic needs?”

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Absolutely not / barely	28	34	31	34	36	32
Reasonably	45	46	47	43	41	41
Yes, without great difficulty /any difficulty	27	20	22	23	23	27

Second, respondents were asked about their level of well-being relative to the previous two or three years: *“If you compare your standard of living and that of your family today with that of two or three years, ago, do you think there has been: (considerable improvement, some improvement, no change, some decline, severe decline)?”*

The proportion of those who believed that their situation worsened relative to previous years declined (only in 2001 was their share lower). About one-third of the respondents (35 percent, to be exact) believed that their situation worsened severely or somewhat; 20 percent thought that they were better off to some extent. Although the share of respondents who felt better off did not decline relative to previous years, it was less than half the proportion of those who believed that their situation was totally unchanged. In 2006 the public was far less positive about its future than it was at the beginning of the decade.

Relative to the recent past, my current standard of living. . .
(Percent)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Has improved considerably or somewhat	26	17	8	13	20	19
Has not changed at all	50	37	34	38	42	46
Has declined greatly or somewhat	24	46	58	49	38	35

Respondents were then asked about their expectations of change in the future: "*Do you expect your economic situation and that of your family to change in the coming year?*" The answers to this question, which was first included in the survey in 2004, show that overall the Israeli public is optimistic about the future: the proportion of those who expect their situation to improve is roughly twice as large as those believing that things will deteriorate. The public's optimism also increased somewhat in compared to 2005.

Expectations (percent)	2004	2005	2006
My situation will worsen severely or somewhat	13	16	13
My situation will not change	47	58	58
My situation will improve somewhat or perceptibly	40	26	29

It was then examined whether the feelings expressed by the population at large prevailed among all groups or was predominant among certain groups. Three sub-populations were examined -- *haredim*, Arabs, and immigrants -- and were further differentiated by income and education level.

In regard to the question "*Does your income allow you and your family to meet basic needs?*" the distinction between respondents with far-above-average income and those with far-below-average income was as expected. (For details, see Table 1 in the Appendix.) Over time, the proportion of high-income

persons who responded that their income suffices to cover basic needs with no difficulty or hardly any difficulty has been rising (even relative to 2001) and has been doing so continuously since 2003. In contrast, the share of very-low-income respondents (relative to the average) who judged their income to be insufficient or barely sufficient for basic needs fluctuated throughout the period within a range of 58-68 percent. (It peaked in 2005 and remained high at 64 percent in 2006.) The important finding is not about the yearly fluctuations but rather the finding that about two-thirds of low-income persons report that their income is not sufficient, or barely sufficient, to cover basic needs.

The proportion of persons with an academic education whose income was not sufficient for their basic needs without difficulty fell far short of that among high-income persons. The ratio in 2006 was less than 1:2 – 34 percent of the highly educated as against 73 percent of those of high income. (The proportion among the highly educated was higher in 2006 than in the previous three years.) At the same time, the share of the highly educated who reported that their income was not sufficient for basic needs or hardly sufficient was around one-fourth, far below the corresponding share of low-income persons (Appendix Table 1).

Responses for the three population groups – Arabs, immigrants, and *haredim* – were examined separately. Appendix Table 1 shows that **immigrants** feel much better off than in the past. Between 2004 and 2006, their sense of well-being (as indicated by their ability to meet basic needs without difficulty) improved: 30 percent of immigrants reported in 2006 that their income was sufficient to meet their basic needs without difficulty, as against only 13 percent who did so in 2004. The proportion of immigrants who described their income as barely sufficient for basic needs fell from 48 percent in 2001 and 50 percent in 2004 and 2005 to 32 percent in 2006. This seems to

reinforce the finding that the immigrants' acculturation is progressing.

In contrast, the survey findings show a significant decline in the condition of the **haredi population** – a group that is usually defined as weak. Thus, in 2001 about one-third of *haredi* respondents described their income as barely sufficient for basic needs – a high proportion in itself. However, the share of the “very weak” among *haredim* has continued to rise from year to year and increased significantly to 45 percent in 2006. The share of this population group that describes its income as sufficient to meet basic needs without difficulty – fell from 21 percent in 2003 to only 12 percent in 2006. These findings may reflect a decline in the sense of well-being among *haredim* following the cutbacks in of child allowances in 2003.

The self-reported condition of the **Arab population** has also declined significantly in recent years, as the survey shows. The downturn stands out in particular in the population group whose income is barely sufficient to meet basic needs. This group is larger among Arabs than among *haredim* and actually amounts to a majority of Arab respondents – 55 percent. It seems reasonable that in addition to suffering cutbacks in child-allowances, the toughening of terms for unemployment compensation also contributed to this group's feelings of an inability to meet their basic needs. Importantly, however, as the Center's surveys show, Arabs were much worse off than *haredim* at the starting point of analysis in 2001. That year, 48 percent of the Arab respondents reported that their income was hardly sufficient, as against 32 percent of *haredi* respondents.

This continuing analysis of changes in the public's feelings over time (see below) clearly shows the widening of the gaps especially when respondents are divided by income. The proportion of high-income persons who believed that they were worse off than in previous years was lower in 2006 than in any previous year (17 percent). In contrast, the share of high-income persons who reported an *improvement* in their situation was the

highest in any year except for 2001. The survey results show clearly that this time period has been good for those with high incomes. In contrast, the share of respondents in the lowest income group who thought their situation had worsened relative to previous years, while smaller than in 2002-2005, remained much higher than in 2001.

Comparison of the present with the past, by income (Percent)	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
High income – worse off	18	23	34	31	19	17
High income – better off	52	34	18	29	37	37
Low income – worse off	36	57	74	69	57	53
Low income – better off	15	13	5	8	9	9

The findings differentiated by levels of education also reveal a considerable improvement in the public's perception of its situation relative to previous years. The percentage of the highly educated who believe that their situation has deteriorated has been declining since 2003 and their belief that they are doing better has been rising since that year. The picture among those who have only a primary or secondary education is quite similar.

Comparison of the present with the past, by income (Percent)	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Academic education						
– worse off	23	36	62	47	35	31
Academic education						
– better off	36	21	8	13	21	23
Primary education						
–worse off	32	50	67	65	62	49
Primary education						
–better off	17	13	8	1	7	13

Although the comparison seems to suggest that the public is better off today than it was in the past, the public's expectations about its future were less optimistic in 2006 than in previous years (Appendix Table 2). This characteristic stands out among those in the lowest income group, about one-fourth of whom believed that their situation would improve, similar to the 2005 level but much lower than that in 2004. Another one-fourth of respondents in this group believed that their situation would worsen further, much as they did in 2005. Among those of high income, in contrast, 40 percent believed that they would be better off in the future and only 7 percent felt that they would be worse off. Interestingly, in this field a downward trend was found over the three surveys conducted in 2006. At the beginning of the year, 24 percent of low-income respondents believed that their situation would worsen in the future; by year's end, 28 percent felt this way.

Respondents with an academic education felt basically the same about future developments in 2006 as in 2005. Their view is not pessimistic; more of them expect their situation to improve than to decline (30 percent versus 12 percent). Those with only a primary school level of education were less optimistic about the possibility of future improvement in their

situation; in 2006, only 26 percent felt that such an improvement would occur, as against 48 percent in 2004.

Interestingly, as the groups were examined separately, even the weakest ones – the Arabs and the *haredim* – showed higher proportions of respondents who expected their situation to improve over time than those who expected a decline.

As a complement to the three questions about standards of living, respondents were asked the following question: "*Are you concerned about the possibility that you or your family may fall into poverty or economic distress?*" The responses gave further evidence of the economic improvement. However, about two-thirds of the respondents still expressed some level of concern about the possibility of declining into poverty.

Level of concern about becoming poor	2004	2005	2006	
			July	September
Very or greatly concerned	31	27	21	18
Mildly or somewhat concerned	44	43	48	49
Not concerned at all	25	30	32	31

In sum, the findings show that the public's self-reported standard of living has risen in the past two years. However, although the improvement was reflected in the responses to all questions, there was a great deal of variance among the population groups; improvements were greatest among the affluent and the strong socio-economic groups.

4. Employment, Income, and Working Conditions

Work is one of the most significant elements in individuals' lives and is usually the source of economic and social security for themselves and their families. Work also helps to determine

social status and has a decisive effect on quality of life and self-esteem.

Employment is the first area to be affected by the onset of an economic crisis. However, it improves rather slowly even after the economy has begun to improve. In 2006, as in previous years, the survey asked, "*Do you, or does someone in your family, fear becoming unemployed or fear that they will not find work and remain unemployed?*" (Very strongly, strongly, somewhat, slightly, not at all).

Fear of dismissal (Percent)	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Very strong or strong	32	34	42	32	30	24
Somewhat	22	22	25	28	22	23
Slight or nil	46	44	33	40	49	54

The 2006 poll shows that the improvement seen in the previous two years' surveys continued. For quite a long time, the public was strongly concerned about unemployment. This year, the proportion of respondents who were totally unconcerned or only slightly concerned about this possibility, either for themselves or for a family member, rose to 54 percent as against 49 percent in 2005 and 33 percent in 2003. At the other extreme, the share of respondents who were greatly or very greatly concerned decreased from 30 percent to 20 percent over the past year and has been falling since 2003. However, one-fourth of the respondents still report a large measure of concern.

Concern about losing one's job is strongest by far among low-income respondents and has remained stable throughout the years at around 50 percent, notwithstanding some improvement in 2006 (39 percent – see Appendix Table 3). Those of low income are also much more concerned than others about a further worsening in their personal situation and of becoming unemployed. Interestingly, the three 2006 surveys bring the picture into stronger focus: during the year, employment

insecurity decreased and employment security rose among members of all groups, including those of low income. However, the rates of concern among those of low income were much higher during the year, although they, too, showed a downward trend.

Broken down by level of education, the findings show that those with an academic education are less concerned about becoming unemployed than those with only a primary school education and that their employment security improved in 2006 relative to the past. This finding also stands out relative to 2001. Notably, the sense of well-being that was evident among the well educated did not appear among those with a primary school level or a partial secondary school education.

The 2006 survey findings indicate that immigrants were much more confident about their employment situation than they were in 2005. It was also the first survey in which the percentage of immigrants who expressed concern about unemployment was significantly lower than the proportion of those who were not concerned. This result may stem from a combination of general economic improvement and immigrants' economic integration. However, the extent of confidence fell during 2006: the proportion of immigrants greatly concerned about unemployment rose from 16 percent at the beginning of the year to almost 30 percent at the end. The 2006 surveys also found that only 51 percent felt secure in their jobs at year's end as against 73 percent at the beginning of the year. Obviously, signs of concern are evident well before a process of improvement ends.

The improvement in the sense of job security extended to the *haredi* and Arab populations. The proportion of *haredim* who expressed concern declined significantly in the past two years. The rate among Arabs decreased but remained high (at 32 percent) relative to other groups. However, the share of respondents who were totally or somewhat unconcerned about losing their jobs increased in 2006 to about half of all

respondents, approximating the rate that was found among *haredim* and similar to that among the immigrants. (See Appendix Table 3.)

5. Health Care

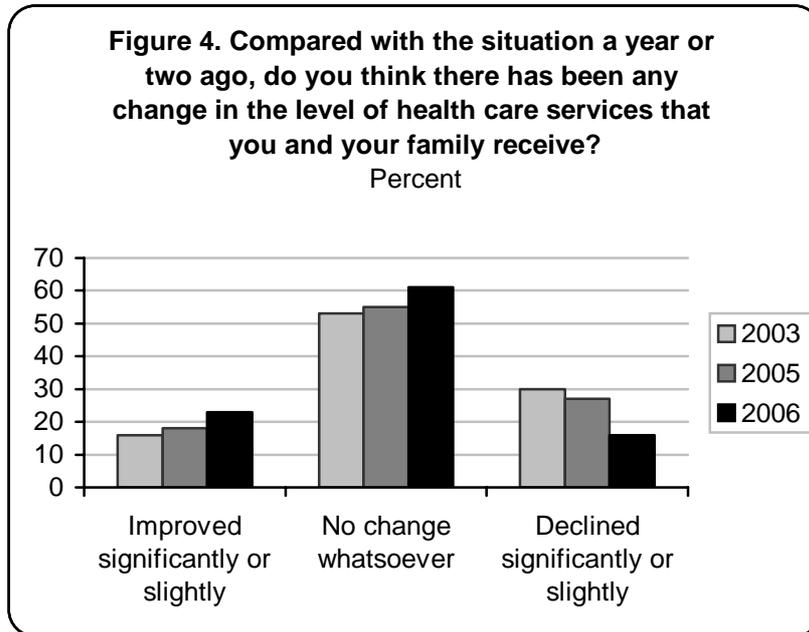
Israel's health care system has undergone many changes in recent years. For over a decade, the State Health Insurance Law has established a "basket" of services to which the public is entitled. All persons with resident status are entitled to services from the sick fund of their choice (and are allowed to switch sick funds) and the level of health care is considered high by international standards. In recent years, however, the public has been made to pay a rising share of service cost in the form of user co-payments—for visits to specialists, essential treatments, use of special services (x-ray, imaging, and computerized or other medical technologies), and, for a substantial number of medications.

The Taub Center has examined the public's satisfaction with its health care services since its first survey in 1989.⁵

The first question about health care was: "*Compared with the situation a year or two ago, do you think there has been any change in the level of health care services that you and your family receive?*"

The findings in 2006 indicate that the public's satisfaction with its health care services has changed. In 2003 and 2005, more respondents believed that the quality of services had deteriorated than believed that they had improved. This picture was reversed in 2006.

⁵ Although the question about health care services appeared in each year's survey, in 1989–2002 and 2004 the phrasing related to health care services generally and in 2003, 2005, and 2006 it referred to the health care services that the respondents and their families received personally.



Interestingly, the belief that the health care services had improved was strongest amongst respondents with the lowest levels of education and income. While an average of 4 percent of respondents expressed the belief that the health care services had improved significantly, 12 percent of those with primary school level or partial secondary level education and 7 percent in the lowest income group felt this way. The proportion of Arabs who believed that the health care services had improved significantly also stood at 12 percent. In contrast, 5 percent of respondents in all groups believed that the services had deteriorated severely.

An age related effect was evident: the older the respondents were, the more they tended to believe that the health care services had deteriorated. Thus, the users of health care services who need greater access to the services than others – the

“heavy” users of the service – are less satisfied than other members of the public.

Responses to the second question about health care revealed one of the least positive findings in this field and corroborated similar findings from other public opinion surveys⁶: ***"In the past year, have you or has anyone in your family refrained from obtaining an essential medical service, such as an appointment with a doctor, the purchase of medication or medical apparatus, etc., because of the price that you have been asked to pay for the service?"***

This question was asked for the fourth consecutive year, and the responses present a troubling picture. The percent of respondents who had to forego a necessary medical service at least once during the past year surpassed 20 percent every year. The high rates among elderly respondents (30 percent) and immigrants (around 25 percent) are especially disturbing. The relationship between income and use of services stands out in particular: it was found that 95 percent of respondents in the high-income group did not have to forego a needed medical service even once, while 10 percent of those in the low-income group reported having had to forego a necessary medical service many times.

Against the background of the recent public debate the public's preferences were also examined: ***"To improve the population's level of health, where should the emphasis be placed?"*** The most significant finding – the preference of including more medicines in national health insurance – may be unsurprising in view of the importance of this topic in the public debate. If so, it is interesting to note that about one-third of the public stressed the importance of preventive medicine and health education and gave it a position that closely approximated that of covering additional medicines through national health insurance. The preferences are as follows:

⁶ Notably, surveys by other research institutes found similar results.

Include more medicines in National Health Insurance	37
Preventive medicine and health education	32
Include inpatient nursing care in National Health Insurance	10
Provide better medical services in periphery areas	10
Improve the quality of the environment	9
Other	2

6. Education

Each year, the Taub survey asks about the quality of the education system, the contribution of the system to narrowing social gaps, the system's main problems, and what is necessary to solve them. This year, there were only two questions.

In most previous surveys, the following question appeared: *"Where should the emphasis be placed in order to improve the education system?"* This year, respondents were asked to choose among the following options: improve teachers' wages and working conditions; reduce class size; affirmative action in budget allocation for students from weak population groups; revise the contents and programs of study; and lower the level of school violence. Although the options that were presented to the respondents were modified slightly this year, the difference does not rule out comparisons with previous years. The findings of the 2006 survey showed that the public thinks it is more important to raise teachers' wages than to reduce class size (26 percent vs. 21 percent). However, the public had no clear preference for any of the four options that had been presented to them; they rated them as of similar importance (around 20 percent). Only the option of affirmative action in resource allocation for weak students was judged to be of much lower priority. Only around 10 percent of respondents cited it as the factor that deserves the highest priority in trying to improve education.

Respondents from high income groups stand out in the importance that they gave to raising teachers' wages: more than 35 percent of respondents in this group considered this the most important action to take. Some 23 percent of those in the low-income category also felt this way. A negative correlation was also found between level of education and affirmative action for students from weak population groups: about one-fifth of those with a primary school level of education considered this the highest priority issue, as opposed to only 8 percent of those with an academic education.

In 2006, for the first time, the following question was asked: *"To raise the standard of education, which educational level, in your opinion, should be given special emphasis?"* The attitudes of the general public resemble the preferences expressed by the Ministry of Education: more emphasis on early-childhood and primary education and less on subsequent levels (33 percent singled out early childhood, 35 percent primary, 14 percent lower secondary, 12 percent upper secondary and only 6 percent higher education.)

7. Value Preferences and Assessments of Government Socio-Economic Policy

In 2006, as in previous years, the survey examined several dimensions of the public's value system and its assessment of government policy. The first question pertains to the goals that are said to guide the state's socio-economic policy. (This question did not appear in previous years' surveys.)

"What do you think about the current level of resource allocation for social services such as education, health care, and welfare?" The question was included in the main survey (July) and in the survey conducted after the Second War in Lebanon.

The most notable finding reflects the public's belief that the government should be spending more, much more, on social goals. Even the war in the North seemed to have little impact on this (see table.) It is worth reporting that there was little difference among income groups in responses to this question.

Resources for social services	July 2006	Sept. 2006
(percent)		
Spend much more	76	65
Spend a little more	17	23
Make no change	5	10
Spend a little less	1	1
Spend much less	1	6

Thus, the survey conducted after the war contradicts the belief that it led to an end to the importance of the government social agenda: 88 percent of survey participants believed even after the war that the social service budgets should be increased greatly or somewhat. The survey also found in response to a separate question about how to cover the costs of war damage, that 76 percent of the public opposed reducing social budgets in order to cover war-related expenses.

Another question in the survey related to the government's priorities: "*Which of the following fields, in your opinion, should the government place at the top of its priorities?*" Some 40 percent of respondents cited fighting poverty and narrowing social disparities, as against 35 percent who believed that defense should come first. (See the following table.) Residents of the North shared this view, although some differences were found among residents of various parts of the North. Those in the "shelter zone" (where residents were regularly ordered into security shelters during the war) and those in the "protected-space zone" (where people were able to access safe areas) favored increasing the welfare budgets to a similar or even a greater extent than the national average, whereas those in the

area outside rocket range were less supportive of this goal. Rather than differences stemming from vulnerability during the war and the need to use supportive social services, these results may reflect socio-economic differences.

Inhabitants of the “shelter zone” ranked defense at the top of their scale of priorities; those in the “protected-space zone” felt that narrowing disparities came first. Interestingly, a greater number of inhabitants of the part of the North that was outside the danger zone ranked defense as the highest priority issue than those who lived in the “shelter zone.” Residents of the North, especially those in the “protected-space zone,” also expressed above average opposition to cutting social service expenditure in order to cover war-related expenses (78 percent of people in the “shelter zone” and 86 percent in the “protected-space zone,” respectively). Importantly, hardly any changes occurred between July and September; the only change after the war was a shift of emphasis from economic growth to defense. This did not reduce the proportion of respondents who stressed that the government should focus on initiatives to fight poverty and narrow social gaps.

Which of the following fields should the government place at the top of its priorities? (Percent)	July 2006	Sept. 2006
Economic growth	17	13
Defense	29	35
Fighting unemployment	9	8
Fighting poverty and narrowing social gaps	42	40
Other	3	3

Differences were found when respondents were divided on the basis of income and education; between non-immigrants and immigrants; and among the weak social groups, especially Arabs and *haredim*. Appendix Table 4 differentiates the findings

by these groupings. First, it is noteworthy that the differences were not reflected in the extent of preference for reducing poverty and narrowing social gaps, the rates of which ranged from 31 percent among the poorly educated to 52 percent among *haredim*. Instead, most of these population groups rated the narrowing of poverty as a matter of highest importance (July survey).

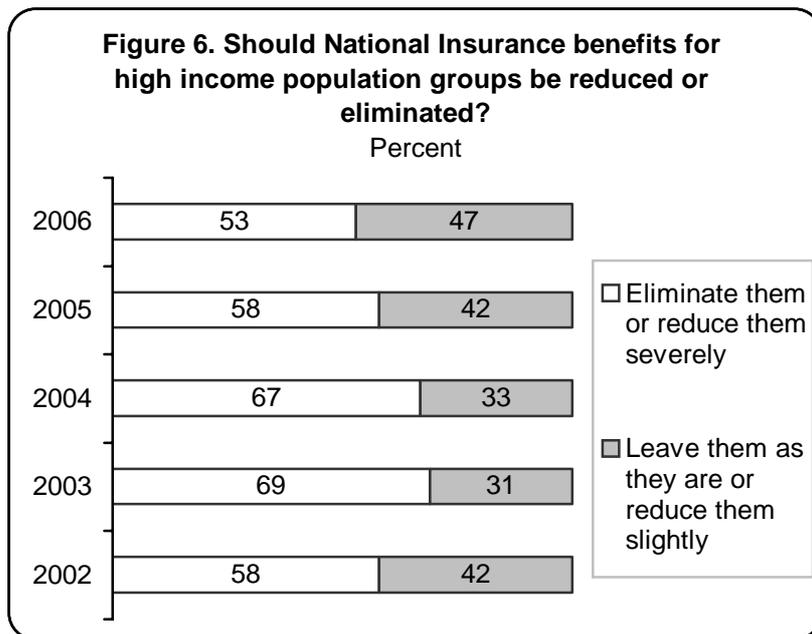
Immigrants ranked defense as the highest priority, as they did in the pre-war survey, and the Arabs ranked defense as less important than any other sub-population. Arabs also stood out among the groups in their attitude toward the importance of government action to reduce unemployment.

Given the responses to the two previous questions, the responses to the next question are especially interesting. Respondents were asked about “*the clash between a policy that aims to narrow social gaps and one that aims to promote economic growth.*” A large proportion of the overall sample believed that narrowing social gaps should be a preference. This is consistent with the responses to the two previous questions. Another noteworthy finding is the shift toward the belief that the two courses of action do not clash, i.e., fewer respondents switched from the group that favored narrowing gaps than from the group that preferred economic growth. (See the following table.)

Narrowing of gaps and economic growth (Percent)	2003	2005	2006
The two goals clash and narrowing of gaps should be priority	34	33	30
The two goals clash and economic growth should be priority	30	26	21
The goals do not clash at all	36	41	49

Comparison of the distribution among subgroups as against the average for the sample at large (Appendix Table 5) underscores a number of interesting points. By focusing on the first two responses (separating out those who deny the existence of a clash between the goals), it was found that the war influenced the sub-populations in opposing directions. Persons with high-income, those with academic education, *haredim*, and immigrants placed more emphasis on narrowing socio-economic gaps. The opposite was the case – less emphasis on narrowing gaps – in the groups of those with a low level of education, those with low income, and Arabs. Among immigrants and those of low income, the emphasis shifted to economic growth.

In another finding, the public's attitude toward giving National Insurance benefits to persons of high-income is clear and consistent. A question on this topic has been asked repeatedly in recent surveys. The public's support of the status quo has been consistent in the surveys; at the most, a small cutback in the level of benefits for high-income persons is favored.



8. The Second War in Lebanon and Its Influence on the Public's Attitudes

The September 2006 survey reexamined the public's views and added several questions to gain an understanding of the effect of the war on attitudes and, in particular, the attitudes of inhabitants of the North.⁷ (In several of the foregoing sections, the effect of the war on the public's attitudes toward specific topics was already noted.)

The September poll included three questions that were directly relevant to the inhabitants of the North and the war's effect on them. *"Did you stay in your locality of residence during the war, or did you leave?"* Some 75 percent of Northern residents remained in their localities throughout the war. The responses were especially interesting in view of the common impression that most inhabitants of the North spent the war away from their homes living as refugees. Before discussing the findings in greater detail, and dividing respondents into sub-groups, it should be noted that the summer is typically a time when families go on vacation. Obviously, too, schools were not in session throughout the war period. This undoubtedly had an effect on the number of people who remained in their localities. Normal vacation departures during this time of year can be estimated based on the number of people who left for several days or weeks in the area of the North that was outside the range of shelters and protected spaces. This was 5 percent ("I went away for a few days") and 6.5 percent ("I went away for a few weeks"), respectively.

Thus, in regard to the Northern population as a whole, it was found that 85 percent of men did not leave their places of residence at all and that 9 percent of men left for only a few days. If these percentages are reduced by the estimates of the

⁷ Among residents of the North, 38 percent lived in the "shelter zone," 39 percent in the "protected-space zone," and 23 percent in the area outside rocket range (sampling error: 4 percent).

proportion of people who would normally leave for vacation, i.e., those who left the area outside rocket range, a very small percentage of men left the North. Among women, the corresponding rates were 66 percent and 13 percent, respectively. Differentiating by areas within the Northern region, 63 percent of inhabitants of the “shelter zone” and 79 percent of the “protected-space zone” did not leave at all. The implication is that a significant majority of Northern inhabitants spent the entire war in their areas or, at the most, went away for only a few days.

Among the population groups in the Northern region that were especially averse to leaving the area, the Arab population stood out (90 percent remained where they were), the 50-64 age group (97 percent), those with incomes slightly above average (81 percent) and the self-employed (82 percent). Significantly high rates of departure were found among those with far-above-average income; more than 20 percent left for several weeks and another 9 percent left for the entire period. The findings reinforce the impression that those who stayed home did so because they had to: due to their work, having nowhere to go, and/or an inability to bear the cost of leaving.

To examine the economic impact of the war, respondents were asked: ***“Did the recent war in the North (and in the South) harm your economic situation and that of your family?”*** Some 13 percent of the participants replied that the war had harmed them economically severely or very severely. Predictably, inhabitants of the North said that they experienced greater damage: 48 percent of inhabitants of the “shelter zone” and 28 percent of those in the “protected-space zone” reported severe adverse effects. Furthermore, Arabs expressed experiencing greater economic harm than Jews and the self-employed suffered more than employees did.

Respondents were also asked about the functioning of the social services during the war. The responses were distributed equally among those stating that the services functioned well or

adequately (41 percent) and those who said they did not function at all or functioned “not so well” (42 percent). Interestingly, in the North the percentage of those who said that social services did not function or functioned “not so well” was greater than the average mainly among inhabitants of the “shelter zone” (55 percent). In the other two zones, the “protected-space zone” and the area outside rocket range, the percentage was below-average (36 percent and 30 percent, respectively). Finally, the Arab population was much more critical than the Jewish population of the functioning of social services in the North. More than 50 percent of Arabs replied that the services did not function very well, as against 30 percent of Jews.

Appendix Table 1. Is your income sufficient to meet your basic needs?

Percent	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
By income						
High – suffices without difficulty	71	56	51	59	66	73
High – barely suffices	5	20	7	12	6	4
Low – suffices without difficulty	8	8	9	8	6	7
Low – barely suffices	64	59	60	58	68	64
By education						
Academic – barely suffices	20	15	26	26	26	23
Academic – suffices without difficulty	37	34	28	30	31	34
Primary – barely suffices	47	43	48	58	68	54
Primary – suffices without difficulty	11	11	15	11	10	12
Selected groups						
Immigrants – barely suffices	48	46	36	50	49	32
Immigrants suffices without difficulty	29	22	18	13	18	30
<i>Haredim</i> – barely suffices	32	38	42	33	43	45
<i>Haredim</i> – suffices without difficulty	8	11	21	17	13	12
Arabs – barely suffices	48	55	44	46	55	55
Arabs – suffices without difficulty	15	12	17	16	19	15

Appendix Table 2. Expectations, by Income and Education
 (Do you expect your economic situation and that of your family to change in the coming year?)

Percent	2004	2005	2006
By income			
High income – worse off	9	8.5	7
High income – better off	22	37	39
Low income – worse off	22	24	24
Low income – better off	43	26	26
By education			
Academic – worse off	16	16	12
Academic – better off	35	25	30
Primary – worse off	21	26	18
Primary – better off	48	18	26

Appendix Table 3: Concern about Becoming Unemployed

Selected Groups	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Percent						
By income						
High – strongly / very strongly concerned	16	22	28	15	15	8
High – hardly / totally unconcerned	69	59	59	58	62	77
Low – strongly / very strongly concerned	52	51	56	46	49	39
Low – hardly/ totally unconcerned	32	33	25	30	31	37
By education						
Academic – strongly / very strongly concerned	25	33	37	27	27	23
Academic – hardly / totally unconcerned	52	45	35	44	45	55
Low education level – strongly / very strongly concerned	43	44	42	49	51	37
Low education level – hardly / totally unconcerned	39	39	39	29	36	47
Selected groups						
Immigrants – strongly / very strongly concerned	46	54	42	39	45	26
Immigrants – hardly / totally unconcerned	41	31	33	40	27	36
<i>Haredim</i> – strongly / very strongly concerned	28	27	39	23	20	18
<i>Haredim</i> – hardly / totally unconcerned	43	50	36	48	52	54
Arabs – strongly / very strongly concerned	50	42	48	44	45	38
Arabs – hardly / totally unconcerned	33	39	27	32	36	51

Appendix Table 4. Which of the following fields should the government place at the top of its priorities?

Percent July survey	Income		Education		Selected groups		
	Lowest	Highest	Lowest	Highest	Arabs	Haredim	Immigrants
Economic growth	13	26	19	17	27	15	18
Defense	30	24	27	31	16	24	54
Unemployment	9	5	21	8	15	7	8
Poverty and narrowing gaps	46	41	31	41	40	52	19
Other	2	4	3	4	3	2	2
Sept. survey							
Economic growth	13	10	13	15	14	12	13
Defense	33	36	32	35	21	32	60
Unemployment	8	8	10	7	19	4	6
Poverty and narrowing gaps	44	41	43	38	45	51	18
Other	3	4	1	5	1	2	3

* Arrived after 1989.

Appendix Table 5. Policy that Aims to Narrow Social Gaps vs. Policy that Aims to Promote Economic Growth

Percent July survey	Income		Education		Arabs	Selected groups	
	Lowest	Highest	Lowest	Highest		Haredim	Immigrants*
Goals clash – narrowing gaps should be priority	31	24	27	27	28	27	26
Goals clash – economic growth should be priority	26	20	28	20	33	22	26
Sept. survey							
Goals clash – narrowing gaps should be priority	30	32	26	30	23	35	29
Goals clash – economic growth should be priority	26	23	42	15	31	19	32

* Arrived after 1989.