

Division of Graduate Studies
Rothberg International School
Hebrew University of Jerusalem
Autumn 2005

Israel: Politics and Society

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Course Objectives:

This course presents an analysis, couched within theoretical frameworks from other Western democracies, of politics and society in Israel. The emphasis will be on classification, typological mappings and model-derived explanations of how the social cleavages of Israeli society function and behave in the Israeli political process, particularly in light of the reforms that have transformed the arena of Israeli politics.

The goal of this course is to expose you to some of the contemporary socio-political issues in Israel, particularly the highly contentious problem of religion and politics.

Lectures proceed from the assumption that all students have read the assignments, and class will often include open discussion. Class participation will be factored into the final grade, and attendance is compulsory. There will be a final exam.

There is only one text, which is assigned almost in its entirety:

Reuven Y. Hazan and Moshe Maor (eds.) Parties, Elections and Cleavages: Israel in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective. London: Frank Cass, 2000.

(This book also appeared as a special issue of the journal Israel Affairs, Vol. 6, #2, Winter 1999.)

There is an additional text, a majority of which is assigned:

Gregory S. Mahler. Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State. Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield, 2004.

Both books are available for purchase at the Akademon bookstore. The remaining items come from several books and journals, all of which are on reserve at the library, along with the main and the recommended texts.

1. Introduction: Are Israeli Politics and Society Comparable or Unique?

Michael Barnett, "The Politics of Uniqueness: The Status of the Israeli Case."

In Michael Barnett (ed.) Israel in Comparative Perspective: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom. Albany: SUNY Press, 1996, pp. 3-28.

Yehezkel Dror, "On the Uniqueness of Israel: Multiple Readings."

In Michael Barnett (ed.) Israel in Comparative Perspective: Challenging the Conventional Wisdom. Albany: SUNY Press, 1996, pp. 245-261.

Ira Sharkansky, "The Promised Land of the Chosen People is not all that Distinctive: On the Value of Comparison."

In David Levi-Faur, Gabriel Sheffer and David Vogel (eds.) Israel: Dynamics of Change and Continuity. London: Frank Cass, 1999, pp. 279-292.

Gregory S. Mahler. Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State. Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield, 2004.

Introduction: "The Study of Israel in Comparative Context", pp. 1-10.

2. Social Cleavages in Israel

Judith Shuval, "The Structure and Dilemmas of Israeli Pluralism."

In Baruch Kimmerling (ed.) The Israeli State and Society: Boundaries and Frontiers. Albany: SUNY Press, 1989, pp. 216-236.

Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak. Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel. Albany: SUNY Press, 1989.

Ch. 2: "Israel as a Multi-Cleavage Society", pp. 32-97.

Alan Dowty. The Jewish State: A Century Later. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Ch. 7: "The Communal Split", pp. 143-158.

Gregory S. Mahler. Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State. Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield, 2004.

Ch. 3: "The Social and Economic Context of Politics", pp. 85-114.

3. The Development and Consequences of Israeli Politics

Gregory S. Mahler. Politics and Government in Israel: The Maturation of a Modern State. Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield, 2004.

Ch. 4: "The Constitutional System and Parliamentary Government, pp. 117-139.

Ch. 5: "The Prime Minister and the Knesset", 141-169.

Ch. 6: "Political Parties and Interest Groups", pp. 171-191.

Ch. 7: "The Electoral Process and Voting Behavior", pp. 193-219.

Ch. 8: "The Machinery of Government", pp. 221-247.

Itzhak Galnoor. "The Israeli Political System: A Profile."

In Keith Kyle and Joel Peters (eds.) Whither Israel? The Domestic Challenges.

London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1993, pp. 87-102.

Emanuel Gutmann. "Israel: Democracy Without a Constitution."

In Vernon Bodganor (ed.) Constitutions in Democratic Politics. Aldershot: Gower, 1988, pp. 290-308.

Reuven Y. Hazan, "Party System Change in Israel, 1948-1998: A Conceptual and Theoretical Border-Stretching of Europe?"

In Paul Pennings and Jan-Erik Lane (eds.) Comparing Party System Change.

London: Routledge, 1988, pp. 151-166.

4. Politics and Society in Israel #1: Religion and Politics

Benyamin Neuberger. "Religion and State in Europe and Israel."

In Reuven Y. Hazan and Moshe Maor (eds.) Parties, Elections and Cleavages: Israel in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective. London: Frank Cass, 2000, pp. 65-84.

Alan Dowty. The Jewish State: A Century Later. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Ch. 8: Religion and Politics, pp. 159-183.

Eliezer Don-Yehiya. "Conflict Management of Religious Issues: The Israeli Case in a Comparative Perspective."

In Reuven Y. Hazan and Moshe Maor (eds.) Parties, Elections and Cleavages: Israel in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective. London: Frank Cass, 2000, pp. 85-108.

Reuven Y. Hazan. (2000). "Religion and Politics in Israel: The Rise and Fall of the Consociational Model."

In Reuven Y. Hazan and Moshe Maor (eds.) Parties, Elections and Cleavages: Israel in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective. London: Frank Cass, 2000, pp. 109-137.

Suggested additional reading:

Asher Cohen and Bernard Susser. Israel and the Politics of Jewish Identity: The Secular-Religious Impasse. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

5. Politics and Society in Israel #2: Israeli Arabs

Sammy Smooaha. "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype."
Israel Studies. Vol. 2, #2, 1997, pp. 198-241.

Alan Dowty. "Consociationalism and Ethnic Democracy: Israeli Arabs in Comparative Perspective."

In David Levi-Faur, Gabriel Sheffer and David Vogel (eds.) Israel: Dynamics of Change and Continuity. London: Frank Cass, 1999, pp. 169-182.

6. The Reshaping of Israeli Politics in the 1990s

Arend Lijphart. "Israeli Democracy and Democratic Reform in Comparative Perspective."

In Ehud Sprinzak and Larry Diamond (eds.) Israeli Democracy Under Stress. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1993, pp. 107-123.

Hanna Diskin and Abraham Diskin. "The Politics of Electoral Reform in Israel."
International Political Science Review, Vol. 16, #1, January 1995, pp. 31-46.

Reuven Y. Hazan, "Presidential-Parliamentarism: Direct Popular Election of the Prime Minister, Israel's New Electoral and Political System."

Electoral Studies, Vol. 15, #1, February 1996, pp. 21-37.

Reuven Y. Hazan, "Executive-Legislative Relations in an Era of Accelerated Reform: Reshaping Government in Israel."

Legislative Studies Quarterly, Vol. 22, #3, August 1997, pp. 329-350.

Abraham Diskin. "The New Political System in Israel."

Government and Opposition, Vol. 34, #4, Autumn 1999, pp. 498-515.

Michal Shamir and Asher Arian. "Collective Identity and Electoral Competition in Israel."

American Political Science Review, Vol. 93, #2, June 1999, pp. 265-277.

Gideon Rahat. "The Politics of Reform in Israel: How the Israeli Mixed System Came to Be."

In Matthew Shugart and Martin Wattenberg (eds.) Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds? New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 123-151.

7. The 1996, 1999 and 2001 Elections in Israel

Baruch Kimmerling. "Elections as a Battleground over Collective Identity."
In Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (eds.) The Elections in Israel 1996.
Albany: SUNY Press, 1999, pp. 27-44.

David Nachmias and Itai Sened. "The Bias of Pluralism: The Redistributive Effects of the New Electoral Law."
In Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (eds.) The Elections in Israel 1996.
Albany: SUNY Press, 1999, pp. 269-284.

Reuven Y. Hazan. "Yes, Institutions Matter: The Impact of Institutional Reform on Parliamentary Members and Leaders in Israel."
In Lawrence D. Longley and Reuven Y. Hazan (eds.) The Uneasy Relationship Between Parliamentary Members and Leaders. London: Frank Cass, 1999, pp. 303-326

Reuven Y. Hazan and Gideon Rahat. "Representation, Electoral Reform, and Democracy: Theoretical and Empirical Lessons from the 1996 Elections in Israel."
Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 33, #10, December 2000, pp. 1310-1336.

Reuven Y. Hazan. "The Israeli Mixed Electoral System: Unexpected Reciprocal and Cumulative Consequences."
In Matthew Shugart and Martin Wattenberg (eds.) Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds? New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 351-379.

Abraham Diskin and Reuven Y. Hazan. "The 2001 Prime Ministerial Election in Israel."
Electoral Studies, Vol. 21, #4, December 2002, pp. 659-664.

8. Political Change and Social Transformation in Israel

Gabriel Sheffer. "Political Change and Party System Transformation."
In Reuven Y. Hazan and Moshe Maor (eds.) Parties, Elections and Cleavages: Israel in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective. London: Frank Cass, 2000, pp. 148-171.

Peter Medding. "From Government by Party Government Despite Party."
In Reuven Y. Hazan and Moshe Maor (eds.) Parties, Elections and Cleavages: Israel in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective. London: Frank Cass, 2000, pp. 172-208.

9. Politics and Society: Israel in Comparative Perspective

Giovanni Sartori, "The Party Effects of Electoral Systems."

In Reuven Y. Hazan and Moshe Maor (eds.) Parties, Elections and Cleavages: Israel in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective. London: Frank Cass, 2000, pp. 13-28.

Arend Lijphart, Peter Bowman and Reuven Y. Hazan. "Party Systems and Issue Dimensions: Israel and Thirty-Five Other Old and New Democracies Compared."

In Reuven Y. Hazan and Moshe Maor (eds.) Parties, Elections and Cleavages: Israel in Comparative and Theoretical Perspective. London: Frank Cass, 2000, pp. 29-51.

10. Wither Israeli Politics and Society? The 2003 Elections

Reuven Y. Hazan and Abraham Diskin. "The Parliamentary Elections in Israel January 2003."

Electoral Studies, Vol. 23, #2, June 2004, pp. 353-360.

Ofer Kenig, Gideon Rahat and Reuven Y. Hazan. "The Political Consequences of the Introduction and the Repeal of the Direct Elections for the Prime Minister."

In Asher Arian and Michal Shamir (eds.) The Elections in Israel 2003. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005, pp. 33-61.