

Research Article

The Backsliding of Israel's Democracy

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Abstract

This article examines democratic backsliding in Israel across the 19th–25th Knesset election cycles (2013–2024) by combining standard democracy indicators with original party-system measures. We integrate external datasets (e.g., Freedom House, EIU, Polity, V-Dem) with a gravity-based framework that models the party system as pulled by three competing poles-Jewish nation-state, liberal democracy, and identity politics-and a composite index (TEN3) that tracks systemic balance/instability. Empirically, we observe a sustained decline in the liberal-democracy gravity share alongside gains for the Jewish nation-state and identity-politics gravities from the 19th to the 25th Knesset; TEN3 edges upward, consistent with a move toward a more tri-polar and potentially less stable configuration. These internal measures align with the late-period deterioration shown by external indices. Substantively, the re-weighting of ideological gravities implies higher coalition-formation costs, greater polarization, and intensifying pressure on liberal-institutional constraints (checks and balances, civil liberties, rule-of-law). Methodologically, the paper contributes a tractable gravity-based lens that can be replicated for other polities. Limitations include the small number of electoral observations and reliance on linear trend fits; future work should add confidence bands, robustness checks, and non-linear dynamics.

Keywords: Israeli Politics, Democratic Backsliding, Liberal Democracy, Identity Politics, Jewish Nation-State, Party-System Fragmentation, Coalition Instability, TEN3 Index.

1. Introduction

To assess the stability of a democracy, political scientists use a set of indicators and sub-criteria. Here's the big picture:

A. Institutional Stability¹

- ✧ Longevity of the Constitution: Is there a stable constitution over time, or is it frequently amended?
- ✧ Continuity of Governing Institutions: Are regular elections held? Is there a peaceful transfer of power?
- ✧ Separation of Powers: Checks and balances among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

2. Political Stability

- ✧ Number and Frequency of Elections: Frequent or snap elections may indicate instability.
- ✧ Capacity to Form Stable Governments: Average cabinet duration; do coalitions collapse quickly?
- ✧ Political Polarization: The extent of fragmentation among ideological or sectoral groups.

3. Rule of Law

- ✧ Judicial Independence: The judiciary's ability to review and constrain the executive.
- ✧ Equal Enforcement of Laws: Are citizens equal before the law?
- ✧ Corruption: Indices such as Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index*.

4. Rights and Liberties

¹Levitsky, S. and Murillo, M.V. 2009. Variation in institutional strength. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12(1): 115–133.

- ✧ Freedom of Expression and the Press: Measured by indices like Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders.
- ✧ Minority Rights: Protection of ethnic, religious, and gender groups.
- ✧ Civil Liberties: Freedom of association, religion, and protest/assembly.

5. Legitimacy and Public Support

- ✧ Public Trust in Institutions: Parliament, government, judiciary.
- ✧ Voter Turnout: Indicates citizens' commitment to the democratic system.
- ✧ Willingness to Accept the Rules of the Game: Do parties and citizens accept election results?

6. Widely Used Quantitative Indices

- ✧ Democracy Index (Economist Intelligence Unit): Five dimensions-electoral process, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation, and political culture.
- ✧ Freedom in the World (Freedom House): Rates countries on political rights and civil liberties.
- ✧ Polity IV: Places political systems on an autocracy–democracy scale.
- ✧ V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy): Provides multiple indices (liberal, egalitarian, participatory, deliberative, etc.).

Table 1. Democracy stability-comparative table: A practical framework of pillars, sub-criteria, operationalization, indicators, sources, and scoring notes.

Pillar	Sub-criterion	Operational definition	Suggested indicators/metrics	Primary data sources	Scoring / aggregation notes	Caveats / limitations
Institutional stability	Longevity of the constitution ²	Durability of the constitutional order and resistance to frequent overhauls.	✧ Years since adoption/last major overhaul ✧ Amendments per decade ✧ Entrenched clauses/supermajority for change	Constitutional texts; Comparative constitutions project; national legislation repositories	Normalize each indicator (0–1) and combine (e.g., average with higher weight on overhaul frequency).	Amendments can be quality-improving; past changes may not imply current fragility.
Institutional stability	Continuity of governing institutions ³	Regularity of elections and peaceful alternation in power.	✧ Share of cycles held on schedule ✧ Deviations from statutory inter-election interval ✧ Binary/weighted score for peaceful transfer in each cycle	Election commissions; International IDEA election calendar; national records	Compute schedule adherence index (0–1) + transfer score; average across last N cycles.	Snap elections may be legitimate tools; interpret in context.
Institutional stability	Separation of powers ⁴	Existence and effectiveness of checks and balances	✧ Judicial review power (yes/no, scope) ✧ Legislative oversight tools	Statutes; parliamentary records; V-Dem	Create a composite (0–1) using normalized	De jure ≠ de facto; usage matters as much as formal

²Polity Project: <https://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html> | Manual (pdf): <https://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p5manualv2018.pdf>

Polity emphasizes institutional design and constraints on the executive-core features of constitutional durability and separation of powers.

³Same link as comment 2, however, polity tracks formal executive constraints and competitiveness; complements election-regularity indicators.

⁴Same links as comment 2, however institutional constraints are central to polity; use V-Dem for de facto.

		among branches.	used per year (inquiries, hearings) ✧ Independence of key appointments	indicators (checks, judicial independence)	sub-indicators; expert validation recommended.	powers.
Political stability	Number and frequency of elections ⁵	Stability of the electoral timetable and avoidance of persistent early dissolutions.	✧ Average inter-election interval (years) ✧ Count of early elections per decade	Election commissions; historical election data	Z-score vs. peer countries or rescale to 0–1 (more frequent → lower score).	Parliamentary systems can legitimately call early elections.
Political stability	Capacity to form stable governments ⁶	Government durability and coalition cohesion.	✧ Average cabinet duration (months) ✧ Share of minority governments ✧ Cabinet breakdowns per term	ParlGov; official gazettes; government registries	Survival analysis or rescaled duration index; penalize frequent breakdowns.	Short cabinets aren't always negative (e.g., deliberate caretaker phases).
Political stability	Political polarization ⁷	Fragmentation and ideological distance across parties/groups.	✧ Effective Number of Parties (Laakso-Taagepera) ✧ Vote-seat disproportionality (Gallagher index) ✧ Survey-based affective polarization	Election results; Manifesto project; academic surveys	Report each indicator; optionally average after normalization.	High ENP can reflect pluralism; interpret with disproportionality.
Rule of law	Judicial independence ⁸	Ability of the judiciary to review and constrain the executive.	✧ Expert indices (e.g., judicial independence) ✧ Case outcomes that overturn executive actions	Court rulings; V-Dem; World Justice Project (WJP)	Combine expert index (0–1) with case-based rate where available.	Case counts may be noisy; expert scores can be subjective.
Rule of law	Equal enforcement of laws ⁹	Equality before the law across groups and individuals.	✧ Non-discrimination measures (WJP) ✧ Case clearance rates / access to counsel ✧ Complaint success rates by group	WJP rule of law index; justice ministry stats	Normalize components; consider distributional gaps (penalize disparities).	Administrative data may underreport marginalized groups.
Rule of law	Corruption ¹⁰	Perceived/observed	✧ Transparency International	TI; World Bank WGI;	Use CPI (rescaled 0–	Perception indices

⁵Democracy Index (EIU): <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2024/>

EIU covers the functioning of government and electoral process; tracks frequency alongside cabinet durability.

⁶Same link as comment 5; however, EIU incorporates the functioning of government, combined with duration metrics.

⁷Same link as comment 5; however, political culture and participation dimensions proxy polarization dynamics.

⁸V-Dem Methodology (pdf): <https://www.v-dem.net/documents/56/methodology.pdf>. V-Dem's liberal component captures judicial checks and constraints.

⁹Same link as comment 8; however, use V-Dem (liberal index) plus WJP outcome metrics for balance.

¹⁰Same link as comment 8; however, use V-Dem (liberal index) plus WJP outcome metrics for balance.

		misuse of public power for private gain.	CPI (0–100) ✧ World Bank WGI: Control of corruption	national audit institutions	1) and/or WGI; triangulate where possible.	reflect elite/business views; complement with audits.
Rights and liberties	Freedom of expression and press ¹¹	Protection of speech, media pluralism, and journalist safety.	✧ Freedom House (expression/press items) ✧ Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Press Freedom Index	Freedom House; RSF	Use standardized scores (rescale 0–1); average across sources.	Indices may weigh legal and safety aspects differently.
Rights and liberties	Minority rights ¹²	Legal protections and real-world outcomes for minority groups.	✧ Anti-discrimination laws (exist/scope) ✧ Representation share vs. population share ✧ Hate-crime reporting rates	Statutes; electoral data; police/ombudsman reports	Blend legal (de jure) and outcome (de facto) measures; cap dominance of any single metric.	Under-reporting common; representation varies by system design.
Rights and liberties	Civil liberties ¹³	Freedom of association, religion, assembly/protest.	✧ Freedom House civil-liberties subscore ✧ Count/severity of restrictions on assembly	Freedom House; government decrees; NGO monitoring	Normalize counts; combine with FH subscore.	Emergency powers can be temporary; track duration and oversight.
Legitimacy and public support	Public trust in institutions ¹⁴	Citizen confidence in parliament, government, and courts.	✧ Survey trust scores (0–100) by institution ✧ Trend over last 5 years	National surveys; WVS; Gallup	Average across institutions; weight recent years more heavily.	Survey wording and samples affect comparability.
Legitimacy and public support	Voter turnout ¹⁵	Participation rate in national elections.	✧ Turnout as % of registered voters ✧ Adjusted turnout vs. voting-age population	Election authorities; IDEA turnout database	Use adjusted turnout where possible; trend over last N elections.	Compulsory voting regimes aren't directly comparable.
Legitimacy and public support	Acceptance of rules of the game ¹⁶	Willingness of parties/citizens to accept results and norms.	✧ Survey items on accepting outcomes and constraints ✧ Incidence of post-election violence/contestation	Surveys; conflict/incident datasets; media monitoring	Binary/graded scoring per election cycle; rolling average.	Rare events but high salience; contextualize.

¹¹Freedom in the World-Methodology: <https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology>. Freedom House directly scores civil liberties and political rights.

¹²Same link as comment 11; Use FH civil liberties subcomponents; complement with representation stats.

¹³Freedom in the World-Methodology: <https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology/>

¹⁴V-Dem Dataset and Methodology: <https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/> | <https://www.v-dem.net/documents/56/methodology.pdf>

¹⁵V-Dem Dataset and Methodology: <https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/> | <https://www.v-dem.net/documents/56/methodology.pdf>

¹⁶Methodology: <https://v-dem.net/data/the-v-dem-dataset/> | <https://www.v-dem.net/documents/56/methodology.pdf>

B. Laakso-Taagepera Index¹⁷

Additional dimensions for assessing the stability of parliamentary democracies analyze the composition of the parliament-namely, the number of parties, their size, and their ability to form a stable government.

One of the most widely used measures for assessing political stability via the number of parties is the Laakso-Taagepera Index, also known as the Effective Number of Parties (ENP).

Laakso-Taagepera index formula calculation is:

The index considers not only the official count of parties but also their relative sizes:

$$N = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^k p_i^2}$$

- ✧ N -Effective number of parties.
- ✧ p_i -the seat share of party i out of the total seats in the Knesset (120).
- ✧ k -the number of parties that won representation.

If all parties are equal in size, N is close to the actual number of parties. If one party is dominant, N is much lower.

Implications for Stability

- ✧ High ENP → Significant fragmentation of the party system, making it harder to form stable governments and leading to a proliferation of fragile coalitions.
- ✧ Low ENP → Indicates dominance by one or two parties, which tends to facilitate governmental stability but reduces political representation.

Let us add a new index to measure index, which reflects the non-commitment of the political system-as represented in the parliament-to the rules and norms of democracy.

$$DC = \frac{1}{1 - \sum_{i=1}^k p_i \alpha_i}$$

- ✧ N -Effective number of parties.
- ✧ p_i -the seat share of party i out of the total seats in the Knesset (120).
- ✧ α_i -the level of commitment and trust of party i in Israeli democracy.
- ✧ k -the number of parties that won representation.

C. The Three-Body Problem

Briefly, the three-body problem is a well-known physics problem that describes a physical system moving under the influence of three centers of gravity (for example, three suns). Systems that move around three centers of gravity¹⁸ are characterized by persistent, extreme instability¹⁹. In chaos theory, a system with three centers of gravity (*attractors*) can be characterized as oscillating among three attractors.

¹⁷Laakso, M. and Taagepera, R. 1979. Effective number of parties: A measure with application to West Europe. *Comparative Political Studies*, 12(1): 3-27.

¹⁸Borderes-Motta, G. and Winter, O.C. 2018. Poincaré surfaces of section around a 3D irregular body: The case of asteroid 4179 Toutatis. *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, 474(2): 2452-2466.

¹⁹Given three massive bodies (e.g., three suns) that exert mutual gravitational forces according to Newton's law of gravitation, the question is: can their trajectories be predicted exactly over time? It has been shown, mathematically and physically, that there is no general analytic solution to this problem. In chaos theory, this is a system with three attractors, where an attractor is a state or set of states toward which the system tends over time. Here we are dealing with a *strange attractor*-a chaotic trajectory that does not repeat yet remains within a bounded region. When a system has three (strange) attractors, its behavior becomes highly complex.

- ✧ The system can "jump" among attractors depending on the initial conditions.
- ✧ The boundaries of the basins of attraction become intricate, making it difficult to predict which attractor the system will reach.

In what follows, we model Israel's political-institutional system as one that behaves analogously to a physical system orbiting three centers of gravity and is therefore fated to a state of inherent instability.

These centers of gravity are the three core principles on which Israel's identity rests: (1) a religious-nation state (Jewish), (2) a liberal-civic democracy, and (3) identity/tribal politics. Each of these centers has an underlying ideology, laws, and institutions that support it, yet among them, there are built-in, persistent tensions that appear, at least ostensibly, irresolvable.

The use of the three-body analogy is an extension-indeed a further extension-of a model in which populations behave according to laws of "social gravity"²⁰. According to chaos theory, a chaotic system is non-stable and highly sensitive to change; that is, it exhibits the "butterfly effect," whereby small differences in initial conditions (e.g., political, security-related, or legal events) can produce dramatic differences in outcomes. Schematically, the three-body problem as applied to Israel's socio-political structures can be presented as follows:

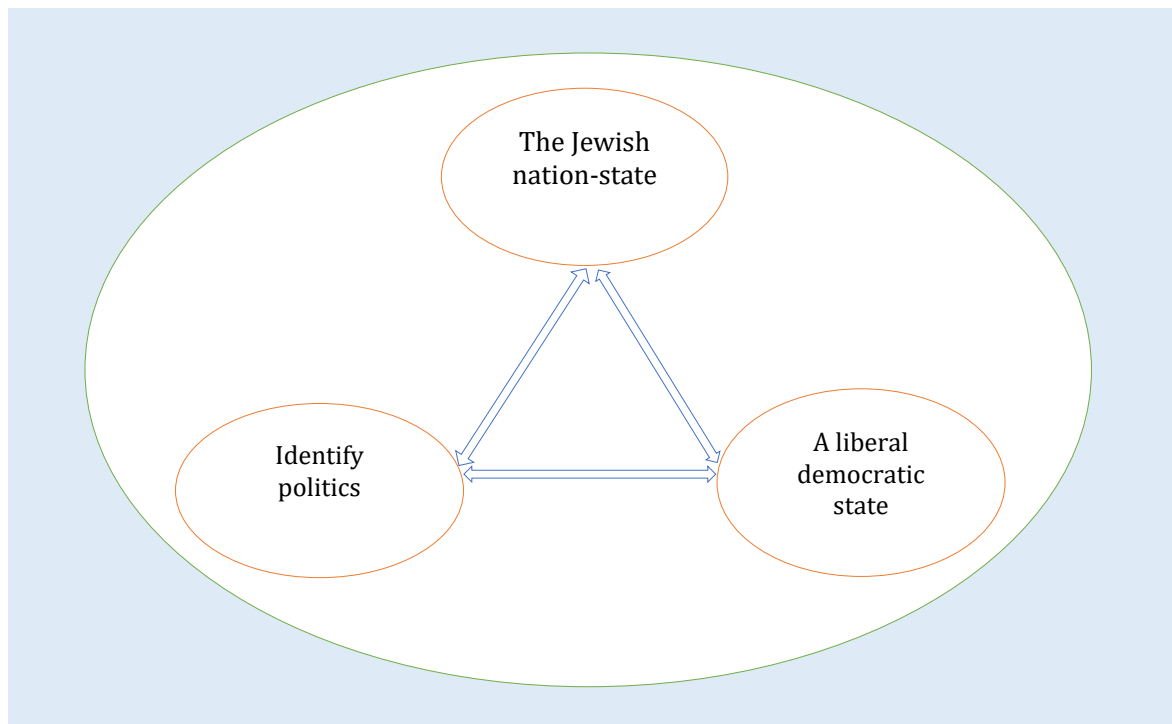


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of Israel's socio-political structures.

Briefly Present the Three Centers of Gravity of Israel's Socio-Political Structure²¹.

In the Israeli context, I would like to note the studies by Ilan Peleg and Ruth Amir²². In their comprehensive book, *The Crisis of Israel's Democracy, 1948–2025*, they provide extensive explanations for the causes of Israel's democratic crisis. For our purposes, the principal explanations in the book concern: an ethno-national structure lacking a full constitutional foundation; sharp social cleavages; and charismatic populism-with Netanyahu at its center.

In his "Tribes" speech, President Reuven Rivlin²³ argued that "demographic and cultural processes have reshaped the face of Israeli society in recent decades: from a society composed of a clear majority and minority to a society composed of four sectors, or tribes."

²⁰Vecchia, K.J. and Stewart, J.Q. Papers (C0571) 1907–1970s. 2007. A finding aid, manuscripts division department of rare books and special collections, Princeton University Library, 2004 "John Q. Stewart Papers". Archived from the original on 2007-06-10. Retrieved 2007-10-22.

²¹For details of the three centers of gravity of Israel's socio-political structure, please look at: Oppenheim, Y. 2025. The impact of deep social, cultural, and political structures on the stability of democracy in Israel. *International Journal of Social Science, Management and Economics Research*, 3(5): 25-36.

²²Peleg, I. and Amir, R. 2025. *The crisis of Israel's democracy, 1948–2025: Origins, developments, and consequences*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

²³Rivlin, R. 2023. "The 'tribes' speech"-former President Reuven Rivlin | The State's Speech, Knesset Channel, April 9, 2023.

Meir Elran and Kobi Michael²⁴ describe an elite struggle as “a power confrontation conducted mainly, though not exclusively, between the new elite (which tends to the right) and the old elite (which tends to the center-left).”

In addition to the unique Israeli democracy, we briefly present the three centers of gravity in Israel’s socio-political structure. Among the three centers of gravity, there are built-in conflicts. To gain an in-depth understanding of the scope and breadth of the conflicts among Israel’s three centers of gravity-and their impact on the weakening of Israeli democracy-see my article “The Impact of Deep Social, Cultural, and Political Structures on the Stability of Democracy in Israel”²⁵. Underlying each of these centers are ideologies and worldviews regarding the future vision of the State of Israel-its character and its objectives.

Israel as a Jewish Ethno-Religious Nation-State

Essence of the Principle: The State of Israel is defined as a Jewish, religiously inflected nation-state, with its national-religious identity enshrined in law, symbols, and institutions (Book Review: Agmon, 2020).

Israel is a Liberal Democratic State²⁶

Essence of the Principle: Israel is a liberal democracy that combines popular sovereignty (encompassing free and competitive elections, political representation, and the alternation of power) with institutional protection of individual and minority rights through the rule of law and the separation of powers. It is not enough that the majority decides; the majority’s authority is limited by a constitution/basic laws, judicial review, and parliamentary and public oversight-so that fundamental liberties (freedom of expression, religion, association, press, due process, and property) are preserved for all²⁷.

Identity Politics

Essence of the Principle: Identity politics is a mode of political organization and discourse in which individuals and groups formulate public claims primarily based on identity affiliation (ethnic/national, religious, gender, sexual, racial, and more), arising from experiences of deprivation, exclusion, or lack of recognition. It aims to secure recognition of identity and collective dignity, fair representation in institutions, and, at times, redistribution of resources and powers-not in terms of the “universal citizen,” but in terms of a distinct group (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2002).

The “Three Centers” Index (TEN3)

Party Assignment

- ✧ Parties emphasizing a Jewish–national identity (Likud, Religious Zionism, Shas, United Torah Judaism) → high weight in the “Jewish nation-state” center.
- ✧ Parties emphasizing liberal–democratic principles (Yesh Atid, Labor, parts of National Unity) → high weight in the “liberal democracy” center.
- ✧ Parties with a distinct sectoral representation (Arab parties, and some other identity-based parties) → high weight in the “identity politics” center.

Mixed parties receive fractional assignments (e.g., National Unity: 70% liberal, 30% Jewish-national).

Weight in the Knesset

For each center $c \in \{J, L, I\}$:

$$S_c = \sum_p w_{p,c} s_p, \quad q_c = \frac{S_c}{120}.$$

²⁴Elran, M. and Michael, K. 2023. The formative socio-political crisis in Israel: Implications for national security. *Strategic Assessment*, 26(2): 137-145.

²⁵Oppenheim, Y. 2025. The impact of deep social, cultural, and political structures on the stability of democracy in Israel. *International Journal of Social Science, Management and Economics Research*, 3(5): 25-36.

²⁶It has not been definitively resolved, legally or socially, whether Israel is a liberal democracy or another type of democracy (conservative, authoritarian). For the purposes of this discussion, however, we will assume that the definition of a liberal democracy is the appropriate “center of gravity” for our purposes.

²⁷Coglianesi, C. 1990. Review of democracy and its critics, by R.A. Dahl. *Michigan Law Review*, 88(6): 1662–1667.

Where S_t is the weighted seat total for center t ; $w_{p,t}$ is party p 's affiliation weight to center t (typically $0 \leq w_{p,t} \leq 1$, with $\sum_t w_{p,t} = 1$); and s_p is the number of seats held by party p . Then S_c is seats per center and q_c is normalized seat share for center out of the Knesset's 120 seats.

Effective-Number Index

$$\text{TEN3} = \frac{1}{\sum_c q_c^2}, \quad 1 \leq \text{TEN3} \leq 3.$$

- ✧ 1 = a single dominant center (uni-polar system).
- ✧ 3 = three equal centers (maximal fragmentation).

Interpretation

- ✧ High TEN3: The system is fragmented across the three centers → harder to reach constitutional or coalition consensus.
- ✧ Low TEN3: Dominance of one center (e.g., "Jewish nationalism") at the expense of the others.

1. Israel's Socio-Political Situation for the Years 2013–2025

In this section, we will compute the dimensions we presented for Israel's socio-political situation for the years 2013–2025. Our research hypothesis is that Israeli democracy has significantly weakened during this period.

A. Israel's democratic stability is assessed according to a set of indicators presented in Section 1. A.

Table 2. Freedom in the World–Israel (2013–2025).

Year	PR (0–40)	CL (0–60)	Total (0–100)	Source
2013	36	45	81	Freedom House-Freedom in the World: Israel 2013 (PR/CL breakdown)
2014	36	45	81	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2014
2015	36	45	81	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2015
2016	36	44	80	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2016
2017	36	44	80	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2017
2018	36	43	79	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2018
2019	35	43	78	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2019
2020	33	43	76	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2020
2021	33	43	76	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2021
2022	34	42	76	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2022
2023	34	43	77	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2023
2024	34	40	74	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2024
2025	34	39	73	Freedom House - Freedom in the World: Israel 2025
Scores split: Political rights (PR, 0–40) + Civil liberties (CL, 0–60). Total = 0–100. Each row includes the source line for that year's country report. Note: Sources refer to Freedom House's 'Freedom in the World' Israel country pages for the corresponding year.				

Table 3. Israel–democracy index (economist intelligence unit), 2013–2024.

Year	EIU democracy index (0–10)	Regime type	Notes/sources
2013	7.53	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2013 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
2014	7.63	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2014 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
2015	7.77	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2015 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
2016	7.85	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2016 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
2017	7.79	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2017 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
2018	7.79	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2018 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
2019	7.86	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2019 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
2020	7.84	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2020 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
2021	7.97	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2021 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
2022	7.93	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2022 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
2023	7.80	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2023 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
2024	7.80	Flawed democracy	EIU Democracy Index 2024 (report/summary); Our World in Data – 'democracy-index-eiu' (ISR).
The EIU Democracy Index measures five dimensions: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation, and political culture. General sources: Economist Intelligence Unit, Democracy Index reports (2013–2024); Our World in Data 'democracy-index-eiu' series for Israel.			

Table 4. Israel–polity IV/polity5 (polity2) scores, 2013–2018²⁸.

Year	Polity2 (-10 to +10)	Notes/source
2013	6	Polity5 annual time-series (polity2), Center for Systemic Peace; also via Our World in Data 'democracy-index-polity' (ISR).
2014	6	Polity5 annual time-series (polity2), Center for Systemic Peace; also via Our World in Data 'democracy-index-polity' (ISR).
2015	6	Polity5 annual time-series (polity2), Center for Systemic Peace; also via Our World in Data 'democracy-index-polity' (ISR).
2016	6	Polity5 annual time-series (polity2), Center for Systemic Peace; also via Our World in Data 'democracy-index-polity' (ISR).
2017	6	Polity5 annual time-series (polity2), Center for Systemic Peace; also via Our World in Data 'democracy-index-polity' (ISR).
2018	6	Polity5 annual time-series (polity2); 2018 Polity IV aggregation confirms Israel +6; also available via OWID 'democracy-index-polity' (ISR).
Polity rates political systems on an autocracy–democracy scale (polity2: -10 to +10). Sources: Center for Systemic Peace (Polity5), Our World in Data 'democracy-index-polity' series.		

²⁸ There are no data for the years 2019–2024

Table 5. Israel–V-Dem liberal democracy index (v2x_libdem), 2013–2021²⁹.

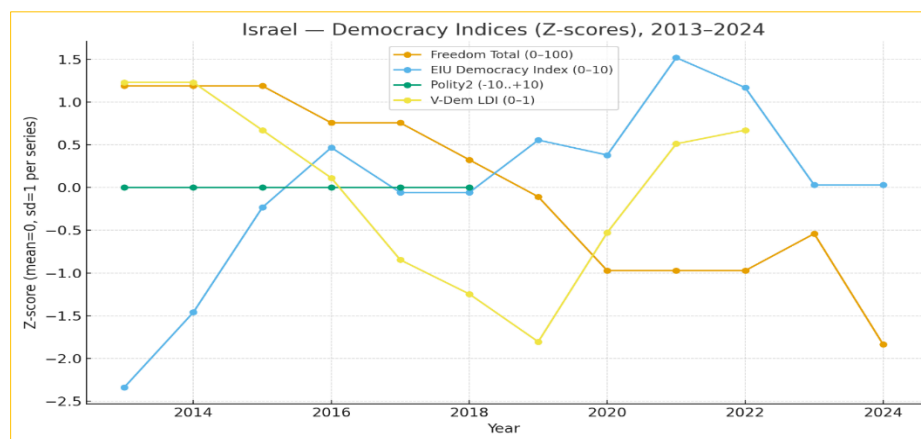
Year	V-Dem LDI (0–1)	Source
2013	0.663	V-Dem v15 Country-Year (2025), variable v2x_libdem, Israel (ISR). DOI: 10.23696/vdemds25
2014	0.663	V-Dem v15 Country-Year (2025), variable v2x_libdem, Israel (ISR). DOI: 10.23696/vdemds25
2015	0.656	V-Dem v15 Country-Year (2025), variable v2x_libdem, Israel (ISR). DOI: 10.23696/vdemds25
2016	0.649	V-Dem v15 Country-Year (2025), variable v2x_libdem, Israel (ISR). DOI: 10.23696/vdemds25
2017	0.637	V-Dem v15 Country-Year (2025), variable v2x_libdem, Israel (ISR). DOI: 10.23696/vdemds25
2018	0.632	V-Dem v15 Country-Year (2025), variable v2x_libdem, Israel (ISR). DOI: 10.23696/vdemds25
2019	0.625	V-Dem v15 Country-Year (2025), variable v2x_libdem, Israel (ISR). DOI: 10.23696/vdemds25
2020	0.641	V-Dem v15 Country-Year (2025), variable v2x_libdem, Israel (ISR). DOI: 10.23696/vdemds25
2021	0.654	V-Dem v15 Country-Year (2025), variable v2x_libdem, Israel (ISR). DOI: 10.23696/vdemds25
2022	0.656	V-Dem v15 Country-Year (2025), variable v2x_libdem, Israel (ISR). DOI: 10.23696/vdemds25

Scale: 0–1 (higher = more liberal democracy). Source: V-Dem v15 Country-Year dataset (2025).

Table 6. Israel-summary of democracy indices (2013–2024)³⁰.

Year	Freedom total (0–100)	EIU democracy index (0–10)	Polity2 (–10 to +10)	V-Dem LDI (0–1)
2013	81	75.3	60	66.3
2014	81	76.3	60	66.3
2015	81	77.7	60	65.6
2016	80	78.5	60	64.9
2017	80	77.9	60	63.7
2018	79	77.9	60	63.2
2019	78	78.6	NA	62.5
2020	76	78.4	NA	64.1
2021	76	79.7	NA	65.4
2022	76	79.3	NA	65.6
2023	77	78	NA	NA
2024	74	78	NA	NA

Columns: Freedom total (0–100), EIU democracy index (0–10), Polity2 (–10 to +10), V-Dem LDI (0–1).

**Figure 2.** Israeli democracy indexes, 2013–2024.²⁹ There are no data for years 2023–2024³⁰ The data values were normalized in order to achieve the same measurement.

Findings

Freedom House (Total): Persistent drift below its own average from mid-decade onward, reaching the most negative point in 2024-a sustained erosion in political rights and civil liberties.

EIU Democracy Index: Rises above its mean to a 2021 peak, then eases down in 2022–2024 but stays near/just above average-a milder arc with post-2021 softening.

V-Dem LDI: Declines below its mean to a trough around 2019, then partially recovers by 2022 (later years not available here).

Polity2: Flat through 2018 and missing thereafter-a structural regime metric that is less sensitive to short-term shifts.

Convergence and Divergence

2013–2019: Freedom House and V-Dem trend downward (backsliding signal) while EIU trends upward-a methodological divergence: rights/constraints vs. participation/governance/culture.

2021–2024: EIU bends down while Freedom House drops further-convergence on deterioration late in the period (V-Dem is missing for 2023–2024 but was recovering in 2022).

Bottom Line (2013–2024)

Dominant Signal: Weakening of liberal-democratic qualities by 2024 (strongest in Freedom House).

Severity Varies by Index: EIU paints a milder path; Freedom House shows the clearest sustained decline; V-Dem shows a downturn to 2019 followed by partial recovery to 2022.

Data Gaps: V-Dem 2023–2024 and Polity2 post-2018 should be filled as releases become available.

B. Implementation of Laakso–Taagepera Index on the Israeli Parliament (Knesset)

There were 6 election cycles in Israel from 2013 to 2022. Below are the results table of these election cycles.

Israel-Knesset Election Results (2013–2022)

This document lists parties that won seats and their seat counts in each Knesset election held between 2013 and 2024. No elections were held in 2014, 2016–2018, or 2023–2024; the last election in this range was on 1 Nov 2022 (25th Knesset). Each table lists parties that won seats and their seat counts. Below each table, the Laakso–Taagepera Effective Number of Parties (ENP)³¹ is computed from seat shares: DC index to measure index, which reflects the non-commitment of the political system-as represented in the parliament-to the rules and norms of democracy.

Israel-ENP and DC by Election (2013–2022)

Table 7. 2013 election-19th Knesset (22 Jan 2013).

Party	Seats	³² DC α_i
Likud–Yisrael Beiteinu	31	0.90
Yesh Atid	19	1.00
Labor	15	1.00
The Jewish Home	12	0.90
Shas	11	0.70
United Torah Judaism	7	0.70
Hatnua	6	0.90
Meretz	6	1.00
United Arab List–Ta'al	4	0.90
Hadash	4	0.90
Balad	3	0.90
Kadima	2	1.00
ENP: 7.28 DC (revised): 10.351		

³¹Definitions: ENP = $1/\sum p_i^2$ (seat shares over all parties). DC = $1/(1 - \sum(p_i * \alpha_i))$, with p_i seat-shares renormalized shares over parties that have α_i level of the democracy commitment.

³²The α_i values were conducted by me according to my knowledge about the Israeli parties attitude the rules and norms of democracy.

Table 8. 2015 election-20th Knesset (17 Mar 2015).

Party	Seats	³³ DC α_i
Likud	30	0.90
Zionist Union	24	1.00
Joint List	13	0.80
Yesh Atid	11	1.00
Kulanu	10	1.00
The Jewish Home	8	0.90
Shas	7	0.70
Yisrael Beiteinu	6	0.80
United Torah Judaism	6	0.70
Meretz	5	1.00
ENP: 6.94 DC (revised): 10.435		

Table 9. 2019 election-21st Knesset (9 Apr 2019).

Party	Seats	³⁴ DC α_i
Likud	35	0.60
Blue and White	35	1.00
Shas	8	0.70
United Torah Judaism	8	0.70
Hadash-Ta'al	6	0.80
Labor	6	1.00
Yisrael Beiteinu	5	0.90
Union of Right-Wing Parties	5	0.70
Meretz	4	1.00
Kulanu	4	0.90
Ra'am-Balad	4	0.70
ENP: 5.24 DC (revised): 5.085		

Table 10. 2019 election-22nd Knesset (17 Sep 2019).

Party	Seats	³⁵ DC α_i
Blue and White	33	1.00
Likud	32	0.60
Joint List	13	0.80
Shas	9	0.70
Yisrael Beiteinu	8	0.90
United Torah Judaism	7	0.80
Yamina	7	0.80
Labor-Gesher	6	1.00
Democratic Union	5	1.00
ENP: 5.57 DC (revised): 5.530		

Table 11. 2020 election-23rd Knesset (2 Mar 2020).

Party	Seats	³⁶ DC α_i
Likud	36	0.60
Blue and White	33	1.00
Joint List	15	0.80
Shas	9	0.70
United Torah Judaism	7	0.70

³³The α_i values were conducted by me according to my knowledge about the Israeli parties attitude the rules and norms of democracy

³⁴The α_i values were conducted by me according to my knowledge about the Israeli parties attitude the rules and norms of democracy

³⁵The α_i values were conducted by me according to my knowledge about the Israeli parties attitude the rules and norms of democracy

³⁶The α_i values were conducted by me according to my knowledge about the Israeli parties attitude the rules and norms of democracy

Labor-Gesher-Meretz ("Emet")	7	1.00
Yisrael Beiteinu	7	0.90
Yamina	6	0.80
ENP: 5.01 DC (revised): 4.979		

Table 12. 2021 election-24th Knesset (23 Mar 2021).

Party	Seats	³⁷ DC α_i
Likud	30	0.60
Yesh Atid	17	1.00
Shas	9	0.70
Blue and White	8	1.00
Yamina	7	0.90
Labor	7	1.00
United Torah Judaism	7	0.70
Yisrael Beiteinu	7	0.90
Religious Zionist Party	6	0.60
Joint List	6	0.80
New Hope	6	1.00
Meretz	6	1.00
Ra'am	4	1.00
ENP: 8.52 DC (revised): 5.505		

Table 13. 2022 election-25th Knesset (1 Nov 2022).

Party	Seats	³⁸ DC α_i
Likud	32	0.50
Yesh Atid	24	1.00
Religious Zionist (incl. Otzma Yehudit and Noam)	14	0.50
National Unity	12	0.90
Shas	11	0.70
United Torah Judaism	7	0.70
Yisrael Beiteinu	6	0.90
Ra'am	5	1.00
Hadash-Ta'al	5	0.80
Labor	4	1.00
ENP: 6.51 DC (revised): 3.846		

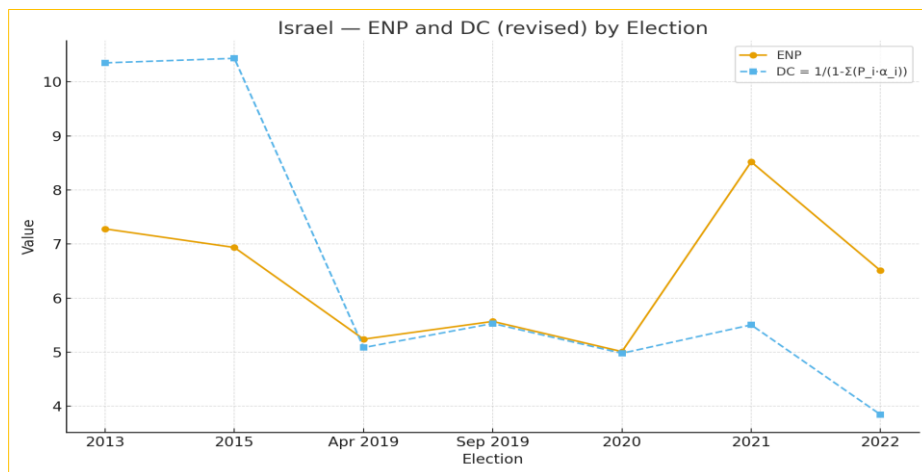


Figure 3. Israel ENP and DC by-election.

³⁷ The α_i values were conducted by me according to my knowledge about the Israeli parties attitude the rules and norms of democracy

³⁸ The α_i values were conducted by me according to my knowledge about the Israeli parties attitude the rules and norms of democracy

Conclusions

In Israel, it is common to measure the effective number of parties in the Knesset (ENPP–Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties). Recent studies (including the Israel Democracy Institute and V-Dem) show:

- ✧ 1950s–1970s: ENP around 2.5–3.5 → Mapai dominant with small satellite parties.
- ✧ 1980s–1990s: ENP rose to 4–5 → strengthening of right–left blocs, decline of single dominant parties.
- ✧ Since 2000: ENP generally around 6–7 or higher → increasing fragmentation, no stable ruling party over time.
- ✧ 2021 Election: ENP ≈ 7.2 (near a global record among parliamentary systems).
- ✧ 2022 Election: ENP fell slightly (Likud won about 32 seats, $\sim 27\%$), still high at ≈ 6.5 .

In Israel's case, the effective number is among the highest in the democratic world—a sign of persistent institutional and political instability. The DC index, which reflects distrust in Israel's democratic rules and laws, is also high, and there is a strong correlation between the two indices. One can say with considerable confidence that political instability—manifested in persistently high ENP scores over the years—has a high correlation with the lack of trust in Israeli democracy as captured by the DC index.

C. Implementation of “Three Centers” Index (Ten3) on the Israeli Parliament (Knesset)

There were 6 election cycles in Israel from 2013 to 2022. Below is the results table in terms of the Three Centers (Jewish nation-state, liberal democracy, identity politics) for these election cycles.

Each table lists the Centers' normalized seat counts. Below each table, the Three Centers' Index (TEN3)³⁹ is computed from seat shares for each election cycle⁴⁰. DC index to measure index, which reflects the non-commitment of the political system—as represented in the parliament—to the rules and norms of democracy.

Table 14. 2013 election–19th Knesset (22 Jan 2013)⁴¹.

Party	Seats	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics
		$w_{p,J}$	$w_{p,L}$	$w_{p,I}$	S_J	S_L	S_I
Likud–Yisrael Beiteinu	31	0.4	0.5	0.1	12.4	15.5	3.1
Yesh Atid	19	0.3	0.7	0	5.7	13.3	0
Labor	15	0.3	0.7	0	4.5	10.5	0
The Jewish Home	12	0.5	0.4	0.1	6	4.8	1.2
Shas	11	0.3	0.2	0.5	3.3	2.2	5.5
United Torah Judaism	7	0.4	0	0.6	2.8	0	4.2
Hatnua	6	0.2	0.8	0	1.2	4.8	0
Meretz	6	0.1	0.9	0	0.6	5.4	0
United Arab List–Ta'al	4	0	0.5	0.5	0	2	2
Hadash	4	0	0.6	0.4	0	2.4	1.6
Balad	3	0	0.3	0.7	0	0.9	2.1
Kadima	2	0.4	0.6	0	0.8	1.2	0
TEN3 – 2.51				Normalized Seats	37.3	63	19.7
				Center gravity shares	31.08%	52.50%	16.42%

³⁹Definitions: $TEN3 = 1/\Sigma q_c^2$ (normalized seats shares over all centers). $DC = 1/(1 - \Sigma(p_i * \alpha_i))$, with p_i seat-shares renormalized shares over parties that have α_i level of the democracy commitment.

⁴⁰The results of election cycles are presented in tables 8–12 in paragraph 2.C

⁴¹All the $w_{p,c}$ values are based on my estimations from my knowledge of the Israeli parties.

Table 15. 2015 election-20th Knesset (17 Mar 2015)⁴².

Party	Seats	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics
		$w_{p,J}$	$w_{p,L}$	$w_{p,I}$	S_J	S_L	S_I
Likud	30	0.4	0.4	0.2	12.00	12.00	6.00
Zionist Union	24	0.2	0.8	0	4.80	19.20	0.00
Joint List	13	0	0.5	0.5	0.00	6.50	6.50
Yesh Atid	11	0.3	0.7	0	3.30	7.70	0.00
Kulanu	10	0.5	0.2	0.3	5.00	2.00	3.00
The Jewish Home	8	0.5	0.2	0.3	4.00	1.60	2.40
Shas	7	0.3	0.1	0.6	2.10	0.70	4.20
Yisrael Beiteinu	6	0.4	0.4	0.2	2.40	2.40	1.20
United Torah Judaism	6	0.3	0.1	0.6	1.80	0.60	3.60
Meretz	5	0.1	0.9	0	0.50	4.50	0.00
TEN3 = 2.73				Normalized Seats	35.90	57.20	26.90
				Center gravity shares	29.92%	47.67%	22.42%

Table 16. 2019 election-21st Knesset (9 Apr 2019)⁴³.

Party	Seats	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics
		$w_{p,J}$	$w_{p,L}$	$w_{p,I}$	S_J	S_L	S_I
Likud	35	0.4	0.3	0.3	14.00	10.50	10.50
Blue and White	35	0.3	0.7	0	10.50	24.50	0.00
Shas	8	0.4	0.1	0.5	3.20	0.80	4.00
United Torah Judaism	8	0.5	0.1	0.4	4.00	0.80	3.20
Hadash-Ta'al	6	0	0.4	0.6	0.00	2.40	3.60
Labor	6	0.4	0.6	0	2.40	3.60	0.00
Yisrael Beiteinu	5	0.6	0.3	0.1	3.00	1.50	0.50
Union of Right-Wing Parties	5	0.6	0.1	0.3	3.00	2.00	0.00
Meretz	4	0.1	0.8	0.1	0.40	3.20	0.40
Kulanu	4	0.6	0.4	0	2.40	1.60	0.00
Ra'am-Balad	4	0	0.7	0.3	0.00	2.80	1.20
TEN3 = 2.73				Normalized Seats	42.90	53.70	23.40
				Center gravity shares	35.75%	44.75%	19.50%

⁴²All the $w_{p,c}$ values are based on my estimations from my knowledge of the Israeli parties.

⁴³All the $w_{p,c}$ values are based on my estimations from my knowledge of the Israeli parties.

Table 17. 2019 election-22nd Knesset (17 Sep 2019)⁴⁴.

Party	Seats	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics
		$w_{p,J}$	$w_{p,L}$	$w_{p,I}$	S_J	S_L	S_I
Blue and White	33	0.4	0.6	0	13.20	19.80	0.00
Likud	32	0.3	0.3	0.4	9.60	9.60	12.80
Joint List	13	0	0.5	0.5	0.00	6.50	6.50
Shas	9	0.5	0.1	0.4	4.50	0.90	3.60
Yisrael Beiteinu	8	0.4	0.4	0.2	3.20	3.20	1.60
United Torah Judaism	7	0.4	0.1	0.5	2.80	0.70	3.50
Yamina	7	0.6	0.4	0	4.20	2.80	0.00
Labor-Gesher	6	0.4	0.6	0	2.40	3.60	0.00
Democratic Union	5	0.2	0.8	0	1.00	4.00	0.00
TEN3 = 2.84				Normalized Seats	40.90	51.10	28.00
				Center gravity shares	34.08%	42.58%	23.33%

Table 18. 2020 election-23rd Knesset (2 Mar 2020)⁴⁵.

Party	Seats	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics
		$w_{p,J}$	$w_{p,L}$	$w_{p,I}$	S_J	S_L	S_I
Likud	36	0.4	0.3	0.3	14.4	10.8	10.8
Blue and White	33	0.3	0.7	0	9.9	23.1	0
Joint List	15	0	0.5	0.5	0	7.5	7.5
Shas	9	0.4	0.1	0.5	3.6	0.9	4.5
United Torah Judaism	7	0.4	0	0.6	2.8	0	4.2
Labor-Gesher-Meretz ("Emet")	7	0.3	0.7	0	2.1	4.9	0
Yisrael Beiteinu	7	0.4	0.5	0.1	2.8	3.5	0.7
Yamina	6	0.7	0.3	0	4.2	1.8	0
TEN3 = 2.82				Normalized Seats	39.80	52.50	27.70
				Center gravity shares	33.17%	43.75%	23.08%

⁴⁴All the $w_{p,c}$ values are based on my estimations from my knowledge of the Israeli parties.

⁴⁵All the $w_{p,c}$ values are based on my estimations from my knowledge of the Israeli parties.

Table 19. 2021 election-24th Knesset (23 Mar 2021)⁴⁶.

Party	Seats	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics
		$w_{p,J}$	$w_{p,L}$	$w_{p,I}$	S_J	S_L	S_I
Likud	30	0.4	0.3	0.3	12.00	9.00	9.00
Yesh Atid	17	0.3	0.7	0	5.10	11.90	0.00
Shas	9	0.4	0.1	0.5	3.60	0.90	4.50
Blue and White	8	0.4	0.6	0	3.20	4.80	0.00
Yamina	7	0.7	0.3	0	4.90	2.10	0.00
Labor	7	0.3	0.7	0	2.10	4.90	0.00
United Torah Judaism	7	0.6	0.1	0.3	4.20	0.70	2.10
Yisrael Beiteinu	7	0.4	0.5	0.1	2.80	3.50	0.70
Religious Zionist Party	6	0.7	0.1	0.2	4.20	0.60	1.20
Joint List	6	0	0.4	0.6	0.00	2.40	3.60
New Hope	6	0.5	0.5	0	3.00	3.00	0.00
Meretz	6	0.1	0.9	0	0.60	5.40	0.00
Ra'am	4	0.1	0.6	0.3	0.40	2.40	1.20
TEN3 = 2.75				Normalized Seats	46.10	51.60	22.30
				Center gravity shares	38.42%	43.00%	18.58%

Table 20. 2022 election-25th Knesset (1 Nov 2022)⁴⁷.

Party	Seats	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics	Jewish nation-state	Liberal democracy	Identity politics
		$w_{p,J}$	$w_{p,L}$	$w_{p,I}$	S_J	S_L	S_I
Likud	32	0.4	0.2	0.4	12.80	6.40	12.80
Yesh Atid	24	0.3	0.7	0	7.20	16.80	0.00
Religious Zionist (incl. Otzma Yehudit and Noam)	14	0.7	0	0.3	9.80	0.00	4.20
National Unity	12	0.4	0.6	0	4.80	7.20	0.00
Shas	11	0.4	0	0.6	4.40	0.00	6.60
United Torah Judaism	7	0.4	0	0.6	2.80	0.00	4.20
Yisrael Beiteinu	6	0.4	0.5	0.1	2.40	3.00	0.60
Ra'am	5	0	0.8	0.2	0.00	4.00	1.00
Hadash-Ta'al	5	0	0.5	0.5	0.00	2.50	2.50
Labor	4	0.3	0.7	0	1.20	2.80	0.00
TEN3 = 2.94				Normalized Seats	45.40	42.70	31.90
				Center gravity shares	37.83%	35.58%	26.58%

⁴⁶All the $w_{p,c}$ values are based on my estimations from my knowledge of the Israeli parties.

⁴⁷All the $w_{p,c}$ values are based on my estimations from my knowledge of the Israeli parties.

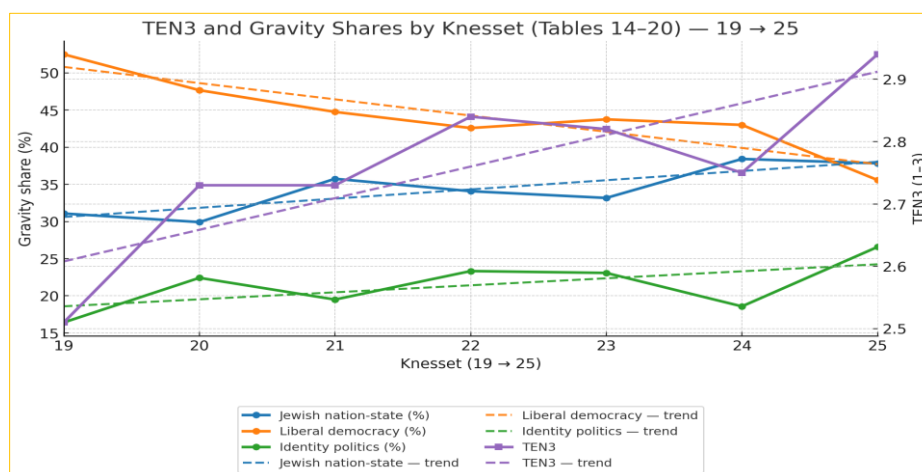


Figure 4. TEN3 and gravity shares by Knesset.

Summary Findings of Paragraph 2.C

Direction of Change (19th → 25th Knesset)

- ✧ Liberal democracy (gravity share) falls markedly-roughly ~52% → ~36%.
- ✧ Jewish nation-state rises-roughly ~31% → ~38%, and by the 25th it overtakes liberal democracy.
- ✧ Identity politics rises as well-roughly ~16% → ~27% (the steepest relative gain).

TEN3, that is, the index for the system stability, edges up slightly (~0.25 → ~0.29): toward the maximum instability point of 3.

Structural Rebalancing of the System

The ideological “center of gravity” shifts away from the liberal-democratic pole and toward national and identity poles. This trend is toward the chaotic system of “Three centers of gravity”.

Political and Governance Implications

- ✧ Coalition Formation: Centrist, rights-first coalitions become harder to assemble; coalitions anchored in national/identity agendas become easier.
- ✧ Policy Tilt: More emphasis on sovereignty, identity, and particularistic claims; relatively less weight on liberal-institutional constraints.
- ✧ Institutional Pressure: As liberal-democratic gravity weakens, checks and balances, civil liberties, and judicial/administrative independence may face greater strain.
- ✧ Volatility Risk: The dual rise of national and identity poles tends to raise polarization, transaction costs, and the chance of episodic instability.

These dynamics find support for my research hypothesis: Israeli liberal-democratic gravity weakens over these six elections, while religious-national and identity-politics gravities strengthen, consistent with a system trending toward heightened instability (what you term a “chaotic state”).

Conclusions

- ✧ The ideological center of gravity shifts away from liberal-democratic norms and toward national/identity poles; by the 25th Knesset, the Jewish nation-state pole is the largest share while identity politics shows the steepest relative gain.
- ✧ TEN3 rises modestly, indicating a more tri-polar configuration that tends to elevate fragmentation and reduce systemic stability.
- ✧ Coalition formation is likely to become harder for centrist rights-first blocs and easier for coalitions anchored in national/identity agendas.
- ✧ Institutional pressure increases: checks and balances, civil liberties, and judicial/administrative independence face heightened stress as liberal-democratic gravity weakens.
- ✧ Polarization and transaction costs grow, implying episodic instability and governance volatility in the near term.
- ✧ Monitoring the joint trajectory of gravity shares, TEN3, and external democracy indices can indicate whether 2024–2025 marks an inflection or a continuation of backsliding.
- ✧ Future research should incorporate uncertainty quantification (confidence bands), non-linear trend modeling, and cross-national applications of the gravity framework.

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