



THE JEWISH -ARAB CENTER

Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel 2003-2009

Sammy Smooha



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ABOUT THE REPORT

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The report was prepared during the author's term, 2009-2010, as a Senior Research Fellow, Jennings Randolph Program for International Peace, at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Washington, DC.

The Index was developed in the early 2000s on the basis of experience accumulated in previous surveys carried out during the years 1976-2002. In its new and present form, the Index was launched for the first time as 2003 Index in the conference hall of the Knesset and at a University of Haifa conference in May 2004.

Dr. Galit Gordoni and Dr. Nohad Ali, doctoral students of mine at the time, contributed greatly to the development of the 2003 Index. Contributors also included a large number of public and academic figures who took part in a workshop held in June 2003 for the final formulation of the Index questionnaire. Dr. Ali has also served as the fieldwork coordinator of all the 2003-2009 Arab surveys and Dr. Mina Zemah, Director of the Dahaf Research Institute, has been responsible for conducting the 2003-2009 Jewish surveys.

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Since 2003 the Index has won wide interest and acceptance as a powerful scientific tool for measuring and monitoring attitudes of Arab and Jewish citizens toward each other and toward the state. It has been presented in conferences and reported by the press.

The Index is conducted under the aegis of the Jewish-Arab Center at the University of Haifa. It would not have been realized without the unlimited support of the former Head of the Center, Prof. Faisal Azaiza, during these years. He recognized the academic and public merit of the Index and worked unceasingly to secure funding for it. Thanks are due to him and to the President of the University Haifa who has allocated and helped raising funds for the Index.

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Summary

- Israel is and remains a deeply divided society of some 5.6 million Jews and some 1.2 million Palestinian-Arab citizens.
- This division is reflected in institutions, culture, national identity, socioeconomic status, and stances on fundamental issues.
- Arab-Jewish relations within Israel have worsened steadily since the Rabin assassination in 1995.
- Two conflicting theses explain the trends of changed relations between the Arab minority and Jewish majority.
- Mutual alienation asserts Arabs and Jews are not only deeply divided but also on a violent collision course.
- Mutual rapprochement suggests that Arabs and Jews are in the process of adjusting to one other.
- Analysis of survey data taken from 1976 through 2009 indicates that both Arabs and Jews are committed to coexistence and democracy.
- Arab attitudes toward the Jews and the Jewish state have become more critical and militant since 1996.
- Israel could accommodate the Arab minority without losing its character as a Jewish and democratic state.
- The Arabs could fulfill most of their demands without transforming Israel into a full binational state.
- A better balance, compatible with the visions of both sides, could be struck between the Jewish and democratic character of the state by policies of nondiscrimination, inclusion, and integration of the Arab minority.
- Reform could be undertaken, step by step, along with settling the Palestinian question and building trust between Arabs and Jews within Israel. No progress was made in this direction between 1996 and 2010, and the decline threatens the relative tranquility in Arab-Jewish relations.
- If the Jewish state does not enhance equality and integration of the Arabs and does not move forward on peace with the Palestinians, Arab attitudes will continue to harden, and both sides will suffer.
- Continued relative quiet in Arab-Jewish relations is an important condition for settling the Palestinian question.
- The answer to improving relations while keeping Israel Jewish and democratic and establishing a separate Palestinian state is to strengthen Israel's democracy and to find a better and fairer balance between its Jewish character and its democratic character.

Introduction

Palestinian-Arab citizens of Israel in 2010 number about one and a quarter million, 16.5 percent of Israel's population. Scholars, media analysts, and policymakers see them as an increasingly radical minority. For their part, the Arabs see Jews and the state as growing more and more intransigent, exclusionary, and unresponsive. Fear is widespread that the Palestinization, Islamization, and growing relative deprivation of the Arabs—along with the drift to the right of the Jews and growing intergroup inequality in the wake of globalization—are driving Arabs and Jews apart and leading to an inevitable and violent confrontation that will have only adverse effects on any Israeli-Palestinian peace. This apprehension is supported by the steady deterioration in Arab-Jewish relations since the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995.

This report, however, poses a counter-thesis, emphasizing a mutual rapprochement between the two sides that prevents confrontation and violence. It presents findings from representative surveys conducted from 1976 to 2009 that bear on the images of the Arab minority as a ticking time bomb in the Jewish state and of the Jewish majority as hard-liner, and suggests an explanation for the continued Arab acquiescence. The report warns, though, that if the deterioration in relations is not checked by policies to enhance the equality, integration, and inclusion of the Arab minority, Israel cannot for long avoid the danger of instability and bloodshed that are rampant in deeply divided societies.

Arab-Jewish Relations

Israel is a deeply divided society. The division between Arab and Jewish citizens is reflected in institutions; culture; national identity; socioeconomic status; and stances on the character of the state, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and other fundamental issues. These differences and disagreements are severely exacerbated by the defeat and humiliation from which the Arab minority emerged in 1948.¹

A good way to unravel the rift is to spell out the distinct features of the minority. The Arabs are a homeland minority, one that has populated Palestine for centuries, whereas most Jews are first- to third-generation immigrants. The Arabs have firm ties to the land, consider themselves the true owners of the territory, and claim the special rights accorded to indigenous peoples. Yet, on the basis of their historical, religious, national, and emotional connections, the Jews feel the same way.

The Arabs are a large minority—one in every six Israelis in 2010—representing close to 16.5 percent of the citizen population of 7.5 million.² At the same time, they are part of a regional and a global majority: 10.5 million Palestinian Arabs, 300 million Arabs in Arab countries, 36 million Arabs in the Diaspora, and 1.6 billion Muslims worldwide (23 percent of the world population in 2010). By contrast, the 5.6 million Israeli Jews are two-fifths of the world's Jewish population of 13.3 million (less than 0.4 percent of the world population). The high mobilization and political consciousness of Arab citizens in Israel lend additional potency to these numbers.

The Arabs are a low-status minority, however. They are subordinate to Jews in every respect: class, power, prestige, and dominant culture. They are a primarily working-class community in a middle-class society. The average Arab commands fewer competitive resources than the average Jew. State and private discrimination further handicaps the Arabs, whose disadvantage is not counterbalanced by affirmative action policies and practices.

Arabs are also a distinct minority. They are marked off from Jews by the most fundamental indicators. They are 82 percent Muslim, 9 percent Christian, and 9 percent Druze. All are non-Judaic. Their language is Arabic, not Hebrew, and the two languages do not share mutual intelligibility. Their way of life, despite certain modernization, is still semitraditional and certainly far less modern and secular than the dominant Hebrew culture. Arabs are also readily identifiable by the combination of their physiognomy, name, accent, and address. It is almost impossible for an Arab to pass for a Jew.

Furthermore, in addition to being an ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural minority, Arabs are a national minority. They are an integral part of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation that lives across the pre-1967 borders, which are Israel's de facto international state boundaries. Israeli Arabs are tied by language, culture, identity, history, collective memory, narratives, and loyalty to Palestinian nationalism and pan-Arabism. The Jews, who are linked to the Jewish heritage and Jewish Diaspora, explicitly distance themselves from Arab cultures and Arab peoples.

Taken together, these characteristics in effect combine to make the Arabs an inassimilable minority. Arabs do not intermarry with Jews. They want to keep their existence separate. Jews, in full agreement, put no pressure on them to assimilate. Arabs are also internally divided into separate religious and endogamous communities. The absence of civil marriage and divorce in Israel further inhibits intermarriage. But the cornerstone of the separation is that of residential communities and schools, which affects 90 percent of the Arabs who live in fully Arab villages and towns. In addition, Israeli Arabs—unless they are Christian—do not emigrate. The double lack of assimilation and emigration turns them into a permanent minority.

Arabs in Israel are most distinguished, however, in being an enemy-affiliated minority. In the eyes of the Jewish majority and the Jewish state, they are potentially hostile because they are part of the Arab world and the Palestinian people who remain inimical to Israel. Apart from the Druze, the suspicious state exempts Arabs from military service, an exemption the Arabs accept and would fight for if denied them. The state places Arabs under a machinery of control to better deter, discover, and punish acts of subversion and disloyalty. It is hard for a minority to identify with a state it considers to be the enemy of its own people, and it is equally hard for the majority to trust and treat equally a minority that belongs to an enemy nation. Arabs and Jews are bound to have a basic mutual distrust.

Finally, the Arabs are a dissident minority. They reject Zionism, the de facto state ideology of Israel. They see Zionism, the Jewish movement of national liberation, as colonialist and racist, and they denigrate the Jews' fundamental Zionist collective identity. The Jews, meanwhile, do not see themselves as colonial settlers but rather as the genuine proprietors of the Land of Israel, from which they were historically exiled and to which they rightfully returned to find alien Arabs in possession. At the same time, many Jews regard Palestinian nationalism and identity not only as hostile but also as irrational, hateful, and detestable. Both sides reject the most cherished values of the other. For many Jews, it is difficult to accept enemy-affiliated and dissident Arabs as loyal citizens of the Jewish state.

Alienation or Rapprochement?

This configuration of features of the Arab minority is the basis for the first of two theses about Arab-Jewish relations in Israel—the popular *mutual alienation thesis*.³ According to the thesis, Arabs and Jews are not only deeply divided but are also on a violent collision course. Developments among the relevant parties—Arabs, Palestinians, Jews, and the state—have been

pushing the two sides further and further apart. The Arabs have become more Palestinian in identity and ties since 1967, and are undergoing Islamization, propelled since the late 1970s by the evolution of two Islamic movements, the more radical and northern of which is the most popular. Partial modernization has raised Arab aspirations to Jewish levels, but Arab achievements continue to fall far short of their ambitions. The Arab sense of relative deprivation is thus reinforced.

The Palestinian people, meanwhile, contribute to the Israeli Arab predicament. The hopes of the September 1993 Oslo Accords were shattered by the failure to reach a peace agreement at Camp David in 2000 and by the eruption, in September 2000, of the bloody Al-Aqsa (Second) Intifada and its brutal repression by Israel. In 2006, the rejectionist Hamas ascended to power, took over Gaza Strip, and weakened the Palestinian Authority and Fatah-dominated Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The continuing stalemate of the Palestinian question frustrates Israeli Arabs, who clearly cannot count on the Palestinians to help them improve their lot in the Jewish state.

Since 1967 the Jews have been shifting to the right. The ascendance of the right and far right to power and the rise of their less liberal constituencies (the orthodox, the ultra-orthodox, Jews from Islamic countries, Sephardic Jews, and more recently the Russian immigrants) have had an adverse effect on Israeli Arabs. Meanwhile, the Jewish acceptance of the two-state principle has made the Jewish public even more intransigent on preserving and even consolidating Israel's Jewish and Zionist character.

According to the mutual alienation thesis, Israel also has not softened its discriminatory policies toward the Arab minority. It has remained as an ethnocracy (a nondemocratic regime that oppresses ethnic minorities but otherwise has a semblance of democracy) with a strong Judaizing drive that denies anything Arab within what it considers the Land of Israel.⁴ State discrimination in the allocation of budgets, lands, appointments, and other resources continues. State violence against Arab protesters and the killing of thirteen of them in October 2000 expose Arab citizenship as fragile and vulnerable. Israel also built the wall, expanded Jewish settlements in the West Bank, and launched the Second Lebanon War and Gaza War, events that have largely alienated the Arabs.

These forces, on the rise over time, radicalize the Arabs and alienate them from the Jews. They are widely acknowledged by academics, the media, decision-makers and policymakers, the public at large, right and left, Arabs and Jews. Mutual alienation approach proponents face two realities, however. One is that violence between Arabs and Jews is negligible in light of the deep division between them and in comparison with the rampant violence in other deeply divided societies, even just across the 1949 Green Line. A related fact is that Israel is a stable democracy and Arabs have been an acquiescent minority. The explanation for these so-called aberrations from the dominant thesis is that the calm is temporary and the explosion forthcoming.

The alternative account for Arab-Jewish relations, the *mutual rapprochement thesis*, posits that Arabs and Jews are in the process of adjusting to each other and that strong forces moderate and counterpoise the forces that drive the two sides apart.⁵ Violence and instability are therefore avoidable. The attitudes and behaviors of the Arabs, the Palestinian people, the Jews, and the state are more balanced and less counterproductive to coexistence than the mutual alienation thesis assumes and predicts.

Mutual rapprochement also postulates that Israeli Arabs are undergoing Israelization as well as Palestinization and Islamization, and that the first affects the second two. Israelization

makes Arabs bilingual and bicultural and adds the Hebrew language and Hebrew culture to their repertoire. Israeli Arabs, the thesis holds, are increasingly binding their fate and future with Israel and conceiving of Israel as their home country. They take Jews as their reference group and wish to achieve the same standards, services, and treatment. They abide by democratic rules for effecting change in Israeli society and avoid violence. Israelization renders Arabs impatient with discrimination and exclusion and drives them to lead a serious fight for change.

Another pivotal facet of Israelization is the sharpening line Israeli Arabs draw between themselves and the Palestinians across the Green Line and in the Diaspora. They view themselves as Israeli citizens entitled to all citizenship rights and as part of the Israeli economy, welfare state, politics, and public discourse, and in this capacity are only partly affected by what is happening to their Palestinian brethren. They endure Palestinization and Islamization differently because of their Israelization. For instance, Arabs in Nazareth who adopt a Palestinian identity would define themselves as Palestinian Arabs in Israel, whereas Arabs in the West Bank city of Nablus would categorize themselves just as Palestinian Arabs or as Palestinian Arabs in Palestine. The affinity and common fate with Israel make considerable difference and drive a wedge between Palestinians on the two sides of the pre-1967 border.

The Palestinian people concur with the historical development of Arabs in Israel as a distinct and separate Palestinian population. The PLO and the Palestinian Authority regard Israeli Arabs as part of Israel; do not incorporate Israeli Arab grievances and demands in their political agenda, expect Israeli Arabs to lobby in Israel for the Palestinian cause; and call on them to take part in Israeli politics and to bolster pro-peace parties and movements. Even Hamas does not call on or expect Israeli Arabs to either boycott the Knesset and or join the violent Palestinian resistance.

Israeli Jews are also reconciling themselves with Israeli Arabs. They have internalized the incontrovertible fact that an Arab minority lives in and will stay in their midst and should be treated differently from the noncitizen Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza. Despite the shift to the right and far right, the Likud, the backbone of the right-wing political bloc, was split in 2005 on the Palestinian question, and a new political center emerged. In the 2000s, Jewish supporters of territorial partition and the principle of two states for two peoples have become a majority position.

Israel declares itself a Jewish and democratic state. As an ethnic democracy, it extends both individual and collective rights to the Arabs and guarantees them continued survival as a separate minority in Israel. It allows them to conduct an intense struggle for equal rights without repression. It is a strong state that adheres to the rule of law, provides ample services, and allows its citizens to lead a modern way of life if they so desire. It exempts Arabs from military service and does not impose civil service as a substitute. It treats Arabs quite differently than the Palestinians under occupation. All Israeli governments, left and right, have maintained a clear-cut distinction between citizen and noncitizen Palestinians. The state tolerates Arab protest, ideological dissidence, and illegal activities and practices (such as building without a permit), but is intolerant of and effective in containing Arab violence, subversion, and acts against national security. The state and the Arab minority learned from the Arab unrest in the wake of the Al-Aqsa Intifada that they should do their utmost to avoid violence and have taken steps in this direction.

The mutual rapprochement thesis does not draw a rosy picture of Arab-Jewish relations. It does not deny the various forms of discrimination and exclusion Arabs are subject to and affirms that the Arabs' condition is far from satisfactory. It concedes that the Jewish and demo-

cratic components of Israel's character are inherently contradictory and that in many cases only the Arabs pay the price of the contradiction. Although the thesis identifies conflicting forces and trends in Israeli society, it also insists that Israel has a resilient democracy, that significant change is feasible, and that violence and turmoil are avoidable.

The two theses, mutual alienation and mutual rapprochement, give different accounts of relations between Arab and Jewish citizens in Israel. Each cites supporting evidence. The 2003–09 Index of Arab-Jewish relations and comparable findings from the 1976–2009 Arab-Jewish surveys are important indicators. The following sections explore which of the two theses is more compatible with these survey data.

The Lost Decade

The two theses, then, are rival accounts of both Arab-Jewish relations and of long-term trends since the proclamation of Israel as a state in 1948. This study focuses on the first decade of the twenty-first century. This section reviews the developments during the decade and their bearing on the two theses. By either account, any account in fact, this was a lost decade for Arab-Jewish coexistence. The situation has worsened and bodes badly for the future of their relations.

The 2000s were distinguished by the collapse of the Oslo Accords in the aftermath of the Camp David impasse in July 2000, which assigned blame to the Palestinians for the failure of the talks and which disseminated the message that Israel did not have a real Palestinian partner for peace.

At the end of September 2000, the Second Intifada erupted and, unlike that of 1987 to 1993, was very violent. The unrest began in response to the visit to Mount Temple—Al-Haram Al-Sharif, a holy place for Muslims—of Ariel Sharon, then head of the Likud opposition. Clashes between the police and Palestinian Arabs in East Jerusalem followed. The uprising lasted five years and included a death toll of 5,500 Palestinians, 1,000 Israelis, and scores of foreigners. Thousands were wounded and substantial destruction was widespread.

In 2005, Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip and dismantled all Jewish settlements there. Arab citizens were ambivalent about the withdrawal. In 2006, the Second Lebanon War aroused bitter controversy between Arabs and Jews. For the first time, Arab citizens suffered human and property losses from a war they opposed. They were also incensed at the blockade of the Gaza Strip after the Hamas takeover in 2006 and at Israel's invading Gaza in late 2008 and early 2009 but ignoring the continued missile attacks against Jewish civilians in the south. All these divisive happenings were exacerbated by the building of the wall constructed partly on the Palestinian side of the Green Line, to which Arab citizens object because they see it as a punishment and a dispossession of the Palestinians and as a barrier separating them from their people.

Several internal changes took place alongside these critical external events. An economic crisis developed, during which the government made cuts in services and allowances, the unemployment rate rose, and conditions for the working class and poor deteriorated. Arabs in Israel were hard hit. In the political sphere, the left lost much of its power (leftist and Arab parties won sixty-one seats in 1992, forty-eight in 1999, thirty-six in 2003, and twenty-seven in 2009), and the radical right accumulated more (eleven, thirteen, thirteen, and twenty-two, respectively). The most important political developments of the decade were the rift in the Likud and the formation of the Kadima as a center party that ascended to power in 2006. After the election in February 2009, however, the Likud regained control and formed a

coalition government that was the most right-wing and the most hostile to Arab citizens that Israel has ever had.

The decade began with most of the population deeply unsatisfied with Premier Ehud Barak and his government. The Arabs, however, supported Barak and hoped that his government (1999–2001) would prove heir to the second Rabin government (1992–95), which had ushered in the golden age of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. Arab disappointment stemmed from Barak's disregard of them, continued hostile domestic policy toward them, and failure to achieve peace with the Palestinians.

The formative event in relations was no doubt the October 2000 unrest. This began with protest demonstrations against Ariel Sharon's visit to Temple Mount, which Arab citizens saw as a provocation and an affront to Islam. On the first day of the protest, police shot to death two Israeli Arab protestors. This incident was seen as catalyzing the mass uprising, which Arabs called the October 2000 Events, a violent protest directed against police brutality and state policy toward the Arab sector and Palestinians. In the course of the subsequent four days, Arab Israelis rioted across the country, seriously damaging public facilities, closing highways, clashing with police and Jewish counter groups, and violating law and order. Outbursts of violence included not only property but people, and a Jew was killed by a stone thrown by Arabs at his car.

After law and order were restored, the Arabs called for an official probe into the police who had killed thirteen Arab demonstrators. The families of the casualties formed a committee demanding that the police officers responsible for the shootings be indicted. After heavy pressure, the government appointed a state inquiry commission (the Or Commission). This was the first time in Israel that an official committee was nominated to investigate Israeli Arab complaints. The police arrested hundreds of Arabs who had participated in the uprising, many of whom were charged with rioting, convicted, and jailed. A backlash occurred as Jews boycotted Arab contractors, restaurants, other businesses, and localities. The Arab sector was hard hit. Cooperation between Arabs and Jews also weakened in many public spheres.

After three years of deliberation, the Or Commission issued a landmark report in which it placed the responsibility for the unrest on the authorities and Arab leaders, and called for state policy shift toward the Arab sector. It also demanded police reform and prosecution of the police officers involved in the killings.⁶ Arab expectations for a comprehensive policy change rose, and disappointment was widespread when the recommendations were not implemented. After five years of investigation and indecision, the attorney general finally resolved in January 2005 to close the case against the police officers on the basis of insufficient evidence. Outrage continues in the Arab community, which accuses the state of trivializing Arab citizens' spill of blood. The failure to bring the police officers to trial remains an open wound in Arab-Jewish relations.

Unrest continued throughout the decade. In October 2007, Peqi'in residents skirmished with police after police arrived at the locality in large numbers to arrest suspects in an incident involving a cellular antenna. Gunfire was exchanged, a police woman was kidnapped and released by clergymen, and scores of residents and policemen were wounded. In the autumn of 2008, a violent confrontation between Jewish and Arab youth broke out after an Arab drove into a mixed neighborhood in Acre on Yom Kippur night. The Jews saw the intrusion as a provocation. The unrest ended with vandalism, heavy property damage, and increased fear and hatred.

Protest abroad rose appreciably. One severe early instance was at the UN's first Durban conference—the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and

Related Intolerance—in early September 2001.⁷ Rather than discussing ethnic prejudice and discrimination worldwide, the conference focused on Israel's apartheid-like occupation of Palestine, Zionism as a form of racism, and a demand to declare slavery a crime against humanity. Israel and the United States walked out and other European countries followed suit in protest of anti-Semitism and the disregard of genocides and violations of human rights in many countries. Alongside the official conference, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) held their own deliberations, also in Durban. It was in this forum that Israeli Arab NGOs were particularly active, joining Palestinian and other organizations in a campaign against Israel and in pressuring the main conference to make decisions against the Jewish state. After the October 2000 Arab uprising, and especially the Durban 2001 conference, joint Arab-Jewish organizations in Israel weakened and began to break up.

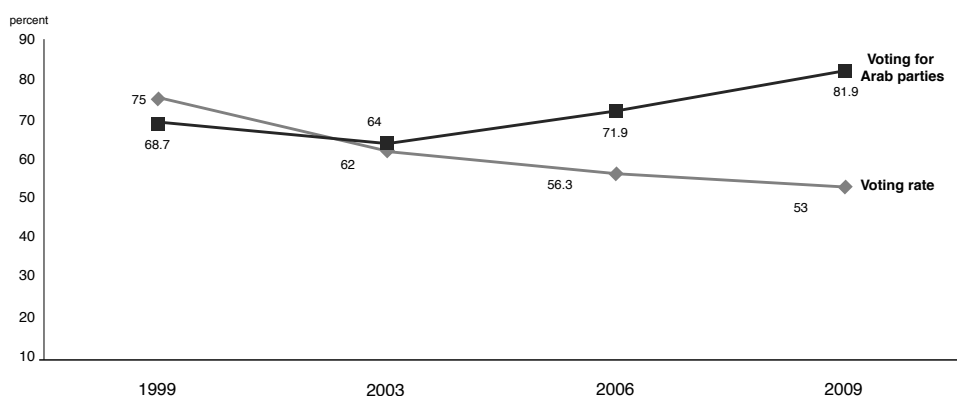
The number of Arab demonstrations and general strikes and the number of Arab protesters also increased substantially throughout the decade. The most striking protest was against Israel's Second Lebanon War in 2006 and the Gaza War in 2008–09. During these periods, the Arabs demonstrated their solidarity with the Arab side, charging the government with war crimes and causing Jewish disaffection.

A significant shift in Arab political behavior was apparent. Arab participation in national elections declined. For the first time, a consensus was formed to boycott national elections, and the Arab public stayed away from the prime ministerial elections in 2001 in response to Barak's tenure (the turnout of eligible Arab voters was only 18 percent). Figure 1 shows a decrease from 1999 to 2009 in the Arab voting rate, from 75.0 percent to 53.0 percent, and an increase in voting for Arab parties, from 68.7 percent to 81.9 percent. Although the decline in Arab voting in Knesset elections paralleled the decline in Jewish voting, it was sharper and had a boycott component not to be found among the Jewish public. The Arab desertion of the Jewish parties marked a deep dissatisfaction with the Jewish political establishment.

In 2006 and 2007, Arab intellectuals published the Future Vision Documents, presenting Israel as a nondemocratic Jewish state and demanding that it be transformed into a democratic binational one. Jews were portrayed as colonial settlers who had usurped Arab lands, and the Arabs appeared as the native people with natural rights to the territory. According to the documents, the Arabs deserve the same national status as the Jews and a separate nation-state for the Palestinians, including a veto power over any important decision regarding the Arab minority. A demand was also made that Arabs be granted national minority status with various specified collective rights. The Jewish response was, unsurprisingly, antagonistic. Supporters of the documents were labeled hostile and subversive. The director of Israel's secret service, the SABAC, declared that the agency would monitor organizations that endorsed the deprecation of Israel's Jewish character even if they complied with the law and avoided violence.

The state also took restraining and restrictive steps against Arab citizens. An amendment to the Citizenship and Entry Law reduced sweepingly the right of a spouse from the West Bank and Gaza to enter and settle in Israel. Various legislation amendments limited Arab political activity. The head of the northern faction of the Islamic Movement was charged with contacting a foreign agent and sentenced to a jail term. The head of the Balad Party at the time, Azmi Bishara, who was also a Knesset member, was accused of abetting the Hezbollah during the Second Lebanon War but was allowed to leave the country rather than stand trial. Right-wing Knesset members accused their Arab counterparts who speak critically of Israel's wars and visit Arab countries and the West Bank and Gaza of treason. The Yisrael Betenu campaign with its slogan "No Citizenship without Loyalty" aroused considerable fear and resistance among

Figure 1. Voting Rate Among Arabs and Voting for Arab Parties in Knesset Elections



Source: Elections 2009 Update, Special Issue 2, March 12, 2009. The Konrad Adenauer Program for Jewish-Arab Cooperation, Dayan Center, Tel Aviv University, <http://www.dayan.org/kapjac/files/Elections2009eng2.pdf>.

the Arab public. Motions were tabled in the Knesset to criminalize participation in the Naqba Memorial Day, to impose restrictions on human rights organizations that monitor Israel's actions in the occupied territories, and to require the pledge of allegiance to the Jewish state by Knesset members and Israeli citizens. Although none of these motions were adopted by the Knesset, the Arab leadership and the Arab public see political persecution and assault on their basic rights in them. Furthermore, the incidence of destruction of buildings without permit in Arab localities increased, especially among the Negev Bedouin, without providing adequate alternative housing to the affected population, a policy that stirred much agitation and in some instances gave rise to violent confrontation with the police.

In the course of the decade, the socioeconomic divide between the Arab minority and Jewish majority also increased to some extent as a result of continued globalization, a shrinking welfare state system, and economic recession. The plan to invest billions in the Arab sector, mainly after the Second Lebanon War, was not implemented. The government decision to recruit Arabs to senior posts in the civil service did not materialize. In 2007 a voluntary civil service in lieu of a duty of military service was extended to young Arab males and females. This initiative has been supported by the Arab public for instrumental reasons but has encountered hostility and rejection among the Arab elites. The Arab leadership also did not welcome the Supreme Court ruling in 2005 in favor of the Arab Ka'adan couple to build their home in the Jewish community of Katzir. The ruling validates the Arab right to choose where they live despite Jewish reluctance but does not widen the collective and national rights of the Arab minority, to which elites are committed.

These developments highlight several trends. The Arab public and Arab leaders saw dramatic change very quickly—an accumulation of power; greater ability to organize, mobilize and protest; reinforced initiative and sophistication; and willingness to assume responsibility for the Arab population rather than to leave it to the Jewish state and the Jewish majority. This empowerment is reflected in heightened Arab protests and claims. Frustration among Arabs also rose in the face of repression of the Palestinian people and the lack of improvement in the civil and national status of the Arab minority.

The state and the Jewish public, meanwhile, continue to insist on the status quo in Arab-Jewish relations. Any real turning point—for good or bad—is to be avoided, whether in inter-group relations, law and order, national security, socioeconomic gaps between Arabs and Jews, or the Jewish and Zionist character of the state. The disregard of the recommendations of the Or Commission attests to the stalemate.

The most important development to follow the October 2000 unrest is, nonetheless, the emergence of a fear balance between the state and the Arab population. Both sides are keenly aware of the heavy cost in the event of confrontation—use of violence, uprising, and repression. Each side does its utmost to keep quiet. The police do not intervene in Arab demonstrations, rallies, processions, general strikes, and other protest actions as long as there is no large-scale breach of law and order. They refrain from using firearms and coordinate their actions with Arab public figures. The Arab public also abstains from statewide mass disorder. The fear balance explains why the disturbances in Peqi'in and Acre did not deteriorate to the degree that the October 2000 uprising did.

The Index of Relations

In the summer of 1976, just four months after the first Land Day general strike, the author conducted his first survey of the adult Arab population. This survey lacked a comparable Jewish sample, but subsequent surveys focused equally on both populations. From 1976 to 2002, surveys were conducted about every four years, providing rich material but insufficient data for establishing and updating trends of change. To fill the gap, an index was launched in 2003 based on comprehensive annual surveys of public opinion of Arabs and Jews about their attitudes toward each other and the state.⁸ Six index surveys were conducted between 2003 and 2009. No survey was taken in 2005.

The new index joins five others pertinent to Arab-Jewish relations.⁹ The advantages of all of them are clear. They measure in a systematic, comprehensive, and quantitative way the trait they are designed for; update the measurement every year; and monitor trends of change over time. Thanks to their recurrence, they gain scientific and public recognition and influence. Their maintenance and continuity require considerable commitment and support on the part of their directors and institutions.

The *Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel* is the only index that examines and monitors the attitudes of Arabs and Jews toward each other and the state. It is a multiyear scientific database of public opinion on issues that divide Arabs and Jews. It can also serve as a basis for making and changing policy, warning against possible deterioration in relations, enriching and sophisticating public discourse, dispelling prejudice and stereotypes, strengthening democracy, supplying teaching and educational material, and assisting human rights and coexistence organizations.

The index is based on standard questionnaires that cover the following sixteen issues:

1. integration (social and cultural)
2. images (stereotypes, distrust)
3. alienation (feelings of estrangement between Arabs and Jews and toward the state)
4. mistrust of institutions
5. deprivation (various forms of deprivation and discrimination Arabs suffer from)
6. collective memory (how do Arabs and Jews view their past relations and conflicts)
7. fear of threats (fears about what Jews and Arabs might do to each other)
8. legitimacy of coexistence (Jewish recognition of Arabs' right to live as an equal minority in the state; Arabs' recognition of Israel's right to exist as a state, as a Jewish and democratic state, and as a Zionist state)
9. regional conflicts (solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to other disputes in the region)

10. regional integration (integration of the state into the Middle East rather than into the West)
11. identity (the relative importance of national, religious, and civic identity; the affinity of the Arabs with the Palestinian people; and the affinity of Israeli Jews with the Jewish Diaspora)
12. representativeness of Arab leadership (the extent to which Arab political parties, the Higher Follow-up Committee, and the Islamic Movement are perceived as representative of the true interests of the Arabs in Israel)
13. cultural autonomy (endorsement of Arabs' self-administration of their cultural, educational, and religious institutions)
14. means of struggle (the degree of agreement to Arab use of general strikes, protest abroad, and illegal and violent means)
15. options for change (regime shifts and steps to improve Arab-Jewish relations)
16. evaluation of relations (assessment of the present state policy toward the Arab minority, estimate of the existing state of relations between Arabs and Jews, and expectations of change in the relations in the future).

These issues are measured in the 2009 index by 113 questions for Arabs and 89 for Jews, most of which are agreement-disagreement responses.¹⁰ Most of the items are identical for both sides and are repeated every year. Each year the surveys elaborate on a certain issue (e.g., legitimacy of coexistence) or scrutinize a special topic (e.g., attitudes toward the Second Lebanon War).

The population of the index surveys for the Arabs consists of Arab citizens, eighteen years and older, living in Israel within its pre-1967 borders, including Druze and Bedouin, but excluding the noncitizen Palestinians of East Jerusalem and the Syrian Druze of the Golan Heights. The sample is national, random, systematic, and representative, taken from the registrar of eligible voters to the Knesset in twenty-eight Arab localities that make up a cross-section of all Arab villages and towns, including the nonrecognized villages in the Negev. The sample size is 700, and the sampling error is 3.7 percent. The data collection is carried out in the fall by face-to-face interviews, administered by Arab interviewers who use a standard questionnaire in Arabic. All sets of interviews for each interviewer are verified. Every year a large team of interviewers is recruited to conduct the survey. The data are weighted by the Knesset election returns so that the voting in the sample corresponds to the actual election results. The nonresponse rate is around 25 percent, some due to refusals but mostly to technical reasons (either difficulty in finding the named person or in scheduling the interview).

The population for the Jewish survey consists of Jews eighteen years and older, including Jewish settlers across the Green Line, new immigrants, and residents of Moshavim and Kibbutzim. A national random sample is taken from the telephone registry. The sample size is 700, and the sampling error is 3.7 percent. Data collection is carried out by telephone interviews in Hebrew and Russian in the fall, commissioned to Dahaf Research Institute. The data are weighted by Knesset election returns.¹¹

The Arab surveys differ from the Jewish surveys. Because they are face-to-face interviews, they take longer to complete and are more costly than the telephone surveys, but they allow for more questions. People raise doubt about the integrity of data produced by Arab surveys but accept at face value the Jewish data. Many ask questions about Arab surveys: Are Arabs willing to be interviewed or refuse in formidable rates, which render their data unreliable? Is it possible to interview Arab women? Do Arabs tell the truth? Do they tend to say what is expected or

desirable rather than what they really think? Do they form clear opinions on complex issues, and do they make subtle distinctions between specific questions? Are they afraid to freely express their views on very sensitive matters? Do they have stable and thoughtful opinions, or just responses reflecting passing moods?

Those who ask these questions believe that in semidemocratic and semitradeational Arab societies people are unaccustomed to polling.¹² They ask them all the more in deeply divided societies where minorities avoid stating their opinions in fear of the authorities. Although these doubts cannot be altogether dismissed, they are by and large unfounded. Special steps are taken to generate reliable and valid data from the Arab minority.

The questions posed to the Arabs relate to fundamental issues about their status as a minority and their stance on the state. Their answers are not subject to fluctuating moods. A question like “Does Israel have a right to exist?” for example, probes the core of Arab orientation and identity. Arabs see Israel as a democratic society in which they are entitled to convey their opinions. They are contacted by Arab interviewers they usually trust. They are told that the survey is for scientific objectives and uses and they are assured confidentiality. Gaining trust is the rationale in opting for demanding and costly face-to-face interviews.¹³

Validity checks indicate that the Arab data are satisfactory. The samples are representative of religion (Bedouin, Druze, Christians), size of village and town, region, refugee origin, age, gender, education, and voting. The data distinguish well between the attitudes of contrast groups: between Druze and non-Druze, between voters for Jewish and Arab political parties, and between holders of non-Palestinian and Palestinian identities. The internal consistency between attitudes and predictive power of certain drivers are satisfactory. The Arab data are therefore as reliable and valid as the Jewish data.¹⁴

Public Opinion

This discussion draws survey findings from 1976 to 2009 and bears on widely perceived images of the Arab minority in Israel as a ticking time bomb and of the Jewish majority as hard-line. The first section, covering 2003 through 2009, presents the current attitudes of both sides and their change over the decade. The second and brief section, covering 1976 though 2009, addresses longer-term trends.

2003 to 2009

In 2003 the first annual survey for the Index of Arab-Jewish relations was conducted. By 2009 the ongoing and cumulative data provided a detailed picture of the positions of each side throughout the decade. Highlights from these 2003–09 surveys, capturing short-term changes, are presented below.

Stands on Coexistence

For this study, the author defines *coexistence* as two communities in conflict agreeing on the state’s borders and political system, having loyalty to the state, regarding life together as desirable, and maintaining voluntary relations in addition to necessary contacts.

Using this minimal definition, Arab-Jewish coexistence means that the two sides accept Israel within the Green Line as their state, democracy as the mechanism for maintaining and changing their relations, equal rights for all, loyalty to the state, and the desirability of voluntary mutual relations. This framework implies that Arabs grant the legitimacy of Israel

Figure 2. Support of Framework of Arab-Jewish Coexistence, 2009

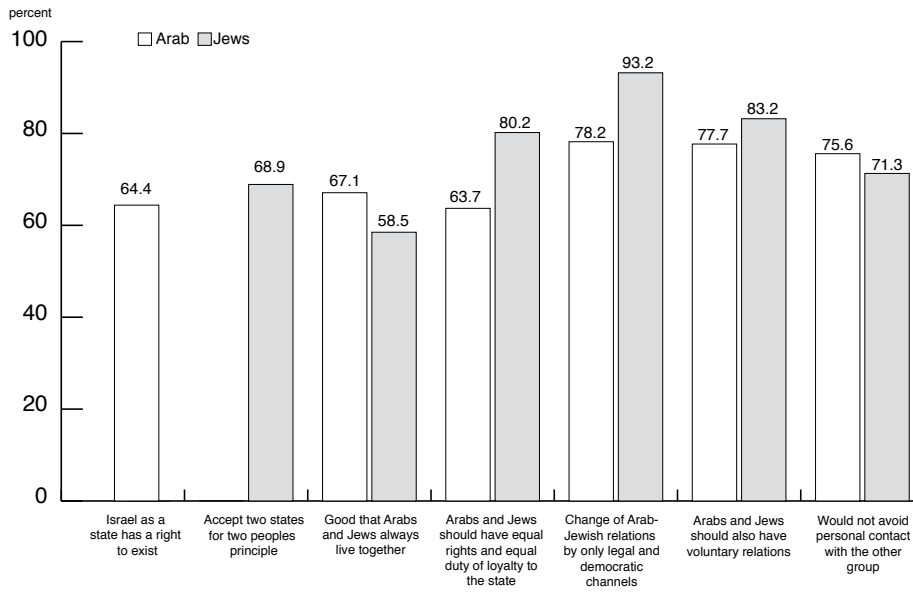
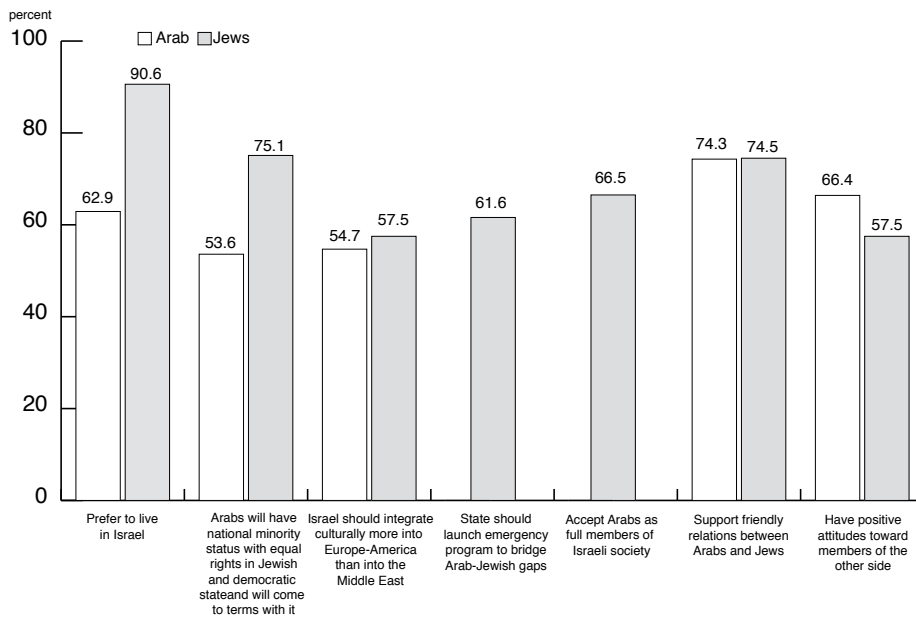


Figure 3. Support of Infrastructure of Arab-Jewish Coexistence, 2009



as a state and that the Jews embrace the principle of two states for two peoples, establishing symmetry between Arabs and Jews by forming a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Coexistence does not require, however, that the Arabs consent to Israel as a Jewish-Zionist state, or that Jews acknowledge Arab national rights or agree to binationalism in either state.

Figure 2 shows that Arabs and Jews clearly accept all the components of this framework of coexistence. The acceptance range among the Arabs extends from 64.4 percent to 78.2 percent and among the Jews from 58.5 percent to 93.2 percent. These figures reveal a fundamental concord between Arabs and Jews that moderates the deep division and sharp disagreement separating them.

Arabs and Jews also share fundamental understandings that shore up their life together. Figure 3 presents some evidence of this. Majorities on both sides concur on Israel as a worth-

Table 1. Arabs' Alienation, Deprivation, and Fears, 2003–09 (percent)

	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009
Not ready to have a Jewish friend	15.7	12.5	14.5	13.2	26.3	28.7
Not ready to have a Jewish neighbor	27.2	25.7	31.6	25.4	47.3	43.0
Not satisfied with life as an Israeli citizen	34.8	39.0	44.3	*	49.9	48.3
Do not trust the courts	27.5	23.4	36.6	28.7	*	39.7
Have personally, as an Arab, encountered threats, insults, or blows by Jews against Arabs	19.4	19.4	25.3	25.1	30.9	29.4
Fear of the annexation of the Triangle to a Palestinian state against the will of its Arab residents	50.6	63.6	62.1	67.9	57.9	61.0
Fear of population transfer (mass expulsion) of some Arab citizens	55.4	63.5	60.0	62.1	56.6	61.9
Jews are the main guilty party for the disaster (Al-Naqba) that occurred to the Palestinians in 1948	65.3	75.4	80.3	80.1	74.9	75.3
Ready to move to a Palestinian state	13.8	11.9	11.9	10.1	19.4	24.0

* Question not asked.

while place to live, on Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, on Israel's integration into the West rather than into the Middle East, on Arabs' and Jews' positive attitudes toward each other, on Jews' willingness to accept Arabs as full members of Israeli society, and on Jews' backing of a state program to bring Arabs to par with the higher Jewish living standards. This support confirms that Arab-Jewish coexistence is sustained not only by the pragmatism and realism of power asymmetry and fear balance but also by a critical mass of legitimacy, consent, and stakes in the system.

Arab Attitudes

The events shaping Arab-Jewish relations and the change in these relations during the 2000s pushed Arabs to more critical and militant views.

Table 1 documents a consistent trend of growth in the alienation, deprivation, and fears among the Arabs between 2003 and 2009. For instance, the proportion of Arabs not ready to have a Jewish friend and to move to a Palestinian state doubled over the period but remained a minority. The proportion of Arabs who fear transfer and cession of Arab areas to a future Palestinian state increased. The share of Arabs reporting personal suffering from threats, insults, or blows from Jews rose, it is worth emphasizing, from 19.4 percent in 2003 to 29.4 percent in 2009. This change indicates a great deal of friction and discontent as well as considerable sensitivity in the daily contact of Arabs with Jews.

Israel's legitimacy in Arab eyes also dropped significantly during the decade after the October 2000 uprising. Table 2 presents data indicating a decrease in Arab acceptance of Israel as

Table 2. Arabs' Perception of Legitimacy of Israel (percent)

	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009
The Jews in Israel are a people who have a right to a state	75.5	74.9	62.5	70.0	61.3	60.8
Israel within the Green Line has a right to exist as an independent state in which Arabs and Jews live together	81.1	84.9	75.4	72.8	53.7	59.4
Israel within the Green Line has a right to exist as a Jewish and democratic state in which Arabs and Jews live together	65.6	70.0	67.5	49.0	41.4	51.6
The equitable resolution is the two states for two peoples principle	88.8	91.3	87.2	83.8	68.6	65.0
The Palestinian refugees will receive compensation and be allowed to return to the state of Palestine only	72.2	65.1	55.6	60.7	56.0	50.5

Table 3. Arabs' Self-Identity (percent)

	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009
Most important personal identity						
Israeli citizenship	29.6	24.1	19.7	20.5	19.4	19.8
Religion	48.2	47.6	55.0	46.3	50.4	46.6
Palestinian people	18.8	25.9	23.9	32.1	29.2	32.0
Self-identity						
Arab, Israeli Arab, Arab in Israel, Israeli	53.0	45.1	0.9	41.6	39.6	39.6
Israeli Palestinian, Palestinian in Israel, Palestinian Arab in Israel	45.5	45.0	54.0	41.6	43.3	42.1
Palestinian, Palestinian Arab	5.5	8.6	8.5	15.5	16.4	17.5

a state and as a Jewish state and in agreement to limit the repatriation of Arab refugees to the Palestinian state only. However, Arab legitimacy has remained over 50 percent.

Table 3 shows an increase in Arab identification in Palestinian terms. The choice of belonging to the Palestinian people as the most important identity rose from 18.8 percent in 2003 to 32.0 percent in 2009, but it has remained a minority view. Self-identity as Israeli Arab (non-Palestinian) diminished from 53.0 percent to 39.6 percent, but the great majority of Arabs who identify themselves as Palestinian recognize the Israeli component in their identity (the ratio between those who do and those who do not was 42.1 percent to 17.5 percent, respectively, in 2009).

Table 4 details the high rise in endorsement of and participation in protest activities. Belief in parliamentary mechanisms, such as Knesset elections, diminished, and belief in extraparliamentary measures, such as protest abroad, grew. More serious is the increase in support for

Table 4. Arab Protest Activities (percent)

	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009
Despite its shortcomings, the regime in Israel is a democracy for both Arab and Jewish citizens	63.1	58.6	58.1	58.1	57.3	50.5
Arab citizens can improve their situation using persuasion, political pressures, and voting	81.4	83.9	73.3	74.4	70.5	62.2
Support protest abroad	49.9	59.2	62.9	70.3	61.6	67.2
Support boycott of Knesset elections	32.8	24.9	34.6	35.7	33.0	40.6
Support illegal demonstrations	9.9	12.0	16.7	18.0	19.0	26.2
Support all means, including violence	5.4	4.0	9.5	10.8	12.6	13.9
Have participated in protest actions such as legal demonstrations and processions	28.7	26.5	34.8	33.6	41.4	41.9
Have participated in protest actions such as illegal demonstrations and violent processions	5.6	4.1	9.2	*	12.1	11.2
Have participated in Land Day events	17.9	25.5	28.6	*	31.8	41.3
Have participated in Al-Naqba commemoration events	12.9	16.0	21.6	*	36.4	32.3

* Question not asked.

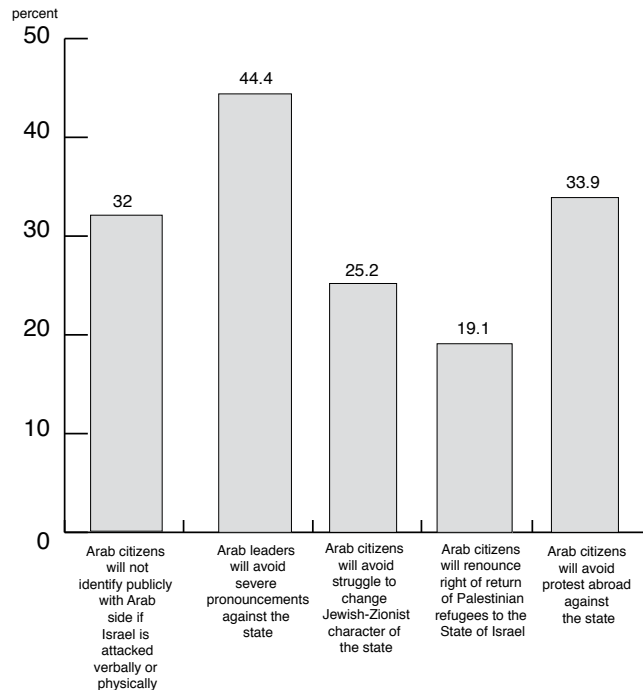
illegal means and violence, though this is still confined to a small minority. The proportion of Arabs reporting participation in protest actions and memorial events was up appreciably, though the rise is probably more attributable to social desirability than to actual behavior.

The 2009 survey devoted special attention to measures for improving Arab-Jewish coexistence. The Arabs were asked what they considered necessary steps to be taken by the state and Jewish majority and what steps to be taken by the Arabs. Figure 4 presents the agreement percentages to five of the sixteen steps Arabs are expected to take to drive “the state and Jews to treat Arab citizens with equality, respect, and trust.” Only a minority of Arabs agreed to the steps the state and Jews expect Arabs to take to improve the treatment of the Arabs. There was Arab consensus on rejecting all sixteen steps presented in the 2009 survey.

These and other data point to the change Arabs went through during the 2000s. They saw an accelerated empowerment expressed in an intensified struggle for equality and in a sharpened response to any state or Jewish action they deemed against their interests or against the Palestinian cause.

The Future Vision Documents provide a comprehensive strategy and an ideological base for achieving full equality. The Arabs see themselves as the victim and expect the state and Jews to effect change. They do not think that they should take confidence measures (other than their long-time adherence to democratic and nonviolent protest), renounce their binational vision, or make any concession that the Jews expect them to make simply to further their relations with Jews or to enhance their minority status in Israeli society.

Figure 4. Arab Willingness to Make Concessions to Gain Jews' and State's Equality, Respect, and Trust, 2009



Many Arab-Jewish dialog groups end up deadlocked given the divergent positions of Arabs and Jews. The Arabs present themselves as the victim, seeking justice, having already made the tremendous sacrifice of accepting life as a minority in a postcolonial state, and expecting the Jews to admit guilt and to make the necessary concessions in the name of equality, democracy, peace, justice, and higher Arab morality. Rejecting this, the Jews in dialog groups, despite being on or leaning to the left (right-wing Jews usually stay away), insist on genuine negotiations and mutual compromises, and refuse to yield unilateral concessions. Their hope is to secure more legitimacy for the Jewish state and measures to ease Jewish fears that Arabs are reluctant to offer.¹⁵

Yet the Arab elites who issued the Future Vision Documents accept the two-state solution. They advocate binationalism in Israel within the pre-1967 borders, not in all of Palestine, and call for equality and partnership between Arabs and Jews. Their vision for Israel proper does not undo the existence of a Jewish majority, which the vision of a single binational state does. For the Jews, however, the call for making Israel a binational state sounds like a threat and an act of treason. They do not distinguish between a radical aim and the democratic way to achieve it with respect to the Arab minority as they do with respect to Jewish minorities, especially the national-religious minority and the ultra-orthodox minority, both of which use democratic methods to advance a theocratic Jewish state.

Jewish Attitudes

In the Jewish responses, the surveys show no clear and consistent trend of hardening. Table 5 presents several questions about Jewish alienation and fears of Arabs during the 2000s. The overall stability is evident in how most Jews feel distant from Arab citizens and in how they reject Arabs as friends. Two-thirds of Jews are reluctant to enter Arab villages and towns, probably out of fear. A majority feels threatened by the high Arab birthrate, the Arab struggle

Table 5. Jews' Sense of Alienation, Deprivation, and Fears (percent)

	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009
Feel distant from Arabs in Israel	69.5	73.5	69.3	67.8	68.4	65.6
Not ready to have an Arab friend	31.3	34.0	33.9	*	*	*
Not ready to have an Arab neighbor	47.4	52.5	51.4	49.5	46.9	50.7
Not ready to have an Arab as a superior in a job	40.3	43.3	44.6	41.2	39.2	57.7
Refrain from entering Arab localities in Israel	73.1	71.8	63.3	64.6	65.7	65.6
Have personally, as a Jew, encountered threats, insults, or blows by Arab citizens	14.9	18.0	16.4	18.7	15.9	20.2
Fear of Arab citizens endangering the state because of their high birthrate	70.1	66.7	64.4	62.2	59.0	58.4
Fear of Arab citizens endangering the state because of their struggle to change its Jewish character	71.8	71.8	71.3	69.3	66.1	70.6

*Question not asked.

against the Jewish character of the state, and mass Arab rebellion and collaboration with the enemy, yet there is no rise in these existential menaces. Given the Jewish-Arab demographic ratio of 79 percent to 17 percent, the 20.2 percent of Jews reporting personal subjection to threats, insults, or blows from Arab citizens, is three times greater in absolute numbers than the 29.4 percent of Arabs reporting parallel negative experiences. This demonstrates not only the intensive frictions between the two sides but also the high levels of assertiveness and activism among the Arab minority.

Table 6 presents figures reflecting Jewish acceptance of Arab rights. Reconciliation to an Arab minority with full citizenship rights is stable. Two-thirds of the Jews advocate a two-state solution, and more than two-fifths are willing to grant Arabs cultural autonomy. On the other hand, one-third would deny Arabs the vote to the Knesset, and more than half would ban the officially mixed, Arab-Jewish Hadash Party, a successor to the Communist Party since the 1930s. Most Jews continue to see Palestinian identity and ties as subversive and prefer the Jewishness of the state over its democracy.

Like the Arabs, the Jews were asked in 2009 about steps necessary to improve their relations with the Arabs and about concessions they are ready to make for this goal. Figure 5 presents the stance of Jews on five of twenty-four steps designed to make Arabs feel at home and equal in Israel. Unlike the Arabs, among whom the majority opposed all the suggested concessions, the Jews gave various answers. A majority of Jews agreed to steps that promote civil and socioeconomic equality and cultural autonomy for Arabs, but a majority also objected to any measure that seems incompatible with national security, such as equal treatment in security checks in border crossings, or with the Jewish character of the state, such as tampering with state symbols.

These findings attest to stability in Jewish attitudes and in Jewish willingness to make significant concessions to Arabs in the name of coexistence. They are not reconcilable with

Table 6. Jews' Perception of Legitimacy of Arab Rights (percent)

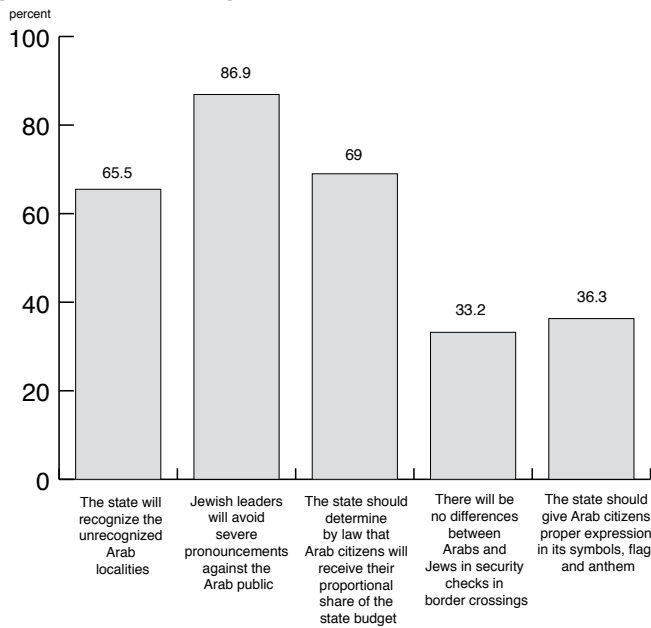
	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009
Arab citizens have a right to live in the state as a minority with full civil rights	72.6	75.4	76.9	76.3	79.7	78.8
Arab citizens should be allowed to vote to the Knesset	65.2	65.5	67.0	66.2	70.6	66.9
Arab citizens should be allowed to buy land in any area they would like	30.8	32.2	38.4	31.9	34.5	31.5
The state should outlaw the Islamic Movement	74.9	74.7	*	*	*	*
The state should outlaw the Hadash Party	52.0	55.9	55.6	48.2	44.4	53.2
An Arab citizen who defines oneself as a "Palestinian Arab in Israel" cannot be loyal to the state and to its laws	75.6	80.8	75.4	72.5	70.0	72.9
Decisions on the character and borders of the state should be decided by a majority from among the Jews and it is not sufficient to have a majority from among the population at large	81.9	80.4	80.1	77.7	73.2	77.0
In case of contradiction between the democratic character and the Jewish character of the state, I would prefer the Jewish character	69.7	67.8	72.3	73.3	69.4	67.1
The equitable resolution is the two states for two peoples principle	71.3	68.4	73.4	70.4	70.6	68.9
Some of the Arab localities in the Triangle will be annexed to a Palestinian state	45.3	48.2	42.2	40.1	42.7	41.4
The state should grant Arab citizens self-rule over their religious, educational, and cultural institutions	61.7	64.2	59.8	61.1	65.2	62.7
Support protest abroad	40.8	33.6	33.6	38.3	39.2	24.7
Support general strikes	46.1	38.0	35.1	41.4	38.9	37.0

*Question not asked.

the popular view that Jewish attitudes radicalized over the decade, in that incidental surveys indicate and many analysts insist on a drift to the right and radical right among both the Jewish public and leadership.

The index findings are a more valid measurement of Jewish public opinion. Hardening in the stances of certain groups and softening in those of others can result in stability. This is indeed the most plausible explanation to the stability found in the attitudes of the Jewish public. An examination of the change in the political map shows that the bloc of right-wing and religious parties won sixty seats in the Knesset in 1999, sixty-nine in 2003, fifty in 2006, and sixty-five in 2009, yielding no rise in power. During the decade, a political center was

Figure 5. Jewish Willingness to Make Concessions for Arabs, 2009



formed and crystallized. Centrist parties won twelve Knesset seats in 1999 and twenty-eight in 2009. They attracted supporters of the shrinking Meretz Party, the Labor Party, and the defunct Shinui Party, all of which are moderate on the issue of Arabs in Israel. They also lured right-wing voters whose views grew more moderate on switching parties.

Contrary to popular wisdom, the political shift in Israel is not a drift to the right but rather convergence in the center. This transformation is reflected for the first time in a national consensus uniting Jews and Arabs on a two-state solution. The new Jewish majority also realizes that an Arab minority lives permanently in its midst, one it has to come to terms with. This moderation is offset by hardened attitudes among the growing radical right that agitate the public opinion with anti-Arab initiatives and provocative pronouncements.

1976 to 2009

Several questions have been asked since the first survey in 1976. One concerns Israel's right to exist and another the use of violence as a means to advance Arab interests in Israel. Figure 6 presents the proportion of Arabs denying Israel's legitimacy and the proportion supporting violence.

The trend over three and a half decades points to the rejection of Israel's right to exist as ranging from 6.8 percent to 24.1 percent. The lowest (that is, acceptance of the right) came in 1995, at the end of the golden age of the second Rabin term, and the highest (that is, rejection) appeared in 2009, in the second Netanyahu term. It is clear that government policy makes a real difference for Arab public opinion on the Jewish state and majority. Arab rejection of Israel's legitimacy has been on the rise since 2006 but the entire 1976 to 2009 period shows no consistent trend, refuting the thesis of growing radicalization in Arab attitudes. In 1976 and 2009, 20.5 percent and 24.1 percent, respectively, denied Israel's right to exist, but this increase is not statistically significant unless the percentage continues to rise in the next decade. The same holds true for Arab support of violence, which shows no long-term rise but does show a steady one from 2004 to 2009, from 1.9 percent to 8.4 percent.

Figure 6. Arab Rejection of Israel's Right to Exist and Support of Violence, 1976–2009

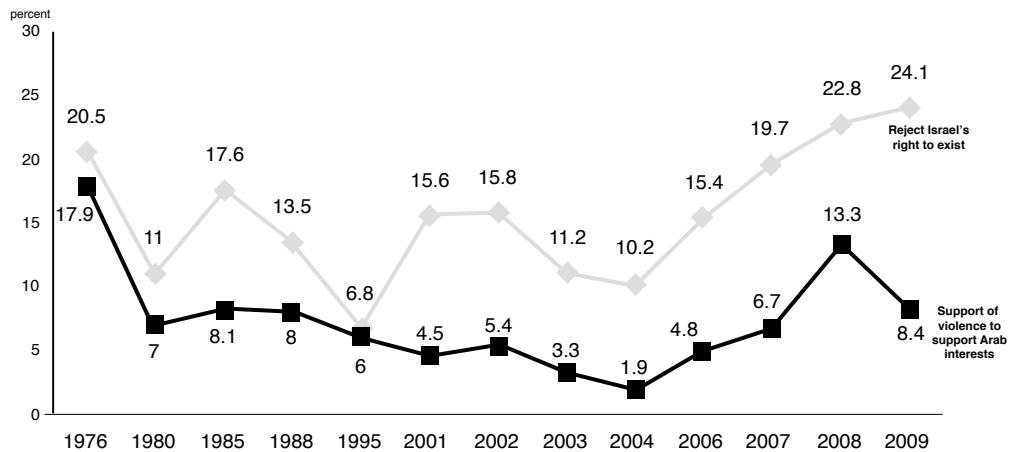


Figure 7. Jewish Rejection of Arab Right to Live in Israel and to Vote, 1985–2009

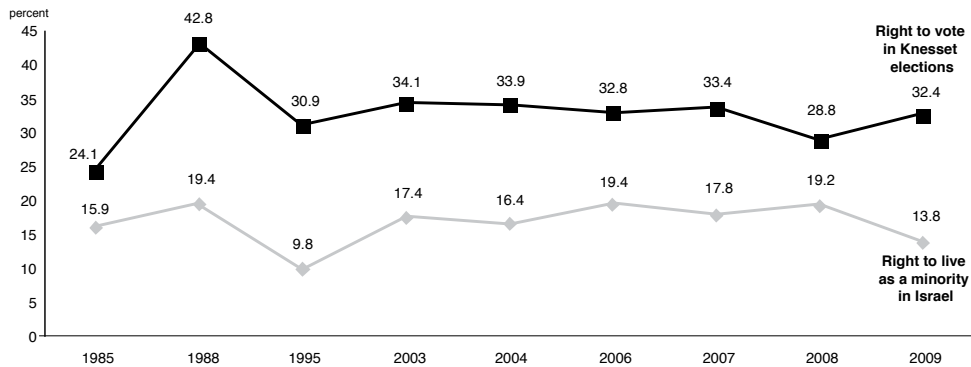


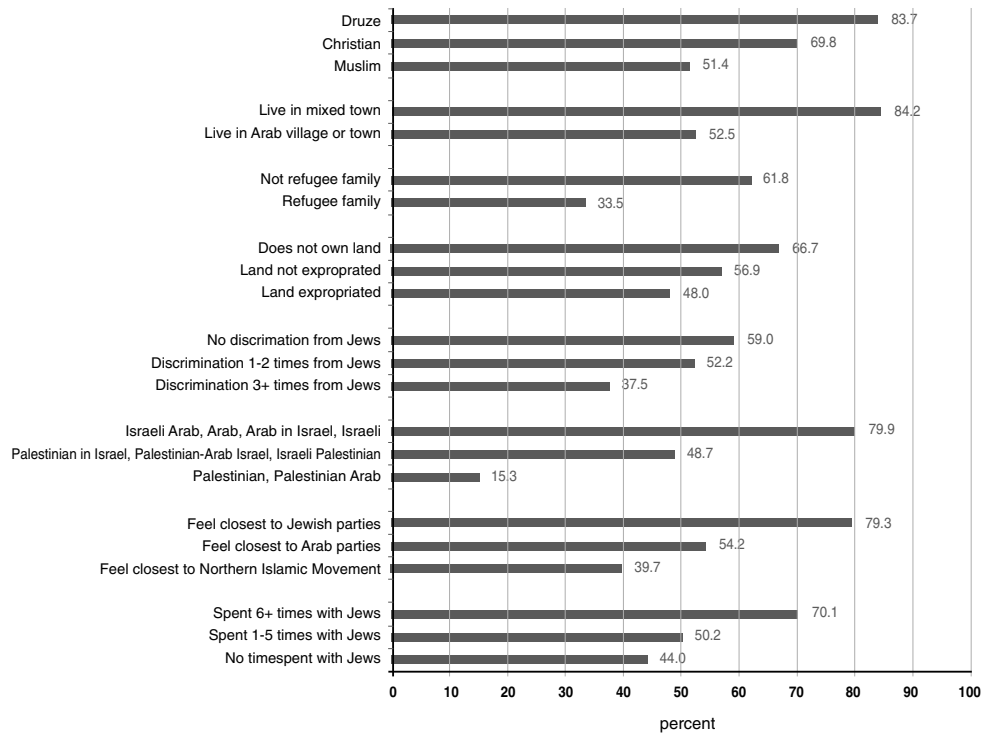
Figure 7 presents parallel data on the Jewish public between 1985 and 2009. Jews were asked whether they accept the Arab right to live as a minority in Israel and whether they support the Arab right to vote to the Knesset. Various fluctuations are noticeable, but the general trend is long-term stability. During this period, about 16 percent of Jews rejected the Arabs' right to live as a minority and about 33 percent rejected their right to vote to the Knesset. These figures are discouraging, but there has been no hardening in the Jewish position in the twenty-five years since these questions were asked for the first time in 1985.

Drivers of Support for Coexistence

To examine support for Arab-Jewish coexistence, the author uses a simple six-point scale, giving one point for agreement with each of the six responses to the related survey questions. The scale is clearly biased toward the positive upper end but has enough variance for further statistical analysis for exploring the determinants of a coexistence orientation.

Examining these drivers leads to several conclusions. First, Arabs and Jews are clearly committed to coexistence, as indicated by their very high scores on the scale: 55.1 percent of the Arabs and 63.3 percent of the Jews score five to six points on the scale.

Figure 8. Arabs' Drivers of Coexistence Support, 2009

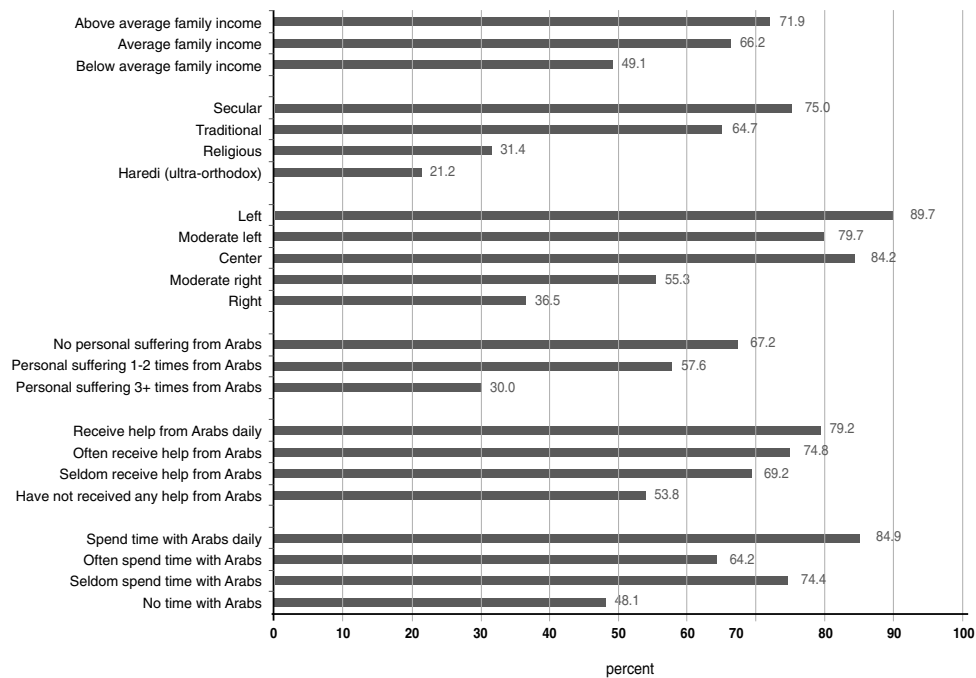


Second, coexistence is a general orientation manifested in measurable attitudes in many areas of intergroup relations. The correlations between these attitudes point to a transparent and consistent pattern. The scale is indeed correlated with about a hundred attitudes on Arab-Jewish relations. Arabs' and Jews' coexistence orientation is reflected in a similar stand on numerous issues that divide them.

Third, some drivers point to possible agents of change. Contrary to popular and scholarly conjecture, for Arabs, being male, young adult, and a university graduate makes little difference in attitudes toward coexistence. Figure 8 presents several of the best predictors of coexistence orientation. Religion plays a central role, the Druze being highest on the scale, Muslims lowest, and Christians in between, which corresponds directly with Israel's policies toward these communities. Quality of contact with Jews is also a primary factor. Arabs who live in mixed Jewish-Arab towns, spend leisure time with Jews, come from families not displaced in 1948, have not suffered from land expropriations, and have not experienced ethnic discrimination are strongly predisposed to coexistence. Attitudes toward coexistence depend also on collective identity and political views—Arabs who follow Jewish parties and define themselves in non-Palestinian terms (as Israeli Arabs, Arabs in Israel, Arabs, or Israelis) are, as might be expected, more supportive.¹⁶

The picture among the Jews is similar. Gender, age, and education have little impact on attitudes toward coexistence, whereas family income, religious observance, and political preference are powerful determinants. Those with high family incomes, a secular orientation, and more moderate political views are more disposed to coexistence. Quality contacts with Arabs are also prime movers. Jews who spend social time with Arabs, have received help

Figure 9. Jews' Drivers of Coexistence Support, 2009



from Arabs, and have not suffered from threats, insults, or blows from Arab citizens tend to favor coexistence (figure 9).¹⁷

Some of the drivers of coexistence among Arabs and Jews are mutable and can be a basis for policy change. Coexistence will be promoted not simply by contact, certainly not contact that breeds friction and dispute, but instead by positive interaction, such as spending leisure time together and helping each other. Certain variables may appear to be out of state control, such as which party Arabs support or how they define their identity, but intervention is nevertheless possible. Arabs who support Arab parties and define themselves in Palestinian terms are less inclined to accept coexistence, for example. This stance is almost certainly because of Jews' limited political tolerance and Israel's conflict with the Palestinians. Any advancement among the Jewish public in political tolerance and commitment to democracy and in the belief that Palestinian-Arab citizens have the right to a Palestinian identity and to support fellow Palestinians would help make Arab-Jewish coexistence compatible with Arab support for Arab parties and Palestinian affinity.

Policy Implications

Many in Israel dream of paradigm shifts that would revamp Arab-Jewish relations. The widespread visions among Arabs include a secular and democratic state, an Arab-Muslim state, an Islamic state, or a binational state in all of Palestine. These share the goal of doing away with Israel as a state. Another Arab vision is eliminating Israel as a Jewish state but keeping it as a binational Israeli-Palestinian one. The Jews, on the other hand, entertain ideas of a Jewish state whose territory incorporates all of Israel/Palestine, a post-Zionist liberal-democratic Israeli state, and a theocratic-Judaic state. All of these visions are impractical and may also lead to injustice for a large number of people in both communities.

Policy changes are more feasible than paradigm shifts. Israel can accommodate the Arab minority without losing its character as a Jewish and democratic state, and the Arabs can fulfill most of their demands without transforming Israel into a full binational state. Moderating Israel's Jewish and Zionist character, consolidating its democracy, and forming a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza are compatible with the visions of both sides.

Israel would continue to be a Jewish state with a Law of Return, Hebrew as a dominant language, Jewish symbols, and a Jewish calendar. At the same time, it would give up Jewish exclusivity and preferential treatment of Jews. For example, some of Israel's symbols would be Arab, the special status of the Jewish National Fund and Jewish Agency would be abolished, and discriminatory state policies would be terminated.

A Palestinian state would be formed adjacent to Israel, and Arab citizens would be granted national collective rights in addition to their current ethnic collective rights. Recognition of Arabs as a national Palestinian minority (not coequal nation) would legitimize their ties with the Palestinian people and bestow on them cultural autonomy, proper representation in the national power structure (but not power-sharing by law), proportional share of the state budget and the civil service, and allocation of lands according to needs. Arabs would be denied veto power, but their political parties would be allowed into coalition governments and required to be consulted in matters essential to their community.

A better balance would be struck between the Jewish and democratic character of the state by strengthening Israeli democracy. Equality would be the cornerstone of Israel's new constitution. Affirmative action in certain areas and for a limited time would replace institutional discrimination against Arabs. The Emergency Situation would end and an Israeli internal security law and regulations would replace the existing illiberal British legislation. Civil marriage and divorce law would allow interfaith mixing. A campaign to promote democratic culture among Jews and Arabs would be executed. Most important, the state would launch a large-scale program to raise Arabs' standards in community services and socioeconomic achievements to that of Jews.

Arabs would stop seeing Jews as colonial settlers and stop equating Zionism with colonialism and racism. They would refrain from a struggle against the Jewish nature of the state, renounce the right of Arab refugees to return to Israel, relinquish the right of internal refugees to reconstruct their ruined villages, and render a civil service to the state in lieu of a compulsory military duty.

A reform package in this spirit could be carried out step by step along with settling the Palestinian question and building trust between Arabs and Jews in Israel. No progress was made in this direction between 2000 and 2010. These years were a lost decade for Arab-Jewish coexistence. Instead of improvement, there was deterioration. Arab-Jewish relations worsened, and Arab attitudes hardened. These declines threaten the relative tranquility in Arab-Jewish relations. If the state does not enhance equality and integration of the Arabs, preferably in cooperation with their leaders, and does not move forward on peace with the Palestinians, the trend of hardening Arab attitudes will continue. Both sides will suffer.

Contrary to popular opinion and wishful thinking, the Palestinian-Arab minority is not a bridge for peace. It might instead be a stumbling block. It cannot be a bridge because it is neither a fair broker (Israeli Arabs are unequivocally on the side of the Palestinians) nor a resourceful and powerful agent that can effectively pressure and reward the two sides (which the United States is). On the other hand, Arab unrest might intensify Israel's fears of postconflict instability and harden its stand on a peace settlement. A struggle to put Arab demands on the

peace agenda, a possibility that Israel and the Palestinian Authority are united in opposing, will overburden the negotiations and reduce the chances of reaching an agreement.

Continued relative quiet in Arab-Jewish relations is an important condition for settling the Palestinian question. Addressing the internal Arab problem is not only rectification of injustice but also a necessary preventive measure that should be adopted during all stages of the conflict—from the present pre-violent confrontation stage, at the stage of the intense conflict if it erupts, and to the future postconflict stage of stabilization when the Arabs will escalate their fight for equality and the need for transitional justice can no longer be ignored.

This is why the Arabs, the Jews, and the state of Israel should not postpone change until peace is concluded. They need to take steps immediately to improve Arab-Jewish coexistence if they are to preclude further deterioration that might impede peace.

Conclusions

This study of Arab-Jewish attitudes and coexistence leads to several conclusions. During the 2003 to 2009 index years, a clear trend of hardening in Arab public opinion toward the Jewish character of the state and the Jewish majority is evident, but overall stability continued to characterize Jewish public opinion toward the Arab minority. The sharpening of Arab attitudes reflects the actual deterioration both of Arab-Jewish relations and of the milieu in which they are anchored. State policies toward the Arab minority remained discriminatory, the Jewish nature of the state continued to take precedence to its democratic character, Jewish threats to impose further restraints on Arab political activities increased, and Israel's conflict with the Arab world took more violent forms—the repression of the Second Intifada, the Gaza War, and the Second Lebanon War. As a result, Palestinian-Arab citizens became more politicized, more impatient with discrimination and exclusion, and more combatant for equality and peace.

On the other hand, the Jews realigned themselves around a new political center and showed little change in attitudes. The growth of the radical right created an anti-Arab atmosphere among its followers and made a lot of noise in the media but failed to remold Jewish public opinion on the Arab minority.

The stiffening of Arab views and the stability of Jewish views during the decade do not confirm the mutual alienation thesis on Arab-Jewish relations. The hardening of the Arab position was probably a proportional response to the deterioration in their conditions and did not cause a collapse in their relations with the state and the Jews. Contrary to the scene painted in the media and the agitation of the far right, the Jews were quite amenable for positive change toward the Arab minority.

The 1976–2009 long-term data reconfirm this interpretation. Arab and Jewish attitudes have not become consistently more radical since the mid-1970s. Cries among the Arabs against the legitimacy of Israel as a state did not swell, nor did endorsing violence as a form of protest gain any traction. Similarly, there was no rise among the Jews to deny the right of Arabs to live in Israel with full citizenship rights. The data did not substantiate the popular and scholarly thesis of growing mutual alienation between the two populations.

In spite of the deep divide between Arabs and Jews and the hardening of Arab attitudes during the 2000s, the findings point to continued consensus on both the framework and infrastructure of Arab-Jewish coexistence in Israel. Most Arabs and most Jews believe in living together, accept Israel within the Green Line as the common territory for their relations, feel that Israel is a good place to live, do not wish to leave the country, are committed to democracy

as the mechanism to regulate their relations, and agree on civic equality as the basis for coexistence and as an important state goal.

As explained by the mutual rapprochement thesis, Arab acquiescence is due to a configuration of three factors. First, Arabs' continued Israelization counterbalances their overall Palestinization and the drift of a segment from among them to radical Islam. Despite all its faults and built-in ethnic biases, Israeli democracy is a resilient and effective tool for regulating Arab-Jewish relations. It provides Arabs with ample room for protest, struggle, and empowerment, which they make considerable use of. The Arabs have stakes in other components of the Israeli package as well, among them a modern way of life without the need to emigrate, the welfare state system, and protection against fundamentalist Islamic takeover.

The second factor is the fear balance between the Arab minority and the state, which has crystallized over many years and was refashioned in the aftermath of the October 2000 Arab uprising. The Jewish state, backed by the Jewish majority, is a strong state. It is resolute and capable of containing major Arab breaches of law and order. It imposes a machinery of surveillance over the Arabs and does not hesitate to crush any internal threat to national security and to the Jewish-Zionist mission of the state. At the same time, the state knows what the Arab redlines are and is careful not to cross them. Those that may be perceived as grounds for Arab riots include state violence against protesters, land expropriations, demolition of thousands of illegal buildings, restriction of basic citizenship rights, compulsory military service, outlawing of Arab political parties, mass deportations, damage to the mosques on Temple Mount, reinstatement of the military government, and concession of Arab localities to a Palestinian state, to name just a few. Both sides are keenly aware of the high cost of violating these tacit mutual understandings.

The third factor is the status and role of Israel's Arabs on the Palestinian stage. As a marginal segment of the Palestinian people, the Arabs are expected to stay put in Israel, to be a political lobby, and to support the Palestinian and the pan-Arab nation. They are expected not to revolt and not to boycott Knesset elections. Their grievances must be directed to the state and not be thrust into the Israeli-Palestinian settlement agenda. Any Arab unrest and Arab involvement in the peace process are regarded by both the Palestinians and Israel as counterproductive and illegitimate. Under these special historical circumstances, Arab acquiescence is tantamount to Palestinian patriotism.

These integrative forces have so far managed to maintain at least a minimal coexistence between Arabs and Jews but eroded since the Rabin assassination in November 1995. If the deterioration continues, the risk of confrontation and violence will increase. The answer to improving relations while keeping Israel Jewish and democratic and establishing a separate Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza is to strengthen Israel's democracy and to find a balance between its Jewish character and its democratic character.

Notes

1. For a general review of Arab-Jewish relations and the status of the Arab minority in Israel, see Sammy Smooha, "Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel: A Deeply Divided Society," in *Israeli Identity in Transition*, edited by Anita Shapira (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 31–67; Yitzhak Reiter, *National Minority, Regional Majority: Palestinian Arabs versus Jews in Israel* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009); Elie Rekhess and Arik Rudniski, eds., *Arab Society in Israel—Information Manual* (Neve Ilan, Israel: Abraham Fund Initiatives, 2009).
2. Israel's population in 2008 officially numbered 7,465,500, of whom 5,634,300 were Jews, 318,000 were non-Jewish relatives of Jews (immigrants from the former Soviet Union), and 1,513,200 were Arabs. If we subtract the 269,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem and the 16,800 Druze residents of the Golan

Heights, who are by and large not Israeli citizens, the Arab citizens constituted about 16.5 percent of Israel's population, not 20 percent as officially stated. See *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2009*, chapter 2 (Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

3. Proponents of this approach include Elie Rekhess, "The Evolvement of an Arab-Palestinian National Minority in Israel," *Israel Studies* 12, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 1–28; Dan Schueftan, "Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel: From the Illusion of 'Solution' to Damage Control," [in Hebrew] *Iyunim Bebitabon Leumi* 1 (2001): 63–128; Arnon Soffer, "The Affinity of Israeli Arabs to Palestinian State," [in Hebrew] *Nativ* 10, no. 1–2 (January–April 1997): 77–81; Dan Rabinowitz and Khawla Abu-Baker, *Coffins on Our Shoulders: The Experience of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Nadim Rouhana and As'ad Ghanem, "The Crisis of Minorities in Ethnic States: The Case of the Palestinian Citizens in Israel," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30 (1998): 321–46; As'ad Ghanem, "Democratizing 'Ethnic States': The Democratization Process in Divided Societies with a Special Reference to Israel," *Constellations* 16, no. 3 (2009): 462–75; Oren Yiftachel and As'ad Ghanem, "Understanding 'Ethnocratic' Regimes: The Politics of Seizing Contested Territories," *Political Geography* 23, no. 6 (August 2004): 647–76.
4. Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
5. Very few scholars adopt and develop this approach: Sammy Smooha, *Arabs and Jews in Israel, vol. 2, Change and Continuity in Mutual Intolerance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992); Sammy Smooha, "The Model of Ethnic Democracy: Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State," *Nations and Nationalism* 8, no. 4 (October 2002): 475–503; Amal Jamal, "Strategies of Minority Struggle for Equality in Ethnic States: Arab Politics in Israel," *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 3 (July 2007): 263–82; Yitzhak Reiter, "Israel and Its Arab Minority," in *Israel Studies: An Anthology*, edited by Mitchell G. Bard and David Nachmias (Jewish Virtual Library, 2009), www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/isdf/text/reiter.pdf.
6. Or Commission, Report: The State Inquiry Commission to Investigate the Clashes between the Security Forces and Arab Citizens in October 2000, 2 vols. [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Government Printer, 2003).
7. World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Durban, South Africa (August 31 to September 8, 2001).
8. The development and presentation of the findings of the first (2003) index is reported in Sammy Smooha, *A Minority-Majority Relations Index in Deeply Divided Society and Its Application to Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel*, Final Research Report Submitted to Israel Foundations Trustees, 2005. The 2004 index is fully reported in Smooha, *Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel 2004* (Haifa: Jewish-Arab Center, University of Haifa, 2005).
9. These indexes are the Peace and War Index (since 1994), the National Resilience Index (since 2000), the Patriotism Index (since 2005), and the Equality Index (since 2006).
10. The answers are disagree, tend to disagree, tend to agree, and agree. No middle or neutral answer is given.
11. In charge of data collection were Dr. Nohad Ali for the Arab surveys and Dr. Mina Zemah for the Jewish surveys. The development of the first 2003 index was funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation received through Israel Foundations Trustees. Additional assistance was received from the Idelstein Fund of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Haifa, and a grant from the office of the president of the University of Haifa. Funds for the annual 2004–09 index surveys (with the exception of the 2005 Index that was not carried out because of a funding shortfall) were received from the office of the President of the University of Haifa, the Citizens Accord Forum, the Alan B. Slifka Foundation, the PEF (Israel Endowment Funds), the Beracha Foundation, the Fohs Foundation, and Ha'amuta Lehitchadshut Yisrael. The support from all these sources and the continued funding from the Alan B. Slifka Foundation in particular are greatly appreciated.
12. For the methodological and political difficulties in conducting public opinion polls in Arab societies, see David Pollock, *Mideast Polling: The Arab Street? Public Opinion in the Arab World* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993); *Slippery Polls: Uses and Abuses of Opinion Surveys from Arab States* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2008); "Saudi Arabia by the Numbers," *Foreign Policy*, February 12, 2010.
13. A methodological empirical study that compares the face-to-face surveys with the telephone surveys on the 2003 index shows the greater validity and advantages of face-to-face data in the Arab sector. For this reason, all the Arab surveys used face-to-face interviews to ensure a better quality of data. See Smooha, *A Minority-Majority Relations Index*, appendix A.
14. Smooha examines, in the methodological appendix, the reliability and validity of Arab face-to-face surveys. See *Change and Continuity*.
15. The dialog group that met for two years in the late 1990s under the auspices of Israel Democracy Institute is a very good example of this stalemated process. For the story of this group, see Uzi Benziman, ed., *Whose Country Is It? A Journey to Formulate a Jewish-Arab Accord in Israel* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2007).
16. Taken together, four of these drivers—life in mixed town, displaced family, identity, and spending leisure time with Jews—have a multiple correlation of 0.56 with the coexistence scale. That is, they explain 31 percent of the variance on the scale.
17. These variables have a multiple correlation of 0.60 with the coexistence scale. That is, they explain 36 percent of the variance on the scale.

This report studies Arab-Jewish relations in Israel (within the pre-1967 borders) from the mid-1970s through 2010 with an eye to what might unfold over the coming decades. It offers a counterthesis to the popular and dominant view of mutual alienation, emphasizing a mutual rapprochement between the two sides that prevents and can continue to prevent confrontation and violence. It presents findings from representative surveys conducted from 1976 to 2009 that bear on the images of the Arab minority as a ticking time bomb in the Jewish state and of the Jewish majority as hard-liner. The report warns, though, that if the deterioration in relations is not checked by policies to enhance the equality, integration, and inclusion of the Arab minority, Israel cannot for long avoid the danger of instability and bloodshed that are rampant in deeply divided societies.