

Peace Index - September, 2010

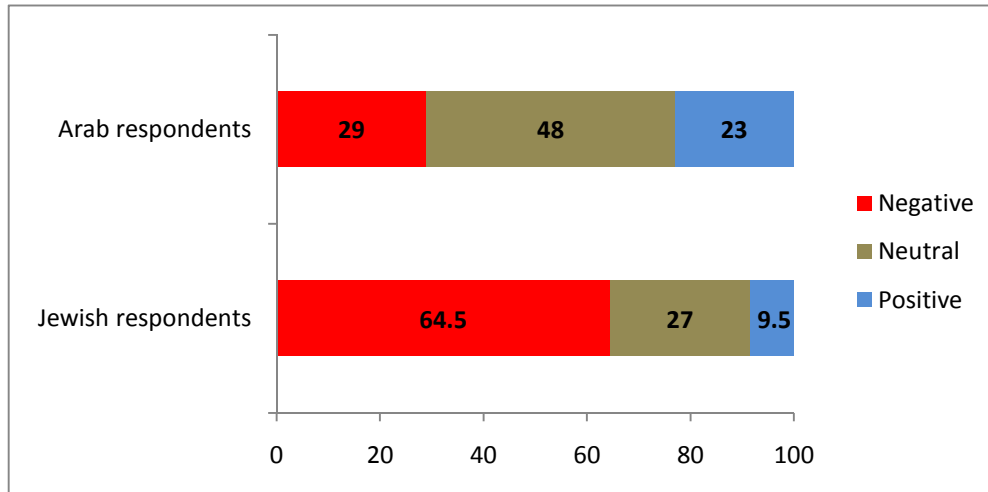
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Summary of the Findings

- **Who was responsible for the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada (the Second Intifada) a decade ago?** A sweeping majority (71%) of the Jewish public puts the blame on the Palestinians, while a majority – though smaller (54%) – of the Arab public puts it on Israel.
- **Who won in military terms?** In both publics, Jewish and Arab, a clear-cut majority (77% and 60%, respectively) considers that there was no militarily victorious side in this intifada.
- **Who won in political terms?** In both publics, a majority also believes that neither side emerged victorious on the political front (64% of the Jewish public and 55% of the Arab public).
- **Why has there been a relative lack of violent incidents in recent years?** There is a large gap between how the Jewish and Arab publics account for this quiet. Most of the Jews (55%) attribute it to Israel's tough policy, while a minority of only 18% credit it to a Palestinian decision to scale back the violence. In the Arab public, however, only a minority (18%) attributes the quiet to Israel's policy whereas 36% see the Palestinian decision to refrain from violence as responsible. The rest, in both groups, have no clear opinion.
- **What are the chances of an outbreak of a Third Intifada?** A majority of the Jewish public (63%) believes the chances are high. The Arab public, however, is evenly split (44%) between those who think a Third Intifada will soon erupt and those who do not see such a danger as imminent.
- **Does the absence of peace or, alternatively, the signing of a peace agreement influence Arab-Jewish relations within Israel?** In both publics – Jewish and Arab – identical rates (54%) were found for those who believe that as long as there is no peace, there is no possibility of greater understanding and interaction between Jews and Arabs in Israel. A majority of the exact same size, however, says a peace agreement in itself will not foster relations of trust and good-neighborliness between Jews and Arabs: more than half of both the Jews and the Arabs hold the pessimistic opinion that even if a peace agreement is signed, no dramatic improvement will occur in the relations between these two publics in Israel.

- A decade ago, who was responsible for the deterioration of the Israeli Arab demonstrations into severe violence?** The Jewish public primarily blames the Israeli Arab leadership (35.5%) and the Arab demonstrators (29%). Only 11% put the blame on the behavior of the police, and 12% think all these factors were responsible for the violence to the same extent. The Arab public takes a very different position: 43% blame the police, 16% the leadership of the Jewish demonstrators, 8% the Arab demonstrators, and only 6% hold the Arab leadership responsible. Twenty percent think all these factors were behind the violent clashes.
- What is the attitude of Israel's Arab citizens toward the state?** A definite majority (64.5%) of Jews think the Arabs' attitude toward the state is negative; the largest number of Arabs (48%) view the attitude of Arabs towards the state as neither positive nor negative, 29% see it as negative, and 23% see it as positive.

Graph of the month: How Do You Assess the Attitude of Arab Citizens toward the State of Israel in Terms of Commitment and a Sense of Personal Belonging to the State?



The Findings in Detail

A full ten years after the October riots in the Israeli Arab sector and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada (also known as the Second Intifada), the Peace Index focused this month on two issues and on the connection between them: (1) how do Jews and Arabs in Israel see the causes and results of the Second Intifada? and (2) how do they view the relationship between the state of Israel and its Arab citizenry?

As expected, and as in the past, a majority of the Jewish public puts most of the blame for the intifada on the Palestinians, and most of the Arab public, conversely, on Israel. The position of the Jewish respondents, however, are more unequivocal, with 71% of them viewing the Palestinians as solely or mainly responsible, while among the Arabs a smaller majority – 54% – puts the blame on Israel.

On the question of whether, in retrospect, one can point to one side as having won or lost the intifada from a military standpoint, a clear majority of both the Jewish and the Arab public holds the view that neither side won – 77% and 60%, respectively. Fourteen percent of the Jews think that Israel won, compared to 24% of the Arab public. In both sectors only a tiny minority – 4% of Jews and 5% of Arabs – claims that it was the Palestinians who prevailed militarily.

The same holds for the question of who won politically. Again a majority – 64% of Jews and 55% of Arabs – says neither side emerged victorious politically from the intifada. As for the other answers, again more Arabs than Jews think that Israel won – 19% compared to 10%. In other words, both militarily and politically, Israeli Arabs see Israel as having prevailed in the intifada more than Israeli Jews do.

There is also a considerable, and not surprising, gap between the two publics regarding the reasons for the relative lack of violent incidents in recent years. On this issue, too, the Jewish public is more definite in its assessments than the Arab public. A Jewish majority – 55% – thinks the relative quiet stems from the tough policy Israel has taken, and only a minority of 18% attribute it to a Palestinian decision to lower the level of violence. The Arab public, however, is divided: the highest rate – 36% – say the reason is the Palestinian decision to scale back the violence, 21% think it was neither the Israeli policy nor a Palestinian decision but other factors, and only a minority – 19% – ascribe the quiet to Israel's security policy.

What are the chances that a Third Intifada will erupt in the foreseeable future? The findings show that a majority of the Jewish public – 63% – regard the chances of this as high. Here, too, the Arab public is divided, with 44% seeing the chances as high and exactly the same rate having the opposite perception.

We asked: “In your opinion, to what extent is the following viewpoint correct or incorrect: As long as a peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinian Authority does not exist, there will not be trust and good-neighborly relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel – no matter how the Israeli government treats Israeli Arabs.” The distribution of responses was very similar in the two sectors: 54% of the Jews and 55% of the Arabs think this opinion is correct or moderately correct. In other words, a majority, albeit not large, of both groups view a peace agreement with the Palestinian Authority as a necessary condition for improving the relations between the Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel.

But is achieving peace also a *sufficient* condition for relations of trust and good-neighborliness between Jews and Arabs in Israel? The findings reveal that on this question a similar majority – 53% of the Jews and 52% of the Arabs – hold the pessimistic opinion that even if such an agreement is reached, there will be no improvement in Jewish-Arab relations in Israel.

The tendency of the two publics to view the future of relations pessimistically is apparently rooted, at least in part, in profound differences between their collective identities and in the level of mutual awareness of these differences. Thus, only 25% of the Jewish public believes that the Arab citizens feel themselves to be Israelis, compared to 60% (!) of the Arabs, who report that they feel themselves to be Israelis to a large or moderately large extent (95% of them define themselves to a very large or moderately large extent as Arabs, 69% as Palestinians, and 90% as members of the religion to which they belong – Muslim, Christian, or Druze). It appears, then, that the Jewish public tends to considerably underestimate the importance of the Arab citizens’ Israeli identity, which is only slightly less potent than their Palestinian identity.

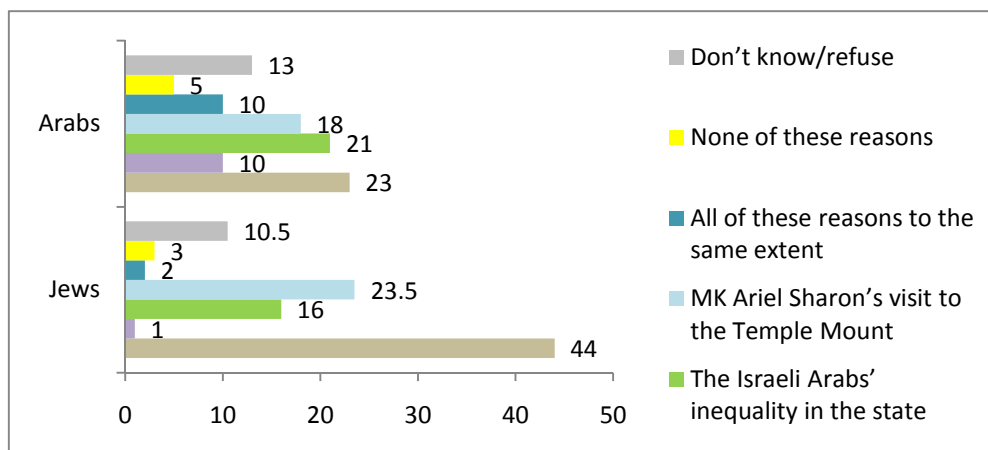
And how do the Arabs view the identity of the Jews? Eighty-one percent of them think that the Jews feel themselves to a very large or moderately large extent to be Jews, 77% that they feel Israeli, and 64% as Zionists. These rates are considerably lower than the Jewish public’s own responses on these identity issues: 95% report that they feel to a very large or moderately large extent that they are Israelis, 94% – as Jews, and 80% as Zionists. Israeli Arabs, then, appear to underestimate these three identities among Jews, especially regarding the Israeli and Zionist identities, though they are not wrong in seeing Zionism as taking only third place in the ranking.

A more concrete indication of the gaps between the two publics emerges from how they assess the authorities’ policy toward the Arabs in terms of budget distribution and services, the recognition and rights granted them as a national minority, and the extent of their integration into the state institutions and the political system. On the issue of budget allocations, for example, whereas 80% of the Arabs think they are discriminated against,

only 40.5% of the Jews think they are. Smaller but still considerable gaps emerge regarding the other two areas. Thus, whereas 47% of the Arabs think they do not receive the rights they deserve as a national minority, only 34% of the Jews believe that to be the case. Similarly, while 56% of the Arabs say they are not integrated or moderately not integrated into the institutional and political system, only 30% of the Jewish public thinks so. Note that on these issues, the general Arab public takes different positions from its leadership, since it emphasizes the material aspects, whereas the leadership puts more stress on the cultural and political dimensions of the discrimination. This emphasis of the general Arab public also indicates, much like the report of the Or Commission, that the fabric of relations between the state and its Arab citizens can be improved if there is suitable investment in infrastructure and similar, tangible areas.

When comparing the Jewish and Arab publics' assessments of the degree to which Arab citizens fulfill their political and economic obligations, a gap emerges that is no less profound than the one regarding the granting of rights. Whereas only 15% of the Jews think the Arabs fulfill their political obligations, 46% of the Arabs think so. This also applies to economic obligations: only 22% of the Jews think that the Arabs meet their economic obligations, compared to 72% (!) of the Arab respondents.

And what about the causes of the October 2000 riots? As shown in the graph below, while the Jews see the main reason as being the Arabs' identification with their Palestinian brethren, the Arab public itself is not united behind a single explanation:



The Negotiations Index for September, 2010

The Peace Index project includes ongoing monitoring of the Israeli public's attitudes towards peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The monthly Negotiation Index is comprised of two questions, one focusing on public support for peace negotiations and the other on the degree to which the public believes that such talks

will actually lead to peace. The aggregated replies to these two questions are calculated, combined, and standardized on a scale of 0-100, in which 0 represents total lack of support for negotiations and lack of belief in their potential to bear fruit, and 100 represents total support for the process and belief in its potential. Each month, the Negotiations Index presents two distinct findings, one for the general Israeli population and the other for Jewish Israelis.

General Israeli Population: 51.3

Jewish Israelis: 49.8

The Peace Index is conducted under the auspices of the Evens Program for Conflict Resolution at Tel Aviv University and the Israel Democracy Institute. The survey was carried out by telephone on September 12-14 by the Dahaf Institute. The survey included 601 respondents, who constitute a representative sample of the adult population of Israel. The measurement error for a sample of this size is 4.5%. Statistical processing: Ms. Yasmin Alkalay. An overview of the findings of the survey was published in Yediot Aharonot on September 27th 2010