Abstract

Jews and Arabs
A Conditional Partnership

Israel 2017

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Self-Definition

The Arab citizens of Israel represent a little over 20% of the state’s overall population. That 20% is comprised of a majority of Muslims (83.5%), Christians (8.9%), and Druze (7.6%). The complex relationship between Jews and Arabs in the State of Israel exists on three levels — state, societal and interpersonal - that do not necessarily overlap. On the one hand, the study shows that definite, substantial disagreements exist between Jews and Arabs on the state level. On the other hand, relations on the societal and, to an even greater extent, personal levels are less tense. In certain areas of life, the situation is actually quite positive.

As a rule, those who self-identify primarily as Jews tend to express more discriminatory and exclusionary opinions regarding Arabs than those who self-identify as Israeli.

Palestinian as a primary identity is more common among Muslims, young educated people, and those who have first-degree relatives living in the territories. The minority that self-identifies as Palestinian tends to express more critical opinions of the State of Israel, Jews and Israelis. In addition, they are more skeptical regarding the possibility of their being able to integrate into Israeli society.

Sense of Belonging to Israeli Society

- 68% of Jews believe that it is not possible to feel part of the Palestinian people and still be a loyal citizen of the State of Israel. Only on the Jewish left wing is there a majority that sees such a possibility as feasible.
- 54% of Arabs feel part of Israeli society.
- 63% of Jews believe that Arabs feel that they are not part of Israeli society.
- 69% of Arabs believe that Jews do not see them as part of Israeli society.

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*Muslim, Christian, Druze
The Relationship between Jews and Arabs

- 51% of Jews believe that the quality of relations between Jews and Arabs is so-so.
- 42% of Arabs believe that the quality of relations between Jews and Arabs is so-so.

- 32% of Jews believe that relations between Jews and Arabs are worse than they were in the State of Israel’s early years.
- 48% of Arabs believe that relations between Jews and Arabs are worse than they were in the State of Israel’s early years.

- 52% of Jews believe that it would be better for Jews and Arabs to live separately so that the Jews can preserve their Jewish identity.
- 77% of Arabs do not want to live separately.

Politics

- 16% of Jews are willing to include Arabs in making decisions on matters of peace and security.
- 24% of Jews are willing to include Arabs in making decisions on matters of governance and the economy.
- 58% of Jews think that Arabs should be given fair and equal treatment in allocating budgets to residential communities.
- 66% of Jews are opposed to including Arab parties in the government and appointing Arab ministers.

- 50% of Christians believe that Arab members of Knesset do a good job of representing Israel’s Arab population.
- 62% of Muslims believe that Arab members of Knesset do a good job of representing Israel’s Arab population.
- 35% of Jews believe that Arab members of Knesset do a good job of representing Israel’s Arab population.
- 24% of Druze believe that Arab members of Knesset do a good job of representing Israel’s Arab population.

- 33% of Jews would like the state to include Arab professionals in the decision making processes of public agencies that affect the public as a whole.
- 71% of Arabs would like the state to include Arab professionals in the decision making processes of public agencies that affect the public as a whole.
A National Home

- 67% of Arabs answered that the State of Israel has no right to be defined as the national home of the Jewish people.
- 58% of Jews think that those who are unwilling to declare that Israel is the national home of the Jewish people should lose the right to vote.
- 67% of the Jews think that Israel acts in a democratic manner toward Arab citizens as well.
- 45% of the Arabs define the relationship between the employees of both nationalities as good or very good.

Relations in Society

- 69% of Jews report that they were employed in the past or are currently employed in workplaces where Jews and Arabs work together. Of them: 89.5% of Arabs define the relationship between the employees of both nationalities as good or very good.
- 74% of Arabs believe that the state should implement a comprehensive plan to reduce the disparities between Arab and Jewish citizens. Of them: 95% of Jews.
Relations in Society

- **58.5%** of Jews try to avoid entering Arab residential communities.
- **16%** of Arabs report that they avoid entering Jewish residential communities.
- **69%** of Arabs can hold a fluent conversation in Hebrew.
- **6%** of Jews can hold a fluent conversation in Arabic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Percentage of Arab respondents who believe this about Jews</th>
<th>Percentage of Jewish respondents who believe this about Arabs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They stay away from those who do not belong to their own group</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are generous</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>They are honest</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>They hold human life sacred</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are modern</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>They are violent</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Who Has a Stronger Connection to the Land?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Jewish respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Arab respondents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both have an equally strong connection to the land</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews have a stronger connection</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabs have a stronger connection</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know/ Refuse to answer</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Strong Connection, by Political Affiliation, Jews

- **Right-wing**: 13%
- **Left-wing**: 34.5%

Should Arabs be allowed to buy land in the State of Israel?

(Jewish respondents’ answers, below)

- Yes, anywhere in Israel: 29%
- Only in Arab neighborhoods and communities: 41%
- Not at all: 25%
- Do not know: 5%

Both have an equally strong connection to the land

- 27%

Jews have a stronger connection

- 44.5%

Arabs have a stronger connection

- 7%

Do not know/ Refuse to answer

- 3%

1.5%

Who Has a Stronger Connection to the Land?

- Percentage of Jewish respondents
- Percentage of Arab respondents

70% of Jews and 27% of Arabs are in favor of obligatory civilian national service for all citizens who are exempt from army service.

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The Israel Democracy Institute is an independent, non-partisan think-and-do tank that operates in Israel’s public sector in the fields of governance, the economy, and society. Its goals are to strengthen Israel’s ethical and institutional infrastructure as a Jewish and democratic state, improve the functioning of governmental and economic structures, find ways to address security challenges while preserving democratic values, and nurture partnership and a common denominator in Israel’s multi-faceted society.

A Limited Partnership is a periodic study that examines the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Israel. In 2017, we chose to examine this relationship on three levels - state, societal, and interpersonal. Among the questions we asked were ones about personal national identity, views on ownership of the land, the state’s fairness toward the indigenous Arab minority group, willingness to share resources and include the other in decision-making processes, and stereotypes each group has about the other.

The Arab-Jewish Relations Program seeks to promote multi-faceted civic partnership between Jews and Arabs based primarily upon the principle of equality. The purpose of its studies is to locate obstacles to equal partnership of this kind and identify factors that will nurture and promote it.

The Guttman Center for Public Opinion and Policy Research was established in its current form in 1998, when the Guttman Institute for Practical Social Research moved to the Israel Democracy Institute. The original institute was founded in 1949 by Professor Eliyahu (Louis) Guttman as a pioneering center for the research of public opinion and the promotion of a methodological approach to social studies. The goal of the Guttman Center is to use data from its databases and public-opinion polls to enrich public discourse on issues of public policy.

This book is the product of collaboration between the Arab-Jewish Relations Program and the Guttman Center for Policy Research.