

Policy Focus

Arab Attitudes
Toward Israel and Peace

Hilal Khashan

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Executive Summary

Previous public opinion polls conducted in the Arab East, especially in the Levant, have revealed that “inching toward peace” with Israel has not produced definitive changes in Arab perceptions. Instead, the peace process seems to have given rise to a kind of resignation born of a pervasive sense of helplessness. These poll results did much to illustrate that the acceptance of peace among Arab publics has not translated into a genuine acceptance of Israelis, nor into fostering bonds of cooperation with them.

The present study, however, looks beyond Arab approval or rejection of peace with the Jewish state to probe the environment that has both given meaning to these attitudes and shaped related behaviors. To this effect, the study explores the agents of Arab attitude formation toward Israel, perceptions about the intensity of the Arab–Israeli conflict and its future outlook, primary attitudes toward peace and their relationship to conspiracy theories, interest in building bridges of peace with Israelis, and identification of variables that promote the cause of Arab–Israeli peace.

The data come from a quota sample of 1,600 respondents divided equally among Lebanese, Jordanians, Palestinians, and Syrians, who answered questionnaires administered during February and March 1999.

The respondents overwhelmingly chose the family unit and school curricula as the most important agents of socialization with regard to the Arab–Israeli conflict, a finding which pointed to the importance of resocialization (for example, promoting independent thinking and inquisitiveness), as well as amending school curricula that, in many Arab countries, still contain inflammatory anti-Israeli rhetoric.

Most respondents to the questionnaire expressed the belief that the Palestinian question primarily concerned the Arab–Islamic world, not just the Palestinians or the Arab countries bordering Israel. The majority also seemed convinced that Israel would disappear sooner or later. By and large, the respondents displayed distrust in Israel’s intentions toward the Arabs, labeling that country as expansionist or racist. This reaction seemed to serve the purpose of rationalizing or legitimizing support for the

continuation of cross-border attacks against Israel, an option endorsed by a considerable percentage of respondents.

Despite years of peace talks and statements made by Arab officials to the effect that peace with Israel was indeed a strategic choice, about 70 percent of the respondents said they were opposed to peace. Even most of those expressing support did not seem committed to it, nor convinced that it would last. Personal or even collective benefit appeared to significantly mitigate these feelings.

In addition, the great majority of respondents did not feel that Israel could assist developing Arab economies, decisively arguing that economic cooperation would only benefit Israel's sophisticated, Western-type economy. They interpreted Israel's call for regional economic cooperation as a ploy for dominance, not as genuine interest in becoming an integral part of the Middle East. Relatedly, only a few respondents were willing to engage in active business transactions with Israelis.

On a more positive note, significantly more respondents—but certainly not a majority—registered an inclination toward building bridges of good, neighborly relations with Israel. Almost half felt that Israel's active peace movement deserved Arab support for its worthwhile efforts. But the predisposition toward direct, personal interaction with Israelis sounded faint indeed. Specifically, the vast majority of respondents did not appear eager to welcome Israeli tourists in Arab lands, nor to interact with them. They elected to refrain from accepting offers of Israeli assistance should their countries require help in the event of a natural disaster. A strong majority of respondents even failed to empathize with the Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Finally, even though the vast majority of respondents complained that the United States stood firmly behind Israel, most of them felt that Washington should continue to mediate between Arabs and Israelis.

The study concludes by suggesting that more durable treaties could be achieved if Arab political systems were to evolve toward the rule of the law, diversify their objectives, build their authority on rational criteria, promote analytical thinking and inquisitiveness, and enfranchise the rank and file.

Introduction

Over the last two decades, a series of peace agreements—Camp David, the Oslo Accords, and the Israel–Jordan Peace Treaty—have changed the contours of the most persistent conflict in the twentieth century. These agreements, particularly the signing of the September 13, 1993, Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington, symbolize—for both East and West—the even broader sea change that has taken place in the management of international crises: from confrontation during the period of superpower rivalry, to mediation, negotiation, and compromise since that rivalry ended in U.S. supremacy. Indeed, the post–Cold War climate favors interstate communication, privatization, economic integration, democratization, and political transparency at the expense of authoritarian isolationism and belligerency.

The Arab regimes, however, have only grudgingly accepted these new rules and have continued to perceive their countries' relations with the Jewish state as adversarial, discouraging mutual interaction. For example, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak seems to believe that his country's modernization can be achieved with little or no economic cooperation with Israel.

Arab societies at large have also remained quite reluctant to go along with the accoutrements of the peace era. In this regard, Arab intellectuals, spokespersons of professional groups, and mass media commentators have joined efforts to create an atmosphere of aversion to—if not outright fear of—peace with the Jewish state among Arab publics. The Arab mass media, for example, consistently describe Israel as a country with permanent ambitions for its Arab neighbors' scant water resources.¹ The Jewish state is also repeatedly accused of seeking to reconstruct Greater Israel, the Hebrew entity that long ago included much of today's Middle Eastern lands.² Contributing to the atmosphere of rejectionism

are the numerous antinormalization conferences that have occurred in many Arab cities since the convening of the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference. In one instance, a group called the Southern Lebanese Anti-Zionist Cultural Invasion advocated “the consolidation of our [Arab] society against all forms of Zionist penetration and the construction of an Arab ‘resisting mind’ and society, as well as emphasis on the use of the Zionist enemy term.”³ Elaborating on this idea, Radwan al-Sayyid, a Lebanese intellectual, has emphasized that “opposition to normalization, especially its cultural component, amounts to opposition to the immoral Zionist project.”⁴

But lately finding themselves besieged by unmanageable social, political, and economic problems, ruling elites in the Arab world have begun to see their tight grip on domestic society loosen, and in this context, peace with Israel is becoming the lesser evil. Arab leaders, if not their publics, have been forced to accept that the civilized world will no longer tolerate bellicose statements, instead expecting moderation and sensibility to precede requests for diplomatic or economic support.

At the same time, even in the midst of intransigence toward normalization, a vast Arab literature is emerging on how to transform an essentially political peace into one based on common interests. In a daring 1997 booklet defending peace with the Jewish state, for example, Hazim Saghiyya, a maverick Lebanese scholar, lashes out at Arab passivity. Saghiyya reproves the Arabs for rejecting normalization; speaks strongly about the need for Arabs to understand Jewish history—especially the Holocaust—with compassion, if not for the sake of good neighborly relations then at least from a humanistic viewpoint⁵; and, finally, calls for a rather remarkable shift in Arab thinking, asking Arab publics to address the genuine security concerns of Israelis.⁶

Efforts like these are aimed not so much at the ruling elites but at the Arab societies themselves, exposing the fact that any significant success in regional cooperation essentially depends on the people of the region more than the leadership. Accordingly and in this spirit, the present study examines what ordinary Arabs—not their leaders—think about peace with the Jewish state.

Arab Attitudes

Social psychologist James Vander Zanden has defined an “attitude”—whether favorable or unfavorable toward a person or position—as “a learned and relatively enduring tendency or predisposition to evaluate a person, event, or situation in a certain way and to act in accordance with that evaluation.”⁷⁷ An attitude, in other words, is a state of mind. Aggregate attitudes do not develop in a vacuum; they are largely a reflection of a group’s political culture and collective experiences, remote and recent.

For purposes of discussion, two broad categories of attitudes are relevant: individual and collective. In the former, an individual forms attitudes independently of others, depending on how he or she evaluates a situation. In the latter, individuals absorb the attitudes of their community unquestioningly. This is not meant to suggest that individual perceptions of a particular situation do not give rise to collective attitudes. Rather, in some instances, a collective attitude demonstrates consensus by group members and is not the result of any form of imposition.

It is unfair to group the attitudes of Arab publics in one monolithic category. That would be both wrong and prejudicial. Arabs, as one might expect, are not of one persuasion and participate in dissimilar socialization processes not only from one country to another, but from one region to another within the same country. Yet, there are some basic attitudes that seem to influence the attitudes of, if not all, at least a considerable number of Arabs.

In a brilliant study, Raymond Cohen alludes to some of these Arab attitudes as they contributed to stalling the peace talks between Israel and Syria. He noted that the Syrian and Israeli negotiating teams exhibited “profound cross-cultural differences . . . [and communicated] with different codes.”⁷⁸ Cohen describes the Syrian culture—which shares many qualities with the Lebanese, Jordanian, and Palestinian cultures—in the following terms:

The extended family—the clan—provides [Syrians] with a primary focus of affiliation. . . . Group values are preeminent, casting the individual in a subordinate, even vulnerable, role. Leadership is paternalistic, society hierarchically organized.

4 • *Hilal Khashan*

Conformism and obedience, not individualism, are central virtues. . . . In a collectivist society, the individual is vitally concerned with how he will appear in the eyes of others. . . . Directness and contradiction are much disliked as threatening communal harmony. . . . Acute and justified alertness to hidden meanings breeds mistrust of stated intentions and a proclivity for conspiracy theories.⁹

It is also important to point out that Arab countries suffer from meager—and in certain cases almost nonexistent—civil societies. This weakness mainly derives from illegitimate ruling elites suppressing political action of the opposition, as well as from the prevalence of parochial identifications precipitated by unacceptably slow social change. The absence of real interest groups and independent mass media networks have greatly limited the access to information enjoyed by Arab populations. (For the role of contemporary Arab poets and poetry in Arab society as a telling, although unscientific, indicator of Arab public opinion, see Appendix A.)

The Survey

This study, for which data was collected in February and March 1999, has an antecedent. In 1996, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy published the comparative results of two surveys that this author had conducted just before and after the signing of the Oslo accords, in 1993 and 1994 respectively. In these surveys, Arab respondents (Syrians, Lebanese, Jordanians, and Palestinians) rather discouragingly expressed overall negative views about peace with the Jewish state.¹⁰ The majority disapproved of peace, and even the most supportive respondents indicated a lack of commitment to such an arrangement, predicting its eventual demise.¹¹ Only a very small minority chose to support peace for its own sake, whereas most others reported a variety of misgivings about real Israeli intentions, ranging from conspiracy theories to blunt accusations of Israel's scheming to control the region's economies and meager water resources.¹²

Furthermore, the vast majority indicated a refusal to involve themselves in traditional activities related to normalization

(economic cooperation, tourism, cultural interaction, and so forth).¹³ In short, respondents generally saw any peace agreement as a temporary arrangement, expressing confidence that the Arab–Israeli conflict would continue until Israel was eliminated.

In the present study, five years after the famous Yitzhak Rabin–Yasir Arafat handshake on the White House lawn, previous research instruments are once again utilized. But apart from considering whether Arab publics have since registered a significant attitudinal change with regard to the conflict with Israel, this survey attempts to examine the environment that gives shape and meaning to the attitudes and behaviors of respondents. It does so by investigating the cognitive, affective, and evaluative aspects of peace with the Jewish state as viewed by Arab publics and locating key variables—such as religiosity and socio-economic status (SES)—capable of influencing Arabs toward a greater or lesser predisposition toward peace. Finally, by examining the following components, the survey considers whether Arab attitudes toward peace are situational or inherent:

- (1) identity orientation and globalization;
- (2) agents of attitude formation toward Israel;
- (3) attitudes toward national government¹⁴;
- (4) perceptions about the intensity, scope, and future of the conflict;
- (5) primary attitudes toward peace¹⁵;
- (6) peace-related attributes of conspiracy thinking;
- (7) support for Islamic militancy;
- (8) support for building bridges with Israelis (economic, touristic, and cultural interactions, as well as good, neighborly relations);
- (9) the attitudes of peace promoters¹⁶; and
- (10) the role of the United States in promoting peace.

Addressing the questions raised in this study required the administration of an empirically testable instrument. For this purpose, the author obtained a quota sample of 1,600 male and female respondents, divided equally among Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians, and Jordanians. The sample accounted for

the social and economic characteristics of the societies from which the respondents were drawn. All respondents were Muslim, and in the case of Lebanon they were equally divided between Sunnis and Shi'is. Palestinian respondents came from the areas administered by the Palestinian Authority (50 percent) as well as from Syria and Lebanon (25 percent each).

The questionnaires were administered by ten trained interviewers with previous field experience. The main researcher adhered to standard instrument quality procedures such as pretesting (thirty cases), reliability measures (consistency and congruence with reality), and validity measures (criterion and construct). Careful instrument construction drew on the author's previous research on the topic and tremendously benefited from the relevant literature on survey research. A panel of five academics and journalists versed in the literature on Arab–Israeli relations provided expert opinion and enhanced the internal validity of the instrument by making appropriate additions, deletions, and modifications. The author maintained close contact with the field workers during the entire period of data collection and personally supervised the stage of data processing (coding and entry), including tabular preparation and presentation (for more information on the data, see Appendix E).

To achieve the objectives of this ambitious study, the questionnaire included—in addition to the conventional questions that appeared in the previous surveys—certain introductory statements before a series of related questions were asked. The aim here was to acquaint the respondents with the issue under consideration before obtaining their answers, which may otherwise have been based on stereotyping or lack of information. For example, prior to asking respondents to evaluate their perceptions of Israelis, an interviewer might have introduced a few statements about Jewish historical experience in Eastern and Central Europe—so as to discern whether better understanding contributes to empathy; direct questions without background information would have been likely to stimulate negative answers. The objective was not to manipulate the respondents into providing favorable responses (an obvious violation of the empirical method), but to increase their cognitive knowledge before they gave their affective and evaluative responses.

Although accurately reporting attitudes was the primary consideration of this study, the possibility of attitudinal change prompted some additional probing. Because the sample included Syrian, Lebanese, Jordanian, and Palestinian respondents, the surveyors also looked for possible cross-national differences. In view of the nonrepresentative composition of the sample, this study did not aspire to make generalizations but to test hypotheses pertaining exclusively to the respondents themselves. The results cannot, therefore, necessarily reflect societal trends for the countries from which the respondents were selected.

The sample consisted of an equal number of Arab Muslims from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine. The respondents were 63 percent male—which, if anything, attests to the difficulty of interviewing women in societies dominated by males (indeed, achieving a 37 percent proportion of women required great effort). Rural residents made up 29 percent of the sample; 58 percent were urban and 13 percent semi-urban. The SES was 26 percent high, 40 percent medium, and 34 percent low (see Appendix B for SES factor loadings and analysis).

A scale to determine level of religiosity was constructed from three questionnaire items: (1) the influence of religious belief on lifestyle, (2) the contribution of religious belief to shaping political views, and (3) the display of religious belief (see Appendices C and D for factor loadings and analysis pertaining to religiosity, text and distribution of the items, and the results of the validity procedure). On that scale, 15 percent had high religious intensity, 20 percent medium, and 65 percent low.

Religiosity and SES variables exhibited consistent relationships with major peace-related attributes that further confirm the validity of the instrument. The results are available in Appendix E.

An Additional Note about the Survey

The method used in this research is known as a “controlled snowball sample,” in which interviewers generally begin with their own acquaintances and obtain additional respondents through a chain of personal referrals. At the same time, the research design attempts to ensure—by means of demographic “quotas” on the

age, gender, education, income, or other characteristics of the respondents as a group—that the sample roughly matches selected features of the overall target population.

This method is not the first or even the second choice of social science. Unlike the best—probabilistic methods—it does not produce a statistically representative sample. And unlike the second-best—simple quota samples of respondents unknown to each other—snowball sample respondents are essentially self-selected. They may therefore be like-minded, rather than a kind of attitudinal cross-section of their group. This may naturally introduce distortions in the results that may not be typical of the general population or even of the specified demographic category.

Despite these significant limitations, the snowball method can be used where other, more scientific, methods are impractical—provided it is always understood that the findings must be interpreted as indicative or suggestive, not as a true quantitative measurement in any genuine or generalizable statistical sense.

In the Middle East in particular, snowball samples have sometimes been used when political or social constraints—intrusive internal security systems, traditional reticence with strangers, and so forth—preclude the use of standard scientific sampling procedures. This is especially relevant when sensitive or controversial questions are part of the survey, which is certainly the case here. The results should therefore be treated with an even-larger-than-usual grain of salt—but they can nevertheless provide useful insight into otherwise obscure corners of these societies.

In the present case, because the interviewers who started the snowball were mostly students at the American University in Beirut, the findings can probably be viewed as most indicative of attitudes among those segments of neighboring Arab societies that are relatively likely to have some contact with such students. This may well bias the results—even if efforts are made to correct this problem—in the direction of younger and more highly politicized subgroups within those societies. That, in turn, may produce an especially negative picture of attitudes toward Israel and the peace process, particularly when the timing of the survey (during the Israeli administration of Binyamin Netanyahu and before the renewal of Syrian–Israeli negotiations, among other

factors) is taken into account. Nevertheless, at a minimum, the survey clearly suggests that there remain substantial pockets of stubborn popular resistance to the prospect of anything more than a temporary and tactical accommodation with the Jewish state, as opposed to the “real peace” and “normalization” that Israelis seek as the price of painful territorial concessions.

Notes

- 1 *Al-Mustaqbal*, May 25, 2000.
- 2 *Nida' al-Watan*, September 13, 1999.
- 3 *Al-Safir*, February 10, 2000.
- 4 *Al-Safir*, November 30, 1996.
- 5 Hazim Saghhiyya, *Difa'an 'an al-Salam* [In defense of peace] (Beirut: Dar al-Nahar li al-Nashr, 1997), p. 64.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 98.
- 7 James W. Vander Zanden, *Social Psychology* (New York: Random House, 1987), pp. 173-174.
- 8 Raymond Cohen, “Negotiations Across the Golan Heights: Culture Gets in the Way,” *Middle East Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1994), p. 45.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 45–46.
- 10 Hilal Khashan, *Partner or Pariah? Attitudes Toward Israel in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan*, Policy Paper 41 (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996).
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- 13 *Ibid.*, pp. 23–33.
- 14 A respondent's attitude toward national government is an important variable, because those holding negative perceptions about their ruling elite are unlikely to endorse their leader's signature to peace treaties.
- 15 “Primary attitudes toward peace” includes (1) leaders' predisposition toward peace, (2) publics' predisposition toward peace, (3) desired scope of relations with Israel, (4) perceptions about durability of peace, (5) reasons for supporting peace and; (6) alternatives to peace.
- 16 “Peace promoters” are those Arabs who approve of exchanging tourists, transacting business, and interacting with Israel and Israelis, and who display empathy toward victims of the Holocaust. The peace promoter variable locates and analyzes cracks in the wall of Arab opposition to interaction with Israelis.

Certain individual attitudes may predict “outgroup” perceptions, or those views that a group maintains toward outsiders. That is to say, the respondents’ own perceptions of their political identity, along with the main agents of their political socialization and their attitudes toward their own national government, might be assumed to affect their perceptions of Jews and the Jewish state. In this way, the strength of pan-Arabism or radical Islam among respondents may be thought to exacerbate respondents’ negative evaluations of Israelis and undermine any predisposition toward peace. By the same token, family socialization and the local media would not be expected to enhance a better understanding of Israelis, nor to promote healthy peace attitudes. Rather, independent sources of information are generally thought to moderate personal views and erode long-held prejudices and stereotypes. Each of these assumptions, as they pertain to Arab outgroup perceptions, will be evaluated in the following paragraphs.

Identity Orientation and Globalization

In view of the steady retreat of pan-Arab nationalism during the past few decades and the divisive nature of Arab Islamic movements, one might hypothesize that territorial nationalism, which began to take shape in the 1960s with the decline of pan-Arabism, would continue to increase in strength up to the present. The results of this research, however, do not substantiate such a hypothesis. Table 1 shows the strength of Islam as a definer of political identity and the weakness of territorial nationalism that competes with regional identification.

Still, an overwhelming majority of the respondents feel Arabs stand to lose from involvement in globalization, as is clear from Table 2. Insecurity, a sense of relative incompetence, and the lack

Q: Your political identity is best expressed in terms of . . .	
(N=1593)	%
Regionalism	13.1
Territorial nationalism	13.4
Arab nationalism	26.1
Islam	42.9
Mediterraneanism	0.9
Unsure	3.6
Total	100.0

Q: Do you believe that Arabs will make significant gains from involving themselves in the globalization process?	
(N=1597)	%
Arabs will make significant gains	18.7
Arabs will endure significant losses	78.1
Unsure	3.3
Total	100.1*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

of a tradition of broad cooperation with outsiders appear to have convinced most respondents to maintain these negative perceptions.

Probing for reasons behind this unusually strong aversion to globalization produced interesting results, as can be seen in Table 3 (next page). Major concerns about globalization relate to fears of perpetuating Arab economic dependency, furthering the erosion of Arab identity, and enhancing Israel's military and economic preponderance in the region. One minute segment of the respondents says that globalization will favorably reflect on prospects for Arab democracy, and another segment associates it with technological gains.

Table 3: Gains from Globalization (part II)

Q: Justify your answer to the question on benefiting from globalization.

(N=1545)	%
Globalization will enhance Arab democracy	7.0
Globalization will benefit Arabs technologically	9.8
Globalization will make Arab economies more competitive	2.5
Globalization will increase Arab economic dependency on advanced societies	28.2
Globalization will destroy Arab identity	26.2
Globalization will legitimize Israel's preponderance in the region	26.3
Total	100.0

Former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres proposed the creation of a Middle Eastern order for economic and security cooperation, marketing his ideas with unwarranted confidence, as though he had never experienced the intricacies of daunting Middle Eastern politics: "Our ultimate goal is the creation of a regional community of nations, with a common market and elected centralized bodies, modeled on the European Community."¹ Peres's vision was not widely shared by this survey's

Table 4: Economic Blocs

Q: People everywhere talk today about the importance of joining regional economic blocs. Relatedly, do you prefer to see your country becoming part of . . .

(N=1600)	%
An Arab economic arrangement	79.5
A Middle Eastern arrangement	12.0
Any arrangement of benefit to us	1.3
No arrangement of any type	2.5
Unsure	4.6
Total	99.9*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

respondents, who preferred an Arab economic arrangement to one that included all Middle Eastern states. These results, which appear in Table 4 (previous page), indicate an unwillingness to cooperate with Israel or Turkey as opposed to Arab countries in the region.

Attitude Formation toward Israel

Have the recent advances in information technology contributed to a measurable change in the formation of public opinion in the Middle East? The survey results would indicate that the impact of information technology on Arabs has been minimal, especially in the formation of independent thought or the altering of views with regard to Israel. One potential reason for this weak influence is that, for the most part, Arabs come into contact primarily with the less-than-controversial aspects of such technology—elements that are not threatening to Arab regimes. Indeed, the responses listed in Table 5 reflect the influence of society—community, family, and leaders—as opposed to technology and the media on the formation of opinion in Arab countries.

Table 5: Sources of Information about the Arab–Israeli Conflict			
Q: From the list that follows, choose and rank order the two most important sources of information on the Arab–Israeli conflict that you feel have shaped your views.			
	1st Choice (N=1600)	2nd Choice (N=1507)	Weighted Scores [†]
	%	%	
Family socialization	65.2	20.6	76
School curricula	15.4	53.7	41
Local media	13.1	16.0	21
International media	6.4	9.6	11
Total	100.1*	99.9*	

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

[†]The weighted scores are determined by combining the values of the first and second choices, with first choices assigned twice as much weight as second choices.

Cross-tabulation in Table 6 illustrates that among respondents who want to cooperate with Israelis—less than 30 percent of a total sample of 1,600—those who say they prefer to evaluate the situation independently before judging it also say they prefer close cooperation with Israelis. Other determinants of attitude formation, however, failed to sway a single respondent to consider “close” cooperation.

One-fifth of the respondents said that nothing will change their perceptions of the conflict with Israel, a response detailed in Table 7. When this result is compared with independent-minded respondents, who constitute only 10 percent of the sample, the influence of religiosity and the scope of entrenched ideas and stereotypes become disturbingly evident. All respon-

	Kind of Cooperation (N=453)			
	Close	Regular	Little	None
	n=87 %	n=111 %	n=129 %	n=126 %
My own independent evaluation	100.0	87.4	9.3	—
My relatives	—	9.9	12.4	17.5
My peers	—	2.7	34.9	30.2
The views of the community	—	—	24.0	8.7
The statements of Arab leaders	—	—	19.4	39.7
Israeli behavior	—	—	—	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.1*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding
Cramer’s V = 0.67

	Level of Religiosity			
	All N=1595 %	High n=246 %	Medium n=316 %	Low n=1033 %
My own evaluation of the situation	10.1	2.4	13.6	10.8
My relatives	26.2	—	7.3	38.2
My peers	13.9	—	7.9	19.0
The views of the community	19.4	—	25.9	22.1
The statements of Arab leaders	5.7	—	4.1	7.6
Israeli behavior	2.5	—	10.1	0.8
Nothing will change my mind	19.4	97.6	19.0	0.9
Unsure	2.8	—	12.0	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	99.9*	100.1*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding
Cramer's V = 0.24
Level of Significance = 0.05

dents who indicated that nothing will change their minds with regard to Israelis reported intense observance of Islamic tenets.

Attitudes toward National Government

Arab publics are often said to manifest negative tendencies toward their national governments, viewing the ruling elites as illegitimate and branding them as insensitive to public needs. In fact, as Table 8 (next page) demonstrates, 83.7 percent of respondents said they were unhappy or very unhappy with the overall performance of their respective governments, while only 13.8 percent were happy or very happy (2.5 percent were unsure). In addition, 88.8 percent of the

respondents in Table 9 indicated that their ruling elites do not work for the best interest of the people. These kinds of perceptions are negative to the point that less than 7 percent of respondents in Table 10 accept the preservation of existing Arab political systems in their present forms. Almost one-fourth of respondents demand the use of force to overthrow Arab ruling elites, an unusually high percentage and a sure sign of simmering societal turmoil. Sample results underscore the relationship between a preference for domestic violence and intense religiosity.

Cross-tabulation findings not shown here reveal that intensely religious respondents who tend to advocate the overthrow of Arab regimes by force also endorse its use against the Jewish state. Although intensely religious respondents choose violence against Israel more often than against their own governments, the majority of them appear to view both as legitimate targets for fundamentalist wrath.

Table 8: Satisfaction with Government	
Q: Are you happy with the overall performance of your government? (N=1600)	
	%
Very happy	6.5
Happy	7.3
Unhappy	38.6
Very unhappy	45.1
Unsure	2.5
Total	100.0

Table 9: Satisfaction with Ruling Elites	
Q: Essentially, the ruling elite in my country work for the best interest of the people . . .	
(N=1592)	
	%
Strongly agree	4.6
Agree	5.2
Disagree	26.4
Strongly disagree	62.4
Unsure	1.4
Total	100.0

Table 10: Attitude toward Domestic Change and Religiosity				
Q: With regard to promoting developmental change, my country's political system should be . . .				
	Level of Religiosity			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1580	n=246	n=316	n=1018
	%	%	%	%
Overthrown forcefully	23.3	98.0	37.7	1.2
Reformed peacefully	68.7	2.0	57.6	89.6
Maintained in present form	6.8	0.0	4.7	9.2
Total	98.8*	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Actual value = 100.1, including 1.3% who responded "unsure"; percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Gamma = 0.54

Level of Significance = 0.01

Note

1 Shimon Peres, *The New Middle East* (Shaftesbury, UK: Element, 1993), p. 36.

The Scope of the Arab–Israeli Conflict

One would expect respondents to see the Arab–Israeli conflict as an essentially Palestinian matter, especially now that the Palestinian Authority has engaged in direct negotiations with the Israelis and concluded agreements with them. To the contrary, however, the vast majority of respondents still see the Palestinian issue as a concern of the Arab and Islamic worlds as a whole.

There is a very strong association between intense religiosity and scope of concern about the Palestinian question. The majority of low-religious-intensity respondents sees the Palestinian question as an Arab, versus Islamic, issue, as presented in Table 1.

Respondents appear divided on the future of Israel—whether it involves the state’s survival and expansion or its eventual demise—with a slight majority anticipating the second possibility. Table 2 indicates that religiosity correlates very strongly with predictive perceptions of Israel’s future. Almost all highly religious respondents express confidence in the eventual disappearance of the state of Israel, while the least religious respondents seem mostly unconvinced that Israel will be eliminated.

Fewer than one-fifth of all respondents express faith in the desire of Israelis to live in peace with their Arab neighbors. The majority of interviewees manifests either worry about Zionist expansionism or antipathy for the racism perceived to be inherent in Zionism. Cross-tabulation in Table 3 (page 20), however, reveals that the majority of respondents with a high socio-economic status (SES) do express confidence in the willingness of Israelis to live in peace with Arabs. This percentage virtually disappears among

Table 1: The Palestinian Question

Q: The Palestinian question essentially concerns . . .

	Level of Religiosity			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1600	n=246	n=319	n=1035
	%	%	%	%
The Islamic World	40.5	98.0	92.8	10.7
The Arab World	45.1	2.0	3.8	68.1
Arab countries bordering Israel	7.4	—	3.4	10.3
The Palestinians	5.1	—	—	7.8
Unsure	1.9	—	—	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding
 Cramer's V = 0.38
 Level of Significance = 0.05

Table 2: The Future of Israel

Q: In the future, Israel will . . .

	Level of Religiosity			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1600	n=598	n=658	n=344
	%	%	%	%
Eventually disappear as a sovereign state	53.9	98.3	31.8	18.9
Survive in its present form	13.4	0.3	10.8	41.0
Expand at the expense of Arabs	30.7	1.2	55.6	34.3
Unsure	2.1	0.2	1.8	5.8
Total	100.1*	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding
 Gamma = 0.31
 Level of Significance = 0.01

Table 3: Projection of Israeli Attitudes toward Arabs

	SES			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1596	n=424	n=634	n=538
	%	%	%	%
An earnest desire to live in peace with their Arab neighbors	18.9	56.4	9.5	0.4
Expansionist tendencies toward Arabs	51.1	26.4	44.5	78.3
Racist attitudes toward Arabs	22.4	16.6	39.6	6.9
Unsure	7.6	0.7	6.5	14.5
Total	100.0	100.1*	100.1*	100.1*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Cramer's V = 0.29

Level of Significance = 0.01

respondents with a low SES, and such results introduce SES as a significant variable in moderating Arab views toward Israelis and in checking radical Islam.

The preceding analysis has most clearly shown the crucial role of religiosity in helping to shape various attitudinal aspects of the Arab–Israeli conflict. But the same results persist when examining the respondents' support for the militant activities of certain Islamic organizations. A large majority supports or strongly supports the militant activities of Islamic groups against the state of Israel. Recall that this survey was conducted during a period of stagnation in the peace talks, during which a general mood of pessimism prevailed regarding the ability or willingness of then-Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu to strike a peace deal with Arabs.

Table 4 illustrates the clear influence of religiosity on survey responses with regard to continuing military operations against

Table 4: Hizballah's Operations against Israel

Q: If Israel pulls out its troops from Lebanon, should Hizballah continue its attacks against Israeli targets?

	Level of Religiosity			
	All N=1600	High n=598	Medium n=658	Low n=344
	%	%	%	%
Yes	44.1	84.8	24.5	10.8
No	53.4	13.2	72.5	86.6
Unsure	2.6	2.0	3.0	2.6
Total	100.1*	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Gamma = 0.43

Level of Significance = 0.01

Table 5: Militant Islamic Activities against Israel

Q: Do you support the militant activities of Islamic groups against the state of Israel?

	SES			
	All N=1561	High n=412	Medium n=623	Low n=526
	%	%	%	%
Strongly support	36.5	10.0	33.4	60.8
Support	50.5	51.0	61.6	36.9
Don't support	6.3	19.9	1.9	1.0
Strongly don't support	6.3	19.2	2.7	0.4
Unsure	0.4	—	0.3	1.0
Total	100.0	100.1*	99.9*	100.1*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Gamma = -0.27

Level of Significance = 0.01

Israeli troops after an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Nearly 85 percent of highly religious respondents approve of continuing such operations, compared to one-fourth of moderately religious respondents and only one-tenth of nonreligious respondents. Similarly, more than 60 percent of high SES respondents support militant anti-Israel activities carried out by Islamists, shown in Table 5 (previous page), as do almost all middle and lower SES respondents.

But Israel is not alone in having to confront the wrath of Islamic fundamentalists. In Table 6, more than 53 percent of respondents indicate support for the militant activities of Islamic groups against Arab governments. Unsurprisingly, these activities are approved much more strongly by those respondents with a low SES. Finally, Table 7 illustrates the strong relationship between degree of religiosity and support for militant Islamic activity against Arab governments.

Table 6: Militant Islamic Activities against Arab Governments (vis-à-vis SES)				
Q: In general, do you support the militant activities of Islamic groups against certain Arab governments?				
	SES			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1510	n=406	n=612	n=492
	%	%	%	%
Strongly support	26.4	12.1	17.8	48.8
Support	26.8	14.3	32.5	29.9
Don't support	19.9	20.2	26.3	11.6
Strongly don't support	26.0	53.0	22.7	7.9
Unsure	1.0	0.5	0.7	1.8
Total	100.1*	100.1*	100.0	100.0
*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding				
Gamma = -0.22				
Level of Significance = 0.01				

Table 7: Militant Islamic Activities against Arab Governments (vis-à-vis Religiosity)

Q: In general, do you support the militant activities of Islamic groups against certain Arab governments?

	Level of Religiosity			
	All N=1510 %	High n=557 %	Medium n=623 %	Low n=330 %
Strongly support	26.4	55.5	10.8	6.7
Support	26.8	39.7	27.8	3.0
Don't support	19.9	2.2	28.9	32.7
Strongly don't support	26.0	1.8	31.1	57.3
Unsure	1.0	0.9	1.4	0.3
Total	100.1*	100.1*	100.0	100.0

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Gamma = 0.48

Level of Significance = 0.01

The Desirability of Peace

This chapter assesses the attitudes of respondents toward peace with the Jewish state. From the survey findings, it is clear that the respondents doubt the sincerity of Israeli leaders with regard to peace, feel disinclined toward peace, manifest a lukewarm predisposition toward cooperation with Israelis, think of peace as a temporary arrangement, tend to support peace for the sake of expedience, or display support for bellicose alternatives to peace. A careful examination of these various dimensions is valuable. Each factor will be analyzed one at a time to determine interrelationships with independent variables, especially religiosity and socio-economic status (SES).

Sincerity in Pursuing Peace

Israeli politicians, it is interesting to note, have not succeeded in convincing the Arab “man on the street” about their sincerity toward achieving peace. The collection of the data for this study occurred during the premiership of Binyamin Netanyahu, against a background of stalled negotiations and widespread pessimism in the Arab world about the genuineness of Netanyahu’s peace intentions. Given his tough negotiating posture, an impartial observer may understand the belief expressed by Arab respondents—seen in Table 1—that the Likud prime minister did not really want peace.

At the time of data collection, Ehud Barak was still a Labor Party aspirant to the premiership. But Barak’s statements appear to have convinced only a minority of respondents about his peace intentions. Bivariate analysis, which identifies the strength of relationship between two variables, shows a significant association between the respondents’ happiness with the performance of their own respective national governments and their convictions about the genuineness of Barak’s intentions toward the peace process.

Table 1: Israeli Leaders' Desire for Peace

Q: Do you think any of these Israeli leaders genuinely wants peace with Arabs? (N=1600)

	Netanyahu	Barak	Peres
	%	%	%
He wants peace	2.6	19.1	18.9
He does not want peace	96.9	75.4	75.4
Unsure	0.4	5.5	5.7
Total	99.9*	100.0	100.0

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Surprisingly, more than 70 percent of all respondents—especially the Lebanese—said they thought then-Syrian president Hafiz al-Asad truly wanted peace with the Jewish state, whereas the majority of Syrian respondents did not think so. This significant discrepancy—seen in Table 2—probably relates to Syria’s state-controlled media and closed society. Although Syrian mass media outlets regularly refer to a “just and comprehensive peace” with Israel, they also give the public the impression that the government is not rushing toward peace at any price, a signal

Table 2: Hafiz al-Asad's Genuine Desire for Peace with Israel

Q: Do you think Hafiz al-Asad genuinely wants peace with Israel?

	Nationality*				
	All	S	L	J	P
	N=1574	n=379	n=398	n=397	n=400
	%	%	%	%	%
He wants peace	70.2	23.2	93.2	78.3	83.8
He doesn't want peace	22.9	56.2	3.8	17.9	15.3
Unsure	6.9	20.6	3.0	3.8	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.1†

*S = Syrians, L = Lebanese, J = Jordanians, P = Palestinians

†Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Cramer's V = 0.27

Level of Significance = 0.01

that may have been interpreted by the majority of Syrians as indicating a lack of interest in peace. Regardless, respondents demand that Israelis commit themselves to peace and expect them to make regular statements to that effect.

One of the results of protracted negative socialization has been the distrust of Israeli peace intentions by people likely even to distrust Arab elites. Because most respondents feel that Israeli leaders are unprepared for peace, it is not surprising that they do not see Israeli citizens as prepared for peace either. In Table 3, respondents report a 13 percent higher rate of perceived Arab inclination toward peace with Israel than perceived Israeli inclination toward peace with Arabs. Almost one-third say Arabs would opt for peace with the Jewish state, by no means an impressive rate in itself, while only 20 percent of respondents believe that Israelis want peace with the Arabs.

Table 3: Israeli and Arab Desire for Peace

Q: Do you think that the majority of Israelis want peace with the Arabs? (N=1600)	%
Majority of Israelis want peace	19.7
Majority of Israelis don't want peace	75.2
Unsure	5.1
Total	100.0

Q: Do you think that the majority of Arabs want peace with Israel? (N=1598)	%
Majority of Arabs want peace	32.4
Majority of Arabs don't want peace	66.6
Unsure	0.9
Total	99.9*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Cross-tabulation results in Table 4 reveal no major differences between the nationality of respondents and their support for peace, as approval ratings ranged from less than 26 percent (Syrians) to 31 percent (Palestinians). If anything, the results both

**Table 4: Acceptance of Peace with Israel,
vis-à-vis Nationality**

Q: Personally, do you want peace with Israelis?

	Nationality*				
	All	S	L	J	P
	N=1599 %	n=399 %	n=400 %	n=400 %	n=400 %
I want peace	28.3	25.6	29.8	27.0	31.0
I don't want peace	69.2	68.4	69.3	70.5	68.8
Unsure	2.4	6.0	1.0	2.5	0.3
Total	99.9 [†]	100.0	10.1 [†]	100.0	100.1 [†]

*S = Syrians, L = Lebanese, J = Jordanians, P = Palestinians

[†]Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Cramer's V = Negligible

Level of Significance = 0.01

point to the consistency of perceptions among Arab publics about peace in the Middle East and attest to the reliability of the data. If nationality does not correlate with a tendency toward peace, SES and religiosity do. There is a spectacular relationship between SES and peace, as seen in Table 5 (next page), with endorsement rates ranging from more than 68 percent at the upper end of the scale to only 5 percent at the lower end. This finding lends itself to several interpretations, all of which seem plausible.

The high support for peace among those with a high SES could mean that the respondents expect to benefit from peace economically; it could also reflect a better understanding of reality, an appreciation for compromise, and the need to bury an inconclusive conflict like the Arab–Israeli dispute in order to move beyond it. (It is worth mentioning that SES correlated very strongly with the sources of information that respondents said determined their views of the conflict. The vast majority of high SES respondents said they evaluate the situation on their own and draw appropriate conclusions independently.)

Table 5: Desire for Peace vis-à-vis SES and Religiosity						
Q: Do you want peace with Israel? (N=1599)						
	SES			Level of Religiosity		
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
	n=424	n=636	n=539	n=598	n=658	n=343
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	68.6	21.1	5.2	19.1	27.1	46.9
No	30.4	78.0	89.4	80.6	72.3	43.4
Unsure	0.9	0.9	5.4	0.3	0.6	9.6
Total	99.9*	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	99.9*
*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding						
Gamma = 0.64			Gamma = -0.47			
Level of Significance = 0.01			Level of Significance = 0.01			

The Durability of Peace

Table 6 shows that most respondents who support peace do not believe in its durability. No matter what reasons contribute toward this pessimism, the fact remains that thinking about peace itself has not led to firm expectations, even among those Arabs agreeable to peace.

As seen in the findings presented in Table 7, around eight-tenths of respondents willing to give reasons say the major obstruction to durable peace emanates from its unbalanced

Table 6: Expected Endurance of Agreements	
Q: If you support peace with Israel, do you believe signed agreements will endure?	
(N=453)	%
Yes	26.0
No	56.5
Unsure	17.4
Total	99.9*
*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding	

**Table 7: Expectation of Broken Peace Agreements,
vis-à-vis SES**

Q: If you say peace agreements will not endure, mention the most important reason.

	SES			
	All N=256 %	High n=208 %	Medium n=36 %	Low n=12 %
Unbalanced peace	78.1	90.4	33.3	—
Islamic militancy	12.5	1.9	52.8	75.0
Jewish militancy	4.3	3.8	8.3	—
Lack of interaction	5.1	3.8	5.6	25.0
Total	100.0	99.9*	100.0	100.0

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Cramer's V = 0.22

Level of Significance = 0.05

nature. This means that respondents—seeing the terms of peace as a reflection of Israeli victories and Arab defeats—tend to treat the peace as a provisional arrangement. More than 90 percent of respondents with a high SES (the respondents most supportive of peace and most likely to view themselves as benefiting from it) warn about the negative repercussions of an unbalanced arrangement on the survival of a peace agreement. Respondents from lower SES backgrounds prefer to focus on the factor of Islamic militancy in contributing to the demise of peace.

Reasons for Supporting Peace

The desire by Arabs for the return of lands occupied by the Israel Defense Forces—including those in the West Bank, southern Lebanon, and the Golan Heights—is quite understandable. A more disturbing note illustrated in Table 8 (next page) is that not even 2 percent of respondents see peace agreements as a first step toward promoting Arab–Israeli relations that would allow peace to endure on the basis of mutual interests and consent.

Table 8: Reasons for Supporting a Peace Agreement

Q: What are your major reasons for supporting a peace agreement with Israel?

(N=450)	%
To recover occupied Arab land	68.0
To block Israeli aggression	11.3
We have no other alternative	12.4
Gives us time to reorganize	6.4
We can eventually build up real peace	1.8
Total	99.9*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Nevertheless, Table 8, while helpful, does not offer a comprehensive indication of all factors contributing toward the respondents' support for peace. It could be reasonable to argue, for instance, that the desire to recover Arab land (reported by 68 percent of respondents) does not necessarily preempt the presence of other, possibly positive, reasons for supporting peace. But the results appearing in Table 9 immediately dismiss this likelihood. When asked if they would continue to support peace if the balance of power were to tip in the Arabs' favor, only 12 percent of respondents said yes. Similarly, as Table 10 indicates, 82.2 percent of respondents would actually support the use of force against Israel if the Arab military situation permits.

Table 9: Support for Peace if Balance of Power Shifts

Q: Would you continue to support peace if the balance of power were to tip in favor of Arabs?

(N=451)	%
Yes	12.0
No	81.2
Unsure	6.9
Total	100.1*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Table 10: Use of Force Against Israel

Q: Would you approve or disapprove of the use of force against Israel if the Arab military situation permits?

(N=448)	%
Approve	82.2
Disapprove	13.6
Unsure	4.2
Total	100.0

Alternatives to Peace

A compelling question presents itself as a consequence of both strong opposition to peace by the majority of respondents and wavering approval by the remaining minority: What do the respondents want instead of peace? As reflected in Table 11 (next page), about 80 percent want the Arab–Israeli conflict to go on; only 13 percent think the time has arrived to heal the wounds of a pernicious conflict and commit it to the past. Table 11 also shows that once again SES markedly separates the respondents' perceptions. High-income respondents are divided, with a slight majority wanting to continue the conflict rather than put it to rest. Middle and lower SES groups, however, are still deeply supportive of perpetuating the conflict rather than finding its resolution.

But respondents opposed to peace disagree on how to translate their next move, as illustrated in Table 12 (next page). Although more than half demand preparation for another war, the fact that the rest of the respondents fall short of thinking belligerently should be seen as a somewhat comforting sign; thirty years ago, almost all Arabs would have advocated war. Bivariate analysis, in this case undertaken between religiosity and strategy for confronting Israel, finds that religiosity is a predictor of this kind of strategy. An overwhelming majority of highly religious respondents (nearly 83 percent) implore Arabs to prepare for the eventuality of yet another war in the Middle East. The percentage drops sharply as the level of religiosity declines.

Table 11: Continuing the Conflict				
Q: The Arab–Israeli conflict has cost the belligerents many lives and squandered valuable resources that could have been invested in modernization. Do you feel it is time for Arabs to put this conflict behind them and work for a better future?				
	SES			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1594	n=423	n=634	n=537
	%	%	%	%
It's time to heal the wounds	13.1	43.0	3.8	0.6
The conflict must go on	78.9	53.2	87.7	88.8
Unsure	8.0	3.8	8.5	10.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gamma = 0.31				
Level of Significance = 0.01				

Table 12: Strategy for Confronting Israel				
Q: If you don't want peace with Israelis, how do you want Arabs to deal with them?				
	Level of Religiosity			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1101	n=577	n=420	n=104
	%	%	%	%
Prepare for the eventuality of war with Israelis	52.3	82.7	21.2	11.5
Strengthen Arab posture to lay the ground for a balanced peace	21.8	01.7	34.3	82.7
Just boycott Israelis	24.0	14.7	41.0	5.8
Unsure	1.9	0.9	3.6	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.1*	100.0
*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding				
Gamma = 0.34				
Level of Significance = 0.01				

Of those respondents who do approve of the use of military force against Israel, it is evident from Table 13 that the great majority would like to see the destruction of the Jewish state. Once again, the highly religious respondents seem far more inclined to endorse this option than are their less religious counterparts.

Table 13: Use of Force against Israel				
Q: How much force should be used against Israel?				
	Level of Religiosity			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=941	n=543	n=335	n=63
	%	%	%	%
Force to recover land lost in 1967	27.8	2.0	60.9	74.6
Force to destroy the state of Israel	65.5	92.6	31.9	9.5
As much force as Arab armies have	6.7	5.3	7.2	15.9
Total	100.0	99.9*	100.0	100.0
*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding				
Cramer's V = 0.32				
Level of Significance = 0.05				

Only one-fifth of respondents believe that Israel has something to offer the Arabs in their struggle to develop economically (see Table 1). As is clear from Table 2, the sweeping majority of the respondents (85 percent) nurtures the opinion that economic cooperation will be more beneficial to Israelis than to Arabs.

Table 1: Economic Relations with Israel	
Q: Do Arabs need to develop economic relations with Israel? (N=1577)	
	%
Yes, Israel has a lot to offer to Arabs	20.5
No, Arabs can do without Israeli know-how	77.5
Unsure	2.0
Total	100.0

Conspiracy thinking features prominently in respondents' perceptions of Israeli objectives regarding peace in the Middle East. Table 3 provides information on six objectives attributed to Israelis by the respondents, five of which suggest conspiratorial intentions. The weighted scores list the five negative perceptions of Israeli intent in the following order: economic dominance, control of water, incitement of Arab conflicts, establishment of "Greater Israel," and the installation of puppet regimes. These fears do not appear to be isolated reactions, but rather a manifestation of rooted perceptions, duly supported by an extensive body of Arab literature.

More than three-fourths of the respondents dismiss the possibility of future Arab-Jewish interaction. One college student expressed the view that "the deep past of Arab-Jewish rela-

tionships is dead, but the recent past is very much alive.”¹ Arabs as a whole seem either uninterested in cooperation or reluctant to believe that Israel would sincerely assist the Arabs.

Table 2: Beneficiaries of Economic Relations	
Q: Who would benefit more from economic relations between Arabs and Israel?	
(N=1600)	%
Both would benefit equally	4.7
We would benefit more	6.6
Israel would benefit more	85.3
Unsure	3.5
Total	100.1*
*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding	

Table 3: Israel's Peace Objectives				
Q: How do you perceive Israel's objectives concerning peace with Arabs? (rank order the three most important objectives)				
	1st	2nd	3rd	Weighted Scores [†]
	N=1596	N=1418	N=1310	
	%	%	%	
Economic dominance	56.6	14.9	16.6	68
Control of water resources	13.2	36.4	24.7	38
Incitement of inter-Arab conflicts	12.5	21.5	16.0	27
Establish "Greater Israel"	6.7	8.1	30.7	18
Genuine peace	5.7	12.1	10.0	14
Create puppet regimes	5.3	7.1	2.1	9
Total	100.0	100.1*	100.1*	
*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding				
[†] The weighted scores are determined by combining the values of the first, second, and third choices, with first choices assigned twice as much weight as second choices and four times as much weight as third choices.				

Virtually none of the respondents with a medium or lower socio-economic status (SES) rank say they anticipate close Arab–Israeli cooperation (see Table 4). Arabs with higher SES have access to richer sources of information and are immersed in more cosmopolitan environments, leading them to accept a more permissive political socialization process.

Table 4: Arab–Israeli Cooperation vis-à-vis SES

Q: Do you see the possibility for genuine Arab–Israeli cooperation?	SES			
	All N=1600 %	High n=424 %	Medium n=636 %	Low n=540 %
I see it	21.3	71.0	5.0	1.5
I don't see it	76.0	23.6	93.9	96.1
Unsure	2.7	5.4	1.1	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gamma = 0.54				
Level of Significance = 0.01				

Table 5: Reasons Why Arab–Israeli Cooperation Is Impossible

Q: If you don't see the possibility of Arab–Israeli cooperation, state why. (N=1216)	%
Israel doesn't want to become part of the Middle East	81.6
Israel wants to make the Middle East part of Israel	8.8
Cooperation will advance Arabs at the expense of Israel	1.3
At heart, Arabs are opposed to it	8.3
Total	100.0

Respondents who express no hope for the possibility of regional cooperation articulate a basic grievance against Israeli society: it does not seem quite ready to integrate into the Middle East. This perception is so intense that, as seen in Table 5 (previous page), about 82 percent affirm the statement, a factor which marginalizes other explanations for the low likelihood of Arab–Israeli cooperation. In more detailed data than presented here, this view was endorsed by more than 96 percent of respondents with a low or medium degree of religious intensity, while those of high religious intensity were more likely to say either that Israel wants to make the Middle East part of Israel or that Arabs oppose Arab–Israeli cooperation at heart.

Economic underdevelopment has not deterred Arabs from interacting with much stronger economies, even when the balance of trade tilted sharply against them. Nevertheless, almost 70 percent of respondents seem very hesitant to waive whatever reservations they have about economic interaction with Israel, as evident in Table 6. (Detailed data indicate that those most willing to waive their reservations are individuals of high SES.)

**Table 6: Willingness to Waive Reservations
about Economic Relations**

Q: Let us accept the argument raised by some Arabs that their countries' economies are much too weak to interact with Israel's in the event of peace. Nevertheless, economic weakness has not prevented Arabs from interacting with countries whose economies are obviously stronger than Israel's. In view of this reality, would you be willing to waive whatever reservations you may have about economic interaction with Israel in the event of comprehensive peace with the Arabs?

(N=1589)	%
Will waive reservations	29.3
Will not waive reservations	68.5
Unsure	2.1
Total	99.9*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Arab apprehensions about economic interaction with Israel most strongly reflect fears about Israeli economic dominance; these and other misgivings are listed in Table 7. Ranked second is the conspiratorial notion of Israel's desire to prevent Arabs from modernizing their economies, a popular idea in many Arab circles.

Table 7: Reasons for Unwillingness to Waive Reservations

Q: If unwilling to waive reservations about economic interaction with Israel, could you state your reasons? (state the two most important reasons in ranking order)

	1st N=1088	2nd N=1046	Weighted Scores [†]
	%	%	
Israel wants to dominate economically	47.6	30.3	63
Israel will never allow Arabs to modernize their economies	19.8	19.6	30
Israel's economic structure is incompatible with Arab needs	18.5	21.6	29
Israeli economy is not as competitive as Western or Far Eastern economies	14.2	28.5	28
Total	100.1*	100.0	

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

[†]The weighted scores are determined by combining the values of the first and second choices, with first choices assigned twice as much weight as second choices.

Note

- 1 Comment made to the author during a workshop on liberalism sponsored by the German Frederick Naumann Stiftung of Germany's Free Democratic Party, October 1-3, 1999, at the Bologna mountain resort near Beirut.

The results of this study indicate that respondents do not favor economic normalization with Israel, do not exhibit enthusiasm for its active peace movement, and tend to eschew all aspects of interaction with Israelis. Wanting peace is one thing, but translating it into a set of rewarding relationships is another. Fewer than one-fifth of respondents amenable to peace accept the development of close cooperation between Arabs and Israelis. The other respondents split nearly evenly among the proponents of regular,¹ little, or no cooperation. The text and distribution of responses appear in Table 1. These findings lend credence to the claim that Arabs want peace but would prefer to avoid contact with anything related to the Jewish state.

Q: If you want peace with Israelis, what kind of relations would you like to see between Israel and Arabs countries?	
(N=453)	%
Close cooperation on a neighborly basis	19.2
Regular cooperation	24.5
Little cooperation	28.5
No cooperation	27.8
Total	100.0

Respondents appear equally divided on the subject of encouraging Israel's peace movement, as is clear in Table 2 (next page). Only 48.4 percent think Arabs should encourage the movement—a percentage that falls to 3.5 percent among those with high religious intensity but reaches 75.7 percent among those with low religious intensity.

Table 2: Support for Israel's Peace Movement

Q: Israel has a strong peace movement. Do you think Arabs should encourage this trend in Israeli society?

	Level of Religiosity			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1594	n=597	n=655	n=342
	%	%	%	%
Arabs should encourage this trend	48.4	3.5	75.0	75.7
Arabs should not encourage this trend	50.9	96.0	24.7	22.2
Unsure	0.8	0.5	0.3	2.0
Total	100.1*	100.0	100.0	99.9*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Gamma = -0.36

Level of Significance = 0.01

As is clear from Tables 3 and 4 (Table 4, page 42), respondents were generally unwilling to involve themselves in patterns of interactive behavior that could create familiarity between Arabs and Jews and thaw the ice of mutual misunderstanding. In fact, these responses do not reflect an improvement from the poll conducted in 1994 (described in the introduction to this study). Respondents strongly refuse to spend their vacation in Israel, prefer not to take advanced career courses there, express little interest in hosting Israeli visitors on Arab land (in this case, the strongest support—nearly 40 percent approval—came from respondents of low religiosity, a percentage detailed in a more complex breakdown of the data), and eschew acquainting themselves with aspects of Jewish life (although about 65 percent of low religiosity respondents expressed some degree of interest, also reflected in more refined data). Only a small minority of respondents report interest in learning Hebrew, and a similarly small number would take the time to study Jewish history. Israeli radio and TV stations seem to hold little interest for the majority of respondents.

Table 3: Israeli Visitors				
Q: What would be your reaction to seeing Israeli visitors in your country?				
	Level of Religiosity			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1584	n=596	n=654	n=334
	%	%	%	%
I would welcome them	12.9	1.7	9.8	39.2
They would anger me	32.2	53.9	28.4	0.9
They would sadden me	31.6	28.9	47.2	5.7
I would react indifferently	23.3	15.6	14.5	54.2
Total	100.0	100.1*	99.9*	100.0

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Cramer's V = 0.36

Level of Significance = 0.01

Respondents also showed limited readiness to cooperate with Israelis on humanitarian affairs. More than three-fourths would not accept Israeli offers of assistance during emergencies or natural disasters, as illustrated in Table 5 (page 43). This finding is probably more revealing of cultural differences than it is of negative attitudes, however. Accepting help is an admission of need that many Arabs, in their consistent demand for dignified solutions to problems, may find demeaning. Aid coming from Jews, the most hated enemy of Arabs for many decades, would only further expose the Arab self-perception of weakness. This is apparently not the case, however, for the two-thirds of Palestinian respondents who confirm their willingness to accept Israeli assistance. The more than three decades of frequent interaction between Palestinians and Israelis must have enhanced mutual familiarity, a factor that makes it less difficult for Palestinians to accept assistance. There is also a psychological dimension to the matter. Palestinians feel that Israelis "owe" them because the creation of the Jewish state transformed Palestinians into refugees, most still living under bleak conditions.

Table 4: Willingness to Interact with Israelis

Q: Would you . . .	Yes %	No %	Unsure %	Total %
Spend your vacation in Israel? (N=1600)	25.9	72.6	1.5	100.0
Attend a career development course in Israel? ^a (N=1321)	15.2	43.1	41.7	100.0
Consider sending your children to study in Israel? ^b (N=1499)	45.6	50.6	3.7	99.9*
Be interested in acquainting yourself with certain aspects of life in Israel? ^c (N=1598)	18.8	60.3	21.0	100.1*
Be willing to learn Hebrew? ^c (N=1599)	10.6	88.8	0.6	100.0
Be willing to look into Jewish history from an Israeli perspective? ^c (N=1578)	10.1	75.9	13.9	99.9*
Listen to Israeli radio broadcast? ^d (N=1467)	10.8	89.2	—	100.0
Watch Israeli TV stations? ^d (N=1179)	21.8	78.3	—	100.1*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

^aAnswers were converted from those on the original questionnaire: Yes = Certainly; No = Never; Unsure = Possibly, Only if I have to, and Unsure

^bOriginal answers: Yes = I believe I would, I would if they cannot get a better offer, I would only if they receive a scholarship; No = Never; Unsure = Unsure

^cOriginal answers: Yes = Certainly, Possibly; No = Never; Unsure = Unlikely, Unsure

^dOriginal answers: Yes = Regularly, Occasionally, Rarely; No = Never

Table 5: Acceptance of Israeli Assistance

Q: Should your political leaders accept Israeli offers of assistance in the event of a natural disaster in your country?

	All	Palestinians	All other
	N=1578	n=398	n=1180
	%	%	%
Yes	8.2	26.4	2.0
Only if it is absolutely necessary	14.5	40.5	5.8
No	74.3	31.4	88.8
Unsure	3.0	1.8	3.4
Total	100.0	100.1*	100.0

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

On a more positive note, Table 6 shows that almost 58 percent of Arab respondents would provide assistance to Israelis should they become distressed by natural disaster (including those who would do so “only if absolutely necessary”), although highly religious respondents appeared less forthcoming in this hypothetical scenario than did the less religious.

Table 6: Provision of Relief Aid to Israelis in Distress

Q: Should Israelis receive assistance from Arabs if they ask for it in the event of a natural disaster in their country?

	Level of Religiosity			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1600	n=598	n=658	n=344
	%	%	%	%
Yes	25.9	12.7	34.8	32.0
Only if absolutely necessary	31.9	17.2	39.5	42.7
No	34.3	67.7	19.6	4.4
Unsure	7.9	2.3	6.1	20.9
Total	100.0	99.9*	100.0	100.0

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

A truly disturbing survey finding is that very few respondents express empathy for the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Nearly three-fourths of nonreligious respondents say they empathize with Jews concerning the Holocaust, as opposed to less than three percent of the highly and moderately religious respondents, as illustrated by Table 7. This could be attributed, for the most part, to a popular idea in the Arab world that the Holocaust never took place, an opinion held by 53 percent of some 1291 respondents who said they do not empathize with Jews (see Table 7, second question). Arab conventional wisdom has it that the Holocaust exists only in the minds of Zionist leaders who supposedly like to use imaginary Jewish suffering to promote their schemes. Other respondents withholding empathy from Jews say they do so because they see Jews as the enemy of Arabs (14.6 percent), and another group argues that Jews were conspiring against Germany (32.4 percent).

Table 7: Empathy toward Holocaust Victims				
Q: Do you empathize with the Jews, especially the victims of the Holocaust?				
		Level of Religiosity		
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1575	n=581	n=652	n=342
	%	%	%	%
Yes	17.7	2.1	2.9	72.5
No	82.3	97.9	97.1	27.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gamma = -0.59				
Level of Significance = 0.01				
Q: If answer is "No," state why.				
	(N=1291)			%
	The Holocaust never occurred			53.0
	The Jews were conspiring against Germany			32.4
	They are my enemy			14.6
	Total			100.0

Many respondents indicate that they would reconsider opposition to peace if they receive assurances that it will benefit the Arabs, a result reflected in Table 8. Not surprisingly, highly religious individuals were less willing to reconsider. As Table 9 indicates, about half of respondents would reconsider their opposition to interaction with Israelis if Arab countries enhanced their power position in relation to Israel.

Table 8: Reconsidering Opposition to Peace				
Q: If you oppose peace with Israel but receive assurances that it will economically benefit the Arabs, will you then reconsider your opposition?				
	Level of Religiosity			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1106	n=480	n=466	n=160
	%	%	%	%
I will reconsider	49.8	24.4	69.7	68.1
I won't reconsider	48.4	73.5	28.5	30.6
Unsure	1.8	2.1	1.7	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	99.9*	100.0
*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding				
Gamma = -0.32				
Level of Significance = 0.01				

Table 9: Enhanced Arab Power and Support for Arab-Israeli Interaction	
Q: Presume that Arab countries enhance their power position in relation to Israel. Would that motivate you to waive whatever reservations you may have about interaction between Arabs and Israelis?	
(N=1236)	%
Yes, it would motivate me	49.4
No, it wouldn't motivate me	47.9
Unsure	2.8
Total	100.1*
*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding	

It seems that many more respondents accept the principle of Arab–Israeli economic cooperation than accept personal involvement with it. This is not an unusual finding. Endorsement of a principle normally precedes its widespread application. Table 10 reveals that less than 19 percent of all respondents appear ready for direct personal participation with Israelis as individuals. Of those respondents with a high socioeconomic status (SES), nearly half express favorable inclination toward doing business with Israelis, as opposed to only 10 percent of medium SES respondents and less than 5 percent of low SES respondents. If respondents are assured that they will derive personal gain from cooperation with Israel, their rate of support jumps to about 58 percent (see Table 11). Interestingly, only 8 percent of highly religious respondents would be induced by personal gain, whereas nearly all less religious counterparts register their acceptance under those terms.

Table 10: Transacting Business with Israelis

Q: In the event of comprehensive peace, would you be interested in transacting business with individual Israelis?

	SES			
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1590	n=421	n=633	n=536
	%	%	%	%
Yes	18.5	49.2	10.1	4.3
No	79.5	50.1	88.5	91.2
Unsure	2.0	0.7	1.4	4.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Gamma = 0.62

Level of Significance = 0.01

Finally, as Table 12 illustrates, nearly 55 percent of respondents indicate that financially rewarding peace deals between Israel and other Arab countries would prompt them to endorse cooperation.

Table 11: Opposition to Peace Despite Personal Benefits				
Q: If you still oppose peace but receive assurances that it will benefit you personally, will you then reconsider your opposition?				
		Level of Religiosity		
	All	High	Medium	Low
	N=1104	n=482	n=474	n=148
	%	%	%	%
I will reconsider	57.9	7.9	95.6	100.0
I won't reconsider	40.6	88.6	4.4	—
Unsure	1.5	3.5	—	—
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gamma = -0.65				
Level of Significance = 0.05				

Table 12: Opposition to Peace Despite Benefits to Arab Countries	
Q: Assume you are opposed to peace, but the Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanese conclude financially rewarding terms for peace with Israel. Would you then support opening a new chapter of relations with the Jewish state?	
(N=1102)	%
Yes	54.5
No	43.6
Unsure	1.8
Total	99.9*
*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding	

Note

- 1 In terms of relations with Israelis, “regular cooperation” can be defined simply as lukewarm relationships between countries that have few interests in common. A few years ago, a Western journalist asked Syrian president Hafiz al-Asad about his ideas on relations between his country and Israel in the event of peace. Asad said he wanted regular relations, similar to those between Syria and Panama.

Chapter 6

The Role of the United States

Arabs know about the special relationship between the United States and Israel, and they realize that there is very little they can do to erode it. When respondents were asked to assess the U.S. role in mediating peace talks between Arabs and Israelis, as shown in Table 1, only 9 percent said the United States performs as an honest broker, and fewer than 7 percent—all of whom were West Bank Palestinians (a fact not reflected in the table)—argued that the United States is actually on the Arabs' side.

Q: How do you see the role of the United States in mediating the peace talks between Arabs and Israelis?	
(N=1588)	%
The U.S. performs as an honest broker	9.0
The U.S. is more on the side of Israel	83.1
The U.S. is more on the side of Arabs	6.4
Unsure	1.5
Total	100.0

Their unfavorable assessment of America's role has not convinced most respondents that Washington should cease to involve itself in the peace talks, however, as Table 2 reflects. Respondents probably feel that the Arab bargaining position, weak to begin with, would become even weaker without a U.S. presence at the negotiating table.

There is an inverse relationship between religiosity and the desire for continuation of the U.S. role in mediation, an expected finding that conforms to the pattern of responses throughout this study.

Table 2: Continuation of U.S. Involvement in the Peace Process

Q: Should the United States continue to involve itself in the peace process?

	Level of Religiosity			
	All N=1581 %	High n=590 %	Medium n=651 %	Low n=340 %
The U.S. should continue	61.8	36.9	69.4	90.3
The U.S. shouldn't continue	36.4	62.5	29.3	4.4
Unsure	1.8	0.5	1.2	5.3
Total	100.0	99.9*	99.9*	100.0

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Gamma = -0.68

Level of Significance = 0.01

If the results of this survey reveal anything, it is that the march toward peace between Arabs and Israelis is proceeding, despite numerous hurdles, at a faster rate than the ability of Arab societies to come to terms with the dramatic changes on the ground. In short, as a ranking official in the Lebanese Phalangist party noted, Arab ruling elites seem more ready to accept peace with the Jewish state than are their populations. Not accustomed to gradual peace agreements, Arab publics do not seem to be able to make a distinction between peace and surrender, and therefore demand a full and comprehensive peace, or none at all.¹ But it is with the rapidly unfolding events and leadership transitions in the region that one begins to reconsider the merits of peace agreements that do not provide a mechanism for fundamentally transforming public, non-elite attitudes toward peace—a transformation that is actually dependent, to a certain extent, on the behavior of Arab leaderships.

Many of the findings of this study suggest that a great deal of anger and frustration exists within Arab societies. Much of this frustration may stem from unfulfilled political demands, but it is exacerbated by the structural and behavioral problems of Arab economies and political regimes. From the survey it is clear that improved economic conditions and socio-economic status (SES) promote a positive attitudinal shift in thinking about peace; Arab leaders may have busy agendas on the home front, but they must give attention to facilitating the appropriate, painful, and long-overdue reform necessary to qualify their societies to become an integral part of mutually rewarding economic interaction. Their work involves introducing real political, social, and educational reform, in addition to promoting economic development.

On the other hand, the survey seems to indicate that intense religiosity keeps the greater part of Arab society focused on confrontation and deeply enmeshed in the literature that keeps it alive and well. European countries have succeeded in burying the legacy of war and forging strong bonds of economic and even political cooperation because they were unencumbered by atavistic differences with regard to religious belief or intensity. A wealth of ideological trends that traveled freely across the continent, despite the short-lived fascistic fury, eventually brought distinct nationalities together and paved the way for sound interaction based on respect for and understanding of the need to work together. Arab societies should learn from the European experience. They must break the hold of extremism and erode the monopoly they allow religion to have on truth and righteousness. This means introducing unrestrained ideological debate into the public arena and determining the exact location of religion in society by removing it from the public domain. Islam, as a belief system, must become a private matter, so as to make space for mundane beliefs.

Many Arabs argue, not incorrectly, that Israel is an ethnic rather than a liberal democracy. But the spectrum of Israel's political life is quite broad, having no equivalent anywhere in the Arab world. Favorable transition toward this kind of openness must also occur in Arab countries in the direction of rational and independent thinking, as well as acceptance of ideological diversity. Arab regimes must facilitate the rise of a post-historical Middle East and revoke the ethnic and religious fractiousness that has only brought disaster to the region. They must fully empower their populations to express themselves freely and create for them the conditions necessary to access unfiltered and uncensored information. Indeed, attitudinal and perceptive change in the Arab world requires an informational breakthrough that attenuates the stronghold of traditional sources of information and socialization on the vast majority of Arabs.

It goes without saying that building peace in the region is a difficult process. True, there are pockets of achievement and shaky bridges of hope, but the challenges are still real and fundamental:

not so much the abstract notion of how to make peace work, but how to get Arabs to modify the paradigms through which they see themselves and construct images of the world around them—including their view of Israelis. As the sometimes disappointing results of this study illustrate, peace will take root only if Arabs rethink their goals and redefine many of their operational variables. If Arab leaders—in particular, the currently emerging younger generation—implement these fundamental changes conscientiously, the true “peace of the people” will come to the Middle East.

Note

- 1 Interview with Karim Paqradi, deputy head of the Lebanese Phalangist Party, in *al-'Alam*, no. 8, August 1999, p. 17.

Appendix A:

The Role of Poets in Arab Society

The lack of civil societies, along with the legacy of defeat, official overbearing, high illiteracy rates, and deep-seated emotionalism found in much of the Arab world today, all foster reliance on traditional—mostly vocal—forms of communication. Poetry—political poetry in particular—constitutes a very important component of modern Arab society. Arab poets have often used language, interacted with it in highly political ways, and easily disseminated it in the poetry-responsive Arab society, in large part to keep alive the conflict with Israel. But in the same way that even non-political Arab poetry often sacrifices content and meaning for the sake of expressive and rhythmic verses, Arab political poetry tends to discard accurate descriptive material for the sake of maximum impact, even if misinformation is introduced, as is often the case.

The fame and recognition of an Arab poet today rests on whether he or she has left a mark on a relevant pan-Arab political issue, particularly the conflict with Israel. Immediately following the establishment of the state of Israel, 'Umar Abu Risha, a Syrian poet of Lebanese origin, wrote an influential poem entitled "Ba'd al-Nakba" (In the Aftermath of the Catastrophe). The following passage sheds light on the Arab mood at the time:

O beloved Homeland! Have you been panged by a bloody strangulation?

It is the blow that has been delivered to my pride that prevents my wounds from healing

By what right does Israel's banner wave over the Church of Nativity and the Dome of the Rock?

How could you turn a blind eye to disgrace, nor defend yourself
in the face of accusations?

Haven't you always been one to defend your integrity to the
death?¹

Disgrace, activated by injured Arab pride, seemed to bother Abu Risha most. His urging of Arabs to avenge the loss of Palestine appeared motivated more by the desire to restore face than by the desire to reinstate the Palestinians. The issue of injustice done to Arabs, and the need to restore balance and self-respect (usually manifested in tribal terminology), invites Arab anger. Poet Mahmud Darwish, formerly an Arab Israeli citizen who now divides his time between Amman and the West Bank city of Ramallah, graphically describes his inner feelings in the following verses from "Bitaqat Hawiyya" (Identity Card):

I am not a hater, nor am I a looter

But I will devour those who do me wrong

Do not underestimate my hunger and my anger!²

Darwish's verses, written in the 1970s, invite the critical reader to draw the conclusion that injustice legitimates raw retaliation; in this way, he sanctions irrational behavior as well as the triumph of atavistic identifications.

The picture becomes clearer if one realizes that emotion, not the realistic evaluation of a situation, contributes to the role of Arab poetry in shaping Arab views on conflict with the Jewish state. The prominent Lebanese poet Bshara 'Abd Allah al-Khury, in a late 1960s poem entitled "Sada al-Qubulat" (Echo of Kisses), uses nostalgia and unquenchable emotions to punctuate the text. These betray a tendency toward the perpetuation of conflict supplied by an inundation of emotionalism, as the following verses suggest:

Palestine! Ye temple of memories

Palestine! Ye dream of prophets. . . .

I am all unquenchable emotions for you. . . .³

Nizar Qabbani, the Syrian poet who won unrivaled acclaim throughout the Arab World for his poems on love and women, also received tremendous respect for his writings on the Arab-Israeli conflict. In an early 1980s piece emphasizing the Arab character of Jerusalem, Qabbani writes about blossoming orange trees and rejoicing wheat plants, suggesting the imminence of Jerusalem's recapture by Arab armies:

Ye Jerusalem . . . my city

Ye Jerusalem . . . my sweetheart

Tomorrow, the orange trees shall blossom

And the green wheat plants shall rejoice

And playing children return

And fathers and sons reunite.⁴

In a much more bellicose tone, Qabbani pays tribute to the Palestinian movement carrying out attacks on Israel in a piece entitled "Manshurat Fida'iyya 'ala Judran Israe'il" (Guerilla Leaflets on Israeli Walls). He advises Israelis to abandon Palestine, because their fight against the Arabs is a losing battle. He stresses the importance of Arab hatred and wrath in sealing the fate of the Jewish state. He warns Israelis against being arrogant because of their victory in the June 1967 War, arguing that the defeat of Arab armies has not diminished Arab hatred for Israel's existence, nor the determination of Arab publics to uproot it. Qabbani does not limit his verses to the expression of wishes for Israel's destruction; rather, seemingly confident that the elimination of the Jewish state conforms to the path of history, he resorts to slander in order to discredit Israel's very existence. The following verses, written in the late 1970s, vividly illustrate Qabbani's thoughts:

Ye shall not flee from my wrath . . .

There is a rifle in every household

From the banks of the Nile to the Euphrates . . .

Oh ye Children of Israel,
Don't be so arrogant
The clock may stop
But it will restart . . .
You have conquered the armies . . .
But you haven't conquered the feelings
You have cut off the trees,
But the roots have remained
What's between us doesn't end in a year, or five, or ten, or a
millenium
The battles of liberation shall last very long. . . .
You are besieged by grudge and hate
Your peace is in shatters
Your home is surrounded, like a whore house
We shall march toward you in order to correct the path of
history.⁵

In an undated poem, "Muhakamat Nazi" (Trial of a Nazi)—which ridicules the trial of Adolf Eichmann, a Nazi official whom an Israeli court found responsible for exterminating millions of European Jews during World War II—poet Rashid Salim al-Khury calls on all nations to put an end to the Jewish political entity. Describing Jews in psychopathic terms, he refers to them as the enemy of all humanity, thus vindicating their eviction from the Holy Land:

There shall be no peace till the Earth rids itself of the menacing nuisance

Its livelihood is fueled by an insatiable desire for malice.⁶

As these examples illustrate, contemporary Arabic poetry, although no scientific indicator of public opinion, does provide a window through which elite attitudes can be discerned—a window that reveals the preeminent place currently maintained by anti-Israel polemic in the public rhetoric of Arab society.

Notes

- 1 'Umar Abu Risha, "Ba'd al-Nakba," [In the aftermath of the catastrophe] in Salim al-Bustani, ed., *al-Adab al-'Arabi* [Arabic literature] (Beirut: al-Markaz al-Tarbawi li al-Buhuth wa al-Inma', 1998), p. 161.
- 2 Mahmud Darwish, *Diwan Mahmud Darwish* [Mahmud Darwish's collection of poems], vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-'Awda, 1977), p. 127.
- 3 Bshara 'Abd Allah al-Khury, *Shi'r al-Akhtal al-Saghir* [The poems of al-Akhtal al-Saghir] (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1972), p. 299.
- 4 Nizar Qabbani, *al-A'mal al-Siyasiyya al-Kamila* [The complete political works], vol. 3 (Beirut: Manshurat Nizar Qabbani, 1983), pp. 159–164.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 165–198.
- 6 Rashid Salim al-Khury, *Diwan al-Qarawi* [al-Qarawi's collection of poems] (Sao Paulo: Matba'at Safadi al-Tijariyya, n.d.), p. 459.

Appendix B:

SES Items and Factor Loadings

Education (N=1600)	%
College	37.5
Secondary/vocational	43.8
Elementary or less	18.8
Total	100.1*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Occupation (N=1600)	%
Professional	27.0
Semi-professional/vocational	46.8
Laborer/farmer	26.3
Total	100.1*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding

Income (N=1600)	%
High	22.3
Medium	36.9
Low	40.8
Total	100.0

Factor Analysis Using Varimax Rotation

Education	0.64
Occupation	0.56
Income	0.49

Appendix C:

Religiosity Items and Factor Loadings

How do you feel about the devoutness of your religiosity?

(N=1600)	%
Highly religious	32.9
Religious	39.3
Irreligious	18.6
Highly irreligious	09.2
Total	100.0

How often do you perform your regular religious obligations?

(N=1600)	%
Regularly	43.6
Occasionally	29.0
Rarely	16.6
Never	10.8
Total	100.0

Factor Analysis Using Varimax Rotation

Devoutness	0.43
Obligations	0.37

Appendix D:

Intense Religiosity Items and Factor Loadings

To what extent does religious belief influence your lifestyle?

(N=1600)	%
To a great extent	25.1
To a moderate extent	29.0
To a little extent	25.6
None	20.3
Total	100.0

Does religious belief contribute to shaping your general political views?

(N=1600)	%
Strong contribution	23.6
Moderate contribution	26.4
Little contribution	19.7
None	30.3
Total	100.0

Do you tend to display your religious belief?

(N=1600)	%
Always	10.7
Frequently	14.4
Infrequently	31.0
Never	43.9
Total	100.0

Factor Analysis Using Varimax Rotation

Lifestyle	0.45
Views	0.41
Display	0.34

The ten interviewers collaborated with the principal investigator in previous public opinion polls on the same topic that resulted in four publications.¹ All of them had previously participated in at least one methodology course offered by the author at the American University of Beirut. The interviewers had a clear idea about the problems of survey research in developing areas, namely Arabic-speaking countries.² The data were collected quietly, primarily through personal contacts, and without jeopardizing the targeted quotas. The interviews took place in an atmosphere of strict confidentiality, and the questionnaires were filled out by the interviewers themselves. The author omitted unreliable responses and invalid questions from the data list. A careful examination of the tables in this study, especially the cross-tabulations, immediately attests to the consistency and internal validity of the responses. The following factor analysis results confirm the accuracy of the instrument and the consistency of the responses:

**Factor Analysis for the Peace-Related Correlates of SES
(using Varimax Rotation)**

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Wanting Peace	0.49		
Continuation of Conflict	0.32		
Faith in Israeli Intentions	0.35		
Genuine Arab-Israeli Cooperation	0.48		
Waiving Reservations about Economic Interaction		0.31	

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Transacting Business with Israelis		0.54	
Support for Militant Activities against Arab States			0.24
Support for Militant Activities against Israel			0.28

Factor Analysis for the Peace-Related Correlates of the Religiosity Scale (using Varimax Rotation)

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Future of Israel	0.41		
Wanting Peace	0.58		
Preferred Strategy for Confronting Israel	0.31		
Empathy with Victims of the Holocaust	0.55		
Encouragement of Israel's Peace Movement	0.64		
Provision of Relief Aid to Israelis	0.59		
Continuation of Hizballah's Anti-Israel Attacks		0.68	
Support for Militant Activities against Arab States		0.43	
Reconsideration of Opposition to Peace If Arabs Benefit		0.44	
Reconsideration of Opposition to Peace in Case of Personal Benefit			0.38
Continuation of U.S. involvement in Peace Process			0.64

Factor Analysis for the Peace-Related Correlates of the Intense Religiosity Scale (using Varimax Rotation)

	Factor 1
Perception of Domestic Change	0.65
Use of Force against Israel	0.73

Notes

- 1 Related studies by Hilal Khashan include, "Are the Arabs Ready for Peace with Israel?" *Middle East Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1994), pp. 19-28; "The Levant: Treaties without Normalizations," *Middle East Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1995), pp. 3-13; "The Views of Lebanese Professionals on Economic Normalization with Israel," *Dirasat* 23, no. 2 (1996), pp. 197-208; and *Partner or Pariah? Attitudes toward Israel in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan*, Policy Papers, no. 41 (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1996).
- 2 The author required the field workers to read the seminal work of Mark A. Tessler et al., *The Evaluation and Application of Survey Research in the Arab World* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1987).



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