

# Public Opinion in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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*From Geneva to Disengagement  
to Kadima and Hamas*

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## SUMMARY

Israeli analysts and pundits enjoy quoting Henry Kissinger's assertion that "Israel has no foreign policy, only domestic policy." Kissinger's comment, while stressed too strongly, captures well the common understanding among political scientists and international relations specialists that domestic considerations have a significant effect on foreign policy. This monograph focuses on one particular domestic imperative of utmost importance in periods of conflict and its resolution: public opinion.

Intercommunal and international conflicts affect the most basic elements holding societies together: beliefs, value systems, collective memories, and identity perceptions. The disruption of these same elements—due to conflict—can heighten emotions and increase stress, a situation that often takes a costly toll on society. These situations are made worse when leaders make bad policy decisions. In such times, then, leaders must be attuned to public sentiment, as public-opinion support becomes critical.

How does public opinion act as a domestic imperative on policymaking? This monograph addresses this question, using extensive research on both Israeli and Palestinian public opinion collected during the second intifada, which began in 2000.

Robert Putnam's two-level game metaphor is particularly useful in providing an analytical framework for this study.<sup>1</sup> In Putnam's model, two heads of government negotiate at the international table an agreement that must be ratified by their respective constituencies. Simultaneously, separate bargaining processes take place: among the constituents of the respective sides, and between each constituency and its respective leader. Expanding on this framework, we see public opinion as a central and special kind of player in the Palestinian and Israeli domestic games.

Public opinion as a player in the domestic policymaking game raises intriguing questions about its nature and its channels of influence: Is public opinion sophisticated enough to grasp the essential features of the game? How does it assert its presence and policy preferences? What are its channels of influence? Can it be influential in a nondemocratic system, such as the Palestinian Authority (PA) under Yasser Arafat, as compared with democracies in which the public has direct or indirect ratification or electoral power? Does it act solely as a constraint on policy, or can it also provide new opportunities for leaders?

These issues are explored in the context of Palestinian-Israeli relations during the second intifada. This research monograph attempts to provide an in-depth overview of both Israeli and Palestinian public sentiment with regard to conflict resolution and peacemaking options and to examine the role of public opinion at crucial junctures in the Israeli-Palestinian two-level game. The concluding section assesses the prospects for a final-status settlement in the coming years and offers policy recommendations.

This study covers the period since the Geneva initiative of a group of Israelis and Palestinians proposing a draft of a final-status agreement, through Ariel Sharon's unilateral disengagement, and up to the consequent political reversals in Israel and the PA. From October to December 2003, an important turning point was reached in the course of the second intifada: from sheer violence to the realization on both sides that it was again time to search for new ways to break the cycle of

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violence. The two initiatives—reflecting completely different visions of future Israeli-Palestinian relations—left an indelible mark on the conduct of the conflict; they are intimately related and provide outstanding illustrations of the role of public opinion as a player in the domestic policy-making game.

The Geneva initiative was a bold move on the part of domestic players to interfere with the leaders' game, and it provides an example of the role non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can play in conflict resolution processes. It was meant to demonstrate that there could be substantial common ground between Israelis and Palestinians regarding a comprehensive solution to the conflict, and to shatter the belligerent climate of opinion at the time. While receiving lukewarm support, it nevertheless turned out to be a major trigger for Sharon's disengagement plan.

The disengagement turned out to be one of the most formative events in the course of the conflict in recent years. With its unilateral logic, it completely shifted the terms of the game played between Israel and the Palestinians and set in motion the political turnabouts in Israel and the PA in which public opinion—through the electoral connection—was the major player. The disengagement was the background for the establishment of the political party Kadima, in November 2005. With Sharon incapacitated and Ehud Olmert at its head, Kadima won the March 2006 Knesset election, and Olmert sought to maintain Sharon's unilateral logic in the West Bank.

The impact of Sharon's unilateral approach, and more specifically of Israel's disengagement from the PA's domestic game, was complex, and it provides a fascinating and rare example of a game in which one leader exploits public opinion on the other leader's side so as to exert political pressure on the other leader. This was the logic of Sharon's game, and there can be no doubt that it strongly influenced the standing of Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas (also known as Abu Mazin) and contributed to the victory of Hamas in the parliamentary election held in January 2006.

The disengagement demonstrates well the dynamic relationship between leaders and their publics and suggests that public opinion should not be cast solely in terms of a constraint on policy; it can also open up opportunities for leaders involved in two-level games. Since the end of 2001, a majority of Israelis have supported the dismantling of most settlements in return for peace. This sentiment provided an opportunity (and impetus) for Sharon's dramatic change in policy. This step, however, was not perceived as normative, and only Sharon's declaration of his disengagement plan legitimized the dismantling of settlements in the eyes of the Israeli public.

Another case in which public opinion provides a major opportunity for its leaders—on both sides—is the issue of a permanent-status settlement. We show that at least at one point in time, both Palestinians and Israelis supported a permanent-status package along the lines of President Clinton's "parameters" and the Geneva initiative. This fact is highly significant and suggests that most any solution with the potential to elicit public support from both sides must resort to some variation of Clinton's ideas. However, the level of support for such a package fluctuated over time and in relation to the political and military contexts. Moreover, and no less important, a more in-depth analysis of Palestinian and Israeli public opinion in its fullest sense suggests that both publics were far from being ready for the painful concessions and trade-offs that a final-status agreement entails. The climate of opinion on both sides did not indicate normative acceptance of such an agreement, and expectations for such an agreement were low; the long-range prospects for normalization and reconciliation, and especially for fundamental ethos-changing steps, were also viewed with skepticism.

The Geneva initiative was an attempt to change the rules of the game from the outside. The unilateral approach and the disengagement were essentially another attempt to change the rules of the game by one of the key players. Kadima's victory in Israel and Olmert's avowed commitment to the unilateral approach, combined with the ascent to power of Hamas in the PA, seemed to foreclose the path to negotiation. Nevertheless, the analysis of Palestinian and Israeli public opinion and of the two-level game during this period suggests that the resumption of negotiations over a final-status deal is the best way to proceed. The two publics, however, are not yet ready for the painful concessions and trade-offs that a final-status agreement requires. Entering such a process without due preparation risks a collapse similar to that of the Camp David summit in 2000. The leaders on both sides thus face the enormous challenge of preparing their publics for a final-status solution, and the sooner they take on this challenge the better. In that the likelihood of this happening is quite low, given the personal policy preferences and the dynamics of international bargaining, this study proposes that NGOs and the international community step in to assume this essential task.

## PREFACE

I am deeply indebted to the United States Institute of Peace for providing me with the opportunity as a Jennings Randolph senior fellow to put together survey data collected over the last few years into a theoretically significant and policy-oriented research monograph, thereby expanding its reach to relevant audiences.

The monograph is based on data collected by the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Poll (JIPP), initiated in 2000 by the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) in Ramallah. The joint project is co-directed by my colleague Dr. Khalil Shikaki and me. It is also supported by the Cairo office of the Ford Foundation and the Ramallah office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

Particular thanks go to Sheryl Brown, former director of the Institute's Jennings Randolph fellowship program, and program officers Ginny Bouvier and John Crist for their help and support. I also want to thank my research assistants at the Institute, David Zimmer and Orli Fridman, as well as my research assistants in Israel, Shira Dvir and Gitit Poran, who helped me carry out four surveys during my year at the Institute. And many thanks to Mina Zemach, director of the Dahaf Institute, who was in charge of collecting the Israeli data, and Dr. Shikaki, my Palestinian co-investigator, partner, and friend in this challenging endeavor.

I gratefully acknowledge the support and cooperation of the foundations, institutes, and individuals mentioned above. Needless to say, this report reflects my positions and mine alone.



# 1

## INTRODUCTION

The circumstances surrounding the collapse of the Camp David summit between U.S. president Bill Clinton, Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak, and Palestinian Authority (PA) chairman Yasser Arafat in July 2000 are still hotly debated by scholars and experts of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In pointing out the myriad reasons for the breakdown, some have pointed to flaws in leaders' personalities and differences in negotiation styles; others have stressed the lack of sufficient preparations for the summit and the initial unbridgeable differences between the parties attending it. Most experts, however, agree that domestic considerations played a major role in the summit progression and eventual breakdown. In fact, the Camp David drama can be easily cast in Robert Putnam's terms as a two-level game, in which Barak and Arafat played one game at the international table while simultaneously playing a second game with influential domestic players, each at his domestic table.<sup>2</sup> To complicate things further, a third game could be envisioned in which each side also played a game with the American hosts.<sup>3</sup> This study, however, stays with Putnam's classic two-level game metaphor, given its focus on the role of domestic factors, and particularly on public opinion, in determining the conduct of the Israeli-Palestinian game since the beginning of the second intifada.

One of the most detailed accounts of the Camp David summit, that of Israel's foreign minister at the time, Shlomo Ben-Ami, appears in his book, *A Front without a Rearguard*. While this title might better suit the chronicles of a war than a peace initiative, it resonates well with Israelis' conception of peacemaking as a battle that should be fought and won. The book's title, however, was chosen mainly to express the difficult domestic political environment surrounding the Camp David summit, as described by its author:

The name of the book—a front without a rearguard—touches upon the environment within which we acted . . . . In part, these were structural imperatives that turned this journey into a struggle of a vanguard unit operating on a complex front while deprived of a stable and supportive rearguard. . . . The political system has disintegrated as negotiations went along abandoning those doing the job without political, parliamentary and popular support. . . . Yasser Arafat and his people, too, faced the reality of a front without a supportive rearguard in the Arab world, while in the territories the expectations of his domestic rearguard were skyrocketing to unattainable heights.<sup>4</sup>

This description highlights the critical function of domestic imperatives and especially public opinion, in the formation of foreign policy. It stresses how the lack of popular support can handicap leaders, and how constraining unrealistic popular expectations can be. Indeed, the first poll in the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Public Opinion Research Project,<sup>5</sup> conducted shortly after the summit in July 2000, illustrates Ben-Ami's observations. Among Israelis, 57 percent believed that Israel made too much of a compromise, 13 percent thought Israel could have compromised more, and only 25 percent suggested the position offered by Barak was just right. Among Palestinians, however, only 15 percent believed Arafat's position at Camp David was too much of a compromise, 6 percent thought it was inadequate, and fully two-thirds of the public (68 percent) believed his position to be acceptable. Thus the Palestinian public's expectations of the summit, much like those of their delegation, were much higher than Israel's offer at the time.

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Indeed, the premise that public opinion affects foreign policy is now widely accepted among political scientists, scholars of international relations, and public opinion experts.<sup>6</sup> In recent years, scholars have gradually discovered the complex nature of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy, and the multitude of ways and modalities it can impact decisionmaking.<sup>7</sup> These may range from vague constraints on policymaking, to indirect ratification power of international agreements, to actual and institutionalized veto power granted by negotiators to other public actors.<sup>8</sup> In addition, negotiators often attempt to influence the public opinion of both their own side and the other side in order to expand the range of their “win-sets.”<sup>9</sup>

The July 2000 Camp David summit provides a clear example of the constraining role of public opinion in conflict resolution. Public opinion, however, can also create new opportunities for leaders, and this is indeed what we found on both sides in the later stages of the conflict.

Following the collapse of the summit, violence broke out in what came to be known as the al-Aqsa (or second) intifada and gave the final kiss of death to the Oslo peace process. The Oslo Accords, signed in September 1993 between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the representative of the Palestinians, was the most significant breakthrough in the century-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It yielded mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO and the establishment of a Palestinian National Authority (PNA or PA) in the West Bank and Gaza, which had been occupied by Israel since 1967.

The political peace process, however, had gradually disintegrated long before the eruption of the intifada. Both sides reneged on their Oslo commitments, and the Oslo process lost support in both publics over time. Following the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, subsequent Israeli governments regarded the Oslo process as an opportunity to consolidate their grip on the territories by accelerating the expansion of the settlement project. The Palestinians did not abandon violence, and their leaders saw the Oslo process as a springboard for fulfilling their political ambitions rather than as an opportunity for serious state building. The Palestinian Authority established in the occupied territories was a far cry from the entity Palestinians yearned for as the embodiment of their national aspirations, and their resentment and frustration grew.

With the clouds of violence gathering and the target date for reaching a final-status agreement looming on the horizon, Prime Minister Barak proposed a summit meeting that would bring together Palestinian, Israeli, and American leaders in an attempt to reach a framework agreement for a final-status settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The summit was convened at Camp David on July 11, 2000, at the invitation of President Clinton to Barak and a reluctant Arafat, who feared a trap being set for him by the United States and Israel. The summit ended on July 25, without an agreement being reached.

About two months later, on September 28, violent clashes began between Palestinians and Israeli security forces following a provocative visit of then opposition leader Ariel Sharon at the mosque compound of the Temple Mount (Har HaBayit in Hebrew, Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Arabic) in Jerusalem. The breakdown of the Camp David summit was widely seen as the primary catalyst for the eruption of violence, the potential for which had long been boiling under the surface.

Despite the failure of the summit, scattered talks between the parties continued throughout October and November 2000 in an attempt to salvage the peace process against the backdrop of intensifying violence, the disintegration of Barak’s government, and the near termination of Clin-

ton's presidency. These continuing negotiations began in the region and then, from December 19 to December 23, in Washington, D.C., under President Clinton's auspices. On December 23, Clinton presented to the two sides' bridging proposals for a final-status settlement known as the "Clinton parameters." These were presented to the parties not as an official American proposal but as ideas that could facilitate an agreement. These ideas became both the baseline for ensuing negotiations as well as the point of reference of influential Track II peace initiatives such as the Geneva initiative. The Clinton parameters provided an extremely useful compilation of the most creative and promising ideas that emerged in the prolonged period of negotiations between the parties; they were designed to grapple with the most fundamental issues of contention in the conflict. These issues included territory, sovereignty, security, Jerusalem, refugees, and the end of conflict.<sup>10</sup>

Talks between the sides resumed in Taba, an Egyptian resort on the Sinai Peninsula, between January 21 and January 27, 2001. The Taba talks did not yield an agreement, although some progress was reported in narrowing the gaps in the positions of the two sides. Nevertheless, these negotiations remained controversial with regard both to their actual content and to Barak's motivation to exploit them—in order to salvage his deteriorating political prospects in the early elections he had declared. The elections took place on February 6, and Ariel Sharon won the prime minister post by a landslide.

The intifada intensified, with numerous Palestinian suicide bombings targeting Israeli civilians and the sealing off of the Gaza Strip and the reoccupation of the West Bank by the Israelis. The continuing violence has claimed the lives of more than 1,000 Israelis and over 3,500 Palestinians, with many more injured.

Throughout this period, several additional efforts to end the violent confrontation and to renew the peace process were made, all to no avail. One such attempt was a Saudi plan adopted by the Arab League at its summit in Beirut in March 2002, calling for peace with Israel in return for a full Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied in 1967 and the return of Palestinian refugees.<sup>11</sup> Politically, the most significant plan was the "Road Map for Peace," sponsored by the "Quartet" of peacemaking powers in the Middle East—the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, and Russia. The principles of the plan were first outlined by U.S. president George W. Bush in a speech on June 24, 2002, in which he called for an independent Palestinian state living in peace with Israel. The official Road Map plan was released in April 2003, following the appointment of Abu Mazin as prime minister of the PA, in a move meant to limit the political power of PA president Yasser Arafat. The Road Map plan, as its name suggests, focused on the process rather than on the details of the end state, and thus it differed from the Clinton parameters. It has been described by its sponsors as a performance-based, goal-driven plan. It consisted of several phases, each a precondition for the next, with the end of the conflict and the establishment of a Palestinian state as the ultimate goal. The first phase called for Palestinian democratic political reform and cessation of terrorist attacks, and an Israeli withdrawal and freeze on settlement expansion. Thereafter, an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders would be established and further negotiations would lead to the end of conflict.<sup>12</sup> The plan was endorsed by both sides, but with considerable reservations. It was never implemented beyond some partial steps specified in its first phase.

Toward the end of 2003, a group of Israeli and Palestinian doves launched the Geneva initiative, a proposal for a full-blown, final-status agreement, modeled to a large extent on the Clinton

parameters.<sup>13</sup> This initiative provides a superb example of the role NGOs can assume in conflict-resolution processes—by modifying public discourse, shattering inhibiting norms, and preparing public opinion for compromise—when domestic leaders seem unwilling or unable to do so. It was meant to demonstrate that there could be substantial common ground between Israelis and Palestinians on a comprehensive solution to the conflict. It was further intended to break the belligerent climate of opinion that had engulfed the Israeli and Palestinian publics since the beginning of the intifada in late 2000. While initially receiving lukewarm support, it succeeded in reviving hope for a political option long lost after the collapse of the Camp David summit in July 2000. In two-level game terms, it was a bold move on the part of domestic players to interfere with the leaders' game, and as such it was perceived as a threat by both Sharon and Arafat.

The Geneva initiative turned out to be a major trigger for Sharon's disengagement in the Gaza Strip, although there were many factors involved in this plan, including other expressions of public opinion and political considerations. These "considerations" included an attempt by Sharon to divert attention from corruption scandals with which he and his sons had become associated and to forestall international pressure on the Israeli government to compromise. Sharon first announced his plan in December 2003, about two months after the Geneva plan appeared on the public agenda. Overcoming a multitude of domestic and international hurdles, he was able to carry it through in August 2005. All Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip and four more in the northern West Bank were dismantled; both the civilian and the military presence of Israel in the Gaza Strip ended.

This case of disengagement demonstrates that public opinion should not be cast solely in terms of a constraint on policy; it can also create important opportunities for leaders involved in two-level games. Thus it provides a powerful demonstration of the dynamic relationship between public opinion and leaders. By the end of 2001, a majority of Israelis supported the dismantling of most settlements in exchange for peace. This provided an opportunity (and impetus) for Sharon's dramatic policy turnabout. This step, however, was still not perceived as normative. It was Sharon's declaration of his plan that legitimized the dismantling of settlements in the eyes of the Israeli public.

The disengagement turned out to be one of the most formative events in the course of the conflict since the second intifada had begun. It embodied an entirely new approach to the conflict and implied a totally different game. It built on the dominant discourse in Israeli society since the 2000 Camp David failure—that there is no partner on the Palestinian side—and further perpetuated it. It also set in motion the political reversal in Israel and facilitated the rise of Hamas to power in the PA. On both sides, of course, public opinion through elections was the major player. In Israel, the combination of the successful implementation of the Gaza disengagement, the internal strife within the ruling Likud party, and the electorate's policy preferences brought about Sharon's call for early elections and the establishment of the Kadima party in November 2005. In the March 2006 Knesset election—without Sharon and with Olmert at the head—Kadima won and formed a new coalition government. Olmert continued the unilateral logic of Sharon to suggest a similar approach on the West Bank; he labeled this approach "convergence" or "realignment."

The impact of the disengagement, and more broadly of Sharon's unilateral approach on the PA domestic game, was complex and provides a fascinating and rare example of a game in which one leader exploits the public opinion on his counterpart's side to exert political pressure on that counterpart. This was the logic of Sharon's game, and there can be no doubt that it strongly influenced

the standing of Abu Mazin and contributed to the victory of Hamas in the parliamentary election held in January 2006.

It is also worth noting that these developments bolstered the importance of public opinion to the point where the leaders on both sides relegated to it the capacity to arbitrate foreign policy decisions: Abu Mazin in his threat to submit the prisoners' document to a referendum and Olmert in his attempt to secure a mandate for his realignment plan by putting it before the voters just before the elections.

By early 2006, then, and despite the disappearance of Sharon from the political scene, unilateralism seemed to have restructured the rules of the Israeli-Palestinian two-level game. But was this actually the case? What were the consequences of the political changes on the international game? And what were the prospects for a final-status settlement in the coming years? The last section of this monograph returns to these issues in its analysis of the policy implications and recommendations.

This monograph attempts to achieve three major goals. First, it seeks to make a theoretical contribution to the conflict-resolution literature regarding the role of public opinion in two-level games. Second, it provides a unique account of Israeli and Palestinian public opinion on core issues surrounding the conflict since the beginning of the al-Aqsa intifada. Finally, it outlines the major contours of the "win-set"—the set of all possible agreements that would gain domestic majority support—of both publics during the period under review and offers policy recommendations based on this analysis.

## The Joint Israeli-Palestinian Poll (JIPP)

The joint project was initiated by the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) in Ramallah in 2000. From July 2000 to June 2006, the project has conducted sixteen joint polls. Its first survey was carried out a few days after the Camp David failure and before the beginning of the intifada. Since then, all subsequent surveys have been conducted in close proximity to important crossroads in the second intifada: the release of the Road Map plan, the war in Iraq, Abu Mazin's short term as prime minister under Arafat, the Geneva initiative, Sharon's disengagement plan, the death of Arafat, and the Palestinian and Israeli parliamentary elections in 2006. All of these surveys asked each public identical and specific questions. The Palestinian surveys employed representative samples of the Palestinian population interviewed face-to-face in about 120 locations in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. Sample sizes were around 1,300 respondents, with a sampling error of about 3 percent. The Israeli data were based on telephone interviews with representative samples of the general Israeli public, ranging between five to six hundred Israelis, with a sampling error of about 4.5 percent. Interviews of the Israeli respondents were conducted in Hebrew, Arabic, and Russian.

The joint poll is unique in several respects:

- It is the only joint project that has systematically tracked both Israeli and Palestinian publics since the beginning of the second intifada.
- It is one of the few joint projects that has survived the violent changes in Israeli-Palestinian relations.

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- It hopes, by making its findings public, to contribute to turning people's *private* opinions—on both sides—into more knowledgeable and accurate *public* opinion.

## 2

## OVER THE TABLE AND BEHIND THE TABLE: A TWO-LEVEL GAME

One need not be an expert on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to realize the extent to which powerful domestic interests and deeply rooted values are vested in the conflict and in the attempts to resolve it. Over the years, this bitter, intractable struggle has structured both societies' economies, political spectrums, and value systems.<sup>14</sup> Thus any attempt to resolve the conflict necessarily creates domestic distributive problems that eventually boil down to the question of who will gain and who will lose from such a process. It is therefore not surprising that, consistent with Putnam's two-level game metaphor, powerful bureaucracies, political institutions, and key interests have become eager players in the domestic games of both sides, pressuring their leaders directly or through public opinion to embrace the policies each favors. At the international table, in turn, the leaders on each side have sought to maximize their degrees of freedom to satisfy these domestic pressures while at the same time trying to contain the harmful impact of foreign developments.

Indeed, Putnam's two-level game model provides a useful way of thinking about the dynamics of many international negotiations, the Israeli-Palestinian game being no exception. In this model, two heads of government negotiate an agreement that must be ratified by their constituencies. Simultaneous bargaining processes take place among each leader's constituents and between these constituents and their respective leaders concerning the proposed agreement and its ratification. All players obviously have distinctive preferences with regard to the potential negotiation outcomes they promote.

Ratification may be any domestic decision-making process required for the implementation of the agreement. Referenda, popular elections, parliamentary legislation, and votes of confidence are all familiar modes of ratification. However, approval does not necessarily have to be formal or even democratic, and offensive agreements stand the risk of being spoiled by uncooperative bureaucracies or dissenting armed political factions. Those agreements that gain the necessary support at home belong to what Putnam labels the "win-set": the set of all international agreements that would "win" support among domestic constituents.

By definition, domestic win-sets must overlap in order for the international negotiators to reach a successful agreement. Larger win-sets have a greater chance to overlap and, consequently, to produce agreements. The relative size of the domestic win-sets and the contours of their intersection define the joint gains from the international bargain. Larger win-sets may project greater flexibility, inviting pressure to concede. Smaller win-sets, in turn, allow negotiators to claim tied hands but necessarily limit the leader's domestic slack. The two-level game scenario obviously does not guarantee agreement, and the possibility of defection hovers over the negotiation tables. Defection could be either voluntary, out of egotistic motives, or involuntary, due to ratification failure. Both games are played iteratively, being linked to each other by a complex array of expectations, moves, and countermoves.

Much of Putnam's model and most subsequent research on this paradigm focus on the impact of domestic preferences and coalitions, institutions, and negotiating strategies on the size of the win-sets and the likelihood of agreement. For example, much attention has been directed at issues of heterogeneity in the domestic players' preferences and the implications of side payments, issues

of credibility and uncertainty in two-level games, and issues of ratification institutions and coalitions.<sup>15</sup> The literature is too extensive to discuss in the limited space of this monograph, but some of its implications will necessarily be addressed in the subsequent analysis of the role of public opinion in the Israeli-Palestinian game. Before that analysis, however, two additional tasks must be undertaken: first, to provide a fuller picture of the two domestic tables, their major players, and web of interests surrounding them; and second, to discuss the nature of public opinion as a special kind of domestic imperative on foreign policy.

### Israeli and Palestinian Domestic Tables

While two-level games may vary in their duration, those played in the context of intractable conflicts may last many years. In such cases, the game is often disrupted for prolonged periods, players come and go, and the underlying rules can change dramatically. This is indeed the nature of the painfully enduring Israeli-Palestinian game.

A full-blown, two-level analysis of this generation-long conflict is beyond the scope of this monograph; instead, it focuses on several recent critical phases of the game that highlight the role of public opinion as a player, provide theoretical insights, and allow for policy recommendations. The period under study is that of the second intifada, which broke out in September 2000 and has since fluctuated between phases of high- and low-intensity violence.

Sitting at the Israeli domestic table during this period are first and foremost the Jewish settlers in the occupied territories and the political forces supporting them. The settlers have been the most influential factor in the shaping of Israel's policy on both peace and the territorial issues over the last three decades. The formative years of the settlers' movement were the mid-1970s and early 1980s; the movement's ideological driving force during this time was Gush Emunim (the "Bloc of the Faithful" in Hebrew). It consisted of a small but extremely dedicated group of national religious activists devoted to the idea of resettling the ancient Jewish homeland as a divine tenet and a means for the redemption of all the people of Israel.<sup>16</sup>

Over the years, the movement became both routinized and diversified: In addition to younger generations born into a bitter conflict with the Palestinians, it also attracted many Israelis who moved into the territories in order to improve their quality of life. Thus in time, the movement came to represent strong economic interests in addition to an ideological force. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to portray the still-significant segment of the ideological settlers as mere colonizers. The settlement project has been motivated from the outset by ideological and political aspirations that go far beyond the territorial dimension to target the very identity and value system of Israeli society as a whole.<sup>17</sup> The settlers saw themselves as fulfilling a national mission of historical magnitude and as following in the footsteps of the Zionist founders of Israel. They aspired to transform Israel's national identity by strengthening its Jewish religious dimensions over the more secular universalistic values of the Israeli left. Thus the dismantling of settlements and return of land to Arabs constituted the breakdown of a national religious ethos and a moral defeat for the settlers' movement at the hands of the Israeli left.

Next to the settlers, and with considerable influence, stands the Israeli military and the security establishment. They include, in addition to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) high command, the heads of Israel's other security services, such as the Shabak and the Mossad. As is often the case in societies in conflict, the Israeli military-security establishment plays a major role in most of the



important decisions pertaining to the conflict with the Palestinians.<sup>18</sup> These decisions include not only tactical military advice such as policy on targeted assassinations, but also decisions with important strategic implications, such as classifying Arafat irrelevant as a negotiating partner, charting the contours of the separation barrier, and determining the details of the disengagement plan. No less important, the international Israeli-Palestinian game has been heavily influenced by a fierce power struggle within Likud between Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu, a fight that set the scene for the establishment of Kadima by Sharon in late 2005 and the political reversal in Israel in March 2006. Finally, powerful economic interest groups have long been pushing the Israeli political leadership toward more accommodating positions in the conflict, given its detrimental impact on the Israeli economy and its standing in the international markets.<sup>19</sup>

The Palestinian domestic table during this period was similarly crowded and even more complex, given the acute fragmentation of the Palestinian political scene, the separation of power between the president and prime minister, the generational conflict within the Palestine Liberation Organization's Fatah wing, and the competition between the various wings of Hamas.

Hamas's role as the major opposition force to the Fatah leadership was turned around overnight when it won the 2006 elections and became the main bearer of responsibility for policymaking, both domestically and in regard to the conflict with Israel. The political competition among its various wings further complicates the game. Here we find a leadership residing within the PA (Hamas "inside") and one in exile ("Hamas outside"). In addition, the political and military wings of Hamas are divided, which serves to distance its officials from responsibility for acts of terror. Following Hamas's rise to power in the January 2006 elections, it was thought that a clear division of labor existed between its factions, such that the inside wing assumed responsibility for domestic affairs while the outside wing handled foreign affairs. Indeed, following the elections, most diplomatic missions to Turkey, Russia, and the Gulf states were conducted by leading members of Hamas's political bureau in Syria. The outside leadership's control of the financial resources seemed to give it the upper hand in shaping policy. However, the conflicting interests of the two wings surfaced in no time with the first crises that challenged the Hamas regime in the PA. The National Conciliation Document drafted by the leaders of the prisoners from the various Palestinian parties jailed in Israel in May 2006, Abu Mazin's threat to call a referendum over the document's adoption, and the calls for a national-unity government exposed the intricate relationship between the domestic and international games and thus the façade of what appeared to be a clear-cut division of labor between Hamas's "inside" and "outside."

As for politics within Fatah, the generational conflict did not subside following its loss in the elections. The conventional view often portrays a clash between the "old guard" and the "young guard" within Fatah.<sup>20</sup> The actual state of affairs, however, is more complex, involving more generations and a dynamic network of coalitions and alliances. The old guard, against which the new forces have coalesced, consists of the founders of the Palestinian national movement, leaders of various guerrilla organizations, and the PLO bureaucracy, the latter of whom owe their positions mainly to Arafat's patronage. Following Arafat's death, these figures lost much of their political influence. The young guard is composed largely of Fatah activists who gained their prominence and rank within the Fatah movement during the first intifada but were largely kept out of the circles of power by Arafat. Prominent among the young guard are the heads of the PA security forces, such as Muhammad Dahlan and Gibril Rajub, who profited both economically and politically from the Oslo process and have strong vested interests in any future agreement. A later generational cleavage is found in the radical grass-roots factions within Fatah, such as the Al-Aqsa

## 14 Public Opinion in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Martyrs, who instigated and fueled the second intifada. They have become disillusioned with the corrupt PA bureaucracy and its official security forces and feel even more deprived of political power. The most important representative of the radical grass-roots factions is Marwan Barghout, the head of Tanzim, the armed wing of Fatah, and one of the leaders of the second intifada, jailed in Israel. These groups are heterogeneous; they represent diverse interests but are capable of forming potentially powerful coalitions and alliances that could exert considerable impact on policy. Such alliances are formed not only among Fatah factions and competitors but also among some of the Fatah grass-roots elements and militant elements within Hamas.

## THE NATURE OF PUBLIC OPINION AS A DOMESTIC IMPERATIVE

While all of the players described in the previous chapter are central to the Israeli and Palestinian domestic games, this study focuses on public opinion as a special kind of player in the two-level game. The premise that public opinion affects foreign policy is now widely accepted. The ways in which public opinion can affect decision making are numerous and varied. They include rather vague constraints on policymaking, indirect ratification power of international agreements, actual and institutionalized veto power granted by negotiators to other public actors. In addition, negotiators often attempt to influence the public opinion of both their own side and the other side in order to expand the range of their win-sets.

While it has been acknowledged as an important domestic imperative, the concept of public opinion remains largely unexplored in the two-level game paradigm, and case studies refer to it only scantily.<sup>21</sup> Of those scholars showing specific interest in public opinion, most have not bothered to illuminate its distinct characteristics as a policy-relevant imperative. Indeed, as Philip Powell has observed, most studies on the interface between public opinion and foreign policy have used poll data and have left the term “public opinion” undefined.<sup>22</sup> Typically these studies have adopted the “hegemonic” view of public opinion simply as the aggregation of opinions expressed in opinion surveys.<sup>23</sup> However, public opinion as a player in the domestic game raises intriguing questions about its meaning and the signals it sends to leaders; these cannot be captured well enough by looking only at data on people’s attitudes, as they involve in addition behavioral expressions as well as more tacit normative cues and expectations of future events and developments.

Another unexplored territory is the difference between public opinion and many other actors who represent key interests at the domestic table. First, it is not always clear who, if anyone, is the genuine representative of public opinion around the table, although many surely compete for this title.

Second, unlike most other domestic political actors, the wheeling and dealing of leaders with their publics is necessarily public and cannot be concealed, a fact that complicates these leaders’ international games. Further, the incentive system that can be used by leaders to gratify public opinion is often less structured and not as well articulated and understood compared with the demands of other actors whose interests are more homogenous and clear.

Third, the leverage of public opinion in shaping foreign policy has usually been discussed in terms of direct or indirect ratification or electoral power. But public opinion seems also to be influential in nondemocratic systems or when ratification is not on the foreseeable agenda. Moreover, public opinion has usually been cast as a constraint on policy, and only a few studies have realized its potential as providing important opportunities for leaders involved in two-level games.<sup>24</sup>

A broader and more complex conceptualization of public opinion is needed to allow us to address these and other concerns related to the role of public opinion as a domestic imperative. A more sophisticated conceptualization of public opinion must acknowledge the element of publicity in public opinion: “public” opinion as distinguished from “private” opinion. Indeed, public opinion is a shared aggregate phenomenon. It is a collective social entity, and publicity is necessary for its

formation. One must also understand the multidimensional nature of public opinion and its essential role in society. Public opinion mediates and accommodates social integration and social change. As a normative force it nurtures integration and stability. As a mechanism of aggregate foresight it paves the way to social and political change. Public opinion thus entails not only the majority opinion, but also the normative opinion—the opinion perceived to be the majority opinion—with an omnipotent presence as a social force that functions to achieve cohesion and value consensus in society.<sup>25</sup> Similarly important are people's expectations as to future events and developments, as well as overt verbal, symbolic, and behavioral opinion expressions.

This conceptualization illuminates important characteristics of public opinion as an influential factor in two-level games.<sup>26</sup> It carries major advantages both for negotiators, by better informing them of their options, and for scholars, by allowing better interpretations of the sources of success and failure of such processes. For example, win-sets in two-level games, as defined by Putnam, are often constrained by perceptions of the public's policy preferences rather than by their actual preferences.<sup>27</sup> Sometimes, however, crucial gaps appear between these perceived sentiments, indexing the prevailing norm and the public's actual preferences. Such discrepancies, labeled "pluralistic ignorance,"<sup>28</sup> raise important questions as to what public opinion is and may give negotiators greater degrees of freedom in accommodating public opinion in two-level games. Adding to this complexity, publics may err not only in their perception of what their own majority thinks but also in their understanding of what the public sentiment of their foe is. Such erring, of course, is also extremely relevant to negotiators, who often attempt to influence not just their own publics but the other side's constituency as well, using what Putnam calls "reverberation strategies."

Another important characteristic of public opinion is its greater susceptibility to framing efforts in comparison to other domestic actors such as interest groups, trade unions, economic organizations, and political institutions and parties. The general public is much more dependent on the media and on experts, as compared with other domestic actors, to inform it about the negotiation intricacies and the actual meaning and implications of international agreements. Publics also seem to be highly sensitive to symbolic gestures and gains, such as historical responsibility acknowledgments, repudiations of collective blame, and identity recognition gestures. Thus, when disputes have an acute symbolic dimension, negotiators may have an incentive to converge on "constructive ambiguity" formulations in the hope of facilitating public approval.

This conceptualization of public opinion can also help in a better understanding of the role of public opinion in nondemocratic regimes by acknowledging the normative influence of public opinion in explaining autocratic leaders' behavior. Public opinion confers legitimacy—people's willingness to submit voluntarily to authority. Legitimacy, by its nature, has a strong normative component and is intimately related to the normative facet of public opinion. This point, which will be expanded on later, is central in understanding the channels through which public opinion exerts its influence in the domestic Israeli and Palestinian games.

## 4

## THE ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN PUBLICS: DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES

This study's conceptualization of public opinion is useful for placing this comparative research in context and directing attention to differences and similarities between Israeli and Palestinian public opinion in its most fundamental dimensions: information and knowledge, norms and values, expectations, and political participation; these become most significant in understanding the two-level game.

### Information and Knowledge

How informed the Israeli and Palestinian publics are regarding daily affairs and political developments is crucial to their performance as players in the domestic political game. Indirect indicators commonly used in this context are literacy rates and levels of education. While literacy rates in both societies are quite similar—95 percent in Israel and 90 percent in the PA<sup>29</sup>—Israelis tend to have higher levels of education than Palestinians. According to UNESCO's "Global Education Digest 2005," the gross enrollment ratio of Israelis in tertiary education programs for the year 2002–2003 was 57 percent, compared with 35 percent for Palestinians.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, polling data show that 56 percent of Israelis have a partial or full academic education, compared with 26 percent for Palestinians.<sup>31</sup>

A more direct assessment is provided by news media exposure patterns of Israelis and Palestinians. Fifty-five percent of Israelis and 50 percent of Palestinians polled in December 2002 had watched news almost every day on Israeli and Palestinian television, respectively. Sixty-five percent of Palestinians and 8 percent of Israelis also reported watching news almost every day on satellite channels such as Al-Jazeera; 21 percent of Palestinians also watched news almost every day on Israeli television. A relatively small percentage of Israelis (13 percent) also watched CNN or BBC almost every day. Israelis are avid radio news consumers, with 56 percent listening to news at least three times a day. No comparable radio news consumption data are available for Palestinians. As for newspapers, 42 percent of Israelis reported reading a newspaper almost every day, compared with 10 percent of Palestinians. Only 19 percent of Israelis reported almost never reading a daily newspaper, compared with 53 percent of Palestinians. Palestinians seem to obtain their current-affairs information mainly from television. Israelis, too, are highly exposed to television, but also to radio news, and they read significantly more print news than Palestinians, which suggests Israelis have greater exposure to in-depth analysis by experts and commentators.

In terms of the Israeli and Palestinian media environments, it is necessary to refer to the differences in the level of media control and in professional journalistic standards in the two societies.

Neither Israel nor the PA achieve especially high scores in the "Freedom of the Press" survey conducted by Freedom House, a nonprofit, non-partisan organization. This survey examines the level of press freedom in each country, focusing on legal, political, and economic parameters. In the 2005 survey, Israel ranks 61 and obtains a score of 28, which barely qualifies it for the "free" category. The "Israeli-occupied territories" category, referring to the performance of both Israel and

the PA, receives a “not free” score of 84, ranking it very close to the bottom of the list (182nd out of 194).<sup>32</sup> It should be emphasized that these figures do not yet reflect the performance of the new Hamas government. Nevertheless, the legal tools created to control the media during Arafat’s presidency, and his treatment of media professionals, seem to have set adverse norms in this regard. Actual control of the press was carried out extralegally through threats. Journalists were harassed, detained, and arrested; editors received clear instructions on what could and could not be printed; radio stations were closed; and some publications were forced out of business. All of these activities occurred outside of any legal jurisdiction.<sup>33</sup> In addition to these restrictions, and their chilling effects, Palestinian journalists were also accused of resorting to self-censorship, driven by nationalistic outlook and cultural motivations.<sup>34</sup> It remains to be seen whether Hamas will continue to follow these practices. In any case, the Palestinian media environment is quite varied—there are a multitude of local television and radio stations—and therefore not easy to control. And what Palestinian media cannot report is often broadcast by the Arab satellite networks, which, as mentioned above, are watched almost every day by close to two-thirds of Palestinians.

While Israeli media are not completely free of legal restrictions and censorship, they have rarely been subject to this level of control and arbitrariness. Self-censorship and national motivations as guiding professional values were not uncommon to Israeli journalists in earlier times, particularly in the state-building years. But with the proliferation of media channels in the early 1990s, and the increased competition among them, these tendencies have seen significant decline.

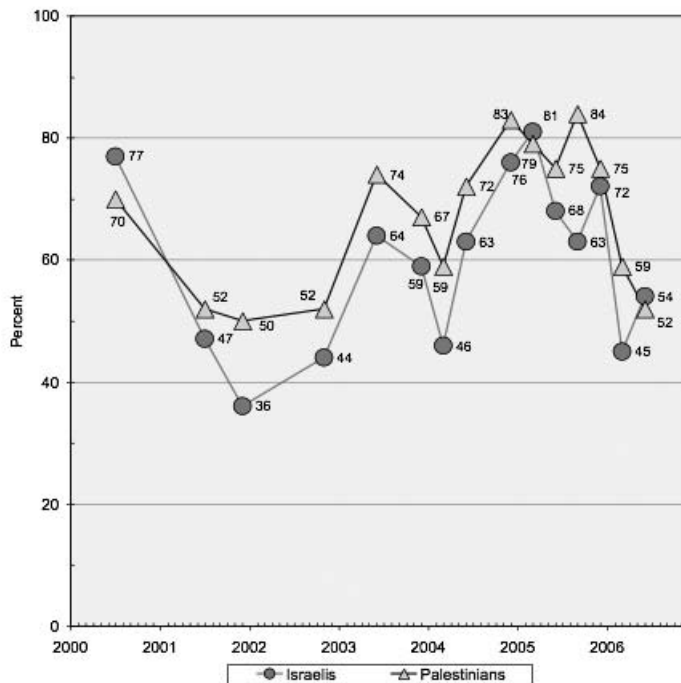
Media news is probably the major source of information on public affairs and conflict-related developments, but it is only part of the public’s information environment. Also very important are people’s daily firsthand experiences and interpersonal sources. Such “popular wisdom” and “experiential knowledge”<sup>35</sup> help people to sense “which way the wind is blowing” and to form accurate expectations regarding the course of the conflict.

A sensitive daily barometer for the Palestinians on the state of the conflict has been the conduct of Israeli soldiers at the military roadblocks located throughout the territories. Other decisions—such as how many Palestinian workers, if any, can cross into Israel, or whether a closure has been imposed—directly affect every Palestinian’s daily life. Similarly, Israelis are exposed to daily events and developments firsthand. Often they hear of recent suicide bombings or ongoing military operations in the territories in real time, that is, from relatives and friends over cell phones before the story is broadcast on the radio. Thus, in terms of being well informed on current affairs and key events, both publics seem to be equally knowledgeable. Attesting to this are the realistic expectations formed with regard to how the conflict might evolve. The JIPP surveys regularly ask both publics to assess the likelihood for an end of violence and the resumption of a political process. Respondents can choose among three options: “negotiations will resume soon enough and armed confrontations will stop,” “negotiations will resume but some armed attacks will continue,” or “armed confrontations will not stop and the two sides will not return to negotiations.”

When responses to the first two options (which refer to the resumption of negotiations with or without violence) are combined, the result shows a remarkable pattern, as seen in figure 1.

As evident from the fluctuations in the figure, both publics’ expectations are very sensitive to political developments, and both read the political reality correctly. Expectations that negotiations will resume irrespective of violence drop sharply a year after the beginning of the intifada and the persistence of violence. They reach their lowest point in the December 2001 poll. Expectations begin to rise after the Quartet’s Road Map announcement (in September 2002) and more sharply after

**Figure 1. Percentage of Israelis and Palestinians expecting negotiations to resume**



Abu Mazin's nomination as prime minister (in April 2003) and the Aqaba summit with Sharon (in May 2003). They drop somewhat in the December 2003 poll, following Abu Mazin's resignation (in September) amid a power struggle with Arafat and an upsurge in violence. Expectations reach their peak after Arafat's death (in November 2004). Following Hamas's victory in January 2006, these expectations sink again. What is particularly striking is the fact that both publics' expectations over time are virtually identical and move in tandem, even though they are exposed to different media and daily experiences and have been obtained independently.

JIPP joint surveys of Palestinian and Israeli opinion indicate that both publics are involved and seek political information but that Israelis seem to be more versed in specific details of issues on the agenda<sup>36</sup> and that Israelis tend to entertain more coherent and consistent attitudes.<sup>37</sup> These differences stem from their living conditions, levels of education, and media environment but probably above all from the fact that Israel has a well-established and longstanding political and party system, which provides ideological cues and party identification ties that help people to be more oriented toward politics. Nevertheless, JIPP data indicate that both publics are knowledgeable enough regarding the conduct of the conflict to develop realistic expectations as to the prospects for an end of violence and the resumption of a political process; they are capable of accurately judging the impact of events and policies, which is an essential prerequisite for each public's ability to sanction or support leaders for their decisions. Moreover, this "aggregate wisdom" and the expectations it entails on the part of the public are a major source of learning and attitude change, at times creating policy opportunities for their leaders' international game. We will discuss such examples in detail in the following sections.

## Normative Characteristics

The normative grasp of fundamental societal values is an essential characteristic of every society and expresses itself in the normative climate of opinion. It has special force, however, when societies face external conflict or are in state-building stages. Times of conflict intensify individuals' security needs and enhance their identification and attachment with the collective. On the group level, social collectives develop cultures of conflict that allow them to endure strife. These cultures nurture beliefs of in-group love and out-group hate, breed discourses of group unity and cohesion, and sanction oppositional voices.<sup>38</sup> Just as external conflict brings to the fore communal attachment and collective concerns and priorities, so does the process of state building, particularly in its early years. This period is usually characterized by scarcity of resources and strongly conflicting interests that threaten the entire nationalist project; it is also a time of intensified social mobilization, when collectivist values largely dominate individualistic orientations and collectivist social norms exercise extra power. The Jewish community in the pre-independence (Yishuv) era and in Israel in the 1950s and early 1960s serves as a good case in point, because it contrasts with later Israeli society.<sup>39</sup> The PA is now at this stage in state building, and this is well exemplified in school texts and curricula.<sup>40</sup> The normative grasp of fundamental social values should therefore be meaningful in both societies, but more significant in the Palestinian than in the Israeli domestic game. Indeed, central societal values play a major role in shaping public opinion, public discourse, and leaders' conduct in the Israeli-Palestinian game.

In the Israeli domestic game, the debate over the future of the territories captured in 1967 and relations with the Palestinians has encapsulated a conflict between four fundamental values. These values can be traced to Israel's Declaration of Independence and constitute the basic tenets of Israeli political culture and its Zionist roots: Israel as a Jewish state and the homeland for the Jewish people, the principle of democracy, the yearning for peace and security, and territorial aspirations for "Greater Israel."<sup>41</sup>

The right of the Jewish people to their homeland embodies the Zionist justification for the establishment of the state of Israel. Besides this value of Israel as a Jewish state, the second major semi-constitutional principle is that of democracy. The Declaration of Independence states that Israel will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants, and the courts have reinforced these rights over the years. This set of values—of Israel as Jewish and democratic—has been reiterated in legislation since the 1990s as the underlying foundation of the state.

The Declaration of Independence opens by referring to "Eretz Israel," binding the notion of the homeland closely to the land. This is another value deeply ingrained in the Zionist ethos of national revival. Finally, the declaration also expresses the aspiration for peace.

Much of Israeli politics revolves around the Arab-Israeli conflict, with the territories issue being the major source of contention, guided by different value priorities and value trade-offs. If Israel decides to place a higher value priority on a democratic state with a Jewish majority, then the notion of keeping the territories becomes less realistic. If the country seeks a Greater Israel, it must face a heightened probability of war, the possibility of a country without a Jewish majority, and the risk of trading off democratic principles. According to the Israeli left, peace is attainable only by returning the territories and putting an end to the occupation. Those on the right believe that the territories are strategically important, that only a strong Israel will eventually guarantee peace, and that the demographic problem can be offset by massive Jewish immigration. These are the value trade-offs that have dominated Israeli politics and policy since the Six Day War.



The Oslo process of the 1990s signaled the primacy of the Jewish and democratic tenets and aspirations for peace over Greater Israel. Sharon's disengagement and Olmert's realignment plan similarly indicate the predominance of the demographic factor and willingness to trade territory for keeping the Jewish state Jewish. And, albeit of lesser importance, also keeping it democratic, even if the prospects for achieving peace are not high.<sup>42</sup>

Palestinian society faces no less complex value trade-offs, and its political scene is similarly divided along basic value dimensions and dilemmas. Just as Israeli fundamental values are expressed succinctly and relevantly in the Declaration of Independence, so are Palestinian basic tenets echoed loudly in the most recent draft of the Palestinian constitution.<sup>43</sup> The first tenet is independence and state building. This appears at the beginning of the first article in the constitution. It reflects the yearning for a homeland by a dispersed people deprived of self-determination and normal citizenship status. Politically, however, it constitutes a purposeful statement by the Palestinian leadership, declaring that the nationalist project of state building is paramount to all other concerns.

The second tenet is Arab Islamic identity and unity as stated in the second article of the constitution's draft: "The Palestinian people are part of the Arab and Islamic nations. Arab unity is a goal. The Palestinian people work on behalf of its realization."<sup>44</sup> The relevance of this tenet in understanding Palestinian leadership policy preferences is vital.<sup>45</sup>

Although the unity clause refers broadly to all-Arab unity, it is the more specific Palestinian national unity that is gradually turning into an overarching although fragile value in Palestinian political culture.<sup>46</sup> The quest for Palestinian national unity has not received due attention, but it has progressed to become a powerful driving force in the Palestinian leadership's crucial policy decisions in recent years. Modern Palestinian history has been marked by substantial fragmentation of Palestinian society and deep divisions among its leading elites; these were often exploited by external forces, such as the British and Zionists during the mandate years, to undermine Palestinian national aspirations. The inability to organize their society to withstand such forces became a source of deep frustration and despair for Palestinians.<sup>47</sup> Palestinian society was further acutely fragmented following the 1948 war, which created the refugee problem. Palestinians were dispersed among neighboring countries—primarily Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon—as well as other parts of the world. Those remaining in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Israel became largely isolated from one another due to political circumstances. Arafat and the PLO leadership understood from the outset that if they were to succeed, national unity had to be embedded in Palestinian political culture. Not only was it essential in rebuilding the shattered Palestinian national identity,<sup>48</sup> but it was also indispensable as a "harmonizing" instrument to control dissenting opposition forces.<sup>49</sup> A political discourse stressing national unity is self-serving for societies involved in conflict and characterizes Israeli political culture as well.

Arafat and the PLO leadership, however, went beyond the use of national unity as just a rhetorical means. Over the years, they made substantial efforts to integrate most Palestinian factions into the PLO.<sup>50</sup> Abu Mazin, who changed course on many of Arafat's policies, remained faithful to this legacy: Despite immense Israeli pressures to confront with force the Palestinian militant factions in order to "dismantle the terrorist infrastructure," he remained firm in his decision to co-opt them by integrating them into the Palestinian political game. This policy resulted in the April 2005 Cairo talks, in which Hamas and the Islamic Jihad agreed to join the Palestinian national institutions and participate in the coming parliamentary elections.<sup>51</sup> Even after the Hamas victory in January 2006, which threatened powerful vested interests in the PA and their monopoly of the means of coercion, Palestinians were careful not to slip into internal strife. The situation was explosive, and occa-

sional violence occurred, including dispersed fighting between PA security forces and Hamas militias. The most important and effective attempt to curb the situation was the May 2006 National Conciliation Document of the Prisoners.<sup>52</sup> It emphasized the need for national unity and obtained overwhelming support among Palestinians (in the June 2006 survey, 74 percent supported it; only 23 percent opposed it). Following Abu Mazin's threat to submit the document to a referendum, it was eventually endorsed by Hamas and became the basis for a new political status quo in the PA.

The third fundamental value is peace, and it is asserted in the third article of the constitutional draft. The article states, "Palestine is a peace-loving state that condemns terror, occupation, and aggression. It calls for the resolution of international and regional problems by peaceful means. It abides by the Charter of the United Nations." Palestinians perceive themselves, as Israelis do, as cherishing peace and engaging in violence only in self-defense and for reclaiming their rights.

The fourth tenet could be labeled "justice" and is embodied in the three pillars of the Palestinian position for a final-status solution: the right of return, pre-1967 borders, and Jerusalem as capital. Justice has become the key idiom in Palestinian public discourse and official statements, used to express Palestinian grievances and to make pleas to the international community.<sup>53</sup> It reflects a discourse that centers on moral rights and entitlement rather than on utilitarian gains and benefits. It also resonates powerfully with Arab and Muslim political culture, where justice is a deeply rooted notion of good governance by and proper conduct of enlightened sovereigns.<sup>54</sup>

As in the Israeli system, these values also require difficult trade-offs and balancing. Justice, especially when fueled by extremely high expectations, is difficult to satisfy. An uncompromising position on the actual refugees' right of return may call for the surrender of peace or independence. Similarly, unity may be abandoned if opposition factions are perceived to undermine the struggle for independence or state building.

In both societies, these values are powerful social forces, and the value trade-offs they entail present real and agonizing dilemmas for Palestinians and Israelis. For their leaders, these trade-offs mean both personal value conflicts and the political costs that any choice, but in particular wrong choices, may incur. Their actual decisions are thus influenced both by their personal attachment to these values and the likelihood and nature of domestic political costs that they might incur because of powerful interests and general public opinion.

### **Behavioral Participatory Characteristics**

Thus far we have compared the Israeli and Palestinian publics along informational and normative dimensions. However, one cannot think of public opinion, and its impact in two-level games, without considering its active, behavioral manifestations and its public and publicity aspects. These manifestations are at the heart of public-opinion influence. They often attract headlines that exert pressure on politicians, which in turn motivates the politicians to consider public sentiment. Public opinion as public expression can range from symbolic and verbal expressions of opinion by individuals in different forums, to organized group activity and protest, to public referenda and election outcomes. How do Palestinians and Israelis compare in this dimension?

The most important difference between the Israeli and Palestinian publics relates to Israel's being an independent state and a well-established democracy with regular elections, whereas the PA is not independent, and is still in search of its constitutional makeup.

Israel is rated “free” by Freedom House, and gets a rank of 1 in political rights and 3 in civil liberties. The Palestinian Authority under Arafat was consistently rated as “not free,” obtaining a score of 5 in political rights and 6 in civil liberties.<sup>55</sup> Since then, far-reaching democratization reforms in the PA have taken place, including free presidential and local elections in 2005, and parliamentary elections in 2006, resulting in power sharing in the PA. Before these elections, Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza had cast their ballots in general elections only once—in 1996—following the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the PA. Even so, when given the opportunity to participate in elections, Palestinians have done so at impressive levels. Palestinian turnout in the 2005 presidential elections is estimated to have been between 66 and 73 percent, depending on the calculations.<sup>56</sup> In the 2006 parliamentary elections, turnout reached 75 percent.<sup>57</sup>

Not only are free general elections a relatively novel experience for Palestinians, their party system is less developed and less routinized compared with the Israeli system. The Israeli occupation is the main reason for these conditions, but analysts also emphasize the longstanding preference of Palestinian parties to pursue organization and direct action rather than electoral competition. Palestinian parties have often shown a lack of interest in electoral politics and preferred instead dialogue and negotiation;<sup>58</sup> this has characterized PLO political life and Palestinian political culture in general for many years. Palestinian parties, instead, have preferred to build their power base among labor unions and civil society organizations. As a result, Palestinians’ political participation has been channeled into more informal modes, mobilized largely from above. Those include frequent support rallies, political ads, and letters of support, often published in Palestinian newspapers.

We should also note Palestinian civil society’s striking scope and diversity, characteristics developed to a large extent as a response to living under occupation. This situation forced Palestinian society to organize itself, over many years, and to provide essential public goods for itself in the absence of a state. This does not mean complete detachment from authority or government; many governments have been involved in regulating and controlling these activities, including those of Lebanon, Jordan, and, of course, Israel. Moreover, Palestinian civil society organizations have developed symbiotic relations with the PLO since its inception in 1964, and these have been considered an essential part of the state-building agenda. Over the years, and particularly since the establishment of the PA, the level of dependency of grass-roots organizations and NGOs on the state increased, given the PA’s substantial efforts to regulate and control their activities in the face of flourishing Hamas-related NGOs.

Compared with Palestinians, Israelis are accustomed to elections, election campaigns, and political parties as major actors in politics. They have, to date, participated in eighteen national election races.<sup>59</sup> Over the years, turnout in Israeli Knesset elections has fluctuated around 80 percent; however, a noticeable decrease was observed in the 2003 and 2006 elections, to 68.9 percent and 63.5 percent, respectively.<sup>60</sup> It seems that Israelis are becoming disenchanted with traditional electoral politics and political parties and are moving to less-conventional forms of political participation, through protest demonstrations and civil society action groups.<sup>61</sup>

Probably the primary mode in which Palestinian public opinion makes itself visible in overt political action is in its expressions of active resistance to the Israeli occupation, by peaceful as well as violent means. These expressions epitomize the prevailing norm of defiance and objection to the Israeli occupation and reinforce the dominant nationalist climate of opinion that surrounds the *intifada*. Not surprisingly, this very nationalist sentiment has often been exploited to suppress genuine antigovernment criticism and protest in the PA on the grounds that it hurts the struggle for national liberation. Such has been the case, for example, with two major teachers’ strikes, in 1997

and 2000, in which the PA used its security services to intimidate and arrest some of the strike leaders.<sup>62</sup>

Mass demonstrations and rallies have not been rare in the PA, but they usually have been organized either by the ruling party or by strong opposition groups—Fatah and Hamas in their turn. Occasionally, spontaneous instances of dissent have occurred, to protest against corruption or the strong hand of the PA security services. The violent demonstrations that erupted at the Dehaishe refugee camp following the visit of Pope John Paul II in Bethlehem in March 2000 serves as a good example.<sup>63</sup> More recently, small-scale armed clashes have broken out, particularly in the Gaza Strip, and have been associated with the power struggle between the PA's political factions.

As for Israel, political protest has by and large been tolerated by the authorities. Still, there have been instances in which excess force has been used—at times with grave consequences—in order to squelch dissent, particularly against Arab citizens of Israel. In October 2000, for example, thirteen Arab protesters were shot and killed by the Israeli police during violent demonstrations in support of the al-Aqsa intifada. Dispersed acts of police violence have also been carried out against orthodox Jews protesting the desecration of the Shabbat in Jerusalem, and against left-wing demonstrators, most recently in protests over the erection of the separation wall that began construction under Sharon's administration. The largest scale of political protest manifested in Israel was in the summer of 2005, by opponents of disengagement, primarily settlers from the West Bank.

### **Public Opinion Channels of Influence in Israel and the PA**

Legitimacy—the voluntary deference to authorities—is considered a basic condition for rule for any regime. Legitimacy has a strong normative component and is often considered as the belief wherein everyone defers to the powerful. In other words, legitimacy is established when those involved in power relations share the belief that the relations are legitimate.<sup>64</sup> Such beliefs are usually grounded in substantive reasons that justify them. Thus, beyond the shared belief in the legitimacy of a regime, what actually makes the regime legitimate are the facts that it is congruent with people's values, satisfies their interests, and fulfills their expectations.<sup>65</sup>

Until the institutionalization of elections in the PA, the influence of public opinion on foreign policy worked primarily through informal channels and because of leaders' fears of losing their legitimacy. Yasser Arafat drew his power chiefly from the unsurpassed level of legitimacy he managed to gain in the eyes of the Palestinian people. This level of legitimacy drew on both substantive and normative sources. Substantively, he fulfilled the Palestinians' expectations beyond imagination. He gained world recognition of their tragedy, he provided them with a strong sense of national identity, and he brought them to the verge of establishing an independent state. Normatively, these achievements and his persona have often been raised to mythological dimensions and have perpetuated widely shared beliefs regarding the unanimity behind the legitimacy of his leadership. This strong legitimacy base allowed Arafat to personalize his rule using effective neopatrimonial practices such as granting loyalists prestigious posts and access to illicit rent.<sup>66</sup> Under Arafat, the PA could be characterized as a liberalized autocracy.<sup>67</sup> He did everything he could to obstruct the establishment of institutions that would constrain his control, which included holding periodic elections and enacting a constitution. Those institutions that were already in place were systematically weakened, circumvented, or ignored by him. All of this might mistakenly imply complete disregard for public opinion. The truth of the matter, however, is that Arafat's concern for legitimacy

in the eyes of his followers produced a much more reciprocal relationship with his public than the institutional analysis might suggest: People's values, expectations, and broad contours of policy aspirations acted as constraints on his political moves, as the case of Camp David, with which we started, seems to exemplify.

This balance sharply changed with the death of Arafat and the electoral reforms implemented in the PA. Abu Mazin has never enjoyed the level of revolutionary legitimacy of Arafat, and the institutional legitimacy that he gained with his election as president has been critically eroded, both by defiant opposition factions and by Sharon's unilateral disengagement. The next chapter elaborates on this point.

Following the electoral reforms in the PA, the channels through which Israeli and Palestinian public opinion affected foreign policy became much more alike. In both systems, publics exerted their influence through formal channels and ratification procedures, as well as informal channels and legitimacy threats. A good example of this influence is the political struggle over Sharon's disengagement plan, which clearly entailed a fight over legitimacy. His opponents made every effort to delegitimize him (personally), his decision, and Israel's democratic institutions. The proponents of disengagement, in turn, relied heavily on public opinion polls, which indicated substantial support for the plan.

With regard to formal channels, elections in Israel may be seen as having functioned as a relatively efficient mechanism of translating public opinion preferences into actual representation in the political arena, even during the era of Labor dominance.<sup>68</sup> This especially has been the case since the 1990s, when dynamic representation can be established.<sup>69</sup> The dynamic relationship between leaders and publics can be quite well encapsulated by common rational-choice logic, which assumes that political actors are office seekers and will attempt to maximize the probability of their being elected. They should then be concerned with public opinion evaluation of their domestic as well as foreign policy performance, as it may affect their chances for election.<sup>70</sup> If they don't, or if they err, they will be thrown out of office.<sup>71</sup>

Since the 1990s, in five of six elections, Israelis have thrown the incumbents out and changed the makeup of government. These choices at the ballot box reflected their preferences on whether to pursue a more conciliatory or more activist policy toward the Palestinians and were then promptly translated into policy.<sup>72</sup> In 1992, the Labor Party's Yitzhak Rabin was elected following a clear dovish trend among Israelis for a more conciliatory policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Oslo breakthrough ensued. Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu was elected in 1996 in a very close election, as the dovish trend of willingness to compromise with the Palestinians continued but was tempered by a growing demand for an emphasis on military means following the wave of suicide bombings in early 1996, just before the elections. While Netanyahu accepted the Oslo agreements as reality, his policy stands insisted on reciprocity, and the Oslo process basically came to a halt. Netanyahu's policy was perceived as too hard-line and, coupled with Barak's promise to get out of Lebanon, led to Barak's victory in 1999. Barak's term was characterized by a sense of disenchantment with the Oslo process and by a sharp turn in Israeli conciliatory attitudes following the start of the second intifada. Israelis' quest for a hard-line leader capable of squelching the uprising brought Sharon to office in 2001. These concerns, coupled with Sharon's middle-of-the-road positioning by hinting at "hard sacrifices" kept him there in 2003. Public pressure to break the stalemate and willingness to make "hard sacrifices" were among the factors driving Sharon's disengagement plan. In 2006, Likud crashed, and Kadima, which directed its campaign at the median voter, won the election.

The logic of rational anticipation, where the political actors who wish to stay in power have to take into account their publics in order to stay in office, also applies now more than ever to the Palestinian scene. The sweeping legitimacy that Fatah possessed as the embodiment of Palestinian national aspirations, and its historic role as the dominant party in Palestinian politics, did not save it from the devastating defeat in the 2006 elections. When given the opportunity, the Palestinian public held it accountable for institutionalizing corruption and failing to enforce law and order in the PA.

## 5

## PUBLIC OPINION, POLICY OPPORTUNITIES, AND CONSTRAINTS: DATA ANALYSIS

Having sketched the nature of public opinion and its role in two-level games, this study moves now to the empirical world of actual public-opinion data. It provides a unique account of Israeli and Palestinian public opinion on the core issues surrounding the conflict since the beginning of the al-Aqsa intifada in September 2000, including the major contours of the current win-sets of the two publics.

The discussion is focused on three important crossroads in the al-Aqsa intifada: the Geneva initiative, from October 2003; Sharon's disengagement from Gaza, announced two months after the initiative and carried out in August 2005; and the consequent political reversals in Israel and the PA in the parliamentary elections of both societies in early 2006. These events are intimately related; they are in different ways functions of public opinion, but they have also shaped Palestinian and Israeli public opinion and the Israeli-Palestinian two-level game. The following section offers policy recommendations based on this analysis.

### From Geneva to Disengagement

The Geneva initiative was an attempt by a group of Israeli and Palestinian doves to draft a comprehensive proposal for an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. It was meant to demonstrate that there is substantial common ground for a comprehensive peace agreement between Palestinians and Israelis. In two-level game terms, it was a bold move on the part of domestic players to interfere with the leaders' game in an attempt to expand their win-sets—the sets of all possible agreements that would gain domestic majority support through public opinion. In fact, it went even further, by offering a complete alternative game with different assumptions, different rules, and perhaps even different players. As such, it was perceived as a threat by Sharon and Arafat, and a challenge to their leadership capacity, particularly since it appeared to be in conflict with their domestic political calculus and outside their acceptability-sets.<sup>73</sup> The Geneva initiative, coupled with favorable sentiment on the part of the Israeli public, a deteriorating economy, and protest groups refusing mandatory military service in the occupied territories, provided the impetus for Sharon's disengagement plan. In a revealing interview to the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, Dov Weisglass, Sharon's senior adviser, explained vividly the forces that motivated the disengagement plan: "The economy was stagnant, and the Geneva initiative garnered broad support. And then we were hit with letters of officers and letters of pilots and letters of commandos. These were not weird kids with green ponytails and rings in their noses who give off a strong odor of grass. These were . . . really our finest young people."<sup>74</sup>

Obviously, additional weighty considerations were involved in this decision. In the interview, Weisglass also revealed Sharon's hope that his initiative would help to deflect international pressure, which was moving in an undesirable direction, and preserve the current situation in "formaldehyde," that is, for a long time. In any case, there can be no doubt about the central role of NGOs, grass-roots protests, and public opinion in pressuring Sharon to come up with a new policy initiative. It is no coincidence that Sharon's disengagement plan was announced in December 2003, two months after the Geneva initiative.



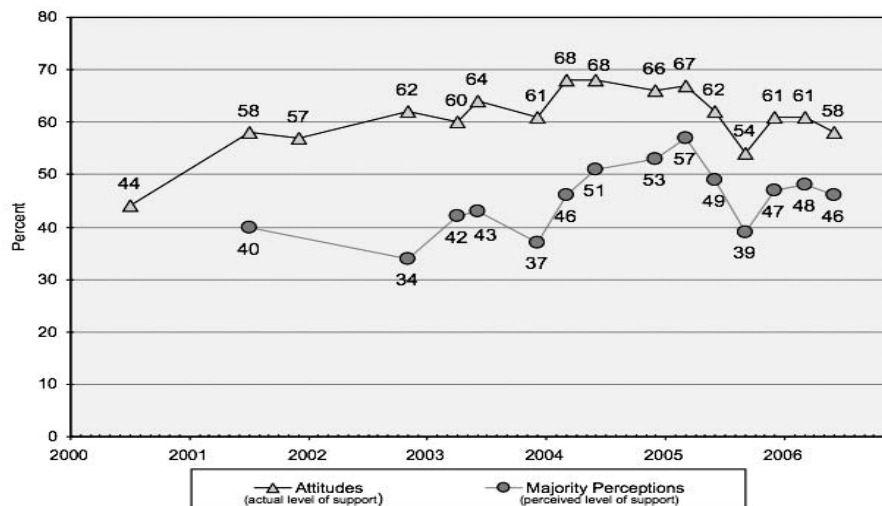
In a speech given at the annual Herzliya conference on Israel's national security, Sharon reiterated his commitment to the Road Map, but he also announced that if the Palestinians would not soon fulfill their part in its implementation, Israel would not wait for them indefinitely and would initiate a unilateral step of disengagement. In his speech, Sharon did not specify the contours of the disengagement, but the plan, as it shaped up in the following months, entailed the evacuation of all settlements in the Gaza Strip and four additional settlements in the northern part of the West Bank.

From that time, Sharon faced significant political and advocacy challenges posed by disengagement opponents within his government, Likud, and the settlers. While surviving all challenges, Sharon suffered a painful defeat in the Likud members' referendum, held in May 2004, which rejected his plan. This was the result of a one-sided, mass-persuasion campaign, launched by settlers, in which most Likud members were contacted in person and pressured to vote against the disengagement. With strong opposition continuing within his government, Sharon moved to form a national-unity government with Labor, which stabilized his regime in the short term. He obtained the Knesset's backing for the plan, but the level of opposition to the disengagement was high, reminiscent of the opposition to the implementation of the Oslo Accords signed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1993 and 1995, which culminated in his assassination in November 1995. The settlers' protest in 2005, however, had more participants and more illegal activities, including confrontations with police and army forces.

Although the opponents to disengagement were successful in advancing the Likud members' referendum, they made little headway in persuading the Israeli public of their view. Support for Sharon's disengagement plan was both strong and stable throughout this period (in most surveys, more than 60 percent), but the dynamics of public opinion are more interesting and complex when viewed within the context of two-level games. **Figure 2** provides an excellent illustration of these dynamics.

The Joint Israeli-Palestinian Public Opinion Research Project has been tracing Israelis' willingness to dismantle most of the settlements in the territories as part of a peace agreement with the Palestin-

**Figure 2. Percentage of Israelis supporting the dismantling of most settlements in exchange for peace**





ians since the beginning of the second intifada.<sup>75</sup> But in addition to attitudes on this issue, the project has also traced the normative facet of public opinion by asking people not only what they think on the issue but also what they think the majority of the public thinks. People's perceptions of the majority opinion reveal the prevailing norm about an issue—the climate of opinion.<sup>76</sup> Figure 2 shows both trend lines.

The line marked with triangles shows the actual level of support for dismantling most of the settlements for peace. The line marked with circles shows the climate of opinion: the percentage of people who believe that the majority of the public supports it. This figure reveals a fascinating story. Since mid-2001, more than 50 percent of Israelis have supported the dismantling of most settlements for peace. This sentiment, however, was still not perceived as a normative step. Throughout this period, only a minority of the public believed that this was the majority opinion, and the gap between the two lines was large. When did this position become normative? After Sharon's public declaration of his disengagement plan in December 2003! Note the big jump in early 2004 in the climate-of-opinion line. It rises from 37 percent to 46 percent, and further to 57 percent in the following months, bringing it close to the attitudes line. In other words, Sharon's announcement of his disengagement plan helped legitimize the dismantling of settlements in the eyes of the Israeli public.<sup>77</sup>

This case provides a powerful demonstration of the dynamic relationship between public opinion and leaders in two-level games. As in the first intifada and the Oslo process,<sup>78</sup> here too, the Israeli public was ahead of its leaders on a crucial policy issue and provided an opportunity (and impetus) for Sharon's dramatic policy change. The policy move, in turn, transformed the "private" opinions into "public opinion" and thereby legitimized them. Thus, contrary to common beliefs, wide support for a policy option is perhaps necessary for its implementation, but it is not always sufficient, since it does not always entail normative legitimacy. Obtaining normative legitimacy constitutes a crucial phase shift in public opinion from a mere favorable sentiment held privately by many people to actual collective readiness for the implementation of a specific policy option. This is where leaders' and other facilitating agencies' role in preparing public opinion becomes so important. This point will be expanded further in the policy recommendations section.

## From Disengagement to Kadima and Hamas

Sharon's unilateral disengagement in Gaza was a bold attempt to redefine the rules of the game played between Israel and the Palestinians, and as such has been a key formative event in charting the course of the Israeli-Palestinian game at both the domestic and international tables. At the Israeli domestic table, it was of great consequence in shattering the omnipotent standing of the settlers. It further triggered the restructuring of the Israeli party system with the establishment of Kadima and its victory in the 2006 election. The disengagement also laid the foundation for Olmert's realignment plan, announced just before the March 2006 election. The plan proposed to evacuate within a few years most of the settlements in Judea and Samaria, while consolidating into large blocks of settlements along the line of the separation wall. As for the Palestinian domestic table, the disengagement was a major factor behind the rise of Hamas to power in the January 2006 parliamentary elections and consequently to the divided government in the PA. As a result, the makeup of the international table was completely overturned.

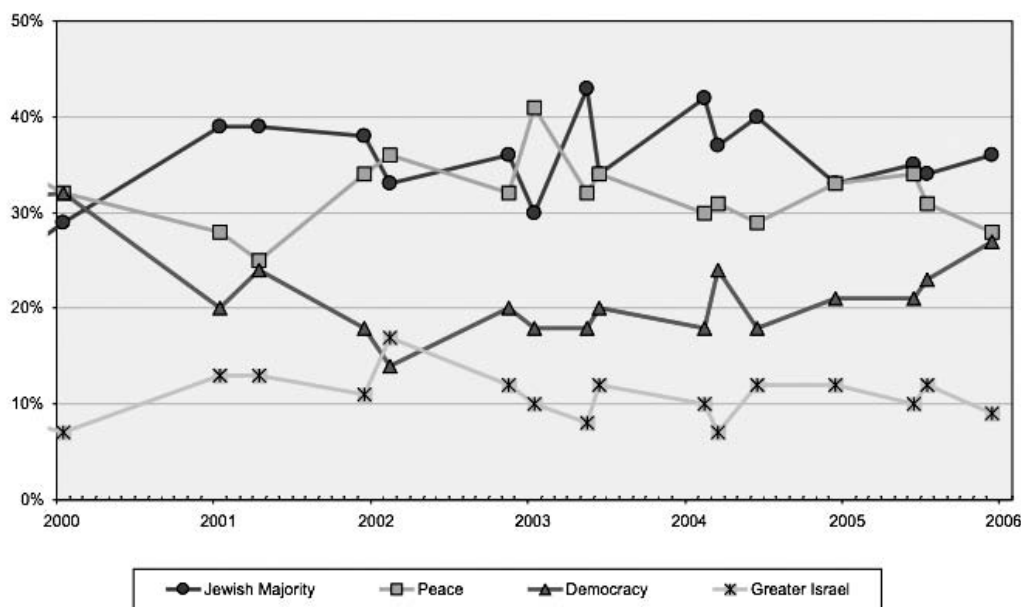
A momentous offshoot of the fierce political battle within Israel over the disengagement came around November 21, 2005, when Sharon called for early elections and announced that he was

leaving Likud and establishing a new party—Kadima. Shortly thereafter, Sharon suffered two strokes, and, following the second serious one, on January 4, 2006, fell into a coma. In the elections that followed on March 28, Kadima, without Sharon and with Olmert as its new leader, became the largest party in the newly elected Knesset. This political “Big Bang,” as it was described in Israel by politicians and political analysts, was the culmination of a dramatic but long-expected realignment process. The Israeli political continuum and the parties that lie along it, frozen for many years, now realigned to concur with their constituencies’ policy positions and value priorities, which had shifted considerably in the last decades. The shift began during the first intifada and continued throughout the Oslo years and into the second intifada, which ultimately shaped the circumstances that triggered the realignment process. The change in Israelis’ support for a Palestinian state provides just one striking illustration of the magnitude of this shift. Before the first intifada, about 20 percent of Israeli Jews expressed willingness to accept a Palestinian state.<sup>79</sup> At present, about 60 percent support it.<sup>80</sup> These figures, and those documenting the willingness to relinquish settlements for peace presented above, indicate Israeli Jews’ preference for a state with a Jewish majority over the dream of a Greater Israel holding on to the occupied territories.

As previously noted, Israeli political culture incorporates several fundamental values that underlie the conflict with the Palestinians: peace, democracy, a state with a Jewish majority, and a Greater Israel. These values are in conflict, and Israeli Jews have come to understand in the last two decades that they cannot attain all of them together.<sup>81</sup>

**Figure 3** traces these value preferences among Israeli Jews during the second intifada period, showing that the choices have become clear. “Jewish majority” and then “peace” consistently rank highest, while “Greater Israel” ranks lowest. In other words, Israeli Jews understood that they need to trade off the dream of Greater Israel if a state with a Jewish majority and peace is important to them.

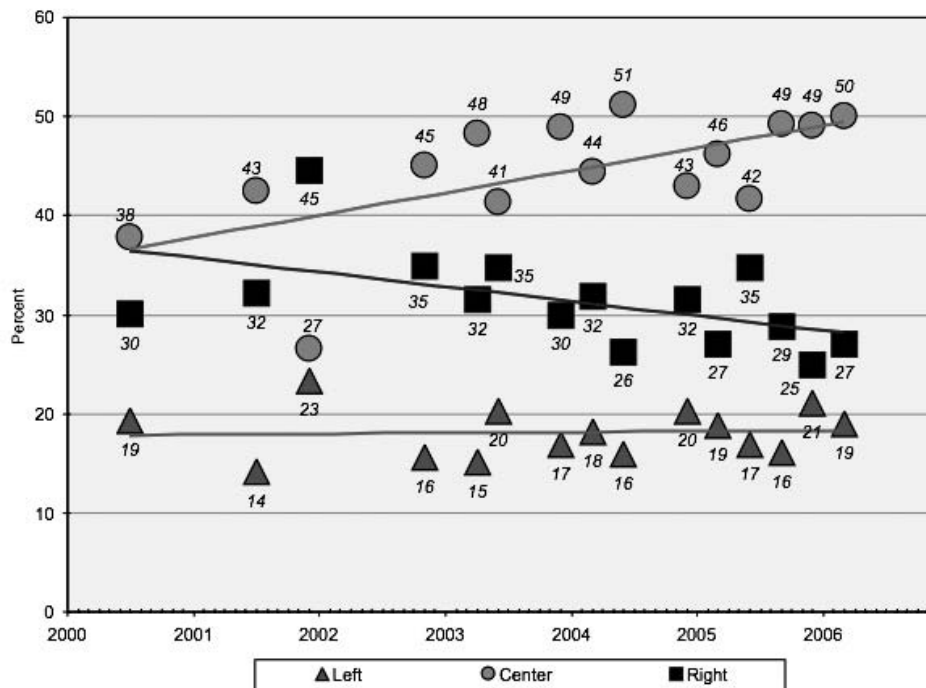
**Figure 3. Israeli Jews’ value priorities over time**



These value priorities begin to tell the story of the disintegration of Likud and the success of Kadima in the last elections, but not the full story. Given these value priorities, it is evident that Likud's ideological and policy positions of adherence to the territories and the settlement project differed greatly from the electorate's ideal point of view. On the other hand, Labor and the Israeli left did not have a chance to capitalize on Israelis' yearning for peace—the second most preferred value. Apparently, the failure of the Camp David summit and the ensuing intifada succeeded in obliterating any trust in a political settlement with the Palestinians. In the JIPP surveys, one sees a consistent despair among Israelis with regard to the prospects of a political settlement with the Palestinians. For example, in March 2006, just before the elections, only a quarter of Israelis believed a settlement with the Palestinians might be reached within the next few years. Fifty percent of the public thought that it might take at least another decade, if not generations. Another quarter thought a political settlement with the Palestinians would never be possible. Similar results were obtained in the June 2006 poll.

Clearly then, the two big dreams that defined and polarized the Israeli political scene have been shattered—for the right, "Greater Israel," for the left, "Peace Now" (or at least "Peace Soon"). As a result, the two traditional camps in Israeli politics lost their ideological and electoral appeal, and Israelis began to gravitate to the center, as documented strikingly in **figure 4**. The figure presents Israelis' self-identification as right-wing, left-wing, or center over time.

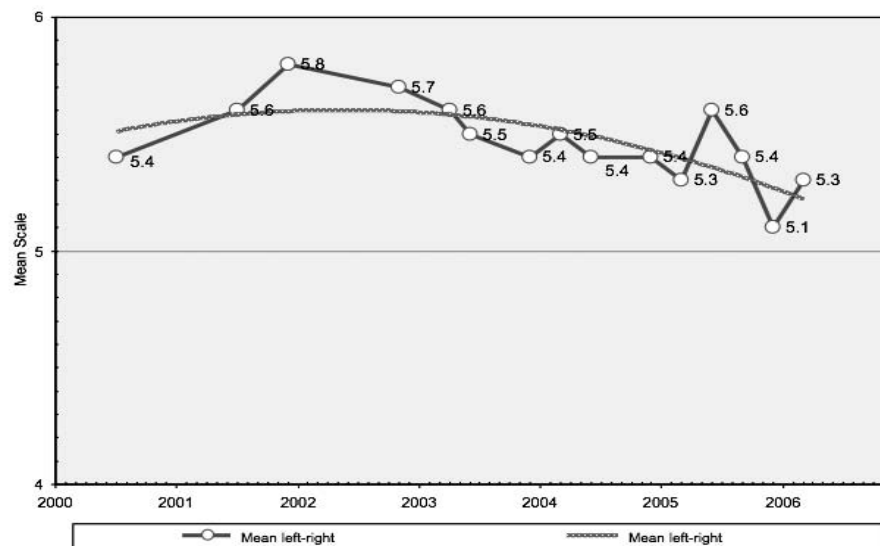
**Figure 4. Left-right identification over time**



The lines in the figure are regression lines that chart the trends. The right-wing line moves down while the center line moves up. The left remains virtually flat over the entire period. Note that in the last two polls, about 50 percent of the Israeli electorate define themselves as center, and, when combined with the left, amount to almost 70 percent of the voters.<sup>82</sup>

It is important to stress that this process, while gradual, was not linear, as the regression lines suggest. **Figure 5** plots the mean values of the left-right scale, which range from 1 (extreme left) to 9 (extreme right). As can be seen, the political realignment process was quite sensitive to the progression of the conflict with the Palestinians. Following the eruption of the intifada, mean values increase, indicating a shift to the right. With the intifada further progressing, the mean values begin to decline, marking a gradual shift toward the dovish direction—basically to the center.

**Figure 5. Left-right identification over time**



What is this “center”? It is the combination of the left’s willingness to compromise and the right’s focus on Jewish in-group orientation, blended with pessimism, distrust, and despair over the Palestinians as a partner. Separation and unilateralism became a logical conclusion, and both the separation wall and the disengagement embody this notion. Politically, the establishment of Kadima was a direct consequence of the disengagement. It would not have come about, however, without the political preferences of the electorate. Kadima thus restructured the Israeli party system in accordance with the electorate’s placement along the left-right continuum.

Most interesting in terms of this study’s focus on the role of public opinion in two-level games is Olmert’s call for a mandate for his realignment plan during the 2006 election campaign. Olmert was concerned with the settlers’ challenge to his legitimacy to implement another far-reaching disengagement in the West Bank. Essentially, the settlers’ campaign against Sharon’s disengagement in Gaza was a battle over public legitimacy. Sharon was accused of retracting from his election promise to protect the integrity of the settlement project and was strongly pressured to hold a referendum on his disengagement plan. In order to preempt a similar scenario, Olmert disclosed his realignment plan three weeks before the 2006 elections.<sup>83</sup> Clearly this step was taken to secure a mandate for his plan. Indeed, this decision was taken against the recommendations of his advisers, who feared it would hurt his chances in the election.<sup>84</sup>

What about the role that the disengagement played in the Palestinian turnabout and the rise to power of Hamas? The Israeli disengagement in Gaza had a profound effect on Palestinian public

opinion and the elections. First, it boosted Hamas's popularity in the Palestinian public. At the same time, because of Israel's insistence on a unilateral process, it considerably weakened the Fatah leadership and eroded Abu Mazin's political assets in the eyes of the Palestinians.

Israel's unilateral retreat in Gaza was largely interpreted by Palestinians as a sweeping victory for Hamas's doctrine of violent resistance to the Israeli occupation. In the September 2005 poll, just after the disengagement in Gaza, 84 percent of Palestinians saw the retreat as a victory for the Palestinian armed struggle against Israel. Moreover, it was seen as a replay of Hizbullah's success in southern Lebanon and reinforced the widespread Palestinian belief that Israel understands only force. In fact, in the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Public Opinion Research Project's first poll in July 2000, 63 percent of Palestinians believed that Palestinians should emulate the methods of Hizbullah in Lebanon; 28 percent did not believe so. More generally, in the JIPP surveys, a majority of Palestinians have consistently agreed that armed confrontations have helped them achieve national rights in ways that negotiations could not.

The erosion in Abu Mazin's standing was a direct outcome of the unilateral nature of the disengagement and should be understood in the context of the two-level game Sharon played with the Palestinian leadership. The unilateral component in the disengagement was an essential part of Sharon's political calculations. First, functionally it allowed full implementation of Israeli interests without any strings attached regarding negotiation. Second, and more important, a unilateral approach was meant to threaten the Palestinian leaders politically, to make them yield to Israeli demands to crack down forcefully on the "terrorist infrastructure," as Sharon called it. Depriving the Palestinian leadership of the opportunity to negotiate with Israel was meant to strip Fatah and Abu Mazin of their most important political asset in the eyes of the Palestinians: they, not Hamas, held the key to the Israeli lock, and thus only they could negotiate a peaceful solution. Indeed, this explains Sharon's refusal to boost Abu Mazin's standing even after the disengagement. Risking the rise to power of Hamas was not an issue for Sharon since he believed that Hamas was bound to take over anyway, unless Abu Mazin disciplined the Islamists by force. Moreover, a belligerent and extremist regime in the PA seemed to serve well the Israeli government's interest in the short run by substantiating its reservations regarding the Road Map and shielding it from an internationally imposed solution. In terms of two-level games, Sharon's unilateral paradigm provides a fascinating and rare example of a game in which one leader threatens the political survival of the other side's leader by implementing a policy that will erode the other leader's standing among his domestic public.

While contributing to Hamas's victory in the PA, the disengagement was by no means the primary cause. Just as the realignment of the Israeli party system evolved slowly, the growing support for Hamas was also gradual. It was driven primarily by domestic rather than conflict-related causes. Most analysts attribute the rise in Hamas's power to Fatah's colossal failure in the state-building project, from the time the PA was established in 1994.<sup>85</sup> Palestinian disillusionment with the PA regime focused specifically on two areas. Most important was the widespread corruption and the regime's neglect to fight it. Second was its failure to enforce law and order and to put an end to the state of chaos created by the many armed groups ruling the streets.<sup>86</sup>

On the surface, these developments in the Israeli and Palestinian domestic political scenes seemed to have validated the Israeli logic of unilateralism, the most conspicuous legacy of Sharon. However, a deeper look into this logic and its consequences, especially at the international table of the two-level game, indicates otherwise.

At the international table, the notion of unilateralism and the Gaza disengagement were meant by Sharon to redefine the rules of the game. From the beginning of the Oslo process—and as is often the case in similar international disputes—the international table simultaneously entertained diplomatic and violent means. This was clearly in the interest of the side that wanted to change the status quo—the Palestinian side. The Road Map from 2002, in its sequential phases, required the Palestinians to renounce terrorism and violence before moving on to the next phase of a Palestinian state, which included the establishment of provisional borders and negotiations for a final-status settlement. The Road Map, however, was unsuccessful in moving the sides beyond the first phase. Similarly, Sharon’s policy of unilateralism was an attempt to break from the logic of simultaneous negotiation and violence and to attempt to force the Palestinians to choose only one course: It went beyond the declaration that as long as the Palestinians do not do away with the “terrorist infrastructure,” there will be no talking, to suggest that without talking, a solution will be imposed unilaterally. This was designed to produce a political threat on the Fatah leadership at its domestic table, as described above. In addition, Sharon hoped for wide international support for the new reality he meant to create in the region, thereby reducing international pressure on Israel. The most significant outcome turned out to be the end of Fatah dominance in the PA and the ascent to power of Hamas, continued violence, and only lukewarm acceptance of his step by the international community. Sharon’s hopes did not materialize, leaving the international game in the same place it was before the disengagement.

The makeup of the international table, however, had been completely overturned. On the Palestinian side, a fierce struggle had developed over who would sit at the table with Israel. The issue came up not just because of the divided government—between a Fatah president and a parliament ruled by Hamas—but mainly because of Hamas’s retractions from all previous agreements with Israel. All subsequent political maneuvers within the PA were tied to these questions, including the politics surrounding the Prisoners’ Document. This caused confusion on the Israeli side. The two-level game had regressed to the pre-Oslo period, when the questions of mutual recognition and the existence of a willing and capable partner for peace were the major issues on the international table.

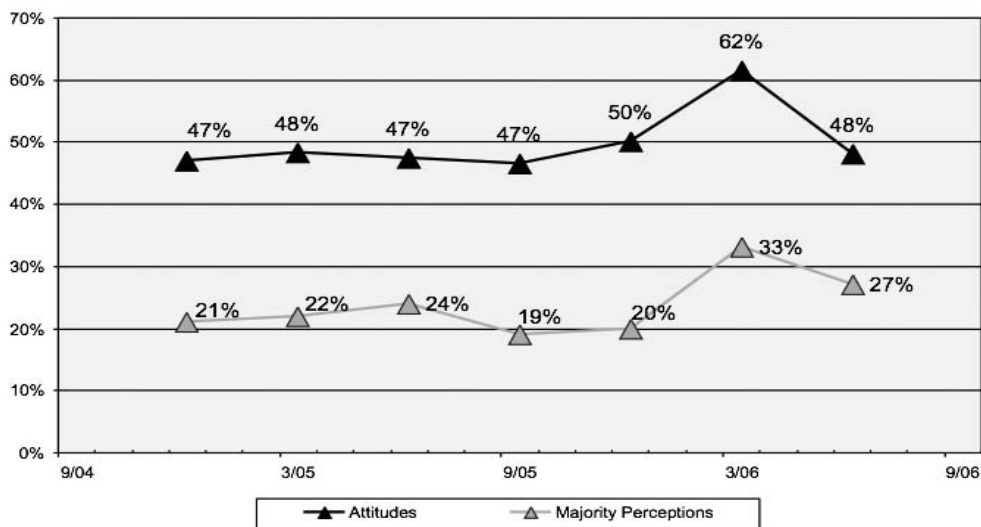
In this respect it is worthwhile to examine concurrent public opinion with regard to negotiations on both sides. Both Israelis and Palestinians support negotiations and overwhelmingly support negotiations over unilateral moves. In the March 2006 poll, about three-quarters of Palestinians (73 percent) and Israelis (76 percent) preferred to see further disengagements in the West Bank negotiated between the PA and Israel, while only 23 percent of the Palestinians and 17 percent of the Israelis preferred further disengagements to be unilateral. Moreover, majorities in both publics—59 percent of Palestinians and 63 percent of Israelis—also believed that taking the unilateral path decreased the chances to eventually reach a final-status settlement.

Within the Israeli political establishment, Abu Mazin has been widely regarded as an incompetent and Hamas as an unwilling partner. Nevertheless, in the same March 2006 poll carried out shortly after the Hamas victory in the PA elections, a considerable majority (60 percent) among Israelis supported entering talks with Abu Mazin over a final-status settlement, with 38 percent opposing it. At the same time, they were not very optimistic with regard to the results of such talks. Forty-six percent believed that it was possible to reach such a settlement with Abu Mazin and the Fatah leadership, while 51 percent thought it was impossible. Even more surprising was the level of support in Israeli public opinion regarding negotiations with Hamas. As **figure 6** shows, through 2005 and 2006, about half of Israelis thought that Israel should talk to Hamas if such talks were required

to reach a settlement with the Palestinians. In March 2006, this figure rose significantly—to 62 percent. This level of support for talks with Hamas coexisted with a high level of mistrust for the same group: 58 percent of Israelis believed that the Hamas leaders aspired to eventually conquer the state of Israel, or to conquer it and annihilate a considerable part of the Jewish population within it. Only 38 percent believed that these leaders aspired to take back only part or all of the pre-1967 territories. Moreover, a majority of the Israeli public believed that there were low or very low chances that Hamas would become moderate over time; 44 percent thought there were medium to high chances for this to happen.

Most Israeli politicians—and surely those in the major parties—oppose negotiations with Hamas. The discrepancy between the political leadership and public opinion on this issue is similar to the situation of the early 1990s, when Israeli public opinion indicated willingness to talk with the PLO long before its mainstream politicians did.<sup>87</sup> Public opinion as sketched in figure 6 is split in its attitudes on this issue; but note that negotiations with Hamas were not normative, and only small minorities think that support of talks with Hamas is the majority opinion. These data thus provide another example of public opinion providing opportunities to its leaders and probably also awaiting them to find ways to overcome this hurdle.

**Figure 6. Percentage of Israelis supporting talks with Hamas if necessary for peace**



A similar state of affairs can be identified in the PA, where the Hamas government is ambiguous about negotiations with Israel, as this would imply recognition of Israel on their part. However, there is overwhelming Palestinian public-opinion support for such a move. In the June 2006 poll, 70 percent of Palestinians thought that if Israel agreed to enter into peace negotiations with Hamas, Hamas should agree to do so; only 26 percent thought it should not agree. Both publics thus open up opportunities, in terms of entering into negotiations, for their leaders in the two-level game.



### The Permanent-Status Framework

One necessary condition for international negotiations to succeed is an overlap in the players' domestic win-sets. We may then ask if there is a permanent-status proposal that simultaneously wins the support of the two publics. In such a case, public opinion on both sides provides a most meaningful opportunity for its leaders.

Many ideas and plans for a permanent settlement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been floating around for years. Since the Oslo process began, however, several more concrete proposals have reached the public agenda, mostly in unofficial, off-the-record versions. Of these, the most prominent have been the Beilin-Abu Mazin understandings of 1995; the Clinton parameters of December 2000; the Moratinos "nonpaper" on the January 2001 Taba negotiations; and, most recently, the Geneva initiative mentioned earlier in this study. While differing on specifics, almost all of these proposals address the most crucial components underlying the conflict: territory, statehood, sovereignty, security, Jerusalem, refugees, and the end of conflict.

The Joint Israeli-Palestinian Public Opinion Research Project's recent surveys provide a comparison of Israelis' and Palestinians' views of such a package at several points in time. In December 2003, following the official launching of the Geneva initiative, the framework for the initiative was presented to respondents as the "Geneva package." One year later, after the death of Arafat, the questions were asked again. Here the package was presented unlabeled, simply as a permanent-status package. The questions were repeated in December 2005, after the Gaza disengagement, and again in June 2006, after the electoral reversals in both societies. The questions in these surveys were phrased along the lines of President Clinton's ideas presented to both sides in late December 2000 and in the Geneva initiative of December 2003. These questions, listed below, cover the six most important components of a permanent-status framework.<sup>88</sup>

- **The end of conflict component** suggests that the permanent-status agreement will mark the end of conflict, that no further claims will be made by either side, and that there will be a mutual recognition of Palestine and Israel as the homelands of their respective peoples.
- **The demilitarized state component** entails the establishment of a Palestinian state with no army but with a strong security force. Its security and borders will be protected primarily by a multinational force.<sup>89</sup>
- **The sovereignty/security component** suggests that the Palestinian state will have sovereignty over its land and airspace but that Israel will have the right to use Palestinian airspace for training and will maintain two early-warning stations in the West Bank. The multinational force will monitor the implementation of the agreement, the territorial integrity of the Palestinian state, and the border crossings into the state.
- **The borders component** addresses the issue of the Palestinian state spanning the entire West Bank and Gaza strip except for several blocks of settlements on no more than 3 percent of the West Bank. In return, Palestinians would receive territory of similar size along the Gaza Strip.
- **The Jerusalem component** states that the city will be the capital of both states. The Arab neighborhoods, including those in the old city as well as the Temple Mount, will come under Palestinian sovereignty. The Jewish neighborhoods, including the Jewish quarter and the Wailing Wall, will be under Israeli sovereignty.
- **The refugee component** includes references to UN Security Council Resolutions 194 and 242, compensation, and the following five options for permanent residency: return to the Palestinian



state; return to areas in Israel that will be transferred to the Palestinian state in a territorial exchange; residency in their current states; immigration to third countries; or return to Israel, which will be restricted and at the discretion of Israel.

Following questions about each of the individual components, Israelis and Palestinians were asked to express support or opposition for this version of the permanent-status agreement as a combined, overall package. Table 1 presents the results of these surveys; support for the overall package is shown in the last row of the table.

**Table 1. Support for permanent-status framework components among Israelis and Palestinians (2003–2006)**

Component	Israelis				Palestinians			
	Dec 2003	Jan 2005	Dec 2005	Jun 2006	Dec 2003	Dec 2004	Dec 2005	Jun 2006
Borders and Territorial Exchange	47%	55%	53%	47%	57%	63%	55%	54%
Refugees	35%	44%	43%	43%	25%	46%	40%	41%
Jerusalem	41%	39%	38%	37%	46%	44%	33%	35%
Demilitarized Palestinian State	61%	68%	69%	63%	36%	27%	20%	25%
Security Arrangements	50%	61%	62%	52%	23%	53%	43%	40%
End of Conflict	66%	76%	80%	70%	42%	69%	64%	58%
<b>Overall Package</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>44%</b>

The results shown in the table are informative in several respects. First, and most meaningful, at least at one point in time, there was majority support for the Clinton/Geneva framework as a combined overall package. In the December 2004/January 2005 poll, 64 percent of Israelis and 54 percent of Palestinians supported this framework as a combined, overall package, up from 47 percent of Israelis and 39 percent of Palestinians who supported this package a year earlier in December 2003. Second, it is evident that considerable changes occurred in the two publics over this period. Third, there are large differences in the levels of support for the different items within each public and between them. And finally, the pattern of support for the overall package is more than the sum of its parts. Specifically, people's calculus is compensatory and trade-offs are considered.

The lowest level of support obtained for the Clinton/Geneva permanent-status formula was in December 2003. The highest level of support was observed a year later, in December 2004, shortly after the death of Arafat. This event was probably the major factor behind the change. Arafat's death was followed by a surge of optimism and considerable moderation in both publics. This optimism was evident in most other questions asked in the December 2004 survey. Another factor that could account for the large difference between the two polls is the fact that the first survey presented the framework to respondents as the Geneva package, which might have lowered its

level of support, given the ongoing delegitimation of the Geneva initiative by officials and the media in both societies at that time.<sup>90</sup>

Among Israelis, majority support for this package was also obtained in the two later polls, held in 2005 and 2006. In December 2005, after the disengagement and the establishment of Kadima, the level of support for the package was the same as in the previous year—64 percent. In June 2006, however, after the rise to power of Hamas and the continuous shelling of southern Israel from the Gaza Strip, support fell to 55 percent.

Among Palestinians, December 2004 was the only point in time where a majority of the public (54 percent) supported this permanent-status framework package. In December 2005, following the disengagement, and in June 2006, after the political turnabouts in both societies, only 46 percent and 44 percent, respectively, supported the overall package.

These data do not allow us to judge the long-term effect of the losses and suffering incurred by the two peoples during the intifada on their willingness to compromise, although clearly no linear effect is apparent. In any case, the results reiterate the degree to which public opinion is affected by political and military circumstances—in the time frame examined by the JIPP data, this effect is seen in the disengagement and the rise of Hamas to power. Interestingly, Palestinian support for this permanent-status framework package seems to have been affected more by the disengagement and the resulting disappointment than by Hamas's rise to power. Israeli support fell only after the Palestinian political turnabout and does not seem to have been affected by the disengagement.

Support for individual items in the package varied significantly within and between the two publics. It is important to see, however, that despite strong reservations regarding some of the components, the overall package always received greater support in both publics, and the gap between the least-liked component and the support for the overall package varied between 12 and 27 percentage points. This indicates that people's calculus in this respect is compensatory. The desirable components and the chance of reaching a permanent-status agreement seem to compensate for the undesirable parts, and therefore the size of this gap varies significantly over time and is bigger when there is reason for optimism.

The significance of these findings cannot be overestimated. The figures suggest that a permanent-status framework that could be endorsed by both publics is not out of reach. On the other hand, these findings and their practical implications must be treated with caution. Not only does the level of support fluctuate, but, more important, this study has so far looked only at attitudes. When other dimensions of public opinion are examined, such as the prevailing norm and people's short- and long-range expectations for a settlement, a much more pessimistic reading is revealed.

Regarding the short term, the JIPP surveys repeatedly show that both publics expect negotiations to resume, but with some continuing violence; their expectations as to the feasibility of a permanent-status agreement are gloomy and provide a completely different reading from their level of endorsement of such an agreement. In the most recent survey, of June 2006, the two publics were asked to estimate how soon a political settlement between Israel and the Palestinians could be achieved. Only 26 percent of Israelis and 13 percent of Palestinians expected that one could be reached within the next few years; 45 percent of Israelis and 26 percent of Palestinians believed it could be achieved only within the next decade, within the next generation, or after many generations; 23 percent of Israelis and 51 percent of Palestinians believed a political settlement could never be achieved.

Furthermore, Clinton's ideas and a Geneva-like permanent-status framework have not acquired legitimacy and normative approval in the two publics. The December 2005 survey asked Palestinian and Israeli respondents about their opinion on the combined package for a permanent-status settlement and about their perceptions of the majority opinion on this package in both societies. At that point in time, almost two-thirds of Israelis and 46 percent of Palestinians supported this package. Among Palestinians and Israelis alike, more respondents perceived majority opposition than majority support for the package in the PA. Palestinians similarly perceived majority opposition to the package among Israelis. Among Israelis, more perceived majority support than majority opposition to the package in their society, but they were still a minority (46 percent).

This overall picture of public opinion has to be considered when translating these findings into operational steps, which this study does in the section devoted to implications and recommendations. The survey results presented in the next section provide an additional layer to this discussion.

### Long-Range Prospects: Normalization and Reconciliation

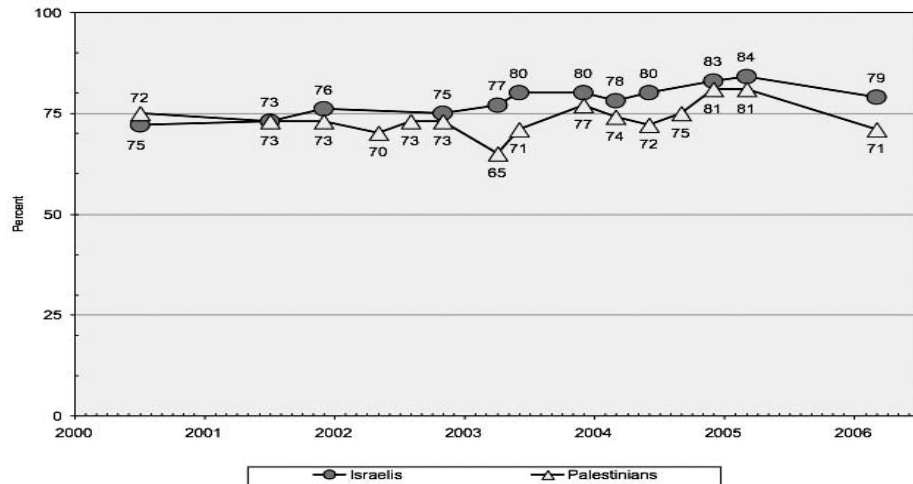
At the outset, the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Poll made a deliberate decision to move beyond daily events and developments to longer-range and more-profound dimensions of the conflict. The question of Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation is very important in this respect. In recent years, there has been increasing understanding that conflict resolution cannot truly be achieved without conflict transformation, which promotes social and cultural change and transforms societal relations so as to enhance the chances of attaining lasting peace. Such transformation entails not only a redefinition of economic and political interests but, even more, a long-range process of fundamental changes in the most basic elements that hold societies together—societal beliefs, value systems, collective memories, and identity perceptions.<sup>91</sup>

The JIPP surveys of the Joint Project have attempted to tap Palestinians' and Israelis' attitudes regarding reconciliation and when it can be achieved.<sup>92</sup> For this purpose, JIPP devised a reconciliation scale composed of normalization and reconciliation steps, often mentioned in the reconciliation literature as prerequisites for successful reconciliation following protracted conflicts.<sup>93</sup> The reconciliation steps vary in terms of difficulty and commitment, from normalization measures, such as open borders and economic cooperation; to steps toward political alliance; to transformative steps intended to change the national ethos, such as fundamental modifications in school curricula. Two additional items tap social rather than policy-oriented sentiments and ask respondents about willingness to maintain social ties with someone from the other side; other questions inquire about reconciliation sentiments in general. All of these questions are presented in the context of having reached "a peace agreement and the establishment of a Palestinian state that is recognized by Israel."

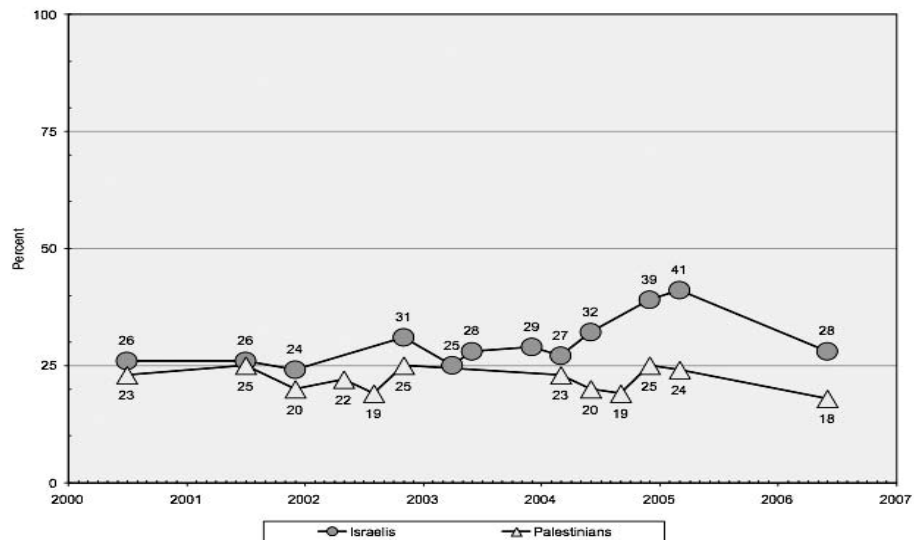
**Figure 7** shows Palestinians' and Israelis' general support for reconciliation. It is evident that support for reconciliation in general is very high in both publics. We should not be overly impressed, however, with these figures, given the fact that high levels of support are typical for general questions inquiring about highly desirable values. Indeed, when we ask respondents to estimate when such reconciliation may be achieved, optimism begins to sink. As indicated in **figure 8**, no more than one-quarter of Palestinians believe reconciliation will be reached within the next decade or the next few years. All others believe it will take longer. In June 2006, half of Palestinians polled thought that reconciliation would never be possible. Israelis became more optimistic in 2005, but

even then only about 40 percent expected reconciliation within the next decade. In the most recent (June 2006) poll, this figure was down again, to 28 percent. The others thought it would take more time, and 28 percent of Israelis thought it would never be possible.

**Figure 7. General support for reconciliation**



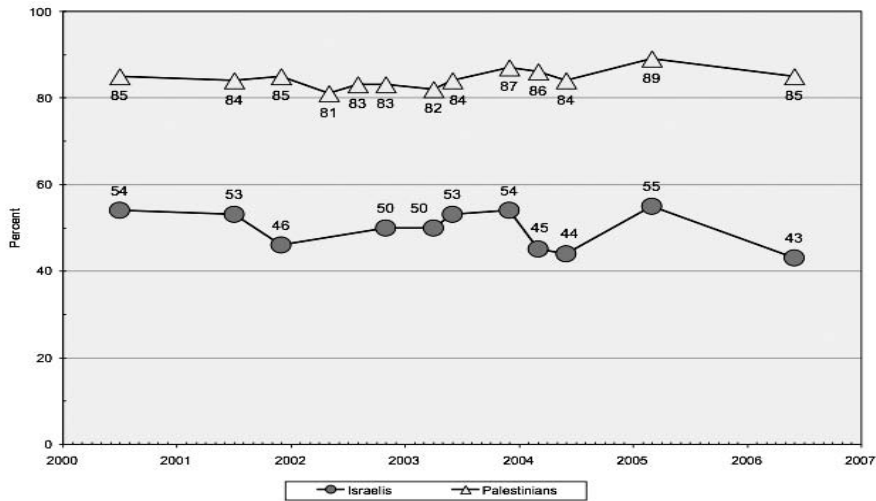
**Figure 8. Reconciliation will be achieved within the next decade**



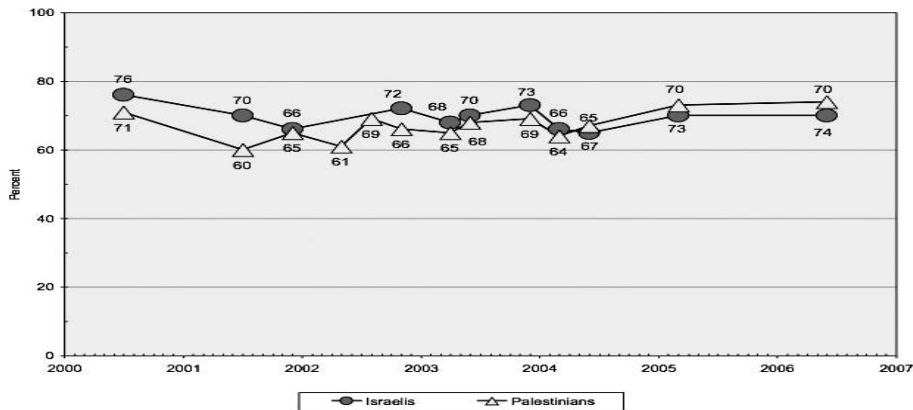
Figures 9 and 10 present the results for some of the more specific normalization steps. It is important to stress that these and all subsequent questions assume a state of peace between Israel and an independent Palestinian state. We can see in figure 9 that Palestinians overwhelmingly

support open borders; Israelis are more reluctant, with levels of support oscillating between 43 and 55 percent. Both publics support joint economic ventures, as seen in high, similar percentages (figure 10).

**Figure 9. Reconciliation scale: open borders**

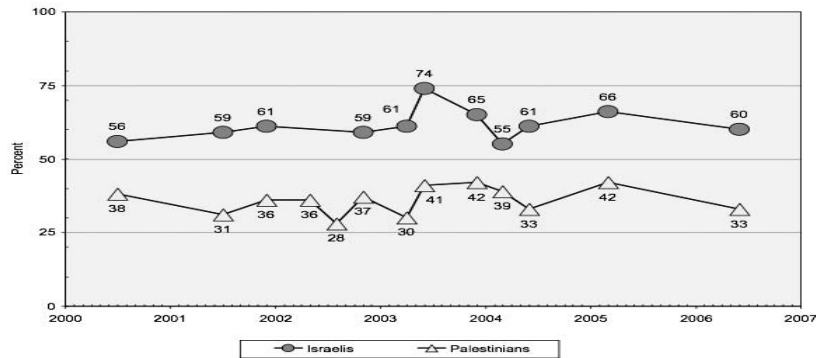


**Figure 10. Reconciliation scale: joint economic ventures**



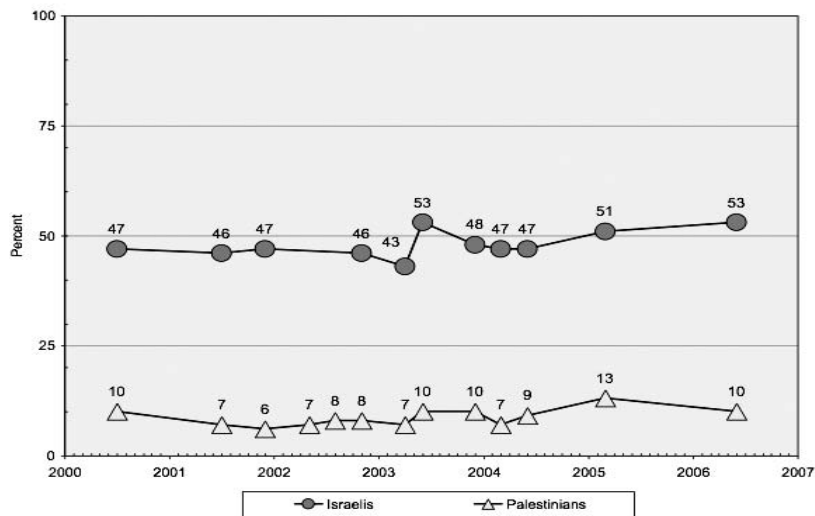
Turning from normalization to reconciliation measures, greater differences begin to appear between Israelis and Palestinians. **Figure 11** shows support for measures to prevent incitement against the other side. It is apparent that Israelis have given this item majority support all along; only a minority of Palestinians support it.

**Figure 11. Reconciliation scale: take measures against incitement**



Finally, shifting to ethos-changing steps, we find the greatest difference between Palestinians and Israelis. **Figure 12** shows support for changing school curricula to socialize children against irredentist aspirations. While about half of Israelis agree with this step, no more than 13 percent of Palestinians do. It is obviously easier for Israelis, who have their own state, to give up such aspirations than it is for Palestinians, who are struggling for a state. Nevertheless, we should recall that, here again, responses were given under the assumption of a state of peace and the existence of an independent Palestinian state.

**Figure 12. Reconciliation scale: educate against irredentist aspirations**



The overall conclusion drawn from these reconciliation data is that, given the best possible scenario, reconciliation sentiments are still quite superficial at this point. There exists goodwill for normalization steps that promise clear and tangible benefits, but there is less support for the more fundamental ethos-changing steps. Moreover, both publics' expectations of reaching reconciliation in the foreseeable future are quite meager.

## 6

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis in the previous sections has significant short- and long-term implications for the evolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and suggests ways to resolve actual and potential problems. Most important is the issue of joint support of Palestinians and Israelis for an overall permanent-status package that addresses the most crucial components of the conflict. Looking further down the road, there is a mixed bag of attitudes toward normalization and reconciliation. In the short run, Sharon's disengagement plan received majority support in the Israeli public, despite the settlers' fervent resistance to the plan. However, the concept of relinquishing territory unilaterally suffered a severe blow because of its failure to reduce violence—especially in the form of shelling of civilian communities—which only intensified after the disengagement was complete. Consequently, Olmert's unilateral realignment plan was not endorsed by the Israeli public. In the June 2006 survey of Israelis, 46 percent supported and 50 percent opposed Olmert's plan to evacuate most of the settlements in Judea and Samaria within the next few years, while realigning into large blocks of settlements along the line of the separation wall. In point of fact, the Israeli public (as well as the Palestinian public) preferred negotiations over unilateral steps throughout this period. And a solid majority of Israelis supported the dismantling of most settlements as part of a peace agreement with the Palestinians. Palestinians saw the intifada and the unilateral disengagement as signs of victory and as an indication that violence paid off; these events also brought Hamas to power in the January 2006 parliamentary elections. The next sections assess the implications of these trends within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian two-level game on its international and domestic tables, taking into account the special nature of public opinion as a player in this game.

It is useful to begin with the issue of the permanent-status framework for several reasons. First, the mutual support for a specific permanent-status framework has far-reaching policy implications, but care is required in assessing how to translate it into actual policy. Second, the Palestinian and Israeli publics have been assigned a decisive role with regard to the permanent-status solution, with the leaders of both sides committed to put any final-status agreement for ratification to a public referendum.<sup>94</sup> Finally, a permanent-status framework poses significant procedural dilemmas as to how to restart and continue the peace process. The question as to which way to go depends now more than ever on the fluid domestic developments following the political changes in both societies. The implications and policy recommendations pertinent to this new reality at the two domestic tables are discussed next, followed by the critical question of how to continue with the conflict resolution process at the international table.

### Implications for the Permanent-Status Solution

The JIPP survey data show that, at least at one point during the second intifada, both publics involved appeared to demonstrate mutual support for a concrete permanent status package structured around the Clinton parameters; the significance of this cannot be overstated, despite fluctuations and a later decline in the level of support. It suggests that a permanent-status framework—endorsed by both publics—is viable.<sup>95</sup>

A second important finding stems from the attitude structure of both publics regarding the permanent-status framework. It is evident that, despite strong reservations about the issues of the refugees and Jerusalem (and among Palestinians issues of sovereignty), the overall package could receive majority support in both publics. This indicates that people's calculus in this respect is compensatory. The desirable components and the chance of reaching a permanent-status agreement seem to compensate for the undesirable parts. This suggests clear operational recommendations for all players in the game interested in conflict resolution. In order to move forward on this path of compromise, it is important to emphasize the overall benefits of a comprehensive package and the necessity of trade-offs that it implies. The role of framing in this context is clear, particularly on issues of symbolic importance.

The issue raised by these findings is how to translate these attitudes realistically into actual policy. Clearly, Clinton's ideas and the ensuing Geneva package may fall within both publics' win-sets—the range of possible solutions that stand a chance to be ratified. On the other hand, given the full sense of public opinion, it would be overly optimistic to suggest, based on these data, that the two publics are ripe for a permanent-status agreement.

The survey data presented reflected only one, albeit important, dimension of public opinion: people's individual policy preferences. Other aspects of public opinion diverge from this optimistic outlook. Expectations of future developments indicated a much more pessimistic reading. The JIPP surveys repeatedly showed that both publics expect negotiations to resume, but with concurrent violence. Moreover, the expectations as to the feasibility of a permanent-status agreement were gloomy and provided a completely different reading from the endorsement of such an agreement. No less problematic in this regard was the dominance of groups and voices opposed to compromise in the political arenas in both societies. Finally, Clinton's ideas and a Geneva-like permanent-status framework did not seem to have acquired sufficient legitimacy and normative approval, as the two publics' climate readings show. Another indicator for this climate was the low level of support in the two publics for the ethos-changing steps on the reconciliation scale. But one does not necessarily need survey data to reach this conclusion; it is enough to attend to the ongoing public discourse and the public statements of the two leaderships. In neither society did the leadership promote public debate on what would constitute an acceptable deal, leaving the public unprepared for necessary compromises and trade-offs. If anything, in the discourse with their publics, leaders on both sides tended to raise rather than lower the acceptability thresholds. With Hamas's covenant on the agenda following its electoral victory, this discourse seemed to regress all the way back to long-forgotten, pre-Olso themes, which included questions on mutual recognition, a two-state solution, and the existence of a willing and capable partner for peace.

Thus there is still a long way to go to turn the one-time joint Israeli-Palestinian majority support for a final-status package into a viable, politically relevant, policy option. For example, the need to offer Palestinians the right of return—even if it is only symbolic—is currently entirely off limits in Israeli public discourse. Similarly, Israelis are barely prepared to face the far-reaching implications of full Palestinian sovereignty in an independent Palestinian state conforming even to the minimum expectations of the Palestinian leadership. Palestinians, on the other hand, have yet to come to grips with the idea that Israel will not fully and completely retreat to the 1967 borders. The notion that an actual massive return of refugees to Israel proper will never happen, at least not in the way it has been idealized, is completely missing from the Palestinian discourse. And it is unrealistic to expect the ruling Hamas to retract unequivocally from its core ideology in the short run. Clearly



the two sides are not ready for the profound changes that are needed in their national narratives, Palestinians even less than Israelis. Indeed, anyone advocating such ideas risks severe social and political sanctions in the PA and, to a lesser extent, also in Israel. Only when the concessions and trade-offs, such as those outlined in the Clinton package, become an integral part of public debate and discourse can one begin to consider the possibility that those ideas have made normative inroads in public opinion in its fullest sense.

It is essential, then, for both leaderships to begin to prepare their publics for a permanent-status agreement that will necessarily call for painful concessions and trade-offs, and the sooner such preparation takes place the better. This recommendation may seem naïve, given strong indications that both leaderships' policy preferences diverge significantly from Clinton's ideas and the Geneva initiative. Nevertheless, it is not far-fetched to suggest that the range of permanent solutions that stand a chance to be jointly ratified will almost necessarily have to resort to some variation of the Clinton ideas and the Taba understandings, particularly the ideas on the core issues of territory, refugees, and Jerusalem. The preparation of public opinion entails moderating the two publics' expectations with respect to what a permanent-status solution holds for them—legitimizing options such as sovereignty-sharing in Jerusalem, the presence of settlement blocs in the West Bank, a symbolic recognition of the right of return devoid of practical implications, the end of conflict, and mutual recognition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people and Palestine as the state of the Palestinian people.

This recommendation will not be easy to implement, even for leaders who may sympathize with the Clinton ideas, for two reasons. First, legitimization of unpopular policy options that shatter hopes, dreams, and cherished values is a very long and hazardous process for a political leader on the domestic front. Second, acts or statements designed to mold public opinion in more conciliatory directions may weaken the leader's position in the international game, as they are often taken to signal policy preferences to the other side's negotiators. Such signals are taken as genuine, given the leader's willingness to take political risks by disclosing to his public an unpopular policy position. As a result, leaders are reluctant to prepare their publics. This creates a vicious circle we call the "closed-lips syndrome." In order for leaders to deliver their agenda they must prepare their publics. But in doing so they may cause the other side to increase its demands and thus spoil the deal they were hoping for in the first place. As a result, the publics remain unprepared and leaders' hands remain tied—which again may prevent an agreement.

Given the "closed-lips" orientation inherent in two-level games, other players, such as NGOs, opposition parties, and international players, have an important role and indeed sometimes step in to shatter inhibiting norms and prepare public opinion for compromise. Their role becomes even more crucial when leaders in power do not seem willing or able to opt for costly and painful conflict-resolution steps, as seems to be the case in the Israeli-Palestinian game during the period of this study. The Geneva initiative is an example of such a move, and quite a successful one. Significant international players, such as the United States or the United Nations, may play a similar role in terms of public-opinion dynamics, and their actions and statements may be especially effective in shaping people's expectations as to future developments, viable policy options, opportunities, and constraints.

In sum, this analysis suggests the following policy recommendations for a permanent-status solution:

- Clinton's parameters for a permanent-status solution should receive high priority as a preferred starting point in future negotiations for a final settlement. No other framework has been shown to receive majority support among both Palestinians and Israelis. And though this particular framework does not preclude other plans, these must now demonstrate at least similar simultaneous levels of support in both publics. It should be clear, however, that support for the Clinton parameters is not guaranteed and depends largely on the actual developments in the conflict and on leaders' own preferences for the final-status arrangement.
- Despite the promising survey findings on this issue, Israelis and Palestinians are still far from reaching a comprehensive agreement. It is essential to prepare both publics—as soon as possible—for the painful concessions and trade-offs that such an agreement will necessarily entail.
- If leaders' own preferences and their negotiation tactics prevent such preparation, NGOs and the major players in the international community must assume an active role in shaping Israeli and Palestinian attitudes and expectations of what is and what is not feasible in a permanent agreement.
- In the process of preparing the publics, it is important to emphasize the overall benefits of a comprehensive package and the necessity of trade-offs it implies, given that people appear to be receptive to such trade-offs. Additionally, creative framing, particularly on issues of symbolic importance, may be constructive in this process.

### **Implications of the Disengagement**

Disengagement was a most significant event in the Israeli-Palestinian two-level game played out during the second intifada. Paradoxically, this was not because of its successful implementation, but rather because of its unintended consequences.

The disengagement was the culmination of the unilateral paradigm, which took root in Israel following the Camp David failure and the intifada, and the consensual despair concerning the Palestinian partner. The separation wall was another manifestation of this stance, as was Barak's earlier unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000. It was built on the notion of "separation" and driven by the Israeli demographic concern for a Jewish majority in the state. The Gaza disengagement affected the Israeli domestic game in a profound way. It provided the final impetus to the political realignment, giving birth to Kadima, which won the March 2006 elections. It also shattered the standing of the settlers at the domestic table by demonstrating that they had no veto power in relinquishing territory and Jewish settlements. The disengagement was perceived as the ultimate precedent for an able and determined Israeli government to free itself from the threat of internal strife pending any move to dismantle settlements. At the same time, however, the disengagement consolidated the right-wing opposition and the West Bank settlers and further alienated them from the mainstream.<sup>96</sup>

The disengagement did not secure international recognition of the end of the Israeli occupation in Gaza, nor of the pre-1967 border along the Gaza Strip as a legitimate separation line, as Sharon had hoped for. Nor did it contribute to increased security for Israel, even in the immediate short term, given the continuous shelling of southern Israel with Kassam rockets from the Gaza Strip and the rise to power of Hamas. Consequently, Israeli public opinion, disenchanted with further unilateral steps, did not give Olmert's realignment plan for the West Bank majority support. The

Gaza disengagement, then, in a very short time, proved the futility of the unilateral approach—as the right wing had indeed warned.

Whether so intended or not, the disengagement has devastated the Palestinian domestic game. Its underlying assumption that threats to political survival might force Fatah leaders to crack down on the Islamist factions faltered. Instead, it achieved just the opposite: a boost to the political power of the Islamists, the intensification of internal and external violence, and the reinforcement of Palestinians' beliefs that Israel understands only force and therefore the violent struggle is worthwhile. The implications of the turnabout in the Palestinian domestic game are taken up in the next section.

Based on this analysis of the disengagement, the following recommendations are offered:

- The unilateral paradigm has proven futile and should be abandoned. It is misleading, however, to attribute the stalled negotiations solely to the Israeli side. In fact, the eruption of the intifada, and the Palestinian leadership's failure, or reluctance, to squelch it, were seen by most Israelis as the primary cause for the collapse of the political process. More recently, the Hamas government's retraction from all previous agreements has become the most severe obstacle to the resumption of a political process. Israelis, however, are generally ignoring far-reaching unilateral steps taken by Israel, such as the separation wall and infrastructure projects designed to cantonize the PA, a scheme that might fatally impair any future final-status settlement. It is therefore essential that Israel not only abandon the unilateral paradigm but also refrain from attempts to shape unilaterally its borders with the present and future Palestinian entity. Israeli public opinion will not stand in the way of the desertion of the unilateral concept. Israelis supported negotiation throughout the period under study and expressed overwhelming preference for negotiation over unilateral steps. And while they supported Sharon's Gaza disengagement, they did not provide majority support for Olmert's realignment plan.
- In regard to the Palestinians, the ongoing shelling of Israeli communities from Gaza is bound to affect Israeli demands for long-term security arrangements, which will necessarily burden any future permanent-status deal. The Hamas regime, which openly supports these attacks, must understand these long-term effects and work hard to institute a ceasefire. Here too, Palestinian public opinion has long supported a ceasefire with Israel and will back up such a step by the armed factions.
- The severe consequences of the disengagement should not be allowed to wipe out the sheer success of Sharon's government to implement the plan quickly, effectively, and beyond all expectations, in the face of settlers' widespread civil and, at times, violent strife. In terms of the Israeli domestic game, it is essential to fortify the norms that define acceptable political dissent, both through visible legal actions against those involved in the instigation and exercise of political violence and through educational avenues. In terms of the international game, it is important that this precedent be integrated into Israel's strategic thinking to guide any future negotiations. From a two-level game perspective, this might weaken Israeli negotiators' "tied-hands" claim, but it may facilitate a compromise.

### **Implications of the Political Turnabout in the PA**

Following Hamas's victory in the parliamentary elections, the Palestinian domestic game immersed itself in a fierce political struggle within the framework of a structurally divided government, and

the acute weaknesses of the Palestinian political culture and political system came to the fore; this impinged on the international game, shattering Palestinians' ability to agree on a legitimate partner for negotiations with Israel if new political initiatives were to be proposed. The international players interested in the resumption of a political process—notably the United States and the Quartet—must maneuver carefully within the parameters of this new reality. Most important, actions taken must be conducive to facilitating the political crisis in the PA in a manner that will yield a consensual and legitimate Palestinian negotiating partner for the resumption of the political process, and one that is acceptable to Israel. The chances for establishing such a partner depend largely on the domestic political struggle in the PA but also on the political route chosen for the resumption of negotiations.

Within the domestic political struggle, the role of public opinion and bottom-up, grass-roots initiatives assume utmost importance. Hamas government policy, which provoked the international boycott and the financial crisis in the PA, has encountered significant social protest and labor strikes. The National Conciliation Document of the Prisoners and Abu Mazin's threat to put it to a referendum have pressured Hamas to blur its initial unequivocal political platform. It is remarkable to note that both Hamas and Fatah understand that the political struggle is in fact a struggle over legitimacy and that public opinion bears the role of the major arbiter in that struggle. In this regard, it is important to stress that this legitimacy struggle is primarily affected by each side's ability to claim credit for improvements in Palestinian living conditions and for solving acute problems such as that of Palestinians imprisoned in Israeli jails. The connection between the domestic and international games is thus patently obvious. It is of utmost importance, then, that Israel and the international community facilitate and support any Palestinian effort to find a willing, viable partner to sit at the international table.

In regard to the routes for the resumption of negotiations, the primary path currently on the international agenda is the Road Map. It is preferred by Israel, but its demand to disarm the militant factions stripped it of any chance to be implemented following Hamas's rise to power, given Hamas's official doctrine and policy of armed resistance. Israel in turn has insisted on "dismantling the terrorist infrastructure" in Sharon's terminology, or, more recently, on the end of violence as a minimum requirement for a return to negotiations, with Hamas ruled out as a partner.

As indicated, however, Israeli public opinion is split about talks with Hamas and thus does not shut the door for such talks if necessary to reach a political settlement. A creative configuration of a Palestinian partner such as a national unity government may secure even greater support among Israelis. And a tacit or explicit ceasefire could mitigate Israeli reluctance to move ahead as long as violence continues and as Hamas's leadership's reiterates its vocal and destructive declarations dismissing Israel's right to exist, which reverberate loudly within the Israeli public and political system.

Another—largely neglected—initiative that could motivate a return to the peace process was that offered by the Arab League in March 2002. This initiative called both for a full Israeli withdrawal to 1967 borders, including the Golan Heights, and, though vaguely stated, for a "just" solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, in return for recognition of Israel, normalization, and a declaration of an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Given its dictate-like nature and general terms, it could obviously not be taken as a realistic substitute for the consensual Road Map. Nevertheless, it should be considered as a diplomatic landmark that provides baseline principles for a comprehensive peace in clear terms, and as an offer that, for decades before, had lacked public legitimacy in the

Arab world. Indeed, there are indications that reference to the Arab League initiative may be seen by Hamas as another (vague enough) facilitator in its effort to break away from its initial rigid ideology.

Based on this analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian political reversals following the disengagement, the following recommendations are offered:

- Given the depth of the political cleavage in the PA, reinforced by its divided government, it is essential to promote reforms in the Palestinian political system that will resolve the constitutional and legitimacy crises, which are bound to derail any future peace initiatives.
- Given Abu Mazin's inherent weakness, such an initiative must be taken and backed up strongly by the international community. It should be based on principles of inclusion rather than seclusion of the central political forces in the PA and the Palestine Liberation Organization. It should involve both political as well as economic incentives to the parties concerned, the removal of the boycott on the Hamas government, a massive package of financial assistance, and pressure on Israel to yield to demands to relieve the acute social needs of Palestinians, including the release of prisoners and the opening of the passage between Gaza and the West Bank. While international involvement in such matters might be seen by Palestinians as meddling in the PA's internal affairs and thus turn counterproductive, it should be recalled that international pressure has proven effective in the past, for example in convincing Arafat to introduce political reforms and in recommending the nomination of Abu Mazin for prime minister. In order to minimize the risk of being spoiled by the Islamists, Hamas should be given assurances that will guarantee its inclusion and due weight in the wider Palestinian political game.
- A creative formula must be devised to persuade the Israeli government to overcome the obstacle of Hamas and accept it as an inevitable player in the renewal of the peace process. A Palestinian national-unity government could be a step in the right direction. However, bolder steps are required to maintain Israel's relative flexibility to keep the door open for such a step. A Palestinian decision on an extended ceasefire period could encourage Israel to exercise flexibility in its objection to any contact with Hamas.

### **How to Proceed with the Political Process**

Following the implications of the political turnabouts in Israel and the PA, several optional routes on how to proceed emerge. Most point in a similar direction and share core assumptions but also differ in scope, configuration, and especially worldview. The first shared assumption is that the end goal of any such process should be a final-status settlement configuring a two-state solution. The second common denominator of these approaches is a sound belief that the involvement of the international community is indispensable in the renewal of the peace process. The third underlying principle requires direct negotiations based on past diplomatic achievements such as mutual recognition and landmark UN resolutions. These optional approaches differ substantially, however, in the worldview that guides them.

The first school of thought consists of those who see the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the context of the global war on terrorism and who strongly believe that any developments here have important implications on this campaign. This point of view has been characteristic of the Bush administration's policy since the September 11 attack, as well as of Israel's policy under Sharon. The persistent adherence to the Road Map plan reflects this paradigm, as seen in the insistence on a freeze

in the political process until the militant factions in the PA are dissolved. The rise of Hamas to power in the PA doomed this demand. The Road Map, however, represents all the principles listed earlier: a two-state solution, direct negotiations, adherence to past achievements, and the involvement of the international community. Nevertheless, this last parameter has been the weakest link in its implementation since its announcement. The underlying assumption here was that diplomatic efforts, together with economic steps, would suffice to push both sides to embark on the process. Clearly domestic considerations overruled these hopes.

The second school of thought entertains the idea that the resumption of the peace process holds a chance to form a regional axis composed of Arab states that are threatened by the rising wave of militant Shiite forces driven by Iran. From this point of view, the international community must facilitate the resumption of the peace process by providing creative diplomatic formulas rather than pressures and sanctions on the parties. This approach characterizes primarily the European Union's and Russia's representatives in the Quartet. This is also the source of recent proposals to quickly convene an international conference that will in fact compress the Road Map into its final phase. A similar logic also guides the March 2002 Arab League initiative.

A third school of thought has been specifically concerned with the depth of the international involvement in the process. Proponents of this school believe that both sides have consistently demonstrated that they are not capable of overcoming the acute domestic constraints that have prevented them from abiding by international initiatives such as the Road Map. Consequently, and following the Camp David failure, Israeli statesmen such as Shlomo Ben-Ami, Israel's foreign minister under Barak, and Yossi Sarid, the leader of the left-wing Meretz party, have proposed instituting an international mandate over the PA, with the goal of establishing an independent Palestinian state living in peace with Israel as soon as possible.

Specific recommendations on how to move forward must be based on the degrees of freedom that powerful domestic players, including public opinion on both sides, give to their leaderships in choosing the specific route.

- Beginning with the Road Map, this type of plan has traditionally enjoyed majority support in both publics—albeit more so among Israelis than Palestinians. For example, in the June 2006 poll, 63 percent of Israelis and 52 percent of Palestinians supported it. The Road Map can thus provide a convenient concept, particularly for the Israeli leadership, to frame the resumption of the process to the public. It is also consistent with Israel's insistence on a venue founded on past diplomatic achievements in order to circumvent Hamas's official retraction from them. The configuration of the Palestinian partnership is also critical; a Palestinian national-unity government or a government of experts might be the best candidate for such a venue. Nevertheless, past experience with the actual Road Map process and its multiphase nature suggests that it promises little substantive progress and constitutes an easy target for spoilers along the way. The Road Map concept, then, should be endorsed primarily for its potential as an overture to a political process but should be handled more flexibly if real progress is to be made.
- Turning to the international conference idea, it seems that it would be extremely difficult for present Israeli governments to welcome such an initiative given the continuation of violence and Israelis' longstanding suspicions of such forums. Israelis have traditionally expressed deep mistrust in international forums and institutions such as the United Nations, given automatic majorities that were easy to recruit by inherently anti-Israeli blocs. Similarly, the Arab League initiative received no attention in the Israeli media and public discourse. Assuming that an international

conference would eventually become an essential component for completing and legitimizing a final-status settlement, either within the Road Map or the Arab League initiative, it is important that NGOs and Track II initiatives work to familiarize the Israeli public with the positive potential of an international conference in advancing the end of conflict—one of the most important pillars of Israel's demands for a final-status settlement.

- The most far-reaching idea to guarantee an effective resolution for the conflict has been an international mandate over the PA, devised to establish an independent Palestinian state on one hand and provide Israel with internationally recognized borders on the other. This proposal reflects profound disbelief in the ability of both parties to solve the conflict on their own and ignores the international reality and domestic sentiments of Israelis and Palestinians. With the increase in the Islamists' power in the PA, and the militant anti-West ethos guiding it, it is doubtful that serious international sponsors for such a mandate could be found, and that this idea will materialize in the coming years. Both Israelis and Palestinians were quite reluctant in the past to support bold steps proposed by the international community; the steps were perceived as a breach of their sovereignty. For example, in the April 2003 poll, 58 percent of Israelis and 48 percent of Palestinians opposed deployment of international forces to implement a disengagement between Israel and the Palestinians and to force the parties to accept the Quartet's Road Map.

Beyond the thought-provoking nature of the grand schemes discussed above, it is clear that a resumption of the political process necessitates some very specific and meaningful steps, which are recommended below:

- It is essential that both sides launch a confidence-building process that would include the following: a decision by the Palestinian government to implement an effective, long-range cease-fire; far-reaching Israeli gestures that would include the release of Palestinian prisoners; enabling the movement of people and goods between the West Bank and Gaza; facilitation of reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip, and dismantling of illegal posts.
- Finally and most important, it should be made clear that, irrespective of the actual definition of the negotiations venue (e.g., the Road Map or a relaxed version of it), a quick return to final-status talks should be built in. Without this component, the chance that such a renewed process will succeed in gaining support, particularly among Palestinians, is doubtful. Based on Israelis' consistent support for the Clinton parameters, as well as for a return to negotiations, Israelis will definitely support such a move.

Israeli and Palestinian public opinion is still not ready for a comprehensive agreement. Yet the one-time joint support of both publics for a permanent-status framework, as presented in the Clinton parameters, suggests that such an agreement is not out of reach. Therefore, embarking on final-status talks does not contradict but rather shores up the public-opinion analysis presented in this monograph. The context of final-status negotiations provides a very appropriate setting for the preparation of the two publics to engage in the concessions and trade-offs that such an agreement will necessarily entail. Supportive public opinion can be consolidated in the dynamic interrelationship between leaders and publics. Leaders will make decisions and policy; public opinion will provide an opportunity for leaders to seize; they should seize it, and through their policy and leadership prepare their publics. If the leaders' own preferences and their negotiation tactics prevent such preparation, NGOs and major players in the international community should assume this role.





## 7

## EPILOGUE

The final pages of this monograph were written in the aftermath of the second war in Lebanon that erupted in August 2006. The outcome of the war has shaken the region politically and strategically, crushed deeply entrenched beliefs, and toppled core policy positions. Israel's failure to demonstrate a convincing victory over a highly motivated, well-trained, and well-equipped guerrilla militia is bound to affect its longstanding national security paradigm, largely based on deterrence. The model of guerrilla war, with its formidable capacity to harm Israel's civilian population, seems to have ignited the imagination of many people in the region, particularly Palestinians. Strategically, the outcome of the war also strengthened the anti-American axis formed by Iran, Syria, and Lebanon, often referred to as the Shiite crescent in the region.

On the positive side, however, the determined reaction of the international community to diffuse the ensuing explosive situation by deploying an international force to the area gave rise to renewed hopes for faster modes of international involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Domestically, the war seemed to accelerate political processes and policy changes believed to be highly resistant to change; it ultimately pulled the rug from under Olmert's realignment plan. More important, it seems to have seared Israelis' awareness that unilateral relinquishment of territory has proven counterproductive and even dangerous. Olmert's government has found itself weakened, with an empty policy agenda around which political support could be consolidated. Evidently, this might push the Israeli government to search for new and creative ways to reengage the Palestinian leadership in an attempt to renew the peace process. In the PA, significant political developments are taking place, meant to circumvent the dead end to which the Hamas government has led the political process and the domestic state of affairs. While insisting on maintaining the right to violent resistance, it seemed that following the war and given the painful strikes Israel inflicted on Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, Islamists understood that officially endorsing Hizbullah modes of violence is riskier than ever to the survival of their regime in the PA. Moreover, the effective international boycott of the Hamas government and the recent signs that the international community is reawakening to new initiatives to resume the peace process seem to have motivated Hamas to reconsider political concessions and a national-unity government with Fatah. The second war in Lebanon thus did not hinder but rather accelerated the processes addressed in this analysis and increased chances to return to some mode of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations toward a final-status settlement.

## NOTES

1. Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 427–61.
2. Shikaki and I first applied Robert Putnam's two-level game notion to aspects of public opinion in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Jacob Shamir and Khalil Shikaki, "Public Opinion in the Israeli-Palestinian Two-Level Game," *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no. 11 (2005): 311–28.
3. More generally, one may consider three-level games, with additional international, cross-level, and transboundary players, such as global human rights and civil society organizations; state associations, such as the Arab League; globalizing agents, such as the World Bank; or diaspora lobbies. See, for example, Jeffrey W. Knopf, "Beyond Two-Level Games: Domestic-International Interaction in the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Negotiations," *International Organization* 47, no. 4 (Autumn 1993); Lee A. Patterson, "Agricultural Policy Reform in the European Community: A Three-Level Game Analysis," *International Organization* 51, no. 1 (January 1997); and Yossi Shain and Tamara Cofman Wittes, "Peace as a Three-Level Game: The Role of Diasporas in Conflict Resolution," in *The New Israel: Peacemaking and Liberalization*, ed. Thomas Ambrosio (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002).
4. Shlomo Ben-Ami, *A Front without a Rearguard: A Voyage to the Boundaries of the Peace Process* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronot, 2004), 16.
5. The Israeli-Palestinian project is described in the next section.
6. See, for example, Ronald Hinckley, *People, Polls, and Policymakers: American Public Opinion and National Security* (New York: Lexington, 1992); Ole Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Bruce M. Russett, *Controlling the Sword: The Democratic Governance of National Security* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990); Richard Sobel, *The Impact of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy since Vietnam: Constraining the Colossus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Eugene R. Wittkopf, *Faces of Internationalism: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990).
7. See, for example, Douglas C. Foyle, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Elite Beliefs as a Mediating Variable," *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1997): 68–90; Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Public Opinion, Domestic Structure, and Foreign Policy in Liberal Democracies," *World Politics* 43, no. 4 (1991): 479–512.
8. See, respectively, V. O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New York: Knopf, 1961); Sobel, *Impact of Public Opinion*; and James A. Stimson, Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson, "Dynamic Representation," *American Political Science Review* 89, no. 3 (1995): 543–654. See also Peter F. Trumbore, "Public Opinion as a Domestic Constraint in International Negotiations: Two-Level Games in the Anglo-Irish Peace Process," *International Studies Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (1998): 545–65; and Jongryn Mo, "Domestic Institutions and International Bargaining: The Role of Agent Veto in Two-Level Games," *American Political Science Review* 89, no. 4 (1995): 914–24.
9. See Andrew Moravcsik, "Introduction: Integrating International and Domestic Theories of International Bargaining," in *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Harold K. Jacobson, and Robert D. Putnam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 1–42.

10. For a detailed account of the parameters see [www.brookings.edu/press/appendix/peaceprocessappen\\_ab.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/press/appendix/peaceprocessappen_ab.htm).
11. For details see [www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/league/peace02.htm](http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/league/peace02.htm).
12. For details see [www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2003/20062.htm).
13. The Geneva initiative was officially launched on December 1, 2003, at a ceremony in Geneva. It was signed by its initiators on October 13, and sent as a letter to the Swiss foreign minister. In between, the accord was publicized and disseminated to the Israeli and Palestinian publics.
14. See, for example, Asher Arian, *Security Threatened: Surveying Israeli Opinion on Peace and War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal, *The Palestinian People: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Edward Said, *The End of the Peace Process, Oslo and After* (New York: Pantheon, 2000); Yazid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Mark A. Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
15. See, respectively, Fredrick W. Mayer, "Managing Domestic Differences in International Negotiations: The Strategic Use of Internal Side-Payments," *International Organization* 46, no. 4 (1992): 793–818; Helen Milner and B. Peter Rosendorff, "Democratic Politics and International Trade Negotiations: Elections and Divided Government as Constraints on Trade Liberalization," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1 (1997): 117–47. See also James D. Fearon, "Signalling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1 (1997): 141–69; Keisuke Iida, "When and How Do Domestic Constraints Matter? Two-Level Games with Uncertainty," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 37, no. 3 (1993): 403–26; and Robert Pahre, "Endogenous Domestic Institutions in Two-Level Games and Parliamentary Oversight of the European Union," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1 (1997): 147–74.
16. See Idit Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *Lords of the Land: The Settlers and the State of Israel, 1967–2004* [in Hebrew] (Or Yehuda, Israel: Kineret, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir, 2004); Lawrence Susskind et al., "Religious and Ideological Dimensions of the Israeli Settlements Issue: Reframing the Narrative?" *Negotiation Journal* 21, no. 2 (2005): 177–91; and Ehud Sprinzak, *The Ascendance of Israel's Radical Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
17. See Yair Sheleg, *The Political Ramification of Evacuating Settlements in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip*. Position Paper, no. 5E (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2004).
18. See Yoram Peri, *The Israeli Military and Israel's Palestinian Policy: From Oslo to the Al Aqsa Intifada*. Peaceworks, no. 47 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2002).
19. Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, "Peace and Profits: The Globalization of Israeli Business and the Peace Process," in *The New Israel: Peacemaking and Liberalization*, ed. Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 2000), 243–64.
20. See Khalil Shikaki, "The Future of Palestine," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2004, 45–60.

21. See, for example, Howard P. Lehman and Jennifer L. McCoy, "The Dynamics of the Two-Level Bargaining Game: The 1988 Brazilian Debt Negotiations," *World Politics* 44, no. 4 (1992): 600–44; and Leonard J. Schoppa, "Two-Level Games and Bargaining Outcomes: Why Gaiatsu Succeeded in Japan in Some Cases but Not Others," *International Organization* 47, no. 3 (1993): 353–86.
22. See Philip J. Powlick, "The Sources of Public Opinion for American Foreign Policy Officials," *International Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1995): 427–51.
23. See, for example, Bruce W. Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1992): 49–74; and Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
24. See, for example, Jeffrey W. Knopf, "Domestic Sources of Preferences for Arms Cooperation: The Impact of Protest," *Journal of Peace Research* 35, no. 6 (1998); Jeffrey W. Knopf, *Domestic Society and International Cooperation: The Impact of Protest on U.S. Arms Control Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Risse-Kappen, "Public Opinion."
25. See E. Noelle-Neumann, *The Spiral of Silence*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
26. See Jacob Shamir and Michal Shamir, *The Anatomy of Public Opinion* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).
27. See Douglas C. Foyle, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Elite Beliefs as a Mediating Variable," *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1997).
28. See, for example, Floyd Allport, *Social Psychology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924); Daniel Katz and Floyd Allport, *Student Attitudes* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Craftsman, 1931); Hubert O'Gorman, "Pluralistic Ignorance and Reference Groups: The Case of Ingroup Ignorance," in *Surveying Social Life*, ed. Hubert O'Gorman (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 145–73; Jacob Shamir and Michal Shamir, "Pluralistic Ignorance Across Issues and Over Time: Information Cues and Biases," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (1997): 227–60.
29. Figures refer to 2002 and are based on the UN Development Program's *Human Development Report 2004* (New York: UNDP, 2004), [http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2004/pdf/hdr04\\_HDI.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2004/pdf/hdr04_HDI.pdf).
30. Gross enrollment ratio is defined as the number of pupils enrolled at a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for the same level of education. For the tertiary level, the population used is the five-year age group following on from the secondary school leaving age. Tertiary education is defined as ISCED levels 5-7, which refers to education at such institutions as universities, teacher's colleges, and higher-level professional schools—requiring as a minimum condition of admission the successful completion of education at the secondary level or evidence of the attainment of an equivalent level of knowledge. Figures are based on the UN Economic, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's "Global Education Digest 2005" (Montreal: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2005), [www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2005/ged2005\\_en.pdf](http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/ged/2005/ged2005_en.pdf).
31. Figures are based on a June 2005 poll.
32. See [www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16&year=2005&country=6759](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16&year=2005&country=6759); [www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16&year=2005&country=6883](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16&year=2005&country=6883); and [www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16&year=2004&year=2005](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=16&year=2004&year=2005).

33. See Nathan J. Brown, *Palestinian Politics after the Oslo Accords: Resuming Arab Palestine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
34. See Alia Siksik, *Media in Palestine: Between the PNA's Hammer and the Anvil of Self-Censorship*, Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, 1999, <http://spirit.tau.ac.il/socant/peace/psp/downloads/10%20%20Siksik%20Alia.htm>.
35. See, for example, William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
36. A good example is Israelis' and Palestinians' knowledge of details of the Geneva document. Sixty percent of the Israelis but only 21 percent of the Palestinians said in our December 2003 survey they had either full or general knowledge of the Geneva document, which was formulated by a group of Israeli and Palestinian doves as a model for a final-status framework and was widely publicized in both societies. This difference probably reflects Palestinians' lower newspaper readership habits, combined with the different methods employed to disseminate the document (direct mail in Israel; newspaper inserts in the PA).
37. See Jacob Shamir and Khalil Shikaki, "Determinants of Reconciliation and Compromise among Israelis and Palestinians," *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 2 (2002): 227–60.
38. See Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (New York: Free Press, 1956).
39. See S. N. Eisenstadt, *Israeli Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1967); Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Trouble in Utopia: The Overburdened Polity of Israel* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989).
40. Brown, *Palestinian Politics*.
41. Shamir and Shamir, *Anatomy of Public Opinion*.
42. For example, in his December 18, 2003, Herzliyah speech, in which he announced his disengagement plan, Sharon began by emphasizing his "duty of shaping the face of the Jewish and democratic state of Israel"; see [www.bitterlemons.org/docs/sharon1.html](http://www.bitterlemons.org/docs/sharon1.html). Similarly, in his postelection speech on March 30, 2006, Olmert declared that "in the near future we will seek to shape the permanent borders of the state of Israel as a Jewish state with a permanent Jewish majority and as a democratic state"; see [www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Communication/PMSpeaks/spechele290306.htm](http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMO/Communication/PMSpeaks/spechele290306.htm).
43. See Nathan J. Brown, "The Third Draft Constitution for a Palestinian State: Translation and Commentary," Ramallah, Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2003.
44. *Ibid.*, 7.
45. Shlomo Ben-Ami, a former Israeli foreign minister and a chief negotiator at the Camp David summit, saw in the all-Arab unity tenet one of the greatest obstacles to the negotiations. For example, in the context of Jerusalem, he describes a discussion with King Abdalla of Jordan in which the king told him that "Arafat is not eligible and not capable of reaching a decision on Jerusalem without an all-Arab support and backup." More generally, Ben-Ami comments on the negotiation process saying, "This negotiation did not take place in a regional and international vacuum, and the Palestinians led by Arafat could not detach themselves from the Arab escort to difficult decisions.... The 'Arab world' constituted Arafat's strategic depth and it also served as an alibi to his inability or unwillingness to compromise." See Ben-Ami, *Front without a Rearguard*, 149 and 56, respectively.

46. In our first joint survey in July 2000 Palestinians and Israelis were asked to rank the most important Palestinian national interest. "Unity of the Palestinian people" received the second highest rank with 27 percent considering it most important, surpassed only by the "establishment of an independent and secure Palestinian state," which obtained 34 percent. Other interests listed in the question were "economic prosperity" (17 percent), "peace" (12 percent), and "democracy" (7 percent). In June 2005, however, deep into the intifada, the value priorities seemed to have changed. When asked about the most important factors that would determine their vote for parliament, the ability of the party to protect national unity came out only fourth, after the fight against corruption, reaching peace with Israel, and improving economic conditions.
47. Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*.
48. Ibid.
49. See Daniel Brumberg, *Liberalization versus Democracy: Understanding Arab Political Reform*, Democracy and Rule of Law Project Working Paper, no. 37 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003); and Daniel Brumberg, "Beyond Liberalization?" *Wilson Quarterly*, March 2004. Nathan Brown comments that many senior Palestinian leaders hold the view that "the nationalist issue must remain paramount for all Palestinians. To concentrate on domestic issues is to risk dividing the nation at the time when it faces its most fateful choices. The demands of national unity are such that issues of governance, democracy, and corruption should not be raised too forcefully." See Brown, *Palestinian Politics*, 14.
50. They were more reserved in these efforts, however, when this could constitute a serious threat to their leadership.
51. National unity became one of the main discourse frames following Arafat's death in November 2004, when fears of violent clashes between Palestinian factions rose and references to it by PLO and opposition leaders appeared abundantly in the Palestinian press. For example, Ramadan Shallah, the Islamic Jihad leader, was quoted by *Al-Hayat* as saying, "We are concerned with not allowing any side to take advantage of this event [Arafat's death] to fabricate confusion and chaos in the Palestinian situation. All forces have to act with a sense of patriotism and responsibility. We should be united to get over any ordeal in this national turning point;" see *Al-Hayat*, November 11, 2004. Similarly, Muhammad Dahlan said in an interview on Al-Arabia TV that "whoever thought there would be infighting and clashes over power is not aware of the Palestinian people's political and social culture. I have always been one of those who announced that there will be no political vacuum or internal strife over power. ... We, leadership and people, all proved that we deserve life and the respect of those who showed respect for us to confront those who were preparing for a post-Arafat era in a negative manner or expected the Palestinian people to face a difficult situation (Al-Arabia, November 12, 2004).
52. An English version of the document can be found at [www.jmcc.org/documents/prisoners2.htm](http://www.jmcc.org/documents/prisoners2.htm).
53. Indeed, international mediators often cater to this value in their public statements. See, for example, President Bush's reference to the refugee issue in his letter to Prime Minister Sharon from April 2004.
54. Amr G. E. Sabet, "The Peace Process and the Politics of Conflict Resolution," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 27, no. 4 (1998): 5–19.



55. See [www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2005&country=6759](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2005&country=6759) and [www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2005&country=6884](http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2005&country=6884).
56. The Israeli figures are calculated from a list of all eligible voters. Palestinians, however, suspected that the list of eligible voters used in the 2005 presidential election was inflated and quoted a more liberal figure of 72.9 percent, based on a smaller list of registered voters. No single turnout figure has been announced by the Palestinian Central Election Commission.
57. This figure is based on data from the Palestinian Central Election Commission. See [www.elections.ps/template.aspx?id=290](http://www.elections.ps/template.aspx?id=290).
58. See, for example, Brown, *Palestinian Politics*.
59. These include seventeen Knesset elections and one special election for prime minister in 2001.
60. See [www.knesset.gov.il/elections17/heb/history/PercentVotes.htm](http://www.knesset.gov.il/elections17/heb/history/PercentVotes.htm).
61. See Gadi Wolfsfeld, *The Politics of Provocation: Participation and Protest in Israel* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1988); Yael Yishai, *Civil Society in Israel* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2003); and Asher Arian and Michal Shamir, eds., *The Elections in Israel—2003* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 2005).
62. Brown, *Palestinian Politics*.
63. See Danny Rubinstein, *Arafat: A Portrait* [in Hebrew] (Lod, Israel: Zmora-Bitan, 2001).
64. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).
65. David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power* (London: Macmillan, 1991).
66. See Hillel Frisch, *Countdown to Statehood: Palestinian State Formation in the West Bank and Gaza* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1998). The use of economic resources to secure loyalty is not exclusive to autocratic regimes. In democracies, too, leaders must maintain the support of some kind of a “winning coalition” to remain in power. This coalition is usually a subset of the “selectorate”—all individuals who have a potential role in choosing the leader. See Bruce Bueno De Mesquita et al., “The Selectorate Model: A Theory of Political Institutions,” in *New Directions in Contemporary Sociological Theory*, ed. Joseph Berger and Morris Zelditch, Jr. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); and Bruce Bueno De Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003). In democracies, where such winning coalitions are rather large, leaders resort to the production of public goods to secure their loyalty. In autocracies, however, this winning coalition is relatively small and leaders can maintain their loyalty more efficiently by committing resources to private goods. Nevertheless, while autocracies are found to produce fewer public goods than democracies, they still commit resources for this purpose, as public goods produce legitimacy.
67. See Brumberg, *Liberalization versus Democracy*. A liberalized autocracy is characterized by a weak party system and parliament with a paradoxically sizeable civil society largely divided and controlled by the government.
68. See Amitai Etzioni, “Alternative Ways to Democracy: The Example of Israel,” *Political Science Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (1959): 196–214.
69. Michal Shamir and Jacob Shamir, “From One Intifada to Another and through the Peace Process: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in Israeli Elections,” 2005.

70. See Kenneth A. Schultz, "Domestic Opposition and Signaling in International Crisis," *American Political Science Review* 92, no. 4 (1998): 829–44.
71. Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson, "Dynamic Representation."
72. Shamir and Shamir, "From One Intifada to Another."
73. Moravcsik, "Integrating International and Domestic Theories."
74. Ari Shavit, "The Big Freeze," *Haaretz* (magazine section), October 8, 2004, [www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/485929.html](http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/485929.html).
75. This question should be understood in the context of the ongoing discourse in Israel that assumes that certain settlement blocks agreed upon with the Palestinians will remain under Israeli control. Percentages in this question refer to the overall Israeli sample; in July 2001 the support question was only asked of Jews (54 percent supported dismantling settlements for peace). The 58-percent figure in the chart is extrapolated based on a consistent difference between Jews and Israelis in other surveys (about a 4 percent difference). Also, the question in July 2000 was different and referred to the Camp David terms on settlements.
76. Obtaining respondents' perceptions of the majority opinion has long been a standard way of assessing the prevailing norm among public opinion scholars. See, for example, Noelle-Neumann, *Spiral of Silence*; Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Public Opinion Research and the Classical Tradition," in *Qualitative Analysis*, ed. Paul F. Lazarsfeld (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1972); and Hubert J. O'Gorman, "Pluralistic Ignorance and Reference Groups." This approach in fact grasps the essence of the aggregate, shared nature of public opinion, distinct from the sum of private opinions, which is detached from the notion of public opinion as a social phenomenon.
77. Immediately after the implementation of the disengagement, in our September 2005 poll there is a drop both in the level of support and in the perceived level of support for dismantling settlements, but thereafter both series rise again.
78. Shamir and Shamir, *Anatomy of Public Opinion*.
79. *Ibid.*, 189–191.
80. In the Israel National Election Study conducted in March 2006, 63 percent of the Jewish sample supported the establishment of a Palestinian state.
81. Shamir and Shamir, *Anatomy of Public Opinion*, chap. 9.
82. The November 2002 data point seems to be an outlier in respondents' self-identification as right wing. The poll took place November 17–27, 2002. On November 15, a Palestinian ambush killed nine soldiers in Hebron; six days later, a suicide bombing in Jerusalem killed eleven and injured forty-four. These circumstances might explain this outlying observation.
83. Olmert provided interviews to all major newspapers on March 10, 2006, eighteen days before election day.
84. Personal interview with a close campaign adviser, April 26, 2006.
85. See Khalil Shikaki, *Willing to Compromise: Palestinian Public Opinion and the Peace Process*, Special Report, no. 158 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, January 2006); and Walid Shomali, "Landslide Victory of Hamas and Prospective Scenarios" (paper presented at the 22d Annual Meeting of the Association for Israel Studies, May 28–31, Banff, Alberta, Canada).



86. See the PSR analysis of the 2006 elections exit poll, [www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2006/exit-plcfulljan06e.html](http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2006/exit-plcfulljan06e.html).
87. Shamir and Shamir, *Anatomy of Public Opinion*, 191.
88. Some minor differences exist between the Israeli and Palestinian wordings and the order of the questions. These were called for because of the contradictory narratives, diverging daily realities, and self-serving discourses on the two sides. Nevertheless, we made every possible effort to assure functional equivalence in the questions to the two publics.
89. The references to the multinational force in this and in the next component appeared in a separate question in December 2003. In December 2004 and in the subsequent polls, this issue was split between the demilitarized state and the sovereignty/security components, and the separate question was removed.
90. The change in the level of support for the permanent-status framework between December 2003 and December 2004 is impressive. Our survey data do not, of course, allow us to identify the international, regional, or local events and forces that account for this change, and they may be numerous. However, Arafat's death was a dramatic and significant event, and we consider it to be a primary cause, even if not the only one. The later fluctuations in this series indicate that other events and developments have affected and can affect these attitudes.
91. See, for example, Herbert C. Kelman, "Social-Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict," and J. Lewis Rasmussen, "Peacemaking in the Twenty-First Century: New Rules, New Roles, New Actors," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*, ed. I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997); Herbert C. Kelman, "Transforming the Relationship between Former Enemies: A Social-Psychological Analysis," in *After the Peace: Resistance and Reconciliation*, ed. L. Robert Rothstein (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1999); and John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).
92. Shamir and Shikaki, "Determinants of Reconciliation and Compromise."
93. James Calleja, "Education for Peace in the Mediterranean: A Strategy for Peace Building," and Haim Gordon, "Working for Peace in the Middle East: The Educational Task," in *Building Peace in the Middle East: Challenges for States and Civil Society*, ed. Elise Boulding (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1994); Kelman, "Transforming the Relationship"; Michael Krepon, Dominique M. McCoy, and Matthew C. J. Rudolph, *A Handbook of Confidence Building Measures for Regional Security* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, 1993); and Lederach, *Building Peace*.
94. Since the beginning of the Oslo process, all Israeli leaders have committed themselves to a public referendum if they reach an agreement that will transfer territory under Israeli control to Arab sovereignty. In 1999, the Knesset passed legislation that requires a majority vote of the Knesset and a referendum for approval of any agreement that would involve relinquishing territory that is under Israeli jurisdiction (this applies to the Golan Heights and Jerusalem but not to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip). However, no referendum legislation has been enacted since, and the current legal state of affairs requires only a majority vote in the Knesset. The recent fierce political debate in Israel over a referendum on Sharon's limited disengagement plan demonstrates how entrenched this notion of referendum has become but also the political leaders' ability to manipulate its actual enactment. Similarly, the most recent draft of

the Palestinian constitution requires a constitutional amendment (via public referendum) for any agreement that comes short of establishing a Palestinian state on all pre-1967 territories. Abu Mazin's use of a referendum threat to pressure Hamas to accommodate the Prisoners' Document is another indication of this trend in the Palestinian Authority.

95. It is important to stress that the mutual support for the Clinton/Geneva framework does not preclude other possible conflict-resolution packages from consideration, as long as they are at least similarly attractive to both publics.
96. Shortly thereafter, in February 2006, when the Olmert government sought to demolish nine houses in the Amona outpost in Samaria, thousands of protesters clashed with policemen and soldiers. The violent clashes resulted in many injuries, a parliamentary investigation, and a widely shared perception that this was to be the shape of further attempts to dismantle settlements in the West Bank.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacob Shamir is senior lecturer at the Department of Communication and Journalism at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was a senior fellow at the United States Institute of Peace during 2004–2005. Shamir served as the head of the Smart Family Foundation Communication Research Institute at Hebrew University from 1999 to 2002 and has held professorships and lecture positions at the University of Texas at Austin, Rutgers University, Bar-Ilan University, and Tel-Aviv University. His book *The Anatomy of Public Opinion* was published by the University of Michigan Press in 2000. He has also written numerous articles for *Political Psychology*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, and *Journalism Quarterly*, among others. Shamir has received several grants from institutions in Israel for projects relating to public opinion and peace. He co-directs with Khalil Shikaki the only ongoing joint Israeli-Palestinian survey research project. Shamir received his master's degree and Ph.D. from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota.

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