

Mada al-Carmel - Arab Center for Applied Social Research

Annual Survey 2004

Abstract

©

Mada al-Carmel – Arab Center for Applied Social Research, 2005

PO Box 9132

51 Allenby St. Haifa 31090

Israel

Tel: +972-4-8552035 Fax: +972-4-8525973

www.mada-research.org

mada@mada-research.org

surveys@mada-research.org

Mada al-Carmel Annual Survey, 2004

Abstract

Introduction

The annual survey (2004) was conducted among a representative sample of various levels of the adult Arab population in Israel, including Druze, between January and March, 2004. The survey was conducted by interviewing the 845 respondents personally. The sample subjects were chosen to reflect the primary characteristics of Arabic society in Israel: geographical area, religion, settlement size and type. The survey was conducted in 36 Arab settlements in the Galilee, the Triangle and the Negev, 4 mixed cities, and 4 unrecognized villages in the North. The survey did not include residents of East Jerusalem nor the Arab residents of the Golan Heights.

The survey was conducted by the Survey Unit of Mada al-Carmel, the Arab Center for Applied Social Research. This is the first comprehensive annual survey conducted by Mada al-Carmel, and addressed a wide range of social and political subjects.

Summary of Principal Findings

1. What are the important social issues in Arab society?

Of 11 key issues presented to the survey participants, the subject of unemployment and creation of employment opportunities was first in importance; 95% of the respondents rate this as having high importance. Other subjects that were rated as highly important were: improvement in the level of municipal services (95%); return of land seized by Israel (94%); and dealing with discrimination in daily life (93%).

A second group of subjects were rated as very important by the majority of participants: raising awareness of nationalism amongst Arabs (89%); the subject of people uprooted from

their land, and the unrecognized settlements (88%); Arab political activism (84%); equality for women (79%); and emphasis on Palestinian identity (79%).

Change in the State of Israel's Jewish nature took last place in the list of subjects, but is still rated as an important issue amongst two thirds (68%) of the respondents.

2. Are Arabs satisfied with the state of Arab society?

In an attempt to gauge the respondents' level of satisfaction with the state of Arab society, they were asked to rate their satisfaction vis-à-vis six societal fields. The findings showed a great deal of dissatisfaction with all the fields presented: only 6% are satisfied with municipal services; 7% are satisfied with their quality of life; 8% with the way their local council is managed; 11% are satisfied with the level of education available in Arab schools; 19% with the level of higher education in Arab society; and 21% are satisfied with women's status in Arab society.

3. What worries the Arab population in Israel, and what reassures it?

Of eight subjects presented to the survey participants, the continuation of the *intifada*, and the "increase in Israel's Jewish character of " takes first place as a worrisome factor, with these subjects rated as such by 84% and 81% respectively. In second place on the list of troubling factors appear: the discourse on exchange of territories between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (75%); the possibility that one of the Arab political parties or movements will be deemed illegal (74%); ethnic conflicts between Muslims, Christians and Druze (79%). A worry concerning Israel's image in the world is shared by 35% of the respondents.

By contrast, the strengthening of Arab nationalism is a source of reassurance for 60% of the respondents. Similarly, the increasing strength of the Islamic movement is considered by 39% of the Muslim respondents to be a source of quietude.

It is important to note that the subjects of increase in Israel's Jewish character and ethnic tensions have the same effect on Druze and Bedouin in the North, who express opinions which differ from the rest of the Arabs surveyed regarding many political subjects, or in relation to State institutions.

4. What is the level of Israeli Arabs' trust in various State institutions?

The findings show that of eight institutions presented to the subjects in the survey, only two were trusted by the Arab population in Israel: 74% express a high level of trust in the health system, and 61% trust the Supreme Court of Israel. These two institutions are followed by the courts (50%); the National Insurance Institute [social security] (38%); the Arab-language media (28%); the police (24%); and the Israeli Arab-language media (20%); while only 19% stated that they had a high degree of trust in the Knesset [parliament].

5. The equality of Arabs and Jews in various fields.

Fifteen different fields were presented to the survey respondents, and they were asked to rate the level of equality between Arab and Jewish citizens in each of those areas. The two fields that received the highest rating were the health services, and treatment in hospitals. The two fields were rated by 52% and 47% respectively, as showing full equality towards Arabs and Jews or "approaching full equality".

Only a minority of the respondents see that equality or a situation approaching equality exists in other fields: education (10%); employment opportunities in government institutions (7%); employment opportunities in the private sector (10%); representation in high-level positions (5%); treatment by law (25%); freedom of expression (30%); the way they are treated by government offices and ministries (19%); ability to affect the State's decision-making process (5%); political representation (4%); the way the State relates to religion and holy institutions (20%); and political rights (11%). As a general rule, 54% of the respondents think that full equality between Jews and Arabs can be achieved, without Israel relinquishing its Jewish nature. Fully 46% see this possibility as realistic.

6. How is the State's relationship to its Arab citizens perceived in various fields: Do Arabs receive the same treatment as do Jews, are they discriminated against or treated as enemies?

The survey examined the respondents' opinions concerning the State's relationship to its Arab citizens in nine fields: health services, land [rights], social services, government ministries, demonstrations, airports, universities, local councils' budgets, education budgets.

In three of the above spheres, approximately one third of the respondents described the State's treatment of its Arab citizens as "like that towards enemies: in demonstrations (40%); in airports (31%); and in land (29%). Furthermore, some two-thirds of the respondents see the State's relationship to its Arab citizens in education (64%) and budgets allocated to local councils (64%) as blatantly discriminatory.

The two domains in which the Arab respondents perceived the State's relationship of them as approaching or similar to the treatment that its Jewish citizens receive were health and social services. In the field of health, 41% of the respondents say that the treatment they received was similar to that received by Jews, and 48% say that the way they are dealt with is only "a little" discriminatory. In the field of social services, 19% see the way they are treated as similar to the way Jews are treated, and 43% view their treatment as only "a little" discriminatory.

7. Should we relinquish something in order to gain the maximum possible equality?

The subjects in the survey were given a list of various topics, and for each one, were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement on giving up that issue in exchange for the greatest possible equality between themselves and Jews.

The vast majority of respondents, more than 75%, think that Arabs should not relinquish anything in most of the topics presented: relinquishing collective rights was rejected by 86%; giving up the Palestinian narrative was rejected by 82%; surrendering the right of Return was repudiated by 82%; abandoning Israel's obligation to recognize its responsibility for refugees and the Palestinian problem was rejected by 79%; and 76% do not agree that emphasis on Palestinian identity should be abandoned. Some two-thirds of the respondents (64%) think

that the demand to change Israel's Jewish identity should not be given up in order to achieve maximum equality between Arab and Jewish Israelis.

8. Comparison of the past with expectations for the future.

In a comparison of their present situation with that of in the past, it was found that approximately two thirds of those surveyed (63%) appraise the status of Arabs today as worse than that of 10 years ago. In addition, some two thirds of the respondents (67%) think that in another 10 years, their status will be worse than it is today.

9. Democracy, Zionism, and the Jewish State.

Does the Arab population think that it lives in a democratic state? The findings show that only 33% think so. Sixty-two percent think that the State of Israel cannot be a Jewish and a democratic state simultaneously. Moreover, 94% of the Arab population sees Zionism as a racist movement; 87% see the Law of Return as a discriminatory one; and 95% think that the "new immigrants" have no right to come to Israel.

Alongside these results, it was found that the Arab population distinguishes between the historic right to the land, which Zionism maintains is intended for Jews; and the rights of generations of new Jews who were born in Israel. By contrast to the 63% who oppose the argument of the historic right of Jews to establish a state in Palestine, 68% think that the Jews who were born in Israel have the same right to be here that Arabs do (while 28% think that Arabs have more rights).

This picture changes concerning the situation that will occur when an agreement is reached between Israel and the Palestinians. Fifty percent of the respondents think that when a final overall agreement is reached between the Palestinians and Israel, which will guarantee a sovereign Palestinian State on Palestinian land, Israel can be recognized as the State of the Jewish nation. Thirty-two percent oppose that concept, and the remaining 18% do not express any unequivocal opinion on this subject.

10. Arabs representing Israel in various fields of life.

This section addresses the question of "whether an Arab in Israel should take part in various spheres that represent Israel?" The findings show a high level of support when the representation is not political in character, like sports and science, contrasted to a low level of support for representation in activities linked to government institutions or the security services. Eighty-nine percent think that it is perfectly fine for an Arab to represent Israel in international sports competitions; 85% think that Arabs should be included in groups of scientists or academicians representing Israel abroad. The other spheres receive less support: only 31% think that Arabs should serve in the Citizens Guard or the Police Department; 28% support Arabs serving in the army; 28% support the concept of an Arab serving as a member of Knesset from a Zionist political party; and 27% support Arab participation in national State ceremonies.

Furthermore, the results show that despite the fact that diplomatic service is primarily political in nature, 73% of the respondents consider it to be an acceptable field for Arab participation.

As expected, the findings show significant differences on this subject between the Druze and Bedouins in the North on one hand, and the rest of the Arabs on the other hand. For example, participation in national ceremonies is considered to be acceptable by 51% of the Druze and 26% of the Bedouin in the North, compared with 12% of the rest of the Arabs surveyed. Moreover, army service is seen as acceptable for 63% of the Druze and 34% of the northern Bedouin, as compared to only 11% of all the other Arab respondents.

The findings show that only 39% see the appointment of MK [Member of Knesset] Mahameed to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee as an achievement for Arab society; only 32% see the appointment of MKs Mazalha and Sadik as Deputy Ministers and the appointment of MK Tarif as a Minister, as achievements for the Arab community. Raslan's winning the title of Miss Israel in the national beauty contest is considered to be an important achievement for Arab society by only a minority (23%) of respondents. By contrast, the late Emil Habibi's receipt of the Israel Prize for Literature is perceived by 56% of the respondents as an achievement of Arab society.

Do Arabs feel a sense of pride when they hear of Israeli achievements in sports and science? The survey's findings show that 22% feel a great sense of pride in such achievements, 35% feel a sense of pride to a certain extent, 35% are not proud of such achievements at all, and the rest, 8%, report a negative feeling.

11. Should Palestinians relinquish something in order to end the occupation?

The question asked of the participants was: "If the Palestinians were offered an agreement where the end of the occupation was guaranteed, and a sovereign Palestinian State was established in the West Bank and Gaza, in exchange for giving up on one of the following issues, do you think that the Palestinians should relinquish it in order to reach agreement?"

The issues presented were:

- ◆ The Right of Return for refugees;
- ◆ Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders;
- ◆ Sovereignty over East Jerusalem;
- ◆ Sovereignty over the al-Aqsa Mosque;
- ◆ The dismantling of all the [Israeli] settlements [on the West Bank and Gaza].

The findings show that the majority of respondents reject relinquishing any of these issues in exchange for an agreement: 95% reject relinquishing sovereignty over the al-Aqsa Mosque; 89% do not want to give up sovereignty over East Jerusalem; 82% reject abandoning the demand that Israel withdraw to the 1967 borders; 76% demand the dismantling of the settlements; and 72% reject forsaking the refugees' Right of Return.

12. What is the best solution for the relationship between the Arab minority in Israel and the State?

From among the seven solutions offered to the survey participants, the solution of "a state for all of its citizens" received the support of 64% of those surveyed; an additional 14% thought a binational state within the borders of Israel was the solution; 12% support the State's conferring the maximum possible rights on its Arabs citizens, but nevertheless maintaining its definition as a Jewish State. The other solutions offered: cultural autonomy; a binational

state within the borders of Mandatory Palestine; and Israel as it is today, each received no more than 4% support from the respondents.

Regarding whether each of the solutions was acceptable or not (i.e. not choosing any one specific solution from among those presented), it was found that 94% accept the solution of a state for all its citizens; 70% accept the solution of a binational state within Israel's borders; 67% accept the solution wherein the State confers the maximum possible rights on its Arab citizens, while maintaining its definition as a Jewish State; 56% accept the solution of cultural autonomy; and 40% accept the solution of a binational state within the borders of Israel and the occupied territory. Only 20% accept continuation of the present situation (Israel as it is today) as a solution.

13. How do the Palestinians in Israel see their future?

A number of possible future scenarios were presented to the survey participants, and they were asked to rate the likelihood of its occurring within the next 10 years. The findings reflect a pessimistic view concerning the future of Palestinians in Israel: 63% expect greater discrimination against Arabs in Israel; 63% foresee greater economic and social disparities between Arabs and Jews; 62% anticipate that one of the Arab political parties or Arab movements will be deemed to be illegal; 47% predict that the existing situation will be made permanent; 45% envisage Israel becoming a nation with apartheid; and 32% anticipate greater expulsions of Palestinians from Israel.

Other scenarios which a smaller percentage of the respondents rated as highly likely to occur: Israel turning into a state for all of its citizens (28%), improvement in the social and political status of Arabs in Israel (24%), complete equality of rights between Arabs and Jews (21%), and transfer of Arabs beyond Israel's borders (21%).

14. Where do you prefer to live?

On the subject of place of residence, 54% prefer to live in an Arab neighborhood; 20% would prefer to live in a mixed neighborhood (Jews and Arabs); 22% have no preference; and 4% prefer to live in a Jewish neighborhood.

Concerning mixed marriages, the great majority, 86%, do not support mixed marriages between Jews and Arabs, while 9% support the marriage of an Arab man to a Jewish wife.

15. What elements of Israeli culture do Arabs enjoy?

The survey's findings showed that watching Israeli news in Hebrew takes first place: 63% report watching news programs very frequently. Reading Hebrew newspapers is in second place, with 49% of the respondents reporting that they frequently read Hebrew newspapers. Israeli Arabs are less interested in the substance of other cultural offerings: 30% of the respondents are very interested in comedy programs in Hebrew; 15% are interested in Israeli music; 10% in Israeli films; 6% in Israeli literature and 3% in Israeli theater.

16. Are the Ashkenazi [Western] Jews or the Sephardic [Mid-Eastern] Jews closer to Arabs?

Politically, 51% of the respondents think that no difference exists between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews; 27% report that the Ashkenazi Jews are closer to Arabs; and 21% see the Sephardic Jews as closer. Socially, 95% see a difference between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews: 63% see Sephardic Jews as being closer to Arabs, while 32% see Ashkenazi Jews as closer. Culturally, 89% discern a difference between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews in their closeness to Arabs: 54% think the Sephardic Jews are closer, and 35% view the Ashkenazi Jews as closer.

17. Opinions regarding the way the Arab Members of Knesset function.

The survey participants were presented with a number of statements relating to Arab Members of Knesset [MKs]. They were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The findings showed that 59% agree that "The Arab MKs should devote more time to the daily problems of Israel's Arab citizens."; 45% agree that "The Arab MKs devote more time to the Palestinian problem than they do to the daily problems of Israel's Arab population". Forty-four percent agree that "The Arab MKs' activities contribute to advancing Arab society"; 39% agree that "The Arab MKs are more active than their Jewish counterparts"; 33% agree that "The Arab MKs fulfill their tasks

satisfactorily"; and 17% agreed that "The Hebrew press provides the Arab MKs enough time to express the opinions of the Arab population".

18. What is the best solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

Six possible solutions to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict were presented to the survey participants. Sixty-two percent of the respondents stated that the solution of "Two countries – Palestine and Israel" is the best solution; another 13% said that "One secular State" was the best solution. Less than 10% of the respondents supported each of the other four solutions.

19. When will peace come?

The survey found that 45% think that peace between Israel and Palestine will never come; 25% think that peace will come within 10 years; 10% think that peace will come between 10 and 19 years from now; and 20% think that peace will come only after 20 years.

20. Support for the *intifada* and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The survey's findings show a great deal of support by Palestinian citizens of Israel for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Eighty-nine percent think that economic assistance should be granted to the West Bank and Gaza Palestinians; and 71% think that moral support is required. Similarly, 75% think that support for West Bank and Gaza Palestinians by Israeli Palestinians should be increased.

21. What is the best way to end the occupation?

On the subject of ending the occupation, 51% think that negotiations are the best way to end it; 38% think that negotiations and the *intifada* are the best way to end the occupation; and only 6% think that the *intifada* alone can end it.

22. Did the *intifada* decrease or increase Israel's willingness to accept Palestinian demands?

It was found that 37% of the respondents think that the *al-Aqsa intifada* (the second *intifada*) reduced Israel's willingness to accept Palestinian demands; 36% think that it raised Israel's willingness to accept Palestinian demands; and 27% think the *intifada* had no effect vis-à-vis this subject.

23. What is the likelihood of various possible scenarios, which describe the Palestinian future in the occupied territories, occurring?

The survey subjects were asked to appraise the likelihood that each one of nine scenarios that describe the future of Palestinian Arabs in the occupied territories would occur. The scenarios that were considered most likely to occur: the Islamic trend would strengthen, which 63% thought would happen with a high degree of likelihood; 53% see a unilateral withdrawal to the separation fence as very likely; 47% predict a deterioration to a state of apartheid in Israel; and 44% predict a continuation of the *intifada*.

The second group consisted of those scenarios which fewer respondents saw as likely to happen. Thirty-seven percent appraised as likely to happen, the scenario in which the Palestinian leadership consents to an agreement that does not guarantee full rights to Palestinians; 33% saw a solution to the conflict; 25% anticipated a civil war among Palestinians; 19% envisioned Israel's defeat; and 16% predicted a Palestinian defeat.

24. Would signing a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, stipulating that a sovereign Palestinian state be established, constitute an end to the conflict?

Sixty-six percent predict that a peace agreement that would guarantee the founding of a sovereign Palestinian State would mean the end to the historical conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, compared to 34% who do not think so.