Intergroup Relations within Israeli Society

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1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing feeling in the Israeli public that the country is heading in the wrong direction. Indeed, numerous politicians, NGO's, and opinion leaders regularly warn that the Israeli democracy is deteriorating in many domains. They point to threats on freedom of the press (Reshet Bet, 2016), lack of trust in public institutions (The Marker, 2015), growing international isolation (Mako, 2016), increases in inequality and poverty (Globes, 2017), societal divides, and a rise in violence (Maariv, 2017). However, does the public sentiment indeed reflect reality? The goal of this report is to examine Israel's democracy in general, and specifically the intergroup relations among the various sectors of Israeli society, using existing research, public opinion polls, and international comparisons. To do so, we examined an exhaustive list of measures collected by various organizations, think-tanks, and academics to present a comprehensive picture of Israel's current situation.

We begin by reviewing the current standing of Israel's democracy compared to other countries across a wide array of social and political domains. Next, we take a close look at the Israeli public's perceptions of social tensions in Israel. We examine both the cognitive and affective aspects of these perceptions, as well as their behavioral action tendencies and resulting political implications. Finally, we summarize the main findings regarding current intergroup relations, and call attention to methodological gaps in existing data.
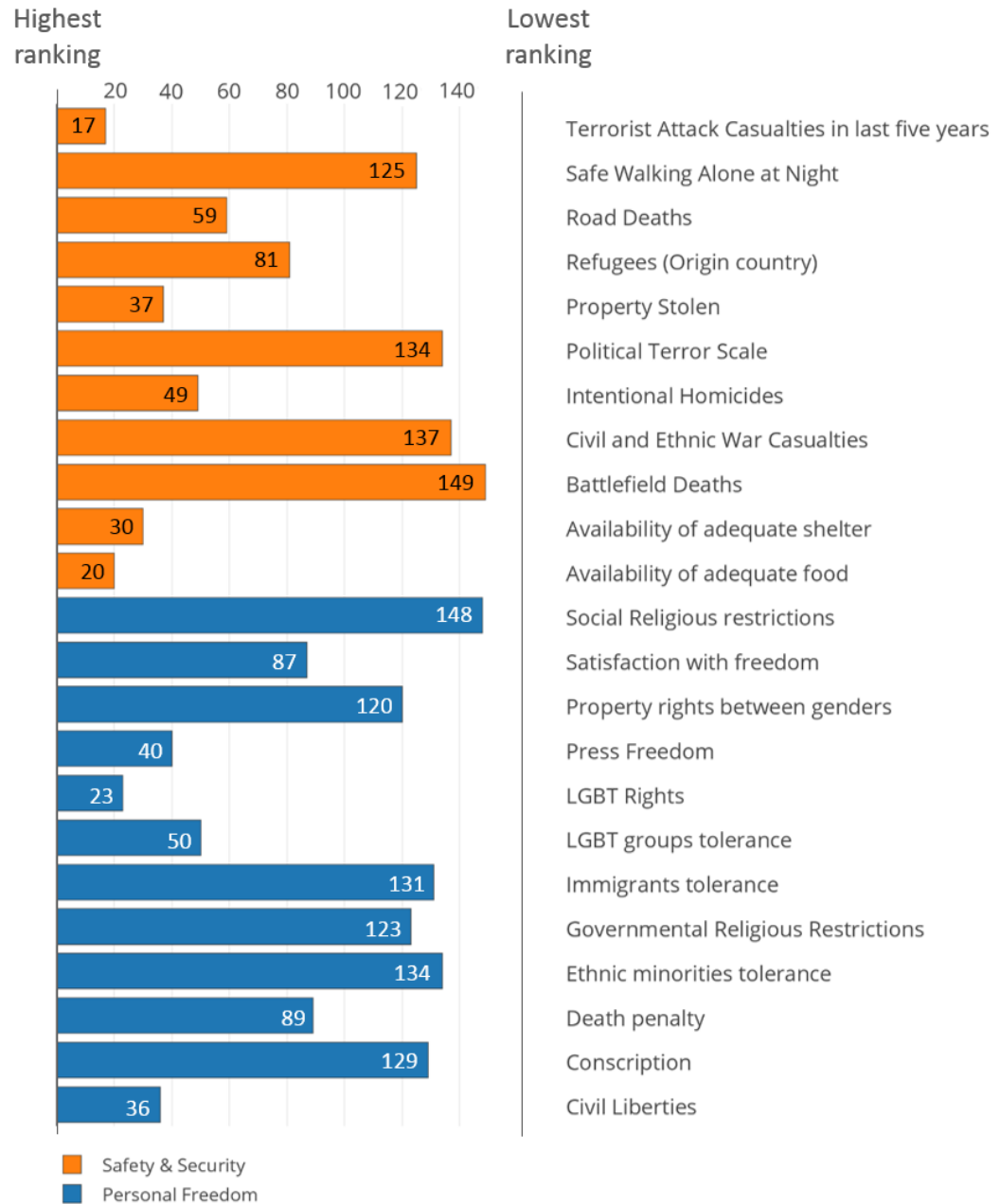
The data presented in this report include three types of existing sources: (1) Research conducted by international institutions that indicate Israel's relative position compared to other countries; (2) Reports of local research institutes and think-tanks regarding attitudinal trends within Israeli society concerning intergroup relations; (3) Studies pertaining to public behavior toward social groups conducted via social networks. It is important to note that while the available sources provide a broad understanding of the current trends in Israeli society, there are important questions that remain unanswered. We will address these shortcomings in the summary of the current report.

2. Israeli Society and Democracy - An International Comparison

To understand how Israel compares to other countries on indices of democracy, we began by examining international rankings published by several international institutions. According to the Legatum Prosperity Index (The Legatum Institute Foundation, 2016), Israel is ranked 40th out of 149 countries. This index assesses the extent to which countries promote citizens' flourishing, reflecting both wealth and well-being across nine indicators of prosperity: economic quality, business environment, governance, education, health, safety and security, personal freedom, social capital, and natural environment. The index is based on objective measures (such as average years of schooling among the population), expert research (such as the World Bank's Governance Indicators), and public opinion polls (such as how satisfied people are with their freedom of choice). The index reveals that Israel enjoys a respectable global ranking mainly due to its strong public institutions, advanced education sector, and diversified economy, which all deliver prosperity to its citizens. However, Israel falls short within two domains[1]: safety and security (ranked 94), and personal freedom (ranked 91). These low scores are based on 23 objective and subjective measures such as the number of battlefield deaths (ranked 149), number of acts of religious hostility by private individuals, organizations and social groups (ranked 148), magnitude of episodes of civil violence, ethnic warfare and ethnic violence during 2016 (ranked 137), and Ethnic minorities intolerance (ranked 134; for the full list see Figure 1).

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[1] A third domain is National Environment that will not be discussed in this report.

Figure 1. Israel's ranking in comparison to 149 countries at the 'Personal Freedom' and 'Safety & Security' indicators of the Prosperity index (2016)

Highest ranking   Lowest ranking

Indicator	Ranking
Terrorist Attack Casualties in last five years	17
Safe Walking Alone at Night	125
Road Deaths	59
Refugees (Origin country)	81
Property Stolen	37
Political Terror Scale	134
Intentional Homicides	49
Civil and Ethnic War Casualties	137
Battlefield Deaths	149
Availability of adequate shelter	30
Availability of adequate food	20
Social Religious restrictions	148
Satisfaction with freedom	87
Property rights between genders	120
Press Freedom	40
LGBT Rights	23
LGBT groups tolerance	50
Immigrants tolerance	131
Governmental Religious Restrictions	123
Ethnic minorities tolerance	134
Death penalty	89
Conscription	129
Civil Liberties	36

■ Safety & Security
■ Personal Freedom

[Source: The Legatum Prosperity Index, 2016]

The Israeli Democracy institute also conducts an important international comparison of Israel, which we included in our analysis. The institute reviews 12 expert-

based indexes provided by international research organizations, and has conducted this comparison every year from 2003. Therefore, its results provide a broad understanding of Israel's positioning compared with other countries on each indicator across time. As shown in Figure 2, Israel is ranked around the mid-point of the scales on most indicators. However, Israel is quite consistently ranked at the bottom when it comes to religious and ethnic tensions[2].

These two indicators of religious and ethnic tensions were developed by the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) to evaluate the tensions among a country's social groups. The religious tensions - between secular and religious Jews - reflect attempts to replace civil law with religious law, exclusion of religious groups from important political and social processes, suppression and coercion aimed at consolidating a governing hegemony by a particular religion. The National/ethnic/linguistic tensions indicate the level of tension between groups based on their race, nationality, or language. In Israel, the rating relates both to ethnic divisions within Jewish citizens (i.e., between Ashkenazim, Mizrachim and other Jews), as well as the ethnic divide between Jewish and Arab citizens. According to the aforementioned indices (and additional indices we reviewed), it appears that while Israel achieves good scores on many indicators, what continues to hamper Israel's democracy is its failure to attenuate intergroup tensions within its society. In the next section, we provide a close look at these tensions within Israeli society.

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[2] From 1992 to 2002 religious and ethnic tensions were measured by the ICRG, but were not compared to other countries by the Israeli Democracy institute, therefore, we did not include them in the current review. However, we find it important to point out that Israel's ranking on these two indicators were similarly low to the years that were included in this report. The Israeli Democracy institute stopped reporting these measures from 2014.

Figure 2. Israel's ranking in comparison to other countries at the democracy and society indicators (2003-2013)[3]
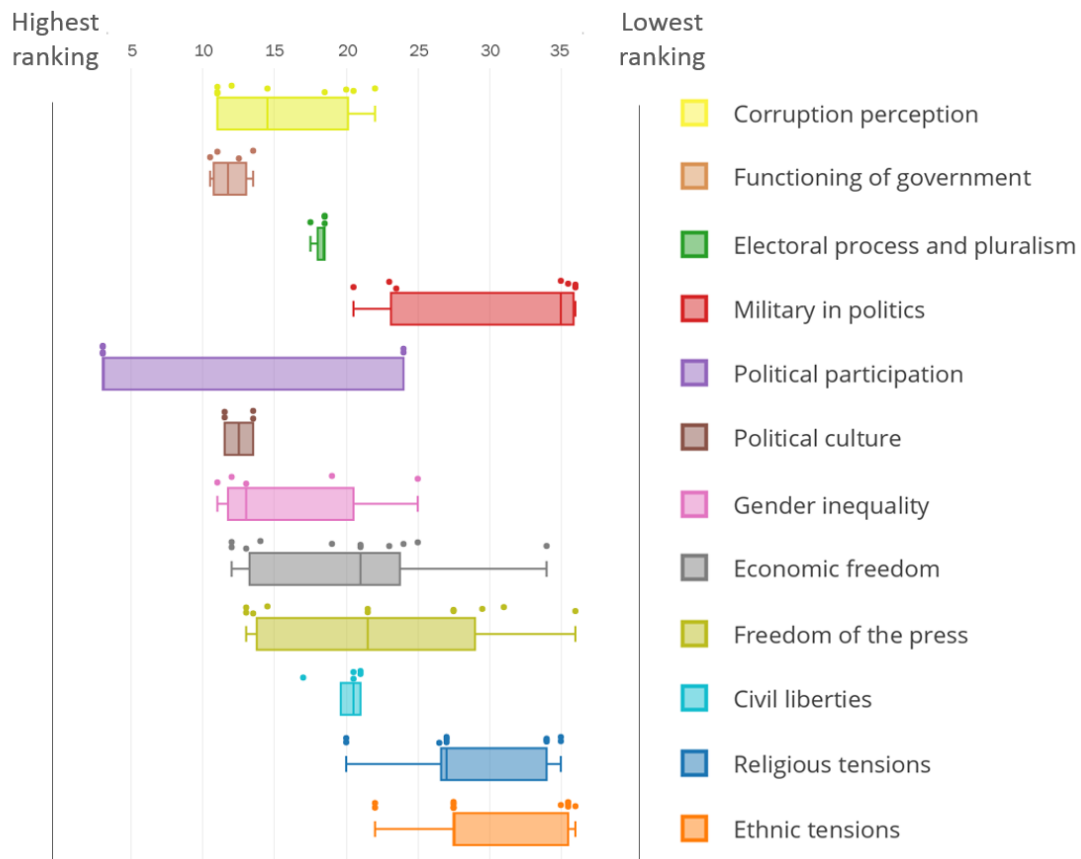

[Sources: Economist Intelligence Unit, Freedom House, Heritage Foundation, Human Development Report International Country Risk Guide, and Transparency International. Taken from the Israeli Democracy Indexes 2003-2013]

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[3] The graph presents an aggregated view of the relative rank of Israel compared to other counties per index between 2003-2013. Sometimes Israel shared the same score with one or more countries, in which case it received a score that represents the median range. For example, if Israel shared the same score with five other countries (positions 9 to 14) it received the median range 11.5. It should be noted that the number of countries used for comparison varied across indexes and years from 27 to 36. Moreover, not all indexes were measured across the years 2003-2013.

3. Mapping Social Tensions in Israel

Israel represents an extreme case of a divided society in terms of the number of intergroup tensions and their intensity. Traditionally, the main tensions are between Jews and Arabs, religious and secular Jews, the political right and left, Mizrahim and Ashkenazim, and divisions based on socioeconomic class. In the last five years, public opinion polls show that four out of these five tensions (except for Mizrahim and Ashkenazim) are perceived by the majority of the Israeli public as "high" (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of Jewish respondents who consider the social tensions in Israeli society as "high" (2012-2016)
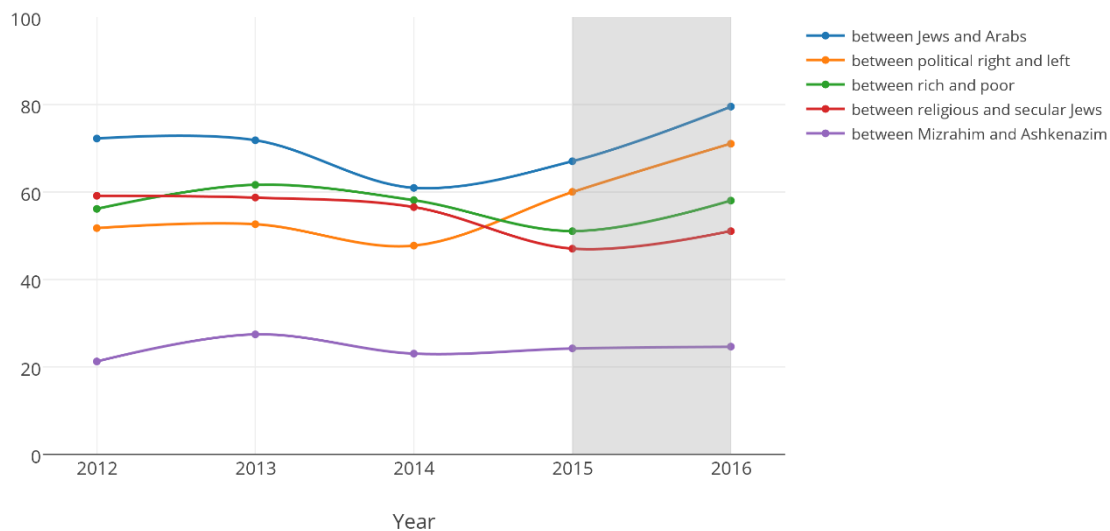
[Source: The Israeli Democracy Index 2012-2016]

These tensions are of growing importance due to the changing demographic balance in Israel. Indeed, two years ago, the president of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, stated that the current demographic trends create a "new Israeli order". According to this account, there is no longer a clear majority or clear minority group within the Israeli society. Instead, there are four main 'tribes' – secular Jews, national religious Jews, Haredim (Ultra-Orthodox Jews), and Arabs - that are rapidly growing closer in size. According to

Rivlin, without a comprehensive national strategic plan that addresses the conflictual issues between the groups, the tensions, fear, hostility, and competitiveness between these groups will continue to grow (Rivlin, 2015). Accordingly, from 2015 to 2016, the perceptions of Jewish Israelis regarding the intensity of these tensions continued to grow by an overall of 14%. This view is not fully shared by the Arab citizens of Israel. For them, there was an increase in the perception of intensity of the Jewish-Arab divide and of the Mizrahim and Ashkenazim tension, however, these was a decrease in their perception of the intensity of the other tensions in the Israeli society (Hermann, Heller, Cohen, Bublil, & Omer, 2016; see Table 1).

Table 1. Percentage of respondents who consider the social tensions in Israeli society as "high" (2015-2016)

	Jews			Arabs		
	2016	2015	Trends	2016	2015	Trends
Jews and Arabs	80%	67%	↑	72%	68%	↑
Right and Left	71%	60%	↑	44%	58%	↓
Rich and poor	58%	51%	↑	42%	46%	↓
Religious and secular Jews	51%	47%	↑	45%	51%	↓
Mizrahim and Ashkenazim	25%	24%	↑	25%	23%	↑

[Source: The Israeli Democracy Index 2015-2016]

However, these data provide a very limited understanding of the tensions because they merely reflect general perceptions regarding the intensity of these divisions. Moreover, additional tensions have emerged over the years with other sub-groups in the Israeli society, including Ethiopians, former Soviet Union immigrants, the

Ultra-orthodox, Jewish settlers in the West Bank, and the LGBT community (Pnima, 2017) that have not yet been examined extensively in longitudinal designs.

Comprehensive measures targeting these divisions that include longitudinal assessment of attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes, and emotions towards the relevant groups, as well as other well-known psychological measures of intergroup divides and general perceptions are also needed. Such measures can better inform us about the nature of these divides, their severity, and their changing (or stable) trends over years.

4. Negative Manifestations of Intergroup Tensions

Long-lasting tensions between groups are likely to lead to various negative social consequences. In the current report, we will analyze the major manifestations of the intergroup tensions: stereotypes and prejudice that form the cognitive and affective basis of the social tensions, social distance and violence which are the interpersonal consequences of conflicts, and political intolerance, deprivation of civil rights, and racial discrimination as the socio-political manifestation of the tensions. While these manifestations are interconnected, they are still distinct from each other and represent different aspects of societal tensions.

4.1. Prejudices

Stereotypes and prejudice stem from a cognitive need to simplify information about human groups (Tajfel, 1981), and an affective need to favor one's own ingroup by negatively evaluating the outgroup (Allport, 1954). Studies have shown that prejudice exists on two levels. One type is explicit and refers to the feelings toward groups that people are consciously aware of. The second type is implicit and refers to the unconscious feelings toward groups (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002). While the first predicts more controlled, deliberate behaviors, the latter predicts behaviors that are more spontaneous and difficult to control, including non-verbal behaviors. In this respect,

public polls using self-report measures can measure explicit attitudes toward groups, but cannot assess implicit attitudes. While for some groups in Israel (i.e., Arabs), it appears that explicit measures can capture racial perceptions, for other groups (i.e., Ethiopians, Ultra-Orthodox, etc.), explicit measures are not enough, as expressions of racism towards these groups may be considered by some as immoral, and thus people are unwilling or unable to report their true attitudes. In any case, neither explicit nor implicit measures of prejudice were assessed continuously over the years.

Recently, "Pnima", a new social movement founded by former education minister Rabbi Shai Piron of Yesh Atid, together with other key figures in Israeli society, published a survey (2017) that measured prejudice toward different groups in the Israeli society. A representative sample of Israelis were asked to match different traits and characteristics to the social group that best fits the description. All groups, without exceptions, assigned the positive traits to themselves or to a group that greatly overlaps with their identity (for example Muslims and Arabs). In contrast, none of the groups described themselves negatively (except for residents of Tel Aviv who thought they are the group that best fit to the description of being "supercilious"; see Table 2). This finding corresponds with Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), one of the most prominent theories in social psychology, which suggests that people are motivated to maintain or enhance a positive group evaluation in order to elevate their self-concept. Moreover, this positive group evaluation is often achieved through favorable comparisons of one's own group to other groups to which one doesn't belong.

However, the negative traits are not assigned to all groups equally but mainly to Arabs, who are described as "primitive", "not trustworthy", "frightening", and "dangerous". Indeed, according to the Israeli democracy index (Hermann et al., 2016), a significant portion of the Jewish population (43%) perceives Arab citizens as a security risk to Israel. Ultra-Orthodox are the second group that received most of the negative traits by being perceived as "primitive" and as the group that "takes advantage of the country's resources". Following the Ultra-Orthodox, Jewish settlers are perceived

negatively by Arabs and Leftists. Such negative attitudes have concrete interpersonal and socio-political manifestations as will be described in the following sections.

Table 2. Stereotyped groups as perceived by the social groups in Israel

I belong to:

| The group that best fits to this description:	Seculars	Ashkenazim	Rightists	Mizrahim	Religious	former Soviet Union immigrants	Arabs	Leftists	Muslims	Tel-Avivim	Ultra-Orthodox	Settlers
Trustworthy	Seculars 36%	Ashkenazim 27%	Rightists 36%	Rightists 31%	Religious 57%	former Soviet Union immigrant 39%	Arabs 64%	Leftists 40%	Arabs 69%	Seculars 32%	Ultra-Orthodox 76%	Settlers 42%
Contributes to the country	Seculars 46%	Seculars 38%	Settlers 43%	Settlers 38%	Settlers 51%	former Soviet Union immigrant 54%	Settlers 22%	Seculars 49%	Settlers 24%	Seculars 43%	Ultra-Orthodox 44%	Settlers 54%
Cultured	Ashkenazim 54%	Ashkenazim 55%	Ashkenazim 52%	Ashkenazim 43%	Ashkenazim 45%	former Soviet Union immigrant 66%	Ashkenazim 29%	Ashkenazim 45%	Ashkenazim 29%	Ashkenazim 45%	Ultra-Orthodox 53%	Ashkenazim 41%
Supercilious	Tel-Avivim 57%	Tel-Avivim 57%	Tel-Avivim 59%	Tel-Avivim 55%	Tel-Avivim 58%	Tel-Avivim 48%	Ashkenazim 39%	Tel-Avivim 39%	Ashkenazim 38%	Tel-Avivim 57%	Leftists 68%	Leftists 57%
Dangerous	Muslims 55%	Arabs 58%	Arabs 66%	Muslims 61%	Arabs 69%	Arabs 62%	Settlers 56%	Settlers 48%	Settlers 54%	Muslims 43%	Arabs 75%	Arabs 62%
Frightening	Muslims 57%	Arabs 58%	Arabs 68%	Muslims 63%	Arabs 70%	Arabs 60%	Settlers 51%	Settlers 35%	Settlers 51%	Muslims 53%	Arabs 78%	Arabs 70%
Not trustworthy	Arabs 52%	Arabs 57%	Arabs 63%	Arabs 60%	Arabs 70%	Arabs 56%	Settlers 37%	Settlers 35%	Settlers 36%	Muslims 41%	Arabs 66%	Arabs 61%
Takes advantage of the country	Ultra-Orthodox 73%	Ultra-Orthodox 67%	Arabs 55%	Ultra-Orthodox 57%	Arabs 63%	Ultra-Orthodox 60%	Ultra-Orthodox 40%	Ultra-Orthodox 68%	Ultra-Orthodox 40%	Ultra-Orthodox 70%	Arabs 62%	Arabs 67%
Primitive	Ultra-Orthodox 45%	Arabs 46%	Arabs 48%	Arabs 42%	Arabs 53%	Ethiopian immigrant 43%	Ethiopian immigrant 38%	Ultra-Orthodox 51%	Ethiopian immigrant 44%	Ultra-Orthodox 55%	Arabs 60%	Arabs 60%

[Source: Pnima, 2017]

4.2. Social Distance

Social distance pertains to an unwillingness to interact with people from different groups on different domains of life (Bogardus, 1925). In the Israeli democracy index (Hermann et al., 2016), Jews and Arabs were asked about their openness to the other group. Level of openness was measured by asking participants about their willingness to engage in several degrees of intimate social relationships with members of the other group. Participants were asked whether they are willing to accept (or not) a member of the other group as a spouse, friend, neighbor, or coworker. While a minority of both sides accepted the other group members as being a spouse (22% and 21% respectively for Jews and Arabs), there was much openness to accept a Jew or an Arab as a friend

(88% and 67% respectively), a neighbor (86% and 67% respectively), or as a coworker (96% and 82% respectively).

Similar results were obtained by the Arab-Jewish Relations index in Israel, which was developed and measured for more than a decade (since 2003) by Prof. Sammy Smooha, a sociologist who has published widely on the internal divides among members of Israeli society. The added value of this index is that it has been measured over time and can provide longitudinal information regarding the relationships between Jews and Arabs. The index, asks participants to indicate on a scale of 1 (representing "disagree") to 4 (representing "agree") the extent to which they feel distant from Jewish / Arab citizens of Israel. Unlike the prevailing feeling among the general public described earlier, the results reveal a positive trend in the relationship between Jews and Arabs, such that over the last decade, both sides feel less distant from the other group (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Percentage of respondents who feel distant from the Jewish / Arab citizens of Israel (2003, 2012, 2013, 2015)
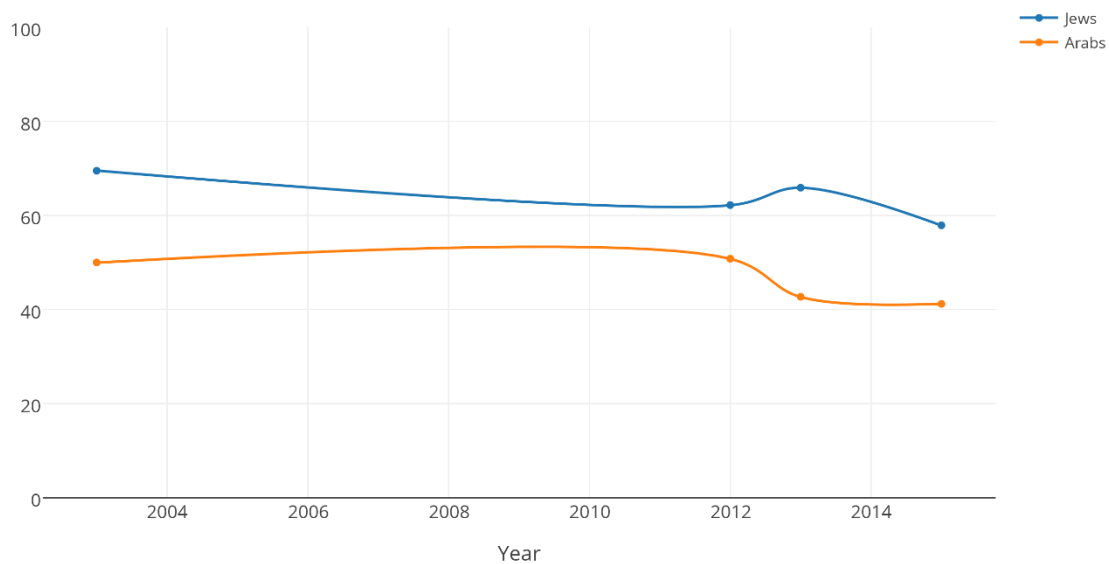
[Source: Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel, 2015]

However, social distance appears to increase during major events concerning Jews and Arabs. For example, according to the Arab-Jewish Relations index (Smooha, 2015), during the military operation Protective Edge in Gaza in the summer of 2014, 78.6% of Arabs felt more distant from Jews, and 62.1% of Jews shared this feeling towards Arabs. Another example concerns the national elections in 2015 in which on several occasions Jewish politicians expressed racist positions regarding the Arab minority in Israel. A notable example concerns Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's call to his supporters, urging them to go and vote because "the Arab voters are heading to the polling stations in droves" (Netanyahu, 2015). According to the Arab-Jewish Relations index (Smooha, 2015), this call was perceived as a racist statement by the majority of the Arab public (85.8%), and it increased the extent to which Arabs felt distant from Jewish Israelis (58.4%). As for other intergroup divides, we did not find measures from which we could make inferences regarding social distance. While social distance is considered a form of passive harm, explicit expressions of racism and violence are considered a form of active harm (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007). Such explicit expressions will be discussed in the next section.

4.3. Intergroup Violence

In recent years social networks have become an arena of intergroup clashes in which people actively harm others based on their social identity. This aggressive behavior is monitored thanks to a collaboration between the Berl Katznelson Foundation and the Vigo company that yielded the development of the Hate Index. This index is based on a monitoring system that scans posts from social media channels (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, blogs, forums, and comment sections) on a daily basis. The collected data is analyzed in real time by searching for predefined phrases that contain racist, violent, or offensive phrases, and calls for violence. From the initiation of the Hate Index we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of offensive phrases. During 2016, 4.5 million offensive phrases were monitored, which is an increase of approximately 28% from 2015 (3.5

million phrases), and an increase of approximately 55% from 2014 (2.9 million phrases) (see Figure 5). The groups that were targeted the most in the last year were Arabs, women, Ultra-Orthodox, and leftists (see Figure 6).

Figure 5. Number of offensive phrases on social networks (in millions; 2014-2016)
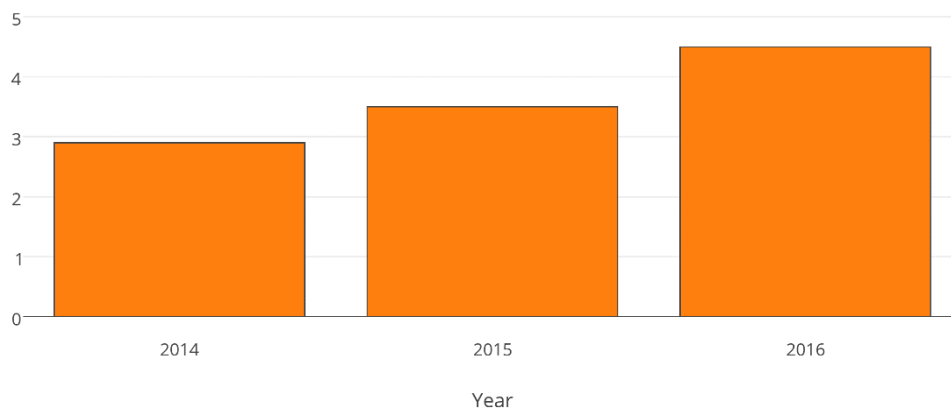
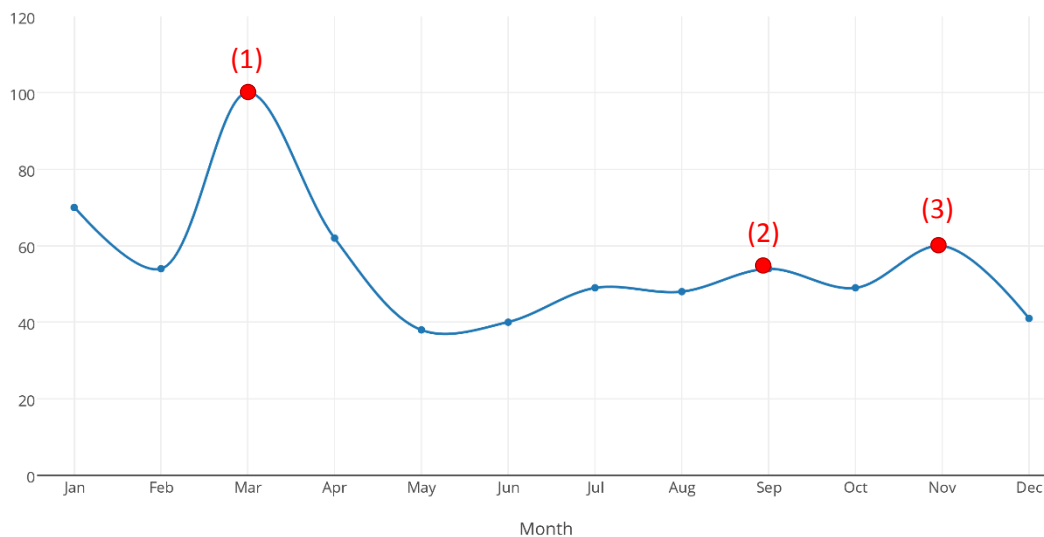[Source: Berl Katznelson foundation & Vigo, 2017]

Figure 6. Number of offensive phrases on social networks per targeted groups (in thousands; 2016)
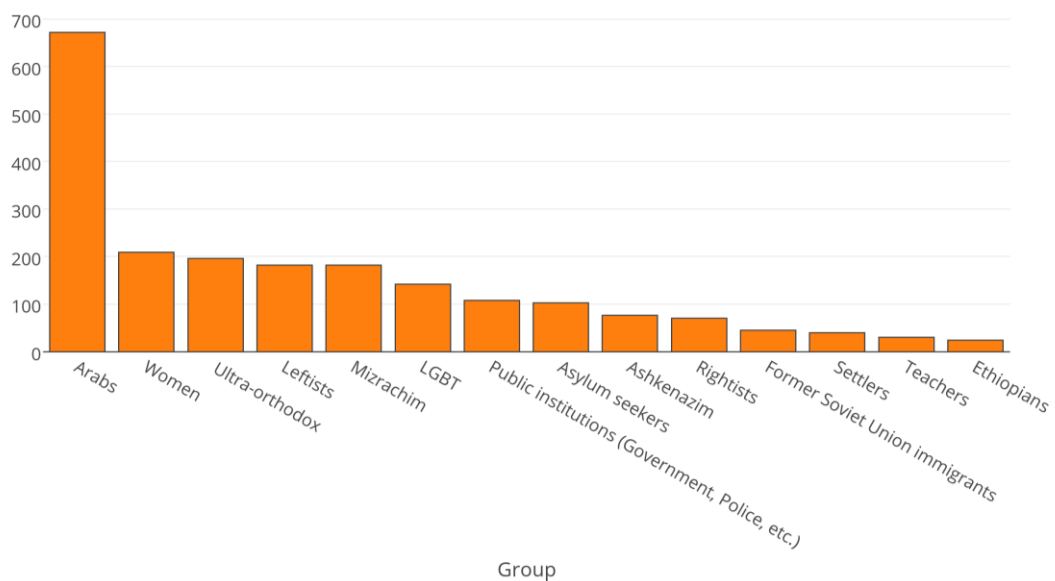
[Source: Berl Katznelson foundation & Vigo, 2017]

Arabs are the group that are subject to the largest number of violent phrases in general. The number of offensive posts increased from 280,000 during 2015 to 675,000 during 2016. Conflictual events are not always reflected in the network. However, three extreme events did lead to a clear increase in violent calls: (1) the Hebron shooting incident (March, 2016); (2) Miri Regev's exit during the Ophir Award ceremony after the citing of the Palestinian national poet, Mahmoud Darwish (September, 2016); (3) and statements from Israeli politicians that suggested that recent arsons were the result of an Arab uprising (November, 2016; see Figure 7).

**Figure 7.** Number of offensive posts against Arabs (in thousands, 2016)

[Source: Berl Katznelson foundation & Vigo, 2017]

Women suffer from the second highest amount of offensive posts, which include misogynistic and sexist comments. Over the last year 66% of the harassments targeted public figures, especially models and politicians. During 2016, there were 190,000 misogynistic and harassing comments directed towards women, a decrease of 13% compared to 2015.

Ultra-Orthodox suffer from the third highest amount of offensive posts, which include comments about equal obligations, such as recruiting to the army. Such

comments are aggressive expressions related to the stereotype of Ultra-Orthodox as "taking advantage of the country's resources". Two peaks of harassment occurred during the (1) cancellation of core (non-religious) studies in Haredi schools (July, 2016); (2) and when Ultra-Orthodox protested against Shabbat train work (September, 2016; see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Number of offensive posts against Ultra-Orthodox (in thousands, 2016)
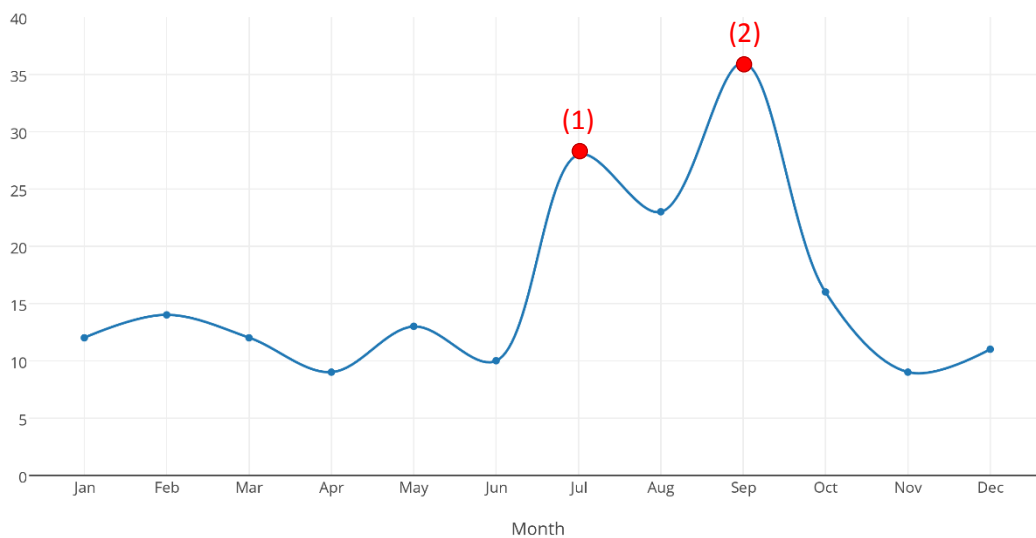
[Source: Berl Katznelson foundation & Vigo, 2017]

Social networks have also become a platform for political verbal aggression between rightists and leftists. There is more violent verbal aggressions targeted toward leftists compared to rightists, but there are still some coming from both sides of the political spectrum (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Number of offensive posts toward leftists and rightists (in thousands, 2016)
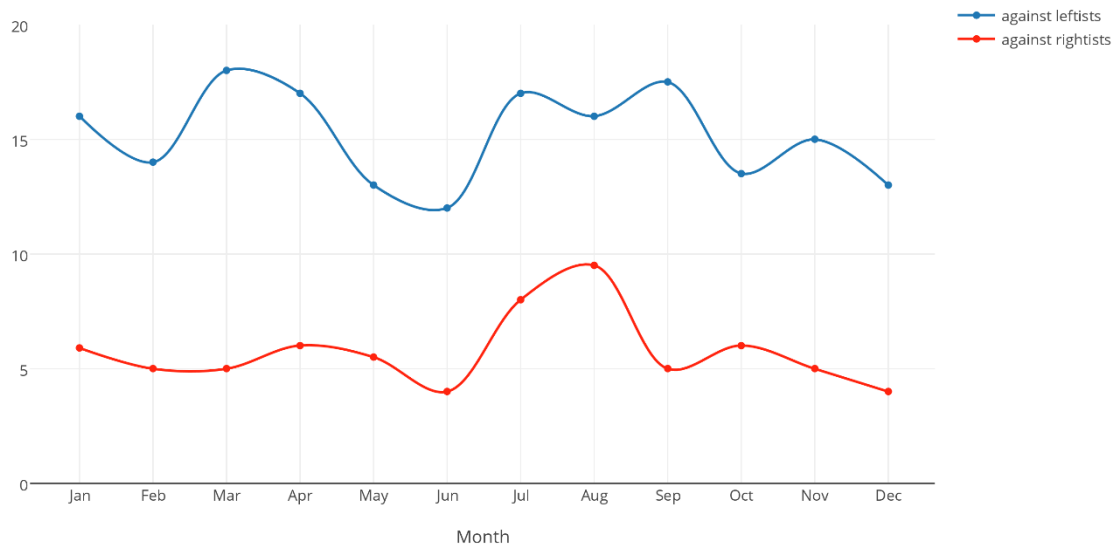
[Source: Berl Katznelson foundation & Vigo, 2017]

The use of social networks as a "boxing ring", where racist and violent expressions are posted as a normative act without hiding behind a fake profile implies an increase in violent interchange between groups and a loss of shame for expressing such racist and violent opinions. It has become legitimate to offend those who hold different opinions, while any attempts to resolve such disputes peacefully are abandoned.

As shown in the last sections, these social tensions involve cognitive and affective components that are expressed on the individual level either passively (i.e., social distance) or actively (i.e., verbal violence on social networks). In the following sections, we will analyze expressions of social tensions on the political level in the form of political intolerance, violation of civil rights, and racial discrimination.

4.4. Political Intolerance

Political tolerance refers to the extent to which people are willing to put up with groups or ideas that they disagree with (Sullivan, J., Piereson, J., & Marcus, 1982).

Therefore, political tolerance is crucial because it allows open competition for power, which is the hallmark of liberal democracies (Dahl, 1971).

A political tolerance index was developed and used to measure tolerance in Israel by Prof. Michal Shamir, a political scientist, who specializes in Israeli politics and public opinion. In their research, Shamir and colleagues (2015) measured political tolerance based on 18 public opinion surveys among Israeli Jews from 1980 to 2011. Given that the definition of tolerance implies a willingness to put up with those that one dislikes, they used the "least-liked group" method. According to this method, respondents are first asked to select their least liked group (e.g., Arabs) and are then asked regarding the extent to which they support this group's freedom of expression (Based on two questions: "Members of the *Least-liked Group* should be allowed to make a speech on T.V."; "Members of the *Least-liked Group* should be allowed to demonstrate."). Merely asking about the least-liked group can provide a candid reflection of the polarization of Israelis along ideological lines. Across 15 surveys, rightists were more likely to select Arab and Jewish leftist groups as least-liked, while leftists were more likely to select Jewish rightist and religious groups (see Table 3).

Table 3. Percentage of least-liked group selection by political identification based on 15 surveys between 1980-2011

	Arab Groups	Right-wing Groups	Left-wing Groups	Religious Groups
Right	48.90%	6.20%	29.90%	10.60%
Center	36.80%	29.60%	12.50%	18.20%
Left	14.10%	60.40%	2.90%	21.10%

[Source: Peffley, Hutchison, & Shamir, 2015]

Over the past three decades there were dramatic changes in which sectors the Jewish public considered the "least-liked". These changes seem to be a result of escalation and de-escalation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Arab sector was the least liked group especially during the spike of terror attacks in early 1980's, through the first Intifada from 1987 to 1993, and again during the second intifada that broke out in 2000. In contrast, the time of Oslo Peace Accords from 1993 to 1995, was the period in which Arabs were considered by very few as the least liked group. However, the political groups from the left and the right were the ones to be disliked at that time (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Percentage of Jewish respondents who selected the least-liked sectors between 1980-2011
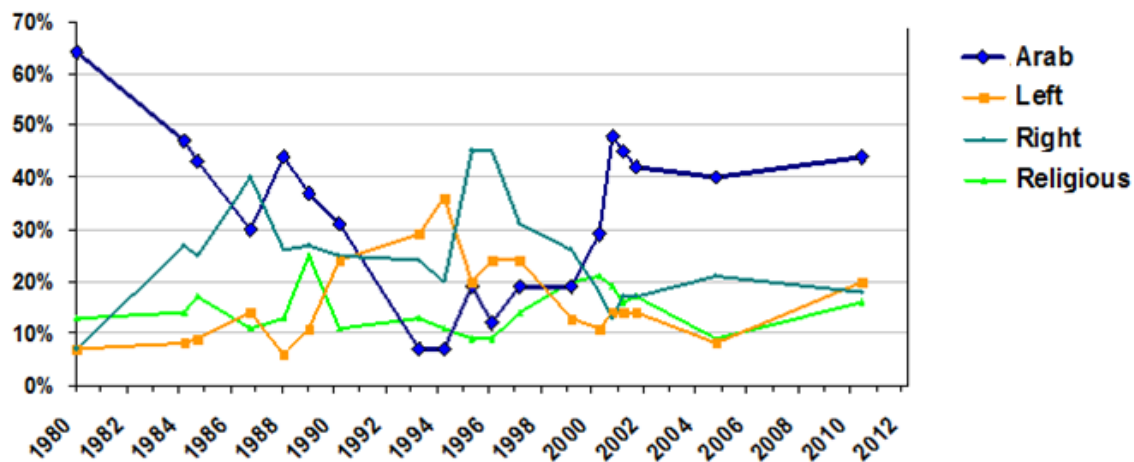
[Source: Peffley, Hutchison, & Shamir, 2015]

A breakdown of the sectors into the specific groups people selected shows that across the surveys more than 40 groups were considered as a least-liked groups, and in the last survey conducted in 2011 there were more than 16 groups listed (see Table 4). These findings emphasize the diverse and long lasting divisions among the members of Israeli society.

**Table 4.** List of selected least-liked groups across 18 surveys between 1980-2011

Group Name	Total Surveys	Surveys
Arab		
Arab Democratic	3	10/1988, 10/1989, 12/1990
Balad	2	7/2005, 2/2011
Arab Parties like Daraushe, Rakah	2	2/1996, 11/1996
Groups supporting PLO	5	9/1980, 12/1984, 6/1985, 10/1988, 10/1989
Islamic Movement	7	1/2000, 1/2001, 7/2001, 12/2001, 6/2002, 7/2005, 2/2011
Progressive List for Peace	6	12/1984, 6/1985, 7/1987, 10/1988, 10/1989, 12/1990
Raam	2	7/2005, 2/2011
Rakah, Hadash	15	9/1980, 12/1984, 6/1985, 7/1987, 10/1988, 10/1989, 12/1990, 12/1997, 1/2000, 1/2001, 7/2001, 12/2001, 6/2002, 7/2005, 2/2011
Left		
Dor Shalom	1	12/1997
Gush Shalom	1	12/1997
Maarach, Avoda	4	7/1987, 12/1990, 2/1996, 11/1996
Mapam	2	10/1989, 12/1990
Mazpen	4	9/1980, 12/1984, 6/1985, 10/1988
Ratz, Meretz	13	7/1987, 10/1989, 12/1990, 2/1996, 11/1996, 12/1997, 1/2000, 1/2001, 7/2001, 12/2001, 6/2002, 7/2005, 2/2011
Shalom Achshav (Peace Now)	17	**All**
Shely	3	9/1980, 12/1984, 6/1985
Yesh Gvul	4	12/1984, 6/1985, 10/1988, 10/1989
Other Extremist Left Group	2	1/2000, 1/2001
Right		
Gush Emunim	9	9/1980, 12/1984, 6/1985, 7/1987, 10/1988, 10/1989, 12/1990, 2/1996, 11/1996
Hatchiya	7	9/1980, 12/1984, 6/1985, 7/1987, 10/1988, 10/1989, 12/1990
Ichud a Leumi (National Union)	2	7/2005, 2/2011
Israel Beitenu	2	7/2005, 2/2011
Kach	17	**All**
Likud	4	7/1987, 12/1990, 2/1996, 11/1996
Moezet Yesha (Yesha Council)	2	7/2005, 2/2011
Moledet	11	10/1988, 10/1989, 12/1990, 2/1996, 11/1996, 12/1997, 1/2000, 1/2001, 7/2001, 12/2001, 6/2002
Tzomet	5	10/1988, 10/1989, 12/1990, 2/1996, 11/1996
Zo Arzeynu	1	12/1997
Other Extremist Rightist Group	2	1/2000, 1/2001
Religious		
Agudat Israel, Pag'I	15	9/1980, 12/1984, 6/1985, 7/1987, 10/1988, 10/1989, 12/1990, 12/1997, 1/2000, 1/2001, 7/2001, 12/2001, 6/2002, 7/2005, 2/2011
Degel Hatora	1	10/1989
Haredim	2	2/1996, 11/1996
Mafdal	12	7/1987, 10/1989, 2/1996, 11/1996, 12/1997, 1/2000, 1/2001, 7/2001, 12/2001, 6/2002, 7/2005, 2/2011
Neturey Karta	5	9/1980, 12/1984, 6/1985, 10/1988, 10/1989
Sha's	11	7/1987, 10/1989, 12/1990, 12/1997, 1/2000, 1/2001, 7/2001, 12/2001, 6/2002, 7/2005, 2/2011
Other Extremist Religious/Orthodox Group	2	1/2000, 1/2001
Other		
Ale Yarok	1	2/2011
Black Panthers	1	9/1980
Mifleget-ha-Olim (Immigrants Party)	5	12/1997, 1/2000, 1/2001, 12/2001, 6/2002
Movement for Progressive Judaism	1	2/2011
Shinui (Change Party)	7	12/1990, 1/2000, 1/2001, 7/2001, 12/2001, 6/2002, 7/2005
Other	10	9/1980, 12/1984, 6/1985, 10/1989, 12/1990, 12/1997, 1/2000, 1/2001, 7/2001, 2/2011

Note: The January 1994 survey used an open question and had over 50 selected least-liked groups. For the sake of space and clarity, we do not list them in this table.

[Source: Peffley, Hutchison, & Shamir, 2015]

The longitudinal results from Shamir's tolerance index clearly demonstrate an increase in political tolerance from 1980 to the mid-1990's. However, from that point in time we detect a clear decrease in tolerance among the Israeli society that remains somewhat stable until 2011[4] (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Political tolerance (1980-2011)
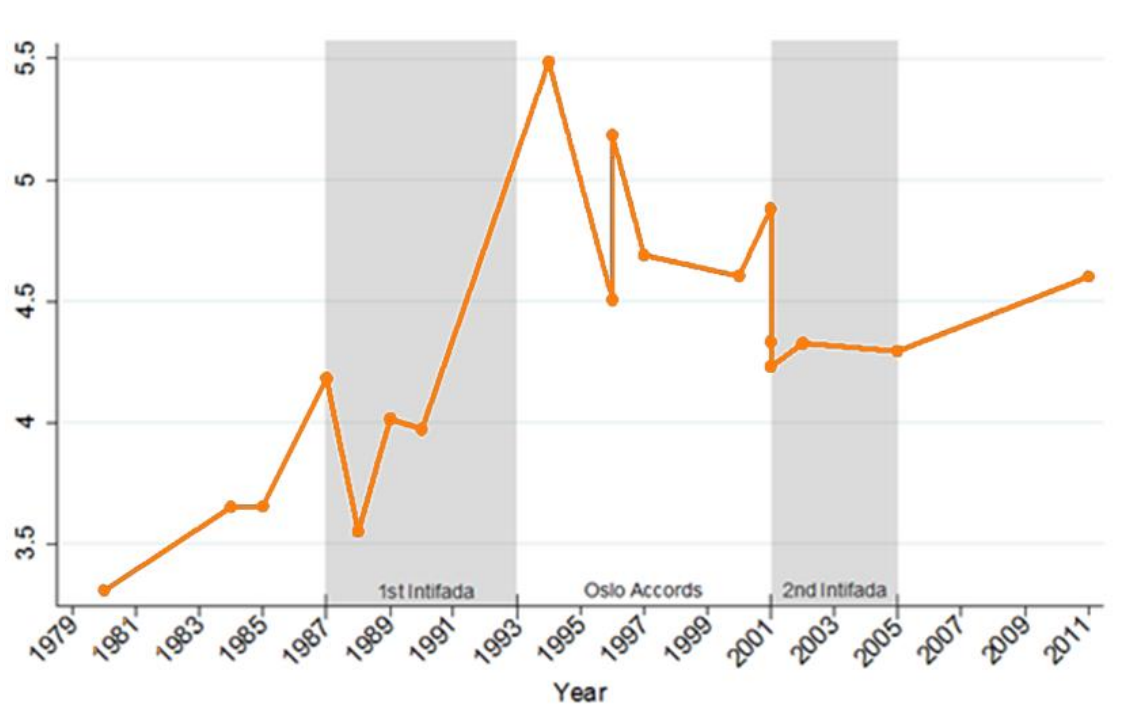
[Source: Peffley, Hutchison, & Shamir, 2015]

4.5. Civil Rights

Freedom of Expression

One of the biggest concerns for societies whose members don't accept and tolerate diverse opinions is maintaining freedom of expression. According to the Israeli Democracy Index (Hermann et al., 2016), almost 40% of the population agreed that they

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[4] This Index hasn't been measured after 2011

prefer to keep silent and not express their political opinions in the presence of people they don't know.

This troubling situation, in which a significant portion of the society self-censors, can be seen in many different domains including the education system. While the formal education system provides an important reflection of the current social situation, it also plays a large role in shaping the future of the Israeli society by socializing students to become good citizens.

Recently, we (The Applied Center for Psychology of Social Change, 2016) conducted a survey among teachers and students' parents to examine their position on discussing controversial issues in the classroom, and their perceived expectations of the education system. The main issue that was considered as controversial by teachers was the relationship between Jews and Arabs. In addition, teachers also mentioned racism and human rights as controversial issues, despite the fact that such issues should be part of the normative discussion conducted in the classrooms. While most of the teachers (73%) think the education system expects them to discuss racism in class, less than a half (47%) think the system expects them to talk about the relationships between Jews and Arabs. Moreover, a significant majority of teachers (77%) think that the parents don't want them to discuss the issue (see Figure 12). Having such expectations in mind, teachers may be less willing to discuss these crucial topics with their students. Indeed, 24% of the teachers reported that they are afraid of talking about controversial issues in the class, and 30% support self-censoring regarding issues that oppose the students' world-views or that might damage Israel's image.

Figure 12. Percentage of teachers who are willing to discuss controversial issues in their classroom, and perceive the education system and the parents as expecting them to do so (2016)
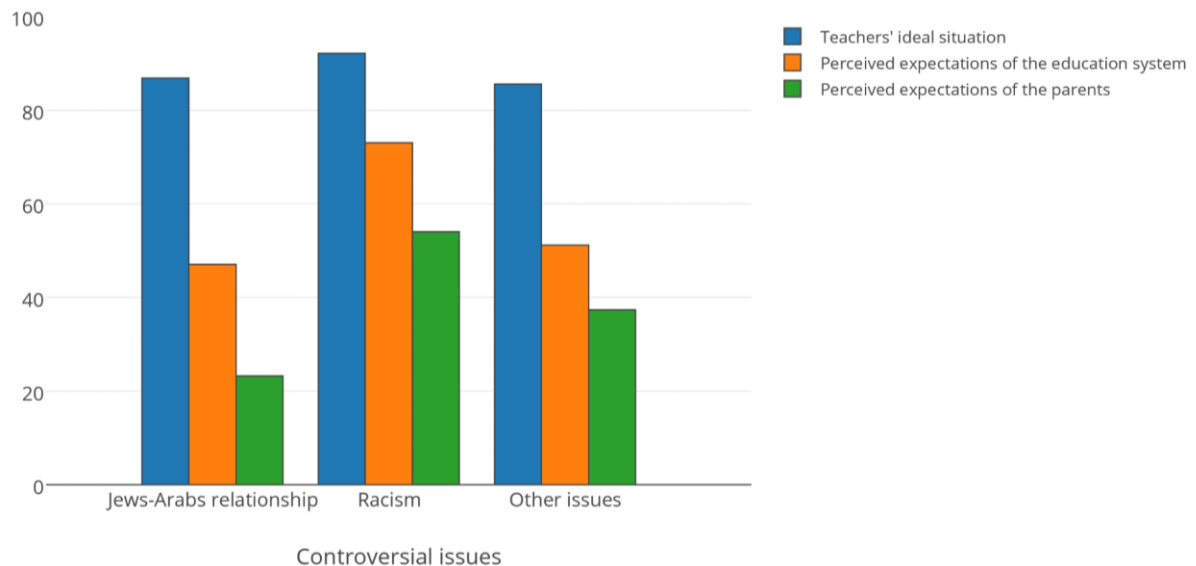
[Source: The Applied Center for Psychology of Social Change, 2016]

Inequality

In liberal democracies, the majority enjoys the privilege to decide, as long as the decision does not infringe any basic rights of the minorities. According to the Israeli democracy index (Hermann et al., 2016), a clear majority of the Jewish public (70%) opposes the statement that "Jews should have greater rights than non-Jewish citizens". However, when the responses to such a general statement are explored in greater depth, a more complex situation is revealed regarding attitudes towards basic democratic values and civil rights. For example, the majority of Jewish respondents (59%) oppose having Arab parties in the governing coalition, including the appointment of Arab ministers. The unwillingness to include Arabs in the coalition is also reflected in the consistent policy of Israeli governments to obtain a Jewish majority when it comes to crucial decisions. More specifically, 72% of Jewish respondents think that decisions crucial to the state on issues of peace and security should be made by a Jewish majority, and 57% think the same with

regards to governance, economic, or societal issues. The significant support for preventing Arab Israelis from having equal civic status indicates that the majority of the Jewish public is unaware of its own misuse of power that can lead to violations of the minorities' basic rights. While the majority is most likely to violate the basic rights of Arabs, Ultra-Orthodox and Ethiopian citizens, also suffer from similar risks.

4.6. Racial Discrimination

In a representative survey conducted by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (2014), 95% of respondents agreed that there is at least one group in Israel that suffers from racism. When asked which groups are likely to be targets of racism, Ethiopians were mentioned by 79%, Arabs by 68%, and Ultra-Orthodox by almost 42% of the respondents.

Indeed, a survey conducted by the Ono Academic College (Yaakobi, Paz-Fuchs, Karif, & Tessel, 2009) among students from the Arab, Ultra-Orthodox, and Ethiopian populations, confirmed the general perception of discrimination that is apparent in the Israeli society. The survey examined whether members of these minority groups felt discriminated against in the occupational domain compared to a control group that consisted of Israeli Jews who did not belong to one of these groups. The findings show that the three minority groups (not including Ultra-Orthodox women) felt more discrimination compared to the control group in various areas relating to employment such as not having an equal opportunity to be hired (see Figure 13), and being less likely to be invited to job interviews or receiving a fair wage.

**Figure 13.** Perception of unequal opportunity in the workplace (2009)
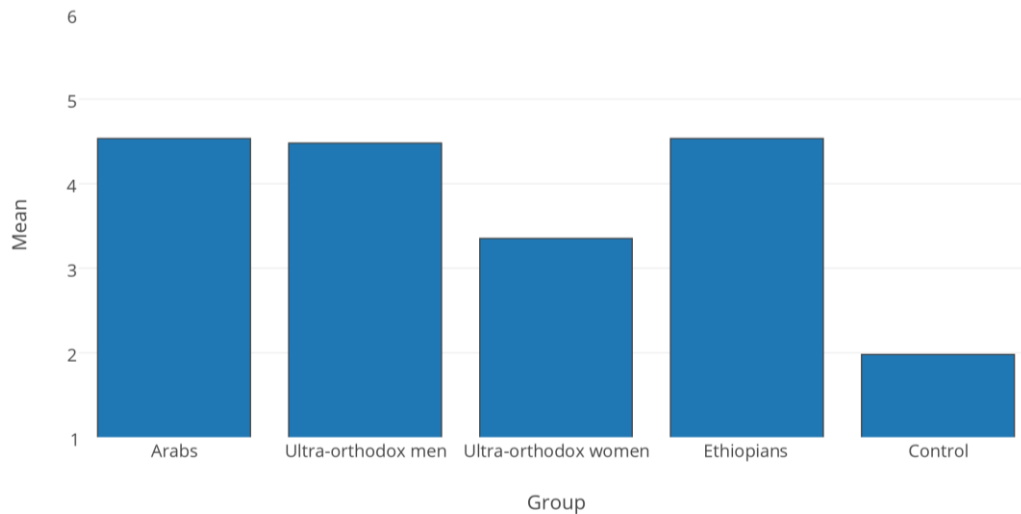
[Source: Ono report, 2009]

Moreover, this sentiment of the minority groups corresponds with the employers' perception of such groups. A survey among employers from different sectors (the public sector, finance, media, accounting, and law), suggests that employers perceive Arabs as the least favorable group to be hired, second being Ultra-Orthodox, and third are Ethiopians, compared to other segments of the Israeli society (see Figure 14).

A more recent survey conducted for Kinneret College (2017), reveals similar trends with regards to the education system. Among Jewish Israeli respondents, 48% answered that they don't want an Arab to be the teacher of their children, while 42% don't want a Haredi, and 14% don't want an Ethiopian. Moreover, to the question "To what extent would you agree that your children should study in a mixed class with students from different sectors?" half of the respondents didn't want their children to study with Arabs, Ultra-Orthodox (34%), religious (13%), nor with Ethiopians (12%). Such opinions that stem from the negative stereotypes mentioned earlier, and clearly show how attitudes toward groups are translated into discrimination and social exclusion in some of the most important domains of society, such as the workplace and the education system.

Figure 14. Employers' perception of avoidance of hiring different groups (2009)
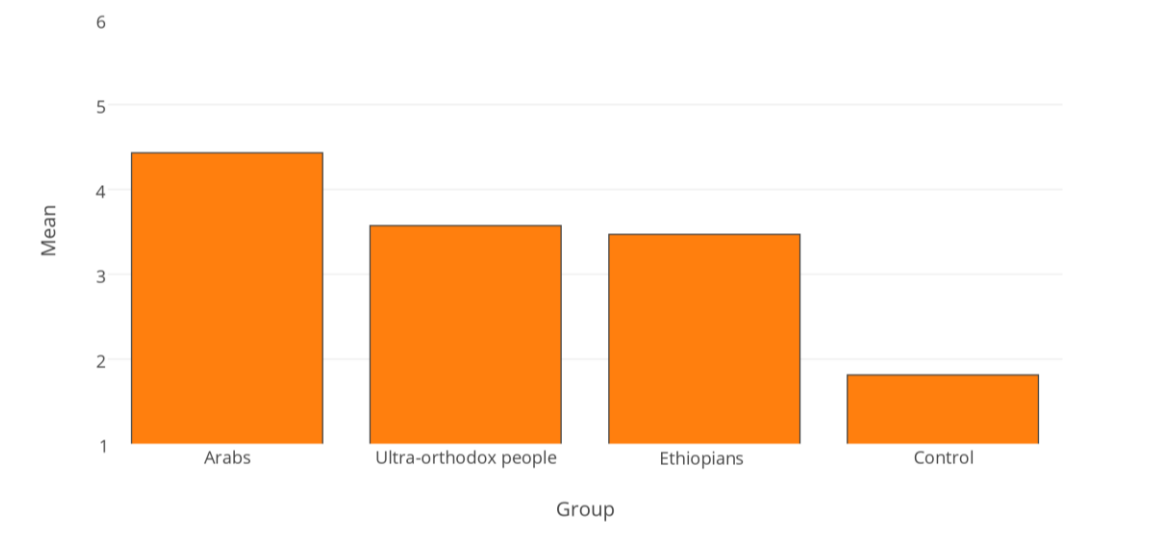
[Source: Ono report, 2009]

5. Summary

While Israel traditionally enjoys a respectable international ranking on social and governance indicators, the extreme divisions in society are the Achilles' heel that keep pulling it down. The intergroup conflicts described above are highly intense and cross the entire spectrum of Israeli society along ethnic, political, religious, gender, and sexual orientation divides. The following conclusions should be taken cautiously, given the methodological constraints mentioned within the report. However, the existence of different and independent indicators that show no improvement in the relations, and even trends of deterioration in some domains, should raise a red flag regarding the future.

In the current report, we reviewed how these social tensions and conflicts unfold from a cognitive and affective process, through interpersonal expressions, to socio-political manifestations. We can see that all sectors have negative prejudice towards other groups that they dislike. While most negative stereotypes are about Arabs, we find

that other groups, such as Ultra-Orthodox, and Jewish settlers, suffer from negative stereotyping as well. On the individual level, there has been a positive trend over the last decade that Jews and Arabs feel less distant from the other group and are more willing to develop personal relationships with members of the other group. While this indicates a decrease in the passive intergroup harm, we also find indicators of an increase in active harm such as in social networks. The number of severe expressions on social media has dramatically increased over the last three years. While the main target of racist, violent, and offensive expressions are Arabs; women, Ultra-Orthodox, and leftists also experience online harassment to some extent.

At the socio-political level, we find a society that is becoming less tolerant over time and that doesn't appreciate or respect the voicing of opposing opinions. This creates a great danger for basic civil rights such as the freedom of expression and equality. Indeed, a significant portion of Israeli society prefers not to express their political opinions around people they don't know. Moreover, teachers report being afraid to talk about controversial issues in their classroom, and prefer to self-censor on issues that contradict the students' world-views or that might damage Israel's image.

As for inequality, significant support for preventing Arab Israelis from having equal civil status indicates that some parts of the Jewish public are insensitive to the balance required for healthy democracy. More specifically, they seem to be unaware of the privileges granted to the majority at the expense of the minorities' basic rights. Racism and discrimination are also present in the Israeli society and target those who are negatively stereotyped. We found data indicating that Arabs, Ultra-Orthodox, and Ethiopians suffer from such discrimination both in the workplace and the education system. However, given the current analyses it is likely to assume that additional groups suffer from such discrimination as well.

While to some extent every sector takes part in and is responsible for maintaining, and sometimes even escalating, these social tensions, a majority acknowledges the severity of the situation and understands its negative consequences on

Israeli society. Together with them, we hope to heal the rifts and improve the intergroup relations within Israeli society.

However, to design best practices and wide-scale interventions, as well as to measure the impact of these on the Israeli society at large, it is important to obtain a comprehensive and precise understanding of the intergroup relations within Israel. While the existing measures provide a broad picture of the current trends in Israeli society, there are important aspects that remain uncovered. First, most of the measures target a limited number of intergroup tensions, mainly the prolonged ones between Jews and Arabs, the secular and religious sectors, and between leftists and rightists. However, over the years the societal divides were expanded to additional groups and sub-groups, such as Ethiopians, Soviet Union immigrants, the Ultra-Orthodox, Jewish settlers in the West Bank, and the LGBT community. As we see from the current report, these divides are currently overlooked. Second, while the existing measures assess some of the cognitive and affective components (i.e., stereotypes, intolerance, discrimination, etc.) that underlie intergroup tensions, there are important psychological mechanisms that are not assessed at all. Such mechanisms can explain how intergroup tensions are formed, maintained, and escalated. Third, with the exception of a small number of measures, most of the measures are not administered periodically and thus provide only snap-shots of the current situation.

Thus, there is a strong need for a comprehensive psychologically-based measure that will include a number of unique features. First, the measure will assess the extent to which one self-identifies with various groups as oppose to simply classifying respondents into groups according to pre-defined categories. That is, respondents are currently categorized as members of a certain group even if their identification with that group is relatively low. The level of identification with one group or more could potentially impact the degree and severity of biases toward certain groups (e.g., Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Thus, this information is important in pin pointing identities that foster negative intergroup biases and behaviors toward other groups. Second, the measure will

extensively assess respondents' general world-views that underlie cognitive and affective processes. For example, we will assess respondents' beliefs about the nature of relations between groups, beliefs about groups' ability to change (Halperin, Russell, Trzesniewski, Gross, & Dweck, 2011), beliefs about the dominance of some groups over others (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 2001), and beliefs about the social system (Jost & Banaji, 1994). In addition, we will evaluate a wide range of cognitive and affective processes that drive individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward other groups. Moreover, we will measure a wide range of behavioral consequences such as social distance, discrimination, support for policies and more. Lastly, the measure will be administered periodically to track changes over time, as well as to determine the effectiveness of our work in decreasing hostilities between groups. Based on the insights provided by such data, we will be able to implement pin-point interventions that can help overcome psychological barriers and improve intergroup relations in Israel.

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Appendix – Measures

Measure	Year/s	Institution	Description	Assessment Method
Periodical measures				
Hate report	2014-2016	The Berl Katznelson Foundation & Vigo	The number and type of content of offensive phrases in social networks.	Based on monitoring about one million posts from the social media channels on a daily basis like Facebook, Twitter, blogs, forums and comment sections
Political intolerance	1980-2011	Mark Peffley Marc L. Hutchison Michal Shamir	The extent in which people support the least-liked group's freedom of expression.	Based on opinion polls 18 representative samples of Israeli-Jewish public – total of 14126 respondents.
The Index of Arab-Jewish Relations	2003, 2012, 2013, 2015	Sammy Smooha in collaboration with Haifa University & The Israel Democracy Institute	Measures attitudes of Arab and Jewish citizens toward each other and toward the state of Israel.	Based on opinion polls A representative sample of the Jewish and Arab sectors - 1400 respondents (700 Arabs, 700 Jews in the last poll)
The Israeli Democracy Index	2003-2016	The Israel Democracy Institute - Led by Asher Arian (2003-2010) and Tamar Hermann (2011-2016)	The public opinion on the state of Israeli democracy, including trust in government institutions, identification with the state, the Jewish and democratic characters of the state, politics and political activism, economic attitudes, as well as an evaluation of Israel's	Based on a 12 international indicators and opinion polls among representative samples of Israeli society – 1531 respondents in the last poll.

			standing in the democratic world as measured by a number of international indices.	
International measures				
Civil Liberties Index	2003, 2010 -2013	Economist Intelligence Unit	The extent to which a country accords its citizens basic civil liberties.	Based on expert evaluations
Corruption Perception Index	2003-2013	Transparency International	Abuse of power for personal gain	Based on a combination of 13 surveys from ten research institutions, examining the perceptions of experts regarding the extent of corruption in their own countries or others.
Electoral process and pluralism Index	2010-2013	Economist Intelligence Unit	The public's ability to change its decision makers through an institutionalized electoral system.	Based on expert evaluations
Ethnic Tensions Index	2003-2013	International Country Risk Guide	The intensity of a country's ethnic/racial/language tensions	Estimated by a team of experts, based on reports in local and international newspapers and publications of international organizations. Note that the ICRG keeps its questionnaire confidential and thus fails to comply with evaluation transparency conditions
Freedom of the Press Index	2003-2013	Freedom House	The freedom enjoyed by the printed and broadcast press	Based on expert evaluations

			in each country examined.	
Functioning of Government Index	2010-2013	Economist Intelligence Unit	The extent of government authority in determining and implementing policies	Based on expert evaluations
Gender Inequality Index	2008-2009, 2011-2013	Human Development Report	The lack of discrimination between men and women and egalitarian application of rights to both genders, particularly in employment, politics and education.	Based on expert evaluations
Index of Economic Freedom	2003-2013	Heritage Foundation	The extent of government intervention in the economy.	Based on expert evaluations
Military in Politics	2003-2007, 2012-2013	International Country Risk Guide	The extent of military involvement in politics.	Based on expert evaluations
Political Culture Index	2010-2013	Economist Intelligence Unit	The extent to which a country's political culture is democratic.	Based on expert evaluations
Political Participation Index	2006-2007, 2010-2013	Economist Intelligence Unit	The extent of public participation in various political processes.	Based on expert evaluations
Religious Tensions Index	2003-2013	International Country Risk Guide	The intensity of tensions among a country's religious groups.	Estimated by a team of experts, based on reports in local and international newspapers and publications of international organizations. Note that the ICRG keeps its questionnaire confidential and thus fails to comply with evaluation transparency

			conditions.	
The Legatum Prosperity Index	2016	Legatum Institute Foundation	The extent to which countries promote citizens' flourishing, reflecting both wealth and well-being across nine indicators of prosperity: economic quality, business environment, governance, education, health, safety and security, personal freedom, social capital, and natural environment	Based on objective measures, expert research, and public polls
Others				
Controversial Issues in High Schools	2016	The Applied Center for Psychology of Social Change, IDC - Eran Halperin Aharon Levy Boaz Hameiri Etyanchi Alemu Eden Nabet Kayda Prodgers	The positions of teachers on discussing controversial issues in the classroom, and their perceived expectations of the education system and the students' parents.	Based on an opinion poll A sample of 558 parents, 862 teachers from state secular Jewish, state religious Jewish, and state Arab sectors.
Education Survey	2017	Kinneret College (by Dialog)	N/A	Based on an opinion poll A representative sample of Israeli-Jewish public - 500 respondents.
Ono Report	2009	Ono Academic College- Erez Yaakobi	The extent in which members of the Arab, Ultra-	Based on an opinion poll A sample of 568 Arab, Ultra-Orthodox,

		Amir Paz-Fuchs Moshe Karif Irit Tessel	Orthodox and Ethiopian populations feel discriminated against in the occupational domain.	and Ethiopian students, 60 employers
Racism Report	2014	Association for Civil Rights in Israel	The perceived racism in Israeli society and the role of education system to reduce it.	Based on an opinion poll A representative sample of Israeli society – 610 respondents.
Rifts in Israeli Society	2017	Pnima (by MIDGAM)	Mapping perceptions and attitudes of different groups of Israeli society in regard to personal, social and national issues.	Based on an opinion poll, focus groups, and social network research. A representative sample of Israeli society – 1189 respondents.