

(Ebook pdf) Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion: The Public Imperative in the Second Intifada (Indiana Series in Middle East Studies)

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*Jacob Shamir, Khalil Shikaki*

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## **Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion**

*The Public Imperative in the Second Intifada*

**JACOB SHAMIR AND KHALIL SHIKAKI**



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#3467984 in Books Jacob Shamir 2010-04-15 2010-04-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .62 x 6.001, .74 #File Name: 0253221722224 pages Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion The Public Imperative in the Second Intifada | File size: 21.Mb

**Jacob Shamir, Khalil Shikaki : Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion: The Public Imperative in the Second Intifada (Indiana Series in Middle East Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion: The Public Imperative in the Second Intifada (Indiana Series in Middle East Studies):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The best and most comprehensive work on Palestinian and Israeli public opinion to date. By Yousef Munayyer... What do Israelis and Palestinians think about the core issues in the conflict? How does Palestinian and Israeli public opinion influence the decision making of their respective leadership? These are the questions that Jacob Shamir and Khalil Shikaki set out to answer in their new book, *Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion: The Public Imperative in the Second Intifada*. Following a theoretical premise founded in rational choice game-theory, the authors make a persuasive argument for the role of public opinion in international bargaining. Public opinion, for Shamir and Shikaki, is a critical force that is involved in a two-layer game where leaders are conscious of their own public's opinion and the public opinion of their counterpart at the bargaining table. A leader's understanding of public opinion allows for the creation of leverage at the bargaining table and a clear understanding of the opposing sides "red lines." The authors explain the "domestic tables" of both Israelis and Palestinians. The players identified are interest groups or "cleavages" which must be taken into account at the international bargaining table. On the Israeli side, they identify three key players: First, the "settlers", which "have been the most influential factor in shaping Israeli's policy on peace and the territories over the last three decades;" second, the Israeli military and security establishment, which plays a "major role in most of the important decisions with regard to the conflict;" and third, economic interest groups, which have "long been pushing the Israeli political leadership toward more accommodating positions." On this point it is unclear why the authors discount the role of economic interest groups which have vested interests in the furtherance of occupation. No discussion of these forces exists despite the fact that they clearly exist and play a significant role. On the Palestinian side the authors identify three more domestic considerations. First, the division between Hamas and Fateh; second the divisions within both parties, (in Hamas they identify a division between the internal and external leadership and in Fateh they point to a division between the old and young guard); and third, they identify refugees as a critical component of the Palestinian domestic table. "More than half the Palestinians," the authors note, "are refugees who lost their homes and property following the 1948 war and the establishment of the state of Israel". Shamir and Shikaki identify two underlying assumptions of a theoretical framework that argues that public opinion matters for the behavior of political leaders. First, that the leaders are "office seekers" and second, that the leaders may accrue "audience costs". This means that for leaders to take public opinion seriously, they must be able to understand the negative consequences of not doing so. For democratically elected leaders, the consequences of betraying public opinion on core issues could mean losing the next election. For autocrats whose policies are not put before the public for referendum in the form of free and fair elections, like Anwar Sadat as the authors point out, the cost may be the leader's life. The authors go on to make a persuasive argument regarding the role of public opinion in three major events over the course of the period that they analyze (2000-2006). Public opinion, they posit, played a critical role in the outcome of the Camp David talks in 2000, the disengagement from Gaza in 2005 and the outcome of the Palestinian elections in 2006, which was a watershed moment in Palestinian politics because it brought an opposition party to power for the first time. Shamir and Shikaki buttress their claims with ample data amassed by the two pollsters over years of querying Israelis and Palestinians. The book is certainly not short on empirical evidence and the charts and graphs used are well-placed, illustrative tools for the argument. Some critical questions abound for the informed reader throughout the course of this book which challenge the methodology, and none are sufficiently addressed by the authors. To start, one has to wonder how the Palestinian polity can be analyzed in the same way as the Israeli polity. In the Israeli case, you have a government which is elected through a democratic system (for its Jewish citizens at least). The Palestinian case is a completely different entity. The leadership is layered between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The former has something resembling a functioning parliamentary system (albeit in a predominantly one-party system in the period the authors analyze), whereas the latter is far from a democratic institution. Still, it is the PLO that negotiates on behalf of Palestinians even though it is in the PA where leaders are office-seekers facing public election. What complicates this further is that the PLO is, in theory, supposed to be representative of the Palestinian public wherever they may be. The PA is tied to an electorate in the West Bank and Gaza. This division should have been explored and its implications on the validity of the argument addressed in this book. Also, another significant difference between the Israeli and Palestinian case is in the leadership's reliance on the public. In the Israeli case, the leadership is empowered by the electorate to run the state. In the Palestinian case, the empowerment of the leadership is far more complicated and involves external actors. Can public opinion be as important in a political system that relies heavily on external forces for sustenance, as it would be in a political system that is independent of these outside forces? In the case of the Palestinian Authority, a majority of its annual budget currently comes from donor dollars, whereas in Israel, the vast majority of government revenue is domestically collected. Surely such an obvious contrast should raise questions about the leadership's ability to weigh the cost of betraying public opinion. The authors fail to address this point. Finally, the scope of the study seems tailored to include cases which would support the framework adopted by the authors. The idea that public opinion is necessary for creating legitimacy for the government, particularly in the Palestinian case, was thrown into flux after the elections in 2006. A series of events on the Palestinian domestic scene made it clear that the ballot box played second fiddle to the barrel of a gun, and the opinion of the public was secondary to the desire for power among the ruling elite. This is

evidenced by Shikaki's own polling in recent months about the public perception of the legitimacy of the governments: "28% believe that Haniyeh's government is the legitimate one and only 26% say that Abu Mazin's and Fayyad's government is the legitimate one, and 31% say both governments are illegitimate. Moreover, 53% say PA president Abbas has lost his legitimacy when his term ended and 41% disagree with that. Similarly, 53% say the Palestinian Legislative Council has lost its legitimacy after its term ended and 39% disagree with that." [1] Overall, this book is the best and most comprehensive work on Palestinian and Israeli public opinion to date. There is a wealth of important information between its pages which showcases a critical understanding of the issues and players that were central in the second intifada period. Holding some of the obvious methodological questions aside, there is much to learn from this study, and Shamir and Shikaki should be commended for the years of analysis that went into this book.[...] Yousef Munayyer is Executive Director of the Palestine Center. This book review may be used without permission but with proper attribution to the Center.

Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion is based on a unique project: the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Poll (JIPP). Since 2000, Jacob Shamir and Khalil Shikaki have directed joint surveys among Israelis and Palestinians, providing a rare opportunity to examine public opinion on two sides of an intractable conflict. Adopting a two-level game theory approach, Shamir and Shikaki argue that public opinion is a multifaceted phenomenon and a critical player in international politics. They examine how the Israeli and Palestinian publics' assessments, expectations, mutual perceptions and misperceptions, and overt political action fed into domestic policy formation and international negotiations from the failure of the 2000 Camp David summit through the second Intifada and the elections of 2006. A discussion of the study's implications for policymaking and strategic framing of future peace agreements concludes this timely and informative book.

This work is a must-read for scholars of Israeli-Palestinian relations and the peace process. . . . With important empirical, theoretical, and policy contributions, Shamir and Shikaki's collaboration should appeal to a variety of audiences. (Jewish Studies ) This work is a must-read for scholars of Israeli-Palestinian relations and the peace process. The books concluding policy recommendations on how to strengthen moderates, prepare publics for concessions, and maintain each players unity are also a valuable resource for policymakers. With important empirical, theoretical, and policy contributions, Shamir and Shikakis collaboration should appeal to a variety of audiences. At a time when the conflict seems more and more intractable, their findings may produce a ray of optimism. (Israel Studies ) Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion . . . makes a significant contribution to understanding, rather than exploiting, public opinion in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Its readability and depth make it appropriate for experts or regular folks, in negotiations or in conversations. With deadpan objectivity, both sides should find it credible; yet the authors avoid both strained symmetry and apologetics, squarely confronting even the toughest findings. October 25, 2010 (The Jerusalem Report) This is an important informative and analytical study examining opinions, dilemmas, and activities of both sides. It provides clear analysis of past events and clues for understanding future developments. (Jewish Book World) Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion will be influential for years to come; students, policymakers, and those who monitor the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are encouraged to read it. (Int Journal of Middle East Studies) Extremely timely . . . its execution balanced and professional. . . . A pioneering effort. (Asher Arian City University of New York) Instantly the best book we have on Israeli and Palestinian public attitudes toward the conflict that divides them, especially in the period following the collapse of the negotiations in 2000. Theoretically insightful and based on rich empirical findings, this book should be read by everyone interested in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. (Shibley Telhami Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development, University of Maryland and Senior Fellow, Brookings) Shamir and Shikaki offer a convincing and rigorous development of Putnam's two-level game theory of international negotiations. Rather than examine interactions within the single dyad of national government and domestic public on only one side of the Israeli-Palestinian divide, they explore the two dyads, both in parallel and in interplay. The result is a thoughtful and genuinely insightful alternative to principally top-down narratives of the failure of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks at Camp David and of the continued stymieing of the peace process since the death of Yaser Arafat, the Israeli disengagement from Gaza, and the transformation of Palestinian and Israeli electoral politics since 2006. (Yezid Sayigh King's College London) An important study and an impressive achievement. Shamir and Shikaki offer readers not only a rare and welcome example of sustained Israeli-Palestinian scientific collaboration but also, and perhaps even more important, a work of engaged scholarship that is creative, original and rigorous. Their research yields many valuable insights, both about the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and about the factors shaping public opinion in conflict situations more generally. (Mark Tessler author of A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict) About the Author Jacob Shamir is Associate Professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism and Senior Research Fellow at the Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is author of The Anatomy of Public Opinion (with Michal Shamir) and of numerous articles and reports on public opinion in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Khalil Shikaki has taught political science at several universities, and is currently the director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah and a

senior fellow at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University.