

Rebuilding Public Trust: The Potential of AI for Public Opinion Research Within Israeli–Palestinian Engagement

Executive Summary:

Joint polling following the events of October 2023, showed a vast mistrust among the majority of Palestinians and Israelis. With both sides identifying as victims, and the massively compelling collective suspicion and persecutory perspective being voiced in fear of an ultimately existential threat from the other, alongside the increasing number claiming rightful ownership of the area, any realistic rapprochement or two-state solution seems fundamentally impossible. (PSR, 2025)

Unfortunately, the current most applied use of AI is militarily oriented toward Israel utilization, often within the questionably defined 'counterterrorism' surveillance efforts at the heart of the primarily condemned, geopolitical colonial framework. (Maharmeh, 2025) Further complicating the landscape is the additional algorithmic prejudice further proven in a 2024 study conducted by Steinert and Kazenwadel, that demonstrated a steadily reduced fatality estimate observed in Hebrew inquiries on Israeli airstrikes than seen in similar requisitions in Arabic. (Steinert & Kazenwadel, 2024)

However, tapering polarization is key to fostering exchange and LLM has provided notable potential for this with previous studies on conservative ideologies, progressive issues, and cultural appropriation. (Ben-David, Hadar, & Salman, 2025). Research related to AI-assisted dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis has nonetheless revealed a conditional openness beneath the diametric opposition in the headlines, specifically, within discussions on safety, dignity, and economic stability rather than those on final-status politics Outlining critical patterns emerging from AI-facilitated polling and dialogue analysis to offer recommendations for policymakers seeking to scale peacebuilding interventions.

Key Findings:

1. Existential Framing Increases Defensive Attitudes

When survey questions emphasize national identity or territorial sovereignty, respondents show significantly higher rejection of engagement. Open-ended responses frequently include language of fear, betrayal, and zero-sum framing.

This inherent opposition is integrally intertwined with the complex, and extremely problematic structure built with decades of antagonistic behavioral social psychology.

2. Human Security Framing Expands Openness

When questions are reframed around personal safety, freedom of movement, economic prospects, community, and stability, then an increase in cross-cultural reception, seems to appear. Phrases with words such as “future,” “children,” and “normal life” provoke a more harmonious response. (PSR, 2025)

3. Exposure to Cross-Community and Cross-Cultural Narratives Moderates Extremity

Thematic concentration of AI-assisted dialogue shows participant patterns of diminishing extremism within those exposed to structured communication that references actualized, lived experiences over that citing political demands. (Brockman & Kalla, 2023)

4. Young Adults Show Greater Conditional Flexibility

Cross-tabulation comparisons indicate that respondents under 35 are more inclined to cooperate on various initiatives when tangible resources are presented with specified advantages. (Zmigrod, Rentfrow, & Robbins, 2019)

Policy Implications

Shift Center of Engagement Messaging from Ideological to More Practical Framing

Strategies highlighting more collective, shared economic and civic societal outcomes have the potential to achieve more widespread collaboration than those focused on identity and national ideology.

Scale AI-Facilitated Dialogue Models

AI tools could effortlessly enable and evaluate significant volumes of open-ended responses, recognizing perception shifts that most traditional surveys miss.

Invest in Youth-Centered Civic Platforms

Direct funding toward frameworks for structured youth engagement as far greater and more long term impact for cooperation disproportionately exists there

Pair Quantitative Polling with Qualitative Dialogue Analysis

Simple surveys can secure attitudes, however it will take legitimate rapport to capture and develop those attitudes.

Conclusion:

Regardless of the extreme distrust, misgivings, and dehumanizing perception that has become integral to the conflict, there is data to suggest that those sentiments are not fixed. With structured dialogue drafted around universal human considerations and experiences, that is further fostered by rigorous research, prospects for engagement and improvement do emerge. Policymakers and funders should concentrate on scalable, observational models constructed to reconcile opinion data with lived dialogue experience.

References:

Acheson, R. (2025, Oct., 3.). "Turning the tide from genocide at UNGA80." *Reaching Critical Will*.

<https://reachingcriticalwill.org/news/latest-news/18068-turning-the-tide-from-genocide-at-unga80>

Alghafli, A. (2025). "The intractability of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: structural imperatives and implications for peace."

Cogent Social Sciences, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2586212>

Ben-David Kolikant, Y., Hadar, O. & Salman, A. (2025). "Talk to the machine: Unleashing the potential of AI to scale dialogic education and reduce polarization." *Intern. J. Comput.-Support. Collab. Learn*

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11412-025-09461-8>

Bivens, R. & Thurber, C. (2026, Jan., 20). "Resistance is not futile: rethinking ethnicity, tactics, and outcomes in civil conflicts,"

Journal of Peace Research, 00(0), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopres/xjaf009>

Brockman, D. & Kalla, J. (2023, Dec., 15). "A field experiment on cross-cutting media." *Open Science Framework*.

https://osf.io/preprints/osf/jrw26_v1

Brown, N. J. (2026, Feb., 19). *For younger Palestinians, crisis has become a way of life*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

<https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/research/2026/02/youth-palestine-west-bank-crisis>

Dialogues and AI to find common ground between Israeli and Palestinian peacebuilders. In *The 2025 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT '25)*, June 23–26, 2025, Athens, Greece. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 23 pages. <https://arxiv.org/html/2503.01769v3>

Kawash, Dr. Ameera. (2024, Feb.). “Impacts of AI technologies on Palestinian lives and narratives.” *7amleh - The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media* <https://7amleh.org/storage/AI%20&%20Racism/7amleh%20-AI%20english1-1.pdf>

Maharmeh, I. (2025). “AI as a tool for settler-colonial projects: how Israel employs AI to intensify colonial dominance under the pretext of counterterrorism.” *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2025.2603049>

Pacchiani, G. P. (2024, September 17). “Poll shows mirror images of fear and distrust between Israelis and Palestinians.” *Times of Israel*. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/poll-shows-mirror-images-of-fear-and-distrust-between-israelis-and-palestinians>

Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR). (2025, Oct., 28). “A dual crisis- Palestinian public opinion amidst occupation and a leadership vacuum.” *Press Release: Public Opinion Poll No. (96)*. <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/1000>

Steinert, C., & Kazenwadel, D. (2025). “How user language affects conflict fatality estimates in ChatGPT.” *Journal of Peace Research*, 62(4), 1128–1143. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433241279381>

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. (OHCHR). (2023, Nov.) *Advancing responsible development and deployment of generative AI*. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/>

Van Green, T. V. G., Shepard, S. S., Cerda, A. C., Borelli, G. B., & Kiley, J. K. (2025). “Americans’ views of Israelis, Palestinians and their political leadership.” In *Pew Research Center*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2025/10/03/americans-views-of-israelis-palestinians-and-their-political-leadership/>

Wählich, M., & Kufus, F. (2025). “Leveraging AI in peace processes: A framework for digital dialogues.” *Data & Policy*, 7, e65. doi:[10.1017/dap.2025.10031](https://doi.org/10.1017/dap.2025.10031)

Wilmot, C. (2024, December 21). “Can AI bring peace to the Middle East?” *TBIJ*. <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2024-12-19/can-ai-bring-peace-to-the-middle-east>

Yao, M. (2025). “The study of the effects of digital media applications in cross-cultural communication in the construction of cultural identity.” *Acta Psychologica*, 258. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105247>

Zmigrod L, Rentfrow PJ & Robbins TW (2019) “Cognitive inflexibility predicts extremist attitudes.” *Frontiers in Psychology*. 10(989). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00989>