Delivering Tolerance:

How Institutional Inclusion Can Reduce Prejudice in Divided Societies

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Prologue

Much of the inspiration for writing this book stems from my time living in Jerusalem. Growing up—and especially during my undergraduate years at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem—I often traveled from the predominantly Jewish western part of the city, where I lived, to the Mount Scopus campus in East Jerusalem, adjacent to many Palestinian neighborhoods. My experience living in Jerusalem—a culturally rich but deeply segregated city—sparked my curiosity to learn about the political effects of the social and geographical barriers separating Jews and Palestinians. But even more, I was interested in learning about the pockets of intergroup cooperation that exist in many cities around the world, despite stark patterns of segregation. Specifically, I became increasingly interested in investigating the extent to which such "pockets of cooperation" can shift the dynamics of intergroup relations and ultimately improve intergroup relations in deeply divided societies.

In an attempt to explore this broad question as a graduate student, I recall compiling a mental list of all the possible places where Jewish Israelis happen to engage cooperatively with Palestinian Citizens of Israel (Hereafter: PCIs). As you might expect, and come to realize after reading this book, my list was relatively short. Most Jewish Israelis rarely engage with PCIs as part of their daily lives and have limited interest in changing this equilibrium of social segregation. Indeed, Jewish Israelis rarely have PCI neighbors, classmates, or even co-workers. To the extent that Jewish Israelis engage with PCIs, they mostly do so by choice, of their own volition.

As I was starting to think of promising settings for my research on intergroup relations, I understood that the Israeli healthcare system is the main context where Jewish Israelis and PCIs have meaningful exchanges and interactions. What was so compelling about the healthcare context was that it appeared to entail deeply meaningful interactions that were often imposed on citizens by virtue of the demographic composition of a broader institution. In other words, when a Likud voter from Neve Yaakov (an Israeli settlement on the outskirts of Jerusalem) is rushed to Hadassah Hospital with a heart attack, they may very well be treated by a PCI doctor. Importantly, they will likely have very little ability to change that fact, even if they deeply dislike PCIs. Moreover, even if a PCI doctor does not treat them, during their stay in the hospital, they will most definitely see many PCI doctors and nurses cooperating with Jewish doctors and nurses to improve human well-being and save the lives of various members of Israeli society. Witnessing this will emphasize to the patient from Neve Yaakov that PCIs are an integral part of the institution that is providing them with essential services that will improve their well-being.

This realization initially led me to investigate the dynamics of intergroup interaction within the institutional context of healthcare provision in Israel. More specifically, I wanted to try to understand how healthcare institutions diversified and whether the intergroup interactions and broader informational signals facilitated by inclusionary healthcare institutions influence how Jewish Israelis perceive PCIs. In my initial attempts to set up field-intensive studies that could shed empirical light on these questions, I spent many hours in different hospitals and clinics in Jerusalem and other cities across Israel.

One of the most striking experiences I have had in recent years was traveling from Nachlaot, the neighborhood where I grew up, to Hadassah Hospital. After a thirty-minute bus ride, entering the hospital felt like stepping out of Jerusalem and into an entirely different world. In a city marked by conflict and division, Hadassah Hospital stood out as a haven of deep and meaningful intergroup cooperation.

Visiting various healthcare institutions across Israel, many of which employ

significant numbers of PCIs as doctors, nurses, and medical assistants, and examining their potential positive impact on intergroup relations, led me to reflect on the stark contrast between Hadassah Hospital and the broader reality of Jerusalem. Over time, I began asking myself: What are these hospitals a case of? And what can medical clinics teach us about public institutions and intergroup relations in Israel, and other divided societies more broadly?

Ultimately, my focus on PCI inclusion in Israeli healthcare institutions and its effects on intergroup relations was motivated by an initial, contextually informed expectation that this setting offers particularly meaningful and instructive insights. Indeed, as I attempt to show throughout this book, the case of PCI inclusion in Israeli healthcare institutions can teach us important lessons about minority inclusion in service provision institutions and intergroup relations more broadly. Healthcare institutions in Israel serve as a real, tangible, and optimistic example of how public institutions can diversify, even in deeply exclusionary contexts. Moreover, they demonstrate how inclusionary public institutions that provide essential services to citizens *can*—under certain conditions—operate as a force that facilitates prejudice reduction at scale.

Importantly, in the pages that follow, I will argue that the story of institutional inclusion and prejudice reduction in Israel is largely instrumental and unintended. A central insight from my examination of inclusion in Israeli healthcare institutions—and broader attempts to diversify the Israeli bureaucracy—is that instrumental needs and intergroup complementarities have been essential forces motivating meaningful inclusion, especially in the healthcare sector and increasingly in others. Accordingly, the effects of institutional inclusion on prejudice are largely positive externalities of an instrumental process rather than the intended outcomes of policies designed to foster social cohesion or tolerance. In this sense, I hope that this book will motivate at least some readers to think closely about how instrumental needs can foster institutional inclusion and be leveraged to reduce prejudice in deeply divided societies. More broadly, I hope my theory and evidence compel scholars to further consider how the institutions that govern our lives shape the

fabric of intergroup relations in our society.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In April 2016, Bezalel Smotrich, a junior right-wing member of the Israeli parliament at the time,[1] drew national and international media attention after tweeting in support of ethnic segregation in Israeli maternity wards. Smotrich explained his position as follows:

> "*naturally, my wife wouldn't want to lie down next to a woman who just gave birth to a baby who might want to murder her baby twenty years from now... Arabs are my enemies, so I don't enjoy being next to them.*"[2]

Smotrich's tweets responded to an Israeli radio report, suggesting that some Israeli hospitals separate Jewish and Palestinian women in maternity wards if requested by patients. In a follow-up interview regarding her husband's tweets, Revital Smotrich further explained that:

> "*[I] kicked an Arab obstetrician out of the [delivery] room. I wanted Jewish hands to touch my baby, and I wasn't comfortable*

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[1]Israel's minister of Finance at the time of writing this book.
[2]Reported by Duoek (2018).

lying in the same room with an Arab woman... I refuse to have an Arab midwife because giving birth is a pure Jewish moment."[3]

These expressions generated a great deal of controversy across the Israeli political spectrum.[4] Many politicians denounced these statements, including Smotrich's party leader at the time, Naftali Bennett. Some argued that Smotrich represents a small minority of right-wing settlers whose ideology and policy preferences are extreme and not representative of the Israeli public. However, the preference to exclude Palestinian Citizens of Israel (hereafter: PCIs) from social and political life runs deep across many segments of Israeli society.

Indeed, in 2018 hundreds of Jewish Israelis stormed the streets of Afula—a middle-class Jewish city in northern Israel—protesting an attempt to sell a Jewish-owned home to a PCI family.[5] The protesters were supported and endorsed by Afula's mayor, Shlomo Malihi, who further stated in an interview:

"*The residents of Afula do not want a diverse city, but rather a Jewish city, and it is their right. This is not racism.*"[6]

Encouraged by their mayor, the protesters on Afula's streets raised banners describing the selling of Jewish-owned homes to PCIs as treason and outed a Jewish family that sold their property to a PCI buyer.

The protests in Afula and the statements issued by Bezalel and Revital Smotrich are not isolated instances. A glance at Israel's social geography, public school system, labor market, and marriage laws emphasizes the prevalence of intergroup segregation as a central organizing feature of Israeli society. The average Jewish Israeli lives in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood, attends a homogenous Jewish school, is employed in an overwhelmingly Jewish workplace, marries a Jewish partner, and eventually gets buried in a Jewish cemetery. It is, therefore,

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[3]Reported by Duoek (2018).
[4]See Duoek (2018), for an elaborate discussion of these events.
[5]see McKernan (2018), for an overview of the Afula protests.
[6]Reported by McKernan (2018).

unsurprising that many Jewish Israelis are not very interested in "sharing space" or interacting with Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Indeed, in Figure 1.1, I report data from a survey I implemented in Israel in January 2022.[7] As part of the survey, I asked respondents to report the closest relationship they would be willing to accept with a PCI. To do so, I presented respondents with a commonly used social distance scale (Bogardus, 1933), which includes seven degrees of social proximity to an outgroup, ranging from extreme degrees of exclusion (i.e., not allowing PCIs to live in Israel) to intimate degrees of inclusion (i.e., accepting PCIs as family members).

The data reported in Figure 1.1 point to a fair degree of variation among the general Jewish Israeli public. Notably, however, almost 50% of Jewish Israelis in my survey report that the closest relationship they would be willing to sustain with PCIs is accepting them as citizens in Israel and that they would be unwilling to have a PCI coworker. Moreover, above 60% of Jewish Israelis in the survey I conducted refuse to have a PCI neighbor, and almost 92% of Jewish Israelis explicitly reject the idea of accepting a PCI as a family member.

As the data in Figure 1.1 suggest, many Jewish Israelis are fairly comfortable with expressing exclusionary preferences. These preferences for PCI exclusion, and the broader tensions between Jewish Israeli citizens and PCIs, are deeply rooted in the ongoing, intractable, and violent Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Bar-Tal, 1998). Indeed, the cleavage dividing Jewish Israelis and PCIs has a long and complicated history, which motivates mutual animosity, stereotypes, and deep mistrust (Smooha, 2015, 2019). In many ways, intergroup relations between Jewish Israelis and PCIs represent an extreme manifestation of group divisions and are a central component of one of the most prominent and intractable contemporary conflicts.[8]

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[7]The data reported in Figure 1.1 were collected as part of a survey experiment, which I present in Chapter 8.

[8]Throughout this book, I focus on one element of the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict: intergroup relations *within* Israel between Jewish Israelis and PCIs. I do not directly engage with questions pertaining to the manifestations of conflict in Gaza and the West Bank, and prejudice towards Palestinians who are not citizens of the Israeli state.
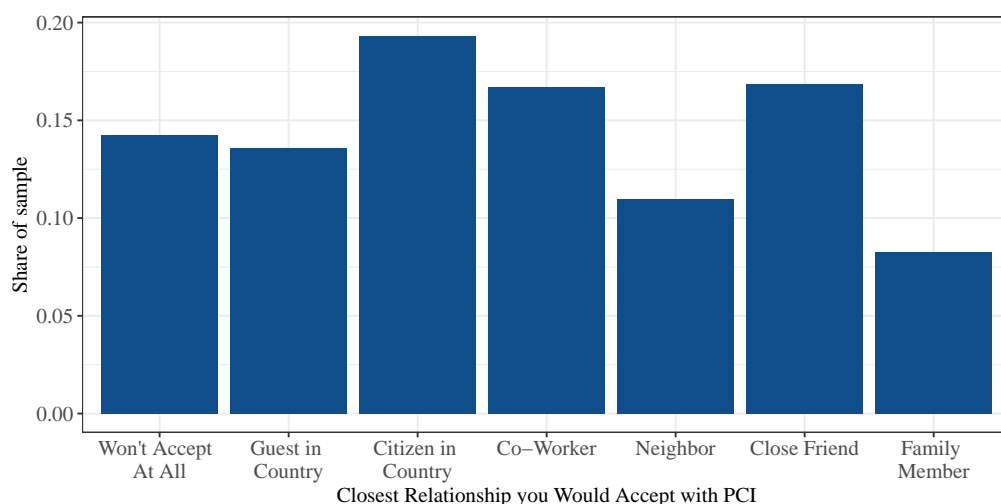
Figure 1.1: **Preferences for Social Exclusion in Israel.** This Figure reports Jewish Israeli preferences for social exclusion of PCIs, based on data from an online survey I conducted in Israel in January 2022 with iPanel ($n = 1,221$). Further details on the survey are provided in Chapter 8.

While especially extreme and rooted in specific contextual factors, the tense nature of intergroup relations between Jewish Israelis and PCIs is not unique to Israel. Indeed, prejudice, animosity, and preferences for exclusion often characterize the relationships between natives and immigrants (Adida, Laitin and Valfort, 2010; Choi, Poertner and Sambanis, 2022; Dancygier, 2023), supporters of competing parties (Iyengar et al., 2019; Brown and Enos, 2021*a*; Gidron, Adams and Horne, 2020), and members of different racial groups (Kinder and Mendelberg, 1995; Enos, 2017). While the intensities of such preferences vary across contexts and are often more pronounced in conflict-ridden societies like Israel, few, if any, modern societies are free of prejudice, animosity, and preferences for exclusion.

To substantiate this latter point, in Figure 1.2, I explore global patterns of preferences for social distance and exclusion. Specifically, I map data from the seventh wave of the World Value Survey (WVS) implemented between 2017 and 2020.[9] I focus on a particular survey item that asks respondents the following

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[9]Note that the WVS did not collect data in Israel, and the question-wording in the WVS and

question:

> "On this list are various groups of people. Could you
> please mention any that you would not like to have as
> neighbors?"

The list provided by the WVS included various social categories across countries. In Figure 1.2, I report the average share of respondents across 81 countries who explicitly stated that they would not be willing to live next to an immigrant or a member of a different racial group. Though the social and political meaning of race and citizenship vary across countries, I focus on these categories because they are often central to research and public debates regarding intergroup relations. The variation reported in Figure 1.2 emphasizes that exclusionary preferences are common around the world.
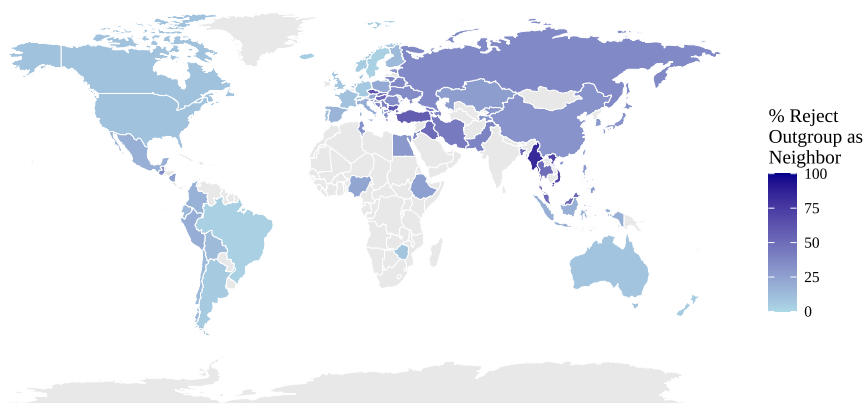
Figure 1.2: **Preferences for Social Exclusion Around the World.** In this Figure, I plot the share of World Value Survey respondents who explicitly state that they would refuse to live next to an immigrant or a member of a different racial group.

Indeed, over 28% of respondents in the WVS explicitly reject the idea of living near an immigrant or a racial outgroup. It follows that Israel, a country where

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my own survey is somewhat different. Therefore, benchmarking patterns of exclusion reported in Figure 1.2 against patterns of exclusion reported in Figure 1.1 should be done with caution.

over 60% of Jewish Israelis reject the idea of having a PCI neighbor (according to the public opinion data reported in Figure 1.1), is a context of extreme prejudice and prevalent preferences for exclusion.

However, Israel is not unique in terms of prejudice and preferences for minority exclusion. Indeed, Figure 1.2 suggests that the cross-national average of 28% masks a substantial amount of cross-country variation in preferences for exclusion. Whereas in some countries, such as Sweden, New Zealand, and Denmark, less than 10% of survey respondents reject having an outgroup neighbor, in other countries, such as Hungary, Myanmar, and Turkey, over 50% of survey respondents explicitly state their unwillingness to live next to members of different social groups. In that sense, prejudice and preferences for social exclusion are a central barrier to cooperative intergroup relations in Israel and many other countries worldwide. Importantly, the prevalence of prejudice, animosity, and preferences for exclusion generates, or at least contributes to, a broad range of negative societal outcomes, including economic discrimination (Enos and Gidron, 2018), biased policy implementation (Swencionis, Pouget and Goff, 2021), and, some studies argue, even violent conflict (Weidmann, 2011).

Motivated by these cross-national patterns and the tangible manifestations of prejudice described above, the primary focus of this book is to explain why reducing prejudice is extremely challenging and to examine how institutional inclusion can reduce social exclusion. Introducing *the multi-dimensional challenge of prejudice reduction*, I argue that the durability of prejudice, coupled with the tendency of prejudicial individuals to avoid experiences that may improve intergroup relations, makes prejudice reduction particularly challenging. Acknowledging these challenges, I develop *a theory of prejudice reduction through public institutions*, in which I argue that minority inclusion in the rank and file of public institutions that provide essential services—such as schools, hospitals, and police forces—can reduce prejudice at scale because it overcomes the different facets that create the multi-dimensional challenge of prejudice reduction in the first place.

Specifically, inclusionary public institutions facilitate various forms of exposure to minority service providers that contribute to the common good. This novel exposure, I will argue and show, is especially effective in reducing durable prejudice. Importantly, however, since public institutions provide essential services, they can facilitate persuasive exposure to outgroups among a broad range of citizens who would otherwise refrain from intergroup interactions but are in need of the services provided by inclusionary institutions. In developing and testing this argument, I seek to emphasize how the design and demographic composition of the public institutions that shape our lives can, under certain conditions, significantly affect patterns of intergroup relations in our society.

1.1   Social Exclusion and Intergroup Prejudice

Before presenting the core argument of this book, it is essential to conceptualize prejudice and contextualize the academic endeavor of studying various approaches to prejudice reduction. The manifestations of PCI exclusion described above and the descriptive survey data reported in Figures 1.1-1.2 are not new phenomena for social scientists. Political scientists, psychologists, economists, and sociologists would likely classify these occurrences and patterns as manifestations of *intergroup prejudice*, a social phenomenon that has received much attention since the start of the 20th century from academics and policymakers. In his foundational book *The Nature of Prejudice*, the American social psychologist Gordon W. Allport defined prejudice as:

> "... *an antipathy based on a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group.* (Allport, 1954, p. 9)"

Allport's definition of prejudice is succinct but quite broad. Indeed, it aims to encompass multiple dimensions of intergroup prejudice, including general

negative sentiments, stereotypes, preferences for exclusion, and dehumanizing beliefs. Other conceptualizations differentiate between stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, which are theorized to resemble the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of adverse intergroup reactions (Fiske, 1998). Generally, there are reasons to believe that these different dimensions of prejudice are interrelated, and recent studies show how attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of intergroup antipathy are closely linked (Enos and Gidron, 2018; Peyton and Huber, 2021).

However, the examples from Israel that motivate this book are more specific. They relate to people's preferences for sharing social space with outgroup members. Such preferences have been extensively studied as a defining feature of intergroup relations. Indeed, building on early work by the German sociologist Georg Simmel, the American Sociologist Emory S. Bogardus developed and operationalized the concept of *Social Distance*, in an attempt to study the type of interactions that a given individual is willing to tolerate with a member of a different social group (Bogardus, 1960).

Bogardus's social distance scale has been used extensively to measure the nature of intergroup relations across space and over time (Wark and Galliher, 2007).[10] The social distance scale is a popular measurement tool because it captures a critical dimension of intergroup prejudice, which I refer to throughout the book as a *preference for social exclusion*. Individual-level preferences for social exclusion represent people's views about how society should be organized and who must be included or excluded from a given social circle. In other words, social distance scales allow us to measure whether respondents are willing to live, work, socialize, or marry people from different social backgrounds.

The early fascination with individual-level preferences for social exclusion and the ongoing scholarly interest in this dimension of prejudice were guided by the expectation that preferences for social distance shape individual-level behavior and group dynamics more generally. Indeed, existing research demonstrates that

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[10]Indeed, the data reported in Figure 1.1 are based on a social distance scale included in an Israeli public opinion survey I implemented in January 2022.

individuals with strong preferences for social exclusion, such as Bezalel Smotrich, the Afula protesters mentioned above, and over a quarter of respondents to the WVS, are more likely to discriminate against outgroup members (Enos and Gidron, 2018).[11] Since prejudice and preferences for social exclusion have been theorized to motivate a host of negative phenomena ranging from discrimination to violent conflict (Allport, 1954), scholars across the social sciences have developed and tested various theories, focusing on different approaches to reducing prejudice and improving intergroup relations.

1.2   The Central Challenges of Reducing Prejudice

The starting point of this book is that reducing prejudice is hard. Very Hard! The two central challenges for reducing prejudice and preferences for exclusion, especially in conflict-ridden societies, relate to the durability of prejudice and intergroup avoidance.

The Durability of Prejudice

Social scientists broadly agree that our social preferences and attitudes are deeply infomred by early age socialization and reinforced by different events and experiences unfolding as part of our childhood and early adulthood (Sears and Valentino, 1997; Henry and Sears, 2009; Laaker, 2019; Kustov, Laaker and Reller, 2021; Ran et al., 2023). For this reason, various political attitudes and preferences are relatively stable and durable over time (Kustov, Laaker and Reller, 2021). This is especially the case for the attitudes and preferences of the adult population.

Consider, for example, Dani (pseudonym), an average 30-year-old secular Jewish male currently living in Ramat-Gan (a city adjacent to Tel Aviv). In all likelihood, Danny grew up in a segregated neighborhood with few, if any,

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[11]Similarly, Peyton and Huber (2021) show that explicit prejudice operationalized as clear beliefs about outgroup inferiority also predicts white American respondents' discrimination and bias towards Black Americans.

PCI neighbors and attended a Jewish school with no PCI peers (Weiss, 2020*b*). During his elementary and high-school education, Dani likely learned a narrative of Israeli history that emphasizes group differences and conflict (Podeh, 2000), and witnessed at least one cycle of intergroup violence between Israel and its Palestinian neighbors, if not many more (Jaeger and Paserman, 2006). Upon turning 18, Dani would be mandated by Israeli law to serve in the military, and even if he were not recruited into a combat unit (which would likely harden his political attitudes (Grossman, Manekin and Miodownik, 2015)), his military environment would be one that emphasizes Israelis' eminent duty to defend themselves against their violent Arab neighbors.

There is no need to be a sophisticated social scientist in order to expect that, with high likelihood, Dani might hold various prejudicial attitudes and exclusionary preferences towards Arabs in general and PCIs in particular. Importantly, as I will argue throughout this book, these attitudes and preferences that are informed by one's social context and personal experiences are not only prevalent in conflict-ridden societies, but more importantly, they are quite stable. Accordingly, reducing prejudice requires exposure to information, experiences, or interactions that are especially novel and persuasive and, in turn, able to impact relatively "hard to move" attitudes and preferences. However, the durability of prejudice, which necessitates highly persuasive exposure, is only one side of the story. That is, prejudice reduction introduces a second, potentially more daunting challenge relating to intergroup avoidance.

Intergorup Avoidance

A central component of prejudice is exclusionary preferences, which shape people's willingness to share social and geographical space with their outgroups. Accordingly, in conflict-ridden societies where prejudice is prevalent, few individuals are willing to expose themselves to information, experiences, or interactions that are conducive to prejudice reduction (Weiss, Siegel and Scacco, 2025; Landry and Halperin, 2023). Moreover, the most prejudicial individuals, who might

benefit the most from constructive outgroup exposure, are oftentimes those least likely to engage with outgroups (Schieferdecker and Wessler, 2017).

Recall Dani from our previous example. Unless he were especially open-minded, Dani would be reluctant to sign up for a Jewish-Palestinian peace-building dialogue group, visit the northern town of Umm al-Fahem to learn about PCI culture and political struggles, or follow a Facebook page that depicts PCIs' experiences living in underserved towns. This sort of intergroup avoidance is often driven by an unwillingness to compromise one's sense of self and identity (Takahashi, Jefferson and Earl, 2023), a belief that outgroups are not worthy of trust (Herrera and Kydd, 2022), or a simple lack of motivation or incentive to learn about the outgroup and adopt more inclusive attitudes (Landry and Halperin, 2023). Regardless of the motivations for this behavioral pattern, existing research shows that reducing intergroup avoidance is far from simple. Indeed, it often requires aligning peoples' incentives with constructive exposure to outgroups (Weiss, Siegel and Scacco, 2025), rather than counting on their altruistic motivation to seek out opportunities to learn about and empathize with disadvantaged groups.

The prevalence of intergroup avoidance that I will document throughout this book emphasizes that *prejudice reduction at scale* is most likely to occur in response to persuasive intergroup exposure that is necessary and unavoidable. There may very well be a universe of experiences and interactions that can, in theory, persuade people and shift their attitudes and preferences toward marginalized groups. However, such experiences will only have a broad impact if people are inherently motivated and very likely to engage in them. Otherwise, the potentially positive impact of persuasive exposure will remain relatively concentrated and narrow.

Prejudice Reduction at Scale: A Multidimensional Challenge

In Figure 1.3, I clarify the central challenges of prejudice reduction at scale through a simple typology. I suggest that any approach for prejudice reduction (be it a theory, policy, or intervention) can be evaluated along two important

dimensions relating to its ability to overcome the challenges of durability and avoidance. Much of the prejudice reduction literature has focused on addressing the first element of this typology, evaluating the persuasiveness of various prejudice reduction approaches (for recent reviews, see: Paluck et al. (2020); Paluck and Green (2009b)). In other words, most existing research focuses on trying to understand, on average, "how much prejudice" a given initiative reduces (in a given target population). Usually, such explorations take the form of a survey or field experiment in which subjects are assigned to view a specific TV series (Paluck and Green, 2009a), converse with a outgroup member (Broockman and Kalla, 2016), engage in psychological training (Halperin et al., 2013), participate in an education curriculum (Weiss, Ran and Halperin, 2023), or read new information (Williamson, 2019). The ultimate objective of these studies is to evaluate whether (and why) a particular intervention reduces prejudice towards outgroups.

Evaluating the persuasiveness of prejudice-reduction approaches is undoubtedly important. Yet, it is equally crucial to assess how well these approaches address intergroup avoidance. Focusing exclusively on either persuasiveness or the capacity to overcome avoidance offers an incomplete understanding of strategies for improving intergroup relations, and may lead to suboptimal outcomes.

Take, for example, an intensive peace-building summer camp that brings together Jewish and Palestinian youth to spend a summer together outside of their homeland. As I will acknowledge in the following chapter, there are good theoretical reasons to expect that this type of initiative will be persuasive and, in turn, reduce intergroup prejudice. Indeed, this is a novel experience that allows for friendship building and dialogue, facilitating intergroup understanding (though see Engstrom (2009) for one of many skeptical perspectives).

However, if only few parents are willing to send their kids off to such a camp, and only a minority of children are intrinsically motivated to spend the summer with their outgroup, then this approach will face challenges that relate to avoidance. Indeed, such summer camps may be *potentially persuasive* but *practically limited* in their ability to overcome social and political barriers to

Overcome Avoidance

Scalable, not Persuasive	Persuasive and Scalable
Not Persuasive, not Scalable	Persuasive, not Scalable

Overcome Durability
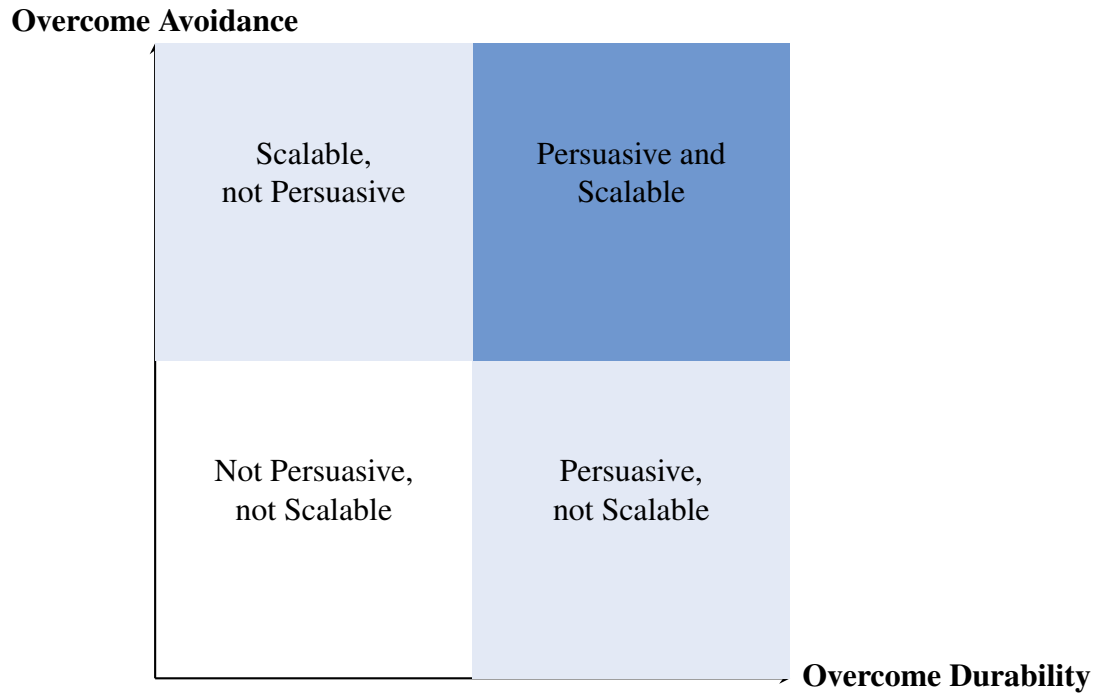
Figure 1.3: **The Multidimensional Challenge of Prejudice Reduction**. This plot provides a conceptual classification of approaches for prejudice reduction in terms of their ability to overcome challenges relating to the durability of prejudice (horizontal axis) and intergroup avoidance (vertical axis). The shading of regions within the plot denotes the expected effectiveness of approaches for prejudice reduction as a function of their ability to overcome the durability of prejudice and intergroup avoidance.

facilitate prejudice reduction at scale. In turn, approaches like the one described above will unlikely generate prejudice reduction at scale because, at best, they will influence a small self-selected group of people (potentially those who are relatively non-prejudicial). For that reason, in my typology of prejudice reduction interventions, I would classify grassroots bridging initiatives in the bottom right region of Figure 1.3. Such initiatives are potentially persuasive and, therefore, highly effective in reducing prejudice among the people in their reach. Ultimately, however, such approaches are unable to persuade the masses because—as I will show in later chapters—most citizens in deeply divided societies, especially those with high levels of prejudice, are unmotivated or reluctant to learn about their outgroup and bridge social divides.

Similarly, approaches that prioritize overcoming avoidance, without addressing the challenge of prejudice durability, are also unlikely to produce meaningful prejudice reduction at scale. Take, for example, a large NGO that seeks to reduce intergroup hostility in Jerusalem through a multi-media campaign calling all residents of Jerusalem to treat each other respectfully. Leveraging social media, as well as street posts and TV advertisements, this campaign might be unavoidable. In other words, in a relatively cost-effective way, the NGO may reach a majority of Jerusalem residents. However, if the campaign's unavoidable message does not activate some social or psychological mechanism that leads people to re-evaluate their relationship with the outgroup and, in turn, update their durable prejudice, it will likely not be persuasive. Accordingly, this unavoidable campaign will fail to reduce durable prejudice at scale. Therefore, I would place this type of approach in the top-left region of Figure 1.3 because it can effectively overcome avoidance but is not particularly persuasive.

Informed by these stylized examples and the broader multidimensional challenge of prejudice reduction, I will argue throughout this book that prejudice reduction at scale requires theories, policies, and interventions that can be placed in the upper-right region of Figure 1.3. Indeed, reducing prejudice at scale requires prejudice reduction approaches that are especially persuasive *and* attractive

to the target population. These types of approaches can simultaneously overcome the challenges of prejudice durability and intergroup avoidance, facilitating meaningful changes in intergroup relations within deeply divided societies.

Importantly, overcoming the multidimensional challenge of prejudice reduction is far from easy. This is one of the various reasons why prejudice is so pervasive in conflict-ridden societies. However, as I now turn to describe, the theory of prejudice reduction through public institutions that I develop and test throughout this book pays close attention to the multidimensional challenges at play. In doing so, it offers a fresh perspective on a longstanding social challenge: reducing prejudice at scale.

1.3   A Theory of Prejudice Reduction through Public Institutions

Since Gordon W. Allport published his foundational book on the nature of prejudice, social scientists have developed, refined, and tested various theoretical frameworks that illuminate the process of prejudice reduction. The primary objective of existing theories is to provide a framework for understanding what psychological processes and social interventions might reduce intergroup prejudice and encourage ingroup members to adopt more favorable attitudes and behaviors towards their outgroup members. Many of these theories focus on the dominant majority group members' prejudice towards minorities since the consequences of such prejudice can often be especially pronounced (Kteily and McClanahan, 2020).

Motivated by the understanding that prejudice reduction presents a multidimensional challenge, I depart from classical approaches that emphasize either grassroots initiatives (Maoz, 2010, 2011; Lazarus, 2011) or psychological trainings and exercises (Halperin et al., 2013; Miles and Crisp, 2014; Simonovits, Kezdi and Kardos, 2018)—both of which generally depend on individuals being motivated or incentivized to engage (Landry and Halperin, 2023). Instead, I turn to consider the

role of public institutions in facilitating prejudice reduction at scale. Specifically, I focus on minority inclusion in the rank and file of public institutions and its potential for shaping intergroup relations in conflict-ridden societies.[12]

I conceptualize institutions as a system of rules and norms that manifests in organizations (Greif, 2006; March and Olsen, 1983). However, throughout the pages that follow, I focus on a component of the institutional system: public institutions, which I define as "organizations that provide essential services for citizens." Common examples of public institutions include schools, hospitals, police forces, and universities. The primary objective of my theory is to explain how minority inclusion in the rank and file of these institutions can reduce prejudice toward minorities.

Why Focus on Public Institutions?

I argue that it is crucial to think about the role of public institutions when studying prejudice reduction for three main reasons. First, public institutions provide citizens with information that enables, guides, and constrains their behavior (Steinmo, Thelen and Longstreth, 1992; Greif, 2006). By virtue of their social functions and importance, some service providers embedded within public institutions are especially well-situated to overcome the challenge of prejudice durability. Think, for example, of a school teacher or a department head in a large hospital. These service providers are often well-respected in their community. Moreover, they are often regarded as important authority figures who can model acceptable behavior and cue suitable social norms. In turn, these service providers may be especially well-positioned to shape the dynamics of intergroup relations in conflict-ridden societies.

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[12]A related literature considers the role of electoral quotas and representation on intergroup relations and prejudice, yielding mixed results. Some studies show that political representation of immigrants in the U.K. generates immediate backlash effects (Grossman and Zonszein, 2021). More optimistic accounts suggest that electoral quotas securing the representation of scheduled caste members in India shape perceptions of social norms and acceptable behavior without affecting prejudice and stereotypes (Chauchard, 2014, 2017).

Second, public institutions provide essential services to a broad range of citizens (Pepinsky, Pierskalla and Sacks, 2017). Even in an era where issues like healthcare, education, or policing are increasingly polarized, schools, hospitals, and community policing units reach a variety of citizens with varying social and political preferences. Therefore, service-providing institutions are well-situated to overcome the challenge of intergroup avoidance. In turn, public institutions have the potential to influence not only tolerant individuals but, more importantly, prejudicial citizens who tend to avoid intergroup interactions but are in need of essential services provided by (inclusionary) institutions.

Finally, even though institutions gradually evolve for a variety of societal reasons (Thelen, 2009), they can be reinforcing and relatively stable for many years (Greif and Laitin, 2004). This stands in stark contrast to many grassroots initiatives, which are often focused on a temporary intervention (e.g., a one-shot diversity training program or a summer-long dialogue initiative). Accordingly, when institutions diversify and become more inclusionary, they can potentially overcome the multidimensional challenge of prejudice reduction and facilitate effective, scalable, and recurring dynamics that are favorable for intergroup relations.

The Main Theoretical Argument

In developing my theory of prejudice reduction through public institutions, I explain *why* minority inclusion in the rank and file of public institutions can, under certain conditions, reduce majority group members' prejudice toward minorities. Specifically, I elaborate on how inclusionary institutions can facilitate different forms of exposure to minority service providers who contribute to the common good. This exposure, I argue, is highly persuasive. Importantly, however, it is also well-suited to overcome the hurdle of avoidance. This is because many citizens must engage with inclusionary public institutions and the minority service providers they employ in order to receive essential goods and services that will ultimately satisfy their immediate needs and improve their well-being.

To fully appreciate my theoretical framework, it is crucial to acknowledge the centrality of public institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and police forces, in our daily lives. To illustrate this, consider the following example: when an Israeli parent wakes up in the morning, they may drop their child off at school. On their way to work, the parent may encounter a police officer directing traffic on a busy street, and after a long day at work, the parent might visit a doctor for a regular check-up. Such a routine is not specific to Israeli parents. Indeed, as this example emphasizes, public institutions that provide various services to the community play a central and essential role in the daily lives of many citizens worldwide (Pepinsky, Pierskalla and Sacks, 2017). More so, the decisions and behaviors of employees in public institutions, be they minority or majority group members, directly impact the well-being of many citizens in various contexts around the world.

Since public institutions and the people within them are an integral part of civic life, I expect that minority inclusion in the rank and file of public institutions could potentially influence the dynamics of intergroup relations in deeply divided and conflict-ridden societies. A pessimistic view rooted in theories of group threat (Riek, Mania and Gaertner, 2006) might suggest that minority inclusion in public institutions will trigger anxiety and fear among majority group members, ultimately increasing prejudice and resulting in backlash. However, in stark contrast to this expectation, I argue that minority inclusion in public institutions can reduce majority group members' prejudice towards minorities because inclusionary public institutions facilitate two forms of exposure to minority service providers that contribute to the common good. Within my theoretical framework, I refer to these forms of exposure as mechanisms through which inclusinoary public institutions can reduce prejudice.

The first mechanism that explains why minority inclusion in public institutions can reduce prejudice relates to common *interactions* that inclusionary institutions facilitate. In these interactions, skilled, high-status minorities provide majority group members with services that improve their well-being. An unintended

outcome of these interactions, I argue, is that they reduce prejudice.

Specifically, interactions between teachers and students, doctors and patients, or police officers and residents can serve as unique experiences that are especially persuasive. This is because the process of interacting with outgroup service providers often entails receiving an essential service (e.g., health, education, security) from a skilled, high-status outgroup professional. In conflict-ridden societies where outgroups are often viewed as threatening to the ingroup's well-being, interactions with skilled, high-status service providers can offer citizens a novel experience that highlights the tangible benefits of institutional inclusion. Therefore, I argue that this unique experience, where a majority group member receives valuable services from their outgroup, can lead majority group members to update their perceptions about the minority group as a whole and adopt more favorable attitudes towards them.

However, I argue that even without direct interactions between minority service providers and majority citizens, inclusionary institutions can still shape intergroup relations and reduce prejudice in conflict-ridden societies. Indeed, the second mechanism of my theory relates to *information* about minority inclusion in public institutions, which can independently affect majority group members' prejudice towards minorities even in the absence of direct service provision. Citizens can learn about the demographic makeup of public institutions from news stories, government reports, official documents, and information campaigns. When these media signal that minorities are integral to a public institution, majority group members learn that minorities are contributing to the common good through their participation in essential institutions.

Such information regarding the minority groups' commitment to the common good can be especially persuasive in contexts where minorities are misperceived as a fifth column, a societal burden, or a group that does not conform to social norms and values (Bracic, 2020; Lajevardi, 2020; Choi, Poertner and Sambanis, 2021, 2022). Thus, information regarding broader rates of institutional inclusion can encourage majority group members to reevaluate some of their stereotypes

and update their perception regarding the role of the minority group as a whole in public life. As a result, I expect information about rates and patterns of minority inclusion in public institutions to reduce majority group members' prejudice towards minorities.

Importantly, this book is by no means the first to consider the role of intergroup interactions or information in shaping prejudice. However, the type of interactions and information that I examine in the pages that follow and the institutional context that facilitates their deployment at scale are theoretically novel and important for two central reasons. First, common frameworks for prejudice reduction suggest that exposure to outgroups *must* involve prolonged equal-status interactions that emphasize similarity and facilitate relationship building in order to reduce prejudice (Allport, 1954). Moreover, brief interactions that do not allow for relationship building are often thought to, and shown to, impair intergroup relations (Enos, 2014; Condra and Linardi, 2019; Dinas et al., 2016; Hangartner et al., 2019). Somewhat similarly, existing frameworks suggest that information about outgroups must emphasize their human attributes and underscore intergroup similarities while avoiding any potential for group threat (Schiappa, Gregg and Hewes, 2005).

However, contrary to common conventions in the existing literature, throughout this book, I will demonstrate how brief, hierarchical, and instrumental interactions that are void of relationship-building or empathy-enhancing opportunities can reduce prejudice. Similarly, I will demonstrate that exposure to information about growing rates of minority inclusion in public institutions that might be perceived as potentially invoking status threat (at least to a subset of the population) is also effective in reducing prejudice. Importantly, I will argue that these experiences can reduce prejudice not because they emphasize similarity, encourage empathy, or foster deep relationship building, but because they emphasize that minorities are well-positioned and credibly committed to leveraging their unique social role and skills in order to improve outgroup members' well-being and contribute more broadly to the public good through their active engagement in public institutions.

Second, in contrast to much of the existing literature, which focuses on evaluating theoretical mechanisms in a relatively abstract environment, I seek to situate the mechanisms I study within a broader institutional framework that sheds light on questions of implementation and scale. In doing so, I not only demonstrate that some forms of exposure *can* reduce prejudice but also describe how institutions facilitate these forms of exposure at scale through various processes and policies that promote minority inclusion. Importantly, the institutional context of service provision on which I focus throughout the pages that follow provides a unique setting in which avoidance can be overcome, and persuasive exposure can unfold at scale. That is, by virtue of the broad reach of institutions and the essential services they provide, inclusionary institutions can expose a broad range of citizens seeking essential services to outgroups in various ways that effectively facilitate prejudice reduction.

1.4   Testing a Theory of Prejudice Reduction through Public Institutions

Testing my theory of prejudice reduction through public institutions might seem like a relatively simple endeavor. All one needs to do is compare the levels of intergroup prejudice between majority group members governed by inclusionary public institutions with the levels of prejudice of majority group members governed by exclusionary institutions. Identifying lower levels of prejudice among citizens governed by inclusionary institutions would provide general support for my theory.

Unfortunately, this empirical strategy is complicated because minority inclusion in public institutions may very well be a consequence rather than a cause of intergroup prejudice. That is, communities with high levels of prejudice might design their institutions as homogeneous and exclusionary. In contrast, societies with low levels of prejudice may adopt inclusionary and diverse institutions. If that is the case, the link between inclusion in public institutions and mass prejudice would be spurious. In turn, our comparisons would not allow us to draw firm

conclusions regarding the effects of inclusionary institutions on prejudice.

An alternative approach might be to try to find two (or many more) comparable cities that only differ in levels of minority inclusion within their public institutions but are otherwise similar, especially insofar as intergroup relations are concerned. Of course, doing so would be challenging. However, comparing levels of prejudice in these cities might illuminate the overall effect of minority inclusion in public institutions on prejudice. Indeed, if my theory of prejudice reduction through public institutions holds, we would likely find that, on average, majority citizens governed by inclusionary institutions are less prejudicial towards minorities. However, with this type of aggregate comparison, it would be hard to determine *why* an effect has emerged and for what reasons majority citizens served by inclusionary institutions are less prejudicial toward minorities, when compared with their counterparts embedded in cities with exclusionary institutions.

My key objective in this book is to *demonstrate how* and *explain why* minority inclusion in public institutions can, under certain conditions, reduce majority group members' prejudice towards minorities. Therefore, the empirical analyses presented in the following pages focus on testing my two central mechanisms related to interactions with minority service providers and information on general rates of minority inclusion in public institutions. To do so, I triangulate a series of studies that demonstrate how interacting with a minority service provider or learning about rates and patterns of minority inclusion in public institutions more broadly have independent effects on majority group members' prejudice towards minorities. Linking multiple studies together and interpreting the cumulative evidence I report from seven experiments implemented in three different countries at various points of time, with over 21,000 participants, I seek to convince the reader that minority inclusion in public institutions can reduce prejudice and that prejudice reduction unfolds through (at least) two central mechanisms relating to interactions with minority service providers and information about broader patterns of inclusion. Importantly, I will argue and demonstrate that institutional inclusion reduces prejudice not simply by facilitating any type of intergroup

contact or signaling generally positive information, but by fostering specific types of interactions and signals that highlight how minority group members use their skills and organizational status to provide essential services and contribute to the common good.

The theoretical framework I develop in this book is grounded in general theories of political psychology and relates to institutions that exist in many divided societies. Therefore, I expect my core argument to generalize across a wide range of countries where institutions are relatively robust and state capacity is not especially weak. However, a large portion of my empirical investigations focuses on a single case, a particular instance of intergroup relations, and a specific institutional domain. Indeed, a significant portion of the empirical analyses reported throughout this book delve deep into Israel, exploring how the inclusion of PCIs in the Israeli healthcare system reduces Jewish Israelis' prejudice toward PCIs as a whole.

Despite my empirical focus, this book is not primarily about Jewish Israelis, Palestinian Citizens of Israel, and their interactions within inclusionary healthcare settings. Instead, the theoretical claims I seek to make are far broader in terms of geographical scope and institutional domain. That being said, I focus on intergroup relations within Israel and specifically on PCI inclusion in Israeli healthcare institutions for two central reasons.

First, my general focus on intergroup relations within Israel is motivated by the fact that the Israeli context is often considered a "hard case" for scholars studying prejudice reduction. Indeed, it is commonly accepted that Israel is a conflict-ridden society where prejudice is both severe and durable (Bar-Tal, 1998; Smooha, 2010). As I show in the concluding chapter of this book, although PCIs have not been directly involved in the Israel-Hamas war that began on October 7, 2023 (and is still ongoing at the time of writing this book), prejudice against them has significantly worsened during the conflict—surpassing even the already high levels of negative sentiment that existed prior to this war. The prevalence of prejudice towards PCIs in the Israeli context and its recent exacerbation as a

consequence of broader patterns of conflict emphasize how reducing prejudice in the Israeli context is especially challenging. Therefore, studying the dynamics of prejudice reduction in Israel requires rigorous theory that can motivate highly persuasive interventions.

Second, I focus on the institutional context of healthcare, given that Israeli healthcare institutions are increasingly a leading sector in Israel in terms of PCI inclusion (Rosner, 2016).[13] As I will describe in later chapters, the rise of PCI inclusion in Israeli healthcare institutions and in public institutions more broadly can, to a very limited extent, be linked to normatively motivated legislation and policy seeking to promote equal employment opportunities. Instead, minority inclusion in Israeli institutions is mostly a consequence of instrumental needs and societal dynamics that have led to an unexpected rise in minority institutional inclusion.

Accordingly, throughout this book, I will argue that minority institutional inclusion in Israel can be understood as a process of instrumental rather than normatively driven inclusion.[14] Importantly, such inclusion, I will show, has unintended, albeit positive, consequences for intergroup relations, as it facilitates prejudice reduction at scale. Informed by the typology I develop in Figure 1.3, and based on the evidence I will share in the following pages, I will argue towards the end of the book that it is precisely this type of instance, in which an instrumental need for minority inclusion arises, that may be most conducive for prejudice reduction in deeply divided societies.

By focusing on a particular albeit crucially informative context—the Israeli case of PCI inclusion in healthcare institutions—I seek to test my theory and hopefully convince the reader of my broad argument. However, I move beyond theory testing to contextualize my results in three important ways. First, after laying out my theoretical framework, I provide historical context regarding the

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[13]Similarly, healthcare is a leading sector worldwide on this front (Patel et al., 2018).

[14]While the instrumental incentives in the case of Israeli healthcare institutions are different, this dynamic broadly relates to instrumental political inclusion that has been shown to be driven by parties' immediate electoral incentives (Dancygier, 2018).

nature of intergroup relations between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of the Israeli state. In doing so, I combine a narrative historical overview alongside descriptive survey analyses to both contextualize and substantiate my arguments regarding the durability of prejudice and the prevalence of intergroup avoidance that together constitute the multidimensional challenge of prejudice reduction.

Second, I examine the dynamics of growing (albeit still minimal) minority institutional inclusion in the Israeli context through a descriptive analysis of historical government records and NGO reports. I argue that the process of PCI inclusion in Israeli institutions is an informative instance of *instrumental inclusion*. My analyses suggest that a small coalition of politicians and civil society organizations committed to promoting equal employment opportunities has set an agenda and legal framework to allow for minority inclusion in the Israeli context. Ultimately, however, what accounted for growing rates of minority inclusion in a subset of Israeli institutions was a serious demand for trained professionals that PCI communities were well-situated to fulfill. This insight on instrumental inclusion in public institutions complements existing theory and evidence explaining the dynamics of minority inclusion in political parties (Dancygier, 2018).

Finally, after contextualizing and testing my theory, I turn to address questions of scope and generalizability in various ways. Focusing on the mechanism of intergroup interactions, I demonstrate that not all forms of inclusion are effective in reducing prejudice, and that the status and skills of service providers, which are leveraged towards the provision of services, are important for prejudice reduction. I also examine how different pathways to inclusion shape the potential effects of inclusion on prejudice. Through an information-provision survey experiment, I show that while minority inclusion driven by top-down, intentional policies can reduce prejudice, it does so less effectively than inclusion that emerges endogenously through unintended social dynamics. I argue that this is because the former may send weaker signals about the societal need for minority service providers and their essential role in contributing to the common good.

Complementing these analyses, I bolster the generalizability of my main

argument by presenting additional studies that consider other institutional domains (e.g., policing, education, fire departments, and the military) and geographical settings (White Americans' prejudice towards Muslim Americans and German natives' attitudes towards Muslim citizens). These additional analyses emphasize the broad applicability of my argument beyond the context of Israeli healthcare institutions. Moreover, in the concluding chapter of this book, I demonstrate how, despite rising prejudice towards PCIs in the aftermath of the October 7 Israel-Hamas War, providing Jewish Israelis with information regarding institutional inclusion is effective in reducing prejudice even in the shadow of intense violent conflict. This emphasizes the temporal validity of my evidence, suggesting that even in the face of unprecedented levels of conflict unfolding in Israel in recent years, institutional inclusion remains a promising approach for reducing Jewish Israelis' prejudice towards PCIs. I present an overview of the empirical analyses reported in the pages that follow in Table 9.

1.5 Contributions

Prejudice Reduction and Intergroup Relations

In developing and testing my theory of prejudice reduction through public institutions, I contribute to four lines of research. Most importantly, I contribute to the literature on prejudice reduction and intergroup relations in two main ways. First, I develop a novel typology for evaluating theories and interventions of prejudice reduction that emphasizes the need to overcome two central challenges relating to i) the durability of prejudice and ii) intergroup avoidance. Informed by my typology, I acknowledge the power and limitations of grassroots psychological approaches for prejudice reduction, which have been the focus of much existing research thus far (Paluck et al., 2020).

Specifically, I emphasize that prolonged, equal-status intergroup contact or participation in intensive psychological trainings and education programs can—under certain conditions—effectively reduce prejudice. However, I also

Table 1.1: Overview of Empirical Analyses

Main Objective	Empirical Analyses	Chapter
Contextualize Prejudice in Israel	Historical overview of intergroup relations, analyses of public opinion data and behavioral tasks substantiating the durability of prejudice and intergroup avoidance.	Chapter 3
Document the Rise of Minority Inclusion in Israeli Institutions	Historical overview of legislation and policies regarding minority inclusion in Israeli public institutions and examination of recent patterns of inclusion across institutions.	Chapter 4
Test the Interaction Mechanism	Analyses of a natural experiment in Israeli clinics, identifying the effects of intergroup interactions with PCI doctors and nurses on prejudice.	Chapter 5
Test the Information Mechanism	Analyses of a survey experiment implemented in Israel, identifying the effects of information regarding inclusion in healthcare on prejudice.	Chapter 6
Examine Moderating Role of Paths to Inclusion	Analyses of a survey experiment implemented in Israel, identifying the diverging effects of intended inclusion via diversification policies and unintended inclsuion absent such policies.	Chapter 7
Consider Scope and Generalizability	Analyses of extension and replication studies considering the institutional and geographic generalizability of evidence.	Chapter 8
Establish Temporal Validity after October 7, 2023	Comparison of prejudice before and after the Israel-Hamas 2023 war, and replication of information experiment in the shadow of conflict.	Chapter 9

acknowledge that many people, especially prejudicial individuals, may avoid such experiences (Weiss, Siegel and Scacco, 2025; Holiday et al., 2025). In that sense, the broader impact of such grassroots approaches may be limited. In the absence of creative ways that align prejudicial people's incentives with engaging in experiences that reduce prejudice, many well-meaning approaches for prejudice reduction may end up "preaching to the choir." Importantly, I suggest that inclusionary public institutions are well-situated to overcome this challenge and engage a broad range of people in different types of experiences that are conducive to prejudice reduction.

Indeed, the fact that public institutions can diversify for various reasons even in conflict-ridden societies (as I demonstrate in Chapter 4), and the fact that such

institutions play an essential role in many peoples' lives, emphasizes why public institutions are worthy of focus for scholars of prejudice reduction. Based on this premise, I combine psychological and institutional perspectives and follow recent calls to develop new approaches for prejudice reduction that reconsider the possible impact of structural or institutional changes for intergroup relations (Paluck et al., 2020). I emphasize that minority inclusion in public institutions is a potentially important political process because it overcomes the multidimensional challenge of prejudice reduction. Specifically, when institutional inclusion unfolds, it can activate powerful mechanisms that reduce prejudice, and by the nature of public institutions that are far-reaching and impactful, these mechanisms are activated at scale in a systematic, recurring, self-enforcing, and cost-effective fashion.

In other words, minority inclusion in public institutions can convert ongoing interactions between skilled high-status service providers and citizens into meaningful *intergroup* interactions. Similarly, institutional inclusion can signal new information regarding the role of minorities in the most essential and valued institutions in society. In that sense, when minority inclusion emerges, it has the potential to reshape the regular operations of public institutions in a way that can promote social dynamics and interactions that are beneficial for prejudice reduction at scale.

My second contribution to the literature on prejudice reduction is in departing from the conventional wisdom that argues that for contact or intergroup interactions to reduce prejudice, they must entail intentional equal-status interactions that are prolonged and capable of facilitating meaningful friendship, familiarity, or relationship-building (Allport, 1954). In contrast, my theoretical framework emphasizes the fruitful role of brief, hierarchical, and instrumental interactions that are primarily intended to satisfy a person's needs rather than affect their prejudice. Indeed, part of what renders minority institutional inclusion effective is precisely the fact that it exposes majority group members to high-status and skilled minorities who, by virtue of their elevated institutional status, are able to satisfy majority group members' basic needs, improve their well-being, and

ultimately contribute to the broader social good.

The implications of my argument are especially important when considering common critiques of the prejudice reduction literature that emphasize how power dynamics and status differences are rarely discussed or shifted in classic interventions to improve intergroup relations (Saguy et al., 2009; Saguy, 2018; Kteily and McClanahan, 2020). Ignoring power dynamics and focusing on equal-status interactions in the context of conflicts with unequal power dynamics can make prejudice reduction interventions more inviting for majority group members (Ron et al., 2017). However, doing so might limit the effectiveness of interventions in shaping the extent to which majority group members believe that minorities are an *integral* part of society. In turn, skeptics often worry that equalizing approaches for prejudice reduction may fall short of reducing durable prejudice.

Acknowledging these critiques, I develop and test a framework that demonstrates how empowered minority group members who are included in high-status, influential, and visible positions within public institutions can effectively reduce intergroup prejudice. The value of public institutions, I argue, lies in their emphasis on the benefits of intergroup complementarity and cooperation, and how they powerfully signal that minorities are essential to the provision of necessary services. Importantly, I emphasize and demonstrate that inclusion in public institutions has limits. Indeed, minority inclusion is most likely to reduce prejudice when it entails inclusion in high-status, skill-based positions in which minorities are easily associated with the provision of essential services. In contrast, minority inclusion is less effective if it unfolds in low-status positions where service providers have fewer opportunities to provide essential services directly to majority group member citizens.

In that sense, acknowledging existing critiques of the prejudice reduction literature (Saguy et al., 2009; Saguy, 2018; Kteily and McClanahan, 2020), my theoretical framework addresses power dynamics head-on by emphasizing how increasing the presence of minorities in high-status and influential positions can shape intergroup relations for the better. In contrast, promoting inclusion

in peripheral low-status positions does very little to shift intergroup relations. Importantly, diverging from studies that emphasize the potential of inclusion to generate group threat (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1983), across all experiments reported in the pages that follow, I do not find evidence that this form of empowering inclusion increases prejudice towards minorities, and facilitates broader backlash. While such backlash may very well occur under specific conditions (as I discuss when outlining the scope conditions of my theory), my empirical evidence that spans various institutional contexts, countries, samples, and research designs emphasizes the potentially broad, positive, and mostly unintended influence of institutional inclusion on mass prejudice. As I will show, through my theory and evidence, minority inclusion in public institutions is especially effective in reducing prejudice, not merely because it facilitates positive exchanges between ingroups and outgroups but because it reshapes the (perceived) role of excluded minorities in society.

Diversity in Public Institutions

Beyond my contributions to the literature on prejudice reduction and intergroup relations, my theory and evidence also inform a rich literature on diversity and minority inclusion in public institutions in two central ways. First, my work highlights an underappreciated externality of minority institutional inclusion for intergroup relations in deeply divided societies. Existing research across the social sciences emphasizes how diversity and inclusion in public institutions can improve organizational effectiveness especially for minority group members (Nanes, 2018; Ba et al., 2021; Keiser et al., 2002; Kruk et al., 2017; Hill, Jones and Woodworth, 2018; Alsan, Garrick and Graziani, 2019).[15] For example, representative bureaucracy theory—one of the most prominent theoretical frameworks in the study of identity and public institutions—suggests that the presence of minorities in public

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[15]Related work in international relations focuses on the consequences of diversity for military effectivness (Lyall, 2020).

institutions can affect civil servants' behaviors and civilians' trust, leading to more equitable public goods provision (Meier, 1975, 2019; Bishu and Kennedy, 2020).

The popularity of frameworks advocating to diversify public institutions has surpassed academic journals and found willing ears in influential policy circles in many countries around the world (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Rosner, 2016). More recently, in the U.S., efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in institutions have come under scrutiny from some political elites and thought leaders (Ellis and Thorbecke, 2024). Such scrutiny raises the possibility that beyond the distributional benefits of diversifying institutions for minority group members, these institutional changes may result in backlash, ultimately increasing resentment and prejudice towards minorities, at least amongst a subset of the population.

Importantly, however, at the time of writing this book, scientific evidence on this question, and more generally on the externalities of diversifying public institutions for intergroup relations, is not yet fully developed. In other words, while we have arguments pointing in either direction, the extent to which diversifying public institutions affects intergroup relations and shapes majority group members' prejudice towards minorities remains unclear. I address this gap by developing and testing my theory of prejudice reduction through public institutions. In doing so, I demonstrate that minority inclusion in public institutions can, under certain conditions, improve intergroup relations in divided societies beyond its benefits for public goods provision.

Second, moving beyond my primary focus on the *effects* of minority inclusion in institutions, my analyses from Israel shed light on the determinants of institutional inclusion in deeply divided societies. Triangulating various sources of data, I show that in the Israeli context, normatively motivated political actors seeking to promote equal-opportunity employment were able to set a legal framework to promote inclusion, first for women and later on for other social groups. However, the influence of an existing legal framework in increasing inclusion was minimal at best. In contrast, the central force motivating PCI inclusion in Israeli public

institutions was the realization by center and right-wing governments, as well as leaders in various public institutions, that leveraging PCI skills and labor supply is necessary for the functioning of essential institutions.

I describe this process as a dynamic of *instrumental inclusion*. Moreover, I emphasize that in deeply divided societies, the rise of minority inclusion in public institutions likely requires not only normative commitments from a small group of highly committed political actors but, more importantly, a set of pressing instrumental needs that can be addressed by specific social groups. This insight complements research on the political inclusion of Muslim immigrants in Europe (Dancygier, 2018), and underscores the importance of attending to the instrumental incentives of majority group members when studying the dynamics of inclusion more broadly. Importantly, for my main argument, these instrumental dynamics facilitate inclusion in deeply divided societies and ultimately generate unintended, albeit promising, opportunities for prejudice reduction.

Power-Sharing and Post-Conflict Institutional Design

I also contribute to the literature on power-sharing, which examines the role of institutions in building durable peace in conflict-ridden societies (O'leary, 2005; Sambanis, 2023). For the most part, the power-sharing literature has taken an elite-centric macro-level perspective, examining how various institutional choices such as the promotion of quotas in legislators, political rotations in cabinet positions, or decentralization of authority to small geographic units shape the prospects of a country to regress back into conflict (Walter, 2002; Mattes and Savun, 2009; Cammett and Malesky, 2012; King and Samii, 2020). Though recent studies differentiate between inclusive, dispersive, and constraining power-sharing institutional arrangements (Graham, Miller and Strøm, 2017), a common argument in the literature is that power-sharing institutions can facilitate peaceful intergroup relations because they allow elites to commit to a political bargain that addresses their group's political aspirations (Cammett and Malesky, 2012), and, in turn, limits their incentives to defect and reinstigate violent conflict (Cederman,

Gleditsch and Buhaug, 2013; Meng and Paine, 2022).

Complementing this strategic macro-level perspective, some recent studies point to the potential micro-level implications of macro-level power-sharing arrangements. Specifically, the political process of incorporating various social groups into state institutions may reduce parochial ethnic attachments among included groups and increase their national identification (Sambanis, 2023; Juon, 2024). Such a psychological process may complement the strategic benefits of power-sharing institutions (that often manifest at the macro-level among elites) and serve as yet another theoretical explanation for why sharing power in conflict-ridden societies could lead (under certain conditions) to lower levels of violence.

Importantly, however, the micro-level psychological consequences of power-sharing have yet to be extensively studied. Moreover, existing research on power sharing and post-conflict institutional design do not directly address how minority inclusion in service provision institutions might influence intergroup prejudice.[16] Indeed, some prominent conceptualizations of post-conflict power-sharing advocate for dispersive institutional arrangements that *minimize* the potential for interaction and friction between social groups (Graham, Miller and Strøm, 2017). In stark contrast to these theoretical frameworks, I argue and demonstrate empirically that inclusionary institutions, and specifically service provision institutions that employ minorities in their rank and file, have the potential to facilitate meaningful forms of exposure to outgroups that, in turn, reduce prejudice.

This insight has two important implications for the power-sharing literature. First, it emphasizes how service provision institutions can facilitate micro-level dynamics that reduce animosity between groups in conflict. Accordingly, examining the role of diversity and inclusion in such institutions can complement the existing literature's primary focus on inclusion at higher levels of government, elected institutions, and the military. As I will argue in the pages that follow, various attributes of service provision institutions—such as schools or hospitals—

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[16]Though Samii (2013) examines the effects of military integration on intergroup relations.

render them especially conducive for fruitful inclusion that can have positive consequences for intergroup relations.

Second, my evidence broadens the range of outcomes that scholars of power-sharing institutions should consider in future research. Moreover, it raises important questions about how different forms of post-conflict institutional design might either improve or impair intergroup relations. In that sense, scholars can draw on my theoretical framework and empirical evidence to examine how macro-level forms of power sharing and their micro-level manifestations reduce intergroup tensions. In doing so, scholars may follow early calls to examine the relationship between prejudice and violent conflict (Green and Seher, 2003), and explore how prejudice reduction may (or may not) operate as one of many mechanisms linking power-sharing arrangements with post-conflict peace and stability. Such explorations could be especially valuable in further clarifying the micro-level foundations of power-sharing institutions, as well as in describing the role of identity and political psychology in explaining the relationship between institutional design and post-conflict stability.

Israeli Politics

Finally, through the tests of my theory, which I contextualize with descriptive evidence on patterns of social exclusion and institutional inclusion in Israel, I contribute to the study of Israeli politics and Jewish-Palestinian relations within Israel (Bar-Tal, 1998; Peleg and Waxman, 2011; Rekhess, 2009; Haklai, 2011; Smooha, 2019). A core argument I seek to establish in this book is that the prevalence and stability of Jewish-Israeli prejudice towards PCIs must be understood in the broader context of years of sustained institutional exclusion. Accordingly, I choose to focus on institutional processes—rather than grassroots remedies—as a promising way to reduce intergroup prejudice. Doing so, I argue, addresses a central motivating factor of prejudice in the Israeli context.

Importantly, in contextualizing my theory, I demonstrate that PCI institutional inclusion in Israeli public institutions is by no means an irrelevant or detached

policy dynamic. On the contrary, I show that despite tense intergroup relations and prevalent and stable mass prejudice, Israeli governments, specifically center and right-wing governments, have devoted efforts to promote PCI inclusion in state and non-state institutions. Furthermore, I explain how the legal framework for this dynamic was initially sparked by political actors seeking to promote equal-status employment opportunities but ultimately scaled due to a range of instrumental dynamics. By laying out and contextualizing my evidence, I seek to emphasize how slowly evolving processes in Israeli institutions could potentially shape the nature of the Jewish-Palestinian cleavage within Israel.

It is crucial to emphasize, however, that my substantive focus in this book is on the internal dynamics of intergroup relations within Israel. When attending to the Israeli case, I focus on Jewish Israelis' prejudice towards PCIs rather than their prejudice towards Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Various insights from my theory and evidence may have applications for broader dynamics of conflict in Israel-Palestine. However, the objective of this book is to develop and test a theory of prejudice reduction towards citizens of the state (i.e., PCIs) rather than members of an opposing ethnonational group that is not formally incorporated into the state (e.g., Palestinians residing in Gaza and the West Bank).

With that in mind, broader dynamics of conflict in Israel-Palestine have direct consequences for the nature of intergroup relations between Jewish Israelis and PCIs. For example, the Israel-Hamas war that erupted on October 7, 2023, has significantly impaired intergroup relations within Israel and increased Jewish Israelis' prejudice towards PCIs. However, given the instrumental impetus motivating PCI inclusion in healthcare institutions, the war has yet to significantly unwind processes of institutional inclusion. This is because the orderly functioning of healthcare institutions directly depends on sustained collaboration between Jewish Israeli and PCI healthcare workers. As I show in the concluding chapter of this book, the presence of inclusionary institutions, and specifically information about them, has positive consequences for intergroup relations even in the shadow of conflict. This should motivate scholars to further consider the merits of

institutions to stabilize and improve intergroup relations in conflict-ridden societies.

1.6 Road Map

I develop and test the theoretical arguments described above in the following chapters. Specifically, in Chapter 2, I lay out my theory of prejudice reduction through public institutions. I connect my main argument with the literature on intergroup relations and diversity in public institutions, and emphasize how the approach I lay out throughout this book is well situated to overcome the multidimensional challenge of prejudice reduction. Towards the end of Chapter 2, I describe a set of hypotheses and explicitly state a set of scope conditions for my theoretical framework.

Before turning to test my theory, I contextualize the core components of my framework (prejudice towards PCIs and PCI inclusion in Israeli public institutions) in Chapters 3-4. In doing so, I emphasize why Israel is a suitable and important context for testing my theory of prejudice reduction through public institutions. Specifically, in Chapter 3, I document the stability of prejudice in the Israeli context and link Jewish-Israeli prejudice toward PCIs with broader patterns of conflict and severe institutional exclusion. Informed by my historical overview and descriptive survey analyses, I substantiate the multidimensional challenge of prejudice reduction, providing empirical support for my arguments regarding the durability of prejudice and intergroup avoidance.

After doing so, in Chapter 4, I describe recent patterns of PCI inclusion in Israeli public institutions. I examine the efforts made by Israeli bureaucrats and politicians to diversify Israeli public institutions and consider the stated motivations behind these diversification efforts. In doing so, I highlight the slow and limited success in achieving inclusion goals and emphasize the central role of instrumental motivations and intergroup complementarities in promoting minority institutional inclusion in limited segments of the Israeli bureaucracy.

In light of the descriptive evidence contextualizing my theory of prejudice

reduction through public institutions in Israel, I turn to test the main observable implications of my argument in Chapters 5-6. Specifically, in Chapter 5, I test the first mechanism relating to intergroup interactions. To do so, I report results from a natural experiment in Israeli medical clinics demonstrating how brief intergroup interactions with a PCI doctor reduce prejudice among Jewish-Israeli patients. In line with my theoretical argument and emphasizing the central role of status and skills that are leveraged towards the provision of essential services, I show that similar interactions with PCI nurses (who do not directly engage with in diagnoses and treatment) do not reduce Jewish-Israeli patients' prejudice.

I then proceed to consider my second mechanism relating to information in Chapter 6. In doing so, I test whether, even in the absence of intergroup interactions with high-status outgroup service providers, mere information about rates of inclusion in healthcare institutions can reduce prejudice. To do so, I report results from a survey experiment implemented in Israel during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. In my analyses of this experiment, I demonstrate how information about the share of PCIs in the Israeli healthcare sector reduces prejudice and increases preferences for social and political inclusion.

Though Chapters 5-6 identify different mechanisms through which institutional inclusion reduces prejudice, they do not directly consider whether and how the political process through which inclusion unfolds moderates its potential effects on mass prejudice. I turn to consider this question in Chapter 7. Reporting results from a survey experiment in Israel, I show that while top-down intentional inclusion via various diversification initatives and programs reduces prejudice towards PCIs, its effects are substantively smaller than unintentional inclusion that unfolds endogenously in the absence of targeted initiatives.

After marshaling evidence in support of my theory of prejudice reduction through public institutions and examining an important institutional moderator, I turn to examine the generalizability and scope of my findings. Specifically, I consider components of generalizability relating to geographical and temporal context as well as institutional domain. Through a series of survey experiments

implemented in Israel, the U.S., and Germany, I demonstrate in Chapter 8 that my main results hold when focusing on U.S. and German citizens' prejudice towards Muslims, and when considering other institutions besides healthcare, such as schools and police forces. Moreover, I demonstrate that information regarding institutional inclusion reduces prejudice above and beyond general information about minority social integration, emphasizing the persuasive nature of my institutional approach.

Finally, acknowledging that the studies from Israel described above were implemented prior to the October 7, 2023 Israel-Hamas war, and that prejudice towards PCIs has deteriorated as a consequence of the violent conflict unfolding in the region, I report a final experiment in Chapter 9. In this final study, I show that even in the shadow of violent conflict, information regarding PCI inclusion in healthcare institutions reduces Jewish Israeli prejudice towards PCIs. Informed by these results, and the various evidence I collect throught the book, I elaborate on the key takeaways from my findings, discuss additional implications for the Israeli context, and lay out a future agenda—informed by the limitations of this book—for the study of institutions and intergroup relations in deeply divided and conflict-ridden societies.