



December 2018

Joint Elite Poll Summary

Palestinian-Israeli Pulse: A Joint Elite Poll

Elites on both sides are influenced by their perceptions of their society, and also by their perceptions of opinion on the opposing side: Those who believe their side or the other side is supportive of a two-state solution are more willing to take action and speak out in favor. But Palestinian and Israeli elites are just as divided by ideological attitudes and party identification as the general public on both sides; they may be more committed to their own attitudes over time than the general public, but also show a greater gap between theoretical positions and support for detailed policies. Pre-existing ideology influences reactions to new information about their own and the other side's support for a two-state solution.

These are the results of Palestinian-Israeli Pulse: A Joint Elite Poll conducted by the [Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research \(TSC\)](#), [Tel Aviv University](#) and the [Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research \(PSR\)](#) in Ramallah, with funding from the [European Union \(EU\)](#).

The Palestinian sample was conducted among 490 elites, and the Israeli sample included 153 – both samples comprised academics, business leaders, media, politicians, and civil society figures. The Israeli sample was interviewed in August and September of 2018, with fieldwork conducted by telephone, by Midgam Research. Palestinians were interviewed face-to-face, by PSR staff, in July 2018.

(1) Goal and methods:

The purpose of the elite survey is to explore certain attributes of the elite members, such as their familiarity with the prevailing attitudes among the majority in their society and in the society of the other side, and the *links between attitudes*, most importantly regarding the two-state solution. Specifically, the survey was an experiment designed to: (1) explore the impact of learning that the majority of one's own side is willing to support compromise for a two-state solution; (2) the impact of learning that the majority of the opposing side is willing to support compromise for a two-state solution. For these first two goals, the research question was: *does knowing these trends make the elite interviewees more willing to support compromise?* (3) explore the impact of knowledge and information on collective ignorance and misperception of the elite members. The research question for this goal was: is an informed elite more able to assess attitudes on the other side correctly and less likely to misperceive the other side's long-term intentions regarding the conflict?

To test these questions, the survey provided the interviewees with actual information about credible public opinion studies (referring to the Palestinian-Israeli pulse conducted in the framework of this project), which examined the larger population of both sides, then questioned the reaction of the elite respondents to the information. Based on this exercise, the survey assessed how elites reacted to information that may affirm or contradict their original world view, how they assessed its credibility, and whether they changed perspectives in light of the information.

Specifically, three questions were asked about support/opposition for the peace process, which serve as the dependent variables of the survey:

- (1) Attitudes toward the two-state solution,
- (2) Attitudes toward an implementation package of the two-state solution,
- (3) Willingness to speak or take action for or against a two-state solution agreement.

Three questions were used to assess the attitudes of the elites, most importantly their perception of positions on one's own side and the other side (these were the independent variables of the survey):

- (1) Perception of the majority view regarding the two-state solution on one's own side,
- (2) Perception of the majority view regarding the two-state solution on the other side, and
- (3) Perception on the accuracy/inaccuracy of polling findings showing support among Palestinians and Israelis for the two-state solution and its implementation.

Description of the sample:

It is important to note that from a methodological perspective, the survey did not set out to define or provide quantitative generalizations about the attitudes of the Palestinian and Israeli elite regarding the peace process; since there is no baseline for defining an "elite" sample, the survey does not claim to represent this population. Rather, it represents the mode of thinking and the potential for changing attitudes *within* the sample of interviewees, who are influential in each of their respective communities. It

also assesses the internal consistency and contrasts of attitudes within this sample of elites, such as whether their own positions are consistent, and how this group reacts to new information.

The methodological challenge was compounded by a high rejection rate of response. The best description is that of a convenience sample, or a non-probability sample, on both sides. We could theoretically weight the data to ensure equal representation of all elite types, trends, and ideologies, but this would be speculative weighting – since there is no baseline setting the size of each group (either by profession or by ideology) in the actual elite society of either side. Therefore, we cannot generalize to the entire Palestinian and Israeli elite society at this point. The current project which included two surveys, in 2017 and 2018, should be seen as a pilot study.

Although the basic findings regarding the attitudes of the elite cannot be considered generalizable, the results remain highly useful for the internal analysis that was the goal of this study. Since the goal of the survey is to establish links rather than describe attitudes, the lack of representation does not undermine the validity of these links. Still, it was important that all relevant groups or elite types and all political and ideological trends in the two societies are represented. The Palestinian sample include 490 elite members divided as follows: 18% academics, 26% members of organized civil society, 22% members of the political elite, 17% from the media, and 18% from the private sector. The Israeli sample is smaller, 153 members, and divided as follows: 39% academic, 26% upper-level management private sector employees, 13% were political figures, 12% are from the media, and 10% from NGO community.

The samples include representatives of all political and ideological trends in both societies. On the Israeli side, the proportion of self-identified left, center and right wing is different than that of the general population: slightly more than 33% identify themselves as left wing, 32% center, and 33% right wing – in other words a nearly balanced breakdown of one-third in each camp, or nearly two-thirds for the center and left-wing together (in the general Jewish public, the right wing accounts for over half; while the center and left combined is roughly 42%) . Moreover, 69% are secular, 16% traditional, 12% religious, and 3% Ultra-Orthodox. On the Palestinian side, the largest group (36%) is not affiliated with any faction, 34% Fatah, 10% Hamas, and 17% third parties. These findings are significantly closer to the political breakdown of the general Palestinian population.

(2) Main findings:

Although the sample cannot be presumed to be representative, at the same time, the possibility that these findings *do* represent the elite of either side cannot be ruled out either. For this reason, we believe it is most useful for this pilot study to describe the attitudes of the elite based on their political perspectives: right, center, and left for the Israeli elite, and Fatah, Hamas, third parties, and non-affiliated for the Palestinians. As in our other public opinion surveys, the findings here show that political/ideological self-identification is the most significant predictor of attitudes.

Attitudes regarding the concept of the two-state solution:

We asked the elite members about their support or opposition to the general concept of the two-state solution “based on the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, known as the two-state

solution.” A majority of all Palestinian elite groups interviewed for this survey support the two-state solution: Fatah elite interviewees showed the highest support with 83%, followed by support third parties (52%), unaffiliated (52%) and even 54% of Hamas supporters – twice as many as the previous survey. On the Israeli Jewish side, support is very high among the elite on the left (96%) and center (78%), declining to 30% among the right.

Do you support or oppose the solution based on the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, known as the two-state solution?

	Palestinians				Israelis		
	Fatah	Hamas	Third parties	Non-affiliated	Left	Center	Right
support	83%	54%	52%	52%	96%	78%	30%
oppose	17%	46%	48%	47%	0%	16%	64%
DK/NA	1%	0%	0%	2%	4%	6%	6%

These findings confirm what has been found in previous studies among the general population on both sides, that self-definition by political or ideological affiliation is meaningful and describes highly distinct positions and world views with relation to the conflict. They also confirm a finding that has been seen consistently: even among the hard-liners on both sides, Hamas supporters in Palestine and right-wingers in Israel, there is some support for the two-state solution; further, on the Israeli side, centrists hold positions that are significantly closer to the left than to the right, but in slightly lower proportions.

There is also a contrast on the Israeli side, when considering the general public: the elite left-wing and centrists show much higher support this year for a two state solution than their counterparts in the general public. Over the last two years, the left in particular showed significantly declining support (which stood closer to the elite range in December 2016); and the center supports the general solution fairly consistently at around 64-65%. This indicates that the elites may be showing more consistency between policy attitudes and the label of “left” and a more dovish center; but possibly also more consistency over time.

The latter observation holds for both sides, whose trends of support have hardly changed since 2017 – by contrast to declining support among both Israelis and Palestinians. The one exception is Hamas, since the current sample shows over double the portion who support the two state solution, but here the small and non-generalizable sub-sample should be kept in mind.

Attitudes regarding a two-state solution package:

We also asked both sides if they support or oppose a plan of implementation package for the two-state solution that would include the following: “establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state close to the 1967 borders; Israel annexes the large blocs of settlements in return for equal size territory given to Palestine, and Israel evacuates outlying settlements; East Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine and West Jerusalem remains the capital of Israel, each side controls its holy sites in the Old City; Palestinian refugees return to a Palestinian state, and a limited number to Israel for family reunification.” This is the

same question about the full package for implementation that is asked in our joint survey among the general population on both sides.

Among the Palestinian elite respondents, a majority of Fatah supporters also supported the package (61%). All others rejected the package with only 30% of Hamas, 31% of third party supporters, and 34% of the non-affiliated supporting it. Among the Israelis, support was high among the left (90%) and the center (51%), but only 10% of the right supported it.

Now consider a plan for implementation of the two state solution that includes: Establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state close to the 1967 borders; Israel annexes the large blocs of settlements in return for equal size territory given to Palestine, and Israel evacuates outlying settlements; East Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine and West Jerusalem remains the capital of Israel, each side controls its holy sites in the Old City; Palestinian refugees return to a Palestinian state, and a limited number to Israel for family reunification. Do you support or oppose this peace package?

	Palestinians				Israelis		
	Fatah	Non-affiliated	Third parties	Hamas	Left	Center	Right
support	61%	34%	31%	30%	90%	51%	10%
oppose	37%	62%	67%	70%	2%	41%	86%
DK/NA	2%	4%	2%	0%	8%	8%	4%

The findings are not significantly different from the previous year, and therefore the general trend appears consistent: that there is a significant gap between the percentage of those who support a two state solution in principle and those who support it once they see the details. This gap is larger among elites than among the general public.

- Among the Israeli elites in total, 67% support the idea, but just 50% support the plan – a 17-point gap. Among the general public, 49% support the principle in June 2018, and 46% support the original detailed plan – only a three-point gap (the same gap holds for Israeli Jews and Arabs separately)
- Among Palestinian elites, 62% support the two state principle, but just 42% support the detailed plans – a 20-point gap similar to the Israeli Jewish elites. Here again, there is less of a gap among the general Palestinian public, 43% support the general two state solution, and 37% support the detailed plan – a gap of just six points.
- The gap between theoretical and policy support appears even higher in the case of subgroups. For example, 78% of the centrist elites support the two state principle, but just 51% support the plan – a 26-point gap. Similarly, 83% of Fatah-supporting elite respondents approve of the principle, but 21-points fewer, 61%, support the plan.
- Among the total Israeli population, the center and the left also show a sizable gap between theory and practice; the only outlier to this trend is the Israeli right among the general public – just 23% support the concept of a two state solution, but in the June 2018 survey, 31% supported the detailed plan.

Role of incentives:

To test the strength of the opposition to the package, we offered those Palestinians and Israelis who opposed it an amendment intended to serve as an incentive. To the Palestinians, the measure stated that “the Israeli government [would] announce that it recognizes the Palestinian’s national and historic right to a state on the land from the 1967 borders and recognizes Israel’s role in the suffering of Palestinian refugees.” The response among Hamas’ elite was surprisingly positive with over four-in-ten (43%) changing their mind and supporting the package if it contained this incentive; Fatah elite showed the greatest flexibility with 54% who changed their mind, along with 30% of the nonaffiliated, and 31% of third parties who changed their mind to accept the package.

For the Israelis who opposed the package, the incentive stated that “the Palestinian leadership [would] announce that it recognizes Israel’s religious and national connection to the region, and its right to exist as a Jewish state.” Among the Israeli elite, the highest positive response came from the center, with 30% changing their mind and accepting the package if it contained this incentive; only 21% of the right. For the Israeli sample, the number of center and left-wingers who opposed the package was so small, the findings cannot be considered highly significant.

	Palestinians				Israelis		
	[Only to those who opposed or definitely opposed the peace package mentioned in the previous question] Even though you currently oppose the peace package mentioned in the previous question, if the Israeli government announced that it recognizes the Palestinian’s national and historic right to a state on the land from the 1967 borders and recognizes Israel’s role in the suffering of Palestinian refugees, would you support or oppose the				[Only to those who opposed or definitely opposed the peace package mentioned in the previous question] Even though you currently oppose the peace package mentioned in the previous question, if the Palestinian leadership announces that it recognizes Israel’s religious and national connection to the region, and its right to exist as a Jewish state, would you support or oppose		
	Fatah	Hamas	Non-affiliated	Third parties	Center	Right	Left
support	54%	43%	30%	31%	30%	21%	0%
oppose	35%	57%	63%	64%	65%	67%	100%
DK/NA	11%	0%	7%	5%	5%	12%	0%

Perception of the majority view on one’s own side:

We asked both sides to assess the majority opinion today among *their own publics* regarding the concept of the two-state solution. Majorities from Fatah (72%) and third parties (51%) believed the majority of the Palestinian public supports it while only 39% of the nonaffiliated and 48% of Hamas believed this is the case. Among the Israeli elite, only the left (45%) believed that a majority of Israelis supports the two-state solution; 49% of the center and 24% of the right believed the same.

This trend is broadly similar to findings among the general population: the ideology of the respondents influences their assessment of their own society – Israelis on the left or Palestinian Fatah supporters are therefore more likely to view society as sharing their support for the two-state solution, and those on the

right or Hamas supporters are less likely to view their society as supporting a position that most of them to do not support.

	Palestinians				Israelis		
	In your opinion, what is the Palestinian majority opinion TODAY on this solution?				In your opinion, what is the Israeli majority opinion TODAY on this solution?		
	Fatah	Third parties	Hamas	Non-affiliated	Left	Center	Right
Majority supports	72%	51%	48%	39%	45%	49%	24%
Majority opposes	21%	43%	48%	49%	41%	41%	64%
DK/NA	7%	6%	4%	12%	14%	10%	12%

Perception of the majority view on the other side:

We also asked both sides to assess the majority opinion today among the *public on the other side* regarding the concept of the two-state solution. Nearly half of Fatah’s elite, 58% of Hamas-identified respondents, 35% of third party respondents, and 25% of the nonaffiliated believe that a majority of Israelis support the two-state solution. Among the Israeli elite, about half of the left (49%) believe that a majority of Palestinians supports the two-state solution – similar to the rate among Fatah; 39% of the center and 18% of the right believe the same.

	Palestinians				Israelis		
	And what is Israeli Jewish majority opinion TODAY on this solution?				And what is the Palestinian majority opinion TODAY on this solution?		
	Fatah	Hamas	Third parties	Non-affiliated	Left	Center	Right
Majority supports	48%	58%	35%	25%	49%	39%	18%
Majority opposes	50%	38%	58%	60%	22%	43%	72%
DK/NA	2%	4%	7%	15%	29%	18%	10%

Perceptions regarding accuracy of findings:

The questionnaire then informed respondents that credible polling of the Palestinian and Israeli general public found that the majority of Palestinians and Israelis support a two-state solution and a plan for its implementation that includes regional peace within the context of the Arab Peace Initiative. In response, a majority of all Palestinian and Israeli elites (except the left in Israel) doubted the accuracy of the findings. Among the Palestinians 33% of Fatah, 14% of the nonaffiliated, 17% of third parties, and 26% of Hamas said the findings were accurate. More Palestinians believe that finding was accurate for the Palestinians but not the Israelis: 31% of Fatah, 26% of third parties, 29% of the nonaffiliated, and 34% of Hamas.

Among the Israelis, a majority on the left (63%) believed the finding to be accurate, but only 39% on the center and 10% on the right believed the same. More elite members on the right (16%) believe the finding

to be accurate for the Israelis only, while only 14% of the center and 4% of the left believed that only the Israeli finding was accurate.

It is worth noting that this doubtful approach is not completely mistaken. In the general survey taken very close to the time of the elite survey, fewer than half – in other words, only a minority – of Israelis and Palestinians supported the general two state solution. The doubt among the elites indicates a fair reading of both Israeli and Palestinian society.

Recent polling from the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research and Tel Aviv University shows that the majority of Palestinians and Israelis support a two state solution and a plan for implementation that includes regional peace within the context of the Arab Peace Initiative. Do you believe this finding to be an accurate or inaccurate reflection of the real views of the Palestinian and Israeli publics?

	Palestinian				Israel		
	Fatah	Hamas	Third parties	None	Left	Center	Right
Accurate	33%	26%	17%	14%	63%	39%	10%
Accurate only for the Palestinians, but not for the Israelis	31%	34%	29%	26%	8%	6%	8%
Accurate only for the Israelis, but not for the Palestinians	12%	12%	11%	10%	4%	14%	16%
Inaccurate for both sides	18%	24%	39%	41%	10%	29%	58%
DK/NA	7%	4%	5%	8%	16%	12%	8%

Impact of knowledge on elite attitudes:

We asked both sides if, regardless of their current position, the finding that the majority of the public supports the two-state solution and its implementation makes them more or less likely to support that solution, or whether knowledge about the public has no influence over their attitudes. A large minority of Fatah elite (42%) said it makes them more likely to support that solution; 21% of the third parties, 18% of the nonaffiliated, and 16% of Hamas indicated the same. Interestingly, on this question as on most questions of the survey, Hamas respondents showed roughly double the level of openness and potential support – in 2017 the equivalent rate was 8% of Hamas supporters who said public support would make them more likely to support the agreement as well.

The largest percentage for all, except Fatah, indicated that the finding has no influence over their own views: 52% of Hamas, 56% of third parties, 56% of the nonaffiliated, and 45% of Fatah. Only a small percentage of all groups indicated that the finding makes them less willing to support the two-state solution: 32% of Hamas, 22% of the nonaffiliated, 17% of third parties, and 11% of Fatah.

Among the Israelis, the pattern was similar. The higher percentage of those who said the finding makes them more likely to support the two-state solution was found among the left (25%) followed by the center (20%) and the right (14%). Large majorities of all groups indicated that the finding has no influence over their own views: 82% of the right, 76% of the center, and 75% of the left. Only a small percentage of all groups indicated that the finding makes them less willing to support the two-state solution: 4% of the right, 0% of the center, and 0% of the left.

Regardless of your current position, does this finding make you more or less likely to support a two state solution, or it doesn't change your opinion?

	Palestinian				Israel		
	Fatah	Third parties	None	Hamas	Left	Center	Right
More likely	42%	21%	18%	16%	25%	20%	14%
No influence	45%	56%	56%	52%	75%	76%	82%
Less likely	11%	17%	22%	32%	0%	0%	4%
DK/ref	2%	6%	3%	0%	0%	4%	0%

These findings indicate a confirmation bias: the idea that people's pre-existing attitudes have a strong influence over how they process new data and information. Those who reject a two-state solution are less likely to accept information, including credible data, showing that the majority support a position that they do not, and vice versa. It could also likely indicate that elites in large part base their positions on their own analysis, rather than letting their views be swayed by public attitudes alone.

Impact of knowledge on elite behavior:

We asked both sides if, knowing that the majority of their public was in favor of the detailed peace package based on polling, whether they would speak or act against or in favor of the two-state implementation package. Among the Palestinians, a clear majority among Fatah supporters (70%) said it would speak or act in favor while only 13% said they would speak against such an agreement. Among Hamas elite, the picture was the reverse: only 34% said they would speak in favor and 40% said they would speak or act against it. The other groups were somewhat balanced: 36% of the nonaffiliated and 38% of the third parties said they would speak in favor while 30% of the third parties and 29% of the nonaffiliated said they would speak against the agreement.

Among the Israelis, only a majority of those on the left (55%) said they would speak or act in favor while only 10% said they would speak against it. Among the right, 42% said they would speak or act against it and only 16% said they would speak in favor. For those in the center, 33% said they would speak or act in favor and only 29% said they would speak or act against. Although just one-quarter Israeli centrists stated that they would take action in favor, this too affirms previous data showing that a greater portion of centrists support a two-state agreement than those who actively oppose it (in this case, three times more).

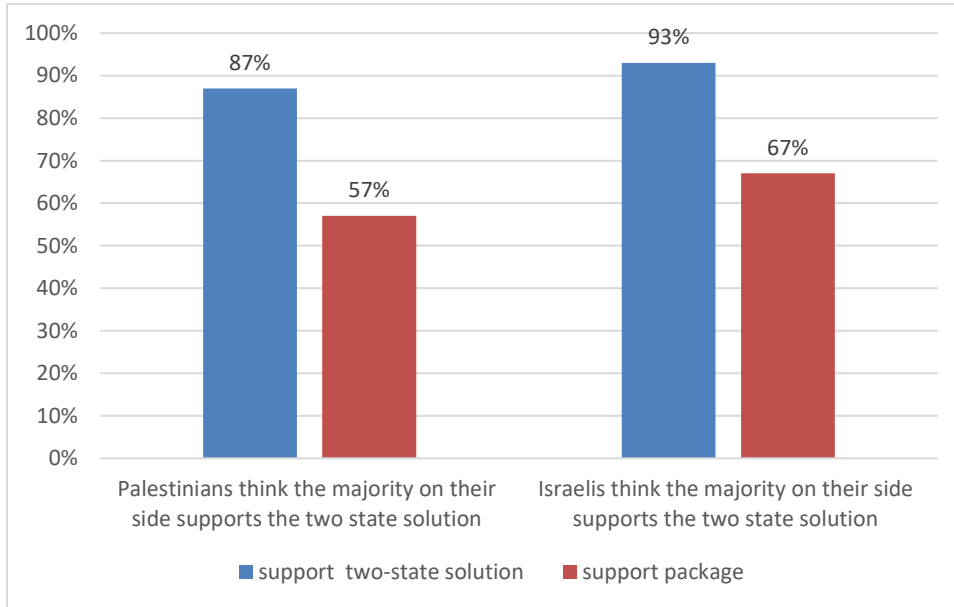
If polling shows that a majority of Palestinians favor the full two state package for implementation with regional peace based on the Arab Peace Initiative, would you speak or act against such agreement, in favor, or not speak out/take action regarding an agreement?

	Palestinian				Israel		
	Hamas	Third parties	None	Fatah	Right	Center	Left
Speak/act against	40%	30%	29%	13%	42%	29%	10%
Speak/act in favor	34%	38%	36%	70%	16%	33%	55%
Would not take action/speak out	26%	30%	28%	14%	30%	33%	29%
DO NOT READ: DK/ref	0%	2%	8%	2%	12%	6%	6%

(3) Links between attitudes:

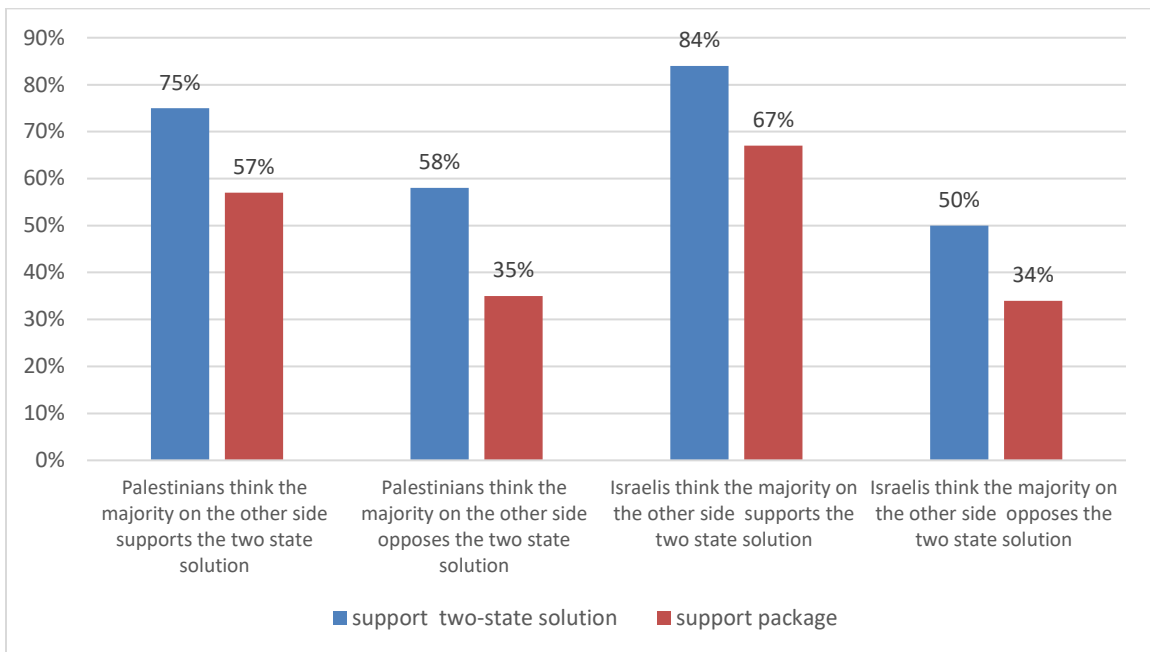
1. Those who think the majority on *their* side supports the two-state solution in general are more likely to support that solution and also the detailed package for its implementation. Those who think that the majority on their side does not support the two-state solution are less likely to support that solution and the detailed implementation package.

1. Impact of knowing that a majority on one's side supports the two-state solution



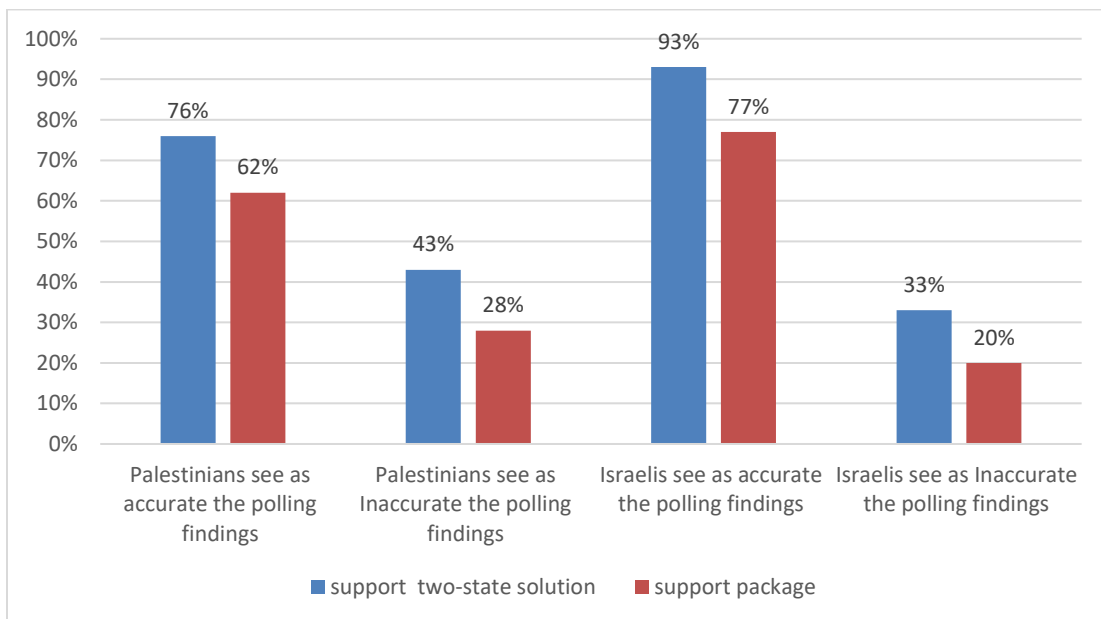
2. Those who think the majority on the *other* side supports the two-state solution are more likely to support that solution and its implementation package. Those who think that the majority on the other side does not support the two-state solution are less likely to support that solution and its implementation package.

2. Impact of knowing that a majority on the other side supports the two-state solution



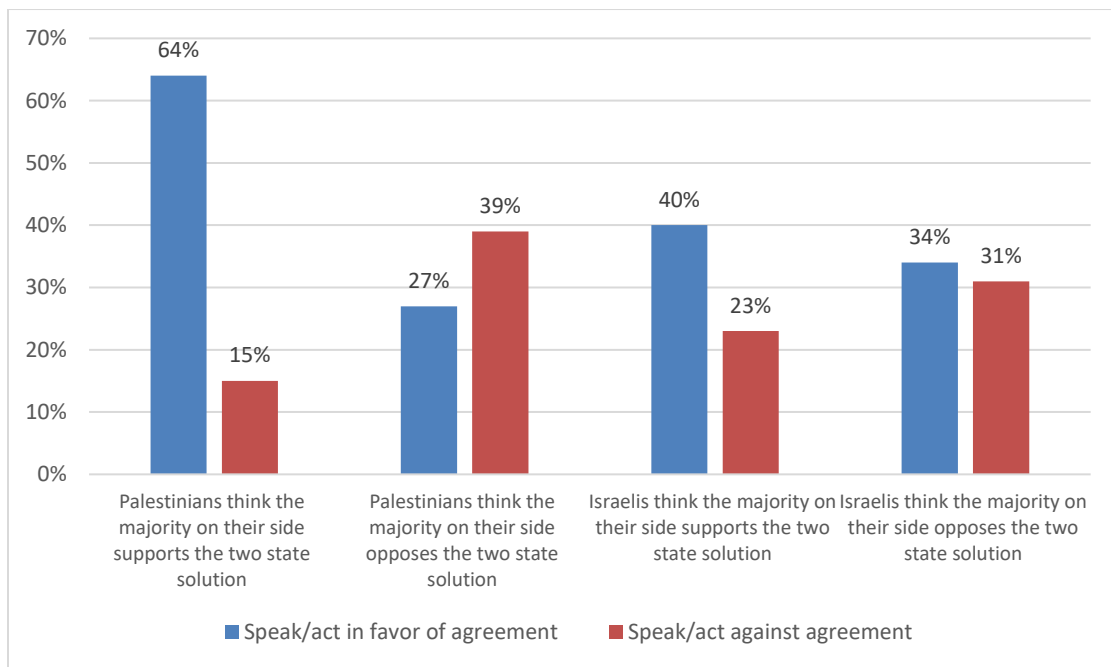
3. Those who see the polling findings showing a majority of Israelis and Palestinians supporting the two-state solution and its implementation as accurate, are more likely to support the two-state solution and an implementation package of that solution. Those who see the same polling findings as inaccurate are less likely to support the two-state solution and an implementation package of that solution.

3. Impact of believing in the accuracy of data showing Palestinian and Israeli majorities supporting the two-state solution and its implementation package on attitudes



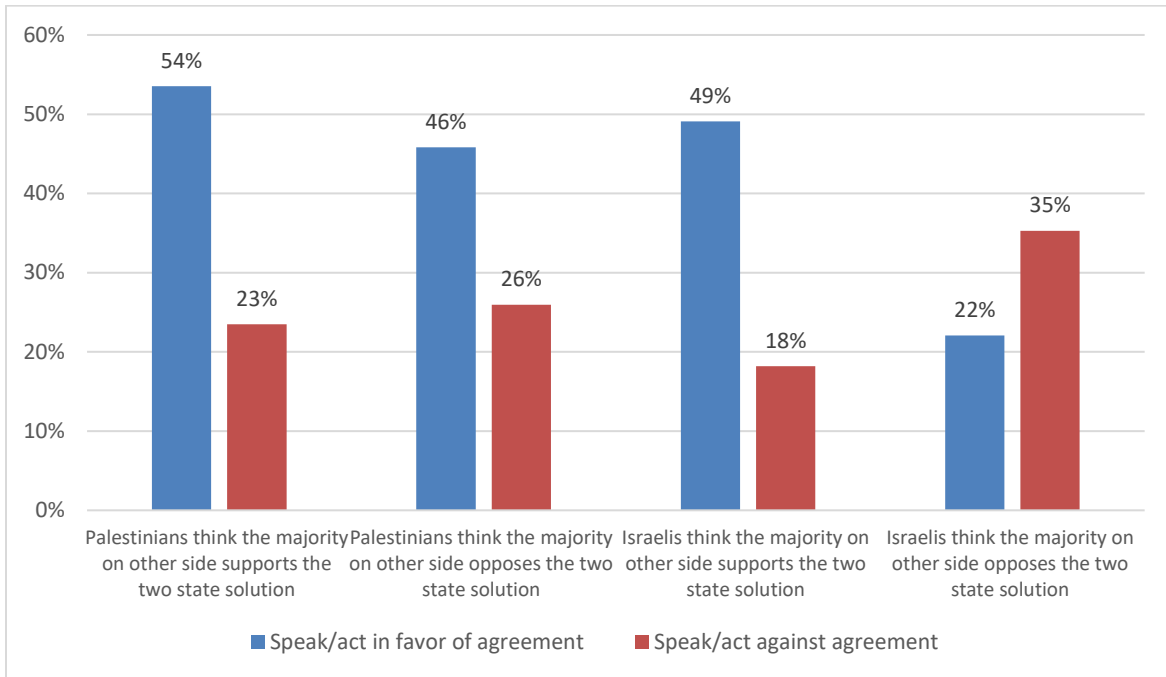
4. Willingness to speak in favor of a two-state solution is much higher among those who believe that the majority on their side supports the two-state solution than among those who believe the majority on their side is opposed to the two-state solution. Similarly, willingness to speak in favor of a two-state solution is much higher among those who believe in the accuracy of the polling findings showing that a majority of the public on both sides supports the two-state solution and its implementation than among those who believe those findings to be inaccurate.

4. Impact of believing that a majority on one’s side is in favor of the two-state solution on willingness to speak in favor of a two-state solution



5. Willingness to speak in favor of a two-state solution is much higher among those who believe that the majority on the other side supports the two-state solution than among those who believe the majority on the other side is opposed to the two-state solution.

5. Impact of believing that a majority on the other side is in favor of the two-state solution on willingness to speak in favor of a two-state solution



6. Willingness to speak in favor of a two-state solution is much higher among those who believe in the accuracy of the polling findings showing a majority of Israelis and Palestinians supporting the two-state solution and its implementation than among those who believe in the inaccuracy of those findings.

6. Impact of believing in the accuracy of data showing Palestinian and Israeli majorities supporting the two-state solution and its implementation package on willingness to speak in favor of two-state solution

