1 October 2017

<u>Elite Poll Summary</u>

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 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. 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) and the Netherland Representative Office in Ramallah.

The Palestinian sample was conducted among 570 elites, and the Israeli sample included 175 – both samples comprised academics, business leaders, media, politicians, and civil society figures. The Israeli sample was interviewed in May and June of 2017, with fieldwork conducted by telephone, by Midgam Research. Palestinians were interviewed face-to-face, by PSR staff, in (May?) 2017.

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 attributes 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.

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, yet. The current survey should be seen as a pilot study. A second survey will be carried out in 2018. Any characteristics that are confirmed in a second study, among a different group of respondents, can be considered a more significant indicator of those characteristics among Israeli and Palestinian elites.

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 570 elite members divided as follows: 26% academics, 23% members of organized civil society, 20% members of the political elite, 17% from the media, and 15% from the private sector. The Israeli sample is smaller, 175 members, and divided as follows: 45% academic, 27% upper-level management private sector employees, 11% were political figures, 11% are from the media, and 5% 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 nearly reversed relative to the general population: slightly more than half identify themselves as left wing, 22% center, and 27% right wing. Moreover, almost three quarters are secular, 11% traditional, 9% religious, and 3% Orthodox. On the Palestinian side, the largest group (37%) is not affiliated with any faction, 27% Fatah, 18% Hamas, and 16% third parties. These findings are significantly closer to the political breakdown of the general Palestinian population.

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. 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." With the exception of the Hamas elite, Palestinian elite members interviewed for this survey support the two-state solution: Fatah elite interviewees showed the highest support with 83%, followed by support third parties (53%), unaffiliated (52%) and Hamas (24%). On the Israeli Jewish side, support is very high among the elite on the left (99%) and center (78%), declining to 26% 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	Third parties	Non-affiliated	Hamas	Left	Center	Right
support	83%	53%	52%	24%	99%	78%	26%
oppose	17%	47%	45%	75%	1%	16%	65%
DK/NA	0%	0%	3%	2%	0%	5%	9%

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 a minority that supports 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.

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 (54%). All others rejected the package with only 12% of Hamas, 39% of third party supporters, and 37% of the non-affiliated supporting it. Among the Israelis, support was high among the left (90%) and the center (57%), but only 13% 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	54%	39%	37%	12%	90%	57%	13%
oppose	44%	59%	63%	88%	8%	27%	80%
DK/NA	2%	2%	0%	0%	2%	16%	7%

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 the most positive with a third (33%) changing their mind and supporting the package if it contained this incentive; 29% of Fatah elite, 27% of the nonaffiliated, and 24% of third parties changed their mind and accepted 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 14% of the right and the left did the same and accepted the package. For the Israeli sample, it should be noted that for the center and left, very small actual numbers of respondents opposed the original peace package, therefore these findings should be considered with even greater caution.

	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		
	Hamas	Fatah	Non-affiliated	Third parties	Center	Right	Left
support	33%	29%	27%	24%	30%	14%	14%
oppose	63%	65%	58%	73%	70%	76%	86%
DK/NA	4%	6%	15%	3%	0%	11%	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 (69%) and third parties (52%) believed the majority of the Palestinian public supports it while only 45% of the nonaffiliated and 31% of Hamas believed this is the case. Among the Israeli elite, only the left (64%) believed that a majority of Israelis supports the two-state solution; 41% of the center and 22% 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	Non-affiliated	Hamas	Left	Center	Right
Majority supports	69%	52%	45%	31%	64%	41%	22%
Majority opposes	23%	44%	42%	63%	29%	41%	63%
DK/NA	8%	4%	13%	7%	6%	16%	13%

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. Only one third of Fatah's elite, 30% of Hamas-identified respondents, 24% of third party respondents, and 22% of the nonaffiliated believe that a majority of Israelis support the two-state solution. Among the Israeli elite, only the left (64%) believe that a majority of Palestinians supports the two-state solution; 30% of the center and 26% 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	34%	30%	24%	22%	64%	30%	26%
Majority opposes	55%	57%	54%	68%	17%	46%	52%
DK/NA	10%	13%	22%	10%	19%	24%	22%

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, all Palestinian and Israeli elites (except the left in Israel) doubted the accuracy of the findings. Among the Palestinians 33% of Fatah, 19% of the nonaffiliated, 18% of third parties, and 15% of Hamas said the findings were accurate. More Palestinians believe that finding was accurate for the Palestinians but not the Israelis: 34% of Fatah, 30% of third parties, 30% of the nonaffiliated, and 19% of Hamas.

 Among the Israelis, a majority on the left (70%) believed the finding to be accurate, but only 27% on the center and 9% on the right believed the same. More elite members on the right (22%) believe the finding to be accurate for the Israelis only, while only 11% of the center and 6% of the left believed that only the Israeli finding was accurate.

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	None	Third parties	Hamas	Left	Center	Right
Accurate	33%	19%	18%	15%	70%	27%	9%
Accurate only for the Palestinians, but not for the Israelis	34%	30%	33%	19%	8%	3%	13%
Accurate only for the Israelis, but not for the Palestinians	9%	13%	12%	10%	6%	11%	22%
Inaccurate for both sides	19%	29%	31%	49%	8%	41%	52%
DK/NA	4%	8%	6%	7%	9%	16%	4%

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 (46%) said it makes them more likely to support that solution; 25% of the third parties, 24% of the nonaffiliated, and 8% of Hamas indicated the same. The largest percentage for all, except Fatah, indicated that the finding has no influence over their own views: 71% of Hamas, 61% of third parties, 59% of the nonaffiliated, and 40% of Fatah. Only a small percentage of all groups indicated that the finding makes them less willing to support the two-state solution: 20% of Hamas, 15% of the nonaffiliated, 13% of third parties, and 12% of Fatah.

Among the Israelis, the pattern was almost identical. The higher percentage of those who said the finding makes them more likely to support the two-state solution was found among the left (24%) followed by the center (16%) and the right (11%). Large majorities of all groups indicated that the finding has no influence over their own views: 80% 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: 7% of the right, 3% of the center, and 1% 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	46%	25%	24%	8%	24%	16%	11%
No influence	40%	61%	59%	71%	75%	76%	80%

Less likely	12%	13%	15%	20%	1%	3%	7%
DK/ref	2%	1%	2%	0%	0%	5%	2%

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.

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 (69%) said it would speak or act in favor while only 11% said they would speak against such an agreement. Among Hamas elite, the picture was the reverse: only 10% said they would speak in favor and 54% said they would speak or act against it. The other groups were somewhat balanced: 41% of the nonaffiliated and 40% of the third parties said they would speak in favor while 37% of the third parties and 27% of the nonaffiliated said they would speak against the agreement.

Among the Israelis, only a majority of those on the left (54%) said they would speak or act in favor while only 7% said they would speak against it. Among the right, 43% said they would speak or act against it and only 7% said they would speak in favor. For those in the center, 24% said they would speak or act in favor and only 8% 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?
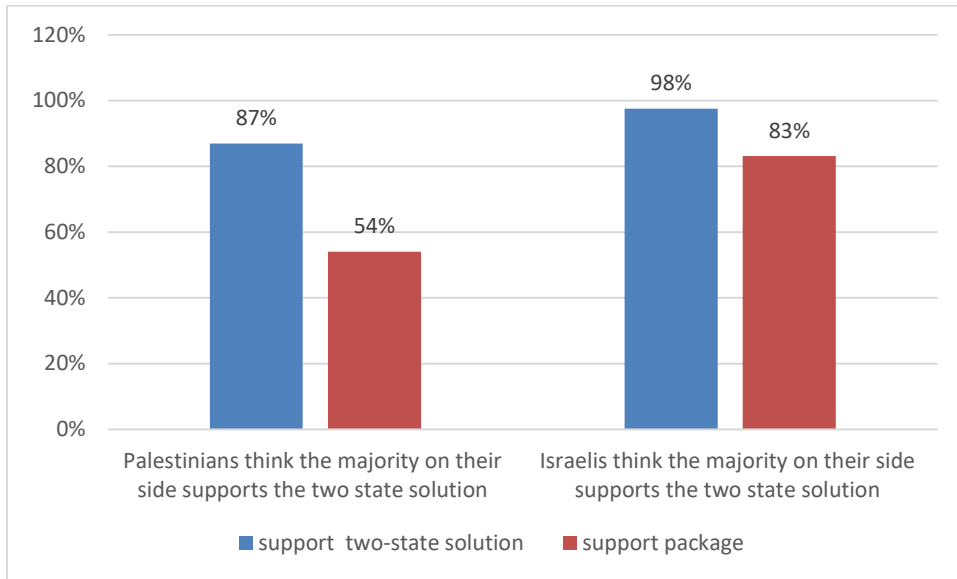
	Palestinian				Israel		
	Hamas	Third parties	None	Fatah	Right	Center	Left
Speak/act against	54%	37%	27%	11%	43%	8%	7%
Speak/act in favor	10%	40%	41%	69%	7%	24%	54%
Would not take action/speak out	31%	20%	27%	17%	39%	49%	34%
DO NOT READ: DK/ref	5%	3%	6%	3%	11%	19%	6%

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
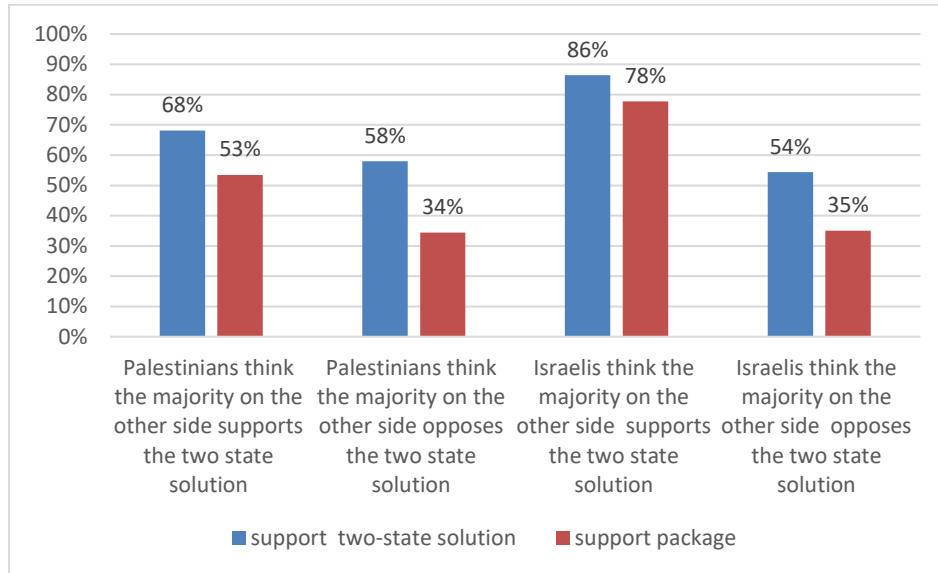
majority on their side does not support the two-state solution are less likely to support that solution and the detailed implementation package.

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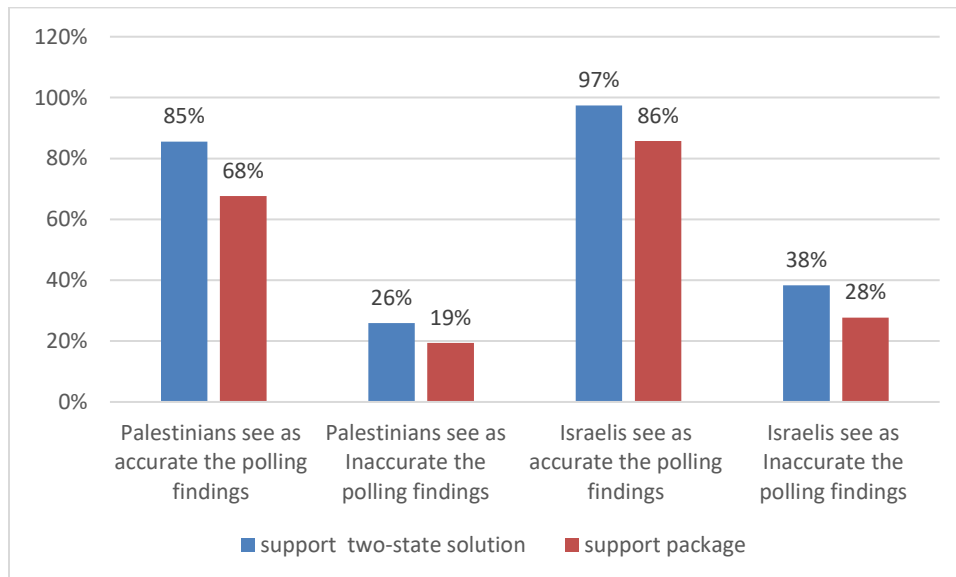

2. Those who think the majority on the *other* side supports the two-state solution are more likely to support that solution and its implementation package. Those who think that the majority on the other side does not support the two-state solution are less likely to support that solution and its implementation 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.
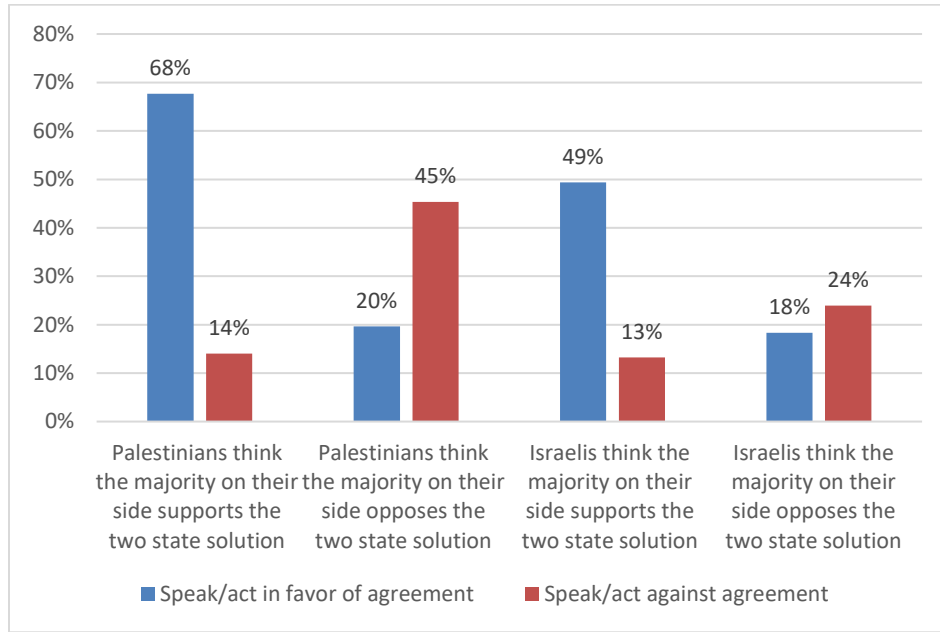
3. Impact of believing in the accuracy of data showing Palestinian and Israeli majorities supporting the two-state solution and its implementation package on *attitudes*

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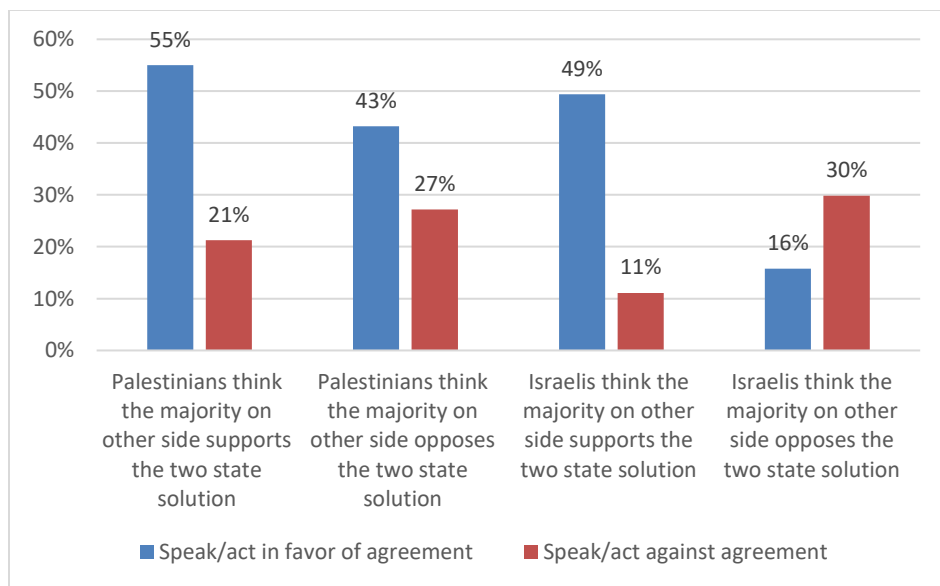
side is opposed to the two-state solution. Similarly, willingness to speak in favor of a two-state solution is much higher among those who believe in the accuracy of the polling findings showing that a majority of the public on both sides supports the two-state solution and its implementation than among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

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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*