

Scenarios for Settlements in a Two-State Solution

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Executive Summary

This is the **final report** on qualitative and quantitative research conducted on policy measures towards a final status solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The research included 6 focus groups and 2 surveys among Israeli West Bank settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank.

The research aimed to map current attitudes towards the conflict in general, and track attitudes towards evacuation-compensation option for settlers, compared to past studies¹. In addition, for the first time in Macro's work, the current study examined an alternative solution to the traditional two-state plans, offering settlers the option of remaining in their homes, under Palestinian sovereignty as permanent residents.

In general, the two populations experience vastly different realities in their daily life. Among the settlers, a very large majority view life positively: 76% consider the quality of life in their settlement high, and 64% of the settlers believe Israel is headed in the right direction in general. By contrast, 58% of the Palestinians believe that Palestine is headed in the wrong direction.

Regarding their ideal vision for the future, settlers and Palestinians expressed opinions diametrically opposed to one another. Nearly half, 46%, of settlers believe that annexation is Israel's long-term goal,² and 23% believe Israel's goal is to retreat from some of the West Bank (WB) territories. One-fifth (20%) do not know what Israel's goal is regarding the conflict. Among Palestinians, 67% said that all settlers must leave Palestine in any future agreement. However, 20% of Palestinians accept the idea that settlers can stay if they live as residents in an independent Palestinian state and accept its sovereignty.

Considering a scenario in which they would receive compensation if they evacuate their settlements by choice (an approach known as "evacuation-compensation"), only

¹ The Macro Center for Political Economics, Final Report: Researching and Generating Support for Voluntary Evacuation of Settlers in the West Bank, December 2013, Tel-Aviv

² Two annexation options were provided - Annexation of the WB without providing equal political rights to the Palestinians (28%), and Annexation of the WB and deporting all Palestinians living in it (18%)

27% of the Jewish-Israeli settlers surveyed indicated that they would be willing to consider leaving the WB. This is consistent with the findings presented in previous surveys from 2013 and 2012. In the current survey, settlers stated that they would prefer to relocate either to the Jerusalem area (38%), the center of Israel (22%), or the settlement blocs (15%).

When presented with an alternative solution in which settlers could remain in Palestine as part of a mutually signed agreement, living under Palestinian sovereignty as permanent residents while keeping Israeli citizenship, Palestinians showed more support relative to settlers. When the scenario was first introduced, 85% of the settlers opposed the idea in general, it compared to 58% of Palestinians. **In addition, only 11% of settlers said they would support it, compared to 39% of the Palestinians.**

Different policy provisions were then presented to the two groups, to test whether they would increase support above the initial level. Among settlers, statements about different security arrangements were received with mixed results and did not significantly improve support for the proposed agreement. By contrast, the idea that a rabbi they trust would encourage settlers to stay in the West Bank as residents was more effective in raising support than any other incentive item. Among Palestinians, the relevant policies tested drew stronger support – including a majority for several. These included: evacuation of settlers with a history of violence or settlements that disrupt travel routes (78%), the option for open borders between the countries while introducing different types of coordination (69%), the continuation of security cooperation while banning the right of the Israeli military to enter Palestine unless by agreement (63%), and the option to evacuate settlers who break Palestinian law (58%). Statements regarding the Palestinian obligation to protect the security of the settlers were somewhat more controversial. However, nearly half of the respondents said it would be acceptable for settlers to hire private security guards.

Following the introduction of the policy provisions, respondents were asked once again to state their support for such an agreement. **While support among Palestinians rose to a majority of 59% of the respondents, support among settlers increased only slightly, to 16%.** Among settlers who reside outside the main

settlement blocs, support only increased from 10% to 13%, remaining very low. In addition, when asked about the impact of having the option to continue living in the West Bank under Palestinian sovereignty compared to a forced evacuation scenario, nearly half – 46% - said it decreases their support for the two state solution, while only 10% mentioned it increases their support.

Main Findings

The report is based on a series of six **focus groups** among settlers (four groups) and Palestinians (two groups) conducted in March 2019. The focus groups were conducted in order to provide qualitative input from the target population of settlers and Palestinians living in their immediate environment, as the basis for the quantitative study which included two **surveys**, the first conducted among a representative sample of 602 Palestinians living in the West Bank (WB), and the second conducted among a representative sample of 495 Israeli Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

The primary research questions were:

- Map broad attitudes towards the state of the conflict at present, including the nature of daily interactions
- Map the current attitudes towards the idea of settler/settlement evacuation on both sides – tracking changes compared to previous studies conducted by The Macro Center for Political Economics
- Alternate scenarios: are the settlers in general and the "hard core" settlers, who are unwilling to evacuate in particular, prepared to consider a new approach of remaining under Palestinian sovereignty as permanent residents, and if so, under what conditions?

Both the findings of the focus groups and the surveys show that the two populations experience very different realities regarding their daily life.

- **Settlers largely perceive their lives as positive and believe Israel is going in a positive direction overall.** 64% of the settlers are optimistic about the direction in which Israel is headed, and 76% consider the quality of life in their settlement high. In the focus groups, settlers mentioned their lives in the settlements appear to be improving relative to the past on the subject of infrastructure, access, and community. Nonetheless, in past surveys a higher

percentage of settlers mentioned that they consider the quality of life in their settlement as high (83% and 82% in 2008 and 2013 respectively).

- In sharp contrast to the settlers, Palestinians chafe under the ongoing occupation, which interferes directly in their lives in the form of access to land or fear of clashes with the army.** In addition, they experience regular concerns of daily life such as unemployment and a crisis of faith in their political leaders, viewed as corrupt, impotent and self-serving. Many expressed the sense that the future appears hopeless on both a personal and national level on the subject of jobs and economic opportunity. As a result, 58% believe that the future is headed in the wrong direction, and 64% are pessimistic about the feasibility of reaching an agreement with Israel.

In the focus groups, regarding their ideal vision for the future, most of the participants in the two communities initially expressed attitudes that were **diametrically opposed to one another**:

- Most Palestinians initially insisted that all settlers must leave**, with no distinction regarding different settlements. Some expressed the desire for them to leave the region altogether. When asked in the survey about what should happen with Israeli settlers in a future agreement, 67% said that all settlers must leave Palestine in any future agreement. Nonetheless, when first asked about the idea of settlers remaining under Palestinian sovereignty, one fifth (20%) of the respondents said that settlers can stay in the WB if they live as residents in an independent Palestinian state and accept its sovereignty. Also in the focus groups, several participants expressed openness to settlers as individuals, and even cited some positive personal interactions. Some Palestinians, especially from the Hebron region, mentioned positive labor relations.
- Most of Israeli settlers categorically believed the entire land belongs to Israel**, and no land should be conceded under any circumstances. This statement was reinforced by the fact that 46% of settlers believe that annexing the WB is the long-term goal of Israel, compared to 25% who

believed that it is some sort of withdrawal from the WB territories. Also, in the settlers' focus groups several participants expressed openness to Palestinians as individuals. Some of the settlers spoke of a certain interactional harmony – shopping in Palestinian towns and having cordial or even friendly relations.

The two main solutions tested in the research were (1) Evacuating settlements outside the large blocs in the framework of a two state solution (2) A proposal for settlers to remain permanent residents in a Palestinian state while retaining Israeli citizens through an agreement between the two sides and with cooperation on security and legal matters. The main responses were as follows:

(1) Evacuation of settlements outside the large blocs as a part of a two state solution

General responses to Israeli withdrawal: Settlers focused primarily on the idea of Israel giving up sovereignty in the WB (Judea & Samaria) and the specific arrangement for settlements appeared secondary compared to this larger issue. In the focus groups most of the **settlers** found the idea of ceding Israeli control to be shocking. They experienced the idea as personally, politically, and spiritually devastating, or at best irrelevant (several participants in each group felt the entire discussion was a waste of time and had to be coaxed to contribute substantively on these issues). In the survey 52% of them mentioned that their biggest concern about such a scenario would be that it is a political and a security mistake.

Many **settlers** felt this amounted to betrayal by the state, and expressed profound anger at the country (the leadership and the public if the latter accepts the idea). Some indicated they would move to the settlement blocs, while others felt that they could continue the ideological mission by moving to the Negev or the Galilee. Some said that the wound would be so deep they would consider leaving the country, and indeed, in the survey a small portion, nine percent, expressed this reaction. A small minority in each group expressed a sense of resignation and indicated that they would accept generous compensation packages to move; nearly all said they would first try to oppose such a policy. Fully one-fifth openly stated that they would oppose the policy by force.

In the survey, consistent with findings from past surveys, 27% of the settlers mentioned they would be willing to consider leaving the WB, 20% said they think they wouldn't agree to leave, and 45% mentioned they are certain they wouldn't agree. 38% of the settlers said they would rather relocate to the Jerusalem area, 22% to the center of Israel and 15% to the main settlement blocs.

As mentioned above, among **Palestinians**, the broad feeling in focus groups was that settlers must leave Palestine in a future state. Some expressed the view that all the land should belong to Palestine, but when asked about a Palestinian state, most accepted that two states represent the main framework for possible resolution. They did not distinguish blocs or outlying settlements. In the survey, 67% mentioned all settlers must leave Palestine, 9% said that some can stay in the big settlement blocs, and 20% that settlers can stay if they live as residents in an independent Palestinian state and accept its sovereignty.

(2) A proposal for settlers to remain as permanent residents in a Palestinian state while retaining Israeli citizens

In the focus groups, the idea was new to most participants, settlers and Palestinians alike, and required careful explanation. **Settlers** had some emotional difficulty conceptualizing how Israel could not be sovereign, or what Palestinian sovereignty meant. The first reaction was hostile, primarily due to the loss of Israeli sovereignty which was painful to them as a national, rather than personal loss (although one they took very personally). In each group several pointed out that settlement is a national and religious goal, not a matter of individual desires; removing the national backing destroys the purpose. As the discussion progressed, a small number in each group considered the idea of remaining under very carefully defined conditions, or as an experiment. **In the survey when the scenario was first introduced 85% of the settlers opposed the idea. In addition, 93% of those who said they are certain they wouldn't agree to evacuate in an evacuation-compensation plan said they oppose the idea.** When asked about the main concerns regarding this approach, the largest group, 57% of the settlers, chose the loss of personal security as their biggest

concern. Other concerns include the loss of state values (24%), damage to the standard of living (7%), damage to religious faith (3%) and loss of livelihood (1%).

Few of the specific conditions offered changed their minds (private security forces, describing the legal situation); the main reassuring factor was that they would remain Israeli citizens. The survey found that specific clauses regarding security arrangements were received with mixed views, and did not have a large effect on the support of settlers to the scenario. **The clause that had the largest effect on raising support for the agreement was about the possibility of a Rabbi encouraging settlers to stay in the WB** (48% mentioned that it increases the chances of them to support the agreement).

Nonetheless, even after presenting the policy provisions, 79% of the settlers opposed it, (an increase from 11% to 16%). Among settlers who reside outside the main blocs, the increase in support only increased from 10% to 13%.

It is significant that among the settlers there was no intuitive sense that the option of remaining offered a breakthrough or a concession. As a result, the facilitator asked specifically whether they might view this measure as a concession, or at least an acknowledgment by the state that they must be given a choice. Some were able to consider this perspective, but their overriding response was that Israel ceding sovereignty represents a profound blow and a loss regardless of arrangements for them. A few participants accepted that having a choice represents progress on the part of the Israeli state accepting that they cannot be summarily evacuated. However, in the survey, 46% mentioned that being given the option to continue to reside within the WB under Palestinian sovereignty compared to a full evacuation scenario decreases their support in the two states solution, while only 10% mentioned it increases their support.

Among **Palestinians**, similar to the settlers, in the focus groups their initial response involved a combination of rejection, along with numerous questions about the details of such an arrangement. Over the course of the discussion, more diverse attitudes emerged, in which the settlers could be seen as guests, neighbors, which could be

acceptable under Palestinian sovereignty. By the end, a minority of 1-2 members in both groups were willing to accept the idea, while others were divided - either opposed or uncertain and still considering the idea.

When the scenario was first introduced in the survey, Palestinian support stood at 39% compared to the 11% among settlers.

In the focus groups, the various policy provisions around the idea had mixed reactions, but the idea of private security for the settlers was the most problematic. However, in the survey many of the policy provisions received the support of the majority of Palestinians – evacuation of settlers with a history of violence or creating settlements which disrupt travel routes, the option for open borders between the countries while introducing different types of coordination, the continuation of security cooperation while halting the right of the Israeli military to enter Palestine unless by agreement, and the option to evacuate settlers who break Palestinian law. Like in the focus groups, the survey findings show that policy provisions regarding the security of Palestinians were a bit more controversial – however, nearly half of the respondents said it would be acceptable for settlers to hire private security guards.

Following the presentation of the policy provisions, respondents were asked once more whether they support the agreement. Interestingly, Support rose to a majority of 59% of the Palestinian, while only 38% opposed it.

Quantitative Results

This section provides the results and analysis of two surveys. The first survey was conducted among a representative sample of 495 Israeli settlers in the WB, and the second survey was conducted among 601 Palestinians in the WB. The purpose of the surveys was to examine broad attitudes towards the state of the conflict, current attitudes towards evacuation-compensation processes, and to compare the results to past results. In addition, the surveys measured attitudes towards a potential future agreement in which settlers would be allowed to remain in Palestine as permanent residents under Palestinian sovereignty while remaining citizens of Israel.

General Information

A majority of 64% of Israeli settlers believe that, taking into consideration all aspects, Israel is headed somewhat or strongly in the right direction. In general, respondents who identify as right wing or very right wing tend to be more optimistic about the direction Israel is headed towards relative to respondents who identified as centrist – 74%, 65.4% and 41.4% respectively. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the settlers who identify as religious are also more optimistic compared to traditional and secular respondents – 79.1%, 58.8% and 42.9% respectively.

Among Palestinians, a majority of 58% believe that, taking into consideration all aspects, Palestine is headed somewhat or strongly in the wrong direction. Only 36% of the respondents believe that it is strongly or somewhat headed in the right direction. Contrary to settlers, less religious people are more likely to be optimistic about the direction of Palestine. Only 33% of the religious respondents believe that Palestine is headed strongly or somewhat in the right direction, while 37% of the traditional respondents and 49% of the secular or between secular and religious agree with this statement. **Secular people in Palestine feel more optimistic relative to secular settlers.**

76% of the settlers mentioned that, when taking into consideration all aspects, the quality of life is pretty or very high in the settlements. This question was also asked in previous surveys conducted by the Macro Center for Political Economics in

2008, 2012 and 2013 among settlers. All in all, a large majority of respondents mention that the quality of life where they live is high in all surveys. Nonetheless, there is a small decline between the 2013 and 2019 surveys compared to the 2012 and 2008 surveys.

Chart 1: Percentage of respondents who believe their country is headed in the right direction, religiosity level

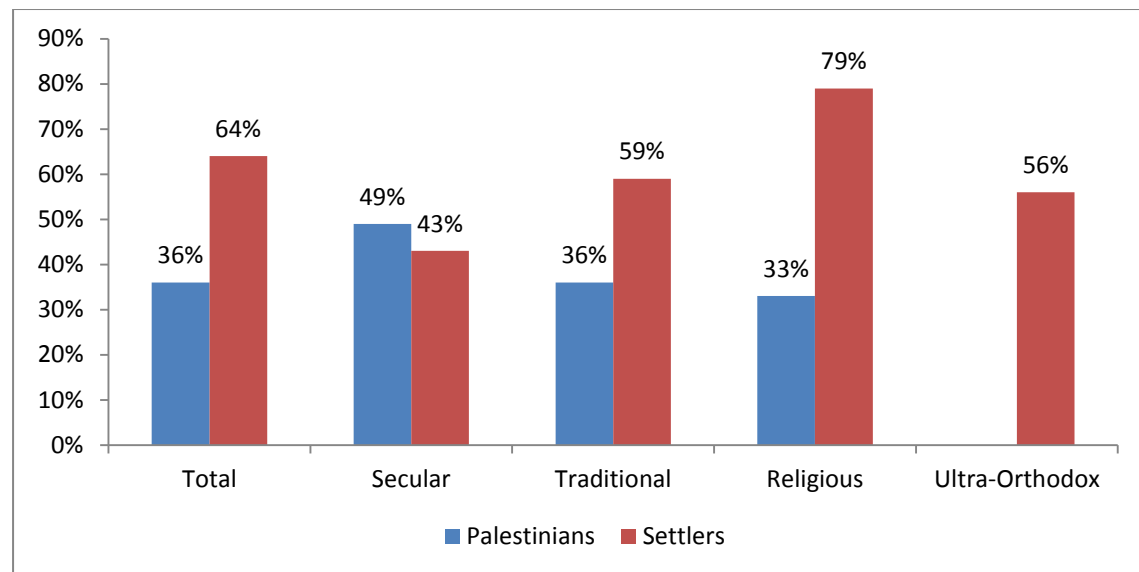
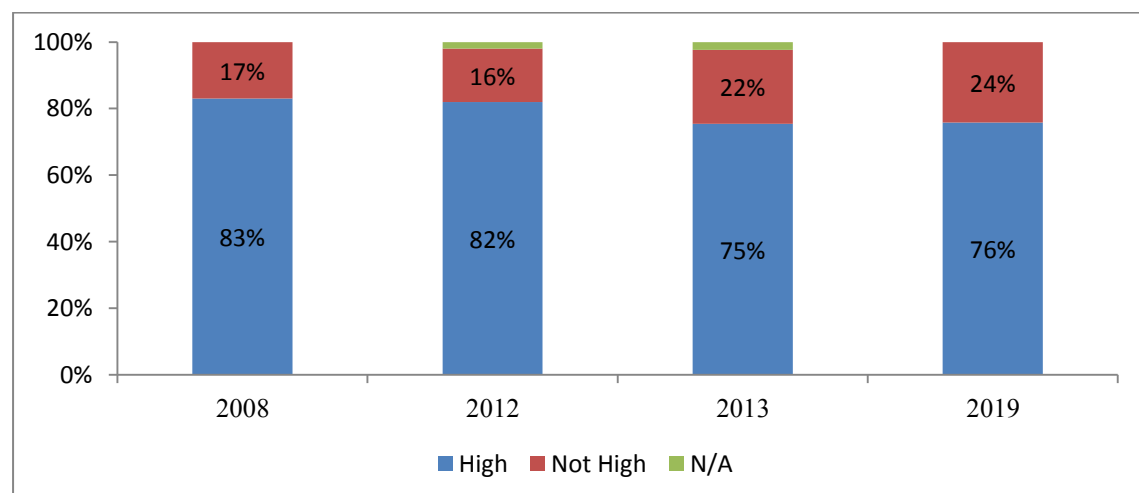


Chart 2: Quality of live in the settlement, percentage, settlers, by year



When asked about the future, settlers and Palestinians expressed opinions diametrically opposed to one another. 46% of settlers believe that the long-run objective of Israel (all answers were related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) is

annexation of the WB (28% believe that the long-term objective is to annex the WB without providing the Palestinians equal political rights, another 18% believe that annexation goes hand in hand with deporting all Palestinians living in the WB), 23% mentioned that it is to withdraw from some of the WB after ensuring Israel's security. Only 2% believe that it is to withdraw to the 1967 border after ensuring Israel's security. Nonetheless, 29% of the respondents said that they don't know what the long-term objective of Israel is. Meaning, most settlers do not believe that the long-term objective of Israel with regards to the future of the WB is related to the well-known formula of retreating to the 1967 borders after ensuring Israel's security as a basic condition of any peace agreement.

In addition, it is noticeable that **settlers who live outside the main settlement blocs (those who are most likely to be evacuated in case of territorial withdrawals) are more likely to mention that Israel's long-term objective is annexation – 51% compared to 45% of those who live in the main settlement blocs.** Nonetheless, the percentage of those who believe that annexation should mean deporting all Palestinians is higher in the large settlement blocs compared to those who live in remote areas – 20% and 11% respectively.

In addition, people who are politically more centrist are more likely to mention that they don't know what Israel's long-term objectives are. Unsurprisingly, those who identify as right wing believe the long-term objective of Israel is annexation, at significantly greater rates than those who are centrist. Only 3.5% of respondents with centrist political positions believe Israel's goal is the annexation and deportation of Palestinians, compared to 19.4% of those who identify as right wing and 32.9% of those who identify themselves as very right wing.

Chart 3: Long term aspiration of Israel, settlers, percentage

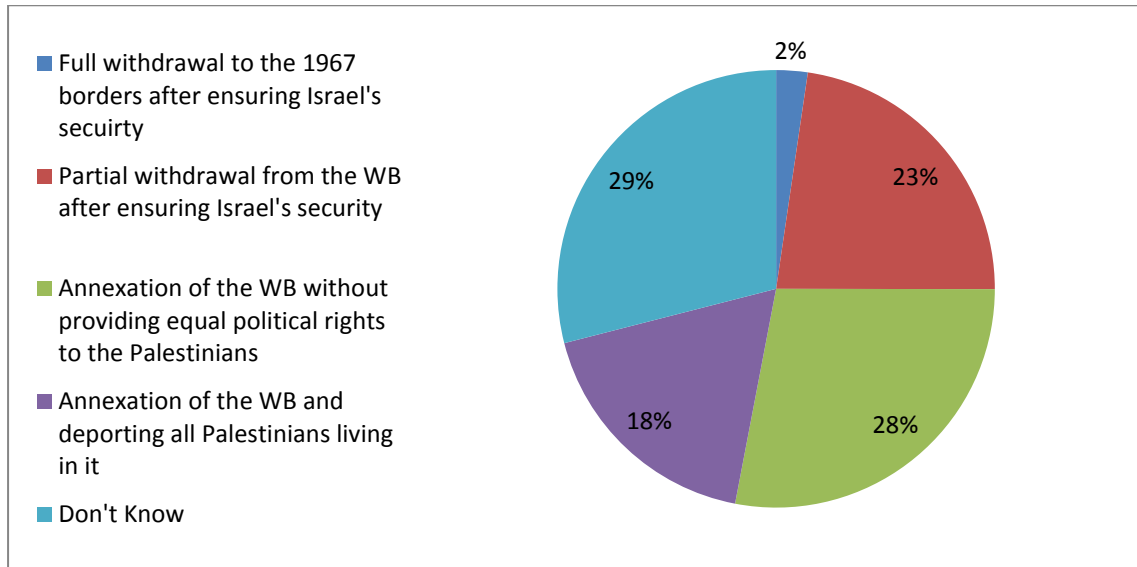
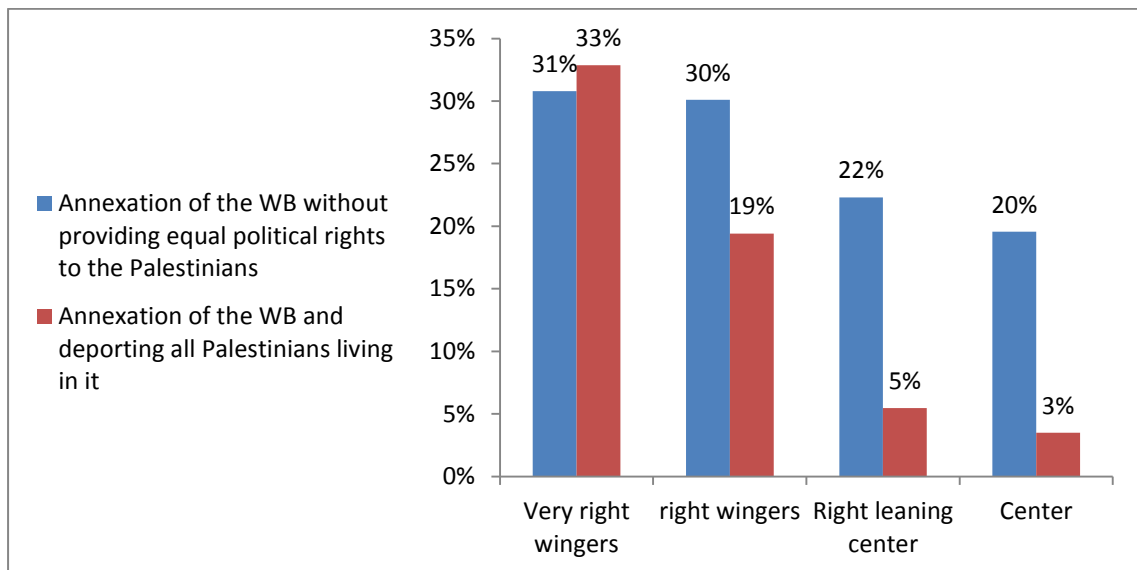


Chart 4: Long term aspiration of Israel, by ideological breakdown, percentage



Perhaps one non-intuitive finding was the willingness of settlers to view Palestinians as regular people caught up in a conflict, rather than an eternal or primordial enemy. When given these two options, the majority – 55% - of the settlers believed that "Palestinians are humans just like everyone else, but there's a conflict with them", and 40% of the settlers see them as the enemy. Naturally, among different groups of settlers the answers vary. First, it is noticeable that older people are much less likely to consider the Palestinians as enemies – this is consistent with the general Israeli

Jewish population, in which older groups show more moderate or dovish attitudes than younger people, who are more hardline. Accordingly, among the settlers, a majority of young respondents view Palestinians as the enemy: 53% of settlers aged 18-24 and 44% of settlers aged 25-34 believe in this, but only 29% of the people aged 55-64 and just 14% of settlers aged 65 or more believe that Palestinians are enemies.

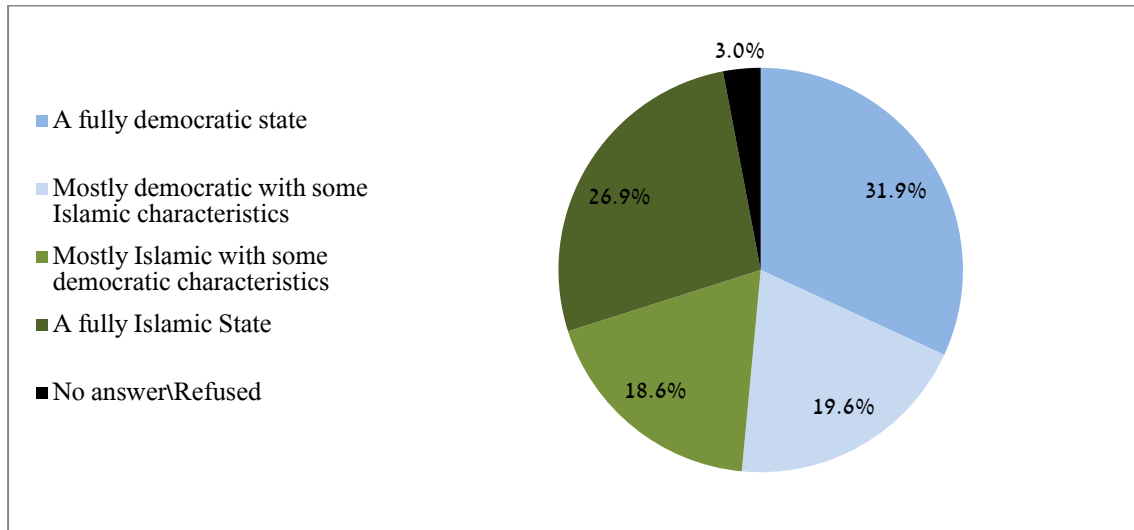
Table 1: Willingness of settlers to view Palestinians as regular people caught up in a conflict vs. primordial enemy, by age group breakdown, percentage

Age group	Regular people caught up in a conflict	Primordial enemy	Don't Know
18-24	38%	53%	9%
25-34	54%	44%	2%
35-44	52%	43%	5%
45-54	65%	32%	3%
55-64	62%	29%	9%
65+	78%	14%	8%

Naturally, 69% of the respondents who identify as very right wing consider the Palestinians enemies, and this portion declines according to gradation of ideology: among those who called themselves “right” (as opposed to “very” right) just 39% view the Palestinians as enemies, while only 17% of those who identify as right-leaning-center and 20% of the people who identify as politically centrist agree with this statement.

When imagining a future with a completely independent Palestinian state Palestinians are divided – 52% would like the state to be more democratic, and 46% would like the state to be more Islamic. Somewhat surprising is the fact that more women than men would like to see a fully Islamic state or a mostly Islamic state with some democratic characteristics – 53% and 42% respectively. Also, there's a generation gap – **59% of the people aged 60 or more would like to see a more democratic state, while 48% of the population aged 30 or less would like to see a more democratic state. This age difference among Palestinians shows certain symmetry with the hardline attitudes among younger Israelis.**

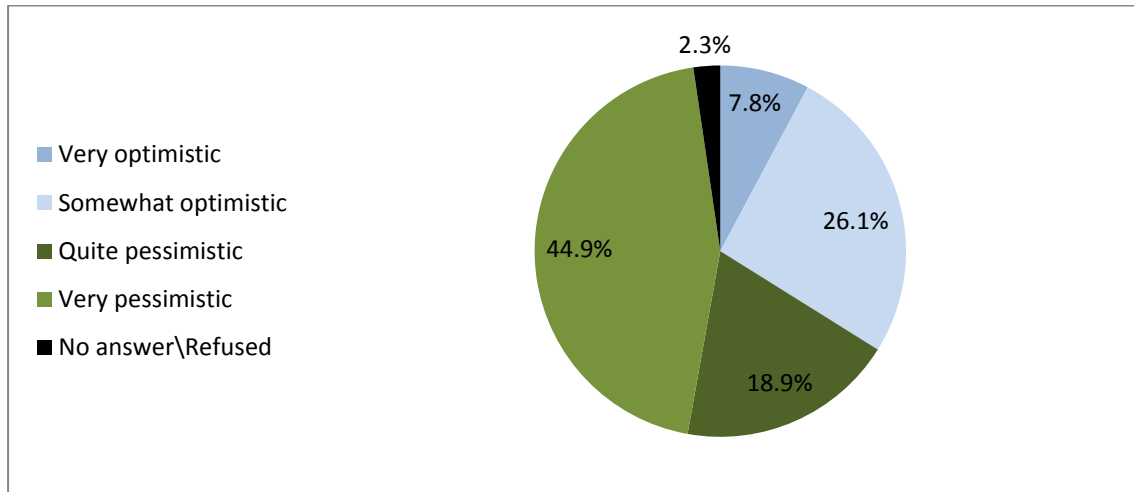
Chart 5: Preferable kind of state among Palestinians – Democracy vs. Islamic state



When asked about the long-term goals of the Palestinian Authority and the PLO, half of the respondents replied that they believe it is either to regain control over all or some of the territories conquered in the 1967 war. About 1 out of 5 of Palestinians (21%) believes that the Palestinian Authority's greatest long-term goal is to conquer the State of Israel and regain control over the pre-1948 Palestinian territories. Another 11% think that the PLO's objective is to conquer the state and destroy much of the Jewish population in Israel. The remaining 17% of the respondents don't know what the long-term objectives of the Palestinian Authority are.

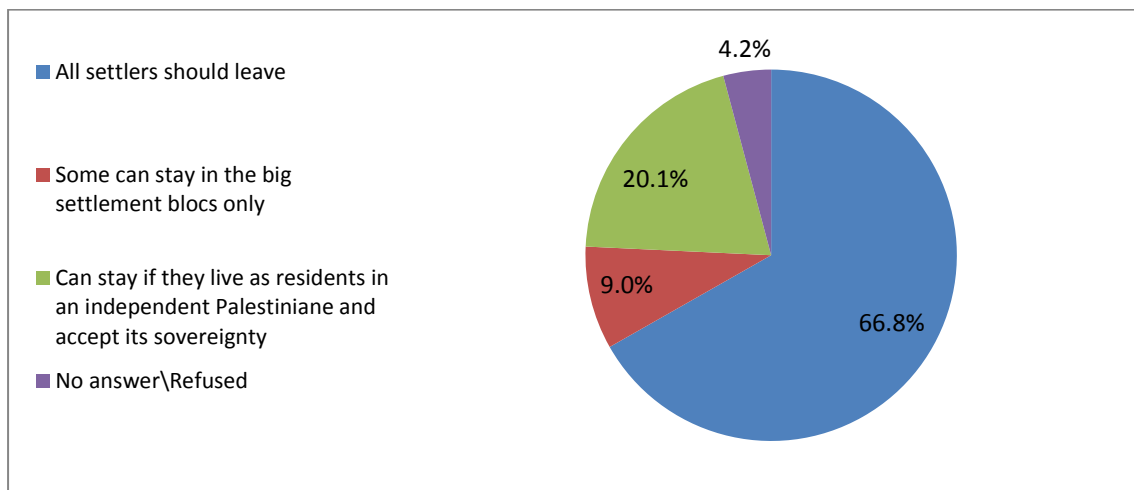
Following years of conflict and a lack of progress in negotiations with Israel, the majority of Palestinians are pessimistic about the feasibility of reaching an agreement with Israel in the coming years. Only 8% of Palestinians are very optimistic about the feasibility of reaching an agreement with Israel, 26% are somewhat optimistic, and a majority of 65% of Palestinians is quite or very pessimistic about the feasibility of an agreement.

Chart 6: Level of optimism among Palestinians about the feasibility of reaching an agreement with Israel



Palestinian attitudes towards settlers: When asked about the future of the settlers, without thoroughly explaining the scenario of them being able to stay under Palestinian sovereignty, a majority of 67% of Palestinians believed that **all settlers living over the Green Line in Palestine should leave**. Only a minority of 9% agreed that some of the settlers would be allowed to stay in the big settlement blocs. **However, quite surprisingly, 20% of Palestinians agreed that settlers would be allowed to stay if they live as residents in the independent Palestinian state and accept Palestinian sovereignty.**

Chart 7: General attitudes among Palestinians towards Israeli settlers in a future agreement



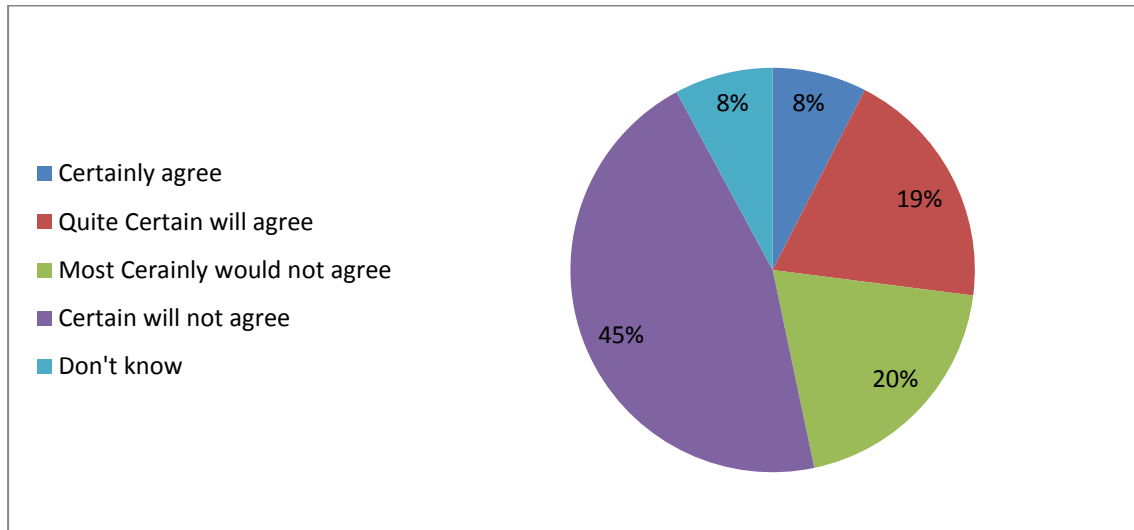
Evacuation-compensation – results among Israeli settlers and comparison to past researchers

The following scenario has been presented: *"If in the following months the Israeli government would contact people in your settlement and would explain to them that as part of its initiative to prepare for the possibility of evacuating settlements if a peace agreement is reached, they shall offer settlers the option to move to another settlement within the main settlement blocs or to relocate within the Green Line. This would make them eligible for financial compensation that would enable them to purchase adequate alternative housing"*. Respondents were asked to mention whether they would agree to move under these conditions.

Similarly to past surveys, 27% said they are certain or quite certain they would agree to move under those conditions, and 65% said they are either certain or quite certain they would not be willing to move. **Nearly half of the respondents (45%) said that they are certain they would not move.**

- People from the political center are more willing to evacuate – 52% compared to 20% of those who identify as right wing and 17% of those who identify as very right wing.
- 47% of the secular people but only 11% of the religious population are certain or quite certain they would evacuate. Ultra-Orthodox settlers are more willing to evacuate (35%).

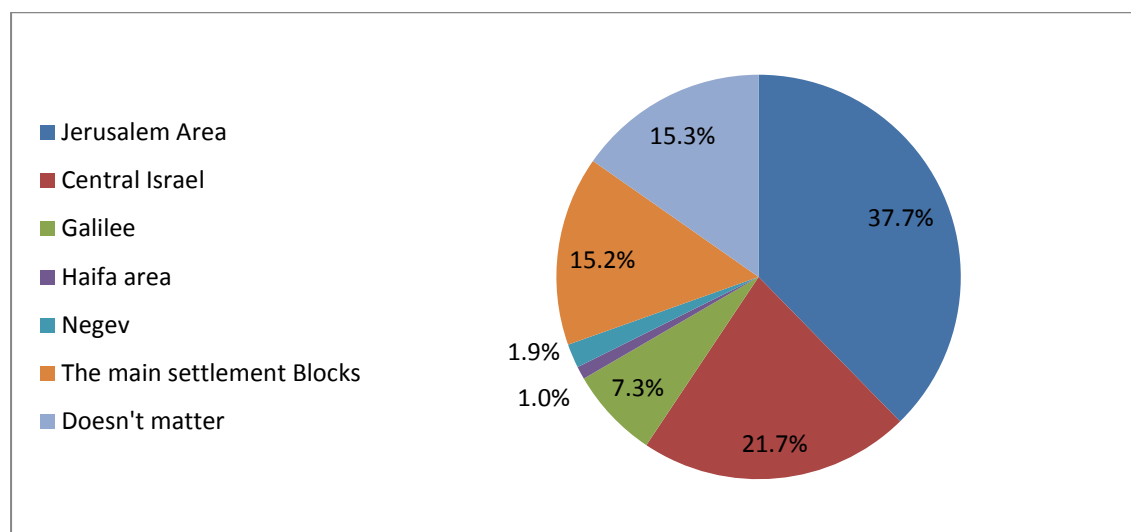
Chart 8: Willingness of settlers to evacuate as part of an evacuation-compensation deal



When asked about the proportion of residents in their settlement that would agree to move – 44% believed that only a minority would be willing to move, 18% believed that around half of the residents would agree to move and nearly the same percentage (18%) said they believe that no one would move. Only 11% said that they believe that a majority or all of the residents would move. **There's no meaningful difference in this question with regards to past surveys.**

Respondents were given an option to choose which region in Israel they would prefer to move to, if they did leave their settlement. 38% mentioned that their first priority would be the Jerusalem area. Another 22% mentioned that they would prefer to move to the center of Israel. Only 15% want to move to the main settlement blocs in the WB. Less than 10% mentioned that they would like to move to the Galilee, Negev or Haifa area. About 15% said they have no preference. **Ultra-orthodox are more interested in moving to the Jerusalem area, while 47% of the secular people want to move to center of Israel.** 54% of the religious group would like either to stay in the main settlement blocs within the WB or to move to the Jerusalem area.

Chart 9: Preferred destination for evacuation among settlers, percentage



It has been found that different policy provisions only affect settlers' decisions slightly. Thus, even if settlers would have the option to move their entire community to the main settlement blocs or to the Negev and Galilee, their willingness to evacuate would hardly increase their likelihood or not at all increase (65% and 86% respectively). Respondents are more concerned about their economic situation; 28% mentioned that appropriate compensation or appropriate employment for them and for their partner would very much affect their willingness to evacuate.

Table 2: Percentage of settlers who would be willing to evacuate when given various concessions

	Very Much	Moderately	Slightly
The ability to move your entire settlement to the main settlement blocs that would stay under Israeli sovereignty	18%	16%	65%
The ability to move your entire settlement together to the Negev or Galilee	6%	8%	86%
Appropriate compensation	28%	14%	58%
Appropriate employment for you and your partner	28%	12%	60%

When respondents were asked to mention how they would react under such an evacuation-compensation scenario, only 28% mentioned they would evacuate (15%

mentioned they would evacuate before the evacuation date and another 13% mentioned they would only evacuate when they are forced to). Another 39% said they would resist without the use of force, and 21% mentioned they would resist with force if deemed necessary. Unsurprisingly, the settlers who are most likely to support forceful resistance are the ones who identify as very right wing, with 44% mentioning they would resist with force if deemed necessary.

When evacuating was put in the context of an agreement in which the government of Israel would decide to evacuate all settlements outside the main settlement blocs, both with a majority in the Knesset and a majority in a referendum, 42% mentioned they would move to other settlements within the settlement blocs, and 25% said they would leave the WB to other areas in Israel. Only 9% mentioned they would leave Israel. However, almost a quarter of respondents (23%) mentioned that they don't know what their favorite course of action would be.

The biggest concern of the settlers in the evacuation scenario is the fact that they see evacuation as a political and security mistake (52%). Other concerns include: waiving state lands is considered a religious offense, the potential loss of the community in which they live, that everything they built would go down the drain, and that relocating would harm their families. While the most common concern was over the fact that evacuation is a political and security mistake, in some groups the religious offense answer was more common – very right wing settlers (22%), people who live in remote settlements (17%), and religious people (16%).

Main Scenario - Settlers can remain as permanent residents in a Palestinian state while retaining Israeli citizens

Settlers were presented with the following scenario: *“Israel and the Palestinian authority reach a permanent agreement in which Israeli Jews who currently reside within the West Bank would be allowed to remain and would still be citizens of the state of Israel, but they would live under Palestinian sovereignty alongside security coordination with Israel. Each settler would be given the option to decide to remain in their settlement or to evacuate”*.

Palestinians were presented with a similar scenario: *There's an agreement for two separate states, and Palestine becomes independent. In this agreement, settlers are allowed to stay in Palestine as permanent residents, if they are law-abiding, and they will be under Palestinian sovereignty although they remain citizens of Israel. Both leaders sign it.*

Such a scenario received very low support among the settlements. Only 11% said they would support the agreement, while 85% said they oppose to such an agreement. The greatest support was obtained among centrist settlers (24%), still very low. **Among Palestinians 39% said they would somewhat or strongly support such an agreement, while a majority of 58% would somewhat or strongly oppose it. Only 5% of those who said they are certain they would not evacuate in an evacuation-compensation plan said they support the idea, while 93% said they oppose it.**

Interestingly, 32% of Palestinians who said that all settlers living over the green line should leave the Palestinian territories replied that they would be somewhat or strongly supportive of them staying under Palestinian sovereignty when this was presented as part of an agreement supported by both leaders.

Chart 10: Settlers positions' on the main scenario

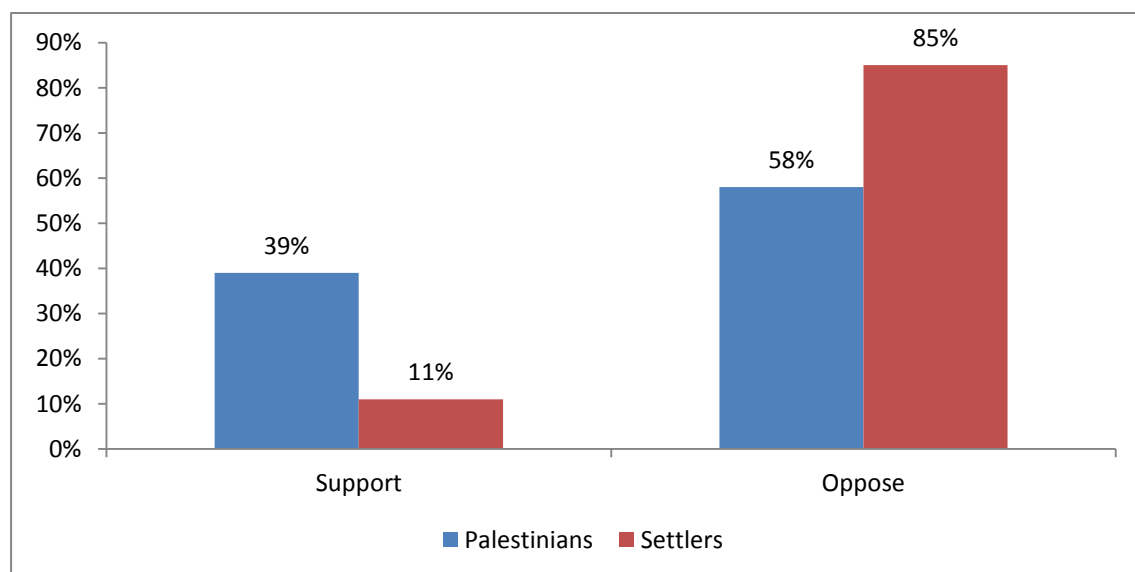
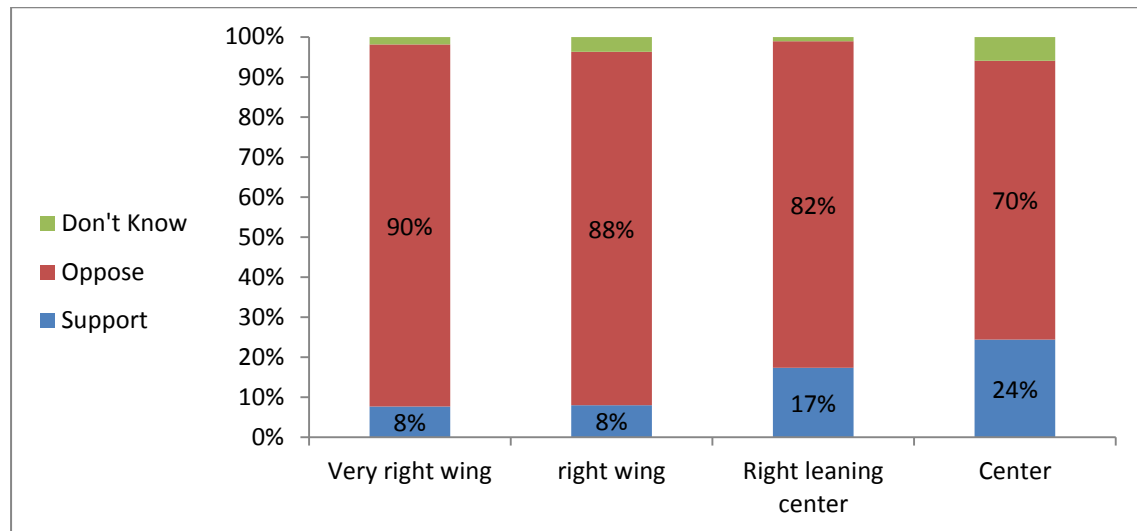


Chart 11: Settlers positions' on the scenario, based on political affiliation



A majority of 57% of the settlers said that their greatest concern is from the damage to their personal security. 24% mentioned that their biggest concern from such a scenario is from the loss of state values. Respondents were less concerned about violations of religious beliefs, loss of income, or damage to their standard of living.

Following the presentation of the scenario, both settlers and Palestinians were asked to state their opinion on a series of policy provisions regarding specific situations that might occur if settlers stay under Palestinian sovereignty in a future Palestinian state.

Among settlers, statements about security cooperation with Palestine and the ability to hire private security forces were received with mixed feelings. While 27% of settlers and 24% of Palestinians mentioned that it would increase their support in the agreement, 32% and 30% respectively said it would decrease their support. **It is possible that some felt that coordination with Palestine and the ability to hire private security forces would improve their sense of personal security; however, others felt it would decrease their sense of security since the IDF will no longer be protecting them became clearer.**

Nearly half of the settlers (48%) mentioned that if a rabbi that they respect would support the agreement and encourage settlers to stay in the WB, it would increase their support in the agreement. Comparatively, only 12% mentioned it

would decrease their support, meaning rabbinical influence was the most powerful influence in shifting support towards the agreement. Support of generals, military, and political figures also leads more people to support the agreement but less dramatically compared to the support of a respectable rabbi. In addition, **40% said that if a significant number of settlers would choose to remain in the small settlements, then it would increase their support in the agreement** compared to 27% who said it would decrease their support.

Among Palestinians, two policy provisions seemed to be widely accepted – both generally and among those who opposed the agreement: (1) Adding a section to the agreement mentioning that settlements such as caravan outposts, those on private lands, those with recent history of violence against Palestinians, and those that disrupt travel routes, will be evacuated in any agreement. (2) There has been a wide support to open borders and coordination between Palestine and Israel on issues such as security, economy, water, and infrastructure.

Two more policy provisions received a majority of support among Palestinians³. (1) Settlers who chose to remain can be transferred to Israel if they break the law or conduct any violent act. (2) The continuation of the security cooperation under the condition that the Israeli military will not be allowed to enter Palestine unless by agreement.

³ However, did not receive a majority of support among those who originally opposed the agreement.

Table 3: Influence in support of policy provisions about the agreement among settlers

Policy provision	Increases	Doesn't effect	Decreases
Tight security coordination between Israel, the IDF, and the Palestinians security forces including a joint force to prevent terror.	27%	35%	32%
The ability to hire private security force to settlers who chose to remain	24%	41%	30%
The fact that a significant number of settlers would choose to remain in the small settlements	40%	25%	27%
The agreement will include open borders between the two states, and coordination would exist between Israel and the Palestine on issues such as security, economy, water, and infrastructure.	28%	34%	31%
A rabbi that you respect would encourage Jewish settlers to stay in the WB	48%	35%	12%
Generals and military commanders in the IDF encourage Jewish settlers to stay in the WB	30%	47%	19%
Politicians from the national camp encourage Jewish settlers to stay in the WB	25%	54%	17%

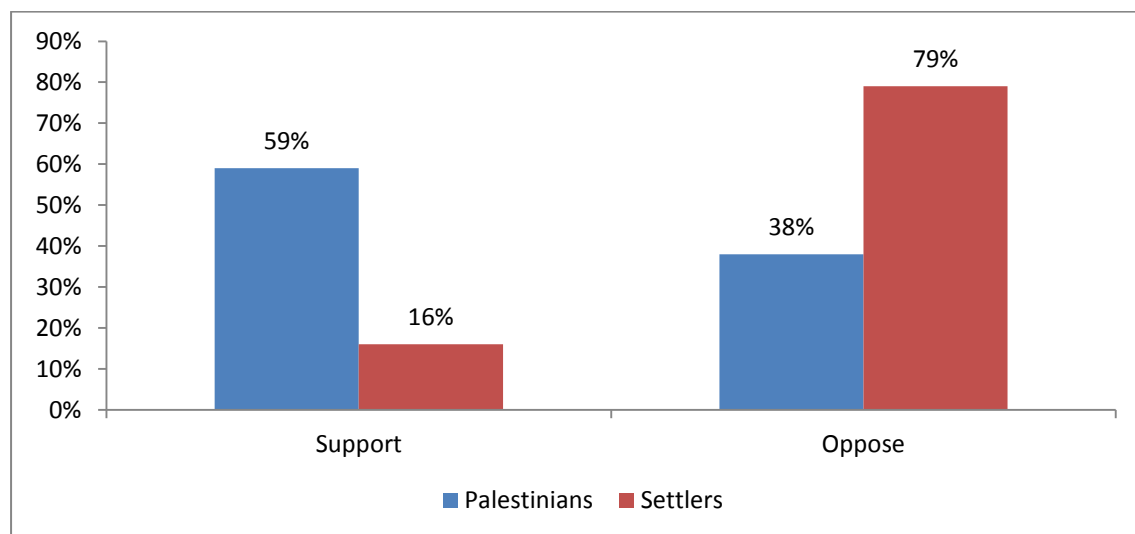
Table 4: level of acceptance of policy provisions about the agreement among Palestinians and among Palestinians who originally opposed the agreement

Statement	Total	Opponents to the agreement
In the agreement, settlements such as caravan outposts, those on private lands, those with a recent history of violence against Palestinians, and those that disrupt travel routes, will be evacuated in any agreement	78%	73%
The agreement will include open borders between the two states and coordination would exist between Palestine and Israel on issues such as security, economy, water and infrastructure	69%	57%
In the agreement, security cooperation continues but Palestine is completely independent, and the Israeli army does not have a right to enter Palestine unless by agreement	63%	51%
Settlers who choose to remain will live under Palestinian law and they can be transferred to Israel if they break the law, including committing any violent act	58%	43%
Settlers who choose to remain will live under Palestinian sovereignty, but they will remain Israeli citizens and will vote only in Israeli national elections – they are not allowed to vote in Palestine and cannot elect people to the Palestinian government.	50%	38%
In the agreement, Palestine commits to protecting Jews living in Palestine just like any other resident	48%	34%
In the agreement, settlers who choose to remain can hire private security guards for their settlements, but all private guards are subject to Palestinian sovereign law	48%	38%
Settlers are given a choice to remain as residents under Palestinian sovereignty, while remaining citizen of Israel, or they can go to Israeli sovereign areas – they are not required to remain	40%	23%

Following the presentation of the policy provisions, both settlers and Palestinians were asked once again to mention if they support or oppose such an agreement. **Among settlers, support increased only slightly from 11% to 16%, However, one of the most interesting findings is that support among Palestinians increases from 39% to a majority of 59%.** Among settlers, the increase of support among settlers who reside outside the main blocs increased by only 3 percentage points from

10% to 13%, and remains very low. Among those who said they are certain they would not evacuate in an evacuation-compensation plan support in the plan rose from 5% to only 10%. Among Palestinians 45% of those who originally opposed the agreement responded that they would either strongly support it or somewhat support it.

Chart 12: Settlers positions' on the main scenario following the presentation of the policy provisions



Among settlers, populations that showed more support for the agreement following the presentation of these statements include the political center oriented population, traditional, and secular people. Nonetheless, right wing people and very right wing people, as well as religious and Ultra-Orthodox people, were much less affected by those these statements – their support for the agreement hardly changed. Yet, it is important to note that 44% of the religious respondents and 78% of the Ultra-Orthodox respondents emphasized that if a rabbi would encourage people to remain in their remote settlements, it would increase their support in the agreement.

Further evidence for the lack of support from such an agreement among settlers is that **46% of the respondents mentioned that the fact that settlers could remain in their settlements under Palestinian sovereignty as part of a future long term agreement actually decreases their support for the two state solutions compared**

to an agreement that is based on evacuation. 39% said that it doesn't affect their support, and only 10% mentioned that the option to remain in their settlement actually increases their support for a political agreement with the Palestinians.

Another factor that was tested was the percentage of respondents who claimed they would protest against such an agreement if it would be signed by both leaders and accepted in a referendum by both sides. In this question respondents could have chosen between the option of supporting the agreement and the option of accepting it without supporting. When those options were presented, 34% of the respondents said they are supportive of such an agreement, while 40% said they don't support it but accept it. Only 17% said they would protest through civil means while only 3% said they would protest through violent means.

Regarding the possibility of being influenced by the support of an admired figure such as a family member or a religious figure, the majority of Palestinians mentioned it wouldn't influence their support in the agreement. Only 18% said that it would make them more supportive of the agreement. Among the Palestinians who said they would at least somewhat oppose the agreement, only 8% said a support of an admired figure would make them more supportive of it.

Qualitative results

To probe the possible solutions for the specific target group of hardline, ideological settlers, the focus groups were designed to recruit settlers who fit this profile, based on region, ideology and religiosity. Palestinians were recruited based on their proximity to the hardline settlements, to test their willingness to consider the alternative of allowing Jewish settlements to live in a future Palestinian state.

In total, six focus groups were held, according to the following specifications:

- Two groups of Palestinians:
 - Nablus (12)
 - Hebron (11)
- Four groups of Israeli settlers
 - Western Samaria & Ariel (held in Ariel, 8 Israeli women)
 - Gav HaHar settlements, eastern Samaria (held in Ariel, 8 Israeli women)
 - Binyamin region (held in settlement of Ateret, 7 Israeli men)
 - Gush Etzion region and Hebron (held in Alon Shvut, 8 Israeli men)

Background

Prior to introducing the emotional and sensitive topics of conflict resolution scenarios, all groups were asked a series of background questions. Settlers were asked to explain the main incentive driving them to live in settlements. Most respondents emphasized economical and communal reasons but nevertheless expressed a strong ideological basis, as soon as the political debate arose. One respondent expressed when saying:

"...I realized maybe I am here for ideological reasons. It's like the more we dig, we find our 'base'. Yes, it (living in settlements) is convenient, there are nice neighbors and it is close to Jerusalem but there's something more."

Both settlers and Palestinians were asked to reflect on their state's current situation. The Israeli settlers claimed the situation is highly positive. This finding was also in sharp contrast with Palestinians – in both groups participants agreed that the situation in the Palestinian Authority (PA) is very bad. In the eyes of Israelis, the state is

thriving and heading in a positive direction, mostly economically and internationally, with the Palestinian issue being raised merely as an interference which currently the state has successfully overcome. For the settlers, the possibility of being evacuated is highly remote; in fact it is hardly on their minds at all. Many pointed to major improvements in infrastructure and quality of life in their settlements over the years, and even security was of limited concern – mostly “on the roads,” (where attacks are more common) rather than inside the settlements, which are heavily secured. The lack of a political solution to the Palestinian issue has little effect on their lives, in their experience.

As mentioned, the Palestinians see the situation with deep pessimism. Both groups cited either economic hardship, lack of opportunities, or hope for the future as the main reason for their despair. They see this problem as a symptom of two main issues: first, the occupation and its effect on the Palestinian people, and secondly incompetence and corruption amongst Palestinian leadership.

General Stance Concerning a Peace Agreement

Participants in all groups expressed significant doubts that the two sides can ever reach a peace agreement. Palestinians expressed disbelief and distrust in their leadership and resent the idea that this leadership could make concessions on their behalf. In their eyes, the best solution for the situation ranged from total expulsion of the Jewish people from Palestinian territories to co-existence under Palestinian rule of the whole land.

Amongst settlers, the very idea of an agreement is seen as unrealistic. The option of co-existence under Israeli rule is one solution, but this raises fear of assimilation. When asked if such co-existence can be achieved, a clear divide surfaced amongst settler respondents. On one side were those who believed that the Palestinians will always pose a security threat towards Israelis, while on the other side participants – slightly more noticeable in the women groups, however also among men – seemed hopeful that such co-existence is possible.

When asked in a general sense about what concessions they might agree to as part of an agreement, both sides looked back on previous concessions and determined they did not benefit their side. The Palestinians expressed disappointment from the Oslo accords which are widely seen as a mistake. The respondents agreed that the concessions of the Palestinian people during the Oslo years were too grave and that Israel ultimately backed out of main parts of the accords.

Among settlers, acceptable concessions were limited to measures aimed at easing the economic situation in the WB or at allowing more freedom of movement. In the Binyamin and Gav HaHar groups any type of concessions were seen as a mistake, with the group from Binyamin widely supporting a tougher approach than the one taken today:

"I think concessions make things harder for them... you need to be very tough with Arabs, even crueler, so it will be clear that we're not giving up on anything".

When specifically asked about territorial concessions, all settlers groups objected to such an option, recalling the Israeli disengagement from Gaza as a grave mistake both

in terms of security and due to the evacuation of Jewish settlers. It was evident that the previous disengagement is seen as a traumatic event in the eyes of the respondents, most of which described it as a breach of trust between the government and its citizens.

Reaction to the Main Scenario

The idea of an agreement which includes an arrangement allowing Israeli settlers who refuse to be evacuated to stay in their settlements under Palestinian sovereignty raised skepticism, surprise, and disbelief amongst all respondents, Israelis and Palestinians alike. Amongst Palestinians, the initial reaction was highly negative, mainly due to fear from the settlers who will not be under Israeli sovereignty and outrage from an option that Israeli settlers would be able to keep lands that were un-righteously taken from Palestinian hands. A few respondents described such an agreement as a "double loss":

"Not only would we have to compromise and accept a two-state solution, but they would also remain on our lands!"

Nonetheless, three respondents from the Hebron group and one from Nablus saw such a solution as positive, emphasizing the fact that in order to gain Palestinian sovereignty they'll agree to allow such an arrangement.

Among settlers, such an option was met with suspicion and many respondents tried to understand the motive that can stand behind such an idea. In the Gush Etzion group, a few respondents saw positivity in the fact that it indicates the Israeli government, as a result of the Gaza disengagement, accepts that it is illegitimate to expel Jewish settlers. Others saw it as a trick aimed at easing opposition to an agreement:

"The slogan of the disengagement was 'Jews don't expel Jews'. So they're saying 'we're not expelling'..."

In addition, Israelis emphasized security dangers they will face in case of such a solution, expressing their disbelief in the PA being able to address their concerns. In total, all agreed the option is negative with only a small minority of the respondents saying they would consider staying under Palestinian sovereignty. The others, most of which came from the Gush Etzion group, said they will reluctantly leave.

For the groups in the Samaria region, the possibility of Israel giving up the land to the Palestinian was so extreme that they became emotional during the conversation (several women were near tears). Others felt a sense of betrayal from the country would be so hard that they would have to immigrate outside of Israel. When considering the option of being evacuated as a result of an agreement with the Palestinians or staying in their settlements, the desire to remain under Israeli sovereignty was the main reason to consider evacuation, together with the belief that the ideological connection to the land demands state sovereignty rather than personal presence.

Reaction to specific policy provisions

During the focus groups, different provisions for such an agreement were proposed. It's important to note that due to the fact that the scenario seemed so strange to all respondents, it was highly difficult to refine specific stances on every proposal from the overall disbelief in the possibility of such agreement.

The **first proposal** presented determined that Israeli settlers deciding to stay under Palestinian sovereignty will remain Israeli citizens, specifically voting in Israeli elections rather than in Palestinian elections. Amongst settlers, the provision created confusion, further emphasizing the fact they could not imagine living in a land governed by Palestinian rule. In what can be seen as an interesting role reversal, one respondent noted that "*No one wants to be a second class citizen*". With that said, the proposal seemed to be generally agreed.

On the Palestinian side, a situation of role reversal was also present as a debate arose concerning whether the Palestinian state should allow remaining Israelis full citizenship, including voting rights. Most respondents had no opinion on the matter or agreed to the proposal while one participant from Hebron believed that a truly democratic Palestine would have to allow such settlers full democratic rights.

The **second proposal** focused on the security cooperation between the Israeli and Palestinian states and determined such cooperation will exist, as it does today, but Israeli armed forces would be forbidden from entering Palestinian land. In Palestinian eyes, it is seen as basic that Israeli forces would not be allowed to enter the territory.

The presence of Israeli soldiers in the Palestinian state is considered as a basic no-go among Palestinians. Concerning security cooperation, most agreed that it is worrisome to have cooperation since it will allow Israel to keep some soldiers involved in Palestine, thus not truly ending the occupation. When asked if the Palestinian state would be able, without such coordination, to provide security for the Israeli settlers, a divide was evident amongst respondents. About half refused to offer protection due to the lack of equivalent measures being taken by Israel in order to protect Palestinians today. 6 participants agreed that it is the Palestinians moral and religious obligation to protect any person living under their sovereignty:

"If I have a sovereign and independent state, I'm obligated to protect any religion that lives under my sovereignty... it's my duty to protect and safeguard my guests and residents".

Lastly, few participants were skeptical that Palestinian security forces would be successful in protecting Israeli settlers and therefore offered that such protection be provided by international forces.

From the Israeli standpoint this proposal was met with absolute disapproval. The security cooperation, both today and as part of such a future scenario, is seen as benefiting the Palestinian side alone. Therefore, it would not support the safety of remaining settlers in a Palestinian state. Moreover, the option of living under Palestinian sovereignty while the IDF is forbidden from entering the area was described as "suicide" and starting of a "...duck hunting season".

The **third proposal** determined that remaining settlers would be allowed to hire private security firms to protect them. From the settler side, a need for such a proposal emphasized the fact that the agreement would not solve the hostility between the sides and was seen as a further disassociation of the Jewish state from its land. Moreover, respondents raised concerns over the effectiveness of such a method. With that said, four participants stated they would feel more secure with such a proposal. On the Palestinian side, the proposal was seen as a breach of Palestinian sovereignty and a danger to the Palestinian people. All but one respondent agreed that such a force would *de-facto* be an Israeli force on Palestinian soil and therefore opposed the

proposal. The respondent agreeing to it, from Hebron, conditioned his support on the forces abiding by Palestinian laws. Interestingly, when this proposal was brought up, many respondents that opposed to the previous proposal changed their attitude and agreed that protection should be provided by the Palestinian state.

The **last proposal** brought up **before the Palestinian group** regarded the mandatory evacuation of specific Israeli settlers and settlements deemed violent, isolated, or built on private Palestinian land. Concerning this proposal, a divide between the two groups was evident. In the Nablus group, all respondents pointed to the fact that in their eyes all settlements are built on private Palestinian lands and can be considered violent. Therefore, such a proposal would either be null or rather nullify the whole arrangement. In contrast, the Hebron group reacted slightly more positively to this proposal, with 8 of them seeing it as slightly improving the overall agreement.

On the Israeli side, the last proposal determined that remaining Israeli settlers would be Israeli citizens and subject to Israeli laws when inside the agreed settlements, but under Palestinian jurisdiction in any other area. All but three participants seemed to focus on the second part of the proposal, either ignoring or not understanding the implications of the first part. Thus, this proposal was met with outrage and anger at the thought of "*...having all duties and no rights*". Other respondents expressed disbelief in the possibility of Palestinian laws to be just, resulting in fear of grave circumstances to any settler who commits the smallest of crimes.