Israel and Palestine Peace Polls:

Public Opinion and Peace Making in Comparative Perspective

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Introduction

Like Northern Ireland the Israel Palestine conflict is one of the most intensely researched in the world. This includes public opinion. But at a time of change of Administration in the US, a new government in Israel and the appointment of George Mitchell as the President's Special Envoy to the Middle East the time seemed right to introduce some of the public opinion and public diplomacy methods employed as part of the Northern Ireland peace process to Israel and Palestine (Irwin, 2002). These methods have also been used with considerable success in Macedonia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Kashmir and Sri Lanka (see: peacepolls.org for full reports and other references).

One of the key features of these methods is to ask the people living in and through a conflict what they believe are the 'problems' that lay at the heart of their conflict, what the 'solutions' to these 'problems' might be and then to test these perceptions in both their own community and the society of their reported adversary. A month of such interviews in Israel and Palestine produced two very different questionnaires. One that focuses on the main features of a peace agreement, what negotiators frequently refer to as 'substantive issues' and the other on the failures of past negotiations associated with the peace process itself, 'procedural issues'.

This paper reviews some of the major findings of these polls in comparative perspective.[1] The results were mixed, that is to say some issues can be resolved with considerable ease where there is a clear consensus while other issues remain highly contentious. Critically, by drawing comparisons between the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and similar work undertaken in Northern Ireland the Balkans, Kashmir and Sri Lanka it is possible to assess the prospects for a successful outcome. From a public opinion perspective this analysis suggests that reaching a peace agreement for Israelis and Palestinians should be no more difficult than the negotiated peace in Northern Ireland. Past failures, it would seem were due to a weak process that in turn was the result of weak leadership and lack of international will.

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[1] The polls were commissioned by OneVoice Israel and OneVoice Palestine in collaboration with Dr. Colin Irwin of the Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool. The fieldwork to develop the questionnaires was undertaken by the research team in Israel and Palestine in November and December 2008. The fieldwork for the public opinion polls was undertaken by AWRAD of Ramallah and Dahaf of Tel Aviv following the elections in Israel in February 2009. Five hundred interviews were completed in Israel and six hundred in the West Bank and Gaza to produce representative samples of both populations in terms of age, gender, social background and geographical distribution.

Basic principles

There is, however, at least one very significant difference between the case of Northern Ireland and Israel and Palestine - the regional and global contexts. In Northern Ireland: Britain, Ireland, the European Union and the United States of America were all pushing for a settlement on almost any terms acceptable to both the Catholics and Protestants of the Province. The only deal that was not acceptable to the international community was full independence, but then only a small minority in Northern Ireland wanted that anyway. Almost everyone was 'on the same page'.

In the Middle East, however, the neighbours of Israel and Palestine are not all 'on the same page'. But, if the people of Israel and Palestine could reach an agreement then it would be very difficult, hopefully impossible, for such an agreement not to be acceptable to the UN, most Arab States and the rest of the world. So, putting to one side regional and global issues for the moment, could the people of Israel and Palestine reach a peace agreement if their political elites and the international community were 'on the same page'? What is the evidence from public opinion?

In December 1997 all the major elements of a potential Northern Ireland peace agreement were tested against public opinion. In this poll the basic principles of various new constitutional arrangements were compared with each other using a scale developed and agreed by the negotiators. Critically those being interviewed had 4 chances to say 'yes': 'essential', 'desirable'; 'acceptable' and 'tolerable' and only one chance to say 'no': 'unacceptable'. Table 1 lists these results for Northern Ireland as a whole and Table 2 lists the results for Catholics and Protestants. As can be seen, the constitutional arrangement that ended up being the cornerstone upon which the Belfast Agreement was built 'Power sharing with North-South institutions but no joint authority' was 'unacceptable' to 52% of Protestants and 27% of Catholics. Using the same scale the 'Two state solution – Two states for two peoples: Israel and Palestine' was only 'unacceptable' to 24% of Palestinians and 21% of 'Israelis' in 2009 (Table 3). So when it comes to basic constitutional principles an Israel/Palestine agreement should be much easier to reach than the agreement in Northern Ireland. Additionally, when we compare these results with other countries and conflicts around the world the only negotiation that was significantly more difficult to resolve than Northern Ireland was Kosovo where the international community chose, after failed negotiations, to impose a deal (Table 4).

Contentious issues

These comparisons suggest that a lack of political will is having a negative effect on the possibility of reaching an agreement in the Middle East. But, of course, the reality is more complicated than that. Other critical and more contentious issues are also making the reaching of an agreement very difficult. But how difficult, and are they more difficult than some of the problems that had to be addressed and resolved in Northern Ireland?

The most contentious issues that had to be dealt with in the negotiation of the Belfast Agreement were decommissioning of paramilitary weapons held by the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), Red Hand Commando

(RHC) and Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) on the one hand and the reform of the police, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), on the other. But decommissioning was only difficult because a minority of armed militias did not want to be disarmed while a majority of both Catholics and Protestants supported such disarmament. What was difficult, for most Protestants, was the reform of the RUC, who were seen by them as their protectors throughout the 30 years of the 'Troubles'. Table 5 details some options in this regard taken from the 'In Search of a Settlement' poll of 1997. Disbanding the RUC was 'unacceptable' to 82% of Protestants but a new name for the RUC, although not popular, was only 'unacceptable' to 59% of Protestants. Critically both Catholics and Protestants could see the reality that was revealed here, published in the *Belfast Telegraph* on 10, January 1998. With protests then, this is what was done, a change of name, reform but not disbandment.

In Israel and Palestine one of the most contentious issues to be resolved is the future of Jerusalem. A city that I have been visiting since 1968. A city that I love. Extensive research has been done on the future of Jerusalem from a public opinion perspective. 'Negotiating Jerusalem' (Katz, Segal, Levy, and Said, 2000) for example. I will not attempt to review all this work here. But in our poll we did make an as yet inadequate first effort to explore this issue using the 'essential', 'desirable'; 'acceptable'; 'tolerable' and 'unacceptable' scale. 'Divide the city according to Palestinian and Israeli neighbourhoods' was 'unacceptable' to 55% of Israelis and 61% of Palestinians. Clearly there is a degree of difficulty here comparable to the problem of police reform in Northern Ireland. When worked on and rephrased it was possible to reduce this level of resistance to 48% 'unacceptable' for Northern Ireland Protestants, as one element in a 'package' (Table 6). And when this reform was tested as part of that 'package' as a whole, for a comprehensive peace agreement, then 74% of Protestants and 81% of Catholics were willing to give their support to such an agreement (Table 7). Similarly it should be possible to resolve the question of Jerusalem and polls completed by Shamir and Shikaki indicate that this is the case (For example see, Shamir, Y., and Shikaki, K., 2009). I do not know if history will be repeated here but it is interesting to note that as the question of police reform was so contentious in Northern Ireland the details of that reform were not 'spelt out' in the Belfast Agreement. But, rather, they were passed on, with decommissioning of illegally held weapons, to international Commissions. Perhaps as a final element in a Middle East peace agreement Jerusalem will be handled in the same way?

In recent months suggestions have been made that the question of boarders should be addressed first in any future Israel/Palestine negotiations. The results for this question point to such a strategy offering some potential for success with only 30% of Palestinians and 39% of Israelis opposed to the suggestion that 'Israel should withdraw to the 67 boarder with adjustment through agreement of equivalent exchange of land' as being 'unacceptable' (Table 8). The equivalent question in the Shamir and Shikaki poll run at about the same time produced a result of 44% 'Disagree or Definitely disagree' for Palestinians and 48% for Israelis (Table 9). The scale devised 'by negotiators for negotiators' in Northern Ireland appears to be more helpful here by stretching the will of the people to the limits of what may be acceptable on any given item.[2] As we know, when put together as a 'package' the

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[2] Ideally identical questions should have been used for this comparison of scale and this will hopefully be done at some future date. Although I should like to have done this on this

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results will be even better. Critically of course, as was done in Northern Ireland and more recently in Sri Lanka this must be done with negotiators in real negotiations if the work is to have any lasting value.

Procedural issues

As both Israelis and Palestinians want a negotiated peace (79% and 71% 'essential or desirable' – Table 10) it should come as no surprise that nearly all the suggestions for strengthening the negotiations are welcomed by both Palestinians and Israelis. There was however one notable exception. Seventy three per cent of Palestinians and 52% of Israelis were opposed to the idea that 'The PLO/ Fatah and Israel should negotiate in secret' as 'unacceptable'. This is how the failed negotiations of the past many years have been conducted and both Palestinians and Israelis want change (Table 11).

At the top of the Israeli list (3rd on the Palestinian list) is 'The people should be kept informed of progress in the negotiations' at 74% 'essential or desirable' and 2nd on the Israeli list (4th on the Palestinian list) is 'Targets, timetables and milestones should be set for negotiations' at 68% 'essential or desirable' and so on and so on. Unlike all the questions previously reviewed in this research there was now much more agreement between Palestinians and Israelis than there was disagreement. After 30 years of 'The Troubles' and failed negotiations in Northern Ireland the governments of Britain, Ireland the US and EU moved to internationalise that process and make the people and civil society active partners/stakeholders. Israel and Palestine have much to learn from that. Their own people would welcome a stronger and more inclusive process.

One result from the procedural questionnaire, that particularly pleased me as encouraging was the suggestion that 'Israel should freeze settlements as a first step to deal with the settlements' at only 23% 'unacceptable' for Israelis (Table 10). Similarly only 23% of Palestinians were opposed to the proposal to 'Stop firing rockets from Gaza' as 'unacceptable'. The symmetry of this result was one of those happy coincidences that sometimes surface in this kind of research and that seem to make all the effort so worthwhile. Unfortunately, after the publication of this poll this particular procedural issue took centre stage as a precondition to be negotiated before negotiations proper. Such issues were always 'knocked down' in Northern Ireland by framing such questions in a balanced way between both Catholic and Protestant aspirations (Table 12) and I had hoped that the same would be done in Israel and Palestine. But this was not the case, partisan polling from an Israeli perspective on an Israeli agenda was allowed to dominate the media on the question of a settlement freeze and negotiations were allowed to stall on this point. Here are a few headlines from this war of words and polls that started in early June and appears to have culminated in an apparent 'win' for Netanyahu in the *Washington Post* article of August 19th with the headline 'Netanyahu's Defiance of U.S. Resonates at Home: Polls Show Resistance to Settlement Freeze'.

- 'Survey: Israeli Jews oppose settlement freeze and evacuation of outposts' (*Israel News:* Lerner, A., June 4, 2009)

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occasion it was not possible to do so because of the very tight budgetary constraints that precluded the use of maps etc. as done in the Shamir and Shikaki poll (see notes Table 9).

- 'Dahaf Institute Poll: Majority Of Israelis Support Obama's Settlement Policy' (*Yedioth Ahronoth:* Kadmon, June 5, 2009)

- 'Poll: 56% of Israelis back settlement construction' (*Associated Press:* June 12, 2009)

- 'J Street blasts 'distorted' poll that says Israelis against settlement freeze' (*Haaretz Service:* June12, 2009)

- ''Jerusalem Post'/Smith Poll: Only 6% of Israelis see US gov't as pro-Israel' (*The Jerusalem Post:* Hofman, G., and Smith Research/Jerusalem Post Poll, June 19, 2009)

- 'Poll: Israelis oppose full settlement freeze 69%:27%, only 6% say Obama favours Israel' (*Independent Media Review Analysis:* June 19, 2009)

- 'Netanyahu's Defiance of U.S. Resonates at Home: Polls Show Resistance to Settlement Freeze' (*The Washington Post:* Howard Schneider, August 19, 2009)

Conclusion

This simply should not happen and it gives me no pleasure or satisfaction to point out that I am repeating a warning made previously in Jerusalem (Irwin, 2006). It is bad negotiating practice that works against the requirements of public diplomacy in a conflict setting and those responsible for such biased research and reporting must take responsibility for the harm that they do. If peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine are allowed to proceed in this kind of research and media environment, over the coming months and years, on all the contentious issues that must be dealt with, then that process will become a very protracted and painful process indeed, polarizing their respective publics against the agreement that must be made. If the negotiation of a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine is to succeed then balanced research between the two communities must become the accepted norm with public funding generously prioritized on that basis.

Unfortunately events have conspired against such research and media standards in recent years. When I came to Jerusalem after the signing of the Belfast Agreement in 2002 I was able to meet with Israeli and Palestinian colleagues who were working together on joint research projects. Regrettably Israeli restrictions on the movements of many of these researchers and a Palestinian reaction to such restrictions on the right to academic freedom and freedom of association, as some form of normalization, is in my view counter productive to the necessities of peace making (Irwin, 2008). These restrictions and sanctions must now be lifted and until such time as this is done I am inclined to conclude that those who impose such sanctions and restrictions do not want peace on any terms except their own. They are not interested in either the public will or the public good and they are in no small measure responsible for the failed peace process that their people, their allies and friends are all obliged to suffer these past many years.

Table 1. A settlement 'package' for Northern Ireland tested in 1997

A comprehensive Northern Ireland settlement will probably have to deal with all of the issues covered in this questionnaire. Such a 'package' will be placed before the people of Northern Ireland in a referendum. Please indicate which of the following settlement 'packages' you consider to be 'Essential', 'Desirable', 'Acceptable', 'Tolerable' or 'Unacceptable'.

All of Northern Ireland per cent	Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Separate Northern Irish State - The complete separation of Northern Ireland from both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland and the establishment of a separate state within the European Union.	3	8	17	15	57
Full incorporation into the British State - Direct rule from Westminster and local government similar to the rest of the United Kingdom with **no** Northern Ireland Assembly or separate laws for Northern Ireland and **no** Anglo-Irish Agreement.	13	14	18	16	39
Continued direct rule (No change) - The continuation of direct rule from London in consultation with the Irish government under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Agreement .	2	8	21	25	44
Power sharing and the Anglo-Irish Agreement - Government by a Northern Ireland Assembly and power sharing Executive under the authority of the British government but in consultation with the Irish government under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.	3	8	24	23	42
Power sharing with North-South institutions but no joint authority - Government by a Northern Ireland Assembly, power sharing Executive and a number of joint institutions established with the Republic of Ireland to deal with matters of mutual interest. (But these arrangements will not include joint authority between the British and Irish governments).	3	11	23	23	40
Joint authority and power sharing - Government by joint authority between the British and Irish governments in association with an elected power sharing Executive and Assembly.	4	13	20	14	49
Separate institutions for the two main communities - Creation of separate structures for the government of each of the two main communities in Northern Ireland, subject to joint authority by the British and Irish governments.	3	5	17	20	55
Full incorporation into the Irish State - Full incorporation of Northern Ireland into the Republic of Ireland to create a single state within the European Union.	14	12	9	9	56

Table 2. A settlement 'package' for Northern Ireland tested in 1997 with results for Catholics and Protestants[3]

Protestant per cent	Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Separate Northern Irish State	3	8	20	17	52
Full incorporation into the British State	23	21	23	18	15
Continued direct rule (No change)	3	12	27	20	38
Power sharing and the Anglo-Irish Agreement	0	3	17	20	60
Power sharing with North-South institutions but no joint authority	4	8	17	19	52
Joint authority and power sharing	0	2	13	13	72
Separate institutions for the two main communities	0	2	12	16	70
Full incorporation into the Irish State	1	1	2	6	90

Catholic per cent	Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Separate Northern Irish State	3	7	13	12	65
Full incorporation into the British State	1	3	9	12	75
Continued direct rule (No change)	1	4	12	32	51
Power sharing and the Anglo-Irish Agreement	5	13	33	30	19
Power sharing with North-South institutions but no joint authority	3	13	31	26	27
Joint authority and power sharing	10	27	31	13	19
Separate institutions for the two main communities	6	7	25	26	36
Full incorporation into the Irish State	34	24	18	14	10

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[3] Although these percentages from the Northern Ireland polls add up to 100 it should be noted that the DKs were generally only 1 or 2 per cent. For clarity of presentation in the *Belfast Telegraph* the editor preferred the results to be presented in this way. He did not like to get a lot of letters pointing out that some results did not add up to 100.

Table 3. Final status options for Israel and Palestine tested in 2009

Palestinian per cent[4]	Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
1. (PALESTINIANS ONLY) Historic Palestine – From the Jordanian river to the sea as an Islamic Waqf	59	12	7	5	12
2. (PALESTINIANS ONLY) Historic Palestine – From the Jordanian river to the sea	71	11	5	3	7
3. (PALESTINIANS ONLY) One joint state – A state in which Israelis and Palestinians are equal citizens	18	13	10	12	43
4. One shared state - Bi-national federal state in which Israelis and Palestinians share power	8	7	7	12	59
5. Two state solution - Two states for two peoples: Israel and Palestine	38	15	10	11	24
6. Political status quo with economic development of Palestinian/the West Bank/Gaza (territories)	32	10	8	8	40
7. Confederation between West Bank and Jordan and between Gaza and Egypt	12	7	7	5	65
8. (ISRAELIS ONLY) Greater Israel – A Jewish state from the Jordanian boarder to the sea					

Israeli per cent	Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
1. (PALESTINIANS ONLY) Historic Palestine – From the Jordanian river to the sea as an Islamic Waqf					
2. (PALESTINIANS ONLY) Historic Palestine – From the Jordanian river to the sea					
3. (PALESTINIANS ONLY) One joint state – A state in which Israelis and Palestinians are equal citizens					
4. One shared state - Bi-national federal state in which Israelis and Palestinians share power	7	6	11	8	66
5. Two state solution - Two states for two peoples: Israel and Palestine	32	13	16	17	21
6. Political status quo with economic development of Palestinian/the West Bank/Gaza (territories)	27	18	12	14	24
7. Confederation between West Bank and Jordan and between Gaza and Egypt	19	20	15	17	21
8. (ISRAELIS ONLY) Greater Israel – A Jewish state from the Jordanian boarder to the sea	17	10	11	8	47

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[4] When these percentages do not add up to 100 the remainder were 'No Answer'.

Table 4. Per cent 'unacceptable' for agreements made or proposed in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Israel and Palestine.

	Per cent Unacceptable
Northern Ireland – Protestant (1997) Power sharing with North-South institutions but no joint authority	52
Northern Ireland – Catholic (1997) Power sharing with North-South institutions but no joint authority	27
Bosnia and Herzegovina – Bosniak (2004) Bosnia and Herzegovina with decentralised regions in accordance with European standards	17
Bosnia and Herzegovina – Serb (2004) Bosnia and Herzegovina with decentralised regions in accordance with European standards	28
Bosnia and Herzegovina – Croat (2004) Bosnia and Herzegovina with decentralised regions in accordance with European standards	39
Kosovo – Albanian (2005) Full independence and no choice of citizenship for Serbs in Kosovo (With choice of citizenship for Serbs – 52% 'Unacceptable')	13
Kosovo – Serb (2005) Full independence and no choice of citizenship for Serbs in Kosovo (With choice of citizenship for Serbs – 64% 'Unacceptable')	94
Indian administered Kashmir (2008) Regional integration and devolution – Pakistan and Indian Kashmir should function like a Co-Federation with an open boarder and decentralisation/local control in all Regions, Districts and Blocks (Muslim 27%, Hindu 40% and Buddhist 55% - 'Unacceptable')	32
Pakistan administered Kashmir (2009) Regional integration and devolution – Pakistan and Indian Kashmir should function like a Co-Federation with an open boarder and decentralisation/local control in all Regions, Districts and Blocks	9
Sri Lanka – Sinhala (2008) Enhanced Devolution – Full implementation of the 13th and 17th Amendments plus the devolution of significant powers to autonomous provinces negotiated at a peace conference	31
Sri Lanka – Tamil (2008) Enhanced Devolution – Full implementation of the 13th and 17th Amendments plus the devolution of significant powers to autonomous provinces negotiated at a peace conference	33
Palestine – Palestinian (2009) Two state solution - Two states for two peoples: Israel and Palestine	24
Israel – Israeli (2009) Two state solution - Two states for two peoples: Israel and Palestine	21

Table 5. Some of the proposals for police reform in Northern Ireland tested as part of the multi-party negotiations. 'No reform' was 'unacceptable' to 75% of Catholics while disbanding the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was 'unacceptable' to 82% of Protestants. The compromise reached included 'A new name for the RUC acceptable across the whole community' at a reduced 59% 'unacceptable' to Protestants.

	Religion	Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Create new community policing units as part of the RUC	Protestant	12	28	36	12	12
	Catholic	23	23	17	10	27
Create new community policing units separate to the RUC	Protestant	3	6	24	19	48
	Catholic	20	22	25	13	20
Disband the RUC and create a new single police force	Protestant	1	2	6	9	82
	Catholic	47	21	17	9	6
Disband the RUC and create a number of regional & city forces	Protestant	1	2	7	7	83
	Catholic	24	25	29	11	11
Leave current policing structures as they are	Protestant	30	24	27	10	9
	Catholic	3	1	8	13	75

	Religion	Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Special training in community relations and human rights	Protestant	30	34	34	2	0
	Catholic	65	22	11	2	0
A policing charter to set duties and responsibilities in law	Protestant	24	31	35	8	2
	Catholic	52	26	17	4	1
Monitor policing standards and publish reports	Protestant	23	35	32	9	1
	Catholic	61	23	10	5	1
Recruit more Catholics	Protestant	19	23	30	19	9
	Catholic	72	14	11	2	1
A new name for the RUC more acceptable across the whole community	Protestant	3	7	15	16	59
	Catholic	59	18	15	4	4
New emblems and symbols more acceptable across the whole community	Protestant	3	8	14	18	57
	Catholic	58	18	15	5	4
Require police to declare their membership of Loyal Orders	Protestant	9	9	10	18	54
	Catholic	71	12	7	5	5
Do not allow police to be members of Loyal Orders	Protestant	5	8	9	9	69
	Catholic	69	12	7	7	5
Make the Oath of Allegiance more acceptable across the whole community	Protestant	9	15	14	15	47
	Catholic	57	16	11	5	11
The police should not normally be armed	Protestant	5	12	13	8	62
	Catholic	34	31	17	9	9
Leave the police service as it is	Protestant	28	26	23	13	10
	Catholic	2	1	6	12	79

Give more responsibility for the management of the police services to:	Religion	Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
The Secretary of State	Protestant	8	8	23	23	38
	Catholic	11	12	30	20	27
A new Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Assembly	Protestant	5	17	29	23	26
	Catholic	25	27	24	11	13
The Chief Constable	Protestant	23	26	32	13	6
	Catholic	5	6	24	19	46
The Police Authority of Northern Ireland	Protestant	17	23	38	12	10
	Catholic	5	5	24	20	46
A number of regional and city Police Authorities	Protestant	3	6	28	29	34
	Catholic	11	21	32	19	17
Community Liaison Committees	Protestant	4	10	26	21	39
	Catholic	22	27	28	13	10
Or no change - leave the responsibility for the police service as it is	Protestant	22	26	29	11	12
	Catholic	2	1	5	15	77

	Religion	Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Give the existing commission more scope to initiate and supervise complaints but maintain the role of the RUC in the investigation	Protestant	22	22	39	11	6
	Catholic	12	7	15	17	49
Establish a completely independent agency to deal with all aspects of investigations into complaints against the RUC	Protestant	13	24	32	14	17
	Catholic	75	15	5	3	2

Table 6. A comprehensive settlement for Northern Ireland tested as a 'package'

'I would like you to read this card. It contains the major elements of a possible settlement for the future of Northern Ireland.'

* A regional assembly made up from elected members who share responsibilities in proportion to their representation and employing a voting system, with other checks and balances, to ensure the fair participation of the whole community in government and the prevention of abuse of power.

* North/South bodies strictly controlled by the elected politicians who establish them to deal with a wide range of issues using various functions and powers appropriate to the areas of government policy being managed.

* Replace the Anglo-Irish Agreement and establish a 'Council of the Isles' to create a new relationship between London, Dublin, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast appropriate to the needs of the region as a part of Europe.

* Constitutional reform that embraces the principle of consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland to keep or change its status, guaranteed rights of British and/or Irish citizenship, and any other balanced changes required to implement the various agreements made at the Stormont Talks.

* A Bill of Rights that deals specifically with the political, social and cultural problems that have aggravated the conflict and a Human Rights Commission with responsibilities and powers to educate, monitor standards and bring cases to court.

* Reform the RUC to create community policing units as part of a two tier service restructured with a view to recruiting more Catholics and improving community relations under the authority of a new Department of Justice in a Regional Assembly.

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Results for Reform of the RUC:

Protestant

Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
3	8	19	22	48

Catholic

Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
40	21	21	9	9

Table 7. Results for the Northern Ireland settlement 'package' tested as a whole in March 1998 and the referendum result of 22 May 1998

Question: 'If a majority of the political parties elected to take part in the Stormont Talks agreed to this settlement would you vote to accept it in a referendum?'

March 1998.

Per cent	All of NI	Protestant	Catholic	DUP	PUP+UDP	UUP	Alliance	SDLP	Sinn Fein
Yes	77	74	81	50	68	83	96	95	61
No	23	26	19	50	32	17	4	5	39

Question: 'If you said 'Yes' would you still accept these terms for a settlement even if the political party you supported was opposed to them?'

March 1998.

Per cent	All of NI	Protestant	Catholic	DUP	PUP+UDP	UUP	Alliance	SDLP	Sinn Fein
Yes	50	46	53	24	24	50	87	70	22
No	50	54	47	76	76	50	13	30	78

Referendum result

22 May 1998.

Per cent	All of NI
Yes	71
No	29

Table 8. Boarder options taken from Israel/Palestine 'peace poll'

PALESTINIAN per cent	Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
1. Israel should withdraw to the 67 boarder	78	8	3	4	6
2. Israel should withdraw to the 67 boarder with adjustment through agreement of equivalent exchange of land	38	11	9	9	30
3. Boarder established by the security wall	14	3	1	5	73

ISRAELI per cent	Essential	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
1. Israel should withdraw to the 67 boarder	12	5	7	7	60
2. Israel should withdraw to the 67 boarder with adjustment through agreement of equivalent exchange of land	10	10	21	11	39
3. Boarder established by the security wall	8	13	24	13	35

Table 9. Boarder proposal taken from the Truman Institute poll (Shamir and Shikaki, 2009)

V16) (Q41-1) The Palestinian state will be established in the entirety of Judea Samaria and the Gaza strip territories, except for several large blocks of settlements which will be annexed to Israel and will not exceed 3% of the size of West Bank. Israel will evacuate all other settlements. The Palestinians will receive in return territory of similar size along the Gaza strip. Do you agree or disagree with this item?

(An Israeli withdrawal from all of the Gaza Strip and the evacuation of its settlements. But in the West Bank, Israel withdraws and evacuates settlements from most of it, with the exception of few settlement areas in less than 3% of the West Bank that would be exchanged with an equal amount of territory from Israel in accordance with the attached map)

	Israeli Jews	All Israelis	Palestinians
1. Definitely agree	14.4%	15.3%	4.3%
2. Agree	31.2%	30.7%	50.0%
3. Disagree	21.9%	21.2%	31.5%
4. Definitely disagree	26.2%	27.1%	12.1%
5. DK/NA	6.2%	5.6%	2.1%

Table 10. Priorities for rebuilding confidence in the peace process[5]

Palestinian per cent	Essential or Desirable	Israeli % Unacceptable
1. Lift the siege of Gaza	99	48
2. Remove all check points	99	57
3. Release Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons	98	47
4. Israel should freeze settlements as a first step to deal with the settlements	98	23
5. Israel should demolish the wall	96	56
6. The new US Administration should place a high priority on Middle East peace	91	11
7. The UN should hold Israel and Palestine accountable and impose sanctions for all violations of international law	91	36
8. The UN should make recommendations for the resolution of the conflict	90	30
9. The EU should establish their own policies for the Middle East	87	26
10. EU and US should work with Egypt to end conflict between Hamas and Fatah	80	17
11. Civil society should get more involved in the peace process	74	14
12. Achieve peace through negotiation	71	5
13. Resist occupation/Israeli rule through violence to achieve peace	69	76
14. The Arab League should explain the Arab Peace Initiative to Israelis	66	25
15. If there is no agreement have an internationally supervised truce for 5 years	58	17
16. Resist occupation/Israeli rule through civil disobedience to achieve peace	54	41
17. Palestinians should explain themselves to the Israelis	52	
18. Stop firing rockets from Gaza	52	4
19. Stop all suicide/attacks against civilians	50	2
20. Release Gilad Shalit	42	6
21. Hamas should recognise Israel if Israel withdraws from the Occupied Territories/West Bank and Gaza	36	44
22. [Palestinians and Israelis should explain themselves to each other]		8
23. [Palestinians should declare a unilateral stop of attacks against Israeli targets to put pressure on Israel]		18
24. [The wall can be built on the 67 boarder]		50

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[5] Items in [brackets] were not asked in both Israel and Palestine.

Israeli per cent	Essential or Desirable	Palestinian % Unacceptable
1. Stop all suicide/attacks against civilians	90	24
2. Stop firing rockets from Gaza	87	23
3. Release Gilad Shalit	85	32
4. Achieve peace through negotiation	79	8
5. Palestinians and Israelis should explain themselves to each other	69	
6. The new US Administration should place a high priority on Middle East peace	59	3
7. Civil society should get more involved in the peace process	58	6
8. Palestinians should declare a unilateral stop of attacks against Israeli targets to put pressure on Israel	57	
9. Israel should freeze settlements as a first step to deal with the settlements	56	1
10. EU and US should work with Egypt to end conflict between Hamas and Fatah	55	9
11. If there is no agreement have an internationally supervised truce for 5 years	47	17
12. The EU should establish their own policies for the Middle East	46	4
13. The UN should hold Israel and Palestine accountable and impose sanctions for all violations of international law	42	2
14. The UN should make recommendations for the resolution of the conflict	39	3
15. The Arab League should explain the Arab Peace Initiative to Israelis	38	12
16. Release Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons	33	0
17. Lift the siege of Gaza	33	1
18. Hamas should recognise Israel if Israel withdraws from the Occupied Territories/West Bank and Gaza	31	39
19. Resist occupation/Israeli rule through civil disobedience to achieve peace	30	24
20. Remove all check points	26	0
21. Israel should demolish the wall	23	2
22. The wall can be built on the 67 boarder	20	
23. Resist occupation/Israeli rule through violence to achieve peace	11	12
24. [Palestinians should explain themselves to the Israelis]		29

Table 11. Priorities for negotiations[6]

Palestinian per cent	Essential or Desirable	Israeli % Unacceptable
1. Fatah and Hamas should reconcile their differences before negotiations	98	16
2. Address the roots of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians as an integral part of the negotiations	97	12
3. The people should be kept informed of progress in the negotiations	94	5
4. Targets, timetables and milestones should be set for negotiations	91	7
5. Negotiators should recognize each others just aspiration	86	7
6. The US should negotiate with all Palestinians including Hamas	77	37
7. Bring the Israeli pro-peace parties into the negotiations	72	22
8. The Arab Peace Initiative should be the bases for negotiations	69	41
9. Multilateral negotiations should include Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and the Arab League	69	35
10. Saudi Arabia should take a leading role	64	56
11.The Quartet's Road Map should be the basis for negotiations	44	30
12. The PLO/ Fatah and Israel should negotiate in secret	16	52
13.[Civil society should play a role in negotiations]		16
14.[Women's groups should be involved at all levels in negotiations]		29
15.[Representatives of political prisoners in Israeli prisons should be involved in the negotiations]		55
16.[Israel should allow the Palestinian prisoners to answer this questionnaire]		35
17. [Palestine and Israel should consult with Arab states on matters of mutual interest]		39
18. [Israel should agree to include Hamas in negotiations if they guarantee not to endanger Israel's security within the 1967 borders (without formally recognizing Israel as a Jewish state)]		52
19. [Negotiations should be hosted in a neutral country]		15

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[6] Unfortunately quite a few questions in this particular section were only asked in Israel. Hopefully this omission will be corrected in future polls.

Israeli per cent	Essential or Desirable	Palestinian % Unacceptable
1. The people should be kept informed of progress in the negotiations	74	1
2. Targets, timetables and milestones should be set for negotiations	68	2
3. Negotiators should recognize each others just aspiration	66	5
4. Fatah and Hamas should reconcile their differences before negotiations	58	1
5. Civil society should play a role in negotiations	54	
6. Address the roots of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians as an integral part of the negotiations	51	0
7. Bring the Israeli pro-peace parties into the negotiations	42	9
8. Women's groups should be involved at all levels in negotiations	41	
9. Negotiations should be hosted in a neutral country	37	
10. Multilateral negotiations should include Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and the Arab League	32	7
11. The US should negotiate with all Palestinians including Hamas	31	7
12. The Arab Peace Initiative should be the bases for negotiations	27	8
13. The Quartet's Road Map should be the basis for negotiations	27	24
14. Israel should allow the Palestinian prisoners to answer this questionnaire	26	
15. Palestine and Israel should consult with Arab states on matters of mutual interest	25	
16. Israel should agree to include Hamas in negotiations if they guarantee not to endanger Israel's security within the 1967 borders (without formally recognizing Israel as a Jewish state)	25	
17. Representatives of political prisoners in Israeli prisons should be involved in the negotiations	20	
18. The PLO/ Fatah and Israel should negotiate in secret	14	73
19. Saudi Arabia should take a leading role	12	13

Table 12. Some of the questions run in Northern Ireland in 1997 to deal with problems related to various parties' preconditions to negotiations.[7]

All the parties should be prepared to talk to each other.....

- Even if the cease-fires do not hold
- So long as the cease-fires hold
- So long as the cease-fires hold and there is also some decommissioning
- Only after decommissioning has been completed

Protestant	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Even if the cease-fires do not hold.	11	13	11	65
So long as the cease-fires hold.	25	30	29	16
So long as the cease-fires hold and there is also some decommissioning.	25	46	19	10
Only after decommissioning has been completed.	46	24	14	16

Catholic	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Even if the cease-fires do not hold.	45	26	17	12
So long as the cease-fires hold.	44	33	15	8
So long as the cease-fires hold and there is also some decommissioning.	27	40	16	17
Only after decommissioning has been completed.	16	16	16	52

- Keep the Talks going - Do not delay the Talks, let reform of the Republic of Ireland's Constitution be dealt with at the same time as all the other issues that must be part of an over all settlement.
- Delay the Talks - Until the reform of the Republic of Ireland's Constitution has been dealt with.

All NI	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Keep the Talks going	48	29	13	10
Delay the Talks	11	14	20	55

Protestant	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Keep the Talks going	36	29	18	17
Delay the Talks	18	19	19	44

Catholic	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Keep the Talks going	63	28	6	3
Delay the Talks	3	6	20	71

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[7] This early 'peace poll' did not include 'essential', which was added at a later stage in the Belfast Agreement negotiations on the suggestion of negotiators.

- Accept the Framework Document - as a basis for a final settlement on the future of Northern Ireland.
- Negotiate the Framework Document - All the parties should negotiate the Framework Document and try to reach an agreement on what they want to keep, change or add.
- Reject the Framework Document - as a basis for a final settlement on the future of Northern Ireland.

All NI	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Accept the Framework Document	17	29	27	27
Negotiate the Framework Document	31	31	25	13
Reject the Framework Document	9	12	22	57

Protestant	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Accept the Framework Document	14	21	25	40
Negotiate the Framework Document	30	28	26	16
Reject the Framework Document	14	17	21	48

Catholic	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Accept the Framework Document	20	39	29	12
Negotiate the Framework Document	32	36	22	10
Reject the Framework Document	4	6	21	69

- Stop all negotiations and govern - The British government should bring an end to the current Talks process and simply try to govern Northern Ireland.
- Stop all negotiations and introduce devolution - The British government should bring an end to the current Talks process and introduce devolved government to Northern Ireland similar to the proposals for Scotland and Wales.

All NI	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Stop all negotiations and govern	12	23	17	48
Stop all negotiations and introduce devolution	12	15	18	55

Protestant	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Stop all negotiations and govern	18	30	16	36
Stop all negotiations and introduce devolution	18	18	17	47

Catholic	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
Stop all negotiations and govern	6	14	15	65
Stop all negotiations and introduce devolution	5	11	18	66

- If any parties leave the Talks - The remaining parties, whoever they are, should continue with their negotiations and try to conclude a settlement that can be placed before the people of Northern Ireland in a referendum.
- If Sinn Féin leave the Talks - The remaining parties, whoever they are, should continue with their negotiations and try to conclude a settlement that can be placed before the people of Northern Ireland in a referendum.
- If the remaining Unionists leave the Talks - The other remaining parties, whoever they are, should continue with their negotiations and try to conclude a settlement that can be placed before the people of Northern Ireland in a referendum.
- If any of the main parties leave the Talks - Then the Talks should be stopped.

All NI	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
If any parties leave the Talks	23	28	22	27
If Sinn Féin leave the Talks	30	26	19	25
If the remaining Unionists leave the Talks	15	18	20	47
If any of the main parties leave the Talks	20	16	19	45

Protestant	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
If any parties leave the Talks	19	25	25	31
If Sinn Féin leave the Talks	39	27	16	18
If the remaining Unionists leave the Talks	12	12	17	59
If any of the main parties leave the Talks	23	15	22	40

Catholic	Desirable	Acceptable	Tolerable	Unacceptable
If any parties leave the Talks	28	32	19	21
If Sinn Féin leave the Talks	20	25	22	33
If the remaining Unionists leave the Talks	20	27	22	31
If any of the main parties leave the Talks	17	18	14	51

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