



STUDY

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

ISRAEL

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

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The Holy Land and the Germans

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50 years after the start of diplomatic relations with Israel – Measuring attitudes of Israelis and Palestinians towards Germany and the Germans

2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the start of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel. In order to provide a meaningful analysis of the quality of these relations after five decades and be in a position to predict how they will look in future, it is vital to take into account the opinions of the citizens of Israel. However, the people living in the Palestinian territories are also affected by these relations directly and at a number of levels, so it is also important to include their assessments in this kind of detailed analysis.

70 years after the end of the Second World War and the unimaginable horror of the Shoah, how strongly is Germany's image still affected by the systematic persecution and murder of Jews across Europe? How do Israelis and Palestinians view the role of Germany in the Middle East conflict? How much credibility does Germany have in Israel and the Palestinian territories? Can Germany act as an "honest broker" in this conflict?

It is necessary to have a scientific basis for studying these questions in order to create a reliable foundation for the events and activities that will mark the 50th anniversary of the start of diplomatic relations between Israel and Germany. To this end, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Jerusalem and Ramallah offices decided to carry out a comprehensive survey to explore the attitudes of Israelis and Palestinians towards Germany and the Germans.

This was done against the backdrop of a difficult year marked by rocket attacks by radical Hamas on Israel, the Protective Edge military operation in the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014 and massive protests and major attacks, particularly in October and November 2014. In particular, the provocative actions of extremist groups with regard to the Temple Mount fuelled fears that the outbreak of a third Intifada was imminent.

With this study, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and its offices in Israel and the Palestinian territories are breaking new ground. Questions about German-Israeli and German-Palestinian relations have of course been the subject of surveys in the past. But this is the first time that such a detailed and representative survey had been conducted to investigate how Israelis and Palestinians view Germany, including targeted questionnaires providing opportunities for direct comparisons.



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I. METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Methodology used in the two sections of the survey

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Israel and KEEVOON Strategies, Research and Communications Ltd¹, directed by Mitchell Barack, carried out a random telephone survey of more than 1,000 Israelis over 18 years of age (using landlines and IP phones). The questionnaire contained 66 questions, including a series of open questions.

The respective population groups were asked these questions in one of three languages: Hebrew (between 4 and 14 December 2014), Russian (between 9 and 17 December 2014) and Arabic (between 18 and 22 December 2014). This random sample is representative of Israel as a whole and of the different linguistic groups within the overall population. It is also representative in terms of gender, age and place of residence. The Russian element of the sample was apportioned in accordance with countries of origin. The Arabic element of the sample was also apportioned in accordance with the four main places of residence of Israeli Arabs.

The margin of error for the survey is 3.16 percent.

The overall theme was tested in advance on four focus groups (young, secular people in Tel Aviv; middle-aged and moderately religious people in Haifa; older and very religious people in Jerusalem; and Israeli Arabs in Nazareth).

For the Palestinian section, from 3-6 December 2014, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung worked with its long-standing partners, the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research², headed up by Dr Khalil Shikaki. They surveyed a random sample of 1,270 people in 127 locations in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

In personal interviews, they were asked about their attitudes to Germany and to Germany's Middle East policy.³

The interviews were apportioned in line with the number of Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (60 percent to 40 percent). They also took into account the ratio of gender and different age groups in Palestinian society.

The margin of error for the survey is 3 percent.

The overall theme of 69 questions was tested in advance on four focus groups. Based on previous experience, single-sex focus groups were used. Two focus groups were run in Ramallah and two in Gaza City because of the geographical divisions in the Palestinian territories.

Summary of the key findings of the two surveys

The key findings of the **Israeli section** of this survey can be summarised as follows:

- Israelis have a very positive attitude towards Germany, with no significant differences between the various age groups. In the popularity rankings, Germany is the undisputed number one among European nations.
- Germany's role in Europe, international politics and the Middle East conflict is viewed extremely positively in Israel and there is a clear desire for Germany to play an even more active role in future. Israeli citizens do not have a negative view of the fact that the German government is involved in both Israeli and Palestinian issues.
- The role of the German Chancellor in German-Israeli relations cannot be emphasised strongly enough. Her popularity in Israel is extraordinarily high. This is particularly due to the support shown by Germany and the German government for Israel's right to exist.
- The differences between Arab and Jewish Israelis are relatively small. This similarity in attitudes points to a high degree of loyalty towards the Israeli state. It sends out a message that should be cause for reflection, particularly among the supporters of the proposed law for a Jewish nation state, which will restrict the rights of Israeli Arabs. Almost universally, Israelis of Russian descent have a more critical view of Germany. It seems likely that this is due to lingering stereotypes from the days of the Cold War. Israelis who are older or more secular take a more positive view of Germany and the Germans. Israeli men are more positive about Germany than women.

The key findings of the **Palestinian section** of this survey can be summarised as follows:

¹ See <http://www.keevoon.com>

² See <http://www.pcpsr.org>

³ The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in the Palestinian territories has been working with PSR for over ten years. Every three months it publishes a survey on political attitudes in the Palestinian territories. This is available free of charge from the Ramallah office's website, www.kas.de/palaestinensischegebiete.



- The Palestinians have good contacts with Germany, are interested in Germany and think that Germany is a role model in terms of its economic and political development. This positive image of Germany is particularly strong in Gaza because many people there have personal connections with Germany.
- Palestinians think Germany is a major supporter of Israel but understand the reasons behind this extraordinary and unusual relationship.
- Palestinians see Germany as a supporter of the Palestinian people and their desire for statehood. Yet German-Palestinian relations could still be improved at political level.
- Despite Germany's close friendship with Israel and the need to strengthen bilateral political relations, Palestinians believe Germany is one of their most important European partners and are keen to see more engagement from Germany at international level.

II. THE VIEW OF GERMANY FROM AN ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE (Dr. Michael Borchard)

The Israeli view of Germany

Germany is currently extremely popular in Israel. Almost 70 percent of Israelis have a positive opinion of Germany. And 28 percent – one in four Israelis – have a very positive opinion of Germany (Fig. 1). Only 23 percent of Israelis have a really negative opinion of the country where countless Jews were murdered just over 70 years ago. This positive attitude towards Germany has changed little over recent years: in 2007, 67 percent had a positive opinion of Germany and in 2009 the figure stood at 65 percent.⁴

Do you have a FAVORABLE or UNFAVORABLE impression of Germany?

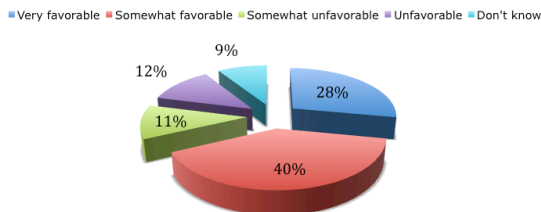


Fig. 1: Israeli attitudes towards Germany

⁴ Previous surveys carried out by KEEVON about the role of Germany in Europe are available on the Israel office's website at www.kas.de/israel.

It is interesting to see how attitudes vary depending on gender and religious background. Men are much more positive about Germany than women (76 percent to 62 percent). The more secular people are, the more positive their view of Germany. Among secular Jews, 77 percent have a good opinion of Germany. Among followers of traditional Judaism, the figure is still 67 percent. For Orthodox Jews it falls to 42 percent and drops still further to 31 percent among the ultra-Orthodox. Few differences were noted between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews. These trends can be seen throughout the whole survey. It is interesting to find out what is behind this positive attitude towards Germany and the Germans. Do family ties with Germany or relatives' German roots play a positive or negative role in this? Only 16 percent of Israelis have parents, grandparents or great-grandparents from Germany. 19 percent have relatives who are currently living in Germany (who either moved to Germany or were born there). Almost one in four Israelis have friends in Germany, but the vast majority of Israelis do not.

65 percent would like to travel to Germany and explore the country, and almost 45 percent have in fact already visited Germany. 66 percent of people would like to spend a holiday there. However, the survey shows that a great deal can still be done to build student exchange programmes, as only one percent of Israelis have taken part in these. The Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (Aktion Sühnezeichen) and other volunteer programmes have led to relatively large numbers of young Germans visiting Israel, but there has been less traffic in the opposite direction.

When assessing the validity of surveys, it is important to ask respondents about existing knowledge. If they are unable to answer even simple questions correctly, then the results of the survey are significantly undermined. 82 percent of respondents correctly identified Berlin as the capital of Germany. This high percentage may not only be based on general knowledge but also have something to do with the hype that is prevalent in Israel about the German capital. When asked why Berlin is so popular as a destination and city, there were two main responses – its modernity (26 percent) and – surprisingly – its historical significance (18 percent). Words such as "hip/cool" and "fun" trail behind at 5 and 6 percent, despite the fact that they are currently so well-used in this respect. This shows a clear difference between the Israelis and Palestinians. Palestinians tend to travel to Berlin with less 'baggage' and, at 30 percent, give Berlin's 'coolness' a much higher rating.⁵ Only 3 percent of Israelis perceive Berlin as being dangerous.

Along with personal reasons for being interested in Germany, the survey also highlights the particular features of Germany that the respondents believe make it a

⁵ See Section III for more details on the Palestinian responses.



country to be admired. Two attributes emerge well ahead of the others. In the number one spot, 80 percent of respondents state that Germany is a very innovative country – this from Israel, the land of start-ups, which takes great pride in its high levels of innovation. This trend was also confirmed in the focus groups. While many Germans look to Israel when it comes to start-ups, the opposite phenomenon is prevalent in Israel.

The 'Made in Germany' label is also a sign of quality in Israel, and German products are extremely popular: 65 percent of people actually buy and use German products. For 51 percent, the fact that a product comes from Germany is a positive factor in their purchasing decision.

Secondly, Israelis and Palestinians alike believe the quality of life in Germany is among the highest in the world. 78 percent of Israelis admire this particular characteristic of Germany.

Almost 55 percent would consider working for a German company, and 33 percent would be prepared to accept a job offer in Germany. 60 percent would not be willing to move to Germany, despite its high quality of life. Only the Israeli Arabs differ in this respect, with 44 percent stating they would be willing to accept a job and 50 percent saying they would not.

Israelis are happy to admire Germans when on holiday or from a distance, but it is not their dream to live in Germany. This may be because of memories of the past and lingering prejudices against Germans. People in Israel also have a deep sense of being rooted in their homeland, they simply don't move away!

These survey results also confirm the discussions triggered by the 'Milky protest'. During this episode in Autumn 2014, an Israeli who lived in Berlin remarked on his Facebook page that a particular chocolate pudding called 'Milky' that is very popular in Israel was three times more expensive in his homeland than in Berlin. This in itself would not have been so remarkable, if the young father had not at the same time called on other families to immigrate to Berlin. He used the word 'Aliyah', a term that is generally used to describe the immigration of Jews to Israel from all over the world. His Facebook post went viral, and it is hardly surprising that many Israelis automatically misinterpreted it as a provocation. The post triggered weeks of acrimonious debate in the media about the relationship between Germany and Israel. The key question revolved around whether Israelis should 'betray' the Israeli dream in order to enjoy a cheaper life in a country which had initiated the systematic genocide of the Jews.

A similar fundamental scepticism towards Germany can be seen in the assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of Germans in terms of character. 60 percent respond that Germans are straight and honest and don't try to cut corners. Only Israelis of Russian descent show

a clear deviation in their responses, with just 36 percent believing Germans are upright and honest.

Israeli Jews have a greater tendency to agree with classic stereotypes of Germans, perhaps influenced by historical considerations. 56 percent of Israeli Jews describe them as being cold and aloof. Among Israeli Arabs, this figure is just 41 percent. Among Palestinians, the figure is lower still.⁶ Only 26 percent of Israeli Jews agree with the statement "Germans are warm, open-minded and enjoy life", but it is agreed with by 44 percent of Israeli Arabs and over 50 percent of Palestinians.

Angela Merkel and the role of Germany as an "honest broker"

Almost 80 percent of respondents view Germany as a stable Western democracy. Over 52 percent agree with this statement very strongly. Over 60 percent agree that Germany is founded on and fully committed to Western values. 59 percent of respondents feel that relations between Israel and Germany have clearly improved since German reunification, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2015. This may be because reunification marked the end of the GDR regime's negative opinion of Israel and because fears in Europe about a revival of German nationalism proved to be groundless.

These positive opinions about Germany as a strong democracy are not only significant in historical terms but are also remarkable in light of their current implications. It seems that Israelis have such a high opinion of Germany that they are not deterred by controversies in this respect that have been raging in Israel. The citizens of Israel are aware of Germany's critical stance towards various issues, such as the building of settlements. 56 percent of respondents in Israel agree with the statement that the German government takes a critical stance towards settlement activity. 48 percent of Arab Israelis agree with the statement. This high figure has no impact on the Israelis' favourable opinion of Germany and their positive view of the actions of the German government.

At a time when we are celebrating 50 years of German-Israeli relations, we asked the survey participants to reply to an open question. We asked them to evaluate the relationship between Germany and Israel in their own words. The majority have a very positive and emotional response to these relations. 332 people, so one third of all respondents, describe relations as "warm", "close" and "friendly". In another question, the word "resilient" comes out on top.

⁶ See Section III for the results of the survey in the Palestinian territories.



Much of this positive opinion is thanks to the German Chancellor. 70 percent of Israeli citizens have a good or very good impression of her (Fig. 2). Only 11 percent have a negative or very negative view of her. This is all the more remarkable when we consider how Angela Merkel has never shied away from criticising Israel's settlement activities, which she has often referred to as a "major obstacle" to the Middle East peace process. Here too, some clear trends can be observed: men have a more favourable view of Merkel than women. Older Israelis like Angela Merkel more than younger Israelis. It is also interesting to see how opinions have changed over time. In 2007, she was favoured by 50 percent of Israelis; in 2009 this had grown to 56 percent; and now her popularity has soared to 70 percent.⁷ It seems likely that the Chancellor's foreign and European policies during the recent years of crisis have had a very positive influence on this rating.

Do you have a FAVORABLE or UNFAVORABLE impression of German Chancellor, Angela Merkel?

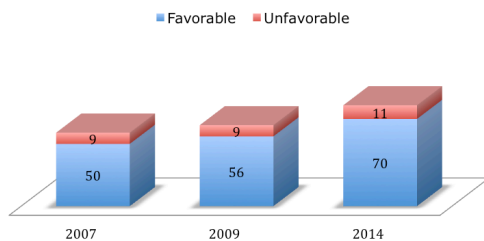


Fig. 2: Israeli impressions of Angela Merkel

Merkel's 'methodology' when it comes to Israel is to provide Israel with active assistance behind the scenes, including military support, for example in releasing the soldier Gilad Shalit in 2011 or supplying Israel with submarines. Nearly 70 percent of Israeli Jews view this positively, and this view is even shared by a majority of Israeli Arabs (55 percent).

Included in this picture is the fact that almost 80 percent of Israelis believe Germany is an important partner for Israel. But they also agree that Germany is also a strong partner for the Palestinians. 47 percent of Israeli citizens agree with this statement, while 35 percent disagree.

Similar responses are given to the question about whether the German government supports the Palestinian cause. 52 percent of Jews agree with the statement that the German government supports the Palestinian cause, a figure that is identical among Israeli Arabs.

It is particularly interesting to see the high level of agreement with the following statement: "The German

government is committed to working towards a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians." 62 percent of Israelis agree with this statement. 61 percent of Israeli Jews are in agreement and – remarkably – 74 percent of Israeli Arabs. This is a clear sign that Israeli Arabs do not feel a sense of disappointment about Germany's actions in the conflict. This favourable view of Germany's actions is even more surprising when we look at the figures in the Palestinian territories. Here, 46 percent of Palestinians agree with this statement, compared to 37 percent who disagree.

It then seems logical to ask the crucial question for future German-Israeli relations: can Germany be an "honest broker" between Israel and the Palestinians? A clear majority agree with this (54 percent), with 32 percent disagreeing. The importance of this can hardly be overestimated if the words "honest broker" involve a feeling that Germany can be totally trusted and that German history should no longer mean that the German government has to limit its actions when seeking a resolution to the conflict.

Germany's support for Israel's right to exist as a key aspect of the relationship

57 percent of Israelis believe that their country can trust the Germans and rely upon them. This is due not least to the solid stance taken by Germany and by the German government in defending Israel's right to exist. The statement Angela Merkel made in front of the Knesset in 2008 confirming that Germany's responsibility for the existence of the Jewish State of Israel forms part of the German national interest has obviously made a clear impact on the general public as well. 56 percent of respondents consider the "average German" a strong supporter of Israel's right to exist.

The respondents have a similarly positive view of the work done by the government. 83 percent agreed with the statement that the German government supports Israel's right to exist (Fig. 3). It is worth noting that there are no differences whatsoever between the Jewish and Arab sections of the population in Israel on this point. Once again, the same trends are apparent: the older and more secular the respondents, the more strongly they agree with this statement.

⁷ See footnote 4 about the surveys on the role of Germany in Europe.



The German government supports Israel's right to exist.

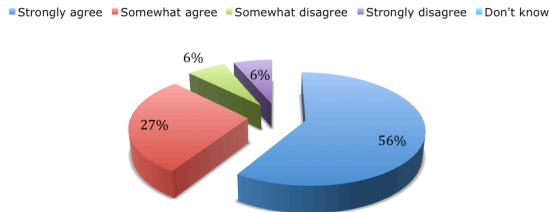


Fig. 3: Germany's support for Israel's right to exist

Of course, Germany's historic responsibility for the atrocities committed by the Nazis remains a strong and determinant aspect of German-Israeli relations. In an open question, we asked what first comes to people's mind when they think of Germany. In response to this question, 375 of the 1000 respondents immediately mentioned the Holocaust, 71 the "Nazis", with the "strong economy" coming a very weak third.

Almost 65 percent of Israelis believe that Germany will always have a special relationship with Israel. Only 23 percent are of the opinion that history should no longer influence relations. Interestingly, there are no differences between Jewish and Arab Israelis on this point. This view has also remained stable over time, and surveys conducted in 2007 and 2009 produced almost identical figures.⁸

The survey produced a somewhat more differentiated response to the question as to what the relations should mainly be based on. While a majority of Israelis, namely 42 percent, still believe that German-Israeli relations rest more strongly on a historic basis than on common interests, the difference between the two is no longer that significant. Not only are 33 percent of the opinion that common interests provide the basis for the relations, a further 19 percent of Israelis maintain that both history and interests play a role. This outlook is confirmed by all those, including the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, who advocate that Germany's historic responsibility for Israel should represent an important pillar of German-Israeli relations. However, a second pillar must complement this first one to guarantee the permanent stability of the partnership of the two states, namely one of mutual fascination, cooperation and close collaboration. 2015 being the anniversary year of the bi-lateral relations, this year should offer special opportunities to deepen cooperation further.

At the same time, this is one of the rare instances where the view of Arab Israelis differs significantly from that of Jewish Israelis. Almost 50 percent of Arab Israelis believe that common interests play the main role, and only 26 percent see historic reasons dominate.

One question that is definitely of interest in this context is who benefits more significantly from the relationship in people's view: Israel or Germany? Only 17 percent believe that Germany gains a greater benefit from the relationship, while 51 percent of Israelis think that their country benefits more strongly.

Where the future of German-Israeli relations is concerned, close to 25 percent accordingly would like to see trade in particular to be strengthened. That said, no fewer than 17 percent also wish to see cultural exchanges enhanced. It is remarkable that this cultural rapprochement is considered to be even more important than "hard" factors such as science and military cooperation. Arab Israelis even assign culture the highest importance in future relations.

However, at 12 percent, collaboration in the area of science and technology is also considered particularly valuable. Military cooperation ranks equally at twelve percent, but this is clearly considered less important by Arab Israelis.

Where the contents of German-Israeli relations are concerned, another pertinent question of course relates to the extent of Israelis' interest in news, in political, social and cultural events taking place in Germany. As one would expect, the figure here is on the low side, as it is for many other nations. 40 percent of Israelis profess an interest in news from Germany. Israelis obtain their news about Germany mainly from television (48 percent) as well as from the Internet, newspapers and magazines (46 percent). Contrary to what happened in the case of the "Milky protest", social media does not play a major role (eleven percent).

Another interesting question concerns the actors of German-Israeli cooperation in the sphere of civil society. They will ultimately determine whether the diplomatic relations will develop into friendship, a friendship that will then also be experienced as such by the countries' citizens. As was to be expected, town twinning tops the list here with 20 percent. A not insignificant 15 percent of respondents have heard of the volunteer services of the organisation Action Reconciliation (German: Aktion Sühnezeichen). The figure for cultural exchanges stands at 14 percent and that for the Goethe Institute at 12 percent. The political foundations also fared reasonably. No less than five percent have heard of the work of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, followed by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung with four percent each.

⁸ See footnote 4 with the reference to the surveys on Germany's role in Europe.



While the quality of relations may be good in reality, there is still room for improvement where “image promotion” for Germany is concerned. At the beginning and the end of the survey, we put an open question to the respondents to find out what first came to mind when they thought of Germany. The responses showed that while the Holocaust still ranked first at the end of the survey, the country’s beauty and its friendship with Israel now followed directly in second and third place.

The German-Israeli relationship within the international and European context

Of course, the quality of the German-Israeli relationship does not rely solely on the bilateral relations. The way this special relationship is embedded within the international context is also of great significance.

First of all, it is remarkable that opinions about the European Union are significantly more positive than might be expected. The survey results do not substantiate the common assumption in Israel, but also in Germany and in the European Union, that relations between the Israelis and the European Union have reached a low point and that this is how Israel’s citizens view the matter. No fewer than around 53 percent have a favourable impression of Europe, while only 35 have a negative view. In this context, the Arab Israelis stand out particularly positively, with 80 percent of them professing a favourable impression of the European Union, and the Israelis of Russian extraction particularly negatively, with only 35 percent of them having a positive stance towards the EU. This positive stance towards the European integration project has also been very stable over time, even though the figures were somewhat higher in 2007 and 2009 at 60 percent. A dramatic decline in the ratings would look very different.

When considering this fundamentally favourable stance towards the European Union, the extent of Germany’s popularity in Israel stands out even more in comparison with the other European nations. Germany is in top position in this respect. Some 30 percent of respondents say that Germany has the best relations with Israel. The UK is in second place with just nine percent. The response is no less clear when respondents are asked with which country they personally would like to see the best relations. Once again, Germany comes top with 26 percent, far ahead of the UK and France as the next two.

In this context, Germany is given special credit for having sided with Israel very publicly within the European Union on several occasions. Some 62 percent of respondents agree with the statement that the German government defends Israel within the European Union.

But the Israelis do not just have a positive view of Germany’s role within Europe. The response to the question about people’s assessment of Germany’s international influence is also extremely positive. 71 percent of Israelis approve of Germany’s activities in international politics (Fig. 4), with as many as 37 percent of respondents even describing Germany’s influence in the world as “very positive”. Only the Arab Israelis deviate on this point, with just 57 percent approving German influence in international politics. The familiar trend, namely that approval is weaker among particularly religious Israelis, younger people and women, is also apparent in this area.

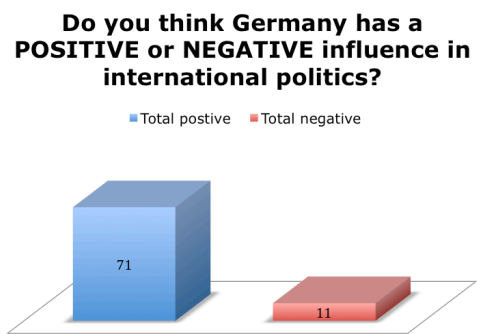


Fig. 4: Germany’s influence in the international arena

One important aspect in this context is party allegiance. In the Likud, Germany’s influence in the world is viewed with significantly greater scepticism (67 percent) than in the left-wing parties, but interestingly also in the more nationalist parties. The approval ratings among “Israel Beiteinu”, the party of Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, and Naftali Bennet’s party “HaBayit Hayehudi” are as high as 78 and 73 percent. Overall, however, one can say that all parties across the board are of the view that Germany has a positive influence on international politics.

Against the backdrop of the extremely favourable view of the measured and responsible foreign policy agenda of the German government, it is small wonder that at 60 percent, the majority of Israelis would like to see Germany play a more active role in international politics, with 27 percent even wishing for a considerably stronger role and only 14 percent demanding greater restraint. One surprising aspect, however, is the awareness among Israelis of the discrepancy between Germany’s significant international influence and the relatively modest interest in foreign policy issues shown by the country’s citizens, which has been confirmed by many surveys conducted in Germany. Many Israelis believe that the majority of Germans view the conflict in the Middle East with little concern. In the respondents’ estimation, only nine percent of Germans are very concerned and 24 percent somewhat concerned, while 55 percent are not concerned at all.



III. THE VIEW OF GERMANY FROM A PALESTINIAN PERSPECTIVE (DR. HANS MARIA HEYN)

The situation in the Palestinian Territories at the time of the survey

During October and November 2014, and therefore immediately prior to this survey, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip were on the brink of a third Intifada. Due to continuing provocations by extremist groupings focusing on the Haram al-Sharif (English: Temple Mount), various Palestinian attacks – one of them involving a synagogue in West Jerusalem that left several people dead – as well as the destruction and desecration of a number of mosques in the West Bank by Jewish extremists, the conflict threatened to escalate at the religious level. The Gaza Strip, which came to prominence in what was the third Gaza war in July and August 2014, did not gain as much media attention during the autumn as the events in Jerusalem and the West Bank. The renewed tensions in East Jerusalem and the West Bank in particular also hampered the activities of international organisations and international representatives in the Palestinian Territories. Before the results from the survey were published, it was therefore assumed that sympathy for Germany and the European Union would probably be rather low.

The Palestinians' image of Germany

In spite of these seemingly unpromising circumstances, the majority of the Palestinian respondents express a favourable view of the European Union and of Germany. 53 percent have a very favourable/favourable impression of the EU, while just 35 percent connect it with negative attributes. The situation is similar for Germany, which is viewed positively by 49 percent overall and negatively by only 33 percent. When you correlate these statements with the respondents' voting behaviour, it transpires that as many as 64 percent of Fatah voters have a favourable impression of Germany. Among Hamas voters, however, the percentage is as low as 37. The respondents view Germany's achievements in the medical and healthcare sector extremely positively. 82 percent evaluate them positively or even very positively. This is comparable to the statements on the economic situation, which 79 percent rate as positive or very positive. Germany is a country of innovation (85 percent agreement), with many Palestinians considering the quality of life in Germany outstanding. 76 percent of respondents agree with the statement that the quality of life in Germany today is among the highest in the world. When asked about the attributes frequently connected with "the Germans", such as "cold, aloof and serious", the majority (51 percent as opposed to 31 percent) of respondents in fact agree more with them being described as "warm, open-minded and enjoying life".

Besides the well-known aspects such as "love of work" and the "economic, cultural and civil society" achieve-

ments, the most important positive character traits mentioned by the respondents were "German open-mindedness" and "German optimism" (32 percent). This indicates that the Germans are not necessarily merely seen as reserved intellectuals and cold-hearted automata in the Palestinian Territories. Correspondingly, only a minority of Palestinians associate the German capital Berlin with the adjectives "strict" (2 percent), "cold" (5 percent) or even "dangerous" (1 percent). For over a third (35 percent), Berlin epitomises "coolness" and "fun".

The extent to which respondents associate Germany with National Socialism has declined markedly. In response to an open question, only four percent of Palestinians now automatically associate Germany with the "Hitler regime" (Fig. 5). In Gaza, the figure is as low as two percent – while this association still tops the list for as many as six percent in the West Bank. At 41 percent (and therefore clearly first and foremost), Germany is viewed as a modern republic strong in the areas of the economy, education and technology – and there is little discrepancy between the Gaza Strip (40 percent) and the West Bank (42 percent) on this point. A further ten percent – the second-largest percentage – associate Germany positively with its government and its system of government as a "strong, good and independent state". Added to this are a further five percent who associate Germany predominantly with "democracy and freedom". One remarkable aspect of the response to this open-ended question is that Germany is seen as a supporter of the Palestinian cause (correlation value of eight percent) as well as of the Israeli cause (correlation value of ten percent), with no great difference between the two values.

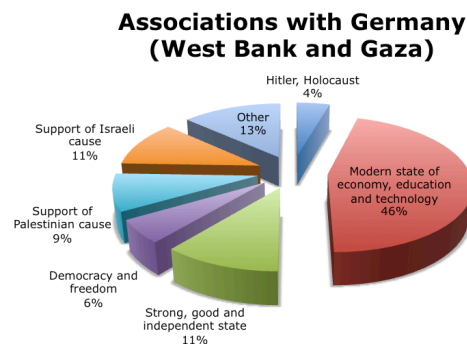


Fig. 5: Palestinians' associations with Germany

The very positive view the Palestinians have of Germany as nation with a strong economy is also reflected in their buying behaviour. In the case of some 60 percent of respondents, "Made in Germany" still acts as an incentive to buy, while only eleven percent are more likely to avoid products that are made in Germany.

Particularly in the Gaza Strip, people have a decidedly positive image of Germany. Over two thirds of respond-



ents (67 percent) there use German products – almost twice the proportion as in the West Bank (Fig. 6). A quarter of people in Gaza (25 percent) have relatives in Germany (compared to just twelve percent in the West Bank) and 17 percent have German friends (just eight percent in the West Bank).

The wish to visit Germany is also particularly prevalent in the Gaza Strip (63 percent agreement); in the West Bank, the figure is as low as 43 percent. In actual fact, only very few Palestinians have been to Germany. Only four percent of people from the West Bank and only three percent from the Gaza Strip have visited Germany to date, although one has to take the existing travel restrictions into consideration in the case of Gaza.

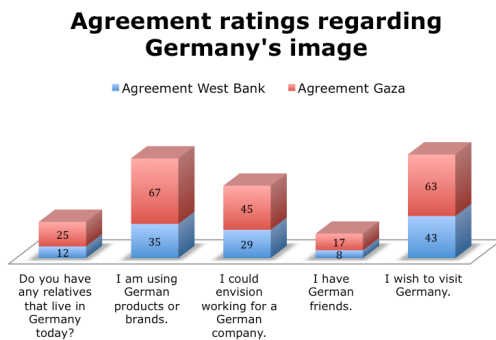


Fig. 6: Comparison of the agreement rates with respect to Germany's image

Also, there is no evidence of a fundamental dislike of the Germans in the Palestinian Territories; quite the opposite. Some two thirds of respondents (66 percent) have no objection to having "German friends", while only 28 percent voiced some reservations. There are, however, some differences between Fatah and Hamas voters in this respect. While 71 percent of Fatah followers would welcome German friends, the number is somewhat lower among Hamas supporters at 61 percent. That said, the Palestinians' interest in living in Germany or working there is markedly less pronounced than often thought. Precisely half the respondents state that they would have no objection to moving to Germany under the "right circumstances" and 41 percent would be interested in working in Germany given the right professional opportunity. While these figures reflect a strong attachment to the homeland and also frequently to family, comparable to the situation in Israel, they also illustrate Palestinian interest in potentially living and working in Germany.

There is little interest in German politics on the Palestinian side. Only close to a quarter of respondents (23 percent) professed an interest in German politics at an international level (unrelated to the Middle East conflict). This lack of interest pervades all age groups fairly equally and does not differ greatly between Hamas and Fatah

supporters either (interest by Hamas supporters: 24 percent; interest by Fatah supporters: 25 percent).

That said, over 40 percent indicate that they are interested in information about what is going on in Germany. "Soft" factors such as "art, culture and cinema", the level of freedom of the press or respect for human rights in Germany are viewed very positively or positively by a large majority. The only area where the Palestinian respondents see a need for improvement is that of the treatment of minorities, which approximately one quarter view negatively. But over 28 percent have heard of cultural exchange projects with Germany and a respectable 15 percent of exchange programmes for learning German. Eleven percent are aware of existing town twinning schemes with Germany, five percent have heard about the Goethe Institute, just under three percent about the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

The Palestinians demonstrate a high degree of awareness of the special relationship between Germany and Israel

The combined response to several questions indicates that the Palestinians are definitely aware of the special relationship between the Federal Republic of Germany and Israel. 47 percent of all respondents stated that Germany would always maintain special relations with Israel due to its historical responsibility. Merely 34 percent do not see a connection between Germany's history and its relationship with Israel. There is a marked discrepancy here between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. While 53 percent of respondents in Gaza are convinced that Germany and Israel will always maintain special relations, only 43 percent of respondents from the West Bank agree. No doubt, the more extensive personal and family contacts between Gaza and Germany have produced this greater awareness. What is surprising, however, is that Hamas supporters in particular have a better understanding of the special relations between Germany and Israel (51 percent agreement) than Fatah supporters (44 percent agreement).

Over 75 percent of the Palestinian respondents rate German-Israeli relations as excellent and characterised by mutual interest. Party allegiance does not appear to make any great difference to people's opinion in this area. The agreement rate for both Hamas and Fatah voters exceeds 70 percent. Only twelve percent of respondents describe German-Israeli relations as tense or negative. Just over half the respondents are aware of Germany's solid support for Israel's right to exist (55 percent), only 31 percent do not see this as part of the German government's agenda, 14 percent declined to answer this question (Fig. 7).



The German government supports Israel's right to exist.

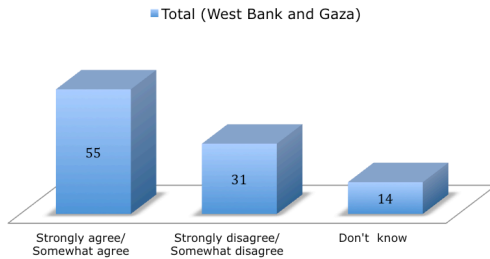


Fig. 7: Germany's support for Israel's right to exist

Even younger Palestinians aged between 18 and 28 are already aware of this important element of the German government's actions (agreement rate of 50 percent). The level of awareness increases with age, reaching the highest value of 62 percent among those over 50). Similar numbers of Palestinians believe that Germany is actively helping Israel "behind the scenes"; 55 percent agree with this statement (with 24 percent disagreeing). Once again, the agreement rate rises with age. 52 percent of Palestinians aged between 18 and 28 agree with this statement; among the respondents over 50, the figure is as high as 62 percent.

Taken together, these figures illustrate a high level of awareness of the special relationship between Germany and Israel among the Palestinian population and also reflect a certain level of understanding. When one considers that this survey was conducted at a time of greatly heightened tension between Israel and the Palestinians, this indicates all the more clearly the potential importance of Germany acting as a broker in this conflict.

There is room for improvement in Palestinian-German relations

In the eyes of the Palestinian respondents, there is scope to enhance relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Palestinian representatives. While Germany does not recognise the Palestinians' right to statehood – in line with the great majority of the other European countries – this should not be seen as a fundamental obstacle to political relations. The extensive development cooperation has also contributed to the high esteem in which Germany is held locally. In 2014 alone, Germany invested over 104 million euros in the Palestinian Territories – partly through the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.⁹ In the au-

turn of 2014, the parliaments of many European countries voted in favour of recognising a sovereign Palestinian state within the pre-1967 borders (these included: France, the UK, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, Portugal and Ireland). In the course of this "wave of recognition", the German government made it clear that it could not be expected to take a similar step without a conclusion to the peace negotiations accepted by both sides. In spite of this German restraint, 53 percent of the Palestinian respondents are convinced that the German government supports the Palestinians' striving for statehood (with 32 percent disagreeing). As many as 58 percent think that the "average German citizen" is in support of the Palestinian cause – only 21 percent express scepticism (Fig. 8). Respondents who profess allegiance to parties other than Fatah and Hamas show a particularly high level of agreement with this view (69 percent).

The average German citizen supports the Palestinian cause.

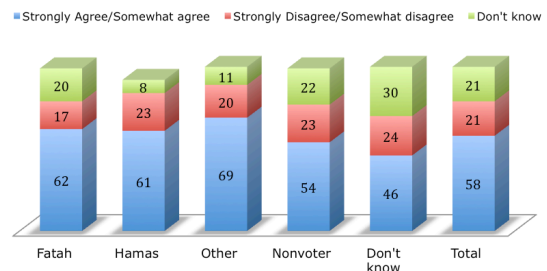


Fig. 8: German support for the Palestinian cause

However, only 25 percent agree with the statement that Germany is already an important partner for Palestine (almost 70 percent do not yet consider Germany an important partner). This reservation is also reflected in the opinions regarding German-Palestinian relations.

Only just over a third of respondents think that German-Palestinian relations have reached a stable and resilient stage. Over half of respondents described the relations as "not stable" in response to the counter-question. That said, 44 percent of Palestinians are already convinced that the German-Palestinian relationship is trustful – with only 40 percent disagreeing. These figures reflect the high level of trust, which Germany and German politics already enjoy in the Palestinian Territories today.

The Palestinians would like to see Germany playing a more active role at an international level and engaging more strongly in the efforts to resolve the Middle East conflict

⁹ BMZ, "Deutschland unterstützt weiterhin die Entwicklung der Palästinensischen Gebiete" (Germany continuing its support for the development of the Palestinian Territories), 20 Nov 2014, online at: http://www.bmz.de/de/presse/aktuelleMeldungen/2014/november/20141120_Regierungsverhandlungen-abgeschlossen-



As illustrated above, the Palestinians demonstrate a high degree of awareness of Germany’s special relationship with Israel. And although the respondents believe that there is room for improvement where the relations between Germany and Palestine are concerned, the majority of them would like to see Germany taking on a more active role in world politics, particularly on issues relating to the peace process in the Middle East. Over half the respondents (51 percent) would welcome Germany taking on a more active role in international politics, while only 17 percent would like to see Germany showing greater restraint. Fatah supporters (56 percent agreement rate) and the potential voters of third parties (61 percent agreement rate) are clearly in favour of a stronger engagement by Germany. Only potential Hamas voters show a different stance on this point. That said, 45 percent of them are also in favour of Germany taking on a more active role at an international level (disagreement: 34 percent).

The Palestinians display a clear desire to enhance relations with Germany. Almost three quarters of all respondents (74 percent) would like to see “very close” or “close” Palestinian-German relations. Only 16 percent disagree. The response to this statement is virtually identical whatever the voting behaviour of the respondents; 76 percent of Fatah voters and 69 percent of Hamas voters state that they are in favour of close/very close relations. The agreement rate is highest among voters for third parties, namely 81 percent.

If it were up to you how close would you like Palestine-Germany relations to be?

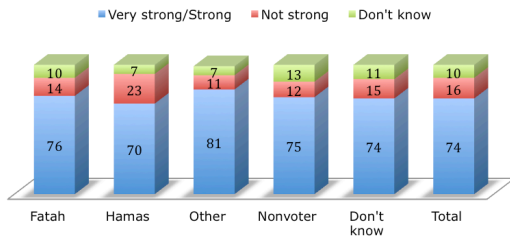


Fig. 9: Assessment of German-Palestinian relations

In the response to the question as to which country the respondents would like to see have the strongest relationship with Palestine, Germany comes a clear first, ahead of France and Spain (although the parliaments of these two countries have advocated recognition of a Palestinian state) (Fig. 10). Once again, Germany’s high level of popularity among people in the Gaza strip is striking.

Of the following countries, which would you like to see to have the strongest relationship with Palestine?

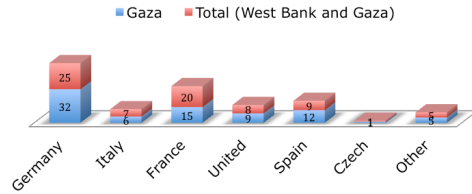


Fig. 10: Relations between EU countries and the Palestinian Territories

In summary, one can say that the European Union and Germany enjoy a high level of respect and esteem among the Palestinians. Particularly people voting for Fatah and potential third parties, as well as non-aligned voters look upon Germany particularly favourably. While potential Hamas voters also tend to be positively inclined towards Germany, their agreement rates lag behind those of the other voter groups. This generally favourable attitude towards Germany goes far beyond economics and extends to the political, social and cultural spheres and applies to all age groups. There are signs of an understanding of the special German-Israeli friendship on the part of the Palestinians. Where their own political relationship with Germany is concerned, the Palestinians are hoping for a considerable strengthening, which they would like to see manifest in Germany playing a more active role at an international level.



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