



*Background Documents Distributed
to the members of the Joint
Palestinian-Japanese Working Group
in preparation for the January 26
Online Workshop*

Palestinian Public Perception of Japan

Report on Results of a Public
Opinion Poll among
Palestinians,
December 2021

January 2022

*Based on the findings of PCPSR's December
2021 public opinion poll*

Khalil Shikaki

Palestinian Public Perception of Japan

Report on Results of a Public Opinion Poll among Palestinians,
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PCPSR's Publications of the Joint Working Group on Palestinian-Japanese Working Group

Background Reports prepared for the first workshop

Mohammad Daraghmeh, **Japan As Seen by the Palestinian Media: How the Palestinian Press and Social Media View Japanese Culture, Literature, Technology, Economy, and Palestinian-Japanese Relations**

Dr. Abdel Nasser Makky, **Strengthening Japan's "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" Initiative: Japan and the Jordan Valley**

PCPSR, **Japan in the Middle East, 2017-2021: The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process and Palestinian-Japanese Relations (excerpts from Japan's MOFA Bluebook)**

PCPSR, **Official PA-PLO Positions on Japanese-Palestinian Relations: recent statements on the Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process and Palestinian-Japanese Relations**

Omar Sha'ban, **Japan's Developmental Role in the Gaza Strip: The Constraints of the "Split" and the Promising Potential in Partnering with Civil Society and the Productive Sector**

Khalil Shikaki, **Palestinian Public Perception of Japan: Report on Results of a Public Opinion Poll among Palestinians, December 2021**

Background Report prepared for the Second workshop

Khalil Shikaki, **Japan and Palestine: Timeline of Main Developments and Turning Points in the last 50 years**

Reports on workshop's proceedings

PCPSR, **Report on the Presentations and discussion of the First Workshop of the Joint Palestinian-Japanese Working Group, January 2022**

PCPSR, **Report on the Presentations and discussion of the Second Workshop of the Joint Palestinian-Japanese Working Group, March 2022**

Other Publications

The Future of the Middle East Peace Process: Policy Recommendations produced by the Middle East Study Group, Headed by Dr. Ryoji Tateyama, Professor Emeritus, National Defense Academy of Japan, Organized by The Japanese Institute of International Affairs

Government of Japan, **Japan's assistance to the Palestinians**

Government of Japan, **JAIP: Jericho Agro-Industrial Park**

Palestinian Public Perception of Japan

Results of a public opinion poll among Palestinians

Conducted in December 2021

The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research conducted a public opinion poll among Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during the period between 8 and 11 December 2021. The poll sought to assess public perception of Japan, its people, and its policies regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The period before the conduct of the poll witnessed several domestic and Palestinian-Israeli developments including the preparation for the holding of the first phase of local elections in rural areas and small towns in the West Bank. Hamas prevented the holding of the local elections in the Gaza Strip. This period witnessed also various violent incidents among students in some Palestinian universities and the death of one student. Israel classified 6 Palestinian human rights NGOs as terrorist organizations. The UK labeled Hamas as a terrorist organization. In the months leading to the conduct of the poll, Israeli-Palestinian relations witnessed some positive developments when the Palestinian president met with the Israeli defense minister to discuss confidence building measures aimed at improving daily living conditions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, such as family unifications, transfer of funds to the PA, and an increase in the number of laborers working in Israel.

Total size of the sample is 1270 adults interviewed face to face in 127 randomly selected locations. Margin of error is +/-3%.

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Summary of Findings:

The poll explored public perception regarding Japan, its position regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, its products, and its international role.

- Findings clearly show that the Palestinian public have a highly positive impression of Japan and its people and that the public emphasizes the country's strength in technology as well as its wealth, democracy and support for Palestine; a minor percentage tends to have a negative view of the country. In fact, a largest percentage views Palestinian relations with Japan as better than Palestine's relations with many other countries including the US, France, Italy, and the UK. A majority views Japan's support to the PA as helpful in strengthening Palestinian efforts to end the occupation.

- Moreover, the findings show that a large majority looks positively at Japan’s position regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; only one fifth looks negatively at it. Indeed, a large majority wants Japan to play a larger role in Palestinian-Israeli relations. This seems to be driven by the belief of the majority that Japan supports Palestinian right to self determination in an independent state. Most believe that it stands against Israeli settlement construction. The majority does not agree with the view that Japan is biased in favor of Israel.
- The poll examined public perception of Japanese manufactured products. When asked to choose labeling them as the “most expensive” or the “best quality” in the world, a much larger percentage selected the second description.
- Finally, the poll asked about Japan’s role in international affairs. Two-thirds came in favor of expanding that role and only one fifth against it.

It is worth noting that despite the fact that political affiliation, between Fatah, Hamas, and other factions, normally plays a highly significant role in shaping attitudes among Palestinians, the perception of Japan remains stable and almost identical among supporters of all factions. Moreover, for the most part, the positive attitudes prevailing among the Palestinians regarding the various issues examined in this poll are not influenced by demographic variables. But there two exceptions to this rule. Education and age do seem to influence attitudes in many of the questions asked in the poll. For example, the more educated and the younger the respondents, the more positive attitudes are regarding Japan’s position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the desire to see a greater role for Japan in international politics. Moreover, in some cases, income seems to influence attitudes. For example, respondents with higher income tend to agree more with the statement that the Japanese products are the best in the world than those with lower income who tend to think that Japanese products are the best and the most expensive in the world.

The Demographic Characteristics of the Christian Poll Sample

| Demographic characteristics of the sample | | | | | |
|---|------------|------|-------------------|---------------------|-----|
| Area | West Bank | 60% | Educational level | Illiterates | 2% |
| | Gaza Strip | 40% | | Elementary | 10% |
| | | | | Preparatory | 22% |
| | | | | Secondary | 31% |
| | | | | Two-year of college | 13% |
| | | | | BA degree | 22% |
| | | | | MA or higher | 1% |
| Governorates | Jenin | 6.6% | Social status | Married | 80% |
| | Tobas | 1.2% | | Unmarried | 16% |
| | Tulkarm | 3.9% | | Other | 4% |
| | Qalqilia | 2.3% | | | |
| | Salfit | 1.6% | | | |
| | Nablus | 8.3% | | | |

Palestinian Public Perception of Japan

| | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|-------|------------------------|----------------|-----|
| | Ramallah | 6.9% | Work place | PA | 11% |
| | Jerusalem | 8.8% | | Private sector | 36% |
| | Jericho | 0.8% | | | |
| | Bethlehem | 4.6% | | | |
| | Hebron | 15.1% | | | |
| | Jabalia | 7.8% | | | |
| | Gaza City | 13.7% | | | |
| | Khanyounis | 7.8% | | | |
| | Deir Al Balah | 5.7% | | | |
| | Rafah | 5% | | | |
| Age | 18-29 years | 25% | Private sector | 36% | |
| | 30-39 years | 23% | | | |
| | 40-49 years | 20% | Do not work or retired | 54% | |
| | 50 years and more | 31% | | | |

The poll sought to ascertain public perception of Japan by looking at the following five areas:

- General perception of Japan, the Japanese people, and how the country is seen
- Japan's relations with Palestine, alone and compared to other major powers
- Japan and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict
- Japan's products seen in terms of quality and cost
- Japan's standing in international politics

General perception of Japan and its people

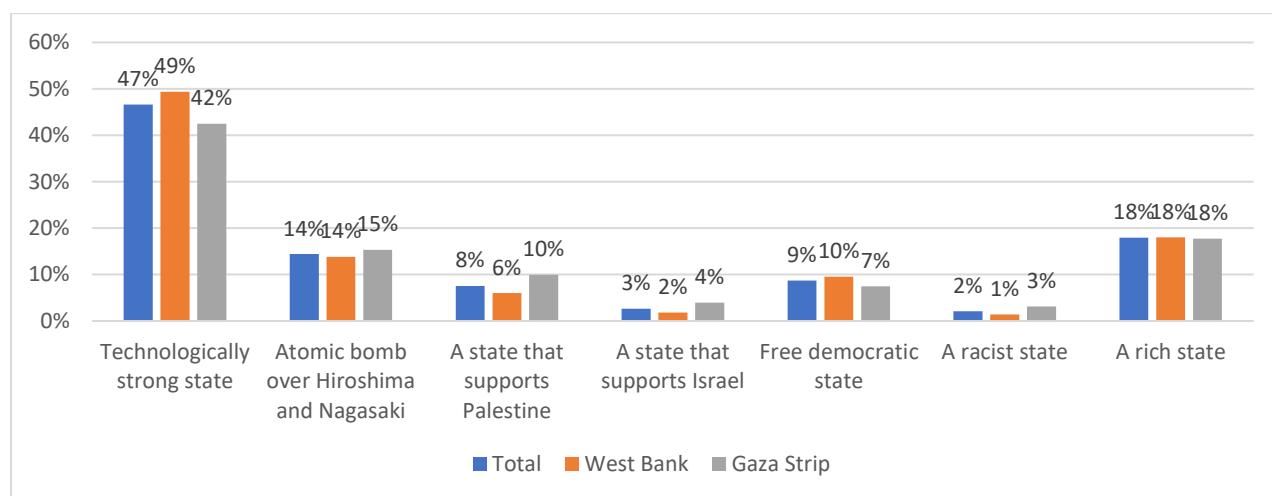
72% of the Palestinians have a positive or somewhat positive impression of Japan while only 18% say they have a negative or somewhat negative impression. The negative impression is higher in the Gaza Strip, standing at 27% compared to only 11% in the West Bank. Education seems to be the most important driver in explaining variations in attitudes, the higher the education, the more positive the impressions. While 60% of those who have completed elementary school only indicate a positive perception, the percentage jump to 79% among those who have finished a BA degree.

Similarly, 74% say that they have a positive or somewhat positive impression of the Japanese people while 14% say they have a negative or somewhat negative impression. Here too, the negative impression is higher in the Gaza Strip, standing at 22%, compared to the West Bank, standing at 9%. Here too, education has a significant impact, those with elementary education indicating 66% positive perception compared to 80% among those with a BA degree.

We asked the public about what comes to their mind when thinking about Japan and asked them to select two descriptions from a list of seven we provided. Respondents could add any other description if not included in the provided list. The largest percentage (47%) selected "technologically strong state" followed by 14% for those selecting "the dropping of the American atomic bomb over Hiroshima and Nagasaki," 9% selected a "free and democratic

state,” 8% selected a “state that supports Palestine,” 3% selected “a state that supports Israel,” 2% selected a “rich country,” 1% selected a “racist country.” It is worth noting that West Bankers selected technology more than Gazans (49% and 43% respectively).

Figure (1): How is Japan seen by the Palestinian public: focus on technology, democracy and support for Palestine

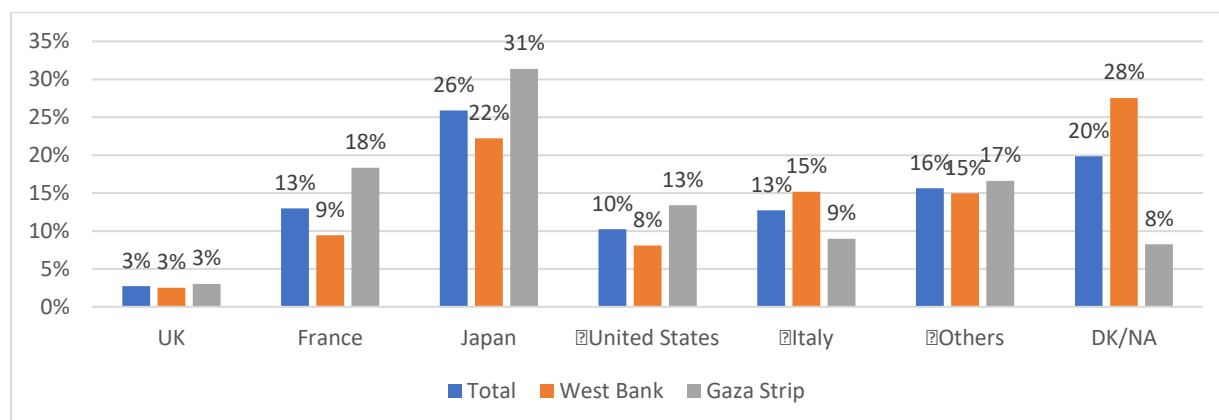


Japan’s relations with Palestine, alone and compared to other major powers:

A set of two statements were presented to the respondents who were then asked to select the more accurate one. The first statement stated that “Japanese assistance to the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA strengthens the Palestinian capacity to defend their rights and increase the chances for ending the Israeli occupation,” and the second statement stated that “the Japanese assistance to the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA strengthens the occupation.” A majority of 55% said the first statement is more accurate and 14% said the second statement is more accurate; 9% said both statements are accurate, 11% said both are inaccurate, and 11% said they do not know or did not answer. Younger respondents between the ages of 18 and 22 chose the first statement with a larger majority than those whose age is 50 or more (63% and 54% respectively). Similarly, higher education increases the percentage of those who chose the first statement, 42% for those with elementary education compared to 57% for those with BA degree.

We presented the public with five countries, the UK, France, Japan, the US, and Italy, and asked respondents to pick the country that has the best relations with Palestine. The largest percentage (26%) chose Japan, followed by France and Italy, selected by 13% each, followed by the US (10%) and the UK (3%). A small minority of 16% selected countries other than those presented to them. Japan was selected by the largest percentage in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (31% and 22% respectively). Only 20% of those with elementary education selected Japan compared to 29% among those with BA education.

Figure (2): Japan’s relations with Palestine, compared to other powers: “the country that has the best relations with Palestine”

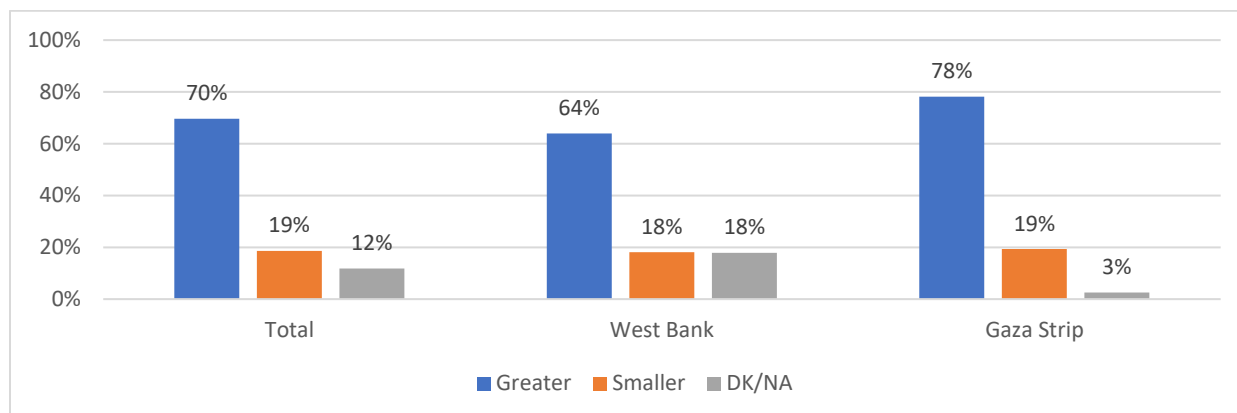


Japan and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

We asked the public if it looks positively or negatively to Japan’s position toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. A large majority of 69% said it looks positively or somewhat positively while only 21% said they look negatively or somewhat negatively to Japan’s position. No differences were detected by West Bankers and Gazans or between supporters of Fatah and Hamas. The percentage of positive impression is higher among the youth (18 to 29 years of age), standing at 72% compared to 67% among those whose age is 50 year or higher. Similarly, positive impression is higher among those holding a BA degree (74%) compared to 56% among those with elementary education.

We asked the public to tell us if it wants to see Japan playing a greater or smaller role in Palestinian-Israeli relations. A large majority of 70% said it wants Japan to play a greater or somewhat greater role than the one it currently plays while only 19% said they want it to play a smaller or a somewhat smaller role. We did not detect important differences between West Bankers and Gazans with the exception of those who indicated no answer, which stood at 18% in the West Bank compared to only 3% in the Gaza Strip. A small difference emerges between supporters of Fatah and Hamas with the former standing at 77% compared to 71% for the latter.

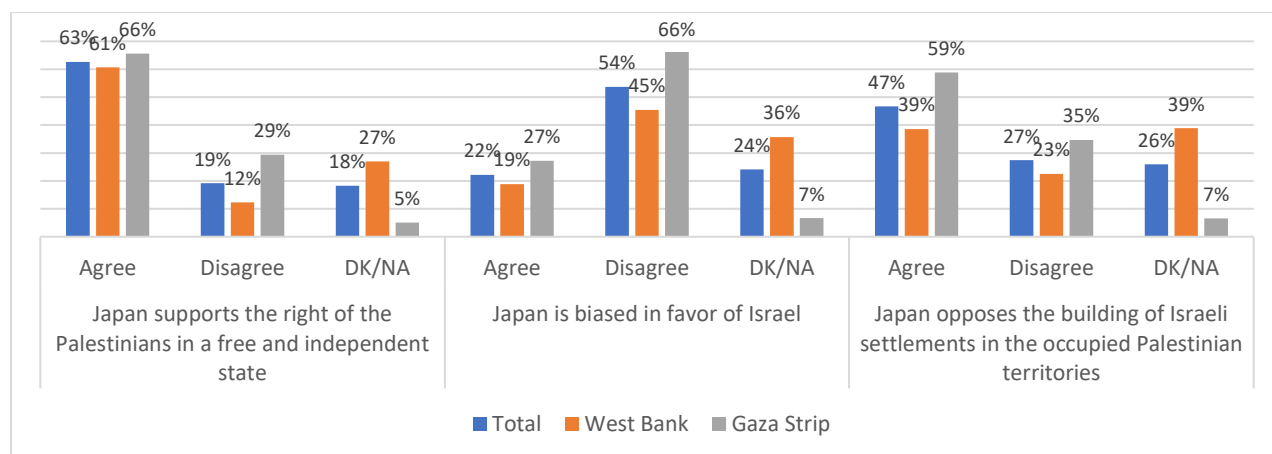
Figure (3): Palestinians favor a greater role for Japan in peace making: “Do you wish to see Japan play a greater or a smaller role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?”



We offered the public three statements asked if it agrees or disagrees with each:

- 63% said they agree, and 19% said they disagree with the statement that Japan supports the right of the Palestinians to a free and independent state; 18% said they do not know.
- 22% said they agree and 54% said they disagree with the statement that Japan is biased in favor of Israel; 24% (36% in the West Bank and 7% in the Gaza Strip) said they do not know or refused to answer.
- 48% said they agree and 28% said they disagree with the statement that Japan is opposed to Israeli settlement construction in the occupied Palestinian territories; 26% (39% in the West Bank and 7% in the Gaza Strip) said they do not know or refused to answer.

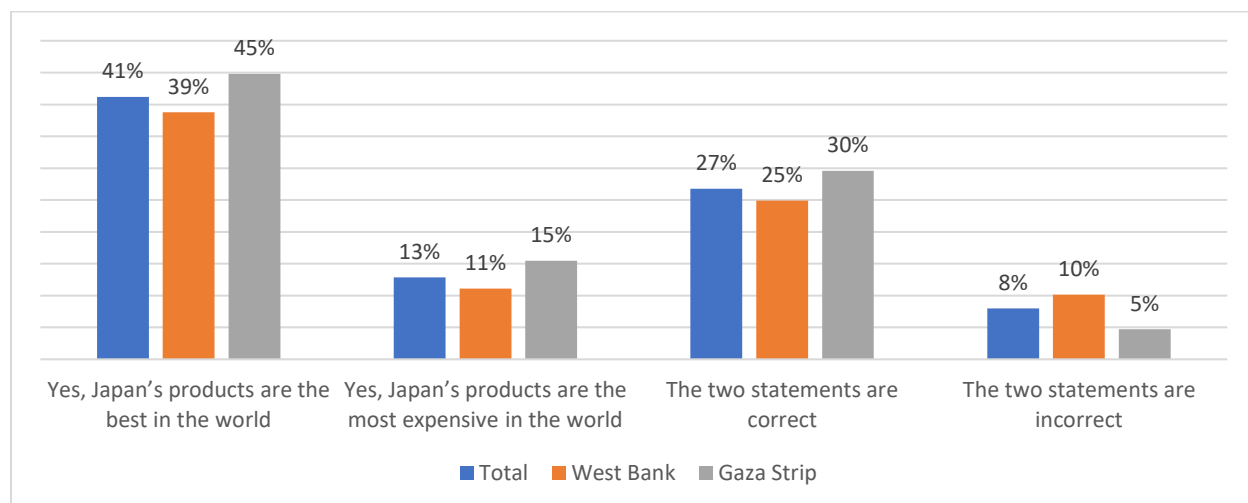
Figure (4): Perception of Japan’s policy on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict



Japan’s products are the best in the world:

We read two statements and asked the respondents to tell us which one is more accurate. The first statement stated that “Japan’s products are the best in the World,” and the second read that “Japan’s products are the most expensive in the World.” The percentage of those who said the first statement is more accurate stood at 41% while 13% said the second statement is more accurate. The percentage of those who said both statements are accurate were 27%; and 8% said both are inaccurate; and 11% said they do not know or have no answer. The percentage of those who said the first statement is more accurate stands at 45% in the Gaza Strip compared to 39% in the West Bank. It is worth noting that those with higher income selected the first statement by 47% while those with lower income selected it by 29%. Those with lower income indicated that the two statements were correct by 36% compared to only 19% for those with the highest income.

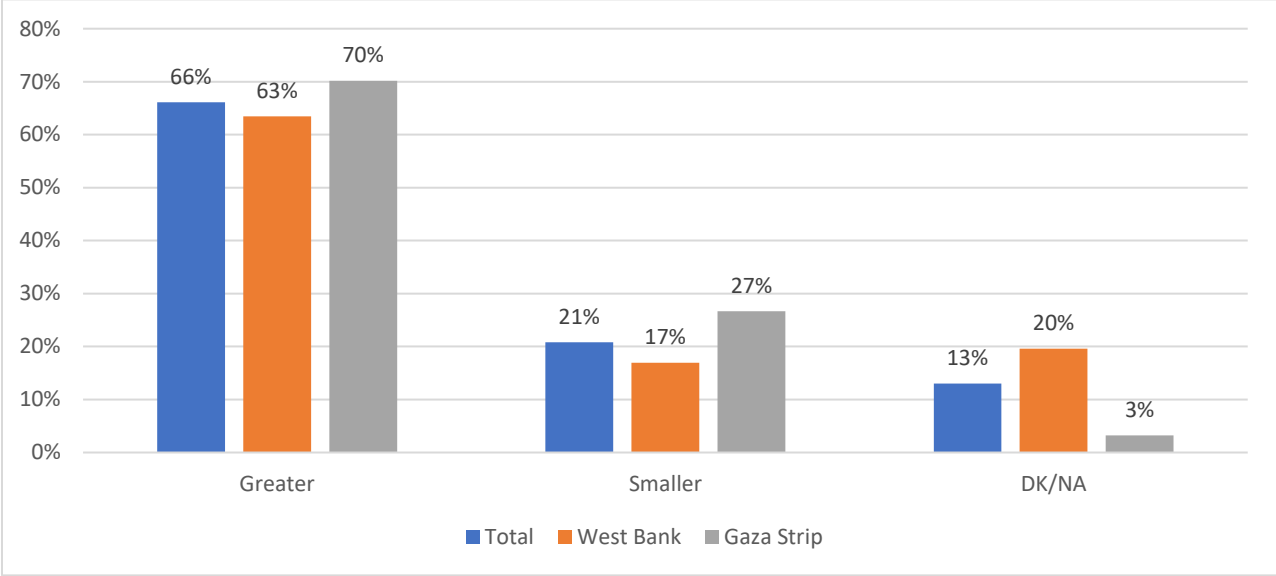
Figure (5): Is Japan’s products the best or the most expensive? Both? Neither?



Japan’s standing in international politics:

We then asked about the role of Japan in international affairs and asked respondents if they wish to see that role becoming greater or smaller. Two thirds (67%) said they want Japan to play a greater or somewhat greater role while 21% said they want it to play a smaller or somewhat smaller role. Here too we notice a difference between West Bankers and Gazans respondents who had no answer, 20% in the former and only 3% in the latter. Moreover, 70% of Gazans compared to 64% of West Bankers want Japan to play a greater role in international politics. We also notice a small difference based on political affiliation as 73% of Fatah supporters and 67% of Hamas supporters wish to see a greater role for Japan. The more educated is more likely to want a greater role for Japan: 65% for those with BA degree compared to 54% for those with elementary education.

Figure (6): Palestinians favor a greater role for Japan in international politics



| Table of Findings | | | |
|--|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Public Opinion Poll among Palestinian on Perceptions of Japan | | | |
| 8-11 December 2021 | | | |
| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
| 1. We want to know if you have a FAVORABLE or UNFAVORABLE impression of Japan | | | |
| 1. Favorable | 42% | 47% | 34% |
| 2. Some what favorable | 30% | 27% | 35% |
| 3. Somewhat unfavorable | 11% | 6% | 18% |
| 4. Unfavorable | 7% | 5% | 9% |
| 5. DK/NA | 11% | 15% | 4% |
| 2. We want to know if you have a FAVORABLE or UNFAVORABLE impression of the Japanese people | | | |
| 1. Favorable | 41% | 47% | 34% |
| 2. Some what favorable | 33% | 28% | 41% |
| 3. Somewhat unfavorable | 10% | 5% | 17% |
| 4. Unfavorable | 4% | 4% | 5% |
| 5. DK/NA | 11% | 17% | 3% |
| 3. What comes to your mind when thinking about Japan? Select two of the following: | | | |
| 1. Technologically strong state | 47% | 49% | 42% |
| 2. The dropping of the American atomic bomb over Hiroshima and Nagasaki | 14% | 14% | 15% |
| 3. A state that supports Palestine | 8% | 6% | 10% |
| 4. A state that supports Israel | 3% | 2% | 4% |
| 5. Free democratic state | 9% | 10% | 7% |
| 6. A racist state | 2% | 1% | 3% |
| 7. A rich state | 18% | 18% | 18% |

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|---|-------|-----------|------------|
| 4. In your view, which of the following countries have the best relations with Palestine? | | | |
| 1. Britain | 3% | 3% | 3% |
| 2. France | 13% | 9% | 18% |
| 3. Japan | 26% | 22% | 31% |
| 4. United States | 10% | 8% | 13% |
| 5. Italy | 13% | 15% | 9% |
| 6. Other (specify) | 16% | 15% | 17% |
| 7. DK/NA | 20% | 28% | 8% |
| 5. Do you view positively or negatively Japan's position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? | | | |
| 1. Positively | 31% | 30% | 32% |
| 2. Somewhat positively | 38% | 34% | 44% |
| 3. Somewhat negatively | 19% | 19% | 18% |
| 4. Negatively | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| 5. DK/NA | 11% | 15% | 4% |
| 6. Do you wish to see Japan play a greater or smaller role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? | | | |
| 1. Much greater | 26% | 28% | 24% |
| 2. Somewhat greater | 44% | 36% | 54% |
| 3. Somewhat smaller | 11% | 9% | 13% |
| 4. Much Smaller | 8% | 9% | 6% |
| 5. DK/NA | 12% | 18% | 3% |
| 7. And what about Japan's role in international affairs? Do you wish to see it play a greater or smaller role? | | | |
| 1. Much greater | 26% | 27% | 24% |
| 2. Somewhat greater | 41% | 37% | 46% |
| 3. Somewhat smaller | 14% | 10% | 20% |

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|---|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 4. Much Smaller | 7% | 7% | 6% |
| 5. DK/NA | 13% | 20% | 3% |
| 8-1. | | | |
| <i>First statement: Japan's products are the best in the world</i> | | | |
| <i>Second statement: Japan's products are the most expensive in the world</i> | | | |
| 1. The first statement is correct | 41% | 39% | 45% |
| 2. The second statement is correct | 13% | 11% | 15% |
| 3. The two statements are correct | 27% | 25% | 30% |
| 4. The two statements are incorrect | 8% | 10% | 5% |
| 5. DK/NA | 11% | 15% | 5% |
| 8-2. | | | |
| <i>First statement: Japanese assistance to the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA strengthens the capacity of the Palestinians to defend their rights and increase the chances for ending the Israeli occupation</i> | | | |
| <i>Second statement: Japanese assistance to the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA strengthens the occupation</i> | | | |
| 1. The first statement is correct | 55% | 53% | 57% |
| 2. The second statement is correct | 14% | 11% | 19% |
| 3. The two statements are correct | 9% | 6% | 15% |
| 4. The two statements are incorrect | 11% | 14% | 6% |
| 5. DK/NA | 11% | 16% | 3% |
| 9-1: Japan supports the right of the Palestinians in a free and independent state | | | |
| 1. Certainly agree | 15% | 18% | 10% |
| 2. Agree | 48% | 43% | 55% |
| 3. Disagree | 17% | 11% | 26% |
| 4. Certainly disagree | 2% | 2% | 4% |
| 5. DK/NA | 18% | 27% | 5% |

| | Total | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
|---|--------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 9-2: Japan is biased in favor of Israel | | | |
| 1. Certainly agree | 2% | 2% | 3% |
| 2. Agree | 20% | 17% | 25% |
| 3. Disagree | 44% | 36% | 56% |
| 4. Certainly disagree | 10% | 10% | 10% |
| 5. DK/NA | 24% | 36% | 7% |
| 9-3: Japan opposes the building of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories | | | |
| 1. Certainly agree | 7% | 7% | 8% |
| 2. Agree | 39% | 31% | 51% |
| 3. Disagree | 24% | 19% | 31% |
| 4. Certainly disagree | 4% | 4% | 3% |
| 5. DK/NA | 26% | 39% | 7% |

The **Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research** explored Palestinian-Japanese relations by establishing a joint Palestinian-Japanese working group made up of experts and academics to engage in a dialogue on the various facets of the relationship with the aim of proposing a joint vision on how to strengthen and advance that relationship in a manner that helps it meet the challenges of the future. This initiative sought to examine *Japan's role in the Middle the Middle East by focusing on Japanese-Palestinian Relation through a Joint Japanese-Palestinian second track policy workshops and consultation.*

The dialogue took place in two online workshops to discuss the current relationship and explore ideas and policies for the future. In addition, the effort included the preparation and publication of various background reports and working papers addressing some aspects of the current relationship. PCPSR also issued two reports summarizing the presentations and discussion of the two workshops as well as the recommendations of the second workshop.

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