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"The price of freedom" - Factors affecting public support for the release of a captive soldier: The case of Gilad Shalit

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Abstract

This study examines the public support determinants for the release of terrorists in exchange for a single captive soldier. A sample of 751 Israelis were presented a questionnaire, in which the exchange price was manipulated into two versions: one in which no specific prices were mentioned, and another which presented a context-specific prisoner exchange. The results show that respondents who answered the non-specific version displayed greater support than those presented with specific details. Additionally, we found that soldiers tended to support the exchange more than civilians, and women showed greater support as compared to men. Our findings provide considerable support for the effect of framing and provide further evidence that decision-makers as well as media experts can guide public opinion.

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1. Introduction

Changes in security concerns, government patterns, and media technology have recharged a long-standing question at the heart of democratic politics: How do public opinion and government policy affect one another? In the past, much attention has been paid to the ways government shapes public opinion (Almond, 1956; Holsti and Rosenau, 1980; Hurwitz and Peffly, 1990; Page and Shapiro, 1984, 1988; Page, Shapiro and Dempsey 1987; Shapiro and Page, 1988); however, there seems to be little doubt today among academics, opinion makers, and the public at large that the reverse relationship is not only present, but also on the rise. Today's leaders are arguably more attentive to public opinion than ever before, and new outlets, such as social networks, user-generated content, and new or alternative media outlets, are monitored very closely by decision makers.

One topic where public opinion has generated interest is that of hostage exchange policy. The changing nature of warfare and security have compelled governments to negotiate with terrorist organizations. One characteristic of these new adversaries is their "failure" to adhere to the "accepted" international laws and norms of prisoners of war. The purposeful targeting of non-military targets, the purposeful (and tactical) taking of hostages, the posing of demands and the recent horrific executions by groups such as ISIS (the Islamic State), Hamas, Hezbollah, and Al Qaeda, have all been aimed to influence public opinion and the policies and actions of governments.

It is within this context that hostage negotiations, exchange agreements, or the tragic assassination of hostages should be examined. Recent examples include the exchange of American soldier Bowe Bergdahl who was freed after the US agreed to release five terrorists from its facility in Guantanamo, Cuba, the release of French journalists Edouard Elias, Didier Francois, Pierre Torres, and Nicolas Henin under (at this time) vague circumstances, and the horrific killings of American reporters James Foley and Steven Sotloff.

The following paper asks: what shapes public opinion as to how government should act? Should governments agree to negotiate exchange conditions at all, or should they take the "no negotiation with terrorists" stance sometimes associated with American and British policy? Or perhaps, should they agree to some concessions if these are incremental in setting free their citizens/soldiers?

1.1 The Case of Gilad Shalit: an Extreme Ratio of 1:1,027

Gilad Shalit was on active duty as a soldier in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) when he was abducted by Hamas militants in an attack near the Israeli border with Gaza on June 25, 2006ⁱ. Shalit was held in isolation by Hamas at an unknown location in the Gaza Strip.

On October 18, 2011, the State of Israel released 1,027 Palestinian prisoners in return for a single soldier: Gilad Shalit. Among the Palestinians were prisoners convicted of multiple murders (what Israelis refer to as "terrorists with blood on their hands"), planning and executing acts of terror against civilians, attacking military personnel and bases, and belonging to terrorist organizations.ⁱⁱ

Shalit's release after five years and four months in captivity launched a heated public debate on the state's obligation to a single soldier, since, for many, the release of terrorists was seen as an act that would lead to future, perhaps more intense, terror. Paradoxically, public opinion supported two seemingly very different outlooks: on the one hand, overwhelming support for the release of Shalit; on the other, a clear demand that future prisoner exchanges avoid the high price paid for Shalit's release.

In the recent decades Israel has released thousands of enemy prisoners in exchange for just a few IDF soldiers. Israel is not alone in having experienced a number of such hostage situations.ⁱⁱⁱ Terrorists try to pressure targeted governments, especially in democracies, by kidnapping their citizens, officials (such as embassy personnel), and soldiers, and demanding a high price on their release. This strategy assumes that massive media coverage will result in public support and will pressure governments to negotiate the release of hostages.

While the impact of public and media campaigns on policy is difficult to assess, most would agree that such an influence does exist. The campaign launched by Shalit's family, and sustained largely by volunteers, reached considerable heights. Shalit's name and picture became a household item, not only in Israel, but among many citizens worldwide. The campaign spread to the general public and included conventional and new media. Thousands of people took the initiative and became dedicated activists, participating in demonstrations and marches. In short, the media campaign was one of the longest in Israeli history.^{iv}

In the summer of 2011, a large wave of protests against the government's socioeconomic policy took place throughout Israel. These were largely referred to as the "tent protests" and involved thousands of people setting up tents in many major cities. The protests, which lasted from July to September 2011, turned into the largest social protest in Israel's history.^v The focus of the 2011 protest incorporated several themes. The protests that had initially focused on the high cost of living and the housing situation, quickly expanded to include education, medical care, and the issue of Gilad Shalit. At that time, the negotiations between Israel and Hamas for Shalit's release were extremely visible on public and media agendas, and people holding flags and signs calling for Shalit's release were present at almost all the demonstrations.

Many Israelis viewed the Shalit issue as if they had a personal, almost intimate, stake in the matter. Shalit had been transformed from an anonymous soldier into "everybody's child" as he was often referred to in the media and public discourse. In Israeli public opinion, this soldier of the "peoples' army" was the peoples' child.

1.2 Framing Theory, Prospect Theory and Public Opinion

Framing theory is based upon the premise that an issue or event can be understood from "a variety of perspectives, and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations" (Chong and Druckman, 2007, p. 104). Framing studies employ either emphasis or equivalency frames (Druckman, 2001b, 2004). *Equivalency* effects occur when, "different, but logically equivalent, phrases cause individuals to alter their preferences" (Tversky and Kahneman, 1987). This typically involves, "casting the same information in either a positive or negative light" (Druckman, 2004, p. 671).

Unlike equivalency frames, *emphasis framing* involves highlighting a particular, "subset of potentially relevant considerations" (Druckman, 2001a). This can lead individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions.

Preference, or selection, of possible policy choices by both policy makers and the general public has been addressed in international relations and policy studies by leading theoretical frameworks such as Rational Choice, Expected-Utility theory and Prospect Theory (Levy, 1997). Prospect Theory can, in some ways, be seen as a derivative of expected utility, in which (among other things) framing of the relevant issues constitutes a preliminary preference selection stage (McDermott, 1992). The frame of an issue, or the way it is presented and/or interpreted, is viewed as having the potential to alter the preferences of one individual in a different direction or extent as compared with another individual. So, for

example, a newspaper editorial which favorably displays a confrontational subject may play differently on various individuals' opinions.

While policy makers at the international level are often awarded the benefit of the doubt in terms of producing and controlling these problem frames, public opinion is often seen as adopting a pre-decided, manipulated, frame (Chung and Druckman, 2007).

The current paper uses unique data collected in Israel several weeks before Shalit was released in October 2011 to examine the degree of support for his release. The objectives of the study were: (a) to reveal the factors affecting people's decision to support the release of the captive soldier (e.g., socio-demographic characteristics); (b) to examine the correlation between inclination to support the social protest and to support release of the captive soldier, with and without an explicit price; (c) to examine the impact of emphasis framing on the decision to support the release of Shalit from Hamas imprisonment. To the best of our knowledge, this type of study has never been conducted before.

2. Hypotheses

Under the assumption that public opinion about Shalit was influencing the government's handling of the hostage crisis, experimental survey research was conducted to identify the factors behind that influence. Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they supported the release of Gilad Shalit using two different question versions, that is, one that did not mention any specific price to be paid in exchange for the soldier's release and one that did. The numbers mentioned in the latter reflected the expected makeup of Palestinian prisoners to be released, as portrayed in the Israeli and international media.

Based on the Emphasis framing (Druckman, 2001a), it was plausible to expect that Israelis would tend to support the release of Shalit when no specific price was mentioned, and not when one was. Therefore, the hypothesis was:

Hypothesis 1: People who answer Version A (non-specific framing) will be more likely to support the soldier's release from captivity than those who answer Version B (emphasis version).

The second hypothesis was that people's support for the social protest and their belief that the government is responsible for the economy correlate with the extent to which they supported the release of Shalit. Individuals with certain personal characteristics may tend to support protests against the government more than others. In other words, some people may be more "inclined to protest" than others, in line with much of the current literature on participation in Western democracies (O'Toole, Lister, Marsh, Jones, and McDonagh, 2003). Those who supported the social protest in Israel expected the government to take actions to improve their situation. Similarly, the protesters may have tended to be more supportive of the release of the captive soldier since they saw the Israeli government as responsible his release Shalit. Therefore, our hypothesis was:

Hypothesis 2: A greater degree of support for the 2011 social protest and greater belief in the notion that the government is responsible for the economy would correlate with a greater degree of support for the release of Shalit from captivity.

The third hypothesis was that in the case of Version A, soldiers would tend to be more supportive of releasing Shalit from captivity than would civilians, since they can identify with Shalit's situation. In the case of Version B we did not have a solid hypothesis regarding whether or not soldiers would be more inclined than civilians to support Shalit's release. On

the one hand, soldiers can identify with Shalit's situation. Yet the high price of releasing 1,000 terrorists, some with blood on their hands, could lead to more terrorist incidents and even increase the number of attempts to kidnap soldiers.

Hypothesis 3: For version A, soldiers currently serving in the army will tend to support Shalit's release more than civilians.

The fourth hypothesis is that women will tend to be more supportive of the release of Shalit than men. This hypothesis is based on previous studies that found gender differences in the decision-making process. For example, a study by Lizarraga, Baquedano, and Cardelle-Elawar (2007) found that emotions are more important to women than to men in making decisions (p. 387). In the case of Shalit, the decision to support his release is more emotional while the opposite decision takes into account the major consequences of the release of a thousand terrorists.

Hypothesis 4: Women will be more inclined to support the release of Shalit than men.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample

The sample in this study included 751 respondents and consisted of several sub-samples, including 263 undergraduate students from institutions in Israel, 299 train commuters, and 189 participants in the tent complexes representing protesters. University students participated, and played a major role, in the 2011 protest, and, like the tent dwellers, were viewed as being highly favorable to the protests and their agenda. The mean age of the sample was 30.4. The sample included 58.6 percent men and 41.4 percent women, 81.8 percent Jews and 18.2 percent non-Jews, 14.8 percent soldiers and 85.2 percent non-soldiers, 87.1 percent Israeli born and 12.9 percent new immigrants (immigrated to Israel after 1990), and 66.8 percent unwed. Additionally, 72.2 percent of respondents did not have children, and 60.8 percent declared having below-average incomes, while 39.2 percent declared having incomes that were average or above average. When asked about their political inclination, 44.2 percent of the respondents identified themselves as right wing, 31.9 percent as center, and 23.9 percent as left wing. Our sample is a non-representative sample and differs from the general Israeli public with respect to some important attributes. Most noticeably, as expected with student samples, the sample is relatively young. Moreover, the over-representation of soldiers, intentional for the purpose of this study, was primarily due to the decision to sample train commuters, as all branches of the Israeli security services have agreements with the Israeli Railroads Authority that allow personnel in uniform to ride free of charge.

3.2 Design and Procedure

The study was conducted during the period July through September 2011, when the bulk of the 2011 protests were taking place. Questionnaires were distributed at the venues mentioned above, and collected after about 20 minutes. The response rate among students in higher education institutions was about 92 percent (very few refused to answer due to time constraints). The average response rate among the train commuters and the occupants of the tent complexes was about 83 percent. The questionnaires were distributed in two versions (versions A and B) to different subjects (between subjects' procedure).

All attitudinal variables included in this study were measured on 7-point scales ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. The questionnaire included items measuring the following variables:

1. *Inclination to pay a heavy price for the return of Gilad Shalit.* The question was posed in two versions (respondents were asked one or the other version). Version A: “Israel should do all it can to secure the release of captive soldier Gilad Shalit.” Version B: “Israel should accept the agreement to free 450 Hamas terrorist and 550 additional terrorists, some with blood on their hands, in exchange for the release of Gilad Shalit.” 2. *Support for the tent protests* was measured by three items (for example, “I support the tent protest”). 3. *Government responsibility.* This measure was designed to tap perceptions about the extent the individual finds government, and himself or herself, responsible his/her own condition (Seepersad, 2009). We included three items (for example, “I feel that the government is responsible for my economic status”). 4. *Socio-demographic details:* age, gender, income (on a five point scale from 1=much lower than the average income, to 5= much higher than the average income).

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table I shows the descriptive statistics for attitude toward release of the captive soldier.

Table I: Attitude toward release of captive soldier, in percentages, according to socio-demographic characteristics

		Version A			Version B		
		N=396			N=355		
Socio-demographic variables		Support %	Neutral %	Do not Support %	Support %	Neutral %	Do not Support %
All respondents		77.0	10.1	12.9	52.2	13.8	34.0
Gender	Male	72.5	12.6	14.9	48.0	12.1	39.9
	Female	83.9	6.2	9.9	59.2	16.2	24.6
Religion	Jewish	77.8	8.5	13.7	51.9	14.9	33.2
	Other religion	76.7	14.4	8.9	56.1	7.3	36.6
Right-left political	Right	77.3	10.7	12.0	47.5	15.1	37.4
	Center	83.9	3.6	12.5	59.1	10.8	30.1
	Left	69.7	14.6	15.7	57.6	10.6	31.8
Soldier	Soldier	86.5	3.9	9.6	47.4	15.8	36.8
	Civilian	75.2	11.1	13.7	53.2	13.1	33.7
Income	Below average	80.9	9.3	9.8	53.2	15.1	31.7
	Average	77.5	7.0	15.5	54.3	17.4	28.3
	Above average	66.7	15.3	18.0	45.6	8.8	45.6
Veterans vs. New immigrants	Veterans	76.3	10.5	13.2	52.9	13.3	33.8
	New Immigrants	86.0	6.0	8.0	48.8	17.1	34.1

^a 7-point scales ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree were recoded as follows: Support:5+6+7, Neutral: 4, Do Not Support: 1+2+3

As shown in Table I, for Version A, the majority of Israelis (77 %) supported the release of Gilad Shalit, while for Version B, only 52.2 % supported his release. In addition, for all socio-demographic variables, the support percentages were lower for Version B than for Version A (except participants with below-average income). Moreover, the findings in Table I point to a significant difference between the percentages of those who do not support Shalit's release according to Version B (34 %) compared those who do not support Shalit's release according to Version A (12.9 %).

Table I also reveals that the highest drops in support from Version A to B were among new immigrants, those with right-wing political orientation, and Jews.

Table II shows the mean values, standard deviations and ANOVA significances for degree of support for the release of Shalit according to socio-demographic variables and questionnaire version.

Table II: Mean values and standard deviations of degree of support according to socio-demographic variables and questionnaire version.

		Degree of support for release of captive soldier^a		
		Version A	Version B	
		N=396	N=355	
Socio-demographic variables		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	t-value (p-value) for the differences between versions A and B
All respondents		5.69 (1.75)	4.48 (2.28)	7.95 (0.00)
Gender	Male	5.48*** (1.82)	4.21*** (2.34)	6.12 (0.00)
	Female	6.01 (1.54)	4.95 (2.14)	4.78 (0.00)
Religion	Jewish	5.75 (1.77)	4.51 (2.26)	7.43 (0.00)
	Other	5.61 (1.55)	4.46 (2.44)	2.77 (0.01)
Political orientation	Right	5.86* (1.74)	4.33 (2.35)	6.24 (0.00)
	Center	5.72 (1.59)	4.74 (2.30)	3.48 (0.00)
	Left	5.33 (1.88)	4.62 (2.22)	2.09 (0.04)
Soldier	Soldier	6.15** (1.61)	4.21 (2.32)	5.11 (0.00)
	Civilian	5.60 (1.77)	4.53 (2.28)	6.44 (0.00)
Income	Below average	5.91** (1.58)	4.59* (2.24)	6.77 (0.00)
	Average	5.58 (1.76)	4.76 (2.16)	2.14 (0.04)
	Above average	5.28 (1.92)	3.95 (2.41)	3.76 (0.00)
Veterans vs. New immigrants	Veterans	5.67 (1.74)	4.54 (2.27)	6.93 (0.00)
	New	6.04	4.15	4.37

Immigrants	(1.50)	(2.42)	(0.00)
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^a 7-point scales ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.

Significant difference between groups: *** $p < .01$ ** $p < .05$ * $p < .10$

The results in Table II indicate significant differences between Version A and B in the mean values of degree of support (5.69 and 4.48, respectively, $p < .001$). In addition, Table II shows that for all socio-demographic variables, the mean values of degree of support were significantly lower for Version B compared to Version A. These results suggest that the framing of the statement (with and without specific price) had a strong effect on the level of support for the release of Shalit, compatible with Hypothesis 1.

The results in Table II also indicate that for Version A the greatest support for Shalit's release was found among soldiers compared to among civilians, compatible with Hypothesis 3. Yet no significant differences were found between soldiers and civilians for Version B. In addition, we found that the mean support level was greater among women than among men for both versions, compatible with Hypothesis 4. Moreover, for both versions those with a lower income level had a significantly higher mean level of support compared to those with a higher income level. No significant differences were found in degree of support between Jews and non-Jews or between veterans and new immigrants or between the groups with different political orientation, for both versions.

Table III shows the means, standard deviations and ANOVA significances for degree of support for releasing Shalit according to support for the tent protest and agreement that the government is responsible for the Israeli economy.

Table III: Mean values and S.D. according to support for the tent protest and agreement with government responsibility for the economic situation in Israel

Variables	Degree of support for releasing Shalit			p value
	Do not Support Mean (SD) N=117	Neutral Mean (SD) N=211	Support Mean (SD) N=408	
Degree of support for the tent protests ^a ($\alpha=.88$)	4.98 (1.88)	5.35 (1.49)	5.996 (1.32)	.00
Government responsibility a ($\alpha=.65$)	4.52 (1.61)	4.62 (1.45)	4.89 (1.54)	.00

^a 7-point scales ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree

The results in Table III show that the degree of support for releasing Shalit was significantly greater among those who believe that the government, and not individuals, is responsible for the population's economic hardship. Additionally, the degree of support for releasing Shalit was significantly higher among people who supported the social protests in Israel in 2011. These results are compatible with Hypothesis 2.

Similar results can be seen by Pearson's correlations. Significant and positive correlations were found between the degree of support for releasing Shalit and the following

variables: belief that government is responsible for the individual's own economic well-being ($r=.143$, $p < .001$), and degree of support for the tent protests ($r=.264$, $p < .001$).

4.2 Results for the Analytical Model

Table IV summarizes the results of the Ordered Probit and the OLS regressions analyses separately for Version A and Version B. The dependent variable is the degree of support for releasing Shalit (on a seven-point scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree). The independent variables are: index measuring degree of support for the social protest, a dummy variable for gender (1=male), a dummy variable for soldier (1=soldier). The model controlled for age, for age squared, and for income (on a five-point scale ranging from 1=much lower than the average income, to 5= much higher than the average income).

Table IV: Regression analysis: The dependent variable is the degree of support for releasing Shalit

	Version A		Version B	
	Ordered Probit Coefficient (S.E.)	OLS Coefficient (S.E.)	Ordered Probit Coefficient (S.E.)	OLS Coefficient (S.E.)
Gender (1=male)	-0.335** (0.158)	-0.495*** (0.173)	-0.300** (0.150)	-0.595** (0.267)
Dummy soldier (1= soldier)	0.646** (0.288)	0.663** (0.293)	0.113 (0.225)	0.151 (0.405)
Income	-0.132** (0.061)	-0.162** (0.070)	-0.075 (0.055)	-0.149 (0.098)
Age	0.089** (0.043)	0.085* (0.051)	0.090** (0.040)	0.158** (0.069)
Age Squared	-0.001** (0.001)	-0.001* (0.001)	-0.001** (0.001)	-0.002** (0.001)
Support for tent protests	0.202*** (0.045)	0.321*** (0.055)	0.184*** (0.050)	0.368*** (0.088)
Constant		3.098*** (0.955)		0.308 (1.332)
Number of observations	353	353	296	296
R-Squared / Pseudo R-Squared	0.137***	0.157***	0.109***	0.113***

*** $p < .01$ ** $p < .05$ * $p < .10$

Table IV results indicate similar results according to the OLS and the Ordered Probit analyses. More specifically, the main factors significantly affecting higher degree of support for releasing Shalit in both versions are: (a) gender: women tend to support the release of the soldier more than men, in line with Hypothesis 4; (b) support for the tent protest: those who receive Social Security benefits tend to support the release of the soldier, compatible with Hypothesis 2; (c) age: the degree of support for releasing Shalit tends to increase with age up

to the age of 39.5 (Version B) or 42.5 (Version A) .After these ages the degree of support tends to decrease (based on the OLS regression analysis).. In addition, the results indicate that the factors in Version A significantly affecting higher degree of support for releasing Shalit are: (d) being a soldier: soldiers tend to support the release of the soldier more than civilians, compatible with Hypothesis 3; and (e) income: those with lower incomes tend to support the release of the soldier more than those with higher incomes. Nevertheless, for version B these two factors (being a soldier and income) did not have any significant effect on the degree of support for releasing Shalit.

5. Discussion

The current study examined factors contributing to the decision to release a captive soldier based upon two versions: with and without mention of a specific price tag. Version A provided a general framing and did not mention any specific price in exchange for releasing Shalit, while version B used *emphasis framing* by indicating a specific, high price (the release of around 1,000 terrorists from Israeli prisons). In addition, the study examined the relationship between support for the 2011 social protest and support for the release of Shalit from Hamas captivity.

Similar to our generally framed version, the Shalit campaign also chose to omit any discussion of concrete price tag.^{vi} Our findings show the effectiveness of this decision in terms of reducing public objection and enlisting support.

The results of the study show that while the majority of Israelis (65.8 percent) supported the release of Gilad Shalit in Version A (framed without specific exchange price), only 43.4 percent supported his release in Version B (framed with price). In addition, for all socio-demographic variables, the support percentages were lower for Version B than for Version A. The results also indicate that the greatest reduction in support between Version A and B was among new immigrants and those with right-wing political orientation.

Compatible with our hypothesis, we found that the degree of support for releasing Shalit was significantly greater among people who believe that the government is responsible for the population's economic hardship rather than individuals. Additionally, the degree of support was significantly higher among people who supported the 2011 social protests in Israel. A possible explanation for this is that some people may be more inclined to protest than others. The tent protesters expected the government to take actions to improve their economic situation.^{vii} Perhaps they also saw the Israeli government as responsible for taking action to release Shalit from captivity and therefore supported his release. Indeed, Gilad Shalit was released a month after the end of the protest in Israel.

An experimental study among a nationwide sample in Israel also found that support for releasing Shalit was related to political ideology (Halperin and Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2010). The results of this study show that, "preferences regarding the bargain were highly affected by existing political ideology for those who were led to believe that their expressed preference on the bargain carries more influence on actual policy" (p. 25).

The results of the analytical model show the following main factors as significantly affecting greater support for releasing Shalit in Version A: (a) gender: women tended to support the release more than men; (b) support for the tent protest: those who were more supportive of the social protest in Israel tended to support the release; (c) age: the degree of support for releasing Shalit tends to increase with age up to the age of 39.5 (Version B) or 42.5 (Version A) .After these ages the degree of support tends to decrease.; (d) being a soldier: soldiers tended to support the release more than civilians; and (e) income: those with

lower incomes tended to support the release more than those with higher incomes. For Version B the main factors included gender, age, and tent protest support.

The results of the current study are important in understanding factors that affect public opinion regarding issues related to terrorism, international relations, peace treaties, and possibly also internal affairs. Although public opinion is expected to guide democratic policy-makers in their decisions, the findings of this and previous studies (Druckman, 2001b) show that politicians can affect public opinion by using *emphasis framing* rather than framing an issue in more generalized terms.

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Appendix

Combined/computed variable name	Item wording (translated)
Support for the tent protests	I support the tent protest I believe the tent protest is justified The tent protest must continue until all the demands are met
Government responsibility	The government's economic and social policies affect my standard of living I cannot control my economic status The government can improve my economic status I feel the government is responsible for my economic status

Footnotes

ⁱ Levinson, Chaim (11 October 2011). *TIMELINE / 1,940 days from Gilad Shalit's abduction to his release*. *Ha'aretz*. Retrieved 16 October 2012.

ⁱⁱ “In Shalit deal, Israel did cross its own red lines.” *Ha'aretz*, 14 October 2011.

ⁱⁱⁱ For example: the case of the army Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, the final remaining captured American soldier from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, who has been recently released by the Taliban after almost five years of captivity.

^{iv} Gili Cohen (18 October 2011). “As Gilad Shalit goes free, a 5-year-long media campaign comes to a close”. By . *Ha'aretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/as-gilad-shalit-goes-free-a-5-year-long-media-campaign-comes-to-a-close-1.390523>

^v Asher Schechter (14 July 2013) “Yes we can, or else: Two years to the biggest social protest in Israel’s history”. *Haaretz*, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/features/.premium-1.535650> .

^{vi} Gideon Levy, Return Gilad Shalit, but not at any price (30 September 2009), *Ha'aretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/return-gilad-shalit-but-not-at-any-price-1.282907>

^{vii} Asher Schechter (14 July 2013). Yes we can, or else: Two years to the biggest social protest in Israel’s history. *Ha'aretz*. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/features/.premium-1.535650>