The Impact of Public Opinion on the Decision-Making Process
A Case Study of Attempts at Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Resolution (1992-1999).

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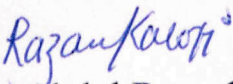
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Aims and Objectives:

Public opinion is one of the most vital and enduring forces in the social sciences. Whether in democracies or in authoritarian systems, public opinion is generally modeled from the top down. The goal is achieved through feeding the public enough related information in order to form an opinion that is parallel to the leadership's interests. In exceptional circumstances however, public opinion can force choices on the leadership, or at least play a significant role, even in authoritarian regimes. A case in point is when Egypt's President, Jamal Abdel Nasser, withdrew his resignation in June 1967, following Egypt's defeat in the Six Days War against Israel. Nasser's regime was classified as authoritarian, but when he was faced with a strong public will to withdraw his resignation, he did so. The aim of the thesis is to assess the impact of Palestinian Public Opinion on the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) political decision-making process during the period (1992-1999), from the point of view of the

interaction between public opinion and decisions made in Palestine, with a close look on the international and Arab pressures exerted on the PLO/PNA. In that period, through the PNA, the Palestinians should have built the foundations for the future Palestinian state, and assessing the level of Palestinian participation in the decision-making process during that period is of great importance, because it reflects the nature of the future Palestinian state.

Beginning in 1987, a series of significant political events altered the Palestinian and the Israeli political reality: the Palestinian Intifada, the end of the Cold War, and the Gulf War. The Palestinian Intifada in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip made the Israelis realize that their occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in its then-existing form, was unsustainable. For the Palestinians, the Intifada raised the profile of the Palestinian issue worldwide, brought an increase in international support for the Palestinians, and sharpened criticism of Israel's occupation and human rights record. At the same time, the end of the Cold War meant the decline in influence and support from the Eastern Block for the Palestinians, forcing them to lower their expectations and to seek a deal. For the Israelis, the end of the Cold War resulted in a waning of its regional influence as a pro-Western ally in the Middle East. Finally, when the Gulf War came along and as the

Palestinian leadership supported a defeated Iraq, this forced the PLO to face the agenda of the world's only remaining superpower, the United States. By October 1991, the convergence of all these events had provided the momentum for the start of an Arab-Israeli peace process -- the Madrid Conference.

Methodology:

The research was conducted on a combination of a review of literature and detailed case studies. Both components were based on secondary sources that included a selection of books, periodicals, and newspaper articles. The case studies are based on an in-depth review of the Al-Quds daily newspaper's coverage of these events, as well as on public opinion surveys conducted by local Palestinian research centers such as the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (JMCC), and the Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS). These public opinion polls contributed much to this study in that they gave a clear indication of Palestinian attitudes and beliefs with regards to the researched case studies, although the accuracy of these polls is questionable.

Through the case studies, it was possible to observe how decisions are made by the PLO/PNA and the public opinion reaction based on the public

opinion polls. It is important to note that the research did not involve analyzing the cause and effect relationship between public opinion and the PLO leadership.

Thesis Structure:

The thesis consists of five chapters. . This chapter is an introduction to the thesis in which the research aim, objectives, methodology, structure, research difficulties as well as the historical development of public opinion. The second chapter focuses on the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the significant political events during the late 80's and early 90's that altered the Palestinian and the Israeli political realities, and made both begin to consider peace as an option. The third chapter discusses the nature and influence of Palestinian public opinion and political lobbying forces in the Palestinian society. The fourth chapter assesses the impact of Palestinian public opinion through detailed case studies of selected major events that took place during the studied period. The first is the expulsion of Hamas members to Marj el-Zuhour in Lebanon (1992), the second is the Hebron Massacre at Haram al-Ibrahimi (1994), and finally the Jabal Abu Ghnaim settlement activities (1997). Special attention will also be paid in this chapter to International and Arab pressures on the Palestinian decision-

making process in relation to the above-mentioned political events. The fourth chapter discusses The fifth and closing chapter of the thesis will draw final conclusions about the research topic.

Research Difficulties:

The study was conducted following the start of the second Intifada, and due to the political situation that resulted in a great difficulty to travel throughout Gaza and the West Bank, it was not possible to conduct interviews with people that would have added to the value of this research such as political figures that were active during the period of study, public opinion researchers, and others.

In addition, since the interest in public opinion is relatively new to the Palestinian society, it was hard to find theoretical material specifically related to Palestinian public opinion.

Historical development of Public Opinion:

Public opinion is a phenomenon of importance to many sectors within a society, including politicians, political scientists, political journalists, and social philosophers. Public opinion is important to not only political people, but also to social scientists who are interested in how individuals' opinions come into being, how they combine into a significant collective force, and how all this is related to the work of governments (Crespi, 1997, p. 1). The modern concept of public opinion may be traced back to the Eighteenth Century AD, even though it has long been part of the political scene, and was in fact considered a vital element in Athenian democracy as early as the Fifth Century BC.

In general, public opinion can be defined as an aggregate of individual views, attitudes, and beliefs about a particular topic as expressed by a significant proportion of a community (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1). There is little agreement among political scientists, sociologists, and social psychologists regarding its nature. The term has been loosely used to denote either a group's firm convictions, or the process of developing opinions (as distinguished from the product) or the statements that result from a process of logical reasoning (as contrasted with those arrived at through illogical means) (Price 1997 p. 1-5).

Also, the concept of public opinion is one of the most controversial, ambiguous, and nontransparent concepts in the Social Sciences. In spite of social, historical, and disciplinary variations and inconsistency of meaning, the concept has been used since the Eighteenth Century (Splichal 1999, p.3), and is largely a product of the Enlightenment Age. The idea is closely connected to liberal political philosophies of the late 17th and 18th Centuries. "Although the concept of public opinion was not explicitly propounded until the 18th Century, many earlier writings included anticipations and approximations of modern theorizing about public opinion. The political philosophy of ancient Greece, for example, dealt with the pitfalls and potential benefits of popular rule...Aristotle believed that the collective sentiments of the *demos* could contribute a sort of common sense to political affairs" (Price 1992, p. 5).

By the end of the 17th Century, liberal philosophers like Locke asserted that individuals should be free to follow their own preferences in different aspects of life, such as in the religious, economic, and political aspects (Price 1992, p. 9).

The contribution of the two terms *public* and *opinion* into a single concept with a political significance could be traced back to the liberal and democratic philosophies of the 1700's.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is sometimes said to be the first modern political thinker to use the phrase *l'opinion publique* around 1744. By 1780, French writers were using the term public opinion extensively to refer to a political rather than a social phenomenon (Price 1992, p. 8).

In his book Public Opinion, Hennessy writes: "the effect of the equalitarian and majoritarian ideas of Locke, Rousseau, Condorcet, Jefferson, and the other thinkers of the period 1650-1800 was to widen the base of political power. Prior to this period, it did not matter much what the public thought – the public had no way to make its opinions either known or effective in determining policy. But the emphasis on political equality and individualism, coupled with the perhaps more important technological and economic changes of the Eighteenth Century, meant that a growing part of the hitherto voiceless public would be able to influence governmental policy and when the pubic begins to influence policy, it becomes important that the public thinks. Thus, by the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, the term 'public opinion' had gained a fairly wide usage among the educated classes" (Hennessy 1965, p. 23).

Up until the middle of the 19th Century, most of the writings dealing with public opinion were of a normative and philosophical nature, because they were studied in political theory rather than in studies on public opinion. Even though during the 19th Century democratic theory increasingly gained support, contemporary writings were by no means unified in their evaluation of the impact of public opinion. On the one hand, supporters of liberal and democratic reforms saw it as the voice of the enlightened middle class, as protection against misrule, and as an agent of progress. And on the other hand, conservative critics understood it antithetically as potentially dangerous, shallow, and transitory, and in need of practical limitations as a political force. Towards the end of the 19th Century, the "new force" of public opinion in society fascinated writers. Public opinion gained power and, with gains in education and with the emergence of more effective means of mass communication, it expanded to nearly all social classes (Price, 1997, p. 15).

The beginning of the 20th century witnessed an important shift in both focus and method of public opinion analysis. The concern in work on public opinion became more sociological and psychological, rather than political and philosophical. During that period, analysts turned their attention to the problem of understanding the social and behavioral aspects of public

opinion, rather than just the philosophical problem of transmuting separate individual will to the will of the state. There became an increased interest in the question of the function and powers of public opinion in society, in how it can be modified or controlled, and in the relative importance of emotional and intellectual factors in its formation. This shift introduced new academic fields in the study and analysis of public opinion, such as collective behavior and social psychology, attitude and opinion research, propaganda analysis, political behavior, and mass communication research (Price 1997, p. 15).

Although the development related to public opinion that occurred in the 20th Century to some extent made social scientific research and normative philosophical analyses of public opinion go in different directions, there is still an important and lively connection between them. "Empirical findings bearing on how public opinion develops and operates in society cannot help but be interpreted in light of how we think public opinion ought to be working" (Price 1997, p.16).

There is no doubt, that the modern study of public opinion is linked to several thinkers such as Lawrence Lowell who wrote "Public Opinion and Popular Government" and Walter Lippmann who wrote "Public Opinion" in 1922, as well as Dewey, Lasswell, Mills, Schattschneider, and Ginsberg. When covering the 20th Century, it is important to discuss Lippmann's ideas

since he contributed much to the study of public opinion. According to Price Lipmann's principal argument was that democratic theory is asking far too much of the ordinary citizen. For Lippmann, citizens could not be expected to behave as legislators, and to be active in and concerned with all the pertinent issues of the day. This is due to the public's general inattention to and lack of concern about political issues. Accurate knowledge of public affairs, on which sound opinions must be based, is not available to the ordinary citizen (Price 1997, p. 16-17).

In his book "Public Opinion," Lippmann explained the above-mentioned notion by writing:

"The world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind. It has to be explored, reported, and imagined. Is no Aristotelian god contemplating all existence at one glance. Is the creature of an evolution who can just about span a sufficient Portion of reality to manage his survival, and snatch what on the scale time are but a few moments of insight and happiness. Yet this same nature has invented ways of seeing what no naked eye could see, of hearing what no ear could hear, of weighing immense masses and infinitesimal ones, of counting and separating more items than he can individually remember. He is learning to see with his mind vast portions of the World that he could never see, touch, smell, linear, or remember. Gradually he makes for himself a trustworthy picture inside his head of the world beyond his reach" (Lippmann 1997, p. 18).

According to Price, Lippmann makes clear in his book that he "believed that modern public opinion would not improve unless an independent, expert organization staffed by *political scientists*, could make *the unseen facts intelligible* to decision-makers and *organize public opinion* for the press.

He envisioned a network of intelligence-gathering agencies (one for each federal cabinet office) with independent sources of funding, guaranteed tenure, and unrestricted *access to the facts*, to accomplish those tasks" (Price 1997, p. 18). Lippmann not only discussed democratic theory, but he also questioned the accuracy of the press. According to Ronald Steel, who wrote the Foreword to the 1997 edition of Lippmann's book, Lippmann questioned the press' accuracy and the ability of the public to access unbiased information. Lippmann argued that unbiased information had become essential because "decisions in a modern state tend to be made by the interaction, not of the Congress and the Executive, but of public opinion and the Executive." This means that the power of public opinion had become greater than that of the Legislative Branch of government. Accordingly, the accuracy of news reporting, the protection of the sources of public opinion, had become the original problem of democracy (Lippmann 1997, p. xi).

The above paragraphs gave an overview of the development of the term *public opinion*. While it is important to discuss what various philosophers and analysts wrote about the term *public opinion*, it is perhaps more important to discuss how public opinion is formed.

The emergence of Individual Opinions:

Individual opinions are a judgmental result of *transactions* between the individuals and the environment they are living in. Individuals think, feel and act in relation to the world around them, as they perceive it to be, and not only in reaction to objectively definable external stimuli. It is also a judgmental outcome of a complex psychological process in which the pros and cons related to the issue are considered. According to Crespi in his book "The Public Opinion Process: How Do People Speak," "Opinions emerge from the mutually creative influence of a set of inner and outer forces on each other. These forces include (a) the circumstances in which the individuals find themselves (including their social positions, relationships with others, structure and culture of the groups to which they belong, etc., as well as the specific circumstances surrounding the controversy); (b) individual qualities and characteristics (such as beliefs, values, interests, feelings, goals, standards of judgment, etc.); and (c) the patterning of interactions of all those variables that shape and mold the world as one perceives it to be. Rather than thinking in terms of how one's opinion on a

particular issue results from interactions between specific variables such as one's group affiliations, interpersonal relations, beliefs, and so on, we

substitute the idea that opinion is the outcome of how the patterning of interactions of all those variables sets into motion a process of continuous change and development" (Crespi 1997, p.12-14).

The level and nature of an individual's involvement in an issue influences the formation of opinion. For example, some people who oppose legalized abortion as a general principle of public policy might support it after an experience involving themselves or any other member of their family. Also, demographic variables (age, income, and education) affect individualistic opinions. To understand the link between demographics and opinions, one must take into consideration the socio-psychological meaning of those demographics. Age, education and level of income are three important aspects (Crespi 1997, p. 13).

To understand the relationship between the process of opinion formation and demographic variables, "we must go beyond analyzing their correlations with opinion and deal with their interrelations with psychological processes" (Crespi 1997, p. 14).

Opinions and Attitudes:

There is no doubt that the history of public opinion research is not so separable from the history of attitude research. Many people conceptualize

opinions and attitudes as virtually equivalent phenomena. Thurstone (1928) was one of the first who tried to show the difference between opinions and attitudes, by defining attitudes as "latent psychological states that cannot be directly observed but are inferred from overt verbalized opinions and behavior" (Crespi 1997, p. 17). Rokeach followed Thurstone's lead by defining opinion as the verbalization of attitude, sentiments and values. Fleming however often used the term attitude when his own precept actually needed opinion. Also, G. Allport who recognized a difference between opinion and attitude, nonetheless discussed opinion measurement as a way to gauge the strength and nature of personal attitudes.

According to Crespi, "there is general agreement of the meaning of attitudes with respect to one characteristic, namely persistent affect (feeling tone): Attitudes refer to persistent and affectively charged psychological states that enable individuals to relate to their surroundings and to 'objects' (people and/or things) that comprise their surroundings in ways that make for behavioral consistency" (Crespi 1997, p. 18). According to Wiebe, who went to great lengths to distinguish between attitude and opinion, an attitude is an instant, intuitive orientation and an opinion is a thought-out choice between different and specific alternatives made in a particular social setting (Price 1997, p. 49).

In his book "Public Opinion," Price differentiated between opinions and attitudes in three ways. "First, opinions have usually been considered as observable verbal responses to an issue or question, whereas an attitude is a covert, psychological predisposition or tendency. Second, although both attitude and opinion imply approval or disapproval, the term attitude points more toward affect (i.e., fundamental liking or disliking), opinion more heavily toward cognition (e.g., a conscious decision to support or oppose some policy, politician, or political group). Third, and perhaps most important, an attitude is traditionally conceptualized as a global, enduring orientation toward a general class of stimuli, but an opinion is viewed more situationally, as pertaining to a specific issue in a particular behavioral setting" (Price 1997, p. 46-47).

From all of the above we can notice that the difference between opinion and attitude can be easily blurred. This could be due to the fact that we use the same questioning techniques to measure both. As mentioned earlier, many thinkers treated the two terms as interchangeable concepts.

Opinion Formation Process:

A person's attitudes, beliefs, values and opinions do not fully develop at birth. They are basically an end result of complex interactions between him

and his environment. As the child gets older, these interactions allow him to deal with an increasingly complex world (Best 1973, p. 48).

The terms *schema, attitude, value,* and *group identification* reflect different aspects of information processing that may influence the calculation and expression of opinions. Operationally, the degree to which these different terms can be precisely defined remains uncertain. Theoretically, when an issue presents itself, only select schemata or attitudes or values or group attachments become activated. Once they are activated they function as the raw material that shapes internal judgments and expressed opinions. The new information gained about the problem, as well as on how valued groups might be responding to the problem, also plays its roles. Usually, opinions are based on one's established system of beliefs and, to a certain extent, on the struggle to make sense of a new situation, i.e. the public issue. While thinking about a particular problem, ones beliefs and attitudes are recollected and combined with whatever new information is available. Then these ideas are compounded into an expressed opinion. According to Abelson (1968), the combination is made up of three atoms: a belief, an attitude, and a perception of some kind of social support. Abelson called the combination an *opinion molecule* (Price 1997, p. 57-58).

Theoretically, an expressed opinion results from a kind of mental calculation. In the process of forming a coherent internal judgment, a person may well express a range of different opinions across a variety of behavioral settings. Such a pattern could reflect the natural interplay of cognition and behavior over time, rather than a series of pseudo-opinions. "The discursive process of opinion formation not only is an interpersonal or collective–level phenomenon but plays itself out at the individual level as well. One's very first encounter with a novel problem is likely to produce a relatively impulsive and unreflective opinion. But each opportunity to think about and express an opinion on the matter can be another step towards a more crystallized or decided view" (Price 1997, p. 59).

In light of all of the above, public opinion is an important feature of any democratic system. Public participation in the political process ensures democracy's legitimacy (Splichal 1999, p.134). Palestine lies in the midst of an area where public opinion has been largely marginalized by the political authorities.

Unlike the other Arab countries in the area, Palestine was never independent, but subject to foreign rule since 1918. However, during the Ottoman period, there were elections, and representatives of the Syrian "wylayat," including Palestine, were sent to Istanbul and always took part in

deliberations with the Ottoman authorities. "The Ottoman *diwan* (imperial council), meeting at the *Porte* of the Sultan, was where discussions took place and decisions were taken on the most important issues for the state, as well as for the high court. The Sultan, in principle, presided over these meetings. Extraordinary or emergency meetings, in which viziers, dignitaries, commanders, ulema, and even retired dignitaries participated, were intended to ensure the sharing of responsibility in taking important decisions" (Inalcik 1993, p.12).

Also, since the birth of the Zionist movement, Palestinians have become part of the most politicized and politically active peoples in the world, given their justified fear of expulsion/colonization, and their struggle to prevent it. Therefore, Palestine is not typical of other *Mashreq* societies (Iraq, Syria, not to mention the Arabian peninsula). The Palestinian elite is very active in shaping and responding to public opinion. A good example, among many, is when the Palestinian leadership, who would have liked to close a deal with Barak in July 2000, was prevented from signing the Camp David (II) Accord by a surge of public opinion. Palestinian and Arab public opinion concerning the issue of Jerusalem and the question of the refugees' right of return made it impossible for Arafat to agree to the compromises being demanded of him. There is no doubt that the Palestinians have always

enjoyed a certain degree of freedom of expression and freedom of opinion.

But what role did these opinions play in forcing the leadership to stick to its

demands? This will be tested in the following chapters.

Chapter 2

History of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict:

The emergence of the Israeli state that marked the beginning of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on May 14, 1948 was definitely not an overnight event, but rather one of long-term planning. According to David Ben Gurion, the first Israeli Prime Minister, May 14th marked the historical climax for the work of three generations of Jews (Bernstein 1957, p.3-4). It is important to give a brief historical introduction on how the Israelis occupied Palestine, thus starting a long and complicated history of the conflict with the Palestinians.

During the year 1897, the first Zionist Congress was held in Basle, Switzerland. Delegates from every major Jewish community in the world attended the congress in which Zionism found an institution to nurture its ideology (Fein 1967, p. 14). The outcome of this Congress was that the participants agreed on the Congress' clear goal of working towards the creation of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. During that period, Palestine was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Approximately 95% of the population then living in Palestine were Arabs, and they owned

99% percent of the land (Muslih, 1992 p; 62). The fall of the Ottoman Empire, at the end of World War I, made it possible for the Zionist Movement to implement their program. After World War I, Palestine fell under the British Mandate which approved the 1917 Balfour Declaration in favor of the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. But this declaration, however, undermining the rights of the Palestinian Arabs. There is no doubt, that from the beginning, the Palestinians were at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the Zionists. Since the beginning of the conflict, the Zionists pushed forward their program from a position of great strength and organization, while the Palestinians struggled from a position of weakness, in the face of enormous odds against them. From the latter we can conclude that since the early years of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the struggle was between two unequal forces (Muslih 1992, p. 62-62).

During the British Mandate period, and until it ended in 1948, the Zionists based their political agenda on three basic and interrelated goals. The first goal was to change the demographic balance in Palestine in favor of the local Jewish community (which then consisted of less than 7 percent of the total resident population in Palestine). This was achieved by bringing into Palestine Zionist immigrants from Europe and elsewhere. The second goal

was to increase the Jews' ownership of Palestinian land. This was achieved trough intensive, and often fraudulent purchase of land. Finally their third and most important goal was to find an alliance with a dominant external power that would support and commit itself to the Zionist agenda (Muslih 1992, p. 63-64).

For their part, the Palestinian Arabs living in Palestine understood the Zionists' threat. Their strategy against the Zionist Movement during the British Mandate was centered on riots, strikes, and attacks on Jewish Communities throughout the land. This did not only create confrontations with the Jews but also with the British authorities who were supposed to maintain law and order (Zilkha 1992, p.15). The Palestinian nationalist ideology during that period revolved around three basic arguments. First, the Zionist movement, which was protected by the British, aimed at displacing the Palestinians. Second, the Palestinians tried to stress their right to national self-determination. Finally, the Palestinians stressed the fact that the Jews have no rights to Palestine, even though they have spiritual connections to the country (Muslih 1992, p. 69).

According to Muslih, in his article (History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict), "Nationalism in the hands of the Palestinian leadership was not a revolutionary ideology intent on using armed struggle or overturning the

existing local power relations, but rather it was oriented towards maintaining the status quo" (Muslih 1992, p.69).

In 1948, "while the UN debated proposals for an international regime for Jerusalem and for postponement of partition in favor of a temporary trusteeship, the representatives of the Jewish Agency informed the delegates of the General Assembly that at 10 a.m. (New York time) a Jewish State had been proclaimed. Before the resolutions on the Assembly's agenda could be voted on, the United States' delegate announced that his government had recognized the provisional government as the *de facto* authority of the new State in Israel" (Bernstein 1957, p.34). The declaration of the Israeli state in 1948 marked the beginning of the Israeli occupation in Palestine, which was partially occupied in 1948 by the Israelis, and then fully occupied in 1967. Since the beginning of the Israeli occupation in 1948, various attempts have been made to solve the Palestinian problem. The Arabs tried, but all their attempts were futile. When Palestine was fully occupied in 1967, the Palestinians took the initiative of solving their own problem, especially after the Rabat Conference of 1974, when the other Arab countries declared the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The PLO, then based in Lebanon,

and forced to flee to Tunis in 1982, became politically weak and less influential because they were far from their homeland (Rabah, 1998, p. 11).

Significant Political Events of the late 80's and early 90's that altered the Palestinian and the Israeli political reality:

More crystallized and serious attempts to secure peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians began after the Gulf war in 1991, when international efforts to bring an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially by the United States, intensified in the region. The American Secretary of State succeeded in bringing together all the parties to the conflict to a peace conference in Madrid in October 1991, a few months after the end of Gulf War. This Conference marked the beginning of a multi-tracked negotiation process, which led to the Oslo Accords and their implementation, to peace between Israel and Jordan, and to serious negotiations with Syria (Heacock 1999, p.18).

On 31 October 1991, the Madrid Conference opened under the co-chairmanship of the United States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (the former Soviet Union), and Israel, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, whose delegation included Palestinians from the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, all attended. All participating parties agreed that the legitimacy of the conference was based on United Nations Security

Council Resolution 242, which called for the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories in exchange for a peaceful existence with all the states in the region (Hiro 1996, p.24-25).

The Madrid formula envisioned a two-track method of negotiations, one bilateral and the other multilateral. The bilateral track was intended to seat the parties face-to-face and discuss the various aspects of the long existing conflict. The aim of the multilateral track was to build confidence between the parties by tackling five major issues: refugees; economic development; arms control and regional security; water; and the environment (Barbeau, 1999, p. 9-10).

Major political events that alerted both the Israeli and Palestinian realities during the late 80's and early 90's made both parties realize the importance of peace. There is no doubt that the first of such events was the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada[1] on the 9th of December 1987, which marked an important change in the nature of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The Palestinian Intifada was an unmistakable expression of the Palestinians' desire to end the Israeli occupation. It not only succeeded in embarrassing Israel and putting the Palestinian problem directly on the International agenda again, but it also helped the PLO to recover, after being paralyzed

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[1] The Palestinian Intifada started in December 1987 and lasted for seven years. This Intifada was a clear sign of the Palestinian will to bring the Israeli occupation to an end.

for so long, and forced it to adopt a strategy other than the option of armed struggle. Even among the Israelis, the Intifada forced a questioning of the morality and wisdom of their occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israeli public opinion during the Intifada indicated an increasing realization that the only way to end the Arab-Israeli conflict was through peace talks with the Arabs (Rabah, 1998 p.11-12).

Also, the early 1990's witnessed a campaign against Palestinian collaborators working for Israel. This led to the destruction of the Israeli secret police's 20,000-strong intelligence network. This development prevented Israeli occupation authorities from having full control and restoring law and order. This loss of control and the Palestinians' refusal to end their Intifada were contributing factors in the Israeli government's growing conviction in the uselessness of the continued suppression of the Palestinians and the denial of their right to self-rule. This also paved the way for the eventual recognition of the PLO, after the defeat of the right-wing government of Yitzhak Shamir in 1992 (Hiro 1996, p.25).

But the Palestinian Intifada was not the only factor behind the Israeli and Palestinian realization of the importance of peace. Indeed, both the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War played important roles as well. There is no doubt that the polarization of the Cold War affected the Middle East region

in several ways, in regards to patterns of conflict and cooperation. First, the Middle East was divided into two kinds of states: either pro-Soviet Union or pro-US. Second, and within the subsystem, the Middle East became divided into moderate or radical states. And finally, the Israeli-Arab conflict over Palestine became a point of confrontation between the two superpowers (Hansen 2001, p. 23).

During the cold War, the United States was concerned about first protecting its access to Middle Eastern oil on which it depends, and second about containing the perceived threat of Soviet regional expansion (Atkinson 1995, p. 3 online source: www.n.athinson.mobilixnet.de/ba.htm). For its part, the Soviet Union tried to avoid encirclement, to expand its influence in the area and to secure access to the area's waterways. The objectives of the United States and the Soviet Union led both to search for ways of securing their influence in the area, and to seek the Middle East countries' support. The world's bipolar system proved beneficial to most Middle East countries (Hansen 2001, p.23).

One of the United States' main allies in the region was Israel. Having a strong relationship, the US was able to use Israel as a safe spring-board to the Gulf (since the US is considerably far from the Gulf). In spite of its small population, Israel is very technologically sophisticated. It has a well-

trained army, equipped with the most advanced weapons of war and a communications system that could easily be integrated into the United States military communications system. In short, during that period, Israel was able to provide for the United States a secure base from which to deal with the ambiguous initial phases of any possible war in the region. For the United States, the Arab countries were not only less technologically sophisticated, but their regimes were not always stable, and were always a danger in their tendency to align themselves with the communist bloc, especially after the fall of the Shah of Iran (Atkinson 1995, p. 3-5 online source: www.n.athinson.mobilixnet.de/ba.htm).

For Israel, the close relationship with the United States was and continues to be of great importance, since this relationship pre-empts Israel's isolation in the international arena. "The ideological support given by the Americans has certainly shaped international perceptions of the Israeli state. No other state, which represses an indigenous ethnic group has received such widespread 'blind eye' treatment, take the South Africa experience for example. Secondly, Israel enjoys substantial economic and military aid from American sources. The economic burden of defense in Israel is the highest in the world" (Atkinson 1995, p. 4 online source: www.n.atkinson.mobilixnet.de/ba.htm).

As shown clearly in the latter part, Israel was a privileged US ally during the Cold War. Thus the new situation and the Gulf War brought along with it changes in the Israeli-US relationship. During the Gulf War, it was clear that the US did not want to risk a successful outcome of the war just to favor Israel (Hansen 2001, p.172). But even before the Gulf War, the Bush/Baker administration, which was the least pro-Israeli since the 50's, nonetheless sided with the Israeli right wing.

On May 22, 1989, the then US Secretary of State James Baker pronounced that "For Israel, now it is time to lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a greater Israel. Israeli interests in the West Bank and Gaza - security and otherwise - can be accommodated in a settlement based on Resolution 242. Forswear annexation. Stop settlement activity. Allow schools to reopen. Reach out to the Palestinians as neighbors who deserve political rights" (Cited in Quandt 1993, p. 389).

The above statement by Baker reflects a subtle shift towards a more active effort by the Bush Administration to redesign the Shamir plan into something more acceptable to the Palestinians.

In spite of this slight shift in American support for Israel, the situation after the Cold War and the Gulf War was quite favorable to Israel. "The end of

the Cold War had deprived the previous Soviet allies of their superpower

backing and of specific support. These states were among Israel's

adversaries and included Iraq, Syria, and the PLO. The Gulf War further

weakened Iraq and the PLO, and Israel was therefore in a favorable position.

In sum, Israel was weakened in the asymmetrical relationship with the US,

which put strong pressure on Israel to participate in the Madrid Conference,

while it was strengthened symmetrically, which improved Israeli leverage in

potential negotiations" (Hansen 2001, p.172).

In conclusion, the end of the Cold War meant the decline in influence and

support for the Palestinians from the Eastern Block, which forced them to

lower their expectations and make a deal. For the Israelis, the end of the

Cold War resulted in a reduction in Israel's regional influence as a pro-

Western ally in the Middle East. When the Gulf War came along and the

Palestinian leadership supported a defeated Iraq, the PLO was left to face

the agenda of the world's only remaining superpower, the United States

(Barbeau, 1999, p. 9-10).

The above chapter looked at why the Israelis and the Palestinians decided to

adopt the peace option after many years of dispute. It is important to note

that the changes that occurred on the international level – the change of the

world order from a bipolar to a unipolar system – contributed a great deal in

paving the road for a peace settlement between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Of course the Intifada also had a major impact that affected the Israelis greatly and made them realize that the only way to end the Arab-Israeli conflict was to engage in peace talks with the Palestinians.

Chapter 3

Palestinian Public Opinion:

The Palestinian public was divided in its reactions to and thoughts on peace with Israel, but it is difficult to assess Palestinian public opinion during the early years of the peace process (1991-1992), because of the absence of public opinion polls during that period.

Starting in February 1993, the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (JMCC) and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (CPSR) conducted a series of public opinion polls to measure Palestinian attitudes and opinions about the peace process. When reading through these public opinion polls, one can conclude that, and in spite of the deteriorating economic and political situation, Palestinians nonetheless supported the peace process, and that this support for the peace process was stronger in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank. Before discussing the impact of public opinion on the PLO/PNA's political decision-making process during this period, it is important to look into the reasons behind the strong Palestinian

support for the peace process, and the difference in this support between West Bank and Gaza Strip citizens.

In his book "Palestinian Public Opinion since the Peace Process" Jamil Rabah (Rabah 1993) asks an extremely important question concerning the strong support of the Palestinian public for the peace processes at a time when their economy is deteriorating, when the political situation is getting worse, and when their national authority is sometimes perceived as being inept, corrupt, and authoritarian. Rabah posits several explanations for this: "First, the Palestinians think that there is no other alternative to the option of peace, not least military struggle. Second, there is a lack of a viable opposition, which has left Fateh virtually alone. Third, there has been actual, albeit minimal, progress in the political situation. Forth, the Palestinian public seems to believe that the Israeli government's measures are antagonistic to the peace process, and the problem therefore is neither in the peace process nor in the Israeli public" (Rabah 1998, p.21).

There is no doubt that Rabah's explanations are factual, but other factors should be considered, for example the fact that the phenomena of conducting public opinion polls among the Palestinian public is relatively new to both the researcher and the Palestinian public.

According to Barbeau, part of Israel's occupation measures against the Palestinians living in the occupied territories was a complete ban of any freedom of expression or opinion related to political, social or even economic matters. Therefore, his made a formal assessment of Palestinian public opinion virtually impossible during the period 1967-1991 (Barbeau, 1999, p.9).

Accordingly, the average Palestinian who is not politically educated and was rarely asked to express his opinion openly in relation to political or even social issues, lacks the trust in the intentions behind conducting these polls, especially since they are interview-based polls.

It is important to note as well that the phenomenon of conducting public opinion polls is not only new to the Palestinian public that was interviewed, but also to the researchers who conducted the polls.

As for the difference in support for the peace process between the people living in the Gaza Strip and those living in the West Bank, Rabah explains, in his book that:

"First, the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip is more coherent and institutionalized; second, settlements and settlement activity are less obvious; third, Israeli military forces are less evident; fourth, the areas in the Gaza Strip remain more geographically continuous and the relaxation of occupation is felt more than in the West Bank; and fifth, development aid is targeted more to the Gaza Strip than to the West Bank" (Rabah 1998, p. 29).

The above quotation provides an explanation for why Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip tend to support the peace process more than those living in the West Bank.

The above paragraphs explained the reasons behind the strong support of the Palestinians for the peace process in spite of the constant deteriorating political and economic conditions. In the following section, I will be looking at several major political events, and studying the difference in reaction to these events between the Palestinian public and the PNA, in order to measure the impact of public opinion on the decisions made by the PLO/PNA.

Political lobbying in Palestine:

The previous section discussed the nature of the Palestinian public opinion, but in order to have a more comprehensive picture, it is important to discuss political lobbying in Palestine and its effect on the PNA. This section will discuss the role of Palestinian Legislative Council, Palestinian Civil Society, and opposition political factions in democratizing the Palestinian Society as essential factors in democratization process of the Palestinian society.

A. *Palestinian Legislative Council*:

On Jan 20, 1996, Palestinians living in Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza went to choose their future provisional government. This marked the beginning of a new era for the Palestinians political participation. The mandate of the Palestinian Legislative council (PLC) is to legislate and provide oversight to the executive authority i.e. PNA.

During the first three years, the PLC concentrated its efforts on governance laws, and that included budgeting, civil service reforms, regulations of national recourses, as well as a law ensuring protection of the disabled in the PA. On the other hand the PLC worked also on issues related to the peace process such as a law prohibiting the sale of real estate for foreigners as well as a law mandating national service. Since they were elected in 1996 until October 1999, the PLC worked on over sixty laws and only about twenty-five of which were passed out of which only six or seven of these laws were remotely peace process related (Schenker 2000, p.1-2. online: http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pubs/exec/schenkerexec.htm).

According to Schenker, the PLC did not achieve the expected results from them, and they are now a peripheral institution.

"Despite the high expectations and promising beginnings, the PLC has failed to carve out the meaningful and significant role in the Palestinian political arena. Beset by

both internal and external problems, the Palestinian legislature has become a peripheral institution, which does not bode well for the future of good governance in the PA" (Schenker 2000, p.1. online: http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pubs/exec/schenkerexec.htm).

In February 1999, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, published a report titled "The Palestinian Legislative Council: Performance Evaluation During the Third Term (March 1998-March 1999)". The report focused on three main levels when evaluating the performance of the PLC. These levels are legislation, accountability and monitoring, which the center considers the main three tasks of any parliamentary institution.

The following quote will summarize the findings of this report in light of the three evaluating levels that were adopted:

"The Council became weaker and more marginalized in comparison to its status at the end of the first two terms...The Council's weakness and inability to confront the Executive Authority and its indirect rejection to create foundation of transparency and accountability for its relationship with it became even more pronounced" (The Palestinian Center for Human Rights 1999, p. 84-85. online: http://www.pchrgaza.org/studies.htm).

In light of all of the above, we can conclude that the PLC, did not achieve the expected results that were expected from this legislative Council that should have paved the road for a strong foundation of a democratic system in the new emerging Palestinian state. The PLC members that were elected by the Palestinian people to represent them in monitoring the performance of the executive authority, and to build the

foundation of the future Palestinian State, were not influential enough to the level to practice any pressure on the executive authority. Of course it is also worth mentioning that the majority of the elected members are part of Fatah group, and this made things easier for the PNA to have control over the PLC.

B. Palestinian Civil Society:

The role of the any civil society is to pressure the state to open up and become more accountable. For the civil society to contribute to the democratization process of the political system, it does not necessarily have to operate in a democratic political system. The civil society works on democratizing groups with major impact on politics (Kamrava 1999, p.1-2. online: http://www.meforum.org/article/456).

In the Palestinian case, there is no doubt that the Israeli occupation was a main cause for the emergence of numerous civil society organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Many Palestinians considered the participation in NGOs and professional associations as efficient means to undermine Israeli occupation and to establish democratic institutions. The great number of increase of Palestinian NGOs was in the 80s,

especially with the emergence of the Palestinian Intifada. By 1995 there were about 700 NGOs in Gaza and about 1,500 in the West Bank (Kamrava 1999, p.2. Online: http://www.meforum.org/article/456).

The following quote by Kamrava illustrates the situation of the Palestinian NGOs following the arrival of the PNA in 1994:

"The PA arrived in July 1994 and almost immediately overwhelmed the NGOs. It saw the political independence of existing social institutions as an impediment to state-building and set out to disassemble them. It began to systematically dismantle the growing and steadily vibrant NGO network and took over their tasks. Given the still-tenuous nature of Palestinian civil society, the PA succeeded without much effort; the youth, factionalism, and lack of professionalism of the NGOs contributed to the ease with which the PA marginalized them. Also important was a lack of popular support for the larger, society-building importance of the NGOs"(Kamrava 1999,p 2. Online: http://www.meforum.org/article/456).

The quote by Kamrava summarizes the situation after the arrival of PNA which weakened an important social sect that was suppose to contribute to the democratization process in emerging Palestinian state.

C. Opposition Political Parties:

For many years, the major opposition political factions in Palestine are PELP and DFLP. Generally opposition in Palestine is generated around subjects related to the Peace process, but on the other hand there is often unity among these faction around other topics such as occupation. Following the peace process, the isolation of PELP and DFLP due to lack

of funds, as well as their inability to find a feasible strategy to combat the peace process, gave the opportunity to Fatah to have the full control of running the peace process. On the other hand, this gave also an opportunity for Hamas to shine as an opposition. There is no doubt, that Hamas gained a lot of support during the Intifada with its complex structure that was not only political but also social and economic, but its suicide bombings did not generate strong support among the Palestinian public. In addition, the strong Israeli measures and the constant Palestinian arrests against Hamas weakened it as an opposition faction. Following the peace process, the PNA's policy to detain members of the opposition groups has played major role in restricting the opposition activities (Rabah, 1998, p. 23-24). During the year 1996, the PNA detained around 1290, and in 1997 the number of Palestinian detainees from opposition parties came down to 1095 (PHRMG 1997, p.2 online: http://www.phrmg.org/monitor1997/may97-9.htm).

From all of the above, we can conclude that there is no strong Palestinian opposition. The PNA managed to suppress the opposition and be in control of the whole peace process.

There is no doubt that the PNA during the period studied managed to have full control of the situation due to the absence of proper lobbying

and pressure groups in Palestine. With a weak Palestinian Legislative Council, and controlled civil society and political opposition, the PNA did not face strong internal Palestinian pressure to democratize its ruling system.

Chapter 4

Case Studies:

This chapter will discuss three important events that took place during the period under study, expulsion of 383 Hamas Members to Marj El-Zuhour, Hebron Massacre at Haram Al Ibrahimi (1994), and Abu Ghnaim Settlement activities. A lot of important political events took place during the period under study (1992-1999), but these three case studies were chosen because they are limited to a closed time frame, and public opinion polls were conducted to measure the public's attitude to these events.

1. Expulsion of 383 Hamas Members to Marj El-Zuhour in Lebanon:

On the 17th of December 1992, Israel expelled 383 Palestinians affiliated with _Hamas_ and _El-Jihad el-Islami_ to Marj El-Zuhour in Lebanon. This Israeli measure was condemned on both the international and regional levels (Al-Quds 17 Dec. 1992, p. 1).

The PLO, who was then still based in Tunis, condemned the Israeli act and immediately announced that the Palestinian delegation will not return to the negotiations, until the issue of the expellees is solved.

Being the peace mediator, the United States directly condemned the Israeli measures, right after the expulsions, on December 17th 1992, asking the Israelis and the Palestinians to end this conflict and to go back to the peace talks. At the beginning of February 1993, Israel offered to return one third of those expelled, but this offer was rejected by the Palestinians who insisted that all those expelled be returned (Al-Quds Feb. 1993, P.1).

According to Al-Quds Newspaper, a public opinion poll conducted by the Arab Studies Institute in Jerusalem revealed that 48.2% of the Palestinians believe that the Palestinians should completely boycott the peace talks, while 7.2% continued to support peace, and 28.3% supported the Palestinians' withdrawal from the peace talks (Al-Quds, Feb. 1993).

During the same period, on 18, 19,and 20 February 1993, the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (JMCC) conducted a survey in which a random sample of 1,190 adult Palestinians (over the age of 17), from all across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, were interviewed. The interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis with people who visited the main towns' General Service offices to fill out applications for their identity cards, travel documents, birth registrations, etc. The interviewers reported that some people filled out their questionnaire by themselves, in the presence of the interviewer. The findings were as follows: 83.7% believe

that the Palestinian delegation should not return to the negotiations until the issue of the expellees is solved, 14% believe that they should proceed with the negotiations, and 2.2% had no or other opinion.

From both polls, we notice that the majority of Palestinians rejected the participation of the Palestinian delegation in any peace talks before the issue of the expellees is solved (JMCC, public opinion polls : http://www.jmcc.org/publicpoll/results/1993/no1.htm).

Based on Al-Quds Newspaper coverage of the crisis, the PLO's position during the early months of the crisis (Dec. 92- April 93) was as follows:

A. The Palestinians will not participate in the 9th negotiations round, scheduled to be held in Washington, in April 93, unless the expellees' problem is solved.

B. Israel should adhere to UN Resolution 799 and return those expelled by December 92.

C. The Israeli proposal to return one third of those expelled as a first phase is rejected, and all expellees should return together.

During February, March and April 93, international diplomatic efforts, especially by the United States, intensified in order to convince the Palestinians to participate in the 9th round of the peace talks in Washington.

The then American Secretary of State, Warren Christopher visited the region in February to assess the situation, and to consult with and focus all parties on the talks, at the very earliest date. During his visit, Christopher stated that with the help of the US as a full partner, real peace could be achieved through direct negotiations (Jerusalem Post, 23 Feb. 93, p.1). Even after Christopher's visit the to the region, the PLO continued to insist that there will be no Palestinian participation in the April peace talks if the expellees' problem is not solved (Al-Quds, 19 March 93, p. 1).

By the end of March however, the PLO began voicing a more lenient position towards the peace talks, starting with Farouk Kadoumi's statement in an interview with the Associated Press, and reprinted in Al-Quds Newspaper on March 21st, 1993, that the PLO will not withdraw from the peace talks, but will not participate in the 9th peace negotiations round to be held in April either, as long as the expellees' problem continues (Al-Quds 21 March, 93, p. 1).

Abu Mazen, member of the PLO's Executive Council, stated in an interview to Reuters, and reprinted in Al-Quds Newspaper, on March 24th, 1993, that the PLO will not proceed with the peace talks unless they get guarantees from the United States that Israel will not take any such expulsion measures in the future (Al-Quds, 23 March 93, p. 1).

On April 25th, 1993, Dr. Haidar Abdel Shafi, head of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, announced officially that the Palestinians would participate in the 9th negotiation round, to be held on April 27th, 1993 in Washington (b). In spite of their adamant position against their participation in the peace talks, the Palestinians in the end agreed to participate, and without any pre-conditions, and without even any concrete guarantees that the expellees' problem would be solved. There is no doubt that international and Arab pressure played a prominent role in pushing the PLO to participate in the peace talks, especially since those Arab countries involved in the peace process had, on the 21st of April, declared their decision to participate in the 9th round, regardless of whether or not the PLO is participating (Al-Quds, 21st April, 93 p.1).

From the above case study, we can conclude that at the beginning of the crisis, the PLO decisions were parallel to the Palestinian public will, but when the final decision was made concerning the whole issue, the PLO completely ignored public opinion.

There is no doubt that both Arab and international pressure, especially from the United States, exerted on the PLO forced the Palestinians to rescind their firm decision regarding their participation in the 9th round of the peace talks in Washington.

It is also important to consider that the absence of lobbying groups contributed in this result as well. It is true that in this particular case study there was no Palestinian Legislative Council, but at the same time the existing political lobbying bodies did not put enough pressure on the PLO to influence their decision especially the opposition parties from Hamas and Al-Jihad.

2. *Hebron Massacre at Haram al Ibrahimi (1994)*

Hebron, the birthplace of the biblical patriarch Abraham, is the home to about 450 Jews and 150,000 Palestinians. It is also the only West Bank city were there is a Jewish presence in the midst of a Palestinian majority. The Jewish presence in Hebron dates back to the biblical period, and today, just outside Hebron, lies the Kiryat Arba Settlement with approximately 5,000 Jewish settlers.

(Hebron Agreement:

www.palestinefacts.org/pf_19991to_*now*_hebron_agreement_1997.php.p.1)

For a long time, Hebron has been the site of many violent incidents between the Palestinians and the Israelis, even though it hosts but a small number of Jews. The most serious among them happened on 25 February 1994, when Dr. Baruch Goldstein, a settler from Kiryat Arba, opened fire at Muslim worshipers in Al-Ibrahimi Mosque during the holy month of Ramadan, killing 51 and injuring around 200 Palestinians (Al-Quds, 26 of Feb. 1994 p. 1).

The United States, the peace mediator, immediately and strongly condemned the massacre and called both the Israelis and Palestinians to continue with the peace process. Many other countries throughout the world also condemned the massacre (Al-Quds, 26 Feb. 1994, p. 1-6).

Following the massacre, the Palestinians' anger was expressed in daily clashes in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the PLO asked for international protection for the Palestinians. The day following the massacre, Yasser Abed Rabo, executive member of the PLO, announced that the PLO will not go back to negotiations with Israel unless Israel confiscated the settlers' weapons, and until international protection for the Palestinian civilians throughout the occupied territories was granted (al Quds 26 Feb 1994, p.7).

According to Al-Quds Newspaper, on 28 February 1994, Israel announced that, following the massacre, the government had decided to form an official investigation committee, disarm and limit the movement of some extremist settlers, and release between 800 to 1,000 Palestinian detainees. The PLO rejected the Israeli decisions, and described them as shallow and mere containment of the crisis, not resolution, in order to press on with the peace negotiations (Al-Quds, 26 Feb. 1994. p. 1).

Also, Yasser Arafat announced that the Palestinians were ready to go back to the peace negotiations only when Israel disarms the settlers, and the international community sends a protection force to the area to guarantee the safety and security of the Palestinians in the occupied territories (Al-Quds, 26 Feb. 1994. p. 7).

On March 2nd, Israel announced the release of 570 Palestinian detainees, and its intent to release another 300 before the end of that week. From the point of view of Palestinian officials, this Israeli step was not enough and Israel should accept the Palestinians' conditions for return to peace negotiations (Al-Quds, 2 March 1994, p.1).

Faced with strong Palestinian determination, the United States threatened to use its veto against any United Nations resolution related to the massacre unless the Palestinians went back to the negotiations with Israel (Al-Quds, 11 March. 1994. p. 1). On the 12th of March, Denis Ross arrived in Tunis to discuss with Arafat the mechanisms for a return to the peace talks, and the PLO again stressed the importance of providing international protection for the Palestinians in the occupied territories (Al-Quds, 12 March. 1994. p. 1). It was a great accomplishment for the PLO when the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 904 which condemned the Hebron Massacre, called upon Israel to continue to take and implement preventative measures, such as confiscation of weapons, prevention of illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers, calling for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories through temporary international and foreign presence, and finally requesting that the United States and the Russian Federation, the co-sponsors of the

peace process, continue their efforts to reactivate the peace process and to take all necessary action to implement the above mentioned measures (United Nations, Security Council: Resolution 904 (1994), http://www.domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF).

Following the United Nations Security Council resolution, the Palestinians and the Israelis held a series of meetings to discuss the Hebron issue and the international presence in Hebron. On the 31st of March, the PLO reached an agreement with Israel whereby the latter accepted the presence of 160 Norwegians, Danish, and Italian international observers. It is important to note here that this agreement had been the first time since the start of the occupation in 1967, that Israel had accepted any international presence in the occupied territories (Al-Quds, 19 March – 1 April 1994).

On March 20th a public opinion poll was conducted by the Center for Palestine Research and Studies - Survey Research Unit in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. According to the poll results, "Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have a number of reservations about returning to the negotiations with Israel, where as much as 38.5% of them said that they are against returning to the negotiations outright. At the same time, 38.8% stipulated that return should be contingent upon guarantees of international protection for Palestinians. Another 17.2% said that they support the return

to the negotiations with no prior conditions" (CPRS Polls-Survey Research Unit: http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/94/poll7.html).

From the results of the public opinion poll, and the pervious section in which the PLO actions were reviewed, we can conclude that in this particular case study, unlike the pervious discussed case studies, the Palestinian leadership reaction went inline with the Palestinian public opinion will. On the other hand, this case study can cannot confirm that the PLO reacted in this way as a response to the public opinion will and their response could be affected by several other factors. A major factor that contributed to this result is that the incident was strongly condemned by the international community, including the United States, and this made it difficult for Israel to exert pressure on the PLO, as it usually did. Also, the fact that the massacre, which jeopardized the peace process, was carried out only a few months after the signing of the Declaration of Principles, it put Israel in a position where it had to prove its commitment to the peace option, especially since it was behind schedule in implementing the first part of the recently signed agreement.

It is true that while the international observers' presence was limited to Hebron only, and did not extend to any other part of the occupied territories, as requested by the PLO, it remains nonetheless one of the PLO's greatest

achievements, since the beginning of the peace process. It is important to note here that even though the international observers' presence in Hebron was an important achievement for the Palestinians, it does not mean that the PLO in return has to give up its condition that the settlers in Hebron be disarmed, and eventually evacuated.

3. Abu Ghnaim Settlement:

The Jabal Abu Ghnaim mountain is located less than two kilometers north of the city of Bethlehem. Historically, it was owned by Palestinians from Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, and from the villages of Um Tuba and Sur Baher (The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem 1997, p.1: http://www.arij.org/paleye/abughnam). The mountain is a very important geographic and strategic site, as it closes the ring of settlements currently surrounding Arab Jerusalem, and it links East Jerusalem to the rest of the West Bank (Bennis 1997, p. 1: http://www.salam.org/palestine/phyllis1.html). Aware of the importance of the mountain's geographic location, Israel decided, in 1967, to unilaterally carve it out of the Bethlehem District, and to include it within its Jerusalem municipal boundaries in such an uneven manner (The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem 1997, p.1: http://www.arij.org/paleye/abughnam).

Before 1967, Jabal Abu Ghnaim was forested by the Jordanians and, later on by the Israelis. It now represents an ecological reserve, hosting around 60,000 pine trees and serving as an oasis for several hundred precious wild animals and plants. Also, it is the site of a Byzantine Monastery which accommodated pilgrims on their journey between the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem

(The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem 1997, p.2: http://www.arij.org/paleye/abughnam).

For many years, Israel's Jerusalem Municipality classified Jabal Abu Ghnaim and its surrounding areas as "Green Areas,"[2] even though, on the ground, most of the area is not green, but rather barren. Israel often uses this technique to prevent Palestinians from building in East Jerusalem (The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem 1997, p.2: http://www.arij.org/paleye/abughnam).

On 6 June 1991, an order to confiscate the land on and around the forested mountain was given by the then Israeli Minster of Finance, Isaac Moda'ee. The confiscation order was based on a 1943 British Mandate law which allows the government to confiscate lands for public use, thus also allowing the building of settlements (The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem 1997, p. 2: http://www.arij.org/paleye/abughnam).

The construction in Jabal Abu Ghnaim started during Netanyahu's government, in March 1997. Before reviewing the Palestinian National Authority's reaction to the building of the settlement, it is important to review the aims and the results of this settlement project.

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[2] A "Green Area" is an area in which development is restricted so that the beauty of its landscape, as well as its ecological diversity might be preserved.

Israel had several aims behind confiscating Jabal Abu Ghnaim and building the settlement there, and they can be summarized as follows:

1. To close the southern entrance to Jerusalem, and effectively isolate the city from the rest of the Palestinian territories.

2. To isolate the Palestinian towns surrounding Jerusalem, such as Abu-Dis, Sur-Baher, Shu'fat and others, with the aim of completing the ring of settlements around these towns. And since this must be subject to final negotiations, in doing so, Israel hopes to preempt any such negotiations by keeping them out of the talks, not subject to discussion.

3. To create a demographic imbalance in the Palestinian cities of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, and the surrounding villages.

4. To squeeze the city of Beit Sahour, thus making it impossible to develop. When the land of Jabal Abu Ghnaim, the only available land for future development and expansion, is confiscated, the people of Beit Sahour will have to consider moving elsewhere. For the Um Taba village, the situation was even more serious and dangerous, since the village had already lost its land in the previous expropriations, and now the new zoning plan will make it almost

impossible for village residents to solve their already exiting housing problems.

5. The economic aim of the project is to build a number of hotels, as well as several industrial zones, to compete with the city of Bethlehem. The Settlement ring includes Gush Etzion, Roads # 60 and 80, and the three encircled Palestinian cities of Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, and Beit Jala. It is clear that the goal is to isolate these three cities from other Palestinian cities (Jabal Abu-Ghnaim, p. 3: www.Palestinegel.Fi/Jabal.html).

The latter gave a brief description of the importance of Jabal Abu Ghnaim, and of Israel's aims for and results of its settlement project. The following section will discuss the PNA's reaction to this project, and the extent to which Palestinian public opinion had an impact on this reaction and on the decisions taken on this issue.

On 26 February 1997, the Israeli Ministerial Committee on Jerusalem approved the Har Homa (Israel's name for the mountain) settlement plan that called for the construction of 6,500 units. Immediately, the PNA began a campaign to warn the international and Arab communities about the dangers of this settlement project in Jabal Abu Ghnaim. On 2 March 1997,

the Palestinian Legislative Council called for a general strike in the Palestinian territories in objection to the Israeli decision to begin the implementation of the Har Homa settlement plan (Al-Quds 3 March 1997 p. 1). On 4 March, after a meeting with Arafat, the then United States President Bill Clinton said only that he understood the Palestinian position on the settlement project. Netanyahu's reaction to the US' position was to declare that the bulldozers will soon start working on the settlement, and that while the US' opposition is expected, it will not stop the construction. On 7 March 1997, the United Nations Security Council ended two days of debate over the issue of Jabal Abu Ghnaim and the Har Homa settlement. The draft resolution, prepared by several European countries, was vetoed by the United States. The resolution would have condemned Israeli settlement practices in Jerusalem, and particularly in Har Homa. In response to the US' veto, the Arab countries requested that a special session of the United Nations General Assembly be held to discuss the same issue (The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem 1997, p.8: http://www.arij.org/paleye/abughnam). On 13 March 1997, the United Nations General Assembly, with a majority vote of 133, condemned Israeli settlement activities in Jerusalem and the building of the proposed Har Homa settlement on Jabal Abu Ghnaim (Al-Quds 14 march 1997, p. 1).

From the above, we notice a big shift in the American position. At the beginning, it was supportive of the Palestinian position, but when a major decision had to be taken against the Israelis, a quick shift occurred, and a United Nations resolution was vetoed by the US.

On the popular level, a series of strikes, confrontations, demonstrations and marches were organized by Palestinians in opposition to the building of the Har Homa settlement (The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem 1997, p.8: http://www.arij.org/paleye/abughnam). The month of March 1997 witnessed fierce confrontations with the Israeli occupation forces, in many Palestinian cities, which lead to the injury of about 400 Palestinians (PASSIA, 1997 p. 1:

www.passia.org/publications/annual_seminar_reports/annual97.html).

Also, the Palestinian Higher Land Defense Committee, on 17 Mach 1997, erected several tents near Jabal Abu Ghnaim and began an around-the-clock sit-in, and engaged in several peaceful demonstrations. The late Faisal Al-Husseini, then the PNA's Minister without Portfolio, responsible for the Jerusalem File, as well as many other Palestinian officials and internationals, maintained a continuous presence at the site (The Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem 1997, p.8: http://www.arij.org/paleye/abughnam). It is also important to note that

different Palestinian political factions requested that the PNA immediately stop negotiations with Israel, especially after the US' veto (Al-Quds, 9 March 97 p. 1).

In spite of all the pressure put by the Palestinian National Authority to stop the construction on Jabal Abu Ghnaim, Israeli bulldozers began work on the settlement on 18 March 1997, with a warning from Netanyahu that any acts of resistance from the Palestinians against the construction will automatically mean Israel will freeze the peace talks with the Palestinians (Al-Quds, 18 March 1997, p.1).

The Israeli decision to start the construction was followed by many condemnations from various European and Arab counties, all warning of the consequences of this settlement project. The United States' position, on the other hand was clear. At the beginning of the crisis, the United States announced that they were not pleased with the situation, but that at the same time they will not put any pressure on Israel. This position later on shifted to clear support for the Israelis. On 21 March 1997, for the second time in less than two weeks, the US cast its veto in the UN Security Council, blocking a resolution that would have called on Israel to stop construction on its Har Homa settlement, although it cautioned that its veto did not

indicate US support of the settlement's building (Al-Quds, 18-22 March 1997).

It is important to note here that the Arab and international positions did not go beyond mere condemnation of Israeli actions in Jabal Abu Ghnaim, falling short of taking any serious position against Israel. It is true that the European Union demanded that Israel freeze all settlement activity, but apparently their demand, rejected by the then Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, was not influential enough to pressure Israel to halt any such activities (PASSIA, 1997 p. 1: www.passia.org/publications/annual_seminar_reports/annual97.html). Also, the United States' clear and unwavering support for Israel did a lot to weaken the Palestinians' position.

From March 6 to 9, 1997, a poll was conducted by the Center for Palestine Research and Studies, to gauge Palestinian attitudes towards: 1) Jabal Abu Ghnaim; 2) Armed Attacks; 3) Permanent Settlement of the Conflict; 4) the Peace Process; and 5) the Local Elections. According to the poll, Palestinian attitudes towards Israel's construction of Har Homa was as follows:

"Only 9% thought that carrying out armed attacks against Israeli targets is the best means to express opposition to Israel's decision to build the settlement. A majority of 56% believed that the best way to handle the issue was through negotiations with Israel while almost 30% supported nonviolent confrontations and a return to the Intifada (CPRS, public opinion poll: http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/97/poll26.html).

A month later, another public opinion poll was conducted by JMCC, where a random sample of 1,200 Palestinians, over the age of 18 years, and from across the West bank and the Gaza Strip, was interviewed. The interviews were conducted on randomly selected homes, in 60 sampling points chosen randomly according to population, and the respondents inside each home were also randomly selected, according to the Kish Tables system.

"The poll results were in general that the level of trust in the peace process has decreased ever since the intensification of the Israeli settlement policies, particularly on Mt. Abu Ghnaim. Compared to the previous month's unpublished JMCC poll, 'strong' and 'some opposition' to the peace process increased from 18.8% to 23.1%. Moreover, whereas in pervious polls the levels of support (strong or somewhat) for the peace process proved to have remained stable, in the last month, support levels declined from 78% to

73%"   (JMCC,   Public   Opinion   Poll:

http://www.jmcc.org/publicpoll/results/1997/no19.html).

From both polls, we notice that at the beginning of the crisis in March, the

majority of the general public (56%) preferred negotiations with Israel as a

way of dealing with the issue, and 30% supported nonviolent confrontations

and a return to the Intifada. Although the poll conducted a month later in

April indicated a decrease in Palestinians' support of the peace process,

from 18.8% to 23.1%, the indications were still that Palestinians supported

the peace option. It is important to note here that the Palestinian public

might have been affected by the results of the Tunnel Road clashes of

September 1996, which lead to the death of many Palestinians and did not

reveal any major political victory for the Palestinians, in relation to the

peace process.

In addition, on 28 March 1997, the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC),

called on the Palestinian National Authority to suspend negotiations with

Israel until they stop building settlements, reject the six-month final status

plan which will leave the Palestinian National Authority with no term of

reference in peace talks, and reject US vetoes in the UN and call on it to be

an honest mediator (Jerusalem Post, 28 March 1997, p. 2).

The PNA's immediate reaction to the crisis was the refusal to attend the first meeting of the Final Status Negotiations, which were scheduled for the 17th of March. Also, the PNA rejected Benyamin Netanyahu's proposal to have all the final status issues settled by the end of 1997, which was followed by an Israeli cabinet decision, approving the first of three "further redeployments" that gave the PNA control over (Area A) totaling about 10% of the West Bank (PASSIA, 1997 p. 1: www.passia.org/publications/annual_seminar_reports/annual97.html).

Apparently, the PNA's strategy in not participating in the negotiations was to pressure Israel into stopping its settlement activities, and to push the United States into a more neutral position. The series of suicide attacks however, which were carried out by Hamas, prompted Israel to also refuse to go back to the negotiating table. Beginning with the Jabal Abu Ghnaim crisis in March 1997, and until mid-October 1998, when the Palestinians and Israelis met at the Wye River Plantation, no serious negotiations took place, in spite of the constant mediation of the US and some Arab countries, mainly Egypt and Jordan. As mentioned earlier, the PNA halted the negotiations with Israel due to Israel's continuing settlement activity in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and specifically in Jabal Abu Ghnaim. When the Palestinians went back to negotiations with Israel, their main

concern was to make Israel accept the American proposal for an Israeli redeployment from 13% of the West Bank, instead of the 10% proposed by Israel. Without any mention of its concerns over Israeli settlement activity, the PNA thus brought an end to the Jabal Abu Ghnaim crisis

(PASSIA, 1997 p.1:

www.passia.org/publications/annual_seminar_reports/annual97.html).

Based on the public opinion polls that were discussed earlier in this case study, and on the fierce confrontations following the start of construction in Jabal Abu Ghnaim, the majority of Palestinians wanted to reach an agreement with the Israelis through negotiations, but there was no mention whatsoever of the PNA's neglect of the whole issue and its failure to bring an end to Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, especially in Jabal Abu Ghnaim.

Again from this case study, we notice that the PNA did not respect the will of the Palestinian people, but instead ended this crisis like other crises, with no political gains for the Palestinians.

In addition, just like the first case study, the PNA not only ignored the Palestinian public's will but also ignored the Palestinian Legislative Council's call in which they asked the PNA to suspend talks with Israel until

it halts its settlement projects in the occupied territories. Ignoring the decision of the PLC reflects that the PLC, as mentioned earlier, developed to become a marginal institution that could not practice real pressure on the PNA. The PNA went back to peace talks with Israel in spite of the fact that Israel did not stop its settlement building.

Also from this case study, and from the previous case studies, we see a pattern in the PNA's reactions to different crises. At the beginning of every crisis, they seem take a solid position that respects the will of the Palestinians, as expressed in opinion polls. But when pressured, either by Israel, the United States, or in some cases, even by Arab countries, their position changes, and leads to a loss for the Palestinian side in most, if not all cases.

Chapter 5

Conclusion:

The Palestinian-Israeli peace process began after many years of Israeli occupation. With the beginning of the peace process, the Palestinian challenge of building the foundations for the future Palestinian state also began, and measuring the level of Palestinian participation in the decision-making process during that period is of great importance, because it reflects the desired nature of the future Palestinian state. From the previously discussed case studies, we can conclude that on the one hand, Palestinian public opinion was not fully taken into consideration during the leadership's decision-making process, with the exception of the Hebron case study (but as mentioned earlier, this was due to the nature of the incident). On the other hand, it is important to note that a generalization could not be possibly made based on these case studies, since there is no concrete evidence that PLO/PNA take into consideration results of public opinion polls. The previous section in which the lobbying bodies in Palestine were discussed reflected that these groups did not practice the desired pressure to influence the Palestinian National Authority towards a democratic ruling system.

On the other hand, and unlike many Arab countries, the Palestinian political system allows for the public to express their opinions freely. Palestinian academics, intellectuals and opposition parties can express their opinions freely and without any fear from the leadership. This can be clearly seen in all four discussed case studies, but specifically in the first one. Also, many articles critical of the peace process were written and published, either in local newspapers or magazines.

From the previously discussed case studies, we also notice that at the beginning of the crisis, the PLO/PNA decisions either intentionally or unintentionally went inline with the public opinion will, but because factors such as Israeli, international and in some cases, Arab pressure, the PLO/PNA would proceed to end whatever crisis without securing any political gains for the Palestinians. Even though in the Hebron case study the Palestinians achieved an obvious victory (by brining into Hebron the International observers), they nonetheless lost on the more important issues of disarming and eventually evacuating the settlers from Hebron. This loss is reflected in the many clashes between the city's Palestinians and settlers that led to the death of many Palestinians. It is important to note here that there are no concrete evidence that the PLO/PNA acted in this manner because they respected the public opinion will but could be a result of

weaker Israeli and possibly international pressure in this particular case that seemed to get stronger towards the end of the crisis. From all of the above, we can conclude that the public opinion did not deeply influence the behavior of the PLO/PNA during the period that was covered in this study.

In a survey conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center in December 1997, 41.2% classified the PA's level of democratization as either bad or very bad, when only 28.1% said that it was either good or very good, and about 30.8% said it was in the middle (Rabah 1998, p. 80). In the same survey, 12.3% said that the nature of the Palestinian National Authority's régime is the cause for its non-democratic practices, while 40.5% said that the PA's régime, combined with Israeli measures, together are the reason behind these non-democratic actions of the PNA (Rabah 1998, p. 81).

In the last section of his book "Palestinian Public Opinion since the Peace Process," Rabah also reviewed some expert and PLC views on the democratization process under the Palestinian National Authority. Dr. Ahmed Khaldi, a political scientist and well-known Palestinian strategist, believes that the Palestinian National Authority is responsible for its leadership's non-democratic actions, but they are strongly in keeping with the nature of Arab society, which is usually given to non-democratic

régimes. For his part, Dr. Eyad Sarraj blames the Palestinian leadership more than Palestinian culture. As quoted in Rabah's book, according to Sarraj, "Arafat truly believes that he can control the Palestinian people and dictate what is right and wrong. He doesn't see that everyone else could understand the situation or know what to do... He thinks he is the only one who comprehends the great conspiracy against the Palestinian people, therefore he works as if by divine inspiration in defense of the people's rights. Any one who opposes him is considered the enemy, either directly or indirectly. The problem is that the people around Arafat don't help in changing his views. On the contrary, they reinforce them" (Rabah 1998, p.85-86).

When reviewing the Palestinian democratization process, the Palestinian Legislative Council is another factor that should be discussed. Dr. Haidar Abdel Shafi, who submitted his resignation from the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in September 1997, was quoted in Rabah's book as saying that, "The PLC has tried from the beginning to take on its responsibility to uphold the rule of law and protect human rights, but all our efforts have been in vain. There have been many complaints by citizens about the violations of human rights by the Palestinian National Authority, and the PLC has issued decisions and recommendations on these issues, but they

have never been implemented." Dr. Abdel Shafi's reference to human rights violations is to indicate that the PNA ignores the decisions of the PLC. This was clearly reflected in the Jabal Abu Ghnaim case study, where the PLC on the 28th of March, 1997 called upon the Palestinian National Authority to suspend the peace talks with the Israeli government, but apparently this request was neglected, since the PNA went back to the negotiations with Israel, even when the latter did not stop its settlement activities.

In conclusion, and even though the Palestinian National Authority, as is obvious from all of the above sections, has proven to be non-democratic, we can not ignore the fact that Palestine is perhaps the only country in the Arab world where public opinion polls are conducted freely, without any restriction regardless of how critical poll results may be. Also, opposition views and articles, including criticism of the Palestinian National Authority, and in many cases of Arafat himself, regularly appear in the Palestinian media. That the final decision is up to the Palestinian National Authority has not deterred Palestinian political parties from being very active in Palestinian political life (Rabah 1998, p. 95). In the Palestinian case therefore, one is dealing with a highly diversified political system with a great dear of room for the expression of deep political differences, but given

to a lack of responsiveness on the part of the authority to the expressed will of the people.

I strongly believe that in a society like the Palestinian's, it is hard to neglect the public's will, especially after all those years of struggle to achieve independence. Even though it was not the case during the studied period, the eruption of the Intifada in September 2000 proved that the Palestinians had lost faith in their leadership's performance, and had reached a point where they basically forced it to follow their will. Indeed, had the Palestinian National Authority followed the public will ever since the start of the peace process, the Palestinians would perhaps not be in the position they are in today.

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JMCC Public Opinion Poll No. 1
On Palestinian Attitudes to the Peace Process and the Palestinian Expellees
February 1993

- Methodology
- Sample distribution
- Occupation of respondents
- Results

Methodology

A random sample of 1,190 Palestinians, over the age of 17 years, were interviewed throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 18/19/20 February 1993. The interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis with people who visited general service offices to fill out application forms for their identity cards, travel documents, birth registrations, etc, in the main towns. The interviewers reported that some people filled out their questionnaire by themselves in the presence of the interviewer.

In the West Bank, approximately 690 questionnaires were allocated to each of the following major towns: Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqilia, Nablus, Ramallah, Hebron, East Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Jericho. In the Gaza Strip, 500 questionnaired were divided between: Gaza, Khan Younis and Rafah areas.

Of the 1,400 questionnaires, we received back 1,190 completed questionnaires. A few were discounted, either because the respondent was under 17 years of age or because the answers were not clear.

Sample Distribution

- 63.5% of the respondents were from the West Bank
- 36.5% from the Gaza Strip
- 21.7% said they live in villages
- 26.9% in refugee camps
- 51.4% in towns/cities
  - (these percentages may not reflect the actual population distribution eg. in the Gaza Strip the percentage of refugees is much higher than in the West Bank)
- 85.4% were male
- 14.5% were female
  - (the interviewers reported that a large number of women declined to be interviewed, particularly in the Gaza Stripl)
- The average of age of the respondents was 32 years, 95% of the sample ranged from 17

to 49 years.

Occupation respondents
- Students 15.4%
- Waged labourers 15.3%
- Housewives 4.7%
- Office employees/teachers/accountants 24.1%
- Merchants 14.5%
- Farmers 2.1%
- Craftsmen 5.7%
- Doctors/lawyers/pharmacists/engineers 6.9%
- Unemployed 8.3%
- Others 3.0%

Results

Q.1 Do you think that the Palestinian delegation should not return to the negotiations until the issue of the expellees is solved?

	Total
Yes	83.7%
No	14.0%
No opinion /other	2.2%

Q.2 Do you think that the Palstinian delegation should return to the negotiations after the expellee problem has been adequately solved?

	Total
Yes	60.6%
No	34.4%
No opinion/other	4.0%

Q.3 Do you think that the Palestinian delegation should not return to the negotiations even after a solution to the expellees problem?

	Total
Yes	32.2%
No	63.7%
No opinion/ other	4.0%

Q. 4 Do you think that the United States can play the role of mediator in the negotiations given its stand on the expellees problem?

	Total

Yes	40.8%
No	53.3%
No opinion/ other	5.9%

Q.5 If an acceptable solution to the expellees problem is found, do you think that negotiations are an appropriate method to solve Palestinian problem?

	Total
Negotiations will never yield any good results for the Palestinians	31.9%
The negotiations are an appropriated method for solving the Palestinian problem	13.7%
The negotiations will yield results but not sufficient ones	50.7%
Other, please specify	3.7%

Q.6 Who do you think represents the Palestinian People?

	Total
The PLO	58.1%
The Islamic movements	12.4%
True representation can only be achieved through direct elections	26.1%
Other, please specify	3.4%

Q. 7 The attitude of Palestinians in the West Bank & Gaza Strip to the question of who they think represents the Palestinian people?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
PLO	676	(394) 56.0%	(282) 66.0%
Islamic movement	144	(74) 10.5%	(70) 16.6%
Direct elections	303	(234) 33.0%	(69) 16.0%
Total	1123	737	426

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CPRS Polls - Survey Research Unit

Public Opinion Poll #7
Palestinian Elections and the Hebron Massacre, March 20, 1994

This is the seventh public opinion poll conducted by the Survey Research Unit (SRU) at the Center for Palestine Research and Studies. This poll focuses on the subjects of the negotiations, international protection for Palestinians, settlements, national council elections, and political affiliations. SRU conducts a monthly public opinion poll regarding the peace process, the Declaration of Principles, political attitudes, and elections. The poll results are published independently and with unit analysis in both Arabic and English. They provide a vital resource for the community and for researchers needing statistical information. The polls give members of the community opportunity to voice their opinions and to seek to influence decision makers on issues of concern to them. They also serve as a historical record of Palestinian attitudes at the various political stages.

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Introduction

This poll presents a record for Palestinian sentiments in the Occupied Territories and a document expressing a decisive phase in the history of the Palestinian people after the massacre at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, which resulted in the death of more than fifty Palestinians and the wounding of at least 200 others, according to Palestinian sources. Subsequent protests resulted in more deaths, injuries, and curfews.

It should be pointed out here that the interviews for this poll were conducted on the 20th of March (Sunday), less than one month after the massacre. It was obvious that the reaction was still strong in the Occupied Territories, where demonstrations and clashes continued. Here, it is important to mention some important events that took place on the same day which had an influence on the results and the fieldwork process:

1. Hebron was still under curfew

2. Ramallah experienced strong clashes and curfew was imposed on the center of town during the morning

3. Nablus was the site of big demonstrations, stone-throwing, and teargas

4. Armed clashes occurred in Gaza City and in other areas throughout the Strip

5. On the political track, the PLO continued to refrain from participation in the official negotiations with Israel in protest to the massacre. The PLO put the conditions of settler evacuation from Hebron, their disarming, and procedures to protect Palestinians on its return to the negotiations.

At the same time, and after waiting nearly one month, the UN Security Council reached a decision on Resolution 904. The resolution called for protection and security for the Palestinians and the presence of international observers in Hebron. It also called for the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Occupied Territories, including Jerusalem. The Resolution demanded that Israel make all arrangements to confiscate settler weapons.

Undoubtedly, Palestinian feelings and their opinions after the massacre in Hebron are beyond stating in a poll or in a research project. Still, the enclosed results capture, as accurately as possible, Palestinian reaction to the nature of events on the ground.

Enclosed are the results of the most recent public opinion poll that has been conducted in the West Bank (including Arab Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip.

Methodology

In an attempt to deal with daily events in the Occupied Territories (i.e., shooting, teargas, demonstrations, curfew, and roadblocks imposed by the Israeli military) and to promote the scientific value of the research, CPRS fieldworkers adopted several procedures, which are as follows:

1. Conducting interviews in the city of Hebron, its villages and its refugee camps in spite of the imposed curfew. Our fieldworkers, residents of the city of Hebron, went from one house to another and conducted interviews with residents. The Hebron area was divided into three polling districts (city, north, and south). A sample of villages and refugee camps was selected by CPRS researchers according to population size and degree of "development." For example, the sample for the north of Hebron included: Hahoul (a developed town), Beit Ummar and Tafouh (developed villages), and al-Aroub (a refugee camp). Each one of these residential areas was further divided into a number of blocks depending on the distribution pattern of housing units. Each block was assigned a specific number of questionnaires which were distributed on the basis of an enumeration system developed for identifying and selecting housing units. These procedures were also used in the areas of Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

2. After conducting 30% of the interviews of the Ramallah area in the city center (where the poll usually takes place), a contingency plan had to be followed due to the curfew imposed on the city center while the poll research was taking place. A sample of villages and camps was selected for the three districts in Ramallah. The sampling

technique used in Hebron was used in Ramallah.

3. In the Gaza Strip, interviews were conducted in nearly all residential areas (see Table).

4. In the north of the West Bank, interviews were conducted in major towns (Nablus, Tulkarm, Jenin, and Qalqilya). Interview stations that attracted villagers and refugee camp residents were selected.

Polling 'Electoral' Districts

One of the objectives set for this poll is to attempt to project Palestinian voting patterns in the case of democratic elections. Therefore, 1978 Palestinians were interviewed. A total of 1286 questionnaires were received from the West Bank and 692 questionnaires were received from the Gaza Strip.

The West Bank

For the purposes of this poll, the West Bank was divided into 8 "areas" which were further divided into 18 "districts". The population size for these districts ranges from 75,000 to 105,000 (except in Jericho and Nablus (West)), depending on the population distribution pattern. CPRS researchers planned to conduct 70 to 90 interviews in each district, according to population size. For each area, the total sample size is much higher.

The West Bank

District	Population size **	Sample size	Sample distribution *
Nablus city	85,375	92	100% Towns
Nablus East	81,995	59	89% Villages, 11% R.Camps
Nablus West	63,628	77	92% Villages, 8% R.Camps
Nablus Total	230,998	228	

District	Population size	Sample size	Sample distribution
Tulkarm (North)	105,694	67	25% Towns, 64% Villages, 11% R.
Tulkarm (South)	96,738	70	33% Towns, 67% Villages
Tulkarm Total	202,432	137	

District	Population size	Sample size	Sample Distribution
Jenin (East)	96,721	87	54% Towns, 34% Villages, 12% R.
Jenin (West)	100,490	64	100% Villages
Jenin Total	197,211	151	

District	Population size	Sample size	Sample Distribution
Jericho	25,957	41	55% Towns, 24% Villages, 21% R.

District	Population size	Sample size	Sample Distribution
Ramallah (North)	76,983	51	84% Villages, 16% R. Camps
Ramallah (South)	77,533	72	37% Towns, 50% Villages, 13% R.C
Ramallah (City)	75,178	96	82% Towns, 10% Villages, 8% R. C
Ramallah Total	229,694	219	

District	Population size	Sample Size	Sample Distribution
Hebron (North)	82,947	72	84% Villages, 16% R. Camps
Hebron (South)	80,073	72	88% Villages, 12% R.Camps
Hebron (City)	96,545	69	100% Towns
Hebron Total	259,565	213	

District	Population size	Sample size	Sample Distribution
Bethlehem (City)	68,646	74	33% Towns, 51% Villages, 16% R.C
Bethlehem (Vicinity)	70,273	75	10% Towns, 74% Villages, 16% R.
Bethlehem Total	138,919	149	

District	Population size	Sample size	Sample Distribution
Jerusalem (Vicinity)	81,730	74	49% Towns, 42% Villages, 9% R.Ca
Jerusalem (City)	83,580	74	14% Towns, 86% Villages
Jerusalem Total	165,310	148	

* (a complete list of villages and camps included in each district may be obtained from CPRS.)

The Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip was divided into 3 "areas" (North, Middle, South) and 7 polling "electoral" districts as shown below:

District	Population size	Sample size	Sample Distribution
Jabalia & North	141,915	113	Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahia Village & Project, Jabalia RCamp, Al-Nazli
Gaza city (A)	90,000	91	Al-Shati', Sheikh Radwan, Al-Nasr
Gaza city (B)	110,000	90	Al-Rimal, Al-Sabra, Al-Daraj
Gaza city (C)	1001,000	88	Al-Tofah, Al-Zaytoun, Al-Shuja'iy
North Total	441,915	381	

District	Population size	Sample size	Sample Distribution
Middle Camps	116,600	115	Al-Bureij, Al-Magazi, Nuseirat, Zawaydeh, Deir El-Balah

Distirct	Population size	Sample size	Sample Distribution
Khan Yunis	140,514	115	Khan Yunis (Camp and City) Qarara Bani Suhaila, Khaza, Abasan.
Rafah & Camp	102,346	80	Rafah (Camp and City)
South Total	242,860	195	

* CPRS estimates are based on the figures provided by "Palestinian Population Handbook" by the "Planning and Research Center 1993".

This division allows for an understanding of voting patterns for (a) the whole Occupied Territories, (b) the West Bank and Gaza separately, (e) each major area, and (d) each district. This, we believe, helps in the formulation of a Palestinian electoral system. It also contributes to a more representative sample.

Naturally, CPRS researchers realize that if elections were to be held, they would not necessarily be based on "electoral districts". We also understand that electoral districts may be divided in various other ways. However, we believe that this poll captures, as accurately as possible, the political map in the Occupied Territories.

In addition, interested individuals may obtain the results of the voting patterns in each one these areas according to place of residence (city, village, and refugee camp) by contacting CPRS.

Data Collection

The fieldworkers worked under difficult conditions, as they had to deal with the curfew in Hebron and shooting and roadblocks in various areas. With much experience and training, these fieldworkers could deal with the difficult conditions and conduct the interviews to complete the study within the time constraints. The poll couldn't have been accomplished if it were not for the determination of the fieldworkers. In this respect, researcher Fayez S., from Hebron, said, "I feel the importance of this endeavor. The danger surrounding the work makes it all worthwhile. I was determined to complete this fieldwork in spite of the difficult conditions." Amal A., also a fieldworker from Hebron, has said, "It is personally fulfilling to conduct this kind of research; the curfew imposed by the Israelis made the work dangerous." Another Hebron fieldworker, Ni'meh S., summarized, "We were determined to conduct this poll under the most difficult conditions in the history of this area."

The general conditions in the Palestinian street were captured through the eyewitness accounts of our fieldworkers. Jamal Rabaya'h stated, "In spite of three weeks passing since the Hebron massacre, the situation in the Palestinian street can be described as a revolution." Regarding the conditions that Hebron citizens are living under, fieldworker Jamal S. stated, "I have witnessed what my ears have never heard before, and my eyes have never seen before...how difficult the conditions the people live under are. What made it more difficult is the lack of infant formula for the children in some houses. I didn't feel the fear in spite of the curfew; I was trying to be strong. The people, however, were stronger than I ever expected."

To complete the data collection process, the choice of interview stations was based on our previous experience in the last six polls. To ensure the representation of Palestinians in all districts, the focus was on areas that attracted villagers and refugee camp residents. Data collectors carried with them an exhaustive list of villages and refugee camps in each district.

This allowed them to reach their target sample as efficiently as possible.

In the Gaza Strip, field workers visited almost all towns, villages, and refugee camps (as indicated in the previous table). Here, around 50% of the interviews were conducted in households to ensure the representation of women. The rest of the interviews were conducted in public places.

In general, the public forum of interviews contributed to a 10% non-response rate which was not included in the sample. A large number of non-respondents were women, probably due to cultural constraints. Some nonrespondents, we believe, are reluctant to state their political affiliation out of fear or ambivalence.

The majority of our data collectors have participated in a number of workshops where the goals of the poll were discussed. They were also lectured on sampling techniques, survey methods, scientific research, and field work. Data collectors worked in groups supervised by qualified researchers. CPRS researchers made random visits to interview stations and discussed the research process with data collectors. Fifty percent of our data collectors were female so as to ensure the representation of women in the sample. All interviews took place on the same day and were conducted on a face-to-face basis. Data collectors were assigned a limited number of interviews (an average of 30) to allow for careful interviewing.

Researchers were instructed to refrain from the following:

1. Conducting interviews in public institutions such as trade unions, offices of political parties, women and student organizations, government offices, etc.

2. Interviewing their acquaintances and giving questionnaires to a group of acquaintances.

3. Conducting multiple interviews at the same time.

4. Interfering with the respondents answers even if they seemed "illogical." If asked to explain a vague item, they must refer to a standard definition provided to them by CPRS. Otherwise, they must leave it up to the respondent to interpret the ambiguity.

Data were processed through the use of SPSS, a computer package that is able to detect illogical answers and other inconsistencies. The margin of error for this poll is less than 3%, and the confidence level is higher than 95%.

Sample Distribution

(expressed as a % of the total sample)

Area of Residence			
West Bank "including Jerusalem"	65%	City	36.2%
		Village	45.9%

Gaza Strip	35.0%	Refugee Camps	17.9%	

Age		Sex		Education	
18-24	26.8%			Up to 9 years (elem./prep)	29.0%
25-31	32.0%			Up to 12 years (Tawjihi)	34.5%
32-38	18.2%	Males	66.8%	2 year College	14.7%
39-45	11.9%	Females	33.2%	University (BA)	20.4%
46-52	5.3%			MA + Phd.	1.4%
53+	5.8%				

Marital Status		Refugee Status		Occupation	
				Laborers	13.4%
				Merchants	12.2%
				Craftsmen	15.6%
Single	32.0%			Students	11.2%
Married	65.6%	Refugee	43.0%	Housewives	13.2%
Divorced & Widowed	2.4%	Non-Refugee	57.0%	Farmers	2.6%
				Employees*	19.2%
				Specialists**	6.0%
				Unemployed	6.6%
				Retired	0.5%

* Employees: Schoolteacher, Government Employee, Nurse, Lower-level Company Employee, Secretary, etc.

** Specialists: University Teacher, Engineer, Doctor, Lawyer, Pharmacist, Executive, etc.

Remarks

First: The Massacre in Hebron

Palestinians perceive the Hebron massacre as an outcome of cooperation between the killer, Baruch Goldstein, settlers' groups, and the Israeli army. A majority of Palestinians (50.8%) said that Goldstein carried out the massacre with a terrorist group and the Israeli army (IDF) at the same time. Another 14.6% believe that he carried out the massacre with a terrorist roup only and a further 29.2% believe that he carried out the massacre with the cooperation of the IDF. This leads us to conclude that the majority of Palestinians feel that responsibility for the massacre lies, at least in part, with the Israeli military.

Second: Palestinian-Israeli Negotiations

Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have a number of reservations about returning to the negotiations with Israel, where as much as 38.5% of them said that they are against returning to the negotiations outright. At the same time, 38.8% stipulated that return should be contingent upon guarantees of international protection for the Palestinians. Another 17.2% said that they support the return to the negotiations with no prior conditions.

The poll shows that Palestinians are concerned primarily with settlements. When asked the question about returning to negotiations, while postponing the discussion of the issue of

settlements to the final status negotiations, 55.3% of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories voiced their opposition. Another 30.8% demanded the evacuation of settlers from the city of Hebron prior to returning to negotiations. In general, 86.1% of Palestinians have reservations about postponing the discussion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Naturally, opposition to postponing the issue of settlements was strongest in Hebron, where only 2.3% thought that the issue should be postponed, 62.4% felt that it should not, and 22.1% felt that postponing the issue in general would be acceptable if the settlers in Hebron were removed prior to final status negotiations. In Jericho, the majority of respondents (68.3%) felt that a postponement was acceptable contingent upon the prior evacuation of the Hebron settlers. In Jerusalem, only 3.4% of respondents supported postponing the discussion of settlements.

Third: PLO Performance

In regard to PLO performance after the Hebron massacre, the largest percentage (48.1%) of Palestinians see it as less than adequate. Another 23.1% evaluated the performance of the PLO as fair and another 18.8% said that it was generally good. There is a clear correlation between education level and evaluation of PLO performance, with the more educated Palestinians being much more likely to evaluate the PLO's performance as less than adequate. (see Appendix) With regard to area, the strongest contrast in this regard was between Jericho and Hebron. In Jericho, 26.8% of respondents rated the performance as generally good, 56.1% as fair, and only 14.6% as less than adequate. In contrast, only 2.9% of Hebron respondents rated it as generally good, 18.6% as fair, and 55.2% as less than adequate.

Fourth: Future Outlook

It was not unexpected that the majority of Palestinians are pessimistic about the future. The poll results show that 51.2% of Palestinians are pessimistic, while another 28.3% are not sure. It seems that the Hebron massacre and its aftermath had an influence on Palestinian future outlook. Our February poll, taken five days before the massacre, showed that 36.7% of Palestinians were pessimistic, 14.5 percent lower than the current figures.

The percentage of those who declared that they were optimistic in February was 39%, compared with 20.5% this month, a difference of 18.5%. Once again, the strongest contrast was between Hebron and Jericho. In Jericho, 24.4% identified themselves as optimistic, 17.1% as pessimistic, and 58.5% as not sure. In contrast, Hebron respondents identified themselves as optimistic at a rate of only 6.2%. The overwhelming majority of Hebron respondents (72.4) identified themselves as pessimistic and another 21.4% as not sure.

The results of this poll confirm the differences between the West Bank and Gaza Strip in terms of their future outlook. Our February poll showed that pessimists in the West Bank comprised 40.3%, ten points higher than the Gaza percentage (29.9%). This poll shows an even wider gap between the two areas, with 57.1% identifying themselves as pessimistic in the West Bank, compared with 40.1% in the Gaza Strip (a 17 point difference). In contrast, only 15.8% in the West Bank identified themselves as optimistic in the current poll, compared with 30.8% in the Gaza Strip.

We have previously hypothesized that this difference is due to the fact that many Gazans foresee changes in relation to the Israeli occupation, while it is unclear to West Bankers if

they will actually benefit from the peace agreement. It is obvious that the Hebron massacre intensified the feeling of uncertainty over the future, especially among West Bankers. The future of the West Bank itself is not clear. The DoP states that the status of the West Bank, excluding Jericho, will be determined through final status negotiations. Also, in the West Bank settlements seem to be more pervasive and permanent.

This difference between the West Bank and Gaza Strip may also be due to the fact that "independents" and "others" demonstrate pessimistic outlook. These "groups" are more prevalent in the West Bank than in Gaza and most responsive to changes on the ground.

Fifth: Elections

Palestinians were asked about the best means to select the West Bank and Gaza members of the Palestinian National Council (should an opportunity to select these representatives occur). The vast majority of respondents (more than 80%) indicated that elections were the best means to select these members. Only 9% supported appointments by the leadership of the PLO and another 9% supported appointments on the basis of quota.

Sixth: Political Affiliation

The Hebron massacre had a negative impact on the popularity of Fateh among Palestinians, especially in Hebron. Our February poll indicated 42% support for Fateh compared with 36.4% three weeks after the massacre.

Taking into consideration the results of this poll and those of the previous CPRS polls, it is obvious that the popularity of Fateh is more effected by political changes and events on the ground than all other groups. This may be due to the fact that Fateh has the largest support among Palestinians, from a wide spectrum of the population, some of whom may be only peripherally committed to the organization. Some Palestinians equate the PLO with Fateh and in general, criticism of the PLO's performance effects Fateh's popularity the most. Also, the status of negotiations with Israel directly affects the largest faction in the PLO, which is Fateh.

The popularity of Hamas has been slightly affected by the Hebron massacre. Support for Hamas among Palestinians increased from 13.9% in February to 15.6% in March. Support for both Hamas and Fateh is clear in the Gaza Strip, where Hamas has 19.8% support and Fateh has 40.1%. As to the rest of the political factions, we notice that their popularity among Palestinians is somewhat consistent.

If we compare the popularity of a coalition of groups supporting the DoP (Fateh, Feda, and Hizb el-Sha'b) with that of a coalition of groups opposed to the DoP (Hamas, PFLP, DFLP, and Islamic Jihad), we notice that the latter would win the following districts: Hebron North (Halhoul, Beit Ummar, Tafouh, and Al-Aroub refugee camp), Hebron City, Hebron South (Yatta, Al Samou', Dora, and Al-Fawwar refugee camp), Gaza City C (Al-Tofah, Al-Zaytoun, and Al-Shuja'iyah), and Tulkarm South (Qalqilya, Salfit, and surrounding villages). Strongly competitive areas include: Jabalia and North, Rafah, and the city of Bethlehem.

We also notice that Hamas is popular in the district of Gaza City C, where a little more than 33% of the respondents indicated their support, with 35% for Fateh. Hamas is also popular

in the suburbs of Bethlehem, with 26.5% of respondents indicating their support. In the North of Hebron, Hamas alone was able to gather more support (25%) than Fateh (18.1%).

Looking at this poll and previous CPRS polls, we are able to come to the following conclusions:

1. Fateh will face its strongest competition in Hebron.

2. In the Gaza Strip, while it is polarized, the situation with regard to political affiliation is both volatile and complex.

3. In the West Bank, "independents" and "others" will play a major role in any election.

4. Fateh might be able to draw on the support of Nationalist Independents.

Hamas, however, has the potential to attract the votes of Islamic Independents, Palestinians who say that they will not vote for any of the political groups, and those who refused to participate in the poll. This leads us to say that support for Hamas might be higher than 15.6%.

Palestinian Elections and the Hebron Massacre

1. Do you support the PLO returning to the peace talks with Israel?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
a. yes	17.2%	14.5%	22.2%
b. no	38.5%	39.5%	36.7%
c. yes, with guaranteed international protection for Palestinians.	38.8%	39.6%	37.2%
d. don't know	05.5%	06.4%	03.9%

2. Do you support continuing the negotiations, given the postponement of discus

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
a. yes	07.7%	08.0%	08.7%
b. yes, if settlers are removed from Hebron.	30.8%	28.5%	33.9%
c. no	55.3%	56.3%	52.4%
d. don't know	06.2%	07.2%	05.0%

3. Do you think that the settler who carried out the Hebron massacre_____?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza
a. acted alone	01.3%	01.0%	02.3%
b. acted with a group of terrorists	14.6%	12.8%	17.9%
c. acted with the cooperation of the IDF.	29.2%	25.8%	33.8%
d. b and c	50.8%	56.0%	41.6%
e. don't know	04.1%	04.4%	04.4%

4. How do you evaluate the PLO's performance after the Hebron massacre (the way

a. generally good	18.8%	18.0%	20.9%
b. fair	23.1%	23.1%	24.5%
c. less than adequate	48.1%	48.6%	46.1%
d. don't know	10.0%	10.3%	08.5%

5. Taking into consideration the political and economic conditions facing the c

a. optimistic	20.5%	15.8%	30.8%
b. pessimistic	51.2%	57.1%	40.1%
c. not sure	28.3%	27.1%	29.1%

6. If elections were held today, you would vote for candidates

affiliated with:

a. DFLP	02.5%	03.0%	01.1%
b. Fateh	36.4%	34.8%	40.1%
c. Hamas	15.6%	14.1%	19.8%
d. PFLP	07.3%	06.1%	08.6%
e. Feda	02.0%	02.6%	00.6%
f. Islamic Jihad	03.6%	03.6%	03.5%
g. Hizb el-Sha'b	02.0%	02.4%	01.0%
h. Islamic independents	07.9%	09.0%	05.3%
i. National independents	11.1%	12.5%	09.4%
j. Other (specify)	01.1%	01.1%	01.2%
k. no one	10.5%	10.8%	09.4%

7. In your opinion, the best way to select the West Bank and Gaza Strip members

a. general elections	77.2%	80.2%	72.3%
b. PLO appointment	10.6%	09.0%	14.6%
c. appointment by political groups	09.9%	08.9%	10.0%
on the basis of a quota system			

d. other 02.3% 01.9% 03.1%

*The following question was optional:

8. If elections to choose the members of the Palestine National Council take pl

a. I would support them as an	33.4%	36.7%	25.4%
alternative to PISGA elections.			
b. I would support them if	29.5%	30.3%	30.8%
they were not as an alternative			
to PISGA elections.			
c. I would support them if the	24.7%	23.9%	25.7%
elected members were also			
members of PISGA.			
d. other (specify)	12.4%	09.1%	18.1%

Political Affiliation by Area of Residence

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	DFLP %	Fateh %	Hamas %	PFLP %	Feda %	I.Jihad %	H.Sha'b %	I.Inds. %	NI
Nablus	3.2	39.2	15.3	4.5	---	1.4	0.5	4.1	13.
Tulkarm	4.1	30.3	15.9	3.4	1.4	3.4	1.4	6.2	13.
Jenin	1.4	49.0	8.8	6.1	---	2.0	1.4	8.2	9.5
Jericho	2.4	46.3	17.1	2.4	9.8	4.9	7.3	2.4	7.4
Ramallah	4.1	33.6	5.0	10.9	4.5	3.2	4.1	5.9	15.
Hebron	0.9	23.0	20.7	4.7	3.3	8.0	1.4	21.6	10.
Bethlehem	2.8	35.2	19.0	5.6	1.4	4.2	2.1	9.9	13.
Jerusalem	4.8	33.8	13.1	7.6	5.5	2.1	5.5	7.6	11.
Gaza North	1.6	39.3	18.1	8.8	0.5	4.7	0.5	5.8	10.
Gaza Middle	---	38.3	22.6	10.4	0.9	1.7	3.5	8.7	4.3
Gaza South	2.1	40.5	17.9	10.0	1.6	2.6	1.1	4.2	7.4

Political Affiliation by District in the West Bank

	DFLP %	Fateh %	Hamas %	PFLP %	Feda %	I.Jihad %	H.Sha'b %	I.Inds. %	NI
Nablus E	3.4	55.9	11.9	3.4	---	3.4	---	---	
Nablus W	5.3	37.3	18.7	6.7	---	2.7	1.3	5.3	
Nablus	1.1	28.0	15.1	3.2	---	---	---	5.4	
Tulkarm N	3.1	36.9	15.4	1.5	1.5	3.1	1.5	6.2	
Tulkarm S	4.3	27.5	18.8	5.8	1.4	2.9	1.4	7.2	
Jenin E	---	49.4	7.2	7.2	---	2.4	1.2	9.6	
Jenin W	3.1	50.0	9.4	4.7	---	1.6	1.6	6.3	
Jericho	2.4	46.3	17.1	2.4	9.8	4.9	7.3	2.4	
Ramallah N	5.0	45.0	5.0	7.5	2.5	---	2.5	---	
Ramallah S	4.2	30.6	4.2	12.5	11.1	5.6	2.8	8.3	
Ramallah	3.7	30.8	5.6	11.2	0.9	2.8	5.6	6.5	
Hebron N	1.4	18.1	25.0	5.6	4.2	5.6	---	19.4	
Hebron S	1.4	26.4	19.4	4.2	1.4	6.9	1.4	22.2	
Hebron	---	24.6	17.4	4.3	4.3	11.6	2.9	23.2	
B'lehem	4.0	28.0	12.0	8.0	2.7	6.7	4.0	12.0	
B'lehem vicinity	1.5	42.6	26.5	2.9	---	1.5	---	7.4	
J'salem vicinity	8.6	28.6	5.7	5.7	8.6	2.9	11.4	11.4	
Jerusalem	3.6	36.0	15.3	8.1	4.5	1.8	3.6	6.3	

Party Affiliation by District in the Gaza Strip

	DFLP %	Fateh %	Hamas %	PFLP %	Feda %	I.Jihad %	H.Sha'b %	I.Inds. %	NI
Jabalia & North	4.5	38.7	13.5	18.0	0.9	3.6	1.8	7.2	6
Gaza (A)	1.1	37.4	13.2	8.8	---	1.1	---	4.4	1
Gaza (B)	---	45.3	15.1	3.5	---	7.0	---	7.0	1
Gaza (C)	---	35.1	33.8	1.3	1.3	7.8	---	3.9	5

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Middle Camps	----	38.3	22.6	10.4	0.9	1.7	3.5	8.7	4
K. Yunis & Camps	3.5	41.7	15.7	7.0	2.6	3.5	1.7	2.6	8.
Rafah & Camps	---	38.7	21.3	14.7	---	1.3	---	6.7	5

Appendix

EVALUATION OF PLO PERFORMANCE BY EDUCATION LEVEL

	Good %	Fair %	Less than Adequate %	Don't Know %
up to 9 Years (Elem. Prep)	21.1	21.8	40.3	16.8
up to 12 Years (tawjihi)	19.0	26.5	47.2	7.3
2 Year College	17.8	20.7	54.9	6.6
University Degree	15.7	22.0	56.8	5.5
Masters & PhDs	4.2	29.2	62.5	4.1

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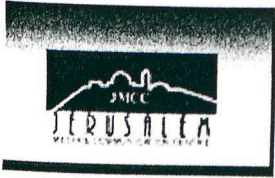
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Jerusalem Media & Communication Centre

Public Opinion Polls

JMCC Public Opinion Poll No. 19
On Palestinian Attitudes Towards Current Issues
April 1997

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Sample distribution
- Occupation of respondents
- Results

Introduction

A comparison of the reuslts between an unpublished JMCC poll on 7 March, 1997 and the current JMCC poll, shows a remarkable shift in the mood of Palestinian public opinion towards various aspects of the ailing peace process.

- In general, the level of trust in the peace process has decreased ever since the intensification of the Israeli settlement policies, particularly on Mt. Abu Ghniem. Compared to last month's unpublished JMCC poll, strong and some opposition to the peace process increased from 18.8% to 23.1%. Moreover, whereas in pervious polls the levels of support (strong or somewhat) for the peace process proved to have remained stable, in the last month support levels declined from 78% to 73%.

- Between 7 March and 3 April there has been a clear drop in support for various Palestinian factions, including Hamas. Support fro Fateh, for example declined from 40.6% in March to 38.5% in April. Support for Hamas dwindled from 11.8% to 16.6%. Furhtermore, those who said they do not trust any political or religious faction increased from 21.3% to 25.9%.

- Over the last three weeks, trust in Palestinian President Arafat decreased from 47.4% to 43.4%, and the number of Palestinians who said they do not trust any Palestinian leader also increased from 15% to 18%.

- Although the majority of Palestinians oppose military and suicide bombing operations against Israeli targets, a large majority believe that these operations are an adequate response to the current political developments: 39.8% of the respondents said that they support military operations against Israeli targets compared to 47.7% who oppose them. The difference between support and opposition to military operations in the West Bank is very low (41.6% whi support compared to 42.7% who oppose), whereas in the Gaza Strip, the difference between those who support military operations and those who oppose them is still about 18% (37.0% in Gaza support military operations compared to 55.7% who oppose them). Similar differences are also found between the West Bank and Gaza Strip in regard to suicide bombs, although the level of opposition to suicide operations is higher in both the West Bank and Gaza.

- An increase in Palestinian frustration with the current Israeli measures can be inferred from the level of support to popular protests against Israeli; 62.7% of Palestinian support the intensification of demonstrations and popular protests. Moreover 31.3% of

Palestinians believe that the PA (Palestinian Authority) should encourage these protests, and 37.5% say the the PA should not interfere. Only 23.1% of the respondents say that the PA should prevent these popular protests.

- The majority of the Palestinians reject Israeli PM. Netanyahu's proposal to stop the implementation of the interim agreement and to begin with the final status negotiations: 67.6% of Palestinians believe that the Palestinian leadership should not accept the proposal.

- 39.8% of Palestinians believe that the economy is the single most important issue today, while 70.1% of Palestinians believe that the peace process has has a negative or very negative effect on their economy.

Methodology

A random sample of 1,200 Palestinians, over the age of 18 years, were interviewed throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 3 and 4 April 1997. The interviews were conducted on randomly selected homes, and the subjects inside each home were also selected randomly according to Kish tables. The interviews were conducted in 60 sampling points chosen randomly according to population.

In the West Bank, 740 people were surveyed from the following areas: **Jerusalem:** Old city, a-Ram & Dhahya, Shu'fat, Shu'fat RC (Refugee Camp), Silwan, Jabal al-Mukaber, Wadi al-Joz, Sheikh Jarrah, Beit Hanina. **Bethlehem:** Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Shahour, Batir, Sawahra, Nahaleen. **Hebron:** Hebron, Fawwar RC, Rihiya, Bani Na'im, Halhoul, Idthna, Sa'eer. **Jenin:** Jenin, Jenin RC, Toubas, al-Jdayda, Sanur, Rumana, Anin. **Tulkarem & Qalqilia:** Qalqilia, Tulkarem, Rameen, Anbata, Kufr Jammal, Jayyous, Sida, Illar. **Nablus:** Nablu, 'Ain Beit Elam RC, Salim, Rujib. **Ramallah:** Ramallah, Al-Bireh, Silwad, Beit 'Anan, Amari RC, **Jericho:** Jericho.

In the Gaza Strip, 460 people were surveyed from: Rafah RC, Beit Hanoun, Khan Younis RC, Khan Younis, Jabalia RC, Magahzi RC, Gaza/Rimal, Gaza/Sabra, Deir al-Balah, 'Abssan, Bani Suheila, Jabalia, Bureij RC, Gaza/al-Tufah, Gaza/Shuja'ia, Gaza/Sheikh Radwan, Nusseirat RC, Shati RC.

The major of error is plus or minus 3% with a confidence level of 95%.

Sample Distribution

- 51.4% of the respondents were from the West Bank
- 38.3% from the Gaza Strip
- 10.3% from Jerusalem
- 29.1% said they live in villages
- 24.5% in refugee camps
- 46.4% in towns/cities
- 46.8% were male
- 53.2% were female
- 64.4% were married
- 28.8% were single
- 5.3% were widowed
- 0.9% were divorced
- 0.6% No answer
- The average of age of the respondents was 34 years.

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Occupation respondents

- Students 11.8%
- Waged labourers 10.8%
- Housewives 38.6%
- Employees eg. secretaries/teachers/nurses/municipal employees 17.5%
- Businessmen/private business 7.7%
- Farmers/fishermen 1.6%
- Craftsmen 1.6%
- Professionals - eg. doctors/lawyers/pharmacists/engineers 2.2%
- Unemployed 6.6%
- Retired 1.3%
- No answer 0.5%

Results

Q.1 In general, do you support or oppose the current peace process between the Palestinians and Israel? Do you strongly support, somewhat support, strongly oppose, or somewhat oppose?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Strongly support	29.1%	24.9%	35.9%
Somewhat support	43.8%	43.1%	45.0%
Strongly oppose	11.2%	13.9%	6.7%
Somewhat oppose	11.9%	13.0%	10.2%
No answer	4.0%	5.1%	2.2%

Q.2 How has the Arab-Israeli peace process affected our economy. Has it had a very positive, positive, negative, or very negative effect on our economy, or has it had no effect at all?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Very positive	2.1%	2.0%	2.2%
Positive	17.8%	18.4%	17.0%
Negative	42.7%	42.0%	43.7%
Very negative	27.4%	24.6%	32.0%
Had no effect at all	6.6%	8.6%	3.3%
No answer	3.4%	4.3%	2.0%

Q.3 In your opinion, which of the following is the single most important issue facing Palestinian society today? To help you remember, here is a card showing the possible issues (Accept one response only)

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Competing negotiations with Israel	23.1%	24.3%	21.1%
Improving our economic situation	39.8%	37.2%	43.9%
Achieving democracy and freedom of expression	11.8%	12.7%	10.4%

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Maintaining order and security	10.9%	12.0%	9.1%
Decline of religious observance	10.8%	10.0%	12.2%
No answer	3.6%	3.8%	3.3%

Q. 4 What is your opinion in regard to the Cairo Agreement, would you say you support it, or oppose it?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Fateh	38.5%	35.8%	42.8%
Hamas	10.6%	9.9%	11.7%
PFLP	1.4%	1.8%	0.9%
DFLP	0.7%	09%	0.2%
Islamic Jihad	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%
PPP	0.4%	0.5%	0.2%
FIDA	0.4%	0.5%	0.2%
Pro peace secularists	0.6%	0.7%	0.4%
Othe Islamic Organization	5.0%	7.2%	1.5%
Others	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%
Do not trust anyone	25.9%	25.0%	27.4%
No answer	13.9%	15.1%	11.7%

Q.5 Which Palestinian political or religious personality do you trust most?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Yasser Arafat	43.4%	38.2%	51.7%
Ahmad Yassin	6.0%	4.9%	7.8%
George Habash	1.4%	1.6%	1.1%
Nayef Hawatmeh	0.4%	0.5%	0.2%
Haidar Abdul Sahfi	3.6%	3.5%	3.7%%
Faisal Husseini	2.3%	2.6%	1.7%
Hanan Ashrawi	2.0%	3.1%	2%
Sa'eb Erekat	1.7%	1.6%	1.7%
Abu Mazen	1.0%	0.8%	1.3%
Others	7%	6.6%	7.6%
Do not trust anyone	18.0%	22.3%	11.1%
No answer	13.3%	14.2%	11.7%

Q.6 In general, how would you rate the overall performance of the Palestinian Authority? Would you say that its performance has been very good, not very good, bad, or very bad?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Very good	12.5%	12.3%	12.8%
Good	67.1%	65.1%	70.2%
Bad	13.1%	13.2%	12.8%

Very bad	2.9%	3.9%	1.3%
No answer	4.4%	5.4%	2.8%

Q. 7 In general, how would you rate the overall performance of the Palestinian Legislative Council? Would you say that its performance has been very good, good, bad or very bad?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Very good	6.9%	7.2%	6.5%
Good	46.9%	48.0%	45.2%
Bad	24.6%	23.8%	25.9%
Very bad	7.3%	5.8%	9.8%
No answer	14.3%	15.3%	12.6%

Q. 8 To what extent would you say that the Palestinian Legislative Council fulfills the needs of the Palestinian people?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Fulfills the needs well	25.8%	27.3%	23.5%
Fulfills the needs to no effect	48.1%	46.2%	51.1%
Fulfills the needs in a bad way	12.8%	11.4%	15.2%
No answer	13.3%	15.1%	10.2%

Q. 9 How would you rate the overall performance of the following Palestinian Authority apparatuses:

a. Security Apparatus

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Good	52.8%	52.4%	53.3%
Fair	13.3%	31.4%	31.3%
Bad	10.0%	9.2%	11.3%
No answer	5.9%	7.0%	4.1%

b. Palestinian Legislative Council

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Good	33.8%	34.2%	33.3%
Fair	27.7%	28.0%	27.2%
Bad	24.1%	21.8%	27.8%
No answer	14.4%	16.1%	11.7%

c. Ministerial Cabinet (The Executive Authority)

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Good	34.3%	33.6%	35.4%

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Fair	26.6%	26.1%	27.4%
Bad	19.0%	21.6%	14.8%
No answer	20.1%	18.6%	22.4%

Q. 10 Do you think that President Arafat conducts his work as the head of the National Authority in a good way, a fair way or a bad way?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Good	67.8%	61.4%	78.3%
Fair	21.8%	24.2%	18.0%
Bad	6.2%	8.8%	2.0%
No answer	4.2%	5.7%	1.7%

Q. 11 Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu has suggested stopping the implementation of the Interim Agreement (Oslo II) and beginning the final status negotiations. do you think that the Palestinian leadership should accept this suggestion or not?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Should accept this suggestion	11.0%	8.8%	14.6%
Should reject this suggestion	68.0%	67.6%	68.7%
Do not know	14.5%	16.1%	12.0%
No answer	6.5%	7.6%	4.8%

Q. 12 Do you support the continuation of military operations against Israeli targets as an adequate response to the current political conditions, or do you oppose it and see it as harmful to Palestinian national interests?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Support military operations	39.8%	41.6%	37.0%
Oppose military operations	47.7%	42.7%	55.7%
No answer	12.5%	15.7%	7.4%

Q. 13 What about the suicide bombing operations?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Suport suicide operations	32.7%	35.0%	28.9%
Oppose suicide operations	54.5%	48.6%	63.9%
No answer	12.8%	16.4%	7.2%

Q. 14 What about the intensification of Palestinian demonstration and protests against Israel? Do you support or oppose this intensification of Palestinian demonstrations and protests against Israel?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Support intensification	62.7%	59.5%	67.8%
Oppose intensification	28.6%	29.5%	27.2%

No answer	8.8%	11.1%	5.0%

Q.15 These are numerous ideas for solving the problems stemming from the recent violations of some aspects of the agreement (Abu Ghniem, Har Homa, closure of institutions, etc...) Some believe that the answer is to intensify the negotiations, other say the negotiations should be stopped, and others say the answer lies in intensifying popular protests. What is your opinion?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Intensify the negotiations	33.9%	31.5%	37.8%
Negotiations should be stopped	25.7%	25.0%	26.7%
Intensify popular protests	19.3%	30.1%	27.8%
Others	3.5%	4.3%	2.2%
No answer	7.7%	9.1%	5.4%

Q. 16 In your opinion what should the PA (Palestinian Authority) do regarding popular protests. Do you think the PA should encourage these protests, should not interfere in these protests, or should the PA prevent these protests?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Encourage these protests	31.3%	25.9%	40.0%
Not interfere in these protests	37.5%	45.4%	24.8%
PA should prevent these prortests	23.1%	19.1%	29.6%
No answer	8.1%	9.6%	5.7%

Q. 17 Currently thre is a discussion about municipal elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Some believe that Palestinian refugees should participate in municipal election whereas others do not believe they should because of the political ramifications of their participation? What it your opinion?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Refugees should participate	70.5%	60.9%	85.9%
Should not participate	20.2%	26.9%	9.3%
No answer	9.3%	12.2%	4.8%

Q.18 Some think that the level of corruption in the Palestinian Authority is high, others think that there is corruption but it is not widespread while others think there isn't any corruption. What do you think?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
There is a great deal	34.8%	30.3%	42.2%
There is a fair amount	44.0%	45.5%	41.5%
There is hardly any at all	11.8%	13.2%	9.3%
No answer	9.4%	10.9%	7.0%

CPRS Polls - Survey Research Unit

Public Opinion Poll #26
Abu Ghneim, Armed Attacks, Permanent Settlement, Peace Process, and Local Elections
March 1997

These are the results of opinion poll #26, conducted by the Center for Palestine Research & Studies, between 6-9 March 1997. The poll deals with Israeli settlement activities in Abu Ghnaim, armed attacks, a permanent settlement plan, support for the peace process, and refugees' participation in local elections. The total sample size of this poll is 1549 (18 years or older), of which 1031 from the West Bank and 518 from the Gaza Strip. Two hundred questionnaires were added as an additional sample for refugee camps, falling inside and outside municipal boundaries of Palestinian cities in the West Bank, in order to better understand the attitudes of refugees living in these camps regarding participation in local municipal elections. The data was then weighted to reduce the effect of the increased weight of refugees in the original sample. The weighted sample size is 1542, of which 984 from the West Bank and 558 in the Gaza Strip.

The margin of error is ± 3%, and the non-response rate is 2%.

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(1) Israeli Building in Abu Ghnaim (Har Homa):

Only 9% think that carrying armed attacks against Israeli targets is the best means to express opposition to Israeli decision to build in Abu Ghnaim. A majority of 56% believe that negotiations with Israel is the best means to deal with the issue; while almost 30% support nonviolent confrontations and a return to Intifada.

Despite the low level of support for armed attacks in this case, a high level of 38% continues to generally support armed attacks against Israeli targets. The general level for armed attacks stood at 40% last December. A year ago, only 21% supported the suicide attacks of February 1996. (see poll # 22).

(2) Permanent Settlement Plan:

About 20% of the Palestinians support, and 77% oppose, the permanent settlement plan which was revealed by Israeli sources several months ago calling for: {1} the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state in most of the West Bank and Gaza; {2} the annexation to Israel of some settlements blocs; [3} some Israeli settlers to live under Palestinian sovereignty; {4} return of refugees to Palestinian state only; {5} security arrangements allowing Israeli military patrols along the Jordan river; and {6 } Jerusalem to remain united and capital of Israel while the Palestinian capital is established in adjacent villages outside the municipal boundaries of the city in such areas as Abu Dis and al- Ayzariya, and al-Haram al-Sharif is placed under Palestinian sovereignty.

Opposition is stronger to items 1,2,5, and 6, and softer to items 3 and 4.

(3) Support for the Peace Process and the Hebron Agreement:

Despite the tense situation today, a majority of 65% of the Palestinians are optimistic about the future. In September 1996, the level of optimism stood at 53%. Support for the current peace process is relatively high (73% compared to 79% in December 1996); while 50% think that the peace process will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. This is similar to results obtained in September 1996, when 51% thought that the peace process will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Surprisingly however, only 41% (compared to 44% in June 1996) think that the permanent status negotiations will lead to solutions acceptable to the two sides.

Despite that, however, 91% of the Palestinians do not trust the intentions of the current Israeli government. It is worth mentioning that in July 1995, 81% of Palestinians said that they did not trust Israel's intentions. Nonetheless, the Hebron agreement receives 61% support and only 21% opposition. The opposition to the agreement is strongest in Hebron itself where 44% are opposed and 45% are supportive (the weighted sample of Hebron is 165).

(4) Economic Situation and the Peace Process:

Despite the widespread support for the peace process, a majority of Palestinians believe that the peace process has negatively affected general Palestinian economic situation and their own personal situation. Only 13% say that their personal economic situation has become better, while 52% say it has become worse since the beginning of the peace process. The poll found that the unemployment rate in March 1997 is 35% of which 31% in the West Bank and 43% in the Gaza Strip. The rates for December 1996 were 31% of which 25% were in the West Bank and 44% were in the Gaza Strip.

(5) Refugee Camps and Local Elections:

About 64% of Palestinians support the participation of residents of refugee camps, located

within existing municipal boundaries of cities, in the local elections for these city municipalities, while only 25% support holding independent elections to select separate local councils for these camps.

On the other hand, only 40% support the inclusion of refugee camps located outside the existing municipal boundaries of cities into these city municipalities; while 44% support the formation of independent local councils for these camps.

Appendix

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
Unemployment	35.0	31.0	43.0

1. Do you support or oppose the current peace process between Palestinians and Israelis?

1) Support	73.3	68.6	81.4
2) Oppose	22.2	26.0	15.4
3) No Opinion	4.6	5.3	3.2

2. Do you trust the intensions of the current Israeli government towards the peace process with Palestinians?

1) Yes	4.8	5.1	4.3
2) No	90.5	89.3	92.7
3) No Opinion	4.6	5.6	3.0

3. Do you expect the current peace process to lead to the establishment of a Palestinain State in West bank and Gaza strip in the coming years?

1)Yes	50.0	46.3	56.5
2) No	35.3	38.9	28.8
3) Not Sure	14.7	14.7	14.7

4. Following the peace process and the implementation of autonomy, your economic situation and standard of living has become :

1) Better	12.6	13.3	11.3
2) Worse	51.9	49.3	56.5
3) Stayed the same	34.0	35.6	31.2
4) Don't Know	1.5	1.8	1.0

5. In your opinion, how has the peace process affected the Palestinian economy?

1) More positively	1.5	1.4	1.6
2) Positively	16.3	18.0	13.3
3) Not positively, not negatively	20.8	17.2	27.1
4) Negatively	34.8	36.0	32.8

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
5) More negatively	22.3	21.7	23.5
6) No opinion/Don't know	4.2	5.7	1.7

6. In your opinion, the first most important issue facing the Palestinians today is:

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
1) The peace process, a political settlement with Israel, and ending occupation.	46.1	47.0	44.7
2) Improving economic situation and living conditions, and solving the unemployment problem	30.0	26.4	36.3
3) Protecting democracy and human rights	21.4	23.3	17.9
4) Others.	2.5	3.3	1.1

7. In your opinion, the second most important issue facing the Palestinians today is :

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
1) The peace process, a political settlement with Israel, and ending occupation.	30.1	27.9	33.9
2) Improving economic situation and living conditions, and solving the unemployment problem	43.7	44.2	43.0
3) Protecting democracy and Human rights	24.1	25.1	22.5
4) Others.	2.0	2.8	0.7

8. With regard to the Hebron agreement signed in January 1997, I...

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
1) Support it	61.2	57.9	67.0
2) Do not support or oppose it	15.1	13.5	17.9
3) Oppose it	21.4	26.0	13.2
4) No opinion	2.4	2.6	1.9

9. Regarding the permanent status negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides over Jerusalem, refugees, borders, and settlements, I beleive

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
1) There is a possibillity to reach a solution acceptable to the two parties.	40.8	35.7	49.7
2) There is no possibility to reach a solution acceptable to the two parties.	52.1	55.7	45.7
3) No Opinion	7.1	8.5	4.6

10. Are you optimistic or pessimestic about the f?

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%
1) Optimistic	64.5	60.7	71.2
2) Pessimistic	29.7	32.8	24.2
3) Don't know (not sure)	5.8	6.5	4.6

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11. With regard to armed attacks against Israeli targets, I...

1) Support	38.1	39.2	36.1
2) Oppose	54.3	52.9	56.8
3) No opinion	7.6	7.9	· 7.1

12. Israel decided to establish a new settlement in Abu-Ghnaim mountain, while the Palestinian side strongly oppose that, what, in your opinion, is the best means (select one only) to express opposition?

1) Negotiantions with Israel	55.8	53.5	59.9
2) Armed attacks against Israeli targets	9.0	10.0	7.3
3) Demonstrations and unarmed confrontations	15.6	14.3	17.8
4) Back to Intifada	13.7	15.1	11.1
5) Others	5.9	7.1	3.9

13. when discussing the upcoming local elections, the issue of the refugee camps located within the municipal boundaries of Palestinian cities is raised. Some suggest that refugees in these camps should participate in the municipal elections of these cities; others oppose that and suggest that independent elections be held for these camps. What do you think?

1) I support participation of camps residents in municipal elections of cities	63.9	58.8	72.7
2) I support holding separate elections to select local councils for these camps	24.9	26.7	21.8
3) Do not support participation of refugee camps in local elections	6.1	8.1	2.5
4) Other opinion	0.5	0.4	0.6
5) No opinion/Don't know	4.7	6.0	2.4

	Total %	West Bank%	Gaza Strip%

14. When discussing the new proposed local government law, the issue of refugee camps located outside the existing municipal boundaries of Palestinian cities is raised. Some suggest the inclusion of these camps into existing municipal boundaries; other oppose that and suggest the formation of independent local councils for these camps. What do you think?

1) I support the inclusion of camps located outside the municipal boundaries into existing municipalities.	40.1	41.9	36.9
2) I Support the formation of independent local councils for these camps.	44.0	39.5	51.8
3) I do not support any change in the current status of camps.	8.8	9.8	6.9
4) Other opinion	1.0	0.9	1.0
5) No opinion/Don't know	6.2	7.8	3.4

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15. Which political party do you support?

1) PPP	1.1	0.9	1.5
2) PFLP	2.3	2.3	2.3
3) Fateh	45.8	42.1	52.3
4) Hamas	8.6	9.4	7.2
5) DFLP	1.3	1.5	0.8
6) Islamic Jihad	1.3	1.3	1.4
7) Fida	0.3	0.4	0.0
8) Independent Isalmists	2.4	3.0	1.3
9) Independent Nationalist	4.0	4.8	2.5
10) Non of the above	29.3	29.7	28.7
11) Others	3.6	4.5	2.1

	Total	West	Gaza
	%	Bank%	Strip%

16) In recent months, newspapers published news stories regarding different plans for a permanent Palestinian-Israeli settlement. The following six items constituted one such plan:

1. the establishment of a sovereign but demilitarized Palestinian state in most of the West Bank and Gaza.
2. the Palestinians agree to Israeli annexation of settlement blocs containing most settlers. In return, Israel gives the Palestinians an Israeli territory similar in size.
3. those Israeli settlers remaining inside the Palestinian state would live in peace and security under Palestinian sovereignty and law.
4. Palestinian refugees have the right to return to the Palestinian state, but would not be given the right to return to Israel proper. They would be compensated for property lost in 1948.
5. security arrangements would be designed to allow the Israeli army to have patrols along the Jordan river and to have warning stations in West Bank mountain tops.
6. Jerusalem would remain united and capital of Israel, and the capital of the Palestinian state would be located in villages outside the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem such as Abu Dis and al-Ayzariya and al-Haram al-Sharif (al-Aqsa Mosque) would come under Palestinian sovereignty.

If this plan as a whole was offered as permanent settlement, would you support or oppose it?

1) Strongly support	1.1	1.0	1.2
2) Support	19.0	16.5	23.4
3) Oppose	45.4	49.2	39.0
4) Strongly Oppose	31.1	29.6	33.8
5) No opinion	3.3	3.8	2.5

17. How would you view these items of the plan?

17-1 Item No.(1) *(Palestinian state)*

1) Strongly support	2.5	2.6	2.1
2) Support	13.6	12.8	15.1
3) Oppose	42.5	43.3	41.2
4) Strongly oppose	40.1	39.6	41.0
5) No opinion	1.3	1.7	0.5

	Total	West	Gaza
	%	Bank%	Strip%

17-2 Item No.(2) *(annexation of settlement blocs)*

1) Support strongly	1.9	2.1	1.6
2) Support	16.5	17.2	15.3
3) Oppose	46.1	47.9	42.9
4) Strongly oppose	32.7	29.4	38.4
5) No opinion	2.8	3.4	1.8

17-3 Item No.(3) *(remaining settlers)*

1) Strongly support	5.6	5.9	5.0
2) Support	42.4	45.7	36.6
3) Oppose	28.5	26.0	33.1
4) Strongly oppose	20.6	19.0	23.6
5) No opinion	2.9	3.5	1.8

17-4 Item No.(4) *(Refugees and right of return)*

1) Strongly Support	7.2	6.6	8.2
2) Support	36.9	35.6	39.1
3) Oppose	29.5	31.3	26.5
4) Strongly oppose	22.4	21.6	23.9
5) No opinion	4.0	4.9	2.3

17-5 Item No.(5) *(Security arrangements)*

1) Strongly Support	0.8	1.3	0.0
2) Support	7.3	7.8	6.3
3) Oppose	51.5	50.9	52.6
4) Strongly oppose	35.9	35.0	37.5
5) No opinion	4.4	4.9	3.6

17-6 Item No.(6) *(Jerusalem and alternative capital)*

1) Strongly Support	1.1	1.4	0.6
2) Support	7.4	6.2	9.6
3) Oppose	33.9	34.4	33.0
4) Strongly oppose	55.5	55.5	55.7
5) No opinion	2.0	2.6	1.1

12/15/2003