



**PALESTINIAN ELECTIONS
AS PERCEIVED BY THE PALESTINIAN PUBLIC
(A Pre-Election Study)**

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Section One
Research Methodology

Methodology:

This study adopted a qualitative methodology with 16 focus groups and workshops involving more than 450 Palestinians of both genders. It also used a quantitative survey of 1200 Palestinians. The study consisted of the five following phases:

Phase 1 - Review of related literature

The research team reviewed all poll surveys as well as the various literature regarding Palestinian elections including rules and regulations and registration systems. It also reviewed suggested modifications on relevant laws and regulations. Researchers came out with the following questions in order to enrich their study:

1. What are the possibilities for holding the Palestinian elections? Under which circumstances and conditions may they be held? What are the expected obstacles and can they be overcome?
2. Why are elections important or unimportant? What role do they play in the various aspects of Palestinians' lives?
3. Are citizens informed in regard to voter registration? What information do they consider as important?
4. Are they informed concerning the law and the election system? What are their various points of view regarding same? What are their suggestions and input?
5. Why is it -or is it not- important to participate? What are the main drivers behind participating or not participating?
6. What are the basic criteria for choosing the proper candidate?

Phase 2 - Focus groups

The program set up six focus workgroups in view of enriching the study and determine the most important issues to be discussed and which are worth studying. The workgroups also endeavored to collect data and primary analyses for a richer bulletin and analysis of the research subject. 80 Palestinians of both genders, from various regions, age groups and education and professional levels, have taken part in these workgroups. Gender ratio was almost 50-50. Their meetings were held in the districts of Khan Younis, Gaza, Nablus, Toulkarem, Ramallah and Hebron.

Phase 3 - Public opinion polling

A public opinion poll was conducted among Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, in regard to matters that had been discussed and commented within the focus groups, as well as in regard to interest in the elections, readiness to register votes and participate in the elections. They also covered the nature of electoral orientations. 1200 Palestinians of both genders were polled within a sample representing all social and economic classes.

Phase 4 - Analysis Workshops

Four analysis workshop have been held in various regions in order to discuss preliminary poll results and enrich research and analysis. These workshops were attended by 51 Palestinians of both genders, from various regions, age groups and education and professional levels, in the districts of Nablus, Gaza, the Middle Region, and Bethlehem.

Phase 4 - Workshops for publishing and discussing results

In order to bring more depth to the provided analysis and publish the results thereof, the program five workshops upon publication of the study's preliminary version. These workshops were aimed to publicize and discuss the results in the districts of Ramallah, Nablus, Gaza, Khan Younis and Hebron. 250 people have taken part therein. A certain number thereof was publicized via special TV programs broadcasted through local TV stations.

Section Two
Workshop Result Analysis

Introduction:

In this section, you will find a detailed qualitative analysis of the results of all workshops held within the framework of the present study. Our analysis is based on the participants views and answers to the six questions mentioned in Section One. This analysis does not reflect the opinions of the research team members.

Part One

1. Are elections possible and why are they important?

All types of elections were considered important and possible by the participants for the following reasons:

- Elections are a demand requisite, regardless of the political and social circumstances of the Palestinian people.
- Elections are a tool which can be used to induce political and social changes, whether by the Palestinian government and its failing ministries and/or the Israeli government, thus strengthening the citizen's confidence in his or her ability to play a role in reforms and allows him to participate in the decision-making process.
- Elections are a democratic right stipulated by international conventions and local laws. Palestinians may not be deprived of this right which consolidates the democratic culture and restores optimism to society, while contributing to its development.
- Elections enforce the general principles of accountability, supervision, and transparency.
- Elections guarantee competence, with the right person chosen for the right job in all fields such as education, economy, politics, culture, etc. Competent individuals will find to courage to come forward. New young faces will emerge with fresh, progressive ideas.
- Elections will help unlock the current political and social situation.
- Elections will reinforce national unity, and increase the Palestinian negotiators' capability to reach a political solution for the Palestinian issue. It will provide them with the much needed legitimacy
- Elections are an opportunity to guarantee the right of representation to usually marginalized sections of the population, such as the poor and the unemployed. Female voters will have the opportunity to play a more active role in reforming society, by eradicating the archaic habits that used to prevent them from voting.
- Elections will increase international support for Palestinians, especially if international observers are invited to supervise them.
- Elections are an opportunity for social debate in view of increasing cooperation between various factions and reaching solutions for internal matters. They can be the catalyst for comprehensive reform and change.
- Elections will stimulate the legislative process and help implement and develop laws.
- Elections constitute another means to resist occupation. Palestinians will emerge as a democratic nation fighting for its rights in a civilized manner. Such role would be increased if elections are linked to a national political project which would satisfy popular demands and bridge the gap between the leadership and the people.
- Elections will enhance economic growth and provide better living conditions if they are part of a comprehensive development strategy.
- Elections will activate the parliamentary process with the renewal of the current Legislative Council.
- Elections must come as an initiative from the part of the leadership in order to prove its autonomy and capacity to make decisions.

- Elections will reduce feudalism and tribalism. New candidates shall be required to submit institution-based programs intended to guarantee a better society.
- Elections will boost the morale and encourage participation in the social process.

As for those who do not see the importance of elections, their input was based on the reality they have been living:

- The occupation is the main obstacle hindering the democratic process, especially when Palestinian territories are severed, besieged and under military control. The occupation will set limits to prevent elections in certain areas and will track down all competent national candidates.
- International pressures increase suspicions regarding the aim of holding the elections. International priorities should no longer have precedence over internal ones. Foreign intervention to impose this or that candidate is also feared.
- Political confusion and lack of vision will be exacerbated by today's conditions, which are totally different from those of 1996.
- The Palestinian leadership is not really serious about holding democratic elections whereas no significant modifications have been made to improve current electoral laws and regulations.
- Deficient integrity in view of the rampant nepotism and current chaos.
- Lack of readiness in view of the fact that no competent authorities are available to organize elections, especially on the local level.
- Lack of civil awareness of the importance of elections will limit representation and participation to a given social category.
- Unbridled tribalism and nepotism cannot guarantee competence-based elections. The geographical distribution stipulated by current election laws will increase the impact of tribalism and hinder democratic elections.
- Consolidation of the status quo in view of the fact that any elections held under the current conditions will facilitate the people's acceptance of the prevailing situation.
- Lack of trust in the Authority and the current political system, which will further increase the gap between the leadership and the population.
- Multi-partisan participation is not guaranteed and a sole-party hegemony is feared.
- Some fear that a massive opposition participation would terminate the current the leadership or at least hinder its ability to implement its programs.
- Rampant frustration might dissuade Palestinians from participating, especially in view of the results of the previous elections where competent candidates failed to participate or simply lost to politically powerful candidates pursuing personal interests.
- The role of female voters will be limited in view of the fact that a quota-based system has not been set up.
- The current situation demonstrates the Palestinians currently have more vital priorities such as getting rid of the occupation, improving the economy, and eradicating chaos. Current needs are a better political vision and perspective which would help Palestinians escape the current gridlock. The extent of moral and material damages sustained by Palestinians requires active programs, not elections.
- During the last few years, signs of a backward democratic culture have started to appear with decreasing voluntarism and non-abidance by law.

Some participants also gave the following contestation motives for not voting:

1. Not participating in elections is a right.

2. Not participating in elections is an expression of dissatisfaction.
3. Not voting is a means of pressure.
4. It is also a basic means to contest existing laws and regulations.

According to some participants:

- Elections are unimportant because the current leadership will not change. Elections will therefore not contribute to any developments or changes in the current situation.
- Elections are worthless when we don't have a state and when we're under occupation.

II. Presidential elections

Opinions concerning presidential elections were also diverging. Those who considered them as possible and important gave the following reasons:

- Occupation is an important factor, but it is not sufficient as a pretext for not holding presidential elections, especially in view of the fact that they are easier to organize from a procedural point of view.
- They are an expression of the Palestinian people's will and capacity, even under these harsh conditions.
- Holding presidential elections is necessary to establish new visions and strategies for the future.
- Choosing the President is a democratic right to be exercised legally, through elections.
- Elections renew the citizens' confidence in the authority and its leadership. They consolidate the Authority's legitimacy under siege, especially in view of the fact that the current President's tenure has expired. Reelection will help fortify the President's position in the face of foreign pressures and challenges. They would also assist the President play a better role and would bridge the gap between him and the members of his government.
- Elections might help change the President's inner circle and reduce the latter's negative influence on the President.

In the view of a number of participants, participating in the Presidential elections is important:

1. To choose the leader who is capable of leading the nation.
2. To guarantee a truly democratic process.
3. To send a message to Israelis and Americans that the Palestinian people is intent on choosing its own president.

Other participants considered that elections are important to renew allegiance to President Arafat, refute the requisites of the Israelis and Americans who are not content with the current leadership. Elections shall constitute a clear and explicit expression of such refusal.

Reasons given as obstacles to presidential elections include:

- Calling for presidential elections while the President's headquarters is besieged will give the impression that Palestinians are defeatists forced to change their president by foreign powers, especially the United States and Israel.
- There are currently no convincing alternatives to President Arafat. Competent Palestinians are not able to compete with President Arafat.
- The creation of the Prime Minister position has reduced the importance of presidential elections. It is now more important to elect a Prime Minister than a President.

- Palestinians are not currently convinced that changing the President would lead to any effective changes on the national or internal levels. Especially with the absence of any competition to the sole party that holds all the powers.
- The Palestinian Authority is not really intent on holding presidential elections now.
- Fear of an internal conflict arising, especially inside Fatah, in case the presidential issue is laid on the table, thus leading to civil war.

III. Legislative elections

In addition to the above reasons given for or against holding elections in general, the following views were expressed in favor of holding legislative elections:

- Elections are a basic democratic right that gives the people the opportunity to choose their own representatives, thus boosting the civil society's role in politics.
- The current Legislative Council has expired and not holding new elections confirms the general idea that the people is prevented from exercising its right to participate in the decision-making process.
- Elections might consolidate participation and debate inside the Council by boosting common goals and furthering the national debate in order to reach solutions for important and strategic issues. They would also guarantee the participation of all factions and powers, thus putting an end to the hegemony of the sole party.
- Elections will strengthen the Legislative Council and consecrate the separation of powers principle.
- Increase institutional transparency by eradicating nepotism and putting a halt to spending public funds for achieving public interests.
- Elections will pave the way for new blood with fresh legislative capacities and ideas.

Justifications for negative responses include:

- The frustration due to the previous experience, which produced a less than perfect Legislative Council that lacked real diversity, suffered from mismanagement, and failed to find solutions to many matters, especially in relation to legislation and legislative applications.
- The election law will increase regionalism and tribalism, while excluding small political parties and marginalized categories such as women.
- The current situation will render holding the elections very difficult in view of the related technical and procedural complications.

IV. Local elections

Participants, of all horizons, estimate that all data show that it is possible to hold local elections for the following reasons:

- There are less insurmountable obstacles than with other elections whereas they will be held inside the towns and cities.
- The democratic process needs to be implemented inside local bodies. Local councils are currently appointed and lack legitimacy because they have not been elected by the community. Local elections will help eradicate nepotism and limit the influence of families and tribes. New young blood will be injected in inactive local councils thanks to the competitive spirit generated by elections.
- Local elections will serve the citizens' direct interests and basic needs. Unlike an appointed member, an elected local council member would try to find solutions to his constituents' problems and leave a mark.
- Boost community participation in guaranteeing transparency, accountability and election regularity.

- Local elections will boost cooperation between municipalities on the level of various districts.
- Local elections represent an opportunity to boost the representation of marginalized social categories, namely women, by changing the concept of female voting in society.
- Local elections may be considered as a preparatory phase for comprehensive national elections.

Participants in various workshops stressed the importance of local elections but expressed some fears, especially concerning Israeli pressures on the Palestinian Authority to impose certain candidates. The following suggestions were given as a solution to overcome such fears:

1. Local elections shall be subject to the population's needs and wishes and not to the Authority's decisions.
2. The public must be made aware of the nature of the role played by local councils. This should lessen the impact of political factors (the candidate's political affiliation) and social factors (tribalism and nepotism).

According to participants:

- Local elections shall provide youth with the opportunity to present themselves as candidates to serve their community and improve the current situation.
- It will put an end to the biased appointment system.
- It will ensure better services to citizens.

Furthermore, the following fears have been expressed:

- Authority candidates might benefit from the Authority's powers to intervene or falsify results.
- Power monopoly by one single party, thus excluding all other social categories.
- Internal violence between the candidates' families and the parties' representatives.
- Nepotism might be enhanced, thus preventing competent individuals from reaching key positions.
- Women's role may be occulted by nepotism and by the absence of legal guarantees for women's representation.

Part Two - Knowledge of election laws and regulations, voter registration and evaluation thereof

Based on the collected data and analysis, we shall expose the extent of the Palestinians' knowledge of their election laws and voter registration mechanisms. We shall evaluate the impact thereof on Palestinians' interest in elections and talk about the best possible means to convey important information to citizens.

I. Guessing instead of certainty

Participants' knowledge of their country's election laws and regulations proved to be very limited especially in regard to registration processes. Their actions were based on guessing and not on verified information. In order for the elections to be held properly, participants suggested the following:

- A preparatory pre-election period is necessary and a specialized committee should be created to raise public awareness regarding such rules and regulations.
- Cooperation among Palestine's social institutions is necessary because elections constitute an integral process that requires cooperation.
- The following awareness-raising mechanisms need to be set up:
 1. Election laws and regulations need to be printed and circulated.
 2. Election awareness-raising brochures need to be published.
 3. Awareness-raising workshops need to be organized in various regions.
 4. Awareness-raising talk shows need to be programmed in various media.
 5. Candidates need to hold campaign seminars to expose their agendas.

II. Participants' opinion of existing laws and regulations

LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

Participants expressed diverging points of view concerning the voting system.

1. The proportional representation system

Supporters of this system evoked the following reasons:

- It prevents a single party's hegemony on government.
- It guarantees the participation of minorities.
- It gives each list or party a precise representation volume within society.
- It is deemed a necessary means to achieve a proper democratic system, which truly translates the people's view of those representing it.
- It provides power and awareness to the opposition in order to effectively monitor the proper implementation of policies.

Detractors exposed the following reasons:

- The system does not necessarily represent all districts and various geographic areas, whereas candidates' lists might not representatives from all regions. It might end up producing elected leaderships from one single region, excluding all others.
- It does not provide direct information concerning individual candidates. The basic knowledge shall only concern the list to which the candidate is affiliated.
- It might engender internal conflicts that may weaken the Palestinian position.
- This system shall limit the participation of independent candidates, which constitute a large portion of the Palestinian society.

2. The simple majority system

- Supporters of this system find that it is based on a system of electoral circumscriptions within different districts to produce regional deputies. Furthermore, district inhabitants

are acquainted with the candidate who can, therefore, provide better representation based on mutual trust.

- Detractors deem that this system serves individual interests and consolidates the existing system. It does not allow voters to get to know candidates from other circumscriptions.

3. The mixed system

Participants considered this system as the best election system, most widely approved by Palestinians. It provides the best possible balance between the two other systems, and is a concentration of all their positive aspects. It also guarantees the rights of minorities and marginalized regions, while ensuring that all groups and political parties are represented.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

1. Universal suffrage (Highest proportion)

Some participants expressed their approval of this system without specifying why, while a small minority contested this system on the grounds that the president might not get his legitimacy from the majority of the population and might only be elected by a minority.

2. Universal suffrage (50% + 1)

Some participants expressed their approval of this system because the president would be elected by the majority of voters (50% + 1). However, a minority deemed that this system might lead to several votes before a candidate obtains the required number of votes.

3. Election by the Legislative Council

None of the participants supported this system and were dubious about the possibility of implementing same in our country. Some of the detractors refused it because their lack of confidence in the current Legislative Council, and their fear that the next legislative elections might not produce a better one.

LOCAL ELECTIONS

I. Election of the local council chairman

1. Universal suffrage (Highest proportion)

The majority of participants privileged this system on the grounds that it provides better opportunities to small and marginalized families. It also plays a major positive role in minimizing the impact of nepotism and tribalism and facilitating the accountability process. On a different level, elections would be much more logical and realistic if the common citizen directly knows who the candidates are.

2. Direct election by local council members

A minority of participants supported this system on the grounds that it achieves a certain level of harmony and cooperation between local council members if their chairman is elected from inside the council. They also deemed that the system minimizes the effect of tribalism.

3. Universal suffrage (50% + 1)

None of the participants supported this system because it excludes candidates without family or tribal ties.

II. Election of local council members

1. *Proportional representation*: Some participants expressed their approval of this system because it provides better chances for independent candidates with no family support. It enhances the role of movements and national parties while excluding corrupt and shady candidates with tribal support.

2. *Simple majority system*: Other participants expressed their approval of this system because it provides room for competition between candidates in order to achieve the best agendas.

Members of a workshop, in which community workers have taken part, have submitted the following suggestions concerning the election law.

Election Law	Presidential Elections	Legislative Elections	Local Elections
Candidate's competence	Very important in the context of the legal provisions, except regarding the age of the candidate.	Very important in the context of the legal provisions, except regarding the age of the candidate.	Very important in the context of the legal provisions, except regarding the age of the candidate.
Candidate's age / Varied answers	25-35 YO	18-25 YO	18-25 YO
Voter's age / Varied answers	16-18 YO	16-18 YO	16-18 YO
Women's representation/Total support of the idea but different ratios	-----	20-50%+	20-50%+
Elections periodicity	Very important to enhance awareness and necessary to consolidate the democratic process. Should be held every four years.	Very important to enhance awareness and necessary to consolidate the democratic process. Should be held every four years.	Very important to enhance awareness and necessary to consolidate the democratic process. Should be held every two to four years.

Other participants in the same workshop presented a proposal that would guarantee a quota for workers and peasants. They specified that the quota would be temporary until each of these social categories begins to exercise its right to vote.

Part Three – Criteria and characteristics for electing candidates

Participants suggested criteria for choosing candidates according to the type of elections. They based their findings on two main criteria: the candidate's own personal criteria, and a social criteria which defines their own expectations when it comes to other individuals' behavior.

I- PERSONAL CRITERIA

Participants suggested that candidates should have the following qualities:

1. Education, culture, and awareness of the reality of life in the country.
2. Honesty, credibility, integrity, objectivity and impartiality.
3. Popularity, good reputation, and personality.
4. Candidates should understand people's problems and be capable to represent them in a precise, expressive manner.
5. Participants deem it necessary for a candidate to enjoy individual qualities and capabilities such as being patriotic, a born leader, experienced, well involved in political, social, and cultural activities. He has to have a democratic spirit.
6. Piety: No specific concept of piety was set. However, a large number of participants linked piety to good moral character and behavior.
7. He/she must have a realistic achievable vision, and a program that may be modified and developed.
8. A sound mind in a sound body, without excluding physically-impaired individuals from taking part in the electoral process.
9. Diplomacy and good communication skills.

II- SOCIAL CRITERIA

Within the scope of this criteria, participants suggested that candidates should enjoy the following qualities, which may reflect reality better if compared with the foregoing.

1. Candidates must be able to fulfill the population's individual needs and achieve their best interests.
2. They should come from well-known families and tribes.
3. They should be well-groomed.
4. They should be humble, modest and close to the people.
5. They should be well-off.
6. They should be popular and should represent a specific political vision or party.
7. Religion: Some participants believe that voters in some regions will insist that the candidate must have the same religious beliefs as they do.

Some participants also suggested that some candidates should have qualities linked to the nature of their duties as elected officials. Thus, legislative election candidates should be well-versed in legal matters. Local election candidates should be impartial. Their loyalty should not be to their families but to their constituency. They should also be aware of their local community issues. Some participants further insisted on the necessity for presidential candidates to be of Palestinian nationality and residence.

Section Three
Comparative Result Analysis
According to Groups

TABLE 3: POSITIONS OF VARIOUS SECTORS REGARDING KNOWLEDGE OF ELECTION LAWS AND REGULATIONS AS WELL AS VOTER REGISTRATION AMONG PALESTINIANS AND THEIR OPINION IN VOTING SYSTEMS

	Local civil servants	National civil servants	Private sector employees	Political activists	Women	Students
General Elections	Limited general knowledge. No specifics.	Limited general knowledge. No specifics.	Limited general knowledge. No specifics.	Limited general knowledge. No specifics.	Limited general knowledge. No specifics.	Limited general knowledge. No specifics.
Presidential Elections	Generally in favor of universal suffrage with a 50%+1 majority	Generally in favor of universal suffrage with a simple majority	Generally in favor of universal suffrage with a simple majority	Quasi-generally in favor of universal suffrage with a simple majority. Limited interest in the 50%+1 majority system.	Generally in favor of universal suffrage with a simple majority	Generally in favor of universal suffrage with a simple majority
Legislative Elections	Generally in favor of the mixed system	The majority in favor of the mixed system, with a significant interest in proportional representation and limited interest in simple majority	The large majority in favor of the simple majority system, with limited interest in the mixed system and the proportional representation system	The large majority in favor of the proportional representation system, with limited interest in the mixed system and the simple majority system	The large majority in favor of the mixed system. The rest support the simple majority system, with no interest in the proportional representation system	A small majority in favor of the proportional representation. The rest support the mixed system, with no interest in the simple majority system
Local Elections	Generally in favor of the proportional representation system for members and of universal suffrage for the chairman (Higher proportion)	Generally in favor of the simple majority system for members and of universal suffrage for the chairman (Higher proportion)	A large majority in favor of the simple majority system. The rest supports proportional representation. Generally in favor of universal suffrage for the	Generally in favor of the simple majority system for members and of universal suffrage for the chairman (Higher	Generally in favor of the simple majority system for members and of universal suffrage for the chairman (Higher	A large majority in favor of the simple majority system. The rest supports proportional representation. A majority in favor of the chairman being elected by the members. Limited interest

			chairman (Higher proportion)	proportion)	proportion)	in the higher proportion system.
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TABLE 4: POSITIONS OF VARIOUS SECTORS CONCERNING INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION. MAIN MOTIVES FOR VOTING OR ABSTAINING.

	Local civil servants	National civil servants	Private sector employees	Political activists	Women	Students
General Elections	Highly important as a personal and social right. They also deem that abstention is a basic right too.	Highly important to participate in view of its impact on society	Highly important	Highly important to participate in order to move society forward	Highly important to participate in view of the fact that it is one of the people's democratic rights	Voting is important in order to express one's freedom of opinion and to achieve equality
Presidential Elections	Highly important as a personal and social right. They also deem that abstention is a basic right too.	Highly important to participate in view of its impact on society	Highly important in order to show support to the designated leader	Highly important to participate in order to move society forward	Highly important to participate in view of the fact that it is one of the people's democratic rights	Voting is important in order to express one's freedom of opinion and to achieve equality
Legislative Elections	Highly important as a personal and social right. They also deem that abstention is a basic right too.	Highly important to participate in view of its impact on society	Highly important in order to choose individuals who represent the population's interests	Highly important to participate in order to move society forward	Highly important to participate in view of the fact that it is one of the people's democratic rights	Voting is important in order to express one's freedom of opinion and to achieve equality
Local Elections	Highly important as a personal and social right. They also deem that abstention is a basic right too.	Highly important to participate in view of its impact on society	Generally in favor of the fact that voting is highly important	Highly important to participate in order to move society forward	Highly important to participate in view of the fact that it is one of the people's democratic rights	Voting is important in order to express one's freedom of opinion and to achieve equality

TABLE 5: POSITIONS OF VARIOUS SECTORS CONCERNING THE BASIC CRITERIA FOR ELECTING A CANDIDATE
BASIC QUALITIES.

	Local civil servants	National civil servants	Private sector employees	Political activists	Women	Students
Presidential Elections	Born leader, democratic spirit, decision-maker, honest and credible, fighter, professional, competent, educated.	Educated (university level), fighter, patriotic, strong personality, good reputation, cultivated, pious (diverging definitions of piety)	Good manners, educated, pious (diverging definitions of piety), born leader, experienced.	Education, professional competence, aware of the country's problems, credible and honest, popular, born leader, fighter.	Highly educated, Palestinian national, fighter, humane, diplomat, new face.	Educated, political and social personality, diplomat, capable of change and development, good behavior.
Legislative Elections	Popular, born leader, professional, communicative, legal knowledge, honest, true representative of the people.	Educated (Divergence concerning the level), cultivated, good reputation, credible, honest.	Knowledgeable of the current situation, high initiative skills, experienced.	Active, patriotic, close to the people, honest, credible, educated, professionally competent, knowledgeable and experienced.	Highly educated, Palestinian national, fighter, humane, diplomat, new face.	Sound mind, objectivity, good general appearance, belonging to known families or tribes.
Local Elections	Honesty, credibility, professionalism, knowledge of local issues, popular (modest), from the region.	Professional competence, education (Secondary school and higher), good reputation, credibility and honesty.		From the region, education and professional competence (university level), credibility, honesty, equity.	Unbiased to the family, from the region, experience, educated, adult.	Simple, close to the people, educated, capable of fulfilling his constituents' needs.

Section Four
Elections Poll General Results
Comparisons Between the West Bank and Gaza

I. Attitude towards elections

1. Knowledge regarding Palestinian elections

- The majority of the survey sample (54%) declared that they do not follow news regarding the elections.
- 57% of the survey sample chose Palestinian TV stations as the preferred media for getting news and information regarding the elections. 21% chose radio, while only 9% gave preference to local newspapers.
- Basically, 74% of the survey sample get the news regarding the current events from TV.
- The majority of the survey sample (72%) declared that they totally lacked knowledge regarding voter registration mechanisms.
- Furthermore, information is not available:
 - To 78% of surveyed individuals regarding the contents of the presidential elections law.
 - To 77% of surveyed individuals regarding the contents of the legislative elections law.
 - To 74% of surveyed individuals regarding the contents of the local elections law.
- In general, 60% of the survey sample declared their intention to register for voting in case the registration process gets under way.

2. Major support for holding the elections and readiness to participate

- 57% are in favor of holding presidential elections.
- 60% are in favor of holding legislative elections.
- 69% are in favor of holding local elections.
- As regards surveyed individuals' willingness to participate:
 - 75% are intent on voting in the presidential elections.
 - 72% are intent on voting in local elections.
 - 66% are intent on voting in legislative elections.
 - In case the opposition calls for a boycott, 63% of the survey sample declared not wanting to boycott.
 - 46% of them declared having voted in the 1996 presidential and legislative election, while 29% declared having been under age at the time.

3. A majority deems elections to be of interest

- Polled individuals consider that elections shall lead to:
 - Enhancing the citizen's view of his/her role in society (82%)
 - Consolidating the rule of law (81%)
 - Activating public participation (79%)
 - A better representation of marginalized categories (77%)
 - Improving the situation of Palestinian women (77%)
 - Achieving reforms within the public institutions of the Palestinian Authority (76%)
 - Improving social conditions (75%)
 - Improving economic conditions (75%)
 - Reforming the political system (74%)
 - Consolidating democracy within the Palestinian society (72%)
 - Putting an end to chaos and anarchy (71%)
 - Accelerating the establishment of a Palestinian state (62%)
 - Changes within the current Palestinian leadership (61%)

- Another majority considers that elections may have the following negative impacts:
 - Consolidating the hegemony of the current Palestinian leadership – Maintaining the status quo (66%)
 - Imposing a political solution on Palestinians (58%)

II. Election criteria

1. Orientation towards change

- As regards the survey sample’s orientations towards electing new candidates as opposed to renewing the mandate of current politicians, we found that:
 - 49% shall elect new faces for the Legislative council
 - 53% shall elect new faces for local councils
- As for the survey sample’s view regarding the integrity of the election process: 50% declared that its integrity shall be guaranteed, while 34% doubted that.

2. Candidates’ trustworthiness and truthfulness are the main choosing factors:

- 97% considered trustworthiness and truthfulness as the main factors for their choice, while more than 90% deemed that the candidate’s role in the service of the nation, his educational background and his socio-economic program are very important factors (See Table 6).

TABLE 6: MAJOR CRITERIA FOR THE VOTERS’ CHOICE OF CANDIDATES			
Factors	Total (%)	West Bank (%)	Gaza Strip (%)
Trustworthiness and truthfulness	97.1	96.9	97.4
Role in the service of the country	96.4	96.0	97.0
Educational background	94.2	93.0	96.0
Economic reform program	92.5	93.8	90.6
Social reform program	90.5	91.5	89.0
Role played in the national struggle	86.9	86.7	87.3
Religious piety	85.8	85.0	86.3
Position regarding political issues	85.5	85.0	86.3
Partisan belonging	45.9	45.1	47.1
Financial situation	34.3	32.1	37.9
Family belonging	23.4	21.0	27.0

- When asked which factor they would take into consideration when choosing their candidate, 46% chose trustworthiness and truthfulness, around 30% chose religious piety, and 6% chose the candidate’s role in the service of the country. 5% were equally interested in the candidate’s educational level and his participation in the national struggle, while 4% evoked the candidate’s economic reform program.
- The majority of the survey sample (70%) declared their intention to vote for competent candidates regardless of their political belonging. 27% declared that they would be voting for competent candidates linked to the Palestinian National Authority. 7% are intent on voting to competent candidates from the opposition.

3. Voting is a personal issue, but...

- The majority of the survey sample (56%) declared that they will be voting for their preferred candidate based on their personal opinion, without any outside influence. 27% declared that they vote will be personal, after consultation with the family, while 17% declared that they will vote according to their families' decisions.
- When asked who is the individual with the most influence on their choice of the preferred candidate, 45% declared "no one"; 20% declared "the spouse"; 15% said "the father"; 5% said "a relative"; and 4% declared "the children". 5% said that their choice will be governed by the decision of the political party they are affiliated to. Very small groups declared being influenced by social leaders, by Imams or by friends.

III. Voting system

- 35% expressed their preference for the mixed system to be used in the upcoming Legislative Council elections, while 32% prefer the simple majority system and 20% the proportional representation system.
- As regards the presidential elections, 45% of surveyed individuals would prefer a universal suffrage with the highest proportion of votes, while 41% would prefer that the president elect obtain at least 50%+1 vote. 14% prefer that the President be elected by the Legislative Council members.
- The majority of the survey sample (61%) declared that they preferred a presidential system, while 39% were in favor of a parliamentary system, with the powers entrusted to a Prime Minister appointed by the Legislative Council.
- The majority of polled individuals were in favor of not changing the minimum ages, i.e. 18 years for voters, 35 years for presidential candidates, 30 years for Legislative Council candidates, 30 years for local council chairmanship candidates, and 25 years for local council membership candidates.

IV. Women's participation

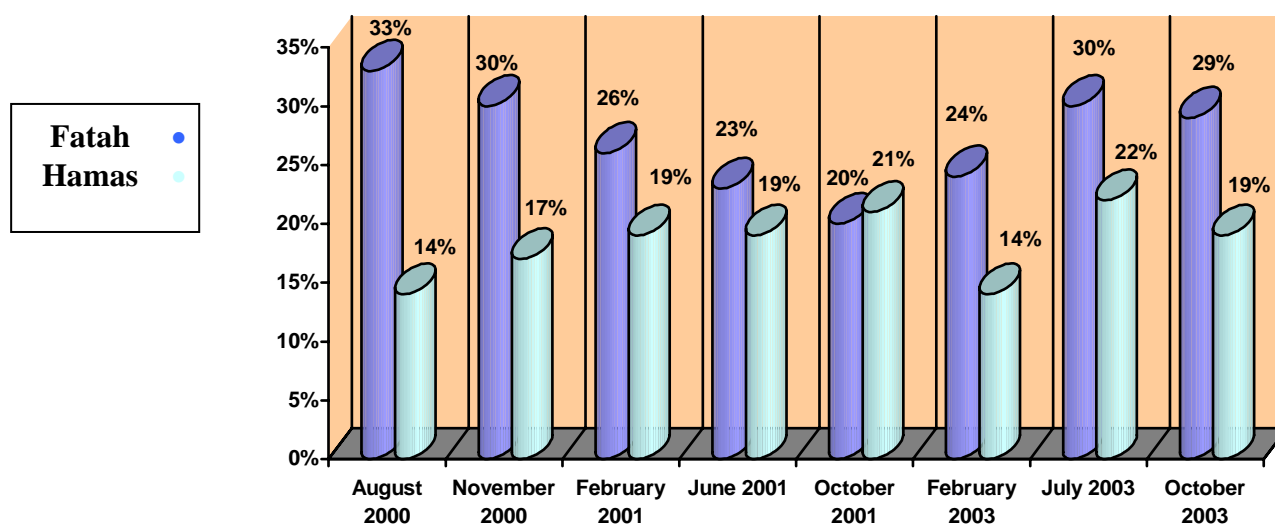
- Results suggest a decrease in readiness to vote for women, especially in legislative and municipal elections (65% instead of 75% in 1996). Readiness to vote for women in local elections dropped from 56% to 52%. This might be partially due to the lack of readiness on behalf of the youth to vote for women. The survey showed that 53% of the Gaza survey sample are young people who did not vote in the 1996 elections, because they were under age. The ratio in the West Bank is 25%. Despite the fact that women's chances are much less than men's, more than 65% of surveyed individuals are in favor of setting quotas for women in the Legislative Council and 62% in local councils.

TABLE 7: VOTERS' READINESS TO VOTE FOR WOMEN

	Total (%)		West Bank (%)		Gaza Strip (%)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Legislative elections	64.3	34.2	40.7	27.6	54.8	44.1
Local elections	51.5	46.5	56.2	41.2	44.6	54.4
Presidential elections	48.4	49.8	54.7	43.1	39.0	59.7
Presenting a female family member for local elections	44.8	52.3	52.3	44.5	33.8	63.9
Setting quotas for women in the Legislative Council	65.3	31.7	69.2	28.1	59.6	36.9
Setting quotas for women in local councils	61.8	35.2	65.5	31.5	56.4	40.6

V. Supporting political trends

- The majority (84%) declared not being members in any of the Palestinian organizations.
- The majority (80%) declared not being members in any popular movement.
- 29% of surveyed individuals declared that they do not intend to vote for any lists from the political movements in Palestine in case a law based on political affiliation is promulgated.
- In exchange, 38% declared their readiness to vote for a Fatah list, while 21% said they would vote for a Hamas list. Palestinian leftist movement would obtain 7% of the votes in case they enter elections as a separate list. As for Islamic Jihad, it would obtain 5% of votes.



**TABLE 8: MAIN RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC OPINION POLL OF FEBRUARY 2004
(PALESTINIAN ELECTIONS)**

Introduction: There was talk about the possibility of holding presidential, legislative, and local elections in Palestine during this year. We would like to ask you a few questions concerning this issue:

	Total (%)	West Bank (%)	Gaza Strip (%)
I. Your general knowledge regarding elections:			
1. Do you follow up on news concerning the elections?			
1) Yes	46.0	45.6	46.6
2) No	54.0	54.4	53.4
2. Which of the following media do you consider to be the best for bringing you election news?			
1) Palestinian TV stations	56.5	58.7	53.1
2) Local newspapers	9.0	10.4	7.0
3) Palestinian radio	21.3	18.4	25.7
4) Other	13.2	12.5	14.1
3. Which of the following sources is considered your main provider of information regarding current affairs?			
1) TV	74.1	79.9	65.6
2) Radio	13.4	7.6	22.1
3) Newspapers	2.5	3.2	1.4

4) Family members	3.4	3.5	3.2
5) Friends	3.6	3.3	4.0
6) Political organizations	1.9	1.7	2.0
7) Other	1.2	0.8	1.8
4. In case the voter registration process is launched, do you intend to register as voter?			
1) Yes	60.3	58.2	63.5
2) No	31.3	31.5	30.9
3) Will decide later	8.4	10.3	5.7
5. Do you have knowledge regarding the voter registration mechanism for the upcoming Palestinian elections?			
1) Yes	24.3	19.9	30.9
2) No	72.2	75.4	67.5
3) Don't know	3.5	4.7	1.6
6. Do you have information regarding the contents of the Palestinian election law?			
Presidential			
1) Yes, enough information	5.0	4.8	5.3
2) Yes, limited information	17.1	16.7	17.8
3) No information	77.8	78.5	76.8
Legislative			
1) Yes, enough information	5.3	5.1	5.5
2) Yes, limited information	17.4	18.6	15.6
3) No information	77.4	76.3	79.0
Local			
1) Yes, enough information	9.5	12.3	5.5
2) Yes, limited information	16.2	18.4	13.1
3) No information	74.2	69.3	81.4
II. Your attitude towards elections			
7. There's talk about elections during 2004. In case conditions remain unchanged, do you support or oppose such elections			
Presidential elections			
1) Support	57.0	57.5	56.4
2) Oppose	34.8	35.0	34.4
3) Not sure	8.2	7.5	9.2
Legislative elections			
1) Support	60.4	62.8	56.9
2) Oppose	26.9	25.8	28.6
3) Not sure	12.7	11.5	14.5
Local elections			
1) Support	69.3	70.8	66.9
2) Oppose	20.3	16.9	21.3
3) Not sure	10.4	9.6	11.7
8. In case Legislative Council elections are held and you decide to vote, will you			
1) Vote for current members	17.3	17.6	17.0
2) Vote for new members	48.9	48.3	50.0
3) Not sure	33.7	34.2	33.1
9. In case Local Council elections are held in your region and you decide to vote, will you			
1) Vote for current members	19.6	18.9	20.8
2) Vote for new members	52.7	55.6	48.4

3) Not sure	27.6	25.5	30.8
10. In case Presidential elections are held on time, will you vote?			
1) Yes	74.6	73.6	76.2
2) No	16.3	16.7	15.6
3) Haven't decided yet	9.1	9.7	8.2
11. In case Legislative elections are held on time, will you vote?			
1) Yes	65.7	66.6	64.4
2) No	24.8	23.1	27.4
3) Haven't decided yet	9.5	10.3	8.2
12. In case Local elections are held on time, will you vote?			
1) Yes	72.2	74.7	68.6
2) No	19.7	16.6	24.4
3) Haven't decided yet	8.0	8.7	7.0
13. In case the opposition calls for a boycott of the elections, will you boycott?			
1) Yes	24.0	20.3	29.5
2) No	63.3	64.1	62.1
3) Haven't decided yet	12.7	15.5	8.4
14. Have you voted in the Legislative and Presidential elections of 1996?			
1) Yes	45.7	44.2	48.1
2) No	25.6	31.3	17.3
3) At the time, I was under 18	28.6	24.5	34.7
III. Your point of view concerning the main factors that may affect your vote.			
15. When voting for a candidate, how do you evaluate the importance of your candidate enjoying the following qualities (Please tell us whether the quality is important or not).			
Trustworthiness and truthfulness (Integrity)			
1) Important	97.1	96.9	97.4
2) More or less important	1.1	0.8	1.6
3) Unimportant	0.8	0.8	0.7
4) No opinion / Don't know	1.0	1.5	0.3
The candidate's service to his country			
1) Important	96.4	96.0	97.0
2) More or less important	1.5	1.5	1.4
3) Unimportant	1.3	1.7	0.7
4) No opinion / Don't know	0.9	0.8	1.0
Educational background			
1) Important	94.2	93.0	96.0
2) More or less important	3.0	3.5	2.3
3) Unimportant	2.0	2.6	1.0
4) No opinion / Don't know	0.8	0.9	0.7
Economic reform program			
1) Important	92.5	93.8	90.6
2) More or less important	2.7	2.4	3.1
3) Unimportant	3.3	2.1	5.1
4) No opinion / Don't know	1.5	1.8	1.1
Social reform program			
1) Important	90.5	91.5	89.0
2) More or less important	3.6	4.0	3.0
3) Unimportant	4.3	3.2	6.0

4) No opinion / Don't know	1.5	1.3	1.9
Participation in the national struggle			
1) Important	86.9	86.7	87.3
2) More or less important	6.6	6.5	6.9
3) Unimportant	5.3	6.0	4.3
4) No opinion / Don't know	1.1	0.8	0.5
Religious piety			
1) Important	85.8	81.6	62.0
2) More or less important	7.1	9.2	4.1
3) Unimportant	6.1	8.0	3.2
4) No opinion / Don't know	1.0	1.2	0.7
Position concerning political issues			
1) Important	85.5	85.0	86.3
2) More or less important	6.5	6.6	6.3
3) Unimportant	5.4	5.2	5.7
4) No opinion / Don't know	2.6	3.3	1.7
Political party affiliation			
1) Important	45.9	45.1	47.1
2) More or less important	11.4	11.9	10.7
3) Unimportant	39.2	39.0	39.4
4) No opinion / Don't know	3.5	3.9	2.8
Financial situation			
1) Important	34.4	32.1	37.9
2) More or less important	11.4	12.7	9.4
3) Unimportant	53.2	54.0	51.9
4) No opinion / Don't know	1.0	1.2	0.9
Family ties			
1) Important	23.4	21.0	27.0
2) More or less important	7.5	7.2	8.0
3) Unimportant	67.6	70.0	64.1
4) No opinion / Don't know	1.4	1.7	1.0
16. Among the above factors, which one would you take into consideration when voting for candidates?			
1) Trustworthiness and truthfulness (Integrity)	46.1	41.7	52.5
2) Religious piety	29.6	31.4	26.9
3) The candidate's service to his country	5.6	6.1	4.9
4) Educational background	5.2	5.5	4.9
5) Participation in the national struggle	5.1	5.2	5.0
6) Economic reform program	3.5	4.5	2.0
7) Position concerning political issues	2.2	2.7	1.4
8) Social reform program	1.1	1.1	1.2
9) Family ties	0.7	0.6	0.9
10) Political party affiliation	0.5	0.6	0.3
11) Financial situation	0.4	0.6	0.0
17. When you read the following sentences, kindly tell us if:			
1) You will vote for competent candidates who are close to the National Authority	23.2	23.9	23.6

2) You will vote for competent candidates from the opposition	6.6	7.0	6.1
3) You will vote for competent candidates whatever their political affiliation	69.8	69.1	70.1
18. When voting for your preferred candidate, will your vote be based:			
1) On your own decision, without any outside influence	56.0	60.3	49.8
2) On your own decision, after consultation with the family	27.0	25.8	28.9
3) On the family's decision	16.9	14.0	21.3
IV. Suggestions and modifications to election laws and regulations			
19. The voting system you'd prefer in the next Legislative Council elections is:			
1) The mixed system	35.0	35.6	34.2
2) The simple majority system	32.2	29.8	35.7
3) The proportional representation system	19.7	20.8	18.1
4) Don't know	13.1	13.8	12.0
20. The best voting system for Presidential elections (President of the Palestinian National Authority/Palestinian State) is:			
1) Universal suffrage with the highest proportion of votes (Even if less than 50%)	45.4	47.0	43.0
2) Universal suffrage (50%+1)	41.1	40.4	42.0
3) President to be elected by the Legislative Council	13.6	12.6	15.0
21. Would you prefer:			
1) A presidential system where all powers are in the President's hands, with the Prime Minister appointed or dismissed by the President	60.9	63.3	57.4
2) A parliamentary system where the main authority is in the hands of the Prime Minister who is appointed or dismissed by the Parliament (The Legislative Council) with an Honorary President.	39.1	36.7	42.6
22. I would support that the voters' age be:			
1) 16 years or more	17.2	15.8	19.4
2) 18 years or more	81.8	83.1	79.8
3) No opinion	1.0	1.1	0.8
23. I would support that the age of the presidential candidate be:			
1) 30 years or more	19.1	18.4	20.2
2) 35 years or more	79.1	80.0	77.9
3) No opinion	1.7	1.7	1.8
24. I would support that the age of the Legislative Council (Parliament) candidate be:			
1) 25 years or more	13.2	13.8	12.3
2) 30 years or more	85.3	84.8	86.0
3) No opinion	1.5	1.4	1.6

25. I would support that the age of the candidate for Local Council chairmanship be:			
1) 25 years or more	13.3	14.8	11.0
2) 30 years or more	85.2	83.7	87.5
3) No opinion	1.5	1.5	1.5
26. I would support that the age of the candidate for Local Council membership be:			
1) 20 years or more	9.6	10.0	8.9
2) 25 years or more	88.8	88.4	88.5
3) No opinion	1.6	1.7	1.5
V. Elections' importance			
27. In your opinion, holding such elections would lead to:			
Enhancing the citizen's feeling that he's playing an important role in society			
1) Yes	82.4	81.0	84.5
2) No	12.0	11.6	12.5
3) No opinion	5.7	7.4	3.1
Consolidating the rule of law			
1) Yes	80.9	79.5	83.0
2) No	12.6	12.9	12.0
3) No opinion	6.6	7.6	5.0
Enhancing popular participation			
1) Yes	78.5	76.5	81.4
2) No	14.0	14.2	13.7
3) No opinion	7.5	9.3	4.9
Representing marginalized categories (such as women, youth, workers, etc.)			
1) Yes	76.8	76.3	77.6
2) No	16.5	15.9	17.3
3) No opinion	6.7	7.8	5.1
Improving the situation of Palestinian women			
1) Yes	76.5	75.6	77.8
2) No	16.7	16.3	17.4
3) No opinion	6.8	8.1	4.8
Implementing reforms in National Authority Institutions			
1) Yes	75.7	75.3	76.2
2) No	15.9	15.6	16.4
3) No opinion	8.4	9.0	7.4
Improving social conditions			
1) Yes	75.2	73.6	77.7
2) No	19.1	19.4	18.7
3) No opinion	5.6	7.0	3.5
Improving economic conditions			
1) Yes	74.5	74.4	74.8
2) No	19.4	19.0	20.0
3) No opinion	6.1	6.6	5.3
Reforming the existing political system			
1) Yes	73.7	72.2	75.9
2) No	18.5	18.3	18.7
3) No opinion	7.9	9.5	5.5
Enhancing democracy in the Palestinian society			
1) Yes	72.1	71.6	73.0

2) No	20.1	19.0	21.7
3) No opinion	7.8	9.4	5.4
Putting an end to chaos and anarchy			
1) Yes	71.2	70.5	72.2
2) No	23.3	23.2	23.4
3) No opinion	5.5	6.3	4.5
Maintaining the hegemony of the current Palestinian Authority (consolidating the status quo)			
1) Yes	66.3	63.6	70.4
2) No	24.2	25.6	22.0
3) No opinion	9.5	10.8	7.6
Accelerating the creation of a Palestinian state			
1) Yes	61.6	61.4	61.8
2) No	31.1	29.5	33.5
3) No opinion	7.3	9.1	4.7
Provoking changes in the current Palestinian leadership			
1) Yes	60.8	59.5	62.7
2) No	27.7	25.9	30.2
3) No opinion	11.5	14.6	7.0
Imposing a political solution on Palestinians			
1) Yes	58.4	56.9	60.9
2) No	32.3	32.2	32.4
3) No opinion	9.4	11.0	7.0
28. Do you think these elections will be conducted properly?			
1) Yes	50.2	50.0	50.4
2) No	34.1	32.2	36.8
3) No opinion	15.8	17.8	12.8
VI. Women's participation			
29. If a Palestinian woman runs for President, would you be prepared to vote for her?			
1) Yes	48.4	54.7	39.0
2) No	49.8	43.1	59.7
3) Don't know	1.8	2.1	1.3
30. If a Palestinian woman runs for a seat in the Legislative Council, would you be prepared to vote for her?			
1) Yes	64.3	70.7	54.8
2) No	34.2	27.6	44.1
3) Don't know	1.5	1.7	1.2
31. If a Palestinian woman runs for a municipal office, would you be prepared to vote for her?			
1) Yes	51.5	56.2	44.6
2) No	46.5	41.2	54.4
3) Don't know	1.9	2.6	1.0
32. Would you present the candidacy of a woman from your family for a municipal position?			
1) Yes	44.8	52.3	33.8
2) No	52.3	44.5	63.9
3) Don't know	2.8	3.2	2.3
33. Are you in favor of setting a quota for women in Local Councils?			
1) Yes	61.8	65.5	56.4
2) No	35.2	31.5	40.6
3) Not sure	2.9	3.0	2.9

34. Are you in favor of setting a quota for women in the Legislative Council?			
1) Yes	65.3	69.2	59.6
2) No	31.7	28.1	36.9
3) Don't know	3.0	2.7	3.4
VII. Political parties and the elections			
35. If elections are held on the basis of electoral lists constituted by political parties and you decide to vote, and if voters have to choose among the following political currents, which would you choose?			
1) Fatah	38.2	40.4	35.0
2) Hamas	21.1	19.5	23.6
3) Islamic Jihad	4.6	5.0	4.0
4) Popular Front	2.8	3.3	2.1
5) People's Party	2.0	2.2	1.6
6) Democratic Union (Fida)	1.3	1.8	0.5
7) Democratic Front	1.0	0.8	1.2
8) None of the above	26.2	24.2	29.1
36. Are you currently a member in any Palestinian political organizations?			
1) Yes	15.9	14.2	18.4
2) No	83.5	85.2	81.0
3) No opinion	0.6	0.5	0.6
37. Are you currently a member in a popular movement (syndicate, union, association, society, etc.)?			
1) Yes	19.6	17.8	22.3
2) No	80.1	81.9	77.4
3) No opinion	0.3	0.3	0.3

Section Five
Comparative Result Analysis
According to Social Categories

TABLE 9.1: FOLLOWING UP ON ELECTION NEWS AND ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THEM

Variable	Gender		Economic Condition			Work Sector			Age			Education			Total
	Male	Female	Good	Med.	Bad	Priv.	Local	Public	16-29	30-50	50+	Elementary	Secondary	University	
I follow up on news about the elections	48.7	43.1	52.6	45.4	43.4	43.2	43.9	55.3	42.00	49.9	48.0	44.4	45.2	58.1	46.0
I watch local TV stations	51.4	62.0	57.6	57.0	55.3	53.9	45.1	33.6	55.7	55.9	60.0	59.2	54.6	40.8	56.5
I have no knowledge of voter registration mechanisms	72.1	72.5	72.4	73.3	70.9	72.8	57.6	60.4	80.6	65.9	64.1	74.9	68.5	60.0	72.2
I have no information regarding the legislative elections law	74.7	81.2	71.4	80.5	76.7	77.7	66.4	53.5	80.5	74.5	78.1	83.0	69.3	51.4	77.4
I have no information regarding the presidential elections law	74.9	80.0	69.6	97.9	97.7	74.2	64.0	59.6	81.2	74.7	73.0	83.2	71.3	51.5	77.8
I have no information regarding the local elections law	67.6	81.4	66.7	78.7	72.9	67.9	71.1	65.8	75.6	73.7	71.7	79.5	66.0	51.5	74.2

TABLE 9.2: ATTITUDE TOWARDS ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Variable	Gender		Economic Condition			Work Sector			Age			Education			Total
	Male	Female	Good	Med.	Bad	Priv.	Local	Public	16-29	30-50	50+	Elementary	Secondary	University	
I am in favor of presidential elections	54.4	59.9	56.4	59.6	54.4	54.6	48.0	42.5	55.3	60.3	54.5	58.2	33.9	54.1	57.0
I am in favor of legislative elections	59.8	61.1	63.3	61.9	57.2	59.0	71.6	56.1	59.5	63.6	55.6	60.0	59.7	64.2	60.4
I am in favor of municipal elections	70.3	68.2	72.8	72.1	64.2	69.5	72.2	68.6	68.3	72.5	64.6	69.0	69.0	71.7	69.3
I will vote in the presidential elections	78.3	70.7	72.7	71.3	79.5	75.6	77.7	83.0	70.5	78.3	77.6	74.9	71.7	77.8	74.6
I will vote in the legislative elections	70.1	60.9	62.4	62.9	70.6	66.5	66.8	77.2	61.8	68.4	70.1	65.6	61.0	73.9	65.7
I will vote in the municipal elections	80.5	63.3	72.1	70.5	74.3	79.2	80.4	85.0	71.0	74.0	71.6	70.4	73.3	83.0	72.2
Elections will be held in a proper manner	53.6	46.5	46.5	48.4	54.0	49.2	65.8	47.8	48.4	54.0	46.3	53.5	43.6	37.8	50.2
I have voted in the 1996 elections	43.9	47.7	33.8	40.8	57.5	46.8	75.4	62.9	17.9	65.8	75.1	47.1	36.2	51.7	45.7

TABLE 9.3: GOVERNMENT SYSTEM AND VOTING SYSTEM

Variable	Gender		Economic Condition			Work Sector			Age			Education			Total
	Male	Female	Good	Med.	Bad	Priv.	Local	Public	16-29	30-50	50+	Elementary	Secondary	University	
I prefer the presidential system	54.4	68.1	54.2	62.9	62.0	50.7	47.8	42.2	60.9	61.3	60.5	66.5	49.0	42.2	60.9
I prefer the parliamentary system	45.6	31.9	45.8	37.1	38.0	49.3	52.2	57.8	39.1	38.7	39.5	33.5	51.0	57.8	39.1
I am in favor of the mixed system	34.4	35.8	36.7	35.0	34.2	36.7	55.8	26.2	37.6	37.1	23.6	34.8	37.6	32.4	35.0
I am in favor of the proportional representation system	24.9	14.1	18.1	19.3	21.0	26.6	15.7	27.7	21.2	18.7	18.3	19.8	18.6	21.2	19.7
I am in favor of the simple majority system	33.4	30.8	34.9	32.7	30.2	30.5	24.2	42.9	32.0	33.5	29.4	30.8	33.1	39.8	32.2

TABLE 9.4: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Variable	Gender		Economic Condition			Work Sector			Age			Education			Total
	Male	Female	Good	Med.	Bad	Priv.	Local	Public	16-29	30-50	50+	Elementary	Secondary	University	
I am ready to vote for a female president	46.2	50.7	48.6	47.1	49.8	54.1	71.4	43.7	44.4	48.6	58.7	50.6	52.6	56.5	48.4
I am ready to vote for a female legislative council member	64.8	63.8	65.0	61.6	67.1	66.7	91.4	68.6	59.0	69.1	67.5	63.6	67.6	69.9	64.3
I am ready to vote for a female local council member	52.3	50.7	54.7	49.1	52.8	53.7	83.1	59.3	46.9	55.1	56.1	50.6	52.6	56.5	51.5
I am ready to vote for a woman from my family in local elections	42.4	47.5	45.5	42.0	47.8	43.7	66.7	40.0	40.4	47.3	51.2	45.3	44.1	43.0	44.8
I am in favor of setting quotas for women in the Legislative Council	63.3	67.5	66.0	64.1	66.4	62.8	82.2	68.9	63.5	66.9	66.5	64.6	69.0	64.4	65.3
I am in favor of setting quotas for women in local councils	56.7	67.4	60.6	60.9	63.5	57.5	71.5	64.0	61.4	61.4	64.0	61.3	64.1	61.9	61.8

TABLE 9.5: AFFILIATION AND VOTING PATTERNS

Variable	Gender		Economic Condition			Work Sector			Age			Education			Total
	Male	Female	Good	Med.	Bad	Priv.	Local	Public	16-29	30-50	50+	Elementary	Secondary	University	
I am a member in a social or popular movement	29.7	8.7	23.5	14.9	23.1	29.4	34.2	33.7	18.9	23.1	13.6	17.9	18.6	33.0	19.6
I am a member in a political organization	22.9	8.3	16.9	14.1	17.6	17.8	20.3	34.2	19.0	15.2	9.3	15.9	12.6	21.5	15.9
I decide for whom I vote	66.9	44.3	55.6	51.0	62.0	71.5	63.0	70.7	51.3	58.0	64.4	52.9	59.2	72.5	56.0
I will vote for new faces in the Legislative Council elections	58.2	38.9	59.6	43.7	49.7	62.4	56.5	62.0	54.9	49.3	32.1	42.5	64.6	68.0	48.9
I will vote for new faces in local council elections	60.2	44.6	60.2	45.5	56.1	64.5	62.7	67.2	56.6	53.5	40.4	48.9	60.7	65.9	52.7
I will vote for competent candidates regardless of their political tendencies	69.2	70.4	73.2	67.3	70.9	70.5	88.5	71.2	68.3	70.6	71.9	66.5	78.1	78.9	69.8
I will vote for the left list	6.6	7.5	10.1	6.3	6.4	7.4	27.8	2.2	7.1	8.2	4.0	7.0	6.5	7.8	7.1
I will vote for the Islamic list	22.5	29.2	25.8	25.8	25.6	23.3	10.5	20.0	27.8	26.2	18.9	26.6	28.3	15.5	25.7
I will vote for Fatah's list	43.0	33.0	43.9	40.3	37.5	42.2	28.0	48.0	39.3	40.4	30.4	39.2	34.5	37.7	38.2
I will vote for none of the above	27.9	30.2	29.3	27.7	30.4	27.1	33.6	29.8	25.8	25.1	46.7	27.2	30.7	39.0	26.2

Section Six
Results Analysis by Workshop Participants

Four analysis workshops were held in the West Bank and Gaza in view of enriching deliberation and analysis. Participants in the said workshops gave their opinion concerning all of the discussed subjects. Such opinions were totally in line with those stated hereinabove as regards

1. The reasons for the lack of knowledge and the means to improve it;
2. The public opinion regarding elections;
3. The factors for choosing candidates;
4. The suggested modifications to elections laws;
5. The importance of elections;
6. Women's participation.

Section Seven
Expert Papers

1. Assaad Al Owaywi – *Jerusalem Open University, Hebron*

It is clear, from available studies, that Palestinian economic standards have dropped sharply, with more than half the surveyed individuals declaring that their economic situation is medium or less.

Despite the harsh reality lived by the Palestinian people, as a result of the repressive and hegemonic actions of occupation forces, it is noted that more people are in favor of halting suicide attacks against civilians. This goes to show that Palestinians are not blood thirsty, they are just fighting to defend themselves, their dignity, and their national rights.

Statistics also show that a large chunk of the Palestinian public is not satisfied with the performance of Ahmad Qurai's cabinet.

Furthermore, results show that, despite harsh conditions and the extreme lack of knowledge in election laws and regulations, a large majority of Palestinians is in favor of holding elections, whatever their type. The majority expressed their wish to register as voters. However, a better information and awareness-raising system should be implemented in Palestinian media.

According to the study, a large fraction of the survey sample do not follow election news, and that may be due to their lack of confidence in the elected legislative Council, which performance is considered unsatisfactory by the majority of Palestinians. This requires a major effort on the part of the governmental and non-governmental authorities to raise the public's awareness and convince voters that pressure-free elections constitute the surest way to nominate the right person for the right job.

Many polled individuals have expressed their intention to vote for new faces, based only on the candidates' integrity, trustworthiness and competence. This means that a higher participation rate is expected for the upcoming elections, as compared to 1996, even if the opposition calls for a boycott. Political parties and organizations will therefore be forced to take that into consideration when naming their respective candidates.

It is also noted that a large part of voters are intent on not taking family or tribal pressures into consideration when choosing their candidates. This may constitute a positive step towards a competence-based vote.

As regards the voting systems, poll results reveal a major preference for the mixed system in legislative elections. On the other hand, universal suffrage is preferred when electing the President. The majority of the poll sample believes that powers should be entrusted to the President, who should appoint the Prime Minister.

Most participants see elections as a national duty, which will enhance their role in society, consolidate the rule of the law, strengthen democracy and help Palestinians get rid of the chaos, nepotism and tribalism. They will also increase the representation of marginalized segments of society, including women.

As for female participation and voting, the sample seemed to be equally divided between those who are willing to vote for a female presidential candidate and those who are against it. The majority is in favor of setting female quotas in the Legislative and local councils. This reflects the maturity of the Palestinian public *vis-à-vis* the role of women in society in view of

pushing development and prosperity forward. These results might seem unexpected, but a number of factors have to be taken into consideration, such as the fact that 40% of polled individuals were of the female gender, in addition to the large participation of women in the national struggle and during the *Intifadehs*.

The very large majority of Palestinians seems to be unaffiliated to any political party or movement. Nevertheless, Fatah seems to secure the loyalty of the majority of those who actually are politically active, with Hamas holding second place.

The great majority of voters deems that it is possible to reelect President Arafat. This reflects the Palestinians' confidence in their leader and his capacity to ensure Palestinian independence, without forsaking national claims.

2. Iyad Barghouti – Ramallah Center of Human Rights Studies

All polls have shown that 70% of Palestinians are ready to participate in the elections, but a lower proportion seems to be actively working for such elections. This is mainly reflected by the lack of interest in elections news and the quasi-inexistent knowledge of elections laws and regulations, including voter-registration and surrounding political conditions.

The main reason behind this seems to be related to the economy, whereas, for comparison's sake, it may be noted that the daily expenditure of a Danish cow exceeds, by three folds, that of a Palestinian individual. The other reason is the frustration felt by Palestinians in view of the fact that elections seem to generate lots of talk, but no actions. Furthermore, many seem to believe that new elections will not effect any real changes.

As regards the polling results, they have shown that a large majority is in favor of holding elections in general, with a larger proportion seeking Legislative elections, compared to those asking for renewed presidential elections. This reflects that Palestinians are either satisfied with President Arafat's performance or believe that he is the only available candidate. The call for Legislative elections is a clear sign of the people's dissatisfaction with the poor performance of the current Legislative Council. On the other hand, the majority of voters seem to be intent on electing new candidates for local and legislative elections. A question remains however: "Why didn't the poll include a question regarding the reelection of President Arafat? Is it because he is considered as the only candidate?".

In regard to the preferred political system, Palestinians seem to favor a Presidential system, with powers being entrusted to the President himself. However, I believe that the survey sample have answered this question with President Arafat in mind. Their answer was based on the person and not on the position.

As concerns female participation, it seems that female support is less significant in local elections.

Political affiliation doesn't seem to be important in the eyes of Palestinians, the majority of whom don't seem to be related to any political party or movement.

In short, we can safely say that people in favor of elections are either opposition member, or they are seeking change or maybe uncertain of what they want. Those who do not want elections are supporters of the current regime, with the occupation being their greatest pretext for not wanting any current changes in leadership.

3. Mohammad Ayyoub – *Popular Committee for Refugee Affairs*

Elections are a popular Palestinian demand. Palestinians are eager to exercise their democratic right to choose their representatives and leaders. They see elections as both a goal and a means: a goal because they are the reflection of true democracy, and a means because they are a tool for change. This change incites members of social institutions to achieve what is best for the good of their electors. It also pushes candidates to learn from their predecessors' mistakes and avoid them.

However, the truth is that democracy is a relative concept. Absolute democracy does not exist and there is no unified definition of the concept itself. Democracy is set up by the powerful according to their best interests. According to the Western concept, democracy means total control or "Dictatorship of the Exploiting Capital" over the nation's capacities. To the contrary, and according to the Marxist point of view, democracy is the dictatorship of the proletariat. In both cases, the controlling class leaves no margin for others with different points of view.

On the other hand, in Islam, it is said that, in one specific instance, the Prophet preached: "*If there are three of you, you should elect a leader*". This constitutes a definite democratic principal which gives a group the right to choose its leader or the person in charge. It does not allow the said leader to proclaim himself as leader. Moslems have chosen Abou Bakr as their first Caliph after the Prophet, while Omar suggested six names among which the Caliph would be elected. As for the State Council system, although it is not binding for the Emir or the Ruler, it is perceived as a light showing the leader the way.

Despite some negative remarks regarding the poll sample, this study has provided us with important indicators that give us an idea of the dangerous situation lived by Palestinians and push us to sound a warning. They include:

1. A 54% majority of voters do not follow up on election news.
2. The survey shows that the majority of our people does not read. 57% of those who follow up on elections do that on TV, with more people doing so in the West Bank compared to the Gaza Strip. 20% of voters listen to radio, while less than 9% read newspapers, with the lesser proportion of those living in Gaza. This might be due to the fact that living standards in Gaza have dropped below those in the West Bank, although survey results tend to show the opposite, which is not true.
3. Most of the surveyed individuals (70%) lack basic knowledge in elections mechanisms and voter registration processes. Nevertheless, 60% of them intend to register as voters.
4. There is a distinct class and social gap within the Palestinian society, with 19% being well off, while 38% described their situation as bad to very bad and 44% estimate that they are part of the middle class. In short, the vast majority of our population has been crushed by poverty while a few have accumulated wealth on the expense of others.
A simple comparison reveals a huge gap between individual incomes in Israel and in National Authority areas, despite the fact that commodity prices are similar. The majority of Palestinians live under the poverty line according to Israeli standards.
5. There is a general drift away from partisan affiliations and popular movements.

Position concerning elections

The vast majority believes that elections are possible under the current circumstances. However, I find it strange that we are now talking about the possibility of holding the

elections whilst no one lifted a finger to demand elections in 1999, when holding them was a major priority, with the expiry of the mandates of both the Legislative Council and the President. Why do we insist to discuss the issue now after repetitive calls for reforms on the part of the US, the EU and Israel?

The same majority seems to want elections to be held, especially Legislative, Municipal and Local elections.

It is also clear that there is great discontentment in regard to the performance of Legislative Council and the appointed local councils. The proportion of those who decided to vote against outgoing members of such councils indicates a quasi-implicit rejection of the appointment principle.

The survey also showed that the majority of new voters will try to vote for competent candidates rather than for candidates who are close to the current leadership. It also indicates that individuality is starting to get the upper hand. However, tribal and family ties are still more influential than political partisanship.

The surveyed individuals set the most important qualities they are seeking in any candidate (listed above). It is, however, interesting to note that honesty and integrity came in first, while political partisanship was considered as the least important characteristic.

It's a pity that the poll showed the level of ignorance in the laws of presidential, municipal and legislative elections. On the other hand, results indicate that young blood has become a requisite.

Expected elections results

The majority of surveyed individuals believed that citizens would feel more important, that many aspects of Palestinians lives would be improved and that major changes will be witnessed. Nevertheless, they also seem to believe that a political solution will be imposed upon them. Furthermore, they believe that reforms will be made within government institutions and within the current political system, and that the current leadership will change (60.8%) while 66.3 seem to believe that the current leadership will strengthen its hold on power. This reveals a strange contradiction that leads me to wonder whether polled individuals understood the questions or whether they were answering at random.

Other specialists, i.e. Professor Samar Hawwash, Professor Tala Aawkal and Dr. Rateb Sowaity came to similar conclusions as the three foregoing analyses.

Section Eight
Conclusions and recommendations

Major conclusions

- Most participants came to the conclusion that elections are possible at this stage, in view of the fact that they are a popular requisite and a democratic right, which would pave the way for internal reforms. A minority believes that the occupation will hinder free elections and that the widespread frustration would prevent Palestinians from going to the polls.
- Participants stressed the importance of overall elections and found it hard to give more or less importance to Presidential, Legislative or Local elections. They considered elections important because of the role they played in enhancing national feelings especially if linked to an overall political project.
- Knowledge of the election system is limited. Participants suggested that awareness-raising mechanisms be implemented.
- Opinions regarding election systems diverged. No-one opposed the provisions of the current election laws, but they all suggested that modifications or changes be made, especially in regard to voters' ages and the quota for female candidates.
- All participants seem to believe that participation is crucial in order to play a role in the evolution of society and the consolidation of democracy, and to guarantee accountability and transparency.
- Participants set a list of characteristics that should be found in candidates. They didn't however forget that family ties and tribalism still play an important role in elections.