

Center for Palestine Research & Studies (CPRS)

Public Opinion Poll NO (3)

Palestinian Elections,

November 11, 1993

The Center for Palestine Research and Studies (CPRS) has, so far, conducted two public opinion polls on the proposed Palestinian elections. The results of the first poll were released on the 29th of October, 1993, and were published in local and international newspapers. The response to the first poll was overwhelmingly positive.

Therefore, CPRS has decided to continue an ongoing research project on Palestinian elections. A public opinion poll on the topic will be conducted each month until the proposed elections date (the 13th of July as mentioned in the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles).

These are the results of the third public opinion poll that has been conducted in the West Bank and Gaza on the 11th of November, 1993.

Introduction

A random sample of 1855 Palestinian, over the age of 18, were interviewed. The sample was distributed according to population size. Effort was made to represent all residential areas (i.e., city, town, village and refugee camp). Age and sex were also considered.

The interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis in West Bank major towns (Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Nablus, Jericho, Tulkarm, Qalqilya and Jenin). In Gaza, interviews were conducted in the following areas: Al-Shati', Khan Yunis, Rafah (town and refugee camp), Al-Breig refugee camp, Beit Lahia village, Al-Zaytoun, Al-Shuja'iyah, Al-Rimal, Qarerah village and Jabalya village.

Fifty-four well-trained field workers instructed to visit areas that attract all of the society's groups and strata. These areas included, among others, bus/car stations that lead to villages and refugee camps, main markets, city centers, hospital entrances, ..etc.

1171 questionnaires were received from the West Bank, and 684 were received from Gaza. The margin of error for this study is plus or minus 1%, with a confidence level of 99%.

Methodology

CPRS researchers are constantly trying to refine and improve the validity of the research methodology and the reliability of the collected data. For these purposes, the sample size was

raised from 1259 to 1855. This has resulted in a higher confidence level and a lower margin of error.

Moreover, more female data collectors were hired to ensure the representation of women in the sample. They were instructed to visit public institutions that attract women.

Furthermore, the majority of our data collectors participated in an intensive workshop where the goals of the poll were discussed. They were also lectured on survey methods, scientific research, field work, and sampling.

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. All interviews took place on the same day.

Limitations

A poll, such as this one, may have a number of limitations. Errors may have resulted as a consequence of surveying only a random sample, and not the complete population. Errors may also have resulted from non-response which is estimated at 10%. Women comprised the majority of non-respondents. Others refused to respond because they believed that their opinions were irrelevant and were not taken into account when making decisions. A number of non-respondents explained their position as a statement against Palestinian-Israeli agreements.

The reader must also be reminded that 23.5% of those who responded identified themselves as "independents" or "Others". Some of them said that they "gave up" on Palestinian politics. Others have "negative" views of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, but did not identify themselves as part of the opposition groups.

We must also note that one more choice was added to the original choices in question # 5 after the data analysis. This addition has resulted from the fact that 16.4% of the sample chose "others" as their answer. It was clear that a pattern was appearing; 10.8% (out of the 16.5%) specified their answer as "competence".

Sample Distribution

Expressed as a % of the total sample)

Geographical Distribution		Area of Residence	Marital Status
63% West Bank "including Jerusalem"		46.5% Town	35.0% Single
37% Gaza Strip		30.3% Villages	64.4% Married
Gender	Age	23.2% Ref. Camps	00.6% Divorced & Widowed
60% Males	48.2% 18-28	Occupation	
40% Females	31.2% 29-39	12.2% Laborers	11.4% Merchants
Refugee Status	14.4% 40-50	07.4% Craftsmen	11.3% Students
49.0% Refugee	6.2% Over than 50	12.2% Housewives	01.8% Farmers

51.0% Non-refugee		29.8% Employees	08.0% Specialists	
Education		05.5% Unemployed	00.4% Retired	
02.3% Illiterate	20.8% Up to 9 yr.	Place of Interview		
29.2% 10-13 yrs	24.7% Bachelors	8.7% Nablus	08.9% Ramallah	
20.7% Two-yr college	02.3% MA+	03.2% Qalqilia	07.2% Jenin	
	10.1% Jerusalem	01.7% Jericho	10.8% Hebron	06.8% Tulkarm
	19.1% Gaza-N	04.5% Gaza-M	13.3% Gaza-S	

Remarks

The findings of this poll must be placed in their proper context. Our field workers have reported that there is still a great deal of ambiguity about the elections. There are also doubts about the possibility of an elections taking place, and about their "fairness". At the time of the poll, emotions were running high, as a result of the widespread violence and settlers provocations in the area. People were also becoming impatient and frustrated with the "no-change" situation on the ground.

The findings of the present poll confirm many of the results obtained in the previous poll. The majority of Palestinian (73%) believe that the best means to choose the members of the Palestinian Interim Council is general elections. In this respect, we notice that there are differences between the West Bank and Gaza. More respondents, in the West Bank (18%) trust the PLO to appoint the members of the Interim Council, with 70.7% of them preferring general elections. In contrast, more Gazans (77%) call for general elections as the best means to choose the members of the Interim Council, and less of them (10.8%) prefer appointment by the PLO.

Regarding participation in the elections, 72.9% of West Bankers and only 62.2% of Gazans declared that they will participate. The discrepancy between attitudes towards elections and attitudes towards participation in Gaza could be explained by a higher percentage of respondents who support the opposition groups (in Gaza 33.1%; in the West Bank 29.6%). Some of those supporters express their opposition to the Palestinian-Israeli Agreement by insisting on an elections (as democratic means), while refusing to participate in an elections that has resulted from an agreement which they have rejected. We must remind the reader that our previous poll showed widespread doubts among Gazans about the fairness of the elections. 28.6% of them think that the elections will be fair, while 32.2% said that it will be unfair, and 39% said that it will be somewhat fair. In the West Bank 44.3% said that the elections will be fair, and 21.6% said that it will be unfair, and 35.9% said it will be somewhat fair.

As to the rights of the opposition under a Palestinian government, the majority of Palestinians (72.3%) said that the government must guarantee the right of the opposition groups to exist and to express themselves. Here, we notice that there is a gap between Gaza and the West Bank 59.2% of Gazans said "yes" to the rights of the opposition. while 79.8% of West Bank said "yes". This could be explained by the ironic fact that a higher percentage of opposition supporters "do not think that a Palestinian government must guarantee the rights of the opposition". This could be an expression of an opposition to the Palestinian-Israeli agreements (i.e., elections, government "assuming that it will be led by the present PLO leadership". Opposition supporters may also be expressing their fear that government will not in fact guarantethe rights of the opposition.

To Palestinians, the most important factor that they will refer to when choosing the members of the Palestinian Interim Council, is the role of the candidate in national struggle (33.9%). This was the first choice of Fateh supporters, who comprised the largest single group in the sample (41.3%). Academic credentials (21.5%) and "competence" (10.8%) were also important factors. Some Palestinians considered religiosity (15.4%) as an important factor. It is surprising to find out that only 11.2% and 1.5% consider political affiliation and family allegiances as important factors.

The responses to the question on political systems show that the majority groups represented (73.7%) if we add those who chose an Israeli parliamentary system). 18.7% chose an Islamic political system governed by one Islamic party. Fewer Palestinian chose a political system that is similar to "Arab government".

When we compare the results of this poll with those of our previous polls, we notice that there is a small decline in the popularity of Fateh (45.6% on September 10, and 41.3% on November 11). At the same time, there is an increase in the popularity of the major opposition groups (Hamas, PFLP and FýDFLP) (refer to the enclosed chart). This may be due to the unstable situation in the Occupied Territories, and to "unfulfilled" political economic expectations after the signing of the "Declaration of Principles".

Finally, it is suggested that the results of this poll should be treated in broad so as to foster understanding of Palestinian views regarding elections and other important issues. The reader must also remember that the process of collecting information is an ongoing one. It is also important to note that there are gaps between "what people say" and "what people mean", and between "attitude" and "behavior".

Results

1. In your opinion, what is the best way to choose the members of the "Palestinian Council" of the Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority?

	West Bank & Gaza	West Bank	Gaza
a) Appointment by PLO leadership	15.4%	18.0%	10.8%
b) Appointment by political groups	06.3%	06.7%	05.5%
c) Political elections	73.0%	70.7%	77.0%
d) Others	05.3%	04.6%	06.7%

2. Will you participate in the elections for the "Palestinian Council" of the Palestinian Interim Self-government Authority?

a) yes	69.0%	72.9%	62.2%
b) No	15.3%	11.3%	22.2%
c) Not sure	15.7%	15.8%	15.6%

3. If elections were to be held today, you will vote for candidates affiliated with:

a) Hamas	14.6%	12.8%	17.7%
b) PFLP	09.0%	06.8%	12.7%
c) Fateh	41.3%	40.6%	42.5%

d) Feda (Abed Rabo)	03.0%	03.9%	01.5%
e) DFLP	02.3%	03.5%	00.3%
f) Hizb El-Sha'b	03.0%	04.3%	00.7%
g) Islamic Jihad	03.3%	03.8%	02.4%
h) Independents	09.3%	10.8%	06.9%
I) Others	14.2%	13.5%	15.3%

4. Do you believe that a Palestinian government, when established, must guarantee the right of the opposition groups to exist to freely express themselves?.

a) Yes	72.3%	79.8%	59.2%
b) No	11.2%	08.4%	16.1%
c) Not sure	16.5%	11.8%	24.7%

5. When voting for candidates in the elections, the most important factor that I will take into consideration is:

a) Family allegiance	01.5%	01.7%	01.4%
b) Religiosity of candidates	15.4%	13.8%	18.3%
c) Academic credentials	21.5%	22.9%	18.9%
d) Role in national struggle	33.9%	35.8%	30.6%
e) Political affiliation	11.2%	09.9%	13.5%
f) "Competence"	10.8%	10.0%	12.3%
g) Others	05.7%	05.9%	05.0%

6. If a Palestinian State is to be established, I will chose a political system that is:

a) Democratic, where all political groups are represented.	58.1%	58.4%	57.7%
b) Islamic (one-party system)	18.7%	18.8%	18.5%
c) Presidential, similar to most Arab countries.	03.4%	03.7%	02.9%
d) Similar to the Israeli parliamentary system	15.6%	15.3%	16.2%
e) Others	04.2%	03.8%	04.7%