
Analysis of Palestinian Public Opinion on Politics

*Popular Trust in Palestinian
Islamist Factions*



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مركز القدس للإعلام والاتصال
JMCC
POB 25047, East Jerusalem
Tel 02-5819777 Fax 02-5829534
email jmcc@jmcc.org
Website: <http://www.jmcc.org>

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Preface

Since 1993, the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (JMCC) has been regularly conducting public opinion polls. These surveys encompass a wide range of subjects that are of interest to the Palestinian public. It also draws the interest of non-Palestinian parties who are, directly or indirectly, engaged with the Palestine question.

Furthermore, the JMCC Polling Unit conducts commissioned surveys for researchers whose research and analysis require an examination of public opinion.

The unit has participated in joint surveys such as regional polls on an Arab level and another poll with an Israeli research center.

Throughout the course of the periodic polls, it has been realized that there is inadequate usage of the accumulating technical data. This realization has led us to expand the polling unit to include data analyses that are intended to help government officials, political activists, researchers, journalists, and any other interested people, comprehend Palestinian attitudes towards the issues that are tackled by the polls. The JMCC has previously published four analytical reports. The present study is the second of three complementary public opinion analyses conducted by the author to do with popular political trust.

Palestinian public opinions on the peace process and on the Palestinian leadership who are ingrained within this process, are two of the most important subjects that JMCC surveys have tracked since the beginning of this political process and the return of the Palestinian leadership.

The most important trend that is clearly demonstrated by the polls is the continuous and steady increase within the Palestinian public in the distrust of all leading Palestinian political figures and factions.

The analysis presented herein studies the Palestinian people's level of trust in Islamic factions. Among its various insights, this analysis confirms the widely-held belief that Islamist factions comprise the most popular form of opposition to the PA.

Accordingly, the polls and the analytical studies constitute a worthy contribution in empowering the trust of the people in themselves as well as reinforcing accountability within the discourse of democratization of the Palestinian society.

Ghassan Khatib
Director

Introduction

Jerusalem Media & Communication Center public opinion polls confirm the widely-held belief that Islamist factions comprise the most popular form of opposition to the PA and Fatah. Graph #1 shows that Hamas (represented with the dot-studded curve) is the second most trusted faction after Fatah (represented with the diamond-studded curve) in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. In fact, Hamas by itself receives more support than do the PFLP, DFLP, FIDA, and PPP combined (represented with the asterisk-studded curve) in all of the 14 polls conducted by the JMCC from May 1995 to May 1998. Across JMCC surveys dating from January 1994 to May 1998, 11.9% of respondents polled reported trusting Hamas most, and 6.5% reported trusting the PFLP, DFLP, FIDA, or PPP most. Of course, as is illustrated in Graph #2, when trust in Hamas and trust in Islamic Jihad are taken together, the Islamist position within the Palestinian political spectrum is even more prominent. The average level of combined trust in Hamas and Islamic Jihad across the JMCC surveys conducted from January 1994 to May 1998 is 14.1%.

Needless to say, popular trust is a crucial source of factional political power. Equally certain is that Islamist political orientations diverge dramatically from those of the PA and Fatah in terms of both internal Palestinian politics and Palestinian-Israeli relations and for that matter Palestinian-Western and Palestinian-Middle Eastern relations. Furthermore, the strength of the Islamic bloc may grow in the face of continued Israeli intransigence. (See, e.g., Shikaki 1998) Accordingly, examination of the factors accounting for popular trust in Islamist factions is warranted.

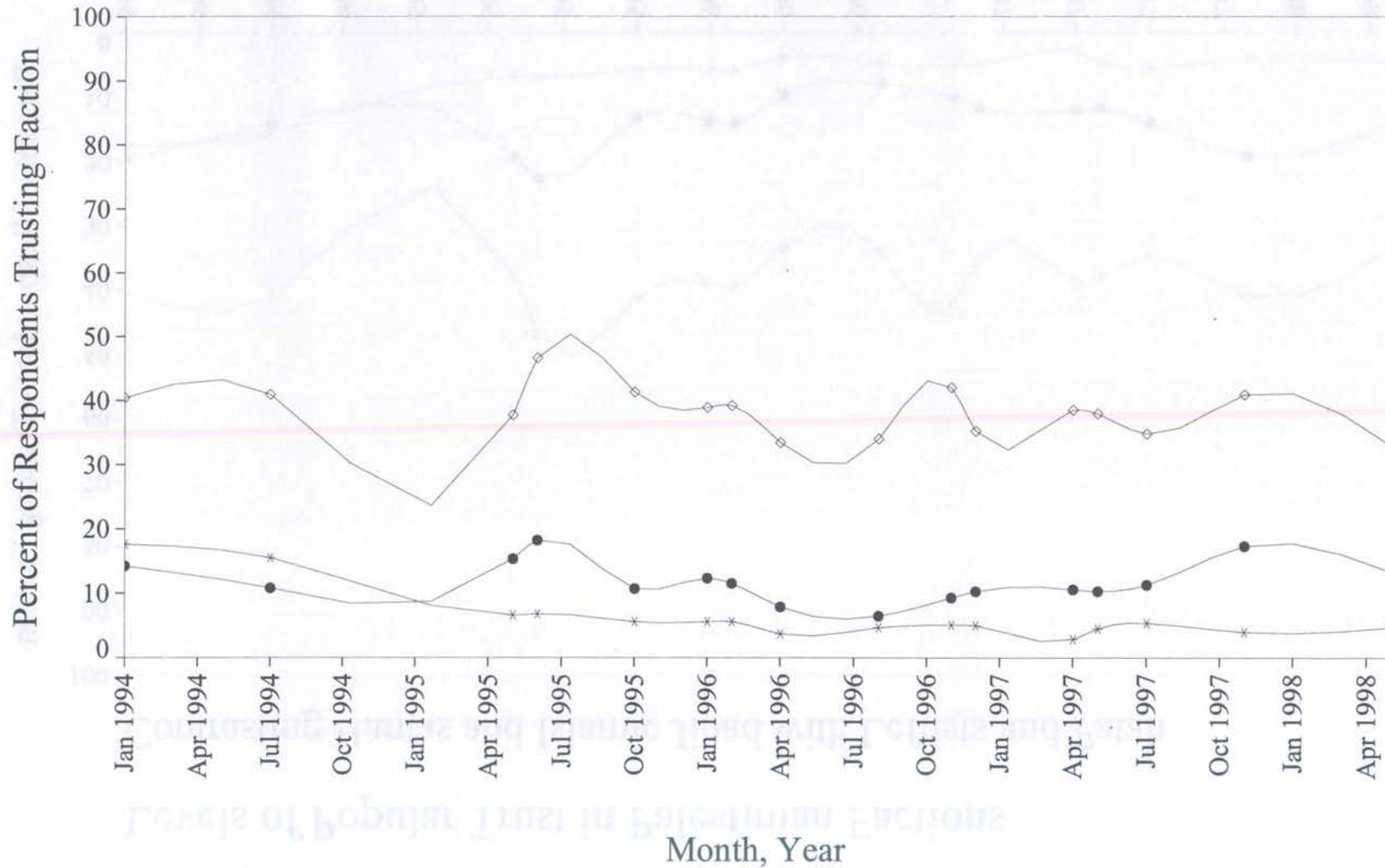
In this spirit, this study analyzes data on public trust in Palestinian Islamist factions collected from three JMCC public opinion polls. This study subjects these data to a statistical technique called logistic regression, in order to estimate the impact of particular independent variables – including demographic variables and variables tapping attitudes on the peace process, Arafat and the PA, and political Islam – on the probability that a person trusts an Islamist faction more than any other faction. Among the more notable findings are the following. Contrary to the claim of some observers that political Islam plays a relatively minor role in drawing supporters to Islamist factions (see, e.g., Budeiri 1995: 93; Usher 1995: 75), pro-political Islamic sentiment plays an important role in this regard. Though support for armed struggle increases the likelihood of trust in Islamists, preferences regarding suicide bombings do not appear to exert an important impact on trust in Islamists. This may suggest that Islamists are more closely identified with armed struggle than with suicide operations *per se*. Skepticism about the prospects for peace, Netanyahu's commitment to signed agreements, and American objectivity, contributes to trust in Islamists. As this skepticism is high among secular opposition factions as well as Islamist factions, the finding that such skepticism is positively associated with trust in Islamists points to the withering of the secular opposition in the Oslo era. Lastly, East Jerusalem residents appear to be less likely than West Bankers and Gazans to trust Islamists most.

This analysis is divided into two parts. Part I discusses the data and methods employed in this study. Literature on Palestinian Islamists will be invoked to guide the construction of the dependent variables and to identify factors potentially affecting trust in Islamists. Part I places in bold the key ideas in order to facilitate a quick understanding of its key points. Part II summarizes and analyzes the results of six distinct logistic regression analyses of models of trust in Islamists. As Part II both focuses on the main empirical findings of the study and is generally accessible to the non-methodologically inclined reader, this part does not resort to the strategy of bolding the key ideas. Rather, the reader is encouraged to read Part II in its entirety. The paper concludes with suggestions for future survey research on public trust in and support for Palestinian Islamists.

Graph #1

Levels of Popular Trust in Palestinian Factions

Contrasting Hamas with Leftists and Fatah

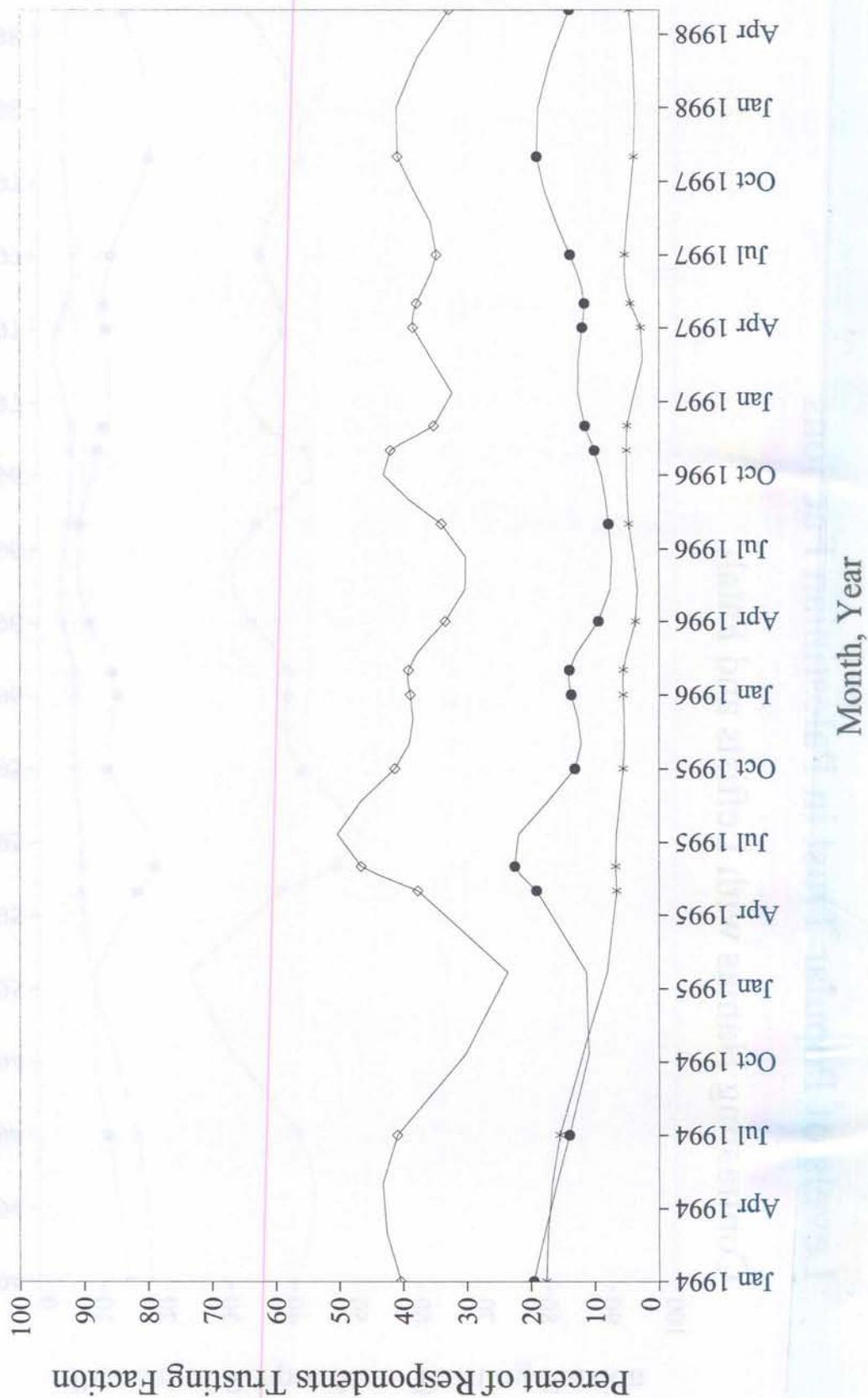


Source: JMCC Public opinion polls

Graph #2:

Levels of Popular Trust in Palestinian Factions

Contrasting Hamas and Islamic Jihad with Leftists and Fatah



Source: JMCC Public opinion polls

I. Data and Methods

Part I discusses the data and methods utilized in this study. Section *A* discusses the survey data employed. Section *B* discusses the conceptualization and measurement of the dependent variable, i.e., trust in Islamist factions. Section *C*, lastly, discusses the factors that may impinge upon the propensity of people to trust or not trust Islamists most. The reader interested in gaining a general understanding of the research design of this study may choose to read only the bolded text of Part I.

A. Survey Data

This study analyzes data from three Jerusalem Media & Communication Center (JMCC) public opinion polls which were conducted, respectively, in May 1998, November 1997, and April 1997. All of these surveys collect data on attitudes regarding the peace process and the performance of the PLC, PA, and Arafat, and on demographic factors, such as age, gender, levels of education and income, region of residence, i.e., West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, and residence-type, i.e., city, village, and refugee camp. Furthermore, both the May 1998 and November 1997 surveys solicit respondent opinion on the prospects of concluding a satisfactory final status agreement in the near future, and both the November 1997 and April 1997 surveys solicit respondent preferences regarding armed struggle.¹ Thus, analyzing all three surveys enables assessment of the robustness of findings concerning these variables across time, changing political conditions, and independent samples.

Concomitantly, each survey contains a unique set of potentially relevant factors. Notably, the May 1998 survey is unique in its collection of data on respondent perceptions of the commitment to the peace process of Netanyahu and the Israeli public. Of the three surveys investigated in this study, only the November 1997 survey solicits data on attitudes regarding the role of Islam in Palestinian politics and society. The November 1997 survey also collects data on perceptions regarding America's concern for Palestinian interests.² Meanwhile, the April 1997 survey solicits data on assessments of the most important issue facing Palestinian society,³ and on the preferred PA response to Palestinian demonstrations. Accordingly, each of these surveys makes a distinct contribution to the explanation of the probability that a person trusts Islamists most.

B. Coding the Dependent Variables: Trust in Islamist Factions

Each of the surveys analyzed in this study asks the respondent in open-ended format⁴ to indicate the Palestinian political or religious faction that (s)he trusts most. The question reads: "Which Palestinian political or religious faction do you trust most?" The frequency distribution of responses to this question for each poll is presented in Table B.

Table B1: Frequency distribution of responses to Trust Faction question, May 1998

¹ The May 1998 survey solicits open-ended data on opinion about the preferred actions of the PA if the PA and Israel are unable to reach an agreement on final status issues by May 1999. The open-ended nature of this question precluded this variable from being tested in the two sets of May 1998 analyses.

² The May 1998 survey solicits data on whether the US is more favorable to Israelis, more favorable to Palestinians, or neutral. Of those polled, 94.6% responded "more favorable to Israelis," 3.0% responded "neutral," 0.5% responded "more favorable to the Palestinians," and 1.9% responded "don't know/no answer." Since almost all of those polled agreed that the US favors Israel, this variable is unable to *differentiate* supporters of Islamists from supporters of other factions.

³ The November 1997 survey also asks respondents to indicate their opinion on the most important issue facing Palestinian society. But since it asks this question in open-ended format, many responses to this question are difficult to code into a coherent quantitative variable. As a result, responses to this question are not integrated into the statistical analyses of the November 1997 data conducted in this study.

⁴ Open-ended questions are questions which, rather than ask the respondent to select one out of a few response-options enumerated in the survey, allow the respondent to provide any response (s)he wishes.

Faction	Frequency	Percent
Fatah	397	32.9%
Hamas	161	13.3%
PFLP	34	2.8%
DFLP	5	0.4%
Islamic Jihad	10	0.8%
PPP	14	1.2%
FIDA	4	0.3%
Pro-peace secularists	1	0.1%
Anti-peace secularists	4	0.3%
Other Islamic factions	47	3.9%
PLO	8	0.7%
Palestinian Authority	9	0.7%
Other factions	5	0.4%
Do not trust any faction	352	29.1%
Don't know/No answer	157	13.0%
Total	1208	100%

Table B2: Frequency distribution of responses to Trust Faction question, November 1997

Faction	Frequency	Percent
Fatah	483	40.9%
Hamas	204	17.3%
PFLP	24	2.0%
DFLP	11	0.9%
Islamic Jihad	21	1.8%
PPP	8	0.7%
FIDA	5	0.4%
Democratic Coalition	1	0.1%
Pro-peace secularists	1	0.1%
Other Islamic factions	35	3.0%
PLO	8	0.7%
Other factions	4	0.3%
Do not trust any faction	204	17.3%
Don't know/No answer	173	14.7%
Total	1182	100%

Table B3: Frequency distribution of responses to Trust Faction question, April 1997

Faction	Frequency	Percent
Fatah	462	38.5%
Hamas	127	10.6%
PFLP	17	1.4%
DFLP	8	0.7%
Islamic Jihad	17	1.4%
PPP	5	0.4%
FIDA	5	0.4%
Pro-peace secularists	7	0.6%
Other Islamist factions	60	5.0%
Other factions	14	1.6%
Do not trust any faction	311	25.9%
Don't know/No answer	163	13.6%
Total	1196	100%

As the aim of this study is to examine the factors accounting for a person's likelihood of trusting an Islamist faction most, it is appropriate to construct from each of the above tables a dichotomous, or binary, variable which for any individual respondent is coded "1" if the respondent indicated trusting some Islamist faction most, and "0" if the respondent did not indicate trusting an Islamist faction most. The study will then estimate models, or groups of independent variables, that account for the probability that a person scores a "1."

To construct the binary dependent variable, various coding decisions demand attention. Perhaps the most basic decision concerns which responses to the Trust Faction question to code as "1." **The dependent variables analyzed in this study code both " Hamas" and Islamic Jihad" responses as "1."** This coding rule is open to the criticism that Hamas and Islamic Jihad articulate different bundles of interests and have different levels of ability to mobilize support for particular policies and for their own faction,⁵ and, that, as a result, coding these two responses with the same value (i.e., "1"=Islamist) impedes identification of the differences in the characteristics of Hamas supporters, on the one side, and of Islamic Jihad supporters, on the other.

In response to this criticism, it should first be mentioned that an important reason for combining respondents who trust Hamas most and respondents who trust Islamic Jihad most into one "Islamist" category is that there are simply too few respondents expressing trust in Islamic Jihad to adequately analyze with logistic regression Islamic Jihad supporters as a distinct category. A second and more **basic justification for combining Hamas and Islamic Jihad into one "Islamist" category is that the two factions have much in common, particularly relative to other Palestinian political factions.** Comparing Hamas and Islamic Jihad is of course complicated by the reality that Hamas is not monolithic in its ideological and political orientation. In the words of Ali Jarbawi (1994: 145): "Hamas may be seen as a movement with many branches. . . . Its cadre include radicals and moderates, clerics and technocrats, religious reformers and traditionalists." (See also Shikaki 1998: 32) Nonetheless, general similarities and differences between Islamic Jihad and Hamas can be identified.

One basic difference is that Islamic Jihad has promulgated *jihad* against Israel since its formation as a collection of political cells in 1979 and the early 1980's (Jarbawi 1994: 130; Budeiri 1995: 91), and thus well before the Muslim Brotherhood began emphasizing *jihad*. Preceding the Intifada, in contrast, the Muslim Brotherhood, including leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, emphasized the Islamic principles and strategies of *tarbiya* (education) and *da'wa* (preaching). (Milton-Edwards 1992: 49) Musa Budeiri (1995: 92) elaborates that the Brotherhood's members emphasized "calls to reform Palestinian society from within, to combat the secularism of the PLO, and to curtail the strength of the left, the purveyor of atheism, immorality, and imported ideas. They perceived their own task to be in education, social work, and the raising of religious consciousness. Resistance to the occupation was not on their agenda." Relatedly, the Muslim Brotherhood had also been part of the traditional pro-Jordanian camp in the Occupied Territories. It was only during the outbreak of the Intifada, motivated by the goals of not being outdone by Islamic Jihad and of being responsive to public support for militancy, that leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood became seriously committed to armed struggle and created Hamas precisely for this purpose. (Milton-Edwards 1992: 49-50; Jarbawi 1993: 73; Rashad 1993: 57; Ahmad 1994: 37-8; Budeiri 1995: 91-2) In other words, the Brotherhood created Hamas largely to alleviate criticisms that the Brotherhood was not committed to all-out struggle. (Abu-Amr 1993: 8) Accordingly, Hamas's origin in the moderate Brotherhood does not in itself represent a meaningful difference between Hamas and Islamic Jihad relevant to contemporary Palestinian politics. (Rashad 1993: 1; Budeiri 1995: 92-3)

A more important distinction between the two factions is that, whereas Islamic Jihad has generally been categorical in its commitment to *jihad*, Hamas has adopted a more cautious and pragmatic approach to the issue. (Abu-Amr 1993, 1995; Ahmad 1994; Jarbawi 1994; Budeiri 1995: 93; Hamad and Barghouthi 1997) One notable example of Hamas's pragmatic flexibility is the proposal of its political department, upon the inception of the PA in Gaza and Jericho in 1994, to agree to a cease-fire vis-à-vis Israel in exchange for Israel's complete withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. In announcing this proposal, Graham Usher (1995: 76) elaborates, Hamas was "making a pitch

⁵ For a theoretical discussion of interest articulation and aggregation, see Almond and Powell (1996: Chapters 5-6).

for mainstream Palestinian opinion, since the references to '1967 borders' and 'settlements' indicated its *de facto*, if not *de jure*, recognition of Israel, and so placed its politics in the centre of contemporary Palestinian nationalist discourse." Additionally, many Hamas leaders prefer a *limited* form of armed struggle. In the words of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, "I think the movement will carry out military operations only in response to blatant Israeli aggression against our people, and the scale of the attacks will be determined by the level of popular support for such a strategy." ([Andoni: 1994] Usher 1995: 77) Hamas leader Ismail Abu Shanab went so far as to state, in an interview conducted in November 1997, that, at least for the time being, "Israel's withdrawal from the territories they've occupied since 1967 is a good solution for both sides. . . . let us both live in peace in our separate states." (Gaess 1998: 118)

Another difference between Islamic Jihad and Hamas is that Islamic Jihad is more exclusively based in Gaza than is Hamas. (Jarbawi 1994: 130)⁶ Perhaps more importantly, Hamas's political legitimacy, in contrast to whatever support marshaled by Islamic Jihad, is to a meaningful extent a function of its provision of basic social and economic services – its provision of selective incentives, in the terminology of scholarly literature on collective action (see, e.g., Olson 1965) – as a mode of mobilizing the Palestinian public. (Roy 1993: 29; Rashad 1993: 12-14; Jarbawi 1994: 136) In large part as a result of some of the differences mentioned above, a final factor differentiating between Hamas and Islamic Jihad is that the former is a much more credible and viable political entity than the latter. This consideration may indeed contribute to a person's propensity to support and even trust Hamas more than Islamic Jihad.

Ultimately, however, Hamas and Islamic Jihad appear to share more commonalities than differences. **Notwithstanding the pragmatic and flexible orientation of Hamas to *jihad*, Hamas does indeed share with Islamic Jihad a substantial commitment to *jihad*.** For one, current Hamas restraint from intensive armed struggle may be viewed as only a temporary tactic which Hamas may well abandon if and when conditions more conducive to the success of all-out struggle present themselves. (Hamad and Barghouthi 1997: 13, 24, 39) Perhaps more fundamentally, Hamas's charter emphasizes the faction's commitment to *jihad*. Article 13 of the Hamas covenant states: "There is no solution to the Palestinian question except by Jihad. . . ." And Article 15 states: ". . . In the struggle against the Jewish occupation of Palestine, the banner of *Jihad* must be raised." Article 6, similarly, proclaims that Hamas "works toward raising the banner of Allah on every inch of Palestine." Additionally, implicit in this shared emphasis on *jihad* is a common belief in the Islamic nature of the land under Israeli sovereignty. (Abu-Amr 1993: 9; Ahmad 1994: 52; Litvak 1996) Article 11 of Hamas's charter, for example, states: "the land of Palestine is an Islamic *Waqf* upon all Muslim generations till the date of resurrection. It is not right to give it up nor any part of it."⁷ It clearly follows from this shared commitment to *jihad* against Israeli occupation of Muslim land, in turn, that Hamas also shares with Islamic Jihad, at least in principle, a categorical rejection of a peace process with Israel. In the words of Hamas leader Shaykh Hamad Bitawi, "if I cannot liberate the whole homeland I must not sign or give up any part of it." (Ahmad 1994: 108; see also Abu-Amr 1993: 9)⁸

⁶Some analysts have also pointed out that Islamic Jihad has closer ties to Iran than does Hamas, while others have cited evidence that suggests that Hamas may have received substantial aid from Iran. (See Rashad 1993: 13-14; Ahmad 1994: 101) In any event, one can question the importance of the role of differences in terms of the strength of ties to Iran on Palestinians' tendencies to support Islamic Jihad or Hamas relative to the role of other factors to do with ideology, political orientation, and demography.

⁷Hamas spokesman from Gaza Mahmud Zahhar goes so far as to suggest: "as for the land, we do not say that Palestine belongs only to the Palestinians. The land of Islam is where Muslims are. . . . If the United States of its own free will today said: 'we are an Islamic state,' their borders would become ours." (Zahhar 1995: 84)

⁸One reflection of Hamas's opposition to the interim agreements is the Hamas leadership's boycott of the January 1996 Palestinian Council elections. Many Hamas leaders, however, apparently including Shaykh Yasin, expressed a preference for Hamas participation in the elections, and many Hamas supporters voted, contrary to calls by Hamas not to do so. Seven percent of the respondents to the CPRS election-day exit poll reported supporting Hamas. It should be added that Hamas's official boycott of the elections may have been motivated not only by opposition to the Interim Agreement, but also by the well-founded concern of Hamas leaders that the electoral rules of the Palestinian Council elections reduced the likelihood of, and for that matter no doubt were in part designed to undermine, Hamas's electoral success. (Shikaki 1997: 12)

This brings us to another obvious commonality among Hamas and Islamic Jihad: **the two movements are opposed to Western secularism and promote the expansion of Islamic principles, practices, and institutions in Palestinian society.** (Abu-Amr 1993: 9; Shikaki 1998: 32) In the words of Hamas spokesman Mahmud Zahhar (1995: 85): "Everything today points to the fact that this Western way of life is on the verge of failure, and that there is no response to the alienation of people besides Islam." Indeed, the very first article of Hamas's charter proclaims: "The Islamic Resistance Movement: Islam is its system. From Islam it reaches for its ideology, fundamental precepts, and world view of life, the universe, and humanity; and it judges all its actions according to Islam and is inspired by Islam to correct its errors." Article 22 of the Hamas charter states: ". . . the imperialist powers in the capitalist West and communist East support the enemy with all their might."

Lastly, given these fundamental similarities between Hamas and Islamic Jihad, it should not be surprising that these factions have on occasion cooperated on vital matters. For example, Hamas and Islamic Jihad collaborated in the 1995 Beit-Lid and 1996 Dizingoff attacks, and backed one another *within* the Alliance of Palestinian Forces.⁹ (Hamad and Barghouthi 1997: 98-9) To these cases of cooperation, it should be added that Hamas and Islamic Jihad supporters often run candidates in civil societal organizations under the banner of a unified Islamic bloc. It has even been suggested that Hamas and Islamic Jihad may merge into one faction. Ziad Abu-Amr (1993: 19) writes: "Discussions have taken place between the two groups to explore the possibility of closer cooperation and even unity." On these grounds, the author believes it justified to combine Hamas and Islamic Jihad into one "Islamist" category.

Meanwhile, the researcher decided to code the "other Islamist factions" category of the Trust-Faction question as missing data rather than as "1." Recalling that the surveys' trust questions are open-ended, the "other Islamists" category is a residual category, and, as such, may include non-Palestinian Islamist factions, Islamists acceptant of the interim agreements and accommodation of Israel,¹⁰ and names of organizations that are primarily social, economic, and/or religious, rather than political. Ultimately, the original responses coded by the JMCC staff as "other Islamist factions" are irretrievable, and thus it is not possible to ascertain the nature and frequencies of particular responses coded as "other Islamist factions." Due to these considerations, by treating "other Islamist faction" responses as missing, the study avoids a potential source of systematic bias in the findings of the statistical analyses.

Another fundamental coding issue is whether to code the "do not trust any faction" responses as "0" or missing. Since coding the "do not trust any faction" responses as missing means eliminating from logistic regression analysis data on respondents who gave this response, and since a large proportion of respondents reported not trusting any faction, treating the "do not trust any faction" response as missing significantly reduces the sizes of the survey samples that are used to estimate the statistical models analyzed in this study. Reducing the sample size, in turn, decreases to some extent the confidence we can have that the effects of independent variables on trust in Islamists estimated by the logistic regression analyses actually exist in the population at large.

What is more, the choice between coding "do not trust any faction" as either "0" or missing influences the substantive meaning of the dependent variable. Coding the "do not trust any faction" response as missing entails an analysis only of that sector of the public which indeed trusts some faction. This coding scheme, in other words, allows us to address the question: Of those respondents *who trust some faction*, what factors account for the probability that respondents trust an Islamist faction most? Meanwhile, coding "do not trust any faction" as "0" entails an analysis of the factors that differentiate between trust for Islamists, on the one side, and *all other political orientations*,

⁹ The Alliance of Palestinian Forces was a loose alignment of ten Palestinian factions which coalesced in response to the 1993 Declaration of Principles.

¹⁰ Evidence that many of the Islamists other than Hamas and Islamic Jihad mentioned by respondents are accommodationist is provided by the survey data. Of those respondents to the May 1998 poll who indicated trusting an "other Islamist faction" most, 44.2% expressed satisfaction with the PA's handling of the peace process, and 38.3% expressed support for the "peace process." Of those respondents to the November 1997 survey who reported trusting an "other Islamist faction" most, 68.6% reported support for the "peace process," 77.4% reported a positive evaluation of the PA, and 80% reported a positive evaluation of Arafat. Of those respondents to the April 1997 poll who reported trusting an "other Islamist faction" most, 69.2% expressed a positive evaluation of the PA, and 52.9% expressed a positive evaluation of Arafat.

including political disillusionment, on the other side. It follows that we should be sensitive to the possibility that particular independent variables perform differently in analyses of the two types of coding schemes. For example, respondent evaluation of the performance of the PA and/or Arafat is likely to play a large role in distinguishing those who trust Islamists from those who trust other factions. This is especially the case since, when “do not trust any faction” is coded as missing, a large majority of respondents in the “0” category expressed trust in Fatah. In contrast, if the dependent variable category “0” includes the “do not trust any faction” responses as well as responses of other political factions, we should expect respondent evaluation of the performance of Arafat and/or the PA to play a lesser role in differentiating between cases of the two categories of the dependent variable (i.e., “1” = Islamist, “0” = non-Islamist). The reason for this is that many people responding “do not trust any faction” are likely to trust no faction because, like Islamists, they are dissatisfied with the performance of Arafat and/or the PA.¹¹ **Because the decision on how to code “do not trust any faction” influences the substantive meaning of the dependent variable, and because the two coding schemes are equally valid, this study constructed and analyzed each type of dependent variable. In one dependent variable, “do not trust any faction” is coded as “0,” and in the other, “do not trust any faction” is coded as missing. The coding schemes for these two variables are expressed below.**

<u>Dependent Variable Name</u>	<u>Coding Scheme of Variable</u>
1. ISLAMIST₁	1 = Islamic Jihad and Hamas 0 = Trust a non-Islamic faction most, with “do not trust any faction” coded as missing
2. ISLAMIST₂	1 = Islamic Jihad and Hamas 0 = Trust a non-Islamic faction most, with “do not trust any faction” coded as “0”

These two variables were constructed for each of the three surveys employed in this study, resulting in six sets of analyses of trust in Islamists.

C. The Independent Variables

On the issue of independent variables, or factors which may influence the likelihood that a person scores a “1” or a “0” on the dependent variables, it should be pointed out that the prevalence of some characteristic among supporters of Islamists does not in itself entail that the characteristic *distinguishes* those who trust Islamists most from those who do not. For example, Khalil Shikaki (1998: 30-2) reports that supporters of Islamist factions tend to have relatively low levels of education. But he also suggests that Fatah supporters tend to have low levels of education. Accordingly, though a large proportion of Islamist supporters may exhibit low levels of education, level of education should not be expected to play a large role in predicting whether or not a person trusts Islamists most. Another factor which may be prevalent among supporters of Islamist factions but may not distinguish between supporters of Islamists and supporters of non-Islamists is emphasized in Lamis Andoni’s (1997) profile of two suicide bombers. Andoni portrays both bombers as children of the Intifada, and proceeds to cite a study by Dr. Iyad Sarraj which argued that “defiant and traumatized children who came of age during the Intifada developed suicidal tendencies as a result of constant fear and humiliation.” (Andoni 1997: 42) But, clearly, a vast proportion of Palestinian society was witness to, if not victim of, Israeli beatings and shootings. Accordingly, whether or not a person was a child of the Intifada may not in itself contribute to differentiating those who do and do not trust Islamists most, even though many if not most supporters of Islamist factions were directly witness to and/or victims of traumatic experiences during the Intifada.

¹¹ See the author’s (1999) forthcoming analysis of JMCC data on trust and distrust in political figures and factions.

Other factors might very well be relevant in explaining trust in Islamists, but are difficult to measure in public opinion surveys. For example, Andoni's profile of suicide bombers points to the role of feelings of relative deprivation: "every child in Gaza knows the gulf that separates Palestinian lives from those of the Israelis in the nearby settlements." (Andoni 1997: 42) Though feelings of relative deprivation may indeed contribute to tendencies to support Islamist factions, reliable measurement of individuals' levels of feelings of relative deprivation is difficult (see, for example, Rule 1988), and in any event is not undertaken by the polls examined in this study. Another example of a factor which may help to account for trust in Islamists but is difficult to measure is feelings of anomie, or social dislocation and disintegration. Hisham Ahmad (1994: 24-5) suggests that anomic feelings among villagers who have migrated to cities contribute to a high tendency among these people to trust Hamas. JMCC surveys, however, collect data only on the resident status, i.e., village, city, camp, of the respondent at the time of the survey, and not on whether or not a city resident formerly resided in a village.

Turning then to the factors measured in the surveys that might differentiate those who trust Islamists from those who do not, we should expect that, all other things equal, people who are opposed to the peace process, supportive of military struggle against Israel, and supportive of the Islamicization of Palestinian politics, have a high probability of trusting Islamists most. Furthermore, we might expect to find that, particularly in the analysis of the dependent variable which codes "do not trust any faction" as missing, all other things equal, people who are pessimistic about the prospects of achieving an adequate final status settlement in the near future and people who are critical of the PA and/or Arafat have a higher proclivity toward Islamists.¹² Abu-Amr (1995: 12) suggests that the PLO's failure to deliver on nationalist goals may even have made a greater contribution to the rise in popularity of Hamas than does Hamas's shift from passive to violent resistance.¹³

Demographic and socio-economic attributes comprise another basic category of factors that may play a role in a person's tendency to trust Islamists most. In reviewing extant literature on this issue, it is important to keep in mind that attributes of the *leaders and members* of Islamist factions may differ from those of *supporters* of these factions, and that some writers emphasize the characteristics of members, others of supporters, and yet others are not clear in distinguishing among these two types of affiliation. With this caveat in mind, the first point to be made about the role of demographic attributes is that **previous research has not found demographic attributes to consistently account for levels of support for Islamists.** Shikaki (1998: 32) writes that Islamists "have no consistent demographic characteristic . . . surveys of Islamist public opinion reveal significant heterogeneity. Palestinian Islamists are not a special group with identifiable demographic characteristics." Some observers have, however, posited relationships between demographic factors, on the one side, and support for Islamists, on the other side. Shikaki (1998: 30-2) suggests that Islamist supporters tend to have relatively low levels of education, and to be male, and that support for Hamas is high among Palestinian university students. As concerns education, however, he also suggests that Fatah supporters tend to have relatively low levels of education. Accordingly, as mentioned above, while a large proportion of Islamist supporters may have relatively low levels of education, this factor may not *distinguish* Islamist supporters from Fatah supporters. Similarly, men seem to be the more predominant gender in Fatah as well as in Islamist factions, and thus gender might not be relevant in differentiating between supporters of these factions.¹⁴ Youth might be yet another characteristic that,

¹² The causal relationship between attitudes toward the PA and Arafat, on the one side, and support for Islamists, on the other, of course runs in the opposite direction as well. That is, not only are people drawn to Islamists in part because they are critical of Arafat and the PA, but also people are critical of Arafat and the PA because they are Islamist.

¹³ As disappointment with progress toward nationalist goals can lead to alienation and withdrawal from the political arena, as well as to support for Islamists, we might expect the role of skepticism about the prospects of peace to be greater in the analysis of ISLAMIST₁ than in the analysis of ISLAMIST₂.

¹⁴ Attitudes on the role of women in politics, however, might very well be related to attitudes toward Islamists. Shikaki (1998: 32) elaborates: "the Islamists have more support among those who oppose women's participation in politics and less support among feminists." Since the JMCC public opinion polls analyzed here do not collect data on preferences regarding the role of women in politics, the present study cannot estimate the effects of this issue on the probability of trusting Islamists most.

though prevalent in Hamas, does not differentiate Islamist from non-Islamist factions. Ahmad (1994: 24-8) points to other attributes exhibited by many Hamas leaders and members, again, to be distinguished from Hamas supporters – they come from the lower middle class, from small towns or villages, from Gaza, and from places “hit most heavily by the occupation,” which this author takes to mean largely from refugee camps. In contrast, Ahmad suggests, many Fatah leaders and members come from cities or large towns, and are generally more affluent than Hamas leaders and members. All told, despite, or perhaps precisely because of, the lack of strong evidence regarding the role of particular demographic and socio-economic variables in accounting for support in Islamists, it is appropriate to explore the effects, if any, of these factors in the present study.

The objective of the following analyses is to discern not only whether or not each of the potentially relevant factors discussed above actually influences the likelihood of trusting Islamists, but also the relative impact of these factors in accounting for trust in Islamists. A crucial question in this regard is the relative impact on trust in Islamists of Islamic sentiment, on the one side, and of militant nationalist sentiment, on the other side. Some observers concur in maintaining that militant nationalism plays a larger role than religion in drawing supporters to Islamists. For example, Budeiri (1995: 93) suggests:

It is clear that Hamas has a nationalist rather than an Islamic agenda: It is virtually impossible to come to grips with a substantive Islamic program Hamas is striving to implement. . . . It must be stressed . . . that the legitimacy the Islamists now enjoy is the result of nationalist activity, and not of a greater receptiveness among a more militant and desperate Palestinian generation to their religious message.

Graham Usher (1995: 75) concurs, suggesting that Hamas’s message to the “younger and more militant elements of Palestinian society . . . is enshrined less in the sage wisdom of figures like Yasin than in the exemplary military actions of Islamic Jihad and Hizbollah.”

II. Summary and Analysis of Models Accounting for Trust in Islamists

The author estimated models of the effects of the factors discussed in Part IC on the likelihood that people trust Islamists most with a statistical technique called logistic regression.¹⁵ Part II summarizes and analyzes the findings of six such models. It is divided into two sections. Section *A* summarizes and analyzes the estimated effects in *absolute* terms of the independent variables appearing in the six logistic regression models. Section *B* summarizes and analyzes the *relative size* of the effects of individual variables across the six models. As this part of the study focuses on the empirical findings of the study, the author does not employ the strategy of bolding the central ideas. Rather, the reader is encouraged to read this part of the study in its entirety.

A. The estimated effects of the independent variables in absolute terms

Table A summarizes the estimated effects of the individual independent variables appearing in the six logistic regression models. Cells with one or more asterisks ("*", "**", "***") refer to variables appearing in the corresponding model which achieve statistical significance. A cell referring to an independent variable which appears in the corresponding estimated model, yet does not achieve statistical significance at the 95% confidence level, lists the p-value of this variable in parentheses. Cells with a period (".") refer to variables for which data were not collected in the corresponding survey. Cells with an "X" refer to variables for which data were collected in the corresponding survey but which do not appear in the corresponding model because they do not consistently achieve or approximate statistical significance. Lastly, the signs ("+", "-") of the beta coefficients of the numeric variables are excluded because each numeric variable exerted an effect in the same direction in each model in which it appeared, and because the substantive meaning of the sign of a numeric beta coefficient depends on the coding scheme of the variable to which the beta coefficient corresponds. Meanwhile, the signs of the beta coefficients of categorical variables – i.e., region, residence-type, gender, legal preference, most important issue, and the April 1997 question on armed struggle – are included because they have a straightforward interpretation: a positive (negative) beta coefficient means that the respondents conforming to the first category listed in each pair of categories have a higher (lower) probability of trusting Islamists most than do respondents fitting the second category. Thus, for example, the "+" sign in the cell corresponding to the "Gaza versus West Bank" pairing of the May 1998 analysis of ISLAMIST₁ means that this model estimates that Gazans have a higher chance of trusting Islamists most than do West Bankers. To cite another example, the "-" sign corresponding to the "negotiations versus religion" pairing within the "most important issue" variable means that people who believe completing negotiations with Israel is the most important issue facing Palestinian society have a lower probability of trusting Islamists most than do people who view religion as the most important issue in Palestinian society.

¹⁵On logistic regression analysis, see, e.g., Aldrich and Nelson 1984, Demaris 1992, and Long 1997, and Part ID of the author's *Analysis of Palestinian Public Opinion on Politics: Popular Trust and Distrust in Palestinian Politicians and Factions* (JMCC, August 2000).

Table A: Summary of the estimated effects of individual independent variables appearing in the six logistic regression models

Independent Variable	Survey Date					
	May 1998		November 1997		April 1997	
	ISLAMIST ₁	ISLAMIST ₂	ISLAMIST ₁	ISLAMIST ₂	ISLAMIST ₁	ISLAMIST ₂
"Peace process"	***	***	X	X	***	***
Armed struggle	.	.	***	***	+*	+**
PA on demonstrations	.	.	.	.	*	**
Prospects of a peace agreement	**	**	***	**	.	.
Confidence in Netanyahu	**	**	.	.	.	.
US favoritism	.	.	*	*	.	.
Evaluation of Arafat	.	.	***	***	**	***
Evaluation of PA	*	X	X	X	*	X
Shari'a versus secular law	.	.	+***	+***	.	.
Role Islam plays	.	.	*	*	.	.
Most important issue negotiations versus religion	.	.	.	.	-**	-(p=.053)
economy versus religion	.	.	.	.	-**	-**
democracy versus religion	.	.	.	.	-**	-*
Level of education	**	*	X	X	X	*
Level of income	X	X	***	**	X	X
Gender: female versus male	X	X	X	X	*	X
Residence-type		X	X	X	X	X
city versus camp	+(p=.144)					
city versus village	+**					
camp versus village	+(p=.374)					
Region			X	X		
Gaza versus West Bank	+(p=.299)	+(p=.055)			+(p=.534)	+(p=.098)
Gaza versus East Jerusalem	+*	+*			***	+*
W. Bank versus East Jerusalem	+*	+*			***	+(p=.084)

ISLAMIST₁: 1 = Islamic Jihad and Hamas; 0 = Trust a non-Islamic faction most, with "do not trust any faction" coded as missing

ISLAMIST₂: 1 = Islamic Jihad and Hamas; 0 = Trust a non-Islamic faction most, with "do not trust any faction" coded as "0"

Having explained the logic of Table A, discussion now turns to an investigation of the effects of individual independent variables. Discussion of these effects is organized into three parts: (a) discussion of effects pertaining to attitudes on Palestinian relations with Israel, (b) discussion of effects primarily pertaining to attitudes on internal political issues, and (c) discussion of the effects of demographic variables.

1. Attitudes on Palestinian relations with Israel

Attitudes regarding issues to do with Palestinian-Israeli relations exert a robust effect on the probability that a person trusts Islamists most. In four of the six estimated models, opposition to the "peace process" increases the likelihood that a person trusts Islamists most. Each of these four effects, furthermore, achieves statistical significance at the 99.9% confidence level.¹⁶ Furthermore, the

¹⁶ Attitudes toward the "peace process" also achieve statistical significance in analyses of models with November 1997 survey data. In an analysis of ISLAMIST₁ with the November 1997 data of a model including all of the independent variables in the November 1997 ISLAMIST₁ analysis reported above and the variable on attitudes toward the "peace process," the "peace process" variable achieved statistical significance (p=.017) and exhibited an effect in the expected direction, viz., the more opposed a person to the "peace process," the higher the likelihood of the person trusting an Islamist faction most. In an analysis of ISLAMIST₂ with the November 1997 data that included all of the independent variables in the November 1997

variable measuring attitudes toward armed struggle proved to be significantly related to the probability of trusting Islamists most in each of the four analyses which tested for this effect. These findings confirm the conventional view that Islamists have a more militant orientation toward Israel than do most non-Islamists. Beyond this general finding, it should be emphasized that it appears that the important impact of views on the peace process on people's likelihood of trusting Islamists most may primarily result, not from categorical Islamist opposition to the peace process, *per se*, but rather from categorical Fatah support for the peace process. This is suggested not only by the very high level of support for the peace process within the Fatah constituency, but also by the striking finding that the most frequent response of Islamist supporters to the survey item tapping views on the peace process in the May 1998 poll is "somewhat support."

Table A1a: Views on the peace process by factional sympathies (May 1998)

<i>Do you support or oppose the current peace process between the Palestinians and Israel?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
strongly support	24.3% (96)	5.1% (2)	8.8% (15)
somewhat support	61.5% (243)	20.5% (8)	32.9% (56)
neither support nor oppose	7.6% (30)	17.9% (7)	17.1% (29)
somewhat oppose	4.3% (17)	20.5% (8)	19.4% (33)
strongly oppose	2.3% (9)	35.9% (14)	21.8% (37)
$X^2 = 164.7; p < .01$			

Though views on the peace process were found to exert an important impact on the probability of trusting Islamists most, preferences on some concrete issues to do with the interim agreements were not found to play an important role in identifying those people likely to trust Islamists most. Specifically, the May 1998 survey collected data on the extent to which respondents thought that "increasing security cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and Israel" and "enacting tougher measures against Hamas" were "important for moving the peace process forward." The estimated effect of views on the importance of "increased security cooperation" on the probability of trusting Islamists most failed to achieve or approach statistical significance in most of the preliminary analyses in which this factor was included. Perhaps even more impressive is that, in various preliminary models, attitude on the importance of "enacting tougher measures against Hamas" did not exert an effect on respondent likelihood of trusting Islamists most that achieved or approached statistical significance. These findings might suggest, particularly in light of the relevance of attitudes on the "peace process" in predicting trust for Islamists, that Islamists and many secularists actually hold convergent views on various *concrete* issues to do with the peace process, but disagree about the desirability of a peace process *in general* and *in principle*. Notably, a large proportion of Fatah supporters share with Islamists an opposition to making further concessions to Israel, at least during the interim period, but Fatah supporters diverge from Islamists in exhibiting a much higher tendency to categorically accept rather than reject the "peace process."

The cross-tabulations presented in Tables A1b-g provide empirical purchase on this proposition. Table A1b presents a cross-tabulation of respondents' views on the importance of increasing security cooperation between the PA and Israel for moving the peace process forward by

ISLAMIST₂ analysis reported above and the "peace process" variable, the "peace process" variable basically achieved statistical significance ($p=.054$) and exerted an effect in the expected direction. Thus, the November 1997 data as well as the May 1998 and April 1997 data confirm that opposition to the "peace process" increases the probability of trusting Islamists most.

respondents' factional sympathies. Table A1c reports a cross-tabulation of respondents' views on the importance of enacting tougher measures against Hamas for moving the peace process forward by respondents' factional sympathies. Table A1d presents a cross-tabulation of Fatah supporters' views on the importance of increasing security cooperation between the PA and Israel for moving the peace process forward by Fatah supporters' views on the peace process. Table A1e presents a cross-tabulation of Islamist supporters' views on the importance of increasing security cooperation between the PA and Israel for moving the peace process forward by Islamist supporters' views on the peace process. Table A1f presents a cross-tabulation of Fatah supporters' views on the importance of enacting tougher measures against Hamas for moving the peace process forward by Fatah supporters' views on the peace process. Table A1g presents a cross-tabulation of Islamist supporters' views on the importance of enacting tougher measures against Hamas for moving the peace process forward by Islamist supporters' views on the peace process.

Beginning with Tables A1b and A1c, we find that supporters of Fatah, the PFLP/DFLP, and Islamists, indeed exhibit more or less similar views on increasing security cooperation with Israel and enacting tougher measures against Hamas. More specifically, Tables A1b and A1c reveal that (a) the views of supporters of Islamists and the views of supporters of the PFLP/DFLP are more similar to one another than are the views of each of these two sets of supporters to those of Fatah supporters; and (b) though the percentage of Fatah supporters who hold that increasing security cooperation and enacting tougher measures against Hamas are important for moving the peace process forward, is larger than the percentage of Islamist supporters expressing these views, the difference in the percentages of the two sets of supporters is not particularly large. Table A1b shows that whereas 57.8% of Islamist supporters held increased security cooperation to be either very or somewhat important for moving the peace process forward and 42.2% of Islamist supporters held increased security cooperation to be either slightly important or not important at all for moving the peace process forward, (a) 54.1% of PFLP/DFLP supporters held increased security cooperation to be either very or somewhat important for moving the peace process forward, and 45.9% of PFLP/DFLP supporters held increased security cooperation to be either slightly important or not important at all for moving the peace process forward; and (b) 73.8% of Fatah supporters held increased security cooperation to be either very or somewhat important for moving the peace process forward, and 26.2% of Fatah supporters held increased security cooperation to be either slightly important or not important at all for moving the peace process forward. Table A1c shows that, whereas 11.1% of Islamist supporters held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either very or somewhat important for moving the peace process forward and 88.9% of Islamist supporters held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either slightly important or not important at all for moving the peace process forward, (a) 4.2% of PFLP/DFLP supporters held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either very or somewhat important for moving the peace process forward and 95.8% of PFLP/DFLP supporters held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either slightly important or not important at all for moving the peace process forward; and (b) 25.4% of Fatah supporters held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either very or somewhat important for moving the peace process forward and 74.6% of Fatah supporters held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either slightly important or not important at all for moving the peace process forward. Tables A1b and A1c thus demonstrate that the views of Islamist supporters on specific concessions to Israel are quite similar to those of PFLP/DFLP supporters, and are not dramatically different from those of Fatah supporters.¹⁷

¹⁷ As is revealed in these two tables, parenthetically, public opinion on the importance for moving the peace process forward of increasing security cooperation, on the one side, and of enacting tougher measures against Hamas, on the other side, is quite divergent, with the proportion of people considering increased security cooperation as important for the peace process much larger than the proportion of people considering the enactment of tougher measures against Hamas as important for the peace process. The reader may view the finding that a large proportion of supporters of the opposition faction view increased security cooperation as important for moving the peace process forward as surprising. On this note, suffice it to mention that the survey question solicits respondents' views on the "importance" of the concession for moving the peace process forward and not on the "desirability" of making the concession in order to move the peace process forward, such that the response on behalf of many supporters of opposition factions that increased security cooperation is important may best be viewed as respondents' empirical assessments of the actual situation rather than as a statement of respondents' preferences on the matter. The divergence of levels of support for security cooperation and for cracking down on Hamas merits further research.

Table A1b: Respondents' views on the importance of increasing security cooperation between the PA and Israel for moving the peace process forward by respondents' factional sympathies (May 1998)

<i>How important is increasing security cooperation for moving the peace process forward?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
very important	41.4% (153)	20.8% (5)	36.7% (47)
somewhat important	32.4% (120)	33.3% (8)	21.1% (27)
minimally important	18.4% (68)	29.2% (7)	21.9% (28)
not important at all	7.8% (29)	16.7% (4)	20.3% (26)

$X^2 = 22.4; p < .01$

Table A1c: Respondents' views on the importance of enacting tougher measures against Hamas for moving the peace process forward by respondents' factional sympathies (May 1998)

<i>How important is enacting tougher measures against Hamas for moving the peace process forward?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
very important	6.5% (23)	0.0% (0)	4.8% (6)
somewhat important	18.9% (67)	4.2% (1)	6.3% (8)
minimally important	36.3% (129)	50.0% (12)	34.9% (44)
not important at all	38.3% (136)	45.8% (11)	54.0% (68)

$X^2 = 20.3; p < .01$

Tables A1d-g provide data relevant to the assessment of the tendency of many people who are supportive of the peace process to be concomitantly opposed to making concrete concessions to Israel. Furthermore, these tables consider the views of Fatah supporters and of Islamist supporters separately in order to assess whether or not this tendency is larger within one factional constituency than within the other factional constituency. In analyzing these tables, importantly, we focus on those columns into which a meaningful number of respondents fall, for our confidence in the representativeness of the data of course largely depends on the size of the sample. This entails that for the two tables cross-tabulating the views of Fatah supporters, A1d and A1f, we focus on the results in the "strongly support peace process" and "somewhat support peace process" columns, and for the two tables cross-tabulating the views of Islamist supporters, Tables A1e and A1g we focus on the results in the "somewhat support peace process" column.

Tables A1d and A1e reveal that, of those supporters of Fatah and of Islamists who expressed support for the peace process, the large majority viewed increased security cooperation as important for moving the peace process forward. More specifically, of the sample of Fatah supporters who expressed moderate support for the peace process, 71.5% held increased security cooperation to be either very or somewhat important, and 28.5% held increased security cooperation to be either minimally important or not important at all. Of the sample of Fatah supporters who expressed strong support for the peace process, 79.8% held increased security cooperation to be either very or somewhat important, and 20.2% held increased security cooperation to be either minimally important or not important at all. Meanwhile, of the sample of Islamist supporters who expressed moderate

support for the peace process, 72.2% held increased security cooperation to be either very or somewhat important, and 27.8% held increased security cooperation to be either minimally important or not important at all. Thus, roughly three-quarters of each factional constituency that expressed some degree of support in the peace process viewed increased security cooperation as important, and roughly one-quarter of each factional constituency that expressed some degree of support in the peace process viewed increased security cooperation as minimally important or not important at all. This finding may be interpreted as running counter to the general expectation articulated above that a large proportion of people who support the “peace process” in general and in principle oppose concrete Palestinian concessions.

Table A1d: Fatah supporters’ views on the importance of increasing security cooperation between the PA and Israel for moving the peace process forward by Fatah supporters’ views on the peace process (May 1998)

<i>How important is increasing security cooperation for moving the peace process forward?</i>	strongly support peace process	somewhat support peace process	neutral toward peace process	somewhat oppose peace process	strongly oppose peace process
very important	47.9% (45)	38.6% (88)	34.5% (10)	50.0% (7)	50.0% (2)
somewhat important	31.9% (30)	32.9% (75)	34.5% (10)	28.6% (4)	25.0% (1)
minimally important	13.8% (13)	21.5% (49)	20.7% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
not important at all	6.4% (6)	7.0% (16)	10.3% (3)	21.4% (3)	25.0% (1)
$X^2 = 13.3; p = .34$					

Table A1e: Islamist supporters’ views on the importance of increasing security cooperation between the PA and Israel for moving the peace process forward by Islamist supporters’ views on the peace process (May 1998)

<i>How important is increasing security cooperation for moving the peace process forward?</i>	strongly support peace process	somewhat support peace process	neutral toward peace process	somewhat oppose peace process	strongly oppose peace process
very important	46.7% (7)	40.7% (22)	33.3% (7)	20.8% (5)	42.9% (6)
somewhat important	13.3% (2)	31.5% (17)	19.0% (4)	12.5% (3)	7.1% (1)
minimally important	20.0% (3)	13.0% (7)	28.6% (6)	37.5% (9)	21.4% (3)
not important at all	20.0% (3)	14.8% (8)	19.0% (4)	29.2% (7)	28.6% (4)
$X^2 = 15.2; p = .23$					

Yet, the relationship between views on Palestinian concessions, on the one side, and views on the “peace process,” on the other side, certainly depends on which concrete concessions are under consideration. With this in mind, we turn to cross-tabulations comparing the views of each of the two factional constituencies with respect to enacting tougher measures against Hamas, on the one side, and the peace process, on the other side. These cross-tabulations reveal that the large majority of both the Fatah supporters who expressed support for the peace process and the Islamist supporters who

expressed support for the peace process concomitantly expressed the view that enacting tougher measures against Hamas is *not* important for moving the peace process forward. More specifically, of the sample of Fatah supporters who expressed moderate support for the peace process, 24.1% held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either very or somewhat important, and 75.9% held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either minimally important or not important at all. Of the sample of Fatah supporters who expressed strong support for the peace process, 24.7% held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either very or somewhat important, and 75.2% held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either minimally important or not important at all. Meanwhile, of the sample of Islamist supporters who expressed moderate support for the peace process, 11.1% held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either very or somewhat important, and 88.8% held enacting tougher measures against Hamas to be either minimally important or not important at all. Thus, many people who support the peace process in general and in principle tend to oppose particular concrete elements of the peace process. Furthermore, this tendency is of more or less equal size among Fatah supporters and Islamist supporters. Returning to the main thread of the present discussion, these findings thus help to account for the finding in the May 1998 models of trust in Islamists that a person's views on security cooperation and cracking down on Hamas do not exert a significant impact on the person's tendency to trust Islamists most.

Table A1f: Fatah supporters' views on the importance of enacting tougher measures against Hamas for moving the peace process forward by Fatah supporters' views on the peace process (May 1998)

<i>How important is enacting tougher measures against Hamas for moving the peace process forward?</i>	strongly support peace process	somewhat support peace process	neutral toward peace process	somewhat oppose peace process	strongly oppose peace process
very important	11.2% (10)	5.0% (11)	7.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
somewhat important	13.5% (12)	19.1% (42)	25.9% (7)	35.7% (5)	25.0% (1)
minimally important	30.3% (27)	39.1% (86)	37.0% (10)	28.6% (4)	50.0% (2)
not important at all	44.9% (40)	36.8% (81)	29.6% (8)	35.7% (5)	25.0% (1)
$X^2 = 13.0; p = .37$					

Table A1g: Islamist supporters' views on the importance of enacting tougher measures against Hamas for moving the peace process forward by Islamist supporters' views on the peace process (May 1998)

<i>How important is enacting tougher measures against Hamas for moving the peace process forward?</i>	strongly support peace process	somewhat support peace process	neutral toward peace process	somewhat oppose peace process	strongly oppose peace process
very important	14.3% (2)	3.7% (2)	4.8% (1)	4.3% (1)	0.0% (0)
somewhat important	0.0% (0)	7.4% (4)	4.8% (1)	8.7% (2)	7.1% (1)
minimally important	14.3% (2)	40.7% (22)	42.9% (9)	30.4% (7)	28.6% (4)
not important at all	71.4% (10)	48.1% (26)	47.6% (10)	56.5% (13)	64.3% (9)
$X^2 = 9.2; p = .68$					

While views on increased security cooperation and increased repression of Hamas were found not to exert a meaningful impact on the probability of trusting Islamists most, views on another concrete issue to do with the peace process, namely, how the PA should respond to popular demonstrations, were found to exert a significant impact on the tendency to trust Islamists most. Analysis of the April 1997 survey data reveals that opposition to PA stopping demonstrations increases the likelihood of trust in Islamists, and support for PA curbing demonstrations decreases the probability of trusting Islamists. This effect achieves statistical significance in the April 1997 analyses of both the ISLAMIST₁ and ISLAMIST₂ dependent variables.

The difference in the role played by attitudes on PA response to demonstrations, on the one side, and by attitudes regarding further concessions on security cooperation and Hamas crack-downs, on the other side, might be explained by the following proposition: while many supporters of Fatah may support or at least view as their right the freedom to adopt a militant stand regarding *further* concessions to Israel, many of these people may be quite hesitant to directly oppose actions *actually taken* by the PA. As the interim agreements between Israel and the Palestinians explicitly commit the PA to curbing demonstrations against Israel,¹⁸ the argument continues, many respondents may view the PA as having adopted a specific policy on the issue of PA reaction to popular demonstrations, namely, to stop them. Conversely, supporters of Islamists are likely to feel less reluctant to criticize policies actually adopted by the PA. Furthermore, direct opposition to actual efforts of the PA to stop demonstrations may entail actual clashes with PA security personnel. Supporters of Fatah may thus view opposition to the PA's handling of Palestinian demonstrations as a red-line not to be crossed, even if they support a militant stand toward Israel and even if they are critical of the PA's decisions regarding other concrete issues to do with Israel. In other words, supporters of Fatah may be relatively more inclined than are supporters of Islamists to view their freedom to oppose the PA's general policy of conciliation toward Israel as stopping at the point of direct confrontation with the PA.

To gain some empirical purchase on these considerations, we compare, on the one side, the relationship between Fatah supporters' views on military attacks, suicide operations, and popular struggle, and Fatah supporters' views on how the PA should respond to popular demonstrations, and, on the other side, the relationship between Islamist supporters' views on military attacks, suicide operations, and popular struggle, and Islamist supporters' views on how the PA should respond to popular demonstrations. These cross-tabulations are presented in Tables A1h-A1m. Again, the basic proposition under consideration is that, whereas Fatah supporters, even if they oppose a conciliatory stand toward Israel, tend to be supportive of policies that the PA has already taken and to view opposition to the PA's handling of Palestinian demonstrations as a red-line not to be crossed, Islamist supporters have a larger tendency than Fatah supporters to oppose the PA's repression of popular demonstrations. Thus, this proposition receives support from the finding that, of the Fatah supporters and Islamist supporters who *support* military attacks, suicide operations, and popular demonstrations, (a) the proportion of Fatah supporters who prefer that the PA stop demonstrations is larger than the proportion of Islamist supporters who prefer that the PA stop demonstrations, (b) and the proportion of Islamist supporters who prefer that the PA support demonstrations is larger than the proportion of Fatah supporters who prefer that the PA support demonstrations.

Tables A1h-A1m provide support for the existence of the suspected difference in the tendencies of the militant portions of the two factional constituencies, yet suggest as well that the size of this difference is at best moderate. More specifically, Tables A1h and A1i reveal that (a) whereas 46.1% of Fatah supporters who support military attacks prefer that the PA support popular demonstrations, 61.1% of Islamist supporters who support military attacks prefer that the PA support popular demonstrations, and (b) whereas 13.5% of Fatah supporters who support military attacks prefer that the PA stop popular demonstrations, 3.2% of Islamist supporters who support military attacks prefer that the PA stop popular demonstrations. Tables A1j and A1k show that (a) whereas 47.0% of Fatah supporters who support suicide attacks prefer that the PA support popular demonstrations, 63.1% of Islamist supporters who support suicide attacks prefer that the PA support popular demonstrations, and (b) whereas 16.0% of Fatah supporters who support suicide attacks prefer that the PA stop popular demonstrations, 1.2% of Islamist supporters who support suicide attacks

¹⁸ See, notably, Chapter 4 (XXIII) and Annex I(II3d) of the *Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip*.

prefer that the PA stop popular demonstrations. Lastly, Tables A1l and A1m report that (a) whereas 40.3% of Fatah supporters who support demonstrations against Israel prefer that the PA support popular demonstrations, 63.1% of Islamist supporters who support demonstrations against Israel prefer that the PA support popular demonstrations, and (b) whereas 12.2% of Fatah supporters who support demonstrations against Israel prefer that the PA stop popular demonstrations, 5.4% of Islamist supporters who support demonstrations against Israel prefer that the PA stop popular demonstrations. These tables thus reveal that militant Fatah supporters have a higher tendency than militant Islamist supporters to express agreement with what in essence is the PA's position on popular demonstrations. At the same time, however, a large proportion of militant Fatah supporters, roughly around 50%, express the view, running counter to the PA policy, that the PA should support popular demonstrations. All told, militant Fatah supporters and militant Islamist supporters exhibit moderate but nonetheless significant differences in their views on the PA's handling of popular demonstrations.

Table A1h: Fatah supporters' views on what the PA should do about popular demonstrations by Fatah supporters' views on military attacks (April 1997)

<i>How should the PA respond to popular demonstrations?</i>	<i>What is your opinion on military attacks?</i>	
	Support	Oppose
PA should support them	46.1% (65)	17.5% (47)
PA should not interfere	40.4% (57)	41.3% (111)
PA should stop them	13.5% (19)	41.3% (111)
$X^2 = 50.3; p < .01$		

Table A1i: Islamist supporters' views on what the PA should do about popular demonstrations by Islamist supporters' views on military attacks (April 1997)

<i>How should the PA respond to popular demonstrations?</i>	<i>What is your opinion on military attacks?</i>	
	Support	Oppose
PA should support them	61.1% (58)	39.4% (13)
PA should not interfere	35.8% (34)	18.2% (6)
PA should stop them	3.2% (3)	42.4% (14)
$X^2 = 32.9; p < .01$		

Table A1j: Fatah supporters' views on what the PA should do about popular demonstrations by Fatah supporters' views on suicide attacks (April 1997)

<i>How should the PA respond to popular demonstrations?</i>	<i>What is your opinion on suicide attacks?</i>	
	Support	Oppose
PA should support them	47.0% (47)	20.5% (62)
PA should not interfere	37.0% (37)	42.2% (128)
PA should stop them	16.0% (16)	37.3% (113)
$X^2 = 30.7; p < .01$		

Table A1k: Islamist supporters' views on what the PA should do about popular demonstrations by Islamist supporters' views on suicide attacks (April 1997)

<i>How should the PA respond to popular demonstrations?</i>	<i>What is your opinion on suicide attacks?</i>	
	Support	Oppose
PA should support them	63.1% (53)	44.4% (20)
PA should not interfere	35.7% (30)	20.0% (9)
PA should stop them	1.2% (1)	35.6% (16)
$X^2 = 30.5; p < .01$		

Table A1l: Fatah supporters' views on what the PA should do about popular demonstrations by Fatah supporters' views on popular demonstrations against Israel (April 1997)

<i>How should the PA respond to popular demonstrations?</i>	<i>What is your opinion on popular demonstrations?</i>	
	Support	Oppose
PA should support them	40.3% (112)	6.3% (9)
PA should not interfere	47.5% (132)	26.4% (38)
PA should stop them	12.2% (34)	67.4% (97)
$X^2 = 141.7; p < .01$		

Table A1m: Islamist supporters' views on what the PA should do about popular demonstrations by Islamist supporters' views on popular demonstrations against Israel (April 1997)

<i>How should the PA respond to popular demonstrations?</i>	<i>What is your opinion on popular demonstrations?</i>	
	Support	Oppose
PA should support them	63.1% (70)	27.3% (6)
PA should not interfere	31.5% (35)	22.7% (5)
PA should stop them	5.4% (6)	50.0% (11)
$X^2 = 33.2; p < .01$		

Discussion now turns to consideration of the finding that views on suicide attacks do not exert a statistically significant impact on the probability of trusting Islamists most. Particularly in light of the significant role played by attitudes toward the "peace process," armed struggle, and PA response to Palestinian demonstrations, in distinguishing those who trust Islamists most from those who do not, it is noteworthy and perhaps surprising that attitudes on the type of tactic most exclusively associated with Islamists – suicide bombings – were found not to contribute to the probability of trust in Islamists. In various preliminary analyses not reported in the preceding sections, attitudes on suicide operations were generally found not to exert a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of trusting Islamists most. The author speculates that this finding might have resulted from respondent fears about expressing support for suicide bombings to survey interviewers. Such fears may have resulted in some supporters of suicide bombings responding "no answer/don't know," and in other supporters of suicide bombings in fact responding that they oppose such actions. Indeed, the survey question on suicide operations received a higher proportion of "no answer/don't know" responses than did the other survey questions to do with relations with Israel.¹⁹ Thus, the failure of the estimated effects of views on suicide bombings to achieve statistical significance might have largely resulted from some respondents concealing their true preferences for suicide operations.

Alternatively, the "armed struggle" variable may have performed better than the "suicide bombing" variable in accounting for the tendency to trust Islamists simply because supporters of Islamist factions sympathize more with the general strategy of "armed struggle" than with "suicide operations" *per se*. Relatedly, some Islamist supporters may view suicide operations as one specific form of the more general strategy of armed struggle, or principle of *jihad*. The Palestinian public in general, moreover, might tend to view the issue and option of confrontation with Israel more in the general terms of armed struggle or for that matter violent resistance than in the terms of suicide bombings. By the same token, supporters of Islamist factions, and opponents of Islamist factions as well, might identify Islamist factions more with "armed struggle" than with "suicide bombings" *per se*.

While adequate understanding of the empirical association between preferences on armed struggle and preferences on suicide operations must await further research, at present it deserves emphasis that the preferences of distinct factional constituencies on these two types of Palestinian strategic options appear to exhibit a particular tendency; namely, supporters of Islamists and supporters of secular factions are somewhat more polarized on the issue of armed struggle than on the issue of suicide operations. More specifically, as is demonstrated in Tables A1n and A1o, (a) the gap between Fatah supporters and Islamist supporters who support and oppose military attacks (37.4%) is somewhat larger than the gap between Fatah supporters and Islamist supporters who support and

¹⁹ It must be pointed out, however, that survey questions on "armed struggle" received nearly as many "no answer/don't know" responses as did the "suicide bombings" question.

oppose suicide operations (28.5%), and (b) the gap between Islamist supporters who support and oppose military attacks and Leftist supporters who support and oppose military attacks (14.7%) is somewhat larger than the gap between Islamist supporters who support and oppose suicide operations and Leftist supporters who support and oppose suicide operations (9.2%). Thus, Fatah supporters and Islamist supporters, and Islamist supporters and PFLP/DFLP supporters, are somewhat more divergent from one another with respect to their views on military struggle than with respect to their views on suicide operations.

Table A1n: Views on suicide bombing operations against Israeli civilians in Israel by factional sympathies (November 1997)

<i>What is your feeling on suicide bombing operations against Israeli civilians in Israel?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
strongly support	8.0% (35)	37.5% (12)	32.8% (67)
somewhat support	10.6% (46)	18.8% (6)	14.2% (29)
somewhat oppose	30.7% (134)	21.9% (7)	24.0% (49)
strongly oppose	50.7% (221)	21.9% (7)	28.9% (59)
$X^2 = 83.1; p < .01$			

Table A1o: Views on armed struggle by factional sympathies (November 1997)

<i>Do you support or oppose the resumption of armed struggle against Israel?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
strongly support	19.5% (87)	56.3% (18)	49.8% (105)
somewhat support	16.1% (72)	15.6% (5)	23.2% (49)
somewhat oppose	30.0% (134)	18.8% (6)	17.5% (37)
strongly oppose	34.3% (153)	9.4% (3)	9.5% (20)
$X^2 = 101.7; p < .01$			

While the *non-significance* of the effects of attitudes on suicide bombings may be surprising because we might expect support for suicide operations to be widespread among Islamist supporters, the *significance* of attitudes on the prospects of peace in the near future, Netanyahu's commitment to signed agreements, and the extent of American objectivity, is surprising because we might expect skepticism on these issues to be pervasive *throughout* the entire Palestinian political spectrum. As concerns the effects of attitudes on the prospects of peace, the statistical significance of this finding in the analyses of the dependent variables which code "do not trust any faction" responses as "0" (i.e., ISLAMIST₂) is particularly striking. The reason for this is that we would expect those who trust no faction – those, put differently, who are disillusioned with the course of Palestinian politics in the interim period – to be disillusioned with Palestinian politics in large part precisely because they are pessimistic about the prospects of achieving peace and also justice through the Oslo process initiated and upheld by the Fatah leadership.

Even more surprising is that analyses of the May 1998 data revealed that attitudes on Netanyahu's commitment to the peace process had a significant impact on the probability of trusting Islamists. As mentioned in reference to the effects of views on the prospects of peace, this type of finding in the analysis of ISLAMIST₂ (which codes "do not trust any faction" responses as "0") is

particularly surprising. What is more, this finding is particularly surprising in light of the finding in various preliminary analyses that attitudes on the commitment of the *Israeli public* to the peace process did not exert a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of trusting Islamists most. Specifically, we might expect the vast majority of Palestinians to concur that Netanyahu is not committed to previously signed agreements, but, in contrast, for many Palestinians to disagree about whether the Israeli left of center is significantly more disposed toward making meaningful concessions to the Palestinians than is the Israeli right. More specifically, we might expect those who view the Israeli left as well as the Israeli right as insufficiently accommodationist to be relatively more disposed to Islamists, while those who believe that the Israeli left is better for Palestinian interests than the Israeli right to be relatively more disposed to secular nationalist parties, at least to Fatah, and, one might add, FIDA and the PPP.²⁰

Similarly, one would expect the view that America favors Israel – not least of all under the Clinton administration – to be sufficiently widespread amongst all stripes of the Palestinian political spectrum to play only a minor if any role in distinguishing Islamists from non-Islamists. Yet, the robustness of the findings in the analyses of the November 1997 survey data suggest that those who are doubtful of American neutrality tend to support Islamists most. One possible partial explanation of this finding is that, to the extent that the Israeli government adopts right-wing positions toward the Palestinians – positions of course advanced by the government in power in Israel when the November 1997 poll was conducted – the position of the United States moves relatively closer to that of the Palestinians. Furthermore, assuming that America's position is generally closer to the Palestinian position than is the Israeli position, the conjunction of Israeli regional hegemony and US international hegemony entails that, as biased as the US may be toward Israel, US intervention nonetheless represents one of the few cards the Palestinian Authority can play.²¹ Palestinian desperation in a global system with only one superpower may thus also help account for a certain softening of views toward the United States among pro-peace Palestinian secularists.

On this note, it should be added that, in some of the preliminary logistic regression analyses, attitudes toward the European Union were found to play a significant role in distinguishing those who trust Islamists most from those who do not. This finding fits with what may be a compelling proposition. Specifically, given a perceived American bias favoring Israel, we would expect nearly all Palestinian factions, certainly all opposition factions, to be critical of America's involvement in Palestinian-Israeli relations. Meanwhile, we might expect differences of views regarding the European Union to fall along the Islamist-secularist divide. On the one side, the critical attitude of many European countries to Israeli occupation of territories conquered in 1967 – critical, at least, relative to the position of the United States – might suffice to gain the European Union sympathy among a substantial proportion of the Palestinian secular nationalists, including Leftists. On the other side, Europe's secular culture may suffice to deter Islamists from thinking favorably about the European Union despite the European Union's favorable position on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict relative to that of the United States. While this postulation did not receive robust support across various preliminary analyses of the November 1997 data, it may nonetheless represent a useful subject for future research.

On the effects of preferences regarding Palestinian-Israeli relations on the probability of trusting Islamists most, lastly, these preferences should ultimately be interpreted as differentiating, not between those who trust Islamists and those who trust any of the secular factions combined, but rather, between those who trust Islamists and those who trust Fatah. In other words, the estimated causes accounting for the probability of trusting Islamists most should be interpreted as influencing the

²⁰ The findings on the impact of skepticism about the prospects of peace and about Netanyahu's commitment to signed agreements might be seen as suggesting a policy prescription for Israel. This policy prescription is simply that – to the extent that Israel defines its security vis-a-vis Palestinians in terms of marginalizing Islamist factions – Israeli security may be enhanced by pursuing policies which minimize Palestinian skepticism about the prospects of peace. Given the need to further develop models of trust in Islamists in future research, however, it may be wisest to refrain from basing any firm policy prescriptions on the findings of this study.

²¹ The author is reminded of a comment made by a Palestinian politician published in an Israeli newspaper *lamenting* the possibility that Clinton's embroilment in the Monica Lewinsky scandal would reduce US involvement in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process.

probability of trusting Islamists *rather than Fatah*, and, in the case of the analyses of ISLAMIST₂, of trusting Islamists *rather than Fatah or no faction*. Conversely, this study's estimates of the effects of preferences on Palestinian-Israeli relations should not be viewed as differentiating between trust in Islamists and trust in Leftist factions. This is so because the majority of respondents coded "0" for the dependent variables expressed trusting Fatah most.²² Of the supporters of the PFLP, DFLP, FIDA, and PPP, the attitudes of the PFLP and DFLP supporters on Palestinian policy toward Israel are particularly proximate to those of Islamist supporters, and thus the relatively small number of respondents trusting these parties most contributes to the robustness and magnitude of the impact of attitudes toward Israel in distinguishing supporters of Islamists from all others.²³ Tables A1p-A1u, as well as Tables A1a, A1n and A1o, indeed confirm that supporters of the PFLP and DFLP have very similar views regarding Israel to those of supporters of Islamists. These tables might even hint that militant views are slightly more prevalent within the PFLP/DFLP constituency than within the Islamist constituency.

Table A1p: Views on reaching a satisfactory final status agreement by factional sympathies (November 1997)

<i>How confident are you that the Palestinians and Israelis will reach a satisfactory agreement on final status issues?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
not confident at all	8.9% (42)	47.1% (16)	29.5% (64)
minimally confident	23.7% (112)	38.2% (13)	40.6% (88)
somewhat confident	56.1% (265)	5.9% (2)	28.1% (61)
very confident	11.2% (53)	8.8% (3)	1.8% (4)
$X^2 = 125.6; p < .01$			

Table A1q: Views on reaching a final status agreement by May 4 1999 by factional sympathies (May 1998)

<i>How confident are you that the Palestinians and Israelis will reach a final status agreement by May 4 1999?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
very confident	5.2% (20)	0.0% (0)	3.0% (5)
somewhat confident	45.2% (173)	12.8% (5)	17.7% (29)
minimally confident	31.1% (119)	23.1% (9)	28.0% (46)
not confident at all	18.5% (71)	64.1% (25)	51.2% (84)
$X^2 = 89.7%; p < .01$			

²² This is of course particularly the case for the analyses of ISLAMIST₁, which coded "do not trust any faction" as missing.

²³ Respondents indicating that they trust some leftist opposition faction most were coded as "0" for two main reasons. First, as only around 3% of those polled in the three surveys investigated in this study indicated trusting the PFLP or DFLP most, there are simply too few cases to be confident in the statistical results of an analysis which treats the DFLP and PFLP as comprising a distinct category of the dependent variable. Second, coding these responses as "0" contributes to the dependent variable's differentiation between Hamas and Islamic Jihad supporters, on the one side, and *all* other factions, on the other.

Table A1r: Views on the prospects of peace in the next five years by factional sympathies (May 1998)

<i>What are the prospects of peace between the Palestinians and Israelis in the next five years?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
very possible	6.5% (24)	8.8% (3)	1.9% (3)
somewhat possible	43.8% (163)	17.6% (6)	20.1% (32)
slightly possible	41.1% (153)	23.5% (8)	40.3% (64)
not possible at all	8.6% (32)	50.0% (17)	37.7% (60)
$X^2 = 95.2; p < .01$			

Table A1s: Views on the trustworthiness of Netanyahu by factional sympathies (May 1998)

<i>To what extent do you think that Netanyahu can be trusted to fulfill signed agreements?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
high confidence	1.3% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.6% (1)
moderate confidence	7.4% (29)	5.1% (2)	1.2% (2)
little confidence	32.9% (129)	5.1% (2)	14.2% (24)
no confidence at all	58.4% (229)	89.7% (35)	84.0% (142)
$X^2 = 46.6; p < .01$			

Table A1t: Views on US intervention in Palestinian-Israeli affairs by factional sympathies (November 1997)

<i>What is your level of satisfaction with US intervention in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
very satisfied	5.7% (26)	0.0% (0)	5.6% (12)
somewhat satisfied	25.2% (116)	8.8% (3)	13.0% (28)
minimally satisfied	30.7% (141)	29.4% (10)	33.0% (71)
not satisfied at all	38.5% (177)	61.8% (21)	48.4% (104)
$X^2 = 21.6; p < .01$			

Table A1u: Views on the likelihood that the US will protect Palestinian interests by factional sympathies (November 1997)

<i>To what extent do you have confidence that America will care for Palestinian interests in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
much confidence	5.1% (24)	0.0% (0)	2.3% (5)
moderate confidence	29.1% (138)	8.6% (3)	12.4% (27)
little confidence	27.2% (129)	14.3% (5)	25.8% (56)
no confidence at all	38.6% (183)	77.1% (27)	59.4% (129)
$\chi^2 = 48.8; p < .01$			

Given the convergence of opinion regarding Israel of Leftist supporters, on the one side, and Islamist supporters, on the other side, the robustness of the effects of preferences regarding Israel on the probability of trusting Islamists most is in large part dependent upon the general unpopularity of Leftist factions. Indeed, the robustness of the effects of attitudes on the peace process, armed struggle, PA response to demonstrations, the prospects of peace and views on Israeli leaders, and American favoritism, on the probability of trusting Islamists most is itself a symbol of the withering of the Palestinian secular opposition in the Oslo era. Simply put, the findings of this study suggest that Islamists comprise the only opposition to the Oslo process that is currently viable.

2. Attitudes on internal political issues

This study found that, in each of the four surveys that solicited data on respondent evaluations of the performance of Arafat, this variable proved to be statistically significantly related to the probability of trusting Islamists most. Similarly, variables measuring respondents' views on the PA achieved statistical significance in two of the three analyses of the dependent variable called ISLAMIST₁ (which treats "do not trust any faction" as missing). As expected, the higher a person's level of criticism of Arafat and/or the PA, the higher the probability that the person trusts Islamists most.

On the effects of evaluations of Arafat and/or the PA on trust in Islamists, at least three comments deserve mention. First, the robust effects of these two variables confirm, or at least are compatible with, the suggestion made above that a key reason for the relationship between respondent preferences regarding various political issues and trust in Islamists is the absence of a viable secular opposition to Arafat, the PA, and Fatah. In other words, negative views on Arafat and the PA are prevalent among supporters of the secular opposition as well as among supporters of Islamist factions. This is corroborated in Tables A2a-A2c, which cross-tabulate evaluations of the PA and Arafat, on the one side, by factional sympathies, on the other side. In fact, these tables demonstrate that criticism of Arafat and the PA has been more prevalent among supporters of Leftists than among supporters of Islamists. More specifically, Table A2a shows that, in response to the November 1997 poll, 69.7% of PFLP/DFLP supporters expressed a negative evaluation of the PA, and 42.0% of Islamist supporters expressed a negative evaluation of the PA. Table A2b reports that, in response to the May 1998 poll, 84.6% of PFLP/DFLP supporters expressed a negative evaluation of the PA, and 47.4% of Islamist supporters expressed a negative evaluation of the PA. Table A2c, lastly, shows that, 59.4% of PFLP/DFLP supporters expressed a negative evaluation of Arafat, and 42.6% of Islamist supporters expressed a negative evaluation of Arafat. Thus, the positive association between criticism of the PA and Arafat, on the one side, and trust in *Islamists*, on the other side, is dependent upon the absence of a viable, i.e., popular, secular opposition.

Table A2a: Evaluations of the general performance of the PA by factional sympathies (November 1997)

<i>How do you evaluate the Palestinian Authority's performance?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
very good	16.9% (81)	6.1% (2)	7.5% (16)
somewhat good	72.3% (347)	24.2% (8)	50.5% (108)
somewhat bad	8.8% (42)	33.3% (11)	29.4% (63)
very bad	2.1% (10)	36.4% (12)	12.6% (27)
$X^2 = 146.2; p < .01$			

Table A2b: Evaluations of the general performance of the PA by factional sympathies (May 1998)

<i>How do you evaluate the Palestinian Authority's performance?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
very good	14.9% (58)	0.0% (0)	7.6% (13)
somewhat good	71.9% (279)	15.4% (6)	45.0% (77)
somewhat bad	11.6% (45)	41.0% (16)	28.1% (48)
very bad	1.5% (6)	43.6% (17)	19.3% (33)
$X^2 = 160.3 p < .01$			

Table A2c: Evaluations of Arafat's job performance by factional sympathies (November 1997)

<i>Do you support or oppose the method that Arafat administers his work as the PNA's president?</i>	Fatah supporters	PFLP/DFLP supporters	Islamist supporters
strongly support	56.0% (266)	15.6% (5)	24.0% (49)
somewhat support	35.6% (169)	25.0% (8)	33.3% (68)
somewhat oppose	6.9% (33)	21.9% (7)	29.4% (60)
strongly oppose	1.5% (7)	37.5% (12)	13.2% (27)
$X^2 = 173.0; p < .01$			

The second comment on the effects of evaluations of Arafat and/or the PA on the probability of trusting Islamists is that evaluations of Arafat play a more consistent role than do evaluations of the PA in accounting for the probability that respondents trust Islamists most. One main reason for this might be that the majority of Palestinians tend to associate Arafat more closely than the PA with the course of Palestinian politics – with the course of policy outcomes pertaining to the most important issues in Palestinian society. This tendency is suggested by both the strong tradition of personalistic rule in Palestinian nationalist politics (see, e.g., Brynen 1995a, 1995b), and by Arafat's actual

absolutist control over the PA. Furthermore, the positive relationship between criticism of the PA and the likelihood of trusting Islamists most achieved statistical significance only in analyses of the ISLAMIST₁ dependent variable, which, again, codes "do not trust any faction" as missing. This suggests that the majority of Palestinians not trusting any faction are more critical of the PA than of Arafat.²⁴

The third comment pertaining to the role of evaluations of the PA is that, in various preliminary models estimated by the author but not reported in this study, evaluation of the PLC was generally found not to exert a robust impact on the likelihood of trusting Islamists most. This finding may have resulted in part from the likelihood that the effects of views on the PLC in the logistic regression were picked up by the estimated effects of views on the PA. In substantive terms, while evaluations of the PA exhibited robust effects, evaluations of the PLC may have not exhibited robust effects because the PLC plays a minor role in the authoritative decisions regarding the major issues in Palestinian society.

Discussion now turns to the estimated effects of views regarding political Islam on the probability of trusting Islamists most. As concerns views on the most important issue facing Palestinian society, respondents who reported that religion is the most important issue exhibited a higher tendency of trusting Islamists most than did respondents who reported completing negotiations with Israel, improving the Palestinian economy, or democratization, to be the most important issue facing Palestinian society. These findings achieved statistical significance in the analyses conducted with April 1997 data of both the ISLAMIST₁ and ISLAMIST₂ dependent variables. Section B of this part of the study will have more to say on the role of the effects of the "most important issue" variable. At present, suffice it to make two comments. First, an analysis was conducted with a recode of the "most important issue" variable that enabled examination of whether or not those reporting "completing negotiations" as the most important issue had a significantly different likelihood of trusting Islamists than did those responding improving the economy, democratization, or security/order. This analysis found that respondents reporting "complete negotiations" as most important did not have a significantly different likelihood of trusting Islamists most than did those reporting the other issues as most important. Second, of the two analyses including the "most important issue" question, the analysis of ISLAMIST₁ found those who responded "democracy" had a lower likelihood of trusting Islamists most than did those who reported "improving the economy." In contrast, in the analysis of ISLAMIST₂, those holding that economic improvement is the most important issue had a lower likelihood of trusting Islamists than those holding that democracy is the most important issue. This difference results from more respondents who indicated not trusting any faction holding economic improvement, rather than democratization, to be the most important issue.²⁵

Turning to findings regarding variables directly soliciting data on attitudes concerning political Islam, the two logistic regression models estimated with data from the November 1997 survey – the only survey of the three analyzed in this study to directly solicit data on opinions about political Islam – support the quite self-evident notion that those who support political Islam have a higher tendency of trusting Islamist factions than do those who do not. In Section B, the *relative* impact of Islamic sentiment on the probability of trusting Islamists most will be considered. At present, at least two comments deserve mention. First, the finding of a positive relationship between support for the institution of the *Shari'a* in a Palestinian state and trust in Islamists conforms to common expectations. It should be added, however, that a large majority of those polled, i.e., 76.0%,

24 This tendency is supported by a comparison of the cross-tabulation of responses to the Trust Faction question and evaluations of the PA, on the one side, with the cross-tabulation of responses to the Trust Faction question and evaluations of Arafat, on the other side. Specifically, in the April 1997 poll, 22.5% of those responding "do not trust any faction" rated the PA's performance as "bad" or "very bad," and 7.8% of those responding "do not trust any faction" rated Arafat's performance as "bad." In the November 1997 poll, 42.1% of those respondents indicating "do not trust any faction" evaluated the PA's performance as "bad" or "very bad," and 39.8% of those respondents reporting "do not trust any faction" indicated "strong opposition" or "moderate opposition" to Arafat's performance. It should be added that, in both the April 1997 and November 1997 polls, the PA Evaluation and Arafat Evaluation questions were worded and scaled differently, somewhat undermining our ability to adequately compare responses to these two questions.

25 Of those respondents reporting "do not trust any faction," 41.2% indicated economic improvement as the most important issue and 16.3% indicated democratization as the most important issue.

expressed a preference for *Shari'a* law. This entails that many supporters of *Shari'a* did not indicate trusting Islamists most. To be exact, 71.7% of those preferring the *Shari'a* over secular law responded trusting a non-Islamist faction or not trusting any faction. For preferences over the *Shari'a* and secular law to have achieved statistical significance, then, essentially all of those respondents expressing a preference for secular law must have indicated a non-Islamist response to the Trust Faction survey question. In fact, only about 6% of respondents preferring secular law reported trusting Islamists most.

The second comment regarding the effects of political Islam is that the finding on the “role that Islam plays” variable – that those who believe Islam *plays* a large role in Palestinian society have a larger chance of trusting Islamists most than those who do not – defies straightforward interpretation. Contrary to this finding, one might suspect that it is precisely Islamists who believe that current Palestinian society is not sufficiently Islamic, and that it is precisely non-Islamists who believe that Islam already plays a large role in Palestinian society. One might expect, accordingly, that a variable tapping views on how much of a role Islam *should* play would help account for the probability of trusting Islamists most. In fact, just such a variable was found in a few preliminary analyses *not* to exert a statistically significant impact on trust in Islamists. One possible explanation of the estimated effects of the “role Islam plays” variable is that the judgment of many Islamists that Islam plays a major role in Palestinian society resulted from wishful thinking rather than objective assessment. But such a widespread case of cognitive dissonance is unlikely. Alternatively, Islamists may tend to view Palestinian society as Islamic because their own lives and thus the lives of many around them are disproportionately Islamic. Suffice it to say for now that, given the widespread esteem for Islam in Palestinian society, variables requiring respondents to *prioritize* political Islam relative to other values and issues, such as the questions on the most important issue and on the relative desirability of *Shari'a* and secular law, may provide more valid measures of a respondent’s affinity toward political Islam, and thus may represent more meaningful variables in the explanation of factional support, than do variables measuring the respondent’s affinity toward political Islam in absolute and non-comparative terms.

3. The role of demographic factors

Five types of demographic factors were found to exert statistically significant effects on the probability that a person trusts an Islamic faction most – education, income, gender, region of residence, i.e., Gaza, West Bank, or East Jerusalem, and residence-type, i.e., city, camp, or village. On the one side, most of the estimated effects of these factors did not prove to be robust across the six logistic regression analyses presented in this study. Level of education exerts statistically significant effects in three of the six analyses, level of income and the distinction between Gaza and the West Bank achieve or approach statistical significance in two of the six analyses, and gender and residence-type achieve statistical significance in one of the six analyses. These findings accordingly lend some credence to Shikaki’s claim, cited above, that demographic factors play a minor role in distinguishing supporters of Islamist factions from supporters of other factions.

On the other side, however, a few general tendencies regarding the relationship between demographic factors and trust in Islamists are suggested by the analyses. Perhaps the most robust demographic finding is that both Gazans and West Bankers exhibit a higher tendency than East Jerusalemites to trust Islamists. One possible explanation for this finding is that Jerusalem residents might tend to be less supportive of political Islam than are residents of the West Bank and particularly Gaza. This hypothesis is refuted by cross-tabulations of political Islamic sentiment by region of residence, which are reported in Tables A3a-c. These tables reveal that there is next to no difference in the tendencies of East Jerusalem residents, on the one side, and West Bank residents, on the other side, to hold religion as the most important issue facing Palestinian society, to prefer that Islam should play a major part in Palestinian society and politics, and to prefer that the *Shari'a* serve as the legal basis of a Palestinian state.

Table A3a: Views on the most important issue in Palestinian society by region of residence (April 1997)

Most important issue facing Palestinian society	West Bank	Gaza	East Jerusalem
Completing negotiations	24.7% (147)	21.8% (97)	28.2% (33)
improving economy	40.2% (239)	45.4% (202)	30.8% (36)
Advancing democracy	12.8% (76)	10.8% (48)	15.4% (18)
Maintaining order	12.3% (73)	9.4% (42)	13.7% (16)
People returning to Islam	10.1% (60)	12.6% (56)	12.0% (14)
$X^2 = 12.8; p = .12$			

Table A3b: Views on the role that Islam should play in Palestinian society and politics by region of residence (November 1997)

Role that Islam should play in Palestinian society and politics	West Bank	Gaza	East Jerusalem
Major role	65.7% (429)	73.9% (311)	69.9% (51)
Moderate role	23.4% (153)	16.6% (70)	16.4% (12)
Small role	7.0% (46)	7.8% (33)	11.0% (8)
No role at all	3.8% (25)	1.7% (7)	2.7% (2)
$X^2 = 14.3; p = .03$			

Table A3c: Preferences on the legal basis of a Palestinian state by region of residence (November 1997)

Preferred source of law for a Palestinian state	West Bank	Gaza	East Jerusalem
Shari'a	74.9% (487)	86.5% (353)	78.1% (57)
Secular law	25.1% (163)	13.5% (55)	21.9% (16)
$X^2 = 20.6; p < .01$			

Another factor possibly accounting in part for the finding that the tendency to support Islamists is lower among Jerusalemites than among West Bankers and Gazans is that Jerusalemites have not been beneficiaries of the extensive education, health care, and welfare, services provided by Hamas through the years. Yet another possible explanation of this finding is that the majority of Jerusalem residents might be more fearful of revealing preferences for Islamists than are residents of the West Bank and Gaza, because they are more directly vulnerable than West Bankers and Gazans to Israeli punishment. It should be added, lastly, that, as East Jerusalemites comprise a minor portion of the samples of the three surveys analyzed, caution should be brought to bear on the conclusiveness of the finding that East Jerusalemites have a lower tendency than West Bankers and Gazans to trust Islamists most.

With respect to the Gaza-West Bank distinction, two of the six analyses found Gazans to have a statistically significant higher probability of trusting Islamists most than do West Bankers. Another analysis estimated the same effect, but in this analysis the effect did not approach statistical significance. We should thus be very cautious in maintaining that residency in Gaza entails a higher probability of trusting Islamists than does residency in the West Bank. The non-robust effect of the Gaza-West Bank distinction, however, does not mean that we do not find more supporters of Islamist factions in Gaza than in the West Bank. It may be the case, rather, that a set of one or more factors significantly and positively related to trust in Islamists is more prevalent among people within Gaza than among people within the West Bank. In other words, it may be the case that, though residence in Gaza does not *in itself* increase the likelihood of trusting Islamists, a disproportionately larger number of Gazans than West Bankers exhibit one or more attributes which themselves encourage trust in Islamists. For example, Gazans may tend to be more religiously conservative than West Bankers.²⁶

By the same logic, moreover, the prevalence in any given region of factors that *both* encourage *and* reduce trust in Islamists may help to account for the lack of robust findings regarding the effects of regional affiliation across the six analyses. For example, though Islamic conservatism may be more prevalent in Gaza than in the West Bank, support for the peace process and opposition to armed attacks – conditions clearly reducing the likelihood of trust in Islamists – may be higher in Gaza than in the West Bank.²⁷ While the amount of Gazan support for the "peace process" is not consistently higher than the amount of West Bank support for the "peace process" across the three surveys examined in this study, the point remains that the presence of *countervailing* conditions within one or more of the regions may account for the inconsistency of the evidence found in this study for the effects of region of residence on trust in Islamists.

This same general logic may help to account for this study's finding that residence-type plays a minimal role in accounting for trust in Islamists. As can be discerned from Table A, the estimate in the analysis with May 1998 data of ISLAMIST₁ that city residents have a higher likelihood of trusting Islamists than do village residents, represents the only statistically significant impact regarding residence-type across the six analyses. We can at least in part explain the general absence of statistically significant differences between city, camp, and village residents, with reference to countervailing tendencies in these distinct residence-types in terms of factors found in this study to play an important role in accounting for trust in Islamists. As concerns the distinction between city and camp residence, for example, the April 1997 survey revealed that twice as many city residents reported religion as the most important issue (12.6%) as did refugee camp residents (6.3%), and more camp residents expressed support for the "peace process" (81.7%) than did city residents (74.2%). Yet, at the same time, more camp residents expressed support for armed attacks (46.2%) than did city residents (43.9%), and more camp residents expressed support for the PA supporting popular demonstrations (38.9%) than did city residents (32.3%).

The analyses provide moderate evidence for a class bias in the probability of trust in Islamists. In the two November 1997 analyses, people who believe their income to fall below the Palestinian average were found to be more likely than people reporting higher incomes to trust Islamists most. Furthermore, in three of the six analyses, level of education was found to be negatively related to trust in Islamists. That is, the higher a person's level of education, the less likely the person to trust Islamists most. Estimates of the role of level of education did not control for the potentially confounding effects of the occupation variable, which includes a "student" category. Since university students may exhibit a disproportionately large amount of support for armed struggle (see Shikaki 1998: 35), controlling for the effects of occupation in future research may enhance the statistical

²⁶The tendency for Gazans to be more religiously conservative than West Bankers is supported by the data analyzed in this study. Of the respondents to the April 1997 poll, 10.1% of West Bank respondents reported religion as the most important issue, and 12.6% of Gazans reported religion as the most important issue. Of the respondents to the November 1997 survey, 74.9% of West Bank respondents indicated a preference for the *Shari'a*, and 86.5% of Gazans polled reported a preference for the *Shari'a*.

²⁷ The April 1997 poll indeed found (a) that whereas 71.3% of West Bank respondents expressed support for the "peace process," 82.7% of Gazan respondents expressed support for the "peace process," and (b) that whereas 50.1% of West Bank respondents reported supporting armed attacks, 39.9% of Gazan respondents reported supporting armed attacks. At the same time, more Gazan respondents indicated below-average levels of income (89.7%) than did West Bank respondents (76.0%).

significance of the effect of education on trust in Islamists. Furthermore, the impact of level of education in differentiating between trust in particular factions may become more pronounced in studies that distinguish support for Fatah from support for Leftists. The reason for this is that supporters of Leftist factions are generally more educated than supporters of Fatah. (Shikaki 1998: 31)

One reason that level of education might be associated with the propensity to trust Islamists most is that level of education may influence the propensity to prefer political Islam, which, in turn, of course influences the propensity to trust Islamists most. In other words, lower levels of education may facilitate positive views on political Islam, and in this indirect fashion lower levels of education may increase the propensity of trusting Islamists most. To empirically assess this hypothesis, we turn to the results of cross-tabulations of views on political Islam by level of education, which are presented in Tables A3d-f. These tables indeed reveal that people with relatively high levels of education have a lower tendency than people with relatively low levels of education to hold religion as the most important issue facing Palestinian society, to prefer that Islam should play a major role in Palestinian society and politics, and to prefer the *Shari'a* over secular law as the legal basis of a Palestinian state.

Table A3d: Views on the most important issue in Palestinian society by level of education (April 1997)

Most important issue facing Palestinian society	Primary-level	Secondary-level	Vocational training	Some college	College +
Completing negotiations	23.9% (38)	25.7% (54)	25.6% (102)	21.9% (53)	20.2% (24)
improving economy	44.0% (70)	41.4% (87)	37.9% (151)	42.6% (103)	43.7% (52)
Advancing democracy	3.1% (5)	7.1% (15)	13.6% (54)	17.8% (43)	20.2% (24)
Maintaining order	17.0% (27)	12.9% (27)	12.8% (51)	5.8% (14)	7.6% (9)
People returning to Islam	11.9% (19)	12.9% (27)	10.1% (40)	12.0% (29)	8.4% (10)
$X^2 = 46.5; p < .01$					

Table A3e: Views on the role that Islam should play in Palestinian society and politics by level of education (November 1997)

Role that Islam should play in Palestinian society and politics	Primary-level	Secondary-level	Vocational training	Some college	College +
Major role	73.0% (130)	68.8% (148)	71.7% (264)	67.2% (158)	56.3% (72)
Moderate role	20.8% (37)	25.1% (54)	18.5% (68)	20.9% (49)	18.8% (24)
Small role	6.2% (11)	4.2% (9)	7.3% (27)	6.4% (15)	18.8% (24)
No role at all	0.0% (0)	1.9% (4)	2.4% (9)	5.5% (13)	6.3% (8)
$X^2 = 48.2; p < .01$					

Table A3c: Preferences on the legal basis of a Palestinian state by level of education (November 1997)

Preferred source of law for a Palestinian state	Primary-level	Secondary-level	Vocational training	Some college	College +
Shari'a	88.0% (161)	79.8% (166)	81.1% (292)	75.1% (175)	64.5% (80)
Secular law	12.0% (22)	20.2% (42)	18.9% (68)	24.9% (58)	35.5% (44)
$X^2 = 27.6; p < .01$					

All told, the findings of this study on the role of class in accounting for trust in Islamists provide modest support not only for the claim that supporters of Islamist factions tend to come from low socio-economic sectors, but also for the claim that supporters of Islamist factions exhibit generally lower levels of socio-economic standing than do supporters of secular factions and many who do not trust any faction.²⁸

Lastly, one of the six logistic regression analyses estimated a statistically significant relationship that women are more likely than men to trust Islamists most. This seems to run counter both to the claim of Shikaki, cited above, that Hamas is supported primarily by men, and to the claim of this author that, to the extent that Fatah is also predominately supported by men, gender should not help distinguish between trust for Islamists, on the one side, and trust for secularists, on the other. Suffice it to say in this regard that, given the significance of gender in only one of the six analyses, this study should not be viewed as providing support for the proposition that, all other things equal, women are more likely than men to support Islamists.

B. The impact of the independent variables in relative terms

Table B reports, for each of the six models, the rank-order of the relative size of the effects of each of the independent variables in the model.²⁹ For example, the column corresponding to the May 1998 analysis of the ISLAMIST₁ dependent variable shows that, of all the independent variables in this analysis, attitudes on the "peace process," with a score of "1," exert the largest impact on the probability of trusting Islamists most, followed, in descending order, by a shift in residency between Gaza and East Jerusalem ("2"), a shift between strong confidence and strong skepticism regarding Netanyahu's commitment to signed agreements ("3"), a shift between residency in the West Bank and East Jerusalem ("4"), a shift between very negative and very positive evaluation of the PA ("5"), a shift between strong confidence and strong skepticism regarding the prospects of peace ("6"), a shift between elementary-level and university education ("7"), a shift between residence in a city and residence in a village ("8"), a shift between residence in a city and residence in a camp ("9"), a shift between residence in a camp and residence in a village ("10"), and a shift between residence in Gaza and residence in the West Bank ("11"). Furthermore, as in Table A, cells with a period (".") refer to variables for which data were not collected in the corresponding survey. Cells with an "X" refer to

²⁸ It should be added that the performance of the variables measuring levels of income and education in accounting for trust in Islamists might be enhanced in future research by attending to the possibility that level of income and education are curvilinearly, rather than linearly, related to the probability of trusting Islamists most. That is, for example, it may be that the impact of level of education on trust in Islamists is strongest among the very lowest levels of education, and that the impact of level of education on trust in Islamists decreases at higher levels of education. Parenthetically, the same consideration may also be applicable to the role of age, which was not found in various preliminary analysis of this study to exert a robust impact on trust in Islamists.

²⁹ The size of the effects of independent variables are reflected in the difference in the predicted probabilities of trusting Islamists most associated with shifts between the minimum and maximum values of numeric variables and shifts between pairs of categories of categorical variables. (See Part ID of the author's *Analysis of Palestinian Public Opinion on Politics: Popular Trust and Distrust in Palestinian Politicians and Factions* (JMCC, August 2000).

variables for which data were collected in the corresponding survey but which do not appear in the corresponding model because they did not consistently achieve or approximate statistical significance.

Table B: Ranking of the relative magnitudes of the effects of independent variables

Independent Variable	Survey Date					
	Dependent Variable					
	May 1998 ISLAMIST ₁	May 1998 ISLAMIST ₂	November 1997 ISLAMIST ₁	November 1997 ISLAMIST ₂	April 1997 ISLAMIST ₁	April 1997 ISLAMIST ₂
"Peace process"	1	3	X	X	1	1
Armed struggle	.	.	3	1	11	10
PA on demonstrations	.	.	.	.	9	7
Prospects of a peace agreement	6	4	5	4	.	.
Confidence in Netanyahu	3	2	.	.	.	.
US favoritism	.	.	6	6	.	.
Evaluation of Arafat	.	.	1	3	7	3
Evaluation of PA	5	X	X	X	2	X
Shari'a versus secular law	.	.	2	2	.	.
Role Islam plays	.	.	7	7	.	.
Most important issue	.	.	.	.	.	.
negotiations versus religion					6	6
economy versus religion					8	4
democracy versus religion					3	5
Level of education	7	6	X	X	X	8
Level of income	X	X	4	5	X	X
Gender: female versus male	X	X	X	X	10	X
Residence-type		X	X	X	X	X
city versus camp	9					
city versus village	8					
camp versus village	10					
Region			X	X		
Gaza versus West Bank	11	7			12	11
Gaza versus East Jerusalem	2	1			4	2
West Bank versus East Jerusalem	4	5			5	9

ISLAMIST₁: 1 = Islamic Jihad and Hamas; 0 = Trust a non-Islamic faction most, with "do not trust any faction" coded as missing

ISLAMIST₂: 1 = Islamic Jihad and Hamas; 0 = Trust a non-Islamic faction most, with "do not trust any faction" coded as "0"

By rank-ordering the relative impact on trust in Islamists of the independent variables in each model, this table enables investigation of the relative importance of factors to do with Israel, internal Palestinian politics, and demography, in accounting for trust in Islamists. Perhaps most notably, this table provides evidence against the claims of some observers cited in Part IC that support for Hamas/Islamists is based *much more* on militant attitudes regarding Israel than on orientations toward political Islam. Certainly, variables measuring attitudes on issues to do with Israel comprise one of the most influential categories of factors, if not the most influential category of factors, accounting for trust in Islamists. In three of the four analyses which include the variable tapping attitudes toward the "peace process," this variable accounts for more variation in the probability of trusting Islamists most than does any other variable. The variable tapping attitudes on armed struggle accounts for more variation in the probability of trusting Islamists most than does any other variable in one of the four models in which this variable is included, and it is the third most influential variable in another of the four models. Similarly, level of confidence in Netanyahu exerted the second largest impact in one of the two models in which it is included, and the third largest impact in the other of the two models in which it is included.

Yet, at the same time, variables tapping attitudes on political Islam also proved to comprise one of the categories of factors that exerted a relatively large amount of influence on the probability that respondents express trust in Islamists. Notably, preferences regarding the type of legal system for a Palestinian state, i.e., *Shari'a* or secular law, proved to be the second most influential variable in accounting for trust in Islamists in the two analyses for which data on these preferences were available. The reader is reminded, moreover, of the finding reported above that only about 6% of those preferring secular law reported trusting Islamists most. And in the two analyses for which data were available on views of the most important issue facing Palestinian society, differences between the "religion" response, on the one side, and the "completing negotiations," "economic improvement," and "democratization" responses, on the other side, generally exerted a larger impact on the probability of trusting Islamists than at least half of the variables in the two analyses.

Ultimately, these analyses might not definitively demonstrate that, of the set of factors pertaining to Israel and the set of factors pertaining to political Islam, one set of factors exerts a larger impact than does the other on trust in Islamists. In one of the two November 1997 analyses, preferences regarding the *Shari'a* and secular law exert a larger impact on trust in Islamists than do preferences regarding armed struggle. But in the other November 1997 analysis, preferences regarding armed struggle exert a larger impact on trust in Islamists than preferences concerning the *Shari'a* and secular law. Similarly, in the two analyses of April 1997 data, the impact on trust in Islamists of shifts between an emphasis on religion, on the one side, and completing negotiations, the economy, and democratization, on the other, is larger than the impact on trust in Islamists of preferences regarding armed struggle. At the same time, preferences regarding the "peace process" have a greater impact on trust in Islamists than do attitudes toward both armed struggle and the most important issue facing Palestinians. Thus, though it is beyond the scope of these analyses to indicate conclusively whether attitudes regarding Israel or those regarding political Islam play a greater role in accounting for trust in Islamists, these analyses do provide strong evidence that, contrary to claims that sentiments regarding political Islam play a small role in accounting for Islamist support, such sentiments do indeed play an important role in this regard.

Evaluations of Arafat and the PA also play a large role in accounting for trust in Islamists. Table B indicates that evaluation of Arafat exerts a larger impact on the probability of trusting Islamists most than does attitude on armed struggle in three of the four analyses containing these two variables. Furthermore, evaluation of the PA exerts a larger impact on the probability of trusting Islamists most than does attitude on armed struggle in the one analysis in which both of these variables appear. Conversely, in the two analyses which included both the variable on evaluation of Arafat and the variable on attitude toward the "peace process," preference regarding the "peace process" exhibits a larger impact than does evaluation of Arafat on the probability of trusting Islamists most. Additionally, in the two analyses that contain both the variable on attitude toward the "peace process" and the variable on evaluation of the PA, attitude on the "peace process" exerts a larger impact on trust in Islamists than does evaluation of the PA. For these reasons, this study might be viewed as providing evidence that preferences on Palestinian policy regarding Israel play a larger role in accounting for trust in Islamists than do attitudes on the performance of Arafat and the PA.

Certainly, evaluations of Arafat and the PA, on the one side, and preferences on policy regarding Israel, on the other side, are strongly and reciprocally interrelated. Specifically, discontent with the conciliatory policy of Arafat and the PA toward Israel increases discontent with Arafat and the PA. Reciprocally, support for a conciliatory policy toward Israel is itself likely to partially result in some cases from pre-existing if not also long-standing support for Arafat and Fatah. In light of the strong and reciprocal relationship between views on Arafat and the PA, on the one side, and views on the peace process, on the other side, we should be cautious not to overemphasize the *relative* impact of each of these factors on trust in Islamists, and not to overemphasize the importance of comparison of the relative size of the effects of the two sets of factors in the first place.

At the same time, however, it is not appropriate to view evaluations of Arafat and the PA simply or even primarily as an expression of discontent with a conciliatory policy vis-à-vis Israel. For one, multiple regression analysis teases out the independent effects of the individual independent variables in the model, such that much of the effect on trust in Islamists of discontent with Arafat and the PA which derives from their conciliatory stand toward Israel is likely to have been picked up by the peace process and armed struggle variables. Furthermore, discontent with Arafat and the PA is no

doubt in part a function of other factors, most notably, corruption, mismanagement, human rights violations, dictatorial practices, and economic ills. It might be added that, particularly in societies steeped in a tradition of personalistic rule, evaluations of the leader may be based in part on affective sentiment as well as instrumental assessment of the proximity of one's own policy preferences to those of the leader. For these reasons, evaluations of Arafat and the PA should not be viewed solely as a referendum on the unfolding of the interim agreements.

It deserves reiteration, furthermore, that the large role played by evaluations of Arafat and the PA in accounting for trust in Islamists is associated with the withering of the secular opposition in the wake of the Oslo agreements. The quite obvious reason for this is that we should expect discontent with incumbents to exert a large impact on the probability of trusting a *single* other political faction only in cases in which only one viable alternative to the incumbent presents itself. Indeed, as was shown above in Part IIA, supporters of Leftist factions exhibit levels of discontent with Arafat and the PA similar to and in fact greater than those of Islamist supporters. Leftist factions, however, simply do not receive enough trust-most "votes" to dissolve the strong association between criticism of the PA/Arafat and trust in *Islamists*.

Turning lastly to the size of the impact of regional affiliation on the probability of trusting Islamists most, the primary point to be made is that the difference between residence in the West Bank and particularly Gaza, on the one side, and residence in East Jerusalem, on the other side, appears to exert a substantial impact on the probability of trusting Islamists most. In contrast, the distinction between residence in Gaza and residence in the West Bank in fact exerts a smaller impact on trust in Islamists than do most other variables in the respective analyses. It should be reiterated, furthermore, that the relatively minor effects of the distinction between residence in Gaza and residence in the West Bank does not in itself mean that we will not find disproportionately more supporters of Islamists in one region than in the other. It means, rather, that residency in Gaza or the West Bank in itself is not a primary *cause* of such a disproportionate distribution of Islamists. Simply, other conditions directly contributing to trust in Islamists might be more prevalent in one region than in the other region. Furthermore, the prevalence in any single region of conditions that both encourage and reduce support for Islamists may serve to minimize the extent to which this region exhibits a relatively higher or lower level of support for Islamists than does another region. To explain and predict differences in the proportions of support garnered by Islamist factions in Gaza and in the West Bank, then, it is necessary to examine the distribution across these two regions of attitudes, beliefs, and demographic factors, which themselves are found to exert a robust impact on the probability of trusting an Islamist faction most.

Conclusion

As this study accounted for popular trust in Islamists with a research design that employed three different representative public opinion polls, two different coding schemes of the dependent variable, and a widely-respected method of model estimation, i.e., logistic regression, we can have a fair degree of confidence in the validity of the study's findings. At the same time, this study did not attend to some considerations that may enhance our understanding of trust in Islamists. Accordingly, this paper concludes by pointing out some suggestions for future research that may contribute to our understanding of trust in and support for Palestinian factions.

As concerns the independent variables, perhaps the most obvious point is that any given survey intended to be used to explain trust in Islamists, and trust in other Palestinian factions, for that matter, should aim to collect data on *all* of the factors thought to be relevant in this regard. Judging by the findings of this study, surveys intended to explain factional support must include factors on preferences regarding Israel, attitudes on political Islam, and evaluations of the PA and Arafat, or whomever follows Arafat. On the topic of including all relevant variables, additionally, it may be desirable to collect data tapping feelings of relative deprivation and/or anomie. One might view the JMCC question on "optimism about the future in general" to tap the attribute of anomie, but responses to this question were not found to exert a statistically significant impact on trust for Islamists in preliminary models analyzed by this author, and, regardless, it is doubtful that this question adequately captures either of the *sui generis* attributes of relative deprivation and anomie. It might also be worthwhile to solicit data capturing levels of trauma experienced either during the Intifada, or at the hands of Israelis more generally.

With respect to the collection of data on preferences regarding Israel, it might be worthwhile to devise questions that discriminate between different forms of armed struggle. Though the limited performance of the question on suicide bombings in this study points to the possibility that the reliability of data on highly sensitive preferences may be suspect, explicitly differentiating between support for violence against settlers and/or military personnel, on the one side, and support for violence against civilians within the Green Line, on the other side, may be useful for differentiating between supporters of Islamists, on the one side, and supporters of secular opposition factions and elements of Fatah, on the other side.

Regarding preferences pertaining to political Islam, this study has suggested that survey questions demanding that the respondent prioritize political Islam in relation to other values may be more adept in tapping respondents' effective commitment to political Islam than are general questions that solicit respondents' attitudes toward political Islam *in vacuo*. In this regard, both the question soliciting preferences over *Shari'a* and secular law and the question soliciting data on the most important issue facing Palestinian society are effective. Survey research on trust in Islamists, on this note, may benefit from asking respondents to *rank* the relative importance of the various issues consistently included in close-ended "most important issue" questions. The reason for this is simply that rank-ordering of fundamental issues provides a measure, if only a crude one, of the *extent* to which religion (as well as other individual issues) is or is not a crucial issue to the respondent. For that matter, it may be useful for "most important issue" questions to include a follow-up question asking the respondent to select from a group of actors – i.e., PA, Israel, America, Palestinian secular opposition, and Islamist opposition – the actor or actors (s)he holds most responsible for failures regarding the issue(s) (s)he indicated as most important. The reason that this follow-up question is relevant is simply that Palestinians' sentiments toward particular factions may in part depend on who they blame for the most important problem(s) in Palestinian society.

With respect to demographic factors, suffice it to say that attention to the possibility of curvilinear relationships and interactive effects may clarify and indeed make more pronounced the effects of such variables as age, level of education, and income. Thus, for example, though this study did not find level of income to consistently exert a statistically significant impact on trust in Islamists, analysis sensitive to the possibility that lower levels of income exert a stronger impact than higher levels of income may reveal more robust findings regarding this variable.

Finally, one limitation of the dependent variables analyzed in the present study is that they were dichotomous, or binary, and that, moreover, the majority of "0" responses referred to Fatah supporters. These dependent variables were constructed by converting responses to an open-ended

survey question asking “which faction do you trust the most?” into one of two responses, i.e., trust Islamists most and do not trust Islamists most. While soliciting open-ended data on respondents’ most preferred faction has various benefits, such data may not be ideal for modeling the factors that account for trust in particular factions. For one, given the withering of the secular opposition in the Oslo era, the open-ended trust-most survey question lends itself to only two categories sufficiently large to subject to statistical analyses – Islamists and non-Islamists, with the latter category comprised primarily of people trusting Fatah most. In analyses of the probability of trusting Islamists most with such a dependent variable, we thus can estimate the factors that differentiate Islamist supporters from Fatah supporters, but cannot estimate the factors that differentiate between support for Islamists and support for Leftist factions.

In contrast, soliciting *ordinal*-level sentiments on *each* faction enables analysis of the extent to which the types of factors emphasized in this study account for trust in Islamists, Fatah, and Leftist factions. Additionally, collection of ordinal-level data on attitudes toward particular factions enables the specification and estimation of models of trust in or support for particular factions that attend to the possibility of both indirect and reciprocal relationships, among the independent variables, on the one side, and factional trust or support, on the other side.

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