

JMCC Public Opinion Poll No. 11

On Palestinian Elections

December 1995

In cooperation with Jerusalem Center for Women

- [Introduction](#)
 - [Methodology](#)
 - [Sample distribution](#)
 - [Results](#)
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Introduction

- **Support for the Peace Process and Palestinian Election:** There was, in general, a positive attitude towards the peace process, the elections, and the influence of the individual within society. Those who strongly felt that they had a civic responsibility to take part in the elections were 72.7% and those who stated that they intended to vote were 78.1%.
- **Qualifications of Candidates:** There was a large number of people who felt that the most important criteria for a candidate was their personal qualifications. 45.0% of those participating in the questionnaire stated that personal qualification were a priority in comparison to 3.0% who supported family loyalty, 19.9% who supported political affiliation and 17.5% who said that religious affiliation was the most important criteria in terms of choosing a candidate.
- **Equal participation of women in public life:** Palestinians, in general, supported a quota for women 60.1% more than they supported a quota for Christians 48.2%. Out of the 60.1% who did support a quota for women, 71.6% were men. There was also a great deal of support, again mostly from men, in terms of voting for a qualified woman candidate and supporting equal opportunities for women in the public sphere. A very high number of those questioned believed that they had an individual responsibility towards society in all respects.

Overall, there was more support by men of women's qualifications and participation in public life than by women themselves. Women were perhaps reluctant or afraid of talking about any pressure that they were subjected to during registration. For example, only 7.0% of women stated that the reason why they did not register was because a male member of the family did not allow it.

- **Personal status laws:** There was a large percentage of those participating in the survey who strongly disagreed to incorporate personal status laws into the Palestinian constitution because of their strong belief that the Shari'a laws must remain the alternative. Out of 29.5% who disagreed to incorporate these laws into the constitution, 81.7% believe that Shari'a laws are sufficient to govern matters of divorce, marriage and inheritance.
- **Effectiveness of Women's Organizations:** Most women who were questioned were not satisfied with Palestinian women's organization. A high percentage of women expressed a lack of opinion concerning the effectiveness of women's organizations which may be interpreted as a very low public awareness among these women, a low rate of trust of women's organizations and perhaps a lack of self confidence or trust in women themselves. Overall, women judged women more harshly than men judged women.
- **Attitude of Men and Women:** Overall, men had a more positive attitude than women to most of the questions that were asked. This may be a result of lack of sufficient access to public life, less experience in organization. This may also be a result of a difference between men and women's attitudes (i.e. ideology) and their actual behavior (practice).

Women sounded more pessimistic than men in the questionnaire perhaps because they were more truthful or sincere in answering the questions and in general, women do not have such a large gap between attitude and practice. Their responses perhaps reflect more the reality of the situation rather than the ideal situation.

Methodology

A random sample of 1,250 Palestinians, over the age of 18 years, were interviewed throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip on 8 and 9 December 1995. The interviews were conducted in randomly selected homes, and the subjects inside each home were also selected randomly according to Kish tables. The interviews were conducted in 63 sampling points chosen randomly according to population.

In the West Bank, 855 people were surveyed from the following areas: **Bethlehem:** Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, Al-Ibeidieh, and Za'atara; **Hebron:** Hebron, Beit Ummar, Halhoul, Sa'ir, Shyoukh; **Jerusalem:** Jerusalem, al-Izaria, Hizma, Shu'fat, Anata. **Jenin,** Jenin, Jenin RC, 'Aqba, 'Araba, Maythaloun, Sanur. **Nablus Area:** Nablus, Askar RC, Beita, Deir Sharaf, Sarra. **Ramallah area:** Ramallah, Al-Bireh, Deir Dibwan, Shouqba, Sinjil. **Tulkarem and Qalqilia area:** Tulkarem, Qalqilia, Beit Lied, Bidia, Jamain, Salfit. **Jericho area:** Jericho.

In the Gaza Strip, 395 people were surveyed from: Gaza city, Deir al-Balah, Deir al-Balah RC, Nusseirat RC, Rafah, Jabalya, Jabalya a-Nazala, Jabalya RC, Khan Younis, Khan Youns RC, Nusseriat RC, Rafah, Shati RC, Buriy RC, Maghazi RC, and 'Abasan.

The major of error is 3%, with a confidence level of 95%.

Sample Distribution

- 68.4% of the respondents were from the West Bank (including East Jerusalem)
 - 31.6% from the Gaza Strip
 - 43.1% said they live in villages
 - 15.3% in refugee camps
 - 41.6% in towns/cities
 - 47.9% were male
 - 52.1% were female
 - 62.9% were married
 - 30.6% were single
 - 3.6% were widowed
 - 1.4% were divorced
 - 1.5% No answer
 - The average of age of the respondents was 33 years.
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Results

Q1. In general, what is the extent of your optimism towards the Palestinian future. Would you say you are very optimistic, somewhat optimistic, optimistic, or very pessimistic?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Very optimistic	45.0%	44.7%	45.8%
Somewhat optimistic	36.2%	36.3%	35.2%
Pessimistic	12.2%	12.4%	11.6%
Very pessimistic	4.4%	4.0%	5.3%
No opinion	2.2%	2.6%	2.1%

Q2. To what extent can you say you are for or against the Taba (Oslo 2) agreement between the Palestinian Authority and Israel?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Strongly support	39.8%	39.4%	40.5%
Somewhat support	27.3%	28.4%	24.8%
Absolutely do not support	14.5%	13.3%	17.0%
Have not read the agreement	13.7%	13.0%	15.2%
No opinion	4.7%	5.9%	2.5%

Q3. In general, would you say that you support or oppose the peace process?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Support the peace process	77.9%	76.6%	80.8%
Oppose the peace process	16.1%	16.1%	15.9%
No opinion	6.0%	7.3%	3.3%

Q4. Do you believe that women will have an equal opportunity in running for the elections?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Yes they will	55.6%	56.0%	54.7%
No they will not	31.8%	32.3%	30.6%
No opinion	12.6%	11.7%	14.7%

Q5. Do you think it is important to incorporate personal status laws (including those pertaining to divorce, inheritance and marriage) into the Palestinian constitution?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Yes	52.4%	53.9%	49.4%
No	29.5%	29.9%	28.6%
No opinion	18.1%	16.2%	22.0%

Q5-1 If the answer to the previous question is no, then why not?

This question was asked only to those who said that personal status laws should not be incorporated in the Palestinian Constitution. n=399

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Shari'a Law is sufficient to govern these matters	81.7%	83.7%	77.2%
Such laws are not important enough to be included in the constitution	8.3%	6.9%	11.4%
Other reasons	3.0%	2.5%	4.1%
No opinion	7.0%	6.9%	7.3%

Please indicate whether you strongly support, somewhat support or strongly oppose the following statements (Q.10 - Q14).

Q6. Women deserve a quota in the elected council.

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Strongly agree	60.1%	59.9%	60.5%
Agree somewhat	17.1%	17.8%	15.7%
Strongly disagree	15.2%	15.4%	14.7%
No opinion	7.6%	6.9%	9.1%

Q7. Christians deserve a quota in the elected council.

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Strongly agree	48.2%	50.9%	42.5%
Agree somewhat	21.4%	21.9%	20.3%
Strongly disagree	19.2%	18.1%	21.5%
No opinion	11.2%	9.1%	15.7%

Q8. Palestinian women's organizations provide women with useful information in a timely manner.

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Strongly agree	27.7%	28.9%	25.3%
Agree somewhat	20.6%	20.8%	20.3%
Strongly disagree	13.0%	13.8%	11.1%
No opinion	38.7%	36.5%	43.3%

Q9. I believe I have a civic responsibility to take part in the elections.

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Strongly agree	72.7%	73.3%	71.4%
Agree somewhat	9.0%	8.8%	9.6%
Strongly disagree	7.5%	8.0%	6.6%
No opinion	10.8%	9.9%	12.4%

Q10. If a woman candidate met my standards of proper qualifications, I would vote for her.

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Strongly agree	67.4%	68.3%	65.3%
Agree somewhat	12.2%	12.5%	11.6%
Strongly disagree	13.2%	12.7%	14.2%
No opinion	7.2%	6.5%	8.9%

Q11. Do you support or oppose the need for qualified women to be entitled for equal opportunities to participate actively in public responsibilities in society?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Support	75.4%	75.4%	75.2%
Oppose	17.3%	16.7%	18.5%
No opinion	7.3%	7.9%	6.3%

Q11-1 If you disagree, then why?

This question is asked only to those who said disagree in Q15

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
I believe women should only take care of family and homes	25.6%	23.7%	29.6%
Because of religion	17.4%	20.3%	11.3%

Women should not have social contact with outside of their immediate family	6.4%	6.8%	5.6%
Women are not as capable as men to handle those kinds of tasks	42.5%	42.6%	42.3%
Other reasons	3.7%	2.0%	7.0%
No opinion	4.4%	4.6%	4.2%

Q12. Do you intend to vote in the upcoming elections?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Yes	78.1%	78.8%	76.5%
No	12.2%	11.6%	13.4%
I have not decided yet	7.4%	6.8%	8.6%
No opinion	2.3%	2.8%	1.5%

Q12-1 If you do not intend to vote, the reason is:

This question was asked to those who said that they will not vote in the elections. n=193

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
I don't have proper ID	5.7%	5.2%	5.0%
I plan to boycott the elections because of ideological reasons	13.0%	12.7%	14.0%
I don't believe in the peace process	33.7%	32.9%	36.0%
I don't believe in democracy	4.2%	3.0%	7.0%
I didn't register to vote	5.2%	7.5%	7.0%
I won't vote until all the prisoners are released	4.7%	3.7%	2.0%
(Women only) My husband, brother, father won't allow me	16.1%	19.4%	8.0%
Others	11.4%	9.7%	15.0%
No opinion	6.0%	5.9%	6.0%

Q13. In your opinion, the most important criterion for a candidate is:

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Family loyalty	3.0%	3.4%	2.3%
Religious affiliation	17.5%	17.8%	17.0%
Political affiliation	19.9%	20.0%	19.7%
Personal qualifications of candidate	45.0%	43.4%	48.6%
Others	7.6%	7.8%	6.8%
No opinion	7.0%	7.6%	5.6%

Q14. Do you believe your vote will make a difference in the final outcome of the elections?

	Total	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Yes	73.6%	76.0%	68.4%
No	14.7%	13.2%	18.0%
No opinion	11.7%	10.8%	13.6%