

Politics, Security & the Barrier

Palestinian Public Perceptions



Riccardo Bocco
Luigi De Martino
Roland Friedrich
Jalal Al Hussein
Arnold Luethold



institut universitaire
graduate institute
d'études du développement
of development studies

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Introduction

In July 2005, the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the Graduate Institute for Development Studies (IUED) in Geneva conducted a survey to find out how the Palestinian public views security sector governance in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). This survey was the first attempt to understand how Palestinians view and judge Palestinian security sector governance. It measured the trust that the public placed in the various Palestinian security forces, both official and unofficial. It examined how Palestinians evaluated the Palestinian Authority's (PA) performance in delivering security to the people, controlling armed groups and implementing reforms in the security domain. And finally, the survey also provided an overview of public opinion on the needs of security sector reform. Our survey report¹ concluded that the Palestinian public was generally dissatisfied with the performance of the security sector, had little confidence in its governance and doubted its legitimacy. Palestinians demanded tangible reform outcomes in the security sector, such as a substantial reduction of corruption and nepotism, more respect for human rights and better political control over armed groups.

In May 2006, DCAF and IUED undertook a second survey to measure the security perceptions, needs and concerns of the Palestinian public. In order to gauge Palestinian security perceptions in a comprehensive fashion, the scope of the survey was broadened to include mobility and safety problems, as well as perceptions about the political situation and the state of the peace process. Also, the questionnaire on security sector governance was expanded and refined.

DCAF and IUED carried out this study within the general frame of the Palestine Public Perceptions project. Since the outbreak of the second Intifada in September 2000, the project has issued regular reports² on the impact of local and international aid on the living conditions of the population in the oPt.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) conducted the poll on which the present report is based. We are grateful to PCBS's senior staff and fieldworkers, coders and data-entry personnel whose dedication and work under difficult conditions made this study possible. Although the data for this study was collected by PCBS, data cleaning and interpretation of the results were the sole responsibility of the authors.

As many other governments in the Middle East would be reluctant to authorise such a perceptions study, the Palestinian Authority deserves credit for having made this research possible.

Data cleaning, documentation and preparation of the database were conducted by the Datadoxa team in Geneva (www.datadoxa.ch). Datadoxa's work provided our authors in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Amman and Geneva with the data and cross-tabulations for their analysis. The results of the May 2006 and July 2005 surveys can be accessed online at our database (www.iuedpolls.org).

¹ See DCAF/IUED, *Palestinian Public Perceptions of Security Sector Governance, Summary Report*, Geneva, 14 October 2005. Available at www.dcaf.ch/mena/documents and www.iued.ch/palestine

² In 2006, IUED publishes its tenth PPP report. The project is supported by various donors, including the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DCAF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and UNICEF. The PPP reports assess the changes in the living conditions in the oPt as well as the perceived impact of the aid delivered to the population of the territories. The PPP initiative is not only a collection of reports but also a database that can be openly accessed under www.iuedpolls.org

Two events have marked the period between July 2005 and May 2006: the Israeli 'disengagement' from the Gaza Strip and the Hamas victory in the Palestinian parliamentary elections. In August 2005, Israel ended its military and civilian presence in Gaza while continuing to control access to the Strip from land, sea and air. Fatah, for decades the hegemonic force in Palestinian politics, in January 2006 lost the PA government to Hamas, the main Islamist movement in Palestine. Both events have profoundly affected the life of the Palestinian people. Upon Hamas' victory, Israel and the international community imposed a financial blockade on the newly elected government which led to a severe deterioration of the situation in the oPt.³ New humanitarian funding mechanisms, created by the international community to avoid dealing with the Hamas government, have not managed to stave off the socio-economic decline. At the same time, Gaza remains sealed off, and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) returned to the Strip in July 2006.

The present report examines if, and to what extent, changes in the political and socio-economic environment have affected Palestinian public perceptions of security sector governance. It also explores whether the change of government has altered the way Palestinians perceive not only their security needs but also the peace process and their trust in political factions and the government.

Considering that the new Hamas government was sworn in on 29 March 2006 and thus had just assumed its functions when the survey was conducted, the report does not provide information on how the public views the performance of the current government. Instead, it shows what the public thinks of the situation that Hamas inherited when it took over the government. In this sense, the report provides essentially a baseline assessment for a new government. Only a comparison with future assessments will eventually allow for conclusions to be drawn on the new government's performance.

Understanding how the public views the performance of the government and how it trusts political factions and the security sector is important for good governance. Equally important is to understand how the public perceives the political situation and the process of negotiating peace.

Studies of public perception are a crucial tool not only for assessing the quality of governance, but also for evaluating the future direction of reforms. By giving the people a voice in the discussion of their own future, public perception studies are a step towards greater inclusiveness in the management and oversight of key public issues. They also help to establish public accountability of the government and to involve civil society in the governance of sensitive sectors such as security.

This report is divided into three sections, preceded by a methodological introduction. The first section deals with mobility and security in the context of the conflict. This part also includes a note on the impact of the Separation Barrier in the oPt. The second section analyses public perceptions of security sector governance. The third section assesses Palestinian perceptions of the political situation and the peace process.

Luigi De Martino
Riccardo Bocco
Arnold Luethold
Roland Friedrich

Geneva/Ramallah,
October 2006

³ Since the May 2006 DCAF-IUED poll was conducted only shortly after the decisions of the international community were implemented, the Tenth Report will only partly be able to measure the impact of the blockade.



Objectives & Methodology

Matthias Brunner • Luigi De Martino • Celine Calvé

Introduction

In May 2006, IUED and DCAF conducted a survey in the occupied Palestinian territories on Palestinian security sector governance, Palestinian mobility and safety, and Palestinian perceptions of the political situation and the state of the peace process.

The objective of the survey is to understand how the Palestinian public views the performance of its government and to measure the trust of the population in political factions and the security sector. The survey also aims to understand Palestinian perceptions of the political situation and attitudes towards the peace process..

Studies of public perception are a crucial tool not only for assessing the quality of governance, but also for evaluating the future direction of reforms. By giving the people a voice in the discussion of their own future, public perception studies are a step towards greater inclusiveness in the management and oversight of key public issues. They also help to establish public accountability of the government and to involve civil society in the governance of sensitive sectors such as security..

This section describes the methodology of the May 2006 survey as well as the independent variables used for the analysis.

1. The Study and its Framework

This IUED–DCAF survey was carried out in the frame of the Palestinian Public Perceptions (PPP) studies undertaken by the IUED Palestine Research Unit.¹ Since January 2001, ten surveys on Palestinian public perceptions have been conducted.²

Data cleaning, documentation and preparation of the database were conducted by the Datadoxa team in Geneva (www.datadoxa.ch). Datadoxa's work provided analysts in Jerusalem, Ramallah, Amman and Geneva with the data and cross-tabulations for their analysis. The results of the PPP surveys can be accessed online at the IUED database (www.iuedpolls.org).

Because of data standardisation, it is not possible to use question numbers to designate the variables used for the analysis. In this report, variables are referred to in the format **o###** (### is the number of the variable). Readers may use the correspondence table at www.iuedpolls.org to find the name of a variable related to a particular question.³

¹ The main objective of the Palestinian Public Perceptions (PPP) studies is to provide government officials, aid professionals, donors and civil society representatives with tools for monitoring the situation in the oPt and assessing the impact of assistance. PPP studies are based on polls that measure Palestinian public perceptions of a variety of governance and socio-economic issues, as well as perceptions about donor assistance and its results. PPP polls were conducted in January, June and November 2001, in April and November 2002, July 2003, March and October 2004, July 2005 and May 2006.

² Efforts have been made to use consistent questionnaires for the ten PPP polls so as to secure maximum comparability of the results. However, some new questions were added in the section on security sector governance. In order to allow precise monitoring of the evolution of answers over time, we have standardised the results of most polls. The analysis in each chapter will refer to the evolution of attitudes wherever possible.

³ Refer to the sheet for poll 10: Correspondence original variables – standardised variables <https://www.iuedpolls.org/resource.php?idResourceType=6>

The questionnaire for the tenth IUED Palestinian Public Perceptions Study, which includes the sections on mobility and security, security sector governance, and politics and the peace process, can be accessed in English and Arabic at www.iuedpolls.org.

The outline below contains the variables of each of these three sections:

Chapter 1: Mobility and Security

Variables: o031, o115v2, o118v2, o119, o164, o337, o338, o339, o361, o362, o363, o364

Chapter 2: Security Sector Governance

Variables: o118v2, o319a-i, o320a-i, o312a-e, o365a-f, o366a-h, o367a-h, o368, o370a-g, o371a-n

Chapter 3: Politics

Variables: o353, o354, o266v1, o266v2, o318, o274v1, o365a-f, o359, o351, o352a-h.

For this survey, PCBS in May 2006 interviewed a representative sample of 1,800 Palestinians over the age of 18 on a face-to-face basis. PCBS employed 100 fieldworkers to this undertaking. In the West Bank, PCBS interviewed 1016 Palestinians, in Jerusalem 174 and in the Gaza Strip 610. There was an over-sampling of 200 cases in West Bank regions that are directly affected by the Separation Barrier. All data in this report is weighted so as to be representative of the entire oPt.

2. Methodology

All questions used for this report were tested in relation to nine independent variables, and they all refer to these variables (see table on next page). Results were systematically tested for statistical significance at a 95% confidence level.⁴

For the bivariate analysis between the dependent and the independent variables with their level of statistical significance and the detailed number of cases, readers may refer to www.iuedpolls.org. Numbers of cases (N) and significance levels have therefore been omitted in this report.

Whenever possible, we refer to data from our previous polls in order to present a coherent analysis of the evolution of the situation since the beginning of the second Intifada.

Presentation of the main independent variables

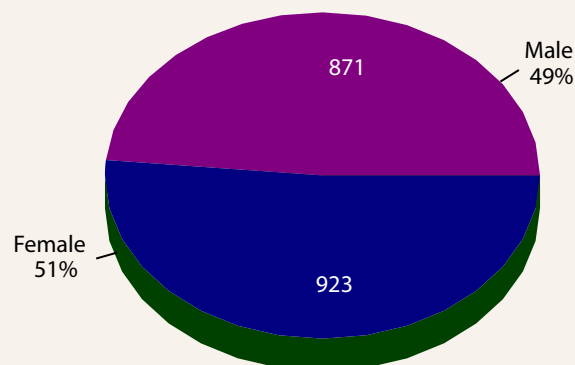
Palestinian society is rather unique because refugees constitute up to 50% of its population. The oPt is split into two geographically separate areas, and this physical separation between the West Bank and Gaza is exacerbated by Israeli occupation measures which make travelling, trade and economic cooperation very difficult. This situation enforces a set of socio-economic structures that are not homogenous. The territorial fragmentation of the occupied Palestinian territories and the forced detachment of Jerusalem impede the creation of a viable Palestinian political, economic and social system. Demographic trends such as a high population growth rate and a large number of dependent children compound these problems.

⁴ For categorical or ordinal dependent variables we used Chi-square tests, for interval variables one-way analysis of variance.

We have chosen nine explanatory variables to adequately capture the specificities of Palestinian society.

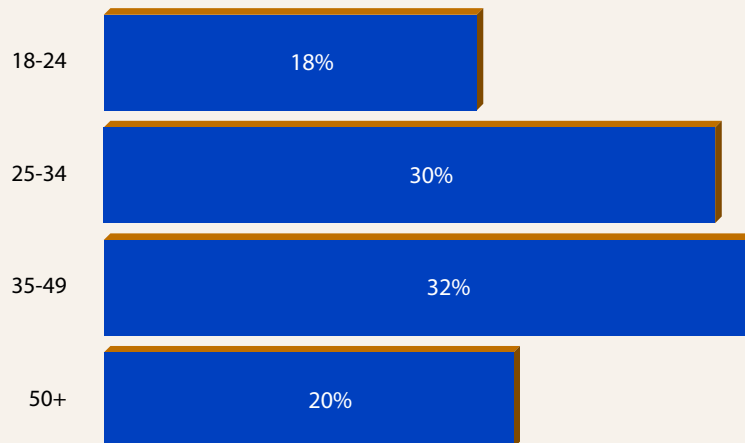
Variable Name	Variable Code	Categories
Region of residence	o059	West Bank Jerusalem Gaza Strip
Area of residence	o060	City Village Refugee camp
Place of residence	place	West Bank refugee camps West Bank outside camps Gaza Strip refugee camps Gaza Strip outside camps East Jerusalem
Poverty	poverty3	Hardship cases Those below the poverty line Those above the poverty line
Refugee Status	o02	Refugees Non-refugees
Education	educ	Low Medium High
Age category	agec	18 – 24 years 25 – 34 years 35 – 49 years 50 years or more
Gender	o061	Male Female
Wall	wall	Directly affected by the wall Not directly affected by the wall

Figure 1: Gender (o061)



Men and women are almost equally represented among the total population in the oPt. In the tenth poll, men comprise 49% of the sample, while women comprise 51%. These percentages are in line with the *gender* statistics in the oPt.

Figure 2 : Age distribution (agec)

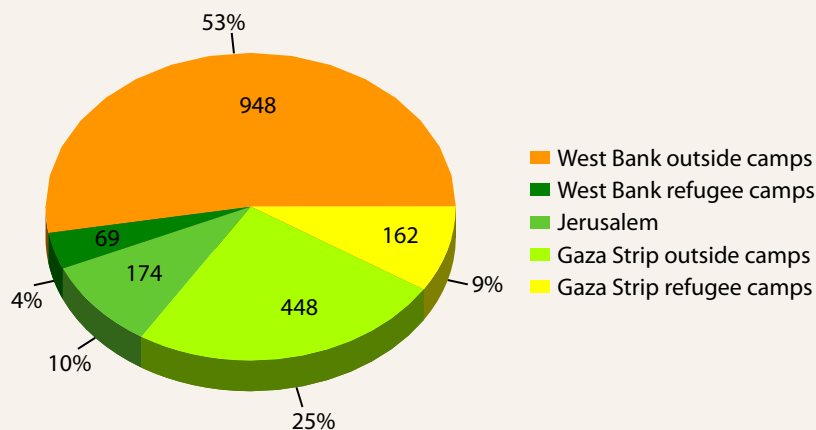


According to PCBS, the projected population on the 1st July 2006 is 3,888,292 (2,444,478 in the West Bank and 1,443,814 in the Gaza Strip) of whom 46% are below the age of 15 years. The population has increased by 39% during the period 1997-2006.⁵

In terms of *age distribution*, roughly 20% of our respondents were between 18 and 24 years old, 30% between 25 and 34 years old, and 32% between 35 and 49 years old. 20% of the respondents were older than 44 years.

The occupied Palestinian territories include different areas: the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The variable, *place of residence*, as shown in figure 3, reflects this geographical fragmentation; in the West Bank and Gaza we have further differentiated between refugee camp and non-refugee camp residents. Fifty-three percent of our sample were from West Bank non-camp areas while 4% resided in camps, 10% were from Jerusalem, 25% were from Gaza Strip non-camp areas, and 9% from Gaza refugee camps.

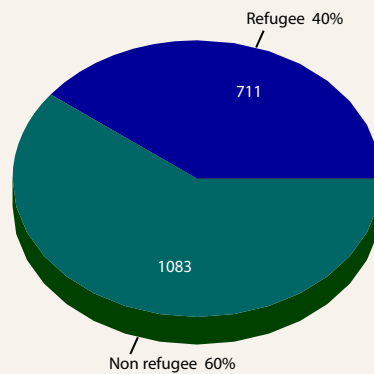
Figure: 3 Place of residence (place)



Refugees constitute approximately 26.5% of the West Bank population and over 65% of the population in Gaza. The number of refugees residing in camps is estimated to be a little more than half a million; about 176,000 refugees live in the 19 refugee camps in the West Bank, and about 478,000 reside in the eight Gaza refugee camps.

⁵ Those figures are available on the PCBS website (<http://www.pcbs.go.ps>).

Figure 4 : Refugee status (o002)



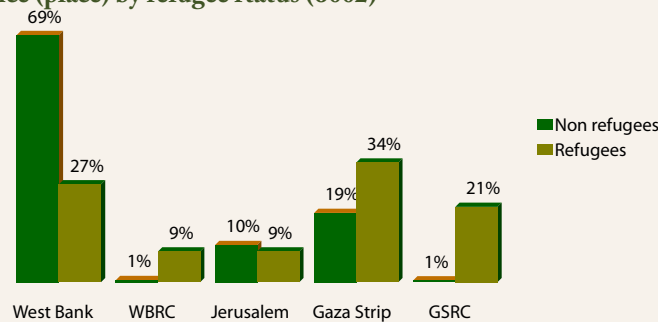
As shown in figure 4, 40% of our sample said that they were refugees or descendents of refugees, while 60% stated that they were neither refugees nor descendents of a refugee family.

The majority of refugees in the oPt (registered and unregistered) lived in the Gaza Strip (55%, see figure 5). On the other hand, more than two-thirds (70%) of non-refugees lived in the West Bank.

While 32% of all refugees lived in camps, less than 1% of non-refugees did so. One non-refugee respondent out of ten lived in Jerusalem: for refugees, this proportion was one out of six.

According to *area of residence*, slightly more than half of our sample (51%) lived in cities, while 31% lived in refugee camps and 17% in villages.

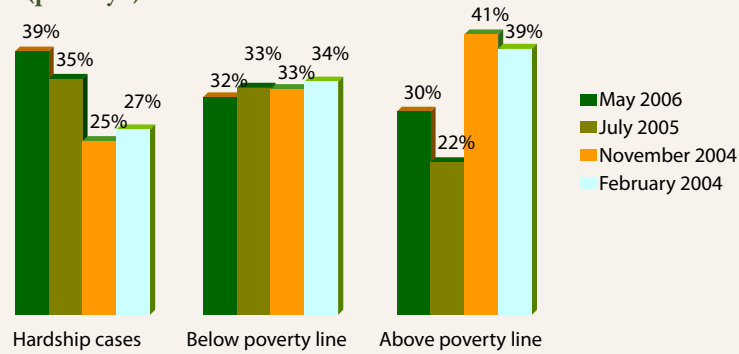
Figure 5 Place of residence (place) by refugee status (o002)



In the November 2001 report, we introduced the *poverty* variable to highlight the economic situation of Palestinian households. In the present report, we use the so-called third revision of the *poverty* variable (*poverty 3*). It is based on the reported household income (o057), but also takes into account the number of adults and children in the household. In November 2002, PCBS defined the average Palestinian household (two adults and four children) as *below the poverty line* if its income was lower than NIS 1,600. If it was lower than NIS 500, they were considered *hardship cases*. Since then, PCBS twice modified the poverty line, putting it at NIS 1,760 in 2003 and at NIS 1,800 in 2004, IUED has adopted this modification: in the tenth report, we consider the standard household to be *below the poverty line* if its income is less than NIS 1800; for the sixth and seventh report, we put the poverty line at 1,760 NIS; for the 2002 and 2001 reports, the figures remained unchanged.⁶

⁶ For November 2001, however, we only recently calculated the adjusted poverty level by household size. This is why it was not mentioned in that previous report.

Figure 6 Poverty level (poverty3)



The evolution of poverty in the oPt can be seen in figure 6. While the percentage of those below the poverty line remained constant from 2001 to 2006, the percentage of hardship cases has increased sharply since November 2002, reaching 39% of the population in May 2006. This was also a four percent increase from July 2005.



Mobility, Security, and the Impact of the Barrier

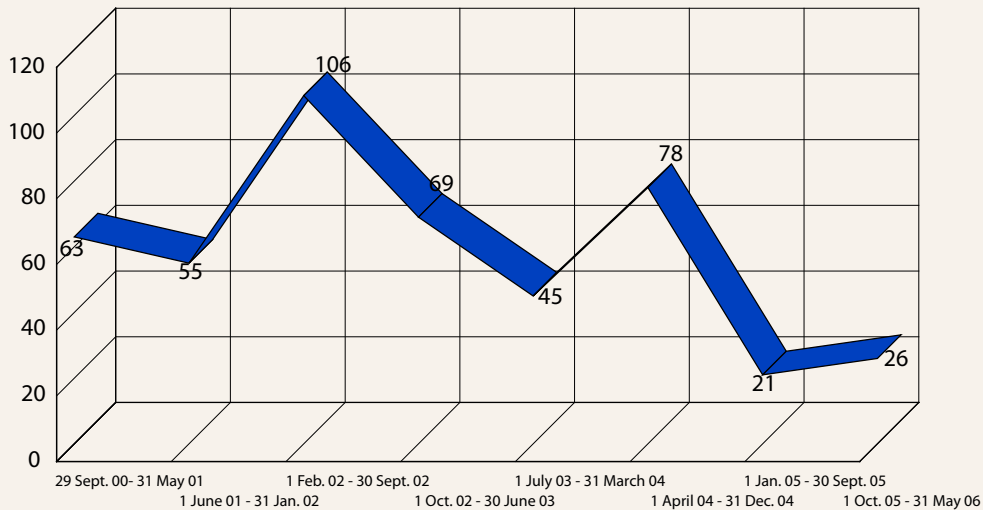
Jalal Al Hussein • Chiraz Skirhi • Tareq Abu El Haj

1.1 Intifada-Related Security Issues

The period of July 2005-May 2006 was marked by two major events. Firstly, Israel started implementing the first stages of Ariel Sharon's (its former Prime Minister) "disengagement plan." In Gaza, this consisted in the unilateral withdrawal of its military forces and the dismantlement of all the Jewish settlements; in the West Bank, four settlements in the north were dismantled (August and September 2005). Secondly, the victory of the radical Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in the Palestinian legislative elections triggered a financial blockade by both the international community and Israel against the newly elected Hamas-led government. Drastic security measures such as the reinforcement of the oPt closure system (checkpoints, roadblocks, restrictions on permits to access Israel, etc.) were also taken by the Israeli authorities against the oPt population.

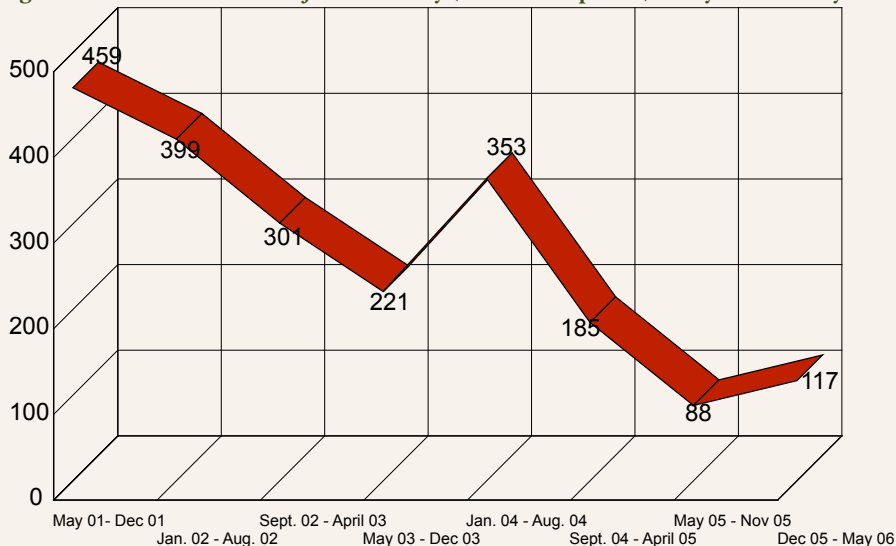
The number of dead and injured has slightly increased during the period under scrutiny. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show that the average number of Palestinians killed monthly during the period under survey increased from 21 to 26, while the average number of Palestinians injured monthly increased from 88 to 117. However, these numbers are comparatively lower than those during the four first years of the Intifada.

Figure 1.1: Average number of Palestinians killed monthly (8-9 months period) - 29 Sept. 2000 to 31 May 2006



Source: www.palestinercs.org

Figure 1.2: Average number of Palestinians injured monthly (6-8 months period) - May 2001 to May 2006

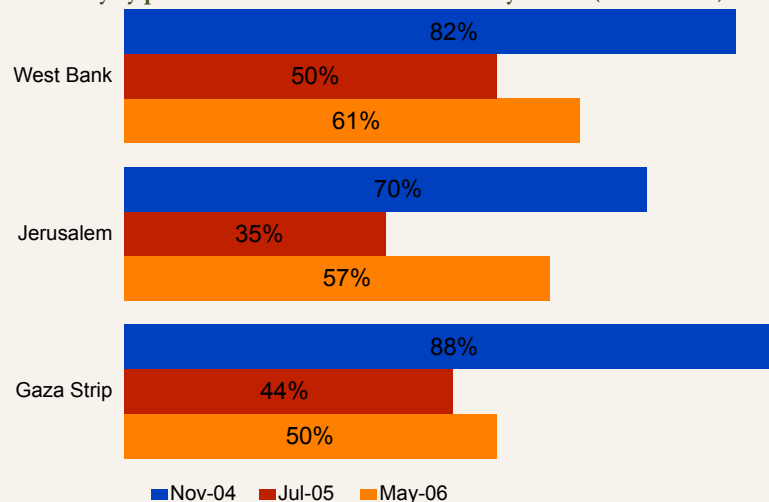


Source: www.palestinercs.org

1.1.1 Insecurity and its profile

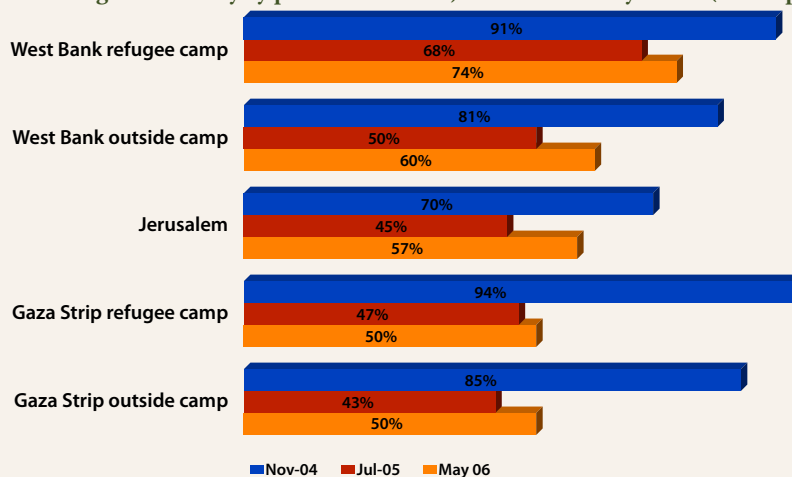
The percentage of Palestinians feeling insecure increased from 46% in July 2005 to 57% in May 2006. Levels of insecurity remained lower than in previous periods of the Intifada: 82% in November 2004 and 77% in February 1994. As indicated in Figure 1.3, the feeling of insecurity has increased in all regions of the oPt, but more particularly in the West Bank (+11%) and Jerusalem (+22%), where the ongoing construction of the Separation Barrier increased mobility restrictions (and concerns about the future of the region).

Figure 1.3: Feeling of insecurity by place of residence – Nov. 2004 to May 2006 – (o118 x o059)



More precisely, figure 1.4 reveals that the West Bank camps have remained the places of residence where the feeling of insecurity was the highest (74%), well ahead of West Bank areas outside camps (60%) and Jerusalem (57%). In the Gaza Strip, such feelings have declined dramatically, either in or outside the camps (50% in both places of residence).

Figure 1.4: Feeling of Insecurity by place of residence, Nov. 2004 to May 2006 - (o118 x place)

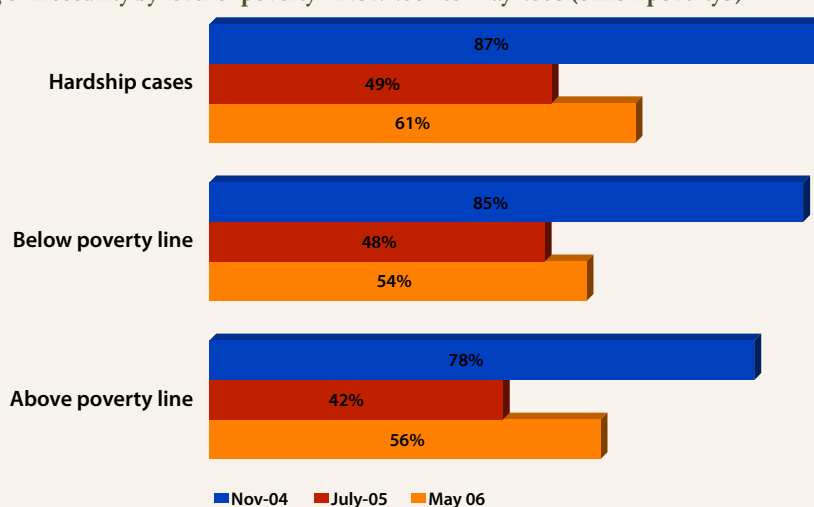


Our variable, “feeling of security”, is rather general since, as we will see below, it covers many different aspects of the problems the oPt population face within the context of the Intifada: the presence of settlements, Israeli military occupation, poor socioeconomic prospects, inter-Palestinian feuds, etc. Nevertheless, crossing this variable with our main explanatory (independent) variables enables us to establish a rough profile of insecurity among the oPt population from social and economic perspectives.

People feeling insecure in the oPt comprise:

- *Men rather than women:* 55% of women say that they feel insecure compared to 59% of men;
- *The old rather old than the young:* 49% of those between 18-24 years of age feel insecure compared with 65% of those aged 50 and over;
- *The poorly educated rather than the educated:* 53% of Palestinians with a high educational level feel insecure compared with 60% with a low educational level.
- *The worse-off rather than the better-off:* Heads of households identified as hardship cases (i.e. earning below 900 NIS/month for a couple with four children¹) feel more insecure than those below the poverty line (i.e., earning between 900 NIS/month and 1800 NIS/month) and those above it (61%, 56% and 54% respectively). However, as seen in figure 1.5, the increase in the feeling of insecurity from July 2005 to May 2006 grew comparatively more amongst respondents above the poverty line (+14%, versus +12% of the hardship cases).

Figure 1.5: Feeling of insecurity by level of poverty - Nov. 2004 to May 2006 (o118 x poverty3)



1.1.2 Reasons for feeling insecure

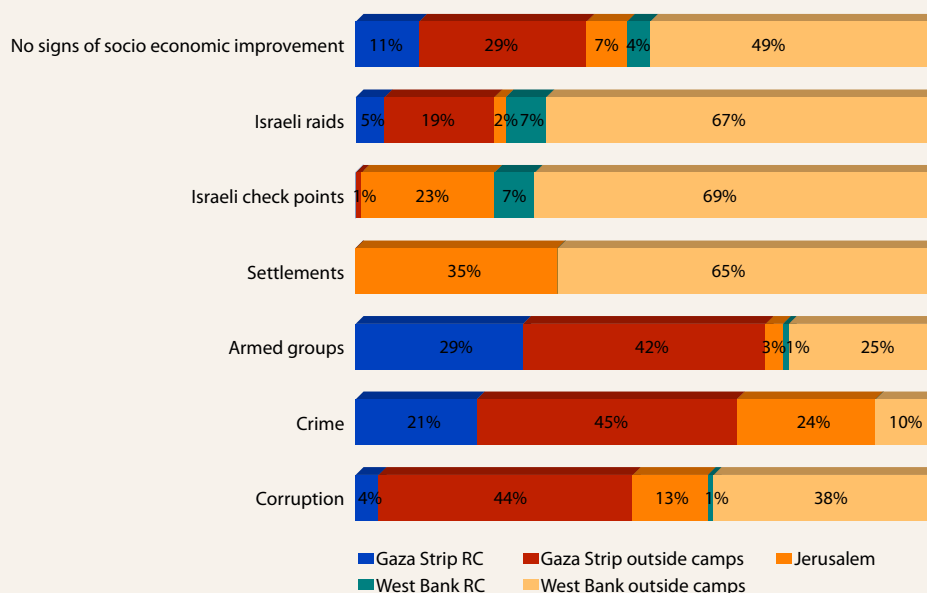
A large majority of Palestinians continue to perceive lack of socio-economic improvement (33%) and Israeli raids (16%) as the main identified threats to their security. Presence of Israeli checkpoints (8%) and of settlements (2%), as well as internal causes of instability such as local armed groups (4%), corruption (4%) and crime (2%) played a minor impact in the overall oPt context

However, the situation differed markedly amongst oPt regions. **West Bankers** emphasised factors directly linked to the Israeli occupation, such as Israeli raids (74%), checkpoints (76%) and settlements (65%), as opposed to 24%, 1% and 0% of the Gazans, respectively. As a result of Israeli disengagement from Gaza and the collapse of the PA security apparatus, **Gazans** focused much more on internal insecurity, such as the activities of local armed groups (71% as against 26% in the West Bank), corruption (71% as against 26% in the West Bank), corruption (49% as against 39% in the West Bank) and crime (66% as against 10% in the West Bank). **Jerusalemites'** opinions about the causes of their feelings of insecurity were less marked than elsewhere. Whereas settlements, Israeli checkpoints and crime came out higher as main reasons for insecurity amongst them (35%, 23% and 24% respectively), economic stagnation was less underscored than in the West Bank and Gaza (7% as opposed to 53% in the West Bank and 41% in Gaza).

¹ This definition of levels of poverty is based on the official definition by the Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).

Figure 1.6 indicates that, in terms of place of residence, the sense of insecurity related to economic instability and to Israeli occupation (including Israeli raids, settlements, and checkpoints) affected the West Bank outside camps much more than any other place of residence. Besides, in the Gaza Strip, Palestinians living outside camps were much more affected by the identified causes of insecurity than the camp dwellers.

Figure 1.6: Reasons for insecurity by place of residence- May 2006 (o119v3 x place of residence)

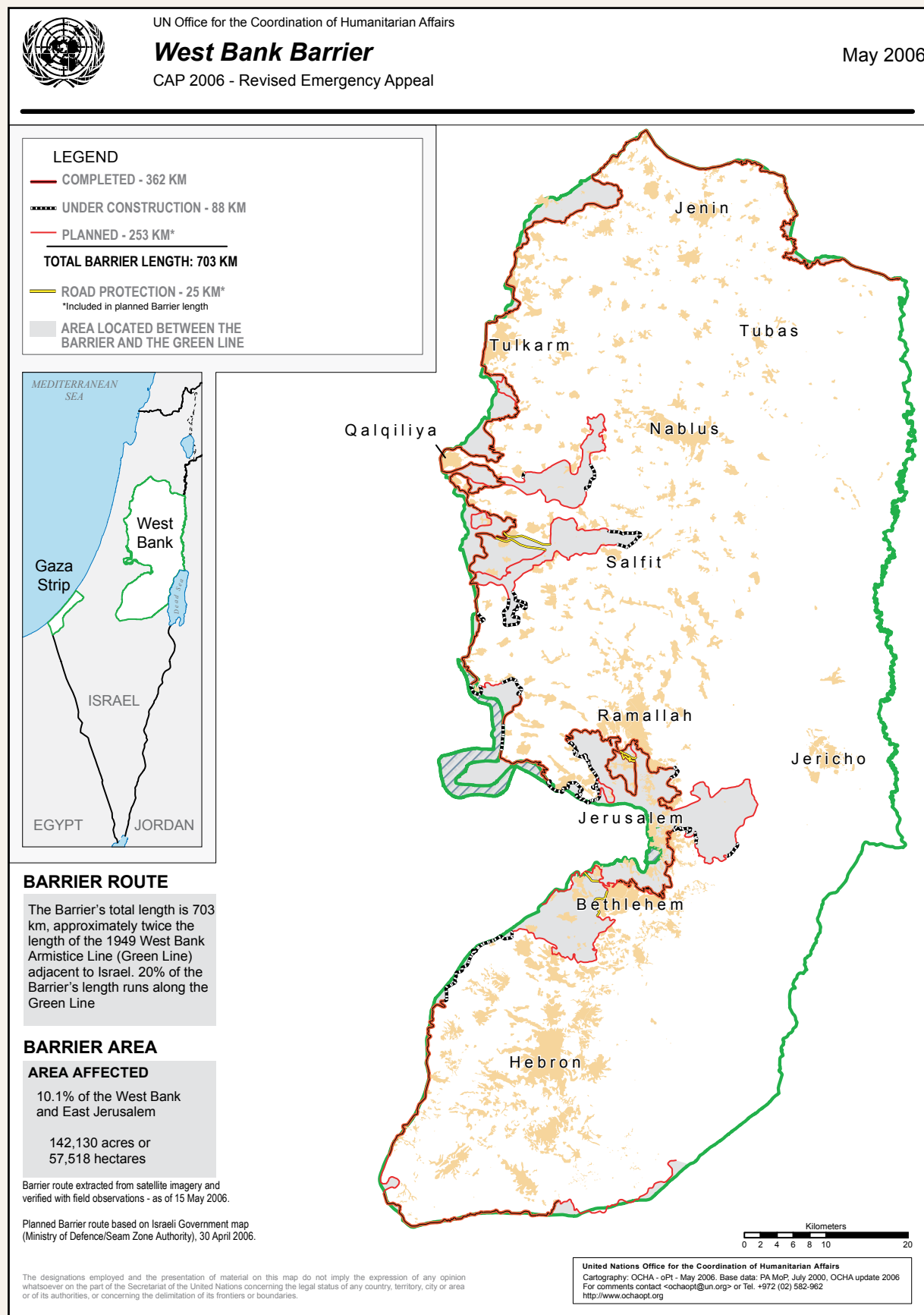


1.1.3 Internal mobility status of the Palestinians

As several reports issued by the main stakeholders indicate, restrictions on the internal mobility of the Palestinians - a root cause of the massive increases in poverty and unemployment rates amongst Palestinians since the start of the Intifada - have increased in the West Bank during the period under survey. According to OCHA, the number of physical obstacles to internal mobility in the West Bank has increased from 376 in August 2005 to 515 in mid-May 2006 (OCHA - 31 May 2006). Moreover, UN agencies have also faced mobility problems. In the case of UNRWA, for example, Israeli authorities have imposed additional mobility restrictions on its staff crossing into Jerusalem from the West Bank, thus seriously hampering the Agency's humanitarian operations (www.electronicintifada.net/v2/article4681.shtml). In comparison, reports indicated that the internal mobility situation in the Gaza Strip had improved as a result of the dismantlement of the Jewish settlements and the disengagement of the Israeli occupation forces in August-September 2005. External mobility (i.e., outside the Gaza Strip) remained a crucial problem.²

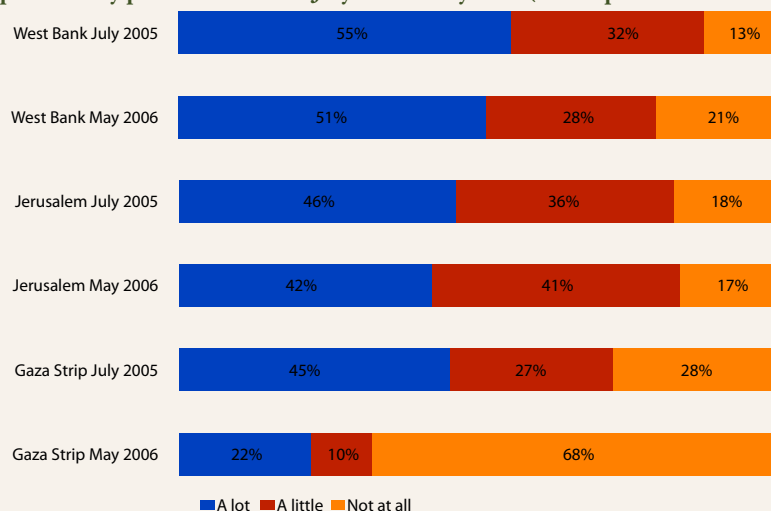
² However, external mobility restrictions, particularly towards the Israeli job market have been heightened. The number of Palestinian workers being allowed to enter Israel has decreased from 5,000 in April 2005 to 3,000 in June 2006. As an example, as of 2 May 2006, Karni crossing has so far been closed 47% of year 2006 (i.e., 57 days), as against 18% in 2005 and 19% in 2004, further restricting the flow of Palestinians labourers to Israeli markets and the passage of commercial goods and basic supplies across borders (UNRWA Revised Emergency Appeal - May 2006).

Map 1.1: West Bank Closures, May 2006



These observations about the mobility status of the oPt Palestinians are partially confirmed by the findings of our survey. As shown in figure 7, the percentage of people in Gaza who have had mobility problems decreased by 40%, from 72% in July 2005 to 32% in May 2006. In particular, the percentage of those Gazans who experienced acute problems dwindled by half during the period under survey, from 45% to 22%. Conversely, no significant mobility improvement was noticed in Jerusalem, a region that has been affected by the reinforcement of closures measures and the continuing construction of the Separation Barrier (see below): percentages of Jerusalemites experiencing mobility problems were nearly as high in May 2006 as in July 2005. However, our survey did not indicate a worsening of the mobility situation in the West Bank, which may be due to the fact that the adverse consequences of the reactivation of Israel's closure policy had not yet impacted on the West Bankers at the time of the interviews (end of April-early May). The survey found that a slight improvement had occurred in the West Bank, but to a lesser extent than in Gaza: 79% of West Bankers had mobility problems (51% with acute problems) in May 2006 as against 86% in July 2005 (55% with acute problems). More specifically, in the West Bank, inhabitants of villages were more affected by mobility problems (83% of them, with 54% of them having had a lot of problems) than city and camp dwellers (76% and 77%, respectively, with 53% and 48% respectively having experienced a lot of problems).³

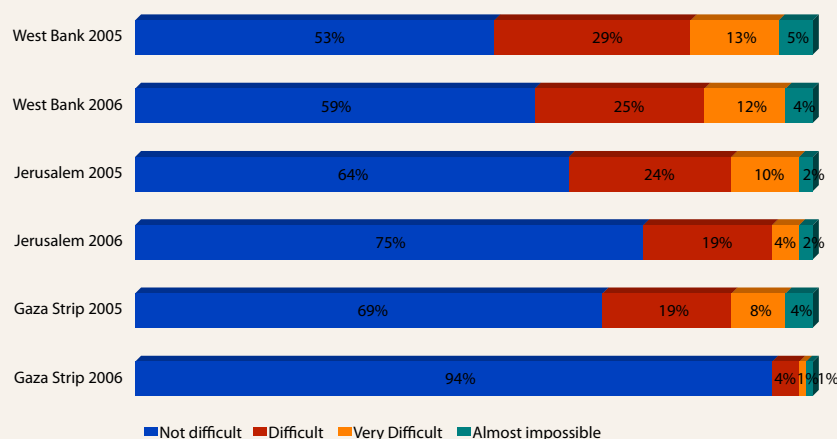
Figure 1.7: Mobility problems by place of residence. July 2005 - May 2006 (o031 x place of residence)



These mixed trends have nevertheless had positive socio-economic repercussions. Overall, 29% of the oPt population had problems in reaching their place of work in May 2006, compared to 40% in July 2005. Figure 1.8 shows that work-related mobility has improved in all places of residence including those in the West Bank, where the percentage of respondents having had problems in reaching their place of work slightly decreased from 47% in July 2005 to 41% in May 2006 and in Jerusalem, where the percentage decreased from 36% in July 2005 to 24% in May 2006. One can thus infer that the mobility problems (outlined above) faced by the Jerusalemites were more linked to inability or problems in reaching relatives than in accessing places of work. In line with the overall mobility trend, improvement related to access to work was most visible in the Gaza Strip, where the ease of access to places of work reached 94% in May 2006. The remaining 6% are not to be underestimated: the percentage represents Gazans normally working in Israel who have experienced the total closure of Erez crossing since 12 March 2006.

³ From a refugee status perspective, as explained in chapter 7 (section 7.1.2) of this report, refugees have been less affected by mobility restrictions than non-refugees, as 47% of them have had no problems in this regard as against only 30% of the non-refugees.

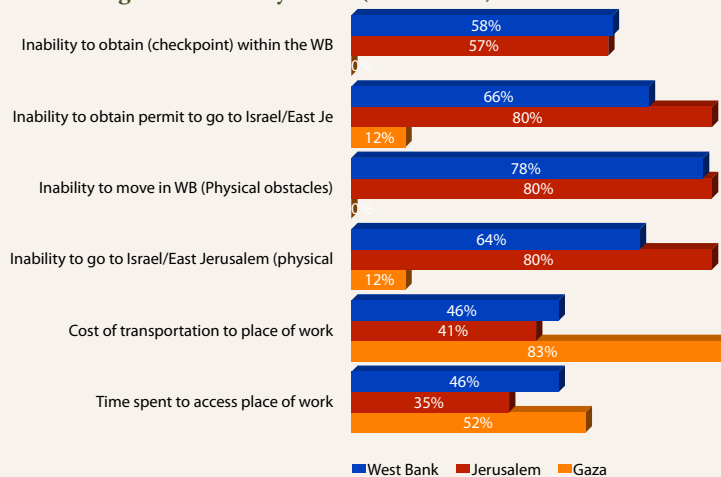
Figure 1.8: Easiness to access place of work by region of residence, July 2005 - May 2006



Given the sharp deterioration of the oPt economy that came about during the period under survey, such percentages could not but increase the problems met by Palestinian businesses. Between July 2005 and May 2006, the percentage of Palestinians throughout the oPt declaring that their businesses had suffered from problems in reaching their places of work increased from 11% to 13%.⁴

Looking more specifically at the causes of the problems to reach place of work, figure 1.9. indicates that in the West Bank and Jerusalem, the main causes of difficulties result from physical obstacles preventing moving within the West Bank (80% and 78%, respectively) or going to Israel/East Jerusalem (80% and 64%, respectively) as well as inability to obtain permits to go to Israel/East Jerusalem. In Gaza, costs of transportation (83% of the respondents) and amount of time spent to access places of work are much more prevalent problems.

Figure 1.9: Causes of difficulties to go to work - May 2006 - (o361 x o059)



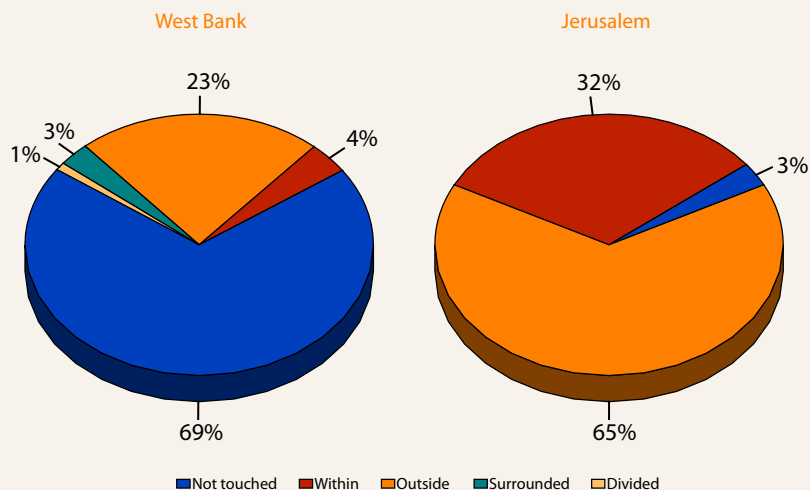
1.1.4 The Separation Barrier and its impact on mobility and property

The construction of the Separation Barrier in Jerusalem and the West Bank regions was initiated in June 2002 following a route that has since then been changed in February 2005 and April 2006. Once completed, the Barrier will be 703 kilometres long of which 135 kilometres will be along the Green Line (OCHA, March 2005). As of May 2006, 362 kilometres of the Barrier had been completed and were operational, 88 kilometres were under construction and 253 kilometres were planned (OCHA, 31 May 2006).

⁴ For this variable “Business suffered due to problems to reach the place of work”, regional differences are statistically insignificant.

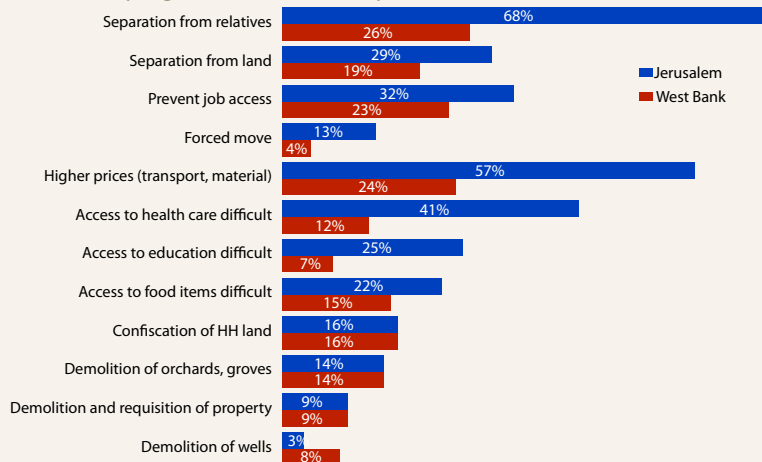
West Bankers and Jerusalemites were situated differently in relation to the Separation Barrier. In the West Bank, 30% of the respondents said they were affected (“touched”) by the Separation Barrier. Amongst those, 4% were living in locations between the Barrier and the Green Line (“within the Barrier”); 23% were living on the West Bank’s side of the Barrier (“outside the Barrier”); 3% were living in places surrounded by Barrier (i.e. in the Qalqilya region), and 1% were living in locations divided by it (“divided”). In Jerusalem, given the population’s proximity of the Barrier, the percentage of people affected by it was much higher: 97%, of whom 32% lived “within” the Barrier, and 65% “outside” the Barrier.

Figure 1.10. Location of West Bankers and Jerusalemites/Separation Barrier - May 2006 Barrier



Previous surveys highlighted a trend towards a decline of the Barrier’s direct impact on the Jerusalem and West Bank populations (see *Palestinians’ Public Perceptions Report IX*, part 1). On the contrary, during the period under survey, the side-effects of the construction of the Barrier have increased (especially in Jerusalem), either with regard to separation from relatives (from 17% to 26% of respondents in the West Bank and 65% to 68% Jerusalem); separation from land (8% to 19% in the West Bank and 11% to 29% in Jerusalem); and higher prices of material and transports (22% to 24% in the West Bank and 32% to 57% in Jerusalem).⁵ As shown on Figure 1.11, except for agricultural damage (demolition of wells and of property, confiscation of land, demolition of orchards and citrus and olive groves etc.), the Barrier affected the Jerusalemites comparatively more than the West Bankers. For both categories, separation from relatives remained the main negative impact of the Wall’s construction.

Figure 1.11: Impacts of the Wall by region of residence, May 2006 (o164;o338) x o59



⁵ As an exception, fewer Jerusalemites were forced to move as a result of the Barrier (from 24% to 13% as against 2% to 4% of the West Bankers).

Finally, refugees have been less concerned by the Barrier and its construction than non-refugees.⁶ Whereas no statistical correlation could be established between refugee status and access problems due to the existence of the Barrier (access to place of work, to relatives, to health and education facilities...), non-refugees were clearly more affected by a various types of damage to property such as the demolition of orchards and groves (9% of refugees as against 16% of non-refugees), confiscation of land (8% of refugees as against 18% of non-refugees), and requisition of property (3% of refugees as against 11% of non-refugees). More importantly, 16% of refugees said to have suffered from being separated from their land properties as compared with 22% of non-refugees.

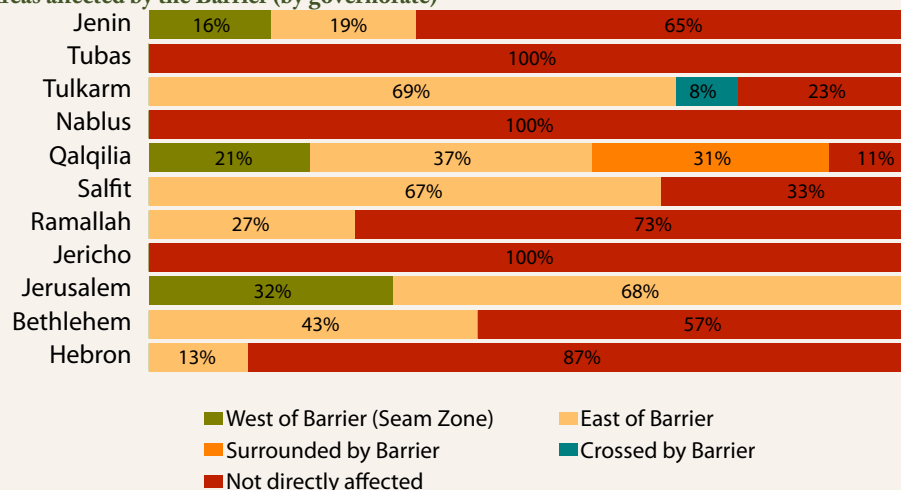
1.2 The Impact of the Separation Barrier

This report includes a special focus on the Separation Barrier. The Barrier's planned length is 670 kilometres, 54% of which (362 km) was complete and operational at the time of the survey. This briefing note will focus on the impact of the Separation Barrier on the lives and livelihoods of Palestinian households in the West Bank.

1.2.1 The distribution of Barrier affected households in the sample

Over a quarter of the Palestinian households in the West Bank reside in communities directly affected by the Separation Barrier, meaning households from communities that are in close proximity to the Separation Barrier and where systematic destruction, separation from or requisition of the community assets is recorded. Of those affected households, 75% are east of the Barrier, 19% are in the Seam Zone.⁷ Four and a half percent live in communities surrounded by the Barrier and less than 2% live in communities that are crossed by it. In terms of geographic distribution, 39% of the affected households are in the northern West Bank, 46% are in the middle area and 15% are in the southern West Bank. The chart below provides the distribution of affected households by governorate according to the sample interviewed in the current survey.

Figure 1.12: Areas affected by the Barrier (by governorate)



While none of the households in Nablus and Jericho governorates are directly affected,⁸ households

⁶ Refugees are much less numerous in areas crossed by the Barrier than non-refugees: 18% of refugees as opposed to 32% of non-refugees)

⁷ The term *Seam Zone* is used in this report to define the area of land located between the Separation Barrier and the 1949 armistice line – popularly known as the Green Line.

⁸ References to communities that are not affected refer to those communities that are not in close proximity to the Separation Barrier and where no systematic destruction, separation from or requisition of the community assets is recorded.

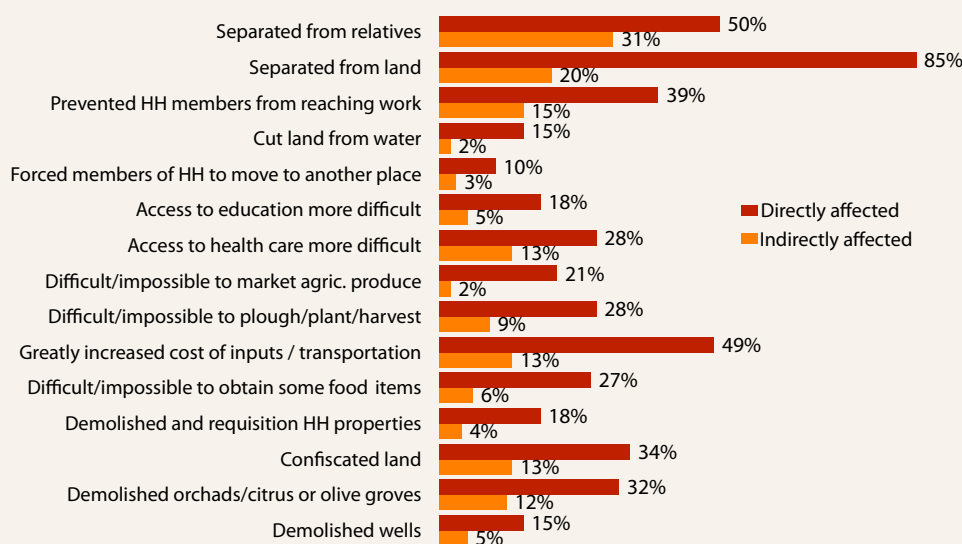
from the rest of the 11 governorates of the West Bank were affected directly by either being located in the Seam Zone directly east of the Barrier, or living in a community that is surrounded or crossed by the Barrier. Aside from Nablus and Jericho, the governorate that is the least proportionally affected is Hebron, with 87% of its households not directly affected. In our sample, Tulkarm is the only governorate that includes communities that are crossed by the Barrier.

Jenin, Qalqilia and Jerusalem⁹ governorates include households that are located within the Seam Zone. With the average ratio of Palestinian West Bank households located in this zone at 19%, the ratio in Jenin governorate falls 3% below the average, whereas in Qalqilia governorate the ratio is 3% above and, finally, Jerusalem governorate, which recorded 13%, is above the average.

1.2.2 The effects of the Separation Barrier

A battery of questions was asked in the survey aimed at gauging the effects of the Separation Barrier on different facets of the lives and livelihoods of Palestinian households in the West Bank. As mentioned above, over a quarter of the Palestinian households in the West Bank reside in communities directly affected by the Separation Barrier; however, this survey reveals that 54% of Palestinian households in the West Bank report being indirectly affected by Barrier. The figure below provides insight on how the Barrier affects these households.

Figure 1.13: Effects of the Separation Barrier on households (directly vs. indirectly affected)



The Separation Barrier has both general effects on the population of the West Bank and more specific effects on communities that are directly affected. It is obvious that greater proportions of households from communities directly affected by the Barrier report negative impacts from the Barrier when compared to households from communities not directly affected by it.

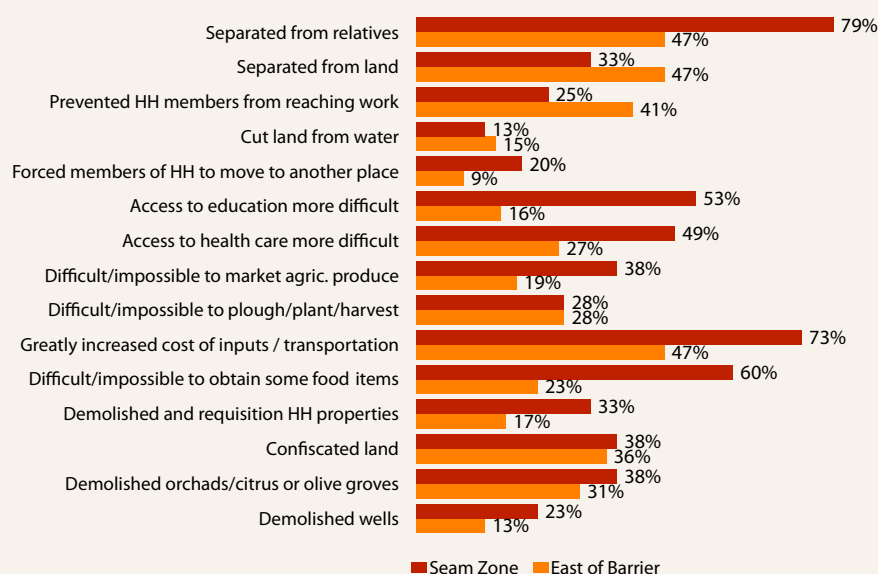
The three most frequently mentioned negative impacts of the Barrier by households located in communities directly affected are: separation from their land (85%), separation from their relatives (50%) and the increase in the cost of inputs and transportation (49%). In contrast, the three most frequently mentioned negative impacts of the Barrier by households from the remainder of the West Bank communities are: separation from relatives (31%), separation from land (20%) and the prevention of household members from accessing work (15%).

⁹ It must be noted that the classification of communities as located in the Seam Zone includes communities located in East Jerusalem.

These figures and the other proportions listed in the figure above point to a qualitative difference in the way in which the Barrier impacts Palestinian households – a difference that depended on whether the Barrier directly affects the communities where they are located or not. For those located in communities directly affected by the Barrier, the negative impacts pervade all aspects of their lives, ranging from being cut off from their relatives as well as educational and medical services to being prevented from reaching their workplace or, for some family members, to having to relocate through to being practically hampered all facets of agricultural activity. Indeed, it is the impact of the Separation Barrier on agricultural activity that sets apart those that are directly affected from the Barrier from those that are indirectly affected – of whom very few have mentioned their land being cut from its water sources, demolition of wells or difficulty in marketing their agricultural produce.

It is possible to delineate the difference in impact of the Barrier on households located within the Seam Zone from households in communities directly east of the Barrier. Figure 1.14 below highlights these differences.

Figure 1.14: Effects of the Separation Barrier on directly affected households (Seam Zone vs. East of Barrier)



On the one hand, when compared to households located within the Seam Zone, higher percentages of households in communities directly east of the Barrier report being separated from their land, prevented from reaching work and their land being cut from its water source. On the other hand, for households located in the Seam Zone the Barrier has a more negative effect on all aspects of their lives. The greatest differences are seen in the ability to obtain certain food items and access to educational services (a 37% difference), followed by separation from relatives (a 32% difference), increases in the costs of necessary inputs and transportation (a 26% difference) and access to health services (a 22% difference). Finally, attention must be directed to the fact that 20% of the respondents from the Seam Zone report household members being forced to move to other places. This finding is in line with the findings of an earlier report (September 2006) on forced migration as a result of the Separation Barrier which asserts that “the Wall and its regime generate forced displacement in East Jerusalem”.¹⁰

1.2.3 Poverty and the Separation Barrier

In the chapter on socio-economic conditions of the PPP report (chapter 2), it is reported that, when examining the overall picture, the Separation Barrier has little influence on poverty levels. However, a comparison between poverty levels of households within the Seam Zone and poverty levels of households

¹⁰ *Displaced by the Wall: Forced Displacement as a Result of the West Bank Wall and its Associated Regime*, Badil Resource Center and the Norwegian Refugee Council, September 2006.

located directly east of the Barrier (as opposed to affected vs. not affected categories in chapter 2) reveals a different picture.

The proportion of households living above the poverty line is significantly higher in the Seam Zone (81%) than in the area directly east of the Barrier (34%).

Due to the classification of areas within East Jerusalem as being within the Seam Zone, this ratio might be exaggerated due to the relatively better access for residents of East Jerusalem to the Israeli labour market and Israeli social services. However, even when excluding East Jerusalem households, the differences in poverty levels remain large and significant: the proportion of the remaining Seam Zone households living above the poverty line is 49%, which is 15% higher than that for households located directly east of the Barrier and the West Bank average (34% above the poverty line) and also 19% above the national average (30%). These trends partially confirm the conclusions of a previous UNSCO report (2005) which claimed that “the Barrier has had a negative economic impact on all communities near it, particularly those to the east of it”.¹¹ The main difference is that, even excluding East Jerusalem figures, the percentage of poor households in Seam Zone communities is even lower than the total West Bank average.

1.2.4 Income levels and the Separation Barrier

Differences in median household income levels are to be seen across communities affected by the Separation Barrier. For households located within the Seam Zone (including East Jerusalem), the median per capita income is NIS 1332 (about USD 280) per month, nearly three times the median per capita income for those located east of the Barrier (NIS 449 (approx. USD 94) per month. The median monthly per capita income in an average West Bank household is NIS 453 (approx. USD 95) per month. As is the case in the poverty analysis above, the classification of East Jerusalem communities as being located in the Seam Zone accounts for most of the vast difference in the median income levels. Excluding East Jerusalem localities from the comparison leads to a more realistic comparison, whereby the median monthly per capita income for all other localities within the Seam Zone is NIS 484 (approx. USD 102), i.e., NIS 31 (approx. USD 7) per capita per month above income levels for communities directly east of the Barrier.

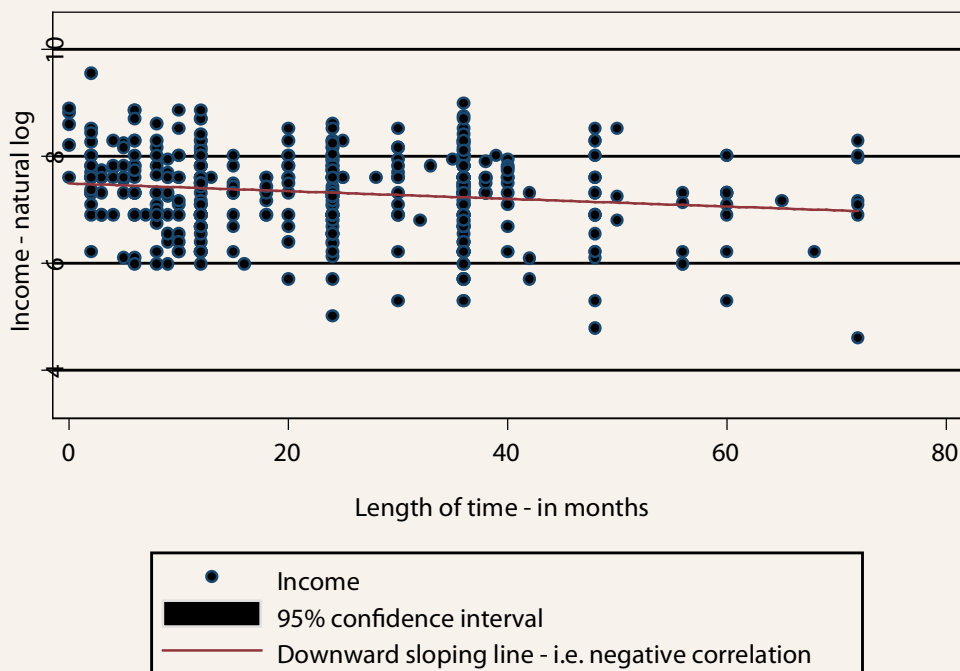
The poverty rates mentioned above (51% poor in the Seam Zone vs. 76% poor in east of Barrier communities) and the relatively small difference in income levels (NIS 31 per capita per month off the median) invites the conclusion that while households located directly east of the Barrier have less income and greater proportions of them are living in poverty, many households located within the Seam Zone (excluding East Jerusalem) are living literally “on the edge” of poverty and are thus highly vulnerable.

As the Separation Barrier encroaches on more communities located along its path, it is expected that its impact will be felt directly in all aspects of life. As respondents from Barrier-affected areas report, the standard of living declines as households become cut off from their relatives, work and land, and as accessible educational and health services¹² become sparser. However, the hardship created by the Barrier extends beyond the initial shock and it continues to have a negative impact on standards of living over time.

¹¹ *Economic Fragmentation and Adaptation in the Rural West Bank*, UNSCO, October 2005.

¹² The most commonly mentioned reason for not receiving needed health services is military barriers, including the Barrier. For further reading on the effect of the Separation Barrier on access to health services, please refer to chapter 5 of the PPP 10 report.

Figure 1.15: Relationship between income levels and length of time a community is affected by the Separation Barrier



Indeed, there is a statistically significant negative correlation between income levels and the length of time communities have been affected by the Separation Barrier. The longer a community has been affected by the Separation Barrier, the lower the income levels.

1.2.5 Employment and the Separation Barrier

The comparison between the number of respondents in the Seam Zone who are unemployed and those from communities directly east of the Barrier reveals a statistically significant difference, whereby respondents from the Seam Zone (including East Jerusalem) have lower unemployment rates than those from communities east of the Barrier (88% vs. 67%, respectively). Conducting the same comparison for all Seam Zone communities except East Jerusalem reveals a smaller difference in employment levels: the ratio of unemployed respondents located east of the Barrier remains at 67% compared to 71% of the respondents located in the Seam Zone (excluding East Jerusalem¹³). It must be noted, however, that the remaining difference is only marginal and is statistically insignificant.

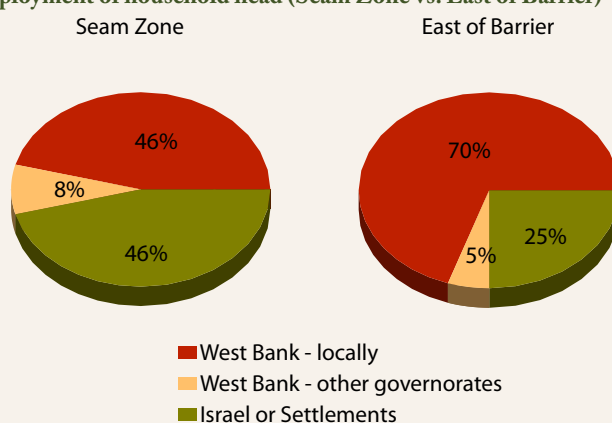
A consideration of the employment status of the household head and how it differs between Seam Zone and east of Barrier communities adds very little to the above comparisons. It must be noted, though, that in East Jerusalem, 100% of the household heads are reported to be either fully or partially employed. Moreover, the ratio of unemployed household heads from Seam Zone communities is also marginally higher (less than 3%) and is not statistically significant.

The marginal differences in employment levels and the statistical insignificance of the cross-tabulations serve to highlight that employment levels cannot account for the differences in poverty and income levels observed between communities located in the Seam Zone and those located east of the Barrier.

¹³ Caution must be advised with this particular statistic, since the number of cases which fit the criteria of living in the Seam Zone aside from East Jerusalem and are in the labour force add up to no more than 17 cases. This is below what is considered as a minimum number of cases for a robust cross-tabulation and is reported here only as a gross and imperfect indicator.

In the section on Poverty and the Separation Barrier, it is suggested that easier access to the Israeli labour market for Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem may possibly explain the lower ratios of households living in poverty. The location of employment is significantly different for communities within the Seam Zone than for those located east of the Barrier. While the ratio of employed respondents from the Seam Zone who work in Israel proper is 28% (excluding East Jerusalem it is 29%), the ratio of employed respondents from communities east of the Barrier who work in Israel proper is 22%. This indicates that for those living within the Seam Zone, employment in Israel proper is more accessible than for respondents located east of the Barrier. Moreover, 74% of the employed respondents from East Jerusalem work within the same city and 70% of the employed respondents from communities directly east of the Barrier work within the remaining West Bank.

Figure 1.16: Location of employment of household head (Seam Zone vs. East of Barrier)



Note: The Seam Zone figures exclude responses from East Jerusalem residents

The figure above details the location of employment of the household head for households both within the Seam Zone and for those from locations east of the Barrier. The difference in employment locally within the West Bank (i.e., within the same community or governorate) is significantly lower for Seam Zone heads of households (46%) than for those from locations east of the Barrier (70%). Conversely, the proportion of household heads from the Seam Zone who work in Israel proper or a settlement is significantly higher (46%) than for household heads from communities east of the Barrier (25%). These figures help explain the fact that greater proportions of households located east of the Barrier are living in poverty when compared to households located in the Seam Zone. Although rates of unemployment are comparable between the communities from the two areas, it is the greater ability of those living within the Seam zone to access employment in Israel - where wages are higher - that explains their better (albeit slightly) socio-economic status.

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Government Change and Security Sector Governance

Roland Friedrich • Arnold Luethold • Luigi De Martino

2.1 Introduction

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the Graduate Institute for Development Studies (IUED) in Geneva conducted a survey in May 2006 to find out how the Palestinian public views security sector governance in the Palestinian Territories.¹ The survey, which involved 1,800 Palestinians from the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, followed up on a similar survey carried out by DCAF and IUED in July 2005.²

The July 2005 survey was the first attempt to understand how Palestinians view and judge Palestinian security sector³ governance. It measured the trust that the Palestinian public placed in various security forces, both official and unofficial. It examined how Palestinians evaluated the Palestinian National Authority's performance in delivering security, controlling armed groups, and implementing reforms. And finally, the report also provided an overview of public opinion on the needs of security sector reform. The report concluded that the public was in general dissatisfied with the performance of the security sector, had little confidence in its governance, doubted its legitimacy and demanded urgent reforms, such as a substantial reduction in corruption and nepotism, enhanced respect for human rights and better political control over armed groups.

Over the last 12 months, the region has witnessed some major changes which have had a direct impact on security sector governance. In late summer 2005, Israel withdrew its settlers and soldiers from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank. In a surprise victory, Hamas won a majority of seats in the Palestinian legislative elections of January 2006 and found itself suddenly in a position where it had to form a new government. Western donor countries responded swiftly by boycotting the new Hamas government and cutting off much of their financial support to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). As a result, the PNA faced serious difficulties in paying the salaries of its employees. By the end of the first half of 2006, tensions between Palestinian factions had risen to a new high. Hostilities between armed Palestinian factions in Gaza and Israel had existed for months and eventually intensified in June when Israel resumed military operations in Gaza and redeployed its troops in the Gaza strip.

The present report examines if and to what extent changes in the political and socioeconomic environment have affected Palestinian public perceptions of security sector governance. It also explores whether the change of government has altered the way Palestinians perceive their security needs. Considering that the new Hamas government was sworn in on 29 March 2006 and thus had just assumed its functions when the survey was conducted, the report does not provide information on how the public views the performance of the current government. Instead it shows what the public thinks of the situation that Hamas inherited when it took over the government. In this sense, the report provides essentially a baseline assessment for a new government. Only a comparison with future assessments will eventually allow for conclusions to be drawn on the new government's performance.

¹ The present report is part of a larger initiative undertaken by the Graduate Institute for Development Studies in Geneva (IUED), the Palestinian Public Perceptions Reports. Published annually, these reports assess changes in the living conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories. This year, IUED publishes its tenth report. The project is supported by a group of donors, including the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DCAF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), UNICEF. The reports and results of the surveys can be accessed at www.iuedpolls.org.

² See DCAF/IUED, Palestinian Public Perceptions of Security Sector Governance, Summary Report, Geneva, 14 October 2005. Available at www.dcaf.ch/mena/documents.

³ The security sector usually includes the armed forces, police and gendarmerie, internal and external intelligence services, and judicial and penal institutions. It also includes the elected and duly appointed civil authorities responsible for control and oversight, namely the executive and parliament. For a detailed description of the Palestinian security sector see Roland Friedrich, "The Palestinian Predicament – Security Governance in the Absence of Statehood", in Arnold Luethold and Rami Khoury (eds.), *Challenges to Security Governance in the Middle East*, DCAF 2006; and Roland Friedrich, *Security Sector Reform in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, PASSIA, Jerusalem 2004.

For easy comparison with the results of the last report, this survey used identical or similar questions wherever possible. However, new questions have been added where this seemed necessary for a better and more differentiated understanding of public views.

In this study, ‘security sector’ is the public sector that comprises all security forces and relevant civilian bodies that manage and oversee them, including the judiciary. ‘Security sector governance’ very generally refers to how this sector is run. It looks at the people, institutions, mechanisms and practices that affect the functioning of the security sector and its capacity to deliver security in the broadest possible sense to the people. A successful security sector would deliver security effectively to the greatest number of people at affordable costs, in a fully transparent and accountable fashion. How well this is done is, however, a matter of public perception.

Understanding how the public views the security sector and its work is therefore important for good governance. Studies of public perception of security sector governance are a crucial tool not only for assessing the quality of governance, but also for evaluating the future direction of reforms. By giving the people a voice in the discussion of their own future security, public perception studies are a step towards greater inclusiveness in the management and oversight of security issues. They also help to establish public accountability of the security sector and to involve civil society in its governance. This is in itself an important element of any security sector reform (SSR)⁴ agenda, because the security sector often tends to resist public input and oversight.

As many other governments in the Middle East would be reluctant to authorise such a perceptions study, the Palestinian National Authority deserves credit for having made this research possible. The present summary report contains some key findings of the survey.

2.2 The Palestinian Security Sector

Throughout the first half of 2006, tension between Hamas and Fatah led to violent clashes between militants of both movements, including assassinations, bomb attacks and street battles, particularly in Gaza. The struggle between Hamas and Fatah also played out in the security sector which witnessed some major changes.

After the January 2006 elections, the PNA Presidency took various steps to remove the security organisations from the control of the Hamas government. The National Security Forces were separated from what was, until then, called the Ministry of Interior and National Security and were put under the authority of the President. The President also ensured control over the Internal Security Forces through the appointment of new commanders and created a new border security agency. The Presidential Guard, which had long been affiliated with the Presidential Security/Force 17, was expanded and put under the direct authority of the President.

The Hamas government on its part reacted by creating a new Gaza security force (‘Special Backup Force to the Police’) composed of members of its military wing and affiliated factions. The official mission of the ‘Backup Force’ is to support the existing security organisations in enforcing law and order in Gaza. The Presidency opposed this move, but nevertheless Fatah set up new militias in Gaza and the West Bank and recruited additional personnel for the Preventive Security.

These developments and the absence of reliable data make it difficult to give accurate numbers of PNA security personnel. Most estimates put the current strength of the PNA security forces at some 75,000 as of May 2006. The personnel figures below mostly reflect the number of security personnel on the payroll as of September 2005, the date of the last reliable figures.

⁴ Security sector reform (SSR) refers to a systemic transformation of the security sector so that the various institutions can play an effective, efficient and democratically accountable role in providing internal and external security to the citizens.

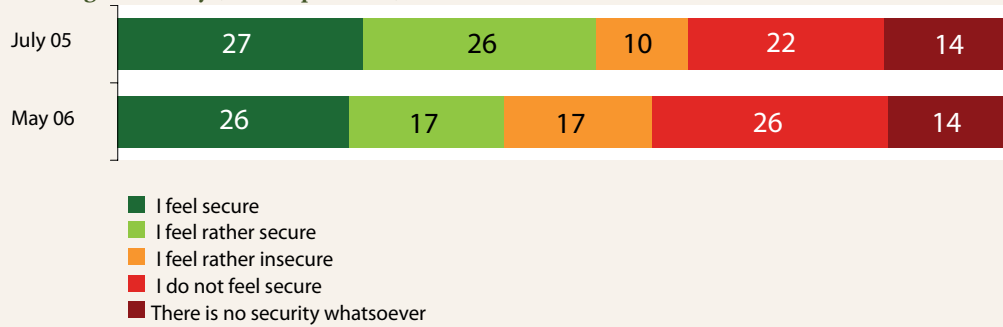
An Overview of Palestinian Security Forces		
PNA Security Forces		Personnel
Internal Security Forces	Civil Police (law enforcement)	18,500
	Preventive Security (internal intelligence)	5,500
National Security Forces (PNA 'proto-armed forces') including:	Civil Defence (emergency and rescue services)	950
	Special Backup Force to the Police	ca. 3,000
		17,000
	National Security Forces	11,000
	Naval Police	900
	Military Intelligence	600
PNA Security Forces		Personnel
	Military Police	2,000
	Presidential Security/Force 17	2,500
General Intelligence (external intelligence)		4,200
Presidential Guard (protection of PNA President)		3,500
Non-Statutory Forces		Personnel
Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades (military wing of Hamas)		2,000-4,000
Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (Fateh-affiliated militias)		c. 3000
Al-Quds Battalions (military wing of Islamic Jihad)		c. 500
Nasser Salah ad-Din Squads (military wing of the Popular Resistance Committee)		c. 300
Martyr Abu Ali Mustafa Battalions (military wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP))		c. 300
Civil Management and Oversight		
Executive Management	President Prime Minister Minister of Interior National Security Council (practically defunct)	
Legislative Oversight	Palestinian Legislative Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interior and Security Committee • Committee for the Oversight of Human Rights and Public Freedoms • Budget and Financial Affairs Committee • Legal Committee 	
Judiciary		
PNA Judiciary	Regular Courts (Magistrate Courts and Courts of First Instance), Supreme Court (combining Constitutional Court, Court of Appeal, Administrative Court), Sharia Courts, Military Courts	
Non-official justice system	Clan-based customary law	

2.3 Key findings

2.3.1 Palestinians feel less secure

Compared to July 2005, Palestinians living in the Palestinian Territories felt less secure. More than half of the respondents (57 percent) said that they felt insecure, an increase of 11 percent.

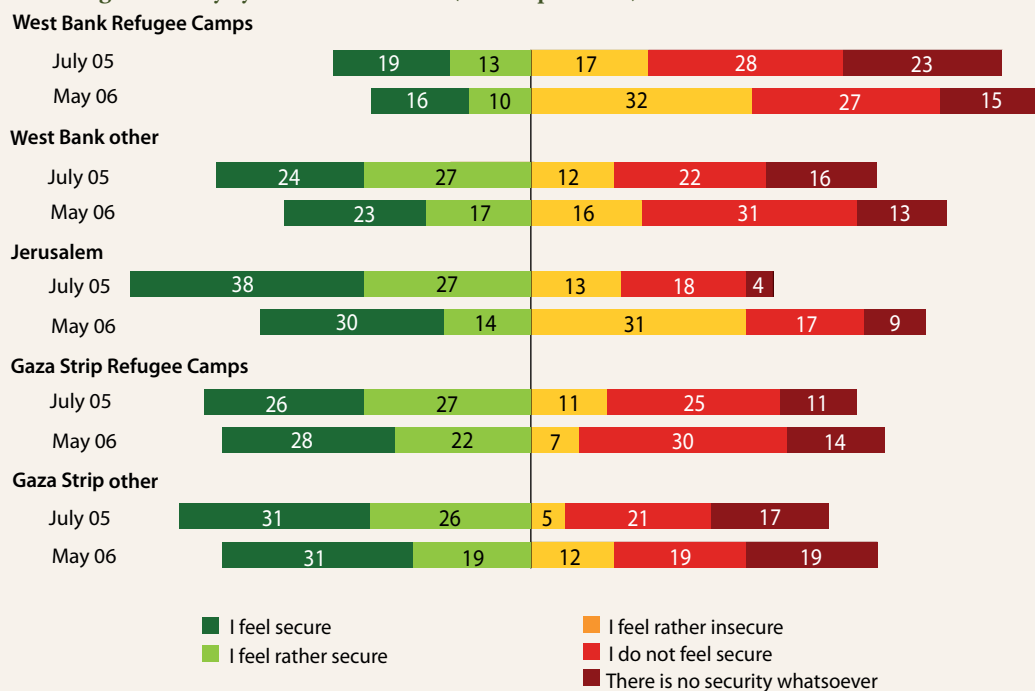
Figure 2.1: Feeling of Security (% of respondents)



Feelings of insecurity increased significantly in Jerusalem where only 44 percent of the respondents felt secure, compared to 65 percent a year ago. This increase is very likely linked to the growing physical and economic separation of the city from its hinterland in the West Bank. In Gaza, too, perceived insecurity increased: more than 50 percent of all respondents from the Gaza Strip said that they felt insecure, whereas in July 2005 perceived insecurity had remained under the 50 percent threshold. However, in comparison to the severe deterioration of the security situation in Gaza over the last 12 months, this increase is relatively low: four percent in the camps and seven percent outside.

Respondents in the West Bank continued to feel less secure than those in Gaza. There, insecurity increased from 68 to 74 percent in the camps and from 50 to 60 percent in areas outside the camps. This is possibly related to the socioeconomic deterioration of the last months and the increase in internal tensions. Whereas in Gaza the population had to adjust some time ago to economic hardship and heightened tension, many West Bank residents may feel the impact of these developments more strongly, given that until now they had enjoyed a relatively higher degree of economic and political stability.

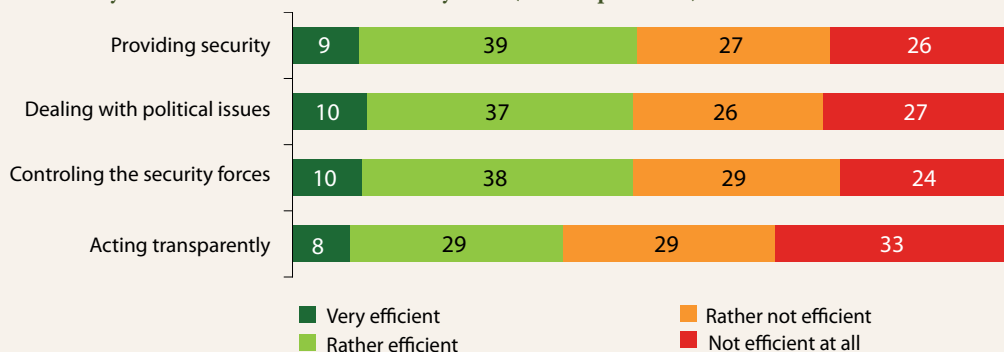
Figure 2.2: Feeling of Security by Place of Residence (% of respondents)



2.3.2 Palestinians expect more security from the Hamas government

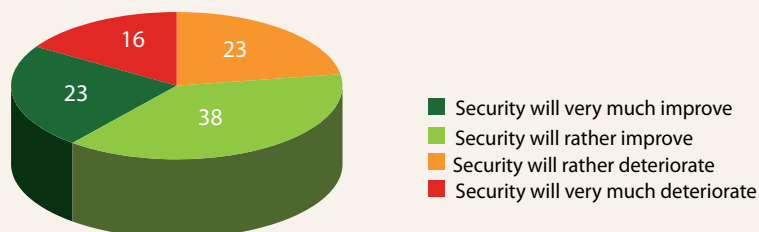
Almost half of the respondents felt that the previous PNA government failed in providing safety and security to the population. Fifty-three percent said that the government was ineffective in delivering security to the people. The same percentage said that the government failed to control the PNA security organisations. An even higher percentage — 62 percent — thought that the previous government did not act in a transparent manner.

Figure 2.3: Efficiency of Previous Government — May 2006 (% of respondents)



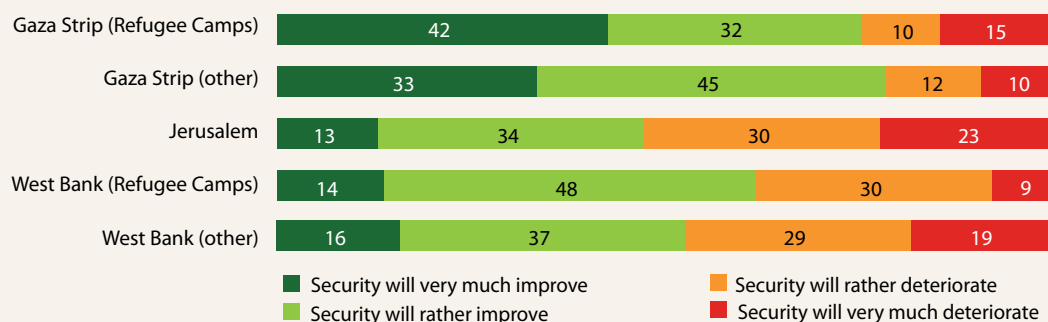
In contrast to the negative assessment of past performance, Palestinians were rather confident in the new government’s ability to provide safety and security. Sixty-one percent of all respondents expected the security situation to improve under a Hamas-led government. Almost a quarter of all respondents (23 percent) expected security would very much improve. In areas where political support for Hamas was generally high, positive expectations were significantly higher.

Figure 2.4: Expectations of Evolution of the Security Situation — May 2006 (% of respondents)



In Gaza, Hamas’s stronghold, 74 percent of respondents living in camps and 78 percent of those living outside the camps felt that security would improve. But also in the West Bank, more than half of all respondents counted on an improvement of the security situation under Hamas. Unlike in Gaza, camp residents in the West Bank were more optimistic than residents outside the camps: 63 percent of camp residents expected security to improve, compared to 53 percent among those outside the camps. Only in Jerusalem did a majority (53 percent) expect a deterioration of the security situation.

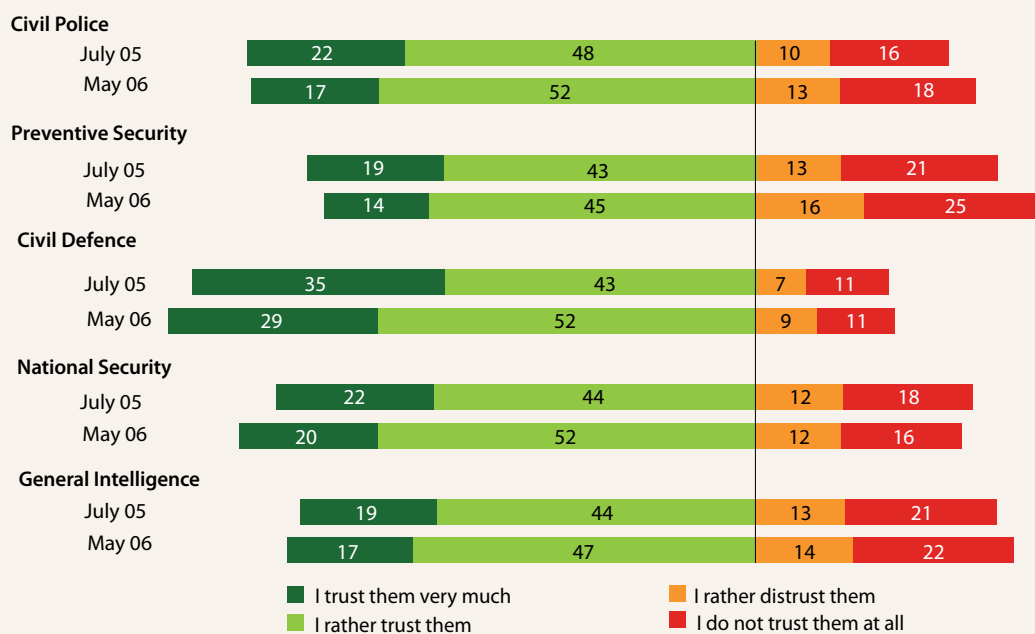
Figure 2.5: Expectations of Evolution of the Security Situation by Place of Residence /— May 2006 (% of respondents)



2.3.3 The PNA security organisations still enjoy some trust, /but scepticism is growing

A majority of Palestinians still thought that the Palestinian security organisations could be trusted. However, in comparison to July 2005, public trust had diminished. Roughly five percent more respondents expressed distrust in all organisations, except for the National Security Forces, for which trust slightly increased. And, compared to 2005, a significantly smaller segment of respondents was prepared to trust the security organisations “very much”. Intelligence agencies continued to be comparatively less trusted than other security organisations: in May 2006, 25 percent of all respondents said that they did not trust the Preventive Security at all, compared to 21 percent last year; also for the General Intelligence, the survey showed slightly reduced trust. Rather surprisingly, the Civil Police was no exception — trust in the Civil Police dropped by five percent, despite the fact that it had undergone an internationally assisted reform process over the previous 12 months.

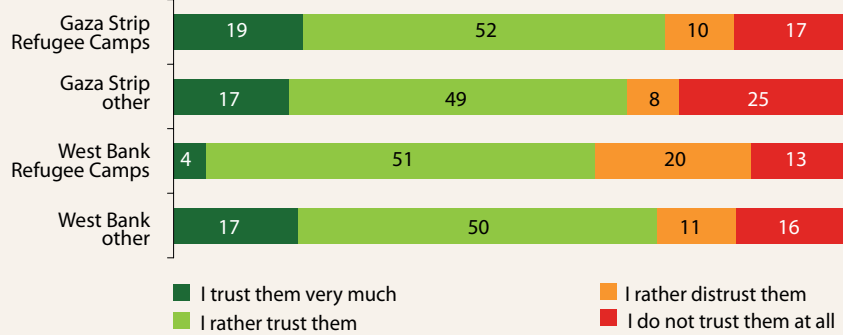
Figure 2.6: Trust in PNA security organisations (% of respondents)



The level of trust in the security organisations varied with educational level and, though to a lesser extent, the socioeconomic level of respondents: the higher the level of education and income, the lower the level of trust. The only exception to this was in regards to the Civil Defence, for which none of the two surveys could find a link between the level of trust and the level of education or income. Due to the apolitical nature of its mission (emergency and rescue services, fire fighting etc.), the Civil Defence has been comparatively less involved in domestic politics. This could possibly explain why in both surveys the Civil Defence scored higher trust levels than other organisations.

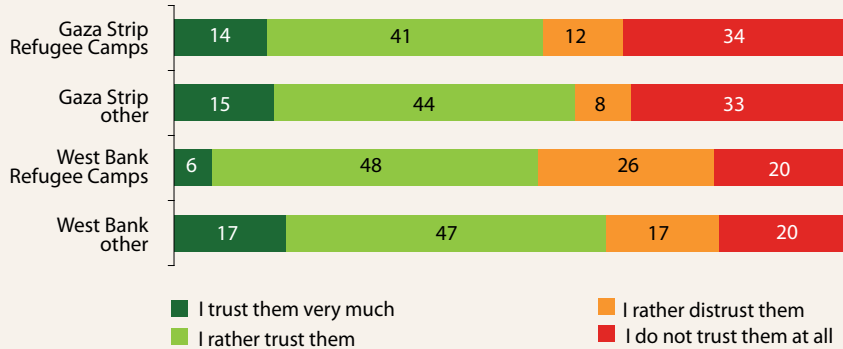
In Gaza, the PNA security organisations obtained relatively similar trust levels inside and outside the refugee camps, whereas in the West Bank they were trusted more by people living outside the refugee camps. Comparing both regions, Palestinians seemed to be more polarised in Gaza than in the West Bank: 33 percent of the Gaza respondents said they had no trust at all in the Preventive Security, as opposed to 20 percent in the West Bank; and 26 percent of Gaza respondents said the same of the General Intelligence, compared to 20 percent in the West Bank. Interestingly, 25 percent of Gaza respondents placed high trust in the National Security Forces, as opposed to 19 percent in the West Bank.

Figure 2.7: Trust in Civil Police by Place of Residence — May 2006 (% of valid responses⁵)



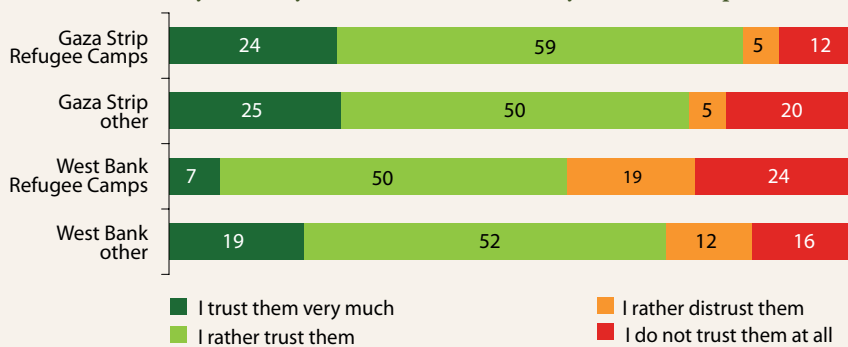
The reduced trust in the Civil Police indicates that, in the eyes of the public, recent reform and rehabilitation efforts had not been successful. In the search for an explanation, three assumptions need to be considered: (1) the reform process did not produce tangible outcomes; (2) it produced outcomes, but not those valued by the public; (3) it produced the expected outcomes, but the public is unaware of them, because these had not been properly communicated.

Figure 2.8: Trust in Preventive Security by Place of Residence — May 2006 (% of respondents)



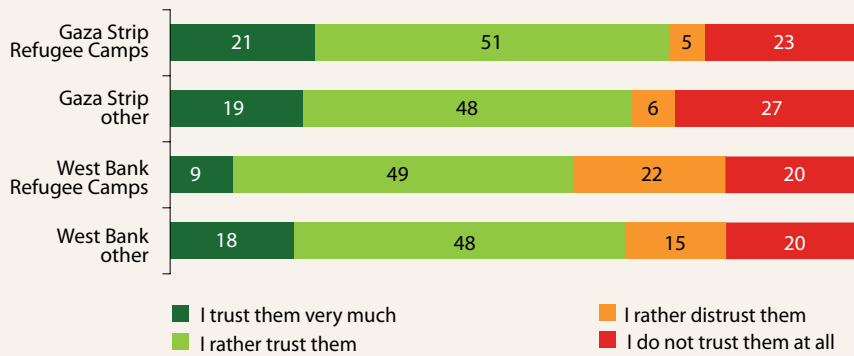
The lower trust in the PNA's intelligence organisations seemed to be related to the infighting between Hamas and Fatah that have marked the post-election phase. Both the Preventive Security and the General Intelligence, especially in Gaza, had a direct involvement in this political struggle. This may have adversely affected their public image. In contrast, the National Security Forces, which managed to stay largely away from the power struggle, may have been rewarded by the public with slightly higher trust. This apolitical attitude would also help explain why the National Security Forces enjoyed comparatively high trust in Gaza.

Figure 2.9: Trust in National Security Forces by Place of Residence — May 2006 (% of respondents)



⁵ Some respondents chose not to answer this question. However, the percentages in the section were calculated based on the total number of interviews conducted rather than the number of responses.

Figure 2.10: Trust in General Intelligence by Place of Residence — May 2006 (% of respondents)

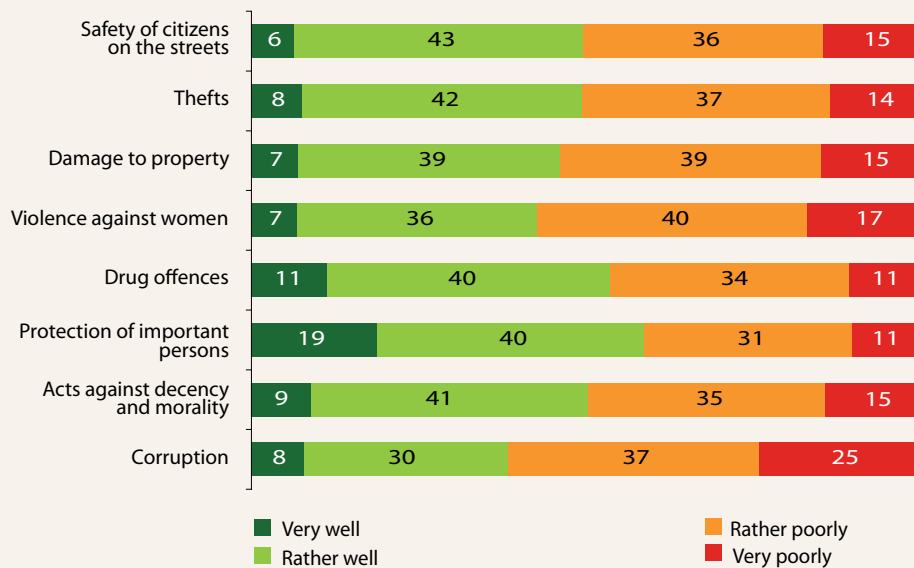


Overall, this survey found that trust levels in the various security organisations correlated strongly with the findings in the last survey. It also indicates that public trust in PNA-controlled security organisations was falling.

2.3.4 Law-enforcement could do better

A majority of Palestinians expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of security forces in several areas of law enforcement. Asked to rate performance in eight areas of law enforcement, a majority of Palestinians expressed dissatisfaction with the authorities' performance in six of them. Respondents were most unhappy with the performance in fighting corruption (62 percent), in preventing violence against women (57 percent) and in preventing damage to property (54 percent). This shows that a much higher percentage of Palestinians than normally thought expected the government to take action in preventing violence against women. Only in regards to protection of important persons and combating drug offences did more than half of the respondents state that they were satisfied with the work of the security forces.

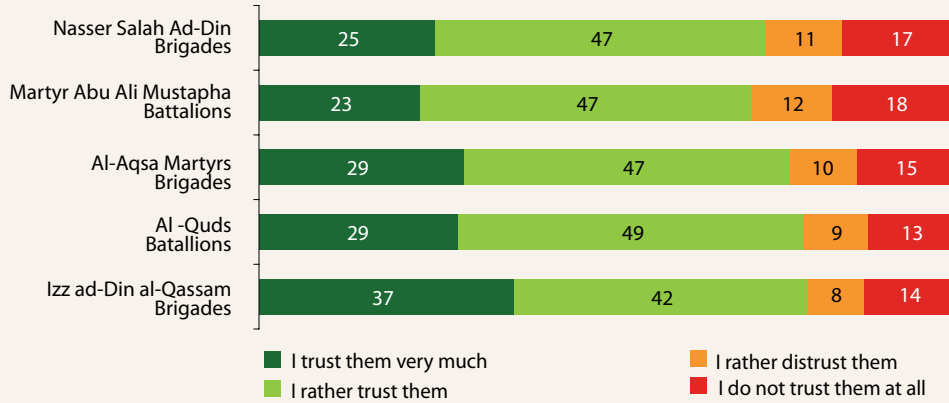
Figure: 2.11 Performance in Law Enforcement — May 2006 (% of respondents)



2.3.5 Trust in armed factions remains high

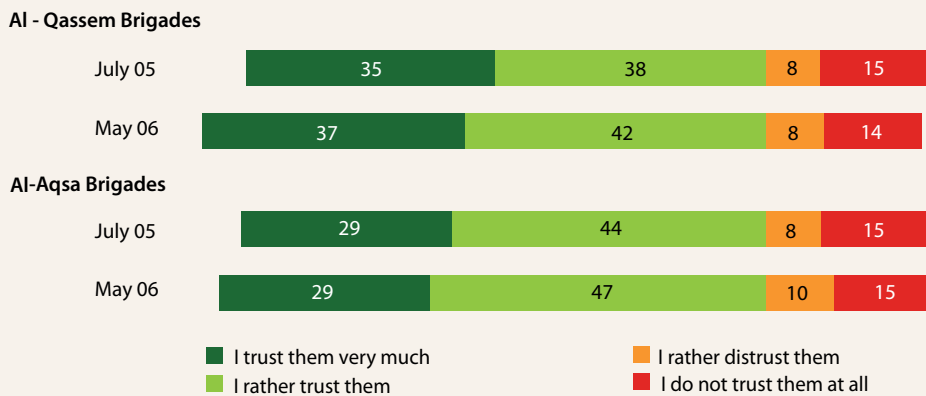
More than 70 percent of the respondents trusted non-statutory forces very much or to some extent. The most trustworthy groups for them were the military wings of Hamas (Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades) and Islamic Jihad (Al-Quds Battalions): respectively, 79 percent and 78 percent of respondents thought these groups would help increase the personal safety of Palestinians.

Figure 2.12: Trust in Armed Groups — May 2006 (% of respondents)



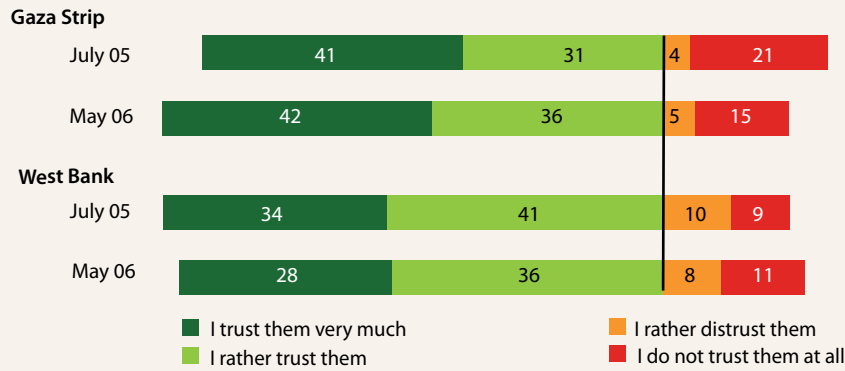
Compared to July 2005, trust in the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades remained stable, whereas trust in the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades (Hamas) had risen from 73 to 78 percent. This may be related partly to the reputation that Hamas’ military wing earned as a resistance movement, partly to its capability to impose a higher degree of discipline than the Al-Aqsa Brigades. In Gaza, respondents generally placed higher trust in all armed factions than those in the West Bank.

Figure 2.13: Trust in Armed Groups (% of respondents)



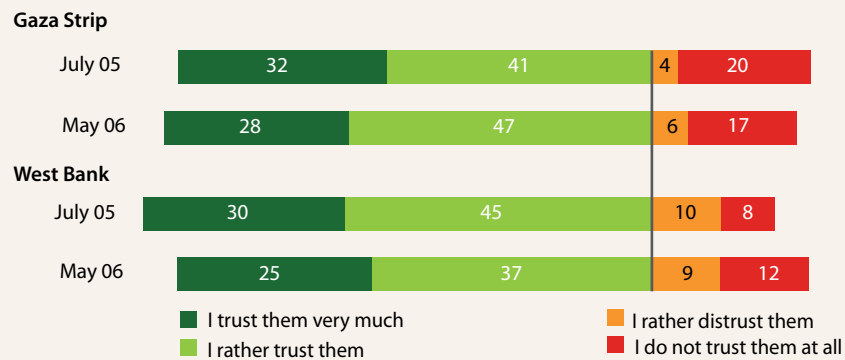
Support for the Al-Qassam Brigades is particularly strong in Gaza. Forty-two percent in Gaza reported having high trust in this group, compared to 28 percent in the West Bank. Overall trust for Hamas’ military wing rose from 71 percent in July 2005 to 78 percent in May 2006. In the West Bank, however, overall trust in Al-Qassam Brigades decreased from 75 to 68 percent.

Figure 2.14: Trust in Al-Qassem Brigades by Place of Residence (% of valid responses*)



The Al-Aqsa Brigades received similar trust levels in the West Bank and Gaza. In Gaza, overall trust in the group had risen slightly from 73 to 75 percent, whereas in the West Bank it had fallen from 75 to 63 percent. In Gaza, higher trust in armed factions could indicate a growing identification with armed groups. Palestinian infighting and the confrontation with Israel may have contributed to such an attitude. The loss of trust in the Al-Qassam Brigades in the West Bank, an area where Fatah has been traditionally stronger than Hamas, might also illustrate the growing polarisation between supporters of Hamas and Fatah.

Figure 2.15: Trust in Al-Aqsa Brigades by Place of Residence (% of valid responses*)

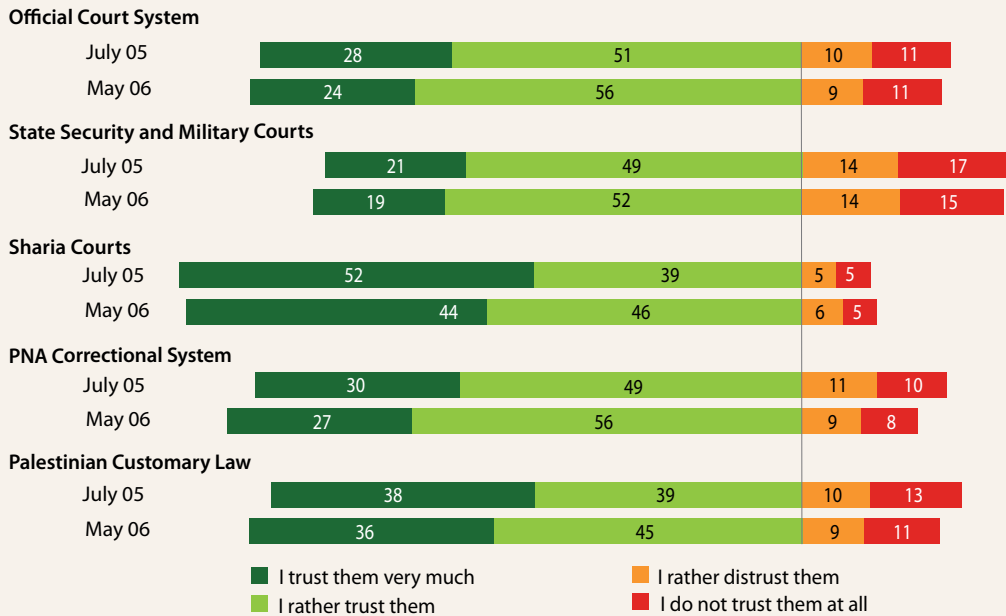


Trust in armed groups varied with level of income and education. Persons with higher incomes and more education trust non-statutory forces less than people below the poverty line and with low levels of education.

2.3.6 Trust in Sharia courts and customary law institutions remains high

Institutions that guarantee the rule of law, especially the courts and the correctional system, are important for a functioning security sector. Asked about their trust in judicial institutions, a majority of respondents said they trusted most the Sharia courts: 90 percent trusted these courts to some degree.

Figure 2.16: Trust in the Judiciary (% of respondents)



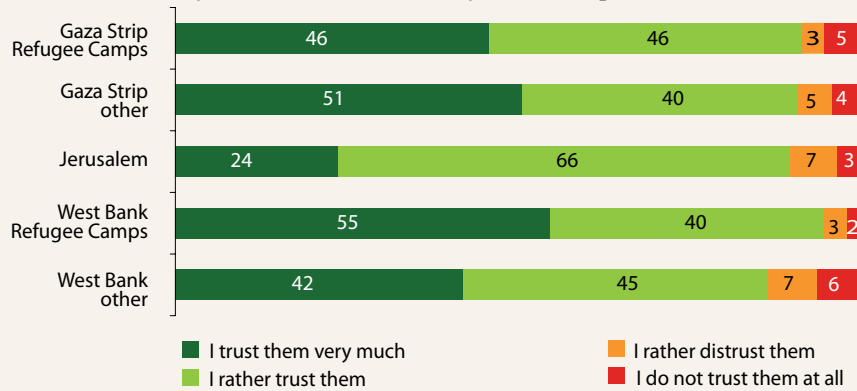
However, the number of respondents with high trust in the Sharia courts dropped from 52 percent in 2005 to 44 percent in 2006. This might reflect a fear that, following the electoral victory of Hamas, Islamic institutions might gain too much influence. The fact that high trust in Sharia Courts dropped from 55 percent to 43 percent among West Bank residents outside the refugee camps — areas which are traditionally Fatah-dominated — seems to support such an interpretation.

The PNA correctional system ranked second in terms of overall trust with 83 percent. Customary law institutions saw an increase in overall trust from 77 percent in 2005 to 81 percent in May 2006.

A majority expressed trust in the official court system,⁶ but in general Palestinians reported having higher trust in Sharia courts and customary law institutions. This raises questions as to the impact of reform efforts that were undertaken to strengthen the judiciary. Three factors may help explain the comparatively higher trust in Sharia courts and customary law institutions: they offer easy access as they are present in all areas; they appeal to the population with the conservative values they represent; and they deal essentially with civil matters.

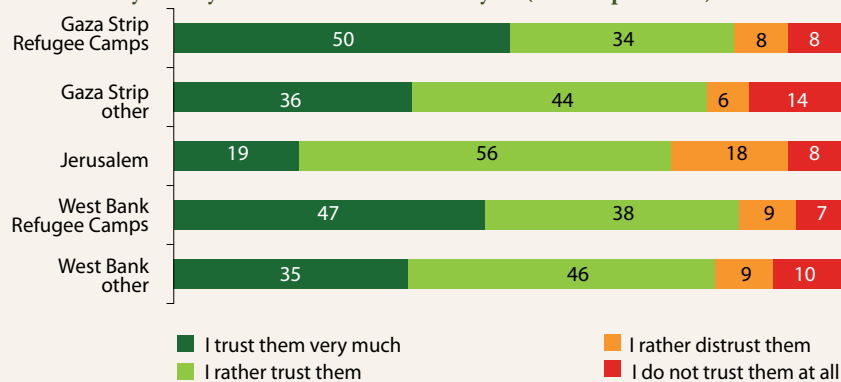
⁶ The official judiciary — often described as the weakest institutional link in the PNA — continues to suffer from grave problems: the PNA legal system is still an amalgamation of laws of various origins (Ottoman, British, Egyptian and Jordanian); there is a lack of personnel, funding and adequate infrastructure; the Executive interferes with the Courts; and court orders are not implemented.

Figure 2.17: Trust in Sharia Courts by Place of Residence — May 06 (% of respondents)



The place of residence continues to be the key factor for explaining the overall high trust in Sharia courts. Around half of the Gaza and West Bank respondents had high trust in these courts, compared to only 24 percent in Jerusalem. The lower results there could be a consequence of better access to regular Israeli courts. This interpretation is supported by the observation that education, age and income had no influence on the trust in Sharia courts.

Figure 2.18 Trust in Customary Law by Place of Residence — May 06 (% of respondents)

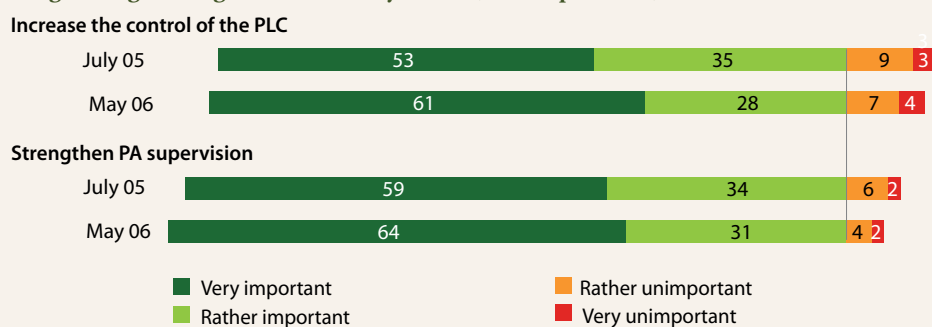


The availability or absence of satisfactory alternatives might also explain the significant variations in the trust levels in customary law between the regions. Only 19 percent of Jerusalem respondents had high trust in clan-based law, compared to between 35 and 50 percent in the West Bank and Gaza.

2.3.7 Strong demand for more accountability and oversight

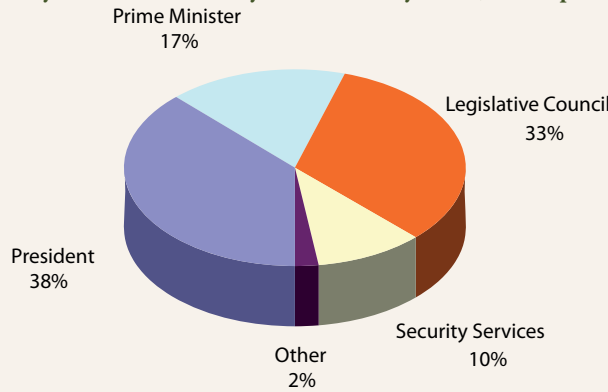
Respondents strongly called for increased civil-democratic oversight of the PNA security organisations. Ninety-five percent demanded more executive supervision by the PNA, and 89 percent demanded increased oversight by the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC).

Figure 2.19: Strengthening Oversight of the Security Sector (% of respondents)



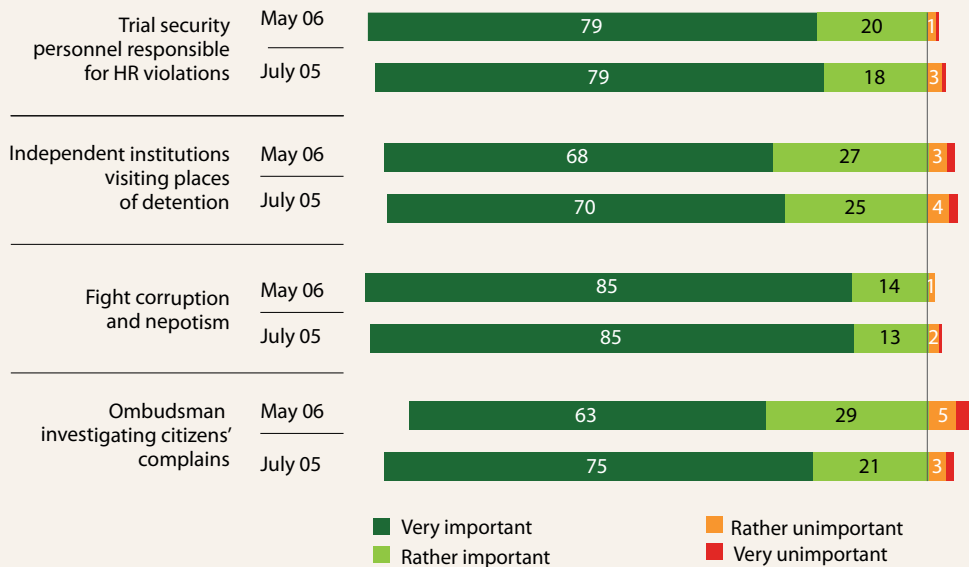
When asked to name the institution that should make key decisions in Palestinian security affairs, a majority opted for the PNA President (35 percent), 30 percent for the PLC, and 16 percent for the Prime Minister. Only 9 percent wanted to see the security forces responsible for security decisionmaking. This clearly demonstrates a popular will to strengthen democratic oversight of the security forces. Considering that the Prime Minister is legally accountable to the PLC, the survey results reveal a preference for a parliamentary system (46 percent), rather than a presidential system (35 percent).

Figure 2.20: Who should make key decisions in security affairs? — May 2006 (% of respondents)



Further evidence of strong popular support for democratic oversight is provided in the following: when asked to rate the importance of four proposed reform measures to improve accountability, between 63 and 85 percent said all of them were “very important”. As in 2005, fighting corruption and nepotism was on top of the list of priorities. Eighty-five percent of the respondents considered measures to this effect as “very important” and another 14 percent as “important”. Seventy-eight percent considered it “very important” that security personnel implicated in human rights-violations be brought to justice.

Figure 2.21: Measures to Strengthen Accountability (% of respondents)



Such continued widespread support for in-depth reform suggests that the security sector reform measures taken by the PNA over the last ten months have not met the expectations of the Palestinian people. It also shows that the security sector continues to be in a crisis of confidence and legitimacy.

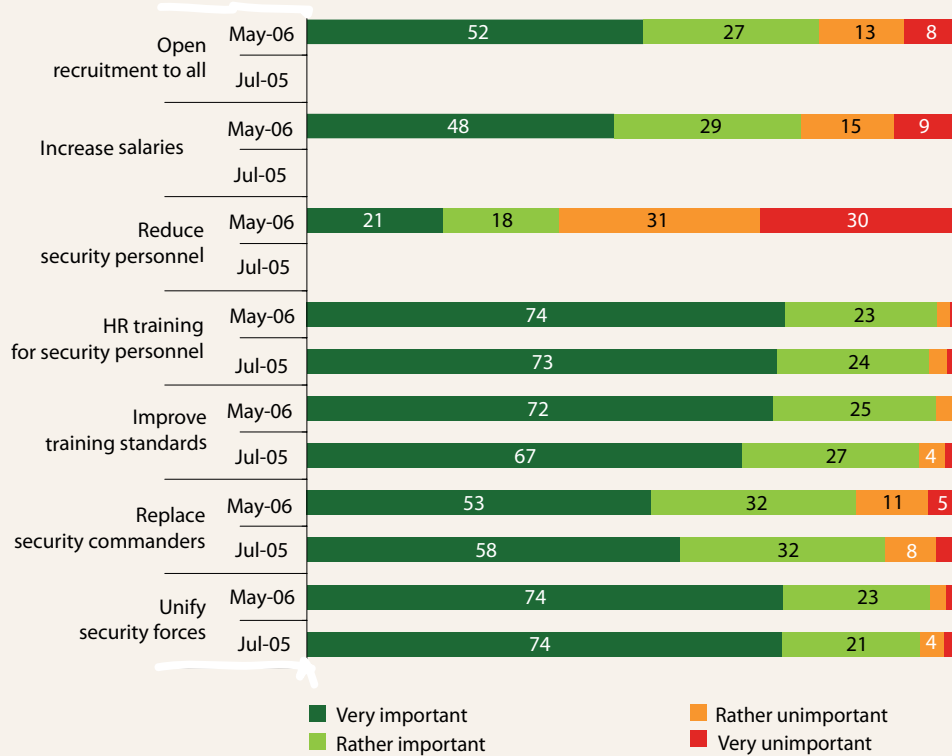
2.3.8 Palestinians want more efficient security forces

Palestinians demanded better performing and more professional security forces. Ninety-two percent of respondents attached importance to the unification of the security forces, the improvement of training

standards and human rights training for security personnel. Compared to July 2005, support for these three measures increased by eight percent in average; this is a further indication that past efforts of reforming the PNA security forces have not been successful in the eyes of the population. The increase of salaries for security personnel and impartial recruitment into the forces were also seen as important, but of a lower priority than the unification of services or the improvement of training.

A majority of 61 percent of the respondents considered a reduction of security personnel unimportant. This is not surprising, given that employment in the security forces provides income for more than 70,000 people and their dependents. The overall rejection of downsizing might also reflect the fact that the PNA security forces are seen as an important element in the Palestinian state-building process and a symbol of national identity.

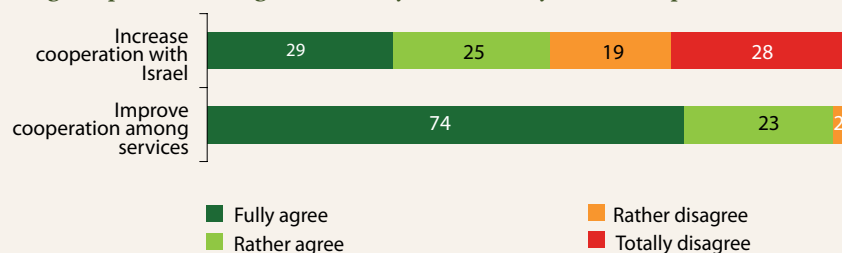
Figure 2.22: Reform of the PNA Security Forces (% of respondents)



2.3.9 More security cooperation needed

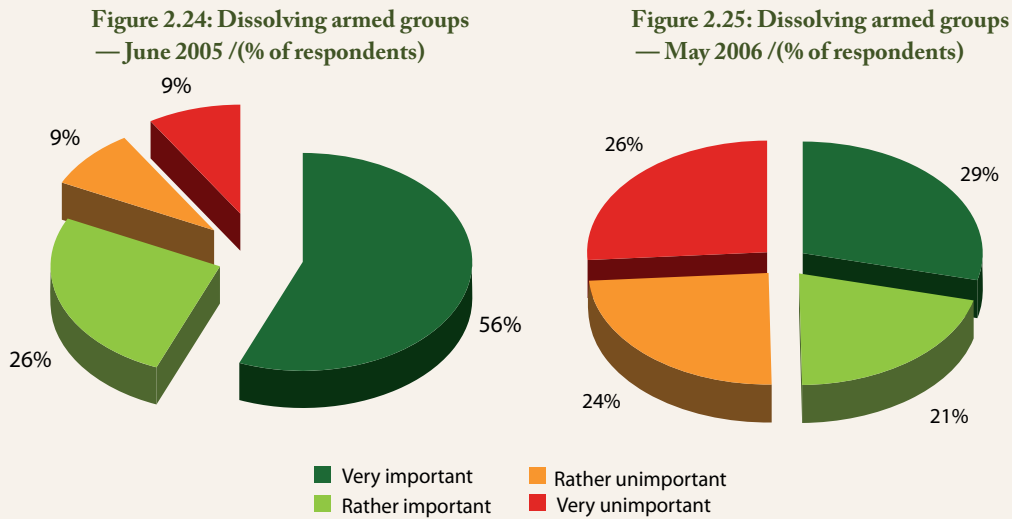
Ninety-seven percent of all respondents attached importance to greater inter-service cooperation among the PNA forces, and 54 percent to increased security cooperation with Israel. Cooperation with Israel in matters related to security was much more controversial, as more than a quarter of Palestinians (27 percent) were totally opposed to it.

Figure 2.23: Improving Cooperation among PNA security forces — May 06 (% of respondents)



2.3.10 Dissolving armed groups has become less popular

Demobilizing militias was seen as much less important than a year ago, when 82 percent supported the disbanding of armed groups. In May 2006, only 50 percent attached importance to the dissolving of armed groups.

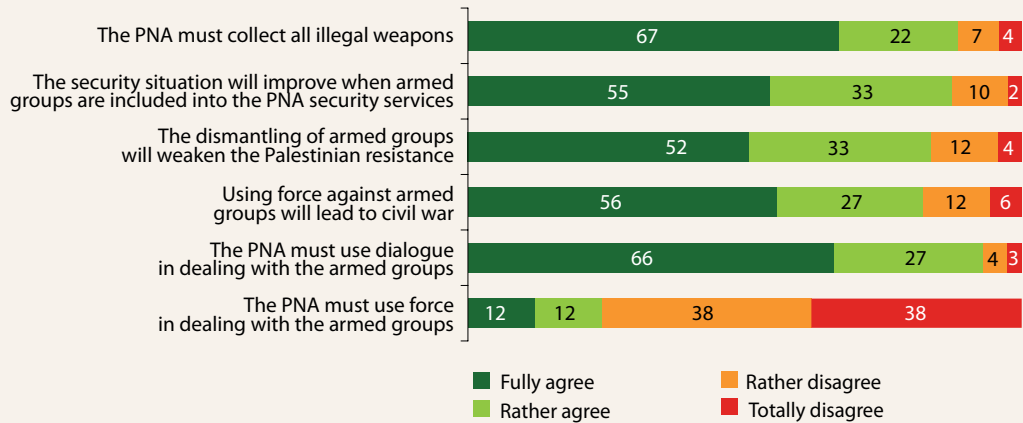


Two factors may have influenced this change in attitude: on one side, growing tensions among factions may have fuelled fears that the situation could get out of control and result in internal armed conflict. This may have strengthened reliance on militias, particularly among supporters of Hamas, as the official security organisations are dominated by Fatah. On the other side, the popular perception that militias had forced Israel to withdraw its troops from Gaza may also have contributed to this result. This could help explain why in Gaza 62 percent considered disarmament unimportant, compared to 28 percent last year.

2.3.11 The PNA must not use force in dealing with militias

The survey included a set of questions on how the PNA should deal with armed groups. Answers to these questions largely confirm the trust Palestinians placed in non-statutory forces. A majority of 86 percent favoured dialogue and consensus over the use of force. Seventy-six percent of the respondents rejected the use of force against the militias, and 77 percent anticipated that forceful action against the militias would lead to civil war. Palestinians saw militias as an instrument of resistance against the occupation: 77 percent of the respondents feared that dismantling militias would weaken the resistance. But, at the same time, they also expressed fears that unaccountable armed groups could have a negative impact on their security: 88 percent of the respondents expected the security situation in the Palestinian territories to improve if members of the militias were integrated into the PNA security organisations, and 89 percent favoured the collection of all illegal weapons.

Figure 2.26: Armed Groups — May 2006 (% of respondents)

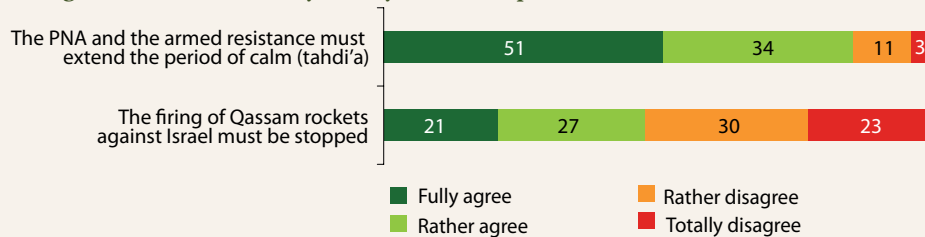


2.3.12 Palestinians want hostilities to stop, but also support action against Israel

Palestinians seemed to be uncertain about the wider security policy their society should follow. On the one hand, a majority of 85 percent of the respondents wanted the PNA and the armed groups to further extend the ceasefire arrangement (tahdi'a) on which all military factions had agreed in March 2005, and which had led to a significant drop in Palestinian violence against Israel. On the other hand, a majority of Palestinians (53 percent) supported the firing of rockets against Israeli targets. In Gaza, more respondents felt strongly on this issue: 35 percent of respondents in the Gaza camps and 28 percent outside the camps were totally opposed to ending the launching of Qassam rockets.

This apparent contradiction may find its resolution in the explanation that Palestinians in general prefer a de-escalation of conflict with Israel, but support the activities of armed groups when these are perceived as retaliation against Israeli military operations.

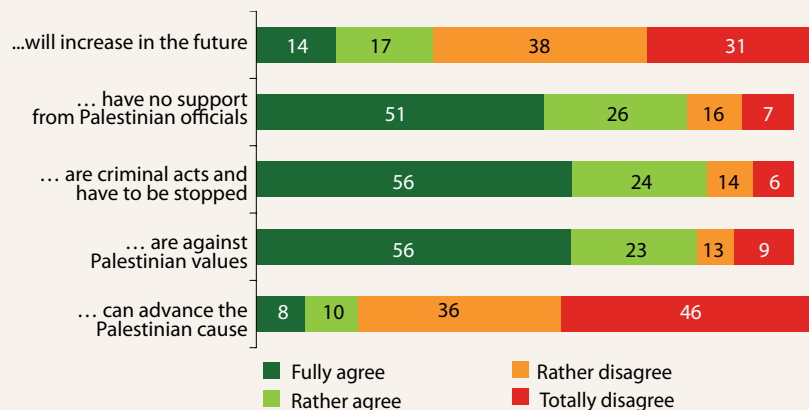
Figure 2.27: Dealing with Peace and Security — May 06 (% of respondents)



2.3.13 Palestinians oppose kidnappings

Over the last nine months, Palestinian militants kidnapped some 15 international workers in Gaza and the West Bank. The survey showed that the Palestinian public overwhelmingly rejected such acts: 80 percent considered kidnappings of foreigners criminals acts that need to be stopped and 79 percent said that kidnappings were against Palestinian values. A majority of 82 percent expressed the conviction that kidnappings would not help advance the Palestinian cause.

Figure 2.28: Kidnappings of Foreigners — May 2006 (% of respondents)

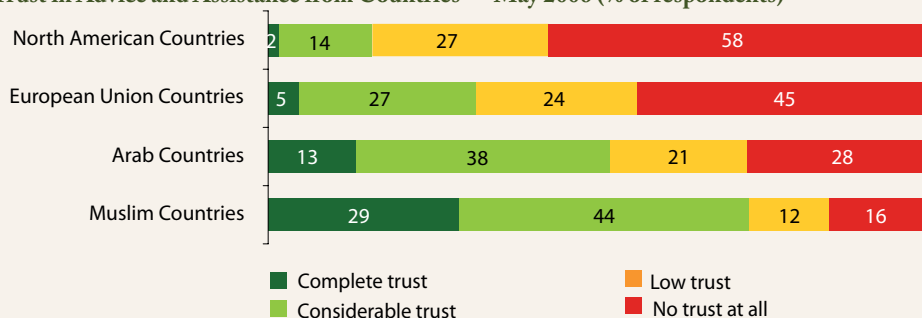


2.3.14 Low trust in American and European donors

A majority of Palestinians felt that, in order to improve their performance, the PNA security forces needed more resources. Between 95 and 98 percent of the respondents saw a need to receive donor support for training, funding, and equipping of forces. However, Palestinians expressed low trust in the Western donor community and their advice and assistance. Only 16 percent of the respondents trusted advice and assistance for security sector reform coming from the US and Canada, and less than one-third (31 percent) trusted the countries of the European Union. Palestinians expressed greater trust in support from Muslim countries (73 percent) than from the Arab world (51 percent).

Palestinians had the highest trust in advice and assistance from Muslim countries (73 percent). This confirms the general trend in the occupied Palestinian territories towards the reassertion of Islamic identity in the face of occupation and economic deprivation. Overall trust in Arab countries is considerably lower.

Figure 2.29: Trust in Advice and Assistance from Countries — May 2006 (% of respondents)



2.4 Conclusions

A growing majority of Palestinians in Gaza, Jerusalem and the West Bank feel insecure and blame not only the Israeli occupation and military activities for this, but also, the governance of the Palestinian security sector. Dissatisfied in many respects with the past performance of the Palestinian National Authority under Fatah, they were, a few weeks after the new government had been sworn in, confident that their security situation would improve under Hamas.

An overwhelming majority of Palestinians call for comprehensive security sector reform, which would deliver them non-partisan security forces that function in a transparent and effective manner, and would be accountable to the elected authorities and to the judiciary. If the Palestinian authorities seek to implement security sector reform, they would enjoy vast public support — in the range of 90 percent and above — for a whole set of policy options. These include at the force level unification of security forces, non-partisan recruitment, training, salary increases, greater Palestinian interagency cooperation, and replacement of commanders. At the executive and legislative level, the public gives equally strong support to measures that guarantee control and oversight by the ministries concerned and by parliament. The public also demands that the judiciary bring security officials to account for their acts, without interference from the executive. There is almost unanimous support for an ombudsman to investigate citizens' complaints and for prison inspections by independent third parties.

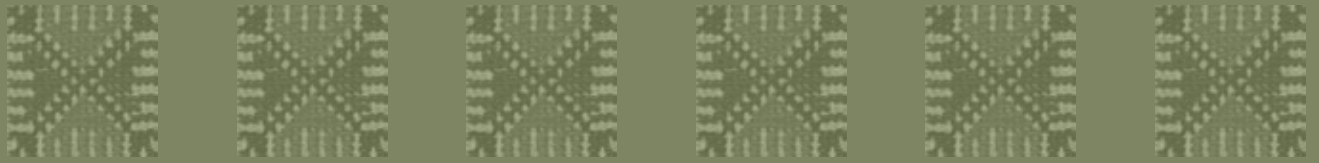
However, in the view of the Palestinian public, the conditions are not or are no longer met for downsizing the forces or disbanding the militias. As, in the longer run, the government will not succeed in establishing accountability without asserting the monopoly of power and will be unable to afford the costs of reform without managing redundancy in its forces, it will need to progressively build up trust in the official institutions before contemplating options that risk to further antagonizing the society.

In the public perception, security sector reform, in order to be successful, needs to diminish corruption, reduce nepotism, provide safety and security, guarantee respect for human rights in general, and more particularly, prevent violence against women.

Trust in official institutions will grow to the extent that the government is capable of meeting these expectations. In absence of tangible results, trust in official institutions will continue to erode. This would further strengthen non-state actors, increase the fragmentation of authority and, perhaps lastingly, undermine nation-building. Irrespective of which faction leads the government, the challenge will remain the building of a Palestinian-owned and -led vision of security sector reform and the design and implementation of the requisite strategies.

Western policies, instead of accelerating and bolstering Palestinian security sector reform, have practically brought it to a stand-still. In some cases, donor states reversed reforms they had instigated earlier. The Palestinian public, displeased with the highly politicised use some donors have made of security sector reform assistance, have grown reluctant to accept assistance from the US and the European Union. With the loss of credibility, donor states also risk to lose the capability to promote the structural reforms that could help them to protect past development investments and to orient Palestinian security policy durably towards peace and stability. Because comprehensive security sector reform is a delicate political and cultural development process, assistance to it in a Palestinian context will only get broad acceptance if it is depoliticised. Without a fresh approach to security sector reform, Western donors may push Palestinians to accept advice from countries that have already been identified as candidates themselves for reform.

The challenges of Palestinian security sector governance highlight overlapping problems of development and security and emphasise the need for integrated development and security policies. It can be expected that after the adoption of a new framework for security sector reform by the Council of the European Union, EU member states and the wider donor community will reexamine their current policies towards Palestinians and give serious consideration to adopting new policy responses not only to Hamas, but to Palestinian security and development in general.



Politics and the Peace Process



Riccardo Bocco • Celine Calve

Introduction

The period covered by the tenth survey, from December 2005 to May 2006, has witnessed significant changes on the Palestinian political scene. Following the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in August 2005 and Hamas¹ victory in the last round of the Palestinian municipal elections in December 2005, the Islamic Resistance Movement’s stunning success in the Palestinian parliamentary elections of January 2006 was the most important event in the period under scrutiny.²

Hamas’ victory has raised several questions related to the movement’s future policy, both domestically and in relation to Israel, to the security situation in the oPt as well as to the future of the peace process. The establishment of the new Hamas government in March 2006 has also impacted on the political agenda of the international community, which substantially reduced its financial support to the PA and devised new funding mechanisms that bypass PA institutions controlled by Hamas.

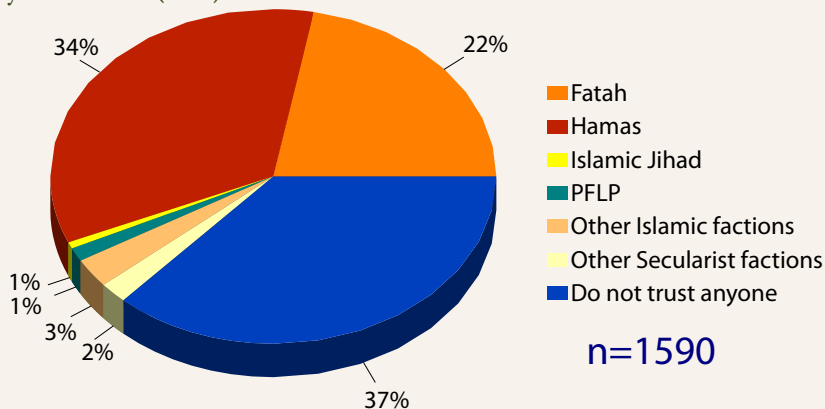
In the following pages we will present some analyses related to Palestinian political life (Section 1), to the PLC (Palestinian Legislative Council) elections of January 2006 (Section 2) and to the peace process (Section 3).

3.1 Palestinian Political Life

Hamas’ success in the parliamentary elections is a landmark in Palestinian history. As Jean-François Legrain³ has put it, the results of the January 2006 legislative elections are of an importance equal to past political events such as the creation of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) in 1964, its emancipation from Arab governments under the leadership of Fatah in 1969 or the victory of the Fatah mayors against the Palestinian “pro-Hashemite” contenders during the 1976 municipal elections in the West Bank. In this section, we will examine some questions related to perceptions about Palestinian domestic political life.

3.1.1 Trust in Palestinian Political Factions

Figure 3.1: Faction you trust most (o133)



The tenth poll measured public trust in political factions through an open question. Respondents were asked to name the organisation which they trust most. The results show that 37% of the respondents did not trust any faction, whereas 34% trusted Hamas and 22% Fatah. Only 1% of the respondents trusted

¹ Hamas is the Arabic acronym of ‘Islamic Resistance Movement.’

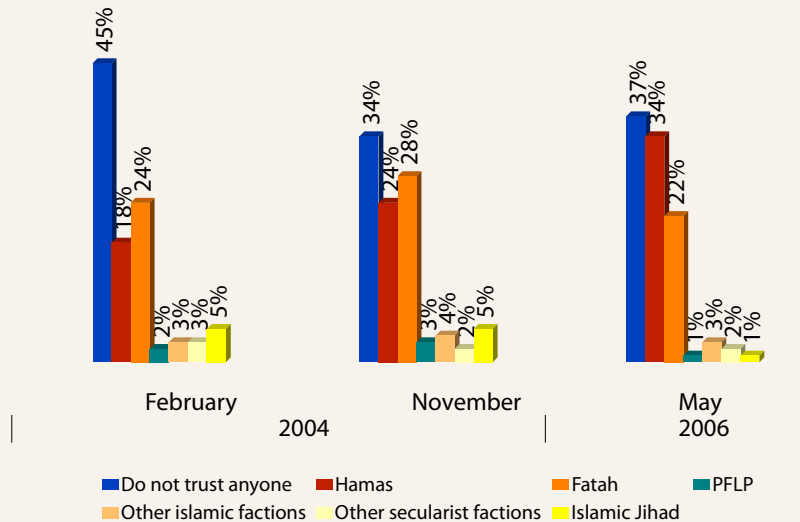
² This period also saw important developments on the Israeli side. In December 2005, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s ailing health prompted Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to take over the government. In late-March 2006, Olmert’s Kadima party won the Israeli legislative elections, and Olmert was elected Prime Minister of a coalition government that included Kadima, Labor and Shas.

³ J.-F. Legrain, ‘Le tsunami palestinien’, *Le Monde*, 31 janvier 2006.

the Islamic Jihad and the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) respectively. Trust in other Islamic factions was low (3%), as was the trust in other secular factions (2%).

A comparison with our February and November 2004 surveys (figure 2) shows that percentage of Palestinians who do not trust any faction has remained constantly high (between 34 and 45%). At the same time, the comparison shows a steady increase in support for Hamas (from 18% in February 2004 to 34% in May 2006), at the expense of Fatah.

Figure 3.2: Factional trust -from 2004 to 2006 (n133)



It might be argued that after the death of Yasser Arafat in late-2004 a new trend emerged in the political preferences of the Palestinian population in the oPt. Over the past two years, the surveys showed a growing polarisation between the Hamas and Fatah in terms of public support, whereas trust in the smaller factions declined.

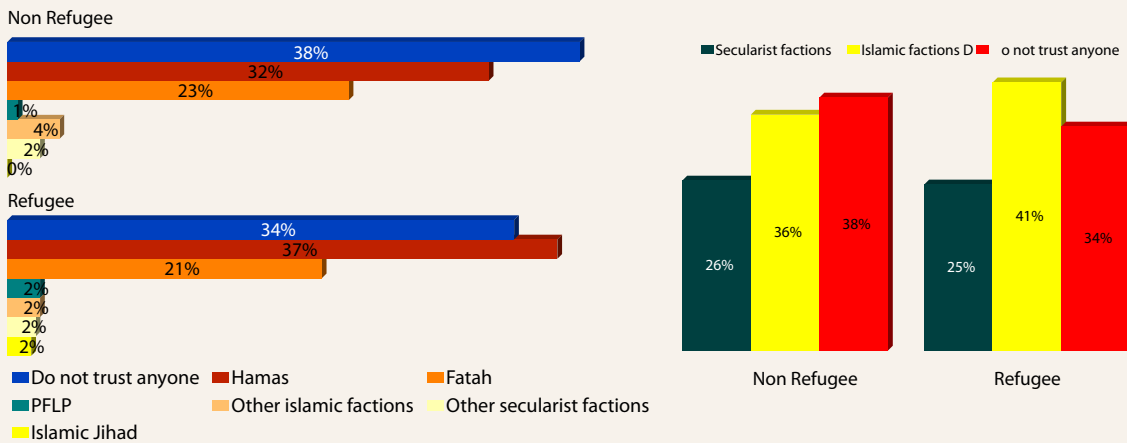
Already before the legislative elections, the increased public support for Hamas translated into the movement's success in the four rounds of municipal elections in the oPt (held in December 2004 and March, September and December 2005). Hamas' victories can be partly explained by the dissatisfaction of the public with Fatah and the corruption associated with it, but they are also a function of the failure of the PA President's domestic policies and diplomatic strategies.⁴

Further analysis of our results reveals strong correlation between the trust in political factions and a number of independent variables.

Firstly, as illustrated in figure 3, a higher percentage of Palestinian refugees (41%) than non-refugees (36%) trusted Islamic factions, including Hamas. The support for secular groups including Fatah, on the other hand, was almost the same amongst refugees and non-refugees.

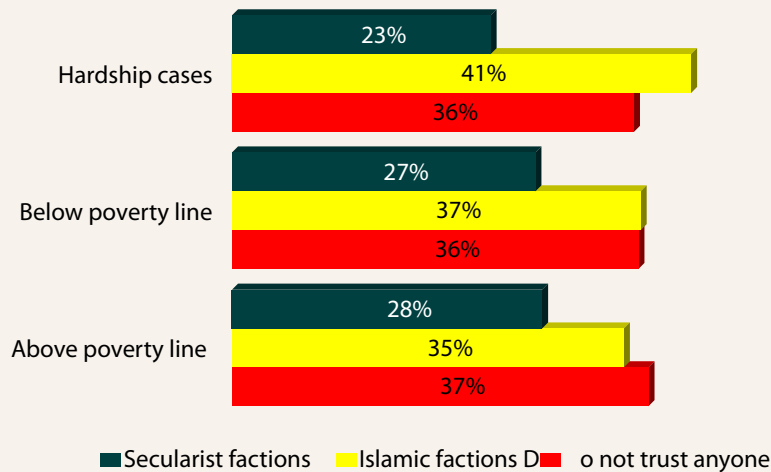
⁴ For background on the January 2005 Palestinian Presidential elections, see : P. Lagerquist, A very slippery 'Landslide' for Mahmoud Abbas", Middle East Report Online, January 20, 2005 (<http://www.merip.org/mero/mero012005.html>). For background on Hamas' entry into electoral politics, see: G. Usher, The New Hamas: between Resistance and Participation, Middle East Report Online, August 21, 2005 (<http://www.merip.org/mero/mero082105.html>); International Crisis Group (ICG), Enter Hamas: the challenges of political integration, Middle East Report n°49, January 18, 2006 (<http://www.crisisgroup.org>) ; R. Blecher, Broken Ranks in the Palestinian National Movement, Middle East Report Online, January 1, 2006 (<http://www.merip.org/mero/mero010106.html>).

Figure 3.3: Trust in factions according to refugee status (o133 *o002)



Secondly, there are correlations between factional trust and economic status. Figure 4 shows that, for 41% of respondents, trust in Islamic factions was highest among the extremely poor segment of the population. Conversely, trust in secular factions was highest among households above the poverty line (28%). It is only in relation to the percentage of those who have no trust in any faction that no correlation could be found: between 36% and 37% of respondents from the three social strata distrusted all political factions. Overall, Palestinians of all three strata trusted Islamic factions more than secular ones.⁵

Figure 3.4: Trust in factions according to the poverty level (o133*poverty 3)



Thirdly, the breakdown of the results by region of residence (figure 5) shows marked differences among the respondents who do not trust any faction: distrust was much higher in Jerusalem (44%) and the West Bank (41%) than in Gaza (29%).

Region of residence also plays an important role when looking at the support for Hamas. In the Gaza Strip, 43% of the respondents trusted Hamas - an increase of 13% over November 2004 - compared to 30% in the West Bank and 31% in Jerusalem. Several reasons can explain the strong support for Hamas in Gaza. Firstly, Hamas' armed activity is seen by many in Gaza as the main catalyst for the Israeli redeployment of Summer 2005,⁶ and, by means of strong media campaigns, the movement managed to back up its claim of having liberated the land. Another important factor is the large network of charitable and welfare Islamic organisations active in the oPt, and in the Gaza Strip in particular, dating from the beginning of the second Intifada. Furthermore, Hamas' visibility may have been strengthened in the past

⁵ In our November 2004 survey, 25% of the hardship cases, 26% of Palestinians living below the poverty line and 20% of those living above the poverty line trusted Hamas. These figures confirm that, since Arafat's death, trust in Hamas has increased by an average of 10%, regardless of the economic status of the respondents.

⁶ G.Usher, Hamas risen, Middle East Report n°238, p.3. (<http://www.merip.org/mer/mer238/usher.html>).

few months by its municipal elections⁷ results⁸.

Compared to our November 2004 survey, support for Hamas has also increased in the West Bank by 11%. Here the perception that Hamas-run municipalities are run more efficiently might account for the increase in trust in the Islamic Resistance Movement.⁹

As concerns Fatah, 24% of the respondents in the West Bank said that they trusted the movement, as opposed to 22% in Gaza and 13% in Jerusalem.¹⁰

Figure 3.5: Trust in factions according to the region of residence (o133*o059)

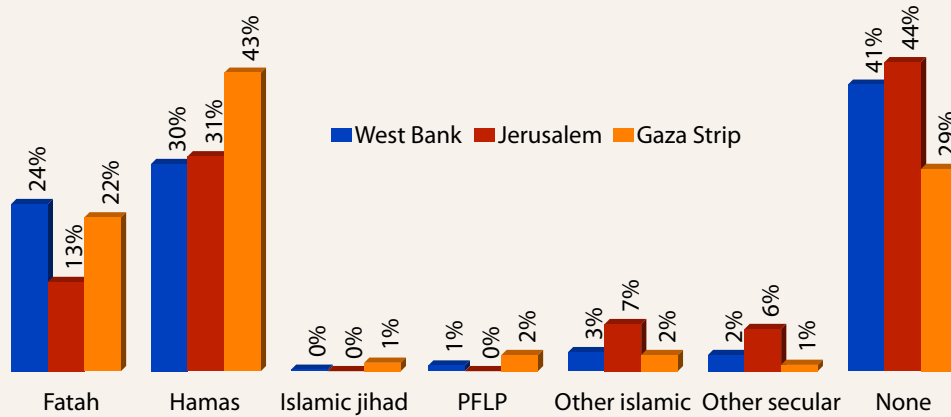
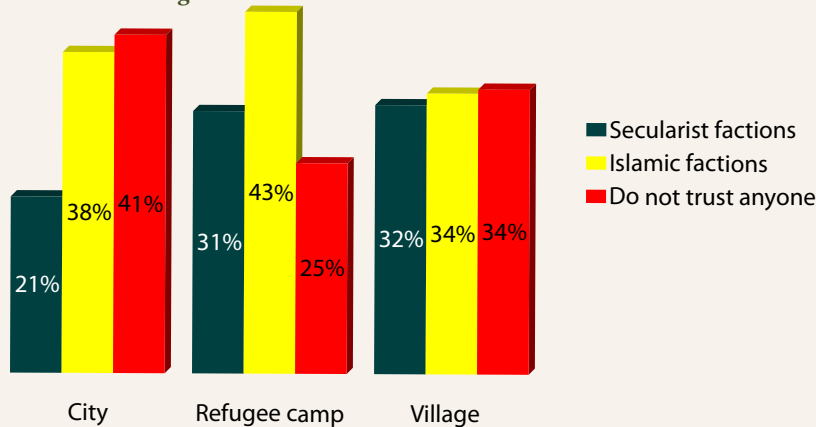


Figure 3.6: Trust in factions according to the area of residence



Examining factional trust in relation to area of residence, it appears that the Islamic factions enjoyed their strongest support among refugee-camp dwellers (43%), followed by the city inhabitants (38%) and villagers (34%). The comparably lower trust in the villages may reflect the fact that these are the areas where the Islamic factions were historically least established.

⁷ In the Palestinian municipal elections of 2004 and 2005, Hamas won an estimated 60% of all seats and clear majorities in 30% of all councils (G.Usher, 2005, op. cit. p.4). For a complete presentation of the results of the municipal elections see: <http://www.pogar.org/countries/elections.asp?cid=14>

⁸ Interestingly, Hamas recruited many local candidates from its affiliated social welfare institutions. Crisis Group interview, Khalil Shaheen, Al-Ayyam correspondent, Ramallah, November 2005, quoted in ICG, 2006, p. 11.

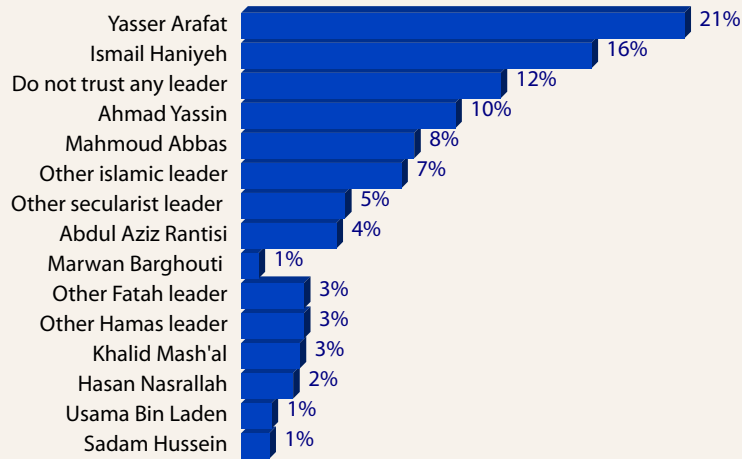
⁹ Hamas's post-election performance has won plaudits from local and foreign observers alike: Enter Hamas: the challenges of political integration op..cit. p: 11.

¹⁰ The number of respondents in the Jerusalem area is too small to draw any scientific conclusion.

3.1.2 Trust in the Palestinian Political Leadership

Respondents were asked to name the political or religious leader whom they trusted most.¹¹

Figure 3.7: Trust in leadership (n134)¹²



As shown in figure 7, almost two years after the death of both Hamas’ and Fatah’s historic leaders, Ahmad Yassin and Yasser Arafat, are still seen as the most trustworthy figures by the Palestinian population, scoring, respectively, 21% and 8% of the respondents’ preferences. Also, 4% of the respondents cited Abdul Aziz Al-Rantisi¹³ as the leader they trust most. Khalid Mash’al - the *de facto* “Minister of Foreign Affairs” of Hamas, based in Damascus- is cited by 3% of the respondents.

It is important to bear in mind that the survey for the tenth poll was conducted in May 2006, five months after Hamas won 74 seats out of 132 in the Palestinian Legislative Council. As a result, Hamas -designated as a terrorist organisation by the United States and the European Union and considered a mortal enemy by Israel - has been the only party constitutionally able to form a government. In such a context, the results of the survey show that after Yasser Arafat, the second most trusted leader (16% of the respondents) is Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas’ new Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority.¹⁴ The PA President, Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), elected as the successor to Arafat in December 2005, is mentioned by 7% of respondents as the leader they trust most, a rating reflecting his time in office of over one year.¹⁵ Marwan Barghouti, a senior Fatah leader imprisoned in Israel, was cited by only 1% of the respondents.

¹¹ No statistically significant relationship can be explored in this section, as the numbers of respondents for each of the leaders quoted are too small.

¹² As the question on the most trusted leader was an open question, deceased historical and foreign leaders were cited by many respondents. We have not inserted in the questionnaire any restrictions that would have allowed us to focus our analysis on the present situation and on current Palestinian leaders. .

¹³ Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi was one of the co-founders of the Islamic Resistance Movement. He was Hamas’ political leader and spokesman in the Gaza Strip following the Israeli assassination - on March 22, 2004 - of the movement’s spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin. On April 17, 2004, Rantissi was also killed by the Israeli Army.

¹⁴ “Although he has been active with Hamas since the end of the 1980s, Ismail Haniyeh’s position within the organisation was strengthened only during the second Intifada due to his closeness to Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and in consequence of a number of Israeli attacks on the Hamas leadership. In December 2005 he was put on top of the Hamas list for PLC elections. He is considered to be a person of integrity, and within Hamas he stands for a moderate and realistic line.” Office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation to the Palestinian Autonomous Territories, The Palestinian Legislative Council elections of January 25th, 2006, Results, Delegates, Formation of Government, Ramallah, April 2006, p. 16.

¹⁵ This finding should be read in parallel with the section on the reasons for voting Hamas, in which the respondents were given the opportunity to give their opinion about the Fatah leadership.

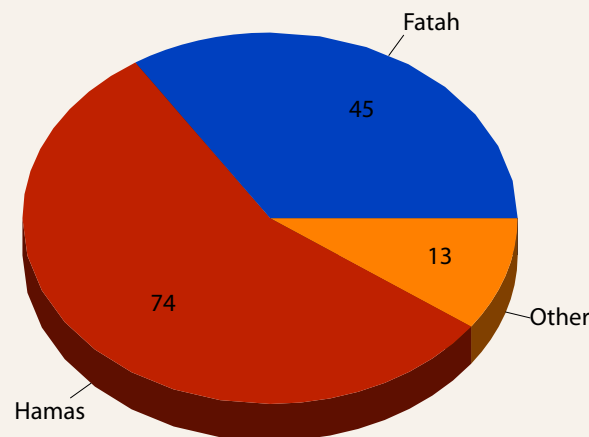
As for trust in political factions, there is a quite high percentage of respondents who state that they do not trust any religious or political leader (12%). Lastly, figure 7, above, shows the weak impact of the regional and international arena on Palestinian political life, as only 1% of the respondents cited Usama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein as trusted leaders.

3.2 A Palestinian « Political Tsunami »

The PLC elections held on 25 January 2006 saw the surprise victory of the “Change and Reform” list led by Hamas.¹⁶ As our survey was conducted only four months after the elections, we did not include any questions directed at assessing the performance of the new government. The following section will rather focus on the results of the PLC elections, the perceptions of fairness of these elections, as well as the factors accounting for Hamas’ victory.

3.2.1 Hamas’ Victory in the PLC Elections

Figure 3.8: Palestinian Legislative Council, Number of seats– Central Election Commission¹⁷



Elections to the PLC are based on a mixed system. Half of the seats (66) are distributed through national lists on the basis of proportional representation. The other half are determined by majority votes in constituencies. In the elections of January 2006, 11 lists with a total of 314 candidates competed nationwide, while 414 candidates ran in the constituencies. Hamas gained the majority of the seats due to the results in the constituencies (45 seats versus 17 seats for Fatah as indicated in table 1, below). Palestinians of both sexes from the age of 18 were entitled to vote, and the turnout was of 74.64%.¹⁸ This high proportion of voters seems to confirm the general support of the population for the Legislative Council elections that was observed in our previous survey.¹⁹

¹⁶ The first elections to the PLC took place in January 1996. At that time, Fatah gained more than two-thirds of the votes. Hamas, the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) and the DFLP (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine) boycotted the elections to voice their opposition to the Oslo accords.

¹⁷ Others: PFLP: 3; Third Way: 2; Badil (DFLP, PPP, FIDA): 2; Independent Palestine (Mustafa Barghouti: 2); Independents (supported by Hamas): 4. The Central Election Commission announces the final results of the second PLC elections, (29 January 2006). Central Election Commission (<http://www.elections.ps/template.aspx?id=291>)

¹⁸ See: The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, op. cit., 2006, p. 6-7

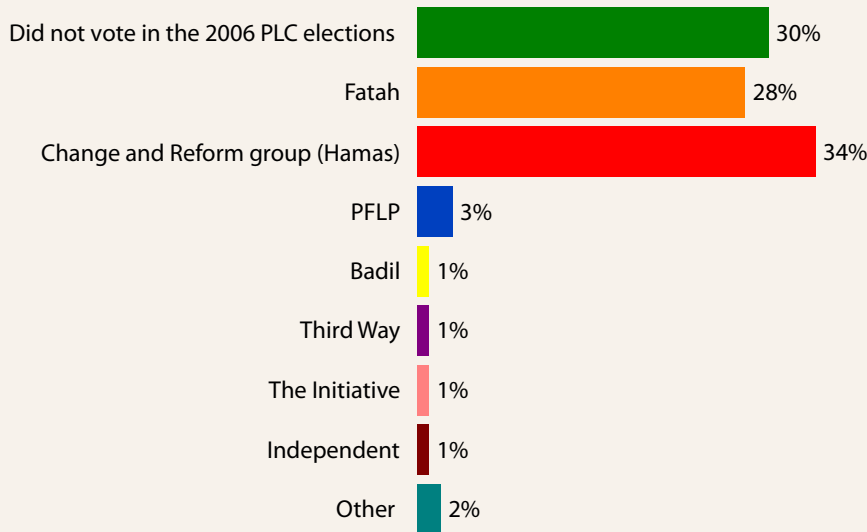
¹⁹ “The majority of respondents (76%) supported the Legislative Council elections, scheduled for January 2006. See our Palestinian Public Perceptions’ Report IX, Politics, Media and the Peace Process, 2006, p. 43 (http://www.unige.ch/ued/new/information/publications/pdf/PPPReportIX_IUED.pdf)

Table 3.1: Results of the elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council²⁰

Party / list	Constituencies		National list:		Total results:	
	Seats	Percentage	Seats	Percentage	Seats	Percentage
“Change and Reform” (Hamas)	45	68%	29	43.9%	74	56.1%
Fatah	17	26%	28	42.4%	45	34.1%
“Third Way” (Fayyad & Ashrawi)	0	0%	2	3%	2	1.5%
“Independent Palestine” (M. Barghouti)	0	0%	2	3%	2	1.5%
“Popular Front” (PFLP, leftist)	0	0%	3	4.6%	3	2.3%
“The Alternative” (DFLP, leftist)	0	0%	2	3%	2	1.5%
Independent members	4	6%			4	3%
Total	66	100%	66	100%	132	100%

For the tenth survey, we asked Palestinians to name the political faction they had voted for.

Figure 3.9: Political faction you voted for on the January elections (o351)



Thirty-four percent of the respondents said that they had voted for the ‘Change and Reform’ list,²¹ followed by 28% who had voted for Fatah. 30% of the respondents did not vote.²²

This contrasts to the results on the ninth survey, where 24% of the respondents said that they would vote for Fatah, 12% percent for Hamas and independent nationalists respectively, while 9% of the respondents said that they would vote for independent Islamists.²³

²⁰ See: The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, op. cit. , 2006, p. 5.

²¹ If we consider those who answered that they ‘did not vote’ as missing cases, the percentage of respondents who said they voted Hamas is 49% (corresponding to the confidence interval of the survey 2.2%).

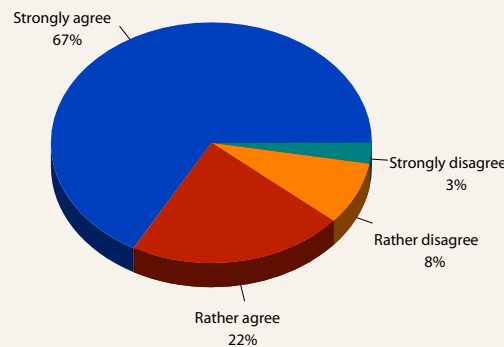
²² Logistic regressions will complete this section on the result of the January elections.

²³ See: Palestinian Public Perceptions’ Report IX), 2006, p. 45, op.cit., variable o307

In terms of place of residence, the highest percentage of respondents who did not vote (46%) in the elections resided in Jerusalem. This is no surprise, given the specific conditions in the city. Although Palestinians living in Jerusalem have the right to vote in PLC elections, they can run as candidates only if they also have a residence in the West Bank or in the Gaza Strip. Also, the Israeli authorities prevented Hamas from campaigning in the city. Only a small number of voters were allowed to vote in specifically designated locations in East Jerusalem, while the majority of residents were required to travel to the West Bank to cast their ballots. However,, Israeli checkpoints prevented many Jerusalemites from doing so.²⁴

3.2.2 Democratic and Fair Elections

Figure 3.10: Do you agree that the January elections were democratic, fair and free? (n359)



According to all local and international observers, the Palestinians held their parliamentary elections in a fair and democratic way. The Palestinian Central Elections Commission (CEC), charged with organising the poll, did not report any irregularities or violations of the Palestinian Electoral Law.²⁵ According to our survey, the vast majority of Palestinians shared this assessment. As figure 10 indicates, 67% of the respondents ‘strongly agreed’ as to the fairness of the PLC elections, and 22% ‘rather agreed.’

However, in terms of place of residence, only a small percentage of Jerusalem respondents shared this view. This seems to relate to the fact that Israeli restrictions strongly hampered the electoral process in the city.

3.2.3 The Vote for Hamas

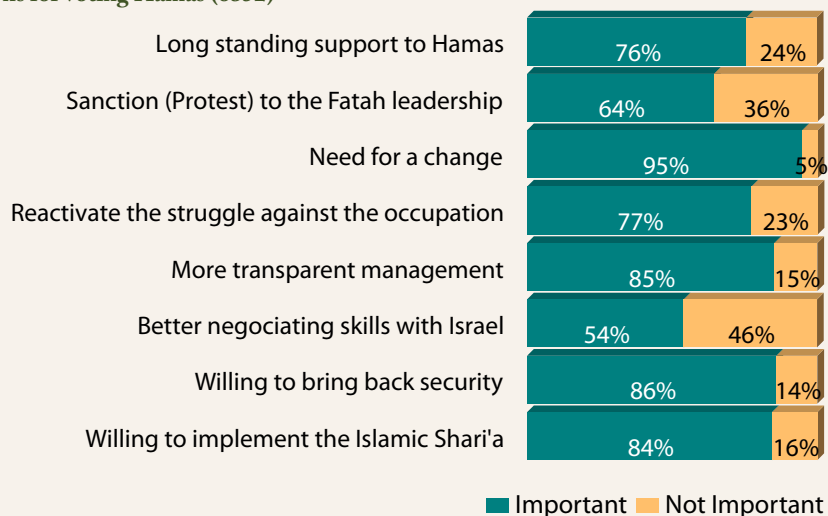
3.2.3.1 Reason for voting Hamas

Many factors may condition voters’ political choices. For the tenth report, we designed a number of questions to find out the reasons lying behind Hamas’ electoral victory.

²⁴ BADIL, Hamas election victory: a call for good governance and respect of Palestinian rights, Bethlehem, 28 January 2006 (see: <http://www.badil.org>).

²⁵ See: <http://www.elections.ps> – For documentary sources on the the elections, see also: J.-F. Legrain, Guide des elections legislatives palestiniennes sur Web, (january 2006), (see: <http://www.mom.fr/guides/pallegislatives/pallegislatives.htm>)

Figure 3.11: Reasons for voting Hamas (o352)



First of all, the quasi-totally of respondents (95%) considered the ‘need for a change’ as an important reason for voting Hamas. In this regard, the slogan ‘Change and Reform’ played well with popular sentiment. The need for change expressed by Palestinians seems to be directly linked to strong dissatisfaction with Fatah after more than a decade in power. Important factors here are the misrule and corruption widely attributed to Fatah, as well as the movement’s inability to establish law and order, physical and economic security, and to promote economic development or secure political gains vis-à-vis Israel, as well being unable to institute political improvements. During its political campaign: “Hamas ran a platform of good government and earned the respect of voters in local districts by displaying greater integrity than its predecessors had in keeping its promises and avoiding corruption.”²⁶ This trend had already become evident in our ninth survey, where respondents attached great importance to moral values when choosing a candidate, ahead of political affiliation and qualifications.²⁷

Our results show that the desire for change was particularly high among residents of refugee camps. Ninety-one percent of camp dwellers cited this as a reason for voting Hamas, as opposed to 75% of city residents and 71% of villages dwellers. In terms of region of residence, 91% of the Gaza respondents said that the need for change was a ‘very important reason’ for voting Hamas, versus 71% in the West Bank and 53% in Jerusalem.

Table 3.2: Efficiency of the previous government (o365)

	Previous government was efficient	Previous government was not efficient
Providing security to the citizens	48%	52%
Controlling the security apparatus	47%	53%
Acting transparently	37%	63%
Acting responsibly	43%	57%
Dealing with economic issues	42%	54%
Dealing with political issues	47%	53%

Following the ‘need for change’, respondents cited the willingness to ‘bring back security’ (86%) and to ‘have more transparent management’ (85%) as the most important reasons for voting for Hamas. This corresponds to a broad dissatisfaction with the performance of the previous government. As table 1 shows, more than half of the Palestinians considered that the former government failed in ‘providing security’ and ‘controlling the security apparatus’. In addition, 63% of the respondents said that the previous government failed to act transparently. It therefore seems fair to say that Hamas in many respects benefited from a protest vote.

²⁶ H. Agha and R. Malley, Hamas : the Perils of Power”, The New York Review of Books, 9 March 2006.

²⁷ See: Palestinian Public Perceptions Report IX, 2006, p. 44, op. cit.

Furthermore, 77% of respondents said that the reactivation of the struggle against Israel was an important reason for voting Hamas. This may indicate dissatisfaction with Fatah's strategy of negotiations and the lack of tangible results for the Palestinians from this approach.

3.2.3.2 Trust in Hamas and vote for Hamas: multi-variate analysis

In order to fully understand the relationships between the whole range of explanatory variables utilised in explaining the Hamas performance, and observing how these variables interact with each other, multivariate regression analysis was used. This multivariate analysis enables us to isolate the effects of each variable from other influences. The following sections will examine the relationships between a range of explanatory variables (socio-demographic predictors, the vulnerability of respondents, their daily environment and their political perceptions) and the trust in Hamas as well as the vote for them.

From a **socio-demographic perspective**, it appears that the vote for Hamas is higher among city dwellers than among the camp residents. Hamas voters are also more likely to reside in Jerusalem than in the West Bank. From a gender perspective, men are far less likely to trust and are less likely to vote for Hamas than women.

Interestingly, in terms of the **vulnerability of respondents**, the probability of voting for Hamas is less likely with respondents who have reduced their quantity of food and for those who said that they can keep up financially for only about one year. Voting for Hamas does not increase with the vulnerability of the household. This seems to suggest that Hamas was able to capture the majority of the votes among all socio-economic strata, irrespective their vulnerability.

However, **assistance beneficiaries**, those who received assistance from the PA, were more likely to trust Hamas and vote for it than those who received it from NGOs.

Relating to the **daily environment**, respondents who felt insecure were more likely to trust Hamas and vote for it than those who felt secure. Respondents affected by the Separation Barrier were less likely to vote for Hamas than those not affected by it.

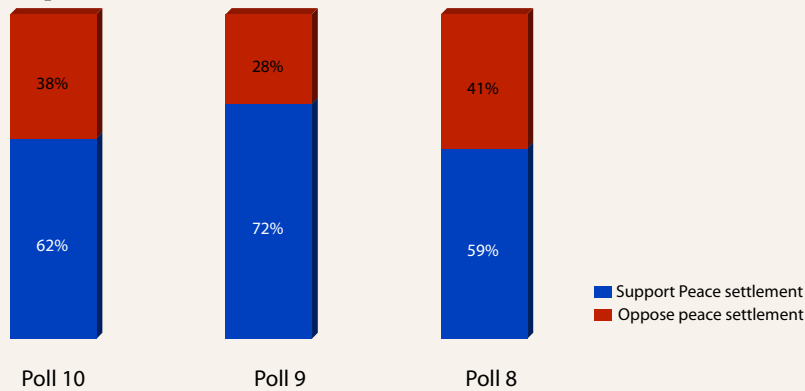
Finally, there are strong correlations between trust in and voting for Hamas and the political **perceptions of the respondents**. Respondents who said that Hamas should recognise Israel were far less likely to trust and vote for Hamas than respondents who were not in favour of recognition. Trust in as well as voting for Hamas is much less prevalent among those who support a peace settlement with Israel. Conversely, trusting in and voting for Hamas is much more important among those who were negative about the performance of the previous government.

3.3 Perceptions about the Peace Process

3.3.1 Palestinian support for peace

The survey for the tenth report shows that Palestinian support for a peaceful settlement of the conflict with Israel has decreased in comparison to July 2005 (figure 12).

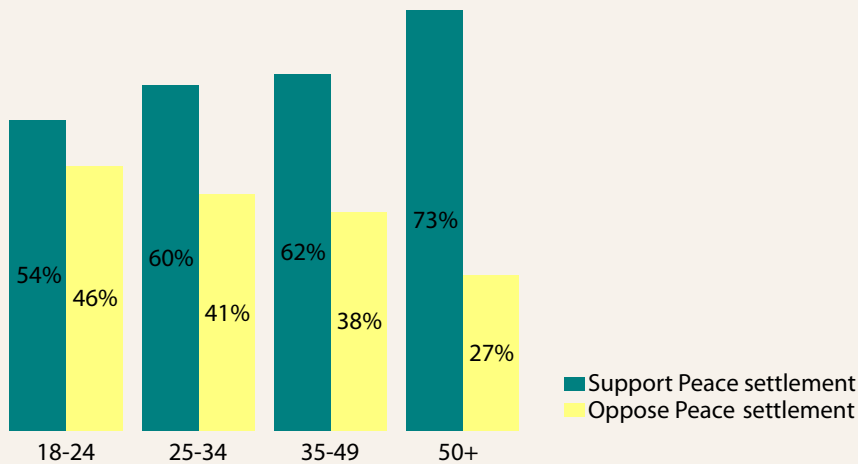
Figure 3.12 Support for peace settlement with Israel (o266v1)



In May 2006, 62% of the respondents supported a peace settlement, a decrease of 10%. The higher support for a settlement in July 2005 might reflect a certain optimism of the public after the transfer of power from the vilified Yasser Arafat to Mahmoud Abbas. Abbas, elected as PA President in January 2005, was welcomed by the International Community as a “man of peace”.

However, this hope did not materialise. During the past year, no substantive political talks took place between Palestinian and Israelis. At the same time, the building of Israeli settlements in the West Bank continued, as did the construction of the Separation Barrier and the physical isolation of Jerusalem from the West Bank. In addition, Israel, after the January 2006 elections, broke off all contacts with the new PA government. It seems obvious that in such a worsening context the support of the population for peace would decline.

Figure 3.13: Support for a peace settlement with Israel according to the age of the respondent (o266v1*agec)



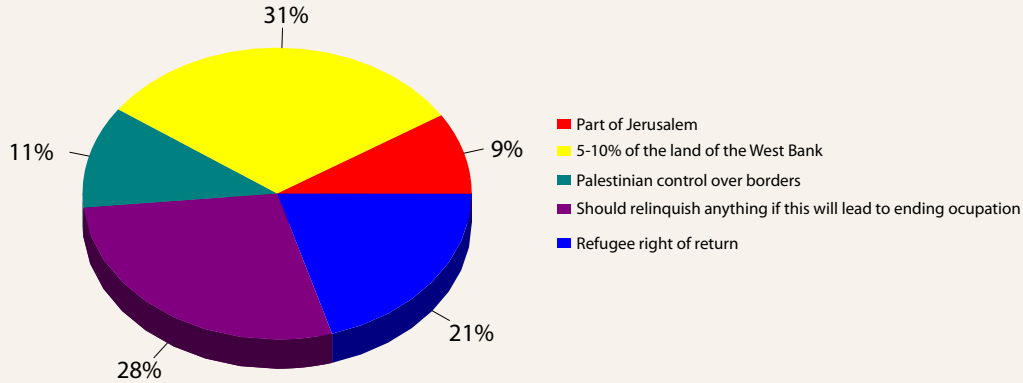
Significant correlations exist between the support for a peace settlement and the age of respondents. Support for a peace settlement increased with the age of respondents.

54% of respondents aged from 18 to 24 years support a peace settlement with Israel, while the percentage is 73% for the elderly. On the contrary, opposition to peace settlement is higher amongst the youngest segment of the population (46%) and lower amongst the elderly (27%). As such, frustration about the present situation is on the increase, as is resignation about the future, embodied particularly in the attitude of the young toward peace.

3.3.2 Concessions for a Viable Palestinian State

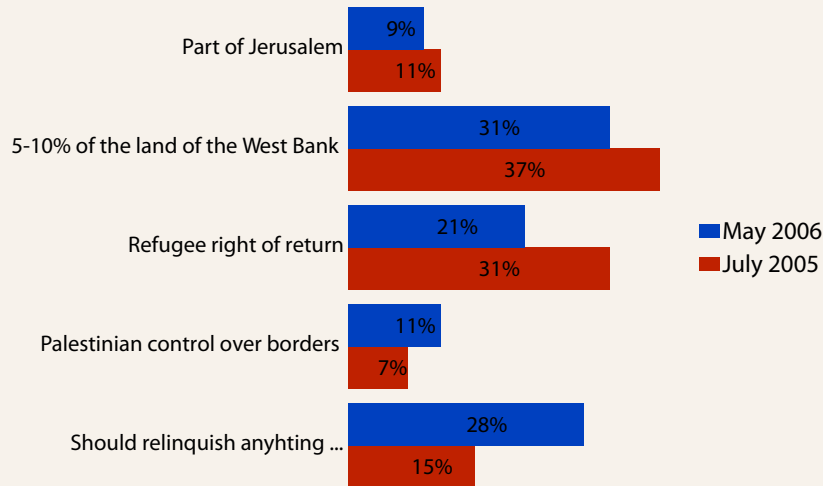
In our tenth survey, we asked respondents which concessions the PA should make in return for a viable Palestinian state.

Figure 3.14: Concessions for a viable State (o274v2)



As shown in figure 14, the least painful concession for respondents was to relinquish territory: 31% were willing to cede 5% to 10% of the West Bank territory to Israel for the sake of an agreement. Interestingly, 28% of the respondents said that they were willing relinquish anything to end the Israeli occupation. 21% were willing to renounce the right of return for the sake of a viable Palestinian State, and 11% would give up the control over the borders of the future state. Nine percent would relinquish part of Jerusalem. It is worth reiterating that significant numbers of respondents are willing to relinquish 5%-10% of the land of the West Bank and the right of return. The latter has been a traditional red line and, for a long time, has been considered non-negotiable issue by most Palestinian negotiators.²⁸

Figure 3.15: Concessions for a viable state (o274v2)



What is striking, in comparison to the July 2005 survey, is the increase in the percentage of those respondents who were willing to relinquish anything if this leads to ending the occupation (+13%).

At the same time, the percentage of respondents who were willing to relinquish 5% to 10% of the West Bank or part of Jerusalem declined (from 37% to 31% and 11% to 9% respectively). A gender analysis²⁹ shows that men are much less willing to relinquish West Bank territory for the sake of statehood than

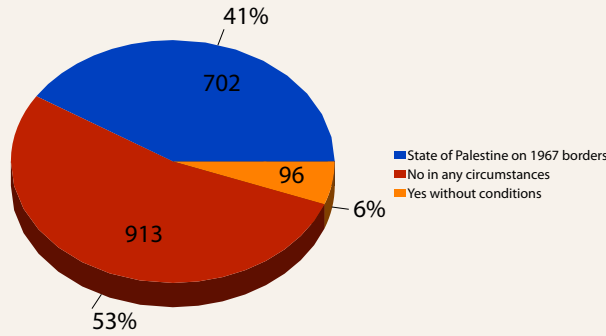
²⁸ It is important to note that we do not discuss here the fairness of the concessions per se, we rather refer to the concessions that the population are willing to make.

²⁹ The significance of the bi variate analysis is 'medium'(0.006).

women (22% versus 41%). Interestingly, the most-cited concession by women is that they are willing to relinquish anything to end the occupation (31% versus 24% for male respondents).

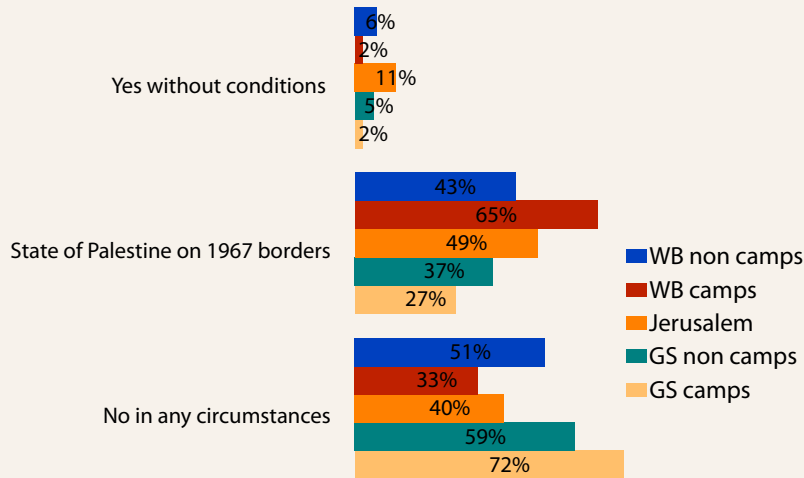
3.3.3 Recognition of Israel by the Hamas Government

Figure 3.16 Recognition of Israel by Hamas government (o353)



We also asked respondents whether Hamas government should recognise the State of Israel. While 62% of the respondents supported a peace settlement, 53% of the respondents in the May 2006 survey nevertheless said that Hamas should not recognise Israel under any circumstances. Forty-one percent of the respondents were in favour of recognition in the event that Israel recognised a Palestinian state with a National Authority based on the 1967 territories, including East Jerusalem.

Figure 3.17: Recognition of Israel by Hamas government according to the place of residence (o353*o059)



An analysis of the data according to the place of residence reveals interesting results. Hamas’ refusal to recognise Israel had most support among refugee-camp residents in Gaza, where 72% opposed such a move under any circumstances.

On the other hand however, 65% of West Bank camps residents thought that the Hamas government should recognise Israel, but only if Israel recognises a State of Palestine with a National Authority based on the 1967 territories, including East Jerusalem.

Finally, respondents were asked if, in their opinion, the new Palestinian leadership should relinquish some Palestinian rights in return for a Palestinian State based on 1967 borders. For 87% of the respondents, there was a conviction that Hamas should not relinquish anything even if that prolongs the occupation.

3.4 Conclusions

On January 25, 2006, Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections with broad support. The majority of respondents agreed that the poll was democratic, fair and free (89%), and that the “need for a change” was an important reason for voting for Hamas (95%). There was a bi-polarisation of Palestinian public opinion, in regard to trust in Palestinian political factions and parties, between the secular and the Islamic factions, the latter growing markedly in strength over the last six months. Actually, with the ascendancy of Hamas in the municipal elections of 2004 and 2005, and the continuing fragmentation of Fatah, the need for re-legitimizing the Palestinian political system became a pressing need for President Mahmoud Abbas himself. May Jayyousi has argued that “the Palestinian political order established by the Oslo Process was fatally flawed. It instituted a dual structure of powers that, in disenfranchising Palestinian citizens of their right of self-determination, ultimately corroded the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority, since its accountability was constructed vertically to the Israeli occupation and to the international order. Hence the constant demands on the PA to fulfil its “peace obligations”.³⁰

Overall, the issue of the PA reform, pushed by external donors and political decision-makers over the last few years, is raising questions to which the international community does not yet seem to have found answers. Actually, is it possible and “safe” to push the political authority of a would-be state to embark upon democratisation processes while the territorial state over which that same political authority should exert its sovereignty does not yet exist?

If we consider the evaluation of the respondents in regard to the performance of previous governments, they have been considered inefficient in their ability to “provide security” to the population (52%), to “control the security apparatus system” (53%), to “act transparently” (63%) and “responsibly” (57%). But the vote was actually more than a rejection of corruption; it was an expression of frustration with the peace process, or even an act of defiance. It was an expression of deeply felt anger at years of lost dignity and self-respect, coupled with a yearning to recover a semblance of both. As H. Agha and R. Malley have stressed, “in voting for Hamas...Palestinians were expressing the belief that the Islamists could succeed where the nationalists didn’t.”³¹

The victory of the Islamic Resistance Movement through democratic elections is displeasing not only to Western states, but to neighbouring Arab states as well, where Islamic constituencies have been gaining ground over the past decades, but have never succeeded in forming a government of their own. The post-electoral conditions on aid set by most international donor countries appear to contradict their desire for a democratic process. Hamas, a new government brought to power through a democratic process and not through a *coup d'état*, is being asked to recognise the State of Israel, while the latter does not recognise a State of Palestine and not even its newly elected representatives. The PA and its new government are neither recognised nor considered as reliable partners by Israel, who can then feel legitimate in pursuing its “unilateral” approach.

On the broader international scale, the U.S. government’s simple faith in elections has distracted it from comprehending the realities that Palestinians live with daily. As J. Beinin explains, “what they have not understood is that an election is only a formal procedure. Substantive democracy requires the rule of law, protection of civil liberties and minority rights, physical security and a reasonable standard of living, sovereignty and political independence. Palestinians have none of these. This is a source of Hamas’ popularity that President Bush fails to grasp.”³²

Finally, looking at the role of international aid, almost thirteen years after the inception of the Oslo

³⁰ M. Jayyousi, A democratic experiment in Palestine,,Bitterlemons International, February 23, 2006, vol. 4, edition 7 (<http://www.bitterlemons-international.org>).

³¹ H.Agha and R.Malley, 2006, op.cit. See also : Ch. Seitz, Fatah Ventures into Uncharted Territory, Middle East Report Online, April 19, 2006 (<http://www.merip.org/mero/mero041906.html>).

³² J. Beinin, « Why Hamas has Won and Why Negotiations Must Resume », in : San Francisco Chronicle, February 8, 2006.

process, donor countries have invested massively in the oPt, with the objectives of fostering peace and political stability, bringing economic development and democracy. Certainly, both the Palestinian and the Israeli political systems have suffered from a series of internal setbacks, due to the implementation process of the Oslo Accords and the eruption of a new phase of conflict which started at the end of 2000. But one cannot overlook the inconsistencies displayed on several occasions by international political decision-makers who have been progressively weakening the role and action of multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, whose tasks had been focused on building a state with a democratic regime in the oPt. The official discourse has officially assigned to development aid a “technical” role, but what about its usefulness and meaning if political decisions and actions are emptying it of its possible impact and obliging the international community to continue opting for massive humanitarian aid?

