



**NEC's monthly monitor of Palestinian perceptions
Towards politics, religion, and local and international
organizations**

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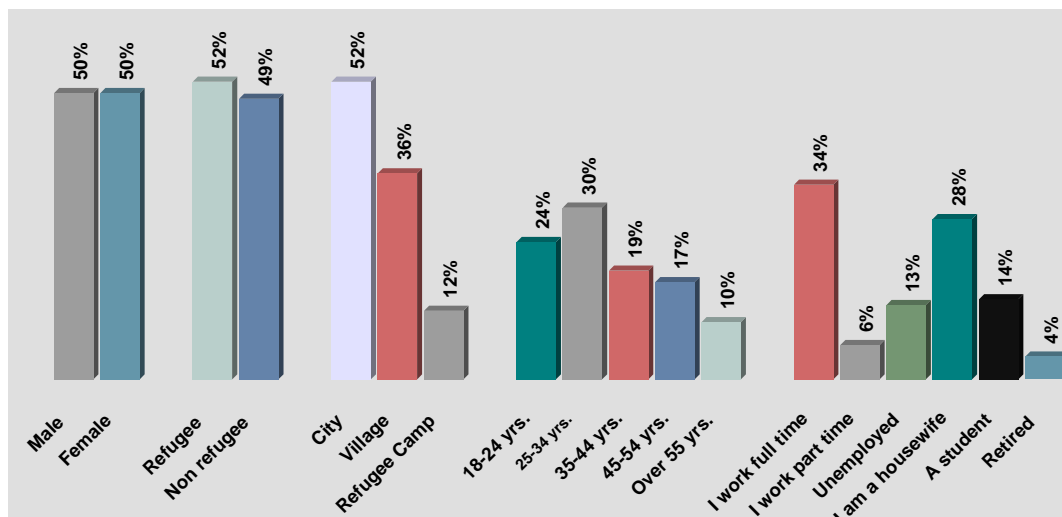
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I. Introduction and methodology

The survey was conducted in the last week of December 2009. About 850 Palestinians over the age of 18 were randomly selected from the population and were interviewed by land lines. The sample included Palestinians from the West Bank (521) and the Gaza Strip (329), males and females, etc. As noted in figure 1, the distribution of the sample reflects to a large degree the population parameters reported by PCBS.

Figure 1: Demographic distribution of the sample



In addition to the questions that are regularly examined, NEC has asked the respondents to evaluate a number of local and international organizations. The evaluation was based on asking the respondents to generally evaluate the respective organizations on a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 being extremely negative and 10 being extremely positive.

All the results in this bulletin were disaggregated according to a number of relevant independent or explanatory variables. These include region of residence, factional trust, age and gender.

The margin of error for the entire sample is +/- 3.4% with a confidence level of 95%.



II. Main Findings

- Almost half of the Palestinians identify themselves as Muslims and about one third as Palestinians. Identification with Islam first is higher among the respondents that trust Hamas, the younger respondents, and females;
- More than 80% of the respondents said that they pray several times daily. This is higher among females and the respondents trusting Hamas;
- Although identification with Palestine is stronger among the older Palestinians, the level of their religiosity is higher;
- Approximately 80% of the respondents believe that the Quran and the Sunna should be the main source of the law. This view is stronger among the young generations and among the female respondents;
- 62% of Fateh supporters prefer to live in a state governed by religion;
- The Israeli occupation is perceived to be the most important reason for the increase in religiosity in the oPt;
- The large majority of the Palestinians wants Palestine to be governed by religion in order to ensure equality and justice;
- Most Palestinians believe that the PLO is the body that represents them. A large proportion of Hamas supporters also share this view;
- The most preferred system of government is one that is similar to one of the Arab models;
- The majority of Palestinians do not believe that a true Islamic model of government exists anywhere in the world these days;
- The majority of Palestinians (43%) said that they trust Fateh most while 44% said that they do not trust any faction;
- The respondents that do not trust any faction are closer to Hamas ideologically and to Fateh politically;
- The inability of Fateh to deliver on the political front will most likely undermine its success in any future elections as it is highly probable that the non-partisans will side with Hamas;
- About 70% of the Palestinians support reaching a peace agreement with Israel and a similar percentage want Hamas to change its position vis-à-vis the existence of Israel;
- Of those who are in the labor market, 24% of the Palestinians are unemployed, 12% are partially employed. Unemployment is significantly higher in the Gaza Strip;
- The most positive evaluation was for UNRWA, followed by the PLO and the Fayyad government;



III. Palestinians and religion

In recent years, religion has become a major force in the Middle East, including the oPt. Its impact touched not only on the political sentiments of most people, but also on the social and economic realities of the various communities in the region. The following pages will attempt to address this phenomenon in an attempt to better understand the ramifications of the increase in religious sentiments on the future lives of the people: social, political, and economic situations.

A. Palestinian Identity

Almost half of the Palestinians identify themselves as Muslims. As noted in figure 1, below, 49% of the respondents said that they are Muslims first, followed by 34% who said that they are Palestinians first.

In June 2009, 35% of the respondents identified themselves as Palestinians, 42% as Muslims, 6% as Arabs and 17% as human beings

The respondents that identified themselves as Palestinians are from Fateh supporters. While, for example, 70% of the respondents that trust Hamas said that they are Muslims first, the percentage among the respondents that trust Fateh who said that they are Muslim first did not exceed 40%. As indicated in table 1, below, slightly more of the Fateh supporters identified themselves as Palestinians than as Muslims. As it is always the case, the identification of the respondents that do not trust any faction falls in the middle when compared to that of Fateh and Hamas supporters.

When analyzing this question according to age and gender, it is noticed that the older the respondent is, the more likely he/she is to identify with Palestine. Conversely, the younger the respondent is, the more likely he/she is going to identify with Islam, as presented in table 2, below.

As for gender, males identify with Palestine more so than females. Whereas, for example 53% of the female respondents said that they are Muslims first, the percentage among the male respondents that said the same is 40%, as also pointed out in table 2.

Figure 2: How the respondents identify themselves

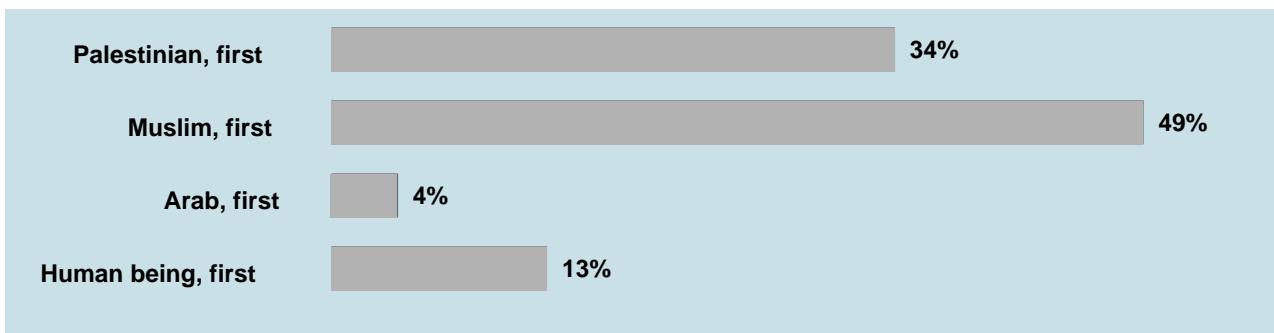




Table 1: How the respondents identify themselves according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | | Factional trust | | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|-------|-----------------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Palestinian, first | 34% | 33% | 22% | 42% | 40% | 29% |
| Muslim, first | 48% | 50% | 70% | 40% | 40% | 53% |
| Arab, first | 4% | 4% | 0% | 6% | 5% | 2% |
| Human being, first | 14% | 11% | 9% | 13% | 15% | 15% |
| Other | 0% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 1% |

Table 2: How the respondents identify themselves according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Palestinian, first | 30% | 33% | 33% | 36% | 46% | 43% | 25% |
| Muslim, first | 54% | 49% | 54% | 44% | 41% | 43% | 55% |
| Arab, first | 3% | 3% | 3% | 6% | 1% | 5% | 3% |
| Human being, first | 13% | 15% | 9% | 14% | 11% | 9% | 17% |
| Other | 1% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 0% |

B. Religiosity

Despite the differences the various sectors of the Palestinians have about how they identify themselves, the majority state that they are religious and adhere to religious practices. When asked about whether they pray, 83% said that they pray several times daily and only 3% said that they do not pray at all. Even among the respondents that trust Fateh, 77% said that they pray several times every day and only 2% said that they do not pray at all. As for the respondents that trust Hamas, 96% said that they pray several times every day while 87% of the respondents that do not trust any faction are of the same position.

The level of “religiosity is higher among the female respondents than the male respondents. While 89% of the former said that they pray several times daily, the percentage among the later is 12% lower.

Although identification with Palestine is stronger among the older Palestinians, the level of their religiosity is higher

Figure 3: Number of times that the respondents pray

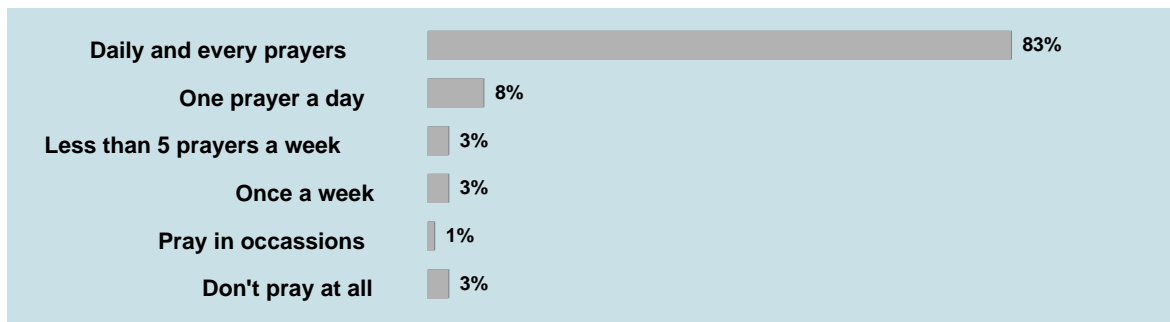




Table 3: Number of times that the respondents pray according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | | Factional trust | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-------|-----------------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Daily and every prayers | 81% | 85% | 96% | 77% | 58% | 87% |
| One prayer a day | 9% | 5% | 3% | 12% | 21% | 2% |
| Less than 5 times weekly | 2% | 4% | 0% | 3% | 0% | 4% |
| Once a week | 3% | 3% | 0% | 4% | 0% | 3% |
| Pray during occasions | 1% | 1% | 0% | 2% | 5% | 1% |
| Don't pray at all | 3% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 16% | 2% |

Table 4: The respondents who said that they pray according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Daily and every prayers | 85% | 83% | 84% | 80% | 89% | 77% | 89% |
| One prayer a day | 5% | 8% | 10% | 6% | 1% | 9% | 6% |
| Less than 5 prayers a week | 2% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 5% | 1% |
| Once a week | 3% | 4% | 1% | 3% | 4% | 5% | 2% |
| Pray during occasions | 1% | 1% | 1% | 4% | 0% | 2% | 1% |
| Don't pray at all | 4% | 1% | 1% | 3% | 3% | 4% | 1% |

C. Reasons for the increase in religiousness

According to the respondents, the Israeli occupation constitutes the principal reason behind the increase in religiousness in the oPt. Of those surveyed, 29% said that the increase in religiosity is primarily due to Israeli occupation and a mere 10% who attributed that to poverty and economic hardship. Almost three times as many Palestinians attributed increase in religiousness to Israeli occupation than to perceived Western hostility towards Islam. Only a small fraction of the Palestinians attribute this phenomenon to corruption or moral degradation, as pointed out in figure 3, below.

22% think that there is no religious extremism in the oPt. This percentage is significantly higher among the respondents trusting Hamas

The belief that the Israeli occupation was the cause behind the intensification of religious sentiments in the oPt was stronger among the respondents that trust Fateh than those trusting Hamas. The results reveal that 30% of the supporters of Fateh, as opposed to 20% of the Hamas supporters, attribute religiousness to the Israeli occupation. The views of the respondents that do not trust any faction is similar to that of the respondents trusting Fateh.

As for area of residence, age and sex, the differences were not very significant. As revealed in table 6, below, the results were more or less similar across the various age groups, as well as among males and females, and among the respondents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.



Figure 4: The main reason behind religiousness

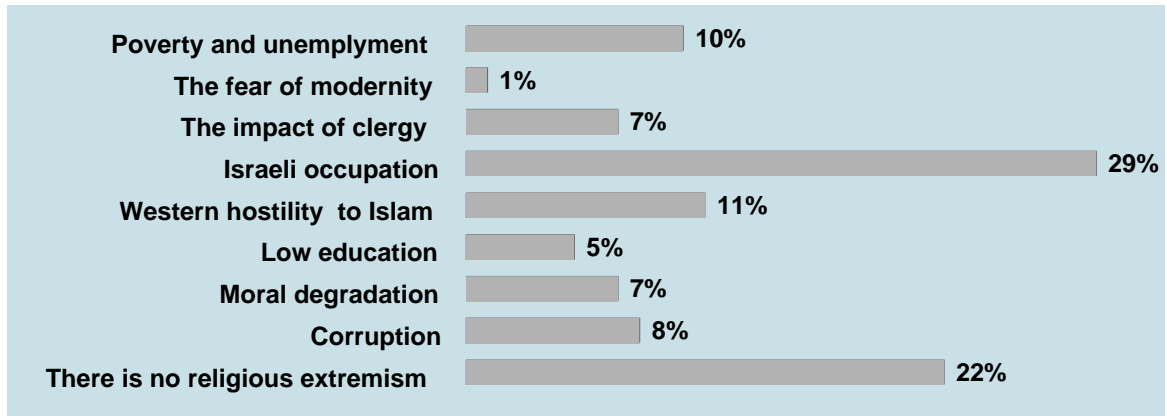


Table 5: The main reason behind religious extremism in OPT according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Poverty and unemployment | 10% | 9% | 7% | 12% | 5% | 9% |
| The fear of modernity | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 0% | 1% |
| The impact of clergy | 7% | 7% | 9% | 9% | 16% | 6% |
| Israeli occupation | 30% | 28% | 20% | 30% | 26% | 29% |
| Western hostility to Islam | 9% | 13% | 13% | 9% | 16% | 12% |
| Low education | 5% | 6% | 4% | 6% | 5% | 6% |
| Moral degradation | 7% | 6% | 7% | 6% | 5% | 6% |
| Corruption | 10% | 6% | 0% | 7% | 5% | 10% |
| There is no religious extremism | 21% | 24% | 38% | 20% | 21% | 22% |

Table 6: The main reason behind religious extremism in OPT according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Poverty and unemployment | 5% | 11% | 11% | 12% | 14% | 9% | 11% |
| The fear of modernity | 1% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| The impact of clergy | 11% | 7% | 7% | 9% | 5% | 9% | 6% |
| Israeli occupation | 27% | 29% | 27% | 30% | 33% | 27% | 32% |
| Western hostility to Islam | 13% | 11% | 12% | 10% | 9% | 12% | 10% |
| Low education | 8% | 6% | 5% | 4% | 3% | 6% | 5% |
| Moral degradation | 8% | 8% | 2% | 7% | 6% | 5% | 8% |
| Corruption | 7% | 8% | 10% | 6% | 9% | 6% | 10% |
| There is no religious extremism | 20% | 18% | 26% | 23% | 20% | 26% | 17% |



D. Religion and the state

The increase in religious sentiments such as the stronger identification with Islam in the oPt, has had a significant impact on the way Palestinians think about the state and the role of religion in politics. Nowadays, as many as 79% of the Palestinians surveyed last month believe that the Quran and the Sunna should be the main source of the law, as illustrated in figure 4, below. Even among the respondents trusting Fateh, almost 70% of the respondents trusting Fateh believe that the Quran and Sunna should be the main source of the law, as opposed to 31% who believe that the people should be the main source of the law.

While it is believed that the youth are often the most likely “liberals” in all societies, the results show that although older Palestinians tend to be more likely to practice religion (pray regularly), the younger adults are more prone to favor the Quran and Sunna as the main sources of the law, as noted in table 8, below. The same is also true for females. Whereas 84% of the interviewed females expressed their preference for the Quran and the Sunna as the main sources of the law, the proportion of the male respondents who share that view is 74%.

Figure 5: The main source of law

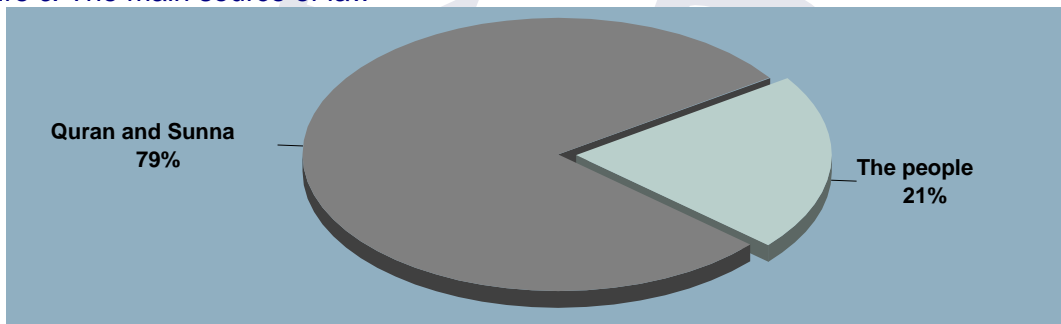


Table 7: The main source of law according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | | Factional trust | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|-------|-----------------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Quran and Sunna | 77% | 82% | 90% | 69% | 63% | 83% |
| The people | 23% | 18% | 10% | 31% | 37% | 17% |

Table 8: The main source of law according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Quran and Sunna | 83% | 80% | 82% | 73% | 72% | 74% | 84% |
| The people | 17% | 20% | 18% | 27% | 28% | 26% | 16% |



E. Palestinians and secularism

1. Attitude towards secularism

It is often been said that people who in religious societies oppose secularism because they do not understand it. According to this survey, while a significant proportion of the Palestinian people believe that there is no contradiction between being a secular person and a religious person, the majority believes that there is. When asked about the statement that says "a person can be a believer and secular at the same time", 59% opposed it and 41% agreed with it.

The respondents who agreed with this statement were primarily the supporters of Fateh, the older respondents and male respondents. As indicated in tables 9 and 10, below, there is a significant difference between the supporters of Fateh and the supporters of Hamas. Whereas 51% of the supporters of Fateh believe that there is not contradiction between being religious and secular, only 21% of the supporters of Hamas believe so.

Figure 6: The respondents agreements with this statement that says" A person can be secular and a believer at the same time"

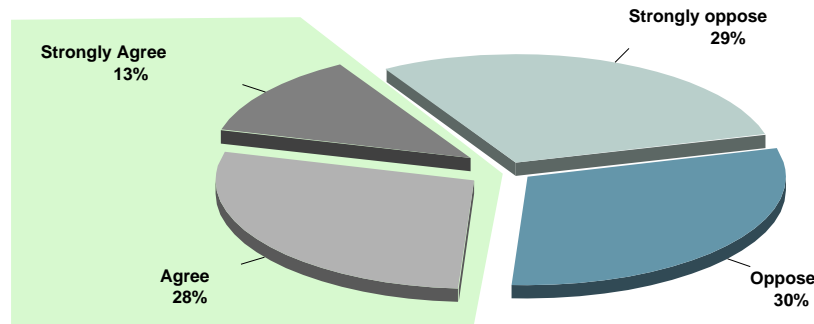


Table 9: The respondents agreements with this statement that says" A person can be secular and a believer at the same time" according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Strongly Agree | 12% | 13% | 9% | 16% | 16% | 12% |
| Agree | 29% | 27% | 13% | 35% | 42% | 23% |
| Oppose | 33% | 26% | 36% | 27% | 16% | 31% |
| Strongly oppose | 26% | 34% | 42% | 22% | 26% | 34% |

Table 10: The respondents agreements with this statement that says" A person can be secular and a believer at the same time" according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Strongly Agree | 10% | 10% | 10% | 26% | 19% | 16% | 9% |
| Agree | 25% | 28% | 29% | 24% | 37% | 31% | 25% |
| Oppose | 37% | 32% | 35% | 21% | 16% | 26% | 35% |
| Strongly oppose | 28% | 31% | 26% | 29% | 28% | 27% | 31% |



2. Secular and religious identification

Despite the fact that as many as 40% of the Palestinian people do not see a contradiction between secularism and religion, the majority identify themselves as religious. As illustrated in figure 8, below, only 13% of the respondents identify themselves as secularist and 67% said that they are religious.

While 81% of the secularists do not see a contradiction between being religious and secularist at the same time, the percentage among those who say that they are religious and who also do not find a contradiction between secularism and religion is only 27%

Again, the proportion of Palestinians who identify themselves as religious is higher in the Gaza Strip (73% as opposed to 63% in the West Bank), among Hamas supporters and among the respondents that do not trust any faction, and among the youth and women, as indicated in tables 11 and 12, below.

Figure 7: Attitudes towards being a secularist or religious person

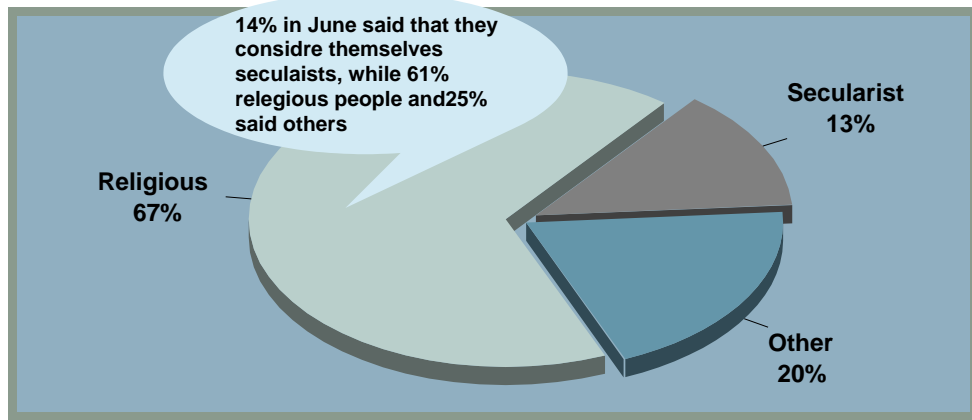


Table 11: Attitudes towards being a secularist or religious person according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | | Factional trust | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|-------|-----------------|--------|------|--|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None | |
| Secularist | 16% | 9% | 6% | 20% | 40% | 9% | |
| Religious | 63% | 73% | 90% | 54% | 45% | 71% | |
| Other | 21% | 18% | 4% | 26% | 15% | 21% | |

Table 12: Attitudes towards being a secularist or religious person according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Secularist | 13% | 13% | 12% | 18% | 15% | 18% | 9% |
| Religious | 69% | 69% | 63% | 65% | 59% | 59% | 74% |
| Other | 18% | 18% | 25% | 17% | 26% | 23% | 17% |



3. Attitude towards the type of the preferred model of government

The strong identification with religion explains why as many as 77% of the Palestinians prefer to live in a state governed by religion. Only 23% of those interviewed said that they prefer to live in a secular state.

When analyzing the data according to the various explanatory variables, it is revealed that even the majority of Fateh supporters prefer to live in a state governed by religion. Only 38% of the Fateh supporters said that they prefer to live in a secular state.

Also, women and the youth are more likely to favor a religious state than a secular state. As pointed out in tables 13 and 14, below, while males and the older generation respondents still favor a religious state, the percentage is significantly lower than that stated by their counterparts.

A state governed by religion is viewed more favorable by the segments that are often perceived to be discriminated against, a phenomenon which may be explained by the belief that a religious state might be more impartial and just

Figure 8: Attitudes towards living in secular country or in a country governed by religion

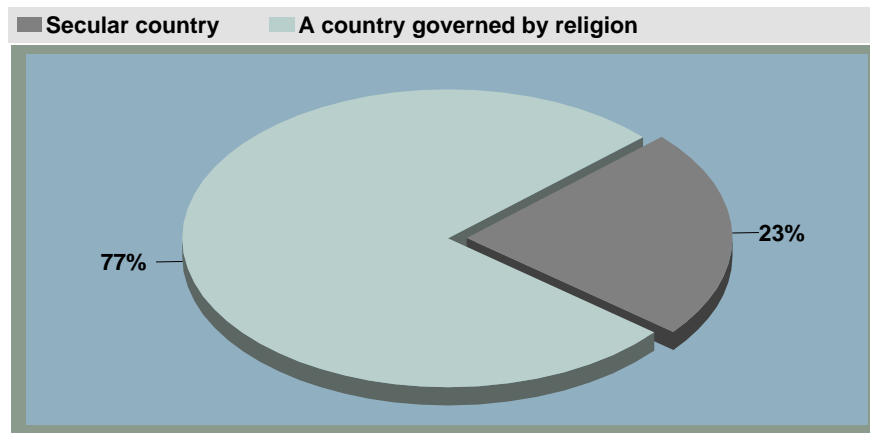


Table 13: Attitudes towards living in secular country or in a country governed by religion according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Secular country | 24% | 20% | 2% | 38% | 47% | 17% |
| A country governed by religion | 76% | 80% | 98% | 62% | 53% | 83% |

Table 14: Attitudes towards living in secular country or in a country governed by religion according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Secular country | 19% | 18% | 26% | 29% | 30% | 31% | 15% |
| A country governed by religion | 81% | 82% | 74% | 71% | 70% | 69% | 85% |



The inclination and preference for a religious state, however, changes when the respondents were confronted with a more realistic scenario. When the respondents were pushed to choose between a secular states governed by Fateh as opposed to a religious state governed by Hamas, 65% of the respondents favored the former and 35% favored the later. While it is evident that the answer to this question followed party lines, the results show that the respondents who do not trust any faction favored a religious state governed by Hamas more so than a secular state governed by Fateh. This result indicates to the actual strength of Hamas in Palestinian society, a strength that is undoubtedly stronger than it appears in public opinion polls, including in this survey.

Figure 9: Attitudes towards living in a secular country governed by Fateh or Islamic country governed by Hamas

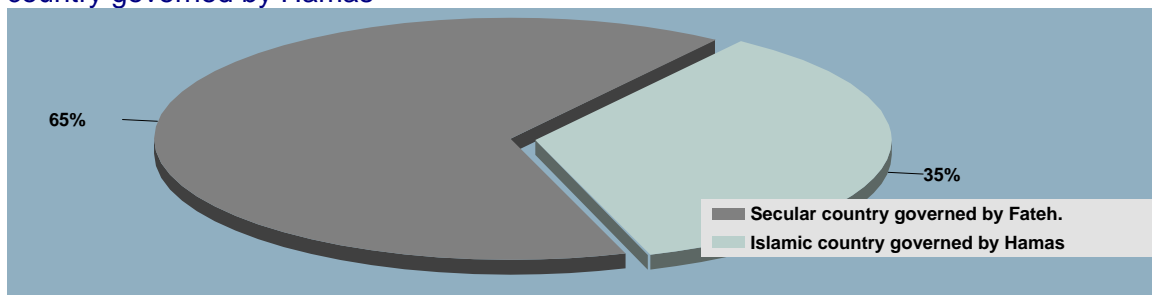


Table 15: Attitudes towards living in a secular country governed by Fateh or Islamic country governed by Hamas according to regional and faction

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Secular Country governed by Fateh | 65% | 64% | 4% | 92% | 57% | 45% |
| Islamic Country governed by Hamas | 35% | 36% | 96% | 8% | 43% | 55% |

Table 16: Attitudes towards living in a secular country governed by Fateh or Islamic country governed by Hamas according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Secular Country governed by Fateh | 62% | 67% | 66% | 66% | 56% | 71% | 57% |
| Islamic Country governed by Hamas | 38% | 33% | 34% | 34% | 44% | 29% | 43% |

F. Perceptions about the future Palestinian state

The strong affiliation with religion amongst the Palestinian population will undoubtedly reflect on the future Palestinian state. Some analysts argue that the impact of religious identification is felt even today, including in the Palestinian curriculum.



In the answer to the question on the best system of government Palestinians would like to have, 19% of the respondents said that they would like to follow the Caliphate system of government, 13% said they want Palestine to be modeled after a non-Arab Islamic country while 25% mentioned one of the Arab governments (mainly Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia). Only 20% of the respondents mentioned one of the European countries or the US, as shown in figure 10, below.

When disaggregating the data according to the explanatory variables, we notice that even 15% of the Fateh supporters want to follow the Caliphate model (Strictly Islamic) so do 21% of the respondents that do not trust any faction. As indicated in table 17, below, the proportion of Fateh supporters who opted for a system of government like the West (i.e. democratic), was the same as that stated by the supporters of Hamas. Furthermore, support for a strictly Islamic model is highest among the youth that fall in the 18-24 age brackets, as noted in table 18.

Figure 10: The preferred system of government to be followed in Palestine

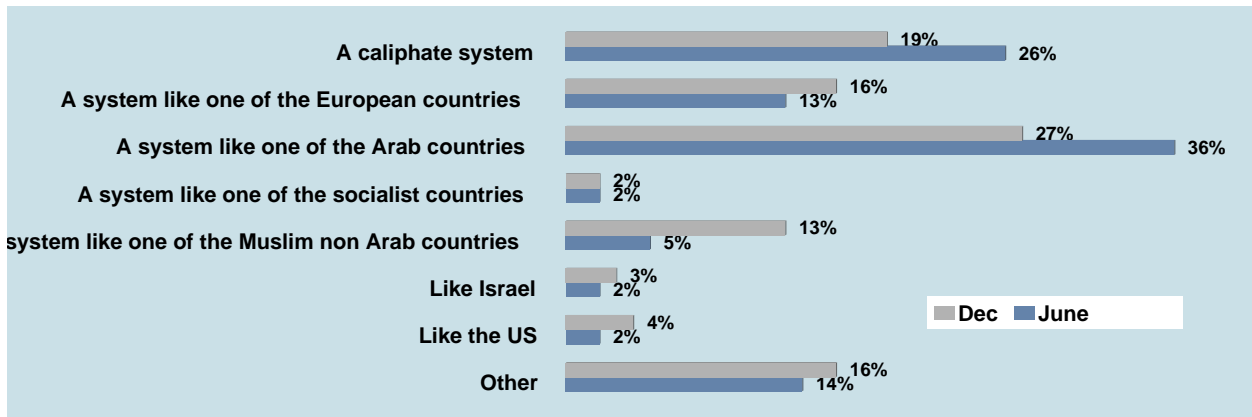


Table 17: The preferred system of government to be followed in Palestine according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|--|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| A caliphate system | 21% | 16% | 34% | 15% | 17% | 21% |
| A system like one of the European countries | 14% | 17% | 18% | 18% | 11% | 16% |
| A system like one of the Arab countries | 25% | 29% | 9% | 35% | 33% | 20% |
| A system like one of the socialist countries | 2% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 11% | 2% |
| A system like one of the Muslim non-Arab countries | 14% | 11% | 18% | 8% | 0% | 16% |
| Like Israel | 3% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 0% | 3% |
| Like the US | 5% | 4% | 7% | 5% | 0% | 4% |
| Other | 16% | 16% | 9% | 13% | 28% | 17% |



Table 18: The preferred system of government to be followed in Palestine according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| A caliphate system | 24% | 17% | 14% | 24% | 20% | 15% | 24% |
| A system like one of the European countries | 12% | 14% | 23% | 19% | 12% | 21% | 10% |
| Like one of the Arab countries | 25% | 27% | 29% | 24% | 23% | 27% | 26% |
| Like one of the socialist countries | 2% | 2% | 0% | 2% | 8% | 4% | 1% |
| Like one of the Muslim non Arab countries | 16% | 13% | 14% | 8% | 9% | 9% | 16% |
| Like Israel | 3% | 5% | 2% | 4% | 3% | 4% | 3% |
| Like the US | 4% | 5% | 6% | 4% | 3% | 5% | 4% |
| Other | 13% | 19% | 14% | 14% | 23% | 15% | 16% |

G. Utopia vs. realism

Strong identification with Islam and with Islamic laws is not a sign of radicalism but a sign of distrust with the existing political institutions and with government practices. The failure of governments to address the needs of the population sets the ground for people to look for idealism and utopia. This is reflected in the attitude people have about whether there are countries in the world that follow the Islamic system of government. As noted in figure 11, below, 75% of the Palestinians believe that there are no governments that can be described as applying the Islamic model. Thus, most governments that are perceived by many as Islamic are not seen by the Palestinians as such because to most Palestinians, adopting Islamic laws means guaranteeing individual rights and ensuring accountability and good practice.

65% of the supporters of Hamas do not believe that there are regimes in the world that adopts the Islamic system of government

As noted in tables 19 and 20, this view is consistent among the various sectors of the Palestinian society. Even to the respondents that prefer the adoption of Islamic laws and the Shari'a like women and the youth, most countries that claim to adopt Islam as a model are not necessarily Islamic.

Figure 11: Attitudes towards whether there is any country in the world that follows the Islamic system of government

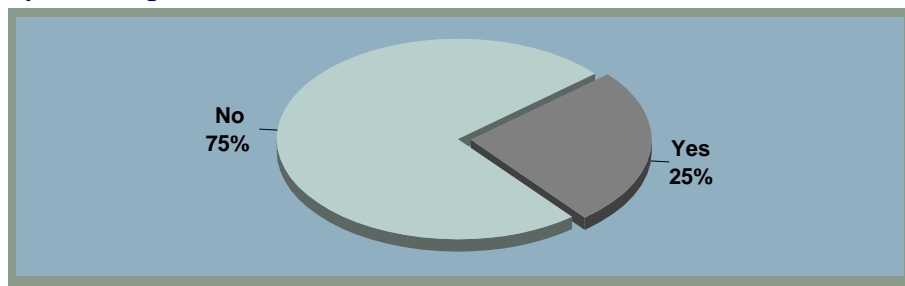




Table 19: Attitudes towards whether there is any country in the world that follows the Islamic system of government according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|-----|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Yes | 25% | 26% | 35% | 24% | 15% | 24% |
| No | 75% | 74% | 65% | 76% | 85% | 76% |

Table 20: Attitudes towards whether there is any country in the world that follows the Islamic system of government according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|-----|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Yes | 29% | 22% | 25% | 21% | 28% | 23% | 27% |
| No | 71% | 78% | 75% | 79% | 72% | 77% | 73% |

IV. Palestinian politics

A. Factional support

Although the majority of the Palestinians are religious and have a preference for the Islamic system of government, they are not ideologically dogmatic or politically radical. As discussed earlier, identification with religion is a result of the failure of governments to address needs more so than a reflection of extremism. This view is confirmed by the proportion of Palestinians who support the ‘secularist’ Fateh as opposed to Hamas. As illustrated in figure 12, below, only 10% of the respondents said that they trust Hamas most (a decline from 41% in January 2006), as opposed to 43% that trusts Fateh most.

Support for Hamas among the non-partisans is attributed to the negative perceptions this sector of the Palestinian people have about Fateh than to their religious sentiments

The results also show that 44% of the Palestinian public trusts neither Fateh nor Hamas. As indicated in table 21, below, the proportion of Palestinians that do not trust any faction is higher in the West Bank where 47% of the respondents there stated that they trust neither Fateh nor Hamas, as opposed to 39% in the Gaza Strip who shared this view.

The analysis shows that the fragmentation of Fateh, perceived lack of coherence, and perceived corruption undermines the apparent popularity of Fateh and will most likely push many of the non-partisans to side with Hamas, despite the support they have for the policies of Fateh

Also worth noting is the differences in factional support among the different age groups and sexes. Consistent with previous surveys, young Palestinians and women are slightly more negative about Hamas than their counterparts. Support for Hamas among women is higher than among men so is the percentage of women that do not trust any faction. Whereas, for example, 51% of the male population said that they trust Fateh most, the percentage among females is 35%, as outlined in table 22, below.



Figure 12: Factional support (Jan 2006 till Dec 2009)

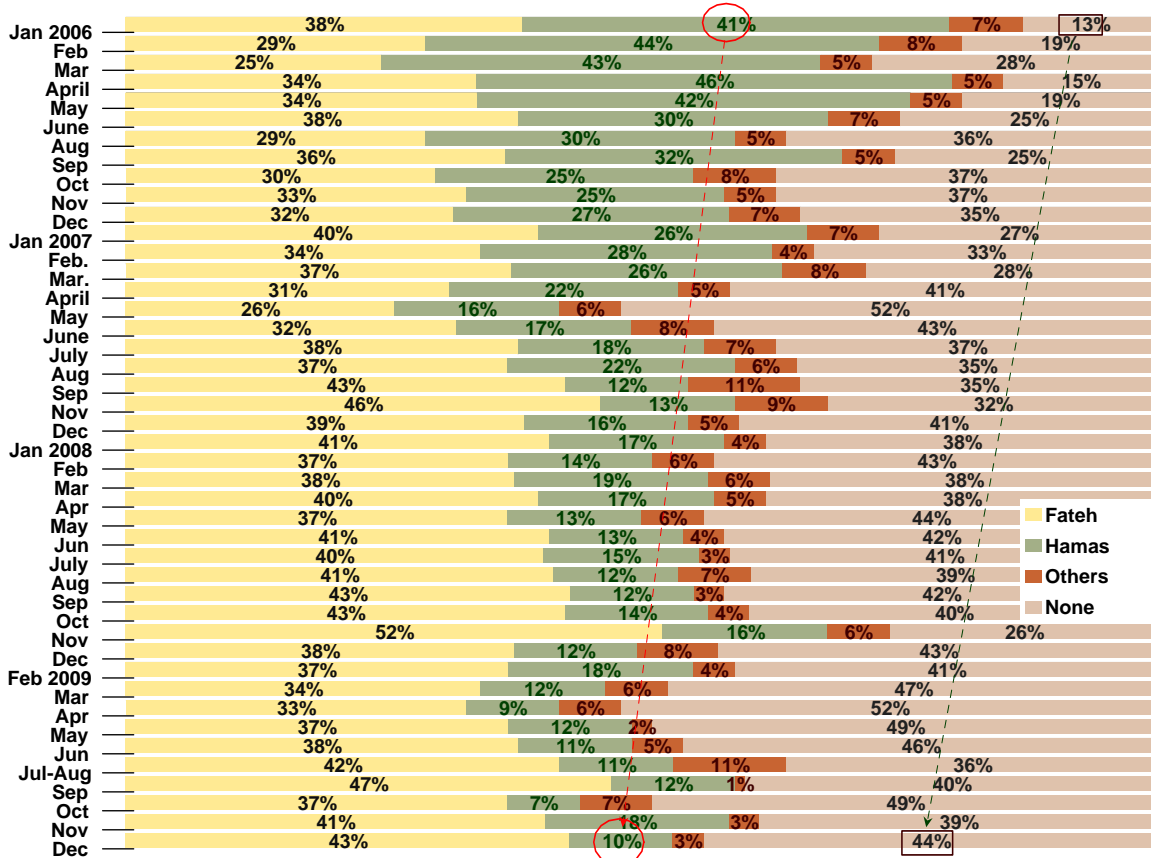


Table 21: Factional trust according to region of residence

| | Region | |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip |
| Hamas | 6% | 17% |
| Fateh | 44% | 43% |
| Others | 4% | 1% |
| None | 47% | 39% |

Table 22: Factional trust according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Gender | |
|--------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Hamas | 13% | 10% | 12% | 7% | 10% | 8% | 12% |
| Fateh | 36% | 46% | 46% | 55% | 32% | 51% | 35% |
| Others | 5% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 5% | 4% | 2% |
| None | 46% | 42% | 41% | 37% | 53% | 38% | 50% |

B. Leadership support

The high proportion of Palestinians that distrusts Fateh and Hamas is also reflected in terms of trust in leadership. As pointed out in figure 13, 46% of the respondents refrained from trusting Abu Mazen or Ismael Hanieh. Only 42% gave their support to Mahmoud Abbas and 12% to Ismael Hanieh.

While it is true that when examining the relative level of support for Abu Mazen as opposed to Ismael Hanieh, about 3/4th of the respondents said they trusted Abu Mazen and 1/4th trusted Hanieh, further analysis of the profile of those that refused to answer this question unveils a somewhat different picture. Support for Ismael Hanieh among the non-partisans is higher than among the general public. Given that the level of religiosity of the non-partisans is closer to Hamas than to Fateh, any future elections will most likely produce results that favor Hamas and its leaders.

Tables 23 and 24 below provide an analysis of the level of leadership support according to the different explanatory variables. As it is the case with other questions, the young and the female respondents tend to be slightly more in line with the position of Hamas and of their leaders than are the male respondents and the middle age and older respondents.

Figure 13: The personality that the respondents trust more

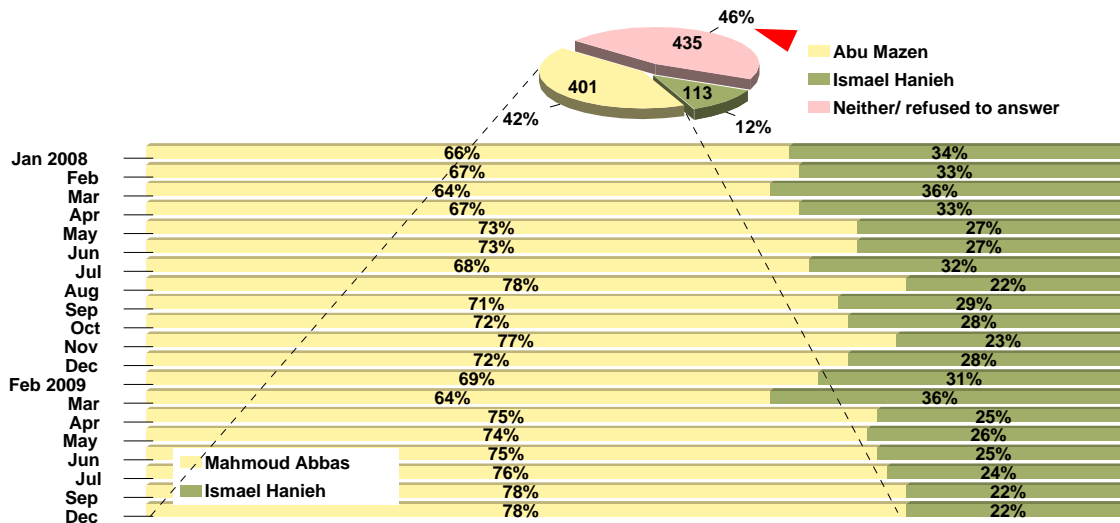


Table 23: The personality that the respondents trust more according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|---------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Abu Mazen | 86% | 67% | 2% | 98% | 88% | 75% |
| Ismael Hanieh | 14% | 33% | 98% | 2% | 13% | 25% |



Table 24: The personality that the respondents trust more according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Abu Mazen | 70% | 79% | 78% | 83% | 81% | 81% | 75% |
| Ismael Hanieh | 30% | 21% | 22% | 17% | 19% | 19% | 25% |

The relative indifference towards President Abbas and Ismael Hanieh, however, does not imply the preference to another personality or leader. When the respondents were provided with a list of names of leaders, Mahmoud Abbas came as the most trusted leader with 37% of the respondents selecting him as opposed to 14% who, for example, selected Marwan Bargouthi, the Fateh leader who is serving long a long prison term in Israeli prisons. Even among the respondents that do not trust any faction, Abbas, selected by a mere 19% of the nonpartisans, remains the highest on the list. These and other results are outlined in tables 25 and 26, below.

Figure 14: The personality that the respondents trust more

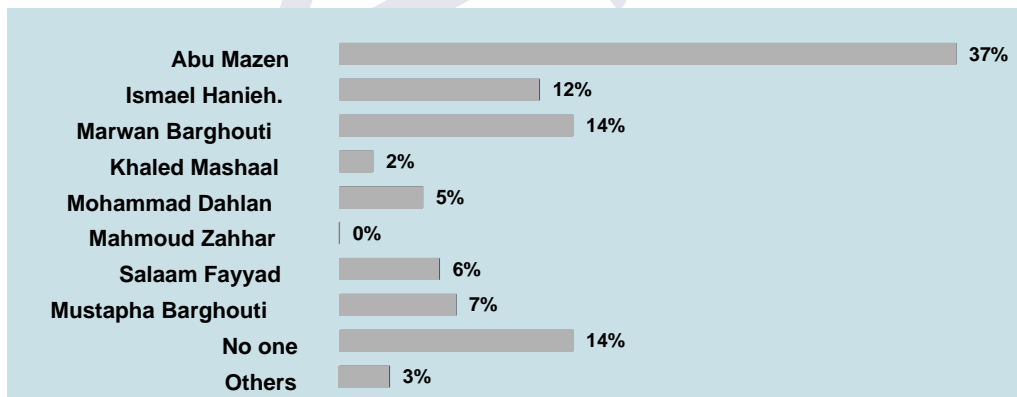


Table 25: The personality that the respondents trust more according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Abu Mazen | 40% | 34% | 0% | 61% | 33% | 19% |
| Ismael Hanieh | 7% | 18% | 72% | 1% | 0% | 6% |
| Marwan Bargouthi | 16% | 11% | 9% | 17% | 20% | 11% |
| Khaled Meshaal | 2% | 2% | 14% | 0% | 13% | 0% |
| Mohammad Dahlan | 1% | 10% | 0% | 9% | 0% | 2% |
| Mahmoud Zahhar | 0% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 7% | 0% |
| Salaam Fayyad | 8% | 4% | 2% | 5% | 0% | 11% |
| Mustapha Bargouthi | 5% | 8% | 2% | 3% | 13% | 10% |
| No one | 18% | 9% | 2% | 1% | 0% | 35% |
| Others | 2% | 3% | 0% | 1% | 13% | 5% |



Table 26: The personality that the respondents trust more according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Abu Mazen | 30% | 37% | 41% | 46% | 43% | 42% | 33% |
| Ismael Hanieh | 13% | 13% | 11% | 13% | 11% | 9% | 15% |
| Marwan Bargouthi | 18% | 13% | 9% | 13% | 11% | 15% | 11% |
| Khaled Meshaal | 4% | 3% | 3% | 0% | 0% | 2% | 3% |
| Mohammad Dahlan | 8% | 4% | 4% | 5% | 2% | 5% | 5% |
| Mahmoud Zahhar | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% | 0% | 0% |
| Salaam Fayyad | 4% | 10% | 9% | 7% | 4% | 6% | 7% |
| Mustapha Bargouthi | 6% | 4% | 7% | 5% | 11% | 8% | 5% |
| No one | 14% | 15% | 15% | 10% | 11% | 11% | 18% |
| Others | 3% | 1% | 3% | 2% | 4% | 3% | 2% |

C. Attitude about who represents the Palestinian people

Despite the weaknesses of the PLO and its relative disappearance both on the local level and the international level, it remains the institution that most Palestinians believe to represent them. In response to the question about the institution that represents them, 68% of the respondents said that it is the PLO, as opposed to 20% that mentioned the PNA and 6% that mentioned either Hamas or Fateh as their representative.

The belief that the PLO is the representative of the Palestinian people is strong across all sectors of the Palestinian society, including the respondents that said they trust Hamas most. As pointed out in table 27, 46% of the Hamas supporters said that the PLO is their true representative, as opposed to 44% who mentioned Hamas.

While only 8% of the respondents trusting Fateh said that Fateh is the representative of the Palestinian people, the percentage among Hamas who said that Hamas represents the Palestinian people is 44%

The lowest support for the representation of the PLO is among young Palestinians. Whereas, for example, over 80% of the Palestinians over the age of 45 said that the PLO is the representative of the Palestinian people, the percentage among the youth is a mere 53%, as indicated in table 28.

Figure 15: The party which represents the Palestinian people

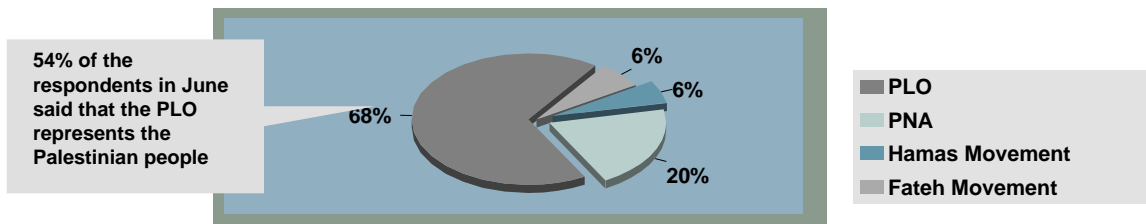




Table 27: The party that represents the Palestinian people according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| PLO | 68% | 68% | 46% | 73% | 75% | 70% |
| PNA | 21% | 19% | 10% | 19% | 17% | 21% |
| Hamas Movement | 4% | 9% | 44% | 0% | 0% | 3% |
| Fateh Movement | 7% | 5% | 0% | 8% | 8% | 5% |

Table 28: The party that represents the Palestinian people according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| PLO | 53% | 65% | 73% | 80% | 82% | 74% | 60% |
| PNA | 32% | 25% | 12% | 10% | 13% | 18% | 23% |
| Hamas Movement | 8% | 5% | 6% | 6% | 2% | 5% | 6% |
| Fateh Movement | 8% | 4% | 9% | 4% | 4% | 3% | 10% |

V. Elections

Attitude towards future elections follows the same logic as that of factional support. Again, and in response to the question as to whom respondents will voter for in case the elections took place next week, 44% replied that they will vote for Fateh and 8% for Hamas. Still 34% of the respondents said that they will not participate in the elections.

The high level of discipline among Hamas in terms of the nomination of candidates and the inability of Fateh to restrain some of its members to run as candidates may lead to a fragmentation of the Fateh vote and, consequently, to their loss in future elections

However, as also discussed earlier, the attitude of people will most certainly be different than their behavior. Hamas will probably gain more support and votes than what appears in the survey. Many reasons lead to this conclusion. First, Fateh's apparent fragmentation¹ and the possibility of having candidates who will run against party line will go in favor of Hamas who is perceived to be more discipline and resilient. Second, the lack of progress in the peace process will alienate a significant proportion of the Palestinians that do not trust any faction in favor of Hamas especially given their ideological closeness to the movement. Third, the strong support Hamas is gaining from the Arab and international media highlights the strengths of Hamas and the weaknesses and corruption of Fateh to the majority of the Palestinian voters. Fourth, the split between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the isolation of the Gaza Strip is undermining the ability of Fateh to maintain public support even among the Fateh traditional supporters in the Gaza Strip who feel that they are left alone.

¹ To some this is a sign of plurality and openness



Tables 29 and 30 provide further details about voting attitude according to different explanatory variables.

Figure 16: The party that the respondents would vote for in case legislative elections were held next week

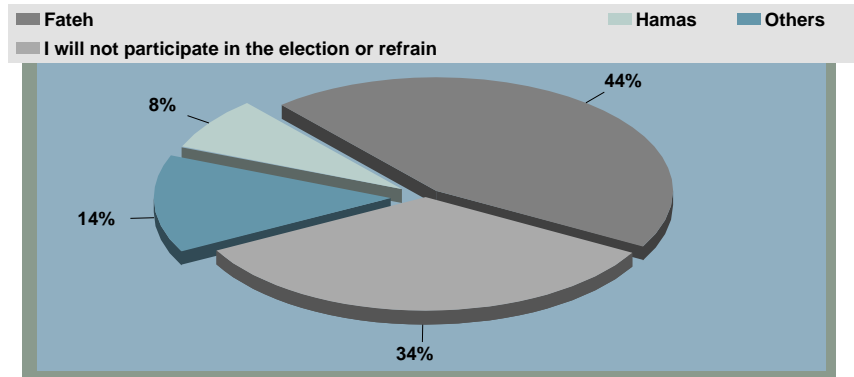


Table 29: The party that the respondents would vote for in case legislative elections were held next week according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|--------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Fateh | 71% | 62% | 2% | 96% | 10% | 41% |
| Hamas | 6% | 20% | 90% | 0% | 0% | 5% |
| Others | 23% | 18% | 8% | 4% | 90% | 54% |

Table 30: The party that the respondents would vote for in case legislative elections were held next week according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|--------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Fateh | 64% | 69% | 65% | 74% | 60% | 72% | 62% |
| Hamas | 16% | 12% | 9% | 10% | 8% | 9% | 15% |
| Others | 20% | 19% | 26% | 16% | 31% | 19% | 23% |

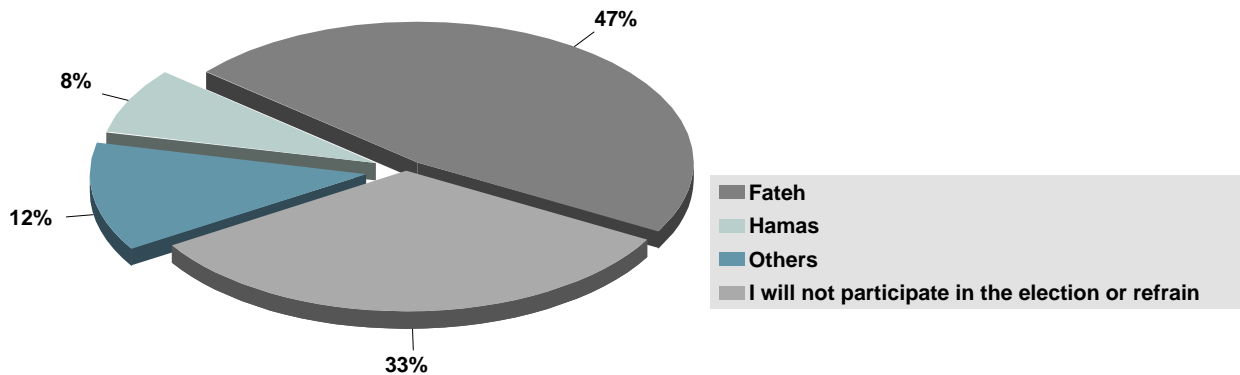
In addition to the above, 45% of the respondents said that they will not vote or will vote for another candidate. While it seems that the Fateh candidate will win the next presidential elections, the analysis stated above with regard to the legislative elections holds true for the presidential elections. There is no doubt that President Abbas remains as the most trustworthy Palestinian leader. However, his successor² may not be able to run against a Hamas candidate for the same reasons that might alienate many voters

² Although Marwan Bargouthi may rally Fateh together, it is not likely that he will be released from prison.



from voting for Fateh. The unwillingness of Abu Mazen to run for elections, and the continued imprisonment of Marwan Bargouthi will further escalate the leadership crisis within Fateh and will consequently provide extra ammunition for the Hamas candidate to gain further public support at the expense of Fateh.

Figure 17: The party candidate that the respondents would vote for, in case presidential elections were held next week



VI. Israeli Palestinians issues

A. Level of support for a peace agreement with Israel

As illustrated in figure 18, below, support for a peace settlement with Israel has been consistent since January 2006. Despite the stalemate in the peace process and the continuation of harsh Israeli measures against the Palestinians in the oPt, 70% continue to support the conclusion of a peace agreement with Israel.

In the Gaza Strip where there is a tight closure, 74% of the respondents there declared their support for a peace agreement with Israel, more so than their brethren in the West Bank. More surprisingly, 46% of the respondents that said that they trust Hamas most favor reaching a peace settlement with Israel, as stated in table 31.

When examining the level of support according to age and gender, it is noticed that the younger the respondents the lower is the level of support for a peace agreement with Israel. For example, while 82% of the respondents that are above the age of 55 support a peace agreement with Israel, the percentage among the respondents that are below the age of 24 and above the age of 1 is a mere 61%. Similarly, whereas 73% of men support a peace agreement with Israel, the percentage is 67% among the female respondents, as outlined in table 32, below.



Figure 18: Level of support for a peace settlement with Israel

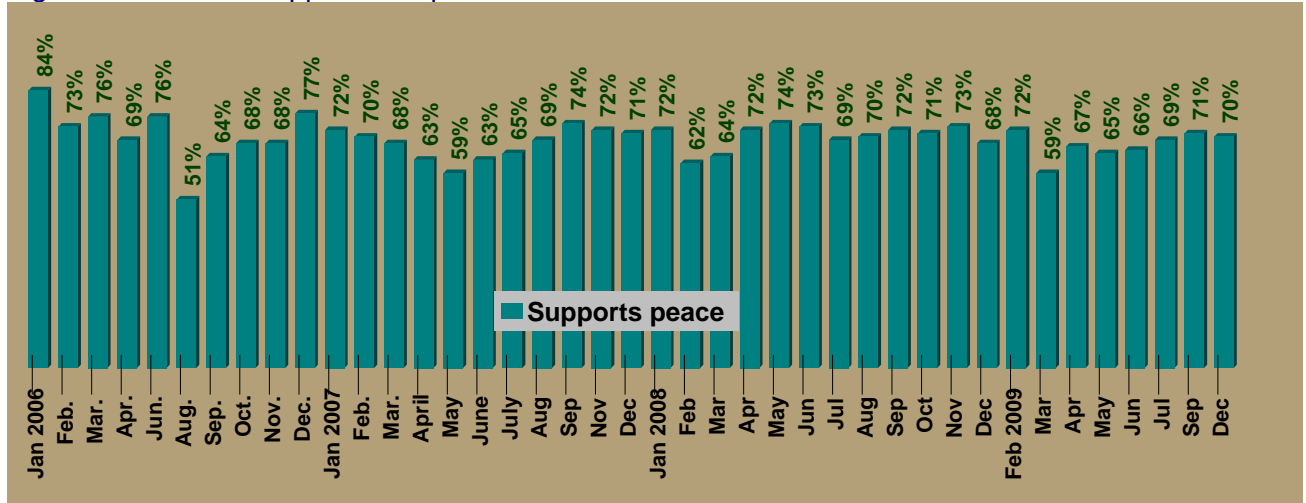


Table 31: Support or oppose a peace settlement with Israel according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|---------|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Support | 67% | 74% | 46% | 84% | 40% | 63% |
| Oppose | 33% | 26% | 54% | 16% | 60% | 37% |

Table 32: Support or oppose a peace settlement with Israel according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|---------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Support | 61% | 72% | 74% | 73% | 82% | 73% | 66% |
| Oppose | 39% | 28% | 26% | 27% | 18% | 27% | 34% |

B. Attitude towards the position of Hamas vis-à-vis Israel

Attitude towards Hamas's position with regard to the existence of the state of Israel is yet another indicator reflecting Palestinian public support for a peaceful solution with Israel. Currently, 70% of the respondents believe that Hamas should change its position about the existence of the state of Israel. This percentage is 6% higher than it was in September 2009.

The attitude Palestinians have with respect to this issue is stronger in the Gaza Strip than it is in the West Bank and among Fateh than among the supporters of Hamas, as noted in table 33. The position of the respondents that do not trust any faction falls between that of Hamas and Fateh.

43% of the Hamas supporters still want Hamas to change its position vis-à-vis the existence of Israel



Once again, the position of the younger generation and females is consistent with other results. Whereas respectively 78% and 77% of the Palestinians over the age of 55 and the male respondents want Hamas to change its position, the percentage among the 18-25 years old and females is 63%, as pointed out in table 34, below.

Figure 19: Perceptions about Hamas' position on the elimination of Israel.

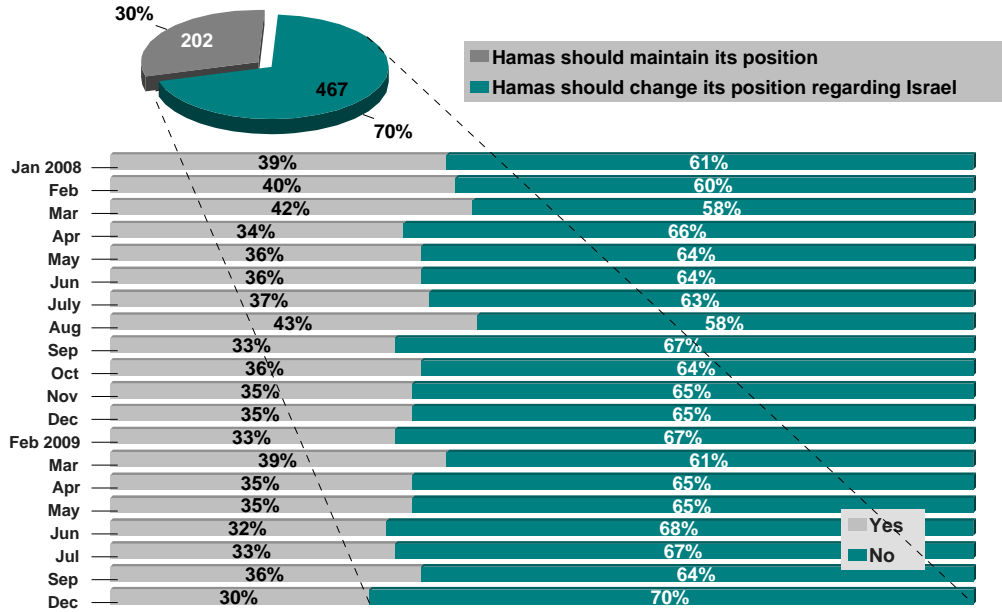


Table 33: Perceptions about Hamas' position on the elimination of Israel according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|-----------------|-------|--------|------|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None |
| Hamas should maintain its position against Israel | 32% | 27% | 57% | 17% | 37% | 32% |
| Hamas should change its position regarding Israel | 68% | 73% | 43% | 83% | 63% | 68% |

Table 34: Perceptions about Hamas' position on the elimination of Israel according to age and gender

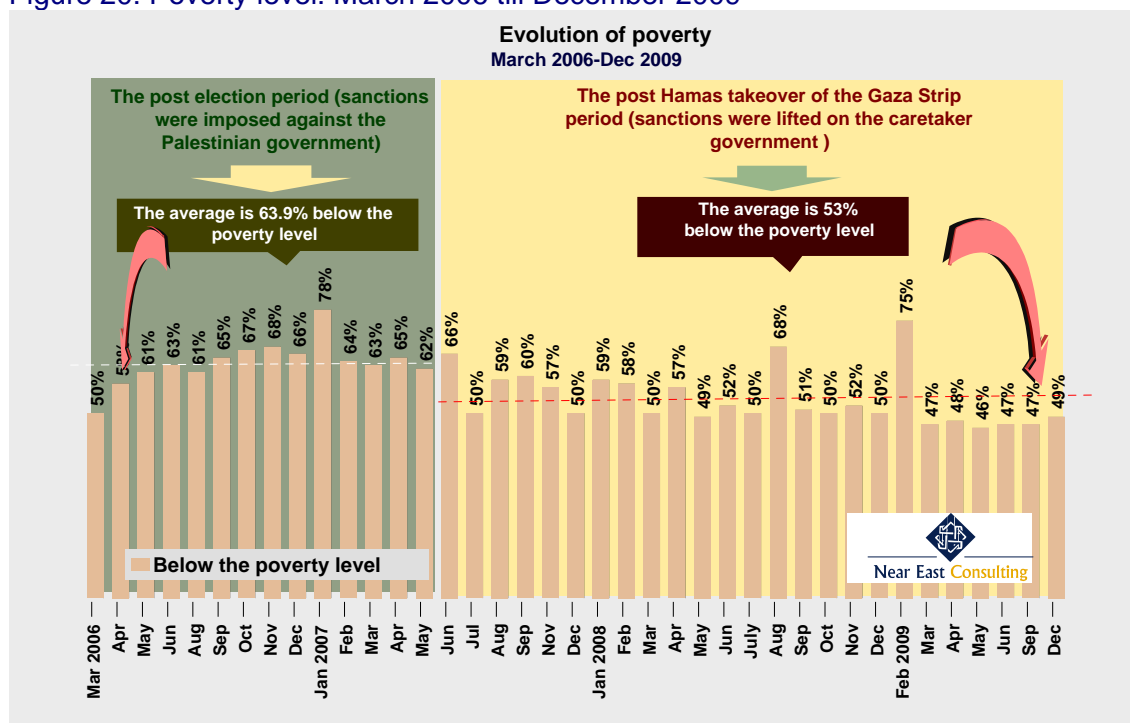
| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 yrs. | Male | Female |
| Hamas should maintain its position against Israel | 38% | 27% | 28% | 26% | 22% | 23% | 37% |
| Hamas should change its position regarding Israel | 63% | 73% | 72% | 74% | 78% | 77% | 63% |

VII. The economy

A. Poverty situation

Today, the respondents that are below the poverty level³ is approximately 49%, as compared to 47% in September 2009. As indicated in 20, below, the average level of poverty since the Hamas takeover of Gaza in June 2007 dropped from 64% to 53%.

Figure 20: Poverty level: March 2006 till December 2009



B. The labor market

During the second half of 2009, unemployment has increased by almost 4%. Whereas the proportion of unemployed respondents was approximately 20%, the rate in December 2009 has increased to 24%, as illustrated in figure 21, below.

Unemployment, as indicated in tables 35 and 36 is more serious in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank (31% in the former as opposed to 19% in the later), among Fateh supporters than among Hamas supporters (24% among the former as opposed to 12% among the later) and among the youth due to the fact that most of them are students.

³ Poverty is calculated by NEC according to the reported household income (including assistance, etc), and on the basis of the household structure.



Figure 21: The employment situation

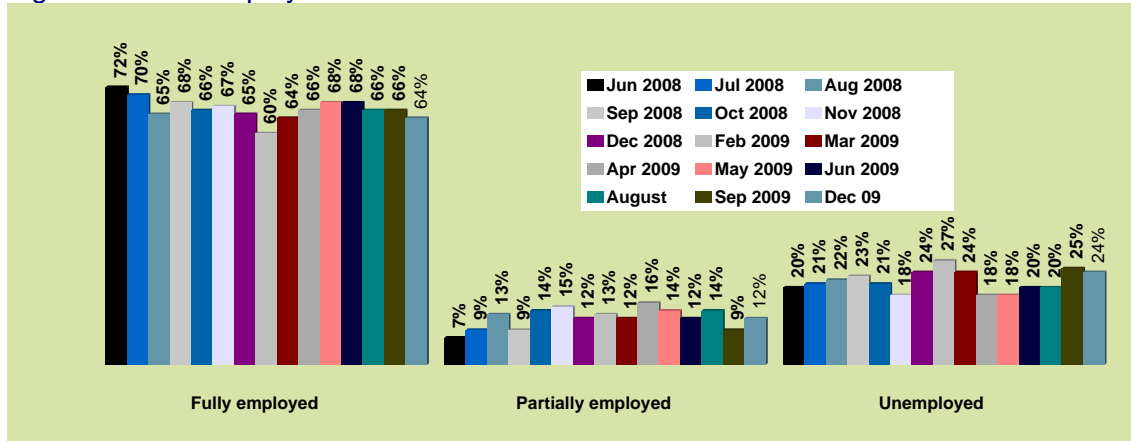


Table 35: Employment according to region and factionalism

| | Region | | | Factional trust | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|-------|-----------------|--------|------|--|
| | West Bank | Gaza Strip | Hamas | Fateh | Others | None | |
| Employed full-time | 69% | 57% | 81% | 61% | 73% | 62% | |
| Employed part-time | 12% | 11% | 8% | 15% | 9% | 11% | |
| Not employed | 19% | 31% | 12% | 24% | 18% | 28% | |

Table 36: Employment according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Sex | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------|------|--------|
| | 18-24 yrs. | 25-34 yrs. | 35-44 yrs. | 45-54 yrs. | Over 55 | Male | Female |
| Employed full-time | 39% | 70% | 76% | 66% | 55% | 66% | 56% |
| Employed part-time | 19% | 10% | 9% | 12% | 10% | 10% | 16% |
| Not employed | 42% | 20% | 15% | 22% | 34% | 23% | 28% |

VIII. Organizations evaluation

Since 2006, NEC has been monitoring Palestinian perception of various local and international organizations. For this purpose respondents were asked to evaluate the general performance of these organizations on a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 being very negative and 10 very positive. The cumulative scores were added and an average score was generated for each organization.

As noted in table 41, below, UNRWA received the highest score (6.6 out of 10), followed by the PLO (6.4), the Fayyad government (6.1), and Fateh (6 out of 10). Palestinian civil society organization received a score of 5.3 while the Hanih government received only 3.4 out of 10.

The average scores according to region, factional support, age and gender are detailed in table 42 and 43, below.



Table 37: Average score of local and international organizations

| | Valid | Missing | Average score |
|--|-------|---------|---------------|
| European Union | 713 | 137 | 3.81 |
| Security Council | 704 | 146 | 2.16 |
| United Nations | 705 | 145 | 2.37 |
| USA | 716 | 134 | 1.02 |
| USAID | 654 | 196 | 3.85 |
| PLO | 707 | 143 | 6.35 |
| Government of Salam Fayyad | 695 | 155 | 6.13 |
| UNRWA | 707 | 143 | 6.57 |
| Fateh | 699 | 151 | 6.02 |
| Hamas | 683 | 167 | 3.46 |
| Government of Ismael Hanieh | 665 | 185 | 3.35 |
| Palestinian civil society institutions | 657 | 193 | 5.27 |
| Non-governmental foreign institutions | 645 | 205 | 4.61 |

Table 38: Score for the various organizations according to region and factional trust

| | Region | | Factional trust | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| | West Bank Mean | Gaza Strip Mean | Hamas Mean | Fateh Mean | Others Mean | None Mean |
| European Union | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| Security Council | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| United Nations | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| USA | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| USAID | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| PLO | 6 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 5 |
| Fayyad govt. | 6 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 5 |
| UNRWA | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| Fateh | 6 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 5 |
| Hamas | 3 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Hanieh govt. | 3 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Palestinian civil society institutions | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Non-governmental foreign institutions | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 |

Table 39: Score for the various organizations according to age and gender

| | Age | | | | | Gender | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| | 18-24 yrs. Mean | 25-34 yrs. Mean | 35-44 yrs. Mean | 45-54 yrs. Mean | Over 55 yrs. Mean | Male Mean | Female Mean |
| European Union | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Security Council | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| United Nations | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| USA | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| USAID | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| PLO | 6 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Fayyad govt. | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| UNRWA | 7 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| Fateh | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Hamas | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Hanieh govt. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Palestinian civil society institutions | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Non-governmental foreign institutions | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
