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# Palestinian Opinion on Peace: Analysis of Survey Data from the Occupied Palestinian Territories

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Palestinian Opinion on Peace: Analysis of Survey Data from the Occupied Palestinian  
Territories

by

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requirements for the degree of

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## **Introduction**

The Palestinian/Israeli conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict are defining confrontations of our time. Countries and people around the globe have a hard time staying out of the debate over who is the legal owner of a very small parcel of land. The current territory includes the State of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories-the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. According to the CIA World Factbook, Israel is 1,068 kilometers (slightly larger than New Jersey), the West Bank is 5,860 square kilometers (slightly smaller than Delaware) and the Gaza Strip is 360 square kilometers (slightly more than twice the size of Washington, DC (CIA World Factbook Israel, West Bank and Gaza Strip). Many claims exist for this land, ranging from nationalistic in origin to religious. Currently, Israelis and Palestinians both hold assertions of ownership over Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. Within the ownership claims, there are supposed entitlements based on nationalistic and religious arguments for both sides with varying levels of strength and use for each. The nationalist claim has historically been the strongest for both sides, with the Zionists and Palestinian nationalists.

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is messy, with no clear-cut solution and with all peace negotiations failing. An aspect constantly debated is the degree of support for the peace conferences, from Palestinians, Israelis, and other actors in the discussions. Significant research has been conducted examining the factors that influence Palestinian public opinion regarding the possibility of peace with Israel. Scholars have examined how gender, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, support for violence, and many other elements could influence popular opinion for the peace process (Adler 1998;

Genicot and Skaperdas 2002; Shaliyeh and Deng 2003; Tessler and Warriner, 1997; Tessler et al, 1999; Shikaki 2002; Flanigan and O'brien 2015). Some scholarship looks at changes in Palestinian support for the peace process, but it has never been a major focus compared to the determinants of public opinion (Shikaki 2006). Nor has it examined data since the early 2000s.

While these themes have been examined before, what is missing from research is current data. Most published articles on the topic of Palestinian public opinion stop around 2006, meaning that information gathered after the Gaza War in the summer of 2014 and other major events have not been analyzed in an academic setting. There are small reports on the data from the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, but they give rudimentary facts about the figures, comparing responses between gender, age, political affiliation, education level and so on. All of these findings are more descriptive in nature rather than quantitative. There is also the possibility this new data has been utilized in articles written in Arabic or Hebrew and not translated, meaning that the information gathered is not accessible to the wider academic community.

The focus of my research will be on the question of Palestinian public opinion with respect to the peace process. I will ask the following: *Did Palestinian support for peace fluctuate from 2006 to 2012 and if so, why?* This paper aims not only to look at whether or not Palestinian support for the Middle East peace process has changed over a six-year period, but also to examine some of the possible factors that could be influencing the change in popular opinions towards peace. A binomial logistic regression will be run on survey data from the Arab Barometer (AB) and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPRS) to determine whether Palestinian support for the peace process

has changed from 2006 to 2012.

The literature review will include a discussion of some determinates of public opinion, including gender, political affiliation, religiosity, economic status, and area of residence. There are many more determinants that have been studied, but for the purpose of this research and for continuity in question wording, these five determinants have been chosen. Since this thesis is using survey data from two different sources in a six year time period, I had to be selective in respects to continuity in question wording and to make sure the independent and dependent questions were not too similar to the point where it would disrupt the binomial logistic regression analysis.

### **Historic Background**

Zionism was/is the movement to bring Jews to Palestine and was founded in the nineteenth century by Theodor Herzl. It is a secular movement that took parts of Jewish history and scripture to support their claim of ownership over Ottoman Palestine. The Zionist claim to the land is based in the nationalist reasoning that the Jews needed a place away from the anti-Semitism of Europe. Ottoman Palestine was selected for the Jewish people's connection to the land and its history. The religious claim for choosing Palestine comes from Abraham's covenant with God, which proclaimed that his descendants would have control over and live in Canaan (Genesis 17:2-10 [JPS]). The link to antiquity informs Jewish history with stories celebrating the reigns of David and Solomon over the Kingdom of Israel and also the destruction of the second Temple. Zionists viewed this legacy as direct, negating the 2,000 or so years that is termed the "exile" period of Jewish history (Zerubavel 17, 25). The claim of Palestine specifically as a refuge was a large part of Revisionist Zionism, created in the early twentieth century by Vladimir Jabotinsky,

who stated that “[w]e have got to save millions, many *millions*. I do not know; but it is a question of re-housing one-third of the Jewish race, half of the Jewish race, or a quarter of the Jewish race; I do not know; but it is a question of millions” (Gettleman and Schaar 2005, 175). All of these reasonings have driven the Yishuv and then Israeli need for a Jewish state.

The Palestinian/Muslim claim has some similarities to the Jewish entitlements for the land. The Palestinians claim that their families have been living in this area for centuries (Smith 2012, 9). There is also the notion of the right to self-determination, which was a popular after World War 1 and became a part of the decolonization movement post World War II. The right to self-determination is the idea that all people have a right to their own nation within a cohesive group based on some commonality, generally culture or language (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica). This was seen by the Palestinians after the Second World War to better than being under the rule of the British through the mandate system. It is rare for Palestinian nationalists to bring up a religious entitlement in the argument, but when they do, they mention that Muslims are descendants of Abraham/Ibrahim through Ishmael. The Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem is also incredibly important because it is where the Prophet Muhammad went on his night journey to heaven (Smith 2012, 1). The nationalistic and religious claims have motivated Palestinian nationalists to keep working towards an independent Palestine.

The nationalist and religious convictions have empowered Jews and Muslims to fight for what they consider their rightful territory. Small skirmishes between the sides occurred before the end of World War II, but they became greater in size after the partition in 1947. The battles change in scale and in players, but the root cause did not,

Jews and Palestinians each wanted to make good on their claims of rightful ownership of the territory (Smith 2012, 193-194).

The wars fought over this land in the last century have changed the political arena as well as the political geography of the Middle East. The war that made the most impact, geographically speaking, is the Six Day War, also known as the 1967 War. Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria were participants in this military confrontation (Smith 2012, 284). In the course of seven days, Israel gained control over the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (Smith 2012, 286). This geographic gain created the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). The swift defeat of the involved Arab nations proved to the Palestinians that they were going to have to fight for themselves and not let anyone else fight their battle for a Palestinian state (Gelvin 2014, 201). This changed the conflict from exclusively being an Arab-Israeli conflict to an Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Before the Six-Day War: Gaza and the Sinai were controlled by Egypt, Jordan governed East Jerusalem as well as the rest of West Bank and the Golan Heights was under the control of Syria. The tensions over land acquisition in 1967, checkpoints, control of Jerusalem, Right of Return, operational power over water and many other aspects stemming from this land acquisition have continued to the present day.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) is the most well known organization that claims to speak for the Palestinian people, in the camps, Israel, other Arab nations, and ones in the diaspora. It was created in Egypt in 1964 under the direction of Egyptian President Gamal Nasser to curb the flow and strength of Palestinian guerilla fighters and would “mollify and rein in [Palestinian] interests” to suit his needs



(Gelvin 2014, 200).

Not all hope for peace was lost after the 1967 War. The first peace treaty that Israeli was a part of was Camp David I. Camp David I was signed on September 17, 1978 involved President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel with President Carter acting as witness. This accord ended the state of war between Israel and Egypt and gave the Sinai Peninsula back to Egypt. The only time Palestinians were mentioned in the accord was to solve the “Palestinian problem”. This was to occur through a “propose[l] to grant autonomy to the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and to install a local administration for a five-year interim period, after which the final status of the territories would be negotiated” (Primer on Palestine...). For the Arab nations around Egypt and Israel, Sadat was seen as a traitor and Egypt was dismissed from the Arab League (Gelvin 2012, 216).

The First Intifada, translated to “shaking off” occurred from 1987-1993. One of the crucial things to remember is that the PLO was not initially involved in this action (Primer on Palestine...). This movement was started by the Palestinians actually living in the oPt and used forms of civil disobedience as well as slight use of force. The Palestinians in the occupied territories did not want to live under the control of Israel any longer. The civil disobedience resembled other similar actions around the world, from large protests to boycotting Israeli products. People also created underground schools since the military closed them “as reprisals for the uprising” (Primer on Palestine...). The uses of force included throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails to creating roadblocks (Primer on Palestine...).

Oslo I, officially referred to as the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-

Government Arrangements or Declaration of Principles (DOP), was an accord officially signed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Yasser Arafat representing the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian people in 1993. This was the first time that Israel and the PLO recognized each other. The DOP created the Palestinian National Authority (PA) and called for the extraction of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) from sections of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (Laqueur and Rubin 2008, 414 and 415). The accord also created a plan for peace between Israel and Palestine “leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 after five years” (Laqueur and Rubin 2008, 413).

Oslo II was an accord signed in 1995 that created three zones of influence in the West Bank. Zones A and B were areas where the PA would have some influence and obligations. Zone C were areas that Israel would still have complete control over until agreement was reached over the permanent status issues such as Jerusalem and settlements (Gelvin 2012, 238). The IDF was to pull out of areas A and B and turn it over to the minimal control of the PA. One of the problems with this arrangement is that “over approximately 70 percent of the West Bank” was under Zone C (Gelvin 2012, 238).

Camp David II was a summit in 2000 started by President Bill Clinton to have Chairman Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel sign an accord to end the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The summit ended without an agreement between the parties. The problem can be summed up quite well with the following two sentences. “Each side held basic preconceptions unintelligible to the other. Israelis expected Palestinians to be grateful to their offer to withdraw from up to 90 percent of the West Bank. Palestinians saw this as insulting” (Smith 2012, 492). After the failed summit, a

huge changes occurred in the peace process, the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

The Al-Aqsa Intifada, also known as the Second Intifada, lasted from 2000 to 2005. It began after Ariel Sharon went to the Temple Mount with armed guards. Some saw this action as a possible change in the status quo over who controlled the Temple Mount. This intifada was far more violent than the first in 1987.

Today, life in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is generally poor. The checkpoints scattered throughout Palestine, especially in the West Bank, impede daily life. These barriers mean that people have an incredibly hard time getting to school, work, medical centers, and even family because they go right through preexisting neighborhoods and villages. David Shearer states that from 2005 to 2006, the number of checkpoints and other obstructions has increased from 376 to 535 (Shearer 2006). Shearer also reports that before the Al-Aqsa Intifada, “more than 150,000 Palestinians worked in Israel. The Al-Aqsa Intifada, also known as the Second Intifada, took place from 2000 to 2005. Nearly 90% of those people have now lost their jobs” (Shearer 2006). When this many people are out of work, it creates unrest in the community and starts to breed resentment in the population. By 2006, “approximately 430,000 settlers” were living in the West Bank and with the growth in the settler population came more checkpoints and restrictions on Palestinians (Shearer 2006).

## **Literature Review**

### **Gender**

One of the more contested determinates of influence is the effect of gender. On one side of the argument, arguably a small segment of the field, scholars say that gender does not play a significant part in someone’s support for peace. This statement goes

against many other articles on the subject of women and peace as well as the women and peace hypothesis. “The ‘women and peace’ hypothesis proposes that women have tendency to hold more peaceful and compromising attitudes than men” (Maoz 2009, 520). A case study done by Shaliyeh and Deng discovered “that Palestinian women are on average 85 percent more likely to support peace with Israel more than men” (Shaliyeh and Deng 2003, 705). This finding is the one that most studies suggest. There is also support for the idea that “increased gender equality, resulting in women’s equal political, economic, and social power, will result in more pacific foreign policy behavior” (Caprioli 2000, 53). Interestingly, this is one place where Dr. Mark Tessler views gender can have an indirect effect on general support for peace.

Mark Tessler, a professor of political science, is a major scholar who supports the idea of there being no difference in level of support for peace between men and women in the MENA region using survey data from multiple countries. Dr. Tessler has written two studies that examine whether gender has an impact on support for peace. Both studies conclude saying that gender is not a major element in public opinion for peace (Tessler and Warriner, 1997; Tessler et al, 1999). In the first article, Tessler says the data posits, “that women are not more pacific than men in their attitudes toward international conflict” (Tessler and Warriner 1997, 280). One interesting finding from this study is that the people who support equality between men and women had a higher probability of standing by diplomacy as a way to end clashes (Tessler and Warriner 1997, 280). The follow up study Tessler completed in 1999 reiterated his earlier test and its subsequent conclusions, “[t]he consistent finding of no relationship provides compelling evidence that the women and peace hypothesis does not apply to the Middle East, or at least not in

the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict” (Tessler and Nachtwey 1999, 528). The data poll includes Israelis, Egyptians, Kuwaitis, Jordanians, Lebanese, and Palestinians, so there is a representative sample of many Middle Eastern countries (Tessler and Nachtwey 1999, 524-525). Proponents of this view are not as common as those who believe that women are more inclined towards peace than men.

### **Political Affiliation**

There is a general consensus that political affiliation effects a person’s position on a certain issue pertaining to their political party (Jacoby 644). In the case of Palestinian political parties, there are two dominant platforms and parties, Fatah, currently headed by Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas, currently ruled by Khaled Meshaal. By knowing only the basics of the two parties, one would assume that Palestinians who support Fatah would be more supportive of the peace process with Israel and adherents of Hamas would not support peace with Israel. This assumption appears to be correct, in 1994; Mkhaimer Abusada found that “ [s]upport for the negotiations is overwhelming among supporters of Fatah, Fida, and PPP. Among supporters of the Islamic and leftist groups, the majority either oppose or have decreased their support for the peace process” (Abusada 1998, 5). In relation to this quote it is important to remember that this is from a year after the first Oslo Accord signed in Washington D.C., so many Palestinians were feeling optimistic about the future of the negotiations and hoped for swift outcomes for the everyday people. Abusada posits that the reason supporters of Hamas did not support the peace process at that time was because they “might not have felt any positive results” from the negotiations (Abusada 1998, 6).

Support for Hamas is another factor that can influence Palestinian popular

opinion. Hamas' charter states that they do not want the Jewish State of Israel to exist, which means by extension they are not willing to support any type of peace process. One would expect believing in Hamas' charter and voting for them in elections means not supporting peace negotiations with Israel, at least fully. Shaliyeh and Deng found that Palestinians who sympathize with Hamas are unlikely to back peace with Israel (Shaliyeh and Deng 2003, 704). Flanigan and O'brien studied the effects that people going to Hamas and Fatah for help on matters such as infrastructure, dispute, family illness and reporting crime had on opinions on the peace process. Flanigan and O'brien found that out of the people who go to Hamas for help, from a total of 1,012 people interviewed, about 28 percent said their ideal resolution for the Israeli/Palestinian conflict was "total destruction of Israel" compared to around 15 percent of people who would go to Fatah (Flanigan and O'brien 2015, 637).

### **Religiosity**

Religiosity is another determinate that can influence people's opinion on ending the conflict, specifically its influence on the Palestinian opinion on peace. A broad assumption one can make about the impact of strong religious identification on politics is that it makes people more conservative compared to their secular, agnostic, or atheist compatriots. In terms of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, one would expect a Palestinian with more Islamist tendencies, bordering on the line of extreme to be not in support for peace with Israel. These tendencies would be along the line of Hamas, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood. While there has not been a multiplicity of research examining the effect of religiosity on Palestinian support for peace, the research cannot be discredited. In an article written by Dr. Bernadette Hayes, a sociologist, she found that "religious

identification is a differential predictor of political attitudes. Second, in terms of these political orientations, religious affiliates and nonaffiliates do differ in expected ways” (Hayes 1995, 191). These findings go along with assumptions mentioned above, with the more religious individuals leaning more towards the conservative view on an issue and the nonaffiliated moving in the direction of the liberal end of the spectrum, which would be non support and support, respectively.

Dr. Tessler and Dr. Jodi Nachtwey, a political scientist, examined the impact of Islam on views towards conflict in “Islam and Attitudes toward International Conflict...”. In their analysis, Drs. Tessler and Nachtwey found that “support for political Islam consistently exhibits a very strong negative relationship with support for Arab-Israeli peace” (Tessler and Nachtwey 1998, 226). They state that there are at minimum three functions that have been debated on the role religion can take in influencing personal politics, “a priestly role, a prophetic role, and a mediating societal function” (Tessler and Nachtwey 1998, 214). These roles are as defined: the priestly role has religion acting as the driver authenticating governmental policy through morality (Tessler and Nachtwey 1998, 214). The prophetic role has religious identity judging “governmental authority” and in some cases, “criticize decisions or policies deemed inconsistent with divine purposes” (Tessler and Nachtwey 1998, 214). The mediating societal function “offers protection from excessive government control and authoritarian tendencies” (Tessler and Nachtwey 1998, 214). The specific analysis in this article used data gathered in Palestine, Egypt, Kuwait, Jordan and Lebanon, but for the purpose of relevant survey questions, data from Palestine, Egypt, and Kuwait are the ones mentioned in this paper.

### **Economic Status**

Economic status is another independent variable that is often measured for its impact on public opinion. A positive or negative evaluation on the current economic situation could have a strong impact on an individual's support for the peace process. Nachtwey and Tessler (2002) posited several hypotheses on the effect of economic situations on the peace process. One hypothesis states that respondents who view the peace process and the end to the conflict as having a positive impact on the national and/or personal economic level have a higher chance of supporting the peace process (Nachtwey and Tessler 2002, 259). In support of this first hypothesis, they found that "individuals with a positive evaluation of the economy or of their personal situation are more likely to support compromise and reconciliation than are individuals with a negative evaluation" (Nachtwey and Tessler 2002, 269).

Clarke, Dutt, and Kornberg use the European Union as a case study, but their results are interesting nonetheless. They found that "unemployment rates negatively influenced levels of life satisfaction, [and] governing party support (Clarke, Dutt, and Kornberg 2015). While these findings do not relate directly to the question of Palestinian support, they can add some valuable context and depth to this particular question. For example, someone living in the West Bank and living under the poverty level might be less willing to support Fatah's official stance on peace with Israel. On the other hand, a respondent residing in the Gaza Strip with a more comfortable economic status under Hamas might be more willing to follow the official party line.

### **Area of Residence**

Little research has been done on the impact of location on Palestinian support for peace. As such, these opinions are my own. For respondents living in the West Bank, one



might assume that they would not be supportive of the peace process because they are living under Israeli rule and have to contend with checkpoints on a regular basis. They would see the Israeli government as not likely to uphold any agreement because they have backed out of past accords. One example is the status of Area C under the Oslo Accords, which stated that “[f]urther redeployments from Area C and transfer of internal security responsibility to the Palestinian Police in Areas B and C will be carried out in three phases, each to take place after an interval of six months, to be completed 18 months after the inauguration of the Council” (Other Releases... 1995). Since Israel did not transfer Area C over to PA control, this could be seen as a sign that Israel will not hold up its end of the bargain.

### **Methods used by Discourse Community in Related Articles**

This article focuses on survey data analysis, so it only makes sense to include some of the statistical methods employed by some of the scholars referenced in this thesis. In “Determinants of Palestinians’ Attitudes Toward Peace with Israel”, Sahliyah and Deng utilized the ordered logit model and Wald test where applicable. Mkhaimar Abusada used chi-Square in his article “Palestinian party affiliation and political attitudes toward the peace process”. “Islam and attitudes toward international conflict: evidence from survey research in the Arab world” by Mark Tessler and Jodi Nachtwey use a factor analysis to analyze their survey data in relation to Islam and its affect on Muslim individual’s opinions on international conflict.

### **Methodology**

**Design** The survey analysis was completed using available data from the Arab Barometer (AB) from 2006-2012 in three waves. Data from the Palestinian Center for Policy and

Survey Research (PCPSR) collected in 2010 will also be analyzed. The first wave of the Arab Barometer data was gathered in the spring of 2006, the second wave was completed from December 2-5, 2010, and the third wave was collected from December 20-29, 2012. All three surveys were completed in partnership with the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research. Each of the polls were conducted face to face in Arabic. All of the PCPSR surveys were also performed face to face in Arabic. The first poll (labeled number #35 by the center) was taken March 4-6, 2010. The second survey (#36) was conducted June 10-13, 2010. The third poll (#37) used was conducted September 20-October 2, 2010. The fourth poll (#38) completed was performed from December 16-18, 2010.

**Subjects** The first wave of the AB had a sample size of 1,270 with all surveyed over the age of 18. The population size of the second AB wave was 1,200 with all over the age of 18. The third wave of the AB had a sample of 1,200 and all polled were over the age of 18. All four of the PCPSR surveys had a sample size of 1,270 adults. The merged data file has a population of 8750.

**Measurement** The questions from the first AB wave used in this thesis include the dependent variable (view on the peace process) and the independent variables (gender of respondent, level of religiosity, and economic condition of their location in the occupied territories, whether West Bank or Gaza). The questions from the second AB wave are the same as above with the inclusion of which political party they would vote for in a new election and where they lived (West Bank or Gaza). The questions from the third AB wave are the same as the first wave along with which political party fit their aspirations the best and where they lived. The questions for all three PCPSR are the same. The

dependent variable asks for the respondent's level of support for the peace process. The independent variables ask where they live, level of religiosity, gender, political affiliation and where their family sits on the poverty line.<sup>1</sup>

**Procedures** The sampling methodology for the first AB wave was a three-stage cluster sampling with 120 clusters. The methodology for the second AB wave used stratification by location and clustering of households. The third AB wave's sampling methodology was stratified by location and household clusters. The sampling methodology for all of the PCPSR surveys was using 127 randomly selected locations.

**This Thesis** The methodology for this analysis is using binomial logistic regression by aid of SPSS on the survey data with questions on support for peace being the dependent question. Questions on gender, political affiliation, religiosity, economic status, and location are independent. A period was used to block missing and/or irrelevant data (don't know/unsure) from being included in the analysis.

### **Findings**

The independent variables are coded as such: religious=1, not religious=0, poor economic situation=1, good economic situation=0, female=1, male=0, West Bank=1, Gaza Strip=0, Fatah=1, Hamas=0. The dependent variable is coded as: support for peace with Israel=1, rejection of peace with Israel=0. The dependent variable from the Arab Barometer asked about the recognition of Israel, which was the closest question to support for peace talks with Israel. I used a binomial logistic regression to gather the following results. The results table has been included at the bottom of this section.

### **Year**

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<sup>1</sup> A detailed list of all questions used can be found in the appendix.

With an odds ratio of .428, we can surmise that there is a negative correlation between the dependent variable and an increase in years. For each one year period, the support for peace decreased by approximately 57 percent. In short, Palestinian support for peace with Israel decreased from 2006 and 2012.

### **Fatah**

The positive relationship between identifying with Fatah and the dependent variable is not surprising. The odds ratio of about 2.8 supports the assumption that supporting Fatah means that the respondent believes in many of the party's policies, including talks with Israel.

### **Religiosity**

An odds ratio of 6.8 percent and a significance level of approximately 19 percent shows that there is a very minor positive relationship between identifying as religious and the dependent variable. This odds ratio and significance level supports the conclusions from Tessler and Nachtwey in their article "Islam and Attitudes toward International Conflict: Evidence from Survey Research in the Arab World" in 1998. They found that there was no difference between people who identify as religious compared to those who do not in relation to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict (Tessler and Nachtwey 1998, 226-227). In the case of this analysis, the impact of religious identification is minimal at best.

### **Economic Situation**

The negative relationship between living under a poor economic situation and the dependent variable suggests that people under the poverty level are less likely to support peace compared to those who live above the poverty level. With an odds ratio of negative 19.4 percent, we can say that identifying as living under a poor economic situation makes

an individual 19.4 percent less likely to support peace with Israel. With a significance level of 0 percent, these findings are statistically significant. These findings disagree with Sahliyeh and Deng, who found a minimal negative relationship between economic levels and support for peace (Sahlieyh and Deng 2003, 705). Nachtwey and Tessler (2002) found that “citizens who are dissatisfied with economic circumstances are less likely than others to support negotiation and compromise” (Nachtwey and Tessler 2002, 269). Overall, it can be said that living under the poverty level has a negative and statistically significant impact on Palestinian support for peace.

### **Gender**

There is a positive and statistically significant relationship between being female and higher support for peace with Israel ( $p < .000$ ). This finding supports the vast majority of literature on the subject.

### **West Bank**

The negative relationship between living in the West Bank and the dependent variable is quite surprising. The odds ratio of .720 indicates that people living in the West Bank are approximately 28 percent less likely to support peace with Israel than people living in Gaza.

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
econworse	-.216	.056	15.108	1	.000	.806
fatah	1.033	.055	356.592	1	.000	2.810
female	.363	.051	51.462	1	.000	1.437
religious	.066	.051	1.685	1	.194	1.068
westbank	-.329	.053	38.374	1	.000	.720
year	-.848	.039	471.196	1	.000	.428
Constant	3.452	.174	395.524	1	.000	31.570

## **Discussion/Conclusion**

The history of this conflict goes back only the past two centuries and is based primarily on political rather than religious reasoning. The early Zionists wanted a state where they would not be persecuted and the Palestinians demanded the right to self-determination as was popular after WW1 and WW2. Out of the many wars and other violent confrontations between the State of Israel and Palestinians and/or Arab neighbors, the 1967 war is the one of greatest importance to this paper. This war created the borders of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as we know today. There have been accords and negotiations between representatives of the Palestinian people and the Israeli government; which have never come to complete fruition for a multitude of reasons.

Overall, Palestinian support for peace with Israel has decreased from 2006-2012. There are many possible reasons for this, while disheartening, not surprising decrease in support. All of the independent variables excluding religiosity are statistically significant with a significance level of .0 percent. Since almost all of the independent variables were statistically significant, they are all possible reasons why support decreased from 2006 to 2012.

There are many other variables not examined here that could contribute to a decrease in support for peace with Israel. One of the most glaring impacts not examined are current events. Any physical confrontation with IDF soldiers at checkpoints in the West Bank would have a strong influence on the public opinion at any given time. The surveys used in this paper from the PCPSR were generally conducted after a major event, whether an election or IDF and Palestinian confrontation. In a sense, the impacts of current events are taken into consideration, but it is not the primary variable being

examined. Another influencer that can be examined in later research is whether or not Palestinians believe that an end to the conflict could actually occur, which would most likely have an impact on a respondent's support for the peace process.

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## Appendix

### Question Wording for Dependent Variable:

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#### Arab Barometer Wave I:

Q610- Which of the following statements best expresses your opinion about the problem of Israel and Palestine? 1 = The Arab world should accept the existence of Israel as a Jewish state in the Middle East only when the only when the Palestinians accept Israel's existence/2 = The Arab world should not accept the existence of Israel as a Jewish state in the Middle East/97 = Not clear

#### AB Wave II:

Q709- Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion with regard to the Palestinian question? 1. The Arab world should accept the existence of Israel as a Jewish state in the Middle East only when the Palestinians accept it/2. The Arab world should not accept the existence of Israel as a Jewish state in the Middle East/8. I don't know/9. Declined to answer

#### AB Wave III:

Q709- Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion with regard to the Palestinian question? 0. Missing /1. The Arab world should accept the existence of Israel as a Jewish state in the Middle East only when the Palestinians accept it/2. The Arab world should not accept the existence of Israel as a Jewish state in the Middle East/8. I don't know/9. Declined to answer.

#### PCPSR:

Q04) Generally, do you see yourself as: 1 Supportive of the peace process/2 Opposed to the peace process/3 Between support and opposition/4 DK/NA

### Question Wording for Independent Variables

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#### AB Wave I:

Q102) What do you think will be the state of [respondent's country's] economic condition a few years (3-5 years) from now? 1 = Much better/2 = A little better/3 = About the same/4 = A little worse/5 = Much worse

Q702) Sex 1=Male/2=Female

Q714a)- In general, would you describe yourself as: 1 = Religious/2 = In between/3 = Not religious/4 = Other/97 = Not clear/98 = Can't Choose/Don't know/99 = Decline to Answer

#### AB Wave II:

A1) 7001=West Bank/7002=Gaza

Q101) How would you evaluate the current economic situation in your country? 1=Very good/ 2=Good /3=Bad/ 4=Very Bad Q609)- Generally speaking, would you describe yourself as ...? 1. Religious/2. Somewhat religious/3. Not religious/9. Declined to

answer.

P713- If new elections took place today with the endorsement of all political actors, and the same lists that ran in the legislative elections of January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006 ran today as well, which list would you vote for? =[7001]. Alternative[=7002]. independent Palestine[=7003]. abu ali Mustafa[=7004]. abu al abbas[=7005]. freedom and social justice (hamas)[=7006]. change and reform[=7007]. national coalition for justice and democracy[=7008]. third way (headed by salam Fayyad)[=7009]. freedom and independence[=7010]. Fateh[=7011]. none of the above/ don't know /not applicable / do not remember/7012. i did not participate in elections/99996. i don't know.99999. declined to answer

Q1002 Gender: 1=Male/2=Female

AB Wave III:

A1) 7001=West Bank/7002=Gaza

Q101) How would you evaluate the current economic situation in your country? 1=Very good/ 2=Good /3=Bad/ 4=Very Bad

Q503- Which of the existing parties is closest to representing your political, social and economic aspirations? 0=No party represents my aspirations/Name of party

Q609)- Generally speaking, would you describe yourself as...? 0. Missing /1. Religious/2. Somewhat religious/3. Not religious/9. Declined to answer

Q1002)- Gender 1=Male/2=Female

PCPSR

March 2010- Poll 35

V03) Area 1=West Bank/2=Gaza Strip

Q3) Generally, do you see yourself as: 1. Religious/2. Somewhat religious/3. Not religious/4. DK/NA

V08) Gender 1=Male/2=Female

V17) Today, the poverty line in Palestine is NIS 1800 for the family. Tell us if the income of your family is less than or more than that. 1=Much less/2=less/3=same/4=more/5=much more

Q64) Which of the following political parties do you support?

1=PPP/2=PFLP/3=Fateh/4=Hammas/5=DFLP/6=Islamic Jihad/7=Fida/8=National initiative (almubadara)/9=Independent Islamist/10=Independent nationalist/11=Third way headed by salam fayyad/12=None of the above/13=Others

June 2010- Poll 36

V03) Area 1=West Bank/2=Gaza Strip

Q3)- Generally, do you see yourself as: 1. Religious/2. Somewhat religious/3. Not religious/4. DK/NA

V08) Gender 1=Male/2=Female

V17) Today, the poverty line in Palestine is NIS 1800 for the family. Tell us if the income of your family is less than or more than that. 1=Much less/2=less/3=same/4=more/5=much more

Q73) Which of the following political parties do you support?

1=PPP/2=PFLP/3=Fateh/4= Hamas/5=DFLP/6=Islamic Jihad/7=Fida/8=National Initiative (Mubadara)/9=Independent Islamists/10=Independent Nationalists/11=Third Way, headed by Salam Fayyad/12=None of the above/13=Other, specify

Sep 2010- Poll 37

V03) Area 1=West Bank/2=Gaza Strip

Q3)- Generally, do you see yourself as: 1. Religious/2. Somewhat religious/3. Not religious/4. DK/NA

V08) Gender 1=Male/2=Female

V17) Today, the poverty line in Palestine is NIS 1800 for the family. Tell us if the income of your family is less than or more than that. 1=Much less/2=less/3=same/4=more/5=much more

Q56) Which of the following political parties do you support?

1=PPP/2=PFLP/3=Fateh/4= Hamas/5=DFLP/6=Islamic Jihad/7=Fida/8=National Initiative (Mubadara)/9=Independent Islamists/10=Independent Nationalists/11=Third Way, headed by Salam Fayyad/12=None of the above/13=Other, specify

December 2010- Poll 38

V03) Area 1=West Bank/2=Gaza Strip

Q3)- Generally, do you see yourself as: 1. Religious/2. Somewhat religious/3. Not religious/4. DK/NA

V08) Gender 1=Male/2=Female

V17) Today, the poverty line in Palestine is NIS 1800 for the family. Tell us if the income of your family is less than or more than that. 1=Much less/2=less/3=same/4=more/5=much more

Q53) Which of the following political parties do you support?

1=PPP/2=PFLP/3=Fatah/4= Hamas/5=DFLP/6=Islamic Jihad/7=Fida/8=National Initiative (Mubadara)/9=Independent Islamists/10=Independent Nationalists/11=Third Way, headed by Salam Fayyad/12=None of the above/13=Other, specify