



الباروميتر العربي
ARAB BAROMETER

Arab Barometer V

Palestine Country Report



2019

Executive Summary

Conditions in Palestine remain challenging. Over the past year, Palestine experienced significant clashes with Israel, resulting in major civil casualties from both sides. Israeli-Egyptian blockade on Gaza has not been lifted, making living conditions in Gaza unbearable.

Meanwhile, relatively little has changed in Palestine politically. The national reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas has made little progress while the peace process with Israel remains frozen. Against this background, the fifth wave of the Arab Barometer reveals that Palestinians remain pessimistic about the country and its direction. Moreover, it is imperative that the government address economic and administrative challenges to improve the lives of ordinary citizens.

Palestinians' assessment of the state of their economy has declined since 2012, with the percent who say that Palestine's current economic situation is good or very good falling from 38 percent to 24 percent. Meanwhile, the economy is cited as the most pressing problem facing Palestine, including by 37 percent in the West Bank and 46 percent in Gaza.

However, Palestinians remain frustrated in other areas. More than four-in-five say that there is corruption in government agencies to a large or medium extent (84 percent in the West Bank vs. 81 percent in Gaza). Still, given other challenges, only 17 percent of Palestinians (21 percent in the West Bank and 11 percent in Gaza) think that administrative and financial corruption is the most pressing challenge for Palestine.

Perhaps as a result, Palestinians have little trust in the government (33 percent). More specifically, 27 percent in the West Bank and 42 percent in Gaza trust in government. Similarly, other institutions like the legal system (41 percent), parliament (26 percent) and political parties (13 percent) garner little confidence.

Despite the political divide between the Fatah and Hamas, the survey makes clear that relatively few Palestinians favor a role for religion in politics. About three quarters (73 percent) of Palestinians (74 percent in the West Bank and 73 percent in Gaza) agree or strongly agree that religious leaders should not interfere in voters' decisions in elections.

Compared to other countries surveyed by the Arab Barometer, support for democracy is somewhat tepid (50 percent overall): while more than half of Palestinians in the West Bank (54 percent) favor democracy over any other type of governance system, just 43 percent of Palestinians in Gaza hold this belief. However, many Palestinians conceptualize democracy based on economic terms: 37 per-

cent in both the West Bank and Gaza believe that the most essential characteristics of a democracy is the government ensuring job opportunities for all.

Palestinians have preferential opinion towards Turkey and Qatar: a considerable proportion of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza would like to have stronger relations with these countries and to have an increase the foreign aid from these countries. Likely related to Donald Trumps policies towards Israel, Palestinians remain skeptical about having stronger relations or receiving more foreign assistance from the United States.

These are among the key findings from a nationally representative public opinion survey fielded in Palestine by the Arab Barometer from 5 - 24 October 2018. The survey, conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, included 2,493 face-to-face interviews. It has a margin of error ± 2 percent and had a cooperation rate of 89 percent.

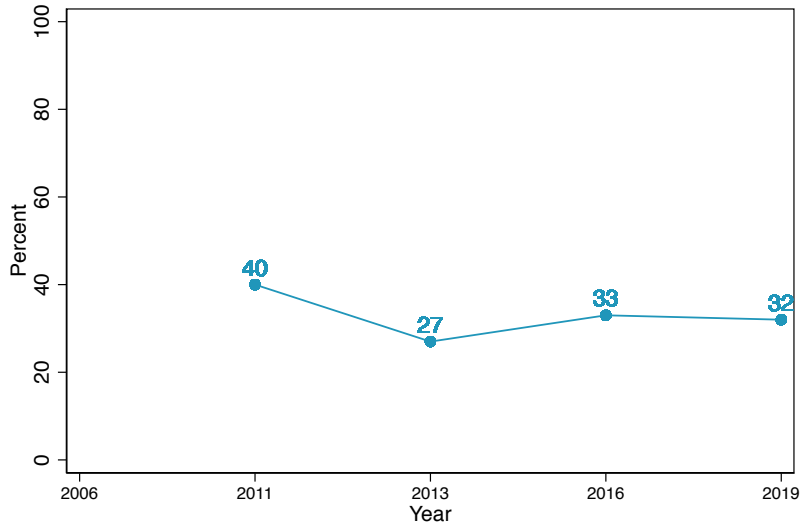
Economic Conditions

Views about the Palestines current economic situation and optimism about the economy are largely negative. Overall, most Palestinians (67 percent) say things are headed in neither the right nor the wrong direction but instead somewhere in between. However, just one in four (24 percent) rate their countrys current economic situation as good or very good as opposed to 76 percent who believe that Palestines economic situation is bad or very bad. At the same time, two-thirds of Palestinians (66 percent) believe that the economic situation was much or somewhat better a few years ago. Palestinians also hold out little hope for the future: only about two-in-ten (22 percent) say they believe the economic situation will be better or much better in the near future.

Palestinians in the West Bank are more likely to rate the current economic situation of Palestine positively. While one third (32 percent) in the West Bank believe Palestines economic situation is good or very good, only 12 percent in Gaza say the same. Notably, views of the economy have declined dramatically over the last decade – by 7 points in the West Bank and 13 points in Gaza.

Evaluation of Economic Situation, the West Bank

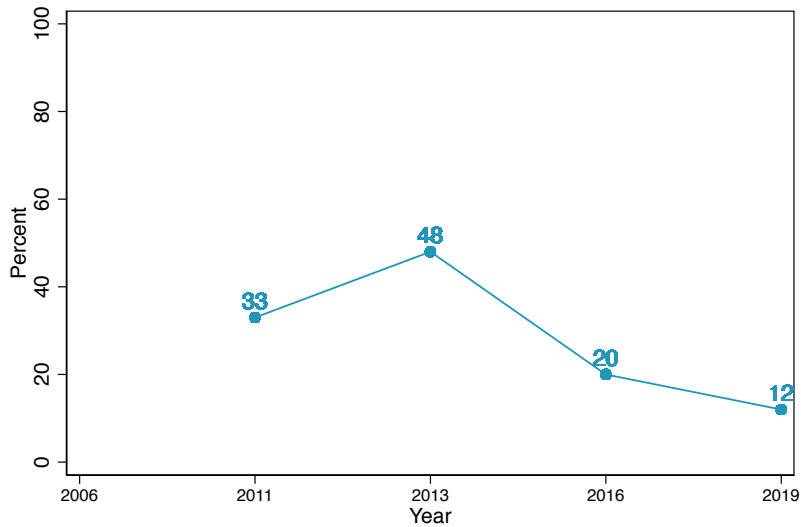
% saying the national economic performance as good or very good.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer.

Evaluation of Economic Situation, Gaza

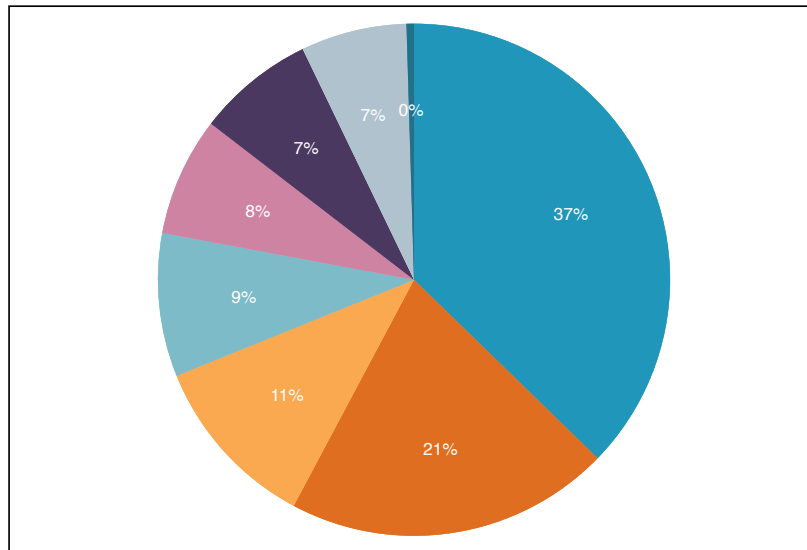
% saying the national economic performance as good or very good.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer.

When asked about the most important challenge that Palestine faces, 41 percent say the economic situation (37 percent in the West Bank and 46 percent in Gaza), followed by 17 percent who say financial and administrative corruption (21 percent in the West Bank and 11 percent in Gaza). Despite Israeli raids, relatively few Palestinians think that foreign interference is the most pressing problem of Palestine (8 percent in both regions).

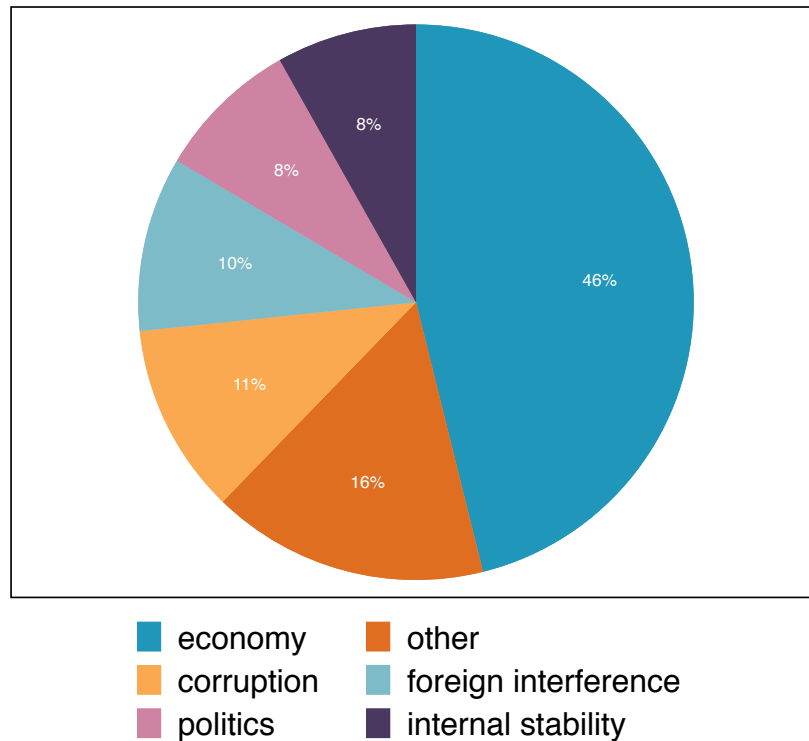
Most Important Challenge, the West Bank
% who say...



- economy
- corruption
- internal stability
- other
- foreign interference
- politics
- security
- don't know/refused

Note: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Most Important Challenge, Gaza *% who say...*



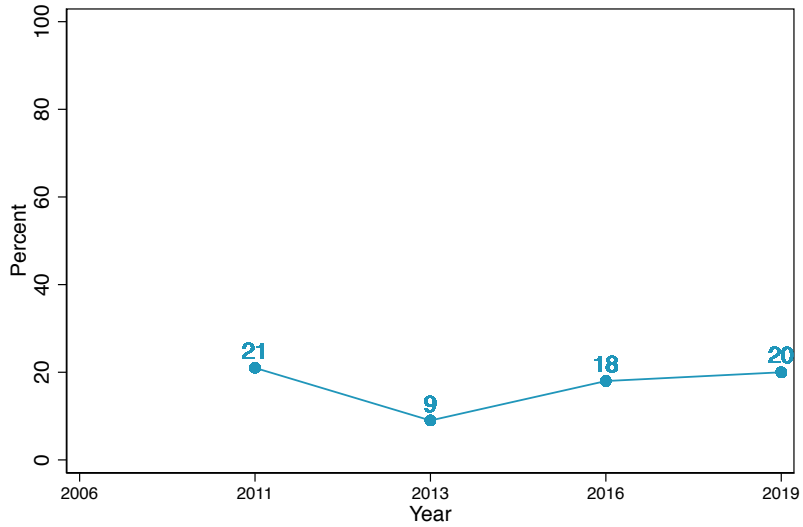
Note: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Migration

While 27 percent of Palestinians have considered migrating, there are key differences by geography. In the West Bank, one-in-five want to leave compared to more than a third (36 percent) in Gaza. Notably, while Palestinians in the West Bank are slightly more likely to consider emigrating since 2016 (+2 points), Palestinians in Gaza are now less likely to do so (-12 points).

Desire to Migrate, the West Bank

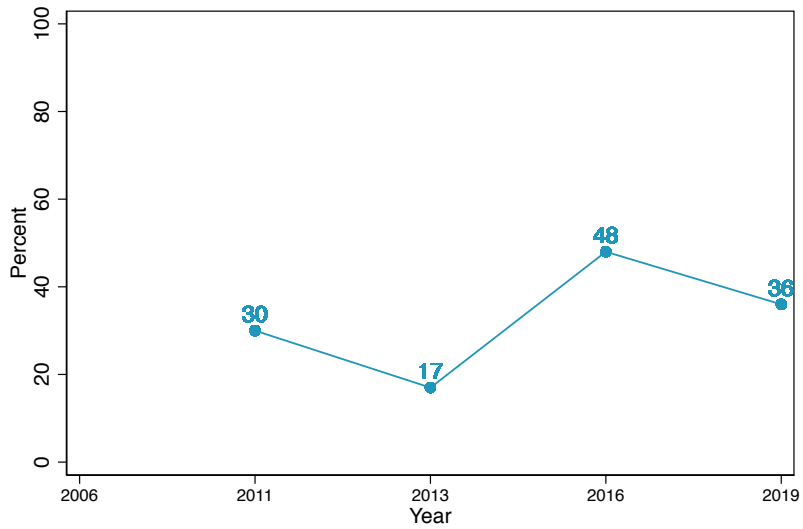
% saying that they want to migrate.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer.

Desire to Migrate, Gaza

% saying that they want to migrate.

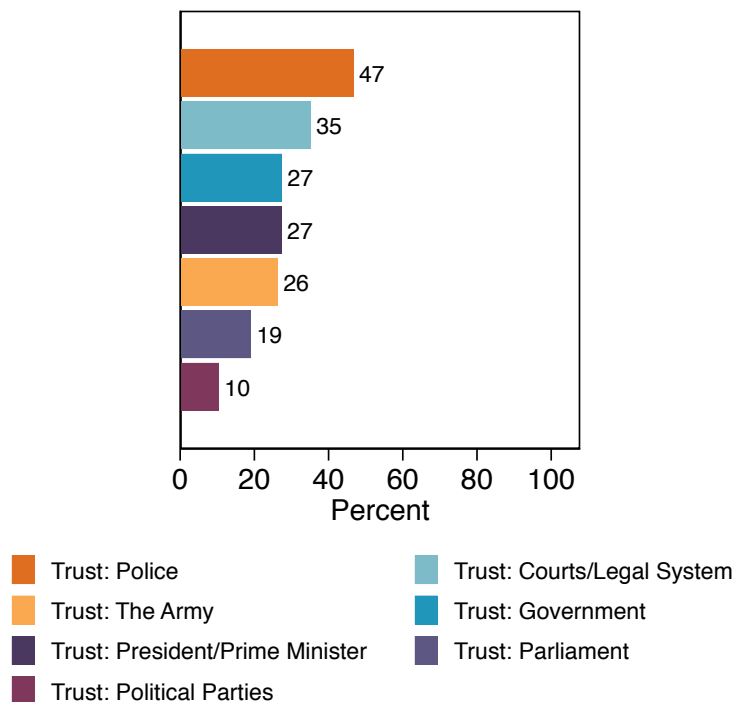


Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer.

Those who have considered migrating are most likely to want to do so for economic reasons (57 percent overall; 55 percent in the West Bank vs. 59 percent in Gaza). Meanwhile, Palestinians from the West Bank cite educational opportunities (9 percent) and security reasons (9 percent) as the motivation for moving abroad, while Gazans are more likely to cite educational opportunities (17 percent) and political reasons (10 percent).

Government Trust and Performance

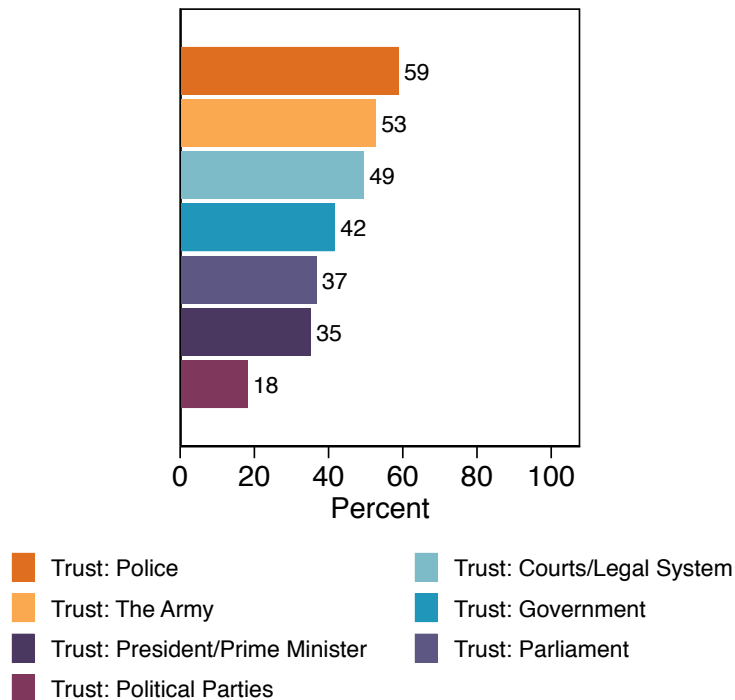
Trust in State Institutions, the West Bank *% saying quite a lot or a great deal of trust.*



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Trust in State Institutions, Gaza

% saying quite a lot or a great deal of trust.

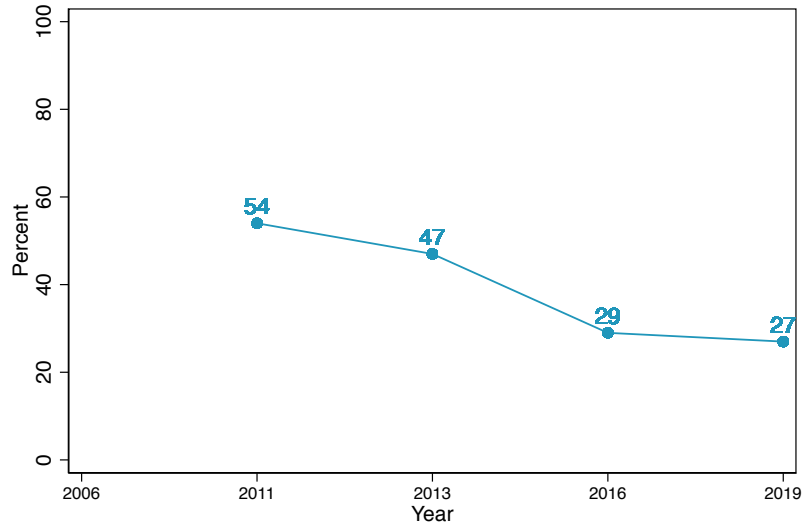


Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

In general, Palestinians are less likely to trust political institutions compared with other countries surveyed by the Arab Barometer. Police and armed forces are the two most trusted institutions at 42 percent and 37 percent, respectively. However, Palestinians in Gaza are more likely to trust in police and armed forces (59 percent and 53 percent respectively), compared with Palestinians in the West Bank (47 percent and 26 percent respectively). Notably, the trust in legal system (35 percent), government (27 percent) and president (27 percent) in the West Bank is greater than that in armed forces. Furthermore, Palestinians in Gaza are more likely to trust government agencies than in the West Bank, due in large part to a decade-long decline in the West Bank. This result may be a reflection of the degree to which the governing authorities are legitimate in the eyes of Palestinians living in the West Bank. Meanwhile, similar to other countries surveyed by the Arab Barometer, political parties enjoy little trust (12 percent overall; 10 percent in the West Bank and 18 percent in Gaza).

Trust in Government over Time, the West Bank

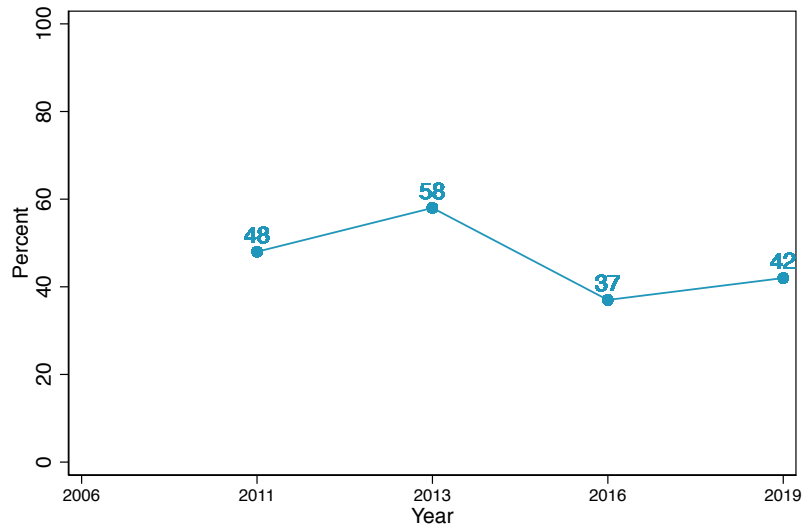
% saying quite a lot or a great deal of trust.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer.

Trust in Government over Time, Gaza

% saying quite a lot or a great deal of trust.



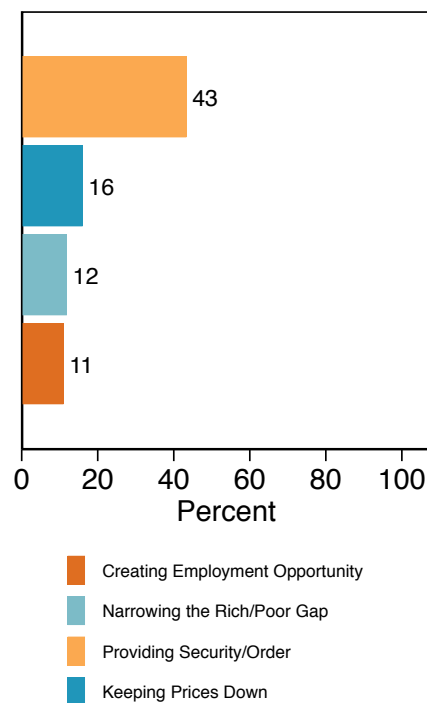
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer.

Even though Palestinians in the West Bank are less likely to trust the government, they are more likely to be satisfied with government performance (31 percent rating it 6 or higher on an 11-point scale). By comparison, 26 percent of Palestinians in Gaza are satisfied with government performance.

Despite the challenging security situation, Palestinians are more likely to be satisfied with government efforts to provide security and order (47 percent overall; 43 percent in the West Bank vs. 52 percent in Gaza) compared with the job it is doing on the economy. By comparison, just 13 percent are satisfied with the governments efforts to tackle unemployment. However, Gazans are more satisfied than those in the West Bank (11 percent in the West Bank and 16 percent in Gaza). Not surprisingly, Palestinians express dissatisfaction with government efforts to reduce income inequality: only 18 percent of Palestinians believe that government is doing good or very good job of narrowing the gap between rich and poor (12 percent in the West Bank and 26 percent in Gaza). Finally, Palestinians in Gaza are more likely to say that government is doing a good job in keeping prices down (42 percent vs. 16 percent in the West Bank.)

Government Performance, the West Bank

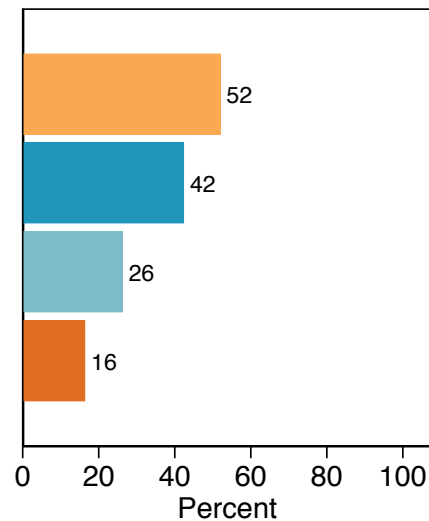
% saying quite a lot or a great deal of trust.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Government Performance, Gaza

% saying quite a lot or a great deal of trust.



- Creating Employment Opportunity
- Narrowing the Rich/Poor Gap
- Providing Security/Order
- Keeping Prices Down

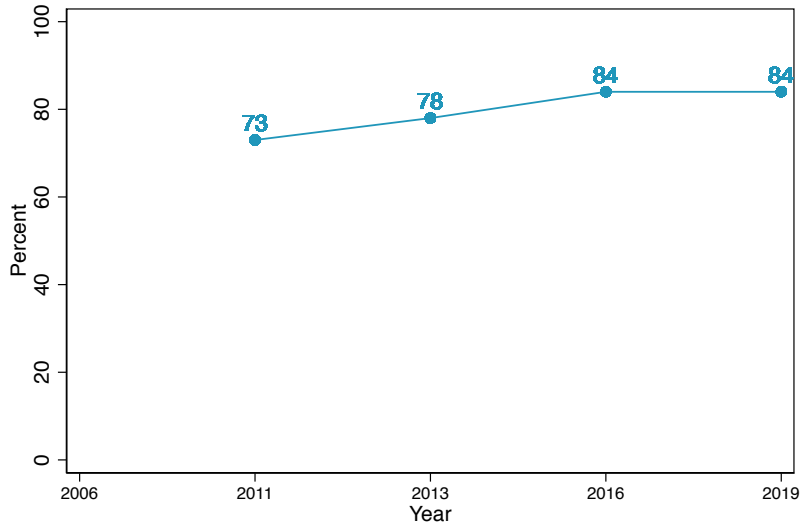
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Corruption

Palestinians believe that corruption remains rampant. About eight-in-ten (83 percent) say there is corruption within the state to either medium (35 percent) or great extent (48 percent). Notably, there is no substantive difference in perception by geographic region, with 84 percent in the West Bank and 81 percent in Gaza saying it is a problem. Even though this perception has changed little since 2016, there has been a dramatic increase since 2010 (11 points for the West Bank and 23 points for Gaza). Notably, Palestinians in Gaza are more likely to think that the government is working to crackdown on corruption (54 percent vs. 37 percent in the West Bank).

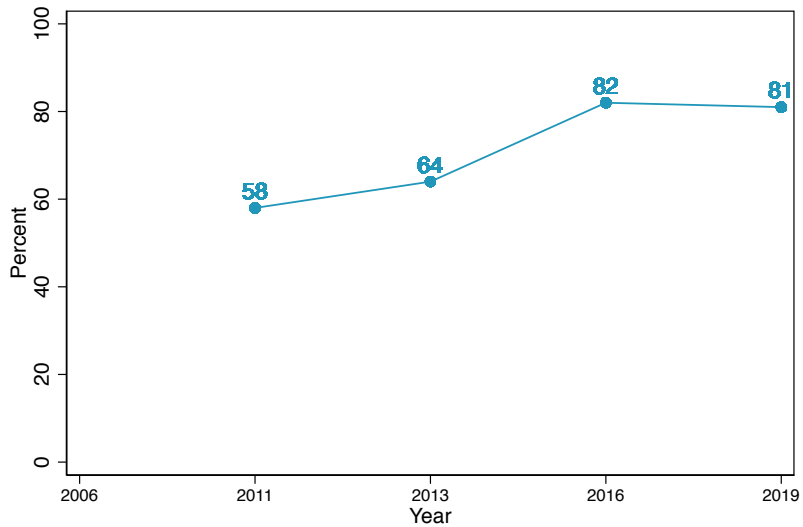
Overall, Gazans are more likely to say that it is necessary to pay bribe (*rashwa*) to a civil servant to receive better health care services (54 percent vs. 19 percent in the West Bank). However, Palestinians living in the West Bank are far more likely to say it is necessary to use *wasta* to obtain employment, with seven-in-ten holding this view compared to 36 percent in Gaza.

Corruption within State Institutions, the West Bank *% saying there is state corruption.*



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer.

Corruption within State Institutions, Gaza *% saying there is state corruption.*

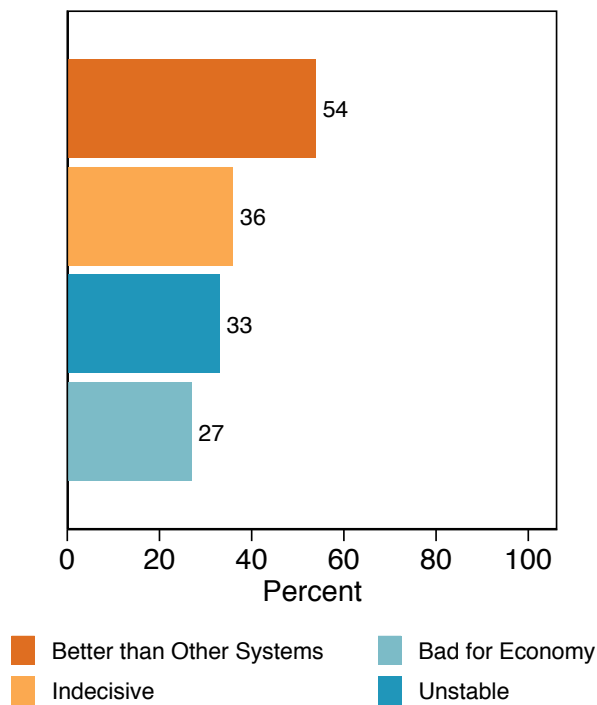


Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer.

Political Preferences

Despite differing understandings of the meaning of democracy, Palestinians are supportive of this type of political system. About half of Palestinians believe that democracy is always preferable to any kind of government. However, there are regional differences: while more than half of Palestinians in the West Bank (54 percent) are supportive of democracy over any other type of system, only 43 percent of Palestinians in Gaza hold this view.

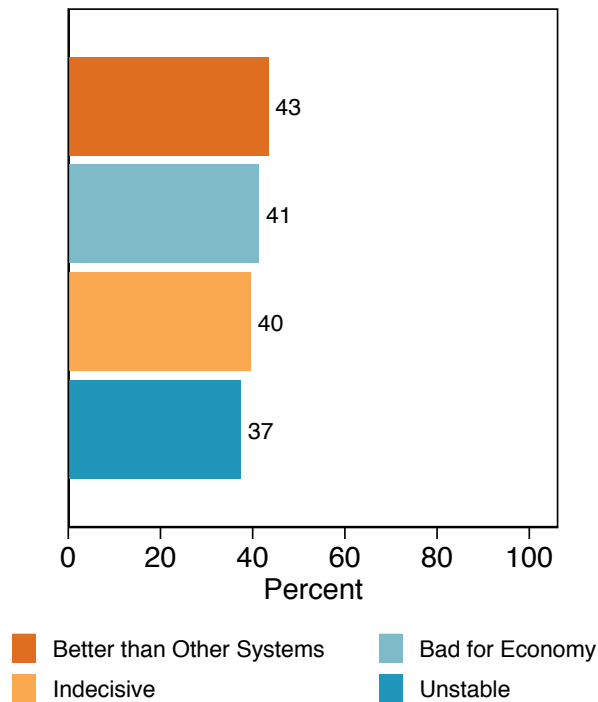
View of Democracy, the West Bank
% who say democracy is...



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

View of Democracy, Gaza

% who say democracy is...



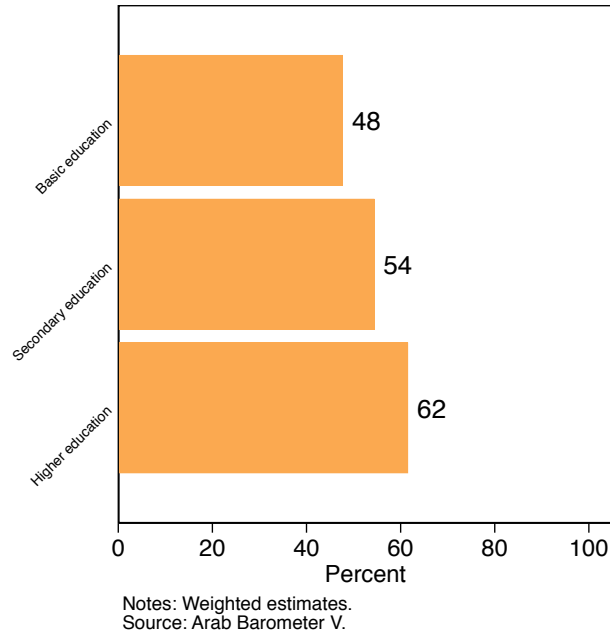
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

In addition to being less supportive of democracy, those living in Gaza harbor greater concerns about this system compared to Palestinians living in the West Bank. More specifically, while 27 percent in the West Bank agree or strongly agree that under a democratic system the country's economic performance is weak, 41 percent in Gaza hold this belief. Furthermore, Gazans are somewhat more likely to say democratic regimes are indecisive and full of problems (40 percent vs. 36 percent in the West Bank) and democratic systems are not effective at maintaining order and stability (37 percent vs. 33 percent in the West Bank).

Support for democracy is strongly linked to education in the West Bank, whereas this relationship is weaker in Gaza. In the West Bank, those with basic education is the least likely group to believe that democracy is always preferable (48 percent), compared to those with higher education (62 percent). Notably, support for democracy does not strongly correlate with education levels in Gaza. 33 percent of those with basic education say that democracy is always preferable, compared with 48 percent of those with secondary education and 45 percent of those with university degree.

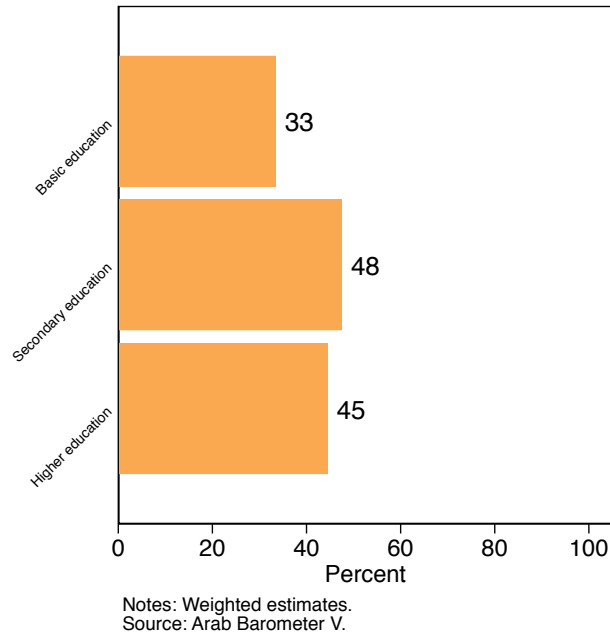
Support for Democracy by Education Groups, the West Bank

% saying democracy is always preferable



Support for Democracy by Education Groups, Gaza

% saying democracy is always preferable



To understand how ordinary citizens in the Middle East conceptualize democracy, the Arab Barometer asks respondents to name the most essential charac-

teristic of a democracy. Palestinians most commonly characterize democracy on economic terms: 34 percent believe that the most essential characteristics of a democracy is a government ensuring job opportunities for all, followed by 29 percent of those who say a government that ensures law and order and 18 percent of those who say when multiple parties compete fairly in the election. By comparison, relatively few Palestinians (15 percent) think that media free to criticize the government is the most essential characteristic of a democratic system of governance.

However, there are geographical differences: while Palestinians in the West Bank most commonly characterize democracy based on economic terms (37 percent), Palestinians in Gaza characterize democracy based on both legal (31 percent) and economic terms (30 percent). Notably, 20 percent of Palestinians from Gaza say fair elections, followed by 18 percent who name freedom of the press. By comparison, 28 percent in the West Bank think that law and order is the most important characteristics of democracy, followed by 17 percent who say fair elections and 14 percent who say freedom of the press.

Religion and Politics

Relatively few Palestinians want religious leaders to play a significant role in politics. For example, about three quarters (74 percent in the West Bank and 73 percent in Gaza) agree or strongly agree that religious leaders should not interfere in voters decisions in elections. However, Gazans are more likely to prefer a role for religion in politics than those living in the West Bank. A greater proportion of people in Gaza say that Palestine is better off if more religious people hold public positions in the state (50 percent vs. 27 percent in the West Bank). Similarly, Palestinians in Gaza are more likely (44 percent) to think that religious clerics should have an influence over the decisions of government, compared to 30 percent in the West Bank.

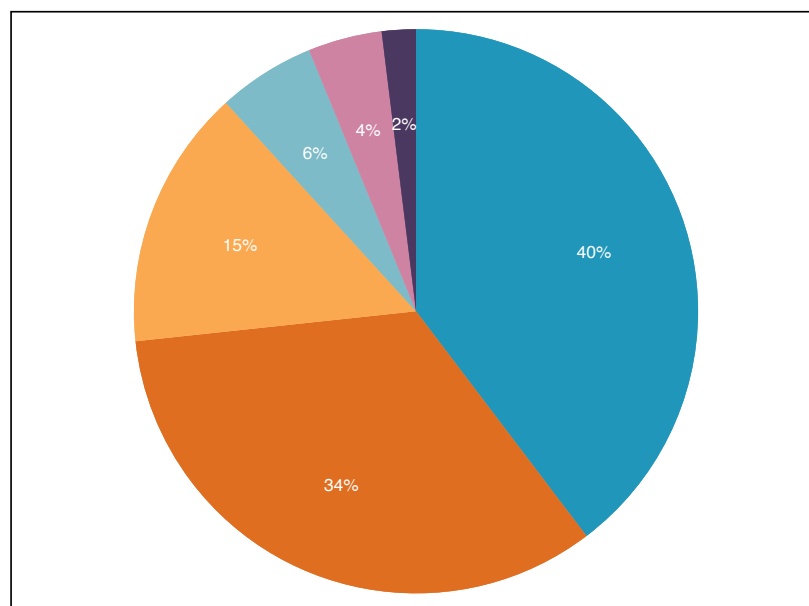
To discern how ordinary citizens conceptualize the laws in their country, the Arab Barometer asks respondents to what extent laws should be based on the sharia or on the will of the people. A considerable proportion (53 percent overall; 49 percent in the West Bank and 59 percent in Gaza) think that laws in Palestine should be either mostly or entirely based on the sharia.

However, Palestinian understanding of the sharia varies. Most Palestinians (45 percent in the West Bank and 51 percent in Gaza) believe that the most essential aspect of a government that applies the sharia is a system that does not have corruption. Furthermore, a considerable portion (32 percent in both the West Bank and Gaza) say that government implementing the sharia is one that provides basic services, such as health facilities, schools, garbage collection and

road maintenance. Only 8 percent in the West Bank and 14 percent in Gaza think that the most essential aspect of the sharia is a government that uses physical punishments to make sure people obey the law, and 3 percent in the West Bank and 2 percent in Gaza think that a sharia government is one that restricts womens role in public. These results suggest that people conceptualize sharia based on instrumentalist characteristics, improving public services and preventing misappropriation of sources.

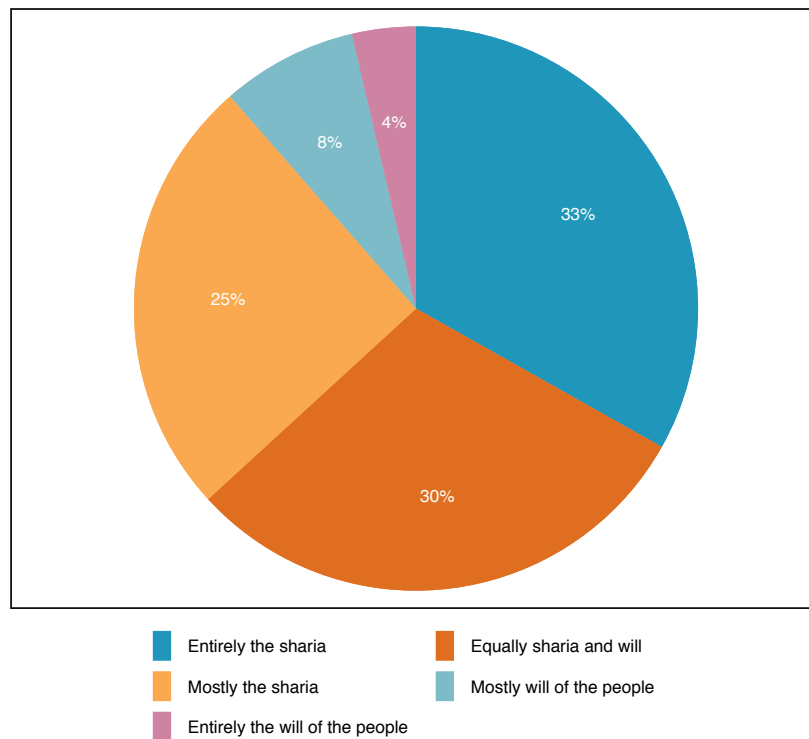
Support for the Sharia, the West Bank

% saying the country's laws should be. . .



Note: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Support for the Sharia, Gaza
% saying the country's laws should be . . .



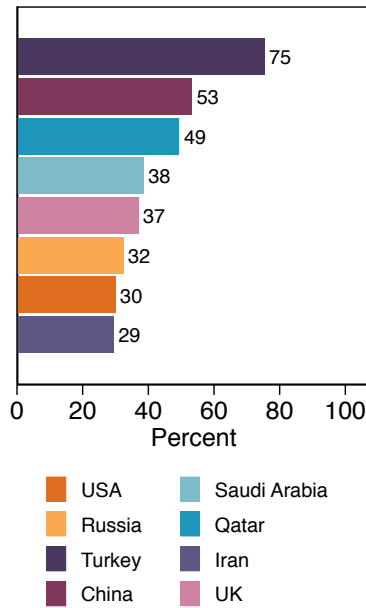
Note: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

International Relations

At a time of tension with the United States following the move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, a minority of Palestinians (31 percent) want economic relations with the USA to become stronger (30 percent in the West Bank and 33 percent in Gaza). Overall, this represents a 2-point increase since 2012.

Economic Relations, West Bank

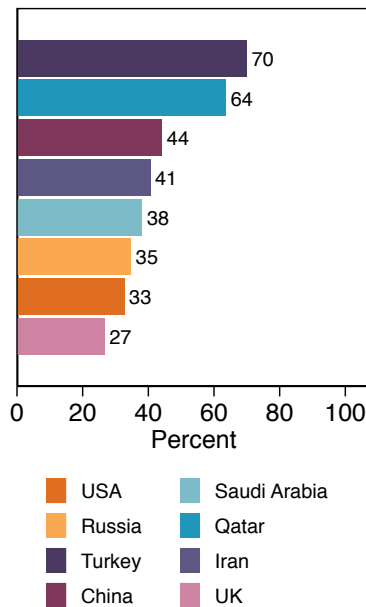
% saying economic relations should become stronger with. . .



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Economic Relations, Gaza

% saying economic relations should become stronger with. . .



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

A clear majority of Palestinians (75 percent in the West Bank and 70 percent in Gaza) has favorable view towards Turkey and would like to see their economic relations to improve. Notably, while 64 percent in Gaza prefer stronger relations with Qatar, just 49 percent in the West Bank say the same. By comparison, just four in ten (38 percent) in the West Bank and Gaza would like to see their economic relations with Saudi Arabia improve in the future.

China has considerable support in both regions: 53 percent in the West Bank and 44 percent in Gaza prefer stronger relations with China, perhaps indicative of Chinas growing influence in the region. Meanwhile, roughly a third of Palestinians (32 percent in the West Bank and 35 percent in Gaza) want Palestine to improve its economic relations with Russia. Additionally, while 41 percent in Gaza prefer stronger economic relations with Iran, just 29 percent in the West Bank hold the same opinion.

Despite relatively unfavorable views about the U.S., a considerable proportion (49 percent) of Palestinians (54 percent in the West Bank and 41 percent in Gaza) want more American foreign aid. By comparison, more than half of Palestinians (61 percent overall; 65 percent in the West Bank and 57 percent in Gaza) prefer foreign aid from China to increase, suggesting Chinas increasing role may be welcomed by those in the region.

Despite an openness toward foreign aid, many Palestinians remain skeptical about the motivations behind countries providing it. In fact, the vast majority of Palestinians (85 percent in the West Bank and 80 percent in Gaza) believe that the main motivation for Western countries to give foreign aid is to gain influence over Palestine.



About Arab Barometer

The Arab Barometer is a nonpartisan research network that provides insights into the social, political, and economic attitudes and values of ordinary citizens across the Arab world.

We have been conducting rigorous, and nationally representative face-to-face public opinion surveys on probability samples of the adult populations across the Arab world since 2006. The margin of error is ± 3 percent.

The Arab Barometer is the largest repository of publicly available data on the views of men and women in the MENA region. Our findings give a voice to the needs and concerns of Arab publics.



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