



A Report on the Participation of Jerusalemites in General and Local Elections in the West Bank

2019



Foreword

This study aims to identify the extent of knowledge of Jerusalemites of their right to political participation, as well as level of awareness and desire to practice this right. The study also attempts to understand the attitudes of Jerusalemites on the feasibility of these elections in Jerusalem and whether their participation will play a role in changing the status quo at the social or sovereign political level in the city.

This survey is one of the activities of a project administrated by Palestinian Vision Organisation and ACT for Alternative Dispute Resolution and Studies with support from German Foundation Konrad Adenauer, a project that seeks to activate the role of youth in creating debate and dialogue on crucial issues that concern the Jerusalemite Palestinian society in this decisive stage of its political history.

The Issue of Elections in East Jerusalem

All free peoples have the right to participate in electing their representatives in various governmental institutions. This includes the Palestinian people, at least based on the signed treaties between the Israeli and Palestinian sides in this regard. Following the postponement of the elections several times because of the deteriorating political situation that relates to Israeli right-wing policies in the latest years, which seek to enhance settlement expansion and finalise the annexation of Jerusalem, alongside the internal deterioration on the Palestinian side as it manifests in the struggle between the two central political parties in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which increases the difficulty of holding elections in all Palestinian territories, the Palestinian Authority is attempting to hold general and local elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while other regional, Arab and international parties seek to eliminate the Palestinian cause and reach a final settlement that ends the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the expense of the Palestinian side.

Since the enactment of the "Basic Law: Jerusalem- Capital of Israel" in 1980 and even after the signing of the Oslo Accords, the Israeli occupation did not hesitate to expand settlements in the city, control what remained of it and engineer the reality to increase the difficulty in the future of changing the existing situation, with the view of retaining full Israeli control over the city.

Despite the promises of the Palestinian Authority, as represented by its President Mahmoud Abbas, to hold general elections in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, the obstacles far exceed the ambition. Despite the clear statement, there are not any guarantees to ensure that elections take place in a democratic manner in the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. This can be attributed to the refusal of the occupation to hold the elections in Jerusalem through intimidating Jerusalemites in participating in the elections or running for office, and through giving primacy to factional over national interests in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. On another level, public pressure has increased to hold the elections, with the hope that this step will help in the reunification and mend bridges between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and consequently for the situation to improve.

With respect to Jerusalem, the situation is even more complex than other Palestinian cities in the West Bank, such that the Palestinian Authority cannot enforce the holding of elections in the city without Israeli consent, which does not want to hold it in the first place, despite previously allowing elections in 1996, 2005 and 2006. Since then, the government has changed in Israel and a populist



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right-wing government was elected; a government that believes in the need to build a Jewish State, annex Jerusalem and Area "C", in addition to annexing and expanding all Israeli settlements in the West Bank. A government that, since its creation, commenced in fiercely fighting the Palestinian identity of the city of Jerusalem, through arresting Jerusalemite representatives in the Legislative Council, restricting and preventing all Palestinian events and activities in the city, closing Palestinian institutions systematically and Israelising services in all its forms, to name a few.

In addition to the policies of the occupation, the coercive Palestinian governmental absence from the city, the feeling of Jerusalemites that their issues are not taken seriously at the governmental Palestinian level and dealt with systematically by the Palestinian Authority and the absence of human rights organisations that defend them from Israeli racist policies, has led many Jerusalemites to refrain from engaging in political activity or develop mechanisms that help them adapt to the complex situation in the city and decrease their expectations of the Palestinian Authority that is unable to change the reality in the city.

Goal of the Report

The report seeks to identify the level of basic knowledge of Jerusalemites in their right to nominate and elect representatives in Palestinian general elections and local elections, as well as identify their main approaches on participating in the elections.

1. Study Population and Sample

According to the data of Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research (2019), Jerusalem is currently inhabited by 901,300 residents, 341,500 of which (38%) are Palestinian. As for the Annual Palestinian Statistical Yearbook, issued on the same year, the number of Palestinian residents of Jerusalem was 435,753 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019). For the purposes of this study, a stratified sample of 1,000 respondents was selected to represent some sociological variables identified by the study committees, including Jerusalem neighbourhoods, gender, age, marital status, professional status and number of years of study. The persons were chosen on these basis in a random selection. The two field researchers moved between neighbourhoods, sat in public gardens, approached pedestrians and filled the questionnaires. The study sample was distributed according to the sociological factors as demonstrated in tables 1-5 below.

Table 1: Sample Distribution according to Residential Neighbourhood

Area	Number	Percentage
Mount of Olives	70	7%
Beit Hanina and Shufat	224	22.4%
Beit Safafa	77	7.7%
Issawiyeh	26	2.6%
Jabal Al-Mukaber and Sur Baher	162	16.2%
Old City	203	20.3%
Silwan and Ras Al-Amoud	105	10.5%
Old City Periphery (Wadi Al-Joz, Sa'ed and Saeed and Sheikh Jarrah)	133	13.3%
	1,000	100%

Table 2: Sample Distribution according to Sex

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	394	39.4%
Female	600	60.0%
Did Not Specify	6	0.6%
	1,000	100%

Table 3: Sample Distribution according to Marital Status

Marital Status	Number	Percentage
Single	541	54.1%
Married	422	42.2%
Divorced	3	0.3%
Widowed	29	2.9%
Unknown	8	0.8%
	1,000	100%

Table 4: Sample Distribution according to Age

Age	Number	Percentage
From 18-24	482	48.2%
25-30	253	25.3%
31-40	119	11.9%
41-50	86	8.6%
51 and above	60	6.0%
	1,000	100%

Table 5: Sample Distribution according to Professional Status

Professional Status	Number	Percentage
Student	330	33%
Employee	168	16.8%
Labourer	214	21.4%
Independent	102	10.2%
Unemployed	134	13.4%
Did not Answer	52	5.2%
	1,000	100%

2. General Knowledge of Jerusalemites about General and Local Elections:

To determine the extent of knowledge, the respondents were asked about their knowledge on their right to participate in elections, and whether they knew who represented them in the Palestinian parliament. The results are shown in table 6, as follows:

Table 6: Knowledge of Palestinian of their Right to Participate in Elections and on the Candidates

Item	Yes	No
Based on your knowledge, do you know whether Jerusalemites have a right to participate in general elections (Palestinian Presidential and Legislative Council Elections)?	90.5	9.5
In your opinion, can Jerusalemites participate in Palestinian local council and municipality elections	85.4	14.6
Do you know whether there are Jerusalemite representatives in the Palestinian Legislative Council	30.4	69.4
If you answered yes, how many are they?	Of the total number of respondents, only four answered correctly, that there are 6 representatives for Jerusalem in the Palestinian Parliament. The vast majority answered incorrectly or did not know	
Do you know what is the elections law for the Legislative Council Elections	22.2	77.8
If you answered yes, do you prefer that elections are held on the basis of proportional representation or constituencies?	10.2 indicated that they prefer constituencies, while 3.9 indicates they prefer proportional representation. The remainder did not understand the difference or did not answer the question.	

The results in the table above demonstrate that the vast majority of Jerusalemites (90.5%) know of their right to participate in general elections and that another significant amount (85%) know of their right to participate in local elections. However, when it comes to knowledge of the elections law, only one fifth of Jerusalemites said they knew what the elections law was, and when they were asked about their preference between proportional representation and constituency elections, approximately 90% of the respondents asked the field researchers to clarify the difference between them.

The results also showed that of the 30% that said they knew the number of representatives of Jerusalem in the Legislative Council, only 4 knew the number of Jerusalemite representatives in the Legislative Council. The results also show that Jerusalemites are completely cut-off from what is happening in the Legislative Council and political work of the Palestinian Authority in Jerusalem. This may be attributed to that the last general elections took place a long time ago, Jerusalemite representatives and their families were imprisoned and internal division between the Gaza Strip and West Bank, which paralysed the work of the Legislative Council for years, led Jerusalemites to forget their representatives and become careless about these issues.

3. Desire of Jerusalemites to Participate in General and Local Elections:

To answer this question, the percentage of Jerusalemites who had the desire to participate in the elections was identified, even if they understand why others might refrain from participating. The results are reflected in table 7 below.

Table 7: Participation in the Elections

Item	Yes	No
If you had the chance to participate in the general elections, would you participate?	57.8	42.2
Would you encourage others to participate?	81.3	18.7
My participation in the elections depends on the proximity of the polling station	52.4	47.6
I understand the decision of Jerusalemites who decide not to participate in the elections, irrespective of their reasons	76.1	23.9

Table 7 reflects a clear division among Jerusalemites on their desire to participate in the electoral process, such that 42.2% do not want to participate themselves, but the vast majority encourage others to participate. Generally, Jerusalemites give legitimacy to refraining from participation, such that 76.1% understand the decision of those who refuse to participate in the elections.

When the participants were asked whether the location of the polling station would affect their decision to elect, 67% said that this variable definitely impacts their decision. Accordingly, the placement of polling stations near the neighbourhoods or behind the wall will significantly impact access of participants to participate in the elections, as demonstrated in table 8.

Table 8: Percentage of Jerusalemites whose participation in the elections depends on the location of the polling station (N=587)

Item	Yes	No
Respondents who have the desire to participate in the elections	578	100%
Respondents who have the desire to participate in the elections who will be affected by the location of the polling station in their decision to participate	388	67%

To test for statistically significant differences between the desire to participate in the elections and sociological variables, an X^2 test was conducted to identify the differences in the distribution of answers according to the variables. Table (9) demonstrates these differences.



Table 9: Distribution of Sample According to Select Sociological Variables

Variable	Value of Variable	Desire to Participate	No Desire to Participate	X ²
Sex	Male	238	155	.21 (n.s)
	Female	337	263	
Age	From 18-24	292	188	.005**
	From 25-30	147	105	
	From 31-40	67	52	
	From 41-50	45	40	
	51 and Above	25	35	
Place of Residency	Al-Tur	38	30	.77 (n.s)
	Beit Hanina and Shufat	128	96	
	Beit Safafa	47	30	
	Issawiyeh	13	13	
	Jabal Al-Mukaber and Sur Baher	98	63	
	Silwan, Al-Thory and Ras Al-Amoud	55	50	
	Old City	114	89	
	Old City Periphery	83	50	
Years of Study	Up to 12 years	225	195	.26*
	More than 12 years	351	225	
Marital Status	Single	322	219	.80 (n.s)
	Married	232	189	
	Divorced	2	1	
	Widowed	17	12	
Employment	Student	190	140	.21 (n.s)
	Employee	130	38	
	Labourer	135	79	
	Independent	47	55	
	Unemployed	72	62	



The results show that there are not statistically significant differences in the desire of Jerusalemites to participate in the elections on the basis of sex, place of residency, marital status or employment. On the other hand, the results demonstrate significant differences on the basis of age, whereby the test demonstrates that the older the age of the person the less he/she has the desire to participate in the local elections. Additionally, the results demonstrate statistical significance between desire to participate and number of years of education, such that the higher the number of years of education received, his/her awareness increases, as does their desire to participate. When calculating the averages, the results showed that the percentage of those who have the desire to participate who received 12 years of education or less stood at 54%, while it increased to 63% for those who received more than 13 years of education.

4. Attitudes of Jerusalemites on Value of Participating in the Elections

To answer this question, we used the Likert Scale to determine the opinion of Jerusalemites on whether their participation in the elections changes the reality on the social level and political level in the city. The results were mixed, as demonstrated in table (10).

Table 10: Value of Participating in the Elections According to the Perspectives of Jerusalemites

Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
Participating in the elections promotes the connection of Jerusalemites to the city	4.0	6.4	15.4	56.8	17.3
Participating in the elections promotes the connection between Jerusalem and the West Bank	3.2	7.2	16.1	56.6	16.9
Participating in the general elections promotes the Palestinian identity of the city	3.5	6.7	16.0	53.9	19.9
Participating in Palestinian elections contributes to improving the living conditions of Jerusalemites	4.6	12.5	25.7	44.1	13.0
Participating in general elections contributes to restoring the political rights of Jerusalemites	5.4	10.2	25.2	45.3	13.8
Participating in general elections could expedite extension of Palestinian Authority control over the eastern part of the city	15.2	23.5	38.3	17.7	5.2
Lack of participation of Jerusalemites in general elections contributes to the Israelisation of the city	7.7	14.9	41.4	27.4	8.5

The results demonstrate three levels of answers. Approximately 75% of Jerusalemites consider that Palestinian elections promote the Palestinian identity and the identity of the city as Arab Palestinian. These results decrease with respect to the contribution of the elections in improving services provided to Palestinians, such that 55% consider that the elections will improve the level of their livelihood and promote the realisation of their political rights. The third level reflects in the last two questions, whereby the majority of Jerusalemites do not believe that participation will change



or affect the reality of the city in terms of effective control over the city, and approximately 40% of Jerusalemites are unsure whether participation will decrease the Israelisation of the city or contribute to extending Palestinian Authority control over the city.

To test whether there is a correlation between the attitudes of Jerusalemites and their desire to participate in elections, a t-test was used. Table (11) demonstrates the differences between the two sets.

Table 11: averages, standard deviation (S.D.) and t-test to identify differences in attitudes of those who have the desire to participate in the elections and those who do not

Item	Average	S.D.	Average	S.D.	T-Test
Participating in the elections promotes the connection of Jerusalemites to the city	3.96	.838	3.52	1.023	7.22**
Participating in the elections promotes the connection between Jerusalem and the West Bank	3.94	.798	3.52	1.026	7.00**
Participating in the general elections promotes the Palestinian identity of the city	4.03	.820	3.49	1.031	8.81**
Participating in Palestinian elections contributes to improving the living conditions of Jerusalemites	3.65	.957	3.26	1.059	6.61**
Participating in general elections contributes to restoring the political rights of Jerusalemites	3.65	.978	3.35	1.071	4.50**
Participating in general elections could expedite extension of Palestinian Authority control over the eastern part of the city	2.87	1.059	2.56	1.074	4.49**
Lack of participation of Jerusalemites in general elections contributes to the Israeliisation of the city	3.25	.983	2.99	1.064	3.97**

The results in table (11) demonstrate statistically significant differences in all items and attitudes, such that the attitudes of those who have the desire to participate in the elections correlated with positive attitudes towards the elections. This means that they consider that the participation of Jerusalemites will positively contribute to changing the social status, identity of the city and ability to reclaim national rights, compared with those who do not have a desire to participate in the elections.



Survey

Attitudes of Jerusalemites on Participation in General and Local Elections and the Perceived Importance of the Participation

Appendix (1)

Hello

My name is ----- and I am a field researcher in Al-Faisal Foundation for Conflict Resolution and Civil Peace. As you know, the Palestinian Cabinet adopted the decision to hold general and local elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Accordingly, we are trying, through this survey, to determine the attitudes of Jerusalemites on participating in general elections, local elections and the perceived importance of the participation.

The survey is short and will only take a few minutes of your time.

It is important that you know that you were randomly selected and that the information you will provide us will be treated with complete confidentiality. Also, if you do not wish to participate you can clarify that, because the participation is primarily voluntary. If you have any questions or inquiries, you can contact Al-Faisal Foundation on the number ...

1	Name of Field Researcher			
2	Area of Residency	Number of Area	(For Researcher)	
3	Date of completing questionnaire			

Part One: The answers to some of the questions are yes and no. I can repeat the question if you need me to

	Statement	Yes	No
4	Based on your knowledge, do you know whether Jerusalemites have a right to participate in general elections (Palestinian Presidential and Legislative Council Elections)?		
5	In your opinion, can Jerusalemites participate in Palestinian local council and municipality elections		
6.1	Do you know whether there are Jerusalemite representatives in the Palestinian Legislative Council		
6.2	If you answered yes, how many are they?		
7	If you had the chance to participate in the general elections, would you participate?		
8	Would you encourage others to participate?		
9	My participation in the elections depends on the proximity of the polling station		
10	I understand the decision of Jerusalemites who decide not to participate in the elections, irrespective of their reasons		
11.1	Do you know what is the elections law for the Legislative Council Elections?		
11.2	If you answered yes, do you prefer that elections are held on the basis of proportional representation or constituencies?		

Survey

Attitudes of Jerusalemites on Participation in General and Local Elections and the Perceived Importance of the Participation

Part Two:

There are a set of statements that we would like to test to what extent you agree with them. The answers are on a scale of 5 (from 1 to 5), with 5 indicating that you strongly agree, 4 indicating that you agree, 3 indicating that you are neutral, 2 indicating that you disagree and 1 indicating that you strongly disagree. Any time you feel that I need to remind of the scale I will. Are you ready?

Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
12 Participating in the elections promotes the connection of Jerusalemites to the city					
13 Participating in the elections promotes the connection between Jerusalem and the West Bank					
14 Participating in the general elections promotes the Palestinian identity of the city					
15 Participating in Palestinian elections contributes to improving the living conditions of Jerusalemites					
16 Participating in general elections contributes to restoring the political rights of Jerusalemites					
17 Participating in general elections could expedite extension of Palestinian Authority control over the eastern part of the city					
18 Lack of participation of Jerusalemites in general elections contributes to the Israelisation of the city					

Part Three: Personal Information: Please Fill the Following Information:

19. Gender: 1. Male; 2. Female

20. Age: _____

21. Number of Years of Study: _____

22. Marital Status: 1. Single; 2. Married; 3. Divorced; 4. Widowed

23. Employment: 1. Student; 2. Employee; 3. Labourer; 4. Independent; 5. Unemployed.