



TRACKING PALESTINIAN PUBLIC SUPPORT OVER 20 YEARS OF THE OSLO AGREEMENTS

By Charmaine Seitz

Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre

November 2013



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With the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

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Our deepest thanks to Manal Warad, who heads the JMCC's polling department and prepared the data presented here, and without whom the writing of this booklet would have been impossible.

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First Edition

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An examination of support and opposition to the Oslo agreements conceived in August 1993, as seen through the lens of polls taken by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre, shows that over the last 20 years, increasing numbers of Palestinians polled have opposed the agreements, despite their early popularity. Rather surprisingly, in recent years, the agreements' popularity has appeared to rebound.

Still, a plurality of Palestinians remained in opposition to the Oslo agreement in March 2013, their ranks solidified by 22% of respondents who said they were "strongly opposed" to the agreement, as opposed to about 7% in December 1997.

Trending Opposition & A Recent Rebound

When Palestinians were asked in December 1997, "What's your opinion of the Oslo agreement? Would you say that you strongly support, support, oppose, or strongly oppose it?," 68% of the public supported or strongly supported the agreements. This first JMCC poll asking this question was also to be the high point of support for the peace process as the question was asked repeatedly over the years.

The majority of the Palestinian public in the West Bank and Gaza Strip viewed the agreements positively until the start of the second Palestinian uprising in September 2000—five years after the agreements had expired. Between June and December 2000, attitudes shifted dramatically to and a plurality of Palestinians began to oppose the agreement.

Since December 2002, while data is only available in 2006 and 2013, support for the Oslo agreements has risen again. Two events may explain this trend. First, the second intifada's punishing policies of closure, incursions, arrests and detentions, and so on may have weighed heavily on Palestinians comparing this period with times of peace. The change may also be the result of domestic conflict between Fateh and Hamas. The Oslo agreements were viewed as signature achievements of Fateh that were under threat by Hamas when it first won general elections in 2006 and then took over the Gaza Strip in 2007.

Factional Differences Most Stark

For the most part, only when respondents were separated by their trust for Fateh, Hamas, other factions, or no faction at all were significant differences noted in the above trends. There are several notable findings related to political alliances:

- In contrast with the general trend, only twice in JMCC polling does a majority of respondents who said they trust Fateh also say they oppose the Oslo agreement: in September 2001 and September 2002.¹ Also, between June 2006 and March 2013, respondents that trust Fateh go against the overall trend in increasing support for the Oslo agreements, increasing opposition from about 21% to 34%.

¹ Note: Not all the polls that asked for an opinion on the Oslo agreement also asked respondents which faction they trust. Polls taken in Dec. 1997, July 1998, Feb. 1999, and Dec. 1999 did not ask about factional trust.

- Among respondents who trust Hamas, the proportion of those who oppose the Oslo agreements is consistently higher than the proportion of those who support it. It is remarkable, however, that in May 1998, nearly 40% of respondents that trusted Hamas said that they supported the Oslo agreements, and that the percentage of Oslo supporters who trust Hamas never drops below 12% in the polling data available.
- In March 2013, approximately one-fourth of respondents polled said that they trust no Palestinian faction. This important constituency bucked the trend between 2002 and 2013 showing a rise in support for the Oslo agreements. This significant group—a natural constituency for any new political configuration—has increased its opposition to the Oslo agreement over the past six years, from approximately 46% to 52%.

Only a few other differences were noted when respondents' answers were analyzed by region, whether they live in a city, refugee camp or village, gender, age and family income. Refugee camp residents became opposed to the agreements before the general Palestinian population and do not share in today's trend of rebounding support. Respondents with above average income were and remain more markedly opposed to the agreements, bucking the current trend of renewed support.

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

The Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre (JMCC) was established in 1988 by a group of Palestinian journalists and researchers seeking to disseminate information on events in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

It was the first Palestinian organization to conduct regular opinion polls of Palestinian political attitudes, and these surveys have been a critical benchmark on the health of the peace process and other key issues for nearly two decades.

Methodology

To conduct its polls, the JMCC selects a stratified three-stage cluster random sample of 1,200 individuals 18 years or older from the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip. The first stage of this selection involves choosing 60 clusters with populations of 1,000 or more individuals (after stratification by district and type of community—urban, rural, and refugee camp) with probabilities proportional to size. The second stage involves selecting 20 households in each of the chosen clusters. Stage three involves selecting one individual in each household using Kish tables. Face-to-face interviews are then conducted with the selected individuals.

JMCC follows the following detailed methodology to conduct its household surveys:

- JMCC sample size is 1,200, and since no single interviewer is expected to interview more than 20 respondents, the number of primary sampling units is normally 60.
- Sample is stratified in the West Bank and Gaza Strip according to population.
- Stratification for districts for each of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is also carried out according to population.
- Cities in each district are stratified according to population.
- Villages and refugee camps in each district are randomly selected (simple random sampling).
- All population concentrations within each district in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip are considered for selection. Concentrations include towns, villages, and refugee camps.
- Each of these concentrations is entered into a district database for randomization purposes on the basis of size. Each concentration is divided by 1,000, which is designated as a single unit. If a certain village, for example, has a population of 10,000, then it is assigned ten units; accordingly it has ten chances of being randomly selected.
- After the population concentrations are randomly selected, interviewers are instructed to go to assigned primary sampling units to conduct the interviews.
- The household selection method is based on a pre-defined route. Interviewers are instructed to follow a specific route when selecting the household. Since most population concentrations are not well-planned, nor are there well-defined bloc systems, interviewers,

particularly in villages and refugee camps, are asked to go to a specific place (mosque, elementary school, etc.) to begin their route. They are instructed to start from that place and then take, for example, the fourth street on their left. When the street is determined, they are instructed to choose the third or second house on their right, then the third house on the left, etc. The number of levels in each house is also taken into consideration, as is the number of streets where the household is selected.

- In cities, this same method is used. The city is divided into neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are also randomly selected. Interviewers have a starting point in each of the neighborhoods then each neighborhood is treated as described above for the selection of households.
- Among members of the household, respondents are selected using Kish tables. The Kish method is an objective procedure for selecting respondents within the household.
- Each household is visited no more than twice if the selected person is not available.

The margin of error for all JMCC polls is ± 3 percent, with a confidence level of 95%.

Terminology and Data

The data presented here represents two decades of polling on the Oslo agreements. When the Declaration of Principles was signed in the fall of 1993, it came as a surprise to most Palestinians. Likewise, while many were skeptical about the agreements, few would have expected that 20 years down the road, the agreements would remain only partly implemented but also largely intact. Acknowledging this is one way of noting the gaps that exist in the polling data presented on these pages.

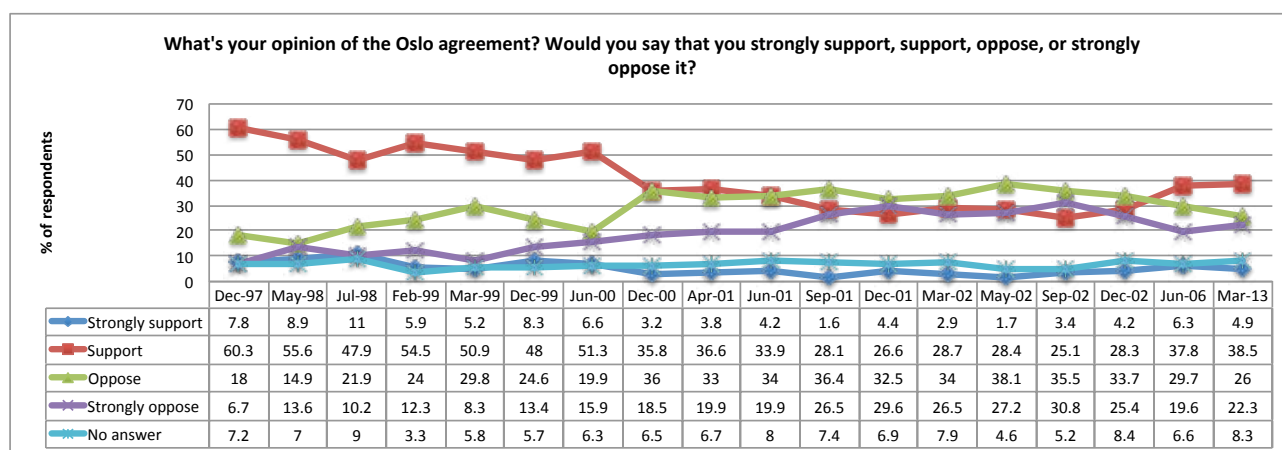
While pains were taken to compare only polling questions that were the same over time, the results are somewhat piecemeal, with data available for several periods of several months apart, and then not available again for several years. We have tried to present here all questions asked that relate to the popularity of the Oslo accords and related agreements, acknowledging that the questions that seemed pertinent at the time were not necessarily pertinent later and were sometimes abandoned, leaving only a snapshot in time of public opinion rather than a view of trending attitudes. In many cases, however, trends are visible, however brief.

While there is no formal document/s named the “Oslo accords” or “Oslo agreements”, this is the terminology most commonly used to refer to the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements negotiated in Norway and the subsequent numerous interim agreements. The terminology has evolved to mean the establishment of an interim Palestinian Authority on parts of the occupied Palestinian territory and the agreements governing the relationship between this authority and Israel.

I: 20 YEARS OF SUPPORT FOR AND OPPOSITION TO THE OSLO AGREEMENT

“We must seriously think about closing [the book on] the two-state solution and turning over a new leaf.”—Oslo accords negotiator Ahmed Qrei, in an editorial calling on Palestinians to abandon the two-state solution on which the peace process has been based

Twenty years after the signing of the Declaration of Principles in Washington, DC, even the architects of the peace agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) say that the flawed agreements have run their course.² But the announcement of the success of secret talks in August 1993 was met with a great deal of optimism, despite the detractors. Indeed, as polls by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre (JMCC) show, the majority of the Palestinian public in the West Bank and Gaza Strip viewed the agreements positively until the start of the second Palestinian uprising in September 2000—five years after the agreements had expired.

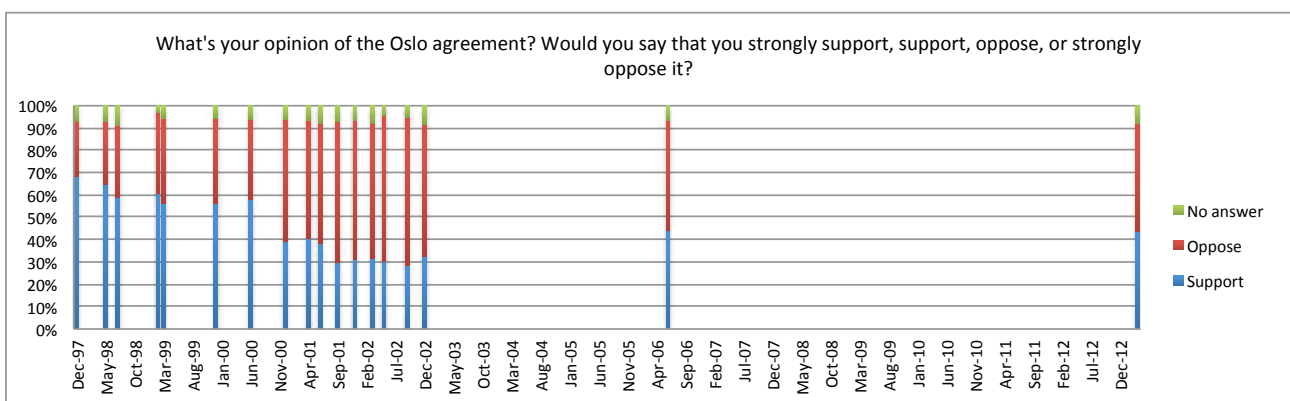


As shown above, the proportion of Palestinians surveyed that strongly supported the Oslo agreement stayed below 10% from December 1997, when the question, “What’s your opinion of the Oslo agreement?” was first asked by the JMCC, until March 2013. At the same time, however, the proportion of Palestinians surveyed who strongly opposed the agreement rose steadily, comprising approximately one-fifth of respondents by April 2001 and not falling below that percentage since.

Overall, while opposition to the Oslo accords has clearly grown over time, surpassing support for the process between December 2000 and December 2002, it has been driven by a steady rise in respondents who “strongly oppose” the agreement. This segment of respondents grew slightly between June 2006 and March 2013, even when the proportion of those who said they “oppose” the agreement declined slightly.

2 “Look beyond the Oslo accords, say architects of Middle East peace plan,” The Guardian, April 24, 2012, available online at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/apr/24/middle-east-two-state-solution>

Another shift took place between June and September 2001, as the second intifada continued and the time period over which Israel began construction of its Wall in the West Bank. The Wall is a series of eight-meter-high cement walls, electronic fencing, guard towers, patrol roads and gates that Israel is constructing, ostensibly for security reasons. In the process, the Wall has confiscated new land, water resources and divided Palestinian communities, establishing a new line on the Palestinian-Israeli map.³



Gaps in the polling data should not be overlooked. While attitudes were measured fairly regularly between December 1997 and December 2002, a four-year, and then six-year gap exists after that during which no data is available on respondents' views on Oslo. It appears, however, that as the Palestinian uprising waned in approximately 2005, so did opposition to the Oslo agreement.

It is difficult to say why support for the agreement would have risen post-2002, despite the lack of implementation of the accords. March to May 2002, Israel carried out operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank, taking over cities where the Palestinian Authority had been established and conducting waves of arrests. Perhaps this threat to the main achievements of Oslo made the agreement seem more attractive.

In January 2006, Palestinians held general elections, voting in a parliamentary majority of Hamas, the Islamist opposition group that had opposed the Oslo accords from the start and conducted armed attacks against Israelis to try to scuttle them. Hamas' control of the cabinet led to a US-led boycott of the Palestinian government, and domestic protests by Fateh, the faction that had dominated the peace process and whose main platform was the two-state solution. In June 2007, fighting between Hamas and Fateh forces resulted in Hamas taking control of the Gaza Strip and its Palestinian Authority institutions, a situation that persists today. It is possible that these events clarified for Fateh supporters and other Palestinians the need to support the Oslo agreements that had created the Palestinian Authority and its institutions.

³ In 2004, the International Court of Justice issued a ruling that the barrier was illegal and that it should be removed and Palestinians compensated for losses.

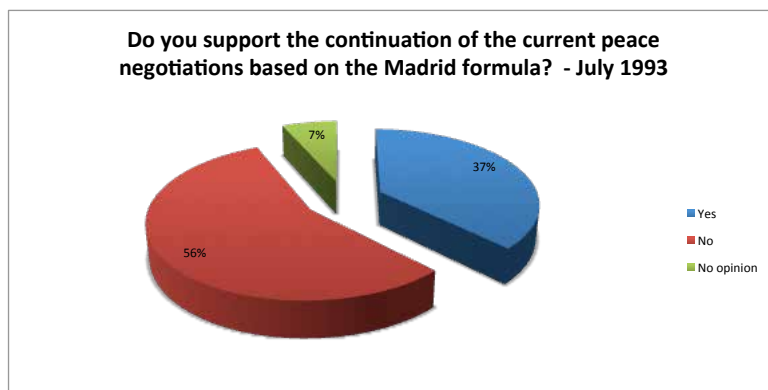
TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Event
Oct. 30, 1991	Madrid Conference held, first bilateral attempt to bring Palestinians and Israelis to a peace agreement
April 16, 1993	Hamas carries out first suicide bombing, killing 2 at the Mehola Junction
August 1993	Secret Oslo talks conclude with first ever agreement between Israel and the PLO on a five-year interim period of self-rule for Palestinians, to be followed by a final status agreement determining key issues such as the status of settlements, Jerusalem, borders, refugees, etc.
Sept. 9, 1993	Letters of recognition exchanged by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization
Sept. 13, 1993	Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements formally signed in Washington DC
Feb. 25, 1994	Baruch Goldstein, an American-Israeli settler, opens fire on Muslims praying in the Tomb of Abraham mosque in Hebron, killing 29 Palestinians and injuring 125
April 29, 1994	Protocol on Economic Relations signed in Paris ("Paris Protocols")
May 4, 1994	Gaza-Jericho Agreement signed ("Cairo Agreement")
Aug. 29, 1994	Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities Between Israel and the PLO signed
Aug. 27, 1995	Protocol on Further Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities signed in Cairo
Sept. 24, 1995	Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip ("Oslo II") first signed in Taba, establishing a Palestinian Authority in Area A in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, shared control in Area B, and complete Israeli control in Area C. Signed again in Washington DC four days later, and superseding Gaza-Jericho Agreement
Nov. 4, 1995	Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by Yigal Amir, an Orthodox Jewish student who opposes the Middle East peace plan. Shimon Peres takes over as prime minister.
Jan. 15, 1996	Israel assassinates Yahya Ayyash, Hamas "Engineer" and main bombmaker by planting a bomb in a cell phone he used
Sept. 1996	Israel opens a tunnel running nearly under the al-Aqsa Mosque, sparking several days of rioting resulting in 70 Palestinian and 16 Israeli dead. Palestinian police turn their weapons on Israeli forces.
Jan. 15-17, 1997	Hebron agreement ("Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron") signed; the West Bank city is divided between Israeli and Palestinian control
July 30, 1997	13 Israelis killed in twin suicide bombings in Jerusalem's main market
Sept. 4, 1997	5 Israelis killed in triple suicide bombings in Jerusalem
Oct. 23, 1998	Wye River Memorandum signed establishing Palestinian-Israeli security cooperation
Sept. 4, 1999	Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum signed, stipulating fulfillment of previous agreements and establishing coming final status talks
Sept. 5, 1999	Israel transferred 7% from Area C to Area B
Nov. 15, 1999	Israel transferred 2% from Area B to Area A and 3% from Area C to Area B
Jan. 20, 2000	Israel transferred 1% from Area C to Area A, and 5.1% from Area B to Area A
July 11-25, 2000	Palestinians and Israelis fail to reach final status agreement at the US-sponsored Camp David talks
Sept. 29, 2000	Israeli leader Ariel Sharon visits Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque, setting off the 2nd Intifada

Jan. 21-27, 2001	Taba summit achieves some breakthroughs, but end without agreement before imminent Israeli elections
March 4, 2001	Hamas carries out the first suicide bombing of the 2nd Intifada, killing 3 in Netanya
Mid-2001	Hamas' armed wing in Gaza begins first rocket launches towards Israel, actual dates disputed
June 2001	Israel starts construction on "the Wall", a series of barbed wire fencing, patrol roads, cement walls and guard towers built largely inside the West Bank
Jan. 27, 2002	Fateh carries out its first suicide bombing with a female bomber in Jerusalem, killing 1 Israeli
March 29 - May 3, 2002	Israel conducts Operation Defensive Shield, re-occupying all major West Bank cities
Sept. 24, 2004	A Qassam rocket causes its first Israeli fatality
End-2004	Israeli settler population in the occupied Palestinian territories has risen to 441,165
March 2005	Hamas and Fateh sign the Cairo Declaration, paving the way for Hamas participation in parliamentary elections
August 15, 2005	Israel commences its disengagement from the Gaza Strip, evacuating settlers and soldiers
Nov. 15, 2005	Palestinians and Israelis sign the Agreement on Movement and Access governing Gaza's crossings with Egypt
Jan. 25, 2006	Hamas wins a majority in parliamentary elections
June 25, 2006	Gaza armed groups capture an Israeli soldier in a cross-border raid
June 14, 2007	Hamas takes control of the Gaza Strip in armed clashes with Fateh
June 2007	Israel clamps a blockade on the Gaza Strip, severely restricting the movement of people and goods
Nov. 27, 2007	Annapolis conference fails to reach agreement
Dec. 27, 2008 - Jan. 18, 2009	Israel carries out its Cast Lead operation in the Gaza Strip; 1,390 Palestinians and 13 Israelis are killed
End-2009	The Israeli settler population in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, rises to 516,569
Sept. 22, 2010	US hosts a meeting of Palestinian and Israeli officials to try to restart talks
Sept. 23, 2011	PLO leader Mahmoud Abbas applies for statehood at the UN
Nov. 29, 2012	United Nations General Assembly resolution 67/19 upgrades "Palestine" to non-member observer state status

II: THE EARLY YEARS: WANING CONFIDENCE

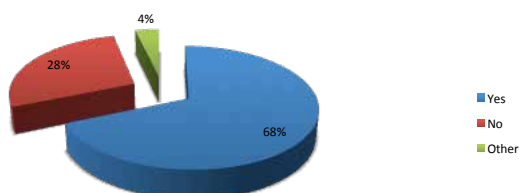
The Declaration of Principles was signed just as Palestinians were expressing pessimism and fatigue after the numerous rounds of talks based on the Madrid Conference, which began in October 1991. When asked in July of 1993 if they supported the continuation of the talks, most (56%) said “no”.



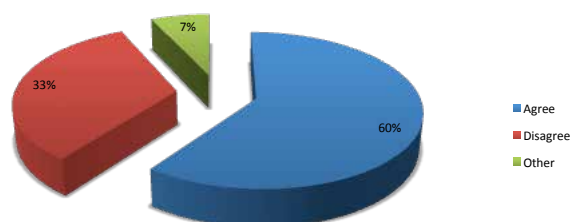
But when it was announced that the PLO and Israel had been meeting secretly in Oslo, Norway and had reached a breakthrough, the immediate reaction was optimism.

When asked in September 1993 if they agreed with the Declaration of Principles, 68% of respondents said “yes”. Most respondents even saw the agreement as leading to the creation of a Palestinian state, despite that the agreement itself did not promise to do so.

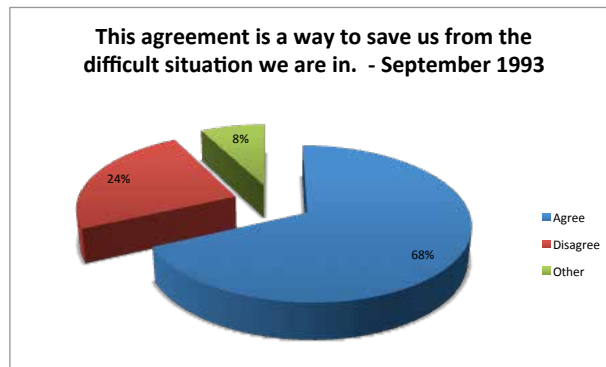
The leadership of the PLO and the Israeli Government have reached a preliminary agreement (Declaration of Principles on transitional arrangements). Do you agree with the phased agreement? - September 1993



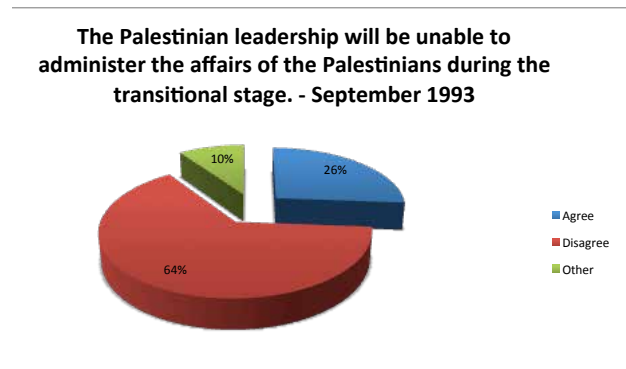
This agreement constitutes a realistic step that may lead us towards a Palestinian state. - September 1993



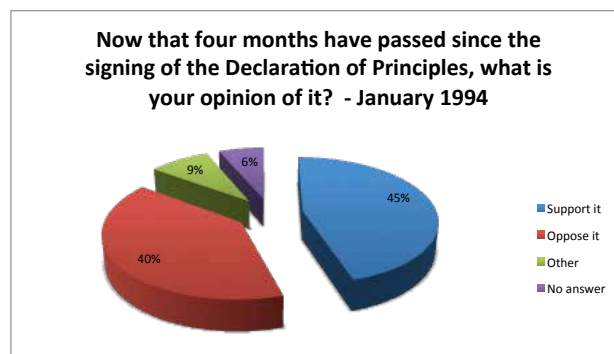
A majority (68%) saw the agreement as a way out of the impasse with Israel and the “difficult situation”.



Most Palestinians did not think that the agreement would lead to internal conflict or that the Palestinian leadership would fail in its role.

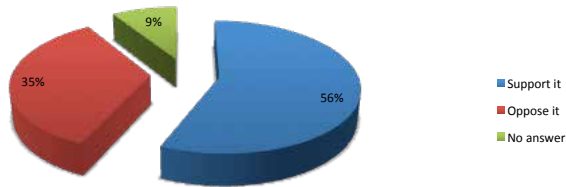


Four months after the signing of the Declaration of Principles, however, the agreement had lost a significant amount of support, with now only 45% of Palestinians surveyed backing the accord.

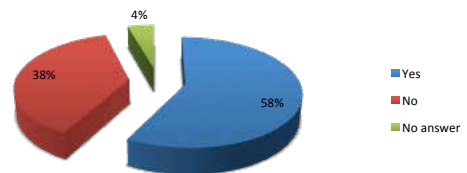


Once the Gaza-Jericho agreement was signed in May 1994, however, support for the process returned to a clear majority (56% or 58%, depending on what was asked).

What is your opinion of the Cairo Agreement? Would you say you support it, or oppose it? - July 1994

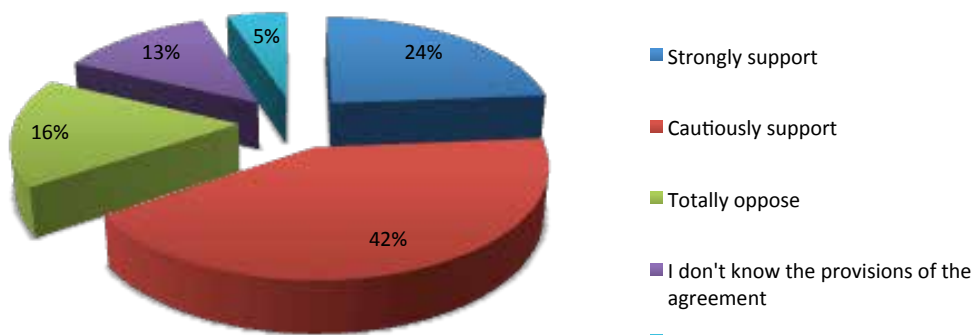


The Cairo Agreement between the PLO and Israel provides limited autonomy for Palestinians in the Gaza and Jericho areas. Do you personally welcome this agreement? - July 1994



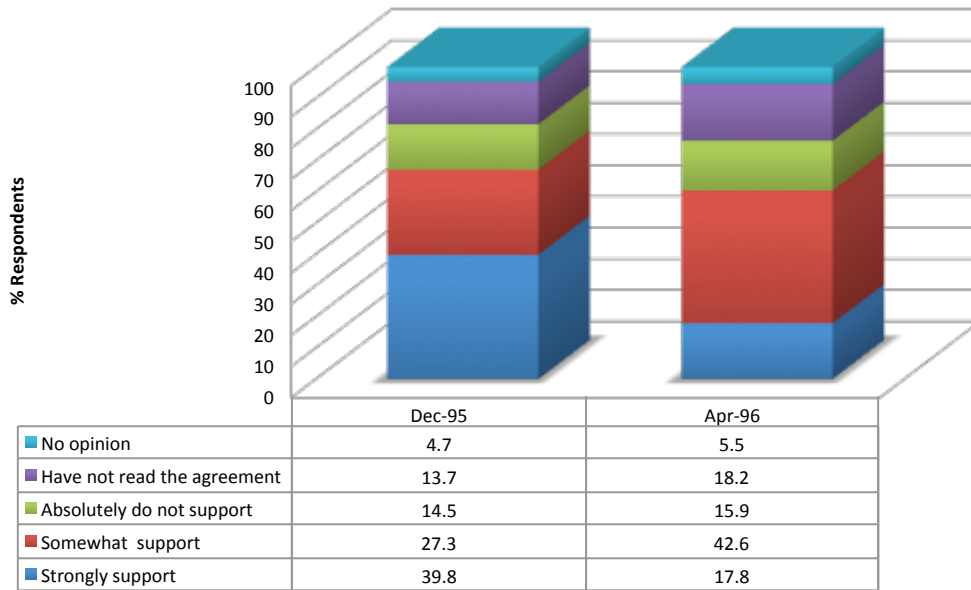
Again, in the fall of 1995, after Palestinians and Israelis signed “Oslo II”, the agreement detailing the interim arrangements, respondents backed the agreement overwhelmingly.

To what extent would you say you support or oppose the agreement reached between the PA and Israel over the Interim Phase? Would you say you strongly support, you cautiously support it, or would you say you totally oppose it? - October 1995

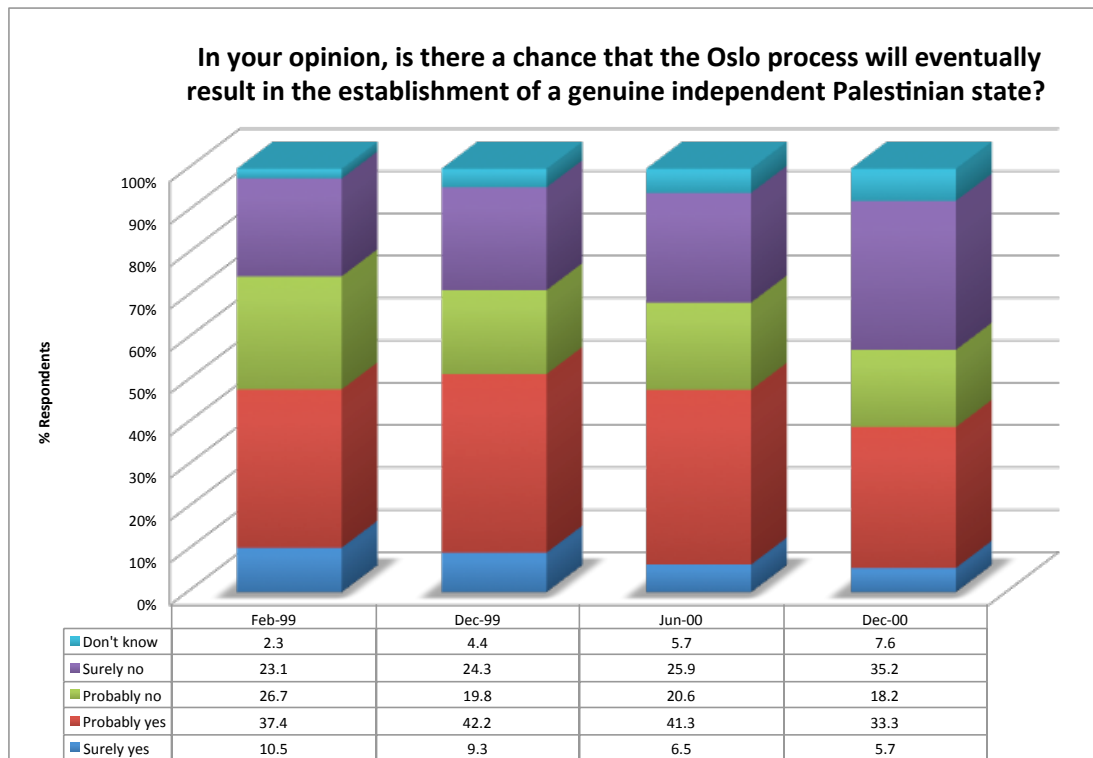


Between December 1995 and April 1996, the proportion of respondents that strongly supported the interim agreement waned, as the proportion of those who cautiously supported it grew. The percentage of Palestinians surveyed who were certain they did not support the pact did not change significantly. During this time, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a right-wing opponent of the peace process, resulting in a change in leadership in Israel.

To what extent can you say you are for or against the Taba (Oslo 2) agreement between the Palestinian Authority and Israel?



In the lead-up to December 2000, when a majority of respondents no longer supported the Oslo agreement, another question provided clues to growing pessimism. When asked if the Oslo process would eventually result in the establishment of a “genuine independent Palestinian state”, the percentage of respondents who said “surely no” rose from 23% to 35%, between February 1999 and December 2000. (At the same time, the percentage of respondents who answered “probably no” decreased from 27% to 18%, indicating that some of these respondents became more certain that the accords would not result in statehood.)



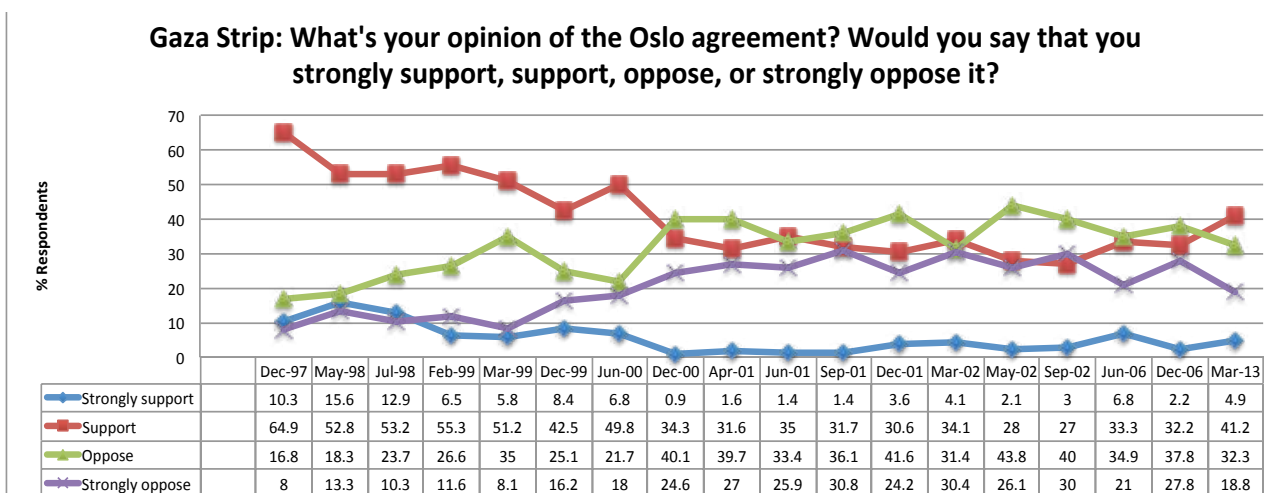
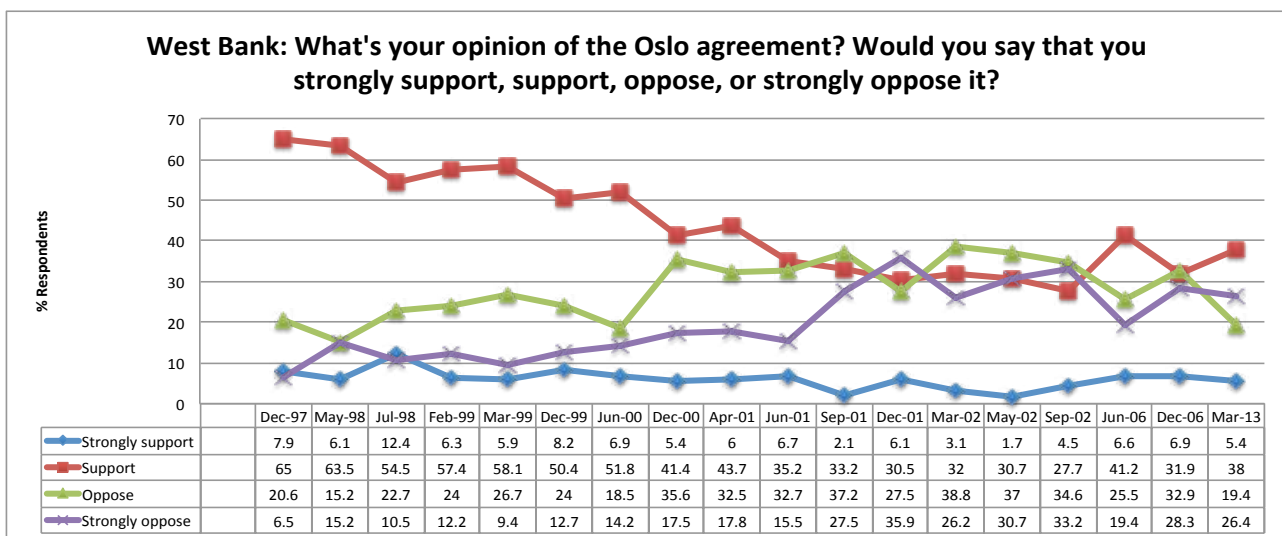
This data provides evidence that, early on in the Oslo process, each new agreement was greeted by a wave of support and optimism. As time went on, however, Palestinians became more skeptical of the process and what it would achieve for them. The change in leadership in Israel, the continued construction of settlements and the slow pace of implementation all undermined public confidence in the Oslo accords.

III: TRENDS IN SUPPORT

When the question “What’s your opinion of the Oslo agreement? Would you say that you strongly support, support, oppose, or strongly oppose it?” was examined for key indicators, such as the location or age of the respondent, few clear trends revealed themselves. Respondents from different backgrounds were fairly uniform in their views over time, except when they differed over the Palestinian political faction that they support.

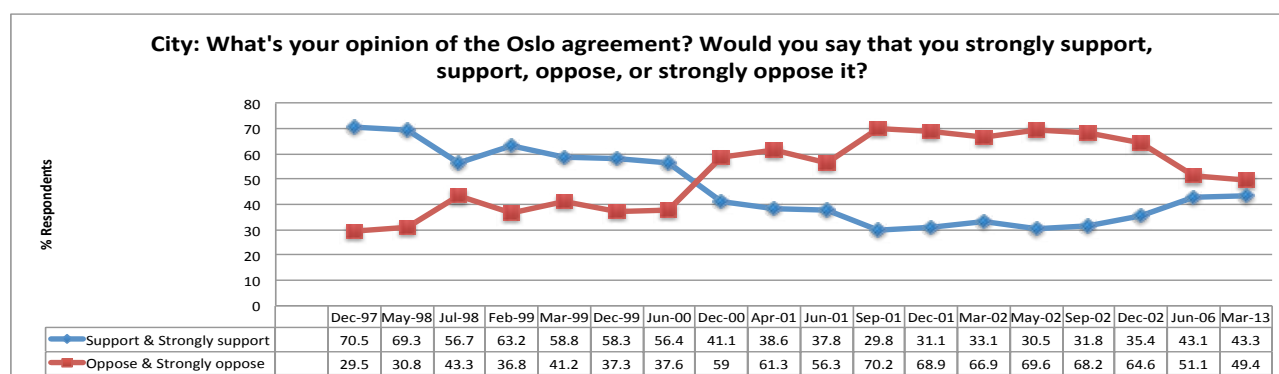
BY REGION: SIMILAR PATTERNS IN GAZA AND WEST BANK

In the West Bank, respondents followed similar patterns seen for respondents overall. It is notable, however, that in the Gaza Strip where rejectionist Hamas is in power, between December 2006 and March 2013, there was a significant decline in the proportion of respondents who “opposed” and “strongly opposed” the Oslo agreement. There was also an eleven percentage point increase in the proportion of respondents who said they support the Oslo agreement. These trends match those seen overall, but it is notable that the governance of Hamas does not seem to have negatively affected Gaza residents’ views vis-a-vis the peace process.

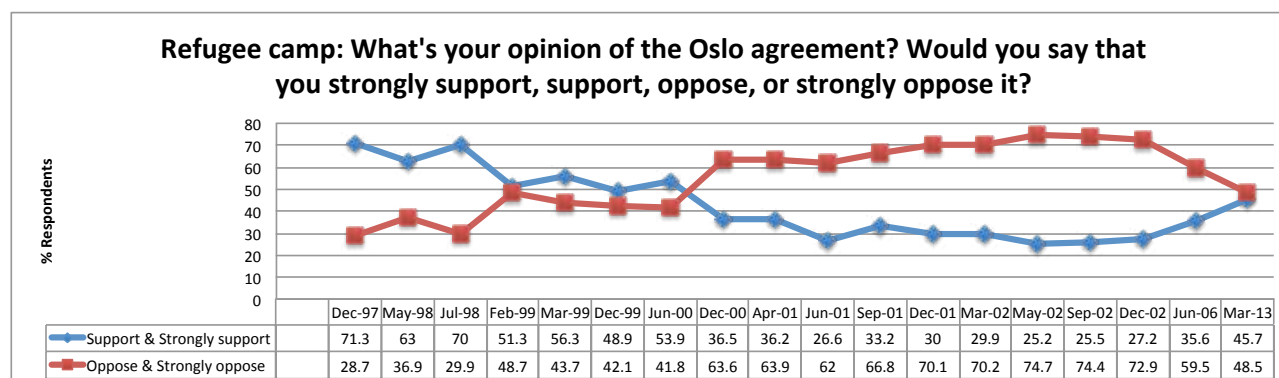


BY LOCALE: REFUGEES AND VILLAGERS BUCK TRENDS OF SUPPORT

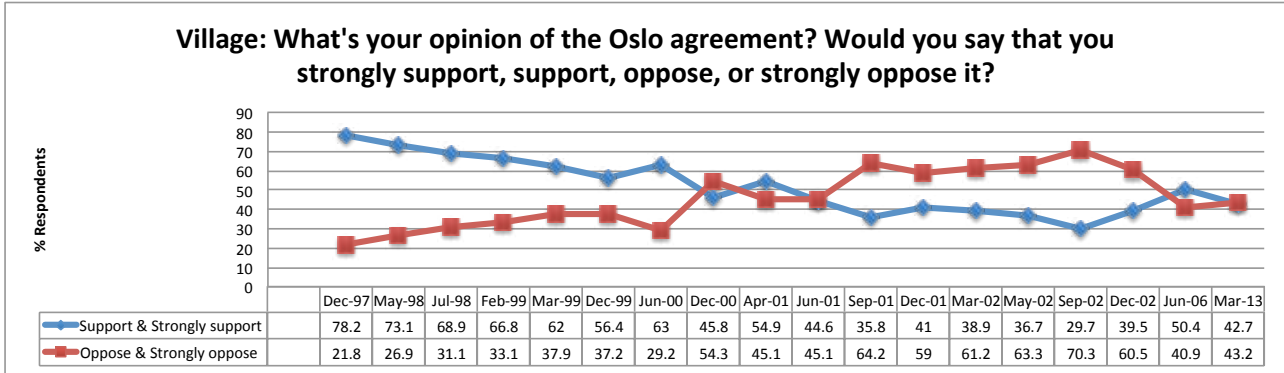
Respondents to JMCC polls are categorized by whether they live in a city, refugee camp or village. Some variations were observed in support and opposition for the Oslo agreement when respondents were divided along these lines. For the purpose of this analysis (and the rest of the report), “strongly oppose” and “oppose” were combined, and “strongly support” and “support” were combined so as to avoid statistically insignificant numbers of respondents in the various categories.



As shown above, city residents followed the general overall trends described in the first section of this report. Refugee camp residents, however, became less supportive of the Oslo agreement earlier on, i.e. in February of 1999. In addition, more respondents are opposed to the Oslo accords than support them even today when Palestinian public opinion overall has returned to backing the agreements.

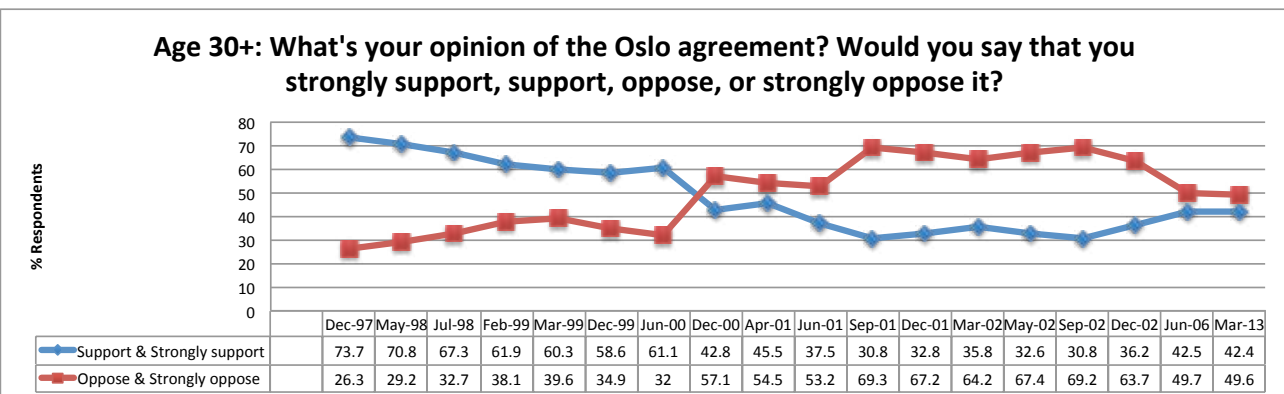
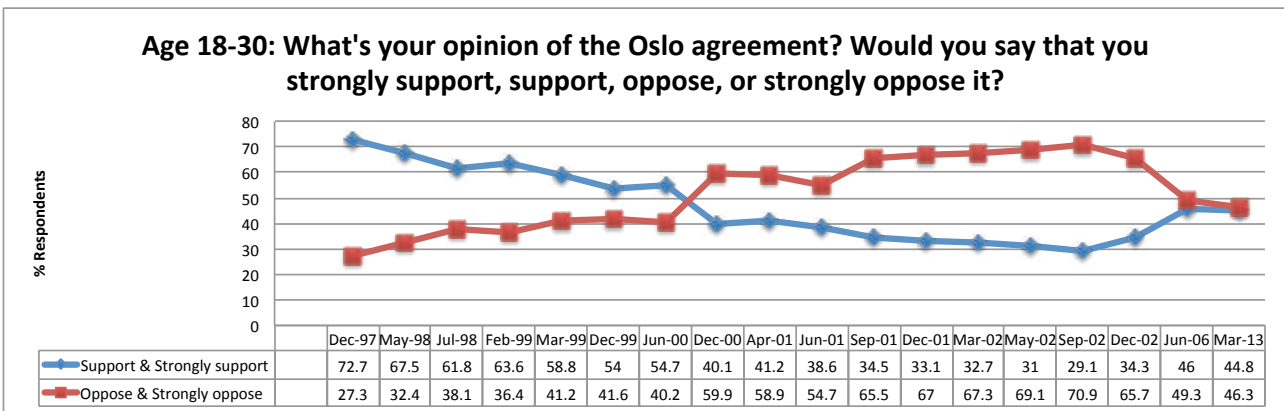


Among village residents, a majority (55%) supported the Oslo agreements at the height of the second intifada, in a poll from April 2001. Also of note is that opposition to the Oslo agreements rose and support diminished between June 2006 and March 2013, bucking the trend of renewed support for the peace process over this time. This was also a period where Israeli settlers became increasingly violent towards Palestinians in the West Bank; this would have greater impact on villagers and be seen as a direct consequence of the Oslo years where settlements continued to expand.



BY AGE: YOUTH NOT A FACTOR IN OSLO SUPPORT

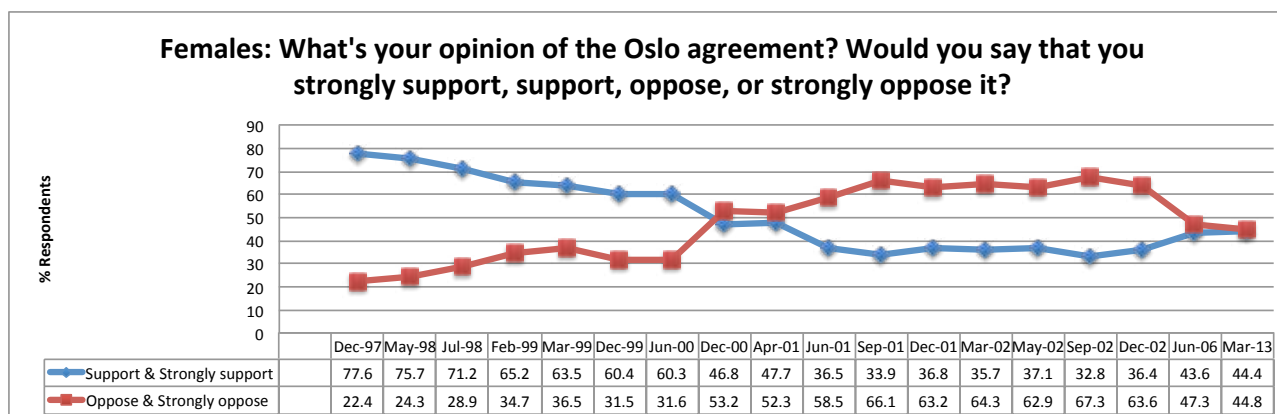
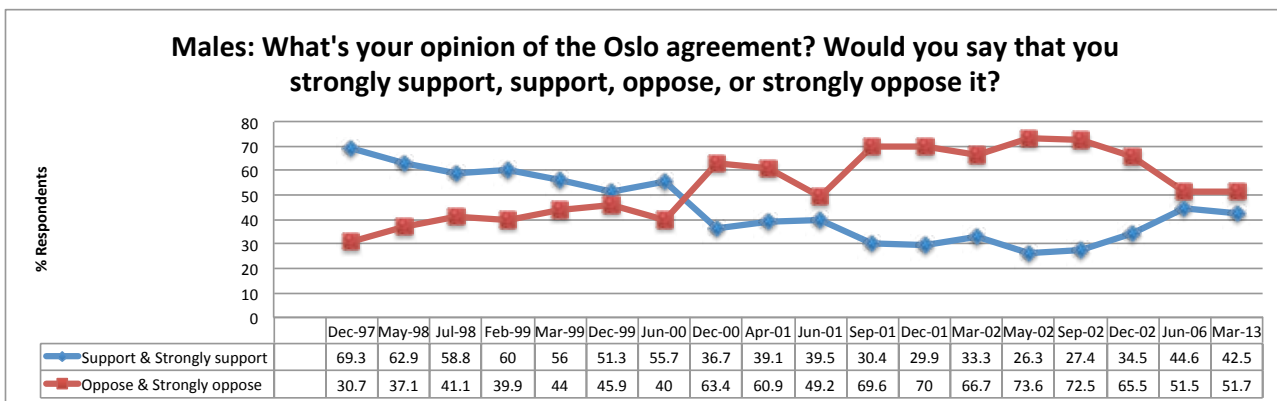
Perhaps surprisingly, there is no statistically significant difference apparent in the views of the Oslo agreement over time between respondents ages 18-30 and respondents aged 30 and above. This finding runs counter to the hypothesis that the occupied West Bank and Gaza, like surrounding Arab countries, could be radicalized by a youth bulge. Rather, there is no indication here that young Palestinians hold different views on the peace process than preceding generations.⁴ Later, in Section VI, responses to a different question shows that in fact today's youth may be slightly more supportive of the Oslo agreements than their elders.



⁴ It is perhaps obvious to point out, but important to remember that each poll surveys a new group of 18-30 year olds, and so on. As such, we are not talking here about the same generations over time but new waves of young people.

BY GENDER: MALE VIEWS MORE PRONOUNCED

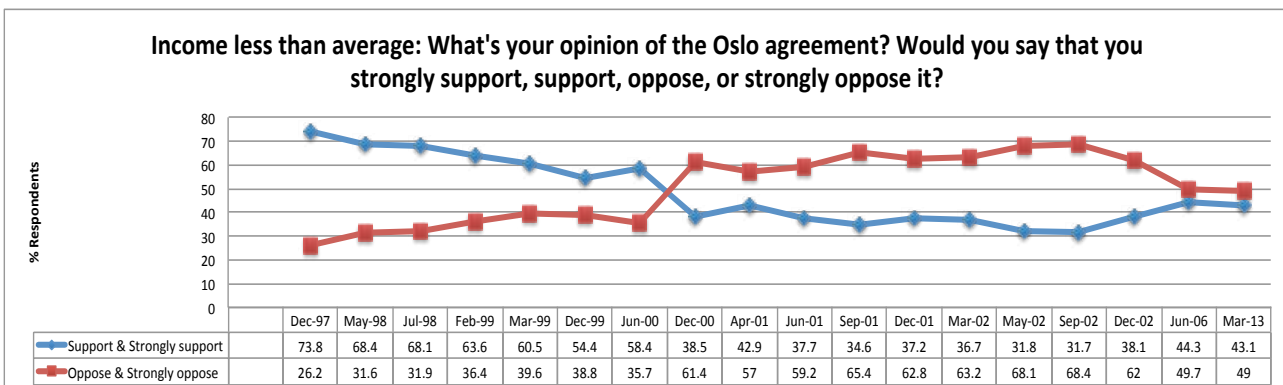
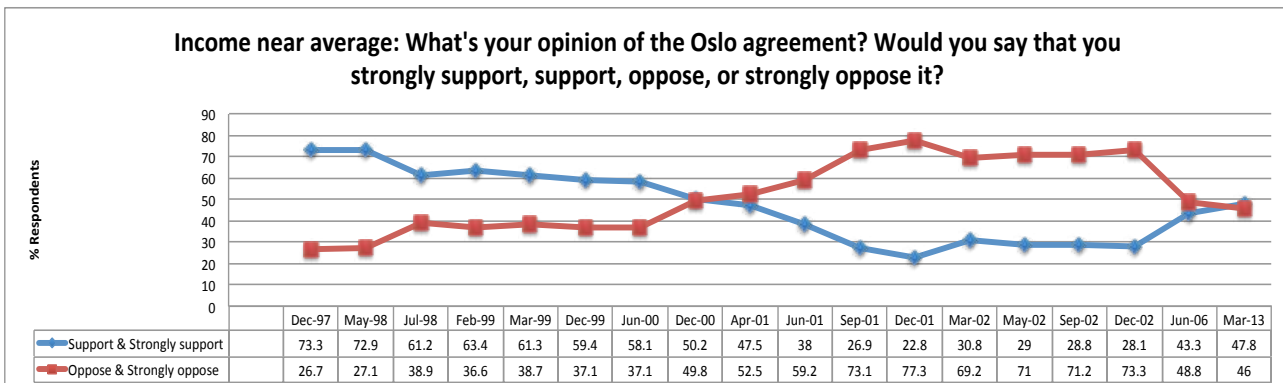
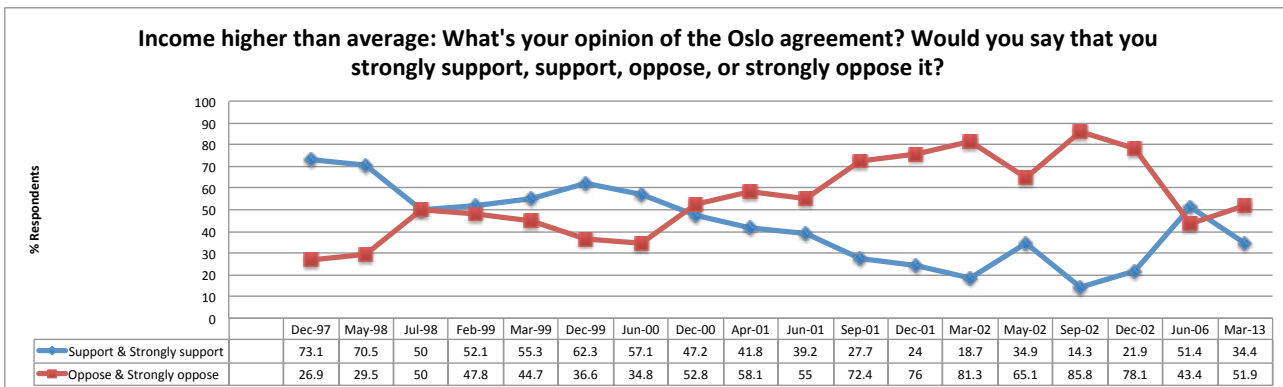
An examination of respondents' views on the Oslo agreements by gender shows that trends among male respondents were more pronounced, with greater numbers of males surveyed expressing opposition to Oslo at times when the general trend was to do so. So, for example, in December 2000 when the tide of public opinion turned against the Oslo agreements, 63% of male respondents opposed the agreements, as compared with 53% of female respondents.



BY INCOME: MARKED OPPOSITION AMONG GREATER THAN AVERAGE INCOME EARNERS

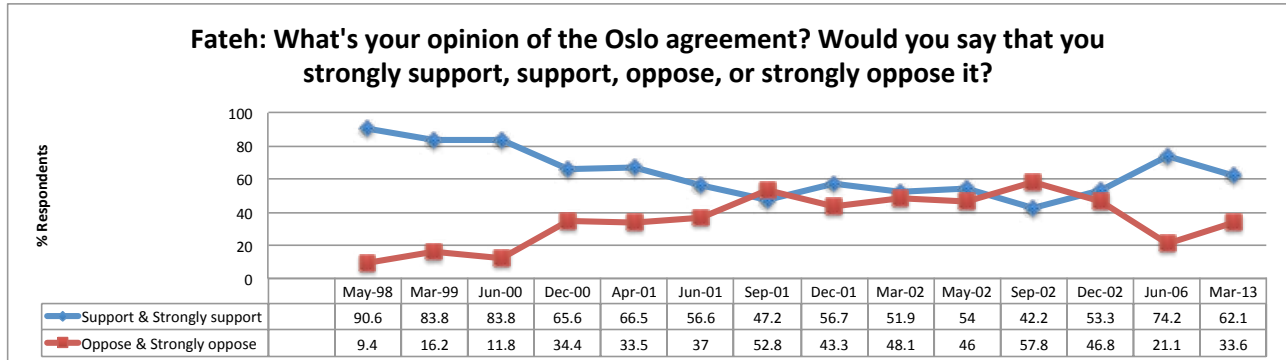
Palestinian views on the Oslo agreements do not vary a great deal according to family income, except among those with greater than average income. To determine family income, typically a sensitive subject, JMCC asks respondents if their household income is less than, close to, or more than an average of NIS 3,000 a month.

Only among respondents with greater than average incomes was there a significant departure from the overall trend. In July of 1998, well before the rest of respondents reached this point, Palestinians with greater than average income were evenly divided between supporters and opponents of the Oslo agreements. Between March and May 2002, just when Israel was invading Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank in Operation Defensive Shield, support for the Oslo agreement rose among respondents with higher than average income from approximately 19% to 35%, before declining again in September to 14%. Moreover, the percentage of respondents with higher than average income who oppose the Oslo accords increased by nearly 10% in the last six years, from about 43% to approximately 52%.

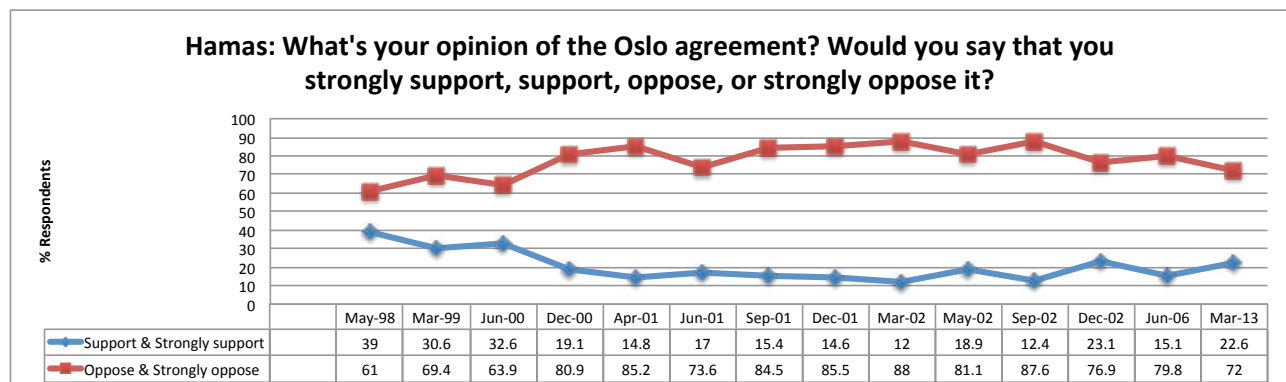


BY FACTIONAL SUPPORT: GREATEST DIFFERENCES IN SUPPORT, OPPOSITION TO OSLO

When respondents are categorized by their trust in different factions, greater diversity is apparent in trends supporting or opposing the Oslo agreement. Only twice in JMCC polling does a majority of respondents who said they trust Fateh also say they oppose the Oslo agreement: in September 2001 and September 2002.⁵ Also, between June 2006 and March 2013, respondents that trust Fateh go against the overall trend in growing support for the Oslo agreements, increasing opposition from about 21% to 34%.

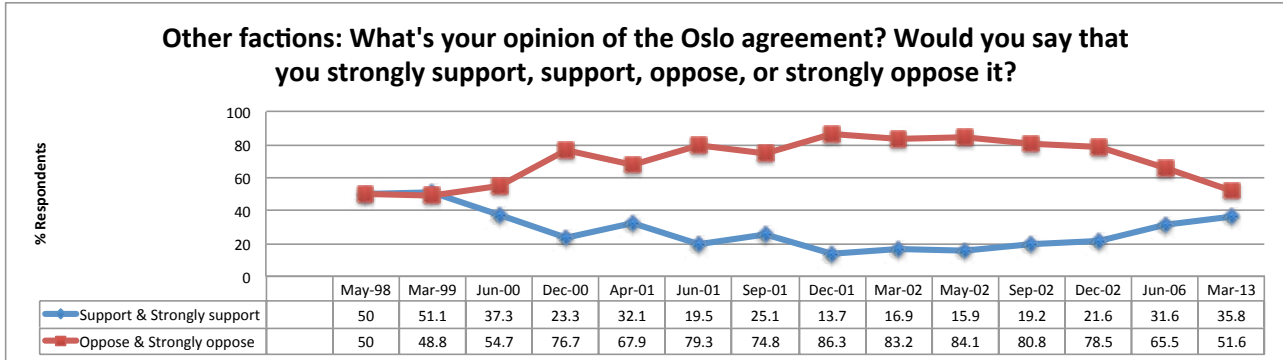


Conversely, among those who trust Hamas, the proportion of those who oppose the Oslo agreements was consistently higher than the proportion of those who supported it. It is remarkable, however, that in May 1998, nearly 40% of respondents that trusted Hamas said that they supported the Oslo agreements, and that the percentage of supporters never drops below 12% in the polling data available.

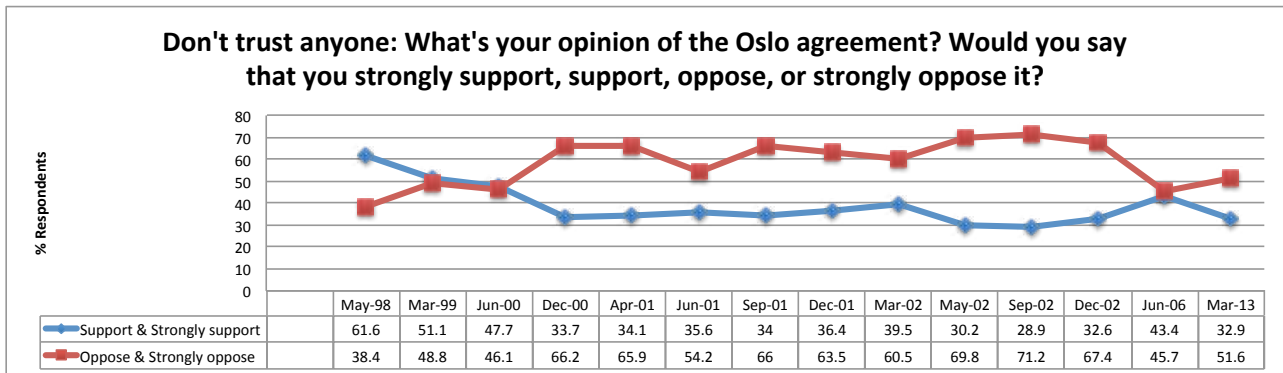


⁵ Note: Not all the polls that asked for an opinion on the Oslo agreement also asked respondents which faction they trust. Polls taken in Dec. 1997, July 1998, Feb. 1999, and Dec. 1999 did not ask about factional trust.

Among most of the smaller Palestinians factions such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine or Islamic Jihad, the Oslo accords were a capitulation and opposition is the norm, despite widely divergent political philosophies. Like respondents who trust Hamas, however, until June 2000, respondents who trust “other” Palestinian factions were evenly divided over the agreements. Still, never less than 13% of these respondents say they support the Oslo agreements.

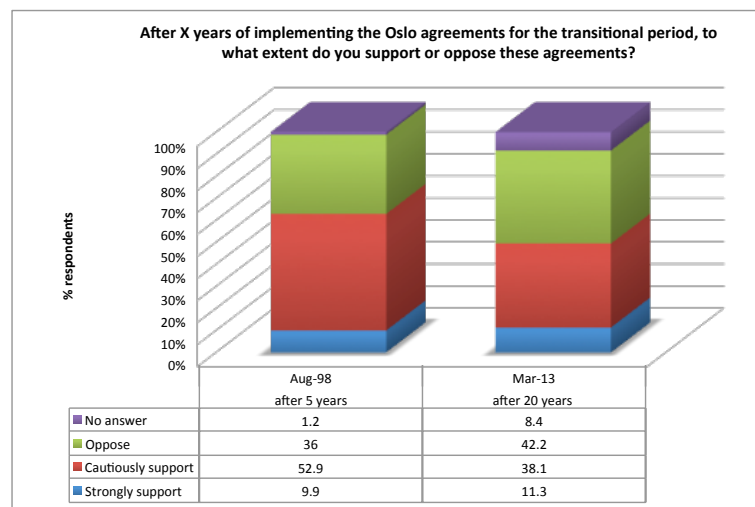


Increasingly, Palestinians say that they do not trust any of their political leaders. In March 2013, 25.8% of poll respondents said that they do not trust any faction. This significant proportion of the public has grown in its opposition to the Oslo agreement over the past six years, from approximately 46% to 52%. Any new faces in the Palestinian political scene will seek to woo this important group.

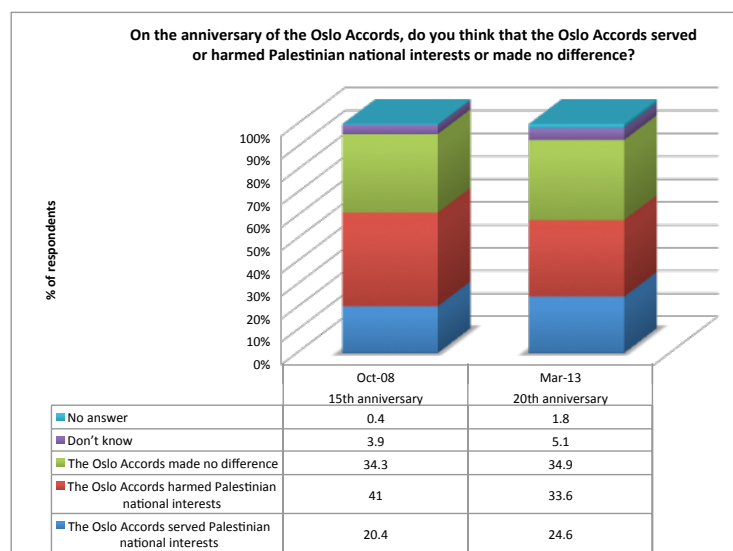


VI: PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE OSLO AGREEMENT TODAY AND BEYOND

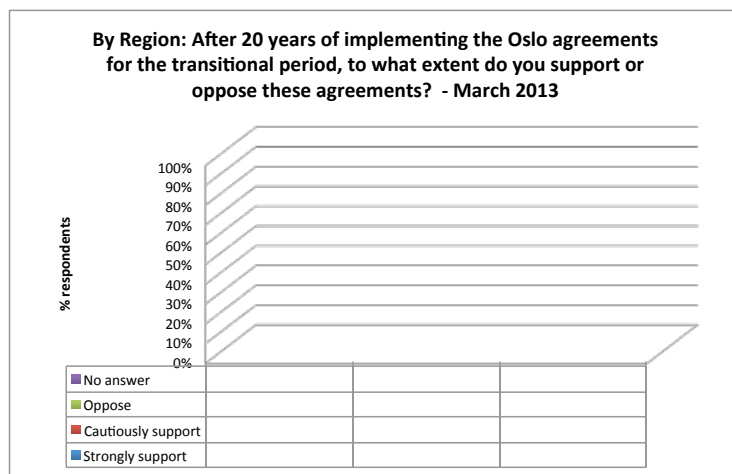
Another measure of the changes in public support for the Oslo agreement is available from a question asked at the five-year and twenty-year anniversaries of the important signing: “After X years of implementing the Oslo agreements for the transitional period, to what extent do you support or oppose these agreements?” While the proportion of respondents who said that they were cautiously supportive went down from approximately 53% to 38%, the proportion of respondents that said they were strongly supportive actually rose very slightly in this time from about 10% to 11% (albeit not outside the three-point margin of error).



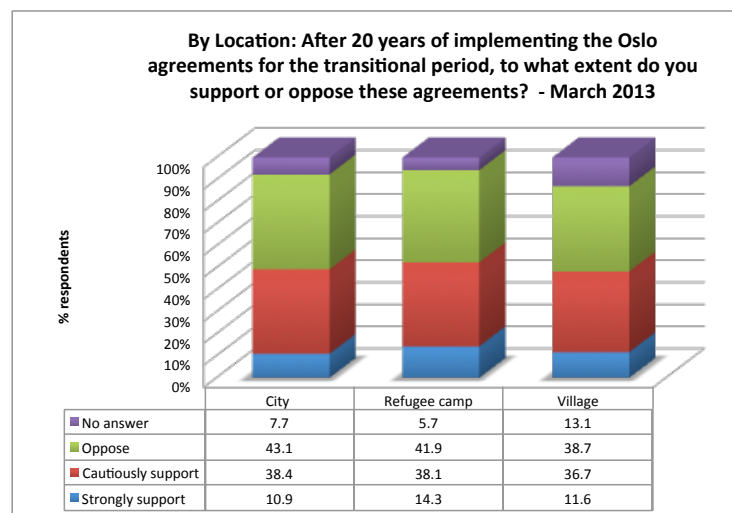
It is remarkable that when respondents were asked on the 15th and 20th anniversaries of the agreement if it had served or harmed Palestinian national interests, the percentage of respondents who said it was harmful actually declined from 41% to about 34% in that five-year period. Both times the question was asked, more than one-third of respondents said that the agreement had made no difference—as if Palestinians’ fate was unrelated to the peace process at all.



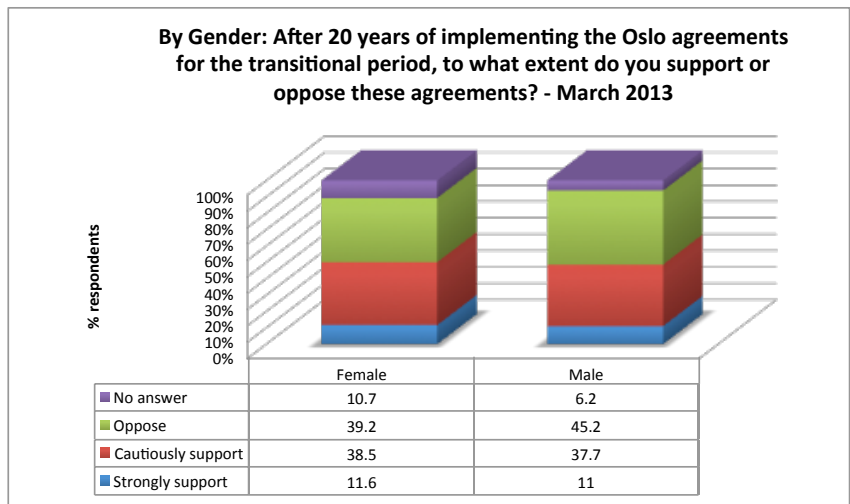
Today, despite that the Palestinian Authority’s governance is limited to the West Bank, and Hamas continues to control Gaza and espouse rejection of the peace process, the amount of opposition and support for the Oslo agreement is quite similar across the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem. This indicates that Fateh supporters, who as shown earlier remain loyal to the agreement, are still influential in all regions, but also that the agreement has become a fact of life among a significant number of Palestinians who trust Hamas and other factions.



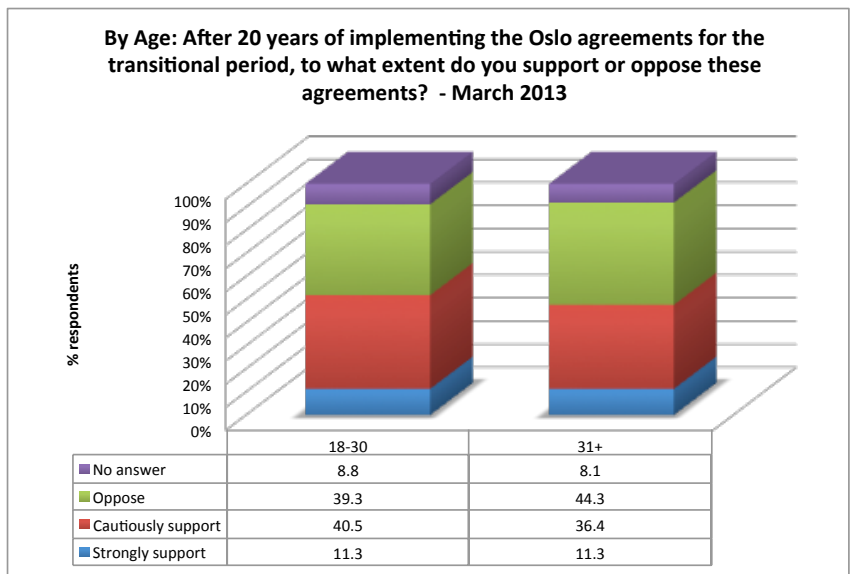
The same uniformity is found whether respondents live in cities (which in many cases have benefitted from the Oslo agreements and the growth of official institutions), refugee camps (where the refugee right of return remains unaddressed by the Oslo agreements) or villages. Differences in support or opposition are barely outside the poll’s margin of error.



Men are slightly more opposed to the Oslo agreement, with approximately 39% of female respondents and 45% of male respondents rejecting the pact in March 2013.

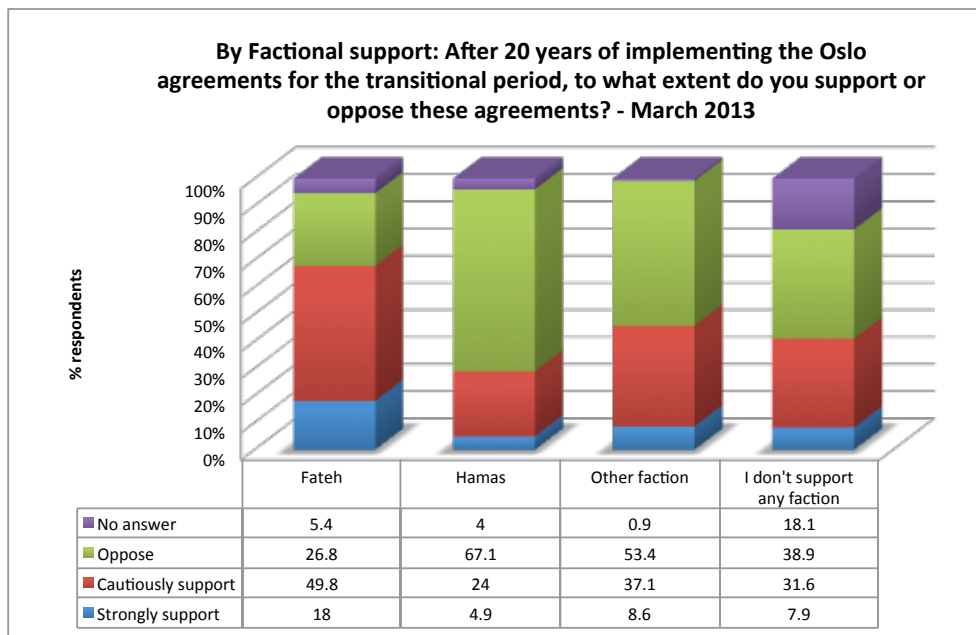


The proportion of respondents aged 18-30 that cautiously supported the agreement in March 2013 was slightly higher than those older than 30 years of age, at approximately 41% compared with approximately 36%.



Respondents with higher than average income were opposed in slightly greater proportions (approximately 46%) than those with average (approximately 43%) or below average incomes (approximately 42%). Those with average income were more likely to say they “strongly support” the Oslo agreement than respondents in other groups.

Only when the March 2013 poll results were examined by trust in faction were very significant differences visible in opposition or support for the Oslo agreement after 20 years. A majority of those who trust Hamas and other factions were opposed to the agreement, while about one-fourth of Fateh supporters oppose the peace pact. Conversely, approximately one-fourth of respondents who trust Hamas said in March 2013 that they cautiously support the Oslo agreements and five percent of those who trust Hamas say that they “strongly” support the Oslo accords. One can say that even among the agreements’ most ardent opponents, the agreement has become entrenched and is now seen by some as a positive tool for Palestinian independence.



Nevertheless, the peace agreement that altered the equation in the Middle East peace process, establishing a Palestinian authority on the ground and removing Israel from the direct business of occupation, was in March 2013—nearly 20 years after its inception—opposed by the majority of Palestinians.

