

## 12. SOCIETY & LIVING CONDITIONS

### ■ General Social Features

	West Bank	Gaza	WBGS (Average)
<b>No. of Households (2005)</b>	408,510	204,280	612,790
<b>Projected no. of Households (2010)</b>	502,807	271,180	771,604
<b>Type of household (%) - 1997</b>			
Nuclear family:	74.0	71.8	73.2
Extended family:	21.7	25.3	23.0
<b>Average household size (persons) - 2002:</b>	6.1	6.8	6.4
<b>Average housing density (persons/room) - 2004</b>	--	--	1.8
<b>First cousin marriages - 1997 (%):</b>	27.2	31.6	
<b>Marriages within extended family - 1997 (%):</b>	47.4	51.8	
<b>Polygamous marriages - 1997 (%):</b>	3	4.4	
<b>Median age at first marriage (2005) for females</b>	19.5	19.1	19.3 years
<b>Median age at first marriage (2005) for males</b>	25.1	24.0	24.6 years
<b>Marriages registered (Shari'a &amp; Churches) (2004):</b>	15,551	12,083	27,634
<b>Divorces (Shari'a) (2004):</b>	2,304	1,657	3,961
<b>Religion:</b>			
<b>Muslims</b> (Sunni Islam, representing Shafe'i, Hanafi, Hanbali and Malki schools)			WBGS 97%
<b>Christians</b> (concentrated in Jerusalem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahur, Bethlehem and Ramallah; (main denominations: Greek Orthodox - ca. 52.2%, Latin - 30%, Catholic - 6%)			WBGS 3% incl. Diaspora: 10%

(Sources: PCBS, *Population Statistics* and *Housing and Housing Conditions Statistics*).

### ■ Women

- Total **fertility rate** in the WBGS in 2003 was 3.89 (3.4 in WB, 4.7 in GS) (Ministry of Health, *Health Status in Palestine*, 2004).
- Some 52% of all students enrolled in higher education institutions are female; women also accounted for over 56% of all graduates from universities and colleges in 2003/04 (Min. of Education and Higher Education). Yet their participation rate in the labor force remains low.
- Women (over 15 years) account for some 14.2% of the formal **labor force** – 16.6% in the WB, 9.9% in the GS. As of Sept. 2005, 24.7% of the female labor force was **unemployed**. (PCBS, *Labor Force Survey*, July-Sept. 2005).
- Of the female labor force in 2003, 33.6% were **employed** in agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing, 7.6% in mining, quarrying, manufacturing, 8.1% in commerce, hotels, restaurants, and 50.1% in services and other branches. The majority of working women were professionals, technicians, associates and clerks (43.4%) or skilled agricultural/fishery workers (33%). (PCBS, *Labor Statistics*, 2003).
- According to the PCBS Demographic and Health Survey of 2004, women headed 7.0% of the total number of Palestinian households in the West Bank and 9.9% of those in the Gaza Strip. Female-headed households display an incidence of poverty 1.3 times higher than households headed by men. (UN Economic and Social Council, *Situation of and Assistance to Palestinian Women*, Dec. 2004)
- In terms of **political participation**, of the initial 88 PLC members (elected in Jan. 1996) only five were women and of the 3,779 members of local authorities only 66 are female (=1.7%). (PCBS, *Local Community Survey*, 2003).
- In 2004/5, 697 of the total of 4,592 academic **teaching staff** employed at Palestinian higher education institutions were female (Min. of Education and Higher Education).

### ■ Households and Living Standards

- In 2004, 92.9% of WBGS **households** owned a **fridge**, 89.6% a **washing machine**, 40.6% a **telephone**, 26.4% a **car** and 20.1% a **video** (PCBS, *Housing and Housing Conditions Statistics*, 2004).
- The **median monthly income** on the WBGS has decreased from NIS 2,500 before the Intifada to NIS 1,500 as of June 2005 (In the West Bank, the median monthly income decreased from NIS 3,000 to NIS 1,500, in Gaza from NIS 1,700 to NIS 1,200). Some 63.9% of Palestinian households suffered some form of decrease, of which 62.6% lost more than 50% of their usual monthly income. The main **coping strategies** were reduction of expenditure (53.6% of households) and delaying payment of bills (61.8%). (PCBS, *Impact of Israeli Measures on the Economic Conditions of the Palestinian Households*, April-June 2005).



- Some 71.1% of the households were in **need of assistance**, while 38.6% actually **received** humanitarian assistance (25.0% in the West Bank, 65.3% in Gaza). Assistance is provided by PA institutions (Ministry of Social Affairs, etc.) UNRWA, relatives, and labor unions. About 51.1% of the total assistance received was provided in the form of food supplies and 18% in cash. **Top priority** for 44.6% of the households was the need for food, for 17.0% the need for work, for 14.8% the need for money, for 8.4% the need for education, and for 7.4% the need for medicine. (PCBS, *Impact of Israeli Measures on the Economic Conditions of the Palestinian Households*, 10<sup>th</sup> April-June 2005).
- In 2004, 93.4% of the Palestinian households owned **TV sets** and 69.5% a **satellite dish** (PCBS, *Computer, Internet and Mobile Phone Survey*, 2004).

#### Recommended Research Sources:

<http://www.pcbs.org/gender/gender.aspx> (Gender Statistics)

<http://www.pcbs.org/> (see Population and Social Statistics)

<http://www.faf.no/pub/151.htm> and <http://www.faf.no/pub/242.htm> (FAFO reports on the Palestinian society)

**Abu Amr, Ziad.** *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

**Abu Libdeh, H., S. Tamari, et al.** *Survey of the Occupied Territories*. Oslo: Norwegian Institute of Social Sciences, 1993.

*Gender & Development*, quarterly newsletter published by MOPIC.

**Giacaman, Rita and Penny Johnson.** *Inside Palestinian Households – Initial Analysis of a Community-based Household Survey*.

Vol. 1. Birzeit University: Institute of Women's Studies in cooperation with the Institute for Community and Public Health, 2002.

**Graham-Brown, Sarah.** *Palestinians and Their Society 1880-1946. A Photographic Essay*. London: Quartet Books, 1980.

**Heiberg, Marianne & Geir Ovensen, eds.** *Palestinian Society. In Gaza, West Bank and Arab Jerusalem - A Survey of Living Conditions*. Oslo: FAFO-Report 151, 1993 (<http://www.faf.no/engelsk/pub/index.htm>).

**Nakhleh, Khalil & Elia Zureik, eds.** *The Sociology of the Palestinians*. London: Croom Helm, 1980.

**Sana Asi,** *Palestinian Women's Status*. PCBS, April 1998.

