



12. Society & Living Conditions

■ General Social Features

	West Bank	Gaza	WBGS (Average)
No. of Households (2007)	440,550	222,731	663,281
Projected no. of Households (2010)	502,807	271,180	771,604
Type of household (%) - 2004			
Nuclear family:	82.7	83.5	83.0
Extended family:	13.4	12.2	12.6
Average household size (persons) - 2006:	5.9	7.4	6.4
Average housing density (persons/room) - 2006	1.8	1.9	1.8
Marriages 2004 (%): - Cousin	24.7	32.2	27.5
- within extended family	17.2	18.8	17.8
- no relation	58.1	49.0	54.7
Polygamous marriages - 2004 (%):	3.0	4.4	3.5
Median age at first marriage (2006) for females	19.6	19.2	19.5 years
Median age at first marriage (2006) for males	25.2	24.0	24.7 years
Marriages registered (<i>Shari'a</i> & Churches) (2006):	16,380	11,853	28,233
Divorces (2006):	2,232	1,524	3,756

Religion:

Muslims (Sunni Islam, representing Shafe'i, Hanafi, Hanbali and Malki schools)	WBGS	97%
Christians (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, *Demographic Statistics, Housing and Housing Conditions Statistics, and Housing Projections Revised*).

■ Women

- Total **fertility rate** in the WBGS in 2004 was 5.7 (4.1 in WB, 5.8 in GS) (PCBS, *Children Statistics Series No. 9, 2006*.)
- Despite the high and successful secondary school enrolment of women, which generally correlates positively with female work, women's **labor force participation** (15+ years) remains low, accounting for only 15.7% of the formal **labor force**. As of Sept. 2007, 12.1% of the female labor force was **unemployed**. Main reasons for the low participation is "housekeeping". (PCBS, *Labor Force Survey, July-Sept. 2007*).
- Of the women participating in the labor force, 39.3% had 13 or more years of **schooling**. However, also among the unemployed women the largest group (38.1%) was that with 13 and more years of schooling. Of the women not outside the labor force, 48.6% did not participate due to housekeeping and 26.9% due to studying/training. (PCBS, *Labor Force Survey, July-Sept. 2007*).
- Of the female labor force in 2005, 37.4% were **employed** in agriculture, hunting, fishing, 8.8% in mining, quarrying, manufacturing, 8.5% in commerce, hotels, restaurants, and 44.9% in services and other branches. The majority of working women were professionals, technicians, associates and clerks or skilled agricultural/fishery workers. (PCBS, *Labor Force Survey, July-Sept. 2007*)
- Some 53% of all university **students** are female; women also accounted for over 56% of all **graduates** from universities in 2005/06. Yet, women present only 12.2% of the academic **teaching staff** at universities. (Min. of Education and Higher Education).
- In terms of **political participation**, the percentage of female PLC members increased to 12.9% in 2006 compared to 5.7% in 1996, mainly due to the quota system used in the 2006 elections. (PCBS, *Women and Men in Palestine, 2006*).
- Some 8.2% of all Palestinian **households** were **headed** by females in 2005. (PCBS, 2006).

■ Households and Living Standards

- In 2006, 94.2% of WBGS households owned a **TV**, 92.3% a **fridge**, 89.9% a **washing machine**, 47.2% a **telephone line**, 18.2% a **car**, 15.5% a **video**, 2.1% **central heating** and 1.49% a **dishwasher** (PCBS, *Housing and Housing Conditions Statistics, 2006*).
- Some 81.5% of WBGS households **own** the **housing** unit they dwell in (WB: 77.7%; GS: 89%), while 11.5% **rent** it and 7% have other types of tenure (PCBS, *Housing and Housing Conditions Statistics, 2006*).



- The average monthly **rent** in 2006 was 115 JD (WB: 125; GS: 78) (PCBS, *Housing and Housing Conditions Statistics*, 2006).
- In 2006, the **main source of income** was for 26.3% of the households some kind of household business, for 52.6% wages and salaries, and for 21.1% cash remittances or other sources. (PCBS, *Living Standards*, 2006)
- The **median household income**, which was NIS 2,600 prior to the Intifada, dropped to NIS 1,600, and some 51.6% of the WBGs households had lost over 50% of their income during the second half of 2005. (PCBS, *Living Standards*, 2006)
- The **average daily net wage** in Sept. 2007 was 77.1 NIS in the West Bank and NIS 64.1 in Gaza (PCBS, *Labor Statistics*, 2007).
- Some 67% of the WBGs households indicated at the end of 2005 that they needed **assistance** (WB: , GS: 71.8%), which consisted to 65.1% of food and of 21.1% of in-cash assistance.
- About 56.5% of the WBGs households in 2006 were of **urban** nature, 28.4% **rural** and 15.1% based in **refugee camps**. (PCBS, *The Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2006*).
- In 2004, 26.4% of the Palestinian households had a **computer** available, 9.2% had **internet at home**, 30% of those of 10 years and older had a **mobile phone** (PCBS, *Computer, Internet and Mobile Phone Survey*, 2004).

Recommended Research Sources:

<http://www.pcbs.gov.ps> (Statistics on Gender and on Living Standards)

<http://www.fao.no/pub/151.htm> and <http://www.fao.no/pub/242.htm> (FAO 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.

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 Ovnsen, eds. *Palestinian Society. In Gaza, West Bank and Arab Jerusalem - A Survey of Living Conditions*. Oslo: FAO-Report 151, 1993 (<http://www.fao.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.



13. Government

13.1 ADMINISTRATION

► Historical Background

Ottoman Period (until 1917): Since the early 16th Century, Ottoman laws and legal system applied. By the mid-19th Century, some laws begin to be influenced by legal developments in Europe (e.g., the Land Code of 1857, Civil Code). Few laws dating back to the Ottoman period are still in force.

British Mandate (1918-48): In 1918, the British military administration assumed full responsibility for all laws, legislation and orders. In 1922, when Britain obtained the mandate over Palestine from the League of Nations, British Common Law and judicial structures were introduced in most legal areas. From 1923-48, the British legal system was super-imposed on existing structures; some of the laws from this period are still in force.

1948-1967: Following the War of 1948, the WB (incl. East Jerusalem) became part of Jordan and the GS was under Egyptian rule. In the WB, laws that did not contradict the Jordanian Defense Law remained in effect; in 1950, when the WB was united with the East Bank some laws applied to both banks and others to only one side. From 1950-1967 the common parliament passed much legislation, most of which is still in force. In the GS, most Ottoman and British laws remained in force with only few reforms introduced; in 1955, Egypt issued a Basic Law for Gaza, and in 1962, a Constitutional Order.

1967-1993: In the course of the June War of 1967, Israel occupied the WBGs, annexed 70 km² (mainly East Jerusalem area), abolished the West Bank court system, assumed legislative, executive and judicial powers, imposed its military administration, and introduced over 2,000 military orders, amending, changing or repealing virtually every piece of existing legislation. Until the 1988 Jordanian disengagement, the West Bank remained partly under Jordanian administration.

Since Oslo: The Oslo agreements divided the WB into three zones: Areas A, B and C:

- ◆ In **Area A** (17.2% of the West Bank as of Oct. 2000), the PA has sole jurisdiction and security control, but Israel still retains authority over movement into and out of these areas, and has repeatedly made use of this 'right' during the current Intifada.
- ◆ In **Area B** (23.8%), the PA has civil authority and responsibility for public order, while Israel maintains a security presence and 'overriding security responsibility'.
- ◆ The remaining 59% of the West Bank, **Area C**, is still under total Israeli occupation.