



## 12. Society & Living Conditions

### ■ General Social Features

	West Bank	Gaza	WBGS (Average)
<b>No. of Households (2007)</b>	440,550	222,731	663,281
<b>Projected no. of Households (2010)</b>	502,807	271,180	771,604
<b>Type of household (%) – 2007</b>			
One person	4.1		4.2
Nuclear family:	81.1	(83.5) 2004	83.2
Extended family:	12.2	(12.2) 2004	12.4
<b>Average household size (persons) - 2007:</b>	5.5	(7.4) 2006	
<b>Average housing density (persons/room) - 2007</b>	1.6	(1.9) 2006	
<b>Marriages 2004 (%):</b>			
- <b>Cousin</b>	24.7	32.2	27.5
- <b>within extended family</b>	17.2	18.8	17.8
- <b>no relation</b>	58.1	49.0	54.7
<b>Polygamous marriages – 2004 (%):</b>	3.0	4.4	3.5
<b>Median age at first marriage (2006) for females</b>	19.6	19.2	19.5 years
<b>Median age at first marriage (2006) for males</b>	25.2	24.0	24.7 years
<b>Marriages registered (Shari'a &amp; Churches) (2006):</b>	16,380	11,853	28,233
<b>Divorces (2006):</b>	2,232	1,524	3,756
People aged 0-14 years	40.4%		
People aged 60 years and over	4.7%	3.6%	4.3%
Sex ratio of those 60+ (female : male)			100:76.9
<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, *Housing and Housing Conditions Statistics*, and *Population, Housing, and Establishment Census 2007*).

### ■ Women

- 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 15.2% of the formal **labor force**, making it one of the lowest in the world. (PCBS, *Labor Force Survey*, July-Sept. 2008). As of Sept. 2008,
- Of the women participating in the labor force, 42.1% had 13 or more years of **schooling**. However, also among the unemployed women the largest group (33.1%) was that with 13 and more years of schooling. Of the women outside the labor force, 65.3% did not participate due to housekeeping and 26.8% due to studying/training. (PCBS, *Labor Force Survey*, April-June 2008).
- Historically, **employment of women** has been concentrated in agriculture, often as unpaid family helpers, and in services, mostly in public administration. At the end of 2007 employment of women was 48.9% in services and 33.7% per cent in agriculture. (ILO *The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories*. May 2008).
- Of the female labor force in mid-2008, 52.1% were **employed** in services and other branches, 30.7% in agriculture, forestry, fishing, 9.2% in mining, quarrying, manufacturing, 7.1% in commerce, hotels, restaurants, 0.4% in construction, and 0.5% in the transport, storage and communication sector. The vast majority (58.2%) were **wage employees**, 27.8% **unpaid family members** and 13.5 **self-employed**. (PCBS, *Labor Force Survey*, April-June 2008).
- Women make up almost 54% of **students at universities**, 57% of students at University Colleges and 37% of students at Community Colleges. In 2007, women accounted for over 58% of all **graduates** from universities. Yet, women present only 16.6% 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 **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)
- Approx. half of all Palestinian households are dependent on **food assistance** provided by the international community (80% of households in Gaza, 33% in the WB). (ILO, *The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories*. International Labor Conference, May 2008.)
- 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*).

## Recommended Research Sources:

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

<http://www.fafu.no/pub/151.htm> and <http://www.fafu.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.

**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: FAFO-Report 151, 1993 (<http://www.fafu.no/engelsk/pub/index.htm>).

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

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



# 13. Government

## 13.1 ADMINISTRATION

### ► Historical Background

**Ottoman Period (until 1917):** Since the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Ottoman laws and legal system applied. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> 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 km<sup>2</sup> (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.