



Society & Living Conditions

12.1 General Social Features

	West Bank	Gaza	WBGs (Average)
No. of households (2017 projected)	610,132	354,684	964,816
Type of household (%), 2015			
One person:	4.6	2.8	4.0
Nuclear:	86.3	84.7	85.7
Extended:	9.1	12.4	10.2
Composite:	--	0.1	0.1
Type of household (%) – mid-2014			
Urban:			73.9%
Rural:			16.7%
Camp:			9.4%
Average household size (persons) - 2015:	4.9	5.7	5.2
Average housing density (persons/room) 2015	1.6	1.9	1.7
Women (15-49 yrs.) married to - a relative	42.2	47.9	44.3
- non-relative	57.8	52.1	55.7
Polygamous marriages – 2014 (%):	3.2	5.84	4.3
Median age at first marriage (women, 2016)	20.5	20.3	20.4 years
Median age at first marriage (men, 2016)	25.1	24.3	24.8 years
Marriages registered (<i>Sharia</i> & churches, 2016)	30,827	19,103	49,930
Crude Marriage Rate (2016):	10.5	10.2	10.4
Divorces registered (2016):	5,165	3,345	8,510
Crude Divorce Rate (2016):	1.8	1.8	1.8
People aged 65+ (2016)	3.3%	2.4%	2.9%

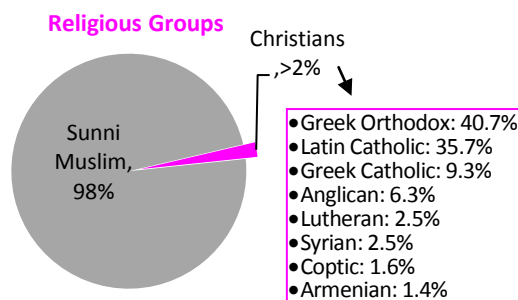
Sources: PCBS, *Vital Statistics*, pcbs.gov.ps; PCBS, *The Palestinian Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014*, Dec. 2015; PCBS, *Press Release on International Population Day*, July 2016; PCBS, *Housing Conditions Survey 2015*, 2015; PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2016*, Dec. 2016; Statistical yearbook of Palestine 2016, Dec. 2016.

Religion

Muslims: Sunni Islam, representing the Malki Shafe'i, Hanafi, and Hanbali schools: **98+%**.

Christians: Prior to 1948, 135,547 Christians lived in Mandatory Palestine, comprising 7.9% of the population (British Mandate's Survey of Palestine, 1946). Today's estimates range from 44,000-75,000 in the West Bank, and from 2,000-3,000 in Gaza. (According to the Israeli CBS, 131,600 "Arab Christians" live in Israel).

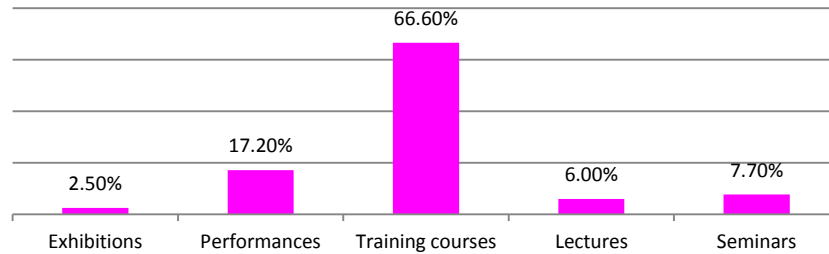
In 2016, there were 2,924 **mosques** in the WBGs (WB: 1,979, GS: 945) (PCBS, *Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2016*, Dec. 2016). In 2011, there were 162 **churches** (WB: 159, GS: 3) (PCBS, *Statistics on Culture*, 2011).



Source (Christians): Al-Qass Collins, Kassis & Raheb. *Palestinian Christians in the West Bank - Facts, Figures & Trends*. Bethlehem: Diyar, 2012.

■ Culture

- In 2016, there were **612 cultural centers** operating in Palestine (WB: 531, GS: 81), most of them in the Nablus governorate with 90, followed by Bethlehem with 86. Together, these centers provided over **10,000 activities** in which 583,000 people participated. Activities included:



Source: PCBS, *Review of the Status of Cultural Institutions in Palestine*, 13 March 2017.

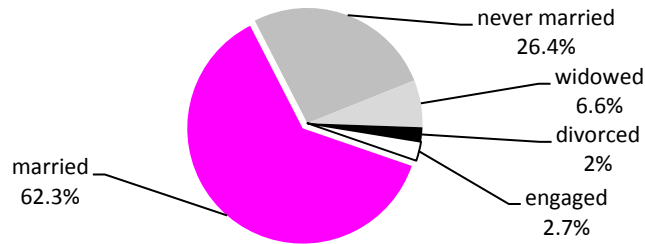
- In 2016, **31 museums** operated in Palestine (WB: 26, GS: 5), attracting some 206,000 visitors (77.3% of them Palestinians), as well as **14 theaters** (WB: 11, GS: 3), performing **270 plays** (*Ibid.*).
- Palestine has currently three **cultural sites** inscribed in the **UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger** - The Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (since 1981), Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem (since 2012) and Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir (since 2014) - while the following 14 sites are on the tentative list (last revised 28 October 2015):
 - Ancient Jericho: Tell es-Sultan (4/2/2012)
 - Anthedon Harbour (2/4/2012)
 - Baptism Site "Eshria'a" (Al-Maghtas) (28/10/2015)
 - El-Bariyah: wilderness with monasteries (2/4/2012)
 - Mount Gerizim & the Samaritans (2/4/2012)
 - Old town of Hebron Al-Khalil & its environs (2/4/2012)
 - Old Town of Nablus & environs (2/4/2012)
 - QUMRAN: Caves and Monastery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (2/4/2012)
 - Sebastia (2/4/2012)
 - Tell Umm Amer (2/4/2012)
 - Throne Villages (6/6/2013)
 - Umm Al-Rihan forest (2/4/2012)
 - Wadi Gaza Coastal Wetlands (2/4/2012)
 - Wadi Natuf & Shuqba Cave (06/06/2013)

■ Women

- Women account for **49.2%** of the total Palestinian **population** of 4.88 million (PCBS, *Palestinians at the End of 2016*, Dec. 2016).
- In 2016, 11% of all Palestinian **households** were **headed by females** (WB: 12.1%, GS: 9%) (PCBS, *Press Release on the Eve of International Women Day*, March 2017).
- Some 20.3% of females get **married before the age of 18** (WB: 19.7%, GS: 23.7%) and 62.3% of the total female population aged 18+ are married (PCBS, *Release on International Women's Day 2017*, 7 March 2017).
- Of the women aged 15-49 years, 2.1% were **married before age 15** (WB: 1.8%, GS: 2.6%) and 4.3% were in a **polygamous marriage** (WB: 3.2%, GS: 5.8%) (*Ibid.*). Some 22% of the women aged 20-24 years **gave birth before the age of 18** (WB: 19.6, GS: 25.1%) (PCBS, *Press Release on International Women's Day 2016*, 8 March 2016).



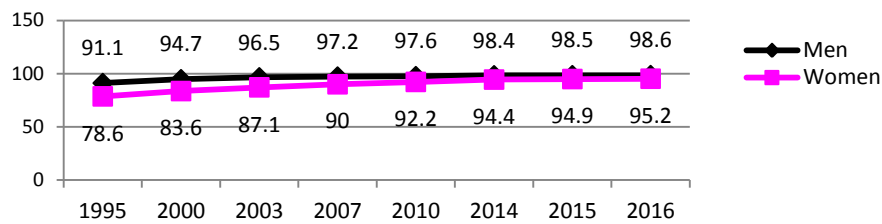
Marital Status of Women Aged 18+ Years



Source: PCBS, Press Release on International Women's Day 2017, 7 March 2017.

- The **literacy rate** of women has improved considerably over the last two decades, but is still higher than that of men:

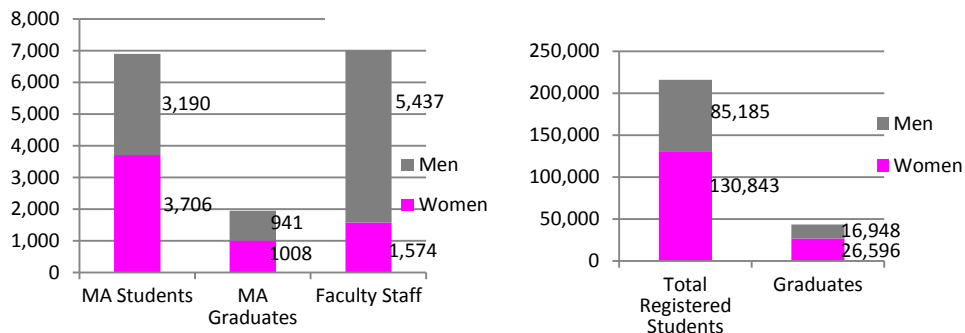
Literacy Rate of Palestinian men and Women (15+ Years), 1995-2016



Source: PCBS, Press Release on International Women's Day 2017, 7 March 2017.

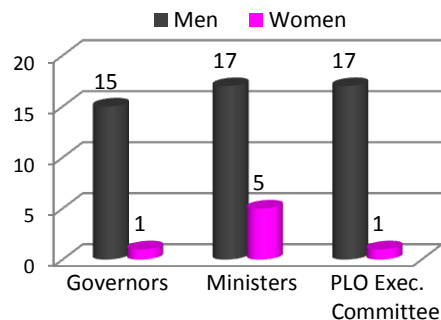
- In the school year 2016/2017, women constituted **50.4%** of all **school students** and 58.6% of the **staff at schools**. Some 61.5% of **school teachers** are female (Ministry of Education, 2016/17).
- More women than men **enroll in higher education** and hold a university degree. In 2016/17, 60.9% of all **students** registered at institutes of higher education were female as were 52.5% of those studying towards an **MA**, 60.8% of all graduates and 52% of those graduating with an MA. However, women made up only 23.3% of all academic faculty staff (*Ibid.*).

Women in Higher Education



Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2015/2016 Statistics

- Women are **underrepresented in decision-making bodies** as well as with regard to **public roles** or senior administrative and political posts: only one of 18 **PLO Executive Committee** members, 5 of 22 **ministers** and one of 16 **governors** (Ramallah/AI-Bireh) are female. In 2014, females represented 41.8% of total employees in the **public sector**, but less than 5% occupy assistant undersecretary positions in



PA ministries. Moreover, women comprise, also thanks to the quota system used, 12.9% of the **PLC** members and 21% of the total **local authority** members (PCBS, *Press Release on International Women's Day 2016*, 8 March 2016; previous years). In **comparison**, in 2016, the average proportion of women in parliaments in the Middle East/North Africa was 16% and worldwide 23% (World Bank data on Social Development, <http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/1.5>).

- The situation is similar in **political parties**: in the most recent Fatah elections (August 2009), not one woman was elected to the main governing body (Central Council), while in the legislative body (Revolutionary Council) only 11 of 120 members are female (Azzouni, Suheir, "Palestine - Palestinian Authority & Israeli-Occupied Territories," in *Women's Rights in the Middle East & North Africa: Progress Amid Resistance*, NY, 2010).
- Only 1.2% of the firms in the WBSGS have a **female top manager**, compared to 4.9% in the MENA average and 10.1% in Israel (World Bank, Enterprise Surveys, <http://www.enterprisesurveys.org/data/explore/topics/gender>). For more details on **women's work** see page 416.
- **Women's low representation** across all sectors is also evident from the following table:

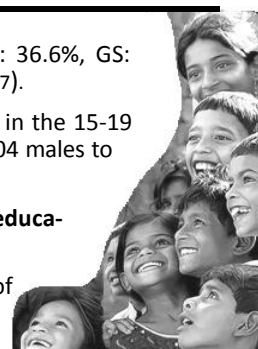
Women Representation in Various Sectors

Registered physicians ¹	16.3%	Diplomats (PLO Ambassador) ¹	5.8%
Registered dentists ¹	34.0%	Ministers ¹	12%
Registered nurses ¹	49.1%	Deputy Minister ¹	16.2%
Registered pharmacists ¹	58.1%	Public Sector/Director (General) ¹	22.1%
Medical Association member	13.6%	Public Sector/civil servants ¹	46.9%
Dental Association member	27.3%	PLC members	12.9%
Engineers ¹	21.1%	Local Council members	21%
Journalists / Editors ¹	25/10%	Civil Police personnel	3.4%
Lawyers ¹	22.5%	Military justice system personnel	2%
Employees in Banks	28%	Public prosecutors ¹	16.7%
Members in sports clubs	2.3%	Shari'a court judges	7.2%
Members in societies	3.2%	Legal judges ¹	17.2%
Members in youth movement	0.4%	Student council members ¹	23.2%
Researchers	22.6%	Members in political parties	0.7%

Sources: ¹PCBS, *Women and Men in Palestine: Issues and Statistics 2016*, 2016; PCBS, *Press Release on International Women's Day*, 2017; PCBS, *A Review of Palestinian Justice and Security Sector Data*, Aug. 2013.

■ Children & Youth

- **Children** (0-14 years) represent 38.9% of the Palestinian population (WB: 36.6%, GS: 42.6%) PCBS & National Population Committee, *International Population Day*, 11 July 2017).
- **Youth** (15-29 years) represented 30% of the total population: 36% of them in the 15-19 age group and 64% in the 20-29 age group. The **sex ratio** among youth is 104 males to 100 females (PCBS, *International Youth Day*, 12/08/2017, August 2017).
- In 2015/16, 56.1% of preschool children were enrolled in **early childhood education** (PCBS, *The Status of the Rights of Palestinian Children 2016*, April 2017).
- In 2016, 38% of the youth (15-29 years), were **enrolled in education**: 82% of the 15-17 years age group, 45% of the 18-22 years old ones, and 8% of those 23-29 years. The **dropout rate** was 34% (42% for males, 27% for females) (PCBS, *International Youth Day*, 12/08/2017, August 2017). Main reasons for dropouts were failed examinations (20%) and lack of interest in education (36.6%) due to non-existing job perspectives (PCBS-ILO announce the results of school-to-work transition survey 2015, 5 October 2016).
- Some 51.5% of youth (15-29 years) have at most **completed basic education**, while 21.9% had **not completed any** level and 22.3% had **completed tertiary** level education (up from 19.7% in 2013) (PCBS-ILO announce the results of school-to-work transition survey 2015, 5 October 2016).
- For **children/youth and work** see p. 417.
- In 2015, 19.6% of **youth** (15-29 years) participated in some kind of **volunteer work**, 6.3% were members in **sports clubs** and 3% in civil, **cultural or other associations**, whereby the participation of females was significantly lower than that of males (PCBS, *Palestinian Youth Survey 2015*, Feb. 2016).

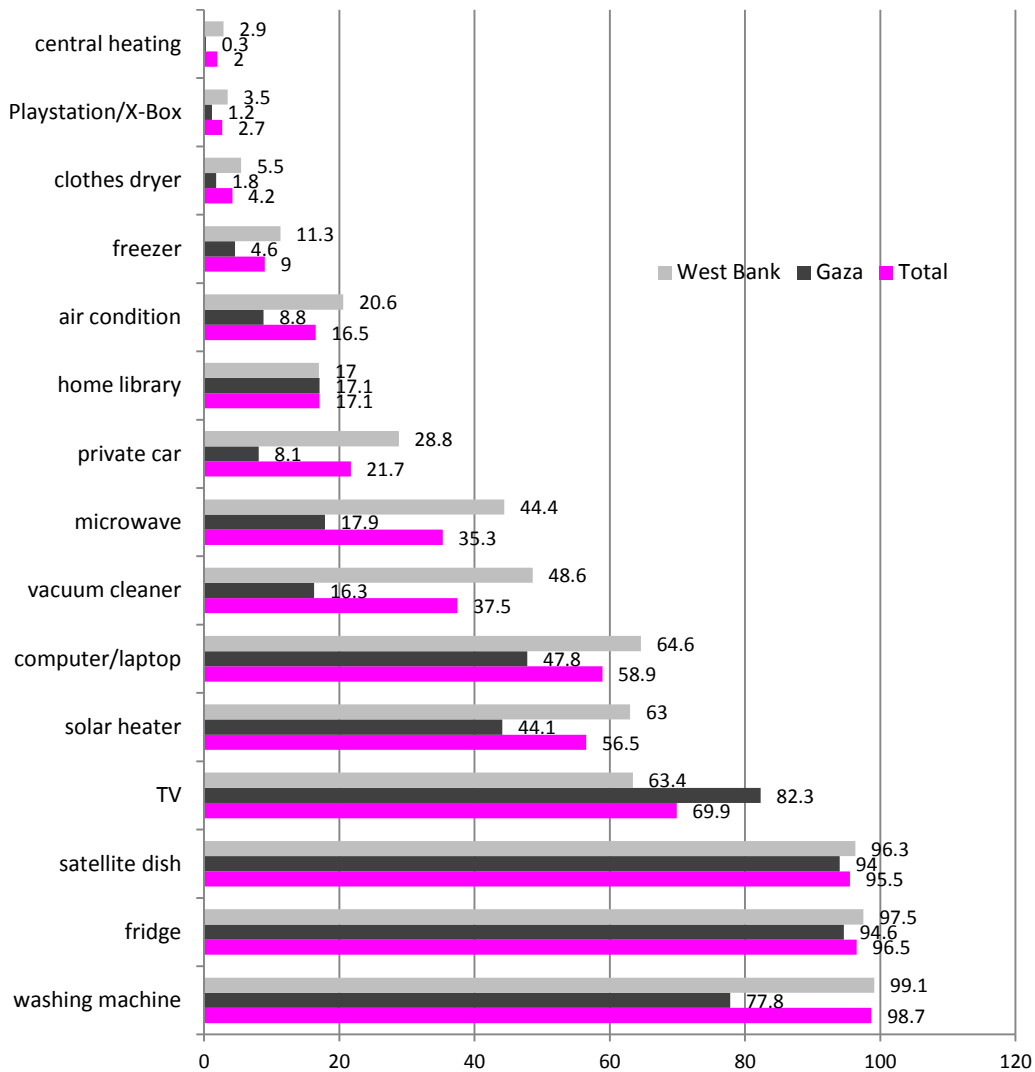


- In August 2016, the Knesset amended the **Israeli Youth Law** to allow for children aged 12-14 to be sentenced for “specific serious crimes”, obviously targeting Palestinian children. At the end of August 2017, **331 Palestinian minors** were held in **Israeli prisons** as security detainees and prisoners, including 2 administrative detainees, while another 8 minors were held in Israel Prison Service facilities for being in Israel illegally (<http://www.btselem.org/statistics>).
- Detained Palestinian children are being **abused** by Israeli forces, “routinely” **interrogated** without the presence of their parents, subjected to unnecessary force in the arrest and detention, and held in unsafe conditions (HRW, *Palestine: Israeli Police Abusing Detained Children*. April 11, 2016).
- In 2015, 1,481 children were referred to **behavior control units** in the West Bank and 160 children were admitted to the Ministry of Social Development’s Dar Al-Amal Institution for Rehabilitation and Protection (PCBS, *Press Release on International Children’s Day*, 20 November 2016).
- **Chronic malnutrition** affects 7.4% of children between 6-59 months (WFP Palestine Country Brief 9/2017).
- In **Gaza**, over 200,000 children are still in need of **psychosocial support**; of these, only 19% received the necessary services in the first half of 2017 due to lack of funds (UNICEF, in OCHA, *The Humanitarian Bulletin*, August 2017).

12.2 Household & Living Conditions

- In 2016, the average **housing density** was **1.7** persons per room (WB: 1.6, GS: 1.9) and the **average household size** was 5.2 persons (WB: 4.9, GS: 5.7) (PCBS).
- An estimated quarter of the Palestinian population lives in **poverty**, with rates in Gaza twice as high (39%) as in the West Bank (16%); 13% live in **extreme poverty** (GS: 21%) (WFP, *Country Brief*, Aug. 2017).
- The 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview identified 2 million Palestinians in **need of humanitarian assistance**, 1.2 million of them in Gaza (OCHA, *Humanitarian Response Plan 2017*, Dec. 2016).
- Some **27%** of the Palestinian population – or 1.6 million people – are **food-insecure** and in need of **food assistance** (WFP Palestine Country Brief September 2017).
- Some 23.6% of the 15-29 years old Palestinians **desire to migrate** (WB: 15.2, GS: 37%), 40.8% of them to improve living conditions/escape the difficult living conditions, 26.4% for employment reasons and 12.5% for education/training (PCBS, *Palestinian Youth Survey, 2015 Main Findings*, Feb. 2016).

Households by Availability of Durable Goods, 2015 (%)



Source: PCBS, *Housing Conditions Survey 2015 – Main Findings*, August 2015.

Recommended Research Sources:

<http://www.pcbs.gov.ps> (Statistics on Gender & on Living Standards)
<http://www.alzaytouna.net/english/books/AmlNotaHuman-2-Woman.pdf>

El Feki, S., Heilman, B. and Barker, G., eds., *Understanding Masculinities: Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) – Middle East and North Africa: Executive Summary*. Cairo and Washington, DC: UN Women and Promundo-US, 2017.

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

PCBS, *Women and Men in Palestine: Issues and Statistics*, various years.

PCBS, *Palestinian Family Survey, 2010*, Final Report, October 2013.

Prime Minister’s Office, State of Palestine & UNFPA, *PALESTINE 2030: Demographic Change: Opportunities for Development*, December 2016.

UNFPA & Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Youth in Palestine – Policy and Program Recommendations to Address Demographic Risks and Opportunities*, October 2017.

