



Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)

SOCIAL MONITOR

Special Issue
1995-1999



Issue Number 4 - May 2001

The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, or *Ma'had Abhath As-Siyasat Al-Iqtisadiyah Al-Filistini* (MAS), is an autonomous think tank founded in 1994 that engages in applied economic and socio-economic research, and provides expert analysis of policies critical to the development of the Palestinian economy.

MAS Social Monitor is prepared and published by the Socio-Economic Monitoring Unit at MAS. This unit was established in 1996 by a grant from the Ford Foundation, with the additional support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada.

EDITOR: Majdi El-Malki
ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Yasser Shalabi
Hassan Ladadweh

This Social Monitor Sections Prepared by:

Section	PCBS	MAS
Population, Marriage and Divorce	Mohammad Dridi	Majdi Malki
Health	Khaled Abu Khaled	Yasser Shalabi
Education	Ahmad Abu Haija	Yasser Shalabi
Cultural Life	Ahmad Abu Haija	Yasser Shalabi
Social Security and Quality of Life	-	Hassan Ladadweh
Standards of Living	-	Hassan Ladadweh
Crime, Victims and Road Accidents	Yousef Mousa	Majdi Malki
Legal Environment	-	Jibril Mohammad

PRODUCTION

Editorial Assistants Maureen Daoud (English)
Abdel Rahman Abu-Shamalleh (Arabic)

Translated to English by: Khalil Touma
Layout Lina Abdallah

Copyright

© 2001 Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)
P.O. Box 19111, Jerusalem and P.O. Box 2426, Ramallah
Telephone: +970-2-298-7053/4
Fax: +970-2-2987055
e-mail: MAS@planet.edu

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photo copying, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute/MAS.

To Order Copies

Contact the Director of Finance and Administration at the above address.

Foreword

The MAS *Social Monitor* is a **unique publication monitoring social indicators and providing a broad picture of the social situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip**. A special feature of this fourth *Social Monitor* is its comprehensive survey of the main social developments in the WBGS over the five years of the interim period (1995 - 1999).

Although the volume and direction of major social indicators are usually considered an important reflection of overall social performance, socio-economic policies and the efficiency of public administration, this is not the case in the Palestinian context. This is due to the inheritance of the Israeli occupation in determining these indicators at the start of the interim period, constraints existing during this period, and the absence of approved social targets to enable objective comparison between targets and achievements.

In view of this, the fourth *Social Monitor* covers trends and developments in demographics, health, education, culture, the legal environment, standards of living, quality of life, social security and crime during the interim period 1995-1999.

Although the given numerical indicators demonstrate a positive quantitative development in all aspects of social life, it must be noted that development was limited and did not yield a tangible qualitative transformation in the lives of the Palestinian people. This is the result of sustained Palestinian sensitivity to Israeli policies and practices and to the huge dependency on donors' assistance, itself deeply contingent on progress in the peace process. There is still a yawning gap in development between the West Bank and Gaza Strip in favor of the West Bank and between different geographic areas in favor of the central West Bank and Gaza city. The disparity in services available to cities, villages and refugee camps continues to be large and there are also distinct gaps between social classes in favor of the well-off and males. The failure of the educational system to balance academic and technical vocational skills negatively affects the absorptive capacity of the local Palestinian labor market and increases dependency on external labor markets. Furthermore, public recruitment is still used to reduce unemployment with limited consideration paid to professional criteria in recruitment procedures.

Apart from some tangible developments in the Palestinian legal and legislative environment, progress has been mainly limited to the ratification of laws rather than practical enactment. The legislative authority plays a marginal role in the enactment of legislation and oversight of executive performance. The same applies to the role of the judiciary.

Social achievements are fragile and have suffered a serious decline since the eruption of the Al-Aqsa Intifada on September 28, 2000 and subsequent Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. These events will be analyzed in the fifth *Social Monitor*.

Although the social indicators presented in the fourth *Social Monitor* have altered radically since the Intifada, the importance of this issue lies in the fact that it is the first publication to analyze the major Palestinian social developments during the interim period 1995-1999. It also constitutes an important background from which to estimate the losses incurred by the Palestinian people as a result of the Israeli aggression. This *Monitor* will also assist

Palestinian policy makers in a critical review of experiences to date and will enhance the capacity to elaborate appropriate policies for the future.

In accordance with MAS policy, a workshop was held to discuss the draft of the fourth *Social Monitor*. A number of researchers, academics, professionals, experts, public officials and members of the private sector attended the workshop in spite of the Israeli siege. Their active participation was crucial to enrich and develop the final draft and for the planning and improvement of future issues. We extend our thanks and appreciation to all of these people and hope that their contribution and input will continue in the form of critical comments and suggestions.

Thanks are also due to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and MAS teams who worked successfully to produce this issue, setting a model for cooperation and coordination among Palestinian institutions.

MAS also extends its gratitude to the Ford Foundation for their financial support.

Ghania Malhis
Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS	vii
SELECTED SOCIAL INDICATORS, 1996-1999	xi
1- GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
2- POPULATION, MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE	7
2.1 Volume and Distribution of Population	7
2-2 A Youthful Society	8
2-3 Declining High Fertility Rates	9
2-4 Decline in Mortality Rate	10
2-5 Limited Decline in the Average Household Size	11
2-6 An Increase in Nuclear Families at the Expense of Extended Families	11
2-7 Decline in Size of Households Headed by Females	11
2-8 Internal Migration	12
<i>2-8-1 Limited Internal Migration</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>2-8-2 Female Internal Migration</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>2-8-3 High Rates of Younger Groups among Internal Migrants</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>2-8-4 Slightly Higher Education Levels Among Migrants</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>2-8-5 Internal Migration Rate Higher Among Refugees</i>	<i>14</i>
2-9 Returning Migration	14
<i>2-9-1 More Male Returnees than Female Returnees</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>2-9-2 High Educational Level Found Among Returnees</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>2-9-3 A Young Majority Among the Returnees</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>2-9-4 Refugees Accounted for Less Than Two Fifths of the Returnees</i>	<i>16</i>
2-10 Marriage and Divorce	16
<i>2-10-1 Continuing Increase in Number of Marriages</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>2-10-2 An Increase in the Divorce Rate</i>	<i>18</i>
3- HEALTH	19
3-1 Decline in the Number of Reported Live Births	19
3-2 A Gap in Infant and Under Five Mortality Rates Between the West Bank and Gaza Strip	20
3-3 Improvement in the Physicians Per 100,000 People Ratio	21
3-4 Decline Again after Improvement in Number of Hospital Beds	22
3-5 A Rise in the Rate of Individuals with Health Insurance	23
3-6 Higher Disability Rates in the West Bank	23
3-7 Increase in the Number of Births at Health Institutions	24
3-8 Increase in the Number of Governmental Health Clinics and Decline in the Number of Non-Governmental Ones	24
3-9 Greater Use of Family Planning Methods	25
4- EDUCATION	26
4-1 Educational Particularities of Individuals in the Palestinian Society	27
<i>4-1-1 Literacy: A Big Gap between the Two Sexes</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>4-1-2 Educational Enrollment and Opportunities: Decline in Gap Between Both Sexes in Younger Age Groups</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>4-1-3 Educational Attainment: 5.4 Percent with a BA or Higher Degree</i>	<i>28</i>
4-2 Indicators Relating to Educational Institutions	29
<i>4-2-1 An Increase in the Number of Schools and Kindergartens</i>	<i>29</i>

4-2-2 Children in School and Kindergartens: An Increase in Enrollment in Kindergartens	29
4-2-3 An Increase in the Rate of Male and Female Teachers in Private Schools and Kindergartens	31
4-2-4 Decline in School Dropout Rates	32
4-2-5 Decline in Repetition Rates in Schools	34
4-2-6 Large Increase in Student/Teacher Ratio in UNRWA Schools	34
4-2-7 Improvement in Class Density Figures in Both Kindergartens and Private Schools	35
4-2-8 Higher Education: A Large Increase in the Number of University Students	36
5- CULTURAL LIFE	38
5-1 Fifty-Eight Percent of the Cultural Centers in the WBGS Inactive	39
5-2 Number of Newspapers and their Period of Publication	39
5-2-1 More than 50 Percent of the Population Do Not Read Newspapers	40
5-3 A Rise in the Number of Licensed Magazines and a Decline in the Number of Published Ones	41
5-4 A Rise in the Number of Licensed Museums and Stability Among the Functioning Ones	41
5-5 Decline in the Number of Theaters	41
5-6 No Licensed Cinema Halls in the Gaza Strip	42
5-7 No Private Radio and TV Stations in the Gaza Strip	42
5-7-1 Number of People Who Watched Palestine TV and Listened to the Voice of Palestine Higher in Gaza than in the West Bank	42
5-7-2 Increase in the Number of People Watching Palestine TV in the Gaza Strip and Jordan TV Channels in the West Bank.	43
5-7-3 TV Satellite Channels	43
5-7-4 Light Entertainment Programs the Most Popular among the Programs Aired by the Local Private TV Stations	43
5-7-5 Peak Viewing Period: 8:00 pm-10:00 pm	44
5-8 Possession and Use of Electronic Equipment	44
5-9 With One Exception, All Cultural Festivals Took Place in the West Bank	45
5-10 Two Thirds of Public Libraries Located in the West Bank	45
6- SOCIAL SECURITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE	46
6-1 Consolidating Labor Legislation in the WBGS	46
6-1-1 Tragic Labor Accidents	47
6-1-2 Weak Union Organization	47
6-1-3 Better Work Conditions in the Public Sector	48
6-2 Limited Unofficial Social Security Systems	48
6-3 Limited Effectiveness of Official Social Security	49
6-3-1 Rise in the Number of Recipients of Assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs	49
6-3-2 Slight Increase in the Number of UNRWA Support Recipients	50
6-3-3 Large Increase in the Number of Zakat Committees	51
6-4 Care Services: An Approach Toward Providing Care Within the Home and Local Community	52
6-4-1 Homes for the Elderly: Full Occupancy Rate Not Reached	52
6-4-2 Decline in the Number of Children in Orphanages	52
6-4-3 Endorsing the Rights of the Handicapped Law	53
6-5 Increase in the Rate of Child Labor in the North and South of the West Bank	55
6-6 The Majority of Population Centers in the West Bank Linked to Water and Electricity Networks	56
6-6-1 Electricity Services	56
6-6-2 Water Services	56
6-6-3 Cesspits the Main Means of Disposing of Wastewater	57
6-6-4 Progressive Rise in the Number of Subscribers to Telephone Services	58
6-7 Services Available to Urban and Refugee Camp Households Better than those Available in Rural Areas	58
6-7-1 Most Houses Owned by their Occupants	59

7- STANDARDS OF LIVING	60
7-1 Increase in Food Expenditure in the WBSG in 1998	61
7-2 High Poverty Rates in the South of the Gaza Strip	63
7-3 Increase in Real Wages and Decline in Unemployment Rates	65
8- CRIME, VICTIMS AND ROAD ACCIDENTS	68
8-1 Reported Criminal Acts (1996-1999)	69
8-1-1 Assault the Most Frequently Reported Crime	69
8-1-2 Highest Crime Rates Found in Gaza and Hebron	69
8-2 Continuous Increase in the Number of Detainees in Palestinian Jails Between 1996 and 1999	70
8-3 Number of Convicted Prisoners Held in the Jails of the WBSG Between 1996 and 1999	70
8-4 More than One Third of Juveniles Accused of Committing Criminal Acts Finished the Elementary Stage Only	70
8-5 Rise in the Number of Cases Referred to the Courts in the WBSG	70
8-6 Stability in Regard to the Number of Staff Working for the Criminal Justice Departments	71
8-7 Increase in the Number of Road Accidents and their Victims 1996-1999	71
8-8 An Increase in the Rate of Victims of Criminal Acts	71
9- LEGAL ENVIRONMENT	72
9-1 PNA Council Responsible for Both Legislation and Execution	73
9-2 The Second Stage: The PLC Establishes Its Legislative Role	73
9-2-1 Sixty-Eight Draft Laws Submitted to the PLC by the End of 1999	74
9-3 Lack of Executive Charts	76
9-4 Evaluation of the PLC Performance	77
9-5 Weak Judiciary	77
9-6 Citizens' Rights	78
9-6-1 Israel Continues to Violate the Palestinians' Human Rights	78
9-6-2 Continued violation of Palestinian Citizens' Rights in the PNA Territories	79
REFERENCES	81
TATISTICAL ANNEX	83

List of figures

Figure 2-1:	Population Pyramid in the WBS, Mid Year Projected- 1999	8
Figure 2-2:	Fertility Rates in the WBS, Selected years	9
Figure 2-3:	Crude Marriage Rate in the WBS, 1997-1999	17
Figure 3-1:	Infant Mortality Rates in the WBS by Region, 1996-1999	21
Figure 3-2:	Reported Physicians per 100,000 Population in WBS 1997-1999	22
Figure 3-3:	Hospital Beds and Ratio Per 1,000 people in WBS, 1996-1999	22
Figure 3-4:	Primary Health Care Centers in the WBS by Supervised Authority, 1995-1999	25
Figure 4-1:	Literacy Rate of Palestinian Population (15 years and over) by Age and Sex, 1995-1997	28
Figure 4-2:	Drop-Out Rates by stage, 1994/1995 – 1998/1999	33
Figure 4-3:	Students Per Teacher by Supervising Authority, 1994/1995 – 1999/2000	35
Figure 4-4:	Distribution of Students at Universities by Sex, 1994/1995 – 1999/2000	37
Figure 6-1:	Ministry of Social Affairs Supports in the WBS by Region, 1995-1999	50
Figure 6-2:	UNRWA Supports in the WBS by Region, 1995-1999	51
Figure 7-1:	Average Personal Consumption in JD in the WBS by Region, 1996-1998	62
Figure 7-2:	Average Personal Consumption in WBS by Governorates, 1998	63
Figure 7-3:	Poverty Rates in the WBS by Area, 1996-1998	64
Figure 7-4:	Poverty Rates in the WBS by Governorate, 1998	65
Figure 7-5:	Average Daily Wages in the WBS by Place of Work	66
Figure 7-6:	Unemployment Rate in the WBS by Area, 1995-1999	68

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) has adopted UN international standards to define the concepts and terminology used in its surveys. These terms and concepts were adjusted to meet the objectives of surveys and also to take into account the special circumstances surrounding the lives of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS).

Age-sex structure: The composition of a population as determined by the number or proportion of males and females in each age category. The age structure of a population is the cumulative result of past trends in fertility, mortality and migration rates. Information on age-sex composition is an essential prerequisite for the description and analysis of demographic data.

Age-specific enrollment rates: The number of students of a certain age group actually enrolled at school compared to the total population of that age group.

Crowding rate: Average number of individuals per room. This is calculated by dividing the number of individuals who live in the household by the total number of rooms occupied by that household.

Daily wage per employee: This is the total net wages paid to all employees divided by the total number of work days. Wages received in different currencies are converted into New Israeli Shekels according to the exchange rate in the survey month.

Dependency ratio: The number of dependents, including children under the age of 15 and the elderly over the age of 65, per 100 people of working age (those between the ages of 15-65).

Disability: Any long-term (lasting 6 months or more) physical or mental restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. This could limit the ability to move freely, to interact comfortably with surroundings and community, inability to use public transportation or work, or any condition that might result in social isolation or staying in bed for a period of more than six months.

Dropout rate: Number of students who left school (basic and/or secondary education) and did not register at any other school during the scholastic year beginning in September and ending on the 31st of August the following year, compared to the total number of students registered.

Economic activity: The type of work carried out at an establishment where the worker is employed (regardless of his/her profession). This is in case of employment at an establishment. In the case where he/she is self-employed, then this refers to the type of work, goods or services that they produce or trade with.

Geographical divisions: According to current administrative divisions, the Palestinian Territories are divided into two geographic areas: The West Bank and Gaza Strip. The West Bank was divided into 9 governorates and sometimes into 3 districts.

North of the West Bank: including the governorates of Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqiliya, Tubas and Salfit.

Center of the West Bank: including the governorates of Ramallah/Al-Bireh, Jerusalem and Jericho.

South of the West Bank: including the governorates of Bethlehem and Hebron. The exclusion of East Jerusalem in some sections is due to the nature of the data available on this area of the West Bank.

Household: One person or more (related or not) living together in the same housing unit or part of it who makes common provisions (arrangements) for providing themselves with food or other essentials for living.

Household expenditure: is defined to include the following:

1. Cash spent on the purchase of goods and services for living purposes.
2. The value of goods, services and payments or part of payments received from an employer.
3. Cash expenditure spent on taxes (non-commercial or non-industrial), gifts, contributions, interest on debts and other non-consumption items.

Household consumption is defined to include:

1. Cash spent on the purchase of goods and services for living purposes.
2. The value of goods, services and payments or part of payments received from an employer.
3. Own-produced goods and food, including consumed quantities during the recording period.
4. Estimated rent value of the household dwelling.

Infant mortality rate: The number of infant deaths in a given year per 1,000 live births.

Labor force: is defined as the economically active population. This consists of all persons aged 15 years and more, who are either employed or unemployed at the time of the survey.

Live birth: A birth is considered as live if the baby born has shouted, cried, or shown any sign of life at birth.

Occupation: The kind of work done during the reference period by the person employed, or the type of work done previously if unemployed, irrespective of the industry or employment status of the person. Occupations are grouped together mainly on the basis of the similarity of skills required to fulfill the tasks and duties of the job. Occupations are classified according to the International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO 1988).

Private schools: Any licensed, local or foreign, non-governmental educational institution or UNRWA school that is established, directed, run or financed by foreign individuals, groups, societies or bodies.

Sex ratio: The ratio of males to females, expressed as the number of males per 100 females.

Standard of living: this is calculated by dividing food consumption by total consumption (Engel's Law of Poverty). This indicator is based on the assumption that the standard of living is defined as the proportion of consumption on food out of total consumption. This indicator is divided into three categories:

- Well-off: whose food consumption to total consumption is less than 30%.
- Middle category: whose food consumption to total consumption is between 30%-44%.
- Worse-off: whose food consumption to total consumption lies between 45%-100%.

Total fertility rate: The average number of children that would be born alive to a woman (or group of women) during her life if she were to pass through her childbearing years conforming to the age-specific fertility rates of a given year. The total fertility rate is calculated by the sum of the age-specific fertility rates multiplied by 5.

Underemployment: This phenomenon exists when a person's employment does not match his/her occupational skills, education or when they are working fewer hours than they would wish. The underemployed are classified into two groups:

1. Visible underemployment: refers to insufficient working hours per week, that is persons working less than 35 hours during the reference week or working less than the normal hours of work in their occupation.
2. Invisible underemployment: refers to the existence of fundamental imbalances between human resources and other factors of production, such as insufficient income, under-utilization, poor working conditions, etc.

Under-5 mortality (child mortality): The proportion of children born who die before reaching their fifth birthday.

The unemployed: Unemployed persons are individuals who are 15 years and over who do not work at all during the survey's reference week, who are not absent from their job and are available for work and actively seeking a job during the reference week. Persons who work in Israel or are absent from work due to border closure are considered as unemployed.

Working age population: All persons in the West Bank and Gaza Strip aged 15 years and over.

West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGs) - Selected Social Indicators, 1996-1999

Indicator	Unit	1996	1997	1998	1999
Population*	1000	2,630,8	2,783,1	2,897,5	3,019,7
Sex ratio	Men/100 women	101.9	101.9	101.9	102.00
Less than 15 years old	(Percent)	64.8	46.8	46.9	46.9
15-64 years old		49.7	49.7	49.7	49.7
65+ years old		3.5	3.5	3.4	3.4
Dependency ratio	(Percent)	101.3	101.3	101.3	101.0
Population growth rate**	(Percent)	5.80	3.97	4.08	4.14
Life expectancy at birth**	Years				
Male and female		71.18	71.35	71.50	6671
Male		69.59	69.76	69.93	70.10
Female		72.84	72.99	73.14	73.28
Infant mortality+ rate**	Per 1,000 live births	27.3	24.2	23.7	23.2
Male		-	26.9	26.3	25.7
Female		-	21.4	21.0	20.5
Maternity mortality rate (1995 statistics)	Per 100,000 live births	70-80 ///	-	-	-
Total fertility rate**	Births/woman	-	6.04	--	5.93
Use of contraceptives	(Percent)	45.2	-	-	-
Crude birth rate**	Births/1,000 persons	-	42.69	42.01	41.35
Crude death rate**	Per 1,000	-	4.78	4.65	4.51
Mean age at time of first marriage/males	Years	-	23	23.94	24.10
Mean age at time of first marriage/females	Years	-	18	18.70	18.8
Urban population	Percentage of total population	-	53.1	-	-
Refugee camp dwellers	Percentage of total population	-	15.9	-	-
Population of rural areas	Percentage of total population	-	31		
Refugee population	Percentage of total population	-	41.4	-	-
Adult literacy rate	Percentage of population 15+ years	84.3 ///	86.1	-	-
Male		91.5	92.2	-	-
Female		77.00	79.7	-	-
Dropout rate at the elementary education level++	(Percent)	2.4	1.86	1.76	1.57
Dropout rate at the secondary education level++	(Percent)	6.98	5.83	6.24	5.26
Average number of students per teacher +++	Students/teacher	29.8	29.2	29.5	29.4
Average number of students per class - elementary education level +++	Students/class	37.2	37.3	37.2	37.5
Average number of students per class - secondary education level+++	Students/class	30.2	29.9	30.2	30.3

Indicator	Unit	1996	1997	1998	1999
Rate of BA students in local universities +++	Percentage of total population	1.8	1.8	2.10	
Connected to water network	Percentage of total households	84.1	83.7	85	-
Connected to sewage network	Percentage of total households	34	33.8	38	-
Connected to electricity network	Percentage of total households	98.1	94.7	94.6	-
Computer owner	(Percent)	-	4.0	7	-
TV owner	(Percent)	89.6	85.0	89	-
Housing density**	Persons/room	2.45	2.0	1.88	
Family owning home library (ratio)	(Percent)	22.9	13.9	-	
Public libraries ****	No.	295	-	13	20
Monthly personal expenditure	JD (according to 1996 prices)	84.1	84.4	82.6	-
Food expenditure as percentage of total expenditure	(Percent)	38.7	38.5	40.3	-
GNP per capita	US\$	1,774.4	1,762.8	1,889.6	1,641
Beneficiaries receiving assistance from Ministry of Social Affairs	Percentage of total population	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.5
Beneficiaries receiving assistance from UNRWA	Percentage of total population	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.3
Active labor force	Percentage of population 15+ years	40.0	40.5	41.4	41.6
Unemployment rate	(Percent)	23.8	20.3	14.4	11.8
Male		24.5	20.3	14.4	11.6
Female		19.6	20.1	15.2	13
Employed in public sector	Percentage of total number of employed	17.6	17.6	16.4	17.9
Employed in Israel and settlements	(Percent)	14.1	17.1	21.7	22.9
Agricultural labor force	(Percent)	14.2	13.1	12.1	12.6
Industrial labor force	(Percent)	16.8	16.4	15.9	15.5
Female share of adult labor force	(Percent)	13.9	14.2	13.6	15.4
Rate of labor force to population	(Percent)	20.8	21.5	22	22.6
Median daily wage***** (according to 1996 prices)	Shekels	46.2	46.5	50.8	57.7
Average daily wage (according to 1996 prices)	Shekels	54.3	55.1	60.3	63
Female wage/male wage *****	(Percent)	70.6	68.0	66.8	71.0
Hospital beds (ratio)	Beds/1,000 persons	1.00	1.17	1.13	1.27
Doctors (ratio)	Doctors/1,000 persons	-	99	114.9	128
Registered crimes***	No.	6,726	8,765	22,286	21,426

Note: When making comparisons, it should be taken into consideration that population and housing data for the year 1997 are taken from the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census. The data for other years are taken from sample surveys executed by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). Some of the 1998 data are the result of assumptions on which PCBS based its population projections for 1998.

-
- * PCBS population projections based on the results of the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census.
 - ** The 1998 and 1999 data are assumptions according to which the PCBS estimated the population figures for the two years.
 - *** With the exception of the part of Jerusalem that was annexed by Israel following the 1967 War.
 - **** The number of libraries in 1996 includes the libraries that were surveyed by a team supervised by the Ministry of Culture and includes all public libraries, including mosque libraries. The figures for 1998 and 1999 are restricted to public libraries supervised by the Ministry of Culture.
 - ***** Wages in each of the two individual regions, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, relate to those workers who work in only one of them, while wages of the total number of workers in the WBGS include also the wages of those who work in Israel and the settlements.

/// = 1995 data

///0 = The third quarter of 1997.

- + Health survey data revealed that the infant mortality rate estimated through direct means for the years preceding the survey (1995-1999) in the WBGS was 25.3 for males and 25.6 for females.
- ++ Data for scholastic years 1995/1996, 1996/1997, 1997/1998, 1998/1999 consecutively.
- +++ Data for scholastic years 1996/1997, 1997/1998, 1998/1999, 1999/2000 consecutively.

1- GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This issue of the *Social Monitor* presents data monitoring the changing trends of indicators pertaining to the Palestinian social conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGs), comprising the years 1995-1999. It was during these five years that the various governmental institutions began functioning in the wake of the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), hereafter referred to as the Authority. The Authority was thus able to lay down the basic structures of ministries and governmental departments. The Authority also attempted to remove in some sectors and areas located under its control the destructive effects the Israeli occupation had imposed on the Palestinian population. It did this, according to its capabilities, with a varied degree of success in health and educational services sectors, individual social security networks, and by encouraging cultural activities, and fighting crime. In this context, the Authority tried to lay the basic foundations for regulating the functions of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which had previously played a pioneering role in serving the Palestinian society during the years of occupation.

Monitoring various social indicators pertaining to the period in question does not necessarily mean evaluating the achievements and performance of the Authority. Rather, it should be considered an evaluation of the challenges still facing Palestinian society. Such challenges still necessitate more continuous planning, work, and coordination if they are to be overcome. The Authority has been functioning in an unstable political, economic and social environment. As a result its work has often been hampered and it has been unable to achieve its aspired goals through its various local and national programs and plans. The occupation has left behind a heavy legacy of destruction in regard to all aspects of social and economic life as well as a deep structural backwardness in all sectors. It was inevitable that the Authority would have to deal with this difficult situation under unfavorable political and economic conditions.

These conditions, it should be noted, stemmed partly from the transitional nature of the phase in which the Palestinian situation was passing as well as national goals not yet realized, such as complete liberation and the establishment of an independent state. Other reasons why the hopes invested in the interim period were not realized were Israeli procrastination and arrogance as well as foreign and Arab support not meeting expectations. This whole situation led to a general feeling of incapability and frustration resulting from gaps between expectations and reality, and between aspirations and achievements. Such undoubtedly contributed to the outbreak of the second Intifada (uprising), referred to as Al-Aqsa Intifada.

The Israeli occupation distorted the social structure and created a marginal and dependent Palestinian economy in the WBGs and this distortion and dependency continued to exist throughout the interim phase. Class polarization emerged in Palestinian society due to the formation of new social sectors that enjoyed economic privileges and political leverage. This occurred while other sectors deteriorated due to repeated closures of the Israeli labor market, the absence of favorable conditions for investment, limited absorptive capacity of the local labor market, as well as the continuation of Israeli control of the basic natural resources and crossing points.

Two of the main results of the aforementioned factors were widespread unemployment and an increase in acute poverty. The limited institutionalized and un-institutionalized social

support systems had a negative effect on both, despite the fact that the Authority departments, in cooperation with the NGOs, attempted to provide essential services to Palestinian society. Such was instigated through a large array of programs in the health, education, labor, and social care fields. Although these programs are important, they still incapable of meeting the essential needs of vast sectors of the Palestinian people and still fall short of both quality and quantity. The number of the needy among the Palestinian community continues to increase due to Israeli policies, and their numbers are expected to increase even further because of the current Intifada and the Israeli practices of suppression, siege and harassment to which large sectors of the population are being subjected.

Careful examination of the statistics pertaining to various aspects of social life in the WBGS reveals that the gaps and inequity, whether referring to gender, regions, age groups, or various population centers, continue to exist. There are significant disparities, for example, pertaining to access to educational, health, cultural, and social care services. The data also show that in spite of increases in services rendered to the population in various aspects, the quality of these services is less than the expected level, which is something that has contributed to the beneficiaries' lack of confidence in the Authority. This, of course, underlines the importance of giving careful consideration on how to improve the quality of services while also narrowing the gaps among the beneficiaries by increasing their number. This is something that requires high-level efforts, suitable opportunities, and good administration.

This issue of the *Social Monitor* does not intend to tackle the period of the Al-Aqsa Intifada and the consequential impact on the social structure. Instead, the years 1995-1999 will be analyzed along with the relevant information pertaining to the following features of life in the Palestinian areas: demography, healthcare, education, culture, social security, quality of life, standard of living, crime and its victims, traffic accidents, and the legal environment. It is intended, however, that the next issue of the *Social Monitor* (Issue No. 5) will be allocated for monitoring the results and effects of the Al-Aqsa Intifada. There is no doubt that this admirable Intifada and the Israeli siege and suppression accompanied with a destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure will have a serious impact on all socio-economic aspects of Palestinian life and society. The health sector was negatively affected due to the large number of casualties and handicapped concurrent with the fact that large numbers of people cannot reach health facilities. This is a direct result of the aggravating financial crisis caused by the shortage of PNA resources especially since Israel refuses to transfer funds from clearance revenues to the PNA. The education sector was also negatively affected, first by the siege that prevents a large number of teachers and students from getting to their schools and universities, and secondly, the damage to some educational facilities by Israeli shelling. Estimates demonstrate a raise in unemployment to 40%, and up to 1/3 of the population are now below the poverty line, which indicates a severe decline in living standards. These rates are liable to rapidly increase with the continuation of Israeli repression and siege.

1. Demographic Indicators

An important achievement pertaining to the quality of available demographic data was the execution of the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census via the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). This was the first Palestinian national general census in the history of Palestinian society; it provided high-quality data and enabled researchers and concerned individuals to overcome the numerous problems relating to statistics from which they had suffered throughout the years of occupation.

The results of the census and the surveys that were carried out by the PCBS show that fertility and population growth rates in the WBGS are higher than the international rates. It was also shown that the population is a predominantly youthful one. In addition, the results confirm that internal migration has been limited and that there are still no urban centers attracting labor forces from the surrounding towns or rural areas. It is also noticed that there is a continuing shift towards nuclear families. Concerning marriage and divorce, it is noticed that the numbers for both has continued to rise, and the phenomenon of early marriage is still prevalent in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

2. Health Indicators

The period covered by this issue witnessed an improvement in the recording of health data, particularly that pertaining to births and deaths and the number of doctors.

The data revealed some improvement in regard to quantitative health indicators. The doctor/population ratio improved, for example, as did hospital bed sufficiency and the rate of health insurance coverage.

It is noted that the contribution of the private sector in the health field has improved, especially in regard to secondary healthcare (hospitals) and health insurance. Concerning the latter, there has been an increase in demand for private health insurance but a retreat in the rate of those with governmental health insurance. This could be viewed as evidence of a deterioration in governmental health services, especially as those individuals who were allowed to choose their insuring party (elective and collective insurance) preferred to register with private companies.

3. Educational Indicators

The 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census provided highly credible data pertaining to the educational features of Palestinians in the WBGS. The data revealed, for example, that there is a gap between the population of the West Bank and that of the Gaza Strip, among the sexes, and between the various types of population centers. The gap becomes narrower, however, among the younger age groups.

The number of schools and kindergartens functioning in the WBGS has increased during the last five years. The largest increase was noticed among kindergartens, particularly in the Gaza Strip. Also note worthy is that registrations in private schools had a higher increase than the governmental and UNRWA schools.

The PCBS census revealed that the number of students per teacher has increased in the governmental and UNRWA schools, but declined in the private schools.

Academic education maintained its superiority over vocational education by means of the number of enrolled students. This occurred despite the Ministry of Education's priority throughout the last period on developing vocational education and increasing the number of students enrolled in vocational education courses.

The number of male and female teachers has also increased over this period, as well as improvements in their qualifications. This increase, however, was not sufficient to cover the rise in the number of students, especially in UNRWA schools.

The data also showed a decline in the number of students repeating classes and dropping out of school, which points to an improvement in enrollment rates and educational performance.

The number of students from the WBGS in local universities has increased. At the same time, the gap between both sexes has narrowed. This points to an increasing tendency on the part of families to educate their daughters, attributable in part to the presence of universities in various WBGS regions.

4. Cultural Indicators

Some statistics relating to this field lack comprehensiveness, such as those pertaining to the cultural activities planned by concerned ministries. The annual cultural report that the PCBS has been publishing since 1998 does not include governmental cultural activities or the cultural activities organized by organizations that are not licensed as cultural ones, which include some charitable societies. There are also some important indicators missing, such as those relating to publishing and cinematic creativity. These shortages reduce the possibility of constructing an accurate picture of cultural life and its development in the WBGS.

The available data revealed an obvious gap between the number of registered cultural centers, published journals and magazines, and newspapers compared to what was actually operative. The data also revealed that until 1999 there were no private radio and TV stations in the Gaza Strip, that research continued outside its natural setting, namely universities, and that local universities made a weak contribution to cultural life. This was the situation regardless that various student bodies organized a variety of cultural activities and concerned academic departments organized conferences on essential political topics.

The cultural indicators draw the conclusion that cultural life in the WBGS has been improving since the establishment of the Authority. This becomes obvious when one considers the various conferences, workshops, festivals, theatrical performances and other cultural activities that have taken place in recent years, as well as the increase in the numbers of magazines, private radio and TV stations to emerge.

5. Social Security and Quality of Life Indicators

The data revealed a noticeable increase in the governmental role in social care programs, especially those rendering assistance to WBGS families and individuals in need during the last five years. The Zakat (Islamic alms tax) committees and UNRWA maintained their significant role in providing social care to the needy. In this respect, there was a noticeable tendency to provide care to persons in need of special attention within the local environment whenever possible (orphans and the elderly), rather than placing them in residential homes.

The data disclosed a gap between the West Bank and Gaza Strip in regard to the provision of public services (water, sewage, and electricity). The data also revealed that the rate of households benefiting from these services in the Gaza Strip is higher than that in the West Bank. This higher rate, however, does not reflect the overall standard of living in the Strip.

6. Standard of Living Indicators

The data relating to the period covered by this issue of the *Social Monitor* pointed to a large gap in living standards between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in favor of the West Bank. A gap also exists between the center of the West Bank and other West Bank areas, favoring the

center region. A third gap was also noticed between the city of Gaza and other Gaza Strip regions, in favor of the city.

In addition, the data revealed the existence of a large gap between the West Bank and Gaza Strip pertaining to the prevalence of poverty. Poverty rates in the Gaza Strip are higher than those in the West Bank, especially in the southern regions where approximately 50 percent of the households are living in poverty.

The average wage rate indicators showed a similar trend. These rates were higher in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip during the last five years. Thus, unemployment rates were lower in the West Bank. The indicators also confirmed the linkage between living standards and political instability, whereby unemployment rates go up and wages down during periods of instability, especially during the security closures imposed on the WBGS by the Israeli occupation authorities.

7. Crime, Victims and Road Accidents Indicators

Statistics pertaining to crime and its victims in the WBGS still suffer from limited available data, a lack of accuracy, and a lack of periodical statistics with which one could monitor criminal acts and their trends. The statistics also lack comprehensive criteria relating to several variables such as gender, various age groups, social status, occupational status as well as a basis for the classification of criminal acts. Another problem is that several relevant formal departments do not abide by the need to record criminal acts in their regions accurately, which makes it difficult to form accurate and authentic conclusions regarding the features and incidence of criminal activity. The PCBS victims of crime surveys are considered an important source of data in this field, but it is still insufficient.

Collecting accurate statistics on crime and victims mainly depends on the ability and readiness of the various official bodies such as police, courts, and judicial departments, as well as insurance companies.

8. Legal Environment Indicators

The legislative role of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) was consolidated during the first four years of its functioning. Within this timeframe the Council succeeded in issuing a large number of important laws designed to regulate Palestinian society in the areas under the control of the Authority. The control on the issuance of laws ratified by the PLC, however, remained in the hands of the Executive Authority mainly because its chairman has yet to endorse the Basic Law.

The Palestinian judiciary in the WBGS still suffers from an acute shortage of human resources, which naturally affects the speed at which cases are investigated.

The data also pointed to the continuing violations of human rights by the Israeli occupation authorities of Palestinians living in the WBGS. These violations included violating the right to live, the destruction of homes, the confiscation of land and continuing settlement development, daily harassment, and the cancellation of identity cards for a number of East Jerusalem residents.

The relationship and dealing with violations of human rights between various concerned departments of the Authority and the human rights organizations functioning in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, particularly the Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights, has

witnessed a marked improvement. However, the consecutive reports of the Commission indicated continuous violations of the rights of Palestinian citizens in areas under PNA control.

2- POPULATION, MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

2.1 Volume and Distribution of Population ¹

The demographic component is considered the real wealth in the WBSG in light of the scarcity of available natural resources. The WBSG, however, faces serious challenges pertaining to demographic development under the Israeli occupation. These challenges include a high level of unemployment and poverty, not to mention the high rate of demographic growth in addition to Israel's control of Palestinian natural resources.

Demographic indicators are divided into two categories. The first includes population volume and geographical distribution as well as age composition, distribution by sex, fertility, and migration rates and their basic trends. The second consists of indicators relating to the family, marriage, and divorce.

Prior to conducting the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census, demographic indicators were based on the Israeli census of 1967. Therefore, all demographic data available prior to 1997 were based on estimated data. This was done by using the 1967 population as the base from which the number of births was added followed by deducting the number of deaths and the net number of persons who left the country. Such, demographic statistics suffered from the absence of a solid and consistent basis of available data as well as from contradictory assumed estimations and statistics that did not cover all the various demographic aspects.

¹ Serial statistics are not available for some indicators of this section. Some require longer periods for watching variables such as age composition. Some definitions have changed minimizing the opportunity to make comparisons between the beginning of the period covered in this monitor and its end.

In 1995 the PCBS conducted the 'Demographic Survey', the most important goals of which were to provide accurate estimations of demographic indicators on the national, district, and governorate levels. The PCBS also prepared a report entitled, *The Population in Palestinian Centers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Reviewed Estimations of 1996*. At the end of 1997, the first population and household census since 1967. This census, it should be noted, is broadly recognized as the first national census in the history of the Palestinian society. This census made it possible to overcome several problems relating to demographic and population statistics.

The PCBS has also prepared projections for population figures in the WBSG from 1997-2025. The projections are based on the outcome of the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census, on assumptions pertaining to fertility and mortality rate trends, and the assumption that 500,000 Palestinians will return to the WBSG before the year 2010 (PCBS 1999e: 22-23).

In mid-1997 the population estimated figure for the WBSG was 2,783, 084 of which 1,404,481 were males and 1,378,603 were females. This calculates a sex ratio of 101.9 males per 100 females. By mid-1999 the population had increased to approximately 3,019,704. Concerning the West Bank alone, the population figures in mid-1997 was estimated to be approximately 1,787,562; 903,101 males and 884,461 females calculating a sex ratio of 102.1 males per 100 females. By mid-1999 the estimated total population

figure had risen to 1,932,637. For the Gaza Strip, the total population figure in mid-1997 was estimated at 995,522; 501,380 males and 494,142 females with a calculated sex ratio of 101.5 males per 100 females. By mid-1999, the total population estimated figure for the Strip had risen to 1,087,067. (see Annex, Table 2-1)

According to the 1997 census, the percentage of dwellers in urban centers, rural areas, and refugee camps were 53.1 percent, 31 percent, and 15.9 percent, respectively. In the West Bank alone, the percentages were 46.6 percent, 47 percent, and 6.4 percent, respectively. This is compared to 63.5 percent, 5.4 percent, and 31.1 percent respectively in the Gaza Strip. (see Annex, Table 2-2)

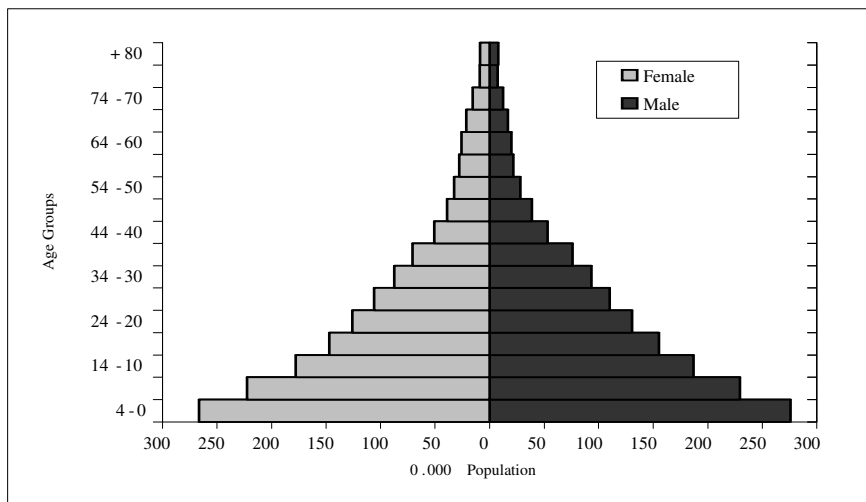
The Hebron governorate is one of the largest West Bank governorates in terms of population size. In mid-1999 its population was estimated at 418,293 people. The Jericho governorate, on the

other hand, has the smallest population among the West Bank governorates, registering only 33,849 in mid-1999. As for the Gaza Strip, the Gaza governorate is considered one of the largest governorates in the Strip in terms of population size; in mid-1999 its population was estimated at 388,031. The Rafah governorate, on the other hand, is considered to have the smallest population (130,354 in mid-1999) among the Gaza Strip governorates.

2-2 A Youthful Society

Figure (2-1) shows that the Palestinian society in the WBS is characterized by being a youthful one with a wide pyramid base. The age distribution figures for the WBS show a high ratio of young individuals in comparison with other age groups.

Figure 2.1: Population Pyramid in the WBS, Mid Year Projected -1999



Source: PCBS 199e

Studies have demonstrated that the population of Gaza is more youthful than in the West Bank. The percentage of children in the WBS under the age of five in mid-1999, for example, was 18.6

percent. However, the number of children less than five years old in the West Bank is only 17.9 percent compared to the Gaza Strip's 20 percent. The years age group, for the same year, was estimated at 46.9

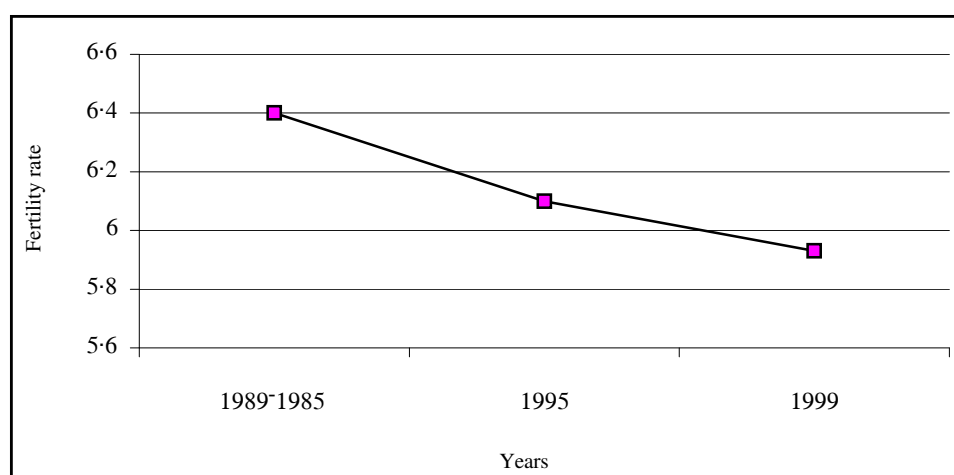
percent of the WBSG total population with the percentages being 44.9 percent in the West Bank and 50.3 percent in Gaza Strip. Individuals 65 years and over estimated an extremely low 3.4 percent (1.5 percent males, 1.9 females), with 3.7 percent in the West Bank and 2.9 percent in the Gaza Strip, respectively. (see Annex, Table 2-1)

It has been noted that the structure of the WBSG population is by large a young one. It also appears that there are clear disparities between the West Bank and Gaza Strip in regard to the mean age; the mean age in the WBSG in mid-1999 was estimated at 16.4 years, 17.4 years in the West Bank and 14.9 years in the Gaza Strip.

2-3 Declining High Fertility Rates

PCBS surveys have shown a declining tendency in fertility rates in the WBSG as illustrated in figure 2-2. Fertility rates in the WBSG are considered very high when compared with the current prevailing rates in other societies; the rate for Arab countries for 1997 was 4.1 children for each woman and 2.7 on the international level. (MAS 2000: 4). Reasons behind the high rates are the frequency of early marriage, (especially among females), are the desire to have male children, and dominant traditions and customs in Palestinian society. There are indications, however, that fertility rates have started to decline over the past few years. PCBS estimations, for example, show an increasing decline in regard to crude birth rates (the number of births per 1,000 persons in the middle of the year) in the second half of the last decade. The crude birth rate in the WBSG in 1997 was estimated at 42.7: 41.2 in the West Bank and 45.4 in the Gaza Strip (PCBS 1999e: 107-109).

Figure 2-2: Fertility Rates in the WBSG, Selected Years



Sources: PCBS (1998c and 2000c)

When the average fertility rate is taken (the average number of children born alive to a woman during her reproductive life),

it is found that the total fertility rate declined from 6.4 births in the period 1985-1989 to 6.1 births in 1995 (PCBS

1998c: 26-28). The rate declined further to 6.04 births in 1997, according to the final outcome of the census, and to 5.93 births in 1999, according to a health survey executed by the PCBS in the year 2000. This decline in fertility rates is attributed to a hike in education rates (especially among females), an increase in female participation in the labor force, an increase in the economic and services needs of individuals and families, an improvement in health conditions, and an increase in the use of family planning. However, in spite of the expected further decline in fertility rates, the Palestinian society in the WBGs will remain a youthful one, at least for the next three decades.

Worth mentioning is the total fertility rate in the Gaza Strip is higher than that of the West Bank by no less than one to 1.5 children. The total fertility rate in the West Bank in 1997, for example, was 5.6 births, while in Gaza it was 6.9 births.

When analyzing fertility rates in the various governorates, the results of the 1997 census indicated that the highest fertility rate found in the West Bank was in the Hebron governorate (7.1 births), while the lowest was in the Nablus governorate (4.8 births). As for the Gaza Strip, the highest fertility rate was in the North Gaza governorate (7.5 births), and the lowest in the Deir Al-Balah governorate (6.6 births) (PCBS 1998c: 26).

2-4 Decline in Mortality Rate

The crude death rates in the WBGs decreased from 21.7 per 1,000 persons in the West Bank and from 19.5 in the Gaza Strip in 1968 (PCBS 1994: 91), to 4.9 and 4.7 per 1,000 persons in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1997, respectively. This decline indicates the improvement in the quality of life and the opportunities to receive medical services as well as the improvement in health awareness among the general population.

Life expectancy at birth, for the year 1997, was estimated at 69.8 years for males and 73 for females. However, the actual figures reveal the life expectancy for the West Bank in 1997 were 70.3 and 73.4 for males and females, respectively. In the Gaza Strip it was 68.9 for males and 72.3 for females.

Infant mortality rates in the WBGs are in better standing compared to other Arab countries with an average rate of 25.3 for males and 25.6 for females in the years 1995-1999. The rate in Jordan was 34 deaths per 1,000 live births, in Egypt 52 deaths per 1,000 live births, and in Tunisia 35 deaths per 1,000 live births. (Population Reference Bureau, 1999).

The decline in mortality rates coupled with the constant high fertility rates will result in a hike in the natural growth of the population, which requires the formulation of appropriate social and economic policies. The PCBS estimated that the natural growth of the population in the WBGs rose by 3.7 percent per annum in the years 1997-2000 (PCBS 1999e: 107-109). This rate is considered to be among the highest in the world considering that the global rate is 1.4 percent per annum (Population Reference Bureau, 1999).

Rapid demographic growth has had an extremely negative effect on the attempts to improve standards of living. It has also obstructed the development process and increased the pressure on service providers such as schools, hospitals, etc. On the other hand, the high level of demographic growth will result in the following:

Keeping the rate high for young individuals under 15 years of age: The rate of these individuals in Palestinian society was estimated at 46.8 percent of the total population in 1997. Maintaining this high rate requires maintaining a high dependency ratio, which means increasing the burden of breadwinners in regard to their dependants. This, of course, would

have a negative impact on the level of social and economic welfare and result in an increase in unemployment rates. In addition, it could lead to difficulties in meeting the needs of family members as far as basic services such as health, education, etc., are concerned.

An imbalance between available resources and the population growth: This will pose a big challenge for the government in the future as the high unplanned population growth will cause an imbalance between the resources and the population, especially when it comes to natural resources such as water, agricultural land, and energy. The Israeli control of natural resources in the WBGs will only add to the expected problems.

2-5 Limited Decline in the Average Household Size

The average household size in the WBGs in 1997 was 6.4 persons, with 6.1 persons in the West Bank and 6.9 persons in the Gaza Strip. In comparison, the figure in 1995 was 7, with 6.6 persons in the West Bank and 7.8 persons in the Gaza Strip.

In 1997 the average household size in the Hebron district was 6.7 persons, which represents the highest average household size among the West Bank governorates. The lowest average household size, 5.8 persons, found in the West Bank governorates was equal among the governorates of Tulkarm, Bethlehem and Nablus.

The highest average household size of 7.2 persons in the Gaza Strip was in the Northern Gaza governorate. The lowest was found in the Khan Yunis governorate, averaging 6.8 persons.

2-6 An Increase in Nuclear Families at the Expense of Extended Families

The 1997 census revealed that the majority of private households in the WBGs, 73.2 percent, consisted of nuclear families; in 1995 this figure was 69.4 percent. Meanwhile, the rate of extended households according to the 1997 census reached 23 percent, with an average size of 8.3 persons. Families with only one member and composite families accounted for 3.3 percent and 0.5 percent of the total number of households, respectively. These results point to a tangible change in regard to the average household size. In the past, the extended household was dominant in Palestinian society, mainly as a result of the vast relationship network required in agricultural production. It seems, however, that the shift from agriculture to waged employment and the accompanying changes in regard to customs and social values have contributed to accentuating this change towards nuclear households over the past few decades. (see Annex, Table 2-4)

2-7 Decline in Size of Households Headed by Females

In 1997, the rate of households headed by females in the WBGs was 9 percent, with 9.5 percent and 8 percent in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, respectively. It should be noted that the size of households headed by females is usually relatively small. An average household headed by females in the WBGs was 4.1 persons, whereas those headed by males was 6.6 persons. When a female serves as the head of a household it is usually because her husband died while the children were still young, forcing her to shoulder the responsibilities usually borne by men. In some cases, however, the husband migrates, leaving his wife to take

care of the children. Women are also obliged to shoulder the responsibilities of breadwinners in the event of their being divorced or when, as single women, they have no male relative to act as the head of the family.

2-8 Internal Migration²

The total number of internal migrants³ in the WBGs was 340,131, representing 13.3 percent of the total population.⁴ The results of the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census revealed that there are internal migrants in all the Palestinian governorates. The Jerusalem governorate, where the rate of migrants reached 30.4 percent, houses the highest rate of migrant individuals.⁵ This does not mean, however, that the Jerusalem governorate has attracted a huge number of people from outside the governorate, the reason being that the rate includes those who changed their place of residence from one population center inside the governorate to another. (see Annex, Table 2-5)

2-8-1 Limited Internal Migration

The results revealed an increase in the annual rate of internal migration every year. This increase, however, was limited. It is clear that the advent of the Authority had an impact on the increase in the annual internal migration rates. It was discovered, for example, that 29.1 percent of the total number of migrants who migrated between 1994 and 1997 did so after the establishment of the Authority. The next highest rate was recorded for the four-year period between the outbreak of the second Gulf War (1991) and the establishment of the Authority (1994) when the figure reached 17.2 percent. The next highest rate was recorded for the period of five years between the outbreak of the first Intifada (1987) and the 1991 Gulf War when the figure reached 12.2 percent. This is followed by the period between the 1967 war and the outbreak of the first Intifada, for which a migration rate of 32.6 percent was recorded. It should be noted, however, that this rate, although high, cannot be considered the highest as a 20-year period is analyzed, and an annual migration rate of only 1.5 percent in terms of the total number of internal migrants. Finally, the lowest rate, 8.9 percent, was recorded for the period preceding the 1967 war.

The previous figures confirm the limited nature of internal migration in the WBGs. They also confirm that migration was in many instances affected by political factors. Moreover, through looking at the distribution of migrants and the period of stay in their new places of abode, it becomes clear that there was a noticeable increase in internal migration in the years between the outbreak of the 1991 Gulf War and the establishment of the Authority. This increase was also followed by another noticeable increase following the advent of the Authority. This may be attributed to the fact that with time a number of returnees from exile changed their habitual places of residence. It also can be attributed to the establishing of

² The section is based on: Malki, Majdi and Shalabi, Yaser, *Internal and Returning Migration in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), Ramallah, 2000, pp. 25-35.

³ Internal migrants are those Palestinians whose current and previous habitual places of residence are the governorates of the WBGs only. Adopted here is the established classification of the type of population center (urban, rural, refugee camp) for the current habitual place of residence according to the terms used in the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census.

⁴ This includes data pertaining to internal migrants in the WBGs who were actually counted in the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census during the period 10-24 December 1997. It does not include projections pertaining to the number of those who were not counted.

⁵ The data do not include the number of Palestinians in the part of the Jerusalem governorate that was coercively annexed by Israel in the aftermath of its occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967. Therefore, the mentioned internal migration rates of the population in the Jerusalem district include only the regions that were actually counted, i.e., those regions that were not annexed by Israel.

many PNA establishments and the accompanying need for some individuals to move from their habitual places of residence to new ones in order to work for these establishments.

A noticeable hike in the rate of internal migration was noticed in regard to the first year of the Palestinian Intifada, which broke out in 1987, in comparison with the previous years and the two years that followed. This may be attributed to the fact that a number of individuals returned to their original places of residence, especially in the cities and rural areas. The fact that commercial centers and facilities were now shutting at midday, the unstable security situation, the deterioration of the economic situation, and an increase in familial solidarity were among the various reasons why some Palestinians decided to return and join their families. One of the reasons for the hike in migration rates during this period could have been due to the tendency of some Palestinians to leave the refugee camps and live in the cities due to acts of suppression to which the camp dwellers, especially the younger ones, were being subjected.

2-8-2 Female Internal Migration

Females accounted for 58.6 percent of the total number of internal migrants in the WBGS, even though they accounted for only 49.2 percent of the total population. Marriage was undoubtedly one of the main reasons behind the high rate of female internal migration compared with the rate of male internal migration. This is due to many females leaving their habitual places to live with their husbands in his place of residence.

2-8-3 High Rates of Younger Groups Among Internal Migrants

Internal migrants are characterized by belonging to the younger age groups. The rate of those under the age of 15 was 18 percent, between 15-40 was 54.8 percent, and of those between 40-65, 21.5 percent.

Those above 65 years of age accounted for no more than 5.7 percent. These results revealed that the rate of those in the age group that precedes the work age is low and the individuals in this group are often moved from their habitual places of residence to new ones to accompany their families. In other words, they themselves do not take the decision to move. The results also revealed that people who changed their previous habitual places of residence fell mainly within the 15- 40 age group, and within this group the rate of those between 20 and 35 was high. This group also includes newcomers to the labor market as well as young couples.

In comparison with the total population, a clear disparity in regard to the age structure of migrants in the WBGS is found. The rate of people under 15 years of age was 47.1 percent of the total population, which is a higher rate than that found among those who changed their habitual places of residence. The comparison also shows that there are serious differences in terms of the age groups that comprise newcomers to the labor market. The rate of individuals in the 19-34 age group reached 36.3 percent of the total number of migrants, but no more than 22.8 percent of the total population.

2-8-4 Slightly Higher Education Levels Among Migrants

WBGS migrants possess higher levels of education than the general population. This is something that also distinguishes them from the majority of other migrants in the Arab and Third World countries. It is noticed that the distribution of migrants by educational level differs to that of the total population in the WBGS. The difference, however, is not that large; this is despite the fact that the rate of those who completed their college and first university education or more is higher among those who changed their habitual places of residence. The illiteracy rate among them is also higher. The rate of those who obtained a BA or higher

educational qualification among the migrants in the age group ten years and above was 4.8 percent compared to 4.5 percent among the total population of the same age. The rate of migrants with a college diploma was 6 percent, compared to 4.3 percent among the total population, while the illiteracy rate among migrants was 15.2 percent compared to 11.7 percent.

2-8-5 Internal Migration Rate Higher Among Refugees

Data relating to internal migration revealed that the highest rate, 61.7 percent, was found among refugees (59.5 percent registered refugees and 2.2 percent unregistered refugees). The rate of refugees among the internal migrants differs from the rate of refugees among the total population. The percentage of refugees among the total population of the WBGS has reached 41.6 percent (40 percent registered, 1.6 percent unregistered). It is clear, therefore, that the rate of internal migration among the total WBGS population, although high, declines among non-refugees. This proves that being a refugee is an important factor when it comes to the significant features of internal migration in the WBGS.

2-9 Returning Migration⁶

The total number of returnees⁷ to the Palestinian territories whose habitual places of residence used to be abroad was calculated at the end of 1997 to be

⁶ This section is based on El-Malki, Majdi and Shalabi, Yaser, *Internal and Returning Migration in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), Ramallah, 2000, pp. 53-62.

⁷ The term 'returnee migrants' refers to Palestinians whose current habitual place of residence is inside the WBGS governorates, but whose previous habitual place of residence was in countries outside the WBGS. The term excludes the returnees whose current habitual place of residence is in the WBGS while their previous one was in the territories occupied in 1948. The classification of population centers (urban, rural or refugee camps) of current habitual place of residence as followed in the census was adopted.

267,355. These people represent 10.5 percent of the Palestinian residents of the WBGS who were counted in the 1997 general population census. (see Annex, Table 2-6)

The rate of returnees to the West Bank was 65.3 percent of total returnees, while the rate of those returning to the Gaza Strip was no more than 34.7 percent. At 57.8 percent, the rate of returnees who stayed in the urban centers in the West Bank was higher than that of returnees who stayed in urban centers in the Gaza Strip (42.2 percent). For the returnees who stayed in rural areas, the rate in the West Bank was higher at 95.5 percent, than that in the Gaza Strip, where it was 4.5 percent.

Meanwhile, the percentage of returnees who stayed in West Bank refugee camps (21.3 percent) was lower than those in the camps in the Gaza Strip (78.7 percent). Compared to the WBGS total population, 11.1 percent of the population in the West Bank are returnees, as are 9.4 percent of the Gaza Strip population.

The data pertaining to returnees from abroad that habitually stay in the WBGS show a disparity in the rates concerning their distribution among the Palestinian governorates. The highest rate applied to the Nablus region, where it reached 12.7 percent of the total number of returnees, followed by the Gaza Strip governorates where the rate reached 12.5 percent. The lowest rate was found in Jericho where the rate was no more than 1 percent of the total number of returnees.

The results of the 1997 general population census dealing with returnees from abroad show that the majority, 48.5 percent, returned in the four years following the establishment of the Authority. The second highest rate, 24.1 percent, applied to returnees who returned in the four years following the second Gulf War. The other rates are comparatively low.

The figures revealed a noticeable annual increase in the number of returnees who returned to the WBGs. This increase, however, may not be a real one if linked to the growth rate of the population. The difference between one year and the next is very limited and almost equals the natural growth rate of the population. The same cannot be said of the periods that followed the advent of the Authority and the second Gulf War, as the increase in the rate of returnees was very clear. The increase in the period that followed the coming of the Authority can be attributed to the return of Palestinians working in PLO departments and institutions as was agreed upon in the Oslo agreement endorsed by the PLO and Israel. The increase in the period following the second Gulf War can be attributed to the forced return of many Palestinians from the Gulf countries, especially Kuwait.

The distribution of returnees by their current habitual place of residence in the WBGs shows the direct impact of both the second Gulf War and the advent of the Authority on the rate of return. It is noticed that the majority of returnees who returned following the second Gulf War did so during the first year, and that the rate declined for the next two years, only to increase again in the fourth year. This rise was probably due to the beginning of the peace process in the region following the Madrid Conference. A clear increase was also noticed in regard to the year that followed the arrival of the Authority, after which the rate gradually retreated every year up to conducting the general census.

With regard to the countries from which the returnees returned, the results show that the vast majority came from Arab countries. The percentage of those who came back from foreign countries, mainly the USA, was no more than 10.9 percent of the total number of returnees. The highest percentage of returnees, namely 36.4 percent, returned from Jordan, followed by 31 percent from the Gulf countries. The remainder returned from

Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Tunisia, and other Arab countries.

2-9-1 More Male Returnees than Female Returnees

The rate of males among the returnees from outside the WBGs is high, reaching 53.6 percent as opposed to 46.4 percent among females. This calculates the sex ratio as 115.7 males per 100 females. The difference can be partly attributed to the fact that many males returned without their families when the Authority was established, especially those working for the Palestinian security departments. When making a comparison with the sex ratio found among the total population of the WBGs, it is found that the rate of male returnees, 50.8 percent, is higher than the rate among the total population. In contrast, the rate of females among the total population, 49.2 percent, is higher than the rate among the returnees.

2-9-2 High Educational Level Found Among Returnees

Returnees from abroad, in the age bracket of ten years of age and over, with a BA or higher degree were 14 percent. The rate with a community college diploma was 9.2 percent, while the rate of those who finished secondary education was 17.2 percent, and those who finished elementary education was 42.1 percent. The rate of those who were literate (but with no formal education) was 11.8 percent, and the rate of illiteracy was 5.8 percent.

In comparison with the total population in the WBGs, the returnees displayed higher educational levels. The rate of those with a BA or higher degree was only 4.5 percent among the total population aged ten years and over while the rate of those who were illiterate was 11.7 percent. The higher educational levels found among returnees from abroad in comparison with the total population in the country may be attributed to the pressure that Israel put on

the population in the WBGS. Such included obstruction of the education process via closures of universities, in addition to the deterioration of the economic conditions as a result of Israeli policies. It should be mentioned that those who migrated abroad in order to study and who eventually returned were registered as returnees, and this increased the educational level rates found among this group.

2-9-3 A Young Majority Among the Returnees

The age structure of those who returned to the Palestinian territories differs to that of the total population who were counted in the 1997 general population census. The returnees under the age of 15 were 28 percent, with 47.5 percent between 15 and 39, 21.3 percent between 40 and 64, and 3.2 percent 65 years of age and over. In comparison, the percentages relating to the total population of the WBGS were 47.1 percent, 38.1 percent, 11.3 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively.

2-9-4 Refugees Accounted for Less Than Two Fifths of the Returnees

The percentage of refugees who returned from abroad is less than the percentage of refugees found among the total population of the WBGS. Of the returnees, 38.3 percent were refugees (35.8 percent registered, 2.5 percent unregistered). The percentage of refugees in regard to the total population in the WBGS, however, was 41.6 percent (40 percent registered, 1.6 percent unregistered).

2-10 Marriage and Divorce

2-10-1 Continuing Increase in Number of Marriages

The available data show that the number of marriage contracts registered in the WBGS is continuously increasing. The number in 1999 was 24,874, compared

with 24,400 in 1998, 23,492 in 1997, and 20,736 in 1996. In the West Bank, 16,099 marriage contracts were registered in 1999, some 186 less than in 1998 and 216 more than in 1997. The number of contracts registered in the Gaza Strip in 1999 was 8,775, some 660 more than in 1998 and 1,166 more than in 1997. (see Annex, Table 2-7)

Figure 2-3 shows that crude marriage rates displayed a tendency to increase in the Gaza Strip between 1997 and 1999 and a tendency to decline in the West Bank. Nevertheless, the crude marriage rate in the West Bank remained higher than that in the Gaza Strip. (see Annex, Table 2-8)

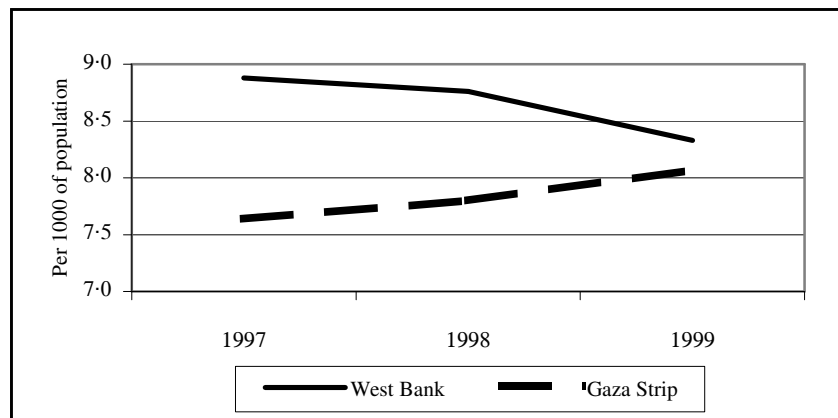
2-10-1-1 Highest Marriage Rates Found in Salfit and Tubas

Salfit and Tubas recorded the highest crude marriage rate among the West Bank governorates for the period 1997-1999. The two regions are both of a rural agricultural nature. The Bethlehem governorate, on the other hand, recorded the lowest crude marriage rate in the West Bank in 1999. In the Gaza Strip the Khan Yunis governorate recorded the highest crude marriage rate in 1999, while the governorate of Northern Gaza recorded the lowest. (see Annex, Table 2-8)

The results show that the highest number of marriage contracts in the West Bank (1996-1999) applied to the Hebron governorate, with 3,445 contracts being registered in 1999. The lowest number applied to the Jericho governorate with only 241 contracts being registered.

The highest number of contracts in the Gaza Strip was attributed to the Gaza governorate for the period 1996-1999, where the number of contracts was 3,055 in 1999. The lowest number, meanwhile, was attributed to Rafah where the number reached 1,069 in 1999. It should be noted that the Hebron and Gaza governorates are the largest in terms of population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, respectively.

Figure 2.3: Crude Marriage Rate in the WBGs, 1997 – 1999



Sources: PCBS 2000e.

2-10-1-2 Early Marriage Continued to Preval During the Last Four Years

Early marriage continued to prevail in the WBGs where the mean age at the time of a first marriage in 1999 was 24.1 years for males and 18.8 years for females. (see Annex, Table 2-9)

The percentage of females under the age of 20 who married in 1999 in the WBGs was 58.5 percent of the total number of females who married that year. The rate among males, meanwhile, was 9.5 percent. There were no big differences in this rate in the years 1996-1999. The early marriage phenomenon appears to be more prominent in the Gaza Strip where the rate of females under the age of 20 who married in 1999 was 60.9 percent of the total number of females who married that year; in the West Bank, the figure was 57.9 percent.

The data showed that the most common age (mode age) at which girls married in the West Bank governorates were 18, with the exception of the Jenin governorate and Salfit where the most common age in 1999 was only 15. As for the Gaza Strip, in general the most common age was 17 although it ranged between 16 years in the two governorates of Gaza and Northern Gaza and 18 years in the Rafah governorate. In the WBGs, the most

common age at which males married in 1999 was 22 (24 years in the West Bank and 22 in Gaza Strip). (see Annex, Table 2-10)

Men often marry younger women, and the rate of marriages in the WBGs in 1999 in which husbands were ten years or more older than their wives was 15.8 percent of the total number of marriages registered at the religious courts that year (PCBS 2000e: 29).

2-10-1-3 Polygamy Still Common in Palestinian Society

The phenomenon of polygamy is still prevalent in the WBGs. The rate of males who married in spite of already having at least one wife in the years 1997-1999 was 6.5 percent, 6.2 percent, and 6.8 percent, respectively, with 6.5 percent in the West Bank and 7.2 percent in the Gaza Strip. The majority of these men married single women, with 69.1 percent in the West Bank and 55 percent in the Gaza Strip.

The rate for those under the age of 30 who had at least one wife and married again was 23.2 percent, with those under age 40 who remarried was 62.8 percent. This phenomenon can be explained by the desire to have children, especially male children, and by the misguided belief that the female is responsible for the sex of the child. As for polygamy among the elderly,

it can be explained by the need of older men for relatively younger wives in case their previous wives become sick or disabled.

Marriage contracts registered with religious courts in the WBSG showed that the educational attainment of 60 percent of the total number was below the secondary education level. Twenty-three (23) percent had finished their secondary education, while 6 percent possessed a college diploma and 11 percent a BA or higher degree (PCBS 2000e: 44).

2-10-2 An Increase in the Divorce Rate

A noticeable increase occurred in regard to the number of divorce cases registered in the WBSG in 1999 in comparison with 1998. The number increased from 3,465 divorce cases in 1998 to 3,761 cases in 1999, marking an increase of 8.5 percent. While 2,388 divorce cases were registered in the West Bank in 1999, 1,373 were registered in the Gaza Strip, meaning there was an increase of 7.9 percent in the West Bank and a 9.7 percent in the Gaza Strip when compared with the 1998 figures. (see Annex, Table 2-7)

The areas with the highest numbers of divorce cases in 1999 were recorded in the two governorates of Gaza and Ramallah/Al-Bireh, where 523 cases were registered in the former and 452 in the latter. As for previous years, 439 and 437 divorce cases were registered in the Ramallah/Al-Bireh governorate in 1997 and 1998, respectively and 486 and 487 divorce cases in the Gaza governorate over the same two years. The Tubas area in the West Bank and Rafah in the Gaza Strip recorded the lowest number of registered divorce cases: 39 cases in the Tubas area and 165 cases in the Rafah governorate. (see Annex, Table 2-7)

The crude divorce rate in the WBSG in 1999 was 1.2 divorces per 1,000 people in the middle of the year. The rate was 1.2 and 1.3 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip,

respectively. The rates in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were similar to each other in the previous two years. The crude divorce rate in the Ramallah/Al-Bireh governorate was higher than that found in other West Bank governorates at 2.04 per 1,000 people in the middle of the year in 1999. As for the Gaza Strip, the crude divorce rate in the Gaza governorate, 1.3 divorces per 1,000 people, was the highest in the Strip in mid-1999. (see Annex, Table 2-11)

2-10-2-1 More Than A Quarter of Divorced Wives Under 20 Years of Age

The rate of divorced wives under the age of 20 was between 27 and 28 percent of the total number of divorce cases among females in 1996-1999. The rate of divorced males under the age of 20, meanwhile, was between 3 and 5 percent of the total number of divorce cases among males in the same four years. This strengthens the belief that early marriage is one of the main reasons behind a high number of divorces.

Age incompatibility may also be a reason for divorce. The rate of divorce cases in which husbands were older than their wives by ten or more years was 724 of the total number of divorce cases, which makes a rate of 19.2 percent in 1999. This rate is similar to those for 1996, 1997, and 1998. In each of the four years, one third of the divorce cases involved couples who had not completed a year of marriage. (see Annex, Table 2-12)

The divorce rate among husbands with high secondary certificates and below was 80 percent and 79.3 percent of the total number of divorced men in 1998 and 1999, respectively. The rate among divorced women was 87.3 percent and 87.8 percent. The data do not necessarily suggest that a low educational level can be considered a reason for divorce if it is taken into consideration that a high percentage of divorce cases involve people under the age of 25. It is likely that the age

factor (the low age of the husband or wife) is more important than the educational level factor, although there is no doubt that possessing a good educational background maintains that a husband and wife improve their chances of making their marriage a success. Differences between the educational levels of husbands and wives may contribute to the occurrence of divorce. The rate of divorced men with a BA whose ex-wives' educational level was secondary education and below was 58.2 percent of this group, while the rate of divorced women who possessed BAs and whose husbands' educational level was secondary education and below was 35.2 percent of this group. (see Annex, Table 2-13.)

Summary

Demographic indicators represent several challenges for economic and social policy makers in the WBGS. The total fertility and population growth rates in the WBGS, (which are higher than the international rates) the continuing increase in the number of young people, and the lack of job opportunities and natural resources may lead to an increase in the scope of poverty. This in turn will be accompanied by all the associated negative social phenomena such as the prevalence of crime and violence. As is the case in many other enlightened Third World countries, this makes the demographic issue a matter that has priority and a special importance in the policies of the State. The demographic issue becomes more complicated and important in the Palestinian context. It is expected that this issue will have additional dimensions in the event that political solutions are reached concerning the Palestinian refugees, many of who could possibly return to Palestine.

Demographic statistics also point to the limited nature of internal migration and the dominance of nuclear households in comparison with extended families. The statistics also show the continuation of

early marriages and the polygamy phenomena and to the rise of divorce among less educated individuals as well as among relatively young couples and couples who were still in the first years of marriage. These social phenomena require that several elaborated studies be conducted in order for the concerned parties to come up with legislative policies and regulations to strengthen the positive aspects and restrict the negative ones.

3-HEALTH

This section deals with the most important health indicators in the WBGS in the period 1995-1999. It also tackles some of the indicators relating to the year 2000, based on a health survey executed by the PCBS. In addition, it aims at revealing the health-related developments that have occurred in the WBGS, be they positive or negative, with the aim of evaluating the lessons that should be learned from them in order to improve the performance in this field.

3-1 Decline in the Number of Reported Live Births

Data released by the Ministry of Health reveal differences in the number of reported live births in the WBGS within the last four years. While the number of these births reached 86,585 in 1995 and increased to 91,033 in 1996, it decreased to 87,915 in 1999, meaning the rate of decline in comparison with 1996 was 3.4 percent. The decline in the number of births was lower in the West Bank than it was in the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank the number declined between 1996 and 1999 by 3 percent, while in the Gaza Strip it declined by 4 percent. (see Annex, Table 3-1)

As for life expectancy, PCBS estimations indicated that the average life expectancy rose slightly between 1997 and 1999. While the average life expectancy was 69.8 years among males in 1997, it reached 70.1 in 1999. As for females, it was 73 years in 1997, rising to 73.3 by 1999. (see Annex, Table 3-2)

3-2 A Gap in Infant and Under Five Mortality Rates Between the West Bank and Gaza Strip

According to administrative records data issued by the Ministry of Health, there was a slight increase in the infant mortality rate of 0.5 percent per 1,000 live births in the WBGS in 1999 in comparison to 1998. The mortality rate was 15.5 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1999, compared with 15 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1998. (It should be noted that this increase might be attributable to improvements in regard to the reporting of deaths rather than to an actual rise in the number of deaths.) Infants in the WBGS were luckier in 1998 as the lowest infant mortality rate was recorded then, 15 deaths per 1,000 live births, within the four-year span 1996-1999. (see Annex. Table 3-3)

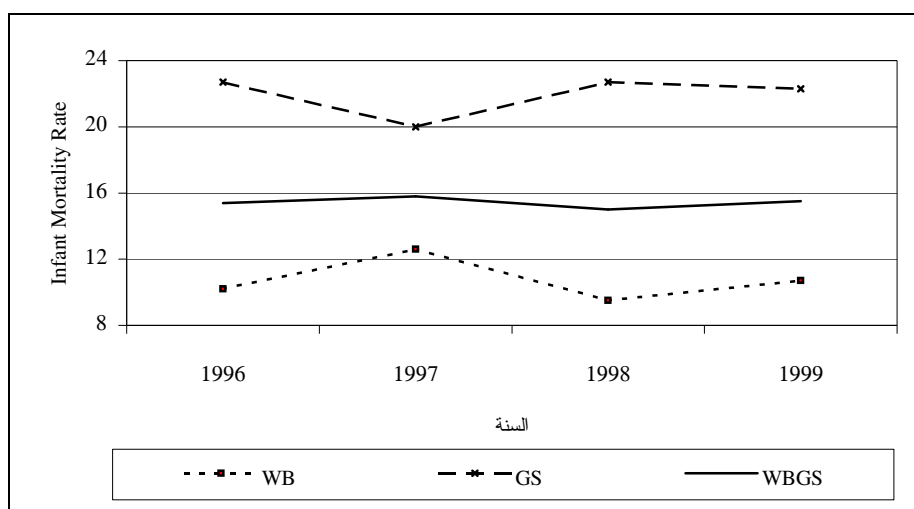
Ministry of Health data show that the infant mortality rate in the West Bank is much less than that in the Gaza Strip. The difference can be partly attributed to the low level of health services available in the Gaza Strip in comparison with the West Bank. The same data show that the infant mortality rate in the West Bank was 9.5 in 1998, going up to 10.7 (an increase of 1.2) in 1999. As for the previous years, the rate was 10.2 and 12.6 in 1996 and 1997, respectively. In the Gaza Strip, however, the data show a slight decrease in the infant mortality rate in 1999 compared with 1998, 22.3 compared with 22.7 deaths per 1,000 live births. The rate was 22.7

and 20 in 1996 and 1997, respectively. (see Annex, Table 3-1) It is obvious that a discrepancy still exists in regard to infant mortality rates in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

In comparison with infants in some neighboring Arab countries, Palestinian infants fair better, as the infant mortality rate in Jordan and Egypt was 34 and 52 per 1,000 live births, respectively, in 1999. The infant mortality rate in the WBGS is still, however, much higher than that found in Israel where it reached 6 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1997. (see Annex, Table 3-3). With regard to the mortality rate among children under the age of five, administrative records issued by the Ministry of Health show that the rate increased to 20.4 in the WBGS in 1999, compared to 19.9 in 1996. It is also noticed that the rate went up to 15.1 in the West Bank in 1999 compared with 14.1 in 1996. In the Gaza Strip, the rate (27.9 in 1996 compared with 27.8 in 1999) remained almost stable (see Annex, Table 3-4). As is the case with the infant mortality rate, the high child mortality rate can possibly be attributed to the high degree of commitment in regard to reporting deaths to the appropriate departments and not necessarily to an actual increase in the number of deaths.

It is noticed that a gap exists in the data related to infant and child mortality rates that rely on administrative records and data extracted through surveys. The gap is due to the expected reporting deficiencies, which naturally affect administrative records. The health survey of 2000 showed that the infant mortality rate in the five years that preceded the survey (1995-1999) reached 25.5 deaths per 1,000 live births in the WBGS (24.4 in the West Bank and 27.3 in Gaza Strip). The child mortality rate over the same period reached 28.7 per 1,000 live births in the WBGS (27.2 in the West Bank and 31.2 in the Gaza Strip) (PCBS 2000h: 41).

Figure 3.1: Infant Mortality Rates in the WBGS by Region, 1996 – 1999



Sources: Palestinian Ministry of Health (1996, 1997, 1998, 1999).

3-3 Improvement in the Physicians Per 100,000 People Ratio

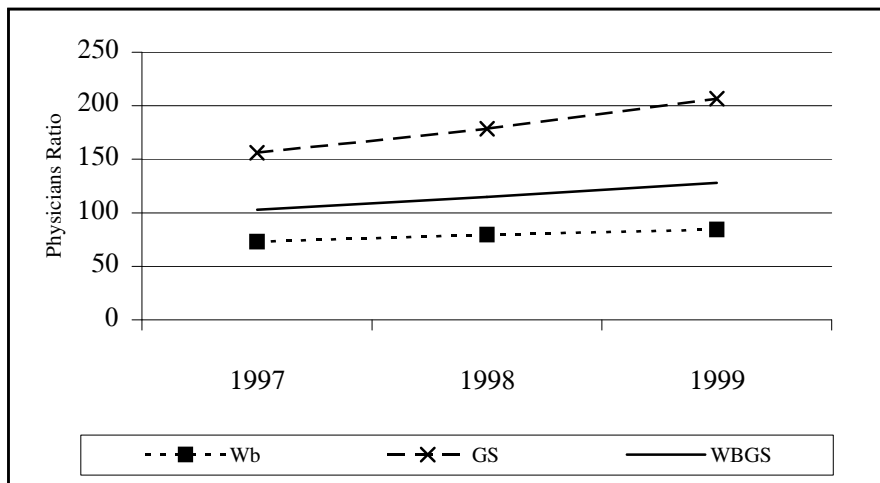
PCBS data indicate that the average number of physicians per 100,000 people rose in the WBGS in 1999 compared with 1998, reaching 128 per 100,000 people in 1999 compared with 114.9 in 1998. The rate in 1997 was 103 physicians per 100,000 people. It should be noted that the data are based on the number of physicians registered with the Physicians Union in the West Bank and the Arab Medical Society in the Gaza Strip.

Figure 3-2 shows that the increase in the physicians/population ratio applies to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as the average number of physicians per 100,000 people. In the West Bank in 1999 it was 84.4, considerably higher than the year before (1998 was 79.6). Both averages are higher than that of the 1997 figure, 73. Gaza Strip data point to a clear increase in the average number of physicians per

100,000 people in 1999 when the average reached 206.5 compared with 178.4 in 1998. Again, both averages are higher than those attributed to 1997 when the rate was 156 physicians per 100,000 people. (see Annex, Table 3-5)

The data show that the ratio of physicians per total population in the Gaza Strip was higher than in the West Bank over the past three years. The difference between the ratios may be attributable to a lack of commitment on the part of physicians in regard to formally registering at the Union, which means there is no clear indicator when it comes to the actual number of physicians. In any case, the ratio is still below the required level and is much less than those found in some of the neighboring countries. The average number of physicians per 100,000 people in Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon, for example, was 158, 202, and 191, respectively in 1997, while in Israel it reached 459 per 100,000 people the same year. (see Annex, Table 3-5)

Figure 3.2: Reported Physicians per 100,000 Population in the WBGS, 1997-1999



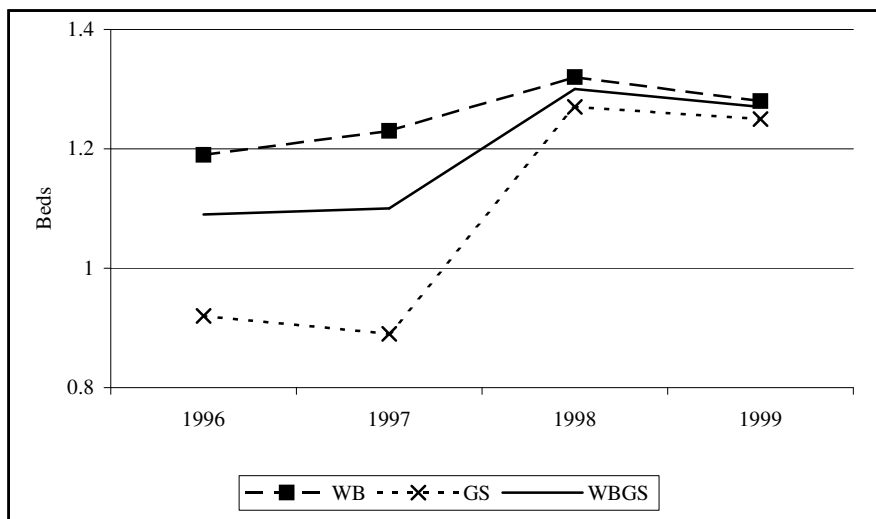
Sources: PCBS. Administration Records (1997-1999).

3-4 Decline Again after Improvement in Number of Hospital Beds

Table 3-6 shows an improvement in the number of hospital beds in the WBGS for the year 1999; 1.09 beds per 1,000 people

while the average was 1.1 per 1,000 people in 1997. The average number of beds per 1,000 people in the Gaza Strip rose considerably in 1999, reaching 1.25 compared with 0.92 in 1996. This rise, it should be noted, was higher than the one recorded in the West Bank.

Figure 3.3: Hospital Beds and Ratio per 1,000 people in the WBGS, 1996-1999



Sources: PCBS. Administration Records (1996-1999).

PCBS data show that the average number of beds per 1,000 people decreased a little in 1999 compared with the previous year,

reaching 1.27 beds per 1,000 people in 1999 compared with 1.3 beds in 1998 (see Annex, Table 3-6).

It seems that the establishment of new hospitals whether by the government, the Red Crescent, or the private sector and the Authority's handling and supervision of health services contributed to raising the average number of beds to the total population in the WBGS. The average, however, went down again in 1999 due to the annual natural population growth, reiterating the need for more hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The last issue of the *Social Monitor* (issue number 3, February 2000) elaborated on the crisis facing the Palestinian Ministry of Health and its impact on the conditions within hospitals, medical centers, and clinics where there has been a serious retreat in the volume and quality of medical services offered to the population.

3-5 A Rise in the Rate of Individuals with Health Insurance

The results of the health survey conducted by the PCBS in 2000 pointed to a rise in the rate of individuals age four and above with health insurance. The rate reached 61.4 percent of the total population in the WBGS compared with 58.8 percent in 1996. The data shows that the percentage of people with health insurance in the Gaza Strip in 2000 was higher than that in the West Bank, reaching 77.4 percent and 52.5 percent, respectively. It was also noticed that according to the survey, the rates of people insured with various types of insurance have changed compared with 1996. The data show a drop in the percentage of people with governmental health insurance, from 33.7 percent in 1996 to 27.9 percent in 2000, as well as a drop in the percentage of people with UNRWA insurance. The data also show that the citizens' demand for private sector insurance increased to a considerable extent, reaching 11 percent in the year 2000 compared with 3.1 percent in 1996. (see Annex, Table 3-7)

The decline in the percentage of people with governmental insurance (both the voluntary and the collective) is due to the decline in the level of the citizens' confidence in the quality and efficiency of the governmental health services. This is not surprising taking into consideration the repeated annual financial crisis from which the Palestinian Ministry of Health is suffering (MAS, *Social Monitor*, No. 3, 2000: 12). The financial crisis that has been plaguing UNWRA since the coming of the Authority is due to some countries being persistent in attempting to evade paying their dues to the agency. This is no doubt at least partly responsible for the decline in the number of those with UNRWA insurance.

3-6 Higher Disability Rates in the West Bank

The results of the 1997 general population census conducted by the PCBS revealed that the disability rate in the Palestinian society had reached 1.8 percent of the total population. This rate was higher in the West Bank than it was in the Gaza Strip, as it reached 1.9 percent in the former and 1.6 percent in the latter.

The results also showed that the most common disability in the WBGS was mobility problems, reaching 30.2 percent compared with 36.7 percent in 1996 according to a survey conducted by the PCBS in 1996. This was followed by visual disability, which reached 14.6 percent compared with 13.1 percent in 1996, then mental disability, which reached 14.5 percent compared with 19.8 percent, multi-disability, which reached 7.9 percent in 1997, audio and speech disability, which reached 6.4 percent in the same year, audio disability alone, which reached 5.1 percent in 1997 compared with 9.6 percent in 1996, mental and mobility disability, which reached 4.6 percent in 1997, and finally, dextral disability, which

reached 3.5 percent the same year. (see Annex, Table 3-8)

By looking at the results of the health survey of 1996 and the 1999 general population census, it can be seen that there was a drop in the rate of each of the disabilities with the exception of visual disability, the rate of which increased slightly. It is important, however, to remember that the 1997 data were based on a comprehensive population census while the 1996 data represented the results of a sample survey and not a total survey of the Palestinian population. (see Annex, Table 3-8)

It is worth mentioning that the disability rate among the Palestinian population in the WBGS rose noticeably during the Palestinian Intifada in the years 1987-1993. It is also noticed that another increase occurred following the outbreak of the current Intifada, which began on 29 September 2000. Elementary estimates point to the existence of 1,500 various disabilities some of which are severe, including paralysis and loss of sight, and some of which affect the limbs.

3-7 Increase in the Number of Births at Health Institutions

The results of the health survey conducted in the year 2000 point to a rise in the rate of births taking place at health institutions in the WBGS. This rate reached 94.8 percent compared with 89.8 percent in 1996 (based on the outcome of the health surveys carried out by the PCBS in 1996 and 2000). The increase, it should be noted, was higher in the Gaza Strip than it was in the West Bank, reaching 99.2 in the former and 92.3 in the latter. Returning to the 1996 data, the rate of births taking place at health institutions was higher in the Gaza Strip (95.9 percent) than it was in the West Bank (86.6 percent). (see Annex, Table 3-9.) This increase in the Gaza Strip

may be attributed to the proliferation of UNRWA health centers as well as the relatively small area of the Gaza Strip, which means that people are usually closer to health centers there than they are in the West Bank.

The rate of births taking place at health institutions in the WBGS was higher than the rates found in other countries. The rates in Yemen and Libya in 1997, for example, were 15 percent and 91 percent, respectively, while in Egypt the rate was 32.5 percent in 1995 and in Lebanon, 88 percent in 1998 (see Annex, Table 3-9).

3-8 Increase in the Number of Governmental Health Clinics and Decline in the Number of Non-Governmental Ones

Ministry of Health data show that there was an increase in the number of governmental primary healthcare centers in the WBGS, where the total number of centers and clinics in 1999 was 341, compared with 205 centers in 1995, which represents an increase rate of 66.3 percent. (see Annex, Table 3-10.) The large increase in the number of health centers points to the large shortage from which the Palestinians suffer due to the measures taken by the Israeli occupation authorities, which did not pay any attention to the vital services required by the Palestinians.

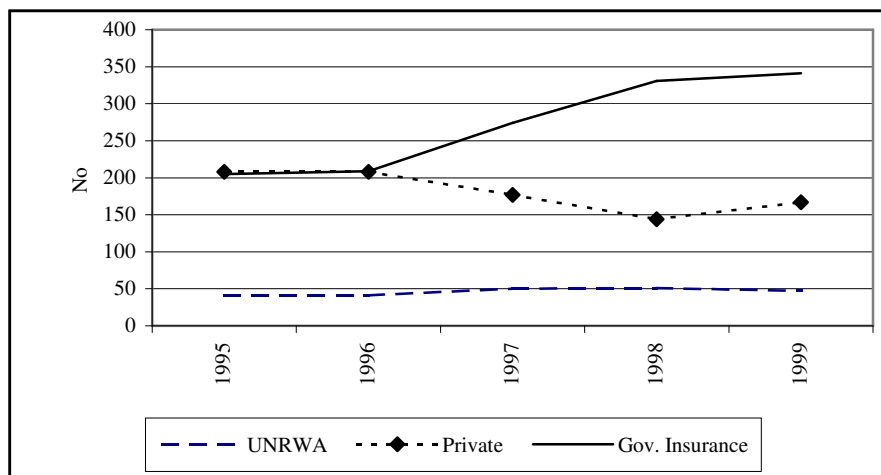
It is noticed that the number of these centers has increased in the West Bank to a greater extent than it has in the Gaza Strip. The number went up by 126 in the West Bank from 176 in 1995 to 302 in 1999. In the Gaza Strip, the increase was relatively small, with the number of centers increasing by ten from 29 centers in 1995 to 39 centers in 1999. (see Annex, Table 3-10.) The reason for the higher increase in the West Bank, compared with the Gaza Strip, can be attributed in part to the fact that there is a higher number of

population centers in the West Bank than there is in the Gaza Strip and that the approach followed by various governmental and non-governmental parties is to establish a health center in each population center.

Figure 3-4 points to a decline in the number of clinics belonging to non-governmental organizations in the WBGS during the past five years, as the number decreased from 208 in 1995 to 167 in 1999. This may be attributed to the scarcity of financial resources to cover the

expenses of such centers, as it was noticed that the NGOs have suffered from a decline in their financial resources since the advent of the Authority, with the exception of those organizations functioning in specific fields such as human rights, democracy and women's issues. In regards to UNRWA centers and clinics, however, Ministry of Health data revealed an increase in the number of these centers in the WBGS where the number increased from 41 in 1995 to 47 in 1999 (see Annex, Table 3-10).

Figure 3.4: Primary Health Care Centers in the WBGS by Supervised Authority, 1995-1999



Sources: Palestinian Ministry of Health Annual Reports (1995-1999).

3-9 Greater Use of Family Planning Methods

The outcome of the health survey conducted by the PCBS in 2000 confirmed that there had been a noticeable increase in the use of family planning methods among married women since 1996. The rate of married women who used any kind of birth control reached 51.4 percent in the year 2000 compared with 45.3 percent in 1996. This points to an improvement in the use of birth control methods. (see Annex, Table 3-11)

The data showed an increase in the use of modern family planning methods among married women in the WBGS who used any kind of birth control. The rate reached 36.7 percent in the year 2000, compared with 30.8 percent in 1996. (see Annex, Table 3-11)

The data also showed an increase in the rate of married women who use the IUD as a means of birth control. The rate reached 24.6 percent in the year 2000 compared with 21.6 percent in 1996. The use of contraceptive pills also increased among married women, reaching 5.8 percent and

3.8 percent in the years 2000 and 1996, respectively (see Annex, Table 3-11). In addition, the data showed that the vast majority of women in the WBGs, namely 99.6 percent, are well informed concerning modern methods of family planning.

The rates mentioned above are high if compared to those associated with various other countries. The rate of women who use a modern family planning method in Yemen and Libya, for example, was 9.8 percent and 5.5 percent, respectively in 1997, while in Lebanon, the rate was 10 percent in 1998, and in the Sudan, 7 percent in 1995. (see Annex, Table 3-11)

Summary

Indicators examined in this section disclosed some improvement in various health fields, especially in relation to the quantitative aspects. The data showed an increase in the birth rates at health institutions, which is something that reflected on other indicators, such as the reported number of live births and the infant and under-five mortality rates. There are indications that the infant and under-five mortality rates have declined in the period examined in this section, although the data, on the other hand, reveal an increase. This discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that the increasing number of births taking place at health institutions has resulted in an increase in registration and reporting. This also applies to the number of live births reported.

The data also revealed an improvement in the physicians per total population ratio in the WBGs. It is obvious, however, that the ratio cannot be considered accurate. It is based on the number of physicians registered at the Physicians Union in the West Bank and the Medical Association in the Gaza Strip, meaning that there are many unregistered doctors who were not taken into account.

In regards to the number of hospital beds, the data revealed a slight improvement in the period 1996-1999. A decline occurred, however, between 1998 and 1999. Although the total number of beds is increasing every year, this increase does not match with the increase in the population growth rate in the WBGs. What this means is that there is a need to increase the number of beds further and to a greater extent than during the period covered by this issue.

The data revealed an increase in the number of people with health insurance, which, obviously, is a positive development. This improvement, however, applied to private sector insurance. As for the rate of those with governmental health insurance, especially voluntary and collective insurance, the rate declined. This implies that faced with the option of choosing either private or governmental health insurance, the majority of people chose the former. The same thing applies to UNRWA health insurance. These results could be taken to mean that the quantitative improvement witnessed in regard to certain health indicators during the period under examination was not accompanied by a qualitative improvement.

4-EDUCATION

This section includes data relating to the educational particularities of individuals in the Palestinian society for the year 1997. Data was derived from the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census. The section also contains data on the various educational establishments, including kindergartens, schools, community colleges, and universities under the supervision of the government, UNRWA, and the private sector. This section is also based on data taken from the *Education Statistical Yearbook* and on

information taken from the databases of educational institutions pertaining to the scholastic years 1994/1995-1999/2000.⁸

This section aims at revealing the situation of the Palestinian education system and the changes that occurred in regard to the educational process in the WBGS after this sector came under the control of the Authority. The section will accordingly monitor the changes that occurred in regard to various educational indicators in the WBGS during the transitory phase, i.e., following the establishment of the Authority until the end of 1999/2000.

4-1 Educational Particularities of Individuals in the Palestinian Society

4-1-1 Literacy: A Big Gap between the Two Sexes

The results of the 1997 census showed that the illiteracy rate among individuals 15 years old and above in the WBGS was 13.9 percent. The rate differed between males and females however, as it was 7.8 percent and 20.3 percent, respectively. The results also revealed a discrepancy in the illiteracy rate among individuals 15 years and older in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1997. At 13.7 percent, the rate was less in the Gaza Strip than it was in the West Bank, where it reached 14.1 percent. The rates, however, do not apply to both sexes. The results showed that the illiteracy rate among males in the Gaza Strip was higher than it was among males in the West Bank (8.6 percent in the Gaza Strip and 7.3 percent in the West Bank). The illiteracy rate among females in the Gaza Strip, however, was lower than it was in the West Bank (18.8 percent and 21.1 percent, respectively) (see Annex,

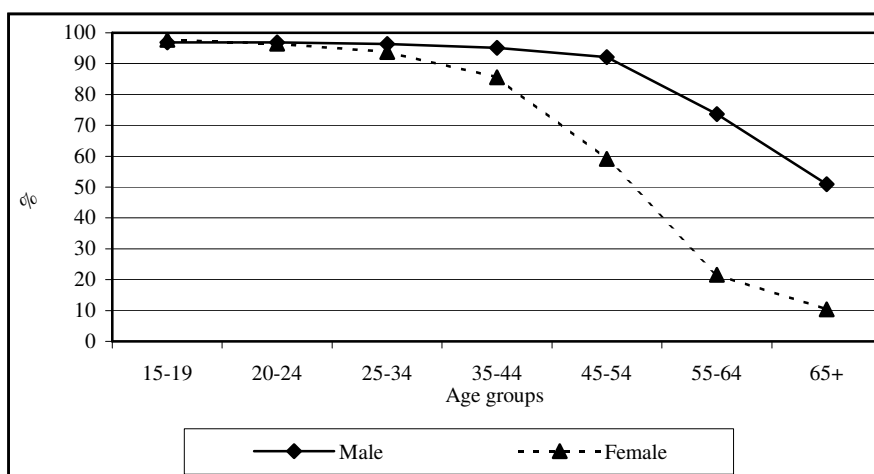
Table 4-1). This implies that the lower illiteracy rate in the Gaza Strip can be attributed to the low illiteracy rate among females there. Interest in education in the Gaza Strip can be attributed to the high refugee population as well as the establishment of UNRWA schools immediately after the Nakbeh ('disaster') of 1948. This was at a time when rural population centers (in which most of the West Bank population lived) did not have access to such schools. Another reason may be the refugees' reliance on investing in education in their search for suitable job opportunities.

Despite the large gap in literacy rates between the two sexes it is not applicable to all age groups in the WBGS, but rather, is limited in the younger age groups and becomes larger among the older age groups. The rate is in favor of females in the 15-19 age group, as the illiteracy rate in 1997 among males in this group was 3.1 percent and 2.3 percent among females. (see Annex, Table 4-1)

The results of the census also showed a discrepancy in regard to the illiteracy rates among individuals 15 years and above according to the type of population center. The results showed, for example, that the highest illiteracy rate was found among individuals in rural areas where it reached 16.9 percent, followed by refugee camps (13.5 percent) and urban centers (12.4 percent). This points to a higher interest in education in the urban centers in comparison with the refugee camps and rural areas, and to a shortage of educational facilities and services in the rural centers.

⁸ Since the scholastic year 1994/1995, the PCBS, along with the Ministry of Education, has been conducting comprehensive surveys of all educational institutions in the WBGS. At the end of every survey, the PCBS and the Ministry issue a new issue of the *Education Statistical Yearbook*.

Figure 4.1: Literacy Rate of Palestinian Population (15 Years and Over) by Age and Sex, 1995 – 1997



Source: PCBS .2000h

4-1-2 Educational Enrollment and Opportunities: Decline in Gap Between Both Sexes in Younger Age Groups

The 1997 census revealed that the enrollment rate among males in the WBSG six years old and above was 42.5 percent of the total number of males in this age group. The rate among females, meanwhile, was 39.6 percent. The results point to a rise in the number of students among the total population, especially if the number of individuals under the age of six is taken into consideration.

The results also showed that the enrollment rates are close when it comes to the various population centers. The enrollment rate among people living in urban centers was 41.7 percent; it was 39.4 percent for people in rural centers, and 42.3 percent for people in refugee camps.

The results of the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census revealed that females in the six years and over age group did not enjoy the same opportunities in education and training as males in the same age group. Upto 1997 the rate of females who were not given the opportunity to attend school was 13.3 percent, while the rate was only 4.6

percent among males. These results confirm that discrimination does exist between males and females regarding educational opportunities. The data indicated, however, that this trend is gradually decreasing every year as the male and female illiteracy rates analyzed earlier point to a large decline in the gap between males and females in the younger age groups. This calculates that the severity of the discrimination between both sexes is declining, so much so that it can now be described as very limited. This also points to a high degree of awareness on the part of families regarding the importance of educating females on the one hand and a large improvement in the availability of educational establishments, especially those benefiting females, on the other.

4-1-3 Educational Attainment: 5.4 Percent with a BA or Higher Degree

The results of the census showed that the rate of individuals aged 15 and above in possession of a BA or higher degree was 5.4 percent. The rate of individuals who did not finish any educational stage was 23.5 percent. The results also revealed a discrepancy in educational attainment

among males and females, as the rate of males with a BA or higher degree was 7.8 percent while that among females was only 3 percent. Concerning those who did not finish any educational stage, the rate was 18.1 percent among males and 29.3 percent among females. (see Annex, Table 4-1) This discrepancy may be attributed to a combination of several factors. The families, for one are more likely to allow the sons to continue their education than their daughters. Also, many females drop out of school early to marry, and some families are still hesitant to send daughters to co-educational institutions of higher learning.

4-2 Indicators Relating to Educational Institutions

4-2-1 An Increase in the Number of Schools and Kindergartens

The number of schools and kindergartens in the scholastic year 1999/2000 was 2,610, of which 843 were kindergartens, 1,259 elementary schools and 508 secondary schools. The data revealed a noticeable annual increase in the number of schools and an even greater annual increase in the number of kindergartens between the scholastic years 1994/1995 and 1999/2000. This increase applied to both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip although the increase was on a higher scale in the Gaza Strip. The number of kindergartens there was 237 in the year 1999/2000 compared with only 13 in 1994/1995 (see Annex, Table 4-3).

As for the supervising bodies, the Authority, UNRWA, and the private sector supervised schools and kindergartens.⁹ There are indications that the rate of governmental and UNRWA

schools decreased every year, with the rate of governmental schools declining from 56.8 percent in 1994/1995 to 49.4 percent in 1999/2000. The UNRWA schools declined from 11 percent in 1994/1995 to 10.1 percent in 1999/2000 due to the increase in the number of kindergartens and private schools (see Annex, Table 4-4).

4-2-2 Children in School and Kindergartens: An Increase in Enrollment in Kindergartens

The total number of male and female children in schools and kindergartens at the beginning of the scholastic year 1999/2000 was 942,942. Of these, 7.7 percent were in secondary schools, 84.1 percent in elementary schools, and 8.2 percent in kindergartens. Of the total number of students in elementary schools, 59.9 percent were in the West Bank and 40.1 percent in the Gaza Strip. With regard to secondary schools, however, 57.9 percent of the students were in the West Bank and 42.1 percent in the Gaza Strip (see Annex, Table 4-5).

The data also pointed to a noticeable increase in the number of students whose number rose by 44 percent between 1994/1995 and 1999/2000. The increase rate among students in the Gaza Strip was higher than that in the West Bank, reaching 59 percent and 36 percent, respectively. The data also revealed that the higher rate of increase in the Gaza Strip was due to the large increase in the number of children in kindergartens in the Strip, which rose in 1999/2000 to more than 24 times what it was in 1994/1995, at a time when the increase in the West Bank in the same period was no more than 42 percent. This can be attributed to the fact that the number of kindergartens did not increase under the Israeli occupation while there was an obvious increase following the advent of the Authority (see Annex, Table 4-5).

⁹ Addressed here are schools and kindergartens that belong to profit-making institutions and those belonging to NGOs. It is worth mentioning that the majority of kindergartens in the WBGS belong to NGOs, while a high rate of private schools belong to religious institutions and NGOs.

The data also revealed that the increase in the number of school students exceeded what was expected. This was a result of the natural increase in the population with the number of school students increasing (with the exception of children in kindergartens) by 40 percent in the WBGS between 1994/1995 and 1999/2000. The increase was larger in the Gaza Strip than it was in the West Bank, reaching 48.5 percent and 34.9 percent, respectively. It is possible that the increase should have been expected in light of the return of thousands of Palestinian families and individuals from the Gulf countries and other Arab countries, both during and after the Gulf crisis and following the establishment of the Authority (see Annex, Table 4-5).

As for the distribution of students by gender, males accounted for 50.6 percent of the total number of school students and kindergarten children, while females accounted for 49.4 percent. The female percentage differed at the various educational stages, reaching 49.5 percent at the basic stage, 50.7 percent at the secondary stage, and 47.5 percent at the kindergarten stage of the total number of students. These rates show that the parents of male children are more likely to send their offspring to kindergartens than the parents of female children, which is something that is reflected in the elementary education level. The higher number of girls in secondary education, meanwhile, can be attributed to the high dropout rate among males, which is higher than that associated with females. One reason for this phenomenon is the deterioration of the economic situation, which impels families to send their sons out to work so they can provide a secondary or even basic income for the family.

With regard to the supervising authorities, the data showed that 62.2 percent of the students were enrolled in governmental schools, 23.6 percent in UNRWA schools and 14.1 in private schools in the

scholastic year 1999/2000. These results point to a decline in the enrollment rates in governmental and UNRWA schools compared with 1994/1995, when the rate were 64 percent and 25 percent, respectively. There was an increase in the rate of students in private schools which was no more than 11 percent in 1994/1995 (see Annex, Table 4-6).

As well as absorbing the majority of children who had finished kindergarten, private schools also attracted an increasing number of elementary students, although at a slower pace. It was noticed that the rate of students enrolled in elementary level private schools rose from 5.9 percent in 1994/1995 to 6.5 percent in 1999/ 2000 (see Annex, Table 4-6).

When kindergartens are excluded, the student enrollment rate at the elementary education level remained stable in schools supervised by various bodies. It was, however, noticed in the secondary stage that there was an increasing demand for governmental schools and a decrease in the demand for private schools. The rate of students enrolled in private secondary schools was decreasing from 9.3 percent in 1994/1995 to 5.9 percent in 1999/2000 (see Annex, Table 4-6).

Upon comparing the number of students with the number of schools and kindergartens, it became clear that governmental schools accounted for 49.4 percent of all schools in 1999/2000, while students in governmental schools accounted for 62.2 percent of the total number of students. The UNRWA schools, meanwhile, accounted for only 10.1 percent of the total number of schools, whereas the students studying there accounted for 23.7 percent of the total number of students. This can be attributed to the fact that the majority of UNRWA schools are relatively large and overcrowded. On the other hand, private schools and kindergartens differ greatly by having a higher school rate than student rate, as private schools accounted for 40.5

percent of the total number of schools while private school students accounted for no more than 14.1 percent of the total number of students.

4-2-2-1 An Improvement in the Female Enrollment Rate at the Elementary and Secondary Levels

The results (see Annex, Table 4-7) showed a noticeable increase in the number of females enrolled in elementary and secondary schools compared with the number of males. At the elementary level, the female/male enrollment ratio rose from 95 female students per 100 male students in the year 1994/1995 to 98 female students per 100 male students in 1999/2000. This increase applied to both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, although the rise was slightly more noticeable in the West Bank.

Concerning secondary education, the results revealed a large increase in the female/male enrollment ratio in favor of females in the WBGs where the ratio was 104 female students per 100 male students in 1999/2000. This is compared with only 84 female students per 100 male students in 1994/1995. The results also revealed differences between the ratios according to area; in the West Bank the ratio was 109 female students per 100 male students in 1999/2000, increasing from 85 female students per 100 male students in 1994/1995. In the Gaza Strip, meanwhile, it was 98 female students per 100 male students, increasing from 82 female students per 100 male students in the same two years, respectively (see Annex, Table 4-7).

The high female/male enrollment ratio in both elementary and secondary level schools in the WBGs as well as the increase in this ratio in favor of females from one year to the next points to an improvement in the attempts to offer equal educational opportunities to the two sexes. This change is often attributed to enhancing awareness on the part of

families concerning the need to educate their daughters, and to the expansion of the educational infrastructure, for females in particular.

As for educational options, the data showed that academic education is still more appealing to students than secondary vocational education. The rate of students joining academic institutions in 1999/2000 was 96.2 percent compared to only 3.8 percent joining vocational institutions. A slight increase was realized, however, in the rate of students joining vocational institutions at the expense of academic institutions in comparison with the year 1994/1995. During this scholastic year the rate of students joining academic institutions was 96.8 percent and that of students joining vocational institutions was 3.2 percent. The data also revealed that this slight increase was more predominant among female students (see Annex, Table 4-8). It could be assumed that the limited increase in the rate of those who enrolled in vocational institutions points to a failure of the Palestinian educational strategy, which, ever since the advent of the Authority, has been based on promoting vocational training.

4-2-3 An Increase in the Rate of Male and Female Teachers in Private Schools and Kindergartens

The number of male and female teachers in schools and kindergartens was 32,060 in the scholastic year 1999/2000. There were 14,550 male teachers and 17,510 female teachers, resulting in male teachers accounting for 45.4 percent of the total number of teachers and female teachers for 54.6 percent. Of all the teachers in schools and kindergartens, 65.8 percent were in West Bank and 34.2 percent were in the Gaza Strip.

The data also revealed that male elementary and secondary level teachers accounted for 49.8 percent (14,535 teachers) of the total number of teachers in

the two stages and female teachers for 50.2 percent (14,651 female teachers). At the kindergarten level (2,874 teachers), however, all but 15 of the teachers were female.

The data also indicated that male and female teachers in schools were distributed according to the bodies supervising these schools as follows: 63.8 percent in governmental schools, 17.6 in UNRWA schools, 9.6 percent in private schools, and 9 percent in kindergartens.

In addition, the data showed that the rate of male and female teachers in governmental and UNRWA schools had decreased in the period 1994/1995-1998/1999. The rate of male teachers in governmental schools in 1994/1995 was 64.3 percent, declining to 63.8 percent in 1999/2000. In UNRWA schools, this rate reached 20.8 percent in 1994/1995 and retreated to 17.6 percent in 1999/2000. In private schools, the number of teachers of both sexes increased continuously from one year to another, which points to the demand for private education and explains the increase in the number of private schools and the number of teachers working in them.

4-2-3-1 An Improvement in Teachers' Qualifications

The rate of elementary and secondary teachers in possession of a BA reached 52.2 percent (11 percent had both a BA and a diploma in education) in the scholastic year 1999/2000. The rate of those possessing a college diploma was also high, reaching 44 percent of the total number of male and female teachers in the two stages in the same year. Those who had university certificates accounted for 0.4 percent, and the rate of those with a Masters or higher degree 1.5 percent. The data also revealed that 1.9 percent had the General Secondary Education Certificate or below, and experience in education in the basic and secondary stages (see Annex, Table 4-9).

If the distribute of teachers with various educational qualifications was based on gender, it would be found that the rate of female teachers in the lower qualifications category was high, while the rate of female teachers in the higher qualifications category was low. Among teachers with nothing but the General Secondary Certificate and below, for example, 59 percent were female and the remainder male, while among teachers with a college diploma, 56.7 percent were female and the remainder male. As for teachers with BAs, 45.4 percent were female and the remainder male, while the percentage of female teachers with a university degree was only 32.2 percent. Only 20.9 of teachers possessing Master's degrees were female (see Annex, Table 4-9). The fact that the rate of male teachers with good qualifications is higher than their female counterparts can be attributed, at least in part, to the long history of discrimination in educating females. The data revealed, however, that this discrimination is gradually decreasing.

The data pointed to a positive development in the educational qualifications of teachers in WBGS schools in the years between 1994/1995-1999/2000. The rate of those with only a General Secondary Certificate and a college diploma declined, while the rate of those with BAs increased. The percentage of those with only the General Secondary Certificate decreased from 4.3 percent in 1994/1995 to 1.9 percent in 1999/2000, while the percentage of those with a college diploma also decreased, this time from 58.3 percent to 44 percent in the same two scholastic years, respectively. On the other hand, the rate of those with BAs rose from 35.3 percent to 52.2 percent. (see Annex, Table 4-9)

4-2-4 Decline in School Dropout Rates

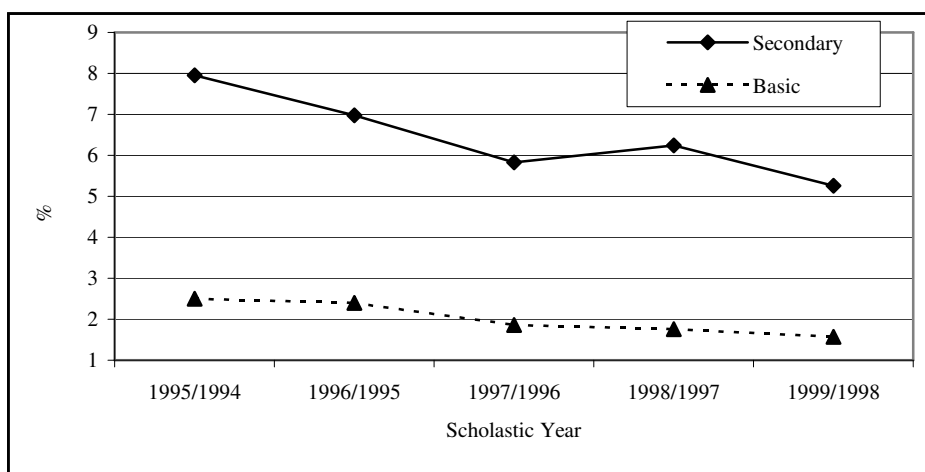
The elementary level school dropout rate in the WBGS was 1.57 percent in 1998/1999 (1.78 among males, 1.35 percent among females). The secondary

level dropout rate was much higher, reaching 5.26 percent (3.98 percent among males, 6.55 percent among females) (see Annex, Table 4-10).

The table showed a noticeable decline in both elementary and secondary level dropout rates between 1994/1995-1998/1999. The elementary level dropout rate declined from 2.5 percent in 1994/1995 to 1.57 percent in 1998/1999, and the secondary level dropout rate from 7.95 percent to 5.26 percent in the same period. The decline in the dropout rate applied to both sexes, although the secondary level dropout rate was higher among females and the elementary level dropout rate higher among males (see

Annex, Table 4-10). The high elementary dropout rate among males compared with females is in great part attributable to the prevailing economic conditions and the need of families to send their sons to work in order to improve their living conditions. As for the high secondary level dropout rate among females, this can be attributed to the prevalence of early marriage among females and the harsh economic conditions. It can also be attributed to the various local habits and customs that force girls to stay at home and restrict their freedom of movement in addition to the social beliefs that minimize the financial benefits of educating girls who will most probably get married at an early age and never join the labor market.

Figure 4.2: Drop-Out Rates by Stage, 1994/1995-1998/1999



Source: PCBS and Ministry of Education. *Survey of educational Institutions Data Base*

The decline in dropout rates applied to both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, although the decline was greater in the latter. The elementary level dropout rate in the Gaza Strip declined from 2.23 percent in 1994/1995 to 0.95 percent in 1998/1999, while the secondary level dropout rate declined from 5.12 percent to 1.80 percent in the same period. In the West Bank, on the other hand, the elementary level dropout rate declined from 2.67 percent in 1994/1995 to 1.98 percent in 1998/1999, while the secondary

level dropout rate declined from 9.76 percent to 7.76 percent in the same period (see Annex, Table 4-10). The data also revealed that both the elementary and secondary level dropout rates in the Gaza Strip were lower than they were in the West Bank. This can be attributed to the fact that education is more of an important factor in terms of social mobility in the Gaza Strip than it is in the West Bank because of the nature of the job opportunities available in each of the two regions. The more noticeable decline in

the dropout rate in the Gaza Strip compared with the West Bank, between 1994/1995-1998/1999, could be due to the Authority's focus on developing the educational infrastructure in the Gaza Strip more in the West Bank. This is because the Israeli occupation policies caused greater damage in the Strip. The decrease in employment opportunities in Israel and in the public sector also contribute to the decline in school dropout rates, especially among males in the Gaza Strip.

4-2-5 Decline in Repetition Rates in Schools

The data showed a decline¹⁰ in the repetition rate in schools in the period 1994/1995 and 1998/1999, with the elementary level rate declining from 4.72 percent in 1994/1995 to 2.54 percent in 1998/1999. As for the secondary level rate, it declined from 3.51 percent to 1.06 percent in the same period. The decline applied to both sexes, with the elementary level rate among males declining from 5.04 percent in 1994/1995 to 2.79 percent in 1998/1999 and the secondary level rate among males from 5.37 percent to 1.47 percent in the same period. Concerning the elementary level rate among females, it declined from 4.38 percent to 2.27 percent and the secondary level rate from 1.28 percent to 0.65 percent in the same period (see Annex, Table 4-11).

The decline in the school repetition rates applied to both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The elementary level rate declining in the West Bank from 3.42 percent in 1994/1995 to 2.22 percent in 1998/1999 and the secondary level rate from 1.99 percent to 1.41 percent in the same period. In the Gaza Strip, meanwhile, the elementary level rate declined from 6.84 percent to 3.01 percent and the secondary level rate from 5.89 percent to 0.58 percent in the same period (see Annex, Table 4-11).

4-2-6 Large Increase in Student/Teacher Ratio in UNRWA Schools

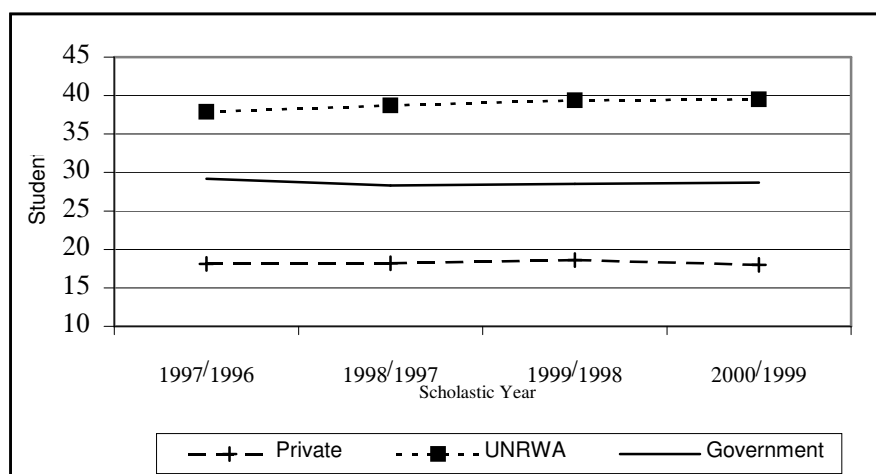
The average number of students per teacher at all levels and under all supervisory bodies was 29.4 students per teacher in the scholastic year 1999/2000. When looking at the average number of students per teacher in the scholastic years 1994/1995 and 1999/2000 a slight decline is evident, as the average declined from 31.1 students per teacher in 1994/1995 to 29.4 in 1999/2000 (see Annex, Table 4-12).

The improvement in the average number of students per teacher in the WBGS did not apply to all types of schools. Figure 4-3 shows that the average increases were continuous in UNRWA schools between 1994/1995 and 1999/2000. It also increased again in the governmental schools in the years 1998/1999 and 1999/2000 after having continuously declined in the years between 1994/1995 and 1997/1998. In private schools and kindergartens, however, the average declined noticeably between the years 1994/1995 and 1999/2000.

The average number of students per teacher in the Gaza Strip was higher than the average number of students in the West Bank in all the years between 1994/1995 and 1999/2000. This applies to governmental and UNRWA schools, but not to kindergartens after the school year 1995/1996. Nor does it apply to private schools after the year 1999/2000, since the average number of students per teacher in private schools in the Gaza Strip was then less than that of the West Bank (see Annex, Table 4-12). The improvement in the number of students per teacher in private schools and kindergartens in the Gaza Strip may be attributable to the establishment of a number of new private schools and kindergartens in which the enrollment level was not particularly high.

¹⁰ This is due to the specification of the repetition rate by the Ministry of Education.

Figure 4.3: Students Per Teacher by Supervising Authority, 1994/1995 – 1999/2000



Source: PCBS and Ministry of Education. *Survey of Educational Institutions Data Base* (several years)

4-2-7 Improvement in Class Density Figures in Both Kindergartens and Private Schools

The term ‘class density’ refers to the average number of students per class. The average number in the WBGS was 26.6 in kindergartens in the scholastic year 1999/2000, which is less than it was in 1994/1995 when the rate was 28.6 students per class. The elementary level class density rate, however, was 37.5 students and the secondary level class density rate was 30.3 students in the scholastic year 1999/2000. In other words, the rates were higher than they were in the scholastic year 1994/1995 when the elementary level class density rate was 37.1 and the secondary level class density rate 30.2 (see Annex, Table 4-13). These averages show that a negative development affected class density rates in the WBGS schools under the supervision of the government and UNRWA, while a positive development affected class density rates in kindergartens under the supervision of the private and NGO sectors.

The data also showed that improvements in the class density rates in kindergartens

applied to both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In addition, the data showed that a high average of students per class in the elementary and secondary levels was applicable to both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with the exception of the secondary stage in the Gaza Strip. This stage was assigned with a class density rate of 39.1 students in 1999/2000, declining from 40.6 students per class in 1994/1995. The class density rate was still shown to be higher in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank at all levels, which proves that the educational infrastructure in the Gaza Strip is still weaker than its counterpart in the West Bank (see Annex, Table 4-13).

Class density rates in relation to the supervisory authority showed (see Annex, Table 4-14) that UNRWA schools were the most overcrowded, with the elementary level class density rate reaching 47.7 students per class. The elementary level class density rate in governmental schools reached 36 students per class, while in private schools it reached 26 students per class in 1999/2000. Worth noting is that UNRWA does not provide secondary education or kindergartens; in other words, it is

responsible for only elementary level schools. Consequently, students who wish to continue their education at the end of the elementary stage have to move to either governmental or private schools. The data also showed that the average class density rate fluctuates from one year to another whether in governmental, UNRWA, or private schools. There was a noticeable increase in the average number of students per class in each of the last six scholastic years in UNRWA schools, where the average went up from 43.6 students per class in 1994/1995 to 47.7 students per class in 1999/2000. This rise in the class density rate in UNRWA schools is due to the agency cutting back on its services as well as a lack of commitment on the part of some donor countries when it comes to fulfilling their financial commitments.

4-2-8 Higher Education: A Large Increase in the Number of University Students

The number of university students in 1999/2000 was 66,050 (35,696 males and 30,354 females). The data showed that a large increase was realized in the number of university students in the WBGs between 1994/1995 and 1999/2000. The number in 1994/1995 was 29,380 (16,042 males and 13,338 females), which means there was an increase of 124.8 percent. The increase among females, at 127.6 percent, was slightly higher than that among males, 122.5 percent (see Annex, Table 4-15). These results confirm that there was an increase in the enrollment rates in the various universities in the WBGs following the establishment of the Authority. This can be attributed in great part to the fact that the universities increased the number of students they admitted each year and to the establishment of new universities. The increase in the rate of enrolled females in comparison with that of enrolled males points to an improvement in the willingness of relatives and society to

have females attend university (see Annex, Table 4-15).

The number of students enrolled in community colleges in the scholastic year 1999/2000 was 5,157 (2,388 males and 2,769 females). The data also showed a 25 percent increase in the number of community college students in the period between 1994/1995 and 1999/2000. This increase, which was not as high as that pertaining to the universities, is partly attributable to the increase in demand for university graduates in the local labor market. The increase in the rate of students in the mentioned period was limited to 25 percent of the total number of college students. The increase rate among male students, at 27 percent, was higher than that among females, which reached 24 percent (see Annex, Table 4-15). The ratio of females to males in community colleges declined in the aforementioned period. This may be a result of an increasing tendency among female students to attend universities rather than colleges on the one hand, and an increase in the demand for college placement on the part of male students on the other.

The number of university graduates in 1998/1999 was 8,380 (4,449 males and 3,931 females). The number of community college graduates, meanwhile, was 1,780 (722 males and 1,058 females).

With regard to the number of people working in universities, teaching staff was 2904 in 1999/2000 (2,575 males and 329 females), which represents a raise of 84.9 percent when compared to 1994/1995 figures when the number of teaching staff was 1571 teachers (1376 males and 195 females). The increase was higher for male teachers reaching 87.1% compared to the increase in female teachers at 68.7% (Table 4-16).

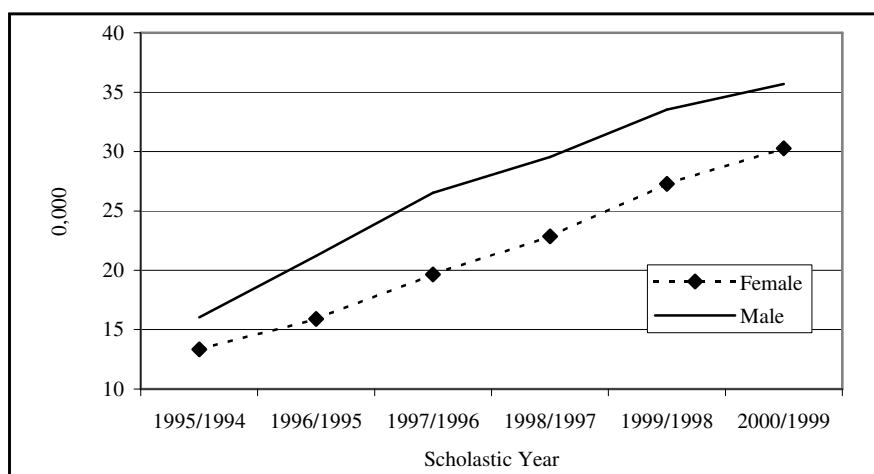
The number of teaching staff in the community colleges was 467 in 1999/2000 (332 males and 135 females), which

represents a decline of 6.2 percent when compared to the members of the teaching staff in 1994/1995, which was 498 teachers (391 males and 107 females). It is worth noting that the decline applied solely to male teachers, among whom it reached 15.1 percent. As for the number of female teachers, it increased by 26.2 percent (see Annex, Table 4-16).

The rate of female participation in teaching in the Palestinian higher education institutions is very low in comparison with that of male participation. The situation, however,

appears slightly better in the community colleges. Female educators in community colleges accounted for 28.91 percent of the total number of teaching staff there. In the Palestinian universities, however, females accounted for only 11.33 percent of the total number of teaching staff (see Annex, Table 4-16). The low percentage of female educators working in institutions of higher education is attributed to the low number of women with scientific qualifications (MA and above), without which they would not have been able to become members of the teaching staff.

Figure 4.4: Distribution of Students at Universities by Sex , 1994/1995-1999/2000



Source: PCBS and Ministry of Education. *Survey of Educational Institutions Data Base* (several years)

Summary

The executing of the general census of 1997 had an important impact in terms of revealing the real situation of the educational characteristics of individuals in the Palestinian society. The results of the census revealed, for example, that the illiteracy rate in the WBSG is relatively high, particularly among females. The gap between males and females, however, is declining year after year and is disappearing altogether in the younger age groups, even becoming in favor of females

in the 15-19 age bracket. The gap between the two sexes is not limited to the literacy rate, but extends to educational enrollment opportunities. This particular gap, however, is also diminishing year after year and is becoming much smaller in the younger age groups than it is in the older ones. In addition to the gap between the two sexes, a gap in the illiteracy rate exists with regard to the various population centers with the lowest rates being found in the urban gatherings, followed by the refugee camps and then the rural areas.

The results of the census also revealed the high rate of students among the total population in the age group six years and above. This points to high dependency rates, especially if taken into consideration the percentage of the population that is under six years of age.

The results pertaining to the educational institutions showed an increase in the number of schools and an even higher increase in the number of kindergartens in the period covered by this issue of the *Social Monitor*. The increase in the Gaza Strip was higher than in the West Bank. The comparative increase was in favor of private sector schools and kindergartens at a time when the ratio of governmental and UNRWA schools to the total number of schools had declined. In spite of the increase achieved in regard to the number of schools, the increase was not sufficient to reduce the average number of students per class. Class density rates in the governmental and UNRWA schools increased while they declined in private schools. This occurred even though the student enrollment rate in governmental and UNRWA schools declined in comparison with the total number of students during a time when enrollment in private schools increased.

The results also revealed that the majority of students are still drawn to higher education. The increase in the enrollment rates in vocational education institutions was very limited, which implies that the Palestinian educational strategy adopted by the Ministry of Education, which was designed to encourage vocational training, has not been that successful.

The results also showed an improvement in the academic qualifications of teachers of both sexes in schools as well as an increase in their numbers. This numerical increase, however, was not sufficient to decrease the average number of students per teacher ratio except in the private schools. This average rose noticeably in UNRWA schools and rose again in

government schools after 1998/1999, following a decline in both private and UNRWA schools between 1994/1995 and 1997/1998.

In addition, the results showed a noticeable improvement in class repetition and dropout rates, both of which decreased in the period covered by this section. The decline applied to students of both sexes.

Concerning the university education level, the number of university students increased considerably between 1994/1995 and 1999/2000. The increase was larger among females, which points to an improvement in the willingness of families to educate their daughters in mixed Palestinian universities. The increase in the number of students enrolled in community colleges was natural. What is surprising, however, is that the increase among male students was higher than that among female students, whereas the opposite was true of university students.

5- CULTURAL LIFE

Cultural indicators include a number of cultural activities (in the general sense of culture), such as reading newspapers, listening to the radio, watching television, visiting cultural institutions, and engaging in other activities with a cultural dimension. Through monitoring these indicators, the *Social Monitor* aims to touch upon some of the features of this field.

Monitoring changes that have occurred in regard to the cultural indicators in the interim phase has not been easy. This is mainly due to the lack of pertinent data that follow a time sequence as well as relying on sources with different interests in the various cultural indicators to

provide relevant data. However, the PCBS started as early as 1998 to issue an annual report on several cultural indicators, which provides time series of indicators that allow specialists to make comparisons between consecutive years.

This section is based on the cultural surveys and data provided by the PCBS in 1998 and 1999 in two reports¹¹ and on the results of the media survey conducted by the PCBS between 17 June and 15 July 2000.¹²

5-1 Fifty-Eight Percent of the Cultural Centers in the WBGS Inactive

The number of licensed cultural centers in the WBGS in 1999 was 176. This figure included 141 centers in the West Bank and 35 in the Gaza Strip. Of the total number of centers, 74 were active (54 in the West Bank and 20 in the Gaza Strip), while 102 centers were either closed or did not organize any activities in 1999. In 1998, however, the number of licensed cultural centers in the WBGS was 179, including 137 centers in the West Bank and 42 in the Gaza Strip. Of these, 83 centers were active while 96 were either closed or did

not organize any activities that year. The number of cultural centers, therefore, declined by 11% in 1999.

The data showed (see Annex, Table 5-1) that 62 percent of the cultural centers in the West Bank were not operational while the rate of inactive centers in the Gaza Strip was 43 percent. The data also showed that functioning cultural centers in the West Bank were focused in the Hebron and Nablus governorates. In the Gaza Strip, functioning cultural centers were focused in the Gaza governorate, which housed 45 percent of the functioning cultural centers in the Gaza Strip. It should be taken into consideration that the number of cultural centers does not point to the size of these centers or the volume and area of their activities.

The activities of the functioning centers in 1999 consisted mainly of symposia, lectures, general courses, artistic performances, and exhibitions. The cultural activities that took place in the various cultural centers were distributed as follows: 421 symposia, 109 lectures, 1,221 general courses, 572 artistic performances, and 231 art exhibitions.

The data also showed that more people attended art exhibitions than any other cultural activity held at the various centers. The number of visitors to these exhibitions was 271,834. In terms of attendance figures, art exhibitions were followed by artistic performances, which were attended by 94,935 visitors. The remaining activities included general courses with 30,425 people participating, symposia with 23,523 people in attendance, and finally, by lectures attended by 4,280 people.

5-2 Number of Newspapers and their Period of Publication

The number of licensed newspapers in the WBGS in 1999, standing at 30, was one

¹¹ These two reports provide a lot of data on the cultural centers and their activities, cinemas, theaters, and museums in terms of their geographical distribution and attendance figures, and on newspapers and magazines in terms of their periodical issuance and types. They also provide data on the Palestinian Broadcasting Service and TV in terms of programs, the number of annual transmission hours and the languages used in the transmissions, in addition to cultural and entertainment activities as well as data based on the administrative records of the cultural centers, cinemas, newspapers, magazines, museums, and theaters that were licensed by the Ministry of Culture and Information in 1998 and 1999. The reports' data are also based on the administrative records available at the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Waqf and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Palestinian Radio and TV Corporation.

¹² The media survey was designed to provide data on several topics related to the media, whether audio, visual or written, as well as to provide data on the phenomenon of computer possession and Internet linkage.

more than in 1998. Of the 30, 21 were based in the West Bank and nine in the Gaza Strip. The number of functioning newspapers was 13, with the figure remaining constant in 1998 and 1999. Of the 13 newspapers, eight were published in the West Bank and five in the Gaza Strip, while nine were political and four apolitical.

The data did not show any significant disparity in regards to the publication period of functioning newspapers in 1998 and 1999. Three dailies, five weeklies, three bi-weeklies and two monthly newspapers continued to be published.

5-2-1 More than 50 Percent of the Population Do Not Read Newspapers¹³

The data originating from the PCBS survey of the media apparatuses in the period 17 June-15 July 2000 showed that only a limited percentage of individuals 18 years and above regularly read daily newspapers. Whereas the overall rate was 11.5 percent, the rate among males was 16.7 percent and that among females 6.3 percent. A high percentage of the population, 54.3 percent, did not read newspapers, while the remaining (34.2 percent) read dailies occasionally. The data also showed that 3.7 percent of individuals 18 years and above read weekly newspapers on a regular basis, while 10.2 percent read them occasionally and the remaining (86.2 percent) never reading papers.

Of all the newspapers, *Al-Quds* (Jerusalem) had the highest percentage of readers, with 72.3 percent of the total number of individuals aged 18 and above who read the dailies on either a daily or irregular basis. *Al-Ayyam* daily took second place in terms of the number of regular and irregular readers with 16.8

percent, followed by *Al-Hayyat Al-Jadeedah* daily, with 9.7 percent.

The data showed a disparity between the West Bank and Gaza Strip in terms of the number of readers per paper. The data revealed that 81.1 percent of the total number of people who read newspapers regularly or irregularly in the West Bank read *Al-Quds*, which was followed by *Al-Ayyam* with 13.2 percent, then *Al-Hayyat Al-Jadeedah* with 4.8 percent. In the Gaza Strip, the order was the same, but the percentages were different. The number of people reading *Al-Quds*, for example, accounted for 44.6 percent of the total number of readers, *Al-Ayyam* 28.5 percent, and *Al-Hayyat Al-Jadeedah* 25.4 percent.

Results in regard to the weekly newspapers showed that *Kul Al-Arab* (All the Arabs) was the most popular weekly in the WBS among individuals aged 18 and above as 53 percent of the total number of individuals who read weekly newspapers regularly or irregularly chose this particular paper. Next came *Al-Risala* with 15.8 percent, followed by *Al-Sinnara* with 7.2 percent. In the West Bank, *Kul Al-Arab* had the highest percentage of readers with 68.7 percent, followed by *Al-Sinnara* with 9.3 percent, and *Al-Risala* with 5.8 percent. In the Gaza Strip, the percentages were as follows: *Al-Risala* 48.1 percent, followed by *Kul Al-Arab* 1.9 percent, and *Al-Sinnara* 0.6 percent.

The data also revealed that if provided with an opportunity to choose a free daily newspaper, 64 percent of individuals (18 years of age and older) living in the West Bank would choose *Al-Quds*; followed by *Al-Ayyam* with 10.5 percent, and *Al-Hayyat Al-Jadeedah* with 3.6 percent. It is worth noting that 21.4 percent did not choose any daily newspaper. The results for the Gaza Strip were as follows: *Al-Quds* 42.1 percent, *Al-Ayyam* 20.3 percent, and *Al-Hayyat Al-Jadeedah* 11.6 percent, with 24.7 percent not choosing any daily newspaper.

¹³ It is worth mentioning that people included in one percentage pertaining to a particular paper does not indicate that they did not read other papers, simply that they read this particular paper frequently.

The data showed that readers clearly prefer certain sections in newspapers to others, with the highest rate, 37.6 percent, reading the news section and political articles. It should be noted, however, that the rate differs between males and females, reaching 51.4 percent among males but only 18.3 percent among females. The local news section was second in popularity with 11.2 percent, followed by the 'newspaper diary' section with 9.5 percent.

5-3 A Rise in the Number of Licensed Magazines and a Decline in the Number of Published Ones

In 1999 there were 104 licensed magazines in the WBGS, five more than in 1998. While there were 77 licensed magazines in the West Bank in 1998, increasing to 81 in 1999, there were 22 in the Gaza Strip increasing only to 23 the next year.

Regardless that there were more licensed magazines in the WBGS in 1999 than there were in 1998, the number of functioning magazines declined from 42 in 1998 to 33 in 1999. In 1999, the functioning magazines were concentrated mainly in the West Bank, with 82 percent of them being published there, mainly in the two governorates of Jerusalem and Ramallah/Al-Bireh. In the Gaza Strip, the rate was limited to 18 percent with all the magazines being published in the Gaza governorate with the exception of one, which was published in the Khan Yunis governorate.

The results also showed that most of the functioning magazines in 1999 were either monthlies (19 magazines) or quarterlies (11 magazines), with only one magazine being published weekly, one biweekly, and one according to a different timeframe. In terms of specialization, the functioning magazines were distributed as

follows: three children's magazines, one economic magazine, three cultural magazines, one religious magazine, one scientific magazine, one medical magazine, and 14 non-specialized magazines dealing with a variety of issues, in addition to nine other magazines with other specializations.

5-4 A Rise in the Number of Licensed Museums and Stability Among the Functioning Ones

The number of licensed museums in the WBGS rose from 14 in 1998 to 17 in 1999, with the three new museums all in the West Bank and the number of licensed museums in the Gaza Strip remaining at two. The number of functioning museums, ten, remained stable in 1998 and 1999. All of the functioning museums were in the West Bank (center and south) with the exception of one museum in the Gaza governorate. Most of the museums are specialized in antiquities, heritage, and folkloric dresses.

The data revealed a noticeable increase in the number of museum visitors, which rose by 62.5 percent, or from 101,708 in 1998 to 164,870 in 1999.

5-5 Decline in the Number of Theaters

The number of licensed theaters in the WBGS decreased from 11 in 1998 to 10 in 1999 (eight theaters in the West Bank and two in the Gaza Strip). Of the ten theaters, six were functioning while four others were closed (two in the West Bank and two in the Gaza Strip).

The number of plays performed in the various theaters in 1999 was 245. Of this number 213 were staged in the theaters of the West Bank and 32 in the Gaza Strip.

With respect to target audiences, the number of plays designed for children was 96, for adults 103, and the number of plays designed for both children and adults was 46. A total of 86,824 people attended plays in 1999.

5-6 No Licensed Cinema Halls in the Gaza Strip

In 1999 there were three licensed cinema halls, the same number as the year before, all of which were in the West Bank, namely in the cities of Al-Bireh, Nablus, and Tulkarem. The three licensed cinema halls screened 275 films in 1999 including 94 Arab films and 181 foreign films. The number of people who viewed these movies was 46,696.

5-7 No Private Radio and TV Stations in the Gaza Strip

In 1999, there were 11 radio stations in the WBGS, three more than in 1998. The stations were distributed as follows: ten local radio stations, all of which were commercial, and one national radio station, Sawt Falastine (Voice of Palestine), the only governmental owned station.

In total, the Voice of Palestine radio station transmitted for 6,944 hours in 1999. The rate of transmission hours allocated to news-oriented programs was the highest, reaching 40.5 percent, followed by entertainment programs at 36.5 percent, religious programs at 8.4 percent, cultural programs at 4.6 percent, educational programs at 1.1 percent, children's programs at 1 percent, and other programs at 7.9 percent. Transmissions in Arabic accounted for 96.3 percent of the total annual transmission hours, with the other 3.7 percent of transmission hours involving the use of various foreign languages.

Thirty TV stations functioned in the WBGS in 1999, the same number as the year before. These stations included 29 private stations, all of which were commercial, and one national TV station (Palestine TV), which is the only governmental TV station.

Palestine TV was on the air for 3,877 hours in 1999. Entertainment programs accounted for the greater part, or 39.6 percent, of the annual transmission hours of this station, followed by news-oriented programs at 27.2 percent, religious programs at 12.6 percent, children's programs at 5.9 percent, cultural programs at 5.5 percent, advertising at 3.4 percent, educational programs at 0.3 percent, and other programs at 5.00 percent. Programs in Arabic accounted for 91.7 percent of the annual transmission hours, with the remaining 8.3 percent involved the use of foreign languages.

5-7-1 Number of People Who Watched Palestine TV and Listened to the Voice of Palestine Higher in Gaza than in the West Bank

Out of every 100 households with a television, 23 also possess a videocassette recorder.

The rate of households with TV sets reached 89.7 percent of the total number of households in the WBGS in the year 2000, which reflects a slight increase from the year before when the rate was 89.2 percent.

The data showed that 29.8 percent of the households watched Palestine TV on a regular or even daily basis (16.2 percent in the West Bank and 56.2 percent in the Gaza Strip), while 28.6 percent watched it only occasionally (31.9 percent in the West Bank and 22.2 percent in the Gaza Strip). The data also revealed that the peak viewing period was between 8.00 pm and 10.00 pm, when 37.1 percent of households in the WBGS watched Palestine TV.

In terms of listening to the governmental Voice of Palestine, the data showed that 16 percent of Palestinians in the WBGS 18 years of age and older regularly listened to the station (12.4 percent in the West Bank and 23.9 percent in the Gaza Strip). The rate of those who listened occasionally was much higher, reaching 46.9 percent (48.9 percent in the West Bank and 42.3 percent in the Gaza Strip).

5-7-2 Increase in the Number of People Watching Palestine TV in the Gaza Strip and Jordan TV Channels in the West Bank.

The data for the year 2000¹⁴ showed that Palestinian households watch Palestine TV more than any other television station. The rate of households who watched the Palestine TV channel was 36.7 percent, which was followed by Jordan TV at 32 percent. The previous rates point to an increase in the number of people who watched Palestine TV in comparison with 1999, when the rate was 30.7 percent. The data also pointed to an increase in the number of people who watched Jordan TV's Channel 1 in the year 2000 compared with the year 1999 in which the rate was 34.3 percent. Palestinian households that did not watch television accounted for 23.2 percent of the total number of Palestinian households in the year 2000.

The data showed that although the number of people who watched Palestine TV was higher than that associated with any other channel, the station was more popular in the Gaza Strip than it was in the West Bank. The percentage of households that watched this channel more than any other channel in the Gaza Strip was 71.9 percent. Egyptian TV followed this at 2.9 percent and Jordan TV at 2.5 percent. Households in the Gaza Strip that did not watch TV accounted for 20.9 percent of the total number of households. In the West Bank, however, the rate of

households that watched Jordan TV's Channel 1, at 47.1, was the highest, followed by the rate of those that watched Palestine TV, which reached 18.6. The rate of households that did not watch TV in the West Bank was 24.4 percent of the total number of households.

5-7-3 TV Satellite Channels

45 out of every 100 households with TV sets also had satellite receivers

The rate of households that possessed satellite receivers in the WBGS reached 45.4 percent of the total number of households that owned TV sets in the year 2000, which means that there was a 30.9 percent increase since 1999.

Al-Jazira Satellite Channel was apparently the most popular satellite channel in the year 2000, with 35.1 percent of the total number of households that possessed satellite receivers watching it more than any other channel (36.6 percent in the West Bank and 32.6 percent in the Gaza Strip). Next in line was ART Radio and TV Channel at 20.3 percent, MBC (Middle East MBC) at 13.8 percent, the Egyptian Satellite Channel at 10.7 percent, the Bahraini Satellite TV Channel at 6.6 percent, and the Lebanese Satellite Channel (LBC) at 4.6 percent. With regard to news programs, the data indicated that Al-Jazira was still number one with a percentage of 78.2 percent, in comparison with 80.9 percent in 1999. MBC also maintained the second position with a rate of 6.6 percent in comparison with 5.7 percent in 1999.

5-7-4 Light Entertainment Programs the Most Popular among the Programs Aired by the Local Private TV Stations

The rate of Palestinian households that watched local stations varied considerably between one governorate and another. The highest rate applied to the Bethlehem governorate (74.8 percent), followed by

¹⁴ PCBS, *Media Survey*, 2000.

the Qalqiliya governorate (55.7 percent), and the Tulkarm governorate (54.2 percent). The lowest rate applied to the Jerusalem governorate and the Tubas region where it reached 13.2 percent and 0.7 percent, respectively. It is worth mentioning that the rates were no doubt affected by the quality of reception in each governorate.

Light entertainment programs at 47 percent were the most popular among the private TV programs watched by Palestinian households. Music and song programs at 12.2 percent, and religious programs, and the news, the rate of each being 10 percent followed this.

5-7-5 Peak Viewing Period: 8:00 pm-10:00 pm

The results of the media survey of 2000 indicate that the peak viewing period is between 8:00 pm and 10:00 pm. The rate of Palestinian households in the WBGS that watched TV during this period was found to be 41.1 percent (37.7 percent in the West Bank and 47.8 percent in the Gaza Strip).

The results also revealed that 26.8 percent of individuals in the WBGS 18 years and above listened to the radio on a daily basis. 75.1 percent of these individuals did so at home, while 18.4 percent listened at the work place. 5.6 percent listened while traveling in private cars, buses, taxis, etc.

The results also showed that the preferred time for children (6-17 years old) to listen to radio and watch TV was between 2:00 pm and 6:00 pm, when 29.1 listened to the radio and 38.3 watched television.

5-8 Possession and Use of Electronic Equipment

- Of every 100 households, 11 owned a computer
- Of every 100 households, 42 owned a telephone line

- Of every 100 households, eight possessed both a telephone line and a computer
- Of every 100 households, two were linked to the Internet.

The rate of families with computers was 10.8 percent (11.4 percent in the West Bank and 9.6 percent in the Gaza Strip) in the year 2000 in comparison with 6.9 percent in 1999. Of all WBGS households, 42.1 percent had a telephone line in the year 2000, an increase of 16 percent from the previous year when the rate was 36.4. The results also showed that 8.2 percent of the households had both telephone lines and computers (8.9 percent in the West Bank and 6.8 percent in the Gaza Strip).

Two percent of the total number of households with both telephone lines and computers in the WBGS were linked to the Internet (2.58 percent in the West Bank and 1.61 percent in the Gaza Strip). However, the rate of individuals aged 18 and above who used the Internet was higher at 5.4 percent. The rate differed between males and females, with 7.9 percent of males using the Net and only 2.8 percent of females. The highest rate of users, or 37.9 percent, used the Internet at their place of work or study. The results of the survey also revealed that 56.1 percent of those who used the Internet did so for work purposes or to gain information and knowledge.

The results also showed that 23 percent of children (6-17 years) used computers, with a majority, 44.4 percent, using them at home. The majority of children who used computers saw 59.2 percent, did so for entertainment and amusement purposes, while 28.8 used it mainly for study and learning purposes (educational programs).

5-9 With One Exception, All Cultural Festivals Took Place in the West Bank

The West Bank witnessed the holding of 21 festivals in 1999 (PCBS 2000a: 67). This figure was slightly lower than the 1998 numbers, 25. All the festivals held in 1999 were held in the West Bank with the exception of one. The West Bank festivals were distributed among the three regions as follows: nine in the central area of the West Bank, three in the south, and eight in the north. There were also 69 art exhibitions in 1999, 48 more than in 1998. The exhibitions were distributed as follows: 14 in the southern area of the West Bank, 30 in the central area, and 25 in the northern area.

5-10 Two Thirds of Public Libraries Located in the West Bank

The PCBS data revealed that there were 20 public libraries for adults in the WBGS supervised by the Ministry of Culture, 75 percent of which were in the West Bank and the rest in the Gaza Strip. The number of public libraries for children under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture was 60, 33.3 percent of which were in the Gaza Strip and the remaining in the West Bank.

Public libraries for adults in the West Bank were distributed as follows: nine libraries in the north, six in the center, and one in the south, located in the Hebron governorate. Each governorate in the Gaza Strip had a public library for adults with the exception of the Northern Gaza governorate. Public libraries for children were distributed as follows: 16 in the north of the West Bank, ten in the center of the West Bank, and 14 in the south of the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip the largest number of public libraries for children, eight, was found in the Gaza

governorate, followed by the Deir Al-Balah governorate with five, the Northern Gaza and Khan Yunis governorates with three each, and the Rafa governorate with two.

Summary

Cultural activity in Palestine is still concentrated in the center of the West Bank and in the city of Gaza. These two areas witnessed the highest rates of cultural activity. Functioning newspapers and magazines, large cultural institutions such as the Rashad Al-Shawwa Center, Al-Qasab Theater, the Popular Art Center, the Khalil Al-Sakakini Center and others are located in these two areas, as well as a number of important research institutions.

The population of the Gaza Strip watched Palestine TV and listened to the Palestine Radio station more than the population in the West Bank. Until 1999, the Gaza Strip still had no private TV or radio stations, although many existed in the West Bank.

The data also revealed an increase in the rate of households that possessed computers in the WBGS as well as an increase in the use of the Internet and satellite receivers.

The statistics pertaining to culture lack comprehensiveness. For example, there is a lack of information concerning cultural activities organized by ministries and organizations not licensed as cultural institutions such as certain charitable societies. There are other indicators lacking, such as those pertaining to publication and cinematic creativity. These shortcomings hinder the possibility of formulating a suitable picture of the cultural life in the WBGS and its development.

6- SOCIAL SECURITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The Authority inherited a destroyed infrastructure from the Israeli occupation authorities (which are still in control of most of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including the natural resources and crossing points). The occupation authorities invested mainly in areas related to security and in the provision of better conditions for settlers. This had a negative effect on the rate of Palestinian households with basic public services, such as electricity, water, sewerage, and telephone systems, as well as the deterioration of governmental services in the field of social security, health and education.

This section deals with indicators for which data were available during the five years that followed the establishment of the Authority. These pertain to work conditions, social welfare systems, and public services available in the population centers and houses.

6-1 Consolidating Labor Legislation in the WBS

President Arafat endorsed the Palestinian Labor Law in the year 2000, thus consolidating the labor legislation in the PNA territories.¹⁵ The Palestinian Labor

¹⁵ The labor laws that were being put into practice in the WBS suffered as a result of the differences between them (the Palestinian Labor Law No. 11 of 1964 in the Gaza Strip and the Jordanian Labor Law of 1960 and its modified version of 1965). The laws also had failings resulting from the fact that they were so old. The law applicable to the Gaza Strip, for instance, authorizes the labor inspector to impose a fine of JD 10 on an institution that violates the law (such as by employing children under the age of 14 or by violating regulations pertaining to public and work safety). The same applies to the laws enforced in the West Bank. In addition, there is a lack of specialized labor courts to adjudicate rapidly in labor disputes, which means that labor dispute cases remain hidden in drawers for years due to the current situation. (See *Social Monitor* No. 3.)

Law provided a solid basis for regulating the relationship among the various parties concerned with the production process in the private sector and for improving work conditions by providing the legal environment that allows for regulating dialogues, contradictions, and conflicts among these parties.

The form of the Labor Law has been subjected to a protracted and active discussion and dialogue process in which the three parties involved have participated, namely, the government represented by the Ministry of Labor, labor unions, and employers. Certain legal institutions concerned with labor rights have also participated, especially the Democracy and Workers' Rights Center. The law as formulated is more advanced than the previous labor legislation in terms of workers' rights. It exempts workers, for instance, from paying legal fees in labor disputes, confirms the right of workers to receive compensation if they leave their work, and sets the number of weekly working days at six and the number of hours at 45. The law also grants women maternity leave of ten weeks assuming they have been employed for at least 180 days prior to delivery. In addition, the law set the amount of compensation to be paid to workers who sustain injuries at work that result in death or serious disability at the wage for 3,500 days of work.

All throughout the endorsement process the law was, and is still being heavily criticized by employers and legalists. They claim that it includes provisions which cannot easily be put into practice. The same people also claim that certain aspects of the law will have a negative impact on investment in the WBS, especially the provisions dealing with compensation for work accidents. (see *Sawt Al-'Amil* (The Worker's Voice, Issue 33, August 2000).)

Although the Civil Service Law was put into practice at the end of 1998, its implementation was then suspended by the PNA and has remained suspended. This is

due to the many problems created by its implementation, especially in regard to giving the appropriate grades to PNA employees, counting the years spent involved in the national struggle as experience, and the need to provide the necessary financial resources in order to meet the financial needs of the Law's implementation.

The Palestinian Civil Service Law resulted in a major protracted discussion, especially after it was endorsed. PLC members believed that the problem was related to the method used for implementing the law rather than its text. They believed it required implementation charts, gradual implementation, and for the organizational structures of the ministries to be endorsed.¹⁶

The Social Insurance Law is still presented to the PLC. This law has also provoked serious discussion and dialogue among the concerned bodies (the government, employers, the labor unions, and the legal centers).

During this transitory stage, the consolidation of labor legislation both in the public and private sectors was achieved in the PNA territories. The effective application of the legislation, however, still requires more effort on the part of the concerned parties and for a decision to be made regarding the way in which it can be gradually and successfully implemented. This should be accompanied by the provision of appropriate implementation charts, qualified departments, and the completion of all related legislation and regulations, such as the Social Insurance Law and the endorsing of the organizational structures of the ministries.

6-1-1 Tragic Labor Accidents

The year 1999 witnessed a tragic labor accident in the WBGS when 14 female

workers were killed when a lighter factory in Hebron went up in flames. The tragedy revealed both the low-level public safety conditions that had existed in the factory and the owners' exploitation of the female and child workers (i.e., children under the legal working age). The tragedy also revealed the extreme weakness of the departments that execute and control the implementation of the laws at the ministries concerned, such as the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Industry and the municipalities. These departments obviously are responsible for ensuring the application of laws and regulations that guarantee the safety of the public and workers. The year also witnessed accidents due to the workers' failure to take the necessary precautions. One incident occurred in Al-Bireh when three men were killed while working on a construction site. The deaths of two other workers in Gaza occurred when they attempted to demolish the front wall of a house.

Reports of the Inspection Department at the Ministry of Labor indicated that 1.2 percent of workers in the institutions that were inspected in 1998 had been involved in work accidents. The work of the department is restricted to a limited number of institutions. (In 1998, approximately 12,620 institutions were inspected in the WBGS.) This situation is due to the lack of fulltime employees in the department and the attempts of some institutions to operate without licenses.

6-1-2 Weak Union Organization

The work conditions survey of mid-1997¹⁷ revealed that approximately 15 percent of the total number of waged laborers in the WBGS were registered with the labor unions. This included 15.3 percent of the workers in the West Bank, 15.6 percent in the Gaza Strip, and 14.2 percent of the workers who worked in Israel and the

¹⁶ The PLC, *Al-Majles Al-Tashri' i* Issue No. 1, Volume 4, 1999, a special supplement on the Civil Service Law.

¹⁷ The sample included 4,622 families comprising 4,736 workers (PCBS, 1999, Work Conditions Survey, main findings (May-June, 1997), Ramallah.

settlements. The rate of female members of labor unions was 17.3 percent of the total number of waged women workers, compared with 14.7 percent of male workers (PCBS 1999h: 48 and 51).

6-1-3 Better Work Conditions in the Public Sector

Forty percent of the employed Palestinians in the WBGs in 1997 worked according to work contracts,¹⁸ 46 percent of them in the West Bank and 67 percent in the Gaza Strip. The rate for WBGs workers in Israel and the settlements did not exceed 9 percent in the same period (PCBS 1999h: 57). Workers in the public sector contributed to the rise in this rate since they usually worked according to written contracts.

The public sector workers enjoy better labor rights and privileges than workers in the private sector. Workers in the public sector usually work according to written contracts, are covered by the governmental health insurance and enjoy weekly and annual leave, pension rights, and other labor rights according to the law. The data showed that approximately half the workers (including those who work in Israel and the settlements) benefited from paid annual leave, health insurance, and insurance against labor accidents.

The data also showed that employees in the WBGs enjoyed better rights and privileges than those working in Israel and the settlements. Approximately one fifth of those who worked in Israel were granted sick leave, 17 percent were granted paid annual leave, and 38 percent had health insurance, compared with 61 percent, 53 percent, and 51 percent respectively in the West Bank. The West Bank rates are higher because a high number of employees work for governmental departments and UNRWA,

both of which provide their workers with the rights and privileges stated in the law.

Workers from the WBGs who work in Israel and the settlements enjoy higher average wage rates than their counterparts who work in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The continuation of their work, however, is conditional on political developments and Israeli security considerations at a time when Israel has resorted to frequently closing its labor market to Palestinians for prolonged periods.

It should also be noted that those who work in Israel without work permits are denied their labor rights and that they are often deceived or maltreated by their Jewish employers who exploit their 'illegal' (according to the occupation regulations) presence.

6-2 Limited Unofficial Social Security Systems

A previous MAS study revealed the limited nature of unofficial social security (MAS, 1997a).¹⁹ The data showed that approximately 10 percent of the sample families provided regular assistance (every one or two months) of varying amounts to relatives and that 3.6 percent of the sample families provided assistance to families outside their *hamoulas* (clans). The previous figures point to the limited effectiveness of the unofficial social security system in the Palestinian society in the period covered by the survey (MAS 1997a: 18).

Twenty seven percent of the families who classified their economic status as miserable said they received assistance of various types and amounts. The rate of families who received assistance among those families who classified their situation as difficult or very difficult was

¹⁸ The Survey conducted by MAS in 1996 showed that the rate of workers working according to written contracts was no more than 18 percent (MAS, 1997a: 52).

¹⁹ The study, conducted in mid-1996, was based on a sample survey covering 1,458 households.

less (18.2 percent and 19.8 percent, respectively) (MAS 1997a: 88).

6-3 Limited Effectiveness of Official Social Security

Three large institutions provide most of the official support in the West Bank: the Ministry of Social Affairs, UNRWA, and Zakat committees. In addition, assistance is also provided by some charitable societies. The three institutions adopt similar bases for the provision of financial support, mainly the absence of a male breadwinner or the inability of the main breadwinner to work. The Zakat committees focus on providing their assistance to orphans through a project known as Kafalat Al-Yatim (Supporting the Orphan). The three organizations have a common strategy, which is to contain poverty but is not supported by any development (MAS 1997b).

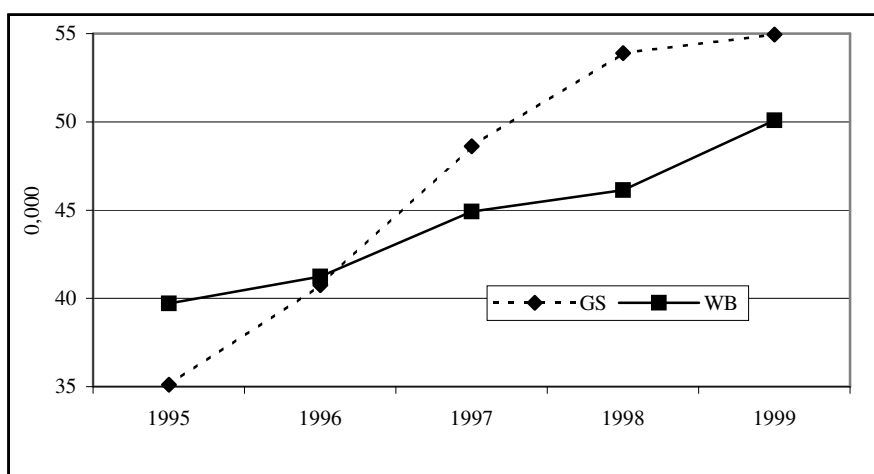
6-3-1 Rise in the Number of Recipients of Assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs

The official records from the Ministry of Social Affairs document an increase in the number of WBGS recipients of assistance from the Ministry in the years 1995-1999.

The rise in the number of families between 1995 and 1999 that received assistance from the Ministry was approximately 75 percent (see Annex, Table 6-1). The rate of increase noticed among families that received financial assistance was lower at 63 percent. This points to a large increase in the number (and rate) of families that received assistance in kind or in the form, i.e., for health insurance, in addition to the provision of other types of assistance including accommodation in orphanages or homes for the elderly. There was a greater increase in the number of families who received assistance in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank. Half of the families who received assistance in 1995 were in the Gaza Strip, while in 1999, 54 percent of the total number of families receiving assistance lived in the Strip. (see Annex, Table 6-1.)

The total number of families who received assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1999 was 33,843. These families comprised 124,163 individuals, of whom 54 percent (families and individuals) were in the Gaza Strip. In the WBGS, 31,448 families received financial assistance. These families comprised 105,022 individuals, of whom 52 percent (families and individuals) were in the Gaza Strip.

Figure 6.1: Ministry of Social Affairs Supports in the WBGS by Region, 1995-1999



Source: Ministry of Social Affairs. *Social Assistants Statistics*.

The rate of individuals who received cash assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs per total population in the WBGS showed a slight increase between 1995 and 1999, with the rate rising from 3.4 percent in 1997 to 3.5 percent in 1999. The rate was higher in the Gaza Strip than it was in the West Bank (5.1 percent and 2.6 percent, respectively), with the rate rising in the Gaza Strip from 4.9 percent in 1997 to 5.1 percent in 1999. The rate also rose in the West Bank from 2.5 percent to 2.6 percent in the same period.²⁰

In the Gaza Strip the rate of recipients of assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs is higher than that of the West Bank, which reflects that the poverty rate in the Strip is higher. The poverty report issued in 1998 showed that 33 percent of the residents of the Gaza Strip were living under the poverty line compared with only 14.5 percent of West Bank residents. Extreme poverty rates reached 21.6 percent in the Gaza Strip and 8.4 percent in the West Bank (PCBS 2000d).

No modifications were introduced within the last five years to the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs scale of assistance regardless that the scale is an old one that was endorsed at the beginning of 1988. The scale is progressive in the sense that it increases with the increase in the size of the family. A one-member family, for example, is paid NIS 96. It should be noted that the real value of the assistance provided by the Ministry constantly decreases due to the erosion of the purchasing power of the Israeli Shekel, which decreased by 29.4 percent²¹ between early 1996 and the end of 1999.

²⁰ The rate was calculated as follows: the number of household members who received financial assistance from the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs during the year, divided on the estimated number of population in the middle of that year. (Source: the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs, monthly counts of recipients of assistance from the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs in 1995-1999. The population projections derived from the PCBS publication, *The Population in the Palestinian Territories, 1997-2025*, 1999, Ramallah).

²¹ The real value of the Shekel in February 1996 was equal to 38 percent of its value in February 1988

6-3-2 Slight Increase in the Number of UNRWA Support Recipients

UNRWA's official records between 1995-1999 showed a slight increase in the number of recipients in the WBGS. The monthly average for the number of families receiving assistance from UNRWA increased in this period by 13.5 percent, with the number of families reaching 24,144 in 1999. The number of individuals also increased in the same period by 7.4 percent.

The rate of families who received assistance in the West Bank between 1995 and 1999 was only 0.5 percent, and for individuals with only 1.1 percent. The increase in the Gaza Strip was much larger with a growth of 22 percent in the number of families and an 18.7 percent increase in the number of individuals in the same period (see figure 6-2).

The total number of families who received assistance from UNRWA in 1999 was 24,144, 65 percent of which were in the Gaza Strip.

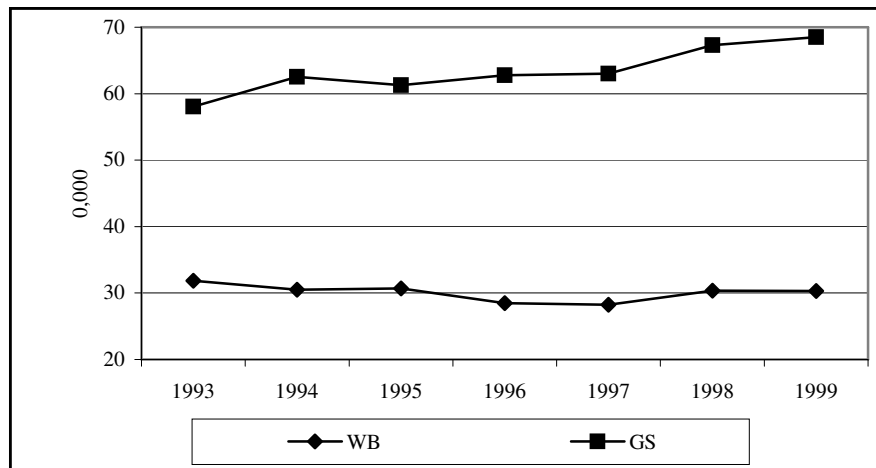
The total number of individuals within these families was 98,815, or 69 percent. The high rates in the Strip in comparison with the West Bank can be attributed to the high refugee population as well as to the high rate of poverty, especially in the camps.

The rate of families consisting of only one person who received assistance from UNRWA per total population remained stable at 3.3 percent in the period 1997-1999. UNRWA provided assistance to 9.7 percent of the total number of refugees in the Gaza Strip and to six percent of the total number in the West Bank.²²

(Sha'ban and Butmeh, *Poverty Dimensions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, 1995, MAS, Ramallah).

²² The rate was calculated in the same manner as the rate of recipients of assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs. 'UNRWA' statistics related to the number of recipients of assistance in 1997 and 1999

Figure 6.2: UNRWA Supports in the WBS by Region, 1995-1999



Source: Ministry of social Affairs. *Social Assistants Statistics*.

6-3-3 Large Increase in the Number of Zakat Committees

Sixty Zakat committees belonging to the Palestinian Ministry of Waqf (Religious Endowment) and Religious Affairs functioned in the WBS in 1999, with 51 committees in the West Bank and 13 in the Gaza Strip. The committees provide their assistance to a large number of families and individuals, especially orphans, within the framework of the Kafalat Al-Yatim program. The committees provided assistance to 9,301 orphans (8,701 in the West Bank and 600 in the Gaza Strip) and to 15,144 families (7,144 in the West Bank and 8,000 in the Gaza Strip) in 1998. Zakat Fund data revealed a 13.4 percent increase in the number of orphans in the West Bank who benefited from the program between 1996 and 1998.²³

The assistance provided by the Zakat committees is often of a financial nature. This is especially the case for regular assistance given to families registered with the committees as families in need; these families also receive irregular assistance in kind. The committees also provide irregular assistance to other families as well if the need is considered by the committees as being less than that of the families actually registered as 'needy cases'. Also supplied by Zakat committees is non-financial assistance to registered families. This is in addition to certain services for which the charges collected from families and individuals who use the facilities of the Zakat Committees are less than those in the market, such as hospitals, medical clinics, schools, and kindergartens (MAS 1997b: 39-40).

The Zakat committees associated with the Zakat Fund also provided emergency assistance (not on regular basis) to a large number of families. Thousands of families also benefited from the Zakat committees' health and medical services. The committees' programs included, but were not limited to, providing poor students at various levels with school fees, stationary, satchels, and other assistance needed.

²³ Zakat Fund data is limited to the Zakat committees associated with the Zakat Fund of the Ministry of Waqf. These committees provide a lower level of assistance in comparison with that shown by the MAS study of 1997. The MAS study revealed the presence of three Zakat committees in the Gaza Strip in addition to the presence of three Islamic charitable institutions that perform the role of Zakat committees. These institutions provided assistance to 1,870 orphans and 3,250 households in 1997 (Hilal, Jamil and Al-Malki, Majdi, "Social Support Institutions, 1997", *Social Monitor*, Issue No. 2).

However, no precise data concerning the provided services is currently available.²⁴

The value of the assistance extended to orphans was about NIS 100 per orphan in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The value of assistance extended to poor families was approximately NIS 150 in the West Bank and between NIS 50-100 in the Gaza Strip according to the size of the family (MAS 1997b: 39-40). Although the number of beneficiaries is large, the committees' contribution to the alleviation of poverty is still limited due to the meager amounts extended.

6-4 Care Services: An Approach Toward Providing Care Within the Home and Local Community

6-4-1 Homes for the Elderly: Full Occupancy Rate Not Reached

In 1999 the number of elderly people (aged 64 and above) in the WBGS was 3.4 percent (102 thousand people). The elderly constitute one of the main groups who receive assistance from the various relief organizations (the Ministry of Social Affairs, Zakat committees, UNRWA, and charitable societies that extend charitable assistance).

During that year there were 18 homes for the elderly, 15 in the West Bank and three in the Gaza Strip. The homes were distributed in the West Bank as follows: nine in the center (three in the Ramallah governorate, five in the Jerusalem governorate, and one in Jericho), three in the north (two in the city of Nablus and one in the city of Jenin), and three in the south (one in Bethlehem, one in Beit Jala, and one in Hebron) (Shalabi, 1999).

The homes were distributed as follows, by means of the supervisory authorities: 12 were under the supervision of local NGOs, five homes were under the supervision of foreign NGOs, and one was under governmental supervision (Shalabi 1999).

The maximum capacity of these homes totaled 439 beds, with 53 beds in the Gaza Strip, 259 in the center of the West Bank, 81 in the south, and 46 beds in the north. The number of residents in the homes was only 386 in 1998, with the figure including 53 elderly people who were handicapped. The real occupancy rate, therefore, did not exceed more than 59 percent of the homes' total capacity. This clearly suggests the low demand in Palestinian society for homes of this nature, which can be attributed to cultural and social reasons. These homes provide services to no more than 0.5 percent of the total number of elderly in the WBGS. A study conducted on homes for the elderly by Fahoum Al-Shalabi recommended that in place of building new homes, the approach should be to "keep the elderly in their homes and provide them with various forms of services there" (Shalabi 1999).

A previous study carried out by MAS revealed a decrease in the number of daycare centers that provide services to the elderly. In 1998 there existed only four homes, two of which were in Jerusalem. Approximately 11 organizations extend services to the elderly, which include the provision of food parcels or hot meals, organizing home visits, and extending home services. The number of beneficiaries, however, is small, and the continuity of the services conditional on the availability of financial support and volunteers (MAS 1998a: 54).

6-4-2 Decline in the Number of Children in Orphanages

There were 21 orphanages in the WBGS in 1998 according to the data of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Seven of these were in the Jerusalem governorate, three

²⁴ The Zakat Fund Department at the Palestinian Ministry of Waqf and Religious Affairs, data on the assistance provided by Zakat committees in 1998.

in the Hebron governorate, two each in the Tulkarm, Nablus, Ramallah, and Hebron governorates, two in the Gaza Strip, and one in Jericho. Four of the orphanages were under the supervision of foreign institutions and the other 17 under that of local NGOs (Ministry of Social Affairs 2000: 13-14).

These orphanages, with a maximum capacity for 2,450 children provided shelter to 1,714 children in 1998 (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2000: 13). The 1998 figures reveal a decline in the number of children who lived in orphanages in comparison with 1995, when the number was 5,336. This is due to the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Social Affairs to thoroughly examine the situation of children before putting them in orphanages, and avoid putting them in orphanages whenever possible. They also attempt to return the children to their families or else provide alternative care (PCBS 2000g: 50).

Eight of the total number of orphanages was for males, four for females, and nine for both sexes. Fifteen were established before 1967, four during the occupation and two orphanages were established following the advent of the Authority (Ministry of Social Affairs 2000: 14).

Zakat committees provide financial and in-kind assistance to large numbers of orphans within the framework of the Kafalat Al-Yatim program. It is worth noting that both the Ministry of Social Affairs and UNRWA consider meeting the needs of orphans as one of their main priorities.

6-4-3 Endorsing the Rights of the Handicapped Law

President Arafat issued the Rights of the Handicapped Law (Law No. 4 of 1999) on 9 August 1999. The preamble of the law asserted "the right of the handicapped to enjoy a free life, to live in dignity, have access to various services, to enjoy the

same rights as other citizens and to meet the same duties according to his capabilities and potential. It is impermissible to make disability a reason for preventing the handicapped from enjoying those rights" (the Rights of the Handicapped Law, Article 2). The law comprises articles related to the provision of protection to the handicapped and the exemption of the handicapped institutions from fees, tax and customs in various fields. In addition, the law determined some special rights of the handicapped in various fields and authorized the Ministry of Social Affairs to be responsible for coordination with the concerned parties in order to guarantee these rights and ensure that the provisions of the law are implemented. One such provision calls for forcing governmental and non-governmental organizations to ensure that no less than five percent of their workforces are handicapped persons and to provide them with suitable work. The law also contains special articles that deal with adapting public places to the needs of the handicapped. Consequently, it represents a major breakthrough in the attempts to deal with the disabled in Palestinian society.

At the close of 1997, the disability rate in the WBGS was 1.8 percent according to the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census (PCBS 2000b: 33). The handicapped are provided with rehabilitation services by local, foreign and international governmental and non-governmental networks. The community-based rehabilitation program represents the cornerstone in the care and rehabilitation system for the handicapped in the WBGS. This program is implemented by local institutions functioning in the field of rehabilitation and care for the handicapped. These institutions function under the umbrella of the National Committee for Rehabilitation in the Gaza Strip and under the Central Committee of Rehabilitation in the West Bank, with the support of the Swedish institution, 'Diakonia', the Norwegian

Society for the Handicapped (NAD), and the Swedish-Palestinian Solidarity Committee. The program's philosophy is based on teaching handicapped individuals and their families the necessary skills through two qualified workers and the use of available local resources in order to improve the situation of the handicapped and have them integrated into the home and society. The program is characterized by its reliance on the work of a small full-time team of qualified staff aided by volunteer local teams (from the same population center). The fact that these local teams are usually quite large helps in covering the needs of the handicapped individuals. This is done by monitoring their disabilities, helping them to acquire the skills needed to survive daily and social life, and in working with the families and society to ensure that the handicapped are accepted. Other activities associated with the program include attempts to protect people from disability through awareness campaigns dealing with genetic influences and healthy baby clinics. The program is being implemented in various regions in the WBGS. The strategy of the community-based rehabilitation program supposes that it is possible to meet 60-70 percent of the needs of the handicapped in the community and between 20-30 percent of their needs in their local region at a time when ten percent of the services are in need for more specialized services on a national scale. (MAS 1998a: 50-51).

The intermediate-level rehabilitation services and the residential care institutions are mainly located in the center of the West Bank. They are limited in number and accommodation capacity, and most specialize in providing medical treatment. A total of 58 NGOs whose main activity was providing care for the handicapped functioned in the WBGS in 1996. These NGOs were distributed as follows: 28 in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, 4 in Ramallah, 8 in the north, three in the Hebron governorate, and 15 in the Gaza Strip. In addition, there were six centers

for rehabilitating the handicapped that belonged to the Ministry of Social Affairs and four Palestinian Red Crescent centers, two of them in the city of Nablus, one in Hebron, and the other in the Gaza Strip. One of the four provides education to the deaf and mute while the others specialize in special education (MAS 1998a: 52).

The PCBS and Ministry of Social Affairs' study (dealing with intermediate level rehabilitation services in the center and south of the WBGS in 1997) revealed that there was a lack of balance in terms of the geographical distribution of institutions and disabilities. There was also a lack of balance in terms of the extended services and types of disabilities. The study also highlighted the need to develop medical services (especially speech therapy and providing treatment to the visually impaired), psychological treatment, social and professional rehabilitation services, and to provide the necessary aid equipment. Worthy of mention is that the accommodation capacity of the institutions that extend these services is much less than the number of disabled individuals in need of assistance.

The Ministry of Social Affairs runs six centers for rehabilitating the handicapped in the WBGS, four of which are in the Gaza Strip. Two of these centers provide care and education to the blind, one is for the mentally retarded, and three are for vocational training of the handicapped. This is in addition to the monetary and in-kind assistance that the Ministry provides to this group.

UNRWA extends services to handicapped individuals and their relatives through coordination with the local rehabilitation committees in the refugee camps.²⁵ This

²⁵ There are local rehabilitation committees in eleven refugee camps in the West Bank : Jalazoun, Qalandiya, Shufat, the Jericho area, Askar, Balatah, Jenin, Tulkarem, Dheisheh, Fawwar and Al-Amari refugee camps. There are also 'societal' committees in seven refugee camps in the Gaza Strip. In the eighth camp, (Al-Bureij), a local committee, with whom

is in addition to working directly with the handicapped through social workers, especially in the camps in which local rehabilitation committees do not exist and in villages in which there are refugees.

The volatile political situation and the present state of conflict that resulted from the Israeli occupation played a major role in increasing the disability rate in the WBGS. Such has intensified the pressure on the institutions that provide care and rehabilitation to the handicapped by obliging them to respond to the temporary unexpected need in this field.

6-5 Increase in the Rate of Child Labor in the North and South of the West Bank

The Palestinian Labor Law²⁶ prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15 (Palestinian Labor Law, Article 93). The law identified certain conditions relating to the employment of children that were designed to guarantee their safety “so that the labor does not negatively affect their physical and mental growth and their education”.

PCBS data revealed that 2.1 percent of the total number of children in the 10-14 age group had already joined the labor force in the WBGS (2.7 percent in the West Bank, 1 percent in the Gaza Strip) in 1999. The rate became even higher in the north and south of the West Bank (4.3 percent and 2.3 percent, respectively) in comparison with the center of the West Bank (1.3 percent). The rate of children between the years of 10-17 who joined the labor force in 1999 was 5.9 percent in the WBGS (7.3 percent in the West Bank and 3.6 percent in the Gaza Strip) (PCBS 2000g: 86).

UNRWA coordinates its activities, is active in tending to the affairs of the handicapped.

²⁶ President Arafat issued the Labor Law on 30 April 1999.

The data showed that the majority of working children in the 10-17 age bracket received wages. However, 37 percent were unpaid as they were working with their families, and five percent were self-employed (PCBS 2000g: 68).

The economic factor plays an essential role in pushing children towards the labor market. This is due to the inability of their families to provide them with an education or because of their need for more income. The families try to secure the latter by sending their children out to work. The average daily wage of a child 10-14 years old was NIS 22.4. On average, children working in the Gaza Strip received NIS 16.4, while those working in Israel and the settlements made NIS 60.4. These wages were much less than the daily wages of working children in the 15-17 age group, which reached NIS 46, NIS 25, and NIS 71.2, respectively (PCBS 2000i: 74 and 76). These wages were much less than the general daily wages that reached 75 shekels in 1999.

Children work for long hours, the same as adults. The average working week of children in the 10-14 age group who worked in Israel and the settlements was 46 hours; in the West Bank it was 42 hours, and for those working in the Gaza Strip, 41 hours. For children between the ages of 15-17, the average working week was 43 hours for those working in Israel and the settlements, and 46 hours for those working in the WBGS in the same year (PCBS 2000g: 76).

Child labor impacts the school enrollment figures. Most of the working children in the 10-17 age bracket did not attend school (73.6 percent in the WBGS in 1999). The data pertaining to child labor indicate that little attention is paid to the conditions stated by the law in terms of the number of work hours and the impact working has on a child's growth and education.

6-6 The Majority of Population Centers in the West Bank Linked to Water and Electricity Networks

6-6-1 Electricity Services

The available data show that 77 percent of the population centers in the WBGS were linked to electricity services in 1998 (75.8 percent in the West Bank and 95 percent in the Gaza Strip). In other words, all Gaza Strip population centers are linked to the electricity network, with the exception of two small ones. Meanwhile, there are 165 population centers in the West Bank that have no electricity services (see Annex, Table 6-2).

Following the establishment of the Authority electricity was provided to 84 population centers, or 16 percent of the total number of population centers with electricity services (15 percent in the West Bank and 23 in the Gaza Strip) (PCBS 1999c: 79).

Forty one percent of the population centers with electricity get their electricity from the Israeli Electricity Company, 34 percent from the Jerusalem District Electricity Company, 12 percent from private generators, 5 percent through the local authority, and 6 percent from other sources. (PCBS 1999c: 80)

Eighty six percent of the population centers with electricity receive electricity the whole day long in the WBGS (85 percent in the West Bank and 95 percent in the Gaza Strip). A partial service is provided to 14 percent of these centers (15 percent in the West Bank, 5 percent in the Gaza Strip) (PCBS 1999c: 87).

Population centers that enjoy electricity services in the WBGS suffer from several problems, most important of which follows: 37 percent suffer from power cuts (34 percent in the West Bank and 72 percent in the Gaza Strip), while 66

percent suffer from problems associated with the weakness of the electricity current (65 percent in the West Bank and 79 percent in the Gaza Strip). Meanwhile, 51 percent are connected to old networks (with the same rate in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip), 16 percent are in areas that the electricity networks do not reach (15 percent in the West Bank and 33 percent in the Gaza Strip).²⁷ Only the residents of one population center in the Ramallah/Al-Bireh governorate said that they did not have problems in regard to the electricity service (PCBS 1999c: 86).

6-6-2 Water Services

The available data showed that 38.5 percent (264 population centers, eight of which were in the Gaza Strip) of the population centers in the WBGS did not have access to a general water network in 1998. Most of these centers, however, were small (PCBS, 2000k: 23). Water services were available around the clock in 42.3 percent of the total number of population centers, while they were only partially available in 19.2 percent of the population centers. (see Annex, Table 6-2.)

The water network was extended to 40 population centers (33 in the West Bank and 7 in the Gaza Strip) between the advent of the Authority and the time the survey was conducted.²⁸ This reflects the interest that was shown in the rehabilitation of the infrastructure in the WBGS following the coming of the Authority.

Most population centers in the WBGS suffer from problems associated with water services, the most important of which is the old network in 36 percent of the population centers, water cuts in 31 percent, a general lack of water services in 19 percent, and contaminated water in 10

²⁷ The total rates do not add up to 100 percent as some population centers are experiencing more than one problem.

²⁸ The survey was conducted in 1998.

percent. Population centers that do not suffer from any of the above problems accounted for no more than 8 percent of the total number of population centers in the WBGS (686 centers), while 38 percent lacked a public water network (PCBS 2000k: 54).

6-6-2-1 Decline in the Quality of Potable Water

Standards pertaining to conductivity, the quantity of dissolved substances, and nitrate and chloride concentration are used to measure the quality of underground drinking water. The degrees of conductivity rates and the dissolved substances of wells have been found to be generally high in the Gaza Strip with the exception of the northern part of the Strip. These rates were highest in the Khan Yunis governorate, where conductivity was 24,881 cubic $\mu\text{s}/\text{cm}$ and the rate of dissolved substances 1,714.1 mg/liter. The highest conductivity and dissolved substances rates in the West Bank were found in the Jericho governorate where they reached 2,857.9 $\mu\text{s}/\text{cm}$ and 1,399.6 mg/liter, respectively. In the rest of the West Bank governorates, however, these rates were within the WHO standards. It should be noted that the WHO standard for dissolved substances is 1,000 mg/liter (PCBS 2000k: 42 and 43).

The Qalqiliya governorate wells recorded the highest rate in terms of the nitrate concentration in 1998, reaching 53.8 ml/liter, while the Khan Yunis governorate recorded the highest rate in the Gaza Strip in the same year when it reached 148.2 mg/liter. The rate of nitrate concentration is generally higher in the wells in the Gaza Strip than the internationally permitted rate, which stands at 50 mg/liter. With the exception of the wells in the Qalqiliya governorate, the nitrate concentration rate in the West Bank wells is lower than the internationally permitted rate (PCBS 2000k: 44 and 45).

The concentration of chloride in potable water is higher than the international permitted rate, i.e., 250 mg/liter, in the wells of Jericho and the Gaza Strip governorates with the exception of the Northern Gaza governorate. The highest rate was recorded in the wells of the Khan Yunis governorate where it reached 567.4 mg/liter (PCBS, 2000k: 46 and 47).

The general quality of water in the Gaza Strip is continuously deteriorating because of excessive use despite improvement witnessed to the previous standards in 1998. It is worth mentioning that 1997 witnessed the highest rates of contamination in the Gaza Strip and that this necessitated looking for alternatives to rationing the use of underground water.

6-6-3 Cesspits the Main Means of Disposing of Wastewater

The number of population centers linked to sewage networks in the WBGS in 1998 was 41, 6 percent of the total number (686) of population centers. Houses in 30 population centers in the WBGS (6.5 percent) were linked to sewage networks, and specifically 26.8 percent in the Gaza Strip (PCBS 2000j: 48). The rate of population centers linked to sewage networks in 1998 was higher than the rate in 1994 (26 population centers in 1994 compared with 41 centers in 1998). This is due to the Authority's interest in improving sewage services.

The most common method employed by population centers in disposing of wastewater was the use of cesspits. The rate of population centers using this method in 1998 was 87 percent and 75.7 percent in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, respectively. Next came sewage networks. The rate of population centers using open sewage systems was 3.5 percent in the WBGS (3.1 percent in the West Bank and 9.8 percent in the Gaza Strip). Thirteen population centers, or 1.9 percent of the total number, used open sewage networks (1.5 percent in the West Bank and 7.3

percent in the Gaza Strip), while 76 population centers (11.1 percent of the total number in the WBGS) used another means of wastewater disposal (all located in the West Bank) (PCBS, 2000j: 90).

6-6-4 Progressive Rise in the Number of Subscribers to Telephone Services

The available data revealed an increase in the expansion of telephone services in the WBGS. The number of population centers with access to telephone services increased from 48 in 1997 to 345 at the end of 1999. In addition, there was some diversification in terms of telecommunication services, which grew to include voice mail, digital network and other services. (Data collected from the Palestine Telecommunication Company pertaining to its development indicators.)

6-7 Services Available to Urban and Refugee Camp Households Better than those Available in Rural Areas

The available data showed that 99 percent of the WBGS households were linked to electricity services (98.8 percent in the West Bank and 99.6 percent in the Gaza Strip). Of the WBGS households, 85.4 percent lived in houses linked to water networks that reached inside the homes (79.3 percent in the West Bank and 98.9 percent in the Gaza Strip). Twelve and a half percent of the families in the West Bank obtained their water from rainwater collection wells (approximately 8.6 percent of the WBGS households). In the meanwhile, 6 percent of the WBGS households (8.2 percent of the West Bank households and 1.1 percent of the Gaza Strip households) received it from other sources (water tankers, springs, and public taps) (PCBS 1999a: 43). The 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census showed that 83.4 percent of the total number of populated houses in the

WBGS (with the exception of eastern Jerusalem that was annexed following the 1967 war) were linked to the public water network. 12.3 percent had their own private extensions, and 4.2 percent were not connected to water networks (PCBS, 2000k: 49).

Of the total amount of water provided to the Gaza Strip, the per capita average quantity was 132 liters daily in 1998. The averages for the different areas were as follows, with the averages for Gaza, Northern Gaza, Khan Yunis, Rafah, and Deir Al-Balah being 159, 157, 109, 100, and 93 liters per person per day, respectively. The same order applies to the average rate of individual water consumption in terms of the water allocated for household usage. The average in the West Bank was 84 liters per person per day. The averages in the West Bank governorates ranged between 129 liters per person per day in the Jericho and Tulkarm governorates and 57 liters per person per day in the Hebron governorate. The quantity of water purchased from the Israeli Mecorot Company was 37,942.6 thousand cubic meters of which 5,370.2 thousand cubic meters were used in the Gaza Strip in 1998. (PCBS 2000k: 38-39).

The data also showed that the average quantity of water used each month by households that relied on public networks for their water was higher than that of other households who relied on other sources of water (21 cubic meters compared with 11 cubic meters for households with no collection wells but relying on springs, and 8 cubic meters for those that get their water in tins). Ninety six percent of households in the WBGS evaluated the water they obtained in 1998 as being of good quality. It should be noted, however, that the water in the Gaza Strip was of a much lower quality as only 15 percent of households in the Strip evaluated their water as being good. This is in comparison with 86 percent of households in the West Bank that evaluated their water as good quality. Not

surprisingly, less than 1 percent of households in the West Bank said the water they received was of bad quality compared with 31 percent of the households in the Gaza Strip (PCBS 1998c: 35).

The PCBS data²⁹ also indicated that 33.4 percent of homes in the WBGS were linked to sewage network in 1997, 24.6 percent of which were houses in the West Bank. The rate of houses linked to sewage networks ranged from zero in the Salfit and Tubas areas to 50.3 percent in the Nablus governorate. As for the Gaza Strip, the rate of houses linked to a sewage network was 50.5 percent. The rate applying to houses in the governorates of Gaza and Northern Gaza (86.1 percent and 70.1 percent, respectively) was relatively high, while in the central governorates (10 percent in Deir Al-Balah and 2.9 percent in Khan Yunis) it was relatively low.

Of the total number of houses in the WBGS in 1997, 64.2 percent disposed of their wastewater using cesspits (72.6 percent in the West Bank and 47.8 percent in the Gaza Strip). But 2.4 percent of houses in the WBGS did not have access to either sewage networks or cesspits (2.8 percent in the West Bank and 1.6 percent in the Gaza Strip). This rate increased in the Jericho governorate, where it reached 12.8 percent of the total number of houses in that governorate.

Sewage networks are concentrated in the urban areas and in the refugee camps of the WBGS. Of the total number of homes in refugee camps, 59.6 percent were linked to sewage networks in 1997 (72.2 percent in the West Bank and 54.5 percent in the Gaza Strip). The rate of urban houses linked to sewage networks was 45.1 percent in the WBGS in the same year (39.7 percent in the West Bank and 52.7 percent in the Gaza Strip). The rate for houses in rural areas, however, declined

to 1.8 percent in the WBGS in the same year (1.7 percent in the West Bank and 3.5 percent in the Gaza Strip) (PCBS 2000j: 39).

Of the total number of houses in the WBGS, 37.7 percent were connected to the telephone network (41.1 percent in the West Bank and 30.1 percent in the Gaza Strip) (PCBS 1999a: 43). Data from the Palestine Telecommunication Company³⁰ indicate that the rate of telephone lines per population was 8 percent at the end of 1999, compared with approximately 3.4 percent at the beginning of 1997.

6-7-1 Most Houses Owned by their Occupants

Ninety percent of the Palestinians in the WBGS owned their houses or lived in them without paying rent in 1998 (88 percent in the West Bank and 96 percent in the Gaza Strip). The rate of families who owned their houses in the center of the West Bank (78 percent of the households) was lower than the rates found in the north and south of the West Bank (91 percent and 93 percent, respectively) (PCBS 1999a: 168).

Data resulting from sample surveys denote an improvement in the household density rate in the WBGS between 1995 and 1998, with the rate declining from 2.3 persons per room in 1995 to 1.9 persons per room in 1998 (1.85 in the West Bank and 1.92 in the Gaza Strip). The results of the general census showed that the household density rate was two persons per room. It is not possible, however, to compare the results of the census which are based on sample surveys with any of the previous results. In general, however, the results indicate that the household density rate in this period was two persons per room. The 1997 Population, Housing and

²⁹ The results of the 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census.

³⁰ The media survey that was conducted in the year 2000 showed that 42.1 percent of the households in the WBGS had telephone lines (45 percent in the West Bank and 36.5 percent in the Gaza Strip) (PCBS, Media Survey 2000, the press conference).

Establishment Census also showed that 35.5 percent (the biggest percentage when it comes to the household density rate) of families in the WBGS live in homes with a rate of one to less than two persons per room (37.1 percent in the West Bank and 35.1 percent in the Gaza Strip). One quarter of households lived in houses with a high population density (three persons or more per room), with the rate reaching 23.2 percent in the West Bank and 22.1 percent in the Gaza Strip (PCBS, 1999d: 42).

Summary

The past five years have witnessed an improvement in the quality of life in the WBGS, which is something that becomes obvious in view of some of the indicators tackled in this section. This is in addition to indicators that were dealt with in other sections of this issue of the *Social Monitor*. This improvement, which is attributable to the efforts to give priority to investment in the infrastructure, was reflected in the increase in the rate of households whose houses were linked to water, electricity, telephone, and sewage networks. There was also an improvement, albeit a slight one, in terms of the household population density rates.

This period also witnessed an important achievement in the legal field in the form of the consolidation and 'modernization' of labor legislation in the WBGS through the endorsement of the Civil Service Law and the Labor Law. These two laws, however, have yet to be implemented. Their endorsement, nevertheless, provides an appropriate basis for the struggle of the parties interested in putting them into action. The PLC has also started discussing the Social Security Law.

It could be deduced from the available data that union organization among workers and employees is weak and that work conditions are better in the Palestinian public sector than they are in the Palestinian private sector.

The available data also revealed the weakness of formal and informal social security systems. In spite of the increase in the number of those who benefited from the assistance of the support parties (Ministry of Social Affairs, UNRWA and Zakat committees), the value of the assistance (the amount of which did not increase prior to the advent of the Authority) remained small and continued to decrease due to inflation.

The approach of those involved in social security towards providing various special groups with care in their local environment was consolidated. This approach involved the disabled, elderly, and orphans. The major role of NGOs in this field may indicate a possible lack of future sustainability due to the local NGOs reliance to a great extent on foreign support. This entails providing mechanisms that guarantee the sustainability of these services through strengthening the linkage of these organizations with the local society and increasing the role of the governmental sector (Ministry of Social Affairs) in this field.

7- STANDARDS OF LIVING

This section is based on the data of the three consecutive rounds of the Palestinian Household Expenditure and Consumption Survey in the WBGS, which was carried out by the PCBS in the years 1996-1998. The *Social Monitor* dealt with the results of these rounds in previous issues. For the purpose of this issue the most important results produced by these rounds will be built upon. Such will be used as indicators for the characteristics of expenditure and consumption rates pertaining to Palestinian households in the WBGS in the five years that followed the establishment of the Authority. By doing this, the average and median wage rates as

well as unemployment rates will be considered as general indicators that shed light on the development directions of the standards of living in the WBS.

7-1 Increase in Food Expenditure in the WBS in 1998

Data on the expenditure and consumption rates of Palestinian households in the WBS showed a progressive decline in the monthly rates of household and per capita expenditure and consumption calculated according to current prices. The monthly average household consumption rate in the West Bank declined by 4.6 percent in 1998 in comparison with the year before, reaching JD 600. It also declined by 6 percent in comparison with 1996. Data related to household and per capita expenditure shows the same tendency toward decline.

Real monthly expenditure and consumption rates (calculated according to the prices of 1996) recorded a slight improvement. This is due to the increase in the purchasing power of the JD, in which the expenditure and consumption rates were calculated during the survey years.³¹ This means, however, that the average household consumption rate in the WBS in 1998, calculated according to the 1996 prices, equaled JD 660.6, which points to an improvement in the average household consumption rate of approximately 3.6 percent in 1998 in comparison with 1996. The rate increased by almost the same percentage in comparison with 1997.

Available data also point to an improvement in the real monthly individual consumption and expenditure rates during this period. The real monthly

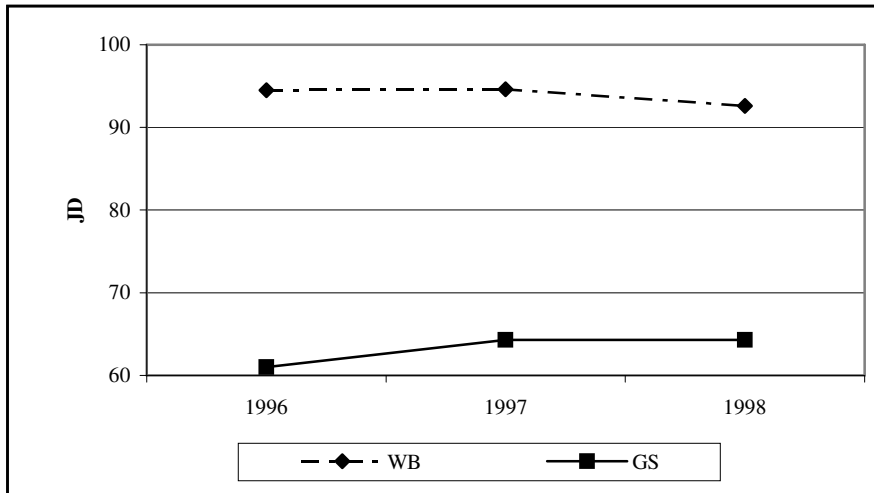
per capita consumption rate (calculated according to the prices of 1996) recorded an increase of approximately 3 percent in 1998 in comparison with the year before. The average individual expenditure rate in the WBS increased by 2.4 percent in 1998 in comparison with 1997, again calculated according to 1996 prices. (see Figure 7-1.) This agrees with the decline in unemployment rates, the rise in real workers' wages, and the decrease in the number of 'security' closure days imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities on the WBS under security pretexts. Such closures sealed off the Israeli labor market from the WBS Palestinian labor force, which has had a negative impact on the total economic activity in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The data revealed an inclination toward increased expenditure on food in the WBS accompanied with a limited increase in the actual average monthly household expenditure. This may be attributed to a change in the patterns of food consumption with people shifting from the consumption of cheap commodities to expensive ones and/or to an increase in the diversification of consumption. This increase in expenditure on food may be linked to the consumption patterns prevailing in Palestinian society. These patterns include the holding of large banquets and moving from the consumption of poultry to red meat and then to fish, which has come to be regarded as a sign that an individual's social position has improved (see Annex, Table 7-2).

The data also highlighted a decrease in the gap between the West Bank and Gaza Strip in terms of the monthly per capita expenditure rate. The per capita expenditure rate in the Gaza Strip increased in comparison with that in the West Bank from 64 percent in 1997 to 69 percent in 1998. The gap, however, is still large (see Annex, Table 7-3).

³¹ The purchasing power of the Dinar increased in 1997 in comparison with 1996 by 1.6 percent, and in 1998 by 8.5 percent (MAS, *The Economic Monitor*, Issues 3 and 5).

Figure 7.1: Average Personal Consumption in JD in the WBGS by Region, 1996-1998 (by 1996 prices)

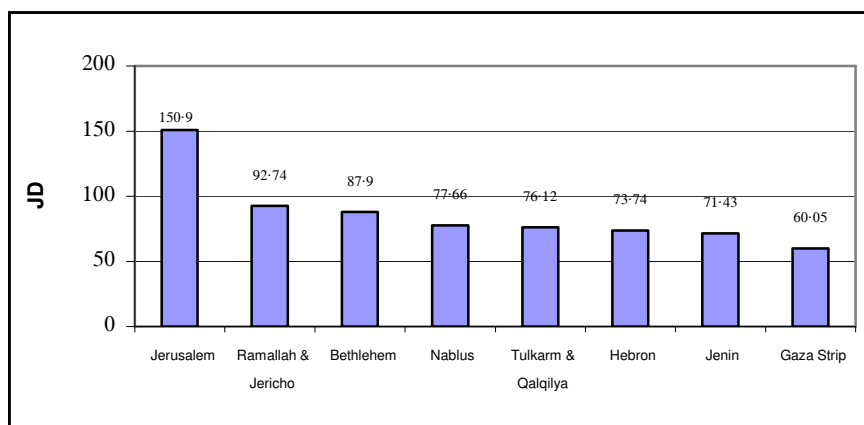


Sources: PCBS Expenditure and Consumption Levels: The Final Report .(1996,1997, 1998).
 PCBS Expenditure and Consumption Levels: Annual Report.(1996,1997).

The data from the expenditure survey in also points to a gap between the household and per capita consumption and expenditure rates in the center of the West Bank and the other regions. The gap between the center of the West Bank, which is the region that boasts the highest

standard of living, and the Gaza Strip, which is the region with the lowest standard of living, is still large. At present, the per capita monthly expenditure rate in the Gaza Strip is slightly more than 50 percent of that in the center of the West Bank (see Annex, Table 7-3).

Figure 7.2: Average Personal Consumption in the WBGS by Governorates, 1998



Sources: PCBS Expenditure and Consumption Levels: The Final Report.(1996,1997, 1998).
 PCBS Expenditure and Consumption Levels: Annual Report.(1996,1997).

The Palestinian regions were rated, as follows, in terms of their per capita expenditure compared with the per capita expenditure in the center of the West Bank in 1998: the center of the West Bank, 100 percent; the south of the West Bank, 66 percent; the north of the West Bank, 64.5 percent; and the Gaza Strip, 52 percent. The Gaza Strip regions, which differ from one another, are rated as follows in terms of their per capita expenditure rates compared with that in the center of the West Bank: Gaza City, 60 percent; the north of the Gaza Strip, 55 percent; the center of the Gaza Strip, 50 percent; and the south of the Gaza Strip, no more than 42 percent.

Figure 7-2 clarifies that the WBGS governorates were classified downwardly in terms of the average individual monthly expenditure rates in 1998: the Jerusalem governorate in the first position and Gaza governorates in the last. A large difference exists between the Gaza Strip governorates, with the lowest average expenditure, and Jerusalem, with the highest average expenditure. The monthly average expenditure per capita in the Gaza Strip governorates is no more than 39.8 percent of that in the Jerusalem governorate.

Data pertaining to the three previous years reveal a slight increase in the gap between the Jerusalem governorate and other governorates according to the monthly per capita expenditure indicator. The average monthly expenditure per capita declined in the Gaza Strip compared to that in the Jerusalem governorate from 40.6 percent in 1996 to 39.8 percent in 1998. This is after having increased in 1997 to 42.6 percent. (see Annex, Table 7-3.)

7-2 High Poverty Rates in the South of the Gaza Strip

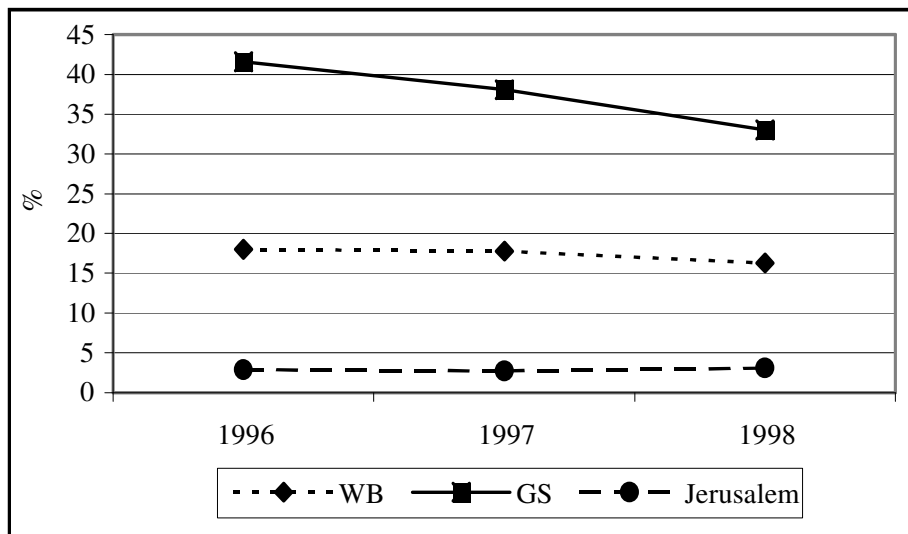
The poverty report of 1998 issued by the PCBS showed a decline in the poverty rate

in the WBGS compared with 1997. It also showed that 20 percent of Palestinian households were living under the poverty line, compared with 23 percent and 24 percent in the years 1997 and 1996, respectively. This agrees with the indications of a decline in unemployment rates in 1998 in comparison with the two previous years, and an improvement in the average daily wage. Excluding the Jerusalem governorate leads to a 2 percent increase (from 14.5 percent to 16.3 percent in 1998) in the poverty rate in the WBGS. (see Annex, Table 7-3.)

The data also showed a large improvement in the Gaza Strip in comparison with the West Bank in 1998. The poverty rate declined in the West Bank by less than 1 percent in 1998 in comparison with 1997 and 1996, while the poverty rate in the Gaza Strip declined by 5 percent and 9 percent, respectively. The extreme poverty indicator also declined by 1 percent in the West Bank in 1998 compared with 1997 and, in the Gaza Strip, by approximately 7 percent in the period 1996-1998 (PCBS, 2000i, and the National Team for the Eradication of Poverty, 1998).

The governorates in the south of Gaza were found to be the poorest among all the governorates in the WBGS with the poverty rate reaching 41.4 percent in 1998. The rate, however, had improved in comparison with the two previous years (half of the households in the south of the Strip were living under the poverty line in the previous two years). Next came the center of Gaza, where the poverty rate was 37.9 percent, followed by the north of Gaza. The area with the least poverty was the city of Gaza, which recorded a poverty rate of 25.9 percent in 1998. The two governorates of Jenin and Hebron were the poorest among the West Bank governorates, with the poverty rate reaching 20.5 percent and 20.4 percent, respectively. The poverty rate was much less in the Jerusalem governorate, where it reached 3.1 percent in 1998. (see Annex, Table 7-4.)

Figure 7.3: Poverty Rates in the WBGS by Area, 1996-1998



Source: PCBS 2000i

The data also showed that the refugee camps remained the poorest of all the population centers in the WBGS. They recorded a poverty rate of 32.8 percent compared with 18.3 percent in the villages, and 17.3 percent in the cities. The same situation applied to the West Bank and Gaza Strip when studied separately. Villages, however, recorded the highest poverty rate on the national level (40.4 percent as compared with 33 percent in the cities and 26.5 percent in the refugee camps). Villages also house 66.4 percent of the total number of poor in the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, however, the largest contributors to poverty are the refugee camps (43.9 percent as compared with 40.8 percent in the cities, and 15.3 in the villages). This difference can be attributed to the demographic structure of the two population regions (PCBS 2000i 34).

The data showed that the situation of poor households headed by women is worse than that of those headed by men. Households headed by women form a large group when it comes to the receipt of social assistance in the WBGS. The poverty rate among the households that were headed by females was 26 percent,

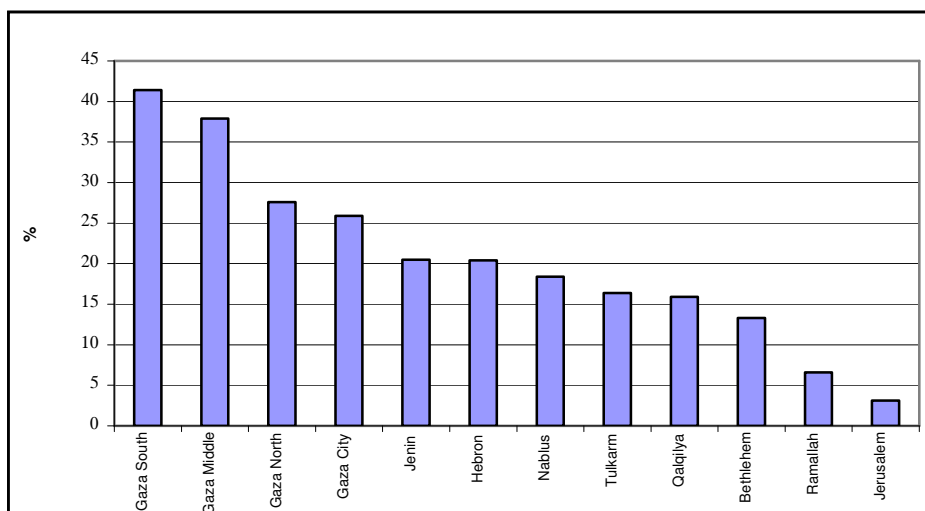
30 percent, and 26 percent, in the years 1996, 1997, and 1998, respectively. As for those headed by men, it was 23 percent, 22 percent, and 20 percent, respectively, in the same period.

The data also pointed to an increase in 1998 in the poverty rate among the households headed by individuals who did not participate in the labor force (28 percent) compared with households whose heads did participate (19 percent). The poverty rate among households whose supporters worked for less than six months in 1998 exceeded that among households whose supporters worked for more than six months (29 percent and 15.5 percent, respectively). This implies that being engaged in long-term employment reduces the possibility of one living under the poverty line by a considerable extent. This is something that should be taken into consideration in any comparison between the terms and conditions of the WBGS workers who work in Israel and the settlements with workers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip who are members of the local labor force. Regardless of the increase in the wage averages of the first group (those who work in Israel and the settlements), political and economic

instability and the continuation of the 'security' closure policy that the occupation authorities frequently resort to in the WBGs decrease the opportunities of

workers to find long-term employment. Consequently, the extent of their occupational security is seriously weakened.

Figure 7.4: Poverty Rates in the WBGs by Governorate, 1998



Source: PCBS 2000i, p.33.

The poverty rate among workers in non-skilled professions in 1998 was higher than that among other workers. Households whose breadwinners worked in non-skilled professions recorded a poverty rate of 27.9 percent, while the poverty rates among households whose breadwinners worked in other professions were as follows: skilled workers in agriculture and fishing, 19.5 percent; workers in services and in market sales, 19.3 percent; workers involved with handicrafts and in similar professions, 18.5 percent; machinists, 16.6 percent; technicians and clerks, 13.4 percent; and finally, legislators and senior administration employees, 3.8 percent (PCBS, 2000g: 41).

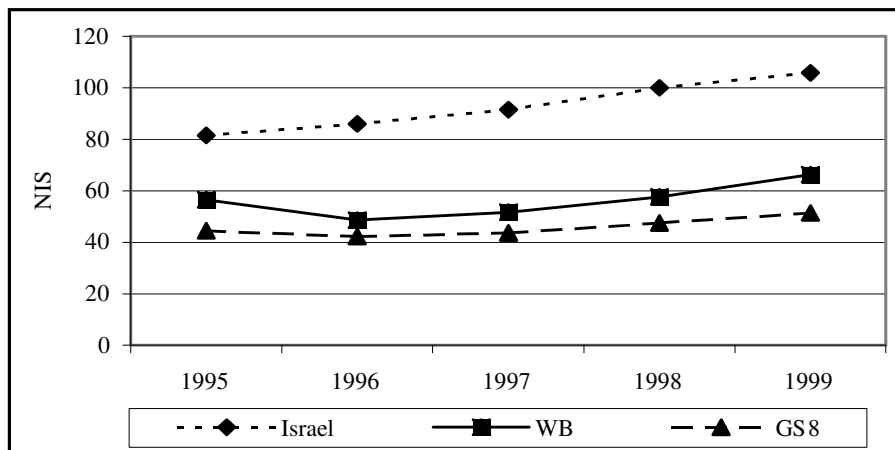
7-3 Increase in Real Wages and Decline in Unemployment Rates

The average daily wage of workers in the WBGs, between 1995-1999 continued to

rise when calculated according to current prices in all work regions (the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Israel and the settlements). The average in all regions was NIS 75.5 daily, which indicates that there was a 10.2 percent increase compared with 1998. The average daily wage increased by 25.6 percent in 1999 compared with 1995. The data showed that the average daily wage of waged workers in the West Bank recorded the highest rate of increase in 1999 in comparison with the year before, followed by workers in the Gaza Strip (see Annex, Table 7-6).

The data also showed an increase in the average daily wage and in the median wage calculated according to current prices of waged workers in the WBGs during the period 1995-1999. This is despite the fact that these two indicators recorded a decline in the two years 1996 and 1997 in comparison with the year 1995. (see Annex, Table 7-5.)

Figure 7.5: Average Daily Wages in the WBGS by Place of Work



Sources: PCBS., 2000d.

The real average daily wage (1996 prices) in the WBGS between 1996-1999 increased by 15.9 percent. It also increased in the same period for workers in the various regions. The year 1997, however, witnessed a decline in the real average wage rate in comparison with 1996. The year 1996 also witnessed a decline in this respect in comparison with 1995 as the daily nominal average wage declined. These two years, it should be noted, also witnessed extensive closures in the WBGS. The data on workers in Israel and the settlements pointed to a decline in the median wage in 1999 in comparison with the previous year.

The median wage in the WBGS increased between 1995-1999 by a rate that was much higher than that associated with the average daily wage increase rate. The real median daily wage increase was approximately 25 percent, while the actual daily average wage increased by 16 percent in the same period. The increase in these two indicators (the average and the median daily wage rates) was higher among the workers in the WBGS in comparison with the Palestinian workers who worked in Israel and the settlements.

The data targeted the existence of a large gap between the average daily wage and the median wage between 1995 and 1999

in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and for the wages of workers from these two areas who worked in Israel and the settlements. The gap between the wages of workers from the WBGS who worked locally and the wages of those who worked in Israel shrank between 1996 and 1999, but then increased again in 1999, in comparison with the year 1995 (see Annex, Table 7-6 A).

The data also revealed the existence of a large gap between the wages of the two sexes in the WBGS between 1996 and 1999. This gap increased when it came to workers in mines, quarries and manufacturing industries, but shrank when it came to workers in other industries³² (see Annex, Table 7-7).

Wages in the WBGS in 1999, according to the type of work, can be listed in a descending order as follows: construction,³³ transportation, storage,

³² Data on the workers in the Gaza Strip and on those who worked in Israel and the settlements showed that the wages of females in some sectors were higher than those of men. This may be attributed to the low number of females in those sectors and their concentration in professions with high wages.

³³ The median daily wage of workers from the WBGS in the construction sector in Israel is higher than that in any other sector in which there are workers from the WBGS who work in Israel. The same thing applies to workers in the West Bank. The situation is different, however, in the Gaza Strip where the median daily wage of workers in this sector was only NIS 44.2 at a

communications, trade, hotels and restaurants, mining, quarries, manufacturing industries, services, and finally, agriculture. The average daily wage of those employed in agriculture equaled approximately 59 percent of that of construction workers. This rate, it should be noted, had increased during the previous three years.³⁴ These figures, however, hide large differences between the regions. The average daily wage in 1998 in the agricultural sector was NIS 44.7 in the West Bank and NIS 27.3 in the Gaza Strip, while the average daily wage of Palestinian workers who worked in Israel and the settlements was NIS 64.2. This picture applies to all the economic sectors (PCBS, 2000d: 82-85).

The unemployment rate continued to decline in 1999 in comparison with the two previous years, reaching 11.8 percent, thereby recording its lowest rate since 1995. The unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip was higher than that in the West Bank in the years 1995-1999. The rate was also higher among females than it was among males in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the same four years, the underemployment rate continued to decline, decreasing from 21.1 percent in 1995 to 5.4 percent in 1999 (see Annex, Table 7-8).

PCBS estimations suggest that the number of people in the Palestinian labor force was 661,000 in the last quarter of 1999. Of this number, 83,000 were unemployed while 74,000 neither worked nor even looked for work probably because they had given up hope of ever finding employment (PCBS, 1999b). The data also reveal the increase in the dependency ratio in the WBGS (i.e., the ratio of those who do not work to those who work), with each working individual supporting 4.1 non-working individuals in the WBGS in mid-

1999 (3.7 persons per worker in the West Bank and 4.9 persons per worker in the Gaza Strip).

Approximately 18 percent of the Palestinian workers from the WBGS worked in the public sector at the end of 1999. The rate of workers in the governmental sector in the WBGS almost remained stable throughout 1999. It remained within the confines of 18 percent of the total Palestinian labor force in the WBGS with the exception of the first quarter of 1999 when the rate reached 19 percent (MAS *Economic Monitor*, No. 7).

The data also showed a continuous increase in regard to the active labor force rate in the WBGS and in the regions separately. The rate of those who worked in Israel and the settlements in 1999 increased in comparison with the years 1995-1999, reaching 22.9 percent in 1999 and 16.5 percent in 1995. Workers in agriculture maintained their rate among the total number of workers, while the rate of those who worked in industry declined. However, the rate of workers in construction and services increased. This points to a decline in the rate of workers in the production sectors in the years 1995-1999 (see Annex, Table 7-8).

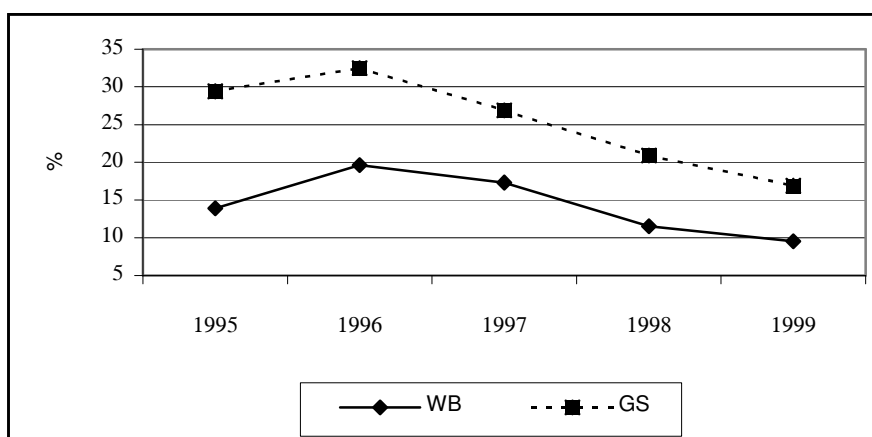
Summary

The available data pertaining to household expenditure and consumption, poverty, wage, and unemployment rates in the WBGS showed that throughout the years 1995-1999 a correlation existed between the standards of living and the existence or absence of political and economic stability. It also showed that the standards of living were greatly affected by the political decisions of the Israelis, which succeeded in making the slight improvement in the standards of living in the WBGS extremely vulnerable to external changes during these years and then forced them into a decline; the same thing applies now during the current Intifada.

time when the average daily wage of workers in the Gaza Strip was NIS 51.4.

³⁴ Of the workers from the WBGS who worked in Israel, 55.4 percent worked in the construction sector in 1999 (PCBS, 2000g, "Labor Force Survey", *Annual Report: 1999*, p.63).

Figure 7.6: Unemployment Rate in the WBS by Area, 1995-1999



Sources: PCBS 2000d.

The data also revealed the existence of a large gap between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This necessitates paying special attention through interventionist policies to bridge the gap between the two regions.

In addition, the data also showed a decline in the poverty rate in 1998 in comparison with the two previous years. As for the average wage and unemployment rates, they recorded an improvement in 1999, which suggests that the poverty rate recorded a further decrease in 1999.

The data revealed an improvement in the average wage and unemployment rate, as well as an increasing general tendency to depend on the Israeli labor market. It also showed that the Palestinian public sector remained one of the main employers of workers in the WBS.

8- CRIME, VICTIMS AND ROAD ACCIDENTS

Statistical data on crime and its victims provided by many statistical departments in the world is considered among the most important social data. This is mainly due to the evaluation it presents of the realized

legal progress and the prevalence of internal security in the country concerned. Therefore, UN agencies and departments give special importance to this kind of data. The 6th UN Conference held in 1980 (on means of preventing crime and dealing with criminals) confirmed that there was a need for the international society to provide statistics on crime and the various systems of criminal justice (Resolution No. 2). It was also decided that variables should be made available to the international bodies for comparison.

On the Palestinian level, the PCBS began in mid-1996 to collect statistical data on criminal acts and to classify and publish it. It also started to conduct surveys on the victims of crimes, with the first such survey in Palestine being conducted in 1996 and the second in 1999. The PCBS is expected to continue conducting similar surveys once every three years. Among the most important positive aspects of these surveys is the information they provide on the volume of criminal acts and their distribution. In addition, this information is provided not by the institutions responsible for registering criminal acts, but by the victims themselves.

8-1 Reported Criminal Acts (1996-1999)

The number of criminal acts reported in 1999 was 21,426, indicating a decrease in comparison with the 1998 figure of 22,286. These two years, however, witnessed an increase in the number of criminal acts in comparison with 1996 and 1997 when the number of criminal acts reached 11,578 and 8,765, respectively. (see Annex, Table 8-1.) This increase in the number of criminal acts may be attributed to the improvements witnessed in the recording of crimes by the Palestinian police as well as to the increase in the rate of reported crimes.³⁵

8-1-1 Assault the Most Frequently Reported Crime

It is noticed from the available data that assault cases accounted for the highest rate of reported crimes, with the number reaching 5,927 or 51.2 percent of the total number of reported criminal acts in 1996. The rate declined, however, in 1997, 1998, and 1999 to 28.6 percent, 29.2 percent, and 29.9 percent, respectively (see Annex, Table 8-1).

Assault crimes were the most frequent crimes during the past four years. The number of reported assault cases in 1999 declined, however, in comparison with 1996. Crimes involving bodily harm increased in 1998-1999 compared with 1996, rising from 11 cases in 1997 to 758 cases in 1998, and to 1,013 cases in 1999 (see Annex, Table 8-3).

³⁵ Besides this improvement in the registration of criminal acts, a basic problem still exists, namely, the lack of clear classification pertaining to the various types of crimes. If it was not for this problem, the enormous number of criminal acts categorized, as 'others' would have been avoided. In 1996 this category represented 1.6 percent of the total number of reported criminal acts. The rate decreased to 0.7 percent in 1997, rising in 1998 to 17.3 percent then rising again in 1999 to 19.4 percent.

The rate of theft in the Ramallah/Al-Bireh governorate was the highest among all the governorates in 1999, reaching 19.7 percent of the total number of thefts reported in the WBGs. The rate was also the highest in 1998 and 1997 when it reached 23.4 percent and 26.6 percent, respectively. Table 8-4 shows the differences between the Palestinian governorates in terms of the type of crimes that were most commonly reported in 1999.

8-1-2 Highest Crime Rates Found in Gaza and Hebron

In regard to the distribution of reported crimes according to governorate, the Gaza City governorate recorded the highest rate of reported criminal acts in 1999 when the rate reached 12.7 percent, followed by the Khan Yunis governorate at 11.5 percent. Criminal acts in the Hebron governorate accounted for 12.6 percent, and those in the Tulkarem governorate 11 percent. It is noticed, however, that in 1998 the Tulkarem governorate recorded the highest number of criminal acts, with the rate reaching 12.3 percent, followed by Khan Yunis at 10.3 percent, Hebron at 9.1 percent, and the city of Gaza at 8.3 percent. When reviewing the 1997 data it is discovered that the Nablus governorate recorded the highest number of criminal acts with the rate reaching 24 percent of the total number of reported criminal actions in the WBGs that year (see Annex, Table 8-2).

A general rise in the number of reported criminal acts was noticed in most of the governorates. The number of reported criminal acts in the Hebron governorate in 1997, for instance, was 155. This number reached 2,048 in 1998 and continued to rise to 2,692 in 1999.

8-2 Continuous Increase in the Number of Detainees in Palestinian Jails Between 1996 and 1999

The number of persons detained in jails in the WBGS in 1999 was 7,575 of which 24 percent were being held for assault crimes. The number of detainees in 1998 was 6,952, with 29.4 percent being held for assault crimes. In 1997 and 1996, the numbers were 5,956 and 6,890, respectively (see Annex, Table 8-5).

8-3 Number of Convicted Prisoners Held in the Jails of the WBGS Between 1996 and 1999

The number of convicted prisoners in the jails of the WBGS in 1999 was 1,871. In 1998 the figure was 1,842, with 1,686 in 1997, and 1,358 in 1996. When comparing the number of detainees not sentenced with those actually convicted in the same period it is noticed that 24.7 percent of the detainees in 1999 had been tried and sentenced, compared with 26.5 percent, 28.3 percent, and 19.7 percent in 1998, 1997 and 1996, respectively (see Annex, Table 8-6).

8-4 More than One Third of Juveniles Accused of Committing Criminal Acts Finished the Elementary Stage Only

Juveniles' accused of committing criminal acts in 1999 was 1,404. Of this number, 730 were in the West Bank and 674 in the Gaza Strip. The rate of females was 2.5 percent. The total number of juveniles

within the WBGS population in 1998 was 1,460, and in 1153 in 1996.³⁶

The number of juveniles who were institutionalized in approved reform schools in the WBGS was 587 in 1999 (290 in the West Bank and 297 in the Gaza Strip). The numbers were 786 and 411 for 1998 and 1997, respectively. The majority of juveniles in the WBGS population fall within the 16-18 age group, with the rate reaching 61.2 percent, 69.6 percent, and 56.4 percent in the years 1999, 1998, and 1997, respectively. Concerning the educational level of the juveniles, only 39.4 percent completed their elementary education (see Annex, Table 8-7).

8-5 Rise in the Number of Cases Referred to the Courts in the WBGS

The number of cases heard at various regular courts in 1999 was 147,281. The numbers were 169,959, 168,239, and 139,138 in 1998, 1997, and 1996, respectively. The number of cases that were actually concluded, however, was 140,101 in 1999, 148,053 in 1998, 152,232 in 1997, and 120,771 in 1996 (see Annex, Table 8-8).

The rate of cases which were not concluded but were carried forward was higher than 50 percent of the total cases during the past four years, reaching 51.8 percent in 1999, 54.5 percent in 1998, 60.9 percent in 1997, and 60 percent in 1996. This is despite the difference between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in terms of the number of cases heard in court and those actually concluded. It should be noted that cases not concluded were classified as pending and carried to the following year. It could be said, therefore, that there is a weakness in the judicial

³⁶ Due to the lack of data on the number of charged juveniles in the Gaza Strip, it was not possible to make a comparison with 1997 data for the WBGS.

system, which apparently cannot handle the enormous number of cases. This weakness may be attributed to the limited number of staff and/or to problems within the judiciary itself.

8-6 Stability in Regard to the Number of Staff Working for the Criminal Justice Departments

The number of staff working for the criminal justice departments, especially those who work in the judiciary is considered an important indicator in terms of the efficacy and competence of these departments. It is noticed from the available PCBS data that there is an acute shortage of judicial staff, which has led to the slowness in concluding cases. Consequently, citizens are resorting to the tribal judicial system or looking for alternatives and other solutions. This situation highlights the importance of the number of judges in the Palestinian courts, whose number did not undergo any significant changes in the past four years. The number of court judges of both sexes in 1997 was no more than 68, rising to 69 in 1998, but declining to 67 in 1999. The number of female judges remained at three.

With regard to prosecutors, they numbered 44 in 1997, 45 in 1998, and 55 in 1999. All of the prosecutors were male.

8-7 Increase in the Number of Road Accidents and their Victims 1996-1999

Between the years 1996-1998 the number of road accidents in the WBGS continued to increase. This prompted decision-makers to find solutions in order to protect the lives and properties of citizens. Such solutions include rehabilitating the infrastructure and imposing strict laws.

Hence, the 1999 figure (6,952) witnessed a considerable decrease in comparison with the years 1998, 1997, and 1996, when the number of accidents was 7,640, 7,532, and 7,186, respectively.

These accidents led to a variety of injuries that ranged between fatal and moderate. The number of fatal accidents was 186 in 1999, 198 in 1998, 180 in 1997, and 191 in 1996. The harm done to children in these accidents drew a significant amount of attention. The number of children under seven years of age who were injured or killed in road accidents was 1,800 in 1999. Of the 1,800 involved in accidents, 82 were killed. In 1998 the 1,487 children involved in accidents resulted in 54 being killed. As for 1997, 80 were killed among the 1,334 children involved in accidents that year (see Annex, Tables 8-10 and 8-11).

8-8 An Increase in the Rate of Victims of Criminal Acts

The PCBS conducted the first survey on victims of crime in 1996 as part of their survey of the labor force. The survey was carried out in accordance with the international recommendations and took into account the experience of other countries in addition to the specificity of the Palestinian situation. The results of international research and studies indicate that reported crimes account for only one third of the real number of crimes. These surveys, therefore, are carried out on a sample from the society to explore crime trends and the basic specifications of the victims. They are done in a time sequence to allow for monitoring the trend and exploring its essential changes.

The rate of household victims of criminal acts in 1996 was 5.6 percent of the total households in the WBGS (6.4 percent in the West Bank and 3.7 percent in the Gaza Strip). It is noticed that the rates did not differ to a great extent to those of 1999,

when the rate of criminal acts against victims' households in the WBGS was 5.1 percent (6.3 percent in the West Bank and 2.8 percent in the Gaza Strip).

It is also noticed that the number of individuals who became victims of criminal acts increased. The rate of those who were victims of theft was 54.2 percent in 1996 (57.7 percent in the West Bank and 41.3 percent in the Gaza Strip), while in 1999 it was 55.2 percent (53.7 percent in the West Bank and 63 percent in the Gaza Strip).

With regard to the reporting of crimes, the rate of individuals who were victims of criminal acts and actually reported them in 1996 was 40.2 percent (33.4 in the West Bank and 65.6 percent in the Gaza Strip). In 1999 the rate was 43.2 percent (40.8 percent in the West Bank and 51.5 percent in the Gaza Strip).

Summary

Data pertaining to crime, the victims of crime, and road accidents still suffers from shortages in regard to many of its basic components. The data lack some important indicators such as gender data, which is considered extremely important, especially in terms of domestic violence and violence conducted outside the home. It is also important that there be categorization based on age in order to explore the degree to which children are subjected to suppression and violence.

Among the aspects that make the data incomplete are failures of those concerned to register sufficient data related to criminals and their victims. The PCBS publishes its annual report based on monthly reports submitted by the police directorates in the various governorates to the police command in Gaza. However, the PCBS does not have access to individual data that would enable it to prepare and publish statistics pertaining to crime, criminals and victims in accordance with the international specifications. What

is published, therefore, is only what the authorities producing these data make available. It is hoped that efforts will be made to produce comprehensive data. This would make it possible to develop the function of related institutions and ministries and enable researchers to deepen their understanding of the crime phenomena and its dimensions and trends in the Palestinian society as well as monitoring it through time.

9- LEGAL ENVIRONMENT³⁷

This section covers indicators relating to the legislative role of the PLC and its role in monitoring the executive authority and holding it accountable. The section also tackles indicators relating to the monitoring of developments in the field of human rights in the WBGS and the evaluation of the performance of the judiciary. This is based mainly on the publications of the PLC and the reports of the Palestinian Independent Committee for Citizens' Rights (PICCR), being the official Palestinian legal commission.³⁸

The PLC³⁹ realized some important achievements during the first four years of its functioning in terms of consolidating, putting into practice, and updating legislation in the WBGS. The Council inherited an unconsolidated legal environment in which both Mandate and Egyptian laws were applicable in the Gaza Strip and Jordanian law in the West Bank. Other laws and regulations in force included the Mandate Emergency Regulations and the Israeli military orders, both of which molded the legislation in the WBGS to serve the interest of the occupation and the settlers. Since its establishment, the PLC has projected

³⁷ This section is based on the reports of the Palestinian Independent Committee for Citizens' Rights (PICCR).

³⁸ Formed by a PNA presidential decree.

³⁹ The PLC started to function officially on 7 March 1996.

continuous improvement in terms of its legislative performance, i.e., the way it prepares laws, and concludes the formulating and endorsing of such laws.

9-1 PNA Council Responsible for Both Legislation and Execution

The PNA Council handled both legislative and executive tasks in the early stage of its functioning before the PLC was elected. It should be noted that President Arafat outlined the legislative procedures in Law No. 4 of 1995.⁴⁰ This law gave the competent ministry or party a role in the process of legislation, while Diwan Al-Fatwa (the Fatwa and Legislation Department) was entrusted with formulating legislation in a suitable form and coordinating among the concerned ministers and parties, to be endorsed by the PNA Council of Ministers. Following the endorsement, President Arafat then promulgates the law and publishes it in the *Official Gazette* (Sisalem, et al. 1998: 29-30). Law No. 5 of 1995, pertaining to the transfer of authorities stated that the PNA president is the one who promulgates laws once the PNA Council endorses them. The two laws mentioned above regulated the legislative mechanism of the Authority in the period before the PLC assumed its authority. Five laws were promulgated prior to these two laws, after being endorsed by the President. They related the transfer of authorities, thereby filling the legal vacuum that resulted from the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement known as the Gaza-Jericho Accord.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Promulgated on 17 April 1995.

⁴¹ The President promulgated two laws in 1994, namely the law dealing with the transfer of authority pertaining to the administering of municipal and village affairs in the Gaza Strip to the Ministry of Local Government, and the law dealing with extending the jurisdiction of the High Court in the Gaza Strip to the West Bank. The President also promulgated three laws in 1995, namely the law pertaining to the modification of governmental lawsuits, the law pertaining to the abrogation of certain decisions and military orders, and the law

President Arafat promulgated 12 laws in 1995 and four more laws in 1996.⁴² In general, the laws that were promulgated in this period were an urgent response to the requirements of the new situation as, among other things, regulated the election process, abrogated some of the old regulations, laws and military orders, and established new bodies. The legislative process in this period was characterized by “mixing between elementary legislation (laws), and secondary legislation (regulations and charts)”, “the weak role of the Council of Ministers in legislation”, “in some of these legislations, reference by the legislator to the source of legislative authority was absent”.⁴³ Some laws met with acute criticism, such as the law pertaining to the encouragement of investment,⁴⁴ which was replaced by a subsequent draft law.

9-2 The Second Stage: The PLC Establishes Its Legislative Role

The PLC outlined a legislative mechanism in both its standing orders and in the draft

pertaining to the establishment of the Traffic Department.

⁴² These laws dealt with economic issues and the establishment of governmental and public institutions, as well as the organization of the functioning of certain institutions. They also dealt with the modification of some of the provisions of already applicable laws, organizing the legislative and presidential elections, issues pertaining to translation and translators, and exempting diplomatic and consular vehicles from licensing fees.

⁴³ For instance, decision No.1 of 1994 concerning the continuation of the application of the laws, regulations and orders that were applicable prior to 5 June 1967, decision No. 8 of 1995 granting officers, non-commissioned officers and members of the intelligence services the status of judicial police, and decision No. 287 of 1995 regarding the powers of the Attorney General. All these decisions modified laws (Abu Hannud, Hussain , 1998, *A Report on Legislation and its Enacting Mechanism in the PNA: An Analytical Study*, (In Arabic), Ramallah, PICCR).

⁴⁴ Prepared by foreign experts in English and then translated into Arabic. It was criticized on both economic and legal grounds. The law was not implemented and was abrogated by another law submitted by the PLC (Hussein Abu Hannud, *Ibid.* p. 36).

Basic Law.⁴⁵ Draft laws are presented to the PLC by the Council of Ministers, by a member or members of the PLC, or by one of its departments. The PLC speaker then refers the proposed draft law to the competent committee⁴⁶ for its comments, after which the committee submits its report to the Council, which opens it for general discussion. The draft law is then referred to the PLC's Legal Committee for its comments, after which it is discussed and endorsed in two separate readings. During the first reading each article is discussed and approved by a vote, after which another vote takes place, this time on the draft law in its entirety. In the second reading, proposed modifications are discussed and then approved by a vote. In some cases there is a third reading, which takes place upon the written request of the Council of Ministers or one quarter of the PLC members. Finally, the draft law is submitted to the President for endorsement.

In accordance with the PLC bylaws, the President ratifies laws within 30 days once they have been passed by the PLC. The PNA President can refer them back to the PLC during this period with his remarks or objections; otherwise, the laws are considered ratified and published in the *Official Gazette*. If the President refers the draft laws back to the PLC, they are discussed again by the Council and, if endorsed by the absolute majority (45 members), considered passed and then published in the *Official Gazette*. Through these procedures the PLC aims to expedite the promulgation of laws organizing the various aspects of the life of society. The

failure to endorse the Basic Law, however, has left the implementation of laws already endorsed by the PLC subject to the will of the chairmanship of the executive authority.⁴⁷

9-2-1 Sixty-Eight Draft Laws Submitted to the PLC by the End of 1999

By the end of 1999 the PLC had dealt with 68 laws, some of which had been promulgated and published in the Palestinian Waqa'i (the *Official Gazette*).⁴⁸ Others, meanwhile, had been referred to the President for ratification and promulgation while others were still in different reading stages. In other words, the PLC dealt with 68 laws in 48 months, making an average of 17 laws per year. Also worthy of mention is that the PLC succeeded in promulgating at least seven laws per year. It is noticed through looking at the *Official Gazette* that most of the laws were promulgated in the years 1998-1999, as 12 laws were pronounced in 1998 and 15 in 1999, but only three in 1996 and in 1997.

The PLC is trying hard to issue new laws rather than resort to modifying or merging the laws that were applicable during the period of Jordanian and Egyptian rule. A general ruling in an independent article in each new law affirms the abrogation of laws that were applicable prior to the issuance of the law in order to put an end to the conflict of laws.

Among the 29 promulgated laws there were two which dealt with local commissions, four relating to the

⁴⁵ It was endorsed by the PLC in October 1997, but has yet to be approved by the President.

⁴⁶ The PLC has 12 permanent committees in addition to the ad hoc committees. The permanent committees are as follows: the Jerusalem Committee, the Land and Settlement Committee, the Political Committee, the Legal Committee, the Finance and Budget Committee, the Economic Committee, the Interior Committee, the Education and Social Issues Committee, the Natural Resources and Energy Committee, the Human Rights and Public Freedoms Monitoring Committee, the Political Committee, and the PLC Affairs Committee (Standing Orders of the Legislative Council, Article 48).

⁴⁷ The PICCR considered the PLC formula, according to which the law becomes applicable a month after being referred to the executive authority if the President fails to endorse it during this period, an ineffective formula and "unsuitable to the Palestinian situation due to the lack of legal awareness and constitutional and legislative traditions governing the relations among the three powers". It is also worth mentioning that the PLC's Standing Orders are not binding as far as the executive authority is concerned, nor do they state a certain mechanism that obliges the executive authority to respect the will of the PLC.

⁴⁸ Passed through at least one legislative procedure.

Authority's general budget, eight relating to economic, commercial, agricultural, industrial, and environmental activities. In addition, four relate to the public governmental administration (one of which dealt with the civil service), three relating to security and public gatherings, one relating to higher education, and three relating to social issues.

The number of draft laws referred to the President for ratification was seven,⁴⁹ three of which were referred in 1997: the Basic Law, the law pertaining to real estate possession by foreigners, and the law pertaining to the General Petrol Commission. In 1998 the Law of the Judicial Authority was referred. The law pertaining to the modification of the Executive Authority Law, the Labor Law,⁵⁰ and the Arbitration Law,⁵¹ were all promulgated recently.

There is only one law, the Traffic Law, in the third stage of reading, while two draft laws are with the Council of Ministers for comment following the conclusion of their second reading. These are the Law on Administrative Hierarchies and the law pertaining to the formation of regular courts. The PLC endorsed three draft laws during their first reading, namely the laws pertaining to penal procedures, standards and measures, and public statistics.

Draft laws accepted in general discussion numbered 12. The draft laws included one on the political parties, which was discussed in late 1997 and then postponed for a first reading until further notice. The other laws focused on economic matters, such as the Income Tax Law, the law pertaining to the regulating of banks and the law pertaining to the Water Authority. The legislative activity related to these laws mainly took place in 1999 when six

draft laws were accepted in public discussion, compared with three in 1998 and one in the year 2000.

There are three draft laws that are currently being dealt with by the competent committees: the draft laws pertaining to social security, the prohibition of torture, and the rules of the civil courts. The PLC referred two draft laws back to the executive authority, namely, the laws pertaining to the protection of natural resources in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Center for Rural Development. It should be noted that President Arafat withdrew the General Budget Law of 1999 and rejected a draft law dealing with publications which was presented by one of the PLC members, considering that such a law had already been issued through a presidential decree. The President also rejected a draft law submitted by the Council of Ministers related to the appointment of mukhtars.

The PLC merged two laws into one regarding rights of the handicapped, and they modified the law pertaining to the judiciary, the law regulating lawyers and the law pertaining to hallmarking and control of precious metals. The PLC also postponed looking into five draft laws without giving reasons for its decision to do so and without defining the length of the postponement. These included the draft laws pertaining to the Bank for the Development of Local Commissions, the Veterinarians Union, governmental health insurance, the Palestinian Medical Council, and the supervision of citrus fruits.

The laws that were referred from the PLC and promulgated by the President until the end of the year 2000 were distributed according to topics. The subjects were as follows: three laws dealing with judicial issues, six laws dealing with administrative issues, 12 laws dealing with economic issues, four laws dealing with social issues, and four laws dealing with legal and public freedoms issues.

⁴⁹ Until 2000, twelve draft laws were referred to the President for ratification and not yet promulgated, including three draft laws referred since 1997 with the remaining in 2000.

⁵⁰ Promulgated by the President on 30 April 2000.

⁵¹ Promulgated by the president on 5 April 2000.

In regard to the years in which these laws were referred to the PLC, it was found that 1998 was an exceptionally busy year as the Council dealt with a total of 24 laws and draft laws. In 1997 the Council dealt with 20 laws and draft laws, followed by 1999 when it dealt with 16 laws and draft laws. Finally, in 1996, only two laws were dealt with. By the PLC The legislation schedule of the PLC for the year 2000 was heavy with four recently referred laws on its agenda, in addition to 35 laws carried forward from previous years.

So far, the legislative process has been characterized by the participation of concerned parties and experts in its discussions. Not surprisingly, certain parties came up with various lobbying methods in order to convince PLC members to adopt their views in regard to certain laws or specific articles. Such an example, was found in the lobbying methods used by the NGOs network in cooperation with the General Union of Charitable Societies during the various stages of the endorsement of the law concerning these two parties. This method was also used by those employed by the workers and employers unions in regard to the Labor Law and the Social Security Law. The PLC has demonstrated increasing openness in terms of the involvement of the society and its various organizations in the discussions pertaining to various draft laws.

The PLC has undoubtedly established its legislative role; however, its monitoring role remains marginalized by the executive authority. In other words, the Council has failed to achieve decisive results in regard to many of the issues it follows up. In addition, it has failed to succeed in monitoring the agreements held by the government. The indifference of the executive authority in regard to the PLC decisions and recommendations continued, especially as the PLC itself did not follow up on their implementation. The delay in submitting the Budget Law and the failure on the part of the executive

authority to abide by the provisions of the General Budget Law also continued (Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights 2000: 53-59).

The PLC has attempted to activate its control role through "adopting a method of public hearing sessions on public issues" (PICCR 2000: 55). Although the hearings have helped in touching upon the fields of governmental malfunction, the PLC has failed to treat this malfunction in a serious manner.

Factors have contributed to the weakness of the control role of the PLC. One is the failure to endorse the Basic Law and to acknowledge the standing orders of the PLC as the regulator of the relationship between the legislative and executive authorities. This is coupled with the failure to define the relationship between them with legal articles.

9-3 Lack of Executive Charts

It is noticed that despite the promulgation of a number of laws, until now, no executive charts approved by the Council of Ministers have been attached.⁵² The laws formulated general regulating frameworks that required executive charts, especially the Local Commission Law and the Civil Service Law among others. The absence of such regulating executive charts means that the new laws are implemented according to the old charts. This, obviously, has a negative effect on the legal system and results in the undermining of the content of the promulgated laws and the maintaining of differences in terms of their application according to the explanations of various

⁵² Some ministries prepared executive charts for certain laws such as civil societies and charitable law for which three executive charts were presented to the Legislative Department- Diwan Al Fatwa Wal Tashrei' by three ministries; Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Non-Governmental Organizations. The Ministry of Social Affairs prepared an executive chart for the law on handicapped rights and other laws as well, but all these remained without ratification.

parties. This is in addition to the legislative process not being involved in the method of modifying applicable laws, but rather resorts to formulating new legislation and laws that contain provisions abrogating the laws that were applicable prior to their issuance.

9-4 Evaluation of the PLC Performance

The PLC was not able to overcome the negative aspects related to the formulation of various laws. This can be attributed to the limitations that restrict legislation in the Oslo Agreements in addition to the frustration resulting from how the executive authority has been ignoring the decisions and legislation of the PLC. It can also be attributed to the limited experience of the PLC members and the absence of binding constitutional rules, a legislative plan, and law priorities. Some development was witnessed in terms of the mechanisms employed in formulating draft laws and their primary discussion. However, legislation did not receive serious attention on the part of the PLC members during the sessions of the Council, while the parliamentary blocks that defend certain interests were noticeably absent. Another major problem is the hegemony of one political party in the council, being the party that leads the executive authority, which naturally prevents real opposition.

It could be said that in the four years since it commenced its role as the first elected PLC and legislative body in Palestine, the PLC did an excellent job. A number of PLC members, however, had reservations concerning the Council's activity in the field of legislation in terms of the quantity and quality of legislation. Those people believed that the number of laws being dealt with was not sufficient and did not reflect the length of time that the Council had been functioning, especially considering that it was equivalent to a full

parliamentary period in many of the world's parliaments. Worth mentioning, however, is the fact that the PLC members had almost no previous parliamentary experience. Past experience was mainly associated with their membership in political and union organizations or in the National Council. In the latter case, it was at a time when its sessions were separated by long periods during which committees were inactive.

9-5 Weak Judiciary

According to the 1999 report of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights, there were some positive developments in regard to the situation of the Palestinian judiciary in that same year. Among these developments was the appointment of an attorney general, a chief justice, and a chairman for the Higher Court in Gaza, as well as the initiation of training for judges and public prosecutors. The basic feature that remained, however, is the lack of efficacy and independence due to the failure to treat the conditions and problems the judiciary was facing.

The judiciary suffers from an acute shortage in the number of courts on various levels, and in the number of judges. There are, for instance, ten magistrate courts and 14 judges in the West Bank and six magistrate courts and 15 judges in the Gaza Strip. The courts deal with simple civil issues, meaning that there is an average of one judge per 113,634 citizens in the West Bank and one judge per 72,471 citizens in the Gaza Strip (PICCR 2000: 70-71). This has resulted in the phenomenon of deferring the hearing of cases for protracted periods of time that sometimes last for years. "Lawyers resorted to striking, refusing to appear before the courts for one day on 15 April 1999 to protest the deteriorating conditions in the courts" (*Official Gazette*, April 1999).

The most important problems from which the Palestinian judiciary in the WBS was suffering were as follows: the belittling of the jurisdiction of the civil judiciary by giving special courts the authority to look into cases which are within the jurisdiction of the civil judiciary. An example is the military courts, which look into cases involving civilians and the State Security Court. In addition, non-judicial parties continue to look into conflicts that are within the authority of the civil courts such as some security departments, legal committees in the governorates, and the tribal judiciary. This is normally accompanied by coercive practices against the disputing parties (Ibid: 88.). In addition, the infringement on the part of the executive authority in terms of the powers of the judiciary administration⁵³ through appointing and pensioning off judges and transferring them from one place to another. The administration of the judiciary remained in the hands of the Chairman of the Executive, the Ministry of Justice and the General Employees Bureau. The security departments also continued to interfere in the affairs of the general prosecution, withdrawing some of its powers, as well as in the work of judges, displaying a tendency to implement the decisions of the Palestinian courts only very selectively.⁵⁴ Other problems included a shortage in the number of court buildings and in the number of judges and prosecutors,⁵⁵ the low salaries of judges, the small size of the available courts and the lack of equipment.

⁵³ The judges went on strike for one day in October 1999 to protest against the conditions in the judicial department.

⁵⁴ This included the security departments and some civilian ministries. Most of the court decisions that are not implemented are of a political nature. For more details, see the annual PICCR reports.

⁵⁵ For instance, the average number of cases a judge looks at each day is 28. See crime indicators in this monitor to notice the increase in the number of cases that are annually referred to the following year.

9-6 Citizens' Rights

9-6-1 Israel Continues to Violate the Palestinians' Human Rights⁵⁶

The Israeli occupation authorities continued with their practice of violating Palestinians' human rights during the interim period; in doing this, they followed an official policy that was adopted by the Israeli Government. The Israeli judiciary continues to practice toleration towards Jews who perpetrate crimes against Palestinians. In 1997, Israelis killed 29 Palestinian. They also killed thirty-seven Palestinian civilians in 1998 and 16 others in 1999. They were killed as follows: 32 by Israeli soldiers, eight by settlers, six while being interrogated, two when a mine left behind by the Israeli Army exploded, and five by Israeli undercover military units known as 'Arabist Units' in unclear circumstances.

Israel sanctioned the torturing of Palestinian detainees on the legislative, legal, judicial, and executive levels. According to a report published by the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem, 850 Palestinian prisoners are subjected to torture every year by the Israeli security service, the 'Shabak'. More than 105 different kinds of torture are used against Palestinians detainees, ten of whom died after being tortured in Israeli jails during the years 1997-1999. According to the Sharm Al-Sheikh Memorandum signed by the Palestinian and Israeli parties on 4 September 1999, a total of 350 prisoners were released, including seven from the city of Jerusalem, all of whom were arrested prior to 4 May 1994. The number of prisoners in Israeli jails at the end of 1999 was 1,700.

Israel continued with its house demolition policy, with 150 houses being demolished in the WBS in 1998 and 53 in 1999, including 27 in the city of Jerusalem.

⁵⁶ Data derived from the fifth annual report of the Palestinian Independent Committee for Citizens' Rights (PICCR: 2000).

Scores of tents and barracks were also destroyed. 417 houses were demolished in the period between the Oslo Agreement and the end of 1997. The Israel authorities also continued with their policy of land confiscation and settlement building, causing the number of Israeli settlements in the WBGS to reach 195 by the end of 1998. 350,000 settlers in addition to 24 new settlement nuclei that were also established in 1999 inhabited these settlements. In that same year, the Israeli Government also approved the structural plans for 30 new settlements. Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Foreign Minister at the time, called on settlers to seize hilltops because "what we control now will become ours". They actually controlled 40 locations. Despite the Barak government's decision to dismantle some settlement locations (15 locations), only a small number were actually dismantled while others remained and continued expansion; this is according to the Peace Now Movement, 2000.

In 1999, the Israeli Government also approved three detailed projects for settlement industrial zones and constructed 14 bypass roads with an area of 10,000 dunums. Thirteen other bypass roads with an area of 12,000 dunums are waiting approval. In all, the Israeli Government has confiscated 400,000 dunums of land since the endorsement of the Oslo Agreement.

Israel practiced a policy of ethnic cleansing in the city of Jerusalem and waged a campaign during which it withdrew the identity cards of Palestinian Jerusalemites who had lived outside the peripheries of the city for more than seven years. The total number of Palestinian Jerusalemites whose identity cards have been withdrawn since 1967 is 5,906. Of this number, 400 lost their identity cards in 1999 alone.

Israel has also continued their policy of collective punishment against the Palestinian people including the closure of

the WBGS for long periods of time, the obstruction of citizen's movement, and the prevention of workers from getting to their work places in Israel. Since the Oslo Agreement closure days on the West Bank have accumulated to 436 days, and to 472 days on the Gaza Strip. The Israeli occupation closed the West Bank for 132 days and the Gaza Strip for 138 days in the year 1996 alone. (MAS Economic Monitor, Issue 7 2000:5)

9-6-2 Continued violation of Palestinian Citizens' Rights in the PNA Territories

The PNA territories have witnessed an improvement in the cooperation between security and various Palestinian bodies with human rights active organizations in the WBGS and in particular with the Palestinian Independent Committee for Citizens' Rights (PICCR). This is evident in the increase of the number of cases in which the security bodies show cooperation with the Committee.

Despite this improvement, the fifth report of the Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights registered violations of citizens' rights by the PNA bodies in various fields including the right to live, the right to freedom and personal security, and the right to freedom of movement. In addition, the report showed that most of the violations were based on political considerations and not legal ones. It also showed that this phenomenon has been continuing for five years. Killings also occurred due to the excessive use of force in dispersing demonstrators and the misuse of arms. There were 150 political detainees in the jails of the executive authority who had not had the benefit of a trial. In addition, there were violations of the freedom of expression. The executive authority issued decisions closing local radio and TV stations, for example, in addition to closing some newspapers or suspending their licenses.

Journalists and citizens were also detained due to an issue related to freedom of expression. The laws pertaining to public gatherings were violated on more than one occasion. A number of house arrest orders were issued. In regard to the use of torture, the PICCR received 164 related complaints (PICCR 2000:112-125).

The Palestinian Independent Committee for Citizens' Rights pursued 1037 cases during 1999 with an increase of 27% in comparison with 1998. The Committee received 765 of these cases in 1999 and the rest were pending from the two previous years. The cases comprised of 2370 claims of violations committed by various governmental bodies in 1999 compared to 1719 violations in 1998. These cases represent those reported by the PICCR. The committee closed 1890 cases during 1999 criticizing concerned parties in 47% of the violation cases, in 26% of the cases, no criticism was addressed and it was difficult to evaluate 2% of the cases. This shows an increase in the rate of violations that were criticized in comparison with 1998 when criticism was addressed in 47% of the cases that were then closed (PICCR 2000:137-162).

The Palestinian Independent Committee for Citizens' Rights has registered a continuous increase in the number of cases that it pursues annually. The Committee has pursued 534 cases in 1997 with a 99% increase in comparison to the year before. This is not a demonstration of an actual increase of violations but rather an indication of the growing trust of the public in the efficacy of reporting to the PICCR to pursue their cases.

Summary

The PLC consolidated its legislative role during the past four years and succeeded in consolidating legislation in various fields and in enacting contemporary laws, such as the law pertaining to charitable societies and NGOs. The issuance of laws was accelerated during the last two years.

The PLC did not, however, succeed in laying down the foundations of its relationship with the executive authority in accordance with binding legal provisions. The legislative process, therefore, remained linked to the will of the executive authority.

The judiciary witnessed some improvements such as the appointing of an attorney general and a chief justice, and the application of the law regulating the legal profession. However, the basic problems affecting the efficacy and independence of the judiciary remained. The phenomenon of interference on the part of the executive authority and the security departments in the work of the judiciary, the failure to execute court decisions, the shortage in the number of judges, and the ineffectiveness of the public prosecution all contributed to the weakness of the process of establishing a modern state ruled by law which considers citizenship to mean rights and duties.

The stage following the establishment of the Authority is characterized by increasing effectiveness in terms of the societal organizations and specialists working in the field of legislation. It is also characterized by an increasing openness on the part of the PLC to involve concerned parties who express their interests through the formation of lobbying groups both inside and outside the PLC in the legislative process.

REFERENCES

- Abu Hannud, H. (1998). *A Report on Legislation and its Enacting Mechanism in the PNA: An Analytical Study*. Ramallah: Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights (PICCR). (In Arabic).
- Administration of Health Statistics. The National Administration of Motherhood, Childhood, and Family Planning (1997). *The Sudanese Survey on the Child and Maternal Health, Most Important Conclusions and Recommendations*.
- General Popular Committee for Health and Social Security. (1997). *The Arab Libyan Survey on Maternal and Child Health, Most Important Findings and Recommendations*.
- Ministry of Public Health. (1998). *The Lebanese Survey on Maternal and Child Health. Most Important Findings and Recommendations*.
- Ministry of Social Affairs (2000). *Orphanages Providing Long Dormitory Services in Palestine*. Ramallah: Ministry of Social Affairs.
- _____ (various issues). *Social Assistants Statistics*. Ramallah: Ministry of Social Affairs.
- National Population Council (1995). *Demographic and Health Survey*. Egypt.
- National Team for the Eradication of Poverty (1998). *Poverty Report*. Ramallah: Palestinian Ministry of Planning.
- Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) (1995). Shaban, R and Al-Botmeh, S. *Poverty in the West Bank & Gaza Strip*. Ramallah: MAS.
- _____ (1997a). Hilal, J. and El-Malki, M. *Informal Social Support System (Non Institutionalized) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*. Ramallah: MAS.
- _____ (1997b). Hilal, J. and El-Malki, M. *Social Support Institutions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*. Ramallah: MAS. (In Arabic)
- _____ (1998a). Hilal, J., et al. *Towards a Social Security System in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*. Ramallah: MAS.
- _____ (1998b, 1999, 2000a). *Social Monitor*, Issues 1-3. Ramallah: MAS.
- _____ (2000b). *Economic Monitor*, Issue 7. Ramallah: MAS.
- _____ (2000c). El-Malki, M. and Shalabi, Y. *Internal Migration and Palestinian Returnees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*. Ramallah: MAS.
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). (1994). *Demography of the Palestinian People in the WBGS: Current Situation Report Series. No. 1*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1997a). *Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Final Report*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1997b). *Health Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. 1996*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1997c). *Standards of Living in the Palestinian Territories: Final Report (October 1995- September 1996)*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1998a). *Household Environmental Survey: Main Findings*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1998b). *Standards of Living in the Palestinian Territories: Final Report (January-December 1997)*. Ramallah : PCBS.
- _____ (1998c). *Women and Men in Palestine. Trends and Statistics*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1999a). *Housing in the Palestinian Territories: Annual Report: 1998*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1999b). *Labor Force Survey: (October-December, 1999 Round): Press Conference*. Ramallah: PCBS.

-
- _____ (1999c). *Local Communities Survey 1998: Main Findings*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1999d). *Population, Housing and Establishment Census, 1997: Final Results, Population Report, Palestinian Territories, First Part*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1999e). *Population of the Palestinian Territories, 1997-2025*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1999f). *Small Area Population, 1997-2010*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1999g). *Standards of Living in the Palestinian Territories: Final Report*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1999h). *Work Conditions Survey: Main Findings*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (2000a). *Culture Statistics*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (2000b). *Disable Persons in the Palestinian Territories 1997*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (2000c). *Health Survey, (Main Findings)*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (2000d). *Labor Force Survey: Annual Report 1999*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (2000e). *Marriage and Divorce in the Palestinian Territories, 1999*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (2000f). *Media Survey: Press Conference*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (2000g). *Palestinian Children: Annual Report*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (2000h). *Population, Housing and Establishment Census, 1997: Educational Characteristics in the Palestinian Territories*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (2000i). *Poverty in Palestine (January-December 1998)*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (2000j). *Wastewater Statistics in the Palestinian Territories*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (2000k). *Water Statistics in the Palestinian Territories*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (various issues). *Administrative Records*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (various issues). *Crime and Victimization Statistics: Annual Report*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (various issues). *Household Expenditure and Consumption Levels: Annual Report*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (various issues). *Household Expenditure and Consumption Levels: Final Report*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and Ministry of Education. (1995). *Education Statistical Yearbook 1994/1995, No. 1*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1996). *Education Statistical Yearbook 1995/1996, No. 2*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1997). *Education Statistical Yearbook 1996/1997, No. 3*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1998). *Education Statistical Yearbook 1997/1998, No. 4*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (1999). *Education Statistical Yearbook 1998/1999, No. 5*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- _____ (various years). *Survey of Educational Institutions Data Base*. Ramallah: PCBS.
- Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights (PICCR) (1998-2000). *Annual Report (third, fourth, and fifth)*. Ramallah: PICCR.
- Palestinian Ministry of Health (1996-2000). *Annual Report (1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999)*. Ramallah: Ministry of Health.
- Population Reference Bureau. World Population Data Sheet. Central Statistical Organization. (1999). *Demographic and Maternal and Child Health Survey, 1997*. Yemen.
- Shalabi, F. (1999). *Homes for the Elderly in the WBGs: Reality and Future Prospects*. Ramallah: Palestine Policy Research Forum (PRIP). (In Arabic).
- Sisalem, M., et al. (1998). *The Laws of Palestine: Laws and Decrees Issued by the Palestinian National Authority (May 1994- May 1998)*. (Publisher unknown.) (In Arabic)

STATISTICAL ANNEX

List of Tables

Table 2-1:	Mid Year Projected Population in the WBGS by Age, Sex and Region, Mid Year –1999	[93]
Table 2-2:	Distribution Population in the WBGS by Type of Locality, 1997	[94]
Table 2-3:	Estimated Crude Birth Rate in the WBGS for Selected Years	[95]
Table 2-4:	Households by Household Type and Region, 1995 and 1997	[96]
Table 2-5 :	Percentage of Palestinian Persons who had Place of Previous Residence (Inside) from Total Persons of the WBGS, Governorates and Type of Locality, 1997	[97]
Table 2-6 :	Percentage of Palestinian Persons who had Place of Previous Residence (Outside) from Total Persons of the WBGS, Governorates and Type of Locality, 1997	[98]
Table 2-7:	Marriages* and Divorces Registered in theWBGS by Governorate, 1996 – 1999	[99]
Table 2-8:	Crude Marriage Rate in the WBGS by Governorate, 1997 – 1999	[100]
Table 2-9:	Marriages Registered in the WBGS by Sex, Marital Status and Age, 1996 – 1999	[101]
Table 2-10:	Mode Age and Median Age at First Marriage by Sex and Governorate, 1999	[102]
Table 2-11:	Crude Divorce Rate in the WBGS by Governorate, 1997 – 1999	[103]
Table 2-12:	Divorces Registered in Shariah Courts in the WBGS by Sex, Marital Status and Age, 1996 – 1999	[104]
Table 2-13	Divorces Registered in Shariah Courts in the WBGS by Highest Qualification of Divorces and Divorcee*, 1999	[105]
Table 3-1:	Distribution of Reported Live Births in the WBGS by Region and Governorate, 1995-1999	[106]
Table 3-2:	Life Expectancy at Birth by Sex and Region, 1997-1999	[107]
Table 3-3:	Infant Mortality Rates in the WBGS by Region, 1996 - 1999	[107]
Table 3-4:	Child Mortality Rates in the WBGS by Region, 1996 – 1999	[107]
Table 3-5:	Reported Physicians per 100,000 Population in the WBGS, 1997-1999	[108]
Table 3.6:	Total Number of Hospital Beds and Ratio per 1,000 Population in the WBGS by Region, District and Year, 1996-1999	[108]
Table 3-7:	Distribution of Persons (4Years and Over) by Type of Health Insurance and Region, 1996 and 2000	[109]
Table 3-8:	Percentage Distribution of Disabled Palestinian People by Sex, Region and Type of Disability, 1997	[110]
Table 3-9:	Percentage of Births Occurred at Health Institution in the WBGS by Region, 1996 and 2000	[111]
Table 3-10:	Distribution of Primary Health Care Centers in the WBGS by Supervised Authority and Region, 1995-1999	[111]
Table 3-11:	Percentage Distribution of Currently Married Women who are using Modern Contraceptive, Type of Method and Region, 1996 and 2000	[112]
Table 4-1:	Palestinian Population (15 years and over) by Educational Attainment, Region and Sex, 1997	[113]

Table 4-2:	Literacy Rate of Palestinian Population (15 Years and Over) by Age, Sex and Region, 1995 and 1997	[114]
Table 4-3:	Distribution of Schools and Kindergartens by Region and Stage, 1994/1995-1999/2000	[115]
Table 4-4:	Distribution and Percentage of Schools and Kindergartens by Supervising Authority, 1994/1995 - 1999/2000	[116]
Table 4-5:	Distribution of Students in Schools and Kindergartens by Region and Stage, 1994/1995-1999/2000	[117]
Table 4-6:	Distribution and Percentage of Students by Supervising Authority and Stage	[118]
Table 4-7:	Female\Male Enrollment Ratio by Stage and Region, 1994/1995-1999/2000	[119]
Table 4-8:	Percentage of Enrolled Students in the Secondary Stage by Type of Education, 1994/1995-1999/2000	[120]
Table 4-9:	Distribution of Teachers by Qualification and Sex, 1994/1995 - 1999/2000	[121]
Table 4-10:	Drop-Out Rates by Region, Sex and Stage, 1994/1995-1998/1999	[122]
Table 4-11:	Repetition Rates by Region, Sex and Stage 1994/1995-1998/1999	[123]
Table 4-12:	Students Per Teacher by Region and Supervising Authority, 1994/1995 – 1999/2000	[124]
Table 4-13:	Students Per Class by Stage and Region, 1994/1995-1999/2000	[125]
Table 4-14:	Students Per Class by Stage and Supervising Authority, 1994/1995-1999/2000	[126]
Table 4-15:	Distribution of Students at Universities and Community Colleges by Sex, 1994/1995-1999/2000	[127]
Table 4-16:	Distribution of Teaching Staff at Universities and Community Colleges, 1994/1995-1999/2000	[127]
Table 5-1:	Cultural Centers by Status and Governorate, 1999	[128]
Table 6-1:	Ministry of Social Affairs Supports in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Region and Year, 1995-1999	[129]
Table 6-2:	Distribution of Communities in the WBGS by Availability Some Public Services, 1998	[130]
Table 7-1:	Average Personal Consumption in JD in the WBGS by Region, 1996-1998 (by 1996 prices)	[131]
Table 7-2:	Percentage and Average Monthly Household Consumption in JD by Consumption Group and Region	[132]
Table 7-3:	Average Personal Consumption in Governorates to Average Personal Consumption in the WBGS, 1996-1998	[133]
Table 7-4:	Poverty Rates in WBGS by Area, 1996-1998	[133]
Table 7-5:	Poverty Rates in WBGS by Governorate, 1998	[134]
Table 7-6:	Average Daily Wages & Median of Daily Wages in the WBGS by Place of Work, 1996-1999, 1996 prices	[135]
Table 7-6 A:	Average Daily Wages and Median Daily Wages of Palestinian Workers in WBGS to the Palestinian Workers in Israel and the Settlements, 1995-1999	[135]
Table 7-7:	Women to Men Wages in WBGS by Economic Activity, 1996-1999	[136]
Table 7-8:	Indicators on Distribution of the Palestinian Labor Force by Sector/Occupation in WBGS, 1995-1999	[137]
Table 8-1:	Reported Criminal Offenses in the WBGS by Type of Criminal Offense and Region, 1996-1999	[138]

Table 8-2:	Reported Criminal Offenses in the WBGS by Year and Governorate, 1997-1999	[139]
Table 8-3:	Reported Criminal Offenses in the WBGS by Type of Criminal Offense, 1996- 1999	[140]
Table 8-4:	Reported Criminal Offenses in the WBGS by Type of Criminal Offense and Governorate, 1999	[141]
Table 8-5:	Percent Distribution of Persons in Custody in the WBGS by Type of Criminal Offense, 1996-1999	[142]
Table 8-6:	Convicted Offenders in Prisons in the WBGS by Type of Criminal Offense, 1996-1999	[143]
Table 8-7:	Juvenile Offenders Who Entered Correctional Institutions in the WBGS by Some Background Characteristics, Type of Criminal Offense and Region, 1997- 1999	[144]
Table 8-8:	Civil Court Matters in the WBGS by Stage of Proceeding and Region, 1996 – 1999	[145]
Table 8-9:	Judges in the WBGS by Type of Court, Sex and Region, 1999	[146]
Table 8-10:	Casualties in Road Traffic Accidents in the WBGS by Governorate and Type of Injury, 1999	[147]
Table 8-11:	Children Aged Less than Seven Years Old Injured and Killed in Road Traffic Accidents in the WBGS by Month and Region, 1999	[148]