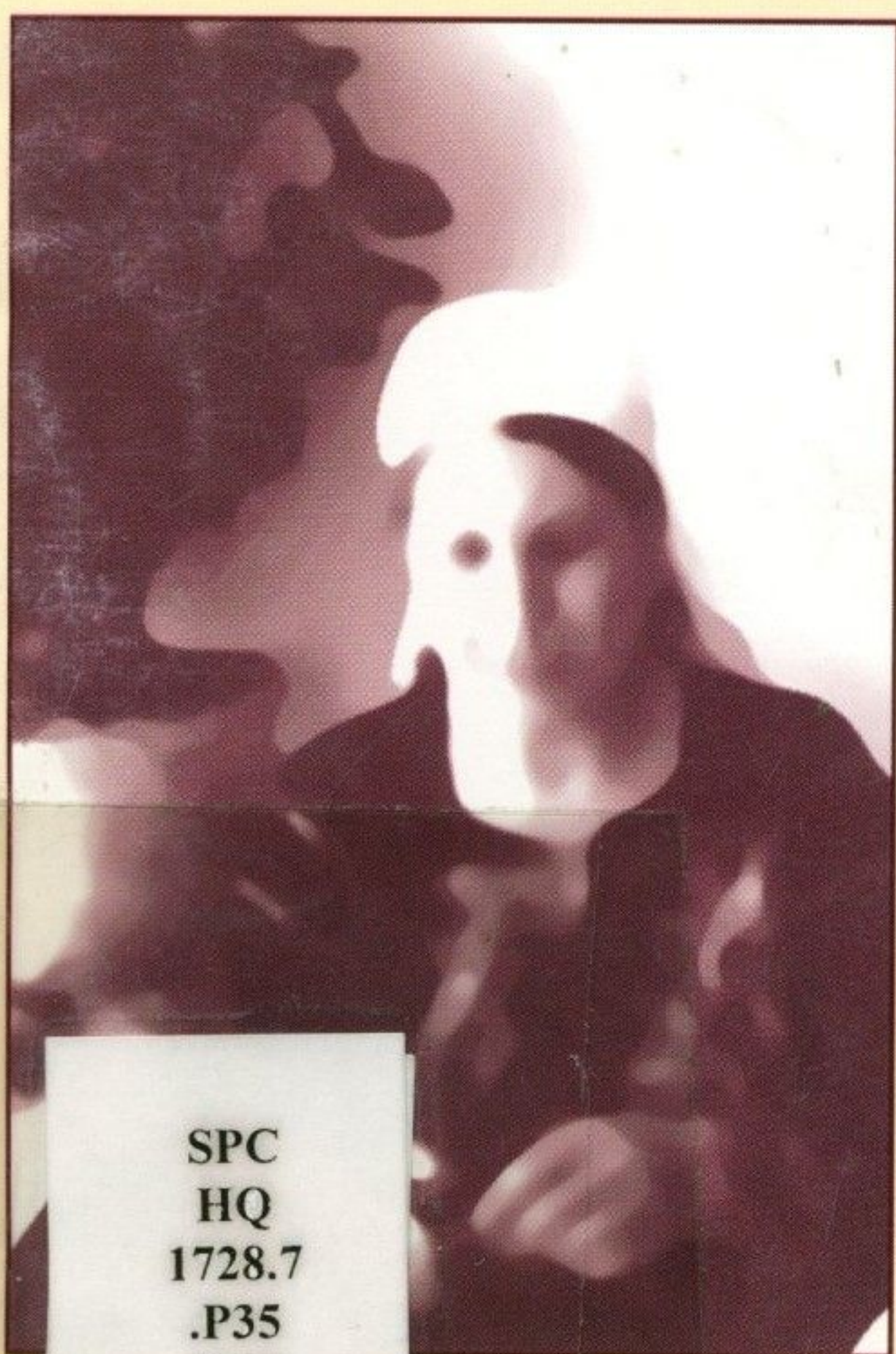




EDUCATION



PALESTINIAN WOMEN: 6 A STATUS REPORT



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Palestinian Women: A Status Report

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Education

A Gender Profile of the Determinants and Outcomes of Schooling in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Mona Ghali

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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Education in Palestine | p. 7 |
| <i>The structural level</i> | |
| <i>The conceptual level</i> | |
| Part 1: Structure of the education system | p. 10 |
| <i>Three supervising authorities</i> | |
| <i>Structure of education</i> | |
| Part 2: The state of Palestinian education | p. 13 |
| <i>Literacy</i> | |
| <i>Enrolment trends</i> | |
| <i>Enrolment by gender</i> | |
| <i>Enrolment ratios</i> | |
| <i>Repetition and drop-out rates</i> | |
| Part 3: In-school and out-of-school factors affecting gendered identities | p. 21 |
| <i>In-school factors</i> | |
| <i>The academic curriculum</i> | |
| <i>The hidden curriculum</i> | |
| <i>Teacher methodology and training</i> | |
| <i>Streaming and fields of specialization</i> | |
| <i>Out-of school factors</i> | |
| Policy recommendations | p. 31 |
| Conclusions | p. 34 |
| Appendix | p. 36 |

List of Figures

- 1 Students by education authority, 1995-96
- 2 Literacy rate by age and gender
- 3 Student enrolment by level, 1975-1999
- 4 Female-male enrolment ratio by level, West Bank and Gaza Strip
- 5 Repeaters by gender, 1994-95, West Bank and Gaza Strip
- 6 Drop-outs by gender, 1994-95, West Bank and Gaza Strip
- 7 Pupils passing the GSCE by gender (percent attending exam)

List of Tables

- 1 Ability to read and write by directorate
- 2 Gross enrolment ratios by gender (percent), 1995
- 3 School enrolment rates by directorate and gender
- 4 School drop-out rates by directorate and gender
- 5 Distribution of community college students by specialization, 1995-96

Appendix

Table A1 School Enrolment by Level and Gender, Selected Years

Terms and Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|--|
| DOP | Declaration of Principles |
| GER | Gross enrolment rate |
| GSCE | General Secondary Certificate Examination (also known as <i>Tawjihi</i>) |
| Intifada | Palestinian uprising |
| MHE | Ministry of Higher Education |
| MOE | Ministry of Education |
| PA | Palestinian Authority |
| PCBS | Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics |
| PCDC | Palestinian Curriculum Development Centre |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East |
| VETT | Vocational education and training |

INTRODUCTION

PALESTINIAN WOMEN: A STATUS REPORT is published by the Women's Studies Program at Birzeit University in separate English and Arabic editions. This ten chapter report is an attempt to build a comprehensive picture of the current challenges facing Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in building a society based on gender equality. The guiding assumption is that such equality is necessary for both sustainable development and democratization. This report is very much a product of its time. On the one hand, it has been greatly influenced by the conceptual revolution in women's studies which puts gender relations, asymmetries and gaps at the center of analysis. On the other, the report is an attempt to respond to the new complexity of the current situation in Palestine, which offers new opportunities for intervention in public policy alongside the continued efforts of grassroots organizations and activities towards bringing about positive change in women's lives.

Eight of the chapters address the situation of women in specific sectors of contemporary life in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A further two provide context and concepts for examining the main features and trends in this society, and the key issues in gender and development that can be brought to bear to understand Palestinian reality. The sectoral chapters have a threefold task. The first is to delineate gender gaps by analyzing women's differential access and/or integration in each sector. The second is to analyze how women's socially assigned roles and responsibilities may act to exclude women or place unequal burdens on them. Finally, the chapters aim to explore linkages between, and possible determinants of, these processes. Various chapters show the linkage between high fertility rates, gender gaps in secondary education, early marriage, and the absence of labor opportunities and social protection. Others identify assumptions about gender roles and their impact on women and men's access to social security and assistance, or delineate the relationship between access to capital and achieving political power.

In terms of key gender indicators, the Report points out that the situation in Palestine shows some sharp contradictions. Positive indicators for women, such as rising educational levels and political participation, exist alongside negative indicators of their low labor force participation and persistent high fertility. To understand these seemingly contradictory indicators requires an integrated framework that examines the specific constraints, resources and opportunities that shape the lives of women and men. Instead of the common assumption that Palestinian women's lives are largely determined by culture, the report attempts to show that gender asymmetry is produced across a number of different but interacting realms of life: the family and household, economy, politics, and society.

While there are many commonalities between gender relations in Palestine and those in other Middle Eastern societies, the history of both military occupation and resistances to it stamp all areas of life in the West Bank and Gaza and must be taken into account. As such, gender as a basis of social organization is examined in relation to other dynamics - national/political, economic, and social - that shape the fates and futures of Palestinian women and men in their different socio-economic and political settings. In turn, the new reality of Palestine in transition has introduced changes in political, economic and social life that require fresh analysis and has made the task of understanding where change is needed more urgent, in order to create a democratic society of equal citizens.

Although the focus of this report is Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a work comparing the commonalities and differences between Palestinian women across their various territorial contexts is yet to be written. A project comparing the situation of women in the West Bank and Gaza, in refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, inside Israel, or in the far-flung Palestinian

diaspora would be extremely important in illuminating the role of gender in structuring the Palestinian nation. Such a project is beyond the scope of this report but it is hoped that it may serve as a catalyst to other researchers.

Understanding the status, roles, economic and social participation and life circumstances of women in the West Bank and Gaza, is in itself a daunting task. This is both due to data gaps and inconsistencies and the historic lack of gender-informed research and scholarship, a gap which is just beginning to be addressed by gender-aware researchers and research centers. The report brings together the large but uneven range of existing research, data and policy documents on Palestine and Palestinian women. The Women's Studies Program was also fortunate to be able to draw upon new research and upon the new data generated by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. As such, the status report may also be useful in identifying areas for further investigation and research.

This status report is the final publication in the first phase of the Palestinian Women in Society project. In the second phase, researchers in the Program will be investigating gender and social policy in several aspects, including gender and public provisions for social security, gender and family and kin-based social support systems., and gender and educational reform

In many ways, the making of this report was a collaborative effort, as each chapter was the subject of in-depth discussions by all members of the Women's Studies Program, where changes and new material were introduced. Each chapter, however, has an individual author who is acknowledged. As with many projects, the less acknowledged work of discussion and debate, and research and editorial assistance, were equally vital to the project.

The chapters and authors are as follows:

1. Palestinian Society -- Lisa Taraki
2. Population and Fertility -- Rita Giacaman
3. Family -- Rema Hammami
4. Labor and Economy -- Rema Hammami
5. Social Support -- Penny Johnson
6. Education -- Mona Ghali
7. Politics -- Islah Jad
8. Law -- Penny Johnson
9. Health -- Rita Giacaman
10. Gender and Development -- Eileen Kuttab

This edition is considered by the Women's Studies Program as a "discussion edition" to be developed and modified through the process of debate among women's movement activists, researchers, developmental practitioners and policy makers. The chapters have, wherever possible, tried to identify practical implications for positive change in order to promote the building of shared strategies.

- *Women's Studies Program*
Birzeit University

Although the title of this report is Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a word compared the experiences and differences between Palestinian women across their various territories. It is not to be taken as a project comparing the situation of women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1993 to the situation in 1994 or to the situation in 1995.

EDUCATION

A GENDER PROFILE OF THE DETERMINANTS AND OUTCOME OF SCHOOLING IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP

Mona Ghali

Education in Palestine¹

Access to education at all levels has increased for Palestinians as evidenced by literacy rates and enrolment statistics, despite adverse socio-political conditions. This is a testament to the value placed on education by the Palestinian community. Paralleling the attitude to schooling of minorities and groups hemmed in due to racial, class or ethnic differences, Palestinians living under occupation have perceived education as instrumental for social and economic mobility.²

Despite the impressive improvement in school enrolment over the past decades, gender roles and responsibilities have not changed to the extent as might be expected from the narrowed education gender gap. Women's roles have expanded to some extent, to include paid work outside the household and a greater role in public life. However, these roles have been generally in addition to, and secondary to, their reproductive role. Preliminary research indicates that students perceive education as a mechanism to prepare young women to care for their children and menfolk rather than to engage in paid employment outside the home, suggesting that social attitudes regarding the purpose of schooling remain conservative.³

By definition the school functions to integrate individuals into the society, serving as a bridging mechanism between childhood and adulthood. Therefore, it is unrealistic to expect that schools prepare individuals to assume roles and responsibilities which are either non-existent or perceived as contrary to the norms and practices governing the society. This is not to insist that schools merely legitimize the *status quo*, or mirror the society. Schools can also serve as a transformative mechanism in readjusting the gender assumptions and power relations if the requisite conditions are present at two levels: at the structural level, including the economy and family; and at the conceptual level, involving the development of an independent Palestinian philosophy of education.

The structural level

Education can contribute to reconstructing concepts of gender if economic and labour market forces afford women the opportunity to perform non-sex stereotyped work. This

¹The author wishes to thank Lamis Abu Nahleh, Reema Hammami and Penny Johnson of the Women's Studies Programme for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

²Lucky Tshireleto, "They are the Government's Children: School and Community Relations in a Remote Area Dweller (Basarwa) settlement in Kweneng District, Botswana," *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol 17, 137-188.

³Lamis Abu Nahleh, "Palestinian Women's Education: Aspirations and Realities," unpublished paper presented at Arab Regional Population Conference, Cairo, December 1996.

Palestinian
Society

Population
and Fertility

Family

Labor and
Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and
Development

was not possible under Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip after 1967. During that period, the linkage between the education system and the labour market of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was weakened as the Palestinian economy was deliberately subordinated, and structurally kept subservient, to the economy of Israel. This affected men and women differently, 'pulling' Palestinian men from school into an unstable Israeli labour market vulnerable to political insecurity, and 'pushing' female labour out from school into a conjugal arrangement in the absence of economically viable and socially acceptable alternatives.

Added to this pattern is the importance of the family, the irreducible unit of Palestinian social organization. The general expectation among the youthful population, regardless of gender, is to mature, marry and raise a family. Given that men usually marry women with similar or lower education level than themselves, and about half of secondary-school age males leave school, then we would expect that females also drop out of school at the same or higher rate. This assumption is verified by education statistics. Therefore, when prescribing policies to improve female education, it is imperative to consider the macro dimension and to place the education system in the context of a set of determinants affecting gender roles and relations and comprising demographics, social organization and attitudes, and political conditions affecting economic forces and the labour market.

The conceptual level

The education system can be an agent of change if, at the conceptual level, it adopts an education philosophy not only inclusive of gender but, even more importantly, based on principles of free and independent thought enabling individuals to reinterpret their reality.

Education is often equated with schooling, but there is an important distinction. The purpose of schooling is to equip individuals with cognitive skills, information, and technical training preparing them to assume a productive role in society through instruction and training offered at academic, professional and vocational institutions. Education goes beyond this narrow objective. It refers to a cumulative lived experience derived from instruction in formal settings such as schools and from active and passive learning in non-formal settings. Therefore, an educated person is capable of processing and reinterpreting information rather than one who can passively store and recall it. The educated person seeks to understand the "reason why" and to get "on the inside of a form of thought and awareness".⁴ Therefore, whereas schooling performs an integrative function, reinforcing the community's faithfulness to a set of traditions and social norms and structures including gender roles, education supports a more individual and continuous process of self-development and self-expression, and therefore is a powerful mechanism for social and political transformation.

⁴R.S. Peters as quoted in Jane Roland Martin, *Changing the Educational Landscape: Philosophy, Women and Curriculum*, New York: Routledge, 1994, 201.

Historically, the education system in Palestine was neither envisioned nor designed to support the development of "educated" persons in the full sense of the term. Foreign authorities mandated the education system for Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from the turn of this century. They assumed correctly that education in the full sense contradicted their national interests. Whether British, Egyptian, Jordanian, or Israeli, each of these powers adopted an *ad hoc* approach to education guided by foreign curricula and fiscal policies which did not coincide with Palestinian interests in developing an independent education system.

As an occupying power, the Israeli Government was obligated under international law to provide education services to school-age children in the occupied Palestinian Territories. It sanctioned the presence of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) so as to reduce its responsibilities and expenditures, particularly in health and education. The Israeli civil administration and military government allocated funds to the system to accommodate population pressures up to a limit, but were not prepared to invest in improving the quality of education, as evidenced by double shift schools, inadequate teacher training, a dated curriculum lacking cultural relevance and not equipping students for contemporary globalisation and technological developments. Furthermore, for political reasons the Israeli authorities censored school texts and ordered closures of schools, colleges and universities throughout the occupation, and particularly during the *intifada*.

The public criticism levelled against the Israeli Government *vis-a-vis* education rarely, if ever, mentioned the gender dimension. Although it was privately recognized, several reasons contribute to this silence. First, there was a hierarchy of education needs, with precedence given to access to education, followed by quality and relevance. Second, empirical analysis and academic research on gender differentiation such as sex role stereotypes in text narratives and images and gender-specific patterns of secondary and post-secondary enrolment and occupational decision-making was made difficult by tight Israeli control and monopoly over education statistics and access to public schools. Third, since it related to gender inequities *within* Palestinian society, many judged it more prudent to defer such a dialogue, believing that recommendations arising from self-examination would be manipulated to the detriment of the national cause.

Only after August 1994, did gender-specific education policies begin to be addressed as the Palestinian Authority assumed responsibility for the sphere of education in accordance with bilateral (Israeli-Palestinian) political agreements. Since the transfer of authority, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) have clarified and negotiated with bilateral and multilateral donor agencies a set of priorities which can be generally categorized into four main areas as follows: institutional capacity-building, infrastructure-building, curriculum reform, and teacher training. While gender was not explicitly addressed in the initial list of priorities, a gender dimension has been gradually grafted on to education planning, research and development strategies. This may, in part,

Palestinian
Society

Population
and Fertility

Family

Labor and
Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and
Development

be donor driven.^{??} But it also reflects the influence of Palestinian feminists and intellectuals in informing the policy-making process.

The purpose of this essay is to examine gender disaggregated data collected from the formal schooling sector and how gender trends in education reflect, reinforce or readjust gender asymmetries and identities in Palestinian society. Part 1 introduces the structure of the system and specifically three education providers. Part 2 examines enrolment, repetition, drop-out rates, and academic achievement as measures of access and equity in education. Part 3 investigates in-school and out-of-school factors which affect gender identities. The former comprise the academic and hidden curricula, streaming, fields of specialization and occupational decision-making, and the latter include the family and the labour market.

Part 1: Structure of the education system

Three supervising authorities

Three authorities provide education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: the public sector, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and the private sector. Prior to 1994, as an occupying power the Israeli government was obligated *inter alia* to provide education services to the Palestinians living in areas which it occupied under the terms of the Fourth Geneva Conventions. It exercised authority over education and other aspects of Palestinian economic and social life through the Israeli military government and civil administration in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Powers in the sphere of education were transferred to the PA from the Israeli military government and its civil administration in August 1994, in accordance with the bilateral Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (1993), the Gaza-Jericho Agreement (1994), and the Transfer of Powers Agreement (1995).^{??} Initially under the jurisdiction of a unified ministry, powers in the spheres of general and post-secondary education were then divided in 1996 and designated to the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Higher Education (MHE), respectively. For administrative purposes, the West Bank is divided into 10 directorates and the Gaza Strip into two directorates.⁷

⁵For a list of ten tentative priorities set forth by the PA in November 1994 see United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Primary and Secondary Education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Overview of the System and Needs for the Development of the Ministry of Education*, Paris: UNESCO, June 1995, 34. Funds have been secured from UNDP (New York) to assist the Curriculum Development Centre to develop a gender-sensitive curriculum. See *Beyond Beijing*, Newsletter of UNIFEM WID Facilitation Initiative in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 1, June 1996, 3.

⁶For the text of these agreements refer to: IPCRI, *Israel-Palestinian Peace Documentation Series*, Vol. No. 1, Jerusalem, June 1994.

⁷The 10 West Bank directorates are: Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm, Qalqilya, Salfit, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Jericho, Bethlehem and Hebron. The Gaza Strip is bisected into Gaza and Khan Younis directorates.

The UNRWA Education Department administers UNRWA schools providing basic level education. UNRWA does not provide secondary education. The Agency also provides vocational training programmes and pre- and in-service teacher training. Consistent with UNRWA's mandate, the Agency is responsible for the education of refugee children in its areas of operation. UNRWA West Bank and Gaza Departments of Education operate autonomously, follow different curricula but adhere to policy guidelines and standards set by headquarters in Gaza and the Department of Education in Amman (Jordan) in coordination with the PA.⁸

The private sector is the main provider of pre-school education and also offers basic, secondary and post-secondary level education. Private schools are licensed and supervised by the MOE and MHE. Traditionally, private schools have been closely associated with religious organizations, whether Christian or Muslim. Since the transfer of authority, an increasing number of secular private schools guided by quasi-commercial interests have been established.

As shown in Figure 1, as of 1995-96 the MOE provides education to 67.6 percent of all school age children (6-17 years) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. UNRWA schools accommodate 26.3 percent and private school enrolment accounts for the balance.

Students by education authority

1995-96

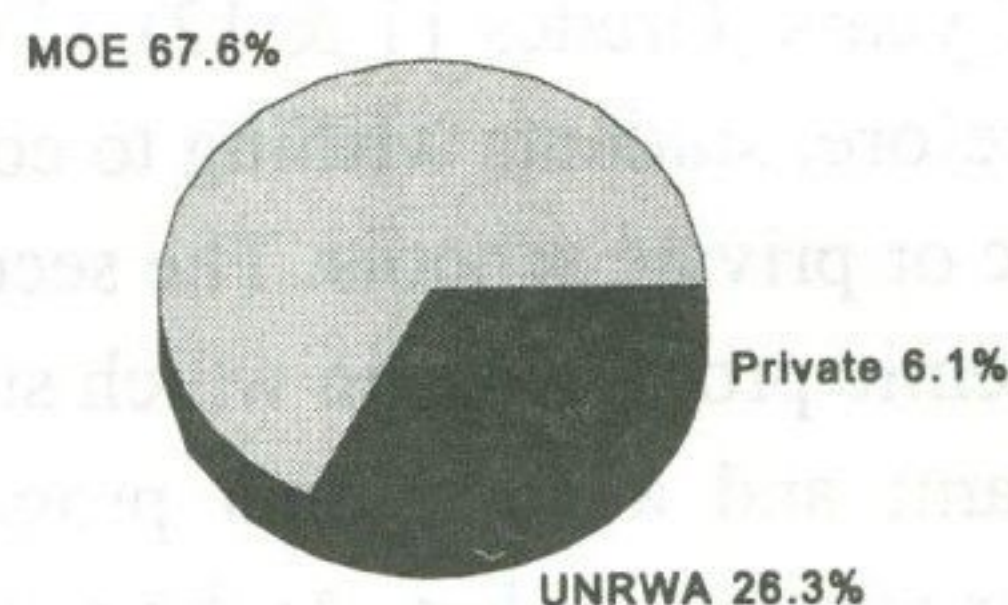


Figure 1

Source: PCBS & MOE, *Education Statistics Series (No. 2) Education Statistical Yearbook 1995/96*, Table 6.1, Distribution of Schools, Classes, Pupils, and Teachers by Directorate, Gender and Supervising Authority, Ramallah, October 1996, 45-46.

Regional differentiation in accordance with the distribution of the registered refugee population is evidenced by the distribution of pupils at UNRWA schools; 50 percent of school-age children attend UNRWA schools in the Gaza Strip as compared with only 11 percent in the West Bank.⁹

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Structure of Education

Prior to the establishment of the MOE, the education system comprised pre-school, elementary (Grades 1 through 6), preparatory (7-9) and secondary level (10-12) schools. The MOE combined the elementary and preparatory levels with Grade 10 creating a basic

⁸Between 1976 and 1996, UNRWA headquarters was based in Vienna, Austria.

⁹A total of 129,612 children 6-14 years attend UNRWA schools out of a total of 259,454 Gaza students; 44,672 students attend UNRWA schools out of a total school population of 403,173 in the West Bank. As calculated from PCBS & MOE, *Educational Statistical Yearbook, 1995/96*, No. 2, Ramallah, October 1996, 45-46.

Palestinian Society

Population and Fertility

Family

Labor and Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and Development

stage and truncating the secondary level to a two-year cycle. Therefore, education divided into four stages as follows:

- Pre-school education started about a decade ago. Currently a two-year preschool cycle for children 4-5 years is provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs, local international NGOs and the private sector but has no funding from the MOE per se. A small proportion of the prospective pre-school age population attend pre-school. In 1995-96, almost 45,000 children were enrolled in pre-school, including minority of children as young as three years and as old as six to eight years. Of these, 52 percent were male.¹⁰
- A basic cycle for children 6-15 years (Grades 1-10) which is compulsory. Education laws in force are asymmetrical in the West Bank and Gaza. In the West Bank, Jordan's Education Law No. 27 is in force. The Act raises the compulsory education level to Grade 10 from the previous level of Grade 9 specified in the Jordanian Law of Education No. 16 (1964) and truncates the secondary cycle by one year to two years. The Gaza directorates follow a complex mix of British Mandatory laws, Egyptian laws and Israeli military orders. Nonetheless, educational policy has recently been unified and the Gaza directorates of education adhere to an education cycle consistent with the West Bank. However, schools in the Gaza Strip continue to apply the Egyptian curriculum, whereas schools in the West Bank use the Jordanian curriculum.
- A two-year secondary cycle for students 16-17 years (Grades 11 & 12). UNRW schools offer nine years of basic education. Therefore, students wishing to continue their studies must transfer at Grade 10 to public or private schools. The secondary cycle is divided into two programmes: an academic programme in which students must select between an arts or science stream; and a vocational programme comprising industrial, commercial, agricultural or nursing studies. At the end of the secondary academic and vocational cycles, students sit for the General Secondary Certificate Examination (GSCE or *Tawjihi*). Under occupation, administration of the GSCE was the responsibility of the Egyptian and Jordanian educational authorities in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, respectively. Since 1994-95, the MOE has supervised the exams in both regions and, as a result, unethical practices commonplace during the *intifada* such as cheating have been largely curtailed.
- A post-secondary cycle whether in the form of vocational education and training (VETT), polytechnical, college or university studies.

¹⁰PCBS & MOE, *Educational Statistical Yearbook*, 1995/96, No. 2, 45 and 92.

Part 2: The state of Palestinian education

Literacy

As shown in figure 2, literacy rates have improved impressively during the past decades

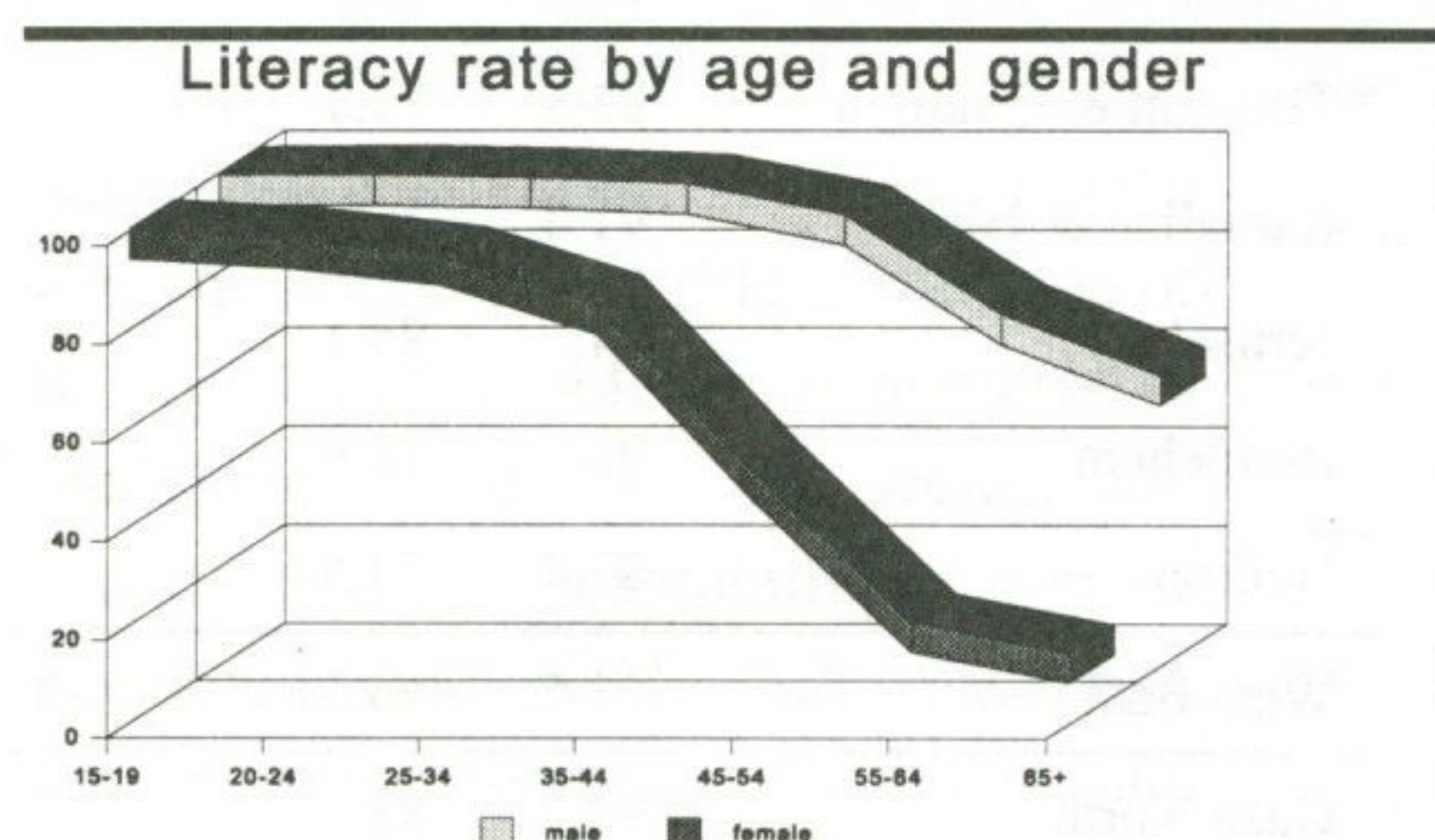


Figure 2

Source: PCBS. *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Preliminary Report*, March 1996, 87.

and the literacy (reading and writing) gender gap has been eliminated among persons 15-24 years, although it persists in the older population. As of 1995, the literacy rate of the West Bank and Gaza Strip population is estimated at 84.3 percent among individuals 15 years and more.¹¹ The rate varies according to gender. In general, there is a 15 percent gender gap in favour of males: 91.5 percent among males and 77 percent for females.¹² The principal reason accounting for the increase in literacy

rates over time is the inter-generational increase in the number of school years completed.¹³

Palestinian
Society

Population
and Fertility

Family

Labor and
Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and
Development

¹¹PCBS, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip Topical Report Series (No. 1): Educational Characteristics, Detailed Results*, Ramallah, October 1996, Table 1.1: Literacy Rate by Age, Sex and Region, 35.

¹²PCBS, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip Topical Report Series (No. 1)*, 24.

¹³PCBS, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip Topical Report Series (No. 1)*, 67.

Men are more likely to be literate than women; urban and camp residents have higher literacy rates as compared with rural residents. West Bank rural women are the least literate among the population; urban males are the most literate.¹⁴ These trends are consistent with results reported elsewhere.¹⁵

As indicated in table 1 opposite, literacy varies according to directorate. The lowest rates are recorded for residents of the Hebron region; the highest for Jerusalem residents. The range of rates is wider for females (72.2-85.1 percent) than for men (87.4-94.4 percent).

West Bank females in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nablus have the highest literacy rate among Palestinian females, averaging 79 percent and over. This may be due to a number of reasons including the concentration of private schools in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and the commercial area of Nablus. A historic gap in the literacy rate between Christians and Muslim almost vanished among the adolescent population, although there remains a very slight in favour of the former. Therefore, religion-based factors can no longer be considered determinants of regional differentiation in literacy rates among youth.¹⁶ The lowest rates are found in the northern districts of Jenin, Tulkarm and Qalqilya, and the southern district of Hebron. Although the Ramallah and El Bireh region also has a concentration of private schools, the literacy rate is lower than would be expected. This may be due to lower rates among older rural women, given that this district has over 300 villages and village residents have lower literacy rates than either urban or camp residents.

The northern Gaza Strip has a higher literacy rate than southern Gaza for both male and female literacy. Regional differences are consistent with the historic concentration of UNRWA funding and international and national non-governmental organization offices in Gaza.

Table 1: Ability to read and write by directorate

| District | Male | Female |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Jenin | 92.8 | 72.2 |
| Nablus | 94.4 | 80.9 |
| Tulkarm & Qalqilya | 93.3 | 73.1 |
| Ramallah & Bireh | 91.4 | 75 |
| Jerusalem | 94 | 85.1 |
| Bethlehem | 90 | 78.9 |
| Hebron | 87.4 | 73.5 |
| West Bank | 91.5 | 76.3 |
| Gaza North | 92.2 | 81 |
| Gaza Central & South | 89.8 | 76.3 |
| Gaza Strip | 91.1 | 78.6 |
| Total | 91.5 | 77 |

Source: Figures for directorates from PCBS, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, District Report Series No. 1-9*, Ramallah: PCBS, 1996, 41. West Bank and Gaza Strip figures from PCBS, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Topical Report Series (No. 1), Educational Characteristics*, Detailed Results, Ramallah, October 1996, 35.

¹⁴PCBS, *The Demographic Survey of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Preliminary Report*, March 1996, 106.

¹⁵See Marianne Heiberg and Geir Ovensen, *Palestinian Society in Gaza, West Bank and Arab Jerusalem: A Survey of Living Conditions*, Oslo: 1993, 135. Birzeit University, *Illiteracy and Adult Education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, Ramallah: PCBS, August 1995, 106.

¹⁶PCBS, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip Topical Report Series (No. 1)*, 1996, for example, among persons 15-19 years the rate for Christians is 99.3 and for Muslims 96.9. In comparison, among persons 55-64 years the rate is 73.3 for Christians and 32.8 for Muslims.

and its environs providing education services and literacy programs.

Enrolment Trends

Since the transfer of the education sector to the PA and the establishment of the MOE, MHE and the PCBS, statistics concerning education have become more accessible. Still, one of the principal problems encountered in analysing trends in the sector, and specifically, calculating gross enrolment rates is the lack of accurate and reliable historical enrolment and population data. Since the June 1967 War, population estimates have been based on adjustments made to the 1967 Israeli census figures and therefore may underestimate the actual population.¹⁷

As indicated in figure 3, between 1975 and 1995, enrolment at the primary, preparatory and secondary levels almost doubled. In 1995, a total of 662,627 students were enrolled in the basic and secondary cycles of which 51.4 percent were males and 48.6 percent females. In comparison, in 1975, total enrolment was 341,392 students, of which 56.7 percent were male and 43.3 percent were female.

The increase in total enrolment is due to several factors including: the high rate of natural population growth, averaging about 2-4 percent per annum up to 1994; the return of Palestinian migrant workers in the Gulf as a result of the economic downturn following the oil price collapse in 1985-86, the 1991 Gulf War, and the return of Palestinians from the Diaspora related with the implementation of the Declaration of Principles in May 1994. For example, according to the MOE, in the 1995-96 school year 6,975 students were offspring of returnees.¹⁸

¹⁷PCBS data for the West Bank and Gaza Strip up to 1993 refer to statistics collected by the Education Department of the Israeli civil administration which conflicts slightly with information in *Judea, Samaria and Gaza Area Statistics*. Enrolment data for the West Bank includes children from Jerusalem who study in West Bank schools and students with foreign nationality which are not included in population statistics. Also, comparing ICBS and PCBS data relating to the post-1994 period is problematic; ICBS statistics exclude students enrolled in East Jerusalem schools and PCBS data is inclusive of East Jerusalem enrolment.

¹⁸PCBS and MOE, *Education Statistics Series (No. 2), Educational Statistical Yearbook 1995/96*, Ramallah: October 1996, 100. Note: These figures refer to students in three cycles: kindergarten, basic and secondary.

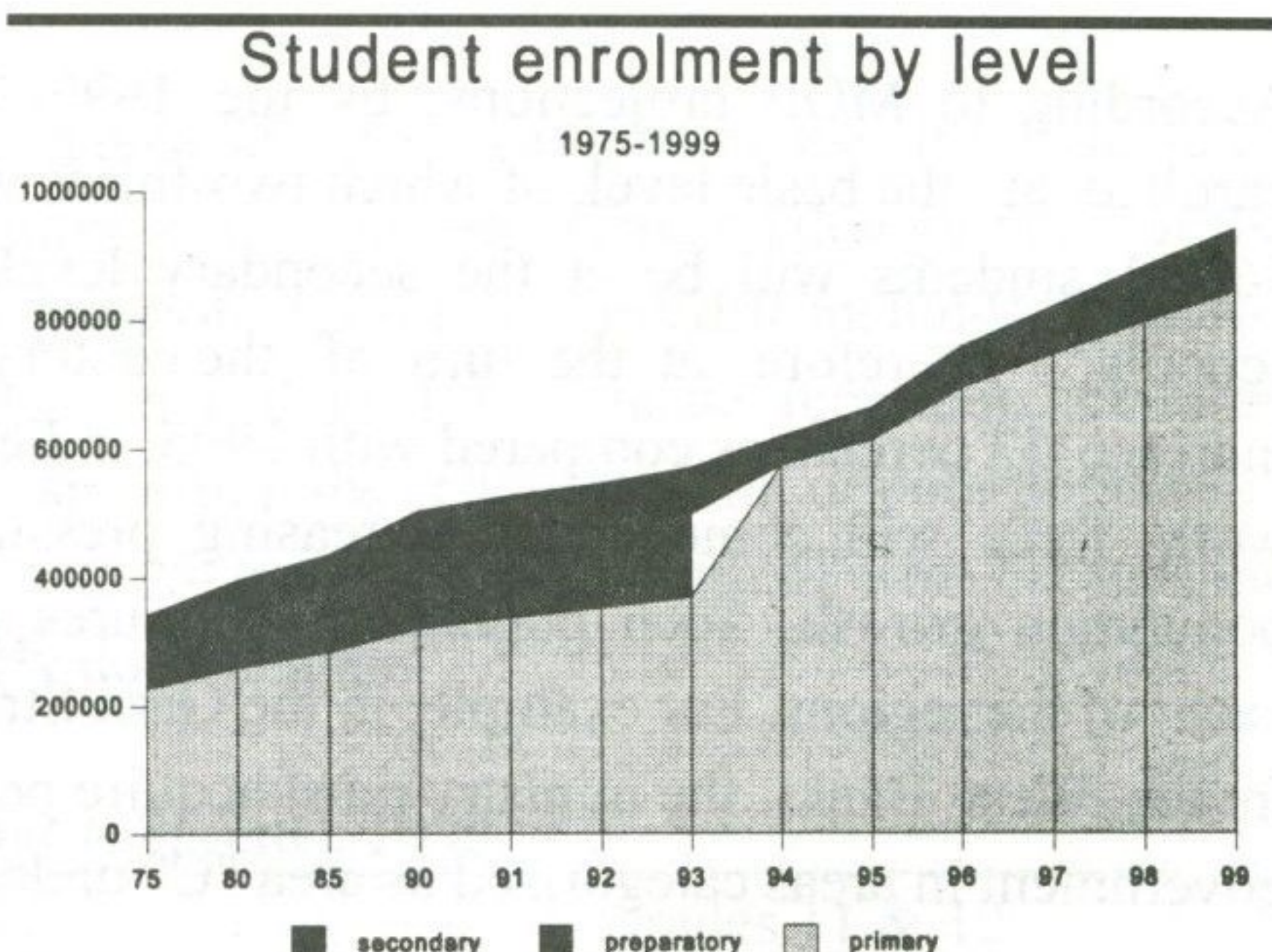


Figure 3

Source: 1975-1993 from ICBS. *Judea, Samaria and Gaza Area Statistics*, various years. Note: data for 1975 for Gaza Strip excludes students in Sinai region; data for West Bank excludes students in East Jerusalem; in 1994-1995 the elementary and preparatory cycle were unified into a basic cycle extending to Grade 10. 1994 from PCBS. *Education Statistics*, 1995 from Department of Educational Planning and Development, Division of Statistics and Information System, MOE, July 1996. Projected figures for 1996-1999 from Department of Educational Planning and Development, Division of Statistics and Information System, MOE, *The Gap in Students, Classrooms, and Teachers in Palestinian schools for the Years 1995-1996-1999-2000*, Ramallah, December 1995, 33.

Palestinian Society

Population and Fertility

Family

Labor and Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and Development

responsibilities.²² The economic downturn after 1985, particularly in the intifada and during the Gulf War and its aftermath, is another factor pulling students out of school.

Gross enrolment rates

The gross enrolment ratio (GER) is used as a measure of educational access. It is calculated by using the number of all enrolled children as the numerator, over a denominator of the number of school age children in the population. Therefore, the GER includes repeaters, over-age and under-age children.²³ GER exceeding 100 indicate repetition, children younger than six years or older than 17 years within the school system, or poor population estimates. Calculations for GER prior to 1995 have a high margin of error because the population age structure after 1967 is poorly documented.

Table 2: Gross enrolment rates by gender (percent), 1995

| Grades 1-6 | | | Grades 7-10 | | | Grades 11 & 12 | | |
|------------|-------|-----|-------------|------|-----|----------------|----|-----|
| f | m | gap | f | m | gap | f | m | gap |
| 106.2 | 110.5 | 4.3 | 82 | 80.9 | -1 | 47 | 50 | 2.6 |

Source: MOE, Department of Planning and Development, July 1996.

1995 GER disaggregated by gender are shown in the above and indicate: 1) the elementary GER is greater than the preparatory and the secondary GER; 2) the male and female GER are comparable at the elementary and preparatory level; 3) both male and female rates drop considerably at the secondary level; 4) male rates exceed female rates at the secondary level. The data is validated by findings of the 1995 PCBS demographic survey which indicates that approximately 10 percent of children age 6-14 years, and one-third of children 15-17 years, do not attend school.²⁴

Regional school enrolment rates for 1995 are indicated in table 3 below. These rates are derived from the PCBS's preliminary demographic survey of 14,606 households, conducted in 1995, and will differ from the GER figures cited above. The major findings include the following:

- Males and females from Hebron and the northern Gaza Strip consistently fall short of the national school enrolment rate at the elementary and preparatory levels.
- The male enrolment rate at the secondary level averages 68.1 percent. Rates among West Bank directorates with the exception of Jenin and Ramallah and Al Bireh rank below this average. The lowest rates are found among Jerusalem males (55.4 percent). Greater employment opportunities for East Jerusalemites than other

²²For example, in 1986 the *Shari'a* courts in the Gaza Strip registered 5,846 marriages as compared with 7,409 in the following year and 8,308 in 1988 and 8,413 in 1989. Only in 1990, did the number of marriages drop to 7,232. See *Marriage and Divorce Statistics in the Gaza Strip*, various years, *Shari'a* Court, Gaza City (unpublished).

²³UNICEF, *A Basic Education Profile of the Middle East and North Africa Region*, UNICEF MENARO, Amman, [undated], 35.

²⁴PCBS, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip Topical Report Series (No. 1)*, 47.

Palestinian
Society

Population
and Fertility

Family

Labor and
Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and
Development

Palestinians as a result of holding Israeli identity cards and having unrestricted freedom of movement inside Israel may contribute to these findings, as would suggested from the high drop-out rates shown in table 4 below. Also, Jerusalem residents may attend school in other directorates, for example, in Ramallah.

The female enrolment rate at the secondary level is 63.6 percent, almost 5 percent lower than the male rate. The Jenin district has the lowest rate; 45 percent of school girls do not attend school.

Table 3: School enrolment rates by directorate and gender

| | 6-11 years | | 12-14 years | | 15-17 years | |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | female | male | female | male | female | male |
| Jenin | 91.9 | 91.7 | 91.2 | 92.3 | <u>55.3</u> | 69.4 |
| Nablus | 93.2 | <u>89.2</u> | 94.2 | 89.9 | 67.1 | <u>65</u> |
| Tulkarm & Qalqilya | 91.9 | <u>89</u> | <u>88.8</u> | 92.6 | <u>63.2</u> | <u>63.7</u> |
| Ramallah & Bireh | 93.2 | 93.5 | 92.1 | 94.7 | 65.1 | 71.4 |
| Jerusalem | 93 | 93.7 | 94 | <u>83.6</u> | 64.3 | <u>55.4</u> |
| Bethlehem | 92.1 | 91.8 | 95.5 | 89.8 | 75.8 | <u>62.9</u> |
| Hebron | <u>90.3</u> | <u>89.8</u> | <u>90.4</u> | <u>87.4</u> | <u>60</u> | <u>64.7</u> |
| West Bank | 91.8 | 90.7 | 91.4 | 90.8 | 63.6 | 66.7 |
| Gaza North | <u>91.3</u> | <u>89.4</u> | <u>86.8</u> | <u>84.6</u> | <u>57.8</u> | <u>65.7</u> |
| Gaza Central & South | <u>90.5</u> | 91.1 | 92.1 | 90 | 70.2 | 78.4 |
| Gaza Strip | 90 | 90.2 | 89.4 | 87.2 | 63.8 | 71.4 |
| Total | 91.5 | 90.5 | 90.7 | 89.5 | 63.6 | 68.7 |

Source: PCBS, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, District Report Series, Nos. 1-9*, Ramallah: PCBS, 1995. West Bank and Gaza Strip totals from PCBS, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Preliminary Report*, Ramallah: PCBS, March 1996, 95.

The double underline denotes rates that are below the national average.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the above observations consistent with interpretation of GER stated above: i) students in the Hebron and Gaza North, regardless of gender, are the most at risk of dropping out of school or failing to enter the education system altogether; ii) the enrolment gap between the preparatory and secondary levels in Jenin girls and Jerusalem boys indicates that the socio-cultural and/or economic pressures to drop-out are greater than in other areas; iii) while data indicate the relative deprivation in the southern region in the West Bank, in the Gaza Strip, the northern area has lower enrolment rates than the central and southern region. This latter finding is inconsistent with what would be expected from the literacy rates cited above and may be due to out-of-school factors including the proportion of households living in refugee camps and eligible for UNRWA education services. However, this would not explain the persistent regional differences in the enrolment rate at the secondary level since UNRWA does not provide

secondary level education.²⁵ Given that indices of economic wealth are consistently higher in the north, non-economic causes may be at play.²⁶

Repetition and drop-out rates

According to MOE regulations, Grade 4 is the first year in which a teacher may hold students back. At the basic level (Grades 1-10) a student may repeat the same year twice after which s/he must be promoted to the following grade. At the secondary level (Grades 11-12) a child repeating the same grade two consecutive years is dismissed from school.

Enrolment rates at the upper basic and secondary levels indicate that school leavers continue to be problem. UNICEF reports a close relationship between repetition and school drop-out. A child who repeats the same grade may eventually drop out for several reasons including embarrassment for being older than other classmates and internalizing failure. Whereas drop-out has been associated with external factors such as the child's socio-economic circumstance, repetition is correlated with factors internal to the education system such as overcrowded classrooms, pedagogy, curriculum, school administration, and the student-teacher interface.²⁷

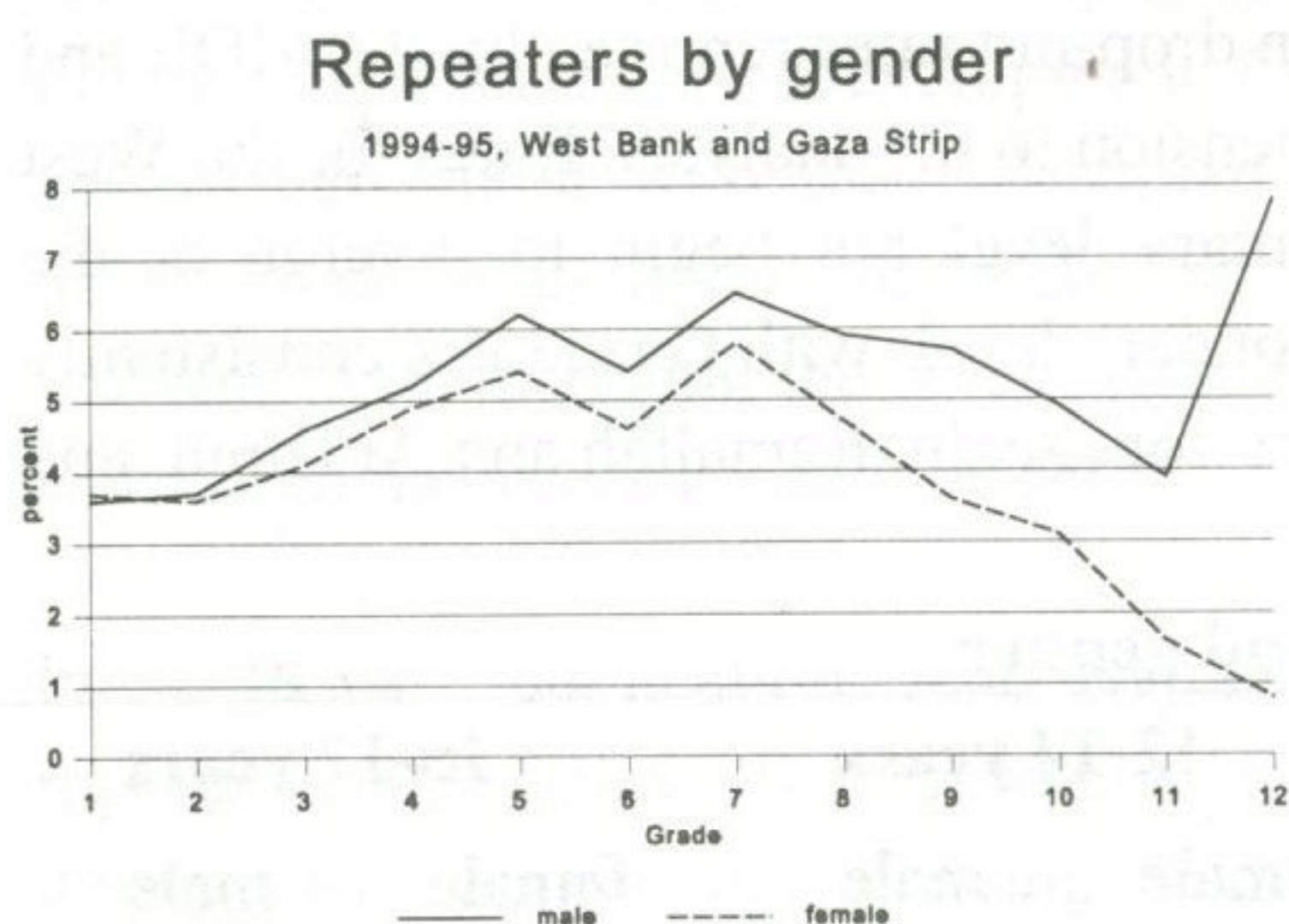


Figure 5

Source: PCBS and MOE, *Educational Statistical Yearbook 1995/96*, Ramallah: October 1996, 105.

Note: Grades 11 & 12 include only literary and academic streams and exclude vocational secondary students.

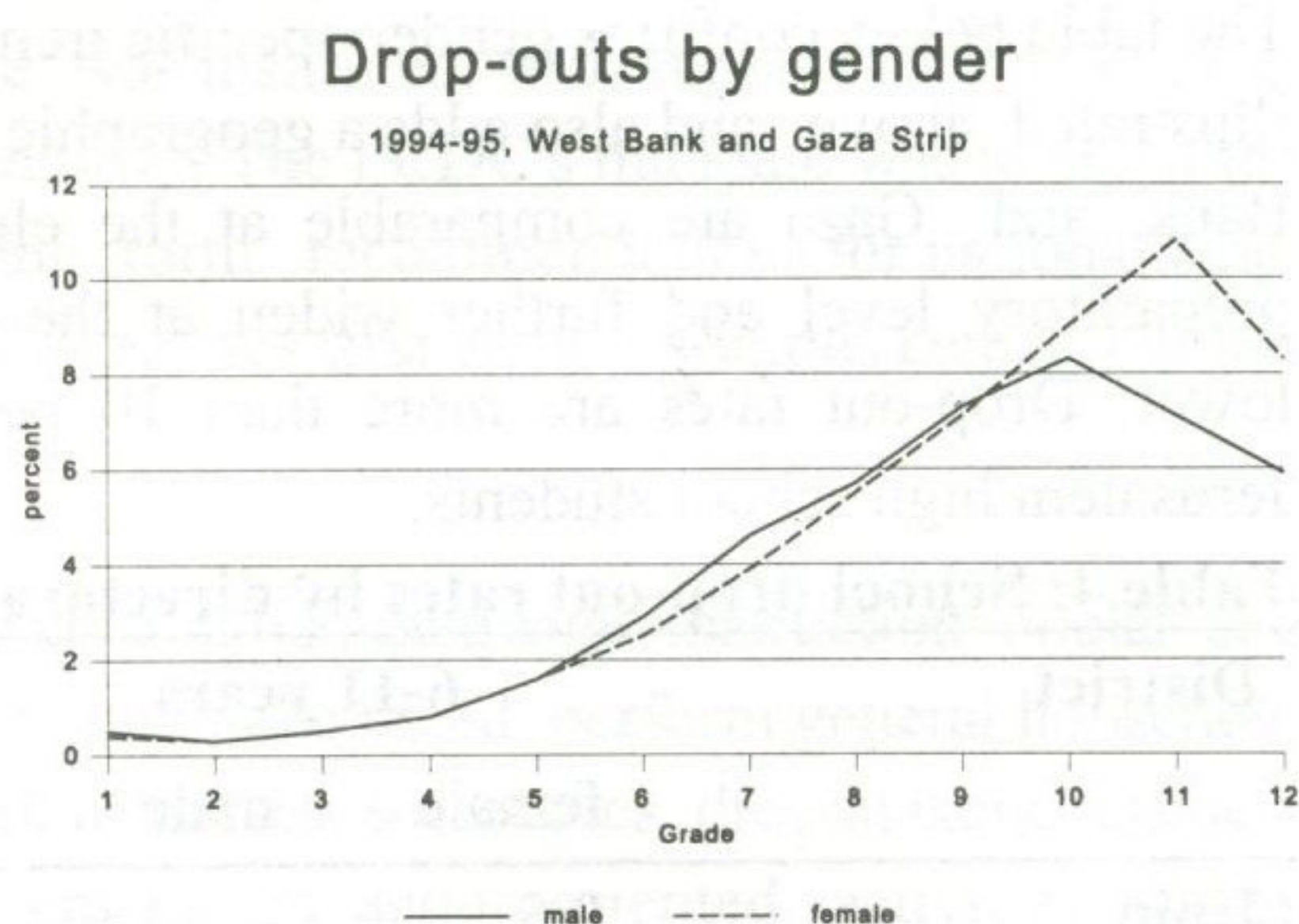


Figure 6

Source: PCBS and MOE, *Educational Statistical Yearbook 1995/96*, Ramallah: October 1996, 105.

Note: Grades 11 & 12 include only literary and academic streams and exclude vocational secondary students.

Figures 5 and 6 above show percentages of repeaters and drop-outs by gender, respectively. The repetition rate for males exceeds the rate for females regardless of grade, but the gap widens after Grade 7 despite the decrease in absolute percentage for both groups. The

²⁵According to the PCBS demographic survey, 42 percent of northern Gaza households live in camps as compared with 65 percent of central and southern households. PCBS, *Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip District Report Series Nos. 8 and 9*, Ramallah, July 1996, 35.

²⁶See durable goods at the household level for Gaza North and Central and South Gaza, PCBS, *Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip District Report Series Nos. 8 and 9*, 38.

²⁷Golnar Mehrah. *Girls' Drop-Out from Primary Schooling in the Middle East and North Africa: Challenges and Alternatives*, Amman: UNICEF, 1995, 6.

Palestinian Society

Population and Fertility

Family

Labor and Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and Development

exception to this is found at Grade 12, where 7.8 percent of male students repeat the year as compared with less than 1 percent of females. This is most likely associated with the desire to pass or improve *tawjihi* scores.

The drop-out rate increases incrementally after Grade 4 for both males and females, with slightly higher rates reported for boys until Grade 9 after which females drop-out is greater. While males tend to repeat at the secondary level, the tendency among females is to drop out. Early marriage is one of the main reasons believed to account for the high female drop-out rate at the secondary level. Although MOE regulations permit a married girl to attend school, administrators may dissuade students from doing so by certain practices such as placement in an afternoon shift school which would be inconvenient for many newlywed women. Furthermore, there is intense social pressure for women to become pregnant soon after her marriage. Therefore, married students who are forced to discontinue school after child birth.

Drop-out and repetition rates at the secondary (Grades 11 and 12) level are mostly found among students in the literary and vocational education streams.

The table below confirms gender-specific trends in drop-out rates reported by the MOE as illustrated above and also adds a geographic dimension to the analysis. Rates for the West Bank and Gaza are comparable at the elementary level but begin to diverge at the preparatory level and further widen at the secondary level, with Gaza rates consistently lower. Drop-out rates are more than 10 percent for Jenin, Ramallah and Al Bireh, and Jerusalem high school students.

Table 4: School drop-out rates by directorate and gender

| District | 6-11 years | | 12-14 years | | 15-17 years | |
|--------------------|------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| | female | male | female | male | female | male |
| Jenin | 0.5 | - | 3.2 | 4.1 | 12.6 | 11 |
| Nablus | 0.6 | 1 | 2.5 | 4.8 | 8.4 | 9.7 |
| Tulkarm & Qalqilya | 0.7 | - | 3.4 | 2.4 | 7.5 | 7.2 |
| Ramallah & Bireh | - | 0.5 | 3 | 2.8 | 10.2 | 10.2 |
| Jerusalem | 1.8 | 1.9 | 1.4 | 6.5 | 12 | 10.8 |
| Bethlehem | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 3.6 | 5.4 | 8.6 |
| Hebron | 0.5 | 0.8 | 2.9 | 4.5 | 9 | 8.1 |
| West Bank | 0.4 | 0.5 | 2.7 | 3.8 | 8.9 | 9.1 |
| Gaza North | 0.7 | 0.5 | 1.9 | 1.8 | 5.9 | 3.8 |
| Gaza South | 0.5 | 0.1 | 1 | 1.7 | 6.1 | 4 |
| Gaza Strip | 0.6 | 0.3 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 6 | 3.9 |
| Total | 0.5 | 0.4 | 2.3 | 3 | 8 | 7.4 |

Source: PCBS, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, District Report Series*, Ramallah: PCBS, 1996, 45. West Bank and Gaza Strip totals from PCBS, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Preliminary Report*, Ramallah: PCBS, March 1996, 97.

Part 3: In-school and out-of-school factors affecting gendered identities

In-school factors

Some writers have suggested that schools are the least influential of the socializing agents contributing to the construction of gender roles, such as the family, the workplace and the media.²⁸ The school's role in the construction of masculine and feminine identities operates indirectly through the effects of the academic curriculum, hidden curriculum, authority/management patterns, and streaming.

The curriculum

The academic curricula in the West Bank and Gaza Strip reflect foreign national histories (Jordanian and Egyptian), traditions and education philosophies and are incongruent with a Palestinian heritage.²⁹ Both curriculums have been also criticized for being outdated and inappropriately sequenced in terms of the academic level, both across subjects and grade level.

Prior to the DOP, Palestinian educators were engaged in a dialogue on unifying and reforming the curriculum.³⁰ Shortly after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Curriculum Development Centre was instituted, with support from UNESCO and in agreement with the Palestinian Authority. The PCDC's mandate was to assist the MOE in curriculum reform, including setting forth recommendations for nationalising, unifying and updating the curriculum. The PCDC was first an autonomous center, but has since been incorporated into the MOE.

In a PCDC publication, Abu Haj examined English-language instruction books and reported that females tidy their rooms, go shopping, bake bread, perform general household duties such as sweeping, cleaning. They work as nurses, secretaries, dressmakers, teachers and housewives. Males on the other hand engage in action-oriented activities such as swimming, playing football, travelling.³¹ Given that these are foreign texts, traditional images and narratives of women is universal and not culture- or ethnic-specific to Palestinian society. In an earlier study, Jirbawi (1995) analysed the content of elementary-level textbooks for gender stereotypes. According to her findings, women are most frequently portrayed as mothers or wives mostly inside the family home. Whilst females are assigned maternal and passive roles, men are portrayed as active and responsible, such as the household head and provider.

²⁸Christine Skeleton, 'Learning to be Tough', 'the fostering of maleness in one primary school', *Gender and Education*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 1996, 186.

²⁹For examples of how the curriculums are irrelevant to the Palestinian context refer to Palestinian Curriculum Development Centre, *A Comprehensive Plan for the Development of the First Palestinian Curriculum for General Education (in Arabic)*, Ramallah, PCDC, 1996, 413-450.

³⁰For example, see Fathiyeh Nasru, *Preliminary Vision of a Palestinian Education System*, Birzeit: Birzeit University, November 1993.

³¹PCDC, *A Comprehensive Plan for the Development of the First Palestinian Curriculum for General Education (in Arabic)*, 213.

Palestinian
Society

Population
and Fertility

Family

Labor and
Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and
Development

A more important factor affecting gendered identities is the hidden curriculum which refers to 'those aspects of learning in schools that are unofficial, or unintentional, or undeclared consequences of the way teaching and learning are organized and performed'.³² It includes gender discrimination in school textbooks but also more subtle forms of differentiation as with teacher-pupil interaction or in non-formal education as with masculinization of youth centres.³³

The hidden curriculum is also evident in the devaluation of the arts stream. Abu Nahleh documents teacher's perception of arts students as "slow", "dumb", "retarded" or "illiterate".³⁴ The system does not afford either the time or the resources to provide remedial lessons. Slow learners may not receive the attention that they require to improve their learning skills, and therefore their academic underachievement may further reinforce teacher attitudes and sensitize the students to their own seemingly inadequate academic competence. Since more female students are enrolled in the arts stream the finding can be interpreted in at least two ways. The high representation of females in the arts stream is a source of the devaluation of arts as compared with the sciences. Alternatively, the arts and females are devalued, and therefore female arts students are doubly disadvantaged.

Teacher training and pedagogy

By virtue of the fact that the implemented curricula are foreign in origin, part of the passionate rebuke against the curricula is due to political sensibilities. As such, the curriculum is an expedient target to ascribe the major blame for the sector's inadequacies. But, according to the findings of the Tamer Institute, "the curriculum is far better than textbooks and textbooks are better than what actually happens in the classroom". Constraints placed on teachers (both external and internal) encourage them to disregard much of the curriculum".³⁵ Therefore teacher motivation and pedagogy are implicated in academic underachievement and low student achievement regardless of gender.

Most education is based on lectures, testing and punishment. Given class size averaging 30 students (1995-96), teachers most commonly resort to lecturing students, having them copy from the blackboard, memorize texts and recall content on examinations. In short, the dominant teaching methodology is authoritarian, and teacher-centred. Education in

³²As quoted in Christine Skeleton, *Women and Education*, in Diane Richardson and Victoria Robins (Eds.), *Introducing Women's Studies*, Handmills: MacMillan Press, 1994, 333.

³³For example, there are only 27 functioning women's centres among the 315 active youth centres in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. For a more detailed analysis refer to: UNICEF and PCBS. Youth and Child Centres Census in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, First Report, Women and Youth Centres (Summary), Jerusalem, May 1996, Section 2-1.

³⁴Lamis Abu Nahleh, *Gender Planning, Vocational Education, and Technical Training (VETT) in Palestine*, Women's Studies Program/World University Service, September 1996.

³⁵Tamer Institute for Community Education, *Assessment of Achievement in Arabic and Mathematics Fourth and Sixth Grade Students in the Central Region of the West Bank* (Ramallah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, East Jerusalem, 1991, 15).

current form is about control and power vested in the teacher, with the student a passive vessel.

The average portion of class time actually devoted to lectures and to student participation has not been quantified. Even in circumstances where teachers are self-motivated and receptive to a more participatory approach such as problem solving and group learning, the system may be unsupportive. For example, according to an English language teacher trainer, school teachers often complain about overcrowded classrooms, the curriculum, training, and the lack of teaching resources as the causes of "very weak" students. Once they are trained in alternative methods such as pair and group work and participatory learning, a recurring comment is "We never knew [there is an alternative way to teach]". Yet, in introducing new techniques into the classroom they are often discouraged by unreceptive students who may complain directly to the head teacher, who in turn instructs the teacher to discontinue the new methodology.

Punishment in the classroom is an extension to what happens within the family circle. Without being trained to manage the classroom effectively, teachers may resort to physical punishment as a means of controlling discipline. Instruction No. 4 of 1981 on School Discipline explicitly prohibits the use of corporal punishment for disciplinary purposes and the MOE has ruled that teachers charged with corporal punishment are subject to immediate expulsion. Still, some administrators and teachers continue to resort to corporal punishment as a form of class management without due concern for the social message being conveyed (the sanction of the use of violence) or the negative association a child develops with the school. Enforcement is not uniform across the system and school administrators may treat such situations with impunity in the absence of parental censure. According to Abu Hein (1996), 19 percent of the working male children 8-15 years who dropped out of school reported it was because of being hit by their teacher.³⁶

The issues raised above concerning motivation, training and teaching methodology refer to systemic problems within the education system affecting the development of lucid and rational thinking among the school-age population. They do not directly reinforce socializing norms and practices regarding "feminine" and "masculine" qualities. Research in other regions indicate a gender gap in teacher-pupil interaction and the "semi-ignored status" of girls in the classroom reinforcing sex role socialization (Salfilios-Rothschild 1979³⁷ Thorne, 1983).³⁸ However, classroom interaction in Palestinian schools has not been empirically studied, and it is unclear as to whether teachers treat each sex differently, particularly in co-ed classrooms and whether this is an extension of social and behavioural patterns found in the Palestinian family.

³⁶Fadel Abu Hein, *Working Children - Gaza Strip (Summary of Findings)*, Gaza: UNICEF, 1996.

³⁷Constantina Salfilios-Rothschild, *Sex Role Socialization and Sex Discrimination: A Synthesis and Critique of the Literature*, Washington, DC, National Institute of Education, 1979.

³⁸Barrie Thorne, *Rethinking the Ways We Teach*. Talk given at a conference on Traditions and Transitions: Women's Studies and a Balanced Curriculum, Claremont College, February 18-19, 1983.

Palestinian
Society

Population
and Fertility

Family

Labor and
Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and
Development

Nicholson (1994) analysed the difference in the norms and values of the lower and high levels of schooling in the US education system.

As one moves from the elementary to graduate and particularly professional schools, one finds an institution less and less "homelike" and increasingly dominated by characteristics associated with the public world and masculinity. Elementary schools are primarily staffed by women and feminine norms predominate. The injunctions preached here, to "share," to be obedient and quiet, are those in which little girls are trained to be adept. It is not surprising that little boys are often failures in this institution. As one moves higher through schools to the graduate and professional level, the norms change. Competition becomes more encouraged than "sharing"; accomplishment becomes more important than effort. It becomes unacceptable to express emotions; crying is never an appropriate response.

Similar staffing patterns are found among Palestinian teachers; women predominate at the kindergarten and elementary levels; men at the secondary and post-secondary levels. However, with the exception of informal observation, research is required to assess whether the values promoted in the classroom at different grade levels are gender-specific.³⁹

Streaming and fields of specialization

Streaming reinforces traditional masculine and feminine identities. This is most evident at the secondary and post-secondary levels of the education system, although gender differentiation according to subject antedate the secondary level. For example, according to a comparative evaluation of student achievement in science and mathematics by the National Centre for Educational Research and Development (Jordan), Palestinian students in the West Bank were ranked 20th among 21 countries selected for the study. No difference among male and female students on the science instrument was reported, but male students in the public school system scored significantly higher than female students in the mathematics test, although there was no gender gap among UNRWA school students.⁴⁰ More research is required to examine whether males outperform females in math and sciences and, if so, whether this is related to a self-fulfilling prophecy in which males and females internalize social expectations of their performance.

i) Secondary school enrolment

Secondary students must choose between academic studies (literary or scientific) or vocational programmes. Students obtaining at least 57 percent in the scientific subjects (math, biological, chemistry and physics) in Grade 10 are admitted to the science stream

³⁹Lynda Stone (ed.), *The Education Feminism Reader*, 80.

⁴⁰*Summary of Study of Student Achievement in Jordan and the West Bank Conducted by the National Centre for Educational Research and Development, Jordan.*

(70 percent until 1996); others choose to advance to the literary or vocational stream. Lateral movement between streams is unidirectional reinforcing an implicit hierarchy and prestige associated with the sciences. While students in the science stream may transfer to the literary or vocational streams, the reverse is not permissible.

As indicated in figure 8, in 1995-96, a total of 48,056 students were enrolled in academic secondary schools, of whom 47 percent were females. Women are more likely to enter the literary stream as compared with the science stream and at a rate greater than men. For example in the West Bank, the ratio of female literary students to female science students is 2.6 to 1 as compared with a ratio of 1.6 to 1 for males.

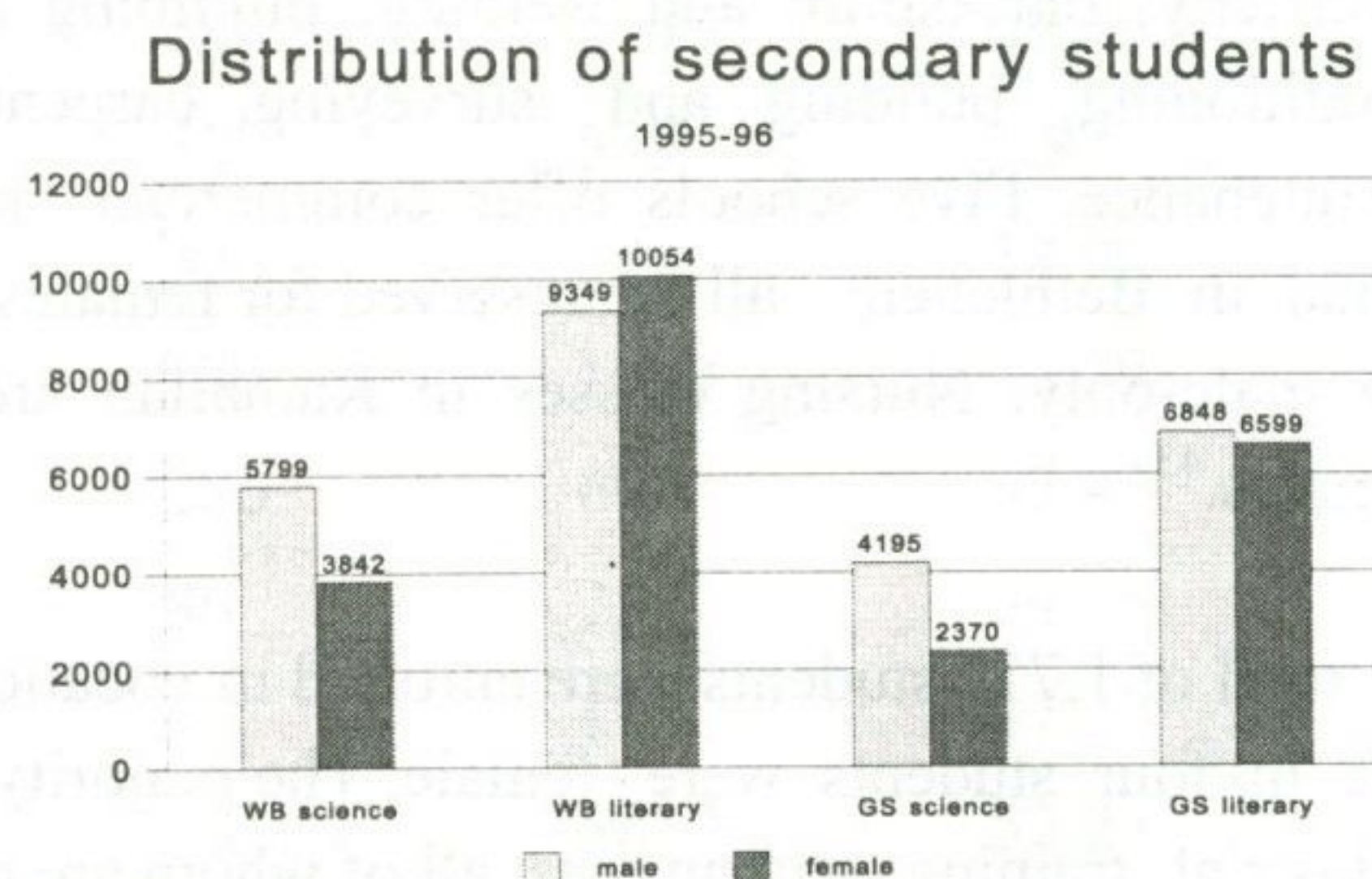


Figure 7

Source: calculated from PCBS & MOE, *Educational Statistical Yearbook 1995/96*, Ramallah: October 1996, 175.

The availability of secondary schools and classes offering science to female students contributes to this gender differential. Some would argue that the demand for female science schools is low. Others argue from the supply-side. Abu Nahleh (1996) proposes several factors to account for the gender bias in secondary streaming. The decision to expand a school to include arts or science at the secondary level or to open a new section of the same class to accommodate the student population is a function of whether the community can afford to provide the infrastructure and/or whether the MOE has the operating budget. Due to a shortage of schools or sections offering science, enrolment in the science stream is competitive, particularly in large cities and villages. Therefore, in practice, the minimum requirement for entering the sciences is much higher than the formal regulations. In smaller or more remote villages, the number of students may not reach the minimum required to justify a science section. If the school can only accommodate a limited number of science placements, teachers may discourage students from entering the science stream, regardless of their academic performance.⁴¹ Furthermore, girls living in rural areas may have to travel to a nearby town or village to attend a science school and this may persuade her parents to discontinue her education, particularly if she has demonstrated poor academic competence. It is easier for the MOE to open arts schools as compared with science schools since they are less expensive to operate and do not require laboratory facilities and supplies and teachers do not have to be as qualified for teaching literary students as science students.⁴²

ii) Vocational secondary school enrolment

Few students enter the vocational secondary stream. There are 20 small public and private

⁴¹Lamis Abu Nahleh, 1996, 129.

⁴²Interview with Lamis Abu Nahleh, Ramallah, September 1996.

Palestinian
Society

Population
and Fertility

Family

Labor and
Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and
Development

vocational secondary schools in the West Bank and Gaza, 18 in the West Bank and two in the Gaza Strip.

These schools offer four areas of specialization, industrial, agricultural, commercial and nursing. The majority (11) of schools are industrial offering courses in auto mechanic, electricity, blacksmith and welding, plumbing and central heating, refrigeration and air conditioning, building and surveying, carpentry, radio and television, and computer maintenance. Five schools offer commercial specialization, and with the exception of Al Amal in Bethlehem, all are reserved for females. In contrast the three agricultural schools are male-only. Nursing classes in Ramallah are mixed and in Nablus are reserved for females.⁴³

A total of 1,714 students were enrolled in vocational secondary students in 1995-96; about one in four students were female. The majority of students (70.9 percent) are enrolled in industrial training programmes, all of whom are men. The balance of vocational secondary students are distributed among commercial (18.3 percent), agricultural (6.8 percent) and nursing (4 percent) programmes. Women predominate in commercial and nursing school enrolment.⁴⁴

Even where women and men have access to fields of specialization in theory, enrolment records indicate that women make traditional occupation choices and avoid science and technology courses and careers. First, school administrators may discourage females from entering non-traditional fields, whether indirectly or by recruiting students based on gender assumptions that non-traditional occupations are not socially acceptable and therefore not a viable option. Second, women may lack information, advice and counselling regarding both educational institutions and employment opportunities. Third, they make their decision based on the masculine image closely associated with these fields and which they themselves internalise.

iii) Community College enrolment

Similarly, gender assumptions operate at the post-secondary level to place women in fields of specialization considered appropriate and therefore reinforcing a gendered labour market. In 1995-1996, 3,859 students were enrolled in the 19 community colleges in the West Bank and Gaza Strip including four supervised by UNRWA. Fifty-two percent of the total number of students were female. The distribution of students by specialization, shown in the table below, indicates males are concentrated in technical fields such as engineering and computer science, whereas women are registered most commonly in academic, education, paramedical and administrative programmes. This pattern coincides closely with the sectors with the highest number of female employees, namely, education, health and

⁴³Vocational Education Department, MOE and MHE, *A Draft Assessment of Human Resource Development in Vocational Schools*, November 1995, 4.

⁴⁴PCBS & MOE, *Educational Statistical Yearbook 1995/96*, Ramallah, October 1996, 86.

social sciences.⁴⁵

Table 5: Distribution of community college students by specialization, 1995-96*

| Specialization | Male | Female | Total | % female |
|-------------------|------|--------|-------|----------|
| Academic | 74 | 551 | 625 | 88.16 |
| Education | 79 | 180 | 259 | 69.50 |
| Engineering | 486 | 53 | 539 | 9.83 |
| Paramedical | 153 | 220 | 373 | 58.98 |
| Admin & Financial | 510 | 589 | 1099 | 53.59 |
| Computer | 317 | 286 | 603 | 47.43 |
| Applied Arts | 165 | 86 | 251 | 34.26 |
| Social Work | 58 | 52 | 110 | 47.27 |
| Total | 1842 | 2017 | 3859 | 52.27 |

*Excludes students enrolled at Religious Institute (Al-Azhar) in the Gaza Strip.

Source: PCBS & MOE, *Educational Statistical Yearbook 1995/96*, October 1996, 243-44.

Note: The sums are calculated by the author and do not coincide with the sums reported by the PCBS and MOE (1,980 female students and 1,842 male students).

iv) University enrolment

Eight universities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip offer courses leading to a bachelor's degree or higher.⁴⁶ In 1995-96, 34,436 students were enrolled. More males than females were registered by a ratio of 1.39 to one.⁴⁷ Moreover, the number of university scholarships awarded for post-graduate study indicates a gender bias. In 1995-96, only two out of the total 50 scholarships were awarded to female students, and significantly less than the 7 scholarships awarded to women (out of 87) in 1990-91.⁴⁸

In 1995-96, more women were enrolled in arts, education, the medical professions (nursing midwifery, medical laboratories), hotel management (tour guides and tourism) and lower diploma (kindergarten, elementary and religious education) programmes. In contrast, more men were enrolled in science, engineering, agriculture, and post-graduate degree courses. Intra-faculty gender differences are also evident. For example, women outnumber men in Arabic and English language studies and social sciences; men outnumber women in all other arts courses. In the faculty of science, females dominate in biology and medical laboratories, while males frequently enrol in the numerate sciences such as math, chemistry, physics, electronics. In engineering, women are found in electrical and

⁴⁵See Reema Hammami, *Labour and Economy: Gender Segmentation in Palestinian Economic Life*, Women's Studies Programme, Birzeit University, 1997.

⁴⁶Note, two education colleges also offer a four-year degree.

⁴⁷The Council for Higher Education, *Palestinian Universities Statistical Yearbook, 1995-1996*, Jerusalem, Table 15, Students at Palestinian Universities by Geographic Region and Gender, 47-48.

⁴⁸Council for Higher Education, *Palestinian Universities Statistical Yearbook 1995-1996*, Jerusalem: 1996, 79; figure for 1990 from PCBS. *Education Statistics in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, Ramallah: PCBS, August 1995, 210.

Palestinian
Society

Population
and Fertility

Family

Labor and
Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and
Development

architectural engineering more commonly than in civil or mechanical engineering perhaps because these require greater contact with the field. In education, women outnumber men in kindergarten and elementary education; the inverse relation is found in the secondary cycle.⁴⁹

Such gendered fields of specialization indicate that for the most part men and women conform to the socially sanctioned definition of their role. Male students dominate the registers of technical and management courses; women enrol in 'nurturing and caring' fields such as early childhood education, social work, secretarial and office management. Such traditional female fields of specialization correspond with a lower status of employment and commensurate lower salaries.

While Palestinian women may aspire to "masculine work" because of the status and value such work renders, their reluctance to pioneer new, non-traditional fields revolves around the thorny issue of choice. Students (and the society in general) attribute success to family solidarity and as Salim Tamari explains, "there is widespread recognition that achievements usually are not the sole result of individual efforts, but are dependent on the collective contributions of one's kin, this being the only assured system of support in an otherwise hostile and unstable world".⁵⁰ Therefore decisions regarding secondary and post-secondary streams and occupation decision-making are not expressly a student's free choice but are the result of accommodating several considerations, some of which may be irreconcilable. These include family wishes, economic constraints at the household level, employment opportunities, admission policies and regulations, and restrictions to movement.

Such considerations support a greater likelihood that students will enter fields of specialization incompatible with their personal interests and abilities and will select post-secondary fields of specialization and employment on the basis of external factors. Abu Zayyad (1994) reports that most female students attending vocational and academic training at the Ramallah Women's Training Centre were not interested in the subject matter they were studying. The greatest correlation between interest and specialization was found among women in secretarial training (51.72 percent) and laboratory analysis (50 percent). Only 44 percent of the women enrolled in elementary teacher training indicated that their interests lay in teaching.⁵¹

⁴⁹Council for Higher Education, *Palestinian Universities Statistical Yearbook, 1995-96*.

⁵⁰Salim Tamari and Ole Fr. Ugland, "Aspects of Social Stratification", *FAFO Living Conditions Survey*, 238-239.

⁵¹Lamis Alami. "Factors to be Considered in the Development of Vocational Education", 1994, p. 6 (unpublished paper); and Salwa Abu Zayyad Abdel-Wahad, "Testing Vocational Interests at the UNRWA Ramallah Women's Training Centre" (unpublished, 1992, p. 12; both as quoted in Lamis Abu Nahleh. "Gender Planning and Vocational Education and Technical Training in Palestine: An Initial Framework". *Gender and Society, Working Paper #4*, Birzeit: Women's Studies Program, Birzeit University, March 1996, p. 10.

Changing employment opportunities may further narrow women's choices and alter gendered labour assumptions. For example, the apparent but still undocumented increase in male enrolment in secretarial courses is associated with the increased demands for secretarial and clerical staff within the PA and international organizations. Men are enrolling in computer processing and other courses considered traditionally as "women's work". Such developments are not exclusive to Palestine, but are global. Western occupational surveys indicate that future new job market growth will be in work typically done by women, such as residential care, computer and data processing, health services, and business services. At the same time, sectors dominated by males will contract.⁵² In the case of Palestine, given high unemployment rates due to Israeli closure of the West Bank and Gaza, the risk is that women will be crowded out of even these traditional jobs as unemployed men undertake work in fields previously identified as female, even if they are low-paid. The long-term risk associated with political instability and weak economic performance is that jobs once confined to women will be masculinized and in the process increase in value.

Out-of-school factors

As mentioned above, education is only one of several socializing agents. The labour market is a necessary but not exclusive intermediary in the reinterpretation and reconstruction of gender roles. Bowles and Gintis (1976) have argued that in capitalist societies schools fulfill an integrative function in which they not only impart the necessary skills and beliefs demanded by the market economy but also encourage the formation of the type of personality structures necessary for functioning in primarily hierarchical and authoritarian work situations.⁵³ The family also plays an important socializing function in gendering identities.

On the one hand, under military occupation, Palestinian economic and social structures reinforced the gendered division of labour and specifically a dominant pattern of female reproduction and domesticity, and male wage earning outside the home. Palestinian national income was largely dependent on the wage labour of workers in Israel and foreign remittances of a predominantly male migrant labour force in the Arab Gulf states. For individuals aspiring to professional occupations, education was perceived as a mechanism of economic mobility; for those drawn out of the education system by the Israeli wage labour market, it was seen as unnecessary. Both trends reinforced the productive value of men and the division of labour by gender through creating opportunities for men while, at the same time, inhibiting the creation of a diverse local industrial and manufacturing base in which women could participate.

On the other hand, despite the decrease in the pull of the extended family and the increasing importance of the nuclear family in social organization, kinship remains strong

⁵²'Tomorrow's Second Sex', *The Economist*, September 28, 1996, 27-28.

⁵³Linda J. Nicholson, "Women and Schooling", in Lynda Stone (ed.), *The Education Feminism Reader*, New York: Routledge, 1994, 73

Palestinian
Society

Population
and Fertility

Family

Labor and
Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and
Development

and has not been replaced by loyalty to the state or national government. As the traditional head of the household and the extended family, the male head of the household continues to be the final arbiter, although there is negotiation with elder female family members. This gendered balance of power is codified in the inheritance and personal status laws and is reproduced in social relations. For example, in a study of early marriage in the Gaza Strip, the majority of respondents reported that the father was the decision-maker with regards to the choice of husband.⁵⁴

Therefore, the labour market and family structures in Palestine dovetail to support socialization practices which preserve the privileged status of males in the public sphere and women's restrictions to the private sphere. Every now and again, forces appear on the scene to level gender relations, but these are reversible. For example, during the formative years of the *intifada* women publicly demonstrated in the streets. But, it was the maternal and protective dimensions which were glorified and idealized.⁵⁵

The public-private dichotomy is evidenced in schooling with regard to the decision by parents to allow a child to advance. Parents apply a cost-benefit analysis, rationalizing the costs associated with practical benefits of higher education to the opportunity costs, particularly for their male children given that the latter are expected to support their parents when they become elderly, incapacitated or are no longer able to provide household income for other reasons. The social expectations on males to be the providers in economic terms is evidenced by labour survey results reported by the PCBS regarding children (12-16 years): the labour force participation rate for males is 11.5 percent, as compared with only 1.3 percent for females.⁵⁶

Alternatively, the public-private dichotomy is evidenced in more subtle forms of gender differentiation as with school absenteeism. Teachers and school administrators report absenteeism is more commonly associated with male students as compared with females and may be associated with different social expectations for males and females. While boys can escape both home and school environments, a girl does not share this freedom since the society does not sanction young girls milling in the streets. Similarly while parents are inclined to demand that their female children return directly from school to study and complete their homework, they grant their male children greater freedom.

⁵⁴Women's Affairs Centre, *Early Marriage in the Gaza Strip*, Gaza City (forthcoming 1997).

⁵⁵See Sharif Kanaana, "The Role of Women in Intifadah Legend", *Contemporary Legend*, 3, (1993) 37-61.

⁵⁶PCBS, *Labour Force Survey in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (September-October 1995) Round, Children Labour (Ages 12-16 Years): Main Findings*, Ramallah: May 1996, 22. Can be either work for wages or unpaid work.

These expectations are reflected in the pass rate for the General Secondary Certificate Examination (GSCE). As shown in the figure opposite, with the exception of 1990 and 1991, the pass rate for the GSCE was greater for females than male students. In 1995, 72 percent of females attending the exam passed as compared with 54 percent of males. The male pass rate is skewed by lower rates of Gaza students as compared with their West Bank counterparts.

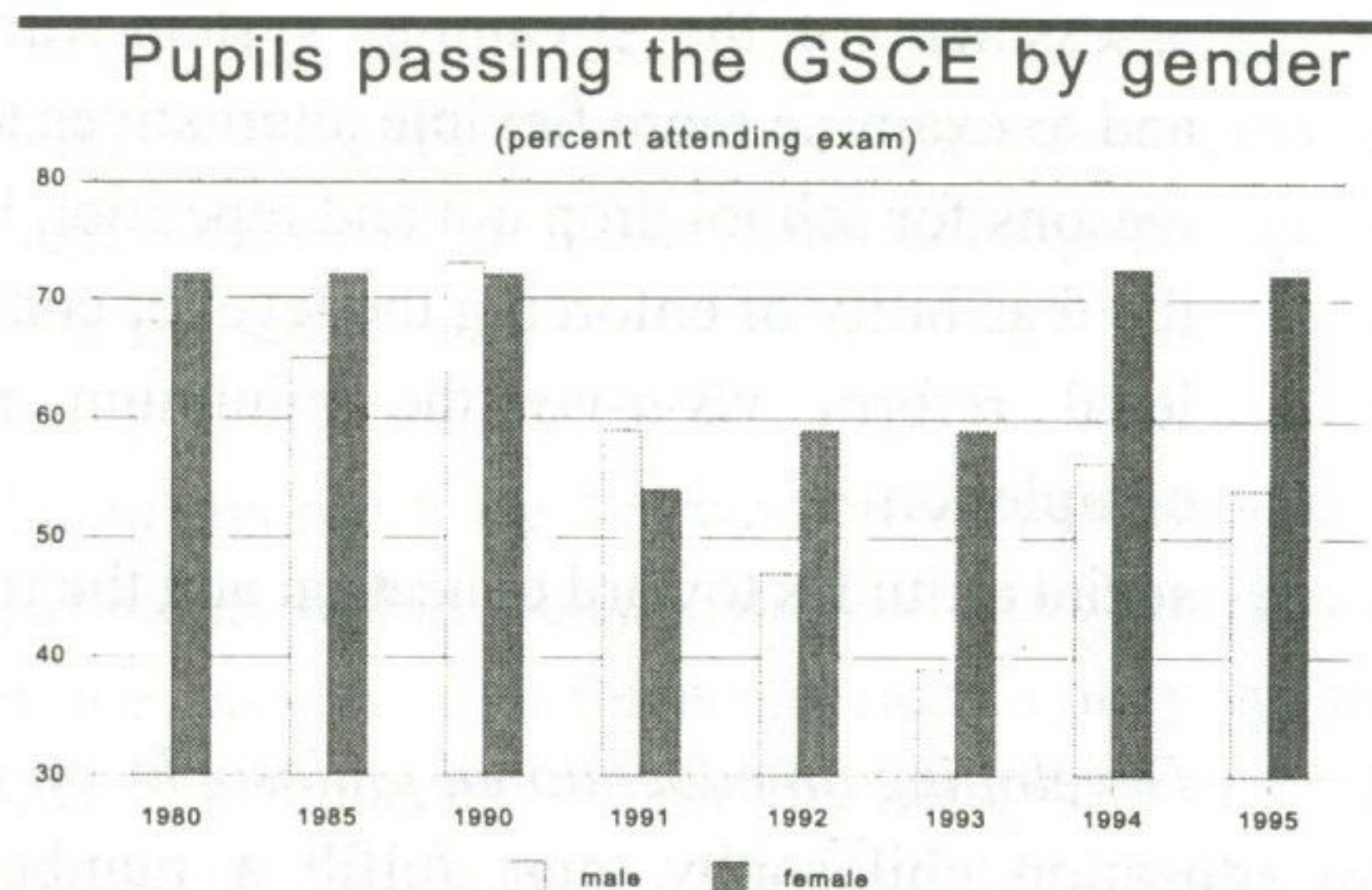


Figure 8

Source: 1985-1993 data from PCBS Current Status Report Series (No. 5), *Education Statistics in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, August 1995; 1994-95 data from PCBS & MEHE, *Education Statistical Yearbook*, 1994-1995, September 1995, 277; 1995-96 data from PCBS & MOE, *Education Statistical Yearbook*, 1995/96, October 1996, 292.

Policy Recommendations

1. Prioritizing Gender

There is a tendency to view gender and education as a second or third order need, as compared for example with infrastructure building and human resources development required to accommodate population growth. There is a degree of realism to such an argument. After all, in the absence of new school construction and increasing the size of the work force, more schools will be forced to operate double and triple shifts, affecting the quality of education. Therefore, the level of funding becomes an important determinant as to whether the gender dimension is given its due or whether it will be subordinate to other priorities; funding must exceed a certain threshold in order for gender programmes to be allocated increasingly scarce funds. The first priority will be to maintain the gains made in the previous decade, and specifically net enrolment rates of over 88 percent at the basic level and 41 percent at the secondary level in 1996-97.⁵⁷ This will depend on the allocation of national income to education which in turn will be a function of public revenue and donor commitment to education.

2. Supporting research on gender and education

More empirical research is required in order to better analyze and understand the processes reinforcing gender differentiation in the education system, and how factors such as class, residence, refugee status, kinship and other variables affect the outcome of schooling. Areas of potential research include:

- student-teacher interaction in the classroom
- gender bias in school texts and other forms of gender differentiation in the hidden curriculum
- gaps in vocational training for men and women

⁵⁷PCBS, *Demography of the Palestinian Population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, Ramallah, 1994. and PCBS and MOE, *Education Statistical Yearbook 1996/97*, No. 3, Ramallah. The net enrolment rate is a measure of education access considered a more accurate measure than the gross enrolment rate since it excludes children who are under and over age in relation to the expected age for attending school.

Palestinian Society

Population and Fertility

Family

Labor and Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and Development

- assessment of the streaming system with respect to occupational decision making and to examine more flexible alternatives to the existing system.
- reasons for school drop out and repetition by gender
- the feasibility of enforcing the level of compulsory education
- legal reform *vis-a-vis* the minimum marital age and its relation to school completion
- social attitudes toward education and the roles of men and women.

3. *Developing an educational philosophy on gender*

An education philosophy must fulfill a number of criteria. It must be reflective, critical, visionary, and realistic. It must be reflective in the sense that it recognizes that, although developed countries share with their less developed counterparts parallels in terms of gender bias, each education system evolved from a unique set of socio-cultural, political, and economic conditions. It must also be critical, meaning that the framers of an education philosophy should resist any analysis that is unidimensional and simplistic. For example, given that male hegemony is the norm, there is a tendency to discuss gender equity solely in terms of how women can gain equal status with men in terms of enrolment and fields of specialization and by so doing making an error in judgement. First, by using the male's privileged status as a model, it legitimizes that status. Second, it tends to ignore that the social expectations placed on males may themselves be oppressive. Third, a male-centric perspective, that is, idealizing the male position and using this as a measure for women, diminishes the value of "feminine" qualities of caring, connection and concern. Finally, an education philosophy must balance its vision with realism. While the former element lends a transformative element; the latter tempers this by recognizing the limitations of human enterprise, whether cognitive, economic, social, political, temporal or otherwise.

4. *Choosing a gender sensitive institutional structure or consciousness.*

Policy makers must select between at least two strategic approaches for implementing a gender sensitive education programme: the lateral and the vertical approach.

The Lateral Approach

The PA and the UNDP have tended to favour the lateral approach, whereby discrete "Gender Departments" are created within the public administration to set policy and programmes related to gender.⁵⁸ Such departments have been established at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

Success with this approach is premised on several assumptions. The most important of these are: 1) "Gender Planning Departments" have access to policy research and plans of other departments; 2) they are provided with the funding and the resources enabling them to function effectively; 3) they have influence in determining whether plans of other

⁵⁸Camillia Fawzi El-Solh, *Mission Report, Support to Women's Departments in Selected Palestinian Authority Ministries*, UNDP/PAPP, 28 January-17 February 1996.

schools.

The media is a mechanism to disseminate information, to introduce and reinforce progressive ideas, and to project non sex-stereotyped images. It has the potential to be a powerful medium by which to inform and influence public attitudes through the discretionary selection of programming. Here again, as with education policy, a gender sensitive media is conditional on the development of a cadre of gender aware media and communication specialists within the system *and* with decision-making powers.

5. *Inter-ministerial cooperation to build linkages between the education system and the economy*

As discussed above, one of the principal factors decelerating change in women's status is women's low participation rate in the formal economy due to limited work opportunities and associated with political conditions. The weak structural links between the economy and the education system serves to reinforce social norms dictating what is appropriate work for each gender. Therefore, it may be constructive if the Ministry of Education coordinates with the Ministry of Labour (MOL) to establish training programmes for women in non-traditional skills with the provision that these new skills are marketable.

Conclusions

If it is agreed that the goals of an education system are access, quality and relevance, then what do these mean in the context of gender equity? First, it is not simply about a numerical equity. As discussed above, enrolment parity at the basic level has been achieved and despite women's improved access to secondary and higher education, there has not been a commensurate increase in Palestinian women's participation in the labour force or a decline in the fertility rate.

Nor is gender equity about eliminating gendered identities by, for example, vetting texts with passive images of women and replacing them with more progressive portrayals of female characters although this could be a helpful exercise. After all, gendered identities are themselves not negative. It is only when they are associated with normative value judgements in which one (usually the male) is assessed more valuable than the other (female) that they are a source of discrimination.

Thus far, we have defined gender equity in negative terms, i.e. what it is not. Education is a means to an end, not an end in itself. That end is usually defined in terms of a more economically productive society. Although women comprise half the population, only the very small minority who participate in the labour force are considered productive. A woman who remains at home to care for her children is not considered productive in purely economic terms-- that is she is not paid wages -- although her domestic labour allows others in the household to do so, principally her spouse. If she has an education level lower

than *tawjihi*, it is difficult for her to find employment apart from child caregiving, housekeeping, or some form of income generating activity, usually sewing, knitting, or food processing. These activities are undervalued in monetary and social terms.

This is the practical reality of most Palestinian women. It can be changed with economic development in the Palestinian territory opening up new job opportunities. This, of course, is beyond the powers and responsibilities of the MOE and MHE although capital investment in education and increased access to schooling has been positively associated with indices of socio-economic development. But it is within the powers of the education ministries to help redefine productivity so as to include the non-wage productive processes. As Jane Roland Martin (1994) argues convincingly, we "must seek not only a transformation of the content of curriculum proper, but an expansion of the educational realm to include the reproductive processes of society and a corresponding redefinition of what it means to become educated."⁵⁹

Less emphasis has been placed on non-economic outcomes of educational investments. Other potential benefits include preparing people to assume to responsibilities and obligations of citizenship, tutoring young people in democratic means of conflict resolution and reducing social inequities. This cuts across gender. Education can teach children to value their own experiential knowledge, enabling them to arrive at alternative and competing interpretations of reality and visions of their future and to counter attitudes, traditions and values which may otherwise crowd out any impulse to contest change that rubs against the status quo, including reinterpreting gendered identities. But first they must be given the license to think freely and independently. Therefore, quality of education involves reducing overcrowding, school shifts, and alleviating the burden of undervalued teachers, and updating and making more relevant the curriculum content. But is also involves developing cognitive and analytical skills, in addition to literacy and numeracy skills. Developing the full potential of each child in turn mandates overcoming gender bias in access, curriculum, teaching methods and educational philosophy and policies.

Palestinian Society

Population and Fertility

Family

Labor and Economy

Social Support

Education

Politics

Law

Health

Gender and Development

⁵⁹Jane Roland Martin, *Changing the Educational Landscape*, 209.

APPENDIX

Table A1: School Enrolment by Level and Gender, Selected Years

| West Bank | | | | | Gaza Strip | | | | | Palestinian Territory | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|----------|------------|--------|--------|----------|--|-----------------------|--------|--------|----------|------|
| yr | male | female | total | f:m | male | female | total | f:m | | male | female | total | % chg | f:m |
| Pre-school | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 75 | 4427 | 3535 | 7962 | 0.798509 | 1715 | 1409 | 3124 | 0.821574 | | 6142 | 4944 | 11086 | | 0.80 |
| 80 | 4303 | 3962 | 8265 | 0.920753 | 2159 | 1668 | 3827 | 0.77258 | | 6462 | 5630 | 12092 | 9 | 0.87 |
| 85 | 7235 | 6213 | 13448 | 0.858742 | 3109 | 2318 | 5427 | 0.745577 | | 10344 | 8531 | 18875 | 56 | 0.82 |
| 90 | 10918 | 10904 | 21822 | 0.998718 | 4141 | 4195 | 8336 | 1.01304 | | 15059 | 15099 | 30158 | 60 | 1.00 |
| 95 | 22714 | 21090 | 43804 | 0.928502 | 555 | 568 | 1123 | 1.023423 | | 23269 | 21658 | 44927 | 49 | 0.93 |
| Elementary (Grades 1-6) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 75 | 80240 | 66488 | 146728 | 0.828614 | 49359 | 39743 | 89102 | 0.805182 | | 129599 | 106231 | 235830 | | 0.82 |
| 80 | 87182 | 78036 | 165218 | 0.895093 | 51420 | 42678 | 94098 | 0.829988 | | 138602 | 120714 | 259316 | 10 | 0.87 |
| 85 | 93057 | 86024 | 179081 | 0.924423 | 55518 | 49836 | 105354 | 0.897655 | | 148575 | 135860 | 284435 | 10 | 0.91 |
| 90 | 103088 | 95652 | 198740 | 0.927867 | 63009 | 58741 | 121750 | 0.932264 | | 166097 | 154393 | 320490 | 13 | 0.93 |
| 95 | na | na | na | na | na | na | na | na | | 220944 | 209803 | 430747 | 34 | 0.95 |
| Preparatory (Grades 7-9) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 75 | 29684 | 18563 | 48247 | 0.625354 | 17021 | 13005 | 30026 | 0.764056 | | 46705 | 31568 | 78273 | ?? | 0.68 |
| 80 | 31389 | 23317 | 54706 | 0.74284 | 15738 | 12804 | 28542 | 0.813572 | | 47127 | 36121 | 83248 | 6 | 0.77 |
| 85 | 35078 | 28363 | 63441 | 0.808569 | 18837 | 17505 | 36342 | 0.929288 | | 53915 | 45868 | 99783 | 20 | 0.85 |
| 90 | 37359 | 32382 | 69741 | 0.866779 | 8763 | 7805 | 16568 | 0.890677 | | 46122 | 40187 | 86309 | -14 | 0.87 |
| 95 | na | na | na | na | na | na | na | na | | 75223 | 72054 | 147277 | 71 | 0.96 |

| West Bank | | | | | Gaza Strip | | | | | Palestinian Territory | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|----------|------------|--------|--------|----------|--|-----------------------|--------|--------|----------|------|
| yr | male | female | total | f:m | male | female | total | f:m | | male | female | total | % chg | f:m |
| Secondary (Grades 10-12) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 75 | 16921 | 8326 | 25247 | 0.492051 | 8016 | 6172 | 14188 | 0.76996 | | 24937 | 14498 | 39435 | | 0.58 |
| 80 | 22054 | 13185 | 35239 | 0.597851 | 5174 | 3394 | 8568 | 0.655972 | | 27228 | 16579 | 43807 | 11 | 0.61 |
| 85 | 19459 | 13544 | 33003 | 0.696028 | 9920 | 8622 | 18542 | 0.869153 | | 29379 | 22166 | 51545 | 18 | 0.75 |
| 90 | 23664 | 16800 | 40464 | 0.709939 | 17145 | 12051 | 29196 | 0.702887 | | 40809 | 28851 | 69660 | 35 | 0.71 |
| 95 | na | na | na | na | na | na | na | na | | 44425 | 40178 | 84603 | 21 | 0.90 |
| Elementary and Preparatory | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 75 | 109924 | 85051 | 194975 | 0.773725 | 66380 | 52748 | 119128 | 0.794637 | | 176304 | 137799 | 314103 | | 0.78 |
| 80 | 118571 | 101353 | 219924 | 0.854787 | 67158 | 55482 | 122640 | 0.826141 | | 185729 | 156835 | 342564 | 9 | 0.84 |
| 85 | 128135 | 114387 | 242522 | 0.892707 | 74355 | 67341 | 141696 | 0.905669 | | 202490 | 181728 | 384218 | 12 | 0.90 |
| 90 | 140447 | 128034 | 268481 | 0.911618 | 71772 | 66546 | 138318 | 0.927186 | | 212219 | 194580 | 406799 | 6 | 0.92 |
| 95 | na | na | na | na | na | na | na | na | | 296167 | 281857 | 578024 | 42 | 0.95 |
| Elementary, Preparatory and Secondary | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 75 | 126845 | 93377 | 220222 | 0.73615 | 25037 | 19177 | 44214 | | | 151882 | 112554 | 264436 | | 0.74 |
| 80 | 140625 | 114538 | 255163 | 0.814492 | 20912 | 16198 | 37110 | | | 161537 | 130736 | 292273 | 11 | 0.81 |
| 85 | 147594 | 127931 | 275525 | 0.866776 | 28757 | 26127 | 54884 | | | 176351 | 154058 | 330409 | 13 | 0.87 |
| 90 | 164111 | 144834 | 308945 | 0.882537 | 25908 | 19856 | 45764 | | | 190019 | 164690 | 354709 | 7 | 0.87 |
| 95 | na | na | na | na | na | na | na | | | 340592 | 322035 | 662627 | 87 | 0.95 |

Source: data for 1975-1990 from Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, *Judea, Samaria and Gaza Area Statistics*, VII (1), XI (1), XVI (2), and XX, selected years, Jerusalem; data for 1995 elementary, preparatory and secondary enrollment calculated from PCBS & MOE, *Educational Statistical Yearbook 1995/96*, No. 2, Ramallah, 105-06.

Table 2: GER by Level and Gender, Selected Years

| | Elementary | | | Preparatory | | | Secondary | | |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | male | female | total | male | female | total | male | female | total |
| 1975 | | | | | | | | | |
| population | 550.35 | 550.35 | 1100.7 | 550.35 | 550.35 | 1100.7 | 550.35 | 550.35 | 1100.7 |
| revised pop'n | 583.371 | 583.371 | 1166.742 | 583.371 | 583.371 | 1166.742 | 583.371 | 583.371 | 1166.742 |
| proportion 6-11 years | 0.17722921 | 0.1701718 | 0.1737005 | 0.07105133 | 0.06840709 | 0.06972921 | 0.06556061 | 0.0638498 | 0.06470521 |
| pop'n yrs | 103390.381 | 99273.2926 | 202663.674 | 41449.2845 | 39906.7111 | 81355.9956 | 38246.1575 | 37248.1241 | 75494.2816 |
| enrolment | 176304 | 137799 | 314103 | 46705 | 31568 | 78273 | 24937 | 14498 | 39435 |
| GER | 1.70522633 | 1.38807726 | 1.54987322 | 1.1267987 | 0.79104489 | 0.96210488 | 0.65201321 | 0.38922765 | 0.52235744 |
| 1980 | | | | | | | | | |
| population | 590.4 | 590.4 | 1180.8 | 590.4 | 590.4 | 1180.8 | 590.4 | 590.4 | 1180.8 |
| revised pop'n | 625.824 | 625.824 | 1251.648 | 625.824 | 625.824 | 1251.648 | 625.824 | 625.824 | 1251.648 |
| pop'n proportion | 0.17722921 | 0.1701718 | 0.1737005 | 0.07105133 | 0.06840709 | 0.06972921 | 0.06556061 | 0.0638498 | 0.06470521 |
| pop'n specific yrs | 110914.293 | 106497.596 | 217411.889 | 44465.6266 | 42810.7972 | 87276.4237 | 41029.402 | 39958.7399 | 80988.1418 |
| enrolment | 138602 | 120714 | 259316 | 47127 | 36121 | 6085715.91 | 2689912.54 | 16579 | 5240354.41 |
| GER | 1.24963156 | 1.13349038 | 1.19274066 | 1.05985238 | 0.84373575 | 69.729208 | 65.560608 | 0.41490297 | 64.7052061 |
| 1985 | | | | | | | | | |
| population | 671.25 | 671.25 | 1342.5 | 671.25 | 671.25 | 1342.5 | 671.25 | 671.25 | 1342.5 |
| revised pop'n | 711.525 | 711.525 | 1423.05 | 711.525 | 711.525 | 1423.05 | 711.525 | 711.525 | 1423.05 |
| pop'n proportion | 0.17722921 | 0.1701718 | 0.1737005 | 0.07105133 | 0.06840709 | 0.06972921 | 0.06556061 | 0.0638498 | 0.06470521 |
| pop'n specific yrs | 126103.013 | 121081.489 | 247184.502 | 50554.7965 | 48673.353 | 99228.1495 | 46648.0116 | 45430.7319 | 92078.7435 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| enrolment | 148575 | 135860 | 284435 | 53915 | 45868 | 99783 | 29379 | 22166 | 51545 |
| GER | 1.17820341 | 1.12205425 | 1.15069916 | 1.06646656 | 0.94236368 | 1.00559166 | 0.62980176 | 0.48790761 | 0.55979261 |
| 1990 | | | | | | | | | |
| population | 799.85 | 799.85 | 1599.7 | 799.85 | 799.85 | 1599.7 | 799.85 | 799.85 | 1599.7 |
| revised pop'n | 847.841 | 847.841 | 1695.682 | 847.841 | 847.841 | 1695.682 | 847.841 | 847.841 | 1695.682 |
| | 0.17722921 | 0.1701718 | 0.1737005 | 0.07105133 | 0.06840709 | 0.06972921 | 0.06556061 | 0.0638498 | 0.06470521 |
| pop'n specific yrs | 150262.19 | 144278.628 | 294540.818 | 60240.2294 | 57998.3335 | 118238.563 | 55584.9715 | 54134.4818 | 109719.453 |
| enrolment | 166097 | 154393 | 320490 | 46122 | 40187 | 86309 | 40809 | 28851 | 69660 |
| GER | 1.1053812 | 1.07010305 | 1.08810046 | 0.76563453 | 0.69289922 | 0.72995644 | 0.73417327 | 0.53295052 | 0.63489197 |

Although the ratio of males per 1,000 females is not 1000, the m:f ratio of 1:1 is used in the above population estimates.

Population statistics from ICBS, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 1995, Table 27.1, Jerusalem, 756.
Proportion of the Population from PCBS, *Demography of the Palestinian Population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Current Status Report Series (No. 1)*, Ramallah, December 1994, 243.

WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM AT BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY

*Teaching * Research * Gender Intervention*

The launching of Women's Studies at Birzeit University comes at a critical time, as Palestinian women, as well as Palestinian society as a whole, seek to address a complex range of social, economic and political issues. Understanding gender relations in Palestinian society, analyzing and debating key social issues facing society, and developing effective gender-aware policies require a comprehensive and sustained initiative. The Women's Studies Program at Birzeit University aims to contribute to this effort through an innovative teaching program, systematic and directed research on gender relations in Palestinian and Arab society, and an active gender intervention program.

Teaching: Women's Studies is a Program within Birzeit University's Faculty of Arts; the Program currently offers a minor in Women's Studies. Teaching began in the 1994-1995 academic year. The Program has developed an interdisciplinary core curriculum of eleven courses, among them Introduction to Women's Studies, Women and Development, Women and the Law, Women in Arab Society, the History of Women's Movements, Gender and Discourse, and Women and the Family.

Research: The Women's Studies Program aims to conduct and facilitate research on Palestinian women, both through instituting its own research projects and through collecting archival materials and offering services to other researchers. In September 1994, the Program launched an extensive collaborative research project on "Palestinian Women in Society," which produced four working papers on feminist scholarship in the Middle East, gender and public policy in Palestine, gender and development, and gender and vocational education in Palestine, as well as **Palestinian Women: A Status Report**. The second phase of this project will investigate several aspects of gender and social policy in Palestine.

Gender Intervention: In addition to its scholarly and academic objectives, the Women's Studies Program aims to develop avenues to empower Palestinian women through a gender intervention program in conjunction with the expanding network of Palestinian women's institutions, as well as to contribute to gender-informed public and institutional policies that recognize and secure the economic, social and political rights of all citizens. Current plans include gender planning training in selected key institutions and locales, and utilizing seminars and workshops to promote gender-aware policy objectives.

For more information please contact: Women's Studies Program, Birzeit University, POB 14, Birzeit, West Bank, Palestine. Telephone and Fax: 972-2-9982959.

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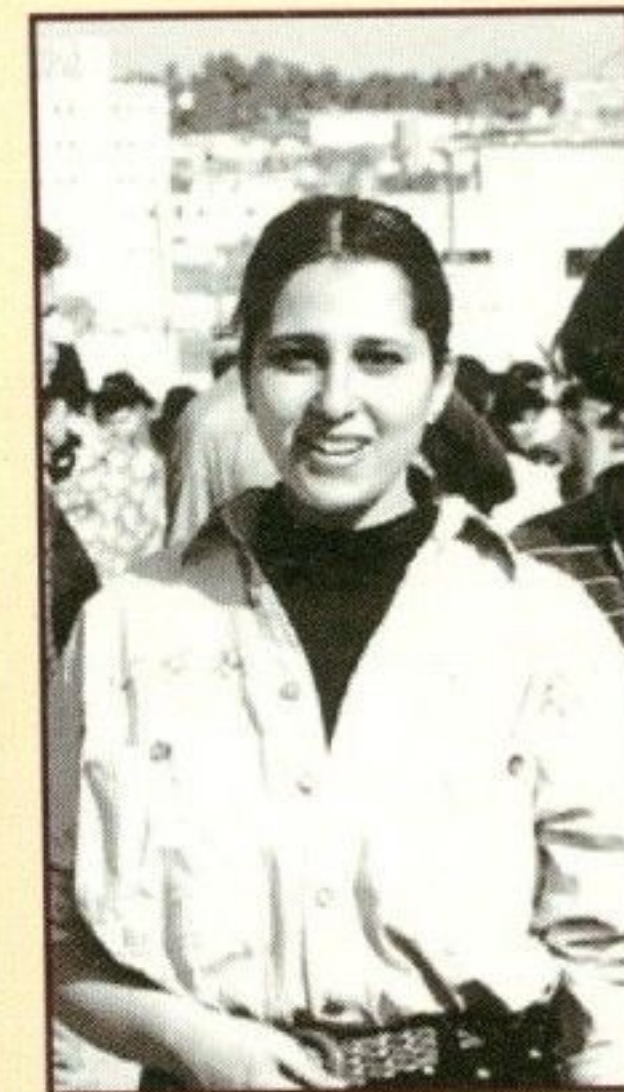
PALESTINIAN WOMEN: A STATUS REPORT is published by the Women's Studies Program at Birzeit University in separate English and Arabic editions. This ten chapter report is an attempt to build a comprehensive picture of the current challenges facing Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in building a society based on gender equality. The guiding assumption is that such equality is necessary for both sustainable development and democratization. Eight of the chapters address the situation of women in specific sectors of contemporary life in Palestine. A further two provide context and conceptual frameworks for examining the main features and trends in this society, and the key issues in gender and development that can be brought to bear to understand Palestinian reality. The report utilizes existing research, data and policy documents on Palestine to try to understand how gender roles and relations and gender asymmetries in Palestinian society structure the lives and opportunities of women and men and either obstruct or allow healthy, equitable and sustainable human development.

In Palestine, positive indicators for women, such as rising educational levels and political participation, exist alongside negative indicators of unusually low labor force participation and persistent high fertility. To understand these seemingly contradictory indicators, an integrated framework is required that examines the specific constraints, resources and opportunities that shape the lives of women and men. Chapters explore the linkage among high fertility rates, gender gaps in secondary education, early marriage, and the absence of labor opportunities and social protection. Other chapters identify assumptions about gender roles and their impact on women and men's access to social security or delineate the relationship between access to capital and achieving political power.

The chapters and authors are as follows:

1. Palestinian Society --- Lisa Taraki
2. Population and Fertility -- Rita Giacaman
3. Family -- Rema Hammami
4. Labor and Economy -- Rema Hammami
5. Social Support -- Penny Johnson
6. Education -- Mona Ghali
7. Politics -- Islah Jad
8. Law -- Penny Johnson
9. Health -- Rita Giacaman
10. Gender and Development -- Eileen Kuttab

The Women's Studies Program welcomes comments and criticism on these chapters; a primary objective in publishing *Palestinian Women: A Status Report* is to open up these critical issues for women and Palestinian society as a whole to debate and intervention.



PALESTINIAN WOMEN: A STATUS REPORT

PALESTINIAN SOCIETY

POPULATION AND FERTILITY

FAMILY

LABOR AND ECONOMY

SOCIAL SUPPORT

EDUCATION

POLITICS

LAW

HEALTH