

# Checkpoints and Barriers:

Searching for Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza

Gender Dimensions of Economic Collapse

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AHLC	Adhoc Liaison Committee
BMC	Businessman Card
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSS	General Security Service
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
ILO	International Labour Organization
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
LFS	Labor Force Survey
LFP	Labor Force Participation
MAS	Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NIS	New Israeli Shekel
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PICCR	Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organization

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An important dimension of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and one that has been extensively documented, concerns Israel's control over the movement of Palestinian people, goods, and resources. Since 1967, control over Palestinian movement has relaxed and tightened, following in part the ebb and flow of the conflict. Over time, however, the apparatus of control itself has gradually become more sophisticated and effective in its ability to interfere in and affect every aspect of Palestinian life, including job opportunities, work, and earnings. Extensive and multilayered, the apparatus of control includes a permit system, physical obstacles known as closures, restricted roads, prohibitions on entering large areas of land in the West Bank, and most notably the Separation Barrier. It has turned the West Bank into a fragmented set of social and economic islands or enclaves cut off from one another. It has surrounded Gaza with a perimeter fence with heavily controlled crossings. This report assesses the impact of the movement and access regime in the period 2000–07 on the economy and the working lives of Palestinians, exploring the gender dimension of restrictions on labor force participation, and how new tensions in the arena of work resulting from movement and access restrictions have affected relations between women and men. The findings of this study are based on an analysis of data covering the years 2000 to 2007 and examine the long-term impacts of restrictions on movement and access.

As controls on movement became more entrenched following the second intifada (2000), a massive economic decline ensued, leading to a drop in male employment and real wages resulting from job losses in Israel, and a corresponding rise in unemployment. Poverty rates, including deep poverty rates, rose as gross domestic product (GDP) fell, and increasing numbers of households found themselves living on food handouts and devising endless coping mechanisms to make ends meet. Thus, the West Bank and Gaza—in the span of a decade—moved from being a middle-income economy to one that is now massively aid dependent. This same period also witnessed a sharp rise in both covert and overt forms of violence. Israeli military incursions, detentions, manned checkpoints, home demolitions, the Separation Barrier (along with its associated permit regime), and the Palestinians' own response spun a web of violence in public and private that touched the everyday lives of all Palestinians. The violence resulting from the occupation has led to loss of life, land, property, and free movement of people, and has fragmented social space, a key source of material and moral support especially for women. With neither Israeli nor Palestinian legal systems able to provide defense or protection, these momentous changes in people's everyday lives created a sense of collapse of the public, social, and moral order (*falataan amni*).

Against this backdrop, the effects on Palestinian society have been extensive and far reaching, on relations between men and women, on intergenerational relations between the young and the old, on ties of kinship, and on social networks. This study, through qualitative sources, provides insights into a chain of events that have and are moderating social behavior



and gender relations associated with work. The study also captures what the deteriorating situation has meant for Palestinian females and males of all ages in terms of their economic engagement, their ability to seek alternate livelihoods, their coping strategies, their social and human investments (for example, education, marriage), and their future aspirations.

As the study shows, men's role as the primary provider and protector of the family, traditionally a mainstay of Palestinian gender relations, has been systematically undermined by economic collapse. With the shrinking of the Israeli market for Palestinian labor and the contraction of the productive sectors of the Palestinian economy experienced over the last seven years, men have retreated from the labor market for lack of opportunities. With barely any options available to them, they have flocked to the informal sector, borrowing and starting small businesses to make up for the loss of employment and income, but the success of this strategy has been limited. Movement and access restrictions have stymied the absorptive capacity of the private sector in both the West Bank and Gaza and the ability to trade, and many businesses have been forced to fold.

On the whole, men's labor force participation never returned to the pre-crisis levels of 1999, suggesting that many men are delaying entry into the labor market or are too discouraged to stay in. In 2007, nearly 60 percent of working-age Palestinians neither participated in any type of recorded economic activity, paid or unpaid, nor were searching for work.<sup>1</sup> This desperation was expressed during focus group discussions conducted as part of this study. Men from refugee camps who lost their jobs in Israel complained about spending most of their time idle, except for occasional piecemeal work offered to them by neighbors or by job creation programs. These men also spoke about having become increasingly reliant on humanitarian aid from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and other charitable associations. Men with small plots of land around their homes have turned to planting crops and raising poultry or livestock, but these activities are insufficient to sustain their families.

In response to male retreat from the labor market, women have had to step into the public sphere and employ strategies to prevent family destitution and aid dependence. Survival strategies have been diverse and multifaceted and include searching for jobs in the formal sector (public sector and services), delaying their exit from the public sector (traditionally women would have left jobs after marriage), home production of food and other goods, selling or bartering food coupons, borrowing from neighbors, and volunteering with charitable organizations. The nature of women's work is not easily captured in standard labor force surveys; often women themselves do not regard what they do as work and standard questionnaires miss it and therefore it remains hidden from view and difficult to assess. According to the standard labor force survey, Palestinian women's participation is among the world's lowest, but it registered a slight increase during the period most affected by economic decline and rising male unemployment, from 14 percent in 2000 to 16 percent in 2007. The increase actually remains concentrated within a handful of

middle- to low-level occupations in the public sector and unpaid agricultural work. A good share of this increased participation has been in low-status, unprotected jobs (for example, domestic work) or unpaid agricultural work—jobs that men are unprepared to do because the returns are too low and the status demeaning after the loss of more lucrative forms of employment.

Many women—in particular middle-aged and those with little education—also turned to a range of informal activities, from petty trading in Gaza, to grocery shopkeeping, sewing, agriculture, and livestock production. Many informal activities benefited from microcredit schemes introduced by aid agencies, with mixed results. In some cases, women borrowed money on behalf of their husbands, and in other cases they were constrained by the strict repayment policies of the lender. For example, according to the director of UNRWA's microcredit program in Gaza, lending has almost ceased and there has been a flight of female microentrepreneurs from the informal sector of the economy, with many closing their businesses because of bankruptcy. The lack of raw materials or goods mobility, especially in Gaza, compounded by the massive decline in people's purchasing power, has also complicated these projects and created the objective conditions to close businesses.

Women's stepped-up involvement in work in the public sphere has come at a cost: women must carefully navigate the need to behave in a manner that is culturally appropriate with the need for increased mobility; they must tread carefully by not overstating their new role as provider for the sake of preserving family harmony; and they must add to their already burdened productive and reproductive household roles, that of their increased economic participation, particularly in the absence of a male income earner. Many of the women interviewed expressed pride in their work but also pointed to the difficulties they face in dealing with low-paid and unprotected jobs. In many cases, men have learned to cope with diminishing employment opportunities and have voiced appreciation for the new roles their wives are taking on. Social ties and networks have acted to support working women, although they too are suffering the weight of restrictions and economic collapse.

The overall conflict environment has permeated every aspect of Palestinian life and affected both men and women. Violence in the public sphere—through checkpoints, body searches, roadblocks, settler violence, and so forth—has intruded into the domestic sphere, and men and women have had to cope under conditions of tremendous anxiety and incertitude to ensure family survival. And while men are the direct recipients of violence, women have also had to bear its indirect costs. For instance, although most detainees are men, women must shoulder the responsibility of having and raising children, cooking, cleaning, running the household in the absence of the male figure, and working to secure the release of detained relatives (contacting human rights organizations, obtaining permits to visit the detainee, and so on), among other responsibilities.



The collapse in the public order and the absence of justice have further corroded the dominant image of Palestinian men as the protector of the family, disempowering and forcing some men to retreat to the domestic sphere as they are unable to protect their families and communities. Other men avoid the home as they cannot fulfill their domestic responsibilities, and spend time in coffee houses, the mosque and other spaces where they can find companionship with other out of work men. As men's public role has diminished, they have experienced loss of self-esteem and self-confidence. Their inability to protect or provide, has contributed to enormous psychosocial stress on the family.

Women's heightened role in the public sphere, coinciding with the weakening of men's established role, is leading to tensions within the household. Although few data are available on the prevalence of domestic violence in the West Bank and Gaza, the limited information that is available shows that households in which men have lost employment because of occupation measures may suffer from higher rates of domestic violence, although this remains inconclusive and requires further investigation. What did come across from the focus group discussions was the ever-present anger, frustration, and short-temperedness that men, women, and children have to contend with inside households.

In this bleak environment, family investment in education has surprisingly been on the increase, with record numbers of Palestinian boys and girls enrolling in secondary and post-secondary education. Education has become an insurance policy for Palestinians, and not simply a means to gain employment. For girls in particular, higher education can bring about better marriage prospects, enable them to supplement family income, and serve as an insurance policy against future vulnerability in case of the loss of a male breadwinner. For boys, education is a key to emigrating in search of more gainful employment opportunities abroad. In practice, educated young men and women, but particularly young women, have had a hard time finding work: an educated young woman waits four times as long as an educated young man to find work.

In addition to the challenge of finding work is the challenge of getting married. While the age of marriage has been increasing and fertility rates—though still high—have fallen,<sup>2</sup> other important changes are taking place within this sphere: while young unmarried women are more culturally constrained to find good jobs, many have also expressed their willingness to take on poorly paid or temporary work for the sake of gaining experience and supplementing family income; while young men are often-times reluctant to allow their sisters or young wives increased mobility (more so than older men), they also recognize the limitations of the single breadwinner model and are thus more willing to allow their educated sisters or wives to work.

The relaxations on restrictions on movement that have started in 2009 have not been sufficient to reverse the trends described above: the Israeli labor market remains closed to Palestinians, restrictions for those Palestinians living in Area C remain as entrenched as



ever, and settlements continue to expand. Therefore, it remains to be seen whether tensions arising from the changes to employment that have arisen from movement and access restrictions and economic decline will have lasting effects on gender roles, particularly the extent to which the male breadwinner model remains the dominant paradigm in gender relations. The main preoccupation voiced by women and girls interviewed for this study was their need for husbands, brothers, and fathers to be employed as this is the principal way they will reduce their stress, anger and frustration and regain their dignity, sense of self-esteem, and empowerment. The undignified manner in which many women have had to participate economically—such as taking on low-paid jobs, borrowing, bartering and enduring ‘humiliating searches’ at checkpoints —has in some ways only strengthened many women’s desire for things to revert to “normal” and for the men once again to support their families. Yet, there seems to be a generational shift where educated young women, married and single are more eager to work, and to play a role in society, and their increasing involvement in civil society organizations is one such expression of this desire. As already noted, there are men who are coping with cycles of employment and unemployment and who appreciate the new roles women are taking on. In such cases it is cooperation rather than conflict that characterizes gender relations.

## Recommendations

The most effective way to improve economic opportunities for Palestinian men and women in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem is to lift movement and access restrictions which disadvantage women in specific gendered ways. There are four additional areas where specific local actions could create opportunities to improve family income by providing opportunities to women and men. These actions ought to be addressed by the Palestinian Authority (PA) as it prepares its new development plan and supported by the international community, including Israel.

### *1. Create and support enabling environments for safe and decent work.*

- Women’s economic participation can increase their personal security and prevent abuse only if family members see the work as “decent” and “dignified.” The PA can promote such an enabling environment through the following actions.
- Support indigenous efforts to affect positive change in the law regarding equal protection of men and women in the workplace, especially in the informal sector. The Palestinian Labor Law enacted in 2001 provides for equal protection of men and women, and includes specific provisions for women, but does not specify penalties for employers who violate these provisions of law. Moreover, the law excludes large segments of the labor force where most of the workers are women: own-account workers, seasonal workers, unpaid family workers, domestic worker, and those involved in unpaid domestic care

and reproductive work at home. Mechanisms that support women in the informal labor market, for example, trade unions that provide insurance schemes, can enable workers to protect themselves.

- Enhance the role of trade unions to monitor and encourage employers to take up fairer policies. On the supply side, given high fertility rates, provision of quality, affordable childcare would encourage women to join the labor market.
- Improve the regulation of the public transport sector to enhance women’s mobility. In addition to Israeli-imposed restrictions on movement, women face special constraints due to the lack of a safe, well-regulated public transport system. The PA can do much to increase both safety and gender-sensitivity in the system. Such interventions could include making the routes and schedules of public transport clear and predictable to reduce waiting time, particularly from outlying villages to major towns; establishing safety and service standards and ensuring operator compliance; providing a seating area with priority access for women in vehicles that do not have dividers between seats to ensure women can maintain proper distance from male passengers.<sup>3</sup>
- As the family operates as an economic unit, livelihood programs should focus on supporting its cohesiveness rather than promoting work for one gender over the other. This can be done by promoting home- or community-based production systems that involve men and women working together. This is especially important for agricultural production, which requires the efforts of more than one family member. There is also considerable potential for improving the production and marketing of food and artisanal products through better processing, packaging, marketing, and advertising.

## *2. Support quality education and youth employment.*

The West Bank and Gaza enjoys gender parity in all levels of education. Families value and invest in their children’s education—a contributing factor to high rates of educational attainment. Households’ investments in their children’s secondary and higher education need to be matched by public investment in quality education that leads to employment. Young men should not be left behind in the process of empowering young women’s entry to the labor market; young women’s gains and social well-being depend not only on parental and family attitudes, but on whether young men also have meaningful opportunities and purposeful lives. Lack of hope and opportunity among young men has a debilitating effect throughout the whole of society—but especially on the possibilities and aspirations of young women. The PA can do much to harness the potential of its youthful population through the following actions.

- Develop innovative programs that promote first-time employment for young men and women equally, especially among those with a tertiary education, by drawing on partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations. Even under the current dismal economic conditions, short-term, voluntary, and make-work programs for new graduates have proven effective in Gaza—especially for young women (as this report has shown). Short-term income to families from such programs affirms that investing in daughters' education is worthwhile.
- Expand the skills base of the young so they become more market-oriented and market-ready—favoring skills that lead to products that can cross borders without restrictions, for example, IT design, telecommunications, and electronics.

3. *Facilitate social cohesion, especially in Area C and others isolated by movement and access restrictions.*

This report shows that when communities are able to organize, drawing on all segments of their population (including male and female youth), they are more resilient in coping with stress factors resulting from the occupation. Civil society and social networks play an important role in sustaining the social capital of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza under these conditions of duress. These enabling networks are key to supporting communities that are under stress, and ensure that communities do not break down under the pressure of conflict.

- Promote and encourage the development of local institutions for community empowerment as these ultimately also protect women: they can be formal or informal, and can be a good source of involvement and experience for youth, both male and female. These institutions can also provide much needed support (in the form of legal advice; counseling; income support; transport; skills development; marketing assistance) to unemployed men and women facing tensions in the household.
- Support indigenous efforts to promote outlets of expression and debate. These can lead to greater social cohesion and community-building and instill positive changes in attitude toward and practice of gender roles through, for example, theater, soap operas, chat shows, art exhibitions, and film on broadcast media.



*4. Collect better data on gender-disaggregated economic participation.*

Much effort has gone into the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data in the West Bank and Gaza. However, the changing conditions on the ground require continual rethinking of tools and methods for gathering information that captures as much of the situation on the ground as possible. For example, labor market surveys tend to focus on formal employment and often miss the hidden forms of employment in which women are engaged, particularly in these past few years. More careful and rigorous research on these hidden forms needs to be carried out to better capture the full extent of women's economic participation and provide guidance to policy-makers on supporting the three areas highlighted above.

## CHAPTER 1:

# INTRODUCTION



Photo by: GETTY IMAGES for CARE International



*Chapter 1 provides the rationale, aims, and objectives of this study, which investigates the impact of movement and access restrictions on economic participation and on gender relations in the West Bank and Gaza. It examines key factors that inform the prevalent culture of gender relations, providing insights into gender inequalities that persist in Palestinian politics, legal frameworks, employment, and the labor market (although the last is examined in detail in chapter 2). The chapter charts the evolution of the system of movement and access restrictions introduced by the government of Israel since 1967 in response to conflict and violence and its security concerns. It provides a brief overview of how the system operates today, highlighting its all-pervasive impact (social and economic) on the daily life of Palestinians. It also indicates key areas where the system is not gender neutral. Chapter 1 lays the basis for assessing how movement and access restrictions are shaping men's and women's responses to the labor market and employment, adding a factor that impinges on gender relations.*

**Since 1967 and the onset of the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, restrictions on movement and access have become an important factor in shaping the everyday lives of Palestinians.** In the aftermath of the first and second intifada, conflict, violence, and economic collapse have also become an enduring and prominent reality. The fragmentation of the West Bank into social and economic islands or enclaves cut off from one another; the isolation of East Jerusalem; and the severing of Gaza from the rest of the Palestinian territory and its corresponding economic collapse have forced individuals, households, and communities to adapt their behaviors and adopt coping strategies to meet basic consumption needs and ensure their physical safety.

**Numerous studies have detailed the decline of the Palestinian economy and the increase in poverty in the wake of the second intifada and the ensuing controls imposed by Israel on Palestinian movement and access within and between Gaza and the West Bank and the outside world.** The World Bank has extensively documented the macroeconomic outlook of the Palestinian Territory, detailing how physical, institutional, and administrative restrictions impact Palestinian economic potential<sup>4</sup>. At the same time, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has documented the humanitarian impact of movement and access restrictions, assessing how Israel's security measures constrain the welfare of ordinary people and their access to services and livelihoods throughout the Palestinian territory.<sup>5</sup>

## Objective of the Study

**This study complements existing analysis by introducing a social dimension that includes gender.** The study's objective is to demonstrate the impact of conflict, violence, and movement and access restrictions on the economic participation of men and women and how gender relations (the social relationships between men and women) are affected. In various locales in the West Bank and Gaza, the study investigates how responses to movement and access restrictions and the corresponding loss of economic opportunity are shaping the social relations between men and women and family relationships as a whole.

**The study examines how location, gender, and class in the context of movement and access restrictions influence women's ability to access labor markets.** It questions whether gains made by women in economic participation will be sustained and consolidated over time or will wither away. Given the overall conflict environment that is leading to high unemployment and poverty, the report also examines the extent to which violence has intruded into the everyday lives of Palestinians. It asks what influence violence plays in the domestic sphere; what impact it has on gender and intergenerational relationships; and what strategies men and women employ to reduce the impact of violence in the public and domestic spheres.

## Research Methods

**The study draws on Birzeit's re-analysis, from a gender perspective, of quantitative surveys conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS).** Foremost among these are the standard labor force surveys as well as surveys on household welfare, crime incidence, domestic violence, and time use. In re-examining these surveys, Birzeit has correlated gendered outcomes (of, for example, labor force participation, crime incidence) with key moments in the conflict and the evolution of movement and access restrictions, tracking trends over time. A regression analysis of the determinants of labor force participation provides micro level support to the trends observed at the macro level.

**Qualitative data were also collected from selected sites. In the West Bank, Birzeit University held 12 focus group discussions** with approximately 120 respondents. These took place in urban, rural, and refugee camps.<sup>6</sup> Rural focus group discussions also included villages that were enclosed between the barrier and the Green Line. Groups included: male and female youth; married women; teachers; and adult men and women (in separate groups). Eight to fourteen people were included in each group. A series of in-depth interviews were also held with four organizations providing microcredit.



**In the Gaza Strip**, Birzeit held a total of 14 focus group discussions. These included four focus group discussions each with the following: housewives, female youth, and male youth (university students and graduates), as well as one focus group discussion with teachers and one with microcredit borrowers (former and current). The total sample was more than 180 participants. Nearly half were women and half men.<sup>7</sup> Twelve semistructured interviews were also held (three in Beit Hanoon, three in el Zaitoon, three in el Maghazi, and three in el Syamat).

CARE conducted a series of in-depth individual interviews in selected rural areas where it works: in the West Bank (Jenin District, Barta'a enclave, Toubas, and the Jordan Valley<sup>8</sup>) and in one village in the Gaza Strip. The subjects of CARE's research were largely married women, disadvantaged socioeconomically and supporting their families either by keeping livestock and producing milk products for local markets or by other entrepreneurial activities. In addition, in-depth interviews were held with a small number of high-earning women entrepreneurs in Ramallah to examine the class and socioeconomic dimensions of economic participation.

## Demographic Overview

The total population of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem is 3.6 million, with 2.3 million or 62 percent of the population living in the West Bank and 1.4 million, or 37 percent of the population, living in Gaza.<sup>9</sup> According to the 2007 census, the Palestinian population in the Jerusalem governorate is estimated at 363,649, including 225,416 who live inside the Israeli municipal boundaries and 138,233 who live outside. The average household size is 5.5 in the West Bank and 6.5 in Gaza.<sup>10</sup> There are also approximately 485,000 settlers living in West Bank settlements, including 195,000 in East Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup>

## The Culture of Gender Relations

**Men and women do not share the same social or economic status in Palestinian society, and their purpose and role are often viewed differently in cultural and religious processes.**

In the face of the law, politics, the market, and employment, and to a lesser degree in health and education, women's status is secondary. Although important reforms are taking place (for example, to revise discriminatory laws and to facilitate women's entry into politics), political uncertainty, violence, and movement and access restrictions associated with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza are likely to affect the various constellations of social relations that exist between men and women as well as efforts to promote a more equal status between the sexes and in family life.



**Family life in the Palestinian Territory is influenced by a kinship system that has evolved over time and still defines who has authority in the family and how members interact. The hierarchy that results places men in a protective and dominant position, with women as dependents who gain status with stature (derived from sons) and age.** The importance of a male line of descendents is inferred in everyday discussions, rendering girls and women less visible. While idealized norms see men as protectors of the family earning a living in the public sphere, and women and girls functioning in the domestic sphere (managing household production and reproduction), in practice these rigid formations are more fluid and many different constellations of gender roles exist side by side.

**Marriage, family, and children are viewed as highly important aspects of Palestinian culture.** Family life is considered by many as the “only refuge from insecurity,” and many women derive their sense of rights and entitlements from it.<sup>12</sup> This can leave those who don’t marry in difficult circumstances, with an uncertain role at home and in society. PCBS data from 2007 indicate a sudden upturn in the number of underage marriages in the last few years.<sup>13</sup> Among 50–54 year old women, only 7.5 percent report marrying at the age of 14 or under; among 20–24 year old women, 4.3 percent report the same; among 15–19 year old girls, just over 12 percent report marrying at 14 years or under.

**The gender gap in education is closing at all levels. In primary education, it has closed, and women’s secondary and tertiary enrollment exceeds that of men.**<sup>14</sup> More girls enroll in vocational education than previously, accounting for 27 percent of all vocational school students in 2002 compared to 18 percent in 1997.<sup>15</sup>

**Although women have made considerable achievements in education in the West Bank and Gaza and in many areas have reached parity with men, those gains are not being translated into jobs in the formal labor market, where women’s participation is just 16 percent,<sup>16</sup> one of the lowest rates in the region and the world.** Moreover, the labor market in the WBG is gendered: most working women are found in nongrowth areas of the formal labor market, in the informal labor market, or they are hidden workers. As informal or hidden workers, women receive few benefits and little protection. Chapter 2 examines these categories of work in more detail, considering in its analysis the role of movement and access restrictions in shaping men’s and women’s responses to employment.

**The long history of Palestinian women’s political activism is now being translated into gains in the formal political arena, including the establishment of a quota system. Nevertheless, their levels of representation remains low.** For example, until the fall of the Unity Government in June 2007, women, aided by a quota system, represented just 13 percent (17 of 132 seats) of elected representatives in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). Although these figures are low, they do in fact represent a substantial gain since the first elections of 1996, when women claimed just 6 percent of seats<sup>17</sup>. Election of women to the PLC is important, as it demonstrates that despite discrimination, it is possible for



women to rise to positions of power and leadership. At the local level in municipal councils, women have fared better, and in 2007 they secured 18 percent of the seats.<sup>18</sup> However, the turbulence in the political process in the last three years has meant that the functioning of the PLC, with mass detentions of elected representatives by the Israelis, has been undermined.

**Legal frameworks also view men and women differently.** At the beginning of the Oslo interim period in 1994, the prevailing legal framework, consisting of Jordanian law in the West Bank and Egyptian and British Mandate legislation in Gaza (as well as Israeli law in East Jerusalem), offered a mixed balance sheet on women's legal rights, obligations, and protection under the law. In general, and subject to conditions under family law, women had the right to own property, to education, to enter into contracts, and to work.<sup>19</sup>

**Of importance, personal status laws, broadly shari'a-based family law, were and are based on a gender contract of complementary, rather than equal, gender roles and responsibilities, providing women a legal right to male maintenance but designating female responsibility for obedience (within limits).** Male financial responsibility is viewed as a rationale for women's smaller proportion of inheritance, which is generally about half that of men. It is significant that many women make no claims (the main explanation: they "exchange" this right for the continued support of their brothers and other male relatives), while women are active claimants in shari'a court of maintenance from husbands.

**As the Palestinian Authority (PA) and its Legislative Council were established, Palestinian women's organizations advocated for gender-conscious legal reform.** The Palestinian Declaration of Independence (November 1998) affirms equality between men and women in its provisions. In 2001, a unified Palestinian Labor Law offered several concrete improvements, including extended maternity leave, as well as general provisions against discrimination. Unlike women in many other countries, Palestinian women are able to give their nationality to their husbands and children. Furthermore, passports can be obtained without the permission of a guardian.

**Nevertheless, a number of provisions in both family and penal law maintain and perpetuate Palestinian women's unequal status in relation to:** *age of marriage* (15 for females and 16 for males); *polygamy* (it is permitted for men, and husbands are not obliged to notify the existing or intended wife; however, only 4 percent of marriages are polygamous); *divorce* (a husband can divorce unilaterally, while a woman can only divorce under specific circumstances); and *custody* (divorced women have custody rights over their children until puberty).<sup>20</sup> There are no specific provisions under the prevailing penal codes in the West Bank and Gaza that address domestic violence, whether physical or sexual.<sup>21</sup> Police and judges may apply more general provisions of the penal codes to assault (or murder) in the case of physical abuse.

**In terms of public attitudes toward women's rights, a recent poll shows that 56 percent of Palestinians think the government should do more to prevent discrimination toward women, while 19 percent think it is doing enough.**<sup>22</sup> Another poll conducted by the Arab World for Research and Development in 2008 found majority support (82 percent) for amending laws that allow arbitrary divorce, polygamy, and so-called honor killings.<sup>23</sup>

**While there is a special women's police unit, the Palestinian judiciary is overwhelmingly male—only 12 percent of judges and 11 percent of prosecutors-general are female.**<sup>24</sup> Women's nongovernmental organizations have reported police cooperation in sheltering women who are victims of severe domestic abuse, and the police are a potential ally in countering violence against women and girls if given the tools and mandate to execute their responsibilities. The October 2008 announcement of the formation of a new police unit to protect the family and children is also encouraging.<sup>25</sup>

**A key aspect of this study is to examine whether movement and access restrictions in the context of occupation and Israel's security concerns are a key factor in shaping the social relations between men and women, including the different roles they play in the public and domestic spheres.** Are women, for example, bearing additional burdens in relation to work, violence, and occupation as they translate at the household level? How have men behaved in the face of soaring unemployment and poverty? Is the application of the legal framework in its gendered outcomes undermined also by the apparatus of movement and access restrictions? In examining these factors, it is first necessary to consider how the system of movement and access restrictions, imposed by the government of Israel evolved and why and how it influences the lives of ordinary Palestinians.

## The Evolution of Movement and Access Restrictions: A Brief Overview

**Following the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel occupied the Palestinian Territories (West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem), exercising control over the movement of Palestinians and their productive assets, including land, water, and cultural heritage.** At first, Israel maintained control in the West Bank and Gaza through curfews; mandatory ID cards; arrests and imprisonment for minor security offenses; and by restricting Palestinian access to approximately 1,150 square kilometers (20 percent of the West Bank) designated as "closed military zones."

**In 1972, Israel began an open-door policy, allowing Palestinian residents to enter freely into Israel and East Jerusalem and to pass between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.** However, residents of the territories were not allowed to remain in Israel and East Jerusalem between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m.



**By the mid-1970s, in contravention of international law, Israel began in earnest to settle its own population on land beyond its prewar border.**<sup>26</sup> Palestinian land and water sources began to be appropriated, and policies were set in place to capture the Palestinian economy by ensuring its dependence on the Israeli labor market and trade.<sup>27</sup>

**In 1987, the outbreak of the first Palestinian intifada (or uprising) ushered in new Israeli security restrictions throughout the early 1990s.** In 1989, the Israeli authorities introduced magnetic cards for Palestinians in Gaza wishing to leave the Strip and work in Israel, while military checkpoints at the exit points began to regulate the flow of workers. In 1991, the open-door policy was revoked and personal permits were introduced. In the same year, “closures” (a comprehensive clampdown on movement in the territories) were in effect for a total of 62 days, curtailing Palestinians’ social and economic life and preventing them from accessing Israel or neighboring countries.

**In 1993, restrictions tightened further and the Israeli authorities imposed a general closure on the West Bank.** For the first time, West Bank residents were required to apply for a permit to enter East Jerusalem. (Access to East Jerusalem is not only symbolic but also critical for specialized medical care, university education, work, trade, culture, social and family relationships, and religious worship).

**In 1994, the Oslo peace process granted Palestinians a greater degree of autonomy, and a national government, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), was created.** However, from the mid-1990s, despite an influx of investment and donor assistance, Palestinian economic growth was undermined by continued limits on Palestinian sovereignty, the expansion of the settlements, and ever-tightening restrictions on the movement of people and goods. During this period, as checkpoints and other obstacles (administrative and legal) became more numerous, Gaza and the West Bank became increasingly cut off from each other.

**In 1995, the Oslo interim agreement split the West Bank into three areas; A, B, and C, with different security and administrative arrangements and authorities.**<sup>28</sup> Under Palestinian control are Area A (all major population centers) and Area B (encompassing most rural towns).<sup>29</sup> These enclaves are surrounded by Area C, which covers the entire remaining area, representing 66 percent of the West Bank. Area C remains under full Israeli control for both security and civilian affairs, including land administration and planning.<sup>30</sup> It is sparsely populated and underutilized, and it is here where land and water resources have been requisitioned for the construction of Israeli settlements. (Despite these demarcations, Israel continues to conduct military operations into all areas of the West Bank at will.)

**In 2000, following the failure of the second Camp David talks, a second Palestinian uprising erupted, and conflict ensued with devastating results.** In 2002, in a bid to reign in militant Palestinian groups, Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield, a comprehensive invasion of the West Bank that included incursions into the six of the largest cities with

devastating consequences. Palestinians sustained loss of life, injury and massive destruction of their property, including homes, infrastructure, and institutions. Economic losses during this period were significant; ordinary people were prevented from reaching their jobs and levels of unemployment and poverty rose.

**In 2002, following a campaign of Palestinian suicide bombings, Israel began to construct the West Bank barrier.** However, Israel planned the majority of the route of the barrier, not on the prewar border known as the Green Line, but rather within the Palestinian Territory. Indeed, some 87 percent of the barrier—a massive concrete and steel structure—runs inside the West Bank, cutting a swath through some of its most fertile land and surrounding 80 Israeli settlements located between the barrier and the Green Line. In 2004, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice declared the route of the barrier to be in violation of international law.<sup>31</sup>

**In 2006, Hamas won the Palestinian parliamentary elections and Israel, which had removed all its settlements and soldiers from the Gaza Strip the previous summer (2005), began a new policy toward the West Bank and Gaza.** This included: tightening movement and access restrictions and other legal and administrative measures; discontinuing reliance on Palestinian labor (from Gaza completely); and withholding Palestinian tax revenues.

**In June 2007, after a near civil war between the Palestinian political movements Hamas and Fatah, Hamas seized full control of Gaza.** In response, Israel, supported by the international community, began tightening a closure regime in operation since the mid-1990s into a full economic blockade.

## The Current Status of Movement and Access Restrictions

**The apparatus that restricts movement and access today has three dimensions: physical, institutional, and administrative.**<sup>32</sup> Physical obstacles include checkpoints, roadblocks, trenches, earth mounds, and the barrier. Institutional and administrative practices associated with the restrictions restrict Palestinian access to large segments of their territory (more than 50 percent). Permits and legal orders limit the freedom of Palestinians to move home (for example, from the West Bank to East Jerusalem and from Gaza to East Jerusalem and the West Bank), obtain work, conduct or invest in business, develop their own resources, or construct and move outside their municipal jurisdiction.<sup>33</sup> In this respect, the World Bank has observed difficulties in reconciling Israel's undeniable security concerns with a system that restricts Palestinian movement but that facilitates the relatively unhindered movement of settlers and other Israelis in and out of the West Bank.<sup>34</sup>

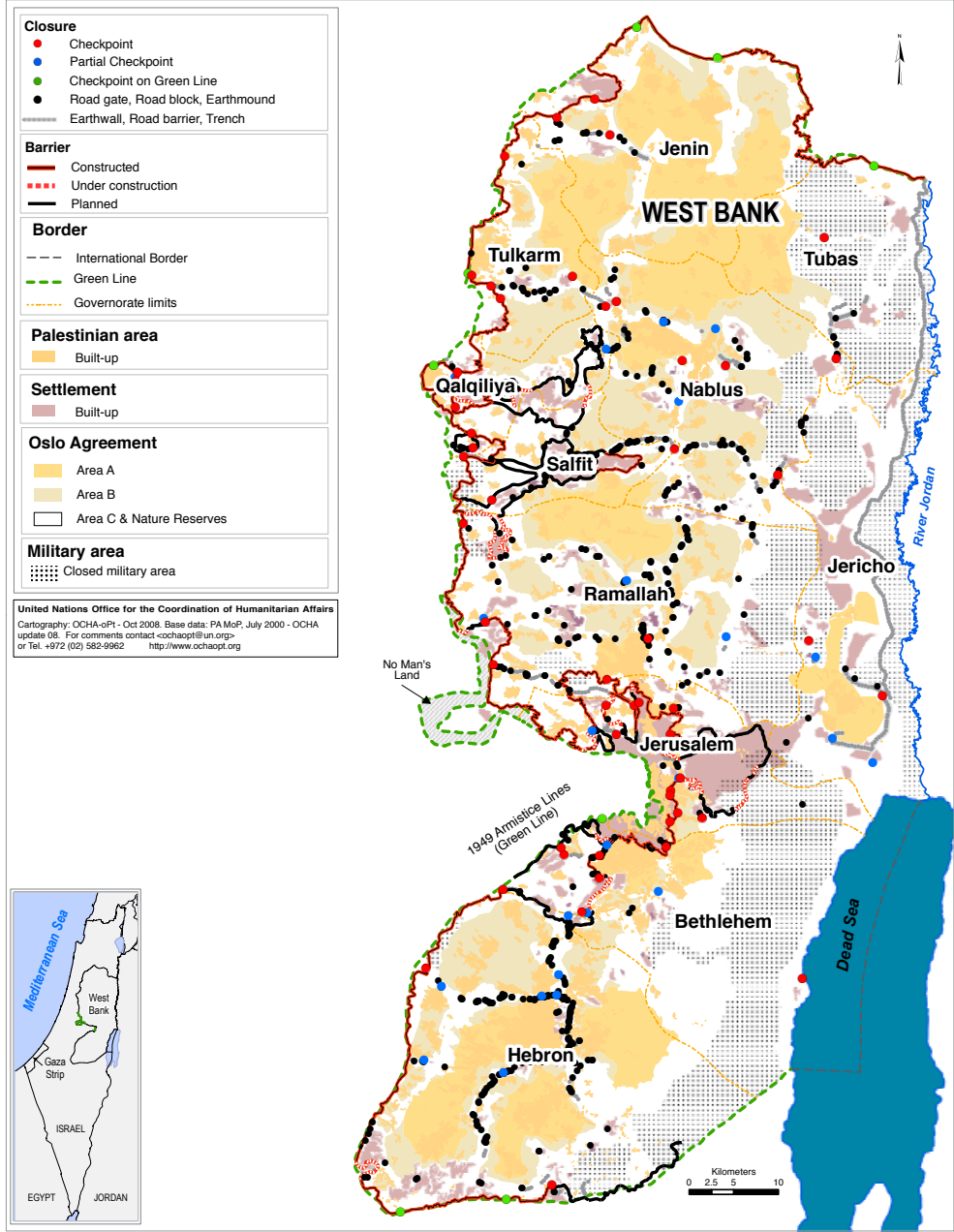


# MAP 1: WEST BANK: ACCESS AND CLOSURES



United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
**West Bank: Access & Closures**

June 2009



**Settlements and outposts are the most important factor shaping movement and access restrictions.**<sup>35</sup> **Settlements are scattered throughout the West Bank and in East Jerusalem and, where they exist, Israel's security apparatus follows** (permits, checkpoints, restricted roads, bypass roads—and in the case of 80 settlements—the barrier follows too). Some 40 percent of settlements are built on privately owned Palestinian lands, and 130 out of the 149 settlements were established wholly or in part on lands that the state of Israel itself has determined as private<sup>36</sup>. Settlements continue to expand, the number of outposts is increasing, and their population is rising (close to half a million). Palestinian farmland in the vicinity of settlements is often closed for use. In recent years, settler violence has destroyed Palestinian productive assets and created an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

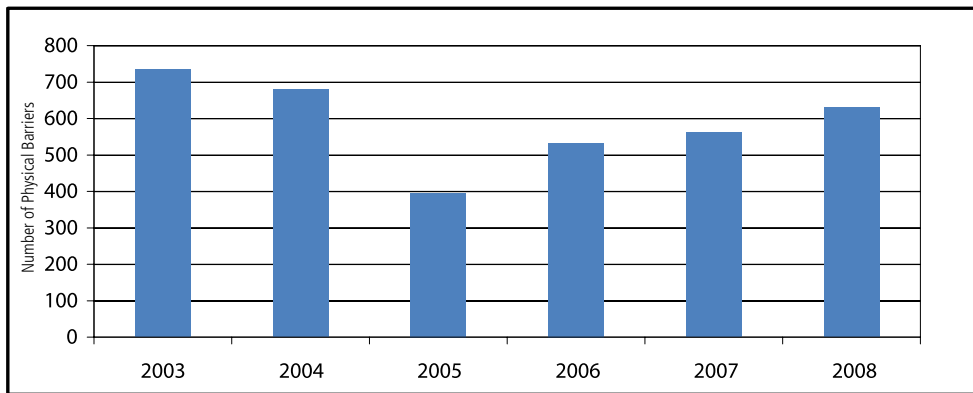
**Closures and permits: physical obstacles are invasive through the West Bank and in many areas people cannot move without encountering a roadblock.** The means of curtailing movement also include permits. Palestinians must obtain permits for nearly all movement outside their greater municipal area. For example, permits are mandatory for West Bank and Gaza ID holders to access East Jerusalem; for East Jerusalem ID holders to access other areas of the West Bank and Gaza; for all nonresidents of the Jordan Valley to access this area; for residency or for visiting closed areas created by the barrier; to access jobs in Israel and the settlements; to import and export; and to use vehicles on certain roads. In Nablus, age restrictions imposed on males ages 15–35 have in the recent past confined around 37,000 men to the city limits. In addition, since June 2007, movement for Gazans has been progressively tightened so that very few people are allowed to exit. Permit requirements are rarely published and highly changeable. They limit the ability of Palestinians to move home, obtain work, and invest in business or construction. The system as a whole has also made it expensive and time consuming for Palestinians to network and do business; to construct; and to reach work, educational institutions, health facilities, and places of worship. Permits and visas also make it difficult for foreign investors and create uncertainty and time-consuming obstacles for Palestinian business owners and local investors.<sup>37</sup>

**Despite Israel's signature to the Agreement on Movement and Access in November 2005, there has been steady increase in the number of physical barriers in place in the West Bank**<sup>38</sup> (figure 1).



Photo by: Mahfouz Abu Turk

Figure 1: Evolution of Physical Obstacles in the West Bank Since 2003



Source: OCHA 2008b.

Note: Annual data reflect Q4. Data for 2008 (September) comprise 75 checkpoints, 18 partial checkpoints, 98 road gates, 67 roadblocks, 230 earth mounds, 22 trenches, 74 road barriers, and 46 earth walls, and excludes the Separation Wall and flying checkpoints.

**The West Bank barrier, with its associated gate and permit regime, is a vast concrete and steel structure that spans 725 km (over twice the length of the 1949 Armistice Line or Green Line).<sup>39</sup>** Gates along the barrier are widely spaced and operate at unpredictable times. Going through them requires a permit. The barrier has had a major impact on villages, towns, and cities that lie in its wake. It isolates communities and separates tens of thousands of people from services, lands, and livelihoods. It has destroyed many agricultural assets and



captured water resources. Since 2003, communities living in its vicinity, particularly in the Northern West Bank, have experienced a significant reduction in access to their agricultural land. About 60 percent of the barrier is constructed and, when completed, more than 10 percent of the West Bank and East Jerusalem will lie between it and the Green Line, comprising some of the Palestinians' most fertile land.

**Areas A, B, and C and the fragmentation of the West Bank.** Land is of fundamental importance to economic activity and development.<sup>40</sup> In the West Bank, economic activity is not only affected by conflict but also by restrictions on access to land and use of natural resources. The demarcations of Areas A, B, and C effectively allow Palestinians control over populated areas but not over the vast majority of their natural resources and agricultural lands. Consequently, as the population grows and resource and development needs increase in all areas, but particularly in areas A and B, Palestinians have nowhere to expand to. The population in areas A and B combined is estimated at 1.8 million, while the population in Area C is just under 250,000. Area C dwellers are mainly rural farmers and herders whose social indicators and access to services and infrastructure are already limited. While Israeli administrative and legal arrangements limit their development to the confines of existing villages, which already have too little space for demographic growth, 38 percent of the area where they live is taken to serve settlements and their infrastructure as well as the security apparatus that constrains the movement of people and goods.<sup>41</sup>

When seen on a map, the populated land masses (Areas A and B) are fragmented into enclaves with a regime of restrictions between them.<sup>42</sup> Three distinct areas have been created in the West Bank in addition to East Jerusalem. Within these areas, further enclaves have been created as well, bordered by checkpoints and roadblocks that isolate one community from another. Today, the Jordan Valley is almost entirely cut off from the rest of the West Bank.

**Military zones and nature reserves in some cases overlap Area C and constitute 28 percent of the West Bank.**<sup>43</sup> Most of these areas, which Palestinians cannot enter or use, can be found in the Jordan Valley and the eastern slopes of the Bethlehem and Hebron governorates.

**The economic and social isolation of Gaza.** Despite the Agreement on Movement and Access in November 2005, closures in Gaza continued to tighten, culminating in an economic blockade imposed since June 2007. Gaza is now surrounded by a perimeter fence patrolled by the Israeli military. Its airspace and sea space are also controlled, and fishing access has been progressively reduced to 5 nautical miles. With such far-reaching restrictions, the Gazan economy, including export-oriented industry and agriculture, has collapsed, leading to unprecedented levels of unemployment and soaring rates of poverty. In January 2009, Israel conducted a major military offensive (Operation Cast Lead) in Gaza, which left at least 1,314 Palestinians dead and four times as many wounded (roughly half of whom were



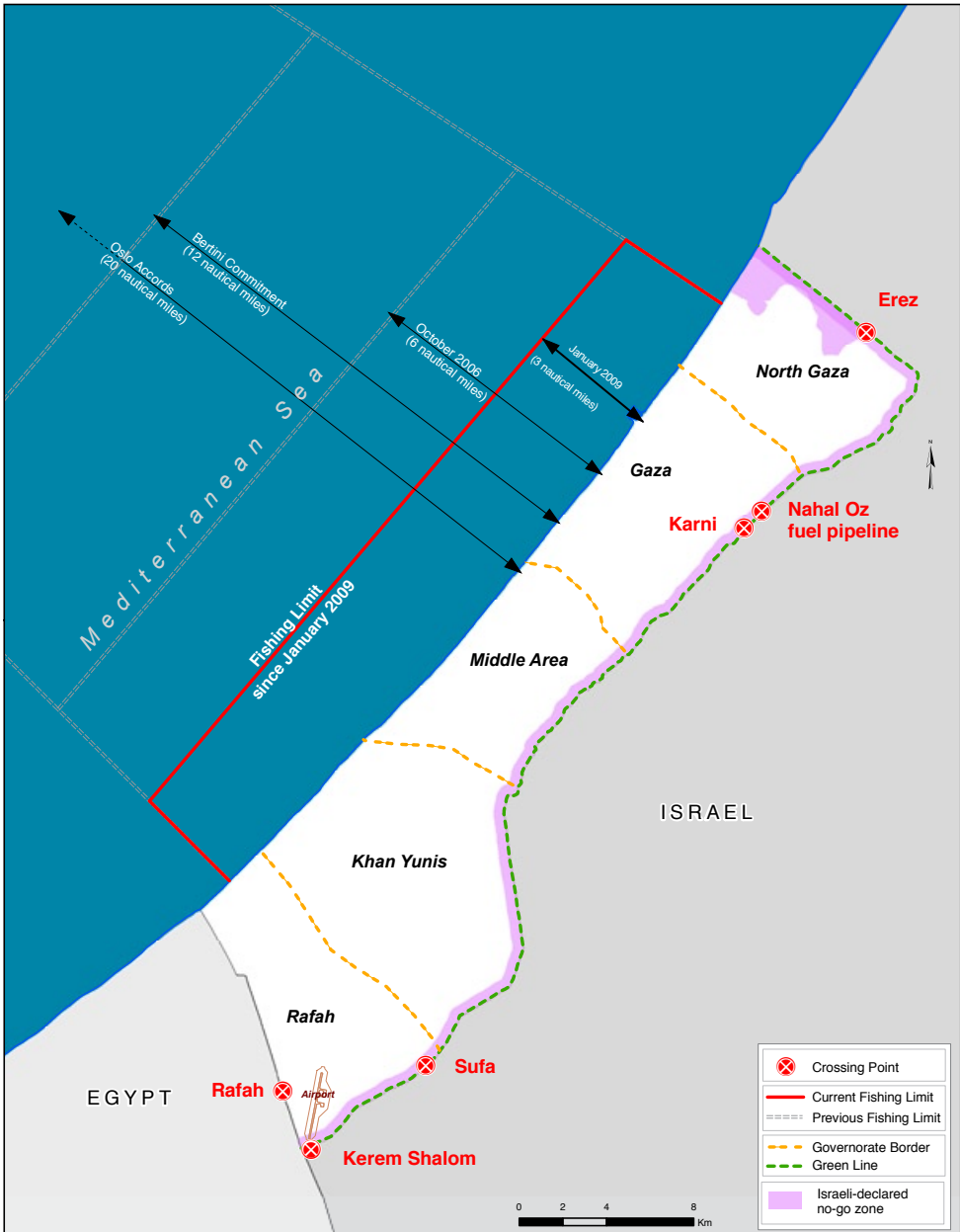
women and children).<sup>44</sup> It also caused extensive damage to private and public property, largely destroying what little industry remained. The timeline of the present study does not cover this period.

**Constrained access to East Jerusalem by permits and the barrier.** Few Palestinians have permits to enter Jerusalem. Permit holders are only allowed to enter the city through 4 of 16 existing checkpoints, and only by foot (even for children, the sick, and elderly).<sup>45</sup> This has increased time spent queuing for security checks and heightened levels of anxiety for those trying to access jobs, specialist medical care, and places of worship. When a general closure is declared during Jewish holidays or security alerts, all access is denied.

**The apparatus of movement and access restrictions is not gender neutral. While the system affects everyone, its effects are felt differently by men and women.** In a culture where gender divisions exist in identity, roles, and labor, and where it is the duty of a Palestinian father, husband, or brother to protect mothers, wives, and sisters in the private and public spheres, a woman's experience of moving through the various dimensions of physical, legal, and administrative obstacles differs substantially from that of a man. For example, while the presence of armed soldiers at checkpoints renders Palestinian male authority and their role as protectors of women obsolete, these same soldiers present a whole range of different problems for women. In their encounter with Israeli soldiers, women are in many ways far more vulnerable than men. In this arena, without family protection, a woman faces not only the uncertainty of safe passage; the possibility of delays moving from one area to another; and the humiliation that accompanies intrusive body searches and detainment, but also the risk of compromise to her reputation. As a woman's reputation is intrinsically linked to family honor, what happens to a Palestinian woman when she encounters the apparatus of occupation during, for example, searches at checkpoints can have devastating consequences on her autonomy, mobility, aspirations for education, and work. This is not so for men whose reputation is not affected in the same gendered way. In addition, the application process to obtain permits and the feats of getting goods to markets, of finding employment, of visiting family, and of accessing services that fall outside the boundaries of home all pose additional challenges for women that stem from the prevalent culture of gender relations but that are exacerbated by the restrictions. These themes are explored further in subsequent chapters.

# MAP 2: GAZA STRIP: ACCESS TO RESTRICTED AREAS


 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
**Gaza Strip: Access to Restricted Areas** June 2009





## The Impact of Movement and Access Restrictions on the Economy and Welfare

**Movement and access restrictions have defined Palestinian economic and social well-being for two decades, and dramatically so since 2000.** Given their intensity, comprehensiveness, and duration, the physical, legal, and administrative dimensions of movement and access restrictions have now intruded into the lives of all Palestinians: consumers, producers, farmers, traders, workers, government servants, teachers, students, doctors, medical patients, and young and old alike. Even the most basic economic activities, such as local trade and home-based informal sector production, have been curtailed because of lack of demand in the prevailing recessionary environment and the inability to reach markets. Social activities such as access to cultural events and visiting relatives have also been affected.

**Palestinians have lost jobs and income from the decline of employment in Israel.** Historically, the high demand for Palestinian labor in Israel accounted for two-fifths of total Palestinian employment by 1987. After 2005, when Israel removed its settlements from Gaza and tightened its closure regime, the loss of access to the Israeli labor market translated into an average daily loss of 0.17 percent of GDP in lost wages.

**Restrictions on the movement of goods have crippled private sector activity.** Supplies of imported inputs and spare parts are now unreliable, and restrictions at border crossings and internal checkpoints delay the delivery of finished products. For farmers, delays mean perished goods, while all producers who cannot reach markets in a timely manner face canceled orders. The business climate is further constrained by weak legal and regulatory frameworks, limited access to credit, and uncertainty regarding macroeconomic and trade policies. Combined, these factors present insurmountable obstacles to the development of the nascent Palestinian private sector including sustainable export-oriented industrial capacity.

**As the movement and access system has become increasingly entrenched, GDP per capita has steadily but rapidly declined from its peak in 1999 to below its post-Oslo start value.** By 2002, real per capita income had fallen to two-thirds its 1999 level. Despite improvements during 2003–05, real per capita income fell to US\$1,020 (constant 1997 terms) in 2008.

**The observed spikes in unemployment after 2000 had knock-on effects for the domestic Palestinian economy through lower average wages.** Palestinian wages have declined in real terms since 2000, reflecting the loss of better-paid jobs in Israel, where wages are on average 75 percent higher than those paid in the domestic Palestinian economy.

**As unemployment has risen and real wages have decreased, so poverty has climbed; in the case of Gaza it has soared.** In 1998, 12 percent of the Palestinian population was living below the poverty line of US\$2.1 per day; by 2005 the figure had grown to nearly 20

percent.<sup>46</sup> Before the second intifada, the poverty rate in the Gaza Strip was 33 percent, slightly double the rate in the West Bank. By the end of 2007, the increasing isolation of Gaza, the economic blockade, and the collapse of its industry and public sector led to soaring levels of unemployment and resulted in 52 percent of the Gazan population living in poverty, nearly three times the rate in the West Bank.<sup>47</sup> The number of those living in deep poverty in Gaza also increased from 22 percent in 1998 to 35 percent in 2006.<sup>48</sup> These rates reflect actual consumption; if remittances and food aid are excluded and poverty is based only on household income, the poverty rate in Gaza and the West Bank would soar to 79 percent and 46 percent, respectively, while deep poverty rates would increase to 34 percent and 70 percent.<sup>49</sup> In effect, to survive people have had no choice but to become aid dependent. Even the majority of government salaries are supported by foreign aid.

**The Palestinian Authority does have a comprehensive system for providing safety nets to the most vulnerable through the Ministries of Social Affairs, Martyrs and Detainees.** UNRWA also provides a social safety net program, as do other UN agencies and international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs).

**Post-second intifada, the increasing entrenchment of movement and access restrictions, the decline in the economy, the unavailability of job opportunities and decent wages, along with a corresponding rise in poverty has meant a shift toward welfare.** With sharply lower incomes, household savings have quickly become depleted. At the same time, outbursts of conflict including the Israeli incursions into the West Bank in 2002 and land destroyed to make way for the barrier and settlements, resulted in damaged or destroyed family assets. Debt has grown. Public sector employees, even those in the lowest occupational echelons, became relatively better off than the families of unemployed laborers in Israel, whereas before 2000 families whose single breadwinner had regular employment in Israel had higher-than-average household income, easily meeting basic consumption needs. Those depending on local employment, by contrast, had lower welfare levels, given that wages in both the public and local private sector averaged just over half of those in Israel.<sup>50</sup>

**By 2003, over half a million Palestinians in what was a formerly middle-income economy were fully dependent on food aid.** Per capita food consumption declined by 30 percent from 2001 to 2003, and the incidence of severe malnutrition reported in Gaza by John Hopkins University was similar to that in poorer Sub-Saharan countries.<sup>51</sup> Five years later, in 2008, more than 80 percent of Gaza's population were dependent on aid, and Palestinians as a whole became the largest recipients of aid in the world.<sup>52</sup>



Table 1: Poverty Rates and Demographic Data in the West Bank and Gaza

	West Bank		Gaza Strip	
	1998	Latest Year	1998	Latest Year
<b>Poverty Incidence</b>	14.5%	19.1% (2007)	33%	51.8% (2007)
<b>Deep Poverty</b>	8.4%	9.7% (2007)	21.6%	35% (2007)
<b>Unemployment</b>	11.50%	19% (2008)	20.9%	40.6% (2008)
<b>Literacy rate</b>		93.9% (2008)		94.4% (2008)
<b>Fertility rate</b>		4.2 (2006)		5.4 (2006)
<b>Population (millions)</b>		2.5 (2007)		1.5 (2007)

Source: PCBS various years.

## Conclusion

In addition to laying out the scope of the study, this chapter has highlighted how the prevalent culture of gender relations in the Palestinian Territory ascribes particular roles to men and women, placing men in a dominant role in the public sphere and placing a much greater responsibility on women for managing the domestic sphere, nurturing and caring for the family. Although in reality many constellations of gender relations exist, women’s role in Palestinian society is secondary to men’s in several key areas, namely, in the face of the law, in terms of political representation and in the workplace, despite their near parity in education attainment. The chapter also traces the evolution of the apparatus of movement and access restrictions that has grown in response to occupation and violence since 1967. The chapter points out that the apparatus as it stands today is not gender neutral. It argues that while restrictions strip Palestinian men of their role as protector, they also increase women’s vulnerability and expose them to forms of humiliation that potentially undermine their reputation and, in turn, their family honor—for which they are the main bearers of responsibility. This is not so for Palestinian men whose reputation and mobility is not affected in the same gendered way. The chapter ends by describing the impact of movement and access restrictions on the Palestinian economy and welfare, while the next section explores its impact on the labor market.

# CHAPTER II: THE MANY FACES OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA



Photo by: Atef Safadi



*This chapter looks at how movement and access restrictions and their consequent economic impacts have affected women's economic participation. More specifically, the chapter looks at how women's economic participation has evolved in the 2000–07 period by examining the various dimensions of this participation—formal and informal—as well as the implications of the crisis on the gendered labor market. As the chapter will show, the evolution of female labor force participation in this decade is intimately linked to the mobility and access restrictions prevalent since the outbreak of the second intifada. These restrictions have magnified the already distorted nature of the Palestinian economy, creating implications for the labor market for many years to come.*

### Box 1: A Brief Note on Labor Market Data in WBG

**The capacity to analyze Palestinian labor market trends depends on the quality of available data.** The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) undertakes regular labor force surveys (LFS) consistent with International Labour Organization (ILO) methodology that provide time-series data on key labor market indicators such as labor force status, sector and occupation of work, age and education characteristics, and wage levels. The regular surveys cover a large sample, generating extensive household-level data that enable regression analysis. Because PCBS only launched its surveys in 1995, data comparisons with earlier periods are not possible.

**Because of the unique nature of the West Bank and Gaza economy, standard labor force definitions may miss relevant aspects of behavior by economic agents both inside and outside the formal economy.** Being “employed” does not always translate into a regular salary, since many workers are private sector contractors who may not have active contracts. Even public sector employees are sometimes deprived of paychecks during fiscal crises. Unemployment rates are mitigated by temporary employment programs, but participants in these programs typically return to unemployed status. Despite meeting the correct definition of “employment,” these examples overstate full employment rates. Unemployment data excludes workers engaged in unpaid family labor or seasonal agriculture to make up for household income. Surveys account for underemployment, but do not fully capture discouraged workers who exited the labor force.

**Additional factors that contribute to underestimating LFP are linked to gender.** In most developing economies, women may misrepresent or misidentify their activities as falling outside the formal definition of work because they are unpaid or informal, which is why time-use surveys are particularly helpful in capturing these effects. Since time-use surveys are unavailable for the West Bank and Gaza, the analysis must make do with ILO-consistent definitions used in the LFS, and acknowledge the potential for measurement error.



The backdrop for this analysis remains the very low rate of female labor force participation (LFP) in the West Bank and Gaza, which stands in sharp contrast to women's educational achievements in the last decades. The rich economic literature available on this topic attributes this situation to a mix of political, economic, and social factors. The high fertility rate and young age at marriage have been singled out as key factors behind this phenomenon.<sup>53</sup> Another argument that has been put forward is that higher disposable incomes earned from Israel and Arab countries allowed families to sustain themselves based on a one-breadwinner model, which mostly excludes women.<sup>54</sup> The low rates have also been attributed to demand-side factors such as the weakness of the manufacturing sector, the high unemployment rates for men, and the family-based nature of the agricultural sector, which provides employment only to women born into agrarian households.<sup>55</sup> The physical barriers and separation imposed by Israel beginning in 1967, escalated by movement and access restrictions under the current regime, contributed to the structural limitations of the economy, in turn negatively affecting women's entry into the labor force.

The period since 2000 has seen the expansion of women's economic activities. Women, young and old, educated and uneducated, married and single, have stepped in to meet economic needs as sons, fathers, and husbands have lost jobs. From searching for public sector jobs to selling excess agricultural produce on the market, Palestinian women have devised countless strategies to survive the current economic predicament, combining their productive and reproductive roles. As the qualitative work conducted during the course of this study revealed, women have not always entered the workplace out of choice but rather out of desperation; few Palestinians have suffered more economic hardship than in these times. The breadth of Palestinian women's economic contribution is often underestimated, as is illustrated by women's active role in the care economy and the hidden work in which they engage that is not recorded. While these strategies are not captured in the official data (see box 1 for a discussion on the labor market data in the West Bank and Gaza), they have surfaced in in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted throughout the West Bank and Gaza.



## Labor Market Trends in the West Bank and Gaza

**Labor force participation in West Bank and Gaza is generally low and varies considerably over time due to the unstable political situation.** Labor force participation in the West Bank and Gaza is characterized by three main features: low crude participation rates, low female labor force participation, and large variability over time due to the unstable political situation stemming from the Israeli occupation.<sup>56</sup> The crude participation rate of 21 percent—one of the lowest in the world—can be explained in large measure by the persistently high fertility rate and resulting population age structure skewed toward those under age 15 and thus excluded from the labor force.

**At 16 percent, female labor force participation in the West Bank and Gaza is among the lowest in the world.** Participation rates among men, by contrast, currently average 67 percent, as shown in table 2. Even for the Middle East and North Africa Region, which has the world's lowest female LFP average, the West Bank and Gaza stands out as having one of the lowest rates in the region, on par with Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The rate is slightly higher in the West Bank than Gaza for both men and women. Participation rates of for women and men in Gaza stand at 12 percent and 63.2 percent, compared to 18.2 percent and 68 percent in the West Bank, respectively.<sup>57</sup> This gender disparity stands in sharp contrast to the progress achieved by women in terms of gender parity in education.

Table 2: Labor Force Participation Rates, by Gender

Year	Female Labor Force Participation Rates in West Bank and Gaza	Male Labor Force Participation Rates in West Bank and Gaza
1995	11.2	66.9
2002	10.4	65.5
2008	16.0	66.3

Source: PCBS 1997 and 2008.

**Within the formal economy, women's economic participation is highly segmented and employment opportunities are restricted to a narrow range of fields.** This pattern is attributed to the structure of the Palestinian economy, which lacks a labor-intensive manufacturing sector and which—until the crisis—relied extensively on low-skill jobs for men in Israel. Because women were effectively excluded from these job opportunities, they tended either to remain outside the formal labor force to look after the home and sometimes engage in home-based informal production, or to seek “good” jobs in the public sector, requiring higher levels of education. This led to considerable segmentation in the labor market along geographical, skill, and gender lines.<sup>58</sup>

Table 3: Workers in West Bank and Gaza Economic Sectors, by Gender

Economic Activity	Share of Employed Females (%)	Share of Employed Males (%)
Agriculture, Hunting, and Fishing	34.3	12.0
Services and Other Branches	48.7	32.6
Mining, Quarrying, and Manufacturing	8.5	13.3
Construction	0.2	13.5
Commerce, Hotels, and Restaurants	7.4	21.8
Transportation, Storage, and Communications	0.9	6.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: PCBS 2006 Labor Force Survey Annual Report.

**This segmentation has translated into women's concentration within two main occupations, one at the top end of the scale – professionals, technical staff, and clerks—and the other toward the lower end of the scale—namely, skilled agriculture.** As seen in table 3, these two categories account for 83 percent of women in the labor force, whereas males are much more evenly distributed across sectors. Women in the services sector, which expanded extensively after the establishment of the PNA in 1994, are highly represented in categories such as teachers, nurses, administrative assistants, and secretaries. Being in nongrowth areas of the economy, these sectors are unable to absorb new female labor market entrants—leading to a persistently high rate of female unemployment over the last years.

**In terms of the education level required within these occupations, women fall within two extremes.** The service sector is characterized by women with a high degree of education, while women in agriculture have little or no education. The regression analysis undertaken for this study shows that a female who has completed a bachelor's or a master's degree has the greatest odds of participating, followed by women with no education. Women with 10-12 years of school have the lowest odds of participation. These results apply to both the West Bank and Gaza. This trend is on the increase, with the likelihood of a woman with a postgraduate degree joining the labor market having increased from 18 to 37 times that of a woman with a high school education

**While service sector jobs are associated with a degree of stability, women tend to hold lower-status jobs in the service sector.** There are limited numbers of women doctors, managers, school principals, and ministry officials, implying a degree of vertical segregation.<sup>59</sup> Women are overwhelmingly dominant in early childhood education, representing over 90 percent of the teaching staff, but the proportion of women declines significantly at higher



levels of education. Neither preschool nor primary school teaching is perceived as a high-skill or status occupation—reflected in their very low salary scales—in contrast to the status and compensation levels associated with teaching positions at higher levels of education. More than 64 percent of professional women are teachers, compared to only 32 percent of professional men.

**Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Employed Persons Ages 15 Years and Above in the West Bank and Gaza, by Economic Activity, Sex, and Region (ILO Standards), April–June 2008**

Economic Activity and Sex	Region		
	Gaza	West Bank	Palestinian Territory
<b>Both Sexes</b>			
Agriculture, fishing, and forestry	12.3	15.7	14.9
Mining, quarrying, and manufacturing	4.6	14.5	12.1
Construction	0.4	14.1	10.8
Commerce, restaurants, and hotels	17.0	20.6	19.8
Transportation, storage, and communication	4.3	4.2	4.2
Services and other branches	61.4	30.9	38.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Males</b>			
Agriculture, fishing, and forestry	9.2	11.6	11.0
Mining, quarrying, and manufacturing	5.2	15.4	12.9
Construction	0.4	17.7	13.4
Commerce, restaurants, and hotels	19.5	24.0	22.9
Transportation, storage, and communication	5.2	5.1	5.1
Services and other branches	60.5	26.2	34.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Females</b>			
Agriculture, fishing, and forestry	28.0	31.3	30.7
Mining, quarrying, and manufacturing	1.1	11.1	9.2
Construction	-	0.5	0.4
Commerce, restaurants, and hotels	3.7	7.9	7.1
Transportation, storage, and communication	-	0.6	0.5
Services and other branches	67.2	48.6	52.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: PCBS 2008.

**Even when women and men are doing similar work at all status levels and sectors of employment, women suffer from wage discrimination.** Pay differentials exist between Palestinian males and females, the exception being the agricultural sector, where women are paid more than men. Female legislators and managers earn the equivalent of males employed in crafts and related trades, while men in elementary occupations earn similar wages as female professionals. With respect to education, semiskilled or unskilled men receive pay equivalent to women with postgraduate education.<sup>60</sup> The notion of "family income" in which it is assumed that female wages only supplement that of a male breadwinner appears to be a common assumption that deflates women's wages throughout the economy, and also shows up in policies excluding female employees from health insurance and family benefits.

**After services, agriculture is the second largest employer of women.**<sup>61</sup> The agriculture sector has seen a gradual decline in prominence over the past 30 years as manufacturing, construction and service activities have increased in importance.<sup>62</sup> Over the years, men have been moving out of local agriculture into other sectors (mostly wage labor in Israel) as is attested by the decline in the male work force working in agriculture, from 32 percent in the early 1970s to 12 percent in 2008. Women have also been moving out of agriculture, but this decrease has been slower. In 1970, 57 percent of women in the labor force were involved in agriculture, dropping to 30 percent by 1989, and inching up to 30.7 percent in 2008. As rural males became integrated into the Israeli labor market, rural females remained working on the family farm, often taking over the agricultural tasks, many of which became redefined as extensions of housework.<sup>63</sup> Though women constitute a substantial proportion of the agricultural labor force, they are largely unpaid and unrecognized.<sup>64</sup>

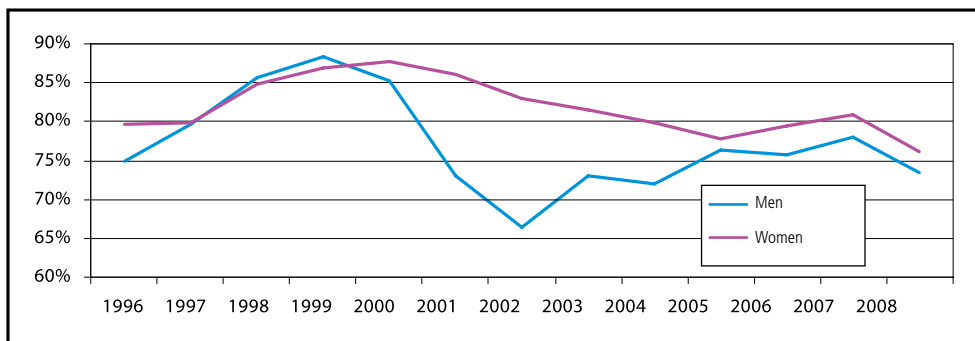


## Women’s Economic Participation in the Aftermath of the Second Intifada

**The economic crisis further brought to light the tightness of the labor market for women.** To make up for the losses that their families encountered as a result of Israeli restrictions, many women had to remain in, return to, or enter the labor market. This finding is supported by the results of West Bank fieldwork where a number of women noted that the loss of income sources within their families pushed them to search for jobs. Many of these women found themselves not only competing with other women for limited jobs, but also contending with a surge in males looking for employment.

**Although women workers were not directly affected by Israeli job losses, female employment was negatively impacted by spillover effects into the local economy.**<sup>65</sup> Between 2000 and 2002, the impact of movement and access restrictions led to a rapid reduction in labor force participation, and massive numbers of Palestinian men were driven out of the labor force. In 2000-2001, 47,000 jobs were lost in Israel, followed by a further 20,000 in 2002. By 2007, employment in Israel and the settlements had fallen to around 13 percent of those employed in the West Bank (62,000 workers), but no workers from Gaza. As illustrated in figure 2, men’s employment rates declined more sharply than women’s beginning in 2001, but male employment also recovered more quickly in 2003 and beyond. Women’s employment rates showed a steady decline through 2005, trending upward through 2007. In 2008, the dire economic conditions led to concurrent exit from the labor force, higher unemployment, and lower employment for both men and women.

Figure 2: Employment Rates for Men and Women in the West Bank and Gaza (%)



Source: PCBS, Labor Force Survey (various years).

**Women’s labor supply suffered fluctuations, but women slightly increased their participation in the labor market as economic conditions deteriorated.** The regression analysis shows that women in the West Bank experienced an important decline in their odds of participation during the height of Israeli restrictions in 2001–2002 as compared to 1999. However, their odds of participation increased in the following years to just surpass

the prevailing odds in 1999. The analysis suggests that by year 2007, their likelihood of participation was 1.18 times that which prevailed in year 1999. This is consistent with the data, which shows that in 2008, female labor force participation for the West Bank and Gaza was at 16 percent, almost 6 percent higher than in 2002. It is also consistent with the trend articulated through the focus group discussions that many women are taking up or staying in low-paying jobs to generate any possible income to meet household needs.

**The slight increase in women's labor force participation is mainly concentrated in the service and agricultural sectors.** In this crisis context, increasing numbers of women are seeking jobs in the service sector while those within the sector are desperately holding on to their jobs. Amid high unemployment and increasing poverty, women who entered the labor market a decade ago are choosing not to leave. This is consistent with the regression finding that age improves a woman's odds of participation and the longer duration of unemployment amongst those who choose to enter the labor market. In the words of a woman in the West Bank:

*"I am a teacher; I have four children and am expecting my fifth child. Before, I would have thought of quitting my work to take care of my children, but after my husband lost his work in Israel, I would not contemplate the idea. However, my husband has been helping me a lot around the house. He takes care of the children and sometimes cooks. Sometimes he shouts and screams, but I know he is just frustrated and needs to assert that he is the head of the household, so I let him."*

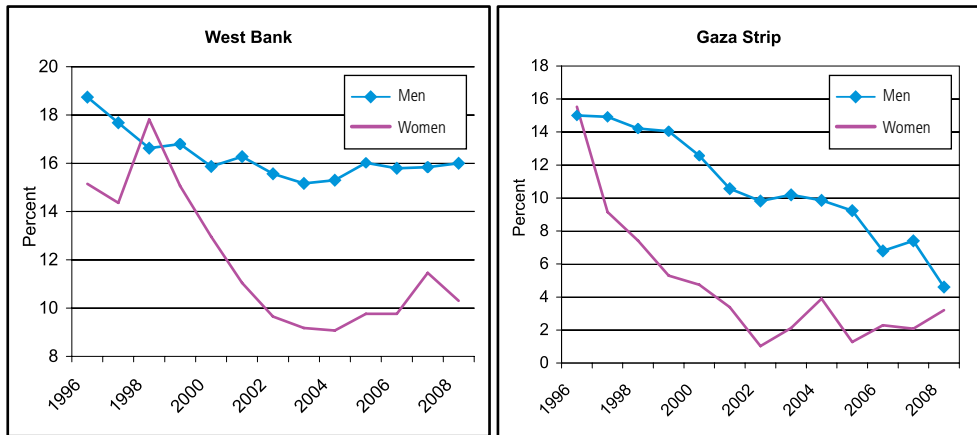
**Increasing numbers of women are being absorbed into agriculture.** Evidence from labor force surveys as well as the focus groups suggests that women, and, to a lesser degree, men are increasingly engaged in agriculture, including men displaced from jobs in other sectors; women and men displaced from more extensive fields inaccessible under the closure regime and thus limited to the small plot surrounding their homes; and women entering the labor force or shifting from informal sector/home-based production. Women's participation in agriculture in the West Bank grew from 30 percent to 35 percent of the female labor force between 2000 and 2007. During this period, three times as many women were engaged in agriculture as men—an average of 33 percent of the female labor force and only 12 percent of the male labor force. This suggests that agricultural activity was a main area through which women sought to generate family income. This is consistent with the regression analysis, which indicates that women living in the northern region of the West Bank have the highest odds of participating in the labor force due to the active agricultural sector.

**The decline in the share of manufacturing employment, the third largest employer of women, further magnified women's limited labor market choices.** Manufacturing, which accounted for 15 percent of women's employment in 1996, plummeted to 2 percent in 2007. The share of manufacturing in men's employment declined from 15 percent in 1996 to 7 percent in 2007.<sup>66</sup> The drop has been particularly acute for women in Gaza (see figure



3). Although the decline in manufacturing goes back to 1996 as a consequence of the restructuring of the Israeli manufacturing industry that relied for a while on subcontracting activities with women in Gaza, this sector has nevertheless experienced an important decline since 2000. The fall in the share of manufacturing employment both in the West Bank and Gaza is indicative of the decline of the private sector as a whole, the rise in uncertainty as a result of movement and access restrictions, as well as the sharp rise in transaction cost.

Figure 3: Share of Employment in the Manufacturing Sector, 1996-2007



Source: PCBS, Labor Force Survey (various years).

**For younger women, it is becoming more difficult to find 'good' jobs . . .** The regression analysis suggests that the odds of younger women finding jobs have been decreasing.<sup>67</sup> The likelihood of a woman aged between 15 and 24 participating in the labor market declined from 19 percent in 1996-2000, to 16 percent in 2001-2002, to 14 percent in 2003-2007. Part of this could be attributed to the fact that single women seeking work are still expected to work in "good" jobs.<sup>68</sup> Street traders, domestic servants, or any other forms of work through which a woman needs to interact with a large undefined public or work within a very personal setting are not acceptable for younger women. The availability of "good" jobs is constrained by the slow growth of the formal economy and the already bloated public sector. Since "socially" acceptable jobs have become so difficult to find, single women have fewer chances of joining the labor market. The pursuit of higher education is one way to secure greater access to socially accepted jobs, which is why many of the families interviewed in the focus groups expressed a preference for their male rather than female children to drop out of schools and universities, a point that will be illustrated in chapter 4.

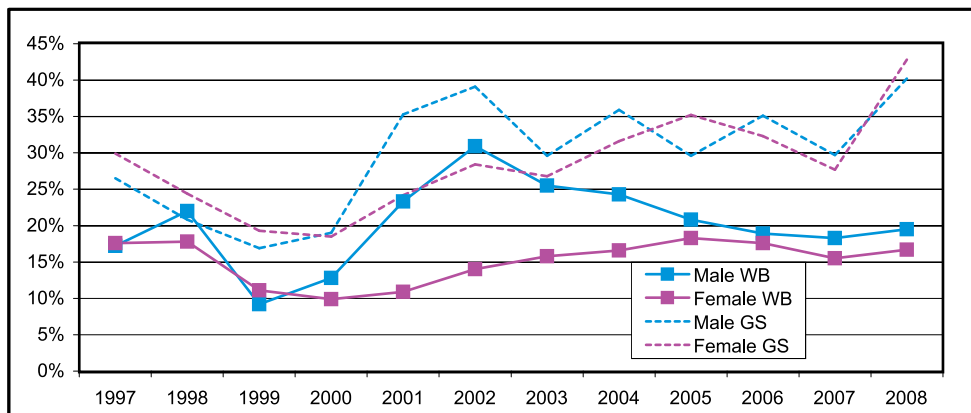
**. . . while the odds of married women participating in the labor force seem to be increasing over time.** In the West Bank and Gaza, married women are less likely to participate in the labor force than single, divorced, or widowed women, but this trend is changing. According to the regression analysis, prior to the intifada, the odds of a single woman participating in



the labor market were 2.6 times that of a married woman. Since the intifada, these odds have declined to 2 times and 1.8 times those of a married woman. Fieldwork indicates that mobility plays a role in this shift, with married middle-aged women having less difficulty in moving around and taking on menial jobs. This increase in mobility remains within the confines of villages, camps, and towns, as it is still considered not entirely appropriate for a woman to move from one area to another in search of economic opportunities.

**The lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector may narrow the ability of new generations of women to enter the formal labor force as first-timers.**<sup>69</sup> Between 1996 and 2000, male and female unemployment rates were steadily decreasing, a trend that was disrupted with the outbreak of the intifada (figure 4). Overnight, between 2000 and 2001 the number of the unemployed jumped from 99,000 to 170,000 workers—a 70 percent rise. Despite the sudden rise in male unemployment following Israeli violence and restrictions in years 2001–2002, these rates started to level off in 2003. By 2007, male unemployment rates were similar to their levels in 1996. In contrast, for women, unemployment rates rose in 2000 and have continued to rise until year 2007.

Figure 4: Unemployment Rates for Men and Women in the West Bank and Gaza (%)



Source: PCBS, Labor Force Survey, (various years).

This suggests that women are facing difficulties in attaining employment; they not only have to compete with a large pool of men, but they also have to contend with the impact of movement and access restrictions and consequent cultural biases and constraints, as is articulated by a female chief executive officer (CEO) in the West Bank:



*"If you are an employer and you have a choice between employing a male or female graduate—you'll take the male. If both have to travel through a checkpoint to get to your office—you are better off taking the man. His family won't mind him staying after hours to finish work, but for the woman—staying late, returning home through the checkpoint, her family won't accept it. They'll create problems. She'll have to leave on time, if not before time. Businesses cannot operate unless their employees are flexible."*

These biases also reinforce the horizontal segmentation that prevails, affecting women's odds of remaining in the workforce:

*"Women graduates who are getting employed are not entering at the same level as men. They enter as secretaries. A typical scenario is an IT company employing a female graduate as a secretary, but in effect she's doing IT work but at a fraction of the cost. She will get a salary of NIS 1,500–2,000. In the first year she'll marry and then have a baby because of cultural pressures. Then she'll calculate that she'll have to pay a baby minder NIS 500 so she'll drop out of work."*

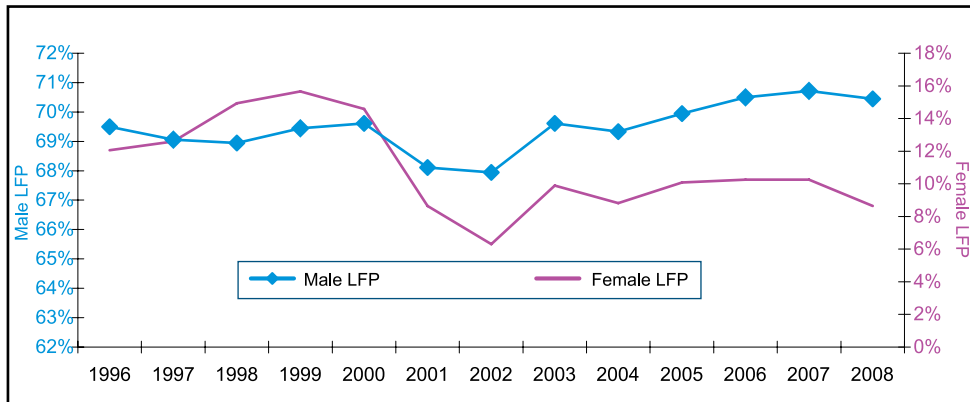
Among those who choose to enter the labor market, women have to contend with the longer duration of unemployment. According to the ILO,<sup>70</sup> despite the similar levels of unemployment among females and males, females' unemployment duration is four times that of males, particularly for women with 13 or more years of education. Closures reinforced this trend, as economic hardship resulted in less turnover; married women who might have withdrawn from the labor market under normal conditions are electing to remain in their jobs, meaning fewer opportunities for younger women in general, the highly educated in particular.

**Women who entered the labor market found jobs that were characterized by low pay and lack of protection.** Women's increased mobility and their venturing out in search of work or help do not reflect an improvement in their economic conditions. Rather, they represent a desperate measure to survive, and add to a woman's burden within her own family. The kind of work engaged in includes employment as domestic cleaners, in nurseries or small-scale textile manufacturing shops, jobs that are usually poorly remunerated. As chapter 4 will show, women perceive it as less humiliating for them to take up these low paying jobs. Women's flocking to agriculture may also indicate that women are being squeezed out of waged jobs and into unpaid work.<sup>71</sup>

**While female labor force participation caught up to and slightly surpassed pre-crisis levels, that of men did not.** The observed trend in male participation is directly correlated with closures, showing a precipitous fall in 2000 and a further decline in 2001, followed by some rebound, as the scale of military violence subsided and Palestinians started to devise

coping mechanisms (figure 5). But male participation rates did not recover to pre-crisis levels, and remain depressed today. Micro level analysis of the determinants of labor supply decisions by men and women confirm these observed trends (see annex 5 for details of the regression specifications and results). In particular, men in Gaza have been facing huge obstacles in their attempts to join the labor force because of the almost total collapse of the Gazan industrial and private sector since June 2007.

Figure 5: Male and Female Labor Force Participation



Source: PCBS 2008.

**The economic crisis also brought to light the distorted nature of male labor force participation in the West Bank and Gaza.**<sup>72</sup> Prior to 1993, Palestinian employment in Israel, predominantly male, absorbed about two-fifths of the employed work force in Gaza and nearly a third of employment in the West Bank.<sup>73</sup> In the post-Oslo period, labor flows to Israel fluctuated in relation to the intensity of the closures during the mid-1990s, peaking in 1999 at 135,000 daily commuters, representing 16 percent of Gaza's working population and 26 percent of West Bank employment. This historical reliance on Israeli jobs—either within Israel or in Israeli settlements—stemmed from the higher wages offered in the Israeli market, even for unskilled jobs. Consequently, labor supply decisions were to a large extent driven by the presence of better-paying jobs on Israeli construction sites and in a variety of service sector jobs.

**The shrinking of the Israeli market for Palestinian men was accompanied by a contraction in the share of employment in the productive sectors in the West Bank and Gaza.** The share of employment in the productive sectors—manufacturing and construction—has declined dramatically, a trend evidenced since 1996 but that has accelerated since 2000. Employment in the construction sector fell sharply after 2000, with workers from

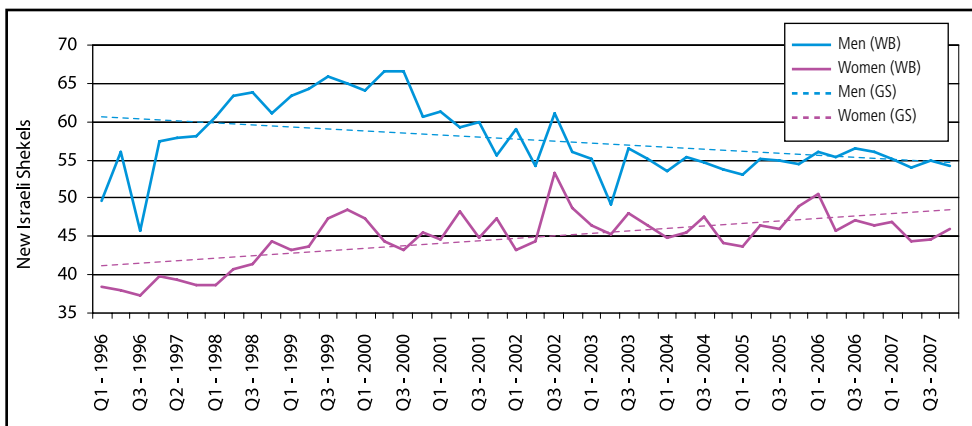


Gaza relatively more affected than those in the West Bank as a result of movement and access restrictions. In 1999, 24 percent of Palestinians from the West Bank worked in the construction sector; by 2008 this figure had fallen to 14 percent. In Gaza, the decline was much more drastic, with the share falling to less than 1 percent by 2008. This drop, affecting both men and women, but primarily men, is indicative of the obstacles facing the Palestinian private sector—especially the uncertainty and high transactions costs associated with closures—and the resulting contraction of economic activity.

**This left many Palestinian men struggling to enter into productive activities.** The regression analysis shows that by 2007, a man in the West Bank had only a 77 percent likelihood of participation compared to year 1999. In Gaza in particular, men have been facing significant obstacles in their attempts to join the labor force. The closure of the Israeli labor market to Palestinian workers and the harsh Israeli measures against the population in Gaza led to the collapse of the local economy and introduced a widespread sense of hopelessness that affects the overall propensity of men to join the labor force.

**Men also saw their average real daily wages decline, at the same time as women's wages were rising faster than inflation.** This trend towards convergence in male and female wages (as shown in figure 6) is driven to a large degree by the loss of well-remunerated male employment in Israel, and the fact that women's employment is concentrated in government and aid organizations with a high degree of job stability and inflation-adjusted wages.<sup>74</sup> The loss of jobs in the construction sector had a tremendous effect on incomes, as construction wages are relatively high because of the influence of higher Israeli base wages. On average, daily wages for Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements are about two-thirds higher than those earned in the West Bank and Gaza. This translated into a decline in men's real wages of minus 15 percent and minus 19 percent for the West Bank and Gaza, respectively, between 2000 and 2007. Women's real wages, on the other hand, increased by 14 percent and 22 percent in the West Bank and Gaza, respectively, between 1996 and 2007.

Figure 6: Average Real Daily Wages for Women and Men in the West Bank and Gaza



Source: PCBS, Labor Force Survey (various years).

**The severity of the movement and access restrictions in the West Bank have further exacerbated men's already dim chances of participating in the labor force.** Israeli restrictions have had a grave and long-term impact on labor market prospects for men in the West Bank. To avoid the high uncertainty, harassment, and delays encountered at checkpoints, men are focusing their search for work closer to home. As noted by men interviewed in the focus group discussions, the localization of economic activities has severely limited men's search terrain and negatively impacted their overall prospects for entering the labor force. Men from refugee camps who lost their jobs in Israel complained about spending most of their time idle, except for occasional piecemeal work offered to them by neighbors or by job creation programs. Men in the camps spoke about having become increasingly reliant on humanitarian aid from UNRWA and other charitable organizations. Rural men with small plots of land around their homes turned to planting crops and raising poultry or livestock, but this is insufficient to sustain their families. Males who own medium- to large-sized plots and who seriously attempted to cultivate their land complained about have been prevented from doing so by military incursions and violence by the Israeli army. Many are unable to reach their lands due to Israeli security reasons. As noted by a young man from Deheshieh refugee camp:

*"I feel totally besieged in the Bethlehem area. I do not attempt to cross checkpoints to seek work anymore because I would be humiliated and detained, particularly as I already have brothers in Israeli jails."*

Another man from Bel'een village in the Ramallah area noted:

*"I have applied for an immigration visa, not a visiting visa; this is because I am not working, and totally unable to find work. So I have decided to leave to study and work abroad. I have friends who migrated to the US and Dubai and they are working and doing well."*

**Discouraged, many men seem to be dropping out of the labor force.** The PCBS data does not allow for clear analysis of the discouraged worker effect, but the fieldwork has revealed a huge sense of hopelessness and apathy on the part of men, and the reliance and dependence of families on aid for survival. A number of men mentioned feeling ashamed of the reality that they are unable to provide for their families. Many men do not report the subsistence forms of work they get engaged in since it is considered shameful for a man to be involved in low productivity or low-earning economic activities. According to the PCBS data, the percentage of men staying outside the labor force has increased over time, particularly after 2001–2002. In 2007, nearly 60 percent of working age Palestinians neither participated in any type of recorded economic activity, paid or unpaid, nor were searching for work.<sup>75</sup> This is particularly true for Gaza, where both men and women are staying outside the labor force because of the desperate economic situation. The quote below serves to illustrate the situation:



## Checkpoints and Barriers:

Searching for Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza  
Gender Dimensions of Economic Collapse

*"I don't see any meaning in life. I finished my university education three years ago. I applied for tens of jobs and no one cares about me. I see my mother waiting for me to work and be the man of the family. I can't do anything for myself and for others. I am not doing anything now, just playing cards and watching TV. I have become very nervous with my mothers and sisters and they constantly try to avoid my anger."*

27-year-old unemployed graduate from Al Maghazi

**Young men in particular seem to be delaying their entry into the labor force.** The regression suggests that since 2000, more young men have been staying outside the labor force, with the odds of participation among 25–35 year old men declining. The focus group discussions revealed that many young men are deciding to continue with their education as many believe that it is the only means through which they can improve their chances of participation in the labor market or to migrate in search of better employment opportunities. More young men have been enrolling in higher education to improve their chances of competing in the local economy. This is consistent with the finding from the regression analysis that shows that men with no education are the most affected by Israeli violence and restrictions. In the period 1996–2000, the odds of participation of a man without education were 35 percent those of a man with 10–12 years of schooling. In 2001–2002, this figure declined to 28 percent of the odds of a man with high school education. In Zibda, a seam village that lost its land and access to work in Israel with the building of the separation wall, this trend was most tangibly enunciated by a focus group of housewives:

*"People of the village used to depend on work in Israel; now that they can't they are going into education even though the economic situation is so hard. Before the wall, all of the boys used to go work with their families in Israel, 70 percent of the boys wouldn't finish school. After the wall was built, we see more families educating their kids through university because there is no alternative. From 2000 the village started in the second intifada to care about education, not from love of learning but in order to guarantee an alternative job prospect."*

For many men, education is also their "ticket" out of the West Bank and Gaza. A man from Bel'een village in the West Bank noted:

*"I am a married man with children, yet if I wasn't, I would have acquired a better education and migrated. It is very difficult to have a normal life here, and many young men are now in education for this purpose only."*

## Participation in the Informal Economy<sup>76</sup>

**The economic crisis in the West Bank and Gaza has forced males and females to generate coping mechanisms and support their households through informal economic activities.**

Informal employment has traditionally been an opportunity for uneducated persons who are unable to enter the formal economy due to the drastic changes of the labor market, or for those who have completely lost their employment opportunities in the Israeli labor market, especially in the construction sector. Today, the informal sector has become the only option that is open for males, largely limited to the service sector and trade, which make up around 78 percent of informal economic activity. A 2003 survey conducted by PCBS on the informal sector revealed that 91.7 percent of informal establishments were male and only 8.3 percent female.<sup>77</sup> This is likely due to high unemployment among males, who through such activities produce alternative employment opportunities. These activities may also serve as a means to fight the idleness confronted by so many men; the survey findings indicate that 70 percent set up these establishments to create employment opportunities and only 12.6 percent to increase income.

**The majority of those working in the informal sector are middle-aged men and women, almost half of them between the ages of 30 and 49 with work experience ranging between 5 and 10 years.** The education profile of informal sector workers—only 22 percent of whom have more than 13 years of education—is below average, indicating that informal work is an opportunity for uneducated persons unable to access formal sector jobs. The data also show that women's participation in informal work tends to increase with age, in contrast





to men, suggesting that under the pressures of the economic crisis, women do not drop out of work but instead manage to combine their productive and reproductive activities<sup>78</sup>. This also explains the appeal of home-based production, which is poorly remunerated but allows some income generation while maintaining flexible working conditions for women. As the qualitative research in Gaza conducted for this study found, many of these women have only 6 to 9 years of education, are aged 45 and above, and are the head of household either because of the death of a husband or their chronic sickness. Most of them live in extended families with their married sons, where most sons are unemployed with the exception of a few who have one or two sons working as low-income earners in the national military or Hamas' executive forces. The same trend was confirmed by the in-depth interviews conducted by the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), where in the West Bank and Gaza, as a whole, most of the women in the informal economy who were interviewed or present in MAS's focus group discussions were unskilled, middle-aged, married women.

**Informal sector workers—the survey reveals—tend to be vulnerable, insecure, and in some cases even unrecognized as “workers.”** Enterprises in the informal sector are either family enterprises or other family members contribute to their establishment to help a member of the family. Most of the time, they depend on family members, particularly children, women, and the elderly, for cheap labor.<sup>79</sup> The 2003 PCBS informal sector survey—the most recent comprehensive data set available—found nearly 55,000 informal sector establishments employing 99,000 workers, 85 percent of whom were unpaid (owners and family members). About 20 percent were engaged in manufacturing activities, another 20 percent in services, and the remaining 60 percent in internal trade. Many face problems in terms of protection in the labor force, and working women are more vulnerable than men.<sup>80</sup> There is no labor inspection, no clarity on what legislation applies, and no special courts to deal with labor related cases.<sup>81</sup> As for trade unions, they do not function freely and their membership is almost exclusively male (91.6 percent).<sup>82</sup>

**Examining the PCBS labor force surveys from 2000 until 2007, we can identify four categories of employment that relate directly or indirectly to informality.** These categories fit the definition of informal employment, that is, work that lacks social protection and entitlements. The categories, laid out in table 5, are agricultural workers, the self employed, unpaid family workers, and workers in Israel (a number of workers from West Bank and Gaza who still work in Israel do not have permits, hence they are unprotected). The data reveals the gendered patterns of involvement within the informal sector and the broader impact of Israeli violence and movement restrictions on employment and the economy as a whole.



Table 5: Categories of Participation in the Informal Sector, by Gender 2000–07

		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>West Bank (WB)</b> Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	Male	9.3	8.8	10.7	11.0	12.6	11.4	12.9	11.7
	Female	29.8	27.1	27.2	31.0	33.8	34.5	37.0	35.0
<b>Gaza Strip (GS)</b> Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	Male	11.2	9.9	14.7	13.8	10.4	10.0	9.9	8.7
	Female	48.4	21.7	33.0	43.1	33.5	24.2	20.4	39.5
<b>WB</b> Self employed	Male	19.6	22.7	31.6	33.1	32.3	30.8	30.2	28.3
	Female	13.7	9.4	10.8	13.1	11.4	13.7	14.4	14.4
<b>GS</b> Self employed	Male	18.1	21.4	26.8	27.0	24.6	24.8	21.3	23.6
	Female	11.5	5.9	3.4	7.0	6.1	4.3	4.6	6.9
<b>WB</b> Unpaid family workers	Male	5.6	6.3	6.7	7.1	6.8	6.2	7.3	6.8
	Female	30.3	26.8	27.8	29.1	31.9	31.9	33.4	33.0
<b>GS</b> Unpaid family workers	Male	4.5	5.2	6.4	6.8	5.5	5.5	4.9	7.4
	Female	43.8	26.4	34.5	44.7	35.3	26.3	21.9	42.8
<b>WB</b> Working in Israel	Male	26.1	21.0	15.9	15.0	14.1	16.6	16.6	16.3
	Female	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.3	1.6	1.5	0.9	1.3
<b>GS</b> Working in Israel	Male	14.8	2.1	2.8	3.6	1.3	0.5	0.1	0.0
	Female	0.3	0.1	0.1	/	/	/	/	/

Source: PCBS Labor force surveys covering the period 2000–07.

**Within the ongoing crisis environment, women turned to a range of informal activities, paid and unpaid.** As the case study in box 2 below shows, women broadened their involvement in a range of informal activities, from petty trading in Gaza, to grocery shop keeping, sewing, food production, and agriculture and livestock production. One of the coping mechanisms that women took up in this period was to return to agriculture as a main avenue for employment, with the possibility of earning income on excess produce, even though this work was mostly unpaid. Women's participation in agriculture in the West



Bank grew from 30 percent to 35 percent of female workers between 2000 and 2007, when three times as many working women were engaged in agriculture as males—an average of 33 percent of female workers and only 12 percent of male workers. This suggests that agricultural activity was a main area through which women sought to generate family income. The situation was different in Gaza, where it decreased from 48 percent to 39 percent of females, attesting to the impact of the dramatic loss of access to Gaza's main agricultural areas, which were turned into Israeli military "buffer zones." Male rates in Gaza also declined but remained steady in the West Bank.

**Self-employment has become a coping mechanism for both men and women, and one of the main venues of job creation for men.** To substitute for lost employment opportunities in the formal labor market, men flocked toward self-employment, much more so than women. PCBS labor force survey data show that the share of self-employment has risen markedly since 2000, when 18–20 percent of male workers were self-employed. By 2007, 28 percent of working men from the West Bank and 24 percent from the Gaza Strip were self-employed. For women, the share of self-employment in the West Bank declined in the first stage of the crisis, from 13.7 percent in 2000 to 10.8 percent in 2002, but by 2007 had increased to 14.4 percent. For Gazan women, there was a very marked decline in self-employment, from 11 percent in 2000 to only 3 percent in 2002. The pace of female self-employment picked up again in 2003 and has fluctuated since then, reaching 6.9 percent in 2007. This indicates that—similar to the West Bank—more and more women found activities to help support their families in the absence of wages from unemployed male family members, as reflected in women's slight rise in labor force participation rates.

**Many informal activities benefited from microcredit schemes, with mixed results.** Sponsored by a variety of donors and local and international organizations, microcredit schemes are targeted to help Palestinian communities—and women in particular—alleviate poverty and cope with the crisis by creating employment. Many women took loans from credit institutions and programs in order to create home gardens and poultry farms, among other projects. The Palestinian Network for Small and Microfinance, an umbrella group of credit associations, had outstanding credits of US\$20 million at the end of 2000 that grew to US\$42 million by September 2006. Many women interviewed in the West Bank for the purpose of this study took loans at the urging of husbands, who could not get access themselves due to the women-only policy of many credit programs. In some cases, such as for agricultural loans, women took loans to create a small project while men organized the marketing—suggesting that women may not have had control over income, although the loans were in their names. In other cases, former Palestinian wage laborers with no experience in business management asked their wives to take out loans. The activities they invested in, such as small trade or a taxi business, collapsed after the closure of Gaza, with women still owing money that they are unable to pay to UNRWA. These women are now in conflict with their guarantors, who are mostly low-income earners, and their husbands are not able to sort out the problem of the debt.

### Box 2: Community Efforts to Develop Income-Generating Projects

Enas is a young married woman with a daughter. She and her husband work as school teachers, her husband in the local secondary school and Enas in a kindergarten that is a money-earning initiative spearheaded by the local women's committee that she heads. Enas's salary is a quarter of her husband's monthly earnings (NIS 400–500 and NIS 2,000 respectively). Net earnings place the family as low income, just above the poverty line. However, they have a cushion of security; they live with their parents-in-law, who provide their food so Enas and her husband can pay off monthly installments on a loan that helped build their top-storey apartment as well as save.

Growing up, Enas worked alongside her parents, tilling their rented land. She went to university, became the first woman in her family to earn a degree, and married. Enas's marriage age, her education, her remunerated work, and her control over her income represent a significant generational shift in gender relations. Her mother and grandmother worked family plots, married young, and were involved in household reproduction (caring activities aimed at sustaining the family) but received no payment for their work and had no control over family earnings.

The women's committee Enas heads was established three years ago by CARE with Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid) funding. It boasts 15 women members and was set up to widen access to social networks and provide skill development and income-generating opportunities. Registered committees are able to attract donor funding for projects and training incentives from the PA. The committee produces honey from bees provided by CARE and runs a kindergarten, but is still searching for other viable products to market. From honey sales, each member draws an annual income of 400 NIS if all the honey is sold. In the past, the committee relied on a middleman from Hebron to purchase their honey in bulk, but a tightening of the closure system and rising fuel costs means this is no longer profitable for him. They now rely on an international nongovernmental organization (INGO) to collect and sell their produce at an exhibition in Ramallah.

Committee members pay a registration fee of NIS 50 and place NIS 500 in a joint savings scheme that provides a revolving loan. Loans are almost always used to build homes and extensions, buy productive assets or fund children's education (extra tuition and university fees). Enas says decisions on how loans are spent are taken jointly between wife and husband: "Wives don't decide without their husbands." The committee had a scheme to stitch and sell school uniforms to surrounding villages that did not materialize. The machines were too expensive and the women had no support to sell their goods. The women are now resting their hopes on the possibility that a trainer from the Ministry of Agriculture will help them produce and market soap.



Enas's husband and her extended family support her work outside the home. She feels her higher education has won their respect and that of the community. She believes rising poverty means that anyone in a position to work should do so. Even so, Enas notes that less educated women her own age invest much time in cajoling and persuading family members if they want to work.

Enas's main concern is the lack of earning opportunities for herself and committee members, as well as access to training, markets, and opportunities to develop a viable product to sell profitably. The village is cut off from the main markets in the West Bank and access to markets in Tubus, Jenin, Nablus, and Ramallah is controlled by at least two checkpoints in any direction. The village is also adjacent to a large block of Israeli settlement agriculture. Goods from settlements destined for markets in Israel and abroad enter Israel through a checkpoint north of the village called Bisan, but Palestinian produce has to use the Al Jalamay which is more than twice as far and involves extensive security checks. Other inequities faced by Palestinians living in the Jordan Valley include the need to secure residence permits and permits for transporting goods for drivers who are not resident in the valley. Villages in the valley also have unequal access to water and are unable to develop their infrastructure, as construction in Area C is tightly controlled.

**In the context of movement and access restrictions and the decline in spending power, the allure of microcredit programs has waned, especially in Gaza.** The main reasons that women cited for starting their small projects were the economic crisis, while the reasons for slowing down or closing the business were mainly related to the Israeli closure policy and the restrictions on movement and access. According to the director of UNRWA's microcredit program, lending has almost decreased and there has been a flight of female microentrepreneurs from the informal sector of the economy, with many closing their businesses through bankruptcy. The lack of raw materials or goods mobility, especially in Gaza, compounded by the massive decline in people's purchasing power, have also complicated these projects and created the objective conditions to close businesses. Women working in agriculture, food production, and sewing reduced their scale of production to a minimum, while many petty traders stopped their work altogether. Some women attributed the reasons for the closing of their grocery shops to debts, the limited purchasing power of the people, and accumulated credit and debt that led to bankruptcy. Of three women in Gaza and one in the West Bank who used to own agricultural greenhouses and who were interviewed for this study, one experienced destruction due to incursion into Beit Hanoon, two were forced to sell because their families were badly in debt, and the woman in the West Bank was affected by the construction of the barrier. This mixed experience can be summed up in the words of a woman from the village of Azoun in the West Bank:

*"Our conditions were fine until the intifada started. My husband became unemployed and had to think of something to support the family. I took a loan from the Agricultural Relief committees to start a greenhouse, and it went well. My husband bought a*

*tractor from the income of the greenhouse and he started to work in other lands, until the Israelis built the barrier and I was denied access to the land. We started to go in the early mornings to water the vegetables before the soldiers come, until one day they caught my children who were young. I had to go to rescue them and I realized that it could be difficult to continue, as it is not possible to put my children in this risky position. It is not easy; last season, the peas I planted died as we were not able to water them, but we have to continue as it is the only way to keep our hopes and to generate some kind of income to support the family."*

**In the face of prolonged Israeli military violence and severe restrictions, women traders in Gaza have turned to a more home-based strategy as a coping mechanism.** Part of this shift was to reduce the cost of transport, especially following the June 2006 fuel crisis. Some mentioned the decisions to cater only to the demands of their neighbors, hence changing the type of the products traded. A few, especially older women, have replaced their market-based trading with a small *basta* in front of their homes. Since the transport crisis in Gaza, rural women who live far from the local market, and do not own a donkey or horse cart, sell their products in the neighborhood. Women in rural areas have reduced their agriculture production for sale, particularly those whose lands were razed by the Israelis, and their seasonal agricultural production has mostly been used for household consumption. A woman from Beit Hanoon explained the changes that occurred in her agro-economic activities by saying:

*"We have three dunums of land close to the border that were planted with olive trees, oranges, and other fruits. The land was razed and the trees uprooted three times; now it has become dangerous to reach it. I used to cultivate the land and pick the products with the help of my sons and daughters. My sons were selling it in the local market. I also contracted with a wholesale vendor who used to come to buy the products from the land. The land is now unusable and we only cultivate the small piece of land around our house, barely enough for our home consumption. My husband and I share the work. Whenever we are in urgent need of cash (NIS 10–20), we sell some of the tomatoes and parsley to our neighbors. We sell our products at higher prices to cover their basic cost. We discovered at the end that it is better just to cultivate for home consumption and not to sell anything."*



### Box 3: Women's Hidden Work: A Case Study in Tamoon Village, Toubas District, West Bank

#### Interview in the Women's Committee in Tamoon Village.

- Interviewer: Um Mohammed (not her real name), are you employed, do you have a job?
- UM: No, I don't have a job. I'm a widow.
- Interviewer: Do you produce or sell any food products to the local shops?
- UM: No, I don't make anything.
- Interviewer: Do you keep livestock, or work on agricultural land?
- UM: No, I don't have any livestock or land.
- Interviewer: How do you spend your time each day?
- UM: Everyday I sit in my son's clothes shop. He works as a teacher but he also owns a shop. Because he's busy teaching, I manage it.
- Interviewer: Do you talk to the customers and take money when they buy things?
- UM: Of course I do.
- Interviewer: Do you receive a wage?
- UM: No, of course not! I'm not doing anything and in any case my son takes care of all my needs.

**A large subset of economic activity is not captured by the existing data, but is equally important.** According to a time-use survey conducted by PCBS in 1999–2000, women spent 5.33 hours per day in market and household work, of which 90.4 percent could be classified as care/domestic economy.<sup>83</sup> In comparison, men spent 6.01 hours per day in market and household work, of which only 15 percent could be classified as domestic/care economy. What these numbers suggest is that women continue to combine their reproductive and productive roles, taking care of household chores, feeding the family, and going to the market, while at the same time participating in income-generating activities that are extensions of goods and services produced for consumption in the household rather than organized as separate income generating activities. These pursuits are not well captured in the labor force surveys, despite being productive unpaid work. These activities are undertaken on the margins of the informal sector to generate supplementary income (often in economic crisis situations) on a non-sustained and pre-need basis, and would include sale or barter of surplus food production (either agricultural products or home-prepared foods); the production of one-off clothing items; or barter of in-kind goods (UNRWA rations is one important local example). While these types of activities seem extremely marginal economically, their prevalence and importance among distressed households have been documented, especially for refugee households.<sup>84</sup>

**To the same extent, “hidden work” is a category of economic activity that has surfaced, but has yet to be captured.** As illustrated in box 3, women's economic participation is often under-reported, all the more so in a period of crisis where family members step in to help out husbands or sons in carrying out economic activities in lieu of wage workers. Unlike unpaid agricultural workers, who are generally included in labor force surveys, or women who sell cheese or honey, whose work might be captured in informal sector surveys, women who partake in hidden work do not recognize their own contribution as work, and hence inadvertently “hide” their economic participation. This phenomenon surfaced during the qualitative work undertaken for the study, and deserves to be studied in greater detail.

## Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the ways in which movement and access restrictions—and ensuing economic collapse—have affected men's and women's economic participation in the West Bank and Gaza. Dim employment prospects have led many Palestinians—chiefly men—to withdraw from or delay entry into the labor force. At the same time, many women have entered the workforce to make up for the lost income of their unemployed husbands. The loss of Israeli jobs triggered men's lower earnings and reduced labor force participation. Household incomes have declined sharply, and as a result all family members are worse off. The crisis environment also exacerbated the already distorted nature of the Palestinian labor market in terms of gender segmentation and bias. The informal sector, which has seen stepped up participation, has been unable to make up for the decline of the formal sector, and is a good illustration of the desperate measures that men and women in the West Bank and Gaza have been willing to take on in order to survive. While women's increased entry into the public sphere may be construed as increased empowerment and opportunity, many might not see it that way. Women's burdens have actually multiplied because of increasing household responsibilities, bringing with them additional psychological pressure and stress in the household. These themes will be developed further in chapter 4.





## CHAPTER III:

# THE GENDERED IMPACT OF OCCUPATION AND VIOLENCE



Photo by: Yasser Darwish



*Palestinian life is punctuated by violence as a result of the Israeli occupation, though it is now perceived as a normal feature of daily life. In fact, close to 50 percent of the total Palestinian population has known only conflict conditions. This violence has led to a sense of profound insecurity, or *falataan amni*, as commonly described by our respondents. *Falataan amni* signifies the collapse of the public, social, and moral order, absence of rule of law, and lack of protection for the weak. Men and women have to navigate under these conditions, exacerbated by movement and access restrictions, struggling to find the livelihoods that can sustain their families and communities. *Falataan amni*, therefore, affects the forms of livelihoods men and women choose, how they relate to each other, and how families and communities regulate the movement of women conditioned by changing norms of gender roles.*

*Occupation, incursions, and movement and access restrictions have spun a web of violence, overt and covert, public and private, which touches the everyday lives of Palestinians. Overt violence involves the use of military force, damage to property and bodily injury, whereas covert violence is designed to instigate fear and humiliation. This chapter examines two forms of violence, one that results from Palestinians' encounter with Israeli state institutions and the other instigated by Israeli civilians (settlers) in the West Bank.*

## Occupation Facilitated by State Institutions Leads to *Falataan Amni*

**This study has identified five sources of both overt and covert violence associated with occupation and movement and access restrictions that involve the State of Israel: military incursions, detentions, manned check points, home demolitions, and the West Bank barrier (along with its associated gate and permit regime).** Palestinians must learn to navigate across all of these to earn their livelihoods. However, in so doing, the outcomes

**Incursions by the Israeli Defense Forces into Palestinian residential areas are a daily, or more frequently, nightly occurrence in most parts of the West Bank, especially in Areas B and C and refugee camps.** Reasons for the incursions include searches for alleged militants or patrols, mapping of the area to ensure military intelligence, and demonstrating a military presence. Nightly raids can also be accompanied by curfews from dawn to dusk, sonar bombs, and tear gas. In some instances, civilian homes or their roof tops can be occupied by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers for lookout purposes, in which case families are held hostage and have to endure the presence of the Israeli military in their own homes. These

*"There is no security at all. Every day, army patrols pass on our streets and I have no way to keep them from attacking my house."*

Headmistress of a girls' school in the village of Zibdeh, near Jenin



incursions are a constant source of anxiety and fear. In the words of one mother from Qalandia camp:

*"Sometimes I put my kids to sleep in the living room, which is close to the front door. When the army comes into the camp, they start shooting, and I am worried that if my kids sleep in the living room and the army enters, then they will hit the kids. So I started putting the kids to sleep in my bedroom. We are all in the same room so that I won't worry about them."*

**In Gaza, incursions are also frequent and have led to deaths, significant damage to property, and restricted access by farmers to the most fertile lands of the Strip located along the Israeli border.** It has also led to the uprooting of hundreds of thousands of fruit trees. As a woman from Beit Hanoon in Gaza explains:

*"We have 3 dunums of land close to the border. They were planted with olive trees, oranges, and other fruits. The land was razed [by the IDF] and the trees uprooted three times. Now it has become dangerous to reach it."*

Gazan farmers who approach their own land located along the Israeli border are routinely shot at by the IDF and many have been killed. Fishermen who go out to sea farther than five nautical miles are fired at by the Israeli navy. Fear of incursions and military actions in Gaza has put an end to many means of livelihood.

**Nearly every Palestinian family has one of its members or close associates detained in Israeli prisons or killed due to the conflict.** Since 1967, 800,000 people (or 25 percent of the total population) have been detained—excluding those arrested and held for short periods of time—one of the highest detention rates in the world. In the last 8 years, 60,000 people have been detained.<sup>85</sup> Currently, 11,000 Palestinians are in prison, including 68 women, 400 children and 47 parliamentarians (over 35 percent of them.)<sup>86</sup> The overwhelming majority of those in detention are men. The detention process from initial arrest to imprisonment is fraught with overt violence, including raids on homes in predawn hours, damage to property, and physical abuse of detainees.

**Although men are most often those who are imprisoned, women must bear the social costs of their detention: the burden of interceding on behalf of prisoners, visiting, and taking care of them once released is primarily shouldered by mothers and wives.** In contravention of the Geneva Convention, which allows

*"I am scared because my husband is in prison and I have a daughter, so I'm always worried about her. So I don't leave her anywhere except at my mother's place, because I am afraid something might happen to her. I also don't want my in-laws or my husband to say anything. I have the responsibility for the household and my daughter, and this responsibility worries me."*

*22-year-old working mother from Qalandia camp*



for prisoners from occupied lands to be held within their own territories, Israel imprisons them within its own borders, making it difficult for prisoners to stage a legal defense and for their families to care for and support them. This requires an enormous investment in time, especially that of women, who are most often responsible for contacting the Red Cross to arrange for visits, seeking out human rights organizations and lawyers to secure prisoner release, obtaining permits, and attending military courts. The time invested at checkpoints for visiting prisoners is also considerable. In the words of a teenager from Hebron:

*“When it comes to visiting prisoners, many people have a hard time at the checkpoints and most of the day is wasted at these checkpoints, so people only manage to see their sons for half an hour.”*

**It is also Palestinian women, especially wives and mothers, who must deal with the stress of caring for and integrating the ex-detainee into the household and community once he is released.** Ex-detainees experience depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic symptoms that often manifest themselves as hostility towards family members. Moreover, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is common among ex-detainees who are survivors of torture—symptoms which are generally negative, though vary according to the severity of the torture—and affect the immediate family and entire social structure.<sup>87</sup>

**In addition, close to 6,000 people were killed between 2000 and 2008; the overwhelming majority were men (94 percent), many between 18 and 29 years of age (55 percent).<sup>88</sup> When a man is absent as a result of death or detention, it is women who fill in the gaps and assume the added burden of maintaining the household and raising the children.** They must also manage the anger of the younger male members of the family and the fear and insecurity that a lack of a father or brother brings. In the words of one mother from Qalandia refugee camp, near Ramallah in the West Bank:

*“My brother was martyred and I am afraid for my son. He has started saying he wants to shoot soldiers because they shot his uncle. I am always afraid for him even though he is so young, only in the third grade. I don’t feel secure.”*

**Checkpoints have now become a constant feature of Palestinian life and have immeasurably complicated the lives of men and women by increasing travel time and transportation expenses and subjecting Palestinians to fear and humiliation.** Palestinians have to cross checkpoints to travel within the West Bank itself as well as into East Jerusalem and Israel for work, education, or medical treatment. Checkpoints are spaces of overt violence; most are manned by heavily armed young male and female soldiers, protected by heavy military vehicles and in some cases by armed private security officers. They are also spaces of covert violence where Palestinians routinely experience humiliation: the major checkpoints, such as the main crossings into Israel from the West Bank and Gaza, require them to walk through a series of gates and turnstiles controlled by soldiers who provide instructions in Hebrew (a language many do not speak) through loudspeakers emanating from a security room. As the



gates and turnstiles are narrow, people can only carry small objects. Palestinians must also undergo body searches at the checkpoints. Some of the searches are done via a body X-ray while others involve a physical search in a small, enclosed room. Arrests and mistreatment such as beatings also take place there.

**Palestinians' experience of checkpoints is fraught with fear and anxiety; routine humiliation is expected.** The experience of a young university student from Jenin is illustrative. She and her mother were crossing the Jalameh checkpoint in Jenin to travel to Nazareth in Israel when they had the following encounter with a soldier:

*"My mother and I had cooked food for my sister in Nazareth. I took the food across the checkpoint but the soldier asked me to go to the search room. When they saw the food, they told me I couldn't take it across. They said I had to throw it away. I couldn't do this. It was expensive and we'd cooked it. I refused to give them the food. I sat on the floor and I ate it in front of them."*

**Although men are subjected to more stringent controls, for women, checkpoints represent spaces of humiliation and present both physical and moral danger with gendered consequences.** The invasive search procedures (such as being asked to strip, or going through a full-body X-ray machine) and the long waits in tight spaces with large numbers of men, all present a potential risk to a woman's honor. Interviewees for this study highlighted that young women are often singled out for physical searches, rather than old women, which they perceived as a heightened form of humiliation and an affront to a woman's honor. In the words of one woman respondent,

*"I am frightened to go through the checkpoint because the soldiers treat us with disrespect. They look at us through cameras and shout at us through loud speakers. I feel such humiliation. School will start soon and I worry about my children, particularly my daughters crossing the checkpoint. In the winter I wear thick clothes and sometimes the soldiers ask me to take them off. It's so embarrassing and insulting, especially if there are male soldiers around."*

A mother from a village outside Jenin

*"At one time, my sister was returning from hospital where she had surgery. She was asked to go the security room. She refused to enter but the soldiers insisted and they made her take off her clothes. When the village heard about it they went on a demonstration because they all felt such a level of harassment."*



**The case of Um Alaa, who lives in the village of Barta'a in Area C, is also illustrative of the covert violence at checkpoints.** She runs a neighborhood kiosk selling snacks to make ends meet. To stock her shop, she must cross a checkpoint during her weekly journey to Ya'abad, a market town that is on the other side of the West Bank barrier and where inhabitants are subjected to a full body X-ray scan.

*"Women don't like being exposed to this machine. We don't know who is looking at us. Women from this area who worked and have relatives in the West Bank [on the other side of the Wall] have given up crossing the checkpoint altogether or reduce the number of journeys they have to make. Before there was no barrier and a trip to the market took just 20 minutes. Now you don't know how long it is going to take. You have to set aside a full day. Sometimes you can queue for hours. Sometimes you find the checkpoint shut early and you have to spend the night with relatives."*

**As a result of such incidents, families and communities often respond by censoring women's movements, particularly those of young unmarried women.** Those who travel do so because they must: mostly to accompany a family member to school or health facilities or for work. The sense of humiliation and degree of affront to a woman's reputation is so great that families in Areas B and C even limit their girls' education rather than subject them to the perceived moral dangers of the checkpoints. In the words of a young woman from Barta'a in Jenin:

*"I waste hours at the checkpoint. During exams, the soldiers make us wait more; they do it on purpose. Sometimes they put you in a security room and then they seem to forget you're there and you just wait and wait. Six women in my village dropped out of university because of this constant harassment."*

**It is not only young and poor women who face difficulties in crossing check points: women entrepreneurs, who are part of an elite business community and need to cross into Israel for business, also face challenges.** In the words of one Palestinian woman who owns a graphic design business that moves products electronically to neighboring Egypt: *"We can move our product electronically to Egypt but we can't develop markets at home or in Israel."* In general, private businesses that could be a source of economic growth are constrained by movement and trade restrictions. Adding to this, the social contacts and institutions within Palestinian society (chamber of commerce, trade associations, and the like) are run by men, for men, making it difficult for Palestinian women entrepreneurs to access these networks that facilitate crossing checkpoints. As one woman CEO explains:

*"If you are a businesswoman, you don't have the same level of access to social networks that businessmen have. You are at a disadvantage. It's impossible for me to go to the places where men rub shoulders and do deals."*



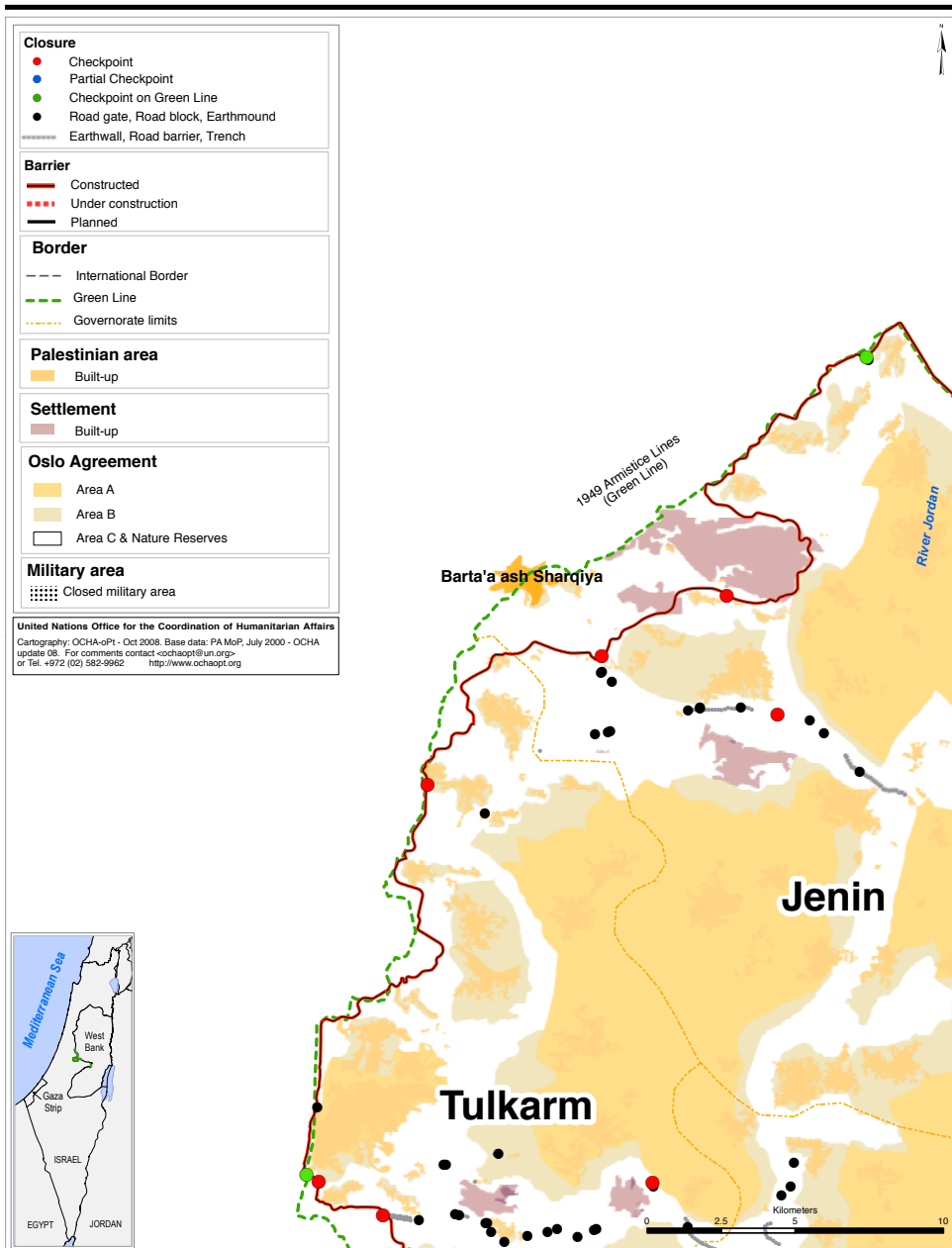
# MAP 3: WEST BANK: BARTA'A ENCLAVE



United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

## West Bank: Barta'a Enclave

June 2009





**Israel issues Businessman Cards (BMC) to a small group of leading Palestinian entrepreneurs, allowing them to cross checkpoints with relative ease, travel on restricted roads, fly out of Ben Gurion airport, and gain access to cities in Israel, but BMC's are out of reach for most women entrepreneurs.** Only 2 businesswomen (compared to over 800 businessmen) hold these permits. Qualifying for a Businessman Card is a long and time-consuming process that involves the intervention of the Palestinian Chamber of Commerce, the PA Ministry of Interior, and final approval by Israeli authorities.<sup>89</sup> In the past, this permit system had been abused by privileged Palestinian men who obtained Businessman permits for their wives to shop, visit relatives, attend cultural events in East Jerusalem, and travel abroad with greater ease. Given that there is a finite number of available permits, this has undermined the case for serious businesswomen.<sup>90</sup>

**Movement and access restrictions, including the closure regime, exacerbate social isolation, particularly for women.** The social relations that sustain family life have been disrupted with increasing restrictions on mobility, as women are now significantly less able to travel outside their communities, especially those in Areas B and C. Many women

who marry outside of their community become cut off from their birth families. For women, any travel outside of the community is calculated against the risk of exposure to the moral dangers discussed above and their financial costs.

As a 38 year old homemaker described:

*"The checkpoints make you pay more on transportation. So you may have to minimize the events you attend and relationships you maintain because you are worried about how to get to a certain location. Before the intifada, I used to reach my parents with 2 shekels, but today I have to pay 20 shekels to do so."*

*"The holidays are the saddest times. Relatives are not allowed to enter our neighborhood and so we go to visit them but we can't leave the house together. Someone always has to stay home. I'm very depressed and feel helpless."*

*17 year old girl, Old City of Hebron  
B'Tselem 2008: 51*

**Gaza suffers from almost total closure as a result of the embargo and is cut off from the West Bank, Israel, and Egypt.** Although Gazans can move about freely within Gaza, the only pedestrian crossing into Israel, Erez, is open only for patients with life-threatening illnesses and special cases. Human rights groups, such as Physicians for Human Rights, have documented that patients crossing through Erez have been detained for interrogation and requested to either provide information or to act as collaborators on a regular basis as a condition for permission to exit Gaza for medical treatment.<sup>91</sup>





**Home demolitions by Israeli civil and military authorities have become a major cause of forced displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.** A recent report by Save the Children UK, *Broken Homes: Addressing the Impact of House Demolitions on Palestinian Children and Families*, shows that families lose not only the financial assets and property inside the home, but are also liable for the costs of the demolition itself—which can cost up to tens of thousands of dollars. They are also exposed to long periods of instability and poverty, and fare worse on mental health indicators.<sup>92</sup> Since 1967, over 24,000 homes have been destroyed. The demolition of homes leads to the forced displacement of families; in the West Bank, with the destruction of 3,302 homes between 2000 and 2004, approximately 16,510 people were displaced. In Gaza, from 2000 to 2007, approximately 7,342 homes were either partially or totally destroyed by Israeli military action, leading to the displacement of over 69,000 people, including over 34,000 children.<sup>93</sup> According to the Israeli human rights group, B'Tselem, the official reasons for demolition of over 4,000 Palestinian houses in West Bank and Gaza between 2000 and 2004 were as follows: 60 percent for military clearing, 25 percent for lack of building permits, and 15 percent to punish militants.<sup>94</sup>

**The social costs of the demolitions are far-reaching: they encroach on the ever-shrinking space in which Palestinians may move and live and wreak havoc with family life, with a particularly negative impact for children.** Studies have documented that victims of home demolitions develop depression and other forms of mental illness following the trauma of losing a home<sup>95</sup>. Mothers have a tendency to develop symptoms of depression and are unable to meet their children's needs due to their own mental preoccupation. Moreover, the psychological well-being of the mother has a greater influence on the children's well-being than that of the father, given the mother's role as the primary guardian of children. Save the Children's study found that parents whose homes had been demolished suffered from melancholy and depression more than adults in the control group. Similarly, children exhibit behavioral and emotional disturbances, including bedwetting, inability to concentrate, and poor school performance, to name only a few.<sup>96</sup>

**Land between the West Bank barrier and the Green Line is classified by Israeli authorities as a "seam zone" or closed area; land around settlements is classified "special security area." All restrict access by Palestinians, preventing them from pursuing their livelihoods.** In closed areas, residents are physically separated from the rest of the West Bank. Most of the barrier, which lies outside the Green Line on West Bank land, has dispossessed Palestinian villages and farmers from their land, separated them from their communities, and become a profound symbol of injustice. The gates of the barrier are patrolled by the Israeli military but are always locked; it is virtually impossible to gain daily entry. For Palestinians to access these lands, they must receive special permission from the Civil Administration, which retains the right to reject any such request. To receive permission, Palestinian households must fulfill a series of stringent requirements such as proof of land ownership (but most of the land in



## Checkpoints and Barriers:

Searching for Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza  
Gender Dimensions of Economic Collapse

the West Bank is not officially registered). With farmers unable to reach and tend their farms, yields are low, costs too high, and investment therefore no longer financially worthwhile. As a result, many farmers have abandoned all attempts to access their land.<sup>97</sup> For Palestinian farming communities, where land is a symbol of identity, bequeathed from generation to generation, losing it is deeply painful, creating a sense of overwhelming powerlessness. Moreover, under already dire economic circumstances, losing land or having restricted access to it suggests that the livelihoods of thousands of already vulnerable households have only become more perilous. Agriculture plays a significant role in supplementing household income, especially under conditions of extreme economic deprivation; its loss brings on extreme vulnerability. Women, in particular, are active participants in the agriculture sector. Restriction of access has a particularly negative effect on their ability to sustain their families—which is exacerbated by the high rates of male unemployment.



## Settler-Led Violence also Contributes to Falataan Amni

**It is well documented that settler-led violence has grown to immense proportions and has become a means for expelling Palestinians from their land—land on or alongside which settlements have been built.**<sup>98</sup> The Israeli human rights nongovernmental organization (NGO) Yesh Din explains that the rising wave of settler violence against Palestinians is explicitly aimed at achieving political aims (that is, to disrupt outpost evacuations) through the use of terror tactics adopted by well-established settler organizations that centrally organize and orchestrate such attacks.<sup>99</sup> Settler violence appears in two forms: bodily harm to Palestinians and confiscation of or damage to their assets, as summarized below.

**Bodily harm to Palestinians includes shooting, threats to shoot, striking with rifle butts and clubs, attempts to run over them with a vehicle, and so forth.**<sup>100</sup> Although settlers' attacks also occur inside the homes of Palestinians, they are more often carried out while Palestinians are working the land, a task that is undertaken by the entire family unit, including men, women, youth, and children; settler attacks are indiscriminate and would target any of these groups. B'Tselem testimonies document attacks on women and children, including the case of three women, one of them eight months pregnant, and four minors working in their olive grove:

*"I heard a shot. I heard my mother and sister-in-law shouting. I quickly got down from the tree...and saw the two of them lying on the ground and a settler standing by them. The settler was holding a weapon and he aimed it at me. My mother's face was bleeding...I cried and shouted for help, hoping somebody would hear me... whenever I tried to get close to my mother, he hit my head with a radio transmitter he was holding...the children were crying and scared."*<sup>101</sup>

The overwhelming force of settlers, who are armed and protected by the IDF, leaves Palestinian men unable to defend their families and communities, disempowering them and rendering them unable to assume the role of protector of the family.

**Confiscation of Palestinian property and/or destruction of their assets are also part of the settler "terror infrastructure."** Israeli human rights groups have documented the systematic destruction of farming equipment, wells, crops, trees, livestock, and other assets by settlers. Between 2000 and 2008, approximately 1.6 million trees were destroyed, and nearly 16,000 sheep and goats and 1,400 cattle killed.<sup>102</sup> Settlers also systematically grab land adjacent to the jurisdiction of the settlement (itself built on confiscated private Palestinian land).

**Settlers also use tactics of intimidation and overwhelming force to push Palestinians off their land.** Violent settlers are often members of the security departments of the settlements or are on guard duty. The attacks on Palestinians thus take place during regular patrols on land next to the settlement, often closed without authorization, or in areas close to



settlements but not closed off by any physical means.<sup>103</sup> These factors keep Palestinians away from the land. Those who choose to cultivate it do so because it is the only means of family livelihood.

**Settler violence spills into Palestinian family and community life, causing yet more internal tension and conflict, often generational: frustrated by the dispossession around them, male youth attempt to retaliate by throwing stones at settlers without comprehending the dire consequences of such actions.** In an environment of collapse of the moral order, parental control over children is compromised. In its May 2009 *West Bank Movement and Access Update*, OCHA documents that during the reporting period (September 2008 to March 2009) there was an increase in the frequency of IDF military operations in some villages in the northern West Bank, where incidents of stone-throwing at settlers' vehicles by Palestinian youth have occurred. The operations included searches and arrests, blocking Palestinian access to bypass roads, and the imposition of curfews for periods of up to 12 hours. Between September 2008 and March 2009, OCHA recorded 47 curfews—a 15 percent increase compared with the previous period. Each attempt at vigilante activism by Palestinians is met with harsh and dire consequences, meted on the entire community in collective punishment. The comments of an elderly man from the village of Azmut, close to the settlement of Elon Moreh, which has a reputation for being more aggressive and ideological, illustrates the intergenerational struggles:

*"I went to pick olives there as part of a program to protect villagers from settler violence. We try to accommodate settlers and move around them, not bait them in anyway. But we cannot control our kids. Our teenage boys are angry. They slip away from the house and they create trouble. They don't fully understand that they can make the situation much worse."*

**For Palestinian children convicted of stone-throwing, the costs are high: stone-throwing carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in jail.** In its recent report based on the testimonies of child prisoners, Defense of Children International documents Israeli military courts' convictions for stone throwing of around 700 Palestinian children from villages near the Wall and settlements every year.<sup>104</sup> Since 2000, 6,500 children have been detained, primarily for stone throwing. In 95 percent of the cases, according to the report, the children pleaded guilty because they were denied access to a lawyer until after they confessed to an interrogator under duress. The report goes on to document that many of the children were painfully shackled for hours, kicked, and beaten to provide confessions. Once sentenced, the children were imprisoned in Israel (in violation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention) where they receive few family visits and little or no education.



Photo by: Mahfouz Abu Turk

## The Absence of Rule of Law Creates *Falataan Amni*

**Israeli authorities do not enforce the law against settlers who commit offenses against Palestinians, even though such violence is against Israeli and International Humanitarian Law.** Yesh Din and other Israeli human rights NGOs have documented that (i) IDF soldiers usually tend to ignore offenses to which they are witnesses, (ii) physical and bureaucratic hurdles make it extremely difficult for Palestinians to file complaints, and (iii) there are serious faults in Israeli authorities' examination of incidents and frequent failures to investigate them appropriately.<sup>105</sup> The acts are systematic and frequent, but the Civil Administration, Police, and IDF have not been able to defend Palestinians against settlers. In fact, Israeli law enforcement authorities refrain from ending illegal activities by settlers.<sup>106</sup> On the contrary, security forces often join settlers against Palestinians.<sup>107</sup> In the words of a farmer from a village in Ramallah District:

*"I saw soldiers fire into the air to frighten residents trying to approach the fence. When my family tried to approach, the soldiers in the lookout tower fired live ammunition into the air. Sometimes soldiers in an army jeep pull up and force residents away."<sup>108</sup>*



**The Palestinian Authority is unable to police, enforce, or protect its citizens in any manner, especially in Areas B and C and in refugee camps, as it has no jurisdiction over these areas.** In Area B, Palestinians have shared responsibility, but in reality this has not been enforced and only worked briefly during the early years following the Oslo Peace Accords. Even in Area A, where the police have jurisdiction, they lack the capacity to investigate, prosecute, or enforce legal provisions. The dual judicial system, one in the West Bank and the other in Gaza, also weakens the ability of the PA to enforce the rule of law. This weak legal environment, while affecting all citizens, makes women especially vulnerable. Additionally, the Palestinian judiciary is overwhelmingly male, with just 12 percent of judges and 11 prosecutors general who are female,<sup>109</sup> which may skew the legal system against women.

**In the absence of an adequate legal system, Palestinians are turning to customary law to resolve internal disputes of all sorts.** There is evidence that the informal system of law is now as extensively used as the formal one.<sup>110</sup> More people are turning to customary law because of the backlog and lengthy processes of the formal courts.<sup>111</sup> Customary law includes principles of compensation, exchange, and collective mediation, and can effectively help resolve conflict. With its emphasis on social harmony, it is indeed appealing in times of social dislocation and insecurity. However, customary law is also problematic for women, as it may not offer equal and fair protection and voice. Women are excluded as participants in the mediation process, although they are addressed as victims, as it is the elderly men of the community who are the mediators. Verdicts designed to restore community harmony, when women are victims, may not be in the best interest of the women themselves. For instance, under customary law, there are reported cases where the community persuades a rapist to marry his victim to ward off family and community conflict.

## Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the occupation and its apparatus of movement and access restrictions have generated overt and covert forms of violence, which in some instances primarily target men and in others are endured by almost everyone in the Palestinian Territory. Many Palestinians say that this has created an atmosphere of moral disorder and social chaos, which in turn generates fear and anxiety. While men are the primary victims of violence (detentions and death, for example), women also suffer consequences associated with their gender role as nurturer. The chapter has also shown that overt forms of violence, from settlers, for example, causes frustration and anger among young Palestinian men, whose retaliatory actions can cause yet more intergenerational tension and rift at home and in the community. The results of this constellation of violent experiences contribute to the isolation and disempowerment already felt in Palestinian communities. The next chapter explores how families, in the face of such high levels of violence, are eking out a livelihood amid high unemployment and poverty, and the impact their efforts have on the culture of gender relations.

## CHAPTER IV:

# COPING STRATEGIES, HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL, AND CHANGING GENDER ROLES



Photo by: Mahfouz Abu Turk



*This chapter examines the impact of the different forms of violence described in chapter 3 and their spillover effects into the domestic sphere, manifested in the changing relations between men and women. The study takes a closer look at the coping strategies women adopt to provide for their families and at their efforts to reduce conflict and preserve domestic harmony. It illustrates how multilayered levels of violence are reconfiguring traditionally ascribed gender roles in a manner that is disempowering to men and women alike. At the same time, it also describes the spaces and opportunities that are opening up for young women, in the form of higher education and improved employment prospects. However, chances are that without economic revival and new employment opportunities, women will continue to be shunted into nongrowth areas of the economy and informal employment, and men will remain despondent, depressed, and angry.*

**As men of all ages experience the daily fear and humiliation that stem from violence, conflict and unemployment, they retreat, depressed and unable to function.** As men's productive public role diminishes, they experience loss of self-esteem. Unable to protect or provide, they have responded by either retreating into domestic space, or fleeing from it causing enormous psychosocial stress on those around them. This presents a massive affront to the idealized notion of Palestinian masculinity. Rather paradoxically, one model of masculinity prevails above all others: that of the IDF soldier. In the words of one of our respondents,

*"Even children have become violent. This is because kids see the army every day, they become more violent. Even their toys are all toy guns. This is all because of the occupation and the pressure one experiences from the occupation. So a person becomes violent in his own home, and children become violent with each other."*

Where men, as the primary victims of violence, are made increasingly vulnerable, and are deprived of their role as strong protector, the gender order is disturbed and moral chaos ensues.

**In response, women, in many cases, are forced into the role of principle provider for the family.** In chapter 2, we showed how women are increasing their economic activities. In this section, we explore other coping and survival strategies women adopt to provide for their families. The scope of nonmarket activities that comprise these strategies demonstrates the resourcefulness of women in the midst of extreme hardship and a collapsing market economy.



## Coping Strategies

**As men retreat, women skillfully nurture and cultivate social relationships in order to develop coping strategies that enable their families to survive.** In most cases, these strategies come at the cost of their pride, as it is more socially acceptable for them to seek assistance or take on jobs that men would consider beneath them, such as working without a wage (in exchange for goods that support the family) or for very low wages. In the words of one woman from Qalandia refugee camp, in the West Bank:

*“After my husband became redundant and we lost any hope of him finding work, I went in search of work and found a job at a small textile factory for NIS 290 a month. It would be humiliating for my husband to accept such a low-paying job, yet it is easier for me as a woman.”*

Another woman from Jenin describes desperate measures she took when she couldn't afford shoes for her children:

*“There was one time we had nothing. The children had grown out of their shoes and they couldn't go to school. I went to Jenin and begged for shoes from shopkeepers. Eventually, a store owner took pity and gave me a job. He gave me shoes, not money. I'm so proud of what I did. I am not ashamed.”*

Married women engage in these and various other strategies that enable their families to survive. We explore three different examples, based on the analysis of our qualitative research: (i) borrowing; (ii) assistance from extended family; and (iii) cultivating networks through volunteer work.

**Women, especially in Gaza, also tap into their social networks and borrow to keep the household functioning.** The focus group discussions shed light on the borrowing patterns of men and women. Following the second intifada (2000 to 2004) and the job losses that ensued, men tended to borrow (also through informal networks) to meet household demands. They borrowed in larger amounts, and as the economic situation worsened, they fell into debt and are now unable to borrow. Married women (often middle-aged wives or mothers) in households without breadwinners are the ones who are forced to borrow to meet the urgent needs of their families, but they do so in very small amounts of NIS 50 to NIS 100 [US\$ 12 to US\$ 25] and from close relatives such as sisters, or from neighbors or friends, and repay in a very short period of time. They may also buy goods on credit from the neighborhood grocer. The prevalence of small-scale borrowing is an approach created by women to foster an environment of mutual solidarity and trust among neighbors and friends to whom they can reach out in times of desperate need.



**For women, repaying debts is a top priority, even before paying expenses for their children's education.** Women will cut back on the variety and quantity of what the family consumes to pay back a loan:

*"No one sees what we eat at home, but it is hard to have someone knocking at our door to ask back for his money. We eat lentils for a week with no problem."*

**Not being able to redeem a loan comes with significant risk.** In Gaza, for example, respondents linked their personal security to the amount of debt they owed to grocers and relatives. In this sense, personal security is perceived as support offered by one's immediate social network: without it, women would lose all forms of social support. Refugee women and women who used to cultivate land in Gaza speak of having to socially isolate themselves if they cannot pay back a loan—in order to avoid embarrassment, harassment, and conflict. They said being in debt destroyed their confidence and left them anxious and fearful.

**A key survival strategy is volunteering with charitable organizations (often religious-based), especially in Gaza.** Women actively participate in lectures and training courses, distribute humanitarian assistance, and participate in social activities. In addition to providing a socially supportive environment for women, such engagement is a critical way for women to receive material assistance (coupons to be used for purchasing consumer goods for the household or food), and temporary paid jobs (3 to 6 months). It also helps women develop social networks and intermediaries (*wasta*) that can help with employment for other family members, especially daughters. Women also trade and sell the coupons they receive from charitable organizations to repay their debts or purchase other needed goods for their families.

Some of these charitable associations and NGOs are run by women, often from some of Gaza's oldest and most established families. Others are operated by Islamic organizations, with national and international links, that are able to receive and redistribute emergency assistance. In the absence of a functioning economy, such institutions form the backbone of the aid distribution system. As a result, they represent one of the few sectors of the economy that has employment opportunities (even if intermittent, depending on the ebb and flow of aid). Therefore, even women who had been earning income through the informal economy are now abandoning that insecure sector for volunteerism and its material benefits.

*"I have been involved in the Jami'at tatweer el Mara, an association for women's development, for more than three years now. I spend more than four hours a day in its headquarters; I organize lectures, go on field visits, and distribute coupons for poor families. I have made good contacts with many institutions in Gaza and I am proud I am in contact with their directors. When my daughter graduated from the university, I put pressure on one of the institutions' heads to employ her. This is the least favor they can provide for my martyred son. She is now earning NIS*

*700 a month and she helps me in managing the family needs. Everything in Gaza goes smoothly if you have wasta (social connections). It's the same with Hamas or non-Hamas institutions."*

In Gaza, even wives of income-earning men turn to charitable associations in the hope of receiving aid. As a middle-aged woman from El Maghazi in Gaza relates:

*"Two of them are in the university and everything is getting triply expensive. This forced me to go out and apply for job creation projects. I am not eligible for these jobs since in principle my husband has an income, but I was able to get something anyway. I have recently become very active with the benevolent associations, attending all their activities, and whenever they have food assistance, they register my name. My two university students also applied for loans in the university, but they only got one because their father gets a regular income. I know that we are better off than thousands of other families who have no sources of income, and they deserve the assistance more than us. Although we live a very modest life, the income we earn is not sufficient until the middle of the month. I am like other families who have no income. I buy meat or chicken once a week. I don't buy fruits and clothes. I myself have never bought any new clothes for more than four years."*

**Women must also invest in and cultivate relationships with their own extended families (for example, parents and siblings), independent of their husbands' families, to supplement household income.** Women provide in-kind support to their own extended families, whether through the care economy or psychological support, which in return also provide them with assistance. In the words of a young woman from Beit Hanoun in Gaza:

*"When I need money after my husband's income is spent, I just visit one of my sisters to borrow a little money for the most urgent things. She does not deal with it as a debt, if she has enough money. I most of the time go and help her with her domestic work and I take care of her children. When she has a baby, I cook for her."*

A young wife from El Maghazi, Gaza also commented:

*"The salary of my husband is not enough. I visit my parents once a week and they give me NIS 50 each time. It is not a debt. It is to support me since they understand my husband's family situation."*

*"The checkpoints make you pay more for transportation. So you have to minimize the events you attend and the relationships you have because you are worried about how to get to a certain location. Before the intifada, I used to reach my parents with 2 shekels, but today I have to pay 20 shekels."*

Married woman from Hebron



**For women, investing in family relationships is difficult when restrictions on movement and access, coupled with cultural mobility restrictions, isolate them from their natal families.** If they do not live in the same area, the restrictions on movement and access limit women's ability to contribute and draw on resources from their natal families. It is these resources that women consider to be a last resort for survival.

**Any household income is shared with the extended family, putting a strain on financial resources, and ultimately, on intrahousehold relations.** In both Gaza and the West Bank, female respondents highlighted that working husbands must also share their income with their extended families (parents, siblings with families, and so on.). Wives must carefully navigate this issue to avoid conflict. A middle-aged woman from Al Maghazi presented her family situation as follows:

*"My husband is a civil servant who earns NIS 2500 a month, and I have 10 children. We used to be fine before the closure. My husband's brothers used to work in Israel and we used to borrow money from them when necessary. Since my brothers-in-law stopped their work, my husband has had to support them. So part of our income goes to pay for the families of my two brothers-in-law. If he doesn't do this, his old parents will be angry with him and we are not in need of family troubles. I have to manage with what is left sometimes by reducing my children's expenses."*

**Married women must therefore work to nurture the networks of family ties.** The support and assistance received from family members, though welcomed, also put at risk these very relationships and are therefore yet another cause of anxiety. Realizing the benefits of this supportive environment requires maintaining the ongoing good will of family members—a demanding task that is not empowering.

**The survival strategies women are forced to adopt (borrowing, bartering, volunteering), and the greater participation in the formal and informal economy described in chapter 2 are thrusting women into the public sphere, just as men are retreating, defeated by high unemployment and conflict.** In many instances, it appears that the resources women bring to their household make them a key, if not the primary, provider for the family. This comes, of course, at a social cost. It undermines men's culturally ascribed roles as both provider for and protector of the family. It is also simply the reality that women bring in cash, when men are unable to do so, that men find particularly humiliating—and that often leads, according to our respondents, to domestic tension.

**In this environment, it is up to women not only to provide, but to tread very carefully in nurturing harmonious relations within the family.** The family is in a sense the foundational unit that provides security and therefore, it is a key survival resource in this violent environment.

**The first national survey on domestic violence, carried out by PCBS, has found** overall rates of gender-based violence in the West Bank and Gaza to be similar to worldwide averages.<sup>112</sup> About 30 percent of married women and 39 percent of unmarried women suffered domestic violence. The study also found that women living in large households are most likely to suffer from physical abuse and conflict, reflecting the high levels of tension brought on by the economic crisis. The key factors protecting them from physical harm appear to be: (i) secondary or higher level of education, (ii) gainful employment, and (iii) old age.

*"The whole situation of men not having jobs has changed family life. Men are going out at night, sitting, smoking with friends and then coming home and sleeping during the day. They are too ashamed to face their families. Their kids and wife come to them and say: 'I need money for this or that' and they have nothing to give. This destroys them."*

Gazan woman aid worker

**An important finding of the 2006 PCBS study is that the main type of domestic strife in the West Bank and Gaza is argument, with over 47 percent of married women reporting experiencing such conflict.**<sup>113</sup> The study also shows that conflict in the form of argument is more common among households where the male breadwinner has lost his source of income.<sup>114</sup> Our case studies corroborate the importance of this type of conflict. Interviews and focus groups with women, and indeed men, in the West Bank and Gaza all identified and highlighted domestic tensions resulting from the changes in gender roles.

**Unemployed men acknowledge the sense of shame that comes with living on their wives' incomes.** An unemployed professional man in Gaza whose wife has now become the main provider for the family describes his feelings as follows:

*"I am a professional. I have qualifications. I haven't had a job for four months. I'm running out of savings. A strong part of me would rather borrow and go into debt than use my wife's earnings for the essential—food on the table, clothes and shoes, electricity. That's just how it is in our culture. I say to my wife: don't kill me with your salary. I don't want any of it. It makes me ashamed."*

**Recognizing this, women tread carefully to protect masculine self-esteem and preserve family harmony.** In the words of one woman from Jenin City who produces and sells milk products from livestock to support her family:

*"I have to think carefully about how I manage myself and what I say. For example, I can't just come home and give him the money I earn. This would make him angry and depressed. He would feel like a failure for not being able to earn it himself. Instead, I leave it on the TV. I don't want him to feel that he is not the man of the house."*



**Secrets and white lies: in their attempts to protect masculine self-esteem and preserve their dignity, wives sometimes conceal their survival strategies from their husbands. This can also lead to domestic tension.** Husbands do the same. As one man from El Maghazi in Gaza explained:

*"One day I discovered that some of the kitchen items we had were not there any longer. I asked my wife about them. She said that she had lent them to her sister. I shouted at her and I got angry. Then she told me that the reality was that she sold them one day when she was in urgent need of money. I was very sad. I also noticed my wife asked her sisters for their children's clothes which they have outgrown. My wife never cooked Khubeiza (wild growing green leaf) before; she didn't like it. Now she cooks anything and I don't say a word. I now often sit with her discussing and negotiating what to do to survive. I trust her opinion."*

**Women must also coax their husbands to help them in their new productive role, drawing them out of their depression for the benefit of the family unit, while at the same time, they continue to carry out their traditionally ascribed role as caretaker of the family.** A respondent from Jenin, describing the depression that has overcome her unemployed husband says:

*"He lost a lot of money [in a farming venture]. It was an expensive failure. He couldn't go out after that. He just sat at home defeated. I now do everything I can to help our family survive. I feel far more responsible than him. I have to do something. It's the situation. There's no decent work for men around here. I have to encourage him to graze the sheep, to get the fodder and to do the simple chores that I cannot do because I am dealing with the children, feeding us, making cheese and selling it."*

**When men work for low wages, it is women (mothers or wives) who manage the domestic economy.** Men who earn low wages know that their earnings are insufficient to meet the needs of the family. In many instances, our female respondents in Gaza noted that men understand that women are better able to manage the family expenses, so they happily hand over a significant portion of their earnings to their wives or mothers. It is not uncommon for unmarried men to only keep some pocket money for cigarettes and transport. Respondents also said that it is becoming increasingly common for women to go and do the shopping for the household—a significant departure from established gender roles. In the words of one young man from Gaza:

*"I do not need any additional headache, since I believe the income is not enough even for half a month!"*

**In addition to spousal conflict, tensions caused by shifting gender roles may also spill over into the extended family, particularly since the economic crisis has forced families to live in multigenerational households to help make ends meet.** The survival strategies

that women adopt to support their families (volunteering, selling their home-based products in the market) are a departure from established gender norms in the dominant culture of gender relations. The following comment by a 27-year-old wife from a refugee camp in Gaza is illustrative of family and intergenerational tensions (between women and parents-in-law):

*“My husband is jobless. I have four young children and I never went out of the house to search for coupons. I didn’t finish my Tawjihi. I live a miserable life. My parents and my brothers are very poor. My mother-in-law and brothers-in-law live attached to us and they just survive. I was forced to go out and go to charitable institutions to get coupons. What else can I do? I wear the neqab [facial veil] in order to hide myself when I go out. My mother-in-law and sisters-in-law always instigate my husband against me while I am out to shop or to search for coupons. I don’t know if they feel jealous or what. They don’t know that I would love to stay at home and not go anywhere. What I am doing is not for pleasure. I leave my children behind while I go out and my husband is careless. Every time I go out he comes back home and beats me until he makes me shout loudly to make sure his mother and sisters know that he is the man of the house. I know this and I try because of my children to shut my mouth and to bear the pain of violence. When my husband calms down, I talk with him and explain the reasons for my going out. He understands and sometimes he apologizes and excuses himself.”*

**Conflict over women’s mobility may also involve brothers or sons, with the young men attempting to restrict women’s movement.** Qualitative interviews and focus group discussions, in Gaza especially, surprisingly suggest that middle-aged men with less education display more tolerance than young, educated men, possibly because they were part of the generation that worked in Israel and had wider exposure to the world or because experience and life have simply made them more empathetic and understanding, and less idealistic in relation to roles and responsibilities. Most young men in Gaza have never left the Strip because of the closure regime, and have therefore become more socially and culturally isolated. This may explain their relative conservatism. Nevertheless, even conservative men have now been forced to accept that wives can work, and even wish for it, in order to meet the household’s survival requirements. One man from Gaza related:

*“I refused to let my wife work five years ago. It was my job to provide. Things are different today: the situation is really bad, so now that I wish she would work, there’s no work for her! But if I had proper money for my family, I would prefer it if she didn’t work.”*

**Some women are conflicted about their new role as main provider for the household.** For the most part, women with limited skills who work in the informal sector for low wages and continue to assume responsibilities for household reproduction (domestic chores and



the like) and who manage complex social relations that generate tension and anxiety, see little cultural or personal significance in their work beyond a limited income. Their earnings, though important for the family, come at significant effort and sacrifice. In the words of a young wife from Qalandia camp:

*"My husband became unemployed and it is me who works. Yet the blessings of the money my husband brings in are more than what I bring in. There is no blessing in my money."*

**Furthermore, on the one hand, some women see the survival activities they engage in as disempowering.** These women often express a desire to give up work and stay at home, longing for the days when their husbands earned the household income:

*"We used to have a good standard of living, only busy with our domestic work and children."*

**While on the other hand, some women, especially those who are more educated feel empowered by their work.** Educated women in the formal labor market, such as teachers, perceive themselves as having decent work that earns them respect both at home and in the community. They move more easily between work space and home space. As one woman teacher in the Jordan Valley explains:

*"I feel more secure and I feel my parents and the community respect me. I don't have to do as much persuading as women with less education"*

In contrast, women who are most socioeconomically disadvantaged, especially those in Gaza, talk of "wandering across town from one charitable organization to another," in search of coupons and food rations that may or may not materialize.

**Among youth there appears to be a reevaluation and an attitudinal shift in traditionally ascribed gender roles.** The following dialogue among three young people in Bethlehem illustrates how young people are viewing and debating gender roles for themselves:

**Women, especially those without higher education, have been forced to adopt short-term coping strategies. However, they recognize that these are not sustainable options that would make qualitative improvements in their standard of living.** Hence, families may be seeking a structural shift for their daughters that would bring a fundamental transformation in their living conditions. There are indications that they are investing in their education and marriage for long-term outcomes.

**There is a perceptible transition underway in terms of gender roles and expectations. Growing numbers of youth and their families no longer perceive the traditional male breadwinner and housewife as sufficient to provide a decent standard of living, given the growing economic crisis.** Moreover, there are also indications that many men appreciate



the role women, especially their wives, are playing in the household economy which fosters domestic cooperation and harmony. In the words of one male respondent from Maghazi, Gaza expressing his appreciation for his wife: *"I now often sit with her discussing and negotiating what to do to survive. I trust her opinion."* These attitudinal changes are also reflected in the evolving patterns in education and marriage patterns for both young men and women.

**Both national statistical data and qualitative research reveal that families place a premium on education, especially girls' education.** They do so in order to ensure their daughter's chances of working in the formal labor market (the most culturally acceptable form of employment for women), improve her chances of marriage, and as insurance in the event of marital breakdown or male joblessness in the future. Families have therefore recognized that the idealized model of a male breadwinner no longer holds and that women need to prepare for the event of its collapse.

**Families are now educating their daughters in record numbers: in the West Bank, there was a steady rise in both male and female enrolment in secondary and post-secondary schools between 2000 and 2006.** Female enrolment not only surpassed male enrolment in higher education by 2006, it also doubled in just 6 years. In Gaza, males continue to have the higher post-secondary attendance rates (15.5 percent), but women have caught up dramatically over the past six years, doubling their post-secondary attendance rate to 12.6 percent ( table 6).

**Qualitative research reveals that in the West Bank, female education is seen as an investment to improve the marriage prospects of daughters and as insurance against future risk, although in Gaza families have been educating their daughters expressly so they would gain employment and support their families.**

A case study of a woman from one of the most underprivileged socioeconomic groups in Gaza, with 15 children, almost all adults and discouraged workers, reveals that she is prepared to break with all gender norms to invest in her 17-year-old daughter's university education, in the hope that she will be able to secure a job in the formal sector and help her provide for the family (see box 4).



Table 6: School Enrolment, by Age in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (%)

	2000			2004			2006		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>West Bank</b>									
6-11	96.1	96.3	96.2	98.0	96.3	97.1	98.7	98.8	98.8
12-15	90.6	94.9	92.7	93.5	96.5	95.0	93.6	98.2	95.9
16-17	63.6	71.4	67.3	78.2	83.8	80.8	78.0	90.3	84.5
18+	7.7	6.4	7.1	12.6	10.2	11.4	11.0	12.6	11.8
<b>Gaza Strip</b>									
6-11	93.9	93.9	93.9	96.6	95.6	96.1	98.3	99.1	98.7
12-15	93.0	94.4	93.7	95.0	94.8	94.9	95.1	97.8	96.4
16-17	72.1	71.6	71.9	82.8	81.7	82.2	82.6	88.6	85.5
18 +	12.5	7.3	9.9	15.9	11.1	13.5	15.5	12.8	14.1

Source: PCBS Databases of Demographic and Health Surveys 2000, 2004, 2006.

#### Box 4: Raising Rabbits in Gaza

In a village in Al Zawayda in Gaza, Subheya Motawe (aged 52) raises rabbits in order to provide extra nutrition for the family as well as income support. Subheya's family are Bedouin who originally fled to Gaza as refugees from Israel in 1948.

Subheya's house is very basic: five rooms, concrete floors and walls, and little furniture other than a second-hand bed and two old wardrobes. Bombardments shook the fragile foundations of the house, causing the roof to collapse, during the January 2005 Israeli offensive.

Subheya is married and has 15 children—9 sons and 6 daughters between 19 and 32 years old. Her husband used to work in Israel, but suffers from chronic back pain and is unable to work. All but one of her children live at home and none contributes regularly to household expenses. Two are casual agricultural laborers who rarely find work, and one works with the Palestinian Authority as a guard.

Subheya's eldest son (age 32) went to Moscow ten years ago to study medical engineering. It didn't work out; he had a breakdown and returned home without a degree. The family now has debts; their hopes for repayment rest with a daughter who is now at university. It took the family two years to save enough to send her. "If she can find a skilled job and earn a good salary then we'll be better off," says her mother.

Local aid workers say that the nomadic life of the Bedouin, centered on animal husbandry, meant that education for their children was not a priority. Children dropped out of school, leaving them with minimum or no qualifications. But that is changing. The creation of the state of Israel, the occupation, and the closure of Gaza has grounded the Bedouin; there is less land available as a result, so they have had to look for new opportunities. Subheya says "My daughter is good at her studies. She is our best hope."

**The qualitative research also shows that charitable work in Gaza (one of the few sectors where employment is available and fluid) is now considered to be “decent” work (although often temporary) for young female graduates.** Young women have been able to support their families through intermittent income, food assistance, and temporary work schemes. Volunteering at charitable organizations gives young university graduates valuable work experience. As a result, interviews with employers revealed there are more young women applicants for jobs, especially charitable organizations and that their CVs are much richer than their male counterparts. This is because women are more likely to be ready to accept any type of work, including unpaid work in the hopes that it will lead to other opportunities. A 24 year old woman relates her experience:

*“Without my volunteering with Sharek (the biggest youth association in Gaza), I wouldn’t have been able to find a good job. I have been applying for jobs since my second year in the university. All the training courses I attained and the voluntary work I have done gave me the opportunity to get a job. I am working now as a project coordinator for 6 months and it is renewable. I get a salary of US\$ 700 a month. I give the entire salary to my parents, except US\$ 100 for my personal expenses and transport.”*

**Young women university graduates in Gaza are also much more flexible and open to a variety of poorly paid and temporary work opportunities (especially within the aid economy<sup>115</sup>) than are young men with higher education.** Normative gender roles probably account for this; young men still perceive themselves as principle breadwinners with aspirations for jobs in the formal labor market. They are therefore more selective about the type of work that best meets their needs. Young women’s employment, on the other hand, is still perceived as secondary, and ultimately not their primary gender role. This illustrates how deeper patriarchal gender norms remain salient even when they are being challenged by new needs and patterns of behavior. Thus, women’s participation in the labor market does not automatically result in changing deeply seated gender-based inequalities.

**Investing in higher education is still a risky proposition for families, as it may not lead to employment. In fact, women with post-secondary education make up the largest part of the female unemployed, in contrast to their male counterparts, who are the least likely group of men to be unemployed.** Moreover, marriage is still perceived as the best possible outcome for a young woman, so the longer women remain in education, the more likely marriage will be deferred. Qualitative interviews show male and female interviewees alike to be very wedded to a certain gender order:

*“When a man earns, he has a sense of himself. Women have a sense of themselves when they are married and have children. I have girlfriends who have a job and earn money but no husband and children. They don’t have a sense of themselves.”*



**For families who have heavily invested in their daughter's education, an unmarried and unemployed university graduate is a source of anxiety and concern.** In the words of a middle-aged mother from the Al Zaitoun area in Gaza:

*"I have been struggling for the past 20 years to educate my daughters. My son didn't care about higher education. I have been trading at home for 10 years and saving money to educate my daughters. I didn't want them to have a hard life like their mother. Two of them graduated from university three years ago and they have been applying for many jobs but with no results. All jobs are distributed by wasta and I don't have wasta. Sometimes I regret that I deprived the whole family of many things to pay for their education. It would be better if they get married to the first suitor that will come to them. I thought that men prefer educated women for marriage, but it is not true."*

Another woman, in her early 50s, from Beit Hanoon in Gaza, similarly comments:

*"I regret that I helped my two eldest daughters complete their university education. I struggled a lot to provide them with the money they needed. Half of my husband's salary paid for their education. Both of them are now sitting at home not able to find a job. People come to ask for the younger daughter for marriage and they don't think about the eldest. If they earn an income, they may marry. I feel so sad for them. What is the benefit of their education if they get older and don't marry? Men in Beit Hanoon don't prefer educated woman."*

**With marriage, the birth of sons, and middle age, women gain power, influence, respect, and independence, hence the concern of families in ensuring their daughters' marriage.**

Women who have lost their male breadwinners, even if they earn sufficient income from other sources, elicit compassion, not just for their loss but because the presence of a man is so central to a woman's identity and personal and social security. Many common sayings and proverbs express this cultural value: "A woman without a man is humiliated" ("El mara bedoon rajel tetshahshat"); "The smell of a man is better than his absence" ("Reehet el rajel walla 'adamu"); and "The shadow of a man is better than that of the wall" ("Thil el rajel walla thil el heyta").

**The most disadvantaged young women, as identified by the qualitative research, are young, single, rural women with only a high school diploma. Unable to move because of both cultural constraints on their mobility and the movement and access restrictions resulting from the occupation, they face dim prospects for work, marriage, and social status.** They remain frustrated and stuck at home performing household chores. In the West Bank, families restrict the movement of young women, especially inhabitants of Areas B and C and refugee camps, to protect them from the moral hazards of the insecure external environment (though they make exceptions for work and education). In Gaza, such young

women are also isolated, lonely, and relegated to household chores and childcare that allow their mothers the mobility needed for survival. For these women, engaging in trade is considered *ayb* (shameful). There is not much they can do to earn income. With little access to the outside world, the only input they receive is training in traditional skills passed from mother to daughter, such as in sewing and handicrafts, that are expected in marriage. They generally do not participate in community organizations and lack the confidence and permission to move alone in public spaces in the way their postsecondary and university-going contemporaries can do. In Gaza, some of the more enterprising mothers take them along to “volunteer” at charitable associations, in the hopes that they would be seen by mothers seeking brides for their sons.



## Community-Level Coping Strategies

The previous section considered coping strategies adopted by men and women in the face of overwhelming violence and rising poverty. Qualitative research for this study has also revealed that the same forms of violence are also stress factors in communities. Our research has shed light on how some communities in the West Bank have fared better in managing and resisting the movement and access restrictions imposed on them than others, suggesting that strong community-based organizations can create channels for social and political participation, helping communities overcome the tensions and pressures around them. A comparison of two communities that have been equally subjected to Israeli military activity—the village of Naeleen and the Old City of Hebron— illustrates this point.

The village of Naeleen has strong local institutions and active involvement of the international solidarity movement. This has fostered a spirit of voluntarism among youth and other segments of the community and a high level of social capital within the village, which has served them well in combating the effects of the conflict. The international solidarity groups played an important role in standing by the community's resistance to the construction of the barrier and settler violence by bringing these issues to the attention of international media. This helped break the isolation and marginalization of the village. The village has two youth centers; one is a sports club and the other a community center that serves young men and women alike. Through the centers, young people are encouraged to serve their communities (by tutoring younger students after school, for example). A culture of community service has emerged that has helped the village reduce internal conflict, achieve higher levels of women's mobility and education, and greater openness towards women's participation in the labor force and public life.

In contrast, the Old City of Hebron, which is isolated by movement and access restrictions and endures a heavy settler presence, lacks community institutions. There is also a worrying level of community disintegration and internalization of observed military violence, by youth in particular. The situation is aggravated by the rapidly deteriorating economic situation and the collapse of the PA security system. There is a strong sense of insecurity, skepticism, and isolation in the Old City. Focus group discussions highlighted the collapse of the value system that used to govern the relationships between students and teachers, and neighbors and the community at large. In the words of one respondent:

*"There is the fear of growing thefts, harassment, collaboration with the Israelis, and of the failure of the Palestinian Authority to safeguard security and safety for the citizens in the City of Hebron. I don't know about other places. But when you go to the police to report a series of thefts in the same neighborhood and on a daily basis, they don't move. Now not only are houses being robbed but also mosques, and the government does nothing."*



Respondents also revealed the rise of other forms of social problems, ranging from high rates of high school dropouts, early marriage for girls, child labor, smoking and thefts in the schools, and growing restriction of women's mobility. Some of these are confirmed by the national statistical data: dropout rates for urban girls in the southern West Bank were much higher than in the north or center. The dropout rate in the northern West Bank for urban females 18 and older was 40 percent, compared to 36 percent in the central West Bank and 46 percent in the southern West Bank.<sup>116</sup>



## Conclusion

**The collapse of the labor market, caused by restrictions of movement and access, is not only incurring a collapse in the economy, but also generating covert and overt forms of violence.** The violence is internalized, resulting in stress, anxiety fear, tension, and depression, in the face of which families have to employ coping strategies. The pervasive conflict environment has permeated every aspect of Palestinian life. Violence in the public sphere has crept into the domestic sphere. Men and women have to cope under conditions of tremendous anxiety and uncertainty to ensure family survival. The predominant military force and absence of justice have disempowered men and forced them to retreat and seek solace in isolation. Married women are making an effort to supplement the family income, but at great costs. The pressures they are enduring are not sustainable. Though trappings of gender role reversals are discernible (for example, men either retreating to the domestic sphere or unproductive public spaces such as coffee and shisha smoking shops; women out and about in public), the circumstances which generate such change and the change itself is perceived as humiliating and unempowering for both men or women.

**The research has confirmed that there are many constellations of gender roles within the dominant culture of gender relations in the West Bank and Gaza.** Thus, in some cases, men have learned to cope with their weakened ability to provide for their families by showing appreciation for their wives, creating opportunities for domestic cooperation and harmony. These roles change and adapt depending on the ebb and flow of mobility restrictions and their subsequent economic impact. As the qualitative research has shown, this situation is influencing a broad range of attitudes on issues including women's work and mobility, education of girls and boys, and age of marriage. Ultimately, these changes, as short or long-lasting as they may be, are about family survival under extreme duress.

**It remains to be seen whether women's roles in the workplace, in the face of male joblessness and poverty, will be reversed if and when the economy is restored and employment opportunities improve.** Evidence from both the West Bank and Gaza shows that shifts in gender roles are a response to ensuring family survival rather than a systemic attitudinal change. Despite some shifts, many men do not necessarily see women as equal partners or consider their role in the workplace as an inherent right. In the words of a once well-off export farmer from Gaza: *"One factor that will contribute to empowerment is women's desire, above all, to see their men's dignity restored and employed earning decent wages."*



# OVERALL CONCLUSION



Photo by: Atef Safadi



This study has assessed the social impact of movement and access restrictions imposed by the government of Israel on the West Bank and Gaza, and has described the journey that women and men are traveling to eke out livelihoods, preserve social structures, and endure the psychological and physical weight of numerous barriers. As the study shows, women's role has been tremendous, taking on low-paid and unprotected jobs, managing household tensions, and tapping into social networks to borrow money, sell coupons, and adopt myriad other strategies to support their families in a time of penury. Men have suffered the impact of the crisis at many levels—economic, social and psychological—painfully bearing witness, but unable to prevent their families' increasing fall into poverty. The study has also described how overt forms of violence, such as demolitions, detentions, and killings, predominately affect men, yet women also share in the repercussions, stepping into roles that they are often ill-prepared for.

For women, two pictures emerge. The first reveals how married and middle-aged women are increasing their economic participation, taking on poorly paid and unprotected jobs or increasing informal income-generating activities to sustain depleting financial resources. Much of this work remains hidden and not captured by traditional labor market surveys. Predominantly uneducated or with limited education, these women have increased their mobility, despite the prevailing cultural attitudes that frown on women leaving their homes unaccompanied—attitudes that help maintain, to the extent possible, traditional networks and support systems which are also buckling under the weight of restrictions and ensuing *falataan amni*. The second picture is of an increasingly difficult environment for young and educated women; the pressure of finding socially appropriate jobs hangs over them, as does the dearth of appropriate jobs available. Mobility restrictions have reduced their economic opportunities; the result is their longer presence in education. The presence of civil society institutions has been a blessing for many of the young and educated, providing them with a constructive outlet, socially and economically.

For men, the picture seems more homogeneous. Without access to land and markets, unable to move goods smoothly within the West Bank and Gaza and across borders, male breadwinners have been forced into unemployment. Many have resorted to the informal sector, to generate income and also employment. Unable to meet the needs of their family, and powerless in the face of increasing physical insecurity, many have retreated into the domestic sphere, others away from it (to coffee houses, mosques) depressed and undermined by their inability to fulfill the idealized notion of what it means to be a male protector and provider. This has spurred increasing tensions in the household, with some men better able to manage these than others. For young men, the situation has been a crushing realization that the future holds little for them, as articulated by so many of the young men in the focus group discussions. Starting a family is a distant reality, and their only hope is to educate themselves and migrate in search of better opportunities.

The extent to which these various realities will alter gender relations is unclear. The prevalent culture of gender relations that was laid out in chapter 1 remains the dominant paradigm for male and female interaction in the West Bank and Gaza. This was captured during the focus group discussions with women and girls, who invariably mentioned jobs for men as their highest priority. There is no doubt that this relates in some way to easing the tensions and conflicts that erupt in the home. The need for men to once again regain their dignity as primary breadwinners is a desire expressed by women across the board. The undignified manner in which many women have had to participate economically—taking on low-paid jobs, borrowing, and bartering—has in some ways only strengthened older women’s desire for things to revert to “normal” and for the men to once again support their families. Additionally, many women would rather not have the pressure of both work and home, as this has only burdened them with ever-increasing demands on their time.

For young, educated women, the situation may be different. In some ways, many feel that education has empowered them, and those who have been lucky enough to attain good jobs have also felt empowered by their economic contribution. The important drop in fertility rates in the last few years is also likely to contribute to changing perceptions of women and open the door for greater participation in the economy. The likelihood of this change in attitude materializing is linked, of course, to the situation improving on the ground, and for the labor market to absorb more entrants. Attitudes among young men may also be changing, although—as revealed in the focus group discussions—there is a push and pull, with some young men more accepting than others of the thought of women in the workplace.

Ultimately, these are changes that will be negotiated by Palestinian men and women, boys and girls, preferably not as a reaction to a conflict situation but as a partnership in paving a way to a future that is peaceful and prosperous.



## Recommendations

The most effective way to improve economic opportunities for Palestinian men and women in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem is to lift movement and access restrictions. Absent such a move, there are four areas where specific local actions could improve family income by providing opportunities to women and men. These actions ought to be addressed by the PA as it prepares its new development plan and supported by the international community, including Israel.

### *1. Create and support enabling environments for safe and decent work.*

Women's economic participation can increase their personal security and prevent abuse only if family members see the work as "decent" and "dignified." The PA can promote such an enabling environment through the following actions.

- Support indigenous efforts to affect positive change in the law regarding equal protection of men and women in the workplace, especially in the informal sector. The Palestinian Labor Law enacted in 2001 provides for equal protection of men and women, and includes specific provisions for women, but does not specify penalties for employers who violate these provisions. Moreover, the law excludes large segments of the labor force where most of the workers are women: own-account workers, seasonal workers, unpaid family workers, domestic workers, and those involved in unpaid domestic care and reproductive work at home. Mechanisms that support women in the informal labor market, for example, trade unions that provide insurance schemes, can enable workers to protect themselves.
- Enhance the role of trade unions to monitor and encourage employers to take up fairer policies. On the supply side, given high fertility rates, provision of quality, affordable childcare would encourage women to join the labor market.
- Improve the regulation of the public transport sector to enhance women's mobility. In addition to Israeli-imposed restrictions on movement, women face special constraints due to the lack of a safe, well-regulated public transport system. The PA can do much to increase both safety and gender-sensitivity in the system. Such interventions could include making the routes and schedules of public transport clear and predictable to reduce waiting time, particularly from outlying villages to major towns; establishing safety and service standards and ensuring operator compliance; providing a seating area with priority access for women in vehicles that do not have dividers between seats to ensure women can maintain proper distance from male passengers.<sup>117</sup>

- As the family operates as an economic unit, livelihood programs should focus on supporting its cohesiveness rather than promoting work for one gender over the other. This can be done by promoting home- or community-based production systems that involve men and women working together. This is especially important for agricultural production, which requires the efforts of more than one family member. There is also considerable potential for improving the production and marketing of food and artisanal products through better processing, packaging, marketing, and advertising.

## *2. Support quality education and youth employment.*

The West Bank and Gaza enjoys gender parity in all levels of education. Families value and invest in their children's education—a contributing factor to high rates of educational attainment. Households' investments in their children's secondary and higher education need to be matched by governmental investment in the quality and relevance of education. At the secondary level, emphasis should be put on widening and developing technical and science tracks and making them more amenable to young women. This should continue into post-secondary with a focus on a wider range of practical degrees for both genders that will provide better opportunities for employment.

Young men should not be left behind in the process of empowering young women's entry to the labor market; young women's gains and social well-being depend not only on parental and family attitudes, but on whether young men also have meaningful opportunities and purposeful lives. Lack of hope and opportunity among young men has a debilitating effect throughout the whole of society—but especially on the possibilities and aspirations of young women. The PA can do much to harness the potential of its youthful population through the following actions.

- Develop innovative programs that promote first-time employment for young men and women equally, especially among those with tertiary education, by drawing on partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations. Even under the current dismal economic conditions, short-term, voluntary, and make-work programs for new graduates have proven effective in Gaza—especially for young women (as this report has shown). Short-term income to families from such programs affirms that investing in daughters' education is worthwhile.
- Expand the skills base of the young so they become more market-oriented and market-ready—favoring skills that lead to products that can cross borders without restrictions, for example, IT design, telecommunications, and electronics.



*3. Facilitate social cohesion, especially in Area C and others isolated by movement and access restrictions.*

This report shows that when communities are able to organize, drawing on all segments of their population (including male and female youth), they are more resilient in coping with stress factors resulting from the occupation. Civil society and social networks play an important role in sustaining the social capital of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza under these conditions of duress. These enabling environment networks are key to supporting communities that are enduring tension and restrictions under stress, and ensure that communities do not break down under the pressure of conflict.

- Promote and encourage the development of local institutions for community empowerment as these ultimately also protect women: they can be formal or informal, and can be a good source of involvement and experience for youth, both male and female. These institutions can also provide much needed support (in the form of legal advice; counseling; income support; transport; skills development; marketing assistance) to unemployed men and women facing tensions in the household.
- Support indigenous efforts to promote outlets of expression and debate. These can lead to greater social cohesion and community-building and instill positive attitudes and practices between the genders, through, for example, theater, soap operas, chat shows, art exhibitions, and film on broadcast media.

*4. Collect better data on gender-disaggregated economic participation.*

Much effort has gone into the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data in the West Bank and Gaza. However, the changing conditions on the ground require continual rethinking of tools and methods for gathering information that captures as much of the situation on the ground as possible. For example, labor market surveys tend to focus on formal employment and often miss the hidden forms of employment in which women are engaged, particularly in these past few years. More careful and rigorous research on these hidden forms needs to be carried out to better capture the full extent of women's economic participation and provide guidance to policy-makers on supporting the three areas highlighted above.

# ANNEXES

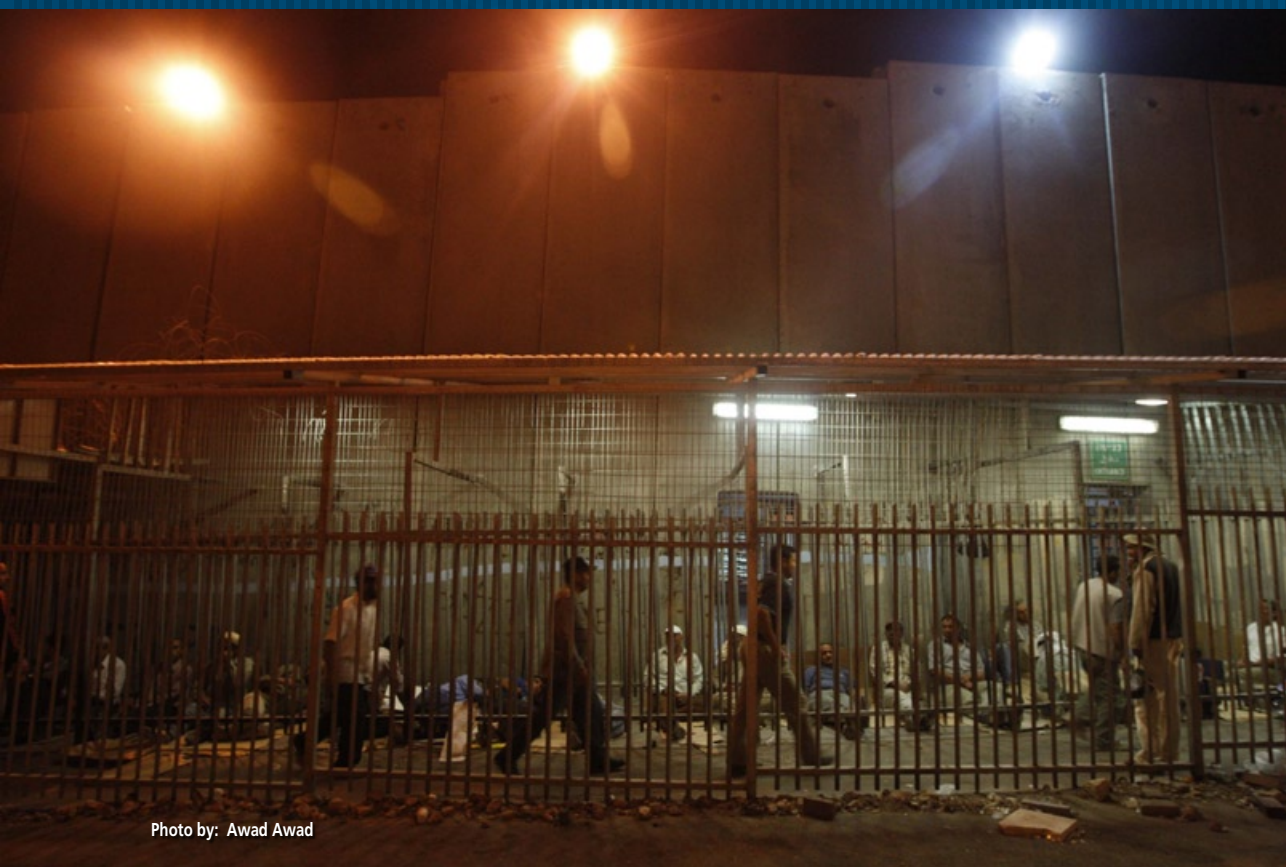


Photo by: Awad Awad



# ANNEX 1: MEASURING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CLOSURES

Various strategies for measuring closures exist, each focusing on a single dimension—such as counting the number of checkpoints and roadblocks existing at any one time (OCHA), the number of days that Rafah crossing is closed (UNSCO), or measuring the current length and route of the Separation Barrier (OCHA, B’Tselem) or the length of roads in the West Bank that prohibit Palestinian transport (B’Tselem). Table A1.1 summarizes the available measures for the West Bank, providing an overview of the geographic and temporal dimensions of internal closures.

Table A1.1: Internal Closures in the West Bank

Nature of Restriction	Extent	Minimum Duration				
Prohibited land area <sup>a</sup>	Palestinians prohibited from 50% of the entire West Bank land mass taken up by Israeli infrastructure	6 years and ongoing				
Prohibited roads <sup>b</sup>	More than 700 km of transport arteries prohibiting Palestinian use	6 years and ongoing				
Segregated regions <sup>c</sup>	Physical barriers segregate the West Bank into 6 main areas (North, Center, South, Jordan Valley, East Jerusalem and Barrier Seam zones)	For E. Jerusalem, 15 years; all other regions, from 3 to 6 years and ongoing				
Cantonized fragments <sup>d</sup>	Entire Palestinian population cantonized into more than 22 fragments within the 50% of West Bank accessible to them	From 2 to 6 years and ongoing				
Barrier “seam zones” <sup>e</sup>	West of the barrier: 15 communities (population of 99,290); East of the barrier: 15 communities (population of 208,627)	From 3 to 6 years and ongoing				
Number of governorates in which communities have experienced curfews <sup>f</sup>	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	7	6	4	11	10	9
Annual duration in hours of all curfews <sup>f</sup>	14,565	8,322	649	1,516	480	873

Sources: <sup>a</sup> World Bank, May 9 2007; <sup>b</sup> B’Tselem 2004; <sup>c</sup> OCHA 2007a; <sup>d</sup> OCHA 2007a; <sup>e</sup> OCHA 2007b; <sup>f</sup> OCHA February 2008.



In sum, approximately 50 percent of the West Bank is off-limits to Palestinians (World Bank 2007). In terms of duration, the segregation of East Jerusalem has been a reality for approximately 15 years, suggesting that its isolation has become entrenched, and as such, affects its socioeconomic and demographic makeup. And whereas the regional-level segregation has been a reality for more than 6 years, the timeline of the 22 fragmented cantons, including Separation Barrier “seam zones,” is more diverse. The issue of physical viability of some of these areas suggests that processes of adaptation and change continue to be in flux.

While internal closures have had an enduring and profound impact on the West Bank, mobility restrictions in the Gaza Strip—namely, the layers of cross-border closures to the West Bank, Israel and third-party countries—have been most protracted and significant. Attempts to quantify the nature and extent of these restrictions tend to overlook an inherent problem, however: since 1992, any movement out of the Gaza Strip through Israel to access the West Bank has been theoretically possible only for the extremely restricted proportion of the populace that meet Israel’s permit requirements. These include the most senior levels of the PA; some senior-level merchants; medical referrals who pass elusive “security requirements;” a small number of local staff of international organizations; and Palestinian wage laborers who have cleared the multiple hurdles of meeting demographic requirements, passing security clearance, and finding willing Israeli employers.

Table A1.2: External Closures in the Gaza Strip<sup>a</sup>

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (until April 1)	4/2006–2008
Average daily workers through Erez*	26,565	619	3,685	6,221	1,867	1574	1,855	zero
<b>Effective Closure Days**</b>								
Rafah	31	57	5	5	66	11/2005–6/2006 1	6/2006–10/2007 299	10/2007–2008 total effective closure since 6/10/2007
Karni	40	18	13	42	53	--	68% of the time by May 1	Total effective closure since June 2007
Sufa	86	134	64	87	78	--	44% of the time by May 1 2006	--
Gaza Airport	365	365	365	365	365	365	365	365

<sup>a</sup> Some data are based on recalculating monthly averages over a one-year period—especially for daily average of workers crossing Erez.

Sources: UNSCO 2003, January 2005; January 2006, OCHA April 2006, [www.EUBAM](http://www.EUBAM).

The most telling indicator on mobility out of Gaza is the number of Palestinian workers crossing at Erez. In 2000, an average 26,500 workers crossed daily, but the number dropped precipitously in 2001, remained low over the next 6 years, and ultimately fell to zero. The only other ways for individuals to enter or exit Gaza are the Rafah crossing and Gaza Airport, but the latter closed in 2000. Rafah’s accessibility has been extremely limited since 2000, and was consistently open only during the six-month period following the 2005 Israeli disengagement from Gaza. From mid-2006 to the present, Rafah crossing has been closed except for a few exceptional days.

For Karni, the main crossing point for goods, the number of closure days fluctuated between 13 (in 2002) and 53 (in 2004), but these figures do not convey the reality that when Karni was open, it operated at a very limited level of transaction, as reflected by the low number of truckloads of goods that crossed each day. By early 2006, Karni was closed two-thirds of the time, and closed completely from June 2007.

## ANNEX 2: SAMPLE, METHODOLOGY, AND SCOPE OF FOCUS GROUP SURVEYS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP

A qualitative data-gathering exercise was launched in early 2008 and was conducted over a six-week period in the Gaza Strip (during April–May 2008) and a similar time period in the West Bank (during July–August 2008). The data were collected through 25 focus groups, complemented by in-depth individual interviews with participants from different sites in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The total sample exceeded 250 participants. The timing of the focus group sessions affects the research results because of the political situation in Gaza, which had been under Hamas control since the preceding year, as well as the very serious fuel crisis that affected the whole of the West Bank and Gaza, causing real hardship vis-à-vis affordability of transport, availability of electricity, and access to water and cooking gas.

The sample was drawn from a range of geographical settings (rural, urban, and refugee camps) across a range of ages, social and employment status, and sectors of economic involvement. The sample comprises both men and women, typically segregated by gender. The average focus group size was 10 people, and each group was conducted for a particular category of respondent (housewives, male household heads, female youth, male youth, and so on). Separate focus groups targeted teachers (one group in the West Bank and three in the Gaza Strip), and another three groups consisted of microcredit borrowers.

The sample reflects the geographical diversity of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by drawing participants from all regions, including those most damaged by border closures and by Israeli military incursions, particularly the border areas. In the West Bank, focus groups were convened in Um Asharaet, Naeleen, Hebron, Sair village near Hebron, Balata refugee camp, Ethna, Jenin, Qalandia refugee camp, Deheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem, and Zabda. Four communities were chosen in the Gaza Strip: in the north, Beit Hanoun; in Gaza city, al Zaytoun; in Middle Gaza, al Maghazi; and in the south, Al Seyamat in Rafah.

It is not particularly useful to separate all social groups affected by mobility restrictions into fixed categories or typologies, however, given that nearly all Palestinians have been affected in a variety of ways and to different degrees. The research sample is selected, therefore, to provide samples of the majority of the rural, urban, and/or refugee camp population, excluding a small percentage of the population who have been “slightly” affected, at least



economically, because of their relatively higher regular income (mostly mid- and high-level professionals employed in government or nongovernment institutions). Another small portion of the population not included in the focus groups (for example, wholesale traders) was able to take advantage of and profit from closures by trading cement, fuel, or flour *inter alia*, which mostly passed through the illegal channels at the Rafah border with Egypt.

The focus groups were segregated by gender in order to minimize intimidation or pressure when discussing sensitive issues. Nevertheless, problems of sexual violence were scarcely raised and quickly passed over by because of discomfort among participants. It is important to note that the youth focus groups mainly consisted of upper secondary and community college/university students, as well as recent graduates, and as such do not adequately reflect the views of youth from poorer households.

Special focus groups of teachers were designed to address issues of education quality and curriculum effectiveness, *inter alia*, as well as to solicit an alternative adult perspective of the issues affecting youth. Microcredit borrowers were also targeted for feedback on the past effectiveness of and future prospects for existing microcredit schemes aimed at alleviating poverty and providing employment opportunities.

With respect to the scope of the focus group research, the discussion questions concentrated on two main themes: the impact of mobility restrictions on formal and informal economic participation and the impact on personal security. Within the context of these broad themes, several subthemes emerged, including decisions on investment in education; female labor supply among married and unmarried women; the impact of large extended households; preferences for formal-versus informal-sector employment; access to humanitarian assistance; changing roles of men and women in the public sphere; household responsibilities; domestic violence; women's perceptions of and reactions to domestic violence; marriage patterns and fertility; psychological well-being; and attitudinal changes.

## ANNEX 3:

TABLE A3.1: KEY MACROECONOMIC INDICATORS

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 <sup>a</sup>
GDP growth (%)	6.0	2.9	12.7	12.1	8.8	-8.7	-8.6	-13.3	14.9	11.9	6.7	-8.3	0.6	2.3
GDP per capita (constant 1997 US\$)	1,609	1,348	1,330	1,432	1,494	1,308	1,150	962	1,067	1,154	1,191	1,056	1,029	1,020
Labor force participation (%)	39.0	40.0	40.5	41.4	41.6	41.5	38.7	38.1	40.3	40.4	40.7	41.3	41.9	41.3
Unemployment (%)	18.2	23.8	20.3	14.4	11.8	14.1	25.2	31.3	25.6	26.8	23.5	23.6	21.5	26.0
Inflation rate (%)		5.6	7.6	5.6	5.5	2.8	1.2	5.7	4.4	3.0	3.5	3.8	2.7	9.9
Export (million US\$)	394	340	382	395	372	401	290	241	280	313	335	367	513	na
Import (million US\$)	1,658	2,017	2,239	2,375	3,007	2,383	2,034	1,516	1,800	2,373	2,667	2,759	3,141	na
External recurrent budget support (million US\$)	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	353	349	738	1,012	1,800
Fiscal Balance excl. external support (% of GDP)	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	-21%	-23%	-31%	-26%	-23%
GDP (current US\$ million)	3,220	3,366	3,702	3,944	4,179	4,195	3,897	3,433	3,841	4,198	4,634	4,619	4,672	5,252

<sup>a</sup> Excludes East Jerusalem.

<sup>b</sup> Preliminary data.

Sources: PCBS, Palestine Monetary Authority, IMF.



## ANNEX 4: PROGRESS TOWARD THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

**Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.** The percentage of Gazans who live in deep poverty has been steadily increasing, rising from 21.6 percent in 1998 to nearly 35 percent in 2006. Prior to the January 2009 incursion, about 80 percent of the Gaza population relied on some form of UN humanitarian assistance. With the continued economic decline in 2007 and 2008, and the mobility restrictions in Gaza, the current deep poverty rate is certainly higher. The above-cited measures reflect actual consumption, and as such include remittances and UN food aid. When poverty measures are based only on household income, however, the poverty rate in Gaza jumps to almost 67 percent. The increase in poverty in the West Bank has been lower but is still significant.

**Achieve universal primary education.** Access to education in West Bank and Gaza is equitable with respect to gender, location (rural and urban), and refugee status. Government schools account for 70 percent of enrolment, while UNRWA accounts for 24 percent and private schools for 6 percent. Although access to schools is primarily constrained by physical conditions and movement restrictions, insufficient investment in upgrading has led to crowding and deterioration in the learning environment. As schools have lost their revenue base from fees, they have also faced difficulties in securing basic school supplies and materials. With more children facing psychological trauma, the limited services for students with special needs has also become more evident. The inequity in resource allocation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has also become acute.

**Promote gender equality and empower women.** The West Bank and Gaza has achieved gender parity in primary, secondary and tertiary education, in contrast to much of the MENA region. Women's participation in the tertiary education sector, at 107.6, exceeds the MDG target, although these figures do not account for the large numbers of male students who seek education abroad. However, at 15.2 percent, women's labor force participation is among the lowest in the world. Similarly, women's decision-making role in the public domain is limited. In 2005, women held 10 percent of Director General positions and 5 percent of parliamentary seats. However, there appears to be improvement at the local government level (women represent 19 percent of elected officials in local office in the West Bank, 17 percent in the Gaza Strip).

**Reduce child mortality.** The infant mortality rate declined from 34 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 21 in 2005, and the under-five mortality rate fell from 40 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 23 in 2005. This general reduction in infant and child mortality over

a 15 year period reflects, inter alia, the resiliency of the Palestinian health sector in the face of continuous financial pressures and service delivery difficulties. By contrast, the average infant mortality rate for the MENA region as a whole was 43 deaths per 1,000 live births.

**Reduce maternal mortality.** There were an estimated 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 1995. This ratio, in contrast to the improvements in infant and child mortality rates, actually increased to 100 by 2005. The maternal mortality ratio in Jordan, by comparison, in 2005, was 41 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.

**Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.** There are no reliable data on the prevalence and incidence levels of HIV/AIDS in the West Bank and Gaza. A recent report indicated that 23 cases were reported in Gaza from 1990-2002. Tuberculosis is still an important public health concern. In 2005, the estimated prevalence rate of tuberculosis was 36 cases per 100,000 individuals, compared to 32 cases per 100,000 individuals in Egypt.

**Ensure environmental sustainability.** The conflict has led to environmental degradation due to the scarcity of water, rapid population growth, the refugee situation, desertification and land degradation, and land confiscation. Green lands, forests, and biodiversity dropped from 4.3 percent in 1998 to less than 1.5 percent in 2004.



## ANNEX 5: LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS ON THE PROBABILISTIC DETERMINANTS OF LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

In the analysis that follows, we use logistic regression analysis to identify the determinants of labor supply decisions by men and women. We use two sets of regressions to estimate the predictors of participation in order to adequately capture the two structural breaks in participation trends observed during 2000–2002 and from 2003 onwards. The first regression utilizes a “years” variable, in addition to other demographic variables, to investigate the impact of mobility restrictions on male and female participation relative to the pre-intifada base year 1999, considering the West Bank and Gaza Strip separately. The second regression estimates the likelihood of participation by analyzing demographic variables and the interaction with three separate periods: 1996–2000; 2001–2002; and 2003–2007.

Twelve years of cross-sectional data from the West Bank and Gaza Strip Labor Force Surveys conducted by PCBS have been consolidated, reweighted, and harmonized for the purpose of investigating labor force participation of men and women. The surveys contain series of questions pertaining to the labor force participation of men and women aged 15 years and over, and identify demographic characteristics such as age; locality (village, camp, and city); region (northern West Bank, central West Bank, southern West Bank, and the Gaza Strip); and individual characteristics such as educational attainment and marital status. The pooled dataset of all respondents in the West Bank and Gaza includes 948,986 people, of whom 483,168 are females. Excluding individuals over the age of 65 brings the pooled sample to 942,882 observations.

Based on empirical research and an extensive literature, the model assumes that a number of factors increase or decrease an individual’s reservation wage, in turn discouraging or encouraging labor force participation. Our analysis considers age, education, marital status, region, locality, and political–economic factors as proxied by a time variable. Formally, this may be summarized as follows:

$$LFP = \beta_0(\text{age}) + \beta_1(\text{education}) + \beta_2(\text{marital status}) + \beta_3(\text{region}) + \beta_4(\text{locality}) + \beta_5(\text{Years})$$

In terms of defining the region variable, we use the following breakdown: the *dnorthgov* dummy variable includes the northern governorates of the West Bank, (Jenin, Toubas, Tulkarem, Nablus, Qalqilya, and Salfit); the *dcntrgov* dummy variable includes the central governorates of the West Bank, (Ramallah, Jericho, and Jerusalem); the *dsouthgov* dummy variable includes the southern governorates of the West Bank (Bethlehem, and Hebron); and

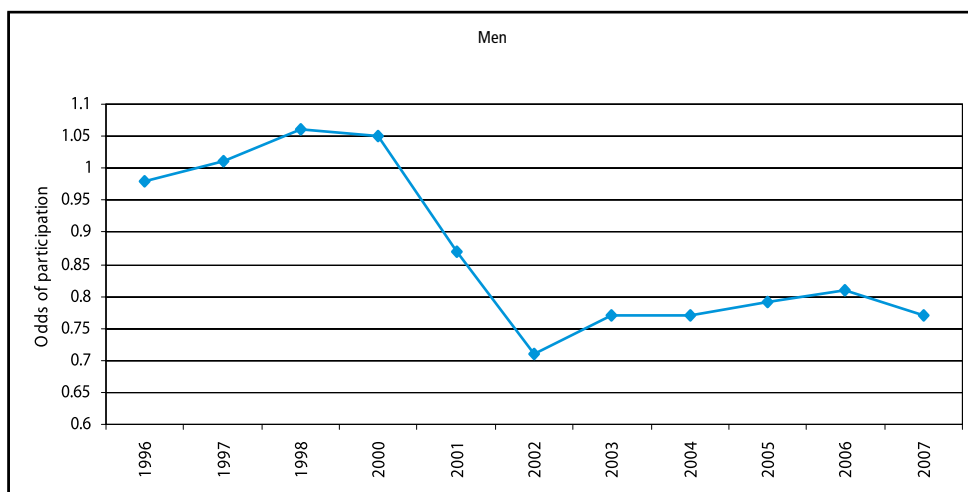


the *dgazagov* variable includes the governorates within the Gaza Strip (North Gaza, Gaza, Deir Al-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah).

The results of the first regression, illustrated in figure A5.1 and summarized in table A5.1, indicate that:

- Male participation in the labor market has never recovered from the rapid decline caused by Israeli violence and movement restrictions.
- Amid the devastation to the local economy and the closure of the Israeli labor market, more young men are remaining outside the labor market and entering higher education.
- Women in the West Bank also experienced a dramatic decline in their odds of participation in 2001–2002 compared to 1999, but their odds increased in the following years, and by 2007, their likelihood of participation was 1.18 times greater than in 1999.
- In the Gaza Strip, with the exception of 1996, the odds of male participation during the entire period under study were lower than reference year 1999, with the lowest odds during the period 2000–2001. In 2002, a Gazan man's odds of participation were 70 percent of those in 1999.
- For women in the Gaza Strip, the most striking feature of their odds of participation is the extreme fluctuation over time, reflecting efforts to search for work in desperate "crunch" periods. The odds peaked in 2000, declined during 2001–2002 and then partially improved, then declined through 2006, and returned to the 1999 baseline in 2007 (figure A5.1c below).

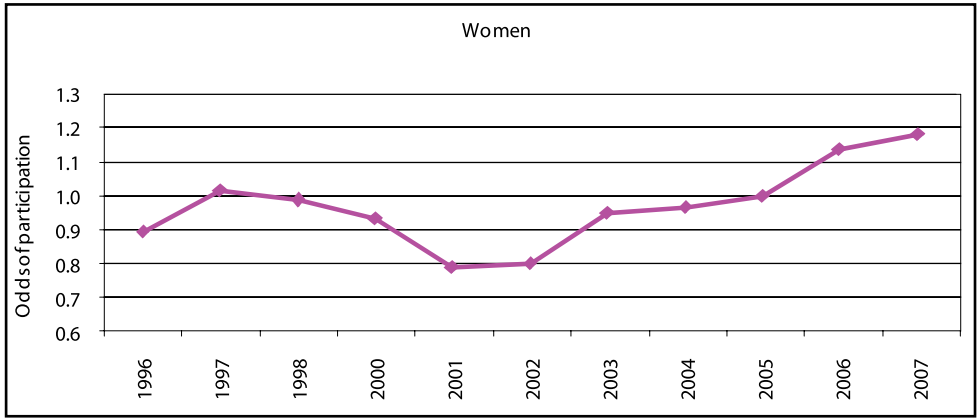
Figure A5.1 (a): Men's Probability of Participation, West Bank  
(Compared to Base Year 1999)



Reference Year: 1999 = 1.0.

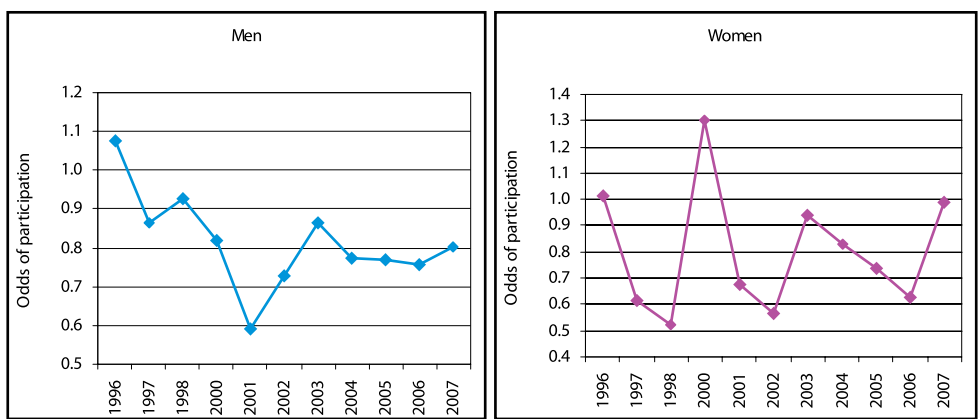


Figure A5.1 (b): Women's Probability of Participation, West Bank  
(Compared to CaseYear 1999)



Reference Year: 1999 = 1.0.

Figure A5.1 (c): Probability of Participation for Men and Women, Gaza Strip  
(Compared to Base Year 1999)



Reference Year: 1999 = 1.0.

The results of the second regression, summarized in table A5.2, indicate that:

- The likelihood of women participating in the labor force increases with age through their mid-50s, and thereafter declines. For men, the odds of participation are highest in the age group 25–35, but these odds have also been declining, as more young men remain in higher education.
- The correlation between education and female participation is U-shaped: the odds of participation are highest for those with a bachelor or master’s degree, lowest for women with 10–12 years of schooling and relatively high for women with no education. This is true in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Over time, the probability of a female with higher education or no education participating in the labor force has been increasing, while the odds of a woman with 10–12 years of schooling participating have been decreasing.
- Violence and mobility restrictions have had the greatest impact on men with no education, whose likelihood of participation was only 35 percent of men with 10–12 years of schooling in the period 1996–2000. This declined to 28 percent in 2001–2002, suggesting that education—previously not required for work in Israel—is more important within the domestic economy.
- Married women are less likely to participate in the labor force than women who have never been married or those who are divorced or widowed, but this trend is shifting. Before the intifada, the odds of a single woman participating in the labor market were 2.6 times those of a married woman, but this ratio has fallen to 1.8. Married men have the highest odds of participation compared to single men, both in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- Women living in the northern region of the West Bank have the highest odds of participating in the labor force, explained by that region’s large agriculture sector, which has mitigated the effects of rising unemployment. These odds have increased over time. Israeli violence during 2001—2002 had the strongest negative impact on women in Gaza, when the odds of participation declined from 120 percent to only 63 percent of the odds of women in central West Bank. The odds of male labor force participation are lowest in the Gaza Strip, reflecting closures and the destruction of the local economy.
- Women located in urban and refugee camp areas are less likely to participate in the labor force than rural women, probably because women in rural areas have better prospects for working in agriculture. The odds for male labor force participation are highest in urban centers, as a result of the higher proportion of formal sector jobs that were less affected by mobility restrictions (jobs in the public sector employment or those provided by international organizations and donor agencies, for example).

Table A5.1: Regression 1

Description	Variable	West Bank		Gaza Strip	
		Likelihood of participation exponential (B)			
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Age (years)	15-24	0.47 (0.00)	0.16 (0.00)	0.54 (0.00)	0.18 (0.00)
	25-34	1.81 (0.00)	0.77 (0.00)	2.14 (0.00)	0.80 (0.00)
	45-54	0.53 (0.00)	1.03 (0.08)	0.70 (0.00)	1.16 (0.00)
	55-65	0.15 (0.00)	0.62 (0.00)	0.18 (0.00)	0.76 (0.00)
Ref group	35-44				
Schooling (years)	No schooling	0.31 (0.00)	1.04 (0.12)	0.29 (0.00)	1.35 (0.00)
	1-9	1.16 (0.00)	0.94 (0.00)	1.24 (0.00)	0.99 (0.67)
	13-16	0.75 (0.00)	7.45 (0.00)	0.96 (0.01)	17.39 (0.00)
	≥17	0.82 (0.00)	21.90 (0.00)	1.51 (0.00)	44.79 (0.00)
Ref group	10-12 years				
Marital Status	Single	0.18 (0.00)	2.38 (0.00)	0.12 (0.00)	1.26 (0.00)
	Other	0.19 (0.00)	1.37 (0.00)	0.22 (0.00)	0.95 (0.28)
Ref group	Married				
Locality	Village	0.95 (0.00)	1.38 (0.00)	0.94 (0.00)	2.04 (0.00)
	Camp	0.89 (0.00)	0.96 (0.03)	0.81 (0.00)	0.83 (0.00)

Ref group	City				
Year	1996	0.98 (0.42)	0.89 (0.00)	1.07 (0.13)	1.02 (0.83)
	1997	1.01 (0.74)	1.02 (0.53)	0.87 (0.00)	0.61 (0.00)
	1998	1.06 (0.01)	0.99 (0.60)	0.93 (0.01)	0.52 (0.00)
	2000	1.05 (0.04)	0.93 (0.01)	0.82 (0.00)	1.30 (0.00)
	2001	0.87 (0.00)	0.79 (0.00)	0.59 (0.00)	0.67 (0.00)
	2002	0.71 (0.00)	0.80 (0.00)	0.73 (0.00)	0.56 (0.00)
	2003	0.77 (0.00)	0.95 (0.05)	0.87 (0.00)	0.94 (0.15)
	2004	0.77 (0.00)	0.97 (0.19)	0.77 (0.00)	0.83 (0.00)
	2005	0.79 (0.00)	1.00 (1.00)	0.77 (0.00)	0.74 (0.00)
	2006	0.81 (0.00)	1.14 (0.00)	0.76 (0.00)	0.63 (0.00)
2007	0.77 (0.00)	1.18 (0.00)	0.80 (0.00)	0.99 (0.83)	
Ref group	1999				

Source: World Bank staff calculations based on PCBS data. Figures in brackets indicate significance levels.

Table A5.2: Regression 2

Description	Variable	Likelihood of participation - exponential (β)					
		1996–2000		2001–2002		2003–2007	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Age	15-24	0.66 (0.00)	0.19 (0.00)	0.47 (0.00)	0.16 (0.00)	0.39 (0.00)	0.14 (0.00)
	25-34	2.29 (0.00)	0.75 (0.00)	1.75 (0.00)	0.75 (0.00)	1.76 (0.00)	0.80 (0.00)
	45-54	0.61 (0.00)	1.08 (0.00)	0.67 (0.00)	1.05 (0.26)	0.52 (0.00)	1.04 (0.07)
	55-65	0.18 (0.00)	0.70 (0.00)	0.21 (0.00)	0.63 (0.00)	0.13 (0.00)	0.62 (0.00)
Ref group	35-44						
Schooling	No schooling	0.35 (0.00)	0.99 (0.65)	0.28 (0.00)	1.13 (0.02)	0.27 (0.00)	1.24 (0.00)
	1-9	1.20 (0.00)	0.89 (0.00)	1.15 (0.00)	0.97 (0.34)	1.20 (0.00)	1.04 (0.03)
	13-16	0.78 (0.00)	9.28 (0.00)	0.86 (0.00)	11.93 (0.00)	0.84 (0.00)	9.19 (0.00)
	≥17	1.18 (0.00)	18.37 (0.00)	0.92 (0.21)	28.67 (0.00)	0.98 (0.56)	37.92 (0.00)
Ref group	10-12						
Marital Status	Single	0.16 (0.00)	2.60 (0.00)	0.18 (0.00)	2.05 (0.00)	0.14 (0.00)	1.80 (0.00)
	Other	0.17 (0.00)	1.27 (0.00)	0.20 (0.00)	1.26 (0.00)	0.25 (0.00)	1.25 (0.00)

Ref group	Married						
Regions	Northern West Bank	1.17 (0.00)	1.50 (0.00)	1.16 (0.00)	1.49 (0.00)	1.01 (0.52)	1.71 (0.00)
	Southern West Bank	1.10 (0.00)	1.07 (0.01)	1.28 (0.00)	1.23 (0.00)	1.02 (0.34)	1.37 (0.00)
	Gaza Strip	0.83 (0.00)	1.22 (0.00)	0.67 (0.00)	0.63 (0.00)	0.72 (0.00)	0.79 (0.00)
Ref group	Central West Bank						
Locality	Village	0.98 (0.19)	1.54 (0.00)	0.97 (0.21)	1.33 (0.00)	0.96 (0.00)	1.52 (0.00)
	Camp	0.78 (0.00)	0.79 (0.00)	0.93 (0.00)	0.96 (0.23)	0.83 (0.00)	0.87 (0.00)
Ref group	Urban						

Source: World Bank staff calculations based on PCBS data. Figures in brackets indicate significance levels.



# ANNEX 6

Table A6.1: Distribution of Ever-Married Women Exposed to Any Violence by Husbands in 2005 (%)

Psychological Abuse	Type of Violence		Region and Type of Locality/ Frequency of Violence
	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	
<b>Region:</b>			
<b>Palestinian Territory</b>			
61.7	23.3	10.9	Any incident
47.0	9.4	0.4	Three times or more
<b>West Bank</b>			
68.8	23.7	11.5	Any incident
51.6	8.8	0.4	Three times or more
<b>Gaza Strip</b>			
49.7	22.6	9.7	Any incident
39.6	10.4	0.4	Three times or more
<b>Type of Locality:</b>			
<b>Urban</b>			
62.8	23.2	11.2	Any incident
48.1	9.0	0.4	Three times or more
<b>Rural</b>			
64.9	23.0	10.9	Any incident
48.6	9.4	0.5	Three times or more
<b>Camps</b>			
52.3	24.1	9.8	Any incident
41.0	11.0	0.4	Three times or more

Source: PCBS Domestic Violence Survey (December, 2005–January, 2006); staff calculations.



Table A6.2: Distribution of Married and Unmarried Women Exposed to Life-Threatening Domestic Violence in 2005 (%)

Gaza Strip	West Bank	Palestinian Territory	
2.8	3.3	3.1	Married Women
3.8	4.0	3.9	Unmarried Women

Source: PCBS Domestic Violence Survey, Main Findings.

Table A6.3: Married Women Suffering Domestic Abuse at Least Once in 2005 (%)

Wife's Characteristics	Types of Violence		
	Psychological Abuse	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
Elementary or Less	62.5	35.8	12.0
Preparatory	64.3	25.1	12.2
Secondary and over	58.4	19.1	8.5
<b>Labor Force Status</b>			
Inside Labor Force	62.8	16.8	7.2
Outside Labor Force	61.5	23.9	11.2
<b>Household Size</b>			
4 or less	54.1	19.7	10.8
5 or more	64.2	24.5	10.9



Table A6.4: Married Women Suffering Domestic Abuse at Least Once in 2005 by an Unemployed Husband (%)

Husband Lost Job Due to Occupation Measures		
No	Yes	Type of Violence
21.4	30.5	Physical Abuse
59.6	70.2	Psychological Abuse
10.0	14.1	Sexual Abuse

Source: PCBS 2008, PCBS Domestic Violence Survey (2006), PCBS unpublished database.

## ANNEX 7: AGREEMENT ON MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

The November 5<sup>th</sup> 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA) is the third of a series of agreements to counter movement restrictions in the West Bank and Gaza and enable Palestinian people freedom to move, to trade, to live their lives.<sup>118</sup>

The agreement, announced by US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice and signed by Israel and the Palestinian Authority, recognizes Israel's security concerns but notes that Israeli actions should not instigate or promote Palestinian social and economic hardship and collapse.<sup>119</sup> Six points are covered:

1. For the first time since 1967, Palestinians will gain control over entry and exit from their territory. This will be through an international crossing at Rafah, whose target opening date is November 25, 2005.
2. Israel and the Palestinians will upgrade and expand other crossings for people and cargo between Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank.
3. Palestinians will be able to move between Gaza and the West Bank with bus and truck convoys.
4. Parties will reduce obstacles to movement within the West Bank.
5. Construction of a Palestinian seaport can begin.
6. The parties agree on the importance of an airport and construction could be limited to nonaviation elements.

One year after the signing of the agreement there was no progress;<sup>120</sup> two years on, the situation in both Gaza and the West Bank is even worse. The ability of Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip to access either the West Bank or the outside world is almost nonexistent and the flow of commercial trade has all but stopped. Movement in the West Bank is also more restricted. There is very little in the way of economic development activity, but rather, deterioration in the humanitarian situation.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 PCBS, "Labor Force Survey" (2007).
- 2 According to some estimates, in 1968 the fertility rate was 7.0 children per woman (UNCTAD 1994), and in 1995 it was 7.4 (PCBS 1998). In 2000, it decreased to 5.1 children per woman (World Bank World Development Indicators [WDI] 2009), and continued to decrease to 4.5 children per woman in 2007 (WDI 2009).
- 3 World Bank, "Gender and Transport in the Middle East and North Africa Region: Case Studies from West Bank and Yemen," (October 2009).
- 4 See World Bank, "West Bank and Gaza Updates" (2004–08).
- 5 See UN OCHA (2006a, 2006b); "The Humanitarian Monitor" (July 2007); "The Humanitarian Impact on Palestinians of Israeli Settlements and Other Infrastructure" (July 2008); "The Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier" (May 2009); "West Bank Movement and Access Update" (May 2009). See also: [www.ochaopt.org](http://www.ochaopt.org).
- 6 The focus group discussions carried out by Birzeit University were held in Al Dehesha, Qalandia, and Balata refugee camps; the villages of Naeleen, Ethna, Um Sharaiat, Saeer, and Zabda; and the urban areas of Hebron and Jenin.
- 7 Four communities were chosen for the focus groups in Gaza: in the north, Beit Hanoun; in Gaza City, Al Zaytoun; in Middle Gaza, Al Maghazi; and in the south, Al Seyamat in Rafah.
- 8 In-depth interviews conducted by CARE were held in Ramallah, El Rihan village, in a closed area behind the barrier in the north of the West Bank, the village of Burkin (Jenin), Ein el Baida (Area C, Jordan Valley, Tamoon (Toubas district), and Azzawyada in Gaza.
- 9 PCBS, "Population, Buildings, Housing Units and Establishments" (February 2008).
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 UN OCHA, "West Bank Movement and Access Update" (May 2009).
- 12 Penny Johnson, "Palestinian Single Women: Agency, Choice, Responsibility" (2007).
- 13 PCBS, "Palestinian Family Health Survey 2006" (December 2007).
- 14 Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, "Palestinian Higher Education Statistics" (2005).
- 15 World Bank, "West Bank and Gaza Education Sector Analysis: Impressive Achievements under Harsh Conditions and the Way Forward to Consolidate a Quality Education System" (2006), 20.
- 16 PCBS, "Labor Force Survey" (2008).
- 17 PCBS, "On the Occasion of Mother's Day" (March 21, 2007).
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Lynne Welchmann, "Islamic Family Law, Text and Practice in Palestine" (1999).
- 20 Human Rights Watch, "A Question of Security: Violence against Palestinian Women and Girls" (November 2006), 24.
- 21 Jordanian Law No. 16 (1960); Gaza Criminal Code Ordinance No. 74 of Gaza (1936).
- 22 World Public Opinion, "World Public Opinion and the Declaration of Human Rights" (2008), 33.
- 23 Arab World Research and Development (AWRAD), "Status of Palestinian Women and Gender Relations," Opinion Poll (February 20, 2008).
- 24 PCBS, Press Release on the Occasion of International Women's Day (2008).
- 25 Al Ayyam (4 October 2008), 2.
- 26 Gershom Gorenberg, "The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements 1967– 1977" (2006).
- 27 For more discussion of this "forcible capture of the economy," or "de-development," see Roy (1995), 120, Hilal et al. (2008), and Kuttab (2006), 241.

- 28 World Bank, *"Economic Effects of Restricted Access to Land in the West Bank"* (October 2008).
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Area A, under Palestinian control, comprises 17.5 percent of the West Bank and includes major population centers. Area B comprises 23.5 percent; it encompasses most rural centers. Full civil control in area B rests with the Palestinian Authority, while security control is shared with Israel. Area C makes up 66 percent of the West Bank, but full security control is exercised by Israel as well as jurisdiction over planning and construction.
- 31 UN OCHA, *"West Bank Movement and Access Update"* (May 2009).
- 32 World Bank, *"West Bank and Gaza Update"* (October 2008).
- 33 World Bank, *"Movement and Access Restrictions in the West Bank: Uncertainty and Inefficiency in the Palestinian Economy"* (May 9, 2007).
- 34 Ibid, page 2.
- 35 UN OCHA, *"West Bank Movement and Access Update"* (May 2009).
- 36 Peace Now, *"One Offense Begets Another"* (November 2006).
- 37 World Bank, *"Palestinian Economic Prospect: Aid, Access and Reform"* (September 2008).
- 38 The November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access is the third in a series of agreements to counter movement restrictions in the West Bank and Gaza and give Palestinian people freedom to move, to trade, and to live. It was announced by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and signed by Israel and the Palestinian Authority. It recognizes Israel's security concerns but notes that Israeli actions should not instigate or promote Palestinian social and economic hardship and collapse.
- 39 UN OCHA, *"The Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier"* (July 2008).
- 40 World Bank, *"The Economic Effects of Restricted Access to Land in the West Bank"* (October 2008).
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 UN OCHA, *"Territorial Fragmentation of the West Bank"* (May 2006).
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 World Bank, *"Palestinian Economic Prospects: Gaza Recovery and West Bank Revival"* (2009).
- 45 UN OCHA, *"West Bank Movement and Access Update"* (May 2009).
- 46 PCBS, *"Poverty in the Palestinian Territories, 2006 Main Findings"* (August 2007).
- 47 UNRWA, *2007 Poverty Report OPT* (2009).
- 48 World Bank, *"Investing in Palestinian Economic Reform and Development,"* Report for the Pledging Conference, Paris (December 18, 2007). PCBS uses two measures of poverty: deep poverty (absolute) and poverty. The deep poverty line reflects a budget for food, clothing, and housing only. For a family of six the deep poverty line in 2006 was NIS 1,837. The poverty line adds other necessities, including health care, education, transportation, personal care, and housekeeping supplies, raising the line to NIS 2,300 for a family of six. Thus, the percentage of households in poverty includes those in deep poverty.
- 49 World Bank, *"Palestinian Economic Prospect: Aid, Access and Reform,"* Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (September 22, 2008); and PCBS, *"Poverty and Living Conditions in the Palestinian Territory"* (2007).
- 50 PCBS, *"Labor Force Survey"* (1999).
- 51 World Bank, *"Two Years of Intifada, Closure and Palestinian Economic Crisis"* (2003).
- 52 World Bank, *"Palestinian Economic Prospect: Aid, Access and Reform"* (September 22, 2008).
- 53 Al-Qudsi, Sulayman. *"Labour Participation of Arab Women: Estimates of the Fertility to Labour Supply Link."* Working paper No. 9622 (1995).
- 54 S. Al-Botmeh and G. Sotnik, *"Determinants of Female Labor Force Participation in the WBGs"* (2007).
- 55 R. Hammami, *"Integrating Women into Wage Employment in Palestine: Strategies, Difficulties, and Rewards,"* in Ministry of Labour, International Conference on Employment in Palestine, Ramallah (1998). In Arabic.



- 56 Pal Stetten, *"Coping with Conflict: Palestinian Communities Two Years into the Intifada"* (2003).
- 57 PCBS, *"Labor Force Survey"* (April–June, 2008) Round (Q2/2008). Press Conference on the Labor Force Survey Results, Ramallah, Palestine.
- 58 Examples of segmentation in the Palestinian labor market include: (i) between unskilled men working in Israel and in the domestic private sector for lower wages; (ii) between unskilled and highly educated men, many of the latter employed in the public sector; (iii) between commuting employed men and stay-at-home women charged with looking after the household (the sole breadwinner model); (iv) between unskilled women employed in the primarily informal private sector and highly educated women employed in public sector jobs; and (v) between highly educated unemployed women and those outside the labor force (both skilled and unskilled).
- 59 S. Al-Botmeh, *"Analysis of the Situation of Women in Palestine"* (2006).
- 60 R. Hammami, *"Labor and Economy: Gender Segmentation in Palestinian Economic Life"* (1997).
- 61 Due to the seasonal nature of agricultural production, PCBS has also found significant variation in the numbers of agricultural workers according to the year and season when various surveys are conducted.
- 62 PCBS, *"Labor Force Survey"* (April–June, 2008 Round) (Q2/2008). Press Conference on the Labor Force Survey Results (2008).
- 63 Majdi Malki, and Khamis Shalabi, *"Socio-economic Changes in Three Palestinian Villages: Palestinian Rural Households Reproduction Conditions under Occupation"* (1993), 157.
- 64 Various studies note that women's agricultural tasks tend to be labor intensive, physically demanding, and nonmechanized (such as hoeing, weeding, sowing seeds, and harvesting), and do not typically relate to marketing or control over economic resources (for example, buying agricultural inputs, selling agricultural products) but rather are limited to local peddling of surplus products (Giacaman and Tamari 1997; Malki and Shalabi 1993; Farah 1997).
- 65 In 1999, women workers in Israel accounted for only 0.7 percent of employed women in Gaza and 2.7 percent in the West Bank.
- 66 Note that the sector decomposition combines manufacturing with mining and quarrying activities, but the latter two subsectors are very small.
- 67 This result is largely consistent with Al-Botmeh and Sotnik (2007), who reached the following conclusions regarding the determinants of female labor force participation: (i) the odds of participating are higher for noneducated and highly-educated females than for women who are semieducated; (ii) women in households dependent on subsistence farming are much more likely to participate in the labor force than women dependent on other main sources of income; (iii) women from the northern West Bank have the greatest odds of participating; (iv) the odds of younger never-married women participating are decreasing over time; (v) women often perceive the labor market as unwelcoming due to vertical and horizontal segregation and lower average female wages; and (vi) female labor force participation is negatively correlated with number of children.
- 68 It is socially acceptable for single women to work in "good" jobs, which usually means working within an institution that has a number of women staff. This includes work as teachers, nurses, or in factories.
- 69 R. Hammami, *"Labor and Economy: Gender Segmentation in Palestinian Economic Life"* (1997).
- 70 International Labour Organization, *"The Situation of Workers in the Arab Occupied Palestinian Territories,"* Report of the Director General, Appendix, ILO Conference, 95<sup>th</sup> session (2006).
- 71 In a study looking at the post-2000 structure of the Palestinian economy, Olmsted argues that the slight increase in female labor force participation masks a reduction in women's access to paid employment and an increase in unpaid work, as is reflected in the flock to unpaid agricultural work. See Olmsted 2008.
- 72 There is an extensive literature documenting these distortions; see, for example, World Bank, *"Long-Term Policy Options for the Palestinian Economy,"* (2002); and Bulmer (2001) *"Distortions in the Palestinian Labor Market and Implications for Employment Growth."*
- 73 Leila Farsakh, *Palestinian Labor Migration to Israel: Labour, Land and Occupation* (Routledge 2005), 80-82.
- 74 On average, public sector wages are higher than those in the private sector, especially in Gaza, where they are 40 percent higher.
- 75 PCBS, *"Labor Force Survey"* (2007).
- 76 According to the classical international definition provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the informal sector includes small and unregistered enterprises, paid and unpaid workers, and casual workers without fixed employers

- (Esim, Kuttab 2002). Another way of defining informality is work which lacks adequate social protection or proper entitlements (rights). This definition, in line with the gender and human rights discourse, considers social protection as part of broader basic human and social rights. This in turn reframes informality as work that lacks a specified minimum wage, health insurance, a pension scheme, paid holidays, job security, end of work compensation, paid maternity leave, paid sick leave, family allowances, unemployment benefits, long hours or unsafe working conditions, and so on (Hilal, Kafri and Kuttab 2008).
- 77 PCBS, *"The Informal Sector Survey—Main Results"* (2004).
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Maliki et al., *"The Informal Sector Enterprises in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Case Studies"* (2001).
- 80 Jamil Hilal, S. Al Kafri, and E. Kuttab, eds., *"Unprotected Employment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: A Gender Equality and Worker's Rights Perspective"* (2008).
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 PCBS, *"Housework, Child Care and Community Service"* (2002).
- 84 R. Hammami, *"Labor and Economy: Gender Segmentation in Palestinian Economic Life"* (1997).
- 85 PCBS, *"Special Report on the 61<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Nakba"* (2008), 3.
- 86 There are 132 parliamentarians.
- 87 World Bank, *"Mental Health and Global Development Agenda: What Role for the World Bank?"* (August 2004). On PTSD among ex-detainees, see E. El Sarraj et al. "Experiences of Torture and Ill Treatment and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms among Palestinian Political Prisoners," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 9 No. 3 (1996), 595-606.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 "Stress Disorder Symptoms among Palestinian Political Prisoners," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 9 No. 3 (1996), 595-606.
- 90 Ibid.
- 91 Physicians for Human Rights, *"Holding Health Ransom: GSS Interrogation and Extortion of Palestinian Patients at Erez Crossing"* (2008).
- 92 Save the Children UK, *"Broken Homes: Addressing the Impact of House Demolitions on Palestinian Children and Families"* (April 2009).
- 93 Ibid, p. 11.
- 94 "Through No Fault of Their Own: Israel's Punitive House Demolitions in the Al-Aqsa Intifada," B'Tselem (November 2004).
- 95 S. Quota, R.L. Punamaki, and E. El Sarraj, "House Demolition and Mental Health Victims and Witnesses," *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness* 6(3), 203-211 (1998). S. Low, and C. Stocker, "Family Functioning and Children's Adjustment: Associations among Parents' Depressed Mood, Marital Hostility, Parent-Child Hostility and Children's Adjustment," *Journal of Family Psychology* 19 (3), (2005), 394-403.
- 96 Save the Children, *"Broken Homes: Addressing the Impact of House Demolitions on Palestinian Children and Families"* (April 2009), 31.
- 97 For a comprehensive extended discussion on efforts to restrict Palestinians access to land close to settlements, see "Access Denied: Israeli Measures to Deny Palestinians Access to Land around Settlements," B'Tselem (September 2008).
- 98 Israeli human rights groups such as B'Tselem (2008), Yesh Din (2006), Breaking the Silence (soldiers' testimonies) have all extensively documented the systematic nature of settler violence and its ultimate objective of displacing Palestinians from their land and means of livelihood.
- 99 Save the Children, *"Broken Homes: Addressing the Impact of House Demolitions on Palestinian Children and Families"* (April 2009), 31.
- 100 B'Tselem, "Access Denied: Israeli Measures to Deny Palestinians Access to Land around Settlements" (2008).



- 101 B'Tselem, "Access Denied: Israeli Measures to Deny Palestinians Access to Land around Settlements" (2008), 28.
- 102 PCBS, "Special Report on the 61<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Nakhba" (2008). Available data do not disaggregate between property destruction carried out by settlers and the IDF. Therefore, the destruction here includes that by settlers and the state.
- 103 Ibid, p. 27.
- 104 Defence for Children International, "Palestinian Child Prisoners: The Systematic and Institutionalized Ill-Treatment and Torture of Palestinian Children by Israeli Authorities" (June 11, 2009).
- 105 Yesh Din, "A Semblance of Law: Law Enforcement upon Israeli Civilians in the West Bank" (June 2006); B'Tselem, "Access Denied: Israeli Measures to Deny Palestinians Access to Land around Settlements" (September 2008); B'Tselem, "Ground to a Halt: Denial of Palestinians' Freedom of Movement in the West Bank" (August 2007); B'Tselem, Human Rights in the Occupied Territories: Annual Report 2007 (2007).
- 106 B'Tselem, "Access Denied: Israeli Measures to Deny Palestinians Access to Land around Settlements" (September 2008).
- 107 Breaking the Silence, Testimonies of Israeli soldiers ([www.showrimshtika.org](http://www.showrimshtika.org)).
- 108 B'Tselem, "Access Denied: Israeli Measures to Deny Palestinians Access to Land around Settlements" (September 2008), 45.
- 109 PCBS, "Press Release on the Occasion of International Women's Day" (2008).
- 110 Birzeit University Institute of Law, "Rule of Law and Dispute Resolution in Palestine" (2006).
- 111 Ibid.
- 112 PCBS, "National Survey on Domestic Violence" (2006). World Health Organization(WHO) (2005) presents the worldwide average as around 30-60 percent. The PCBS survey found that about a quarter of Palestinian women reported one act of physical violence by their husband during 2005 and one third reported at least one act of violence at any point before 2005. We therefore infer that the rates are similar to other parts of the world. Exact comparisons are difficult, however, since there are some differences in the questions used in the two surveys.
- 113 PCBS, "National Survey on Domestic Violence" (2006).
- 114 Unpublished data from "National Survey on Domestic Violence" (2006) analyzed by PCBS for this report.
- 115 These jobs are often within the relatively sheltered work environment of the charity/NGO sector.
- 116 Derived by PCBS from unpublished data for the purposes of this report from its survey "Assessment of the Impact of Israeli Measures on Economic and Social Conditions of Palestinian Households" (2006).
- 117 World Bank, "Gender and Transport in the Middle East and North Africa Region, Case Studies from West Bank and Yemen" (October 2009).
- 118 [www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/56890.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/56890.htm).
- 119 U.S. Department of State, Joint Press Statement on the Agreement on Movement and Access, [www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/56890.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/56890.htm).
- 120 UN OCHA, "Agreement on Movement and Access One Year On" (November 2006).



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