

Increasing Poverty? Glimpses from a Living Conditions Survey

**Presentation at the Scan Club, Amman
2 June 2005**

Åge A. Tiltnes, Fafo

Increasing Poverty?

Glimpses from a Living Conditions Survey

- **Poverty in Jordan – the “Debate”**
- **Living Conditions – Development since 1996**
- **Women: Employment vs. Domestic Duties**
- **ICT & Media (if time allows)**

Poverty in Jordan

Poverty – what is it?

The lack of something!

- **Income**
- **Living standards**
- **Living conditions**
- **Social exclusion**
- **Deprivation**
- **Livelihoods**
- **Rights**
- **Freedoms**
- **Etc.**

“Jordan Poverty Assessment” (2004)

Report by the World Bank (with MOPIC, MSD)

Some highlights:

- Based on expenditure data from DOS 1997 and 2002-03
- Yearly growth in per capita private consumption at 3.5% (it declined 1992-1997)
- Reduction in poverty from 21 to 14%
- Poverty depth also reduced
- The poor gained in non-income dimensions as well:
 - Illiteracy declined by 40%
 - Infant & child mortality declined by over 30%
- Uneven geographic spread of poverty reduction:
 - No change in Balqa, Karak and Aqaba
 - Increase in Zarga (from 16 to 22%)
 - More poverty in rural areas (but vast majority of poor reside in urban areas)
- Not often mentioned:
 - Non-poor enjoyed a marginally faster rise in consumption than the poor → Increased inequality
 - The gains in consumption of the poor have been driven in main by greater share of spending and transfers – not from raising incomes and employment → Unsustainable development

“Jordan Human Development Report” (2004)

Report by the UNDP (with MOPIC, JOHUD/ZENID, DOS)

Some highlights:

- Part I producing UNDP development indices based on statistics from DOS
- Part II drawing on qualitative fieldwork in poverty pockets giving voice to the poor and suggest how engaging the poor themselves can improve poverty alleviation
- **HDI** (Human Development Index) **rose**; **HPI** (Human Poverty Index) **down from 1997 to 2002**
- **But, points at Zarqa as a “problem spot”, characterized by increased unemployment and decreasing educational enrolment rates**
- **And, identifies problems such as poor transportation, lack of employment, gender discrimination, lack of credit, increasing school dropout and child labour, poor quality in education, lack of (perceived) rights, etc.**

Common perception

- **NGOs;**
 - **The press;**
 - **Researchers and academicians;**
 - **People in the street; and**
 - **Government employees**
-
- **.... are NOT convinced statistics tell the “truth”!**
 - **Rather, poverty and hardship is on the raise.**

Some DOS/Fafo findings

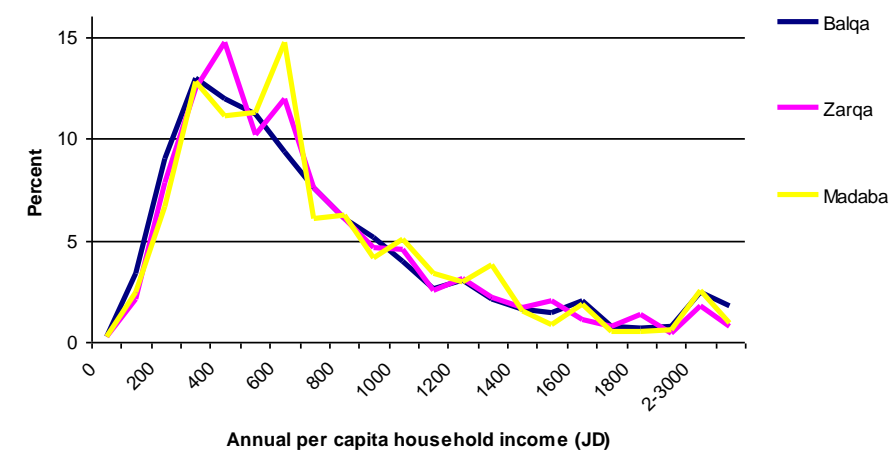
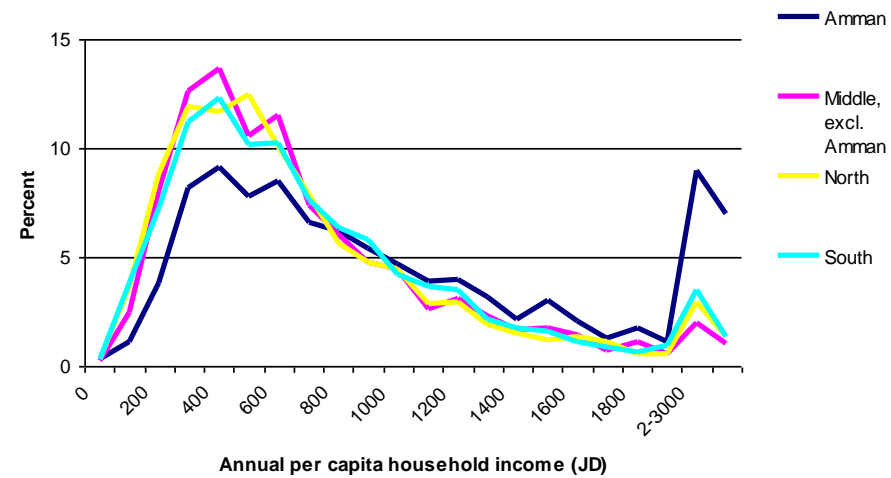
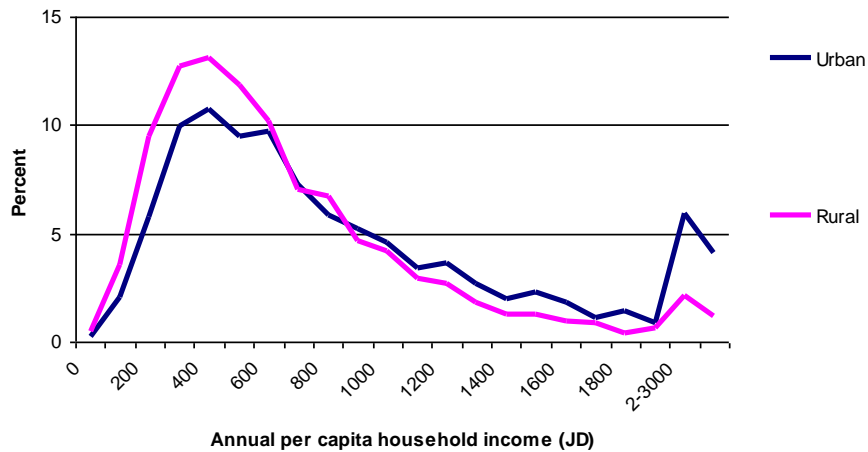
**Results from the 2003 Jordan Multi-
Topic Household (Living
Conditions) Surveys
(Compared with 1996)**

Income distribution

Higher income in,

- Urban areas
- Amman

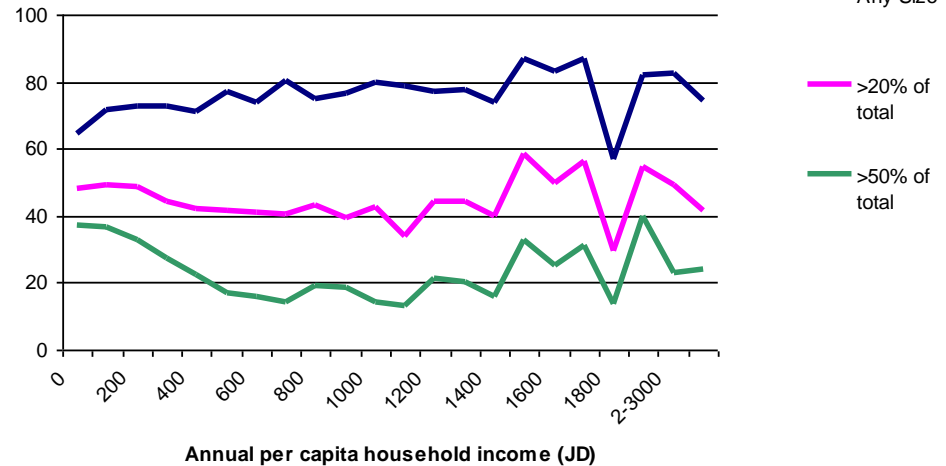
Lowest in Zarqa



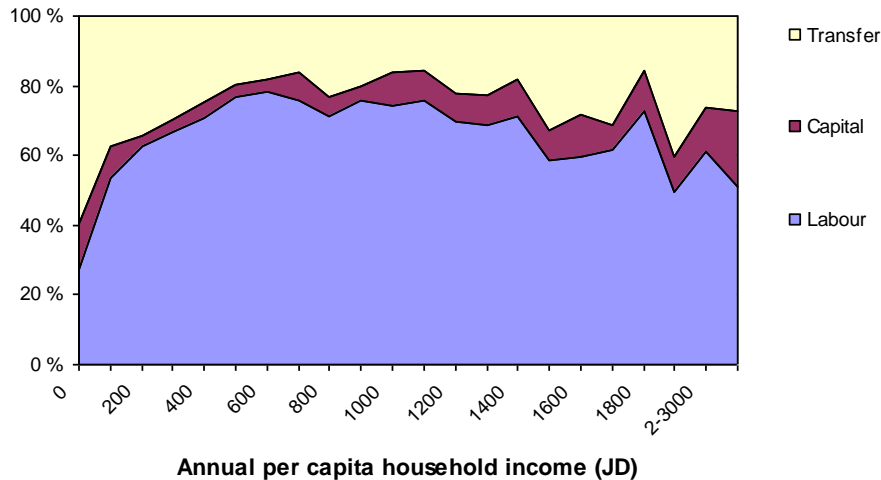
Income sources

- Labour income most important
- Transfers (incl. remittances) also widespread ...
- ... and key for the poor

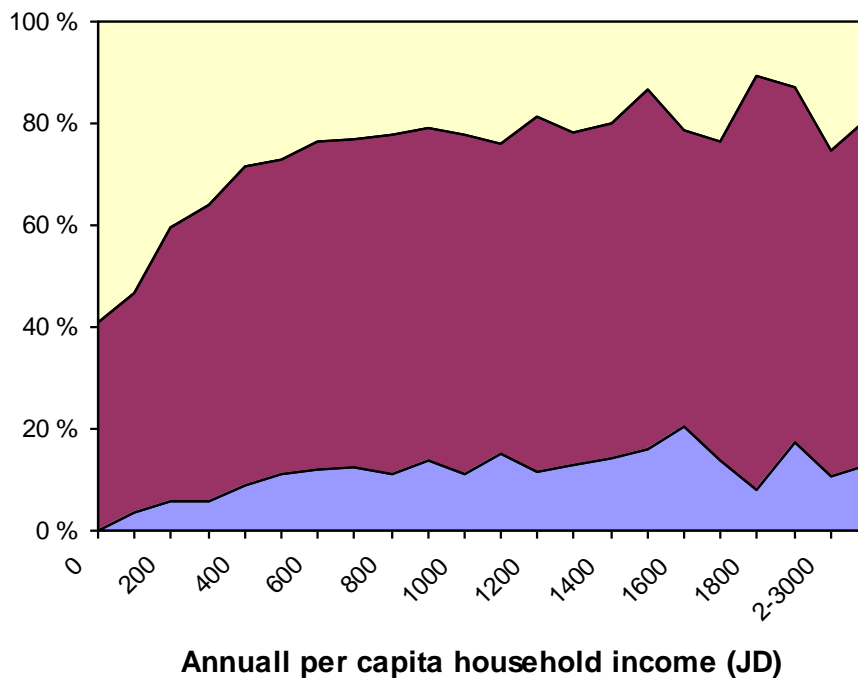
Prevalence of transfer income



Largest source of income



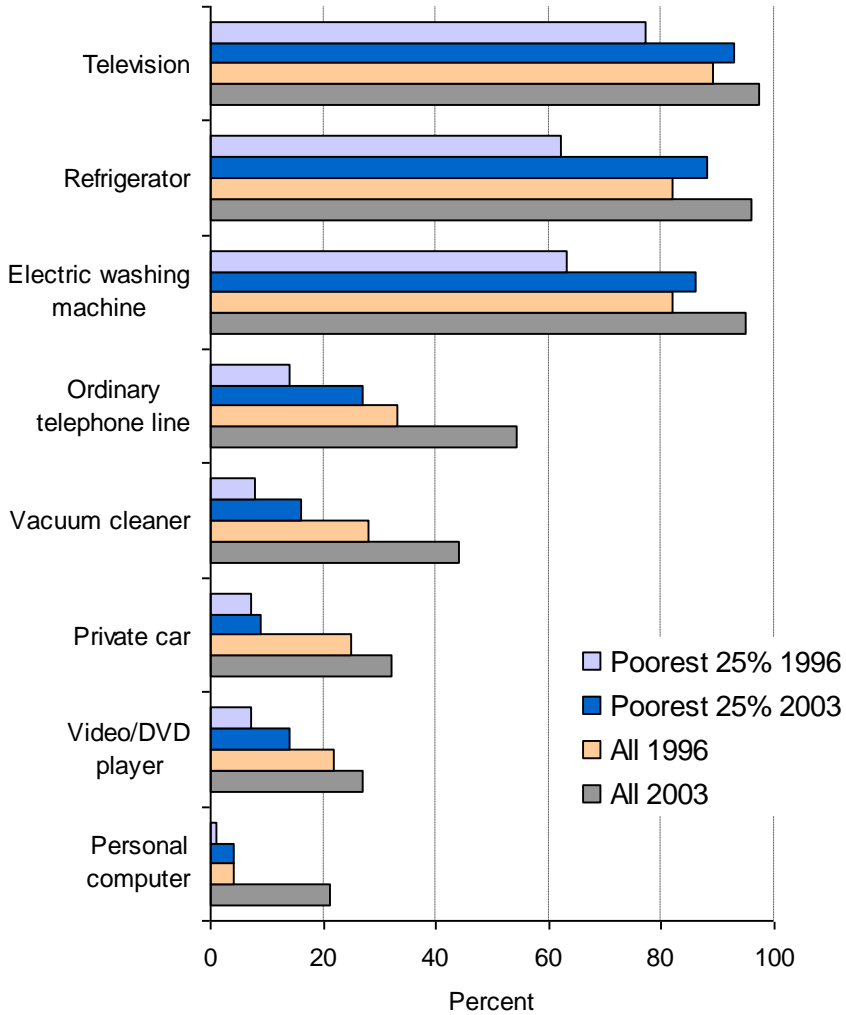
Majority of families with unchanged income from 2002 to 2003



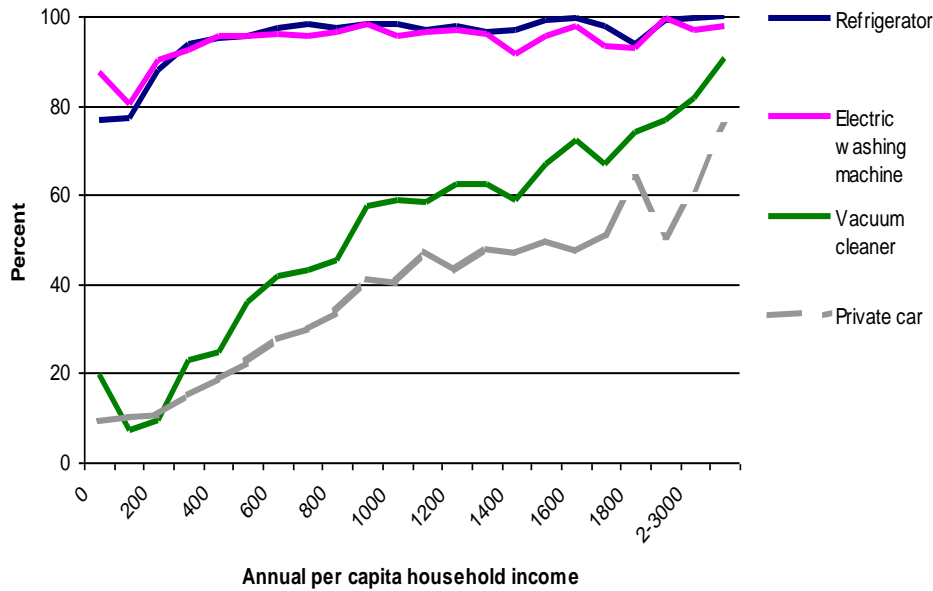
- According to a subjective assessment

- **27 percent income decline**
- **11 percent income increase**

Household amenities – improvement for all

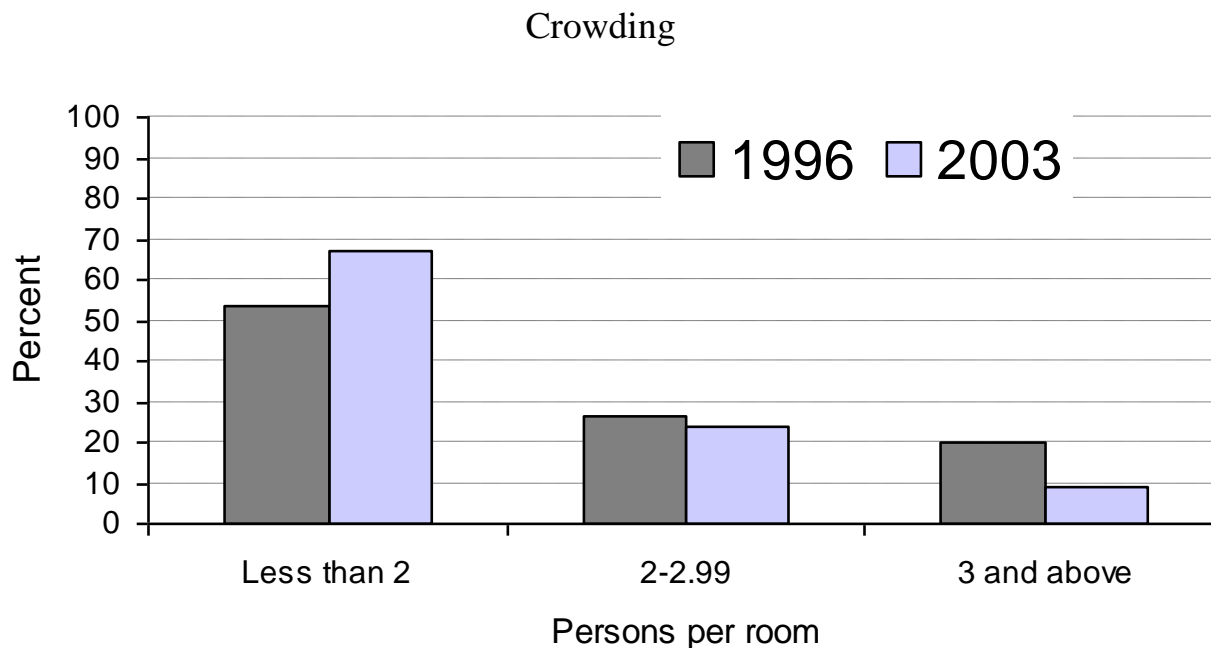


Gaps between income groups bridged with regard to some consumer durables ...
 ..., but remains vast in other areas



Increasing Poverty in Jordan?
 Glimpses from a Living Conditions Survey
 The Scan Club, Amman, 2 June 2005

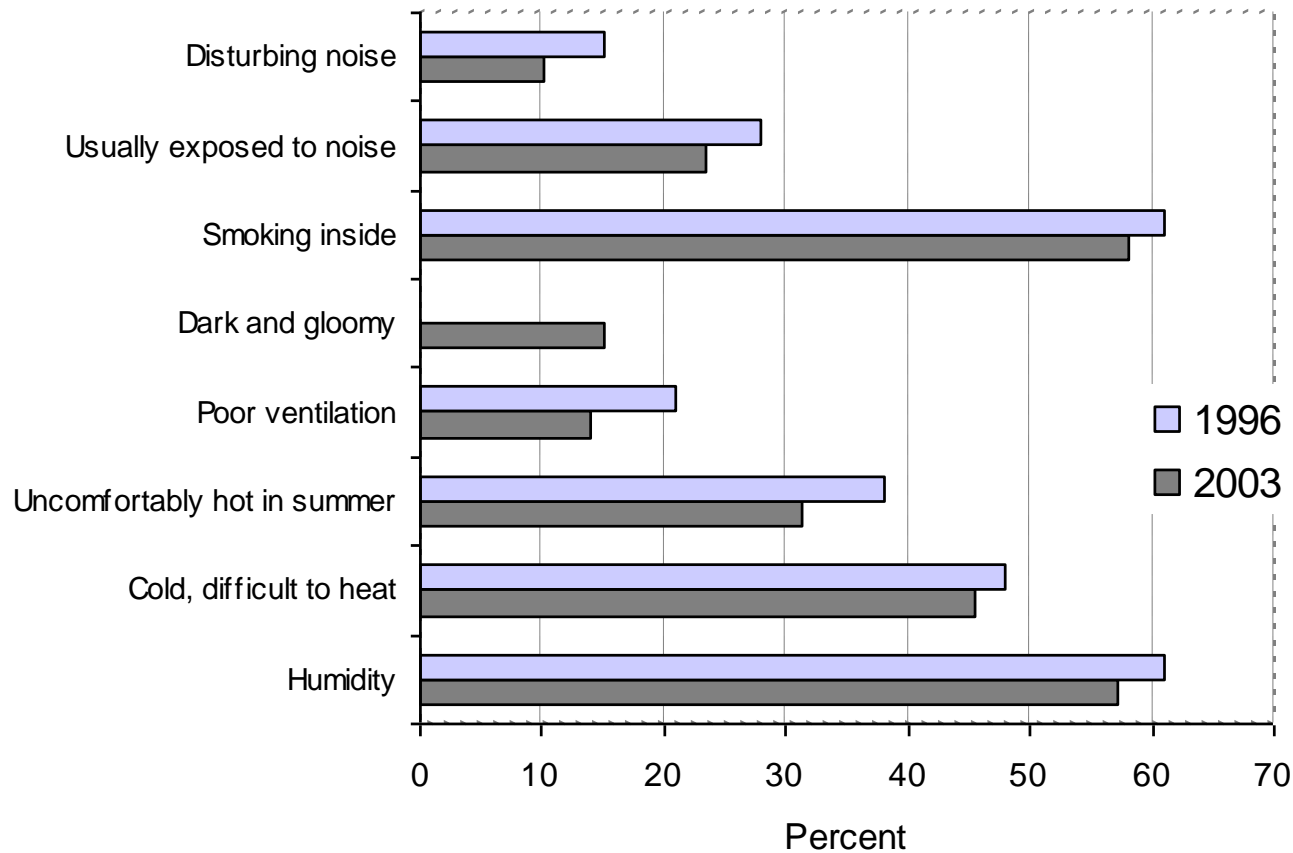
Indoor housing environment improved (i)



Infrastructure improved:

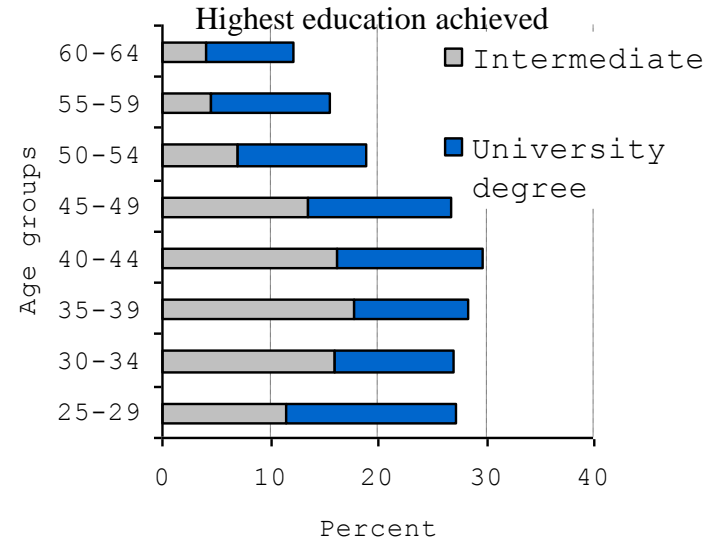
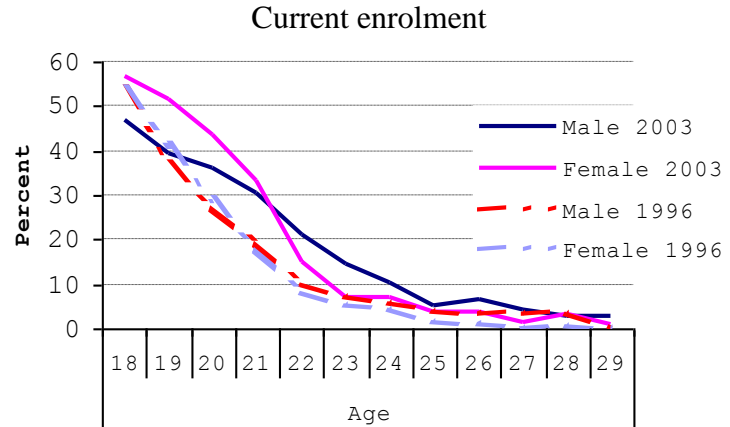
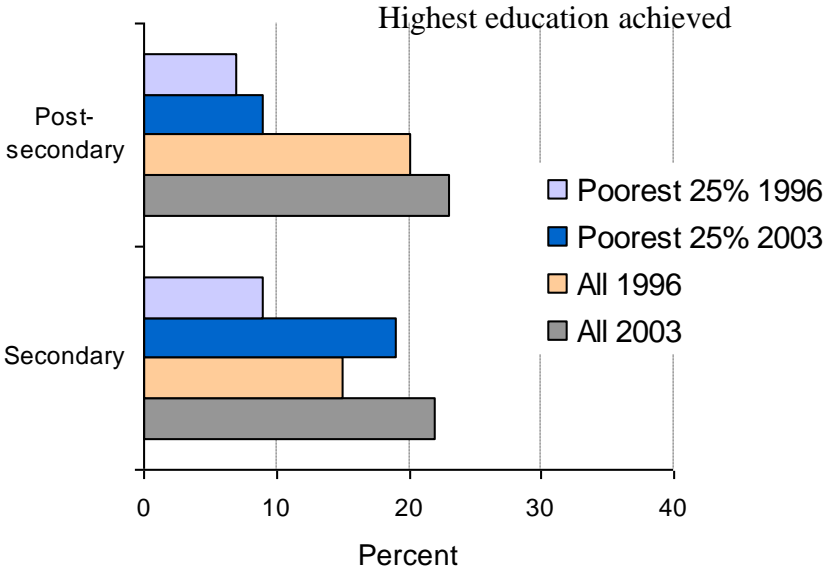
- **99% connected to electricity grid (up 2%)**
- **98% have piped water (up in rural areas)**
- **63% sewage network (up 6%)**

Indoor housing environment improved (ii)

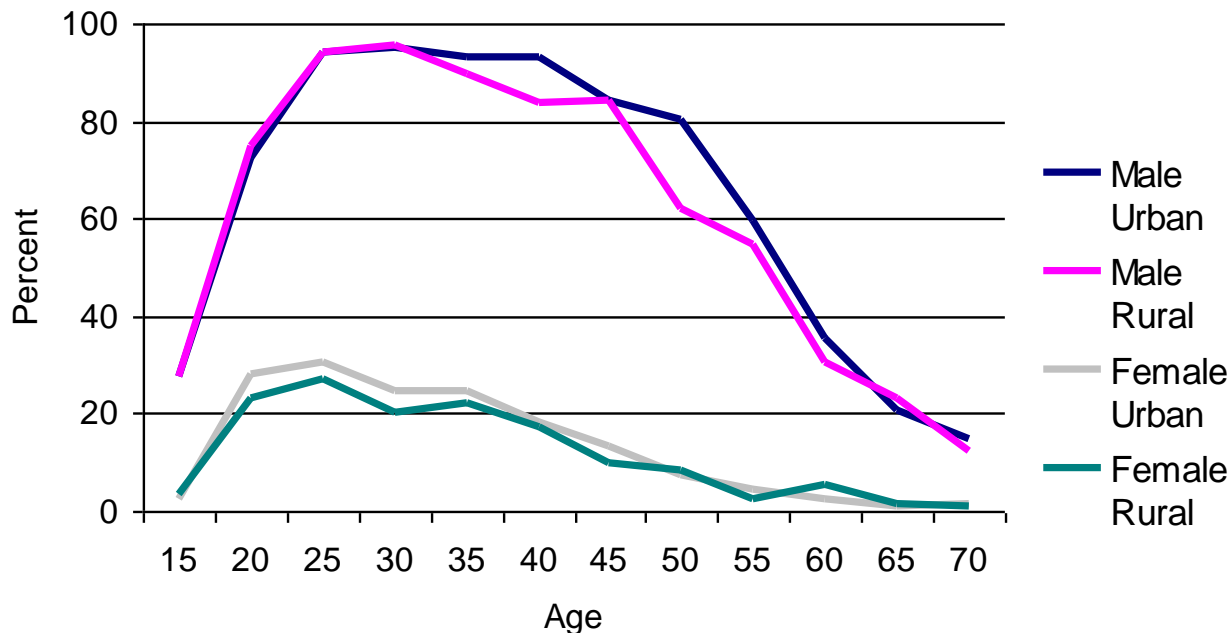


Education – improvement overall

- Increasing percentage with more than secondary
- Higher enrolment
- But, positive trend may have stagnated



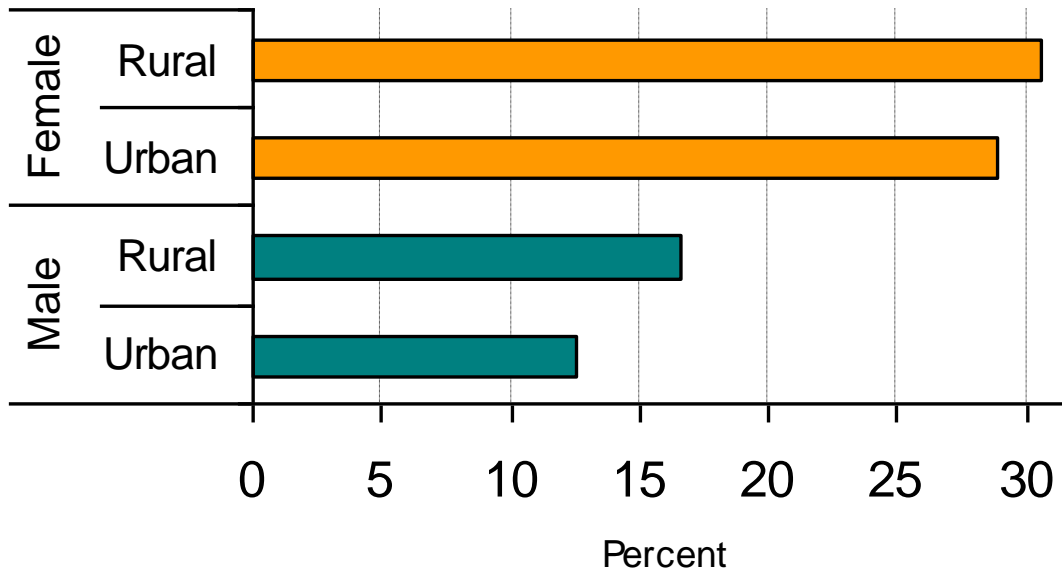
Employment rates fairly stable over time



- **16 percent participation for women – Low!**
- **66 percent for men**

Unemployment rate (ILO) at 16.5%

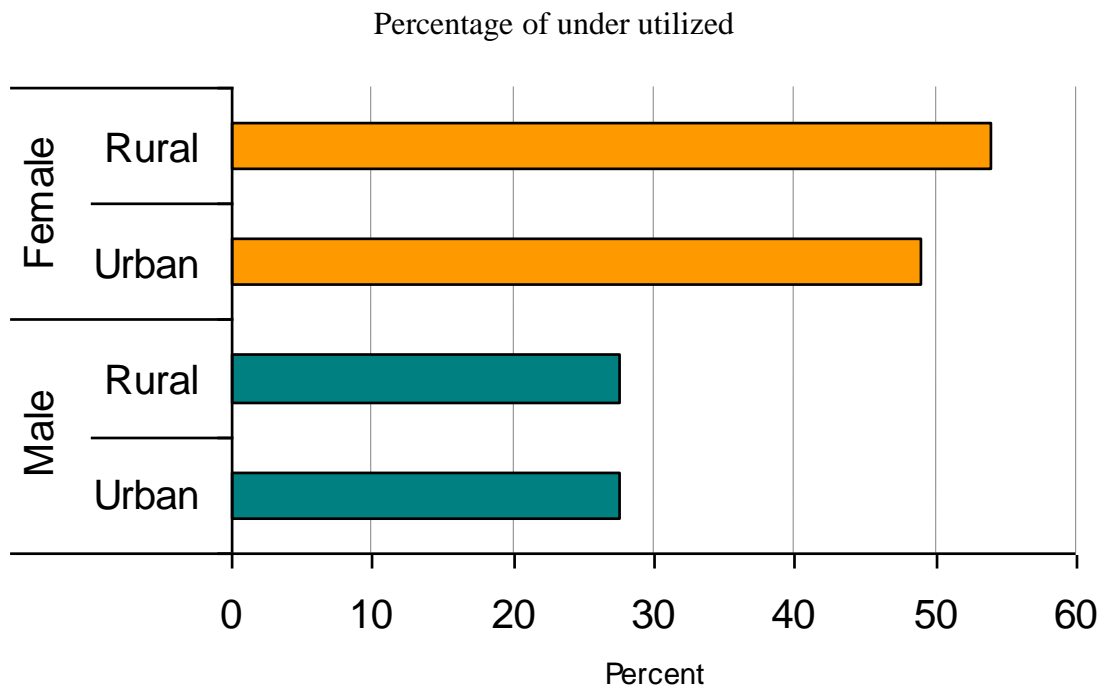
- rather stable at around 15% past few years



- 30 percent for women – High!
- 13 percent for men
- Often contested

Unemployment rates often disputed resulting in low confidence in national statistics

- If we include **“discouraged”** workers, those who want to change the job because **pay is too low**, they are **over-qualified**, or they want to **work longer hours**, the picture becomes different:



“Unemployment” see

- A doubling for men
- An increase by almost two-thirds for women

Such figures seldom released or discussed

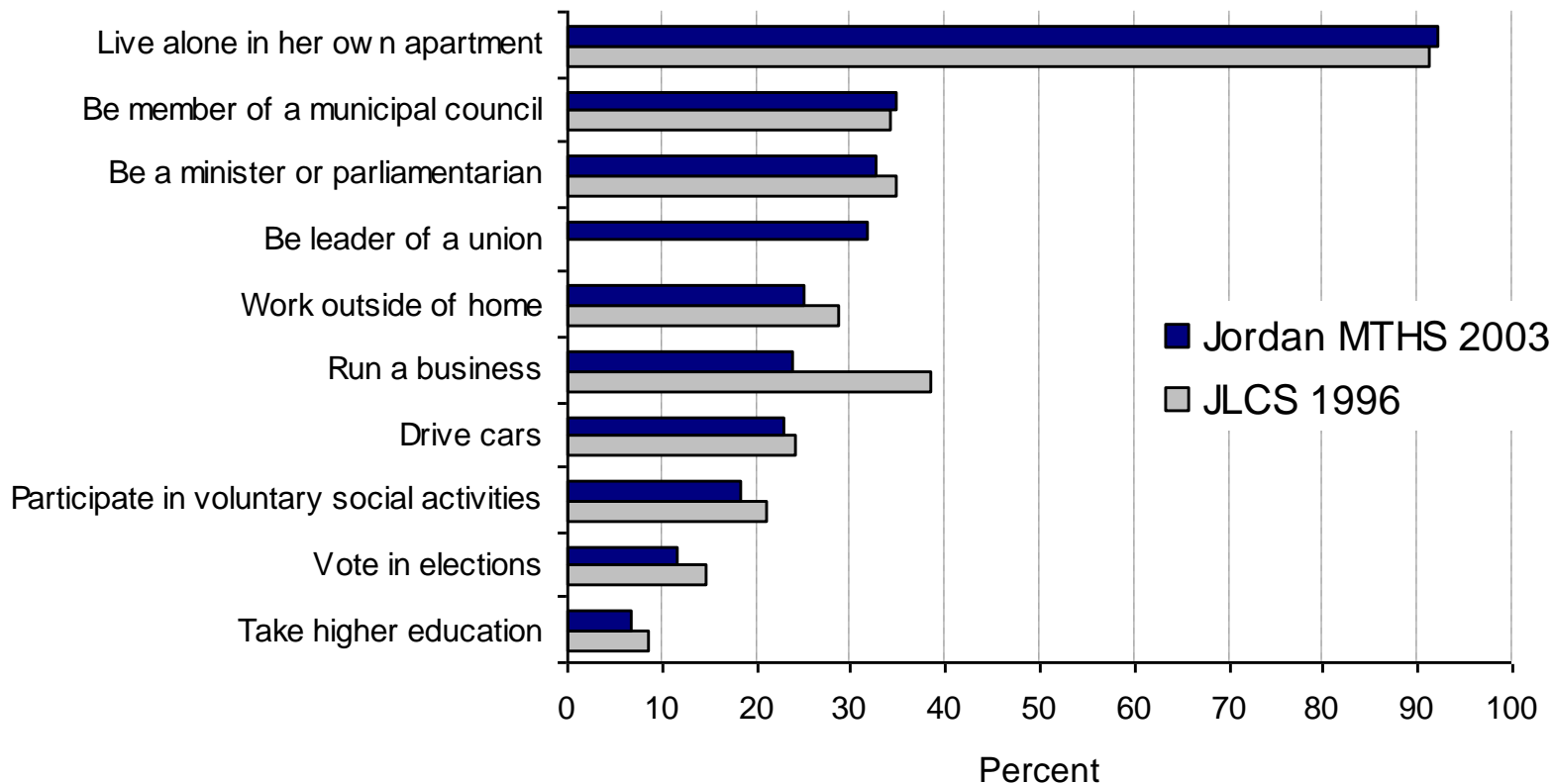
➔ Weaker understanding of the labour market than needed

Women's employment

More supportive attitudes toward women than in 1996 ...

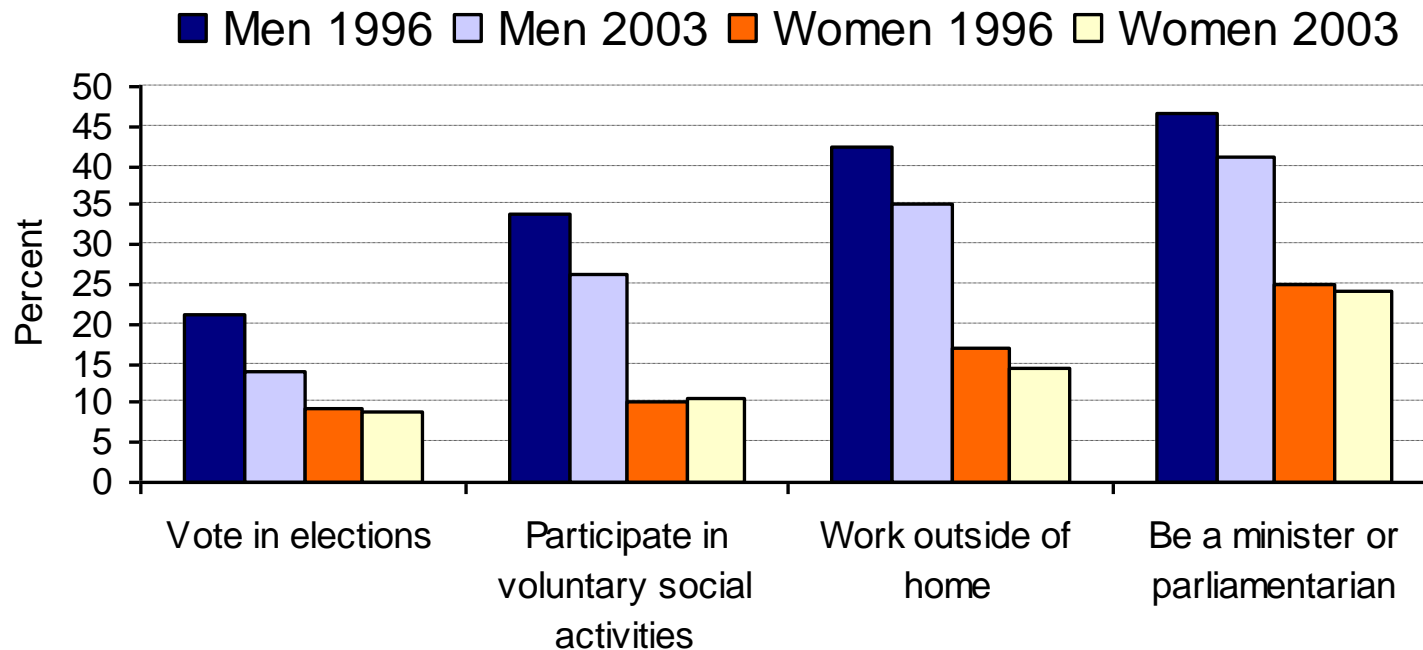
... but still a way to go.

Percent disagreeing with statement



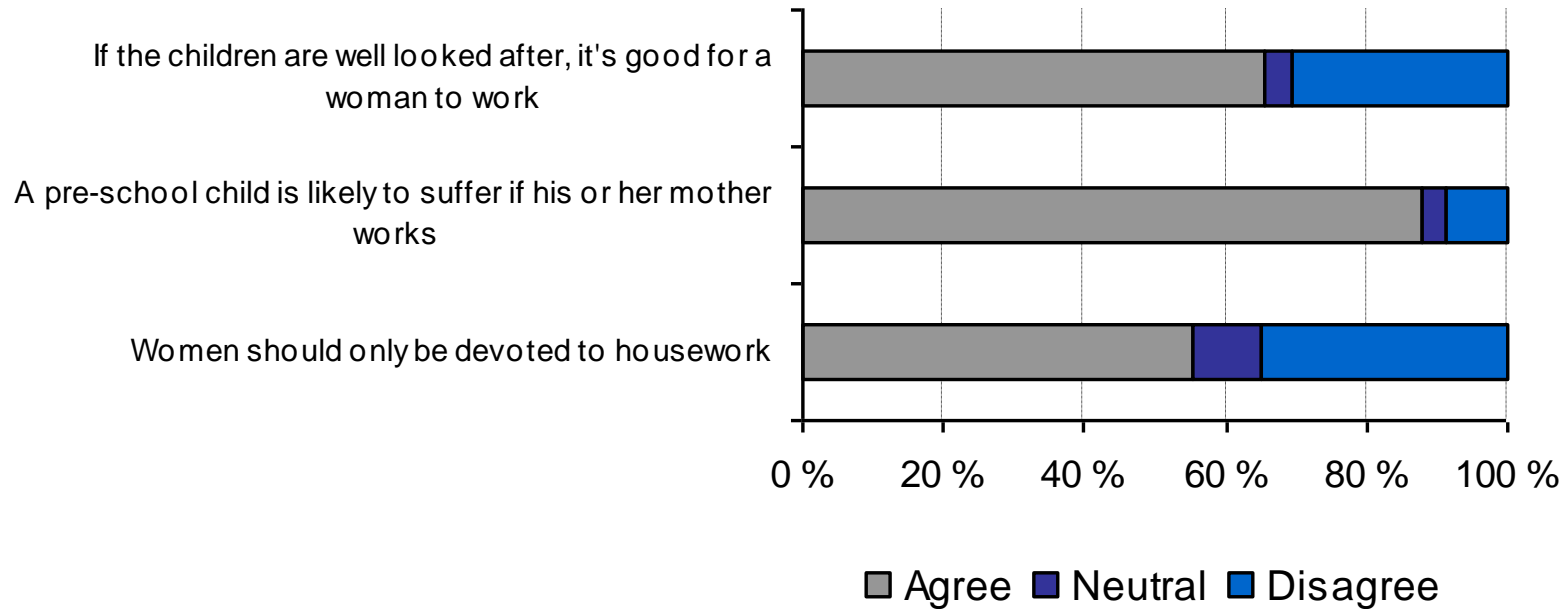
It is men that have changed their opinions, not women

Percent disagreeing with female role



- **And, urban residents more negative than rural residents to a larger female role in the labour market**

Attitudes toward women and work

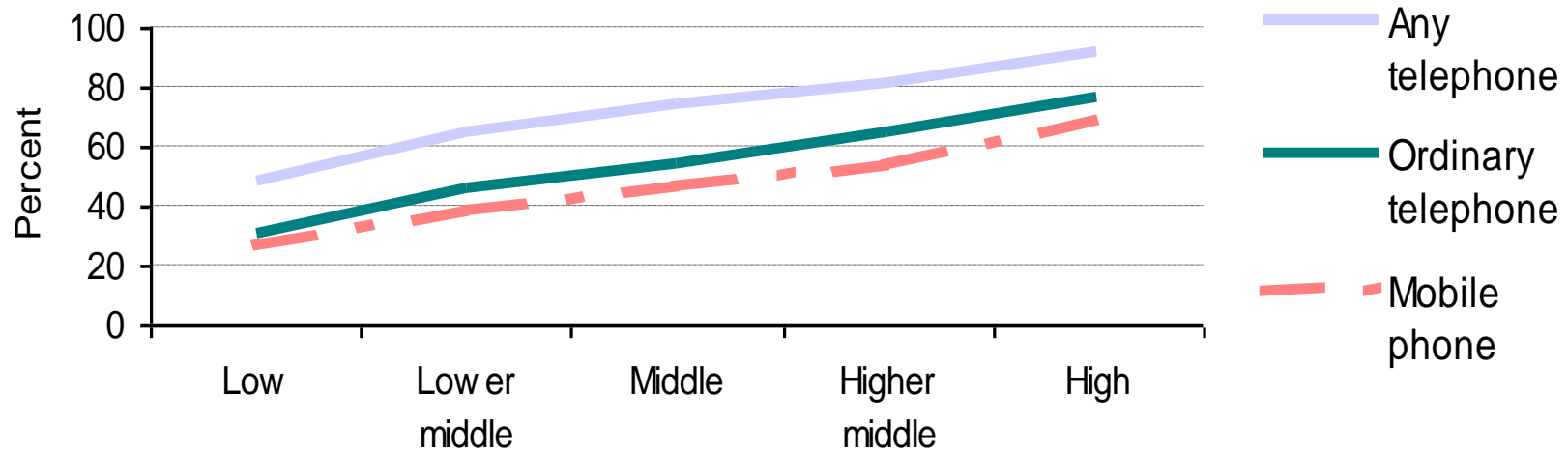


- **KG attendance (Y4+Y5) doubled from 1996:
From 25% to 50%**

ICT & media

Mobile phones still not accessible to all

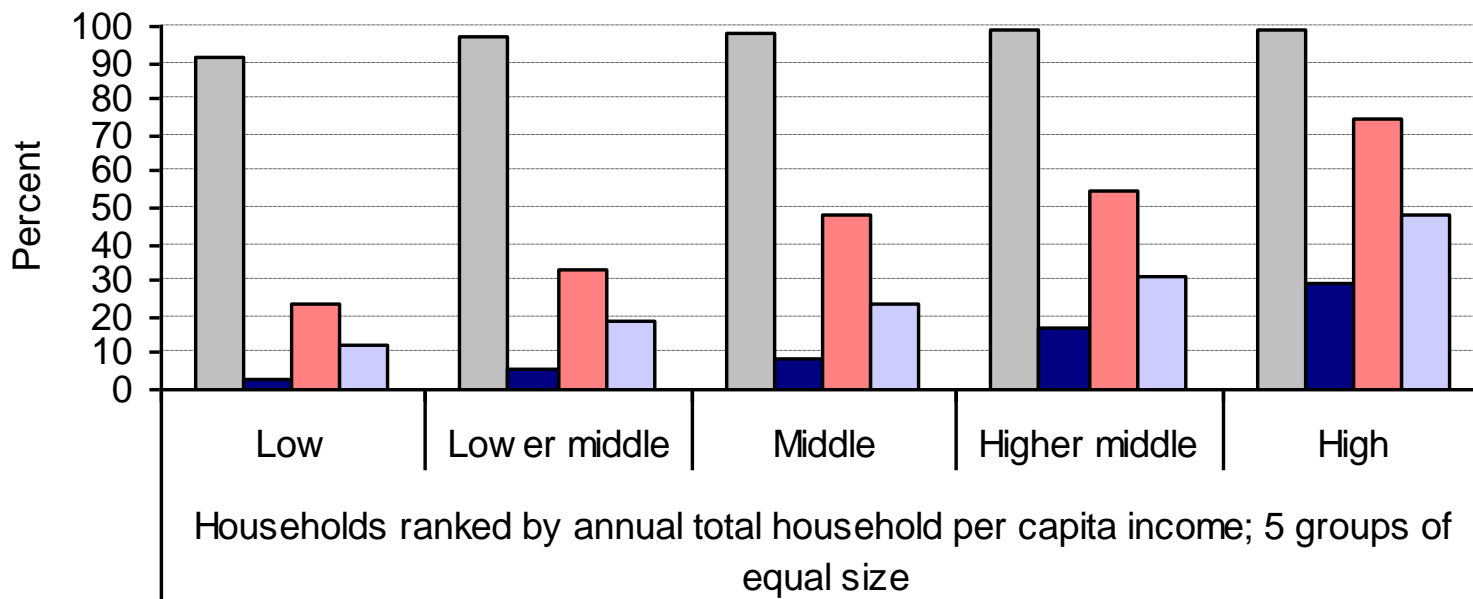
In fact half of the poorest families don't have a phone at all!



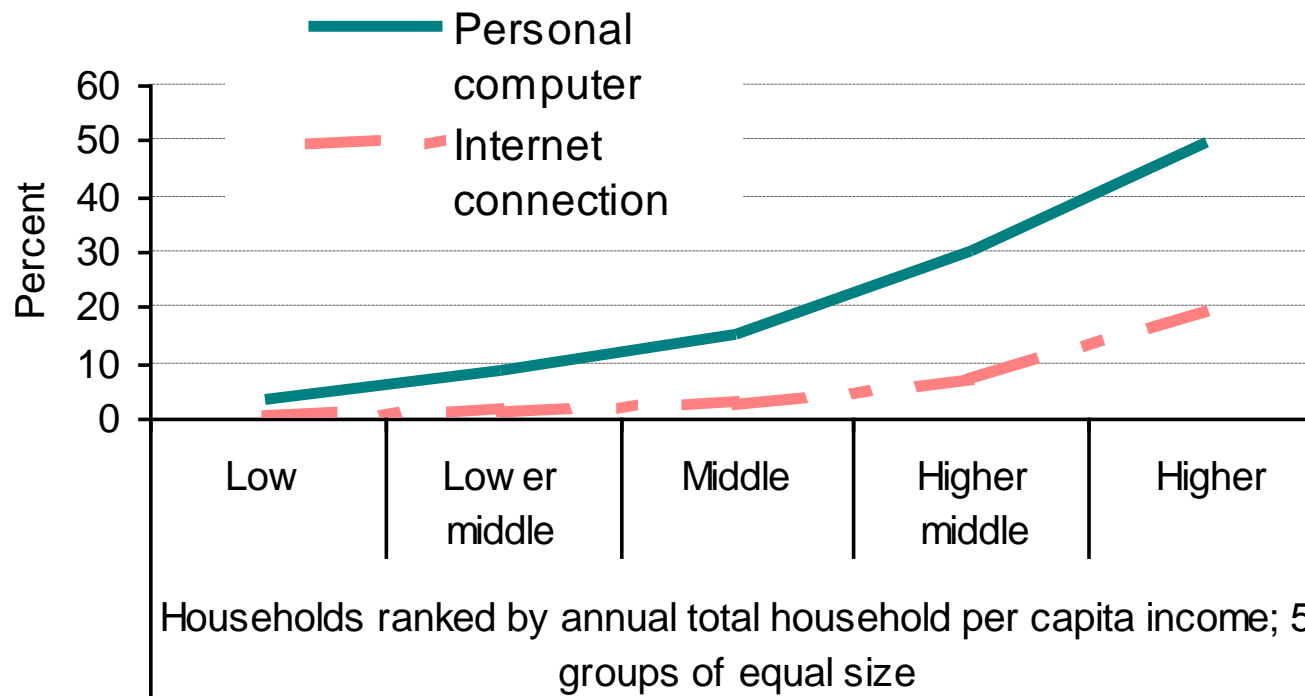
Households ranked by annual total household per capita income; 5 groups of equal size

Uneven spread of TVs, satellites and VCR/DVD players

■ At least one TV ■ 2 TVs or more ■ Satellite antenna ■ VCR/DVD player

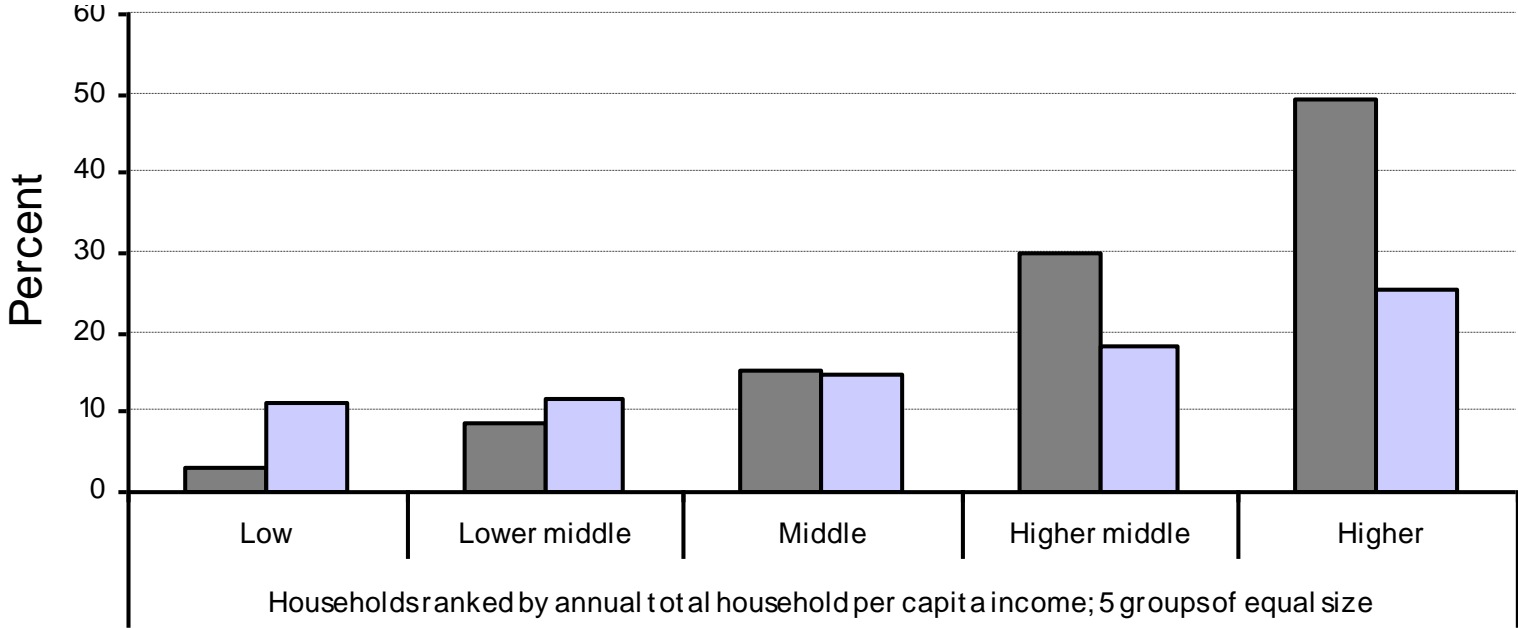


Private PCs and Internet connections still for the well off

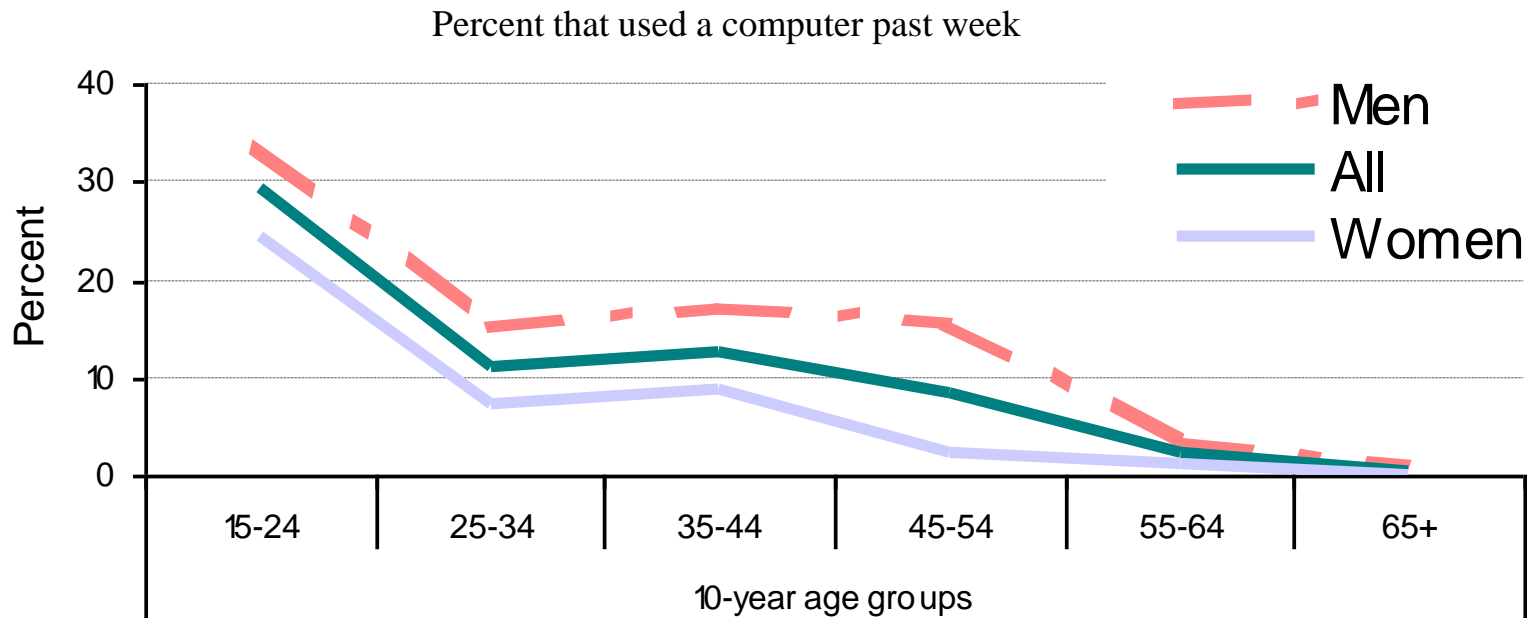


... but use more evenly distributed

■ Household owns computer □ Person used computer past week



Users are predominantly young people



Reduced poverty?

Mixed evidence from the living conditions survey

- **Objective measures of education, housing, amenities etc. indicates majority is better off than in 1996**
 - Positive development for all socio-economic groups
 - Geographic variation (Zarqa a “problem spot” → Additional investigation and research needed to better understand the situation!)
- **Subjective income assessment hints at a negative development from 2002 to 2003**
- **The poor lag behind with regard to modern technology and communication/transportation**