

Special Article

Demographic Trends in Israel and Palestine: Prospects and Policy Implications

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WHILE PUBLIC DEBATE tends to focus on issues of security and politics, the past, present, and future of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are intimately and crucially related to the way demographic variables affect population size and composition. Therefore, a demographic perspective is essential in the search for a resolution.¹

The conflict stems from ideological, historical, religious, and political differences that are rooted in ancient cultural traditions. It was during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that the two sides provided new symbolic meanings, added new contentious frameworks, and reinforced old disagreements, rendering solutions more difficult. At the core of the contemporary confrontation, two peoples—Jews and Arabs—claim rights of settlement and political sovereignty over the same territory they both view as homeland. The very name of that land—in Arab: *Falastin*, in Hebrew: *Eretz Yisrael*—is itself the subject of controversy.

Around this principal bone of contention, two additional tiers further complicate the conflict. The first reflects the general hostility of Arab societies toward the State of Israel. This regional dimension has been demonstrated by repeated, direct interventions by Middle Eastern countries and political movements in support of the Palestinian side of the conflict. The second tier relates to

¹Early versions of this paper were presented at the XXIV General Population Conference of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, Salvador de Bahia, Session 64, *Population Change and Political Transitions* (Chair: Massimo Livi Bacci; Discussant: Alan Hill), August 2001; and at the David Patterson Seminar, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Yarnton, October 2002. Research was carried out at the Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics, the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Population projections for world Jewry were supported by the Israel Humanitarian Fund, New York. The author thanks Dalia Sagi for assistance with data processing. While aiming at objectivity, the author takes responsibility for stressing an Israeli point of view in some of the judgments expressed below.

the broader conflict between Islam and Western civilization. Evident at least since Khomeini's Islamic revolution in Iran in the late 1970s, its full intensity became clear with the deadly assaults on American targets on September 11, 2001. This global dimension can be demonstrated, or at least inferred, through the array of contemporary conflicts that Islamic groups are fighting against other forces in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America, and by the explicit or implicit ideological ties among them all. In this last respect, Israel does not stand out on its own, but is rather part of a cluster of other Western, Christian, or otherwise non-Islamic entities that extremist Islam views as adversaries.

In an attempt to solve the core Arab-Jewish conflict, on November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly approved Resolution 181(II) providing the legal foundations to partition the territory of the former British Mandate over Palestine by establishing separate Arab and Jewish states. Further provisions concerned the international status of the Jerusalem and Bethlehem area.² Faced with this UN resolution, representatives of the Jewish side declared their acceptance of territorial partition.³ The State of Israel was declared on May 14, 1948, thus implementing the claim to a Jewish state in Palestine. Representatives of the Arab side, however, rejected the UN resolution,⁴ and thus no parallel declaration of in-

²Part I, A, 3 of Resolution 181 states that "independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem . . . shall come into existence in Palestine not later than 1 October 1948." See: <http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/History/partition.html>.

³Before the vote on the UN partition resolution, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver of the Jewish Agency for Palestine said that the Jewish Agency favored all the resolution's 11 recommendations but one—the exclusion of Jerusalem from the projected Jewish state. "Jerusalem," he went on, "held a unique place in Jewish life and religious traditions. It was the ancient capital of the Jewish nation and its symbol through the ages. . . . The Jewish section of modern Jerusalem, outside the walls, should be included in the Jewish state." Nevertheless, said Silver, "If that heavy sacrifice was the inescapable condition of a final solution, if it made possible the establishment of the Jewish State . . . then the Jewish Agency was prepared to recommend the partition solution. . . ." Ruth Lapidot and Moshe Hirsch, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict and Its Resolution: Selected Documents* (Dordrecht, 1992), pp. 55–56.

⁴Mr. Husseini of the Arab Higher Committee said: "One other consideration of fundamental importance to the Arab world was that of racial homogeneity. The Arabs lived in a vast territory, stretching from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, spoke one language, had the same history, tradition and aspirations. Their unity was a solid foundation for peace in one of the most central and sensitive areas of the world. It was illogical, therefore, that the United Nations should associate itself with the introduction of an alien body into that

dependence of an Arab state in Palestine followed, although such an intention has been repeatedly claimed ever since. The reasons why an independent Arab state in Palestine was not declared in 1948—at least in a form that would command clear international recognition—are complex and cannot be discussed here.

Warfare between the Arab and Jewish sides in Palestine erupted immediately after the UN partition decision—actually an extension of violence that had already been going on between the two sides—and continued intermittently over the following decades.⁵ War between neighboring Arab countries and Israel also erupted in 1948, motivated, at least officially, by the Israeli-Arab conflict within Palestine. By the time cease-fire agreements were reached with the neighboring countries in 1949, Israel had extended its control over some areas that, in the 1947 UN partition plan, were assigned to the would-be Arab state. A major Arab-Israeli war followed two decades later, in 1967, in which Israel occupied the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. The profound demographic implications of 1948–49 and 1967 are discussed in detail below. In 1973, war erupted again, followed by only minor changes in the cease-fire lines with Syria and a major Israeli military redeployment on the Egyptian front. Besides these two full-scale wars, Israel launched major retaliation campaigns in 1956 against Egypt—leading to full-scale invasion of, and temporary control over, the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip—and in 1982 into Lebanon.⁶ During the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq launched a missile strike against Israel.⁷

Cease-fire agreements were signed between Israel and its neigh-

established homogeneity. . . . The future constitutional organization of Palestine should be based on . . . the establishment on democratic lines of an Arab State comprising all Palestine. . . ." *Ibid.*, pp. 57–58.

⁵For a historical account see Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–1999* (New York, 1999).

⁶UN Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967, called for "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict." UN Security Council Resolution 338 of October 22, 1973, called "upon the parties concerned to start immediately after the ceasefire implementation of Security Council resolution 242." UN Security Council Resolution 425 of March 19, 1978, following the Litani operation, called "upon Israel immediately to cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory." The same principle was reiterated following the entry of Israeli forces into Lebanon in 1982.

⁷Iraq remains the only belligerent country that has not signed a cease-fire agreement with Israel.

bors—Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon—in 1949, 1967, and 1974, each reflecting battlefield results and achieving (temporary) boundary definition between the parties inside and outside Palestine. Peace treaties were signed between Israel and Egypt in 1979 and between Israel and Jordan in 1994. With the withdrawal of occupying Israeli forces from Lebanon in 2000, the UN established the exact international boundary between the two countries. An agreement of intent was signed in 1993 between Israel and the Palestinian Authority based on the so-called Oslo Accords, but subsequent negotiations did not lead to a peace treaty. In 1987, and again in September 2000—after negotiations brokered by the U.S. collapsed—the Palestinians initiated an intifada (popular uprising); the second intifada, and Israeli military response to it, are still under way at the time of this writing.

In the prevailing situation of prolonged and unresolved political and military confrontation, observation of demographic trends in Israel and Palestine unveils the deeper layer of political, cultural, religious, social, economic, and environmental factors that underlie the conflict. Because of the crucial connection between population variables and socioeconomic and environmental development in a small and densely settled territory, Jewish and Arab population trends in Palestine are best analyzed through an integrated approach. Looking at the two parties not only as separate and hostile entities but also as one integrated regional societal system may sharpen perception of the complexities of the problems at stake and also help in discerning possible mechanisms to reduce tensions.

One way to assess the significant role of demography in the Israeli-Palestinian context is to elaborate different scenarios of future Jewish and Arab population development for both the short term and the longer run. This essay reviews some of the main demographic trends among Jews and Arabs in Israel and Palestine, presents various population projections for the period 2000–2050, and discusses some possible policy implications of the emerging demographic scenarios. In the following, new projections are presented based on official baseline data released by the State of Israel and by the Palestinian Authority. The analysis and interpretation, however, reflect our independent research. Assumptions for the population scenarios rely on assessment and evaluation of past trends with regard to health and mortality, fertility, interna-

tional migration, and territorial population redistribution. Cultural, communal, and institutional variables also receive significant attention.

Beyond a general expectation of rapid population growth within a relatively small territory, population projections indicate the important role of differential growth for the different ethnoreligious subpopulations, geographical regions, and functional age groups. Prospective changes in Jewish and Palestinian population sizes, densities, manpower characteristics, and mutual ethnoreligious balance may be primary factors in exacerbating conflict, but may also stimulate innovative thinking about ways to contain conflict.

Demography is a primary force in shaping the political, environmental, socioeconomic, and sociocultural interests of the contending parties. Political boundaries and the very viability of the respective countries are powerfully related to ethnic and religious composition, population densities, environmental constraints, and socioeconomic development. Possible policy interventions may concern fertility, international migration, the population's geographical mobility and distribution, and investments in public facilities and economic infrastructure. From the different perspectives of the two main parties to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a serious appraisal of prospective demographic trends might lead to policy decisions that ease the path toward conflict resolution, or at least help keep the situation from deteriorating.

POPULATION CHANGE IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE: FRAMEWORKS AND PATTERNS

Territory

Boundaries of the territory known, among other appellations, as *Kna'an* (the biblical Hebrew word translated in English as Canaan), *Eretz Yisrael*, The Holy Land, and Palestine have changed repeatedly through history. At times, the relevant land formed one single political unit or was at the core of a significantly more extended one. During other periods, it was divided between different foreign powers or constituted a relatively distant and peripheral province controlled by one or more of them.

The geographical concept of *Palestine*—more accurately, West-

ern Palestine—refers to the whole territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. This area formed the British Mandate between 1922 and 1948,⁸ and comprises some 28,000 km² (table 1). Of this total, 20,444 km² of land plus 474 km² of lakes are included in the State of Israel, reflecting armistice or cease-fire agreements with Lebanon and Syria, and more recent peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan. In addition, soon after the Six-Day War of June 1967, Israel incorporated into the Jerusalem municipality a total of 73 km² that included the eastern part of the city and adjacent land, areas that, between 1948 and 1967, were ruled by the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan, later Jordan. Afterward, Israel also extended its legal jurisdiction over 1,154 km² of the Golan Heights, captured from Syria in 1967. Not included in the State of Israel are the *Palestinian Territories*.⁹ These include the

⁸The Balfour Declaration, issued November 2, 1917, stated that “the British Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish People . . . it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.” These principles were incorporated in the Preamble and Article 2 of the Terms of the Mandate for Palestine, July 24, 1922. On September 16, 1922, the Council of the League of Nations approved a British memorandum stating that provisions aimed at securing the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine were not applicable to the area east of the Jordan River—Eastern Palestine—which was to be separately administered by the British. See Palestine Royal Commission, *Report Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty, July 1937* (London, 1937).

⁹The UN Population Division’s 2000 revised population projections adopted the caption “Occupied Palestinian Territories” in place of the previous label, “West Bank and Gaza.” This change reflected discussions at several UN bodies—its Legal Office, Department of Political Affairs, Office of the Secretary General, and General Assembly—following a request from the Palestinian Authority that was supported by the Arab states. That led to a 1999 instruction to the Population Division to report statistics according to the new denomination. The decision is documented in a series of internal memoranda based on a more general decision by the General Assembly that does not refer specifically to statistical reporting. Quite aside from its obvious political orientation, the label “Occupied Palestinian Territories” is neither geographically clear nor accurate. In the current political-military reality of the whole territory of Palestine between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, and following the 1993 Oslo agreements, there are four types of geopolitical situations: 1. *The State of Israel*: Full Israeli sovereignty; 2–4. *The Palestinian Territories*, subdivided into: 2. *The “A” zones*: these areas, including all the main Palestinian cities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and 64 percent of the population in the Palestinian Territories, are in the full administrative and security control of the Palestinian Authority, and host no Israeli military or civilian settlement; 3. *The “B” zones*: 33 percent of the population, Palestinian administrative responsibility, Israeli army security responsibility; 4. *The “C” zones*: 3 percent of the population, full responsibility in the hands of the Israeli army. See Philippe Fargues “Des cartes dans quel jeu? Les accords israélo-palestiniens et la démographie,”

West Bank (of the Jordan River), comprising 5,506 km² (governed by Jordan between 1948 and 1967), and the Gaza Strip, comprising 378 km² (under Egyptian military rule between 1948 and 1967).

TABLE 1. ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, LAND SURFACE, SQUARE KM AND MILES

Surface	Total Israel ^a	West Bank	Gaza	Total Palestinian Territories	Grand Total
Sq. Km	21,671 ^b	5,506	378	5,884	27,555
Sq. Miles	8,371	2,127	146	2,273	10,644

^aIncluding Golan Heights and East Jerusalem.

^bAccording to the UN partition plan, the Jewish state was to have a surface of 16,114 km².

Although comparatively small—the equivalent of a medium-size region in a typical European country or one of the smallest states in the United States¹⁰—the territory of Palestine (Israel plus the Palestinian-ruled areas) comprises significant variations of morphological and climatic regions. The main territorial areas include the Mediterranean coastal plane to the west, the hilly north-south central backbone, and the Jordan Valley to the east. Israel's southern part, the Beersheba Subdistrict—12,946 km² of mostly desert or arid land—makes up 58 percent of Israel's total area. For all of Palestine, then, extremely

Revue d'Études Palestiniennes 75, Spring 2000, pp. 53–64. The “B” and “C” zones, hosting both a military and a civilian Israeli presence, can accurately be described as “occupied territory,” but, as noted, most Palestinians live in the “A” zones. To be faithful to the UN terminology, two separate sets of statistical data should be provided for “Occupied Palestinian Territories” and “Autonomous Palestinian Territories.” To be sure, in Middle Eastern political rhetoric the State of Israel itself has often been referred to as “Occupied Palestinian Territory.” It may be noted that the notion of “occupied territory” may apply to many other places around the world featuring territorial conflict—at least from the point of view of one of the contending parties. Use by the UN—including its Population Division—of the term *exclusively* for parts of Palestine neither enhances scientific clarity nor adds to data reliability. An alternative label for “West Bank and Gaza” would be “Palestinian Territories” or simply “Palestine.” The Palestinian Authority's Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in Ramallah refers to the relevant areas as “Palestinian Territory.”

¹⁰The total area of the State of Israel without the Territories is larger than New Jersey and smaller than Massachusetts. The total area of the West Bank approximates that of Delaware.

variable land and climate conditions influence potential and actual settlement patterns.

Past Population Trends

Available evidence indicates that historically, the total population of Palestine—whatever the internal political divisions—shifted significantly in size and composition. The rough reconstruction in table 2 reflects prevailing scholarly assumptions of a relatively large population size—probably ranging between 1 and 2.5 million—during the early centuries C.E.; significant population decline after the fifth century; long-term population stagnation until the beginning of the nineteenth century; and rapid growth ever since.¹¹ In the modern period, the total population of Palestine repeatedly doubled, from 275,000 in 1800 to over half a million in 1890, over a million in 1931, about two million in 1947, and four million toward the end of the 1960s. More recently, population again doubled from over 4.5 million in 1975 to 9.3 million in 2000, and probably stands in the vicinity of 10 million in 2003. Over the period 1800–2000, Palestine’s total population grew by a factor of nearly 34 times. Between 1947, the year of the UN partition plan, and 2000, total population grew by 4.7 times.

Population distribution by main ethnoreligious groups shows an uninterrupted presence of Jews, and subsequently Christians and Muslims, over most of the last two millennia, along with significant changes over time in the absolute and relative size of these groups. Archaeological and documentary evidence points to the early prevalence of Jewish population, political organization, and culture. Then, between the fourth and seventh centuries—the Byzantine period—the majority of the population was Christian. With the rise of Islam after the seventh century, a Muslim majority emerged. This lasted through 1947, when, out of an estimated total population of about 2 million, close to 1.2 million (60 percent) were Muslims, about 650,000 (32 percent) Jews, and about 150,000 (7 percent) Christians.¹²

¹¹Roberto Bachi, *The Population of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1977). For population estimates in antiquity, see Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones, *Atlas of World Population History* (Harmondsworth, 1978); and Magen Broshi, *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls* (London, 2001), pp. 80–109.

¹²Bachi, *Population of Israel*, pp. 4–5.

TABLE 2. POPULATION IN PALESTINE WEST OF JORDAN RIVER, BY RELIGIOUS GROUPS, FIRST CENTURY—2000 (ROUGH ESTIMATES, THOUSANDS)

Year	Jews	Christians	Muslims	Total ^a
First half				
1st century C.E.	Majority	—	—	1,000–2,500
5th century	Minority	Majority	—	>1st century
End 12th century	Minority	Minority	Majority	>225
14th cent.				
pre-black death	Minority	Minority	Majority	225
post-black death	Minority	Minority	Majority	150
1533–39	5	6	145	157
1690–91	2	11	219	232
1800	7	22	246	275
1890	43	57	432	532
1914	94	70	525	689
1922	84	71	589	752
1931	175	89	760	1,033
1947	630	143	1,181	1,970
1960	1,911	85	1,090	3,111
1967	2,374	102	1,204	3,716
1975	2,959	116	1,447	4,568
1985	3,517	149	2,166	5,908
1995	4,522	191	3,241	8,112
2000	4,969	217	3,891	9,310

^aIncluding "Others": Druze, other small religious minorities, and, since 1990, immigrants from the former USSR without religious affiliation.

Sources: until 1975, Roberto Bachi, *The Population of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1977); after 1975, author's estimates based on Israel Central Bureau of Statistics and Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

Following Israel's 1948 War of Independence and the far-reaching political changes that came in its wake, a Jewish majority emerged again in the whole territory of historic Palestine. One of the determinants of this shift was the flight from Palestine of 625,000–675,000 Arabs, according to Israeli sources,¹³ or 700,000–850,000, according to Palestinian sources.¹⁴ These have

¹³Ibid., pp. 401–02.

¹⁴See Edward Hagopian and A.B. Zahlan, "Palestine's Arab Population: The Demography of the Palestinians," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 12, Summer 1974, pp. 32–73; and G.F. Kossaiifi, *The Palestinian Refugees and the Right to Return* (Washington, D.C., 1996).

been recognized, together with their descendants, as the Palestinian refugees.¹⁵ Another key determinant of population change beginning with Israeli independence was large-scale, unrestricted Jewish immigration, which amounted to 2,850,000 between 1948 and 2000. Differential natural increase of the main ethnoreligious groups further contributed to the changes in population size and composition.

At the end of 2000, the total population of Palestine from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River was estimated at 9.3 million, about 5 million (53 percent) Jews, close to 3.9 million (42 percent) Muslims, and over 200,000 (2 percent) Christians. Of the grand total of 9.3 million, Israel's population—including Jewish residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip—amounted to about 6,350,000. Of these, 4,969,000 were Jews, 199,000 non-Jews related to the recent large-scale Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, and 1,178,000 Arabs and others, mostly Muslim Palestinians, but also Christians and Druze (practitioners of a religion that originated as an offshoot of Islam). The total population of the Palestinian Territories approached 3 million—1,845,000 on the West Bank and 1,128,000 in the Gaza Strip.

Homelands and Diasporas

One of the most significant aspects of population dynamics in Israel and Palestine has been a continuous interaction between trends occurring locally and developments in the much broader framework of the Jewish and Palestinian diasporas. Of particular salience has been the role of international migration, leading to large-scale and, in a sense, reverse processes of concentration and dispersion of Jews and Arabs worldwide—Jews moving from diaspora to homeland; Arabs moving from homeland to diaspora.

Interactions between a Jewish population core in Palestine and an ancient and globally dispersed diaspora helped shape the very essence of Jewish history, identity, and culture. In modern times, Jewish population patterns in Israel were crucially affected by

¹⁵We cannot enter here into a discussion of the causes and modalities of the great Palestinian flight of 1948. The main Palestinian thesis argues that there was forced expulsion by the Israeli army, while the main Israeli thesis is that there was voluntary flight in response to encouragement by Arab leadership in the framework of a war Israel did not initiate.

heavy and, in the initial stages, very heterogeneous immigration. The essential process driving Jewish population trends has been the transition of Jews from being part of a multitude of communities representing small minorities in their respective diaspora countries of residence, to forming the majority of the State of Israel's population. Complex processes of absorption in a new societal context and growing sociodemographic homogenization were foreshadowed and justified by the prescriptive Zionist societal goals of "the ingathering of the exiles" and "fusion of the diasporas." In actual experience, large-scale immigration and absorption involved considerable social friction, the accumulation of social gaps, and, occasionally, the exploitation of these by political interests. Even so, the predominant pattern was one of convergence between different immigrant groups.¹⁶ At the same time, the remaining Jewish diaspora continued to constitute a potential source of Jewish population growth and—at least in the prevailing normative ethos of Israeli society—contributed to a broad perception of Jewish peoplehood transcending geographical boundaries.

The Palestinian migration experience was, in a sense, symmetric and reversed, a large-scale diaspora emerging only recently. International dispersal of population mostly followed the 1948 war and, to a lesser extent, the 1967 war. The Palestinian case is similar to that of Israel, however, in that the prevailing normative ethos looks to the diaspora as a substantial reservoir for potential immigration. Just as Israel's Zionist ideology speaks of a Jewish return to the homeland, the Palestinians speak of the return of the Palestinian refugees.¹⁷

¹⁶U.O. Schmelz, Sergio DellaPergola, and Uri Avner, *Ethnic Differences Among Israeli Jews: A New Look* (Jerusalem and New York, 1991).

¹⁷The question of who is a refugee and who is not, besides being politically overcharged, is complex and requires intensive scrutiny. According to the UN Refugees Relief and Work Agency in the Near East (UNRWA), a Palestinian refugee is "anyone who was living in Palestine two years before the 1948 war and migrated to one of the areas in which UNRWA operates (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, West Bank, and Gaza Strip) and became 'financially' in need." According to the Palestinian National Convention, Palestinian refugees are "Arab citizens who were living in Palestine until 1947, whether displaced by force outside Palestine or remaining inside Palestine. The definition also includes all of their descendants born to an Arab father inside or outside Palestine after that date." Rather than enter into the specific question of the demographic development of Palestinians holding the status of refugee, we quote available population estimates that basically refer to Palestinian refugees, but address the total Palestinian population as such. Every Palestinian falls into one of the following categories: Registered refugees—holding refugee registration cards issued by

Table 3 presents a rough reconstruction of the size and geographic distribution of worldwide Jewish and Arab Palestinian populations on the eve of Israel's independence in 1948, and in 2000.¹⁸ In 1948, the total world Jewish population was estimated at 11.2 million, of which 650,000 (6 percent) lived in Palestine, 945,000 (8 percent) in Middle Eastern and North African countries, and the other 86 percent in Eastern European and Western countries. Israel's independence and the large-scale international migration it allowed had a huge impact on the geographical dis-

UNRWA; Non-registered refugees — not holding refugee cards issued by UNRWA; Non-refugees — Palestinians not categorized under either of the two aforementioned statuses. See <http://www.pcbs.org/english/miscelln/definition.htm>. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in Ramallah, "the updating of UNRWA data depends on the refugees themselves," and is therefore of unknown validity. See <http://www.pcbs.org/miscelln/reading.htm>. Issues demanding clarification concern the exact procedures for the recording of vital events among refugees, especially cases of death, since UNRWA benefits associated with refugee status might be lost in case of death. Also, in case of marriage between a refugee and a non-refugee, evaluation of the advantages associated with belonging to either status, and transferability to spouses and descendants, may affect the choice of status. Indeed, the current belonging of (former refugee) Palestinians to refugee or non-refugee status in the West Bank and Gaza reflects individual decisions and processes of social mobility that escape rigid accountancy rules. These and other issues make the definitional boundaries of the refugee population and the accountancy of Palestinian refugees and their descendants an exemplary case in the study of *poorly defined subpopulations*. Many of the same research issues apply to certain Jewish populations, namely those who left Arab countries and immigrated to Israel. The majority of Jews who ever immigrated to Israel would indeed qualify for the status of refugees, having lost most of their belonging and being unable to return to the countries of origin. A significant difference is that Jewish immigrants in Israel were incorporated through a major public effort of absorption within the mainstream of Israeli society. In the case of the Palestinians, a major effort was instead invested in refraining from solving the social problems of immediate relevance, postponing and subordinating those issues to the final solution of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

¹⁸Jewish population figures derive from a systematic, country-by-country evaluation of sources of data and estimates. See Sergio DellaPergola "World Jewish Population," *American Jewish Year Book* (hereafter AJYB), yearly publication; idem, "Projections démographiques: combat de chiffres," in J.C. Sebag, ed., *L'arrière-plan démographique de l'explosion de violence en Israël-Palestine* (Paris, 2000), pp. 25–31; and Sergio DellaPergola, Uzi Rebhun, and Mark Tolts, "Prospecting the Jewish Future: Population Projections 2000–2080," AJYB 2000, pp. 103–46. Palestinian population figures need to undergo a similar critical evaluation, as they partly reflect estimates by individual researchers or such public bodies as the Office for Statistics and Natural Resources in Damascus. See Hasan Abu Libdeh, "Palestinian Territories: Demographics," in S. Della Seta, ed., *The Price of Non-Peace: The Need for a Strengthened Role for the European Union in the Middle East* (Brussels, 1999), pp. 170–77; PASSIA (Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs), *Agenda 1998* (Jerusalem, 1998); Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Population, Housing and Establishments—Census 1997* (Ramallah, 1999); UNRWA, *Annual Report*, 2000; and <http://www.pcbs.org/english/miscelln/method.htm>.

tribution of world Jewish population and also on the balance of natural increase and Jewish identification (retention vs. assimilation). It should be noted, however, that world Jewish population grew rather slowly after World War II, and, since the mid-1970s, has been close to zero population growth. In 2000, out of a world total of about 13 million Jews, 4.9 million (38 percent) lived in Israel, only 38,000 remained in Muslim countries (amounting to virtual ethnic cleansing), and the balance (61 percent) mostly lived in North America and elsewhere in the West.¹⁹

TABLE 3. WORLD JEWISH AND PALESTINIAN POPULATIONS BY MAJOR REGIONS, NUMBERS (THOUSANDS, ROUGH ESTIMATES) AND PERCENTS, 1948–2000

Region	Jews				Palestinians			
	Number		Percent		Number		Percent	
	1948 ^a	2000 ^b	1948 ^a	2000 ^b	1948 ^a	2000 ^b	1948 ^a	2000 ^b
Total world	11,185	12,900	100.0	100.0	1,664	8,956	100.0	100.0
Israel/Palestine, total	650	4,952	5.8	38.4	1,404	4,356	84.4	48.6
Israel	645	4,582	5.8	35.5	806 ^c	1,131	48.5	12.6
West Bank ^d , Gaza	5	370	0.0	2.9	598 ^e	3,225	35.9	36.0
Middle East ^f ,	945	38	8.4	0.3	160 ^g	4,100	9.6	45.8
North Africa								
Other countries	9,590	7,910	85.8	61.3	100 ^g	500	6.0	5.6

^aMay 15.

^bDecember 31.

^cAssuming 650,000 Palestinians left as refugees.

^dIncluding East Jerusalem.

^eDifference between figures in two preceding lines.

^fIncluding Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Gulf States, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other countries in the region.

^gAuthor's rough estimate.

Sources: Bachi (1977); DellaPergola (2001); DellaPergola, Rebhun, Tolts (2000); PASSIA (1998); UNRWA (2000).

The great majority of Palestinian Arabs lived in Palestine on the eve of partition in 1948, though some emigrant communities already existed both in the Middle East and in several Western countries. It can be roughly estimated that the total Palestinian popu-

¹⁹Sergio DellaPergola, "World Jewish Population 2000," *AJYB* 2000, pp. 484–95.

lation worldwide grew from about 1.7 million in 1948 to about 9 million in 2000, reflecting significant natural increase in the intervening period. A major factor of local, regional, and global population redistribution was the exodus connected with the 1948 war. In 1949, about 156,000 Arabs were left in the areas that had become the State of Israel. A further flight of Palestinians from the West Bank followed with the 1967 war. In 2000, about half of the whole Palestinian people—over 4.3 million, or 49 percent—lived on the territory of historic Palestine, whether in the State of Israel (13 percent), or in the West Bank and Gaza (36 percent).²⁰ Another estimated 4.1 million (46 percent) were living in neighboring Muslim countries in the Middle East and North Africa, over 60 percent of them in Jordan. The balance (5 percent) lived in other, mostly Western, countries.

Under the current terms of Israeli-Arab conflict in Palestine, diaspora populations constitute a frequently mentioned potential for immigration, and hence a relevant element in the evaluation of possible future population trends in the area. Whether or not actually motivated to move back to Israel/Palestine, diasporas have represented, and continue to represent, a powerful factor in the mobilization of public support and economic resources both internally—within the respective Jewish and Arab constituencies—and vis-à-vis external actors in the international community such as foreign governments, the world media, the United Nations, and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Thus Jews and Palestinians in their respective diasporas have played, and will continue to play, a significant role in the overall development of population trends in Israel and Palestine, if not directly, at least indirectly.

Territorial Aspects of Population Distribution

The Palestine partition plan of 1947 envisioned dividing the land into six areas, three with a Jewish majority, three with an

²⁰Regardless of citizenship, refugee or non-refugee status, and whether or not living in their localities of birth. In 2001, the number of registered refugees was estimated at 607,770 on the West Bank (33 percent of the total Palestinian population there), of which 163,139 in camps; and 852,626 in the Gaza Strip (73 percent of the total population), of which 460,031 in camps. See <http://www.un.org>, United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (2001).

Arab majority, and the Jerusalem-Bethlehem area as a *corpus separatum* under UN administration. Following the 1948 war and the 1949 armistice agreements, the Jewish-Israeli side expanded its territorial hegemony at the expense of the Arab side, with several enclaves of what was to have been Arab territory passing under direct Israeli rule. The 1967 war produced further territorial changes, namely the expansion of Israeli rule (civil or military) over the whole of historic Palestine. As noted, Israel annexed East Jerusalem and surrounding territory in 1967, and Israeli legal jurisdiction was subsequently extended to the Golan Heights. However, in the West Bank and Gaza areas the Israeli administration did not suspend application of the preexisting Jordanian or Egyptian legal frameworks under which the local population had been governed. At the same time, Israel promoted an extensive network of Jewish settlements throughout the West Bank, the Gaza area, and the Golan Heights. Consequently, each part of Palestine ended up having both Jews and Arabs, though the respective proportions varied greatly.²¹

Table 4 provides an approximate classification scheme of Jewish and Arab population distribution over the different political and administrative units of the whole territory that was submitted to various modes and frameworks of Israeli rule after the 1967 war.²² Within the State of Israel proper, 36 of the 45 natural regions²³ had Jewish majorities in 2000. They contained an enlarged Jewish population²⁴ of 4.6 million, 93 percent of the total population of these areas. The nine other natural regions continued to display an Arab majority, reflecting the underlying assumptions of the 1947 partition plan and the noted consequences of the 1948 war. There were about 610,000 Arabs in these areas, representing

²¹For a more detailed analysis of territorial population distributions of Jews and Arabs within Israel and the Palestinian Territories see Arnon Sofer, *Israel, Demography 2000–2020: Risks and Opportunities* (Haifa, 2001).

²²Residential segregation between Jews and Arabs is extremely high within single localities, and within residential neighborhoods in the few localities with a mixed Jewish-Arab population. The following discussion refers to population distribution by administrative units.

²³Natural regions are territorial subdivisions of the 14 administrative subdistricts, which are, in turn, subdivisions of Israel's six major districts.

²⁴All of the Jewish population data reported here are "enlarged," meaning they include non-Jewish members of Jewish households, mostly immigrants from the former Soviet Union. See below for further discussion.

a majority of over 76 percent; Jews were less than 24 percent of the population. These majority-Arab areas were in the northwestern and central parts of Galilee in Israel's north, and in the so-called "Triangle" bordering the West Bank.²⁵

TABLE 4. AREAS IN ISRAEL AND IN THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, BY JEWISH^a AND ARAB^b POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, 2000

Area	Number (thousands)			Percent		
	Jewish	Arab	Total	Jewish	Arab	Total
GRAND TOTAL	5,180.6	4,213.7	9,394.3	55.1	44.9	100.0
Total Israel	4,982.4	1,188.7	6,171.1	80.7	19.3	100.0
(without Pal. Territories)						
<i>Pre-1967 borders</i>	4,794.6	965.3	5,759.9	83.2	16.8	100.0
Natural regions	4,608.4	355.6	4,964.0	92.8	7.2	100.0
with Jewish majority						
Natural regions	186.2	609.7	795.9	23.4	76.6	100.0
with Arab majority						
<i>Added post-1967</i>	187.8	223.4	411.2	45.7	54.3	100.0
Golan Heights	15.8	19.0	34.8	45.4	54.6	100.0
East Jerusalem	172.0	204.4	376.4	45.7	54.3	100.0
Total Palestinian Territories	198.2	3,025.0	3,223.2	6.1	93.9	100.0
West Bank	191.5	1,878.0	2,214.5	8.6	91.4	100.0
Gaza	6.7	1,147.0	1,153.7	0.6	99.4	100.0

^aIncluding non-Jewish members of Jewish households, referred to below as the "enlarged Jewish population."

^bIncluding others.

Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2001); Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (1997); DellaPergola (2001).

As for the areas directly administered by Israel since the 1967 war, at the end of 2000 the Golan Heights had a total population of 35,000 (55 percent Arab Druze and 45 percent Jews), and the East Jerusalem area had a total population of 376,000 (54 percent Arabs of which 4 percent Christians, and 46 percent Jews). The ag-

²⁵The Arab-majority natural regions were Eastern Lower Galilee, Kokhav Plateau, Nazareth-Tiran Mountains, Shefar'am Region, Karmi'el Region, Yehi'am Region, Elon Region, all in the Northern District; Alexander Mountain in the Haifa District; and East Sharon in the Central District. There are another three natural regions with Arab majorities on the Golan Heights.

gregate population of Israel—the land within the pre-1967 borders plus the directly ruled territories added after 1967—was 6,171,000, of which 81 percent were Jews and 19 percent Arabs.

In the Palestinian Territories, the total population of the West Bank and Gaza at the end of 2000 was estimated at about 3 million Arabs (94 percent of the total) and about 200,000 Jews (6 percent). Jewish residents of the Palestinian Territories constituted 9 percent of the total population on the West Bank and less than 1 percent in the Gaza Strip. Following partial implementation of the Oslo agreements in the 1990s and withdrawal of Israeli military forces, the majority of Palestinians lived in autonomous districts subject to the Palestinian Authority. However, the current wave of violence, beginning in late 2000, elicited an ongoing military reaction from Israel. As a result, the Palestinian Territories are now highly fragmented, and Israeli forces impose strict limits on travel across the area.

In sum, the grand total population of Israel and Palestine—the area encompassing the old British Mandate plus the Golan Heights—was about 9.4 million in 2000, 55 percent Jewish and 45 percent Arab. This mosaic of interspersed Jewish- and Arab-majority areas stands at the center of a complex and often bloody arena of human interaction and political clash, whose demographic implications constitute one of the most sensitive issues in the region.

DEMOGRAPHY IN COMPARATIVE CONTEXT: PAST AND PROSPECTIVE

International Migration

As already noted, international migration has operated as a leading mechanism of population growth in Palestine. Riddled with apparent contradictions when viewed in strictly political or normative terms, the patterns of this migration constitute important building blocks in the long-term evaluation of population growth.

While events developed in totally different ways for Jews and for Palestinians, it is important to keep in mind the continuing socioeconomic osmosis that prevailed over time across religioethnic boundaries. During most of the twentieth century, Jewish immi-

gration constituted a main engine of economic growth and modernization in the whole area. Not only did this immigration function as a self-reinforcing mechanism expanding the economy to allow for the absorption of further Jewish immigration, but the economic change it stimulated also provided large-scale employment for Palestinian Arabs, and in that way, especially during the British Mandate, encouraged Arab immigration from neighboring countries.²⁶

The consequence for Israel was that an Arab labor force became one of the essential prerequisites for the construction of a modern Jewish state. And as far as the Palestinians were concerned, were it not for the existence of the State of Israel, a large share of the Palestinian labor force, unable to find employment locally, would have been forced to migrate elsewhere in search of work. Indeed, about 140,000 Palestinians emigrated from the West Bank during the 1960s—ruled, at the time by Jordan—looking for jobs. Afterwards, from the 1967 Israeli occupation until 1989, 171,000 Palestinians left the West Bank and 114,000 the Gaza area in search of the new opportunities opening up in the booming economies of the Gulf States. After the 1991 Gulf War, about 30,000 returned, and another 30,000—mostly people related to members of the Palestinian Authority's administration and military forces—came back to Palestine after the Oslo agreements.²⁷

Between 1967 and 1987, a growing number of Palestinian commuters—perhaps as many as 200,000—were employed within Israel's territory.²⁸ But with the 1987 (first) intifada, they came to be seen as a security risk, and Israel drastically curtailed their number. The result was a dramatic decline in Palestinian income levels and standard of living.

The most recent chapter in the intertwined relationship between Jewish and Palestinian economies and migrations concerns, once

²⁶Jacob Metzger, *The Divided Economy of Mandatory Palestine* (Cambridge, 1998).

²⁷Elia Zureik, "The trek back home: Palestinians returning home and their problems of adaptation," in A. Hovdenak et al., eds., *Constructing an Order: Palestinian Adaptation to Refugee Life* (Oslo, 1997), pp. 79–102.

²⁸According to Israeli data, the 105,000 officially registered Palestinians who worked in Israel in 1989 constituted 37 percent of the total Palestinian labor force. They represented 7 percent of the total Israeli work force, 17 percent of all workers in agriculture, and 44 percent of all construction workers. Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1989).

again, the consequences of political tensions. After a few years' partial recovery, the 2000 (second) intifada brought the Israeli-Palestinian labor-force interaction to a virtual end. Seeking manpower to substitute for the Palestinians, the Israeli economy found it in a growing number of foreign workers, some on temporary contracts who remained illegally in the country. In 2000, their number was estimated at 200,000–250,000.

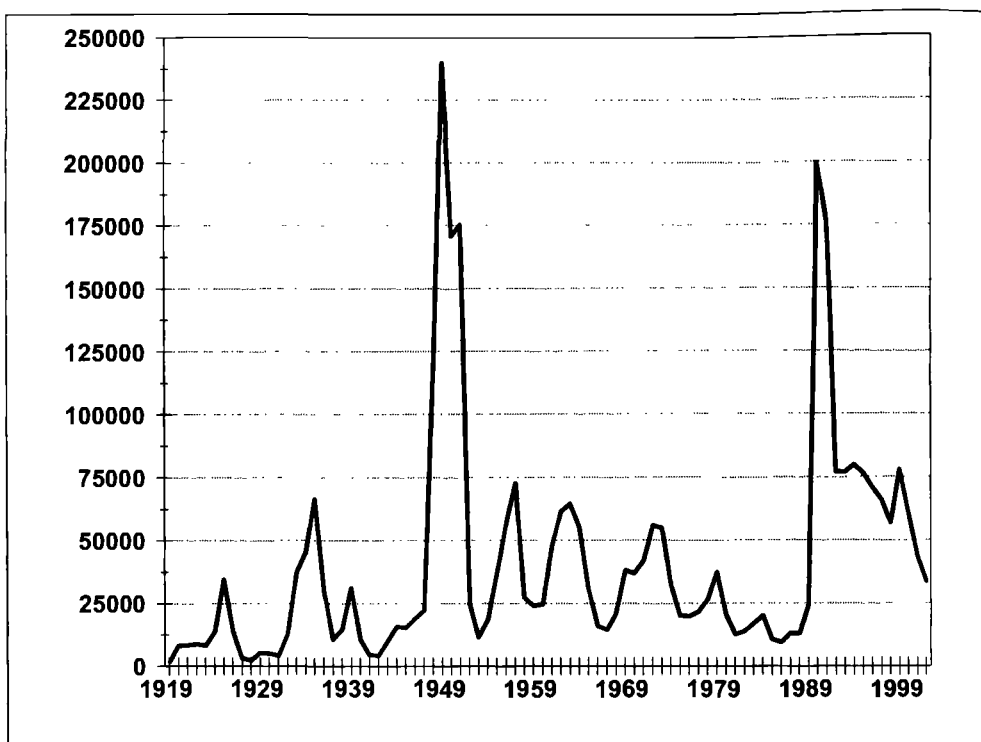
The mechanisms governing Jewish international migration—immigration to Israel in particular—responded to the variable conditions of Jewish communities worldwide, within the context of general political and socioeconomic change at the global, national, and local levels.²⁹ Migration policies in the sending and receiving countries played a key role, such as the quotas imposed on immigration by the U.S. beginning in the early 1920s and by the British in Palestine in the 1930s, or the ban on Jewish emigration long imposed by the Soviet Union. Since 1948, Israel's Law of Return has allowed nearly unlimited immigration of Jews, their children and grandchildren, and spouses. Large-scale, push-dominated Jewish emigration translated into repeated waves of migrants, mostly from less developed or less politically emancipated countries, to Israel and to various Western countries.

Figure 1 illustrates the changing volume of Jewish immigration to Palestine/Israel between 1919 and 2002. In absolute terms, there were two major waves. The first, in 1948–51, included the mass transfer of Jews from Muslim countries and of survivors of the World War II destruction of European Jewry. The second, since 1990, has been dominated by the major exodus from the former Soviet Union. Emigration from Israel reached an estimated 15–20 percent of the total volume of immigration—a comparatively low amount in comparison to other countries that have experienced major immigration.

Largely as a consequence of migration, the geographic distribution of the Jewish diaspora tended to become increasingly aligned with the more stable and affluent countries, those where the factors stimulating migration were weak. Hence, the potential for future Jewish migration would appear to be rapidly declining. A pro-

²⁹Sergio DellaPergola, "The Global Context of Migration to Israel," in Elazar Leshem and Judith T. Shuval, eds., *Immigration to Israel: Sociological Perspectives* (New Brunswick, 1998), pp. 51–92.

FIGURE 1. ALIYAH TO PALESTINE/ISRAEL, 1919–2002



jection assuming continuation of the emigration rates that prevailed during the 1990s in the major current countries of residence of Jews predicts a sharp decline of net migration to Israel, down to a few thousand per year over the first half of the twenty-first century (see table 5). Nevertheless, past experience suggests that we cannot rule out the possibility that new disruptive factors might emerge at some future time in geographical areas that are currently attractive to diaspora Jewish communities. Also, emigration from Israel has been primarily related to long- and short-term economic trends in the country, which also are subject to change.³⁰

As for the future of Palestinian migrations, the possibility of an influx of refugees and others into the areas now governed by the State of Israel and by the Palestinian Authority is a major topic

³⁰Ibid.

TABLE 5. WORLD AND DIASPORA JEWISH POPULATION, BY MAIN FACTORS OF CHANGE, ASSUMING MIGRATION AND FERTILITY RATES AS OF LATE 1990S, 2000–2050 (THOUSANDS)^a

Region and Factors of Change	2000–2010	2010–2020	2020–2030	2030–2050
Total World				
Initial Jewish population	13,109	13,428	13,847	14,125
Final Jewish population	13,428	13,487	14,145	14,480
Difference	319	419	298	355
Thereof: Diaspora				
Initial Jewish population	8,235	7,863	7,619	7,250
Final Jewish population	7,863	7,619	7,250	6,251
Difference	-372	-244	-369	-999
Net migration balance with Israel	-105	-49	-28	-34
Natural and other change ^b	-267	-195	-341	-965

^aBeginning of year estimates. Projection baseline: 1995. Minor discrepancies are due to rounding.

^bBalance of births, deaths, and changes in Jewish identification.

Source: DellaPergola, Rebhun, and Tolts (2000).

of current political discourse.³¹ Large-scale return of former Palestinian refugees to what is now Israel stands at the center of contention, but does not seem compatible with the Israeli position on a final peace agreement. The actual likelihood of such migration is not clear, especially if a plan of economic compensation as an alternative to “return” can be worked out in the framework of a political settlement. The demographic implications of a small-scale influx of Palestinian refugees to Israel will be discussed below. Arab emigration from Israel/Palestine has been occurring on a relatively minor scale, and it is hard to see how it might increase substantially, given the difficulty in locating possible countries of destination.

³¹Article 11 of UN General Assembly Resolution 194 of December 11, 1948, “resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and wishing to live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.” See <http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/UN/unga194.html>.

Our main assumption in the following population projections is that the political and socioeconomic configuration of the global system will not undergo significant change, and that international migration will therefore not play as significant a role as other demographic determinants. Were major change to occur, of course, as in the recent case of the fall and dismemberment of the Soviet Union, international migration—including Jewish migration—would again reflect the pressures and opportunities created by the new circumstances.

Health and Longevity

Ironically—in the prevailing context of Arab-Jewish conflict—the two groups are genetically similar to each other. Recent research in population genetics based on DNA comparisons reveals that Sephardi (Mediterranean/Middle Eastern) and Ashkenazi (Central/Eastern European) Jews share common ancestries with Arab populations of the Middle East, especially the Palestinians.³² This is so despite wide-ranging international migrations, physical separation, and inbreeding over the centuries.

Contemporary gaps in mortality rates between Jews and Arabs largely reflect cultural, socioeconomic, and environmental differences between the respective populations. Early in the twentieth century, mortality levels were extremely high among the native population in Palestine. Life expectancy at birth for Muslims during the 1930s was less than 40 years.³³ Health patterns in Palestine dramatically improved—beginning with a decline in infant mortality—following Jewish immigration and the superior infrastructures developed by the British administration. Immigrants brought with them higher standards of personal health and hygiene than existed among the veteran population, and they and the British introduced better medical and health training as well as new and more efficient health services.

³²Michael Hammer et al., “Jewish and Middle Eastern non-Jewish populations share a common pool of Y-chromosome biallelic haplotypes,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA* 97, June 6, 2000, pp. 6769–74; Almut Nebel et al., “The Y chromosome pool of Jews as part of the genetic landscape of the Middle East,” *American Journal of Human Genetics* 69, Nov. 2001, pp. 1095–1112.

³³Bachi, *Population of Israel*, p. 247.

Jewish immigrants arriving after 1948 from less developed countries—mainly in Asia and Africa—quickly closed the life-expectancy gap with the earlier immigrant communities. On average, life expectancy at birth among Israeli Jews steadily increased by about one additional year of life every five calendar years. Israeli Arabs, starting at a much lower life-expectancy level, followed suit, consistently narrowing the gap. Their infant mortality rates, while twice those of the Jews, are now the lowest in the Arab world, with the possible exception of Kuwait. The overall health of Arabs in the Palestinian Territories after 1967 improved as well, though at a slower pace. Recent measurements of life expectancy indicate smaller gaps between Jews and Arabs in Israel than between Arabs in Israel and those in the Palestinian Territories.

Over the second half of the twentieth century, the health and mortality patterns of Israel/Palestine placed it in the category of the more developed countries, and thus they are likely to share the latter's course of development. Perhaps the clearest indication of this, both for Israelis and Palestinians, is the narrow gap between male and female longevity. Examined in the context of other sociodemographic and economic indicators, it appears to result from especially low male mortality rather than high female mortality.³⁴

It can be assumed that ongoing improvements in health will continue to produce declines in age-specific and in most cause-specific mortality rates. In our projections, initial life expectancies at birth for the Israeli population were set at the figures for the second half of the 1990s—76.3 years for Jewish men and 80.2 for Jewish women; 74.2 years for Arab men and 77.4 for Arab women. In the West Bank, the projection's initial life expectancies were 71.4 years for men and 75.5 for women; and in the Gaza area, 70.4 and 73.4, respectively. Our assumption in all the population projections that follow is that, as in the recent past, life expectancy at birth will continue to increase by about one year every five calendar years.

Marriage and Fertility

Reviewing recent demographic trends in Israel and Palestine, one is struck by two factors: (a) the persistence of high-to-

³⁴United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2001* (New York and Oxford, 2001), pp. 201–13.

moderately-high fertility levels over time; and (b) an apparent lack of consistency between measures of fertility and other key demographic indicators. By the mid-1990s, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR)³⁵ among Israeli Jews was 2.6 children, only moderately down from its highest level of 4 in 1951, and higher than among the total population of any other developed country (see figure 2). Overall Jewish fertility levels in Israel resulted from the convergence of a significant lowering of the fertility of immigrants from Asia and Africa, on the one hand, and measurable increases among immigrants from Europe and America, on the other.

The TFR among Israel's Christian Arabs was nearly the same as that of the Jews, and the TFR of Israeli Druze was quickly converging at the same level. Israel's Muslim population, which had a TFR of nearly 10 during the 1960s, declined to slightly above 4.5 by the mid-1980s, and stayed steady at that level thereafter. Within this Muslim population, the TFR of Bedouins—an originally nomadic group now increasingly relocating to permanent settlements, mostly in Israel's Southern District (the Negev)—is still estimated at above 10 by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, probably the highest fertility currently on record worldwide. Interestingly, during the 1990s, Israel's Jews maintained stable TFRs notwithstanding declining propensities to marry, and Israeli Muslims did the same in spite of rising propensities to marry.³⁶

In the Palestinian Territories, TFR was estimated in 1995 at 5.4 in the West Bank and 7.4 in the Gaza area—the latter figure one of the highest on record internationally. A 1997 estimate pointed to TFRs of 5.6 in the West Bank and 6.9 in Gaza, and an estimate for 1997–99 suggested some fertility decline, to 4.5 in the West Bank and 5.4 in Gaza.³⁷

While within a general theory of demographic transition the levels of mortality, fertility, and socioeconomic development tend to form one coherent cluster, this has not necessarily been the case for the Jewish and Muslim populations of Israel and the Palestin-

³⁵The TFR is a measure of the number of children expected on average, assuming indefinite continuation of currently observed age-specific fertility levels.

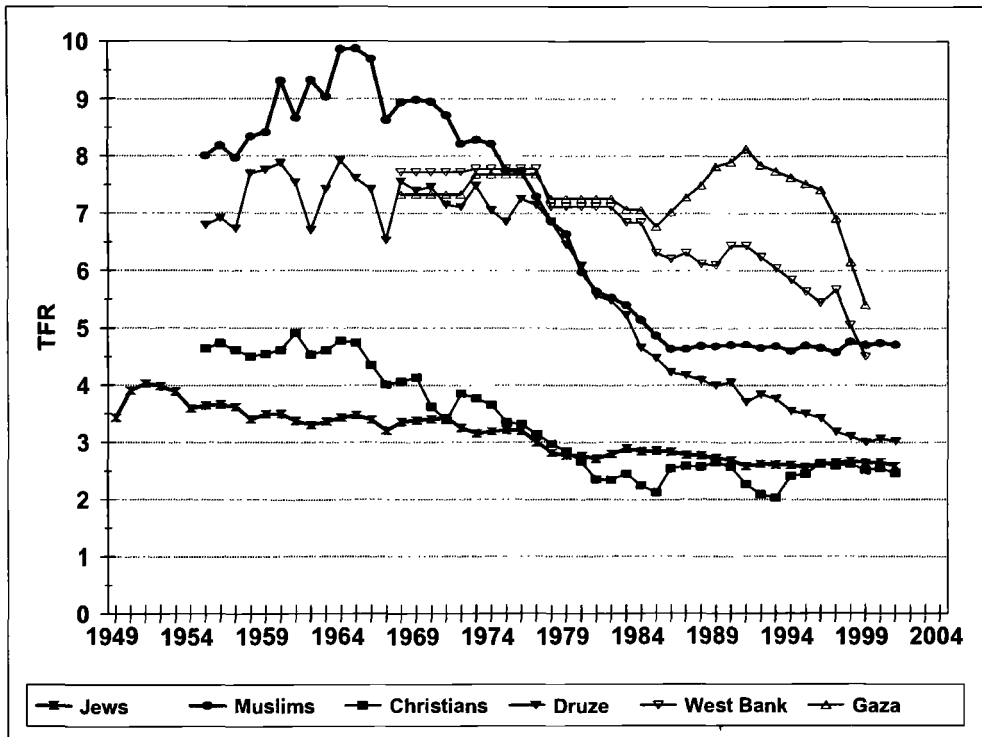
³⁶Sergio DellaPergola, "Demographic Changes in Israel in the Early 1990s," in Y. Kop, ed., *Israel Social Services, 1992–93* (Jerusalem, 1993), pp. 57–115.

³⁷All the data come from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. See <http://pcbs2.org/english/populati/tables5.htm>; and <http://www.pcbs.org/inside/selcts.htm>.

ian Territories. In other words, the Israeli and Palestinian societies are demographically unlike other communities that share roughly the same fertility patterns.

Table 6 exemplifies the respective fertility levels in 1995–2000

FIGURE 2. TOTAL FERTILITY RATES IN ISRAEL (JEWS, MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, DRUZE) AND IN PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, 1949–2001



and matches them with similar fertility levels observed among other contemporary populations worldwide. The Israeli Jewish TFR was matched by similar levels in 20 other countries; the Israeli Muslim TFR had 10 matches worldwide; the West Bank’s TFR had 12 matches; and Gaza’s TFR had 6. But a comparison of Israeli and Palestinian infant mortality rates with the average rates in these matching countries reveals distinctly higher levels among the latter: matched countries had infant mortality rates

three to seven times higher, on average, than the respective Israeli/Palestinian rates. Conversely, a comparison of GNP per capita shows levels two to ten times higher in Israel/Palestine than in the matched countries.³⁸

If one views fertility levels as the product, or at least a correlate,

TABLE 6. SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS, ISRAEL JEWS AND MUSLIMS, PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, AND MATCHED COUNTRIES, 1995–2000

Country	TFR	TFR ^a	Infant Mortality ^a	GNP per capita US\$ ^a
Israel Jews	2.6	2.62	5.0	17,000^b
Matched countries ^c	2.4–2.8	2.62	26.1	3,164
Ratio Israel Jews/Matched		1.00	0.19	5.37
No. of countries		20	20	16
Israel Muslims	4.7	4.67	9.2	8,000^b
Matched countries ^d	4.5–4.9	4.67	65.5	758
Ratio Israel Muslim/Matched		1.00	0.14	10.43
No. of countries		10	10	10
West Bank	5.4	5.44	25.5	1,618
Matched countries ^e	5.2–5.6	5.40	78.4	891
Ratio West Bank/Matched		1.01	0.33	2.34
No. of countries		12	12	11
Gaza	7.4	7.41	30.2	1,468
Matched countries ^f	7.0+	7.36	115.9	284
Ratio Gaza/Matched		1.01	0.26	5.16
No. of countries		6	6	5

^aAverage of selected countries.

^bAuthor's rough estimates.

^cAlbania, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Brunei, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, French Polynesia, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Mongolia, New Caledonia, Panama, St. Lucia, Turkey, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vietnam.

^dGhana, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Sudan, Swaziland, Vanuatu.

^eBhutan, Cambodia, Central Africa, Comoros, Gabon, Iraq, Laos, Namibia, Pakistan, Senegal, Solomon Isl., Tanzania.

^fAngola, Mali, Niger, Somalia, Uganda, Yemen.

Sources: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2001); Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (1997, 1998); United Nations (2001); Population Reference Bureau (2001).

³⁸Separate income figures for Israeli Jews and Arabs are the author's estimates, based on Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel* (Jerusalem, 2001). Figures

of several other variables—such as health patterns and socioeconomic development—recent TFRs in Israel and Palestine are definitely out of the range of behaviors normally observed in the international community. Such an intriguing difference can be described as an excess of fertility over the average fertility level of those countries whose other demographic characteristics are comparable.

The apparently anomalous fertility patterns of Israelis and Palestinians can only be explained by a rare combination of factors that counteract the tendencies to limit family size that characterize modern societies.³⁹

First, strong pronatalist attitudes are rooted in, or derived from, religious and cultural traditions shared by the vast majority of the population, both Jewish and Muslim.⁴⁰ Traditional moral imperatives, widespread conventions, and, last but not least, the competitive logic of political-military conflict, have encouraged fami-

for the Palestinian Territories were adapted by the author based on Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Labor Force Survey, Annual Report* (Ramallah, 1998).

³⁹Sergio DellaPergola, "Aspects socio-démographiques de l'intégration des minorités en Israël: convergences ou divergences?" in J.L. Rallu, J. Courbage, and V. Piché, eds., *Old and New Minorities—Anciennes et nouvelles minorités* (Paris, 1997), pp. 229–50; DellaPergola, "Jerusalem's Population, 1995–2020: Demography, Multiculturalism and Urban Policies," *European Journal of Population* 17, Jan. 2001, pp. 165–99; Philippe Fargues, "Protracted National Conflict and Fertility Change: Palestinians and Israelis in the Twentieth Century," *Population and Development Review* 26, 2000, pp. 441–82.

⁴⁰For analyses and outlooks on Jewish fertility trends see Sergio DellaPergola, "Some Effects of Religion on Population Trends," *Pro Mundi Vita Studies* 5, 1988, pp. 40–48; Dov Friedlander and Carol Feldmann, "The Modern Shift to Below-Replacement Fertility: Has Israel's Population Joined the Process?" *Population Studies* 47, 1993, pp. 295–306; Ilana Ziegler, "Family Growth in Israel and the 'Critical Child'" (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1995); Barbara S. Okun, "Religiosity and Contraceptive Method Choice: The Jewish Population of Israel," *European Journal of Population* 16, 2000, pp. 109–32. For the Palestinian side see Dov Friedlander, Zvi Eisenbach, and Calvin Goldscheider, "Modernization Patterns and Fertility Change: The Arab Populations of Israel and the Israel-Administered Territories," *Population Studies* 33, 1979, pp. 239–54; A.G. Hill, "The Palestinian Population of the Middle East," *Population and Development Review* 9, 1983, pp. 293–316; Hasan Abu Libdeh, Geir Ovansen, and Helge Brunborg, "Population Characteristics and Trends," in M. Heiberg and G. Ovansen, eds., *Palestinian Society in Gaza, West Bank and Arab Jerusalem: A Survey of Living Conditions* (Oslo, 1993), pp. 35–97; and Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *The Demographic Survey in the West Bank and Gaza* (Ramallah, 1997). For data on both sides see Eric Peritz and Mario Baras, *Studies in the Fertility of Israel* (Jerusalem, 1992); Fargues, "Protracted National Conflict and Fertility Change"; and Dov Friedlander, "Fertility in Israel: Is the Transition to Replacement Level in Sight?" in United Nations Secretariat, Division of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Expert Group Meeting on Completing the Fertility Transition* (New York, 2002).

lies—Jewish, and, even more so, Muslim—to have more children.⁴¹ Among the Muslims, in fact—and this holds for the more traditional sectors of the Jewish population as well—women were often discouraged from seeking employment and career rewards, and pushed toward early marriage and reproduction.

Second, Israel's relative economic well-being provides the means for both Jews and Arabs to afford more children, and national policies encourage this through a complex of public incentives and constraints. The Israeli household's comparatively favorable situation enables accumulation of income, durable goods, and other resources, thus allowing Israelis to "purchase" large families. Furthermore, Israel's pronatalist policies include a package of mother-child allowances, extensive public-educational facilities (including tax-supported preschool), and other provisions to ease the situation of working women. This is part of a broader system of transfer payments, as appropriate to a modern welfare state. Israel has also developed a well-articulated and universally accessible public-health system, consistent with its identity as a developed society. Other things being equal, good healthcare for adults and children allows for prolonged and fecund reproductive spans, translating into more children.

The Israeli national commitment to pronatalism operates across the board, devoid of any ethnoreligious bias that might promote differential growth of specific population groups. For example, legislation enacted in Israel in 2000 strongly increased child allowances for the fifth child and above. By that provision, about 40 percent of child-allowance benefits went to the families of Israeli Arab newborns, at a time when Israeli Arabs constituted only about 20 percent of the Israeli population (not including the Palestinian territories).⁴² Another mechanism indirectly affecting fertility has been a system of public subventions

⁴¹What the actual effect might be of the rhetoric of the "war of cradles" is not easily quantifiable. See Mati Steinberg, "The Demographic Dimension of the Struggle With Israel As Seen by the PLO," *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, 11, 1989, pp. 27–51; and Youssef Courbage, "Reshuffling the Demographic Cards in Israel/Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28, 1999, pp. 21–39.

⁴²The package of economic reforms approved by the Israeli Knesset in May 2003 included a significant cut in child allowances and a provision for gradual downward equalization of the amounts paid to each successive child. See Zvi Zarhiah, "Gam vikuhim bakoalitzia 'ikvu et hahatzba'ah," *Haaretz*, May 29, 2003.

for education and housing channeled through particular ethno-religious communities rather than directly to individuals. By lowering the cost of child rearing for designated subpopulations, these provisions tend to support the birthrates and higher fertility of these groups.

The combined impact of these pronatalist factors apparently outweigh the effects of the considerable improvement in educational attainment of both Jewish and Arab women, a trend that, in other modern societies, exerts a rationalizing influence toward smaller and more efficiently planned families. One can also conjecture that prolonged years of religious education for many men and women in Israel and Palestine—something rare in Western countries—reinforce the religiocultural influences supportive of larger families. Indeed, even the secular education given women may, in a way, promote fertility by enabling the women to find employment, thus increasing family incomes and making larger families more affordable.

Looking to the future, the proven resilience of religiocultural patterns and of derived political mechanisms underlying fertility suggest that changes in fertility levels will be relatively slow. Table 7 indicates several possible fertility scenarios designated for the population projections, which are discussed below. For Israel's Jewish population, the possibilities are either continuation, or moderate declines or increases, of the currently observed TFR levels. Hypothesized changes would stem from either a rise or decline in current fertility patterns, or else compositional changes within the Jewish population by subpopulations whose fertility behaviors have been widely at variance. In this connection it is important to note that Jewish fertility in fact ranges from very high among the more religiously oriented, to rather low among the more secular sections of society, including some of the recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union.⁴³ The latter, however, are quickly catching up to the norms of veteran Jewish Israelis.

Fertility scenarios for Palestinians, whether in Israel or in the West Bank and Gaza, encompass a broader range of variation. One possibility would be a gradual convergence of Palestinians to the

⁴³A study of demographic differentials in Jerusalem during the mid-1990s estimated the range of variation of Jewish TFRs between 6.5 in the more religious neighborhoods and 1.4 in the least religious. See DellaPergola, "Jerusalem's Population."

TABLE 7. FERTILITY ASSUMPTIONS FOR POPULATION PROJECTIONS, BY MAJOR ETHNORELIGIOUS ORIGINS AND TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS, ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, 2000–2050

Population	TFR 2000	High	Medium	Low
Jews	2.6	2.9 instant	As in 2000	2.1 instant
Non-Jewish fringe	1.9	2.9 instant	2.4 instant	As in 2000
Israel Arabs	4.0	As in 2000	2.6 by 2050	2.6 instant
West Bank	5.4	As in 2000	2.6 by 2050	2.6 instant
Gaza	7.4	As in 2000	2.6 by 2050	2.6 instant

Source: S. DellaPergola, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

fertility standards of the Jewish population. This was, in fact, one of the hypotheses typically suggested in previous population projections (see below), but it has never, to this point, materialized. Here, as a medium scenario, the process of adaptation to the Israeli Jewish norm is hypothesized to occur slowly, over a period of 50 years. A high scenario would consider uninterrupted continuation of current fertility levels. Although apparently untenable on conventional theoretical grounds, such a scenario corresponds to the actual situation over the last 20 years among large sections of the Palestinian constituency, and it should not necessarily be ruled out. A low scenario—though quite untenable—is also suggested: the instant convergence of Palestinian TFRs to the level of Israeli Jews. The suggested high-low range is thus not a prediction of things to come, but is rather intended to create a conceivable maximum-minimum range of projected population sizes for further discussion.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2000–2050

Earlier Experiences with Population Projections

Before embarking on a new round of population projections for Israel and the Palestinian Territories, it may be useful briefly to review the assumptions and predictive ability of such attempts in the past. As early as the 1920s and 1930s, in the context of debates about the political future of post-Mandatory Palestine, scholars and British government administrators began elaborating various population scenarios and discussing the emerging policy implica-

tions.⁴⁴ Nearly all of these efforts shared three assumptions: that population change reflects the variable levels of two leading determinants—fertility and international migration; that differential growth of various ethnoreligious sectors tends to generate significant changes in population size and composition, which, in turn have far-reaching political implications for the present and future prospects of the region; and that there is some “feedback” between the size of population achieved and the additional population growth that the emerging socioeconomic situation will make possible.

Rather than review the successes or failures of past analysts in predicting population trends, it is interesting to note some of their typical analytic foci. The crucial role of migration in generating long-term consequences for population growth was almost universally recognized, and quite certainly led the British authorities to introduce stringent limitations on Jewish immigration during the last years of the Mandate.

Most population scenarios focused on fixed amounts of immigration, ranging from nil to several tens of thousands a year. The different amounts reflected very different opinions about the potential and resilience of Jewish migration, from very low to moderately high—the emphasis being on migration momentum as such, rather than on a detailed consideration of what forces determine migration. There was almost no attempt to view international migration as powerfully fluctuating in response to the variable intensity of determinants in the countries of origin and destination—as, indeed, has been powerfully demonstrated by the Jewish experience over the past 120 years. Only one such attempt proved accurate, predicting the shift from an Arab to a Jewish majority in Palestine’s total population before 1960, which is what ac-

⁴⁴Liebmann Hersch, “La population de la Palestine et les perspectives du Sionisme,” *Metron* 7, 1928, pp. 115–36; Palestine Royal Commission, *Report*, pp. 280–82; Helmut Mühsam, “Bevölkerungsprobleme Palästinas,” *Metron* 13, 1938, pp. 175–201; Roberto Bachi, “Marriage and Fertility in the Various Sections of the Jewish Population and Their Influence on its Future,” in D. Gurevich, A. Geertz, and R. Bachi, *The Jewish Population of Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1944), pp. 245–48 (Hebrew); Frank W. Notestein and Ernest Jurkat, “Population Problems of Palestine,” *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 23, 1945, pp. 307–52. Since the 1967 war, there has been renewed emphasis among Israeli scholars on population projections. See Bachi, *The Population of Israel*; Dov Friedlander and Calvin Goldscheider, *The Population of Israel* (New York, 1979), pp. 189–217; and U.O. Schmelz, *World Jewish Population—Regional Estimates and Projections* (Jerusalem, 1981).

tually happened.⁴⁵ Another element virtually ignored in past population projections was large-scale emigration, which, as noted, crucially contributed to the post-1948 establishment of a Jewish majority.

With regard to fertility assumptions, the two main challenges were correctly predicting the main changes in fertility levels and discerning the patterns of convergence or divergence between different subpopulations. Generally, assumptions about moderate change better complied with reality than assumptions of rapid change. The predominant assumption of eventual convergence of Muslims to the lower Jewish levels of fertility did not materialize, resulting in significant underestimates of the Arab subpopulation in most projections. Nor did high Muslim fertility levels remain unchanged, as was assumed in several other population projections. Fertility of different Jewish immigrant groups converged more rapidly than was often assumed, while the contrary occurred to fertility levels of Palestinian Arabs in the State of Israel as compared to those in the West Bank and Gaza. Overall—considering the techniques and data available at the time—these earlier attempts to project Palestine's population provide a wealth of relevant and not-entirely-superseded insights. The most interesting projections were those that carefully considered population trends prevailing in the Jewish diaspora as a predicting factor in future demographic changes in Palestine/Israel, and appropriately considered age composition as a crucial intervening factor in population movements.

What demographers consistently did not—indeed could not—achieve was the prediction of macroscopic political events, such as World War II, the Shoah, the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, or the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The demographic consequences of these events were crucial elements in the population equation of the Middle East. This clearly points to the volatility of sociodemographic processes in unstable political environments—such as Israel and Palestine—and their dependence on a much broader range of geopolitical and cultural factors than is the case in the conventional experience of most other populations.

⁴⁵Mühsam, "Bevölkerungsprobleme Palästinas."

Contemporary Population Projections

Attempts to project the population of Israel/Palestine are routinely carried out by international organizations,⁴⁶ national central statistical agencies,⁴⁷ and independent investigators.⁴⁸ These often differ over definitions of the territorial units and/or time frames for analysis, and may also reflect the analysts' varying political approaches.⁴⁹

In any case, they generally agree in assuming a continuation of current trends, with higher and lower scenarios reflecting different assumptions about the likelihood of fertility decline in Israel and the Palestinian Territories, and about future immigration. These assumptions can sometimes be questioned. For example, the UN Population Division projects an eventual convergence between Jewish and Arab fertility rates at or below replacement level, largely on the basis of expected rising levels of education among the Palestinians. But, as noted above, ideological factors can render the relationship between education and rate of population growth rather tricky in Israel and Palestine, making it difficult to infer whether and how prospective changes in educational attainment affect fertility levels and population trends.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, the majority of the recent population projections do not give a sense of a "war of data." On the contrary, their findings tend in the same overall direction. Results obtained by dif-

⁴⁶United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision—Highlights* (New York, 2001); Population Reference Bureau, *2000 World Population Data Sheet of the Population Reference Bureau* (Washington, D.C., 2001); World Bank, *World Development Report 2000/2001* (Washington, D.C., 2000).

⁴⁷Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, *Population, Demography and Households 1999* (Jerusalem, 2001); Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Population in the Palestinian Territory, 1997–2025* (Ramallah, 1999).

⁴⁸Yousef Courbage, *Nouveaux horizons démographiques en Méditerranée* (Paris, 1999); idem, "Israël et Palestine: combien d'hommes demain?" *Population & Sociétés* 362, 2000; Fargues, "Protracted National Conflict"; DellaPergola, Rebhun, and Tolts, "Prospecting the Jewish Future"; DellaPergola and Rebhun, "Projecting a Rare Population: World Jews 2000–2080," paper presented at Population Association of America, Washington, D.C., 2001.

⁴⁹One example is whether to include East Jerusalem in the projections for Israel or for the West Bank. In this paper, all of Jerusalem is computed together with Israel.

⁵⁰One example of multistate population projections is in Anne Goujon, *Population and Education Prospects in the Western Mediterranean Region (Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip)* (Laxenburg, 1997).

ferent researchers—despite their possibly warring political allegiances—point, first, to rapid population growth, and, second, to significant differences in the scenarios for Jews and Arabs in Israel/Palestine.⁵¹

Expected Population Size

We now proceed to present the results of our own analysis of the expected consequences of current population trends in Israel and Palestine. Tables 8–13 and figure 3 show selected findings from a new set of projections for the period 2000–2050.⁵² The data emphasize the possible implications of variations in current fertility levels, with the role of international migration ignored or assumed to operate at moderate and declining levels. As noted above, fertility assumptions tend to create a range between minimum and maximum likely scenarios. The figures for Israel are based on Central Bureau of Statistics projections until 2020. All figures for the Palestinian Territories, as well as the 2050 projections for Israel, derive from my own work.⁵³

The category “non-Jewish fringe” in the tables represents non-Jews who are mostly part of immigrant Jewish nuclear families from the former Soviet Union, and are therefore socially integrated within the Jewish section of Israeli society.⁵⁴ Together, Jews and the associated “fringe” form an “Enlarged Jewish Population.” Nearly all other non-Jewish citizens in Israel, whether Muslims or Christians, are Palestinian Arabs from the point of view of their national cultural identity. The Druze minority is also included in this group for the purpose of data analysis. All the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza are Palestinian Arabs with the exception of the Jewish residents of these areas, who are included in Israel’s Jewish population data. The data are presented in a way that allows for

⁵¹For a typical example of a recent projection that assumed faster fertility decline than actually occurred see Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, *Projections of Population in Israel up to 2003 based on the Population in 1993* (Jerusalem, 1995). The TFRs expected by 2003 were 2.3 for Jews and 3.7 for Moslems, as compared to actual TFRs of 2.6 and 4.7, respectively, in 2001.

⁵²The baseline for all projections is end-1995 data and estimates.

⁵³I take full responsibility for all the data presented hereafter.

⁵⁴At the end of 2001, this group comprised 231,000 persons with “religion undeclared” plus 25,000 “non-Arab Christians.”

modular reconstruction and comparisons of the main ethnoreligious (Jews vs. Palestinians) or territorial (Israel vs. Palestinian Territories) aggregates.⁵⁵

Table 8 shows the alternative population-projection scenarios for the different Jewish and Arab subpopulations in Israel and Palestine between 2000 and 2050. The 2000 medium figure includes about 9.3 million people—6.3 million in Israel (including East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, and the Israeli inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza), and about 3 million in the Palestinian Territories. By 2020, the total population would range between 12.1 and 15.6 million, with a medium projection of 14.4 million. The Jewish population (enlarged to include the non-Jewish “fringe”) would range between 6.3 and 6.9 million, as part of a total State of Israel population of 8.2–9.0 million. The Palestinian Territories would reach a population ranging between 4.0 and 6.6 million,⁵⁶ and, with the addition of Israel’s Arabs, the total Palestinian population would range between 5.8 and 8.7 million.

By 2050, according to the same assumptions, the following ranges would obtain: for the enlarged Jewish population, 7.3–10.4 million with a medium value of 8.8 million; for the State of Israel’s total population, including both Jews and Arabs, 9.4–14.8 million with a medium value of 11.9 million; for the total of the Palestinian Territories, 6.0–21.7 million (half in the West Bank and half in Gaza) with a medium value of 11.6 million; and for the total Palestinian population in Israel and the Territories, 8.1–26.1 million with a medium value of 14.7 million. The total population of Israel and Palestine would thus range between 15.4 and 36.5 million with a medium value of 23.5 million.

Admittedly, some of these figures stagger the imagination—especially the higher scenarios for 2050. In fact, both the high and the low scenarios require quite extreme assumptions about the future of current fertility levels—indefinite continuation, on the one hand, and instant reduction, on the other. Medium scenarios, in contrast, assume a blend of demographic transformations that

⁵⁵The projections do not include the temporary resident foreign workers and their families, who totaled about 200,000–250,000 in 2000.

⁵⁶The medium projections of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (1999) fairly match our independently obtained results and fall between our high and medium projections.

TABLE 8. POPULATION OF ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, BY MAJOR ETHNORELIGIOUS AND TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS, 2000–2050 (VARIOUS PROJECTIONS, THOUSANDS)

Year and Projection	Jews	Non-Jewish Fringe	Total Enlarged Jewish	Israel Arabs	Total Israel	West Bank	Gaza	Total Palestinian Territories	Total Palestinians	Grand Total
	(a)	(b)	(c)=(a)+(b)	(d)	(e)=(c)+(d)	(f)	(g)	(h)=(f)+(g)	(i)=(d)+(h)	(j)=(e)+(h) (j)=(c)+(i)
2000										
High	5,000	201	5,201	1,185	6,386	1,878	1,147	3,024	4,209	9,410
Medium	4,969	199	5,168	1,178	6,346	1,845	1,128	2,973	4,151	9,319
Low	4,938	197	5,135	1,171	6,306	1,703	993	2,696	3,867	9,002
2010										
High	5,784	281	6,065	1,574	7,639	2,676	1,776	4,452	6,026	12,091
Medium	5,689	291	5,980	1,555	7,535	2,518	1,645	4,163	5,718	11,698
Low	5,574	236	5,810	1,535	7,346	2,049	1,191	3,240	4,775	10,586
2020										
High	6,521	381	6,902	2,092	8,994	3,789	2,782	6,570	8,662	15,564
Medium	6,368	329	6,697	1,976	8,673	3,338	2,342	5,680	7,656	14,353
Low	6,057	239	6,296	1,855	8,151	2,492	1,483	3,975	5,830	12,126
2050										
High	9,741	650	10,391	4,419	14,810	10,826	10,829	21,655	26,074	36,465
Medium	8,230	550	8,780	3,121	11,901	6,414	5,146	11,560	14,681	23,461
Low	6,873	450	7,323	2,065	9,388	3,752	2,267	6,019	8,084	15,407

Source: S. DellaPergola, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

better comply with the demographic experience of the last 50 years in Israel and Palestine. The question still awaiting an answer is why, and under what conditions, a significant departure from the current trends might occur. At the same time, the finding that, under medium assumptions, the total population of Israel/Palestine might increase by about 5 million between 2000 and 2020 stands to reason, and calls for further elaboration.

We now turn to a more detailed examination of some of the main findings of these projections.

Territorial Distribution

One key issue concerns the implications of population growth for population densities, the environment, and natural resources. Such concerns are hardly new, as the question of what might be

Palestine's maximum "economic capability" or "carrying capacity" constituted one of the main themes in the political debate during the British Mandate.⁵⁷

In the 1930s, political leaders and population experts wildly underestimated future population growth and typically suggested "high" scenarios not much above 2 million. The current (2003) total population of roughly 10 million for the same area clearly indicates how technological advances and changes in political assumptions have drastically overturned the opinions of 70 years ago.⁵⁸ By the same token, one may today ask similar questions about Palestine's maximum possible population. While the determination of such a maximum would seem necessary given the area's scarcity of such essential resources as drinkable water, a final answer might depend on the nature of future technological development.

In table 9, the population figures presented in table 8 are translated into current and expected population densities per km². Figure 3 portrays the expected development of population densities in Israel and Palestine against the background of selected examples of contemporary countries and large metropolitan areas.

In 2001, Israel's population density stood at 294 per km²—a comparatively high level that is also met in several Western European countries and in the European part of Turkey. The countrywide average density, though, may be misleading because of the very unequal patterns of population distribution over Israeli territory. Population densities ranged between a high of 6,788 per km² in the Tel Aviv District, wholly occupied by the central part of the Greater Tel Aviv metropolitan area, and 39 per km² in the Beersheba Subdistrict, which includes large tracts of arid desert land and represents 58 percent of Israel's total territory. Leaving out the Beersheba Subdistrict, Israel's population density was 664 per km².⁵⁹

⁵⁷Palestine Royal Commission, *Report*; Friedlander and Goldscheider, *Population of Israel*; Ilan Troen, "Calculating the 'Economic Absorptive Capacity' of Palestine: A Study of the Political Use of Scientific Research," *Contemporary Jewry* 10, 1989, pp. 19–38.

⁵⁸A population capability of 10 million on both sides of the Jordan River was suggested by Zionist leaders David Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi in 1918, in a statement clearly influenced by ideological motives and political hopes. Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Israel in the Past and in the Present*, trans. from Yiddish by D. Niv (Jerusalem, 1979).

⁵⁹Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel* 53, 2002, table 2.4. The Beersheba Subdistrict comprises 12,946 of Israel's total 21,671 km² of land surface.

TABLE 9. POPULATION PER KM², ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, 2000–2050
(VARIOUS PROJECTIONS)

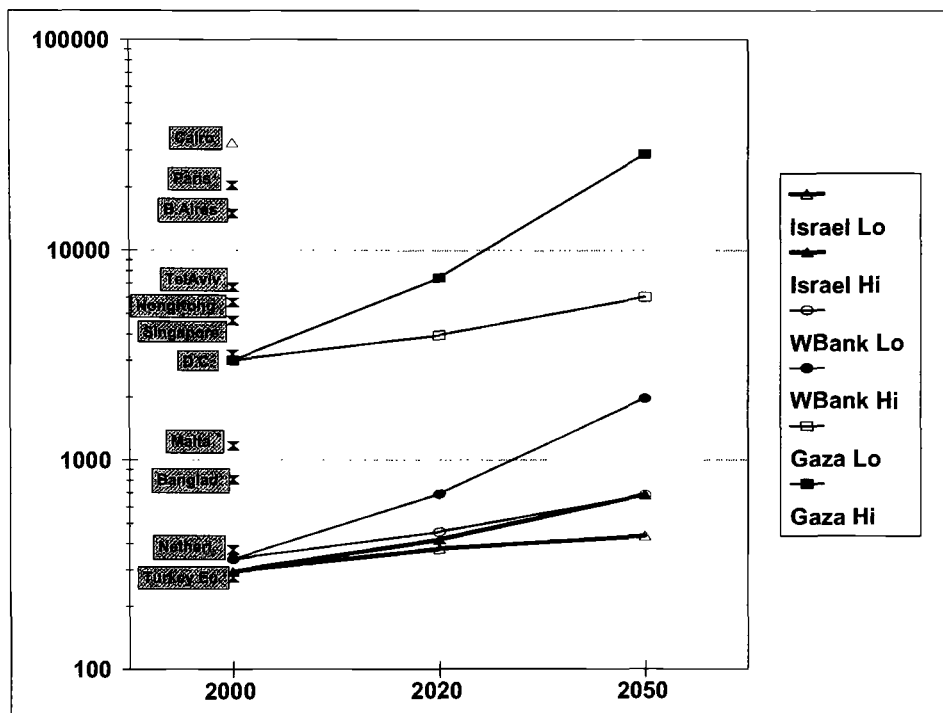
Year and Projection	Total Israel	West Bank	Gaza	Total Palestinian Territories	Grand Total
2000					
High	295	341	3,034	514	341
Medium	293	335	2,984	505	338
Low	291	309	2,627	458	327
2010					
High	352	486	4,698	757	439
Medium	348	457	4,352	708	425
Low	339	372	3,151	551	384
2020					
High	415	688	7,360	1,117	565
Medium	400	606	6,196	965	521
Low	376	453	3,923	676	440
2050					
High	683	1,966	28,648	3,680	1,323
Medium	549	1,165	13,614	1,965	851
Low	433	681	5,997	1,023	559

Source: S. DellaPergola, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Regarding the Palestinian Territories, the West Bank's initial population density matches the Israeli countrywide average. Despite steady growth, it remains within the known range of contemporary societies. The Gaza area, however, has a density of about 3,000 people per km². Significantly higher population densities were recently observed in cities such as Hong Kong and Singapore, but the level of socioeconomic development there was significantly more advanced than in Gaza. Prospectively, the medium and high scenarios for Gaza lead to densities comparable only to the densest of contemporary large urban areas.

It is not the outcome that is impossibly high, but rather the clear imbalance between population size and the available urban infrastructure. A population density like that in the city of Paris—about 20,000 per km², similar to the maximum expected in the Gaza area—is conceivable in the context of a leading capital city founded on a developed urban and highly technological infra-

FIGURE 3. POPULATION DENSITIES PER KM² IN ISRAEL, WEST BANK, AND GAZA, 2000–2050



structure, and having at its disposal a large national hinterland. These conditions obviously do not apply to Gaza at present, nor are they likely to come into existence in the near future. The scenario of very high population densities extending over Gaza's 378 km² of territory and the excruciating social problems and high human costs involved deserve serious reflection.

Ethnoreligious Population Composition

A second issue of major import concerns the implications of population trends for the ethnoreligious population balance in Israel and Palestine. Table 10 presents the expected percentage of Jews out of total population according to different projection scenarios, different territorial divisions in the State of Israel alone or the whole of Israel and the Palestinian Territories, and different

definitions of the Jewish population—the latter either including or excluding non-Jewish members of Jewish households. In 2000, Jews represented 78 percent of the State of Israel's total population. Adding the non-Jewish "fringe," the enlarged Jewish population was 81 percent of the total.

Reflecting the much faster pace of growth of the Arab vs. the Jewish population, the projections indicate a significant change in the respective ethnoreligious proportion within Israel/Palestine's total population. Looking at the pre-1967 State of Israel plus East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, medium scenarios have the Jewish population diminishing to 73 percent and the enlarged Jewish population to 77 percent, by 2020. By 2050, the Jewish share of Israel's population would fall to 69 percent and the enlarged Jewish population to 74 percent. Because of the leading role played by fertility—namely Arab fertility—in our projections, higher sce-

TABLE 10. PERCENT OF JEWS AMONG ISRAEL AND PALESTINE TOTAL POPULATION, 2000–2050 (VARIOUS SCENARIOS)

Year and Projection	Israel		Israel and Territories	
	Jewish	Enlarged Jewish ^a	Jewish	Enlarged Jewish ^a
2000				
High	78.3	81.4	53.1	55.3
Medium	78.3	81.4	53.3	55.5
Low	78.3	81.4	54.9	57.0
2010				
High	75.7	79.4	47.8	50.2
Medium	75.5	79.4	48.6	51.1
Low	75.9	79.1	52.7	54.9
2020				
High	72.5	76.7	41.9	44.3
Medium	73.4	77.2	44.4	46.7
Low	74.3	77.2	50.0	51.9
2050				
High	65.8	70.2	26.7	28.5
Medium	69.2	73.8	35.1	37.4
Low	73.2	78.0	44.6	47.5

^aIncluding non-Jewish members in Jewish households (column b in Table 8).

Source: S. DellaPergola, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

narios produce lower percentages of Jews, and lower scenarios produce higher percentages.

Within Israel's territorial framework (basically without the West Bank and Gaza occupied in 1967), a Jewish majority appears to be firmly established at least until the mid-twenty-first century. However, an emerging Israeli Arab minority in the range of 30 percent calls to mind international comparisons with other ethnically split societies. In the case of Cyprus, which went through bitter conflict and eventually a territorial and political split, the minority group was far smaller—the ethnic balance during the 1960s was 82 percent Greek vs. 18 percent Turkish.⁶⁰ Other recent examples of ethnically split societies can be found in most of the republics that constituted the former Yugoslavia. In these cases, too, ethnic cleavages have triggered harsh struggles.

Looking now at the grand total of Israel plus the Palestinian Territories in 2000, there was a scant Jewish majority of 53 percent (55 percent using the enlarged definition of Jewish population). According to the medium projections, this majority will be gone before 2010 or very soon thereafter (whether according to the strictly Jewish or the enlarged population definition). By 2020, Jews would constitute 44–47 percent of the total population of Palestine, and by 2050 their share might further diminish to 35–37 percent—reverting to a situation very similar to the Jewish-Arab population division in the mid-1940s, toward the end of the British Mandate.

Age Composition

Further analysis of the projected results by major age groups sharpens the findings and their implications. Age composition obviously constitutes not only one crucial result of demographic change, but also operates as a critical mediating variable in other processes, not all of them demographic.

For example, age composition is intimately linked with political memory. As noted above, one of the decisive events that shaped the current geopolitics of the Middle East was the war of June 1967

⁶⁰According to the 1960 census, the share of Greeks within the total population in the different districts of Cyprus varied between a maximum of 86.4 percent and a minimum of 75.6 percent. See Cyprus Republic, *Summary of Main Statistical Data* (Nicosia, 1964).

and the subsequent Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories. A simple calculation of the percent of current population that lived in Israel or Palestine at that date reveals that it barely reaches 25 percent on both sides. This low proportion of actual witnesses to the events of 1967 reflects the size of contemporary Jewish and Palestinian population cohorts born after that date, as well as the volume of subsequent Jewish immigration. In other words, some three out of four actors and spectators in the current conflict did not directly experience one of its most crucial developments, and thus appear to be enacting roles they have learned through mediating sources of information — with intriguing consequences for their understanding of facts, underlying causes, and practical implications.

Table 11 presents current and expected population composition by age. Since overall population distribution was significantly affected by high, or comparatively high, fertility levels in the past, children and young adults tended to outnumber older adults and the elderly, whose share within the total population was comparatively low. Among Jews, past large-scale immigration determined peculiar concentrations of younger adults at the time of major migration waves. These tended to move throughout the age ladder, determining a unique configuration of sudden changes in the size of successive birth cohorts. The future rhythm of change in the size of specific age groups will continue to reflect these peculiarities, and, within each ten-year time span, will tend to be quite unequal for different age groups. Table 11, confined to the medium projections, assumes overall stability or moderation in fertility levels, and therefore foreshadows a gradual process of population aging through slower growth of the younger age groups and faster growth of the elderly.

Table 12 shows percentages of Jews (by both the strictly Jewish and the enlarged definitions) among the total population of different age groups within the State of Israel, and in the grand total of Israel plus the Palestinian Territories. Reflecting the higher fertility of Palestinians, the Jewish share of total population is systematically smaller at the younger than at the older end of the age distribution. In turn, percentages of Jews among the younger age groups at one date tend to anticipate their percentage among the total population at a later date. In 2000, Jews represented 71–74 percent of Israel's children aged 0–14, and 92–94 percent of the

TABLE 11. POPULATION OF ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, BY AGE, MAJOR ETHNORELIGIOUS AND TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS, 2000–2050 (MEDIUM PROJECTION, THOUSANDS)

Year and Age	Jews	Non-Jewish Fringe	Total Enlarged Jewish	Israel Arabs	Total Israel	West Bank	Gaza	Total Palestinian Territories	Total Palestinians	Grand Total
	(a)	(b)	(c)=(a)+(b)	(d)	(e)=(c)+(d)	(f)	(g)	(h)=(f)+(g)	(i)=(d)+(h)	(j)=(e)+(h) (j)=(c)+(i)
2000										
Total	4,969	199	5,168	1,178	6,346	1,848	1,128	2,973	4,151	9,319
0–14	1,297	52	1,349	482	1,831	799	564	1,363	1,845	3,194
15–24	840	39	879	233	1,112	386	216	602	835	1,714
25–44	1,297	67	1,364	310	1,674	425	228	653	963	2,327
45–64	949	38	97	117	1,104	166	87	253	370	1,357
65+	576	13	589	36	625	69	33	102	138	727
2010										
Total	5,689	291	5,980	1,555	7,535	2,518	1,645	4,163	5,718	11,698
0–14	1,421	68	1,489	603	2,092	1,038	771	1,809	2,412	3,901
15–24	858	42	900	297	1,197	498	344	842	1,139	2,039
25–44	1,555	97	1,652	404	2,056	641	352	993	1,397	3,049
45–64	1,213	63	1,276	193	1,469	251	127	378	571	1,847
65+	642	21	663	58	721	91	42	133	191	854
2020										
Total	6,368	329	6,697	1,976	8,673	3,338	2,342	5,680	7,656	14,353
0–14	1,521	72	1,593	682	2,275	1,298	1,042	2,340	3,022	4,615
15–24	939	44	983	386	1,369	643	470	1,113	1,499	2,482
25–44	1,710	93	1,803	518	2,321	873	553	1,426	1,944	3,747
45–64	1,303	84	1,387	298	1,685	402	214	616	914	2,301
65+	895	36	931	92	1,023	123	62	185	277	1,208
2050										
Total	8,230	550	8,780	3,121	11,901	6,414	5,146	11,681	14,681	23,461
0–14	1,819	120	1,939	852	2,791	1,877	1,639	3,516	4,368	6,307
15–24	1,177	72	1,249	528	1,777	1,141	995	2,136	2,664	3,913
25–44	1,909	132	2,041	849	2,890	1,788	1,468	3,256	4,105	6,146
45–64	1,720	119	1,839	574	2,413	1,085	770	1,855	2,429	4,268
65+	1,605	107	1,712	318	2,030	524	274	798	1,116	2,828

Source: S. DellaPergola, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

elderly, aged 65 and over. Relative to the total for Israel plus the Palestinian Territories, Jews represented 41–42 percent of the children and 79–81 percent of the elderly. By 2050, according to this medium projection, Jews would constitute 65–69 percent of the

TABLE 12. PERCENT OF JEWS AMONG TOTAL POPULATION IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, BY AGE GROUPS (MEDIUM PROJECTION)

Year and Age	Israel		Israel and Territories	
	% Jewish	% Enlarged J	% Jewish	% Enlarged J
2000				
Total	78.3	81.4	53.3	55.5
0–14	70.8	73.7	40.6	42.2
15–24	75.5	79.0	49.0	51.3
25–44	77.5	81.5	55.7	58.6
45–64	86.0	89.4	69.9	72.7
65+	92.2	94.2	79.2	81.0
2010				
Total	75.5	79.4	48.6	51.1
0–14	67.9	71.2	36.4	38.2
15–24	71.7	75.2	42.1	44.1
25–44	75.6	80.4	51.0	54.2
45–64	82.6	86.9	65.7	69.1
65+	89.0	92.0	75.2	77.6
2020				
Total	73.4	77.2	44.4	46.7
0–14	66.9	70.0	33.0	34.5
15–24	68.6	71.8	37.8	39.6
25–44	73.7	77.7	45.6	48.1
45–64	77.3	82.3	56.6	60.3
65+	87.5	91.0	74.1	77.1
2050				
Total	69.2	73.8	35.1	37.4
0–14	65.2	69.5	28.8	30.7
15–24	66.2	70.3	30.1	31.9
25–44	66.1	70.6	31.1	33.2
45–64	71.3	76.2	40.3	43.1
65+	79.1	84.3	56.8	60.5

Source: S. DellaPergola, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

0–14 age group and 79–84 percent of the 65-and-over age group in Israel. The respective percentages within the grand total population would be 29–31 percent at 0–14 years of age, and 57–61 percent at 65 and over. The latter would be the last remnant of a Jewish majority among any age group within the grand total population of Israel plus the Palestinian Territories.

One particular aspect of age composition immediately relevant to an assessment of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the absolute size of the cohorts of young adults that can potentially confront each other militarily, either as part of the Palestinian intifada or as members of Israel's armed forces. Perhaps surprisingly, the number of Jews and Palestinians aged 15–24 in the year 2000 was quite similar; both groups had 800,000–900,000 young men and women of that age (whether or not actively involved). Of course this does not imply an equivalence of forces and means between the two contending parties. Nevertheless, demography provides a visual angle of some military interest at least at the level of tactics, if not strategy, in assessing the current confrontation.

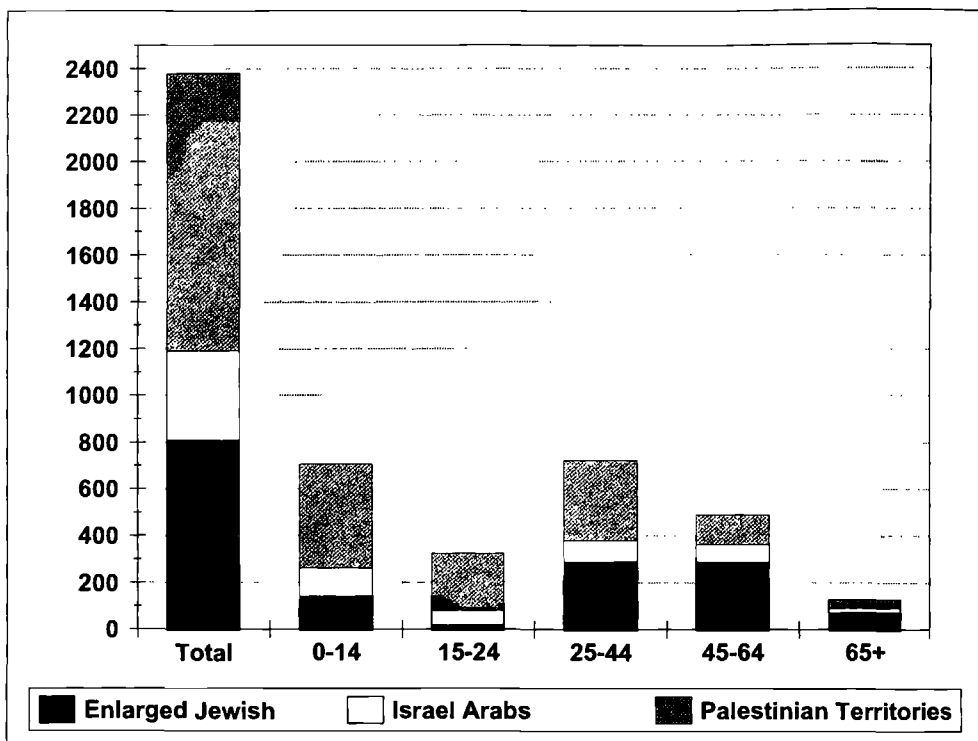
Socioeconomic Effects

Age compositional changes, in both absolute and relative terms, bear significant implications for the varying types of services and public interventions generally used at the different stages of the lifecycle. Changing cohort sizes imply public and private investments focused on each functional age group: educational facilities for the student population; employment and socioeconomic development for the labor force; and social services geared toward the elderly for the retired. The rhythm of variation of these investments over time for specific age groups is significantly higher and less regular than among the population as a whole. Figure 4 provides an illustration of some of the issues involved by showing prospective changes in the size of relevant age groups in the shorter term, the period 2000–2010.

In the grand total population aggregate of the State of Israel plus the Palestinian Territories, the two fastest growing sectors will be, first, the 25–44 age group, typically demanding employment, and the 0–14 age group, typically demanding education. An increase of about 700,000 (an average of 70,000 per year) is expected for each age group.

Between 2000 and 2010, over 60 percent of the necessary investments in educational facilities and nearly half of the new openings in the labor market will be needed in the Palestinian Territories. Within the State of Israel without the Territories, about half of the investment for the school-age population will be needed for the Arab sector simply to maintain the current situation—with-

FIGURE 4. EXPECTED POPULATION INCREMENTS IN ISRAEL (JEWS AND ARABS) AND PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, BY AGE, 2000–2010 (THOUSANDS)



out even moving to close existing gaps in the quality of educational systems for the two groups. In contrast, close to 60 percent of the increase in the older segment of the labor force (aged 45–64) and the elderly (aged 65+) will occur within the Jewish population of Israel. The Palestinian Territories are expected to absorb nearly 75 percent of the total growth in the number of younger adults, aged 15–24, whose critical role in political and security developments was already noted. And within that age group, the growth in the number of Israeli Arabs over the 2000–2010 period will be three times higher than among Israeli Jews.

A synthetic measure of the age distribution may provide a final outlook on expected trends in the allocation of socioeconomic burdens across the different ethnoreligious and territorial sub-populations. Table 13 illustrates the possible long-range develop-

ment of dependency ratios—the number of children and the elderly as compared to the number of people of working age—according to the medium projection.⁶¹

In 2000, the total population in the Palestinian Territories featured a dependency ratio of 97 (88 in the West Bank and 112 in Gaza), one of the world's highest,⁶² mostly as a result of the already noted combination of very high fertility and quite low infant mortality. The dependency ratio for Israel's total population was 63 (60 for the enlarged Jewish population and 79 for Israeli Arabs). High dependency ratios, even if heavily skewed owing to high percentages of children in the population, obviously underlie a general condition of socioeconomic underdevelopment, or at least stress. According to the medium projection, assuming stable or declining fertility rates, a process of gradual convergence might be expected between the very high dependency ratios of Palestinians and the lower ones of Jews. By 2050, in fact, the situation might even be reversed, with dependency ratios of 71 for the enlarged Jewish population and 60 for the total of Palestinians, reflecting a much higher proportion of elderly among the Jews than among the Palestinians.

TABLE 13. DEPENDENCY RATIOS^a AMONG THE POPULATION OF ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, BY MAJOR ETHNORELIGIOUS AND TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS, 2000–2050 (MEDIUM PROJECTION)

Year	Jews	Non-Jewish Fringe	Total Enlarged Jewish	Israel Arabs	Total Israel	West Bank	Gaza	Total Palestinian Territories	Total Palestinians	Grand Total
	(a)	(b)	(c)=(a)+(b)	(d)	(e)=(c)+(d)	(f)	(g)	(h)=(f)+(g)	(i)=(d)+(h)	(j)=(e)+(h) (j)=(c)+(i)
2000	60.7	45.1	60.0	78.5	63.1	88.8	112.4	97.1	91.5	72.6
2010	56.9	44.1	56.2	73.9	59.6	81.2	98.8	87.8	83.8	68.6
2020	61.1	48.9	60.5	64.4	61.4	74.1	89.2	80.0	75.7	68.3
2050	71.2	70.3	71.2	60.0	68.1	59.8	59.2	59.5	59.6	63.8

^aRatio of ages ((0–14)+(65+))÷(15–64)

Source: Table 11.

⁶¹In spite of its somewhat unrealistic portrayal of the functional division between major age groups (children, adults, the elderly), a conventional dependency ratio is computed here as the ratio of the sum of population at age 0–14 and 65+, divided by population at age 15–64.

⁶²United Nations, *World Population Prospects*.

Higher fertility levels, as hypothesized in the high projections, would obviously produce much higher—and problematic—dependency ratios.

DISCUSSION: PAINFUL TRANSITIONS

General Policy Assumptions

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict draws heavily on ethnoreligious differences, and these serve to heighten the importance of numbers in the conduct of the conflict.⁶³ Systematic appraisal of demographic trends is essential not only for understanding the causes and issues involved, but also for formulating suggestions about policies that might lead to peace.

There have been five basic approaches to the conflict's fundamental essence and its possible solution:

1. *Historical Rights*. Each party claims legitimate and exclusive rights over the whole contested territory from "time immemorial," or at least since the twentieth century. Each party can bring conspicuous evidence supporting the argument of having been the earlier, more permanent, or more relevant settler in the disputed land. These claims intimately relate to the primordial roots of each party's historical experience and religiocultural identity. Since ancient rights of precedence cannot be rated or ranked, conflict cannot be solved by the sole use of historical argumentation.

2. *Prevalence of Force*. Each party tries to overcome the other through the use of force, military or otherwise, with or without the help of external powers. Over the last several decades the Israeli side, more often than not, has prevailed over its opponents in strictly military terms. However, while one party may claim victory over its rival, the other may never acknowledge defeat or ever give up. Conflict cannot be permanently solved by the sole use of force.

3. *Colonization by Third Party*. Political and cultural hegemony may be imposed from the outside, substituting for the now prevailing Jewish-Israeli and Arab-Muslim-Palestinian frames of reference, and thus making the Israeli-Palestinian conflict obsolete or

⁶³N. Choukri, *Population and Conflict: New Dimension of Population Dynamics* (New York, 1983).

irrelevant. One example would be conquest or colonization by a third power. The prime example of this during the twentieth century—the British Mandate over Palestine between 1922 and 1948—clearly points to the failure of third-party rule or interference in solving the conflict.

4. *End of Identities.* Several scenarios may be elaborated in which one or both parties give up their own unique religious, ethnic, and cultural identities. Hypothetical examples would include ethnoreligious merger through frequent intermarriage; one particular social class establishing full hegemony and overcoming ethnic differences; or local or imported cultural influences creating an entirely new societal paradigm. However, considering the recent revival of ethnoreligious identifications globally and in the Middle East in particular, and the prevailing patterns of ethnoreligious segregation in Israel/Palestine, these scenarios for conflict resolution appear most unlikely, at least in the short run.

5. *Compromise.* The two contending parties, Jewish and Arab, may achieve compromise by each acknowledging a legitimate contemporaneous presence of the other on the contested land of Palestine. Such compromise may be achieved either through (a) functional partition within one joint sovereign political framework inclusive of both parties—a “binational” state—or, (b) territorial partition and the creation of two separate, sovereign, national frameworks. The obvious preconditions for compromise are an explicit decision to put an end to conflict and a formal acceptance of the main solution modalities by both relevant parties.

Assuming that the preferred line of thought should aim at a solution of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict rather than at its endless perpetuation—an assumption that, under present political circumstances, cannot universally be taken for granted—the latter option, division into two sovereign states, appears the more realistic of the two alternatives for compromise. The first option, a binational state, would require transition from conflict to fully integrated cooperation and division of labor. This is a far more complex and less likely scenario than simple partition along the lines of “two states for two peoples,” which might be followed at some later date by coordination between the parties.⁶⁴

⁶⁴A two-state solution is mentioned in UN Security Council Resolution 1397 and called for in the proposed “road map” discussed below, pp. 229–30.

Although recent scholarship has demonstrated the often fanciful and imaginary elements that lie at the roots of contemporary nationhood, nationalism, and nation-states,⁶⁵ ethnoreligious identities in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are rooted in a powerful complex of historical and contemporary factors that cannot be reasonably neutralized in the foreseeable future. Their cumulative strength in the light of real experiences—namely, those directly related to the conflict—is so strong as to amount to cogent empirical reality for the vast majority of the concerned populations. Israeli and Palestinian national identities are here to stay. Indeed, the argument can be made that national-religious identities may even help the search for peace insofar as they translate into a dynamic and positive popular force in the building of new societies—provided that their more extremist and destructive fringes are kept under control.

To be sure, such nationalism is not looked upon favorably in Europe today, since, in the experience of most European nation states, this societal model has clearly implied one ethnoreligious group dominating over others. In the case of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and other similar nationalist regimes, it entailed the ruthless suppression of cultural minorities, Jews prominently among them. More recently, particularly since the collapse of the Soviet empire at the beginning of the 1990s, bitter intergroup conflicts have arisen over control of postcommunist governments. There is, therefore, a widespread assumption that the older model of a unitary nation-state is obsolete, its place to be taken by multicultural entities such as the European Union and the United Nations.⁶⁶ The multicultural model, however, which so far has represented more a declarative model than political reality in Europe itself, is hardly a realistic proposition for solving the Israel-Palestine conflict, where ethnocultural differences are even sharper. The presence of two states, one Israeli and the other Palestinian, is the more plausible solution.

Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, proposed that a Jewish state would provide a solution to the his-

⁶⁵See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York, 1991). For a discussion of demography as an important agent in nation building, see Calvin Goldscheider, *Israel's Changing Society: Population, Ethnicity and Development* (Boulder, 1996).

⁶⁶Mark Lilla, "The End of Politics: Europe, the Nation-State, and the Jews," *New Republic*, June 23, 2003, pp. 29–34.

torical problems of the Jewish people. A natural correlate of this assumption is that the State of Israel should be politically and culturally configured so as to give primary expression to the multi-form interests and values of a Jewish constituency. At the same time, its 1948 Declaration of Independence stated Israel's commitment to a democratic system ensuring full equality to all citizens regardless of religion and ethnic origin. While the Israeli judicial system and other government and law-enforcement agencies have generally maintained the rights of individuals, the inherent conflict between being a *Jewish* and a *democratic* state is unavoidably entangled with the question of ethnoreligious population composition.⁶⁷

The aspiration of Palestinians to their own sovereign nationhood—whatever might be said of the methods used to bring it into being—has achieved irreversible momentum. The primary aims of an independent Palestine, from the standpoint of world opinion, are to satisfy the aspirations of the Palestinian national liberation movement through full-scale sovereignty, develop an adequate economic infrastructure, and gain international recognition. Concerns about the state's democratic framework, pluralism, or the rights and equality of religious and ethnic minorities, while not neglected, have been minor themes in recent public discourse.

The Israeli-Jewish interest in maintaining a society founded on recognizable Jewish cultural patterns—hence based on a permanent Jewish majority—implies giving up claims to the whole territory of Palestine and redeployment to boundaries conceptually similar to those of 1967. To contribute to the creation of a stable regional political system, parity between a Jewish-Israeli and an Arab-Palestinian state should be founded on a clear ethnic, religious, and cultural definition of each.⁶⁸

⁶⁷See Ruth Gavison, "The Significance of Israel In Modern Jewish Identities," in E. Ben-Rafael, Y. Gorni, and Y. Ro'i, eds., *Contemporary Jewries: Convergence and Divergence* (Leiden-Boston, 2003), pp. 118–29.

⁶⁸We may recall, in this context, the respective contentions of both sides in favor of "ethnic cleansing." On the Arab side, the slogan "to throw the Zionists into the sea" was a popular propaganda item after 1948, but came to a halt when the 1967 war proved it impossible. On the Jewish side, the right-wing objective of removing Palestinians eastward and making Jordan into "Palestine," known as "transfer," is clearly impractical on logistical grounds, even leaving aside ethical considerations. And even were it practical, any steps to carry it out would arouse strong international protest and legal sanctions against Israel, with powerful consequences in the light of the ongoing revision and expansion of interna-

The existence within each state of significant ethnoreligious minorities that differ culturally and socioeconomically from the majority inherently brings social friction, legal contentiousness, and—quite possibly—popular unrest. This has certainly been the case with regard to the Arab minority in Israel, which has long felt itself the object of discrimination on the part of the Jewish majority. A similar if not more acute situation would probably emerge in a Palestinian state hosting a substantial minority of Jewish inhabitants—i.e., the “settlers.” Nor does the formula sound plausible of partition between a multiethnic, multicultural, binational (Jewish-Arab) Israeli state alongside a monoethnic, monoreligious, uninational (Arab-Muslim) Palestinian state.

The “security fence” that Israel is building as of this writing, designed to separate Israeli from Palestinian territories, is, more than anything else, a symbolic reminder of the unavoidability of separation. Its construction, demanded by Israeli public opinion, is being carried out by a Likud-led government despite complaints from many on the political right that it will create a *de facto* border by effectively transferring West Bank territory outside the “fence” to a Palestinian state. This may be an important reason for the apparently reluctant pace of its construction, and, hence, its current inefficiency. The fence’s function will cease completely the day a real peace agreement is reached.

We now turn to a brief discussion of some environmental, socioeconomic, and policy implications of current and expected demographic trends.

Political and Demographic Scenarios

We illustrated above the powerful momentum of population trends in Israel and Palestine, and their relevance, explicit or at least implicit, for the future of the conflict. Several inescapable paradoxes underline the intertwined sociodemographic relationship between Jews and Palestinians. From the Palestinian point of view, the es-

tional law-enforcement tools and of already existing anti-Israeli sentiments in many quarters. For a short overview of the broader legal context of the emerging anti-Israel attitudes, see Irwin Cotler, *Human Rights and the New Anti-Jewishness* (Jerusalem, 2002), JPPI Alert Paper 1, issued by the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute.

tablishment of the State of Israel, large-scale Jewish immigration, and large-scale Palestinian emigration may have constituted undue disruption of the natural social order. On the other hand, were it not for Israel and the conditions its creation allowed for improvements in health, fertility, education,⁶⁹ and employment, the Palestinian population would be conspicuously smaller,⁷⁰ less healthy, less educated—and less focused on its own national identity.

Future demographic shifts through differential population growth could have disruptive political consequences for the multiethnic societal complex of Israel and Palestine. Enhancing maximum ethnoreligious homogeneity within, and maximum diversity between, each of Israel/Palestine's future sovereign territorial entities—an *Arab state* and a *Jewish state*, in the spirit of UN Resolution 181 of 1947—would at least partially defuse the disrupting effect of prospective demographic trends by optimizing benefits and minimizing liabilities.

The fundamental objective should be to preserve a clearly distinguished and recognizable ethnocultural collective profile for each state. Clearly, there is a political price attached for both parties. For Israel, it is return of territory, for the Palestinians it is settling for less than full “right of return” to Israel proper. Table 14 and figure 5 summarize the possible demographic implications of different political scenarios for the future population distribution among Jews and non-Jews in Israel and Palestine. Two scenarios involve, respectively, a partial return of Palestinian refugees, and limited territorial exchange.

Partial Return of Palestinian Refugees

One scenario mentioned at various stages of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in the late 1990s assumed that, in the framework of a final peace agreement, the State of Israel would agree to readmit a symbolic contingent of 100,000 Palestinian refugees onto its territory. For the sake of simplicity we have as-

⁶⁹A full-scale higher education system was allowed in the West Bank and Gaza only after Israel's occupation in 1967.

⁷⁰The Palestinian Territories currently have the highest rate of natural increase in the world. See Gilles Pison, “Tous les pays du monde (2001),” *Population & Sociétés* 370, 2001.

TABLE 14. PERCENT OF JEWS^a AMONG TOTAL POPULATION IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, ACCORDING TO VARIOUS SCENARIOS, 2000–2050 (MEDIUM PROJECTION)

Year	Israel+ Palestinian Territories (a)	Israel without Territories (b)	Israel+ 100,000 refugees (c)	Israel+ territorial exchange (d)
2000	55	81	80	87
2010	51	79	78	86
2020	47	77	76	84
2050	37	74	72	81

^aIncluding non-Jewish members in Jewish households (column b in Table 8). Not including foreign workers and illegal residents.

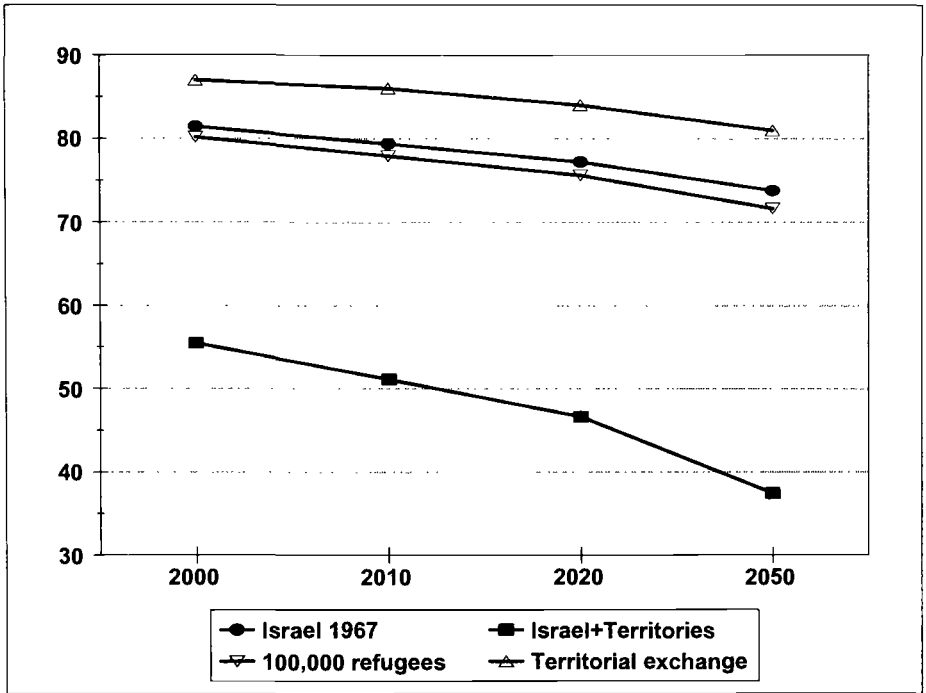
Source: S. DellaPergola, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

sumed here that this group's age distribution and demographic behaviors would be similar to those of the weighted average of total Palestinians in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. That initial contingent would, in absolute numbers, double by the year 2020 and triple by 2050. But according to the assumptions of our projections, their impact on the ethnoreligious equilibrium would be minimal, a decrease of about 1–2 percent in the Jewish share of the Israeli population. If the initial contingent of repatriated Palestinian refugees were mainly elderly people who had witnessed the 1948 exodus, the impact on population trends would be much less. Larger and younger contingents of returning Palestinian refugees, not assumed in our projections, would exert a much more dramatic impact on the ethnoreligious composition of Israel's population, as well as on its absolute size.

Territorial Exchange

A further scenario assumes that some territorial exchanges might be negotiated between Israel and a future Palestinian state. Minor portions of Israel's territory within the pre-1967 boundaries now hosting a predominantly Arab population might be exchanged for some equally small areas in the Palestinian Territories now hosting large concentrations of Jews.

FIGURE 5. PERCENT JEWISH (INCLUDING NON-JEWISH FAMILY MEMBERS) AMONG TOTAL POPULATION IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE, BY ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS, 2000–2050



At the end of 2000, about 207,000 Arabs lived in the area popularly known as the “Triangle”⁷¹ on Israeli territory next to the 1967 boundary. Another 210,000 Arabs lived in the eastern quarters of Jerusalem. This population of 417,000 constituted about a third of the total Arab population in Israel, and lived within slightly more than 1 percent of Israel’s total territory (not including the West Bank and Gaza Strip). This territory and population might be transferred to the Palestinian Authority or a hypothetical Palestinian state, in return for the areas near Jerusalem and in the western parts of the West Bank close to the northeastern out-

⁷¹An area forming part of the Alexander Mountain and Hadera natural regions in the Haifa District, and Eastern Sharon, Southern Sharon, and Petah Tikvah natural regions in the Central District.

skirts of Greater Tel Aviv, where the bulk of the Jews living on the West Bank are situated.⁷²

Readjusting the population projections allowing for such territorial exchange suggest the possibility of maintaining a Jewish majority of about 80 percent within Israel by the year 2050, as against much lower percentages according to different territorial scenarios.

Negotiating and redrawing the Israeli-Palestinian boundary would imply that the sparser and smaller Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territories not relayed physically to the State of Israel would be withdrawn, and their inhabitants transferred to the main portion of Israel's territory.⁷³ The sparser Arab settlements in Israel's northern (Galilee) and southern (Northern Negev) areas would remain within the framework of the State of Israel. All Arabs within the State of Israel would be granted the option of Palestinian citizenship, with provision for their cultural autonomy in Israel and political rights in the Palestinian State. Those preferring Israeli citizenship would be fully entitled to the standard package of Israeli rights and duties, including full exposure to the regular Israeli school curriculum and military service or equivalent civil service—from which they are now exempt.⁷⁴

An alternative might be suggested that would allow Jewish residents in the Territories not annexed to Israel the option of stay-

⁷²Some 264,000 Jews lived in these areas as of 2000, 172,000 in the eastern neighborhoods of Greater Jerusalem and 92,000 within a ring of about 15 km from Jerusalem, including Ma'aleh Adumim, Beitar Ilit, Giv'at Ze'ev, Efrat, Gush Etzion, and several other localities. That same ring in the West Bank also included an estimated 349,000 Palestinians. Another 100,000 Jews lived elsewhere on the West Bank.

⁷³This would include all Jews living in the Gaza Strip, estimated at 7,000 in 2000. Whether Israel would keep control of territory between the Gaza area and Egypt is a security matter outside the scope of this article.

⁷⁴It may be interesting to note provisions regarding political rights and citizenship options for Jewish residents in the Arab state (which did not come into existence) and for Arab residents in the Jewish state, according to UN Resolution 181 enacted in 1947. Part I, C, Chapter 3, 1, states that "persons over the age of eighteen years may opt, within one year from the date of recognition of independence of the State in which they reside, for citizenship of the other State, provided that no Arab residing in the area of the proposed Arab State shall have the right to opt for the citizenship in the proposed Jewish State and no Jew residing in the proposed Jewish State shall have the right to opt for citizenship in the proposed Arab State. The exercise of this right of option will be taken to include the wives and children under 18 years of age of persons so opting. Arabs residing in the areas of the proposed Jewish State and Jews residing in the area of the proposed Arab State who have signed a notice of intention to opt for citizenship of the other State shall be eligible to vote in the Constituent Assembly of that State, but not in the Constituent Assembly of the State in which they reside."

ing there and maintaining Israeli citizenship, in the same way that Israeli Arabs would be given the option of staying in Israel with citizenship in the Palestinian state. One objection, however, is the uncertain security that would follow the dependence of these settlers on Palestinian (and not Israeli) security forces. Furthermore, unlike Arabs in Israel, they would constitute a tiny minority of the total population of the Palestinian state, even if rapidly growing thanks to a robust natural increase. And the noninclusion of these future several hundred thousand Jews within the territory of Israel would mean a lower percentage of Jews out of the total population of the State of Israel.

The exchanges of *land, population, and civil rights* for peace envisaged above would be far less disruptive than large-scale mutual population transfer, a well-known model for solving international conflicts with an ethnoreligious component.⁷⁵ According to the scenario discussed here, relatively few people—principally the inhabitants of small and sparse Jewish localities in the Palestinian Territories—would have to relocate, and the main changes would derive from redrawing borders and shifting citizenship and related civil rights.

As for the status of Jerusalem, a conventional solution would be partition, allocating the Jewish sections to the Israeli state and the Arab sections to the Palestinian state. A better solution—if it were only feasible—would be the creation of a Greater Jerusalem Authority, with local autonomy for Jewish and Palestinian neighborhoods and a joint Israeli-Palestinian Authority for the governance of the holy sites—primarily the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, or even of Jerusalem's entire walled Old City.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Since 1947, for example, an estimated 16–17 million people crossed between India and Pakistan as a result of the partition of the subcontinent and the violence associated with it. In 1922–23, some 1.2 million Greeks from Anatolia fled to Greece. About a million Turks were repatriated from the Balkans between the two world wars. See Myron Weiner, "Political Demography: An Inquiry into the Political Consequences of Population Change," in R. Revelle, ed., *Rapid Population Growth: Consequences and Policy Implications* (Baltimore, 1971), pp. 567–617.

⁷⁶For an Israeli perspective on the future of Jerusalem see Sarah Hershkovitz et al., *Strategic Masterplan for Jerusalem 2020* (Jerusalem, forthcoming). For a Palestinian perspective see Z. al-Qaq, "Post-1967 Palestinian Strategies for Jerusalem?" in *Brussels-Jerusalem: Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution in Divided Cities* (Jerusalem and Brussels, 1997), pp. 339–68. For an overall perspective see Abraham (Rami) Friedman and Rami Nasrallah, eds., *Divided Cities in Transition* (Jerusalem, 2003).

Environmental Policies

The suggested solution assumes some shared responsibility and agreed division of labor between Jews/Israelis and Arabs/Palestinians in the handling of human and other resources over Palestine's whole territory. Assuming the political feasibility of such cooperation, several major policy implications of demographic scenarios follow.

The first relates to the consequences of rapid population growth for future population densities. The changing equilibrium between population and physical environment touches on issues of common interest, and requires strict coordination and agreed allocation of resources between the Israeli and Palestinian parties. In particular, scarce resources like drinkable water, arable land, even sand, call for urgent regulation to prevent excessive or inefficient consumption that will lead to shortages. Similar problems exist in regard to other types of resources as well—such as air—that require constant monitoring to prevent degradation. Joint initiatives will also be required to locate resources that are as yet unexploited, develop new renewable or nonrenewable resources locally, or import them when feasible. Such crucially urgent initiatives require long-term planning, regional cooperation, and the allocation of massive investments from international agencies.

A further area of concern is the future of physical planning for residential uses, and, even more significantly, for the development of adequate transportation and other types of infrastructure, such as sewage disposal, in an increasingly dense environment. To keep pace with the projected population growth, there is an urgent need to develop a common Israeli/Palestinian approach to environmental resources. This is especially true in the case of large metropolitan areas such as Jerusalem, which, in any future political scenario, will continue to include substantially intertwined Jewish and Palestinian populations and economic infrastructures.⁷⁷

⁷⁷See Ron Froumkin and Tamar Ahiron-Froumkin, *Environmental Aspects of Agreements and Development Programs in Regional Cooperation: Current Situation and Recommendations for the Future* (Jerusalem, 2003), in Hebrew.

Socioeconomic Policies

One undesirable aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been the focusing of public debate on a narrow range of mostly political and security-oriented issues, while other important matters related to daily life are given less attention, if not entirely ignored. The maintenance of civil society and the provision of its social and economic needs—behind and beyond war and peace—have not been adequately addressed, making it harder to plan for the future.⁷⁸ In this regard, one key aspect of the population scenarios presented above is their implications for future manpower size and composition.

The huge socioeconomic investments needed to develop educational networks and employment opportunities cannot reasonably occur unless substantial budgetary resources are diverted from current military and defense uses to civilian purposes. Moreover, the massive amount of foreign investment necessary will only materialize if there are strong enough guarantees for stability and future growth in the region.

A major problem in the socioeconomic structure of the Palestinian population is the lack of a middle class, an element that is absolutely essential to lead economic development in a modernizing society. The problem is sharpened by the contrast between a comparatively well-educated Palestinian population, on the one hand, and, on the other, limited occupational opportunities at appropriate professional levels. To be sure, once statehood is achieved the Palestinians will develop a steadily growing central administrative bureaucracy. Even so, the sharp increase in the younger Palestinian labor force projected at least through 2010 needs to be absorbed within an expanding economic and administrative system, or else it will exacerbate existing political tensions. Failure of the Palestinian Authority to fill basic social needs such as education and employment will surely be exploited by other centers of power, such as is already happening in the form of the social

⁷⁸A useful overview is S. Della Seta, ed., *The Price of Non-Peace: The Need for a Strengthened Role for the European Union in the Middle East* (Brussels, 1999). See also Ephraim Kleiman, "Some Basic Problems of the Economic Relationship Between Israel, the West Bank and Gaza," in S. Fischer, D. Rodrik, and E.H. Tuma, eds., *The Economics of the Middle East Peace* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993).

services— together with fundamentalist indoctrination— provided by Hamas.

In Israel, too, the question of economic absorption of a growing labor force must be addressed within the context of the interrelation between the economy, security, and peace. As a modern market economy strongly connected internationally, Israel depends on foreign investments—including tourism. As clearly demonstrated by the financial and economic upturns and downturns of the 1990s and early 2000s in Israel, the international economic community is extremely sensitive to the long-term prospects for peace in the region. Only a climate of optimism fueled by advances in the political process toward peace will allow for renewal of the steady economic growth that prevailed in Israel over most of the 1990s. Failure to develop the economy at a rhythm at least equal to that of the inevitable population growth will mean growing unemployment, leading, in the end, to an increase of emigration—which will herald a further weakening of Israel's demographic standing.

Moreover, in light of projected demographic changes in Israel, a large part of the necessary educational and manpower investments will have to go to the Israeli Arab sector, proportionally and even absolutely more than to the Jewish majority. Otherwise, Israel will face sharpened social unrest on the part of those who feel they have been allocated far less than their fair share.

Given the complementarity that, in spite of everything, still exists between the Israeli and Palestinian economies, economic decline in Israel would necessarily produce negative consequences for Palestine. The common vested interest of Israelis and Palestinians in sustained economic growth sufficient at least to absorb the expected population growth and the ensuing increasing demand for employment, should powerfully motivate the two sides in a quest for political solutions and economic cooperation.

Demographic Policies

Demographic trends reflect cultural and socioeconomic factors as well as policy interventions. Some control over population size and distribution may be achieved, at least in theory, by manipulating the various operative variables responsible for demographic change, as well as through administrative policy. International mi-

gration balances and fertility levels are highly sensitive to changes in the quality of life. Thus policies affecting employment, housing, physical environment, public services, and personal and collective security may have significant effects on propensities for immigration and out-migration. Fertility levels and differentials may also be expected to respond to these intervening factors.

Causal mechanisms linking quality-of-life opportunities and demographic response (population size and composition) are easily specified and understood, although there can be no full control over the amount and direction of actual response. In principle, a more attractive, peaceful, and economically developed society in Israel and Palestine will more likely produce more immigration and less emigration. In a social environment still densely imbued with traditional values, social stability and growth do not stand against the natural course of family values in promoting marriage and planned fertility.

Policy interventions more specifically tied to demographic trends have been the subject of debate in Israel. Without entering here into a review of rationales and arguments, the consensus is that, over the years, government policies have directly or indirectly affected population trends.⁷⁹ Admittedly, whatever the goals, even the most successful policies can expect only partial and mixed results in the demographic development of a heterogeneous population such as that in Israel/Palestine. The major challenge lies in fully appreciating the relationship between demographic behaviors and the deeper roots of existing conflicts in the regional context. Defusing of political and cultural tensions may be the fundamental prerequisite for a cooling down of demographic trends, particularly with regard to achieving a gradual lowering of fertility levels. If current fertility rates reflect, among other things, the militant ambition to prevail over one's rival through the power of numbers, political normalization may empty that particular argument of much of its appeal.

Normalization involves, in the first place, mutual agreement on a regional peace framework covering the multiple facets of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—and crucially, as already noted, a

⁷⁹Sergio DellaPergola and Leah Cohen, eds., *World Jewish Population: Trends and Policies* (Jerusalem, 1992).

clear definition of national boundaries between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

A further policy goal is achieving harmony between different antagonistic religiocultural sectors within each of the two major parties, the Jews and the Arabs. In the Palestinian camp, there are cleavages between the Muslim majority and the Christian minority, and between the different Christian denominations. The main cleavage in the Jewish camp is between the *haredi*⁸⁰ minority on the one hand, and the moderately religious, traditionalist, and secular majority, on the other.

One important matter of contention among the Jewish groups involves the procedure for conversion of the hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish members of Jewish households—mostly immigrants from the FSU. Finding an agreed solution for their incorporation into the Jewish mainstream of Israeli society constitutes one of the crucial items on the Israeli public agenda, and would have significant consequences for the demographic balance, as shown in our preceding discussion. In the case of the Jews, the idea of a new “social contract” has been advocated to establish rules of respectful political discourse between the factions and among their representatives.⁸¹ This approach would facilitate agreement, or at least mutual noninterference, on topics of potential conflict, and might have long-term consequences in the demographic behaviors of each of the groups.

The key goal of interventions aimed at fertility should be a reduction in the present intergroup and intragroup fertility gaps, rather than the achievement of a specific family size. In the analysis of family and fertility in both Jewish and Palestinian contexts, conventional socioeconomic explanations are not sufficient; the impact of ideas and values should be more carefully evaluated.

An intriguing point is the demographic effect of the ongoing tension on both sides over security, particularly in regard to marriage—a significant intervening determinant of fertility levels. Among the Palestinians, the economic crisis created by the breakdown of security might lead to a reduction in the price of brides, hence more feasible and younger marriages, hence continuing high

⁸⁰From the Hebrew *hared*, meaning fearful (of God), used to describe the most religious Jews, estimated at about 7 percent of Israeli Jews in 2000.

⁸¹For the recent example of the Kinneret Covenant, see below, pp. 271–72.

fertility levels. Excessive deterioration of economic resources and the lack of employment, however, might lead to the opposite effect of unfeasible and delayed marriages, generating fertility decline. Among the Jewish population, a continuing crisis would more likely erode marriage propensities, and some downward effects of continuing insecurity on fertility may ensue. Peace and prosperity, as already noted, might generate opposite effects.

What is called for is a policy of fertility regulation, with an emphasis on the reproductive health of women. A similar process is clearly under way in most of the Muslim countries, including some of the religiously more rigorous such as Iran.⁸² Given the persistent preference for medium-size nuclear families in Israel and Palestine, social policies on both sides directly addressing fertility might choose to give strong incentives for the third and fourth children, minor support for the second and fifth, and sharply less for births of a higher order.

Moreover, it is imperative to close the gaps that still prevail between different subpopulations in regard to the role of women in society and in the community. Palestinian women should be granted the same degree of access as Israeli women to all existing health, education, training, and employment facilities and rights. And the available package, in turn, should be expanded to allow fuller participation of women from all groups in economic production and decision making.⁸³

Turning to international migration, the situation of the Jewish diaspora indicates a drying-up of the traditional emigration basins and a likely diminution in the volume of migration to Israel over the next decades. The only way this could be reversed would be an unlikely scenario of significant political and economic disruption in the major societies of the West that now host the largest Jewish

⁸²In 2001, reflecting a marked downward trend during the 1990s, the TFR was estimated at 2.5 in Lebanon, 2.6 in Iran, 3.5 in Egypt, 3.6 in Jordan, and 5.7 in Saudi Arabia. See Pison, "Tous les pays du monde."

⁸³The previously mentioned very high dependency ratios reflect, among other things, extremely low rates of labor force participation among Palestinian women. In 2001, 60 percent of Jewish men and 53 percent of Jewish women (in both cases, over age 15) were in the labor force; the corresponding figures for Israeli Arabs were 62 percent for men and 24 percent for women. Among Palestinians of the same age in the West Bank and Gaza in 1997, 76 percent of men and 9 percent of women were working. These figures come from Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, and Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics, *1997 Population Census*.

communities worldwide. Barring that, future Jewish population growth in Israel is bound to slow. Another tool for slowing Jewish population growth would be some restrictive revision of the currently very liberal definition of people eligible for Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return.

On the Palestinian side, as noted above, current growth rates, reflecting high fertility, lead to surrealistic results if not checked—such as 11 million people in Gaza by 2050, according to the high scenario—and the impossibility of absorbing such population growth in a viable economic framework. The consequence would be a spiral of impoverishment and political instability in the future Palestinian state.

Clearly, the call for return and absorption of an unlimited number of Palestinian refugees and their second- and third-generation descendants in the projected Palestinian state is not grounded in a realistic vision of future demographic and social developments—whatever the state's eventual boundaries. Nor is the realization of such an influx within the State of Israel, as it would imply a drastic change in Israel's cultural profile that would be tantamount to termination of the Jewish state. The implausibility of planning the demise of Israeli society necessitates moderation in Palestinian rhetoric about a right of return.⁸⁴

At the same time, there must be a plan of action to solve the housing and other socioeconomic problems in Palestinian refugee camps through compensation, resettlement elsewhere, and development. On these issues, the international community could play a positive role by educating to promote the policy transitions, providing serious financial support to make them possible, and refraining from proclaiming doctrinaire “right of return” views and maintaining the punitive attitudes toward Israel it has often expressed in the past.

⁸⁴A survey conducted by Dr. Khalil Shikaki, director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, suggests that 10 percent, at most, of the refugees would insist on permanent residence in Israel. More than half, he found, would accept financial compensation and residence in the West Bank or Gaza, or in land Israel might transfer to the Palestinian state in return for West Bank land. James Bennet, “Palestinian Mob Attacks Pollster,” *New York Times*, July 14, 2003. As the title of this article indicates, disseminating the actual views of the refugees, which are apparently quite moderate, can arouse the ire of those Palestinians who insist on a literal “right of return.”

Conclusion

The much-hoped-for transition toward terminating conflict in Israel/Palestine has to deal—among many other things—with a nearly insurmountable circular demographic conundrum. In order to defuse excessive and unbalanced population growth, it is necessary to solve, or at least tone down, the conflict. On the other hand, it is exactly the disruptive demographic phenomena that exacerbate the conflict. Given this background, careful study of demographic trends and perspectives may stimulate the elaboration of sensitive social-policy solutions that do not necessarily accord with declared political programs or with popular ideologies.

Even assuming that people who prefer reasonable and honorable compromise solutions will predominate over the strategists of permanent tension and continuous struggle, the two sides in the conflict do have different goals and may prefer different strategies. Looking at the present in historical perspective, certain trends that have appeared with some regularity since the beginning of the Israeli-Arab conflict should teach us about the limits of feasible change. The persistence of political, cultural, national, and religious values as determinants of population trends indicates that not everything can be explained through the logic of rational choice in the Middle East. Values, passions, contradictions, and paradoxes play a central role in the Israeli-Palestinian demographic equation.

More broadly, in any conflict there are often two truths. The truth of Israeli repression of normal civil life and stringent limitations on the free circulation of people and goods in the Palestinian Territories is countered by the truth of Palestinian terrorism against Israeli civilians. In a broad assessment of the future of population and society, one cannot ignore these contradictions and their effects on the psychology of the actors.

The State of Israel's interest is to preserve itself as a democratic state—which it is—with a predominance of Jewish culture and values—to which it aspires. The Palestinian interest is to reach statehood promptly, give expression to national aspirations, and start implementing in its sovereign state the long-frustrated hope for normal civil life. Both interests demand clear territorial and political separation between the two entities. In terms of population, separate growth would at least reduce the impact of demography

in magnifying the existing conflict. Coordination between the two parties, crucially needed to solve urgent environmental and socioeconomic problems stemming from rapid population growth, might develop over time if a sense of mutual respect, tolerance, and cultural pluralism can gradually emerge.

Still unclear at the time of this writing is whether or not there is enough goodwill and leadership to make possible the transition to end the conflict. The answer could mean the difference between vision and disaster for the intertwined populations and societies of Israel and Palestine.