

DEMOGRAPHY

1. The average annual growth rate of the West Bank population between 1968 and 1980 was 1.4 percent. The absolute number of inhabitants increased from 603,000 in 1968 to 704,000 in 1980. There was a marked fluctuation in the annual growth rate, the lowest in 1980 being 0.5 percent, and the highest, in 1973, 2.7 percent.

2. The annual growth rate of the population in the Gaza Strip was 2.3 percent.

3. The annual growth rate of the Jewish population in Israel during the same years was 2.53 percent, and that of the non-Jewish population in Israel, 3.93 percent.

4. The average annual growth rate under Jordan (1952-1961) was 0.7%.

5. A comparison of the annual growth rates indicates that the so-called demographic threat, i.e., the gradually increasing proportion of West Bank and Gaza inhabitants versus Jews in Western Palestine is not upheld by the data. While it is true that there are more Arab children (Israeli, West Bank and Gaza) in the 0-7 age group, the aggregate Arab growth rate is almost half the Jewish rate.

6. Natural increase in the West Bank is affected by a very high birth rate (gross 44 per thousand compared to 35 per thousand in the non-Jewish population in Israel), a high death rate (15 per thousand) and a very high infant mortality (between 70-100 per thousand).

7. However, the low growth rate in the West Bank is mainly due to a negative migration balance. While natural increase fluctuated between 14,000 per annum (1968) and 20,600 per annum (1980), there has been a constant migration from the West Bank (except in 1969 and 1973). The total

emigration figures between 1968 and 1980 (about 100,000) equal half the natural increase: In 1980, 83% of the natural increase (20,000) was eliminated by emigration (17,100). There are two distinct periods in emigration movements in the West Bank. After the initial dislocation caused by the 1967 war, the emigration figures remained below the 10,000 mark until 1974. Emigration accelerated after 1975 and stayed well above the annual rate of 10,000.

8. In Gaza, emigration was lower than in the West Bank. Total emigration between 1968 and 1980 was 69,000, or 40% of the natural increase, and never exceeded one third of the natural annual increase. If we deduct from this figure the major exodus from Gaza after the 1967 war (31,000 people in a single year, 1968), the average emigration rate amounts to 25% of the natural increase. Consequently, the population growth in Gaza is almost double that of the West Bank.

9. Population breakdown by age and sex indicates another facet of the emigration trend. From age 25-29 upward, the percentage of females increases sharply to well above 50%, both in Gaza and in the West Bank and reaches 59-60%, among the 35-44 age group. The average female percentage among Jews and non-Jews in Israel remains steady at approximately 50%. This anomaly is undoubtedly caused by the emigration of males who leave their families behind and seek temporary but long-term employment outside the territories.

10. While the data does not indicate short-term changes in the "demographic balance" between Jews and Palestinians in Western Palestine, the factors influencing long-range rate of growth should be studied. The very high fertility rate in the West Bank and Gaza is offset by a high mortality rate and high emigration figures. Changes in

these factors may affect the long-range pattern. Also, socio-political and economic factors strongly influence emigration patterns (see below). Due to the marked impact of emigration on the growth rate, these relationships should be further studied.

11. The rate of population growth in the West Bank by subdistricts shows changes in the distribution of the population, caused by differential rates of growth. The population growth of the southern subdistricts (Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jericho and Hebron) was greater than that of the northern subdistricts (Jenin, Nablus and Tulkarm). In Tulkarm and Nablus, for example, the total population growth was 5% in 13 years. The growth in Hebron reached 33% and in Ramallah, 25%. Consequently, there occurred a shift in population concentration. While in 1968, 51% of the West Bank population lived in the northern subdistricts, in 1980, 53% lived in the southern subdistricts.

12. The annual growth rate of the southern subdistricts has been about 2.1% per annum, compared to about 0.4% in the northern subdistricts. It appears that migration from the northern subdistricts is greater than from the southern subdistricts. Judging from the employment data for the Jerusalem district (below), it does not appear that there is a sizeable internal migration from the north to the south, but rather that there is considerable emigration from the north to Transjordan. This tentative conclusion needs further study. The differential growth rate of the northern West Bank versus the southern West Bank seems to be a post-1967 development. Data from the Jordanian period shows a more rapid growth rate among the population of Samaria than in Judea. The change is undoubtedly linked with the post-1967 economic growth of Greater Jerusalem.

13. The shift in West Bank population distribution is closely related to the concentration of Arab population in the Jerusalem metropolitan area. The three West Bank southern subdistricts are contiguous to the Jerusalem municipal area. In the metropolitan area of Jerusalem (which encompasses approximately 300,000 dunams outside the municipal boundary) there has been a constant growth of the Arab population, at an average annual rate of 3% since 1968. Rough estimates show that in 1969, 37% of the total population of the southern subdistrict resided in the metropolitan (West Bank) area of Jerusalem. In 1980, it exceeded 50%.

14. The close ties between the southern subdistricts and Jerusalem are indicated by the following data; almost all West Bank laborers working in Jerusalem (13,900) come from the Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jericho and Hebron subdistricts. Of these, 90% commute daily to work. Two thirds of the total labor force in these subdistricts are employed in the West Bank and a third in Jerusalem. All laborers working outside the West Bank who live in Bethlehem and Jericho, 60% of those in Ramallah and half of the Hebronites are employed in Jerusalem. Only 22% of the Jenin subdistrict labor force and 14% from the Nablus subdistrict are employed in Israel, compared to 34-36% in the southern subdistricts.