

*Position Paper*

# Demographic Trends in Israel

**Uzi Rebhun      Gilad Malach**

**Editor: Ruth Gavison**



**The Metzilah Center  
for Zionist, Jewish, Liberal and Humanist Thought**

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Uzi Rebhun      Gilad Malach

Series editor: Ruth Gavison

Translator: Naftali Greenwood

Translation Editor: Nina Reshef

Production coordinator: Dikla Cohen

Graphics: Adi Rubin

Cover art: Israel Images / Itzik Marom

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Copies may be ordered from:

The Metzilah Center

POB 8435 Jerusalem 91083, Israel

Tel: 97277-4020771/2/3 Fax: 97277-4020774

Email: [metzilahorder@metzilah.org.il](mailto:metzilahorder@metzilah.org.il)

[www.metzilah.org.il](http://www.metzilah.org.il)

**The Metzilah Center** was founded in 2005 to address the growing tendency among Israelis and Jews worldwide to question the legitimacy of Jewish nationalism and its compatibility with universal values. The center believes that Zionism and a liberal worldview can and must coexist; that public discourse, research, and education hold the key to the integration of Zionism, Jewish values, and human rights in the Jewish state; and that the integration of these values is critical for the lasting welfare of Israel and the Jewish people worldwide.

Metzilah aims at disseminating knowledge, deepening the understanding and awakening the public discourse on some of the core issues of life in Israel and the prosperity of the Jewish people in Israel and worldwide: the Jewish people's right to national self-determination in (part of) the Land of Israel; contemporary Jewish identities; the complexity of Israeli society; and the preservation of all citizens' human rights.

The early stages of the Zionist movement were characterized by profound and comprehensive discussions at all levels of society. The richness of the public discourse was a way for society to cope with the intricacy that was inherent to the establishment of the State of Israel.

While the State of Israel and its society are still facing complex challenges, the contemporary public discourse is lacking depth and candor on the core issues, and is overly swamped with shallow slogans and preconceived ideas. To counter this trend, the Metzilah Center supervises and publishes Position Papers exploring the core issues and providing policy options.

Position Papers shed new light on basic problems and establish a factual, historical, and ideological framework for thought and action. Metzilah's objective is to produce accurate and professional studies that will sharpen the basic comprehension of the key issues that the State of Israel is facing, as well as laying a foundation for a thorough public debate on these key issues – a necessity for Israeli society and the Jewish world.

The Metzilah Center believes that the State of Israel is crucial for the welfare and prosperity of the Jewish people and that the State's objectives need to be anchored: fulfilling the right of the Jewish people to self-determination by means of a Jewish state in the Jewish historical homeland; respecting the human rights of all of Israel's citizens and residents; and consolidating Israel as a stable, peace-seeking, and prosperous democracy that acts for the welfare of all its inhabitants.

### *About the Authors*

**Dr. Uzi Rebhun** is a senior lecturer at the Division of Jewish Demography and Statistics at the Institute for Contemporary Jewry, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

**Gilad Malach** holds an M.A. in public policy and Jewish thought. He specializes in religion-and-state issues and intergroup relations in Israel. He is currently writing a doctoral dissertation for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on Public Policy Strategies toward the Ultra-Orthodox.

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# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	7
<b>Preface</b>	13
1. Introduction	13
2. Goals	15
3. Structure	16
<b>Chapter One: Population of Israel 1948-2008</b>	19
1. Introduction	19
2. Population Size and Composition by Religion	19
3. Sources of Population Growth	22
4. Spatial Distribution	24
5. Religiosity	27
6. Conclusion	30
<b>Chapter Two: Contemporary Demographic Patterns, 2000-2008</b>	31
1. Introduction	31
2. Fertility in the Jewish Sector: from Gentle Decline to Stability and from Stability to Increase	33
2.1 The Jewish Population at Large	33
2.2 The Ultra-Orthodox: Decline in Fertility Coupled with Growing Share in the Jewish Population	33
2.3 The “Not Classified by Religion” Group—Persistent Low Fertility	34
3. Fertility in the Muslim Sector: Rapid Decrease, Plateau, and Further Decrease	35
3.1 The Muslim Population at Large	35
3.2 The Negev Bedouin: Plummeting Fertility Rate	36
4. Christians and Druze: Falling Below the Jewish Fertility Rate	36
5. Jewish Immigration and Migration Balance	37

6. Spatial Distribution	38
7. Conclusion	38
<b>Chapter Three: Population Projections, 2005-2030</b>	40
1. Introduction	40
2. The Medium Scenario: Population Increase and Its Composition by Religion	41
3. A “New” Scenario	42
4. Future Changes in Age Composition	44
5. Jewish Population Projection by Religiosity	46
6. Conclusion	46
<b>Chapter Four: Implications for Public Policy</b>	48
1. Introduction	48
2. A Stable Jewish Majority in Israel	50
2.1 Enhancing Jewish Immigration	52
2.2 Constraining Immigration that Does Not Integrate into Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State	53
2.3 Borders of Israel Jurisdiction in Eastern Jerusalem	54
3. Israel as a Developed and Modern Democracy that Allows Its Citizens to Make a Respectable Living	55
3.1 Child Allowances and the Poverty Line	57
3.2 Core Studies in Primary and Secondary Schooling	59
3.3 National Civic Service	60
3.4 Encouragement of Labor-Force Participation	61
4. Conclusion	63
<b>Notes</b>	65
<b>Bibliography</b>	75

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The demographic issue has been central in the history of the Zionist enterprise and the State of Israel as *the state where the Jewish people realizes its right to self-determination*. The question debated over the years is this: what level of *Jewish majority* does Israel need in order to be both Jewish and democratic? The question became more acute after the 1967 Six-Day War but is also relevant within the confines of the Green Line.

To our taste, it is of critical importance to study broader demographic trends in view of the totality of Israel's goals. These goals include more than being Jewish and democratic; Israel also aspires to be a developed and prosperous country that upholds human rights and is committed to the welfare of all its residents and citizens. Here, then, we examine the proportions and characteristics of specific population subgroups and their effect on Israel's future in all these senses combined.

This position paper discusses the population *in Israel proper*. It argues that certain elements of Israel's goals generate tension coupled with relations of complementarity and mutual reinforcement. Our underlying premise is that accurate demographic information is essential for two purposes: intelligent decision-making about the goals and their fulfillment, and intelligent public debate on the topic.

## Chapter One: Population of Israel, 1948-2008

In its sixty-year history, Israel's population has grown in a dramatic way that is unprecedented in the West—from fewer than 900,000 persons at the time of the first census (1948) to 7.25 million at the end of 2007. The Jewish majority, however, has been clearly *diminishing* since it peaked in the early 1960s at 89 percent. In 2007, Jews (including “others,” i.e., non-Jews who are allowed to immigrate under the Law of Return) accounted for 80

percent of the total. Three main factors explain the erosion of the Jewish majority: (a) higher natural increase of the Arab population (especially the Muslim), (b) the annexation of eastern Jerusalem in 1967, and (c) periodic downturns in Jewish immigration.

Various subgroups of the population, Jewish and Arab alike, also underwent important changes. The share of the *haredi* (“ultra-Orthodox”) group has grown rapidly over the past twenty years. During this time, the proportion of Jews who define themselves as *haredi* increased from 3 percent to roughly 9 percent. In 1990, fewer than 10 percent of Jewish children attended *haredi* schools; in 2008 some 21 percent did so. The share of Muslims in the Arab population has climbed from 70 percent when the state was founded to 83 percent today.

This position paper also calls attention to the *spatial distribution* of the population. Israel’s population density outpaces the Western norm by far. Much of the population is concentrated in the core area of the country, where the Jewish majority is clear-cut. In peripheral areas, in contrast, the Arab minority is plainly becoming overrepresented and has become a majority in the Northern District.

## **Chapter Two: Contemporary Demographic Patterns, 2000-2008**

The most conspicuous trend in the Jewish sector during these years is a *mild upturn* in the total fertility rate, from 2.59 children per woman in 2001 to 2.80 in 2007. The main reason for this unexpected increase in fertility is the proportional growth of the *haredi population*. Concurrently, immigration has fallen off severely, to less than 20,000 per year, after mass immigration in the 1990s delivered almost a million people to Israel’s shores.

In the Arab sector, the fertility rate has been *falling steeply* in recent years, especially among Muslims. The Arab fertility rate has declined by 18 percent over the past seven years, from 4.74 children per woman in 2000 to 3.90 in 2007. The Negev Bedouin population recorded an especially salient 27 percent decline, from 9.77 children per woman in 2000 to 7.14 in 2007. Concurrently, the “family unification” phenomenon, which at its peak in

1995–2000 allowed thousands of Arab migrants to enter the country each year, has declined perceptibly.

### **Chapter Three: Population Projections, 2005-2030**

Here we juxtapose two demographic scenarios: a standard (“medium”) alternative for developments in the various sectors of Israel’s population, pursuant to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), and a “new” scenario, derived from the entire set of pervasive trends in recent years, that assumes continued increase in Jewish fertility and the contraction of Muslim fertility.

According to the first scenario, the majority of Jews (and others) will narrow to around 76 percent by 2030 and Jewish (and other) children aged 0–4 will account for fewer than 70 percent of all children.

By contrast, in the scenario that we suggest, the erosion of the Jewish majority is gentler and the Jews’ share in the population in 2030 is anticipated to come to 77 percent. However, the difference reflected by the *long-term trend* is more conspicuous. The proportion of Jewish and other children, in our estimation, will be *slightly higher* in 2030 than today and will reach 72.6 percent. The Jewish fertility rate will *resemble* the Muslim fertility rate, which surpasses the Jewish rate today by more than one child per woman. We are witnessing a change of trend that may allow *the balance of Jews and Arabs in Israel to stabilize in the long run*.

Another aspect of the two projections concerns the continued proportionate growth of the *haredi* population. By 2028, 15 percent of Israel’s population and more than 20 percent of its Jewish population are expected to be *haredi*. In the 0-14 age cohort, the projected share of *haredim* is even more salient: 25 percent of children in Israel and roughly 33 percent (!) of the Jewish children.

### **Chapter Four: Implications for Public Policy**

*The purpose of this chapter is not to propose a public policy but to sketch principles and general guidelines for one.* The policy envisaged should assure Israel’s survival as *a Jewish, democratic, developed, and prosperous state that protect*

*human rights and promotes the welfare of its residents and citizens.* Elements of these goals exhibit tension but are also complementary. Israel will not be Jewish and democratic, let alone developed and prosperous, unless it has a stable Jewish majority that will facilitate stable majority–minority relations and an economy oriented to growth and development.

In respect of maintaining the Jewish majority, the paper addresses three aspects:

- *Jewish migration.* The paper places special emphasis on the effort to bring home emigrant Israelis and their families—a group that is estimated at more than half a million persons. We point that external processes and a policy tailored to them may influence thousands of people to come home each year.
- *Reducing Palestinian migration to Israel.* The paper relates to the strong effect of the generous family-unification policy in the 1990s and the perceptible effect of the limit that was subsequently imposed by an amendment to the Citizenship Law.
- *Rolling back the annexation of Eastern Jerusalem.* Regardless of the complex political, national-religious, and security aspects of the issue, the paper points to the decisive effect that such a step would have on buttressing Israel's Jewish majority and the Jewish complexion of its capital.

As it pursues the goals of democracy, welfare, prosperity and development, and safeguarding of human rights, Israel also needs to develop civil cohesion and civil participation in national life while, of course, acknowledging its proliferation of groups, nationalities, cultures, and ways of life. In this respect, we address four closely interrelated aspects:

- *Fertility patterns and child allowances.* According to the position paper, lavish child allowances that increased commensurate with the number of children in the family contributed to high fertility among *economically weak groups*—and the subsequent severe cutback in allowances contributed to a decline in fertility among all of the country's economically weak groups.
- *Core studies in primary and secondary schools.* In some *haredi* primary schools for boys, core studies are rudimentary and do not satisfy the

Ministry of Education criteria. At the next level, the *yeshiva qetana* (for boys of high school age), core studies are not offered and the Knesset recently endorsed this practice in legislation. All such institutions receive most of their funding from the state. The position paper notes the implications of this state of affairs for the future, given the rapid increase in the share of *haredi* schoolchildren. In Arab schools, the quality of studies that confer knowledge and social-integration skills is sometimes poor and education legitimizing Israel as a Jewish and democratic state is conspicuous in its absence.

- ***National Civic service.*** In early 2008, a National Civic Service Administration that focuses on the *haredi* and Arab population was launched. The position paper notes the contribution that such service makes to civil cohesion and future participation in the labor force. The importance of such activity becomes even clearer when one notes that most participants in the service are Arab women and *haredi* men—members of Israel's least employed groups.
- ***Encouragement of labor-force participation.*** A strong correspondence has been shown to exist among schooling, labor-force integration skills, actual participation in the labor force, and the poverty rate. From all these standpoints, a creative and differentiated effort to encourage labor-force participation, especially among groups that exhibit low participation rates today, seems to be worth making.

In this context, we should note that all the aforementioned aspects—Jewish majority, welfare, development, and prosperity—should also be examined in their spatial-geographic context.

## **Conclusion**

The position paper that follows, *Demographic Trends in Israel*, tackles concurrently two challenges that the demographic situation poses for Israel's future: *maintaining its Jewishness and concern for its future as a developed and prosperous state.* These challenges necessitate ongoing evaluation, appropriate deployment, and diverse political and public measures.

The Jewish majority has been eroding in recent years and is expected to continue eroding in the foreseeable future. We do believe, however, that the pace of the erosion will slow if appropriate policy interventions are conducted amidst a commitment to the upholding of citizens' and residents' human rights. Accordingly, two contrasting views—that Israel is moving toward binationalism and that the current trends are not threatening the preservation of the Jewish majority—*should be revisited and assessed with greater caution.*

The position paper underscores the rapid growth of two economically weak population groups: *haredim* and Muslims. This growth is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. Avoidance of an appropriate response to these population groups in regard to schooling and employment, in a manner tailored to the groups' needs and culture, *may deal a blow to Israel's future* as a developed and prosperous state.

# Preface

## 1. Introduction

Demographic data about realities in Israel are often put forward as weighty if not conclusive arguments in favor of one policy or another. It is argued, for example, that Israel will soon become a binational state or that a majority of Israeli pupils already attend non-Zionist schools. One hears such arguments, expressed in various ways, from all corners of the political arena. In response, it is claimed that science is being subjugated to ideology and that demographic considerations—foremost the sort based on parsing the population by national or religious groups—are altogether illegitimate when policy decisions need to be made. Some contend that the projections offered are groundless and are being used as tools by people who wish to promote a certain policy by peddling fear and concern to decision-makers and the public or by creating the impression that this or that outcome is inevitable. Another charge is that the projections contribute per se to the creation of a sense of threat and the disruption of inter-group relations in Israel.

Consequently, both the public and the decision-makers are seriously confused about the data themselves, resulting in the sense that the decisions made are merely ideological because they rest on data that are susceptible to manipulation. Such a sentiment strengthens the feeling that one may, and perhaps should, regard demographic assessment based on the characteristics of national or religious sub-communities as irrelevant in policymaking.

This position paper takes a contrasting view: reliable demographic research of data and trends such as these is crucial. Applied with due caution, it should underlie the state's demarches and policy decisions. For the very reason that one can indeed exploit the data for political purposes, the public and its decision-makers need to understand the data and the various ways in which they may be presented and used.

Since the 1967 Six-Day War, the debate over the size and stability of the Jewish majority has focused on the numerical ratio of Jews to Arabs who dwell between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. For many, this demographic aspect determines the choice of a one-state or a two-state solution. In this position paper, we intend to focus on processes that are unfolding *in Israel proper*. Our goal is to describe and analyze main demographic trends in Israel and shed light on several questions relating to the composition of the population, including the numerical ratio of Jews and Arabs who dwell *in Israel*. We will also examine the directions in which these trends may develop in the future.

The question “Will Israel continue to have a stable Jewish majority?” is a scale-tipping one in respect of political, national, economic, social issues relating to the country’s future and, foremost, its survivability as the state where the Jewish people realizes its right to self-determination. Not surprisingly, this inspires spirited scientific and political polemics. On one side of the divide, it is argued that the large discrepancy in birth rates between Arabs and Jews is leading inexorably to the *de facto* development of a binational state (Bystrov and Soffer, 2008). On the other side, it is alleged that the differences in birth patterns are narrowing so swiftly as to create similarities between the population groups that are also reflected in a future increase in Jewish birth rates. With immigration tossed in—after all, most immigrants join the Jewish population—one may assure a solid Jewish majority in Israel (Zimmerman et al., 2006, and Feitelson, 2008). Still others contend that there is no need for an absolute Arab majority to delegitimize Israel’s characterization as a Jewish nation-state; even today, they insist, Israel should function as a binational state in every sense and will certainly have to do so in, say, another decade. At hand, then, is a political and normative controversy based on projections of demographic trends. Such controversies have much influence on attitudes toward matters such as migration policy and demands for the exercise of the “right of return”. This position paper provides tools for the evaluation of these contrasting arguments.

Our argument is that the size and stability of Israel's Jewish majority is not the country's only existential demographic issue. Israel also wishes to be democratic, prosperous, and developed.<sup>1</sup> An additional question, then, focuses on the *socioeconomic* aspects of the country's demographic makeup. Various population subgroups in Israel, including the Muslims and the *haredim*, have been growing rapidly in recent years. In greater part, these groups are poorly integrated in terms of schooling and employment. This position paper highlights the proportions of these groups today, the directions in which they are expected to head, and the implications of these trends for Israel's ability to prosper.

These two issues—the stability of the Jewish majority and Israel's future as a developed and prosperous state—are *interrelated* in complex ways. Both goals represent crucial elements in Israel's vision: the first concerns the particularistic, Jewish part of the vision while the second involves an indicator that relates to the population at large. Parts of both the Jewish and the Arab populations, however, pose special challenges to the developed and prosperous nature that the country wants to have.

In other words, policymakers' efforts to promote values of definitive importance for national strength cannot be limited to the Jewish-majority issue only. Concurrently, strenuous efforts are needed to contend with cultural, social, and economic characteristics of all population groups, Jewish and Arab. The policy that copes with these issues, therefore, must be integrated but, concurrently, sufficiently differentiated to be effective.

## 2. Goals

This position paper states that concern about demography, including attention to national, religious, cultural, and socioeconomic issues and characteristics, is immensely important for the welfare of any country and, therefore, is relevant and necessary. Examination of the national and socioeconomic components of group characteristics is essential for the making of an intelligent policy that will allow Israel to survive as a developed and democratic state that looks out for the welfare of all its inhabitants and where the Jewish

people may fulfill its right to self-determination—all of which, of course, within the necessary constraints following from human rights.

Accordingly, the aim in this position paper is to provide a *professional and balanced* view of Israel's demographic profile. The purpose is to offer a professional infrastructure for debate of these topics without taking a partisan or ideological stance. This document concerns itself in particular with new trends that have risen to prominence in recent years and its examination of their causes and possible implications.

In sharper focus, the goals of this document are three:

- a. to clarify the immense importance of a reliable and agreed demographic picture, based on explicit and clear premises, for fateful decisions about Israel's future borders, welfare policies, vocational training, enhancement of all sectors' labor-force participation, land policy, outline and development plans, spatial distribution, education system, etc.;
- b. to sketch an up-to-date picture of the demographic trends and explain the background of the main disagreements in this field;
- c. to provide decision-makers and the public with an infrastructure for the public policy that is warranted or needed in response to the trends that this document illuminates.

### 3. Structure

*The first chapter* presents a historical review of Israel's demographic development from the time it was established until 2008. The analysis differentiates among population subgroups by religion—Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and Druze—and refers to the unequal contributions of the two factors that determine population increase: fertility and the migration balance. The review indicates the steady erosion of the Jewish majority in recent decades, the relative growth of the *haredi* population within the Jewish population, and the spatial distribution of the Israeli population.

*The second chapter* focuses on recent demographic changes and trends that have a direct effect on projections relating to Jewish–Arab population ratios and the socioeconomic composition of the population at large. We

devote particular attention the steady downward trend in Arab fertility and the reasons for it, coupled with the unexpected mild upturn in Jewish fertility rates. The chapter also tracks the immigration and emigration trends of Jews and others in recent years.

*The third chapter* assesses the future continuity of recently prevailing demographic patterns and proposes alternative scenarios for the development of Israel's population and that of various subgroups up to 2030. We present the Central Bureau of Statistics population projection but also suggest a reasoned "new" alternative based on our reading of trends that have emerged in recent years. This part of the document also addresses other projections about trends among various population subgroups and emphasizes the situation of the *haredi* population.

*The fourth chapter* offers examples of possible policy implications of the previously presented data and trends. The domains discussed are associated with welfare policy, vocational training, enhancement of all sectors' labor-force participation, Jewish and other immigration, education systems, and future borders.

All data in this document are based on CBS publications unless specifically stated otherwise. The CBS is a professional and reliable agency that keeps its data up-to-date and accurate. We hope that the information and analysis in this position paper, and the principled discussion of public-policy implications to which it relates, will help decision-makers and enhance the public debate concerning the issues raised.



## *Chapter One*

# Population of Israel, 1948-2008

### 1. Introduction

This chapter reviews the development of Israel's population from independence to the present day. It focuses on main demographic characteristics, sources of increase, spatial dispersion, and religiosity. The data presented relate to the population at large and to a breakdown of main subgroups by religion.<sup>2</sup>

### 2. Population Size and Composition by Religion

Israel's first census, conducted shortly after the country was established, reported a population of 872,000 (Table 1). Largely owing to large waves of immigration in subsequent years and, in particular, mass immigration, the population swelled to slightly more than two million by the end of the country's first decade. In the years that followed, the pace of growth eased somewhat but nevertheless remained high, bringing the population to 2.8 million by the end of the second decade, 3.7 million by the end of the third, and nearly 4.5 million by the end of the fourth. Mass immigration from the former Soviet Union fueled a spurt of growth from then on, bringing the population to some six million by 1998. By the end of 2007, the country had a population of 7.24 million.

*Table A1. Population of Israel, by Religion, 1948-2007*

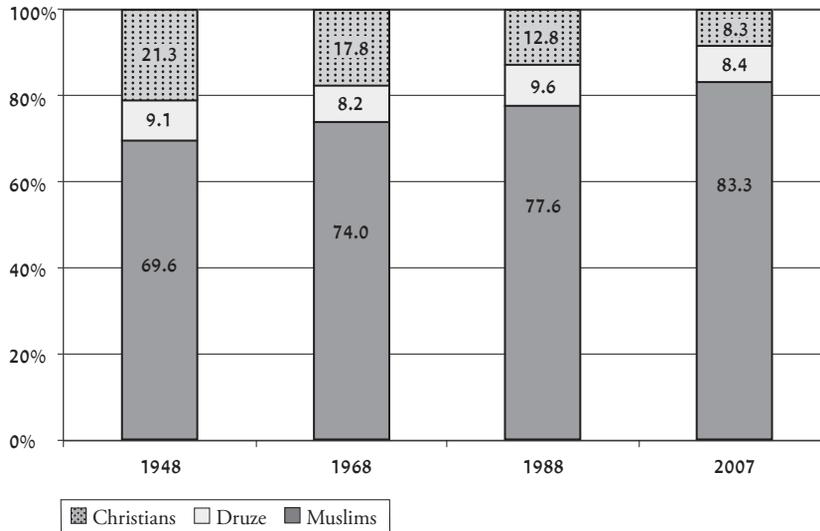
Population	1948	1968	1988	2007
Numbers (in thousands)				
Total	872.2	2,841.1	4,476.8	7,244.1
Jews	716.7	2,434.8	3,659.0	5,474.3

*Table A1. Continued.*

Population	1948	1968	1988	2007
<b>Numbers (in thousands)</b>				
Non-Jews	156.0	406.3	817.8	1,449.9
Not classified by religion	—	—	—	319.9
<b>Percentages</b>				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Jews	82.2	85.7	81.7	75.6
Non-Jews	17.8	14.3	18.3	20.0
Not classified by religion	—	—	—	4.4

The increase was not equally divided among the constituent religion groups of the population. In the first decade, the Jewish population grew more quickly than the non-Jewish population, advancing from 82 percent of the total upon independence to 89 percent in 1958. Since then, the share of Jews has been falling gradually—to 86 percent in 1968,<sup>3</sup> 82 percent in 1988, and 76 percent today.<sup>4</sup>

The Arab population includes three main subgroups: Muslims, Druze, and Christians. Among the three, the share of Muslims has grown from 70 percent of the non-Jewish population in 1948 to 83 percent today, whereas that Druze and Christians has declined from 9 percent and 21 percent, respectively, at the dawn of statehood to 8 percent for each group today (Figure A1). Consequently, the share of Muslims in Israel's total population has climbed from 10 percent when the country was established to 17 percent today.

*Figure A1. Israel's Arab Population, by Religion 1948-2007 (Percentages)*

In recent years, another group has been included in the Israeli population in a separate category: persons “not classified by religion” as defined by the Ministry of the Interior. They are usually kin of Jewish immigrants or others who are entitled to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return, and nearly all come from the former Soviet Union. The 320,000 people in this group account for around 4 percent of Israel’s total population.<sup>5</sup>

Another way to get an impression of periodic changes in the size of Israel’s population and its subgroups is to examine the annual growth rate. The annual growth rate of the Jewish population fell from 9.2 percent in 1948-1960 to 1.5 percent in the 1980s, climbed to 3.4 percent in the first half of the 1990s, and has fallen since then to 1.6 percent. The annual growth rates of the other subgroups have also been trending down since the late 1950s: from 4 percent to 2.8 percent among Muslims, from 4.4 percent to 1.8 percent among Druze, and from 2.8 percent to 1.6 percent among Christians.<sup>6</sup>

Notably, persons who hold Israel citizenship but have been out of the country for more than one year are not included in the Israeli population.

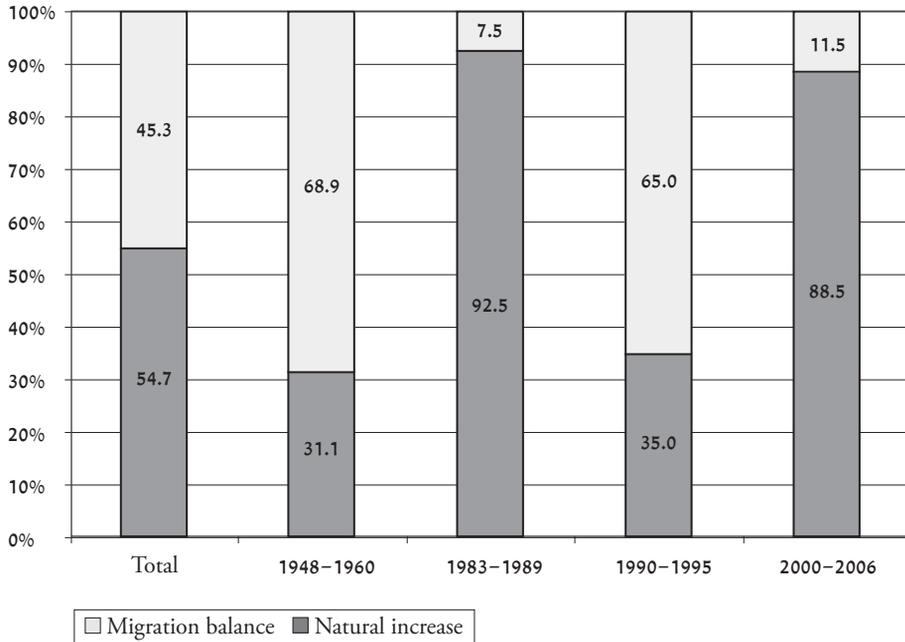
Various estimates place their numbers at around half a million (largely Jewish). The data also exclude foreign workers, whose members were estimated at slightly under 200,000 at the end of 2006.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. Sources of Population Growth

Two factors determine changes in the size of a population: natural increase (births less deaths) and migration balance.<sup>8</sup>

From the establishment of Israel to the end of 2006, the country's Jewish population grew by 4.8 million persons. The increase was divided almost equally between natural increase, at 55 percent of the total growth, and migration balance at 45 percent (Figure A2). However, the relative contribution of these factors has changed over time. The share of migration balance in the total increase fell from nearly 70 percent of the total growth of the Jewish population in 1948-1960 to 45 percent in the 1960s and around 25 percent in 1972-1982. Jewish immigration fell into a trough in the 1980s, reflected in the fact that the migration balance contributed slightly less than 8 percent to Jewish population growth during this time. In 1990-1995, the share of migration balance in Jewish population growth reverted to the high historical level of the early-statehood period (65 percent). Afterwards, it declined again—to 39 percent in the second half of the 1990s and 12 percent in 2000-2006.

*Figure A2. Sources of Jewish Population Growth, Selected Periods (Percentages)*



These trends reflect the patterns of Jewish immigration to Israel, which typically follows a wave-like pattern: powerful flow, ebbing, another surge, and so on. Normally, not all immigrants integrate successfully in the destination country; some choose to return to their country of origin or to migrate to a third country. Accordingly, the more Jewish immigration there is, the more inhabitants leave Israel for lengthy periods of time several years later. Other departees are long-time immigrants or Israelis by birth who, influenced mainly by economic and political push factors, seize various kinds of opportunities in other countries. In the early 1990s, the annual number of Israelis who left for at least one year was around 25,000, peaking at 27,000 in 1993. This record level recurred in the second intifada years but fell to approximately 21,000 in 2005.<sup>9</sup>

Since Israel was founded, its Arab population has grown by more than 1.25 million persons. Most of the growth results from natural increase, which reflects high fertility rates (which have slowed over time) and falling infant-mortality rates. Another major contributing factor was the addition of the inhabitants of eastern Jerusalem to the Arab population in 1967 and the non-Jewish inhabitants of the Golan Heights in 1981. In 1990–2007, the Arab population has gained more than 30,000 persons due to the implementation of the “family unification” policy.<sup>10</sup>

Since the early 1990s, immigration by Christians who are allowed to immigrate under the Law of Return has made a considerable and documented contribution to the growth of Israel’s non-Arab Christian population. Migration balance accounted for nearly 80 percent of the increase in the country’s total Christian population in 1990–1995, around 33 percent in 1996–2000,<sup>11</sup> and roughly 50 percent since then. In absolute terms, however, the increase has been minor.<sup>12</sup>

The population of persons not classified by religion grew from around 65,000 in 1996 to 320,000 at the end of 2007. Even though migration balance accounts for most of the upturn, the contribution of natural increase has also risen over time. Thus, the share of migration balance in the total growth of this population group fell from 84 percent in 1996–2000 to 66 percent in 2007.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4. Spatial Distribution

In many cases, concern about demography focuses on the national level and disregards local characteristics and spatial distribution. This tendency, we believe, limits the insight that one may obtain of the processes and phenomena investigated. Awareness of the spatial aspects of life in Israel is an essential condition for the country’s ability to attain its goals.

Israel is one of the most densely populated countries in the West. In 2005, it had a population density of 341 persons per square kilometer or, if one excludes the Negev from the reckoning, 845 persons per square kilometer.

Such a density has serious implications for the country's ecology, social composition, and quality of life (Bystrov and Soffer, 2008).

Furthermore, Israel, like most countries, has patterns of geographic distribution that create salient differences between center and periphery. These distribution patterns—which also produce different density patterns—carry emphatic national implications. In 1948, shortly after the end of the War of Independence and the rapid outflux of Arab inhabitants, half of Israel's population lived in the two districts farthest from the periphery, Tel Aviv and Central (Table A2). The two most peripheral districts—Northern and Southern—were home to some 13 percent of the population at the time. One Israeli in ten lived in the Jerusalem District. The rest of the population dwelled in the Haifa District, which was the second most populous at the time. Over the next sixty years, two main changes took place. First, the share of the population in the two interior districts declined; this was manifested in opposite processes: loss of population in the Tel Aviv District and gain of population in the Central District. Second, the population of the peripheral districts climbed to about one-third of the national population. This was reflected mainly in an increase in the Southern District; the share of the Haifa District fell precipitously and that of the Jerusalem District was basically unchanged.

*Table A2: Population of Israel, by District of Residence, 1948–2006 (Percentages)*

	1948	1983	2006
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Jerusalem	10.2	11.7	12.2
Northern	16.8	16.2	16.9
Haifa	20.5	14.2	12.1
Central	14.3	20.6	23.7
Tel Aviv	35.7	24.8	16.9
Southern	2.5	11.9	14.3
West Bank (Jews)	—	0.6	3.7

Many of the aforementioned trends among the population at large reflect the residential preferences of the Jewish-and-other population. About half (48.5 percent) of the Jewish population lives today in the Tel Aviv and Central District combined, slightly less than one-fourth dwell in the peripheral districts,<sup>14</sup> and the share of the Jerusalem District in the total Jewish population has been steady at more than 10 percent. Approximately one Jew in twenty lives today in the West Bank.

The distribution patterns of the Arab population were strongly affected by the addition of the population of eastern Jerusalem, to which nearly one-fifth of all Arabs in Israel belong, after the Six-Day War. For this reason, and despite sizable absolute growth, the share of the Northern District in the Arab population has fallen. The proportions of Arab population in each of the other districts have remained largely unchanged. Thus, these patterns underscore the Jews' preference of the interior parts of the country and the Arabs' preference of Jerusalem and the north.

The balance among population subgroups in each district have been affected by different rates of increase in the Jewish and Arab populations by places of residence, reflecting immigrants' settlement patterns, internal migration, and natural increase (Table A3). In the Jerusalem District, the share of Jews has fallen from around 97 percent in 1948 to 70 percent today. In the Northern District, the ratio of Jews to Arabs attained equilibrium by the first half of the 1980s but recently has fallen to 47:53. A similar progression, although at different rates, has been typical of the Southern District, where the Jews attained a solid majority of more than 90 percent but have lost relative ground since the 1980s. In the Haifa District, the proportion of Jews has fallen by around 10 percentage points since 1948 and now reached slightly over 75 percent. In the interior districts, the share of Jews has remained steady (Tel Aviv District) or has grown slightly (Central District). Accordingly, in three districts—Jerusalem, Northern, and Haifa—Jews and those not classified by religion are currently underrepresented relative to their share in the Israeli population at large, whereas in three other districts—Central, Tel Aviv, and Southern—they are overrepresented.

*Table A3: Proportion of Jews (Including Not Classified by Religion) in the Population, by District, 1948-2006 (Percentages)*

	1948	1983	2006
Jerusalem	96.7	73.3	70.0
Northern	37.1	49.8	47.2
Haifa	84.4	80.8	76.4
Central	87.1	92.1	91.9
Tel Aviv	98.8	98.9	98.8
Southern	28.0	90.6	84.6

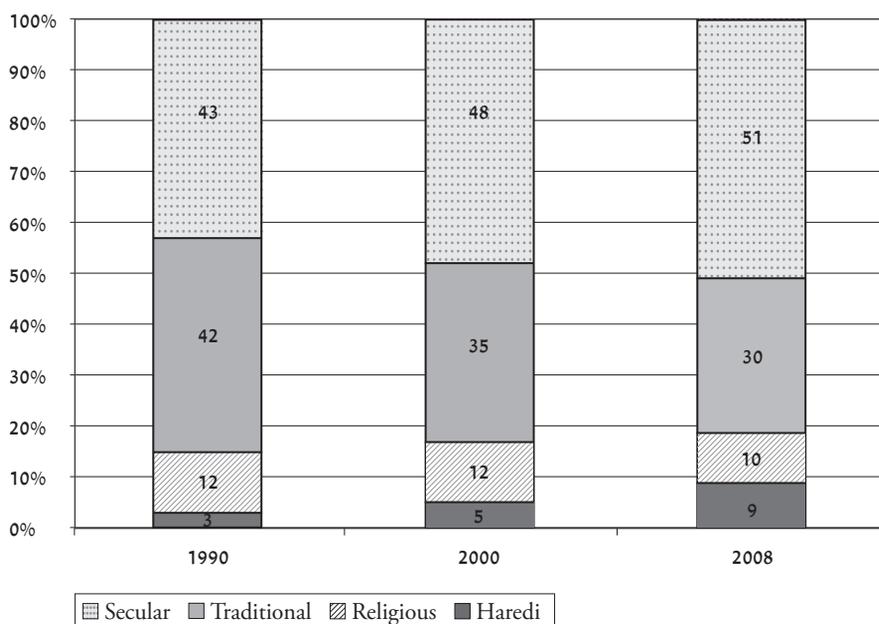
## 5. Religiosity

The empirical data on the religiosity of Israel's population are less significant than those relating to religion or nationality.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the availability of data is better in the Jewish sector than in the Arab sector. Just the same, the data do make a direct and important contribution to group-level social and economic indicators that may affect both the demographic and the social and economic trends in Israel. The data that we use relate to self-definition of religious identity (Figure A3).

On the basis of this classification, the share of the two polar groups on the religion-identity continuum in the Jewish sector increased between 1990 and 2008: that of self-defined *haredim* increased threefold (from 3 percent to 9 percent, respectively)<sup>16</sup> and that of the secular also increased, to slightly over half of the adult Jewish population. The proportional growth of both groups came mainly at the expense of the traditional population.<sup>17</sup> These changes—especially the increase in the share of the secular—are partly explained by the religiosity of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. However, the religiosity of Israeli society has an intergenerational dynamic of its own. Those who define themselves as *haredi* and religious seem to have become more radicalized in their attitudes than their parents were, while the secular and the traditional have established even a greater distance from religious patterns in the past generation (Peres and Ben-Rafael, 2006). These tendencies are widening the cultural gaps among Jewish population groups

that are divided on the basis of religiosity and, within this general category, on the basis of their attitude toward the state, democracy, general schooling, and economic and social integration.<sup>18</sup>

*Figure A3: Adult Jewish Population of Israel, by Self-Definition of Jewish Identity, 1990-2008 (Percentages)\**



\* The data on self-definition were first gathered in 1990. The CBS began to address this issue only in 2002 within the framework of the annual Social Survey. See CBS, 2002.

Based on Levy et al., 2002; Arian Ventura and Filipov, 2008.

The relative growth of the *haredi* population is especially noticeable in the young age cohorts. Data on the distribution of children in the Jewish education system, parsed by main school systems, show that enrolment in *haredi* schools climbed from less than 10 percent of total Jewish enrolment at the beginning of the 1990s to more than twice that rate in 2008. Thus, today slightly more than one-fifth of Jewish children in Israel attend *haredi* schools

(Table A4). Nearly all of this increase was offset by falling enrolment rates in the State (non-religious) system. In absolute terms, enrolment in *haredi* systems increased by a factor of 2.5 while enrolment in the state system was unchanged. These developments strongly affect teacher training and the allocation of economic resources for the education system. Their impact is also evident in the Jewish and general subjects taught, including Zionist and Israeli values, and in the integration skills for the modern labor market that children in the different school systems receive.

*Table A4. Distribution of Jewish Children, by School System, 1992–2008*

Population	1992	2000	2008
Numbers			
Total	908,087	1,029,564	1,064,256
State	644,382	685,420	643,740
State-Religious	177,130	190,014	197,359
<i>Haredi</i>	86,575	154,130	223,157
Percentages			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
State	71.0	66.5	60.5
State-Religious	19.5	18.5	18.5
<i>Haredi</i>	9.5	15.0	21.0

Source: CBS; and Ministry of Education data.

The data on religiosity among Arabs are scantier; they are based on the Central Bureau of Statistics' annual Social Survey, which first addressed itself to this issue in 2002. According to the survey, the Arab population also spans the continuum of religious affiliation. Roughly half of all Arabs are very religious (6 percent) or religious (44 percent); the other half are not-so-religious or not religious in equal measure.<sup>19</sup> Notably, the intensity of religious (or national) affinity among minority groups, especially those involved in a national conflict, may be strengthened by the effect of the conflict on the components of identity.

## 6. Conclusion

Israel experienced rapid population growth in its first sixty years. The increase was distributed differently over time, space, and the components of demographic change (natural increase and migration balance). Furthermore, some population subgroups, such as Muslim Arabs and (since the 1990s) *haredim*, have grown more quickly than the rest of the population. In view of these historical developments, we will attempt in the next chapter to gain a thorough understanding of the current patterns, which may provide basis, within the limits of scientific research, for the evaluation of future trends.

## *Chapter Two*

# Contemporary Demographic Patterns, 2000-2008

### 1. Introduction

Israel has the highest birth rate in the West (*The World Factbook*, 2008).<sup>20</sup> These data are also valid for the Jewish population alone and point to a high birth rate even among the traditional and secular populations.<sup>21</sup> The tendency to relatively large families reflects norms that are widely espoused by all groups in Israeli society. However, Israel has always had distinct sub-groups with very high birth rates that made an especially large contribution to the country's high level of fertility. In the past, these groups were immigrants from northern Africa and Asia and the Arab population; today they are *haredim* and Muslims.<sup>22</sup>

Over the years, with the exception of the 1990s, birthing has become the dominant factor in population increase and the Jewish fertility rate—which generally has remained steady over time—has always been significantly lower than the Arab and, in particular, the Muslim fertility rate. In the Muslim sector, there was a perceptible downturn in fertility that halted in 1985–2000 and resumed in recent years. It is the rapid natural increase in the Arab sector that underlies the assessment that Israel is heading in the direction of becoming a binational state and will reach this destination sooner or later.

Analysis of the trends in recent years reveals meaningful changes among groups in the growth rate due to natural increase and suggests that these changes—if they continue—may affect the validity of that flatly worded assessment.

It is not easy to pinpoint the reasons for demographic changes; in many cases, the reasons may be disputed. As we show below, however, a significant change has taken place in the fertility patterns of the *haredi* and Muslim populations: the birth rates of both groups have fallen perceptibly, affecting the overall growth of the Israeli population during these years (see Cohen et al., 2007). An important if not exclusive reason for this change, it would seem, is the change of policy on child allowances.

In 2001, Israel tumbled into one of the most severe socioeconomic crises that it has known. The crisis was accompanied by dramatic changes in welfare policy that were most conspicuous in respect of child allowances. Until then, the level of this benefit was affected by the position of each child among his/her siblings (for fifth children and upward, the family received an allowance five times as large as that for the first and second children).<sup>23</sup> Since 2003, the allowance has been paid at a flat rate for each added child. Furthermore, child allowances for families with six children were cut roughly in half between 2001 and 2006. These changes shattered the Israeli policy of many years' duration that favored the direct financial subsidization of large families.

In recent years, there has also been a considerable decline in immigration. The massive wave of immigration from the FSU in the 1990s slowed down substantially and the number of immigrants reverted to an approximation of the paltry rate of the 1980s. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the second intifada, the Knesset amended the Citizenship Law by means of an ad hoc provision that severely limited the phenomenon of "family unification" involving inhabitants of the Palestinian Authority areas, a practice that had gained momentum during the Oslo Accord years.

Below we examine the recent changes in Israel's fertility and migration patterns.

## 2. Fertility in the Jewish Sector: from Gentle Decline to Stability and from Stability to Increase

### *2.1 The Jewish Population at Large*

Israel's Jewish fertility rate fell at a moderate pace over the years. The most conspicuous decrease occurred during the 1970s and 1980s, when the fertility rates of all Jewish origin groups settled at three children or fewer (Table B1). For comparison, Jewish women born in Asia-Africa had a fertility rate of 5.5 in 1955. Another mild contraction took place in the 1990s due to the FSU immigrants, who were noted for their low fertility rate (1.5). Notably, the fertility rate of Israel-born women (2.75) hardly changed between 1955 and 2000. The share of Israel-born mothers among all Jewish mothers climbed from 13 percent in 1955 to more than 75 percent in 2000.

In 2001, the Jewish fertility rate was 2.59 children per woman. In 2007 it was 2.80—the first increase in forty years. The upturn clashes with the CBS outlooks for these years, which predicted a decline or a leveling-off (CBS, 2004). The increase was also unexpected in view of the large share of low-fertility immigrants from the FSU in the Jewish population. The surprise was all the greater given the steep cutback in child allowances, which was thought to have had a downward effect on the total fertility rate. Thus, the upturn seems to reflect a trend that is explained, at least in part, by the growing share of the *haredi* population among Israeli Jews at large.

### *2.2 The Ultra-Orthodox: Decline in Fertility Coupled with Growing Share in the Jewish Population*

The *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) population grew with particular celerity in 1990-2007. Despite mass immigration from the former Soviet Union, the proportion of those not enlisting in the army on grounds of “Torah as occupation” climbed from 4.6 percent of the 1990 induction group to 11 percent of those slated for induction in 2007. Due to the very high *haredi* fertility rate (around eight children per woman),<sup>24</sup> the younger the age, the larger is the share of *haredim* in it. The more young *haredim* join the

birth-giving cycle at a higher rate, the more influence they have on the Jewish birth rate at large. More than one-fourth (28.5 percent) of Jewish newborns in 2006 were of *haredi* families.<sup>25</sup>

After many years of increase, the *haredi* fertility rate has been falling off in recent years (2002-2006). In two all-*haredi* towns, Upper Betar and Upper Modi'in, the fertility rate fell from 8.9 in 2001 to 7.7 in 2006 and from 9.0 to 8.0, respectively (Ha'aretz, Jan. 14, 2008).<sup>26</sup> This considerable falloff (12.5 percent) apparently traces to social, cultural, and economic changes that *haredi* society is undergoing and was triggered, evidently, by (among other factors) the steep cutback in child allowances and its aftermath, growing labor-force participation by *haredi* women and men (Sheleg, 2000, chapter on the *haredim*; Sivan and Kaplan, 2003; Lupu, 2003; Cohen et al., 2007).

Even though these trends will slow the growth rate of the *haredi* population, they will not change the upward trend in the share of *haredim* in the Jewish and Israeli population in the years to come.<sup>27</sup> We will take up this matter again in the next chapter.

### 2.3 The "Not Classified by Religion" Group—Persistent Low Fertility

Israel's population of persons not classified by religion is unique in its patterns. In many contexts, we include almost all members of this group (except for a small group of Christians who immigrated with family members) among the Jews because the Jews are the group by force of which they reached Israel and into which they integrate.<sup>28</sup> However, the fertility pattern of this group has not changed perceptibly over the years and remains at around 1.5 children per woman.<sup>29</sup>

### 3. Fertility in the Muslim Sector: Rapid Decrease, Plateau, and Further Decrease

#### *3.1 The Muslim Population at Large*

Israel's Muslim population had one of the world's highest birth rates for quite some time and it actually increased in Israel's first twenty years (Table B1).<sup>30</sup> At its peak, the Muslim fertility rate came to nine children on average per woman. During the 1970s, the rate began to fall steeply due to comprehensive modernization in the Arab sector. The fertility rate stopped falling in the mid-1980s and rested at 4.7, 1.75 times greater than the Jewish rate, until 2000. Several explanations were offered for this phenomenon: the change in Israel's child-allowance policy, the stabilization of the tipping point between tradition and modernity, or the national struggle between Jews and Palestinians, which kept Arab fertility high (Sheleg, 2004; Schellekens and Eisenbach, 2002; Nahmias and Stecklov, 2007).<sup>31</sup>

The plateau in fertility in 1985-2000 was anomalous because Israel's Muslim population was going through rapid modernization during this time. It was such a deviation that the birth rates in all Arab countries surrounding Israel fell below those of the Muslims in Israel, even though the Muslims in Israel had more schooling and larger gross product per capita.

After the fifteen-year plateau, the Muslim birth rate began to decline gently in 2002 and more quickly in 2004, adding up by 2007 to an 18 percent decline relative to 2000 (to less than four as against 4.74). This decrease returned the Muslim birth rate to the natural trajectory of moderate decline associated with modernization and schooling.<sup>32</sup>

The accelerated pace of decrease evidently reflects a unique combination of the continuation of modernization trends, the harsh economic conditions that prevailed in 2001-2004, and the steep reduction in child allowances that began in 2002 and has continued to this day. The cutbacks had the effect of withdrawing the aberrant subsidization of childbirth that had been practiced until then, making the economic burden of raising children

heavier and heavier. Consequently, the correlation between the rising level of education and the contraction of the birth rate gathered strength.<sup>33</sup>

### *3.2 The Negev Bedouin: Plummeting Fertility Rate*

The Negev Bedouin are a subgroup of the Muslim population. Unlike the Muslim population at large, whose fertility rate fell by half in the relatively short span of fifteen years, the Bedouin have kept their birth rate exceedingly high. In 1999, their fertility rate stood at slightly over ten children per woman (Table B1). This population, too, went through rapid modernization in the 1990s, reflected mainly in an increase in schooling including higher education. The process was first expressed in a gradual decrease in fertility, from ten children per woman in 1999 to nine children in 2003. The process speeded up greatly after 2003: in only four years, the Bedouin birth rate fell to 7.14 children per woman—a 20 percent downturn! The total change in 1999-2007 is a dramatic decrease of three children per woman—29 percent in the fertility rate.

## **4. Christians and Druze: Falling Below the Jewish Fertility Rate**

The Christian fertility rate has always been lower than that of the Muslims (Table B1). Until the early 1970s, however, it surpassed that of the Jews and has been falling perceptibly since then. For more than thirty years, the Christian fertility rate has been oscillating between 2 and 2.5 children per woman. By 2000, it became slightly lower than that of the Jewish population and in 2007 it settled at the intergenerational replacement rate of 2.1.<sup>34</sup>

The religion group that underwent the most meaningful change is the Druze—from 7.5 children per woman on average in 1970 to only three in 2000 and 2.5 in 2007, below the Jewish fertility rate.<sup>35</sup>

*Table B1. Fertility Rates of Religion Groups, 1955-2007*

	1955	1970	1985	2000	2007
Jews	3.64	3.41	2.85	2.66	2.80
Muslims	7.96	8.95	4.86	4.74	3.90
Negev Bedouin				9.77	7.14
Christians	4.85	3.62	2.12	2.55	2.13
Druze	6.58	7.46	4.47	3.07	2.49

### 5. Jewish Immigration and Migration Balance

The beginning of the current decade witnessed a perceptible decrease in immigration of Jews and others eligible for immigration under the Law of Return, from more than 60,000 in 2000 to slightly over 30,000 in 2002. The end of the *intifada* did not change the trend; in 2005 immigration came to around 21,000. Moreover, only 13,000 of them were Jewish and the remaining non Jewish immigrants (most of whom Not Classified by Religion.) The main reason for the decline in immigration is the small number of Jews who remained in the former Soviet Union, the principal area of origin for immigration in the 1990s.

In the worst years of the *intifada* (2001-2003), the number of Israelis who left the country for lengthy periods of time surged conspicuously. Later on, however, their numbers declined and settled in 2005 to the lowest since 1983. In net terms, the balance of immigrants, emigrants, and returning Israelis has been positive at 13,500 Jews and others per year.

Another effect of the *intifada* pertained to the immigration of inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza to Israel under “family unification.” After “unification immigrants” were found to have been involved in terror attacks in Israel, the government decided in 2002 to institute a sweeping moratorium on the approval of family-unification applications and, afterwards, it enacted the temporary amendment (by an ad hoc provision) of the Citizenship Law. After several modifications, the statute passed the review of the High Court of Justice (although it is being reexamined at the

present writing) and caused the rate of positive in-migration of Muslims (and of Arab Christians) to fall considerably. Thus, Israel's Arab migration balance fell from +7,300 per year in 2000 (16 percent of the total increase of the Arab population) to 1,400 (4 percent of the total increase) in 2007.<sup>36</sup>

## 6. Spatial Distribution

Population growth obviously leads to higher population density. The increase in density varies from district to district and includes trends relating to nationality (and religious affiliation). In the first half of the current decade (2000-2005), Jews tended perceptibly to move from periphery to center. Apart from the Central District and the Jewish localities in the West Bank, Jewish migration was negative in all districts, including around 9,000 persons in the Southern District, 12,000 in the Northern and Haifa districts, and 16,000 in the Jerusalem District. The Tel Aviv District had the largest negative migration balance, losing almost 25,000 people during those years. In contrast, the Arab population showed a clear trend of local stability: in 2006, only 5 percent of persons who changed localities of residence were Arab and 67 percent of Arabs who changed residence stayed in the same district, as against 40 percent of Jews who did so.

These trends are exacerbating the proportional decline of the Jewish population in districts where Jews have been underrepresented to begin with, i.e., where their proportion is smaller than the countrywide average (foremost the Northern and Jerusalem districts, and to a lesser extent the Haifa District as well).

## 7. Conclusion

The fertility and migration patterns of Israel's population subgroups have changed considerably in recent years. These important changes, while not seriously affecting the numerical ratios of Jews and Arabs countrywide, have done much to change the two groups' internal composition and spatial

distribution. In the long run, these changes are expected to have a strong impact on the composition of the Israeli population and the size, share, and spatial distribution of its subgroups. We will take up several of these important matters in the next chapter.

## *Chapter Three*

# Population Projections, 2005-2030

### 1. Introduction

In addition to the descriptive data and the distribution of the existing population by main characteristics, the CBS provides population projections that reflect expected trends. Notably, demographic projections, like projections in other fields, cannot cover the full range of possibilities. In particular, they fail to take account of sudden events or deviations—political, economic, ecological, or technological occurrences that may change demographic behavior patterns gradually or all at once. Accordingly, a projection is not a prophecy. Rather, it reflects changes that a population is expected to undergo if its development complies with certain assumptions about the demographic factors that are responsible for changes in population size. These factors include fertility, mortality, and migration balance.

The projection presented in this position paper focuses on the 2005-2030 period. Projections on Israel usually assume that the recently observed trends among the population, by its main constituents, will continue with reference to possible changes. The references are expressed within visible constraints that limit the branching that can occur in view of larger or smaller increases in population size. The projection was conducted for five-year periods. We present the results for two points in time: 2015 and 2030. Of course, the farther into the future the projection pertains, the greater the concern that it will be unreliable and farther removed from the actual findings.<sup>37</sup> Our point of departure is the CBS projection, which was generated in accordance with accepted professional standards, and we focus on its medium scenario. Farther on in the chapter, we will explain why it is also correct to offer an additional alternative scenario, a “new” one, which

(in our opinion) better fits the trends that have come into sight in recent years and their analysis.

## **2. The Medium Scenario: Population Increase and Its Composition by Religion**

As stated, we focus on the medium scenario of the CBS population projection, which, for the most part, is customarily considered the most reasonable one. This projection assumes stability, or moderate changes, in the population's demographic behavior patterns. The intensity of the changes varies slightly from one subgroup to another, especially in regard to fertility rates. According to this alternative, the fertility rates among Jews (2.6), Arab Christians (2.1), and those not classified by religion (1.6) will remain constant, as will, by and large, those of the Druze (2.5-2.6). In contrast, this alternative assumes a decline in the fertility of Muslim women in Israel (excluding the Southern District), from 3.4 at the beginning of the projection period to 2.6 at its end, and among Muslim women in the Southern District, from 7.5 to 5 on average. It also assumes that the Jewish migration balance will gradually decrease and that the Arab migration balance will be zero.<sup>38</sup> The life expectancy of all population groups and of men and women is expected to rise and the differences between Jews and non-Jews are projected to narrow somewhat.

Under these assumptions, the Israeli population is anticipated to grow from around 7 million today to slightly over 8 million in 2015 and to 10 million by 2030 (Table C1), reflecting an annual growth rate of 1.6 percent in the first decade of the projection period and 1.3 percent in the second part. Roughly divided, if Israel's population grew five times over during its first four decades (1948-1988), it will grow by only a factor of two in the next forty years (1988-2030).

*Table C1. Base Population and Population Projections, by Groups, 2005-2030*

Population	2005	2015	2030
<b>Numbers</b>			
Total	6,988.2	8,174.5	9,984.6
Jews	5,313.8	6,074.8	7,205.4
Arabs	1,374.6	1,738.0	2,361.6
Others	299.8	362.1	417.6
<b>Percentages</b>			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Jews	76.0	74.3	72.1
Arabs	19.7	21.3	23.7
Others	4.3	4.4	4.2

Although this projection assumes that all population subgroups will grow, they will not grow at the same rates. The projected increase is greater among the Arab population (more than 2 percent on annual average) than among the Jewish population (less than 1.5 percent on annual average). Accordingly, the share of Jews is anticipated to decline from 76 percent today to 74.3 percent in 2015 and 72.1 percent in 2030. This relative decline is added to the share of the Arab population, which is expected to grow from 19.7 percent at the beginning of the projection period to 23.7 percent at its end.<sup>39</sup> The share of the Not Classified by Religion group will hardly change. Among the Arabs, chiefly due to the high fertility patterns of Muslims in the Southern District, the share of Muslims is likely to grow from 83 percent at the beginning of the projection period to 86 percent at its end.<sup>40</sup>

### 3. A “New” Scenario

In contrast to the above projection, which reflects a uniform (medium) scenario for the full range of subgroups, we now attempt to combine different scenarios for different population subgroups. In particular, we propose a scenario that includes a higher Jewish fertility rate and only a moderate

decline in the immigration balance (the high scenario), coupled with a steep decline in the Muslim fertility rate (except Muslims in the Southern District) to a level resembling, if not slightly lower than, the Jewish fertility rate (the medium scenario).<sup>41</sup>

What makes this scenario quite reasonable, in our opinion, is the relative growth of the *haredi* group within the Jewish population. As we observed in the previous chapter, the rapid increase of the *haredi* population has contributed much in recent years to the increase in the total fertility rate of Jewish women. The upturn is expected to continue with greater intensity as long as the share of *haredi* women among Jewish women continues to rise. Our combination of scenarios does show that the share of the Jewish population is expected to fall—from 76 percent at the beginning of the projection period to 73.2 percent in 2030—but even this is slightly higher than the projection of the medium scenario. If this supposition is correct, it may be very meaningful for projections on the relative size of the populations after 2030.

The most noticeable difference between the medium projection and the new alternative has to do with the trend. In 2005, 71.8 percent of children aged 0-4 were Jewish and other; the others were Arabs. According to the medium scenario, their share will fall to 69.7 percent by 2030, i.e., the number of Arab children will grow more quickly. In contrast, according to the new scenario that we propose, the share of Jewish and other children will actually increase, to 72.6 percent. One cannot overstate the importance of this possibility: if the number of Jewish children aged 0-4 grows more quickly and if the increase persists, it will ultimately stop the erosion trend of Israel's Jewish majority.

*Table C2. Fertility Rate by Groups, "New" Projection, 2005 and 2030*

	2005	2030
Jews	2.7	2.9
Muslims (Excluding Southern District)	3.5	2.6
Muslims (Southern District)	7.7	5.0

*Table C2. Continued.*

	2005	2030
Christians	2.2	2.1
Druze	2.6	2.1
Not Classified by Religion	1.5	1.5

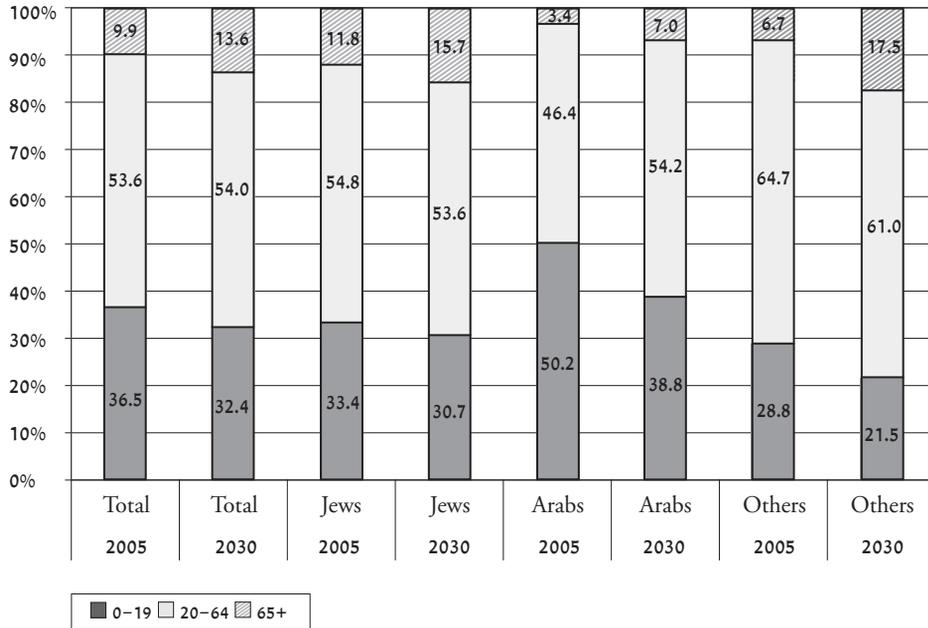
As the table shows, the new projection expects fertility rates of 2.9 children per Jewish woman and 2.6 per Muslim woman (not including the Southern District).

#### 4. Future Changes in Age Composition

In the midst of its growth, and despite high fertility rates, the Israeli population is expected to age. Under the medium scenario, the median age of the population will climb from 28.4 in 2005 to 32.2 in 2030. In all population groups—Jews, Arabs, and Not Classified by Religion—the share of children is expected to fall and that of the elderly (65+) to climb. Concurrently, the relative size of the productive and breadwinning working-age stratum is not expected to change appreciably.

These changes stand out among the non-Jewish groups. The share of children in the Arab population is expected to fall from half to less than 39 percent and that of the elderly population is projected to double. Accordingly, the proportion of the middle-aged population will increase strongly. From the socioeconomic standpoint, the dependency ratio—the ratio of the economically inactive population (children and seniors) to the economically active population (middle age) is expected to decline from 1.15 at the beginning of the period to 0.85 at its end. Among those not classified by religion, too, demographic development is expected to lead to a falling share of children and an increase of more than 2.5 times in the share of seniors. Accordingly, according to the medium outlook, the share of Jewish and other children among children in Israel (aged 0-14) is projected to maintain a steady 68 percent majority up to 2030.

*Figure C1. Age Composition, by Population Groups, 2005 and 2030  
(Medium Scenario)*



The way these relative distributions by age groups (Figure C1) are reflected in absolute numbers has a major effect on the planning of welfare, education, and healthcare services. In the next twenty-five years, the number of children in Israel is expected to grow by roughly 750,000 and that of the elderly is poised to roughly double, from around 700,000 to 1.4 million. Among the elderly, the number of “old-old” (75+) is projected to climb from 320,000 today to some 670,000 by the end of the projection period.

According to the new scenario as proposed above, the share of the young (0-19) in the Jewish population is expected to be slightly larger than the level predicted in the medium projection, 32.6 percent of the total Jewish population. Most of the growth of this group will be subtracted from the middle-aged cohorts. This relative upturn translates into an increase of roughly 250,000 children in the Jewish population.<sup>42</sup>

## 5. Jewish Population Projection by Religiosity

Differential trends among Jewish subgroups of the population may have important social and economic implications for aspects such as military service, labor-force participation, social subsidies, and standard of living.<sup>43</sup> In this context, the size and share of the *haredi* population is especially important. The few projections that independent institutions and researchers have conducted shed light on the expected distribution of secular, traditional, religious, and *haredi* Jews, and particularly the size of the last-mentioned group.<sup>44</sup>

According to a recent projection (2008) by the “Israel 2028” project staff, assuming no radical change in the *haredi* fertility rate, *haredim* in 2028 will account for some 15 percent of the Israeli population and 20.5 percent of the Jewish population (Table C3; see also Hurvitz and Brodet, 2008).<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, by 2028 the *haredi* population is projected at more than 1 million persons. Children will figure importantly in this group, at around 25 percent of all children in Israel (aged 0-14) and some 33 percent(!) of Jewish children.

*Table C3. Haredim as Share in the Jewish Population and Total Population of Israel, 1990-2028 (Percentages)*

Share of haredi population	1990	2008	2028
Among Jews	3	9	20.5
In total population	2.5	7	15

Source: Hurvitz and Brodet, 2008, p. 201.

## 6. Conclusion

The Israeli population is expected to surpass 10 million in the coming two decades. This trend will increase population density severely, with all the implications that this brings in train. The various scenarios suggest that the share of Jews and persons not classified by religion will continue to diminish through the end of the projection period, although the extent of the

decrease will still allow their share of the population to exceed 75 percent. The projections do, however, point to very meaningful changes in the age composition of the population and, in particular, of the Jewish subgroups. These changes suggest that the trend of erosion of Israel's Jewish majority may slow.

The most recent projections foresee an increase in the number of *haredi* Jews and, in turn, their share in the population, especially among the young age groups. Therefore, maintaining the Jewish majority is linked to the perceptible relative growth of the *haredi* population in Israeli society. Within the Arab population, the projections shows an increase in the share of Muslims. These changes have weighty political, socioeconomic, and cultural implications.

## *Chapter Four*

# Implications for Public Policy

### 1. Introduction

The demographic characteristics and possible trends of the population play an important role in public-policymaking or may be influenced by the adoption of such a policy. Thus, public policy and the allocation of economic resources may influence birth rates in an upward or downward direction, the luring of population to preferred areas of settlement, and the encouragement of emigration or immigration.

The argument that the state should not try to influence the size or characteristics of the population seems odd. Such an influence is one of the main goals of every migration policy. In their internal affairs, too, many countries apply policies that aim to influence the size and attributes of the population or its subgroups.<sup>46</sup>

Obviously, such a policy should submit to the accepted human-rights constraints. When the taking of a differential approach toward different population groups is at issue, the state must honor the principle of non-discrimination. Furthermore, where groups that practice singular ways of life are at stake, it would be both wise and just for the state to tailor its policies to these groups' main cultural affinities.

Reliable demographic data are of critical importance in both the planning of policy on such issues and in the evaluation of its efficacy. Clearly, however, such data, while crucial, do not suffice for the formation, approval, and successful implementation of a policy. Our intention in this chapter is to indicate main goals from which such policies should be derived and to suggest guidelines for main directions of thought.

Below we focus on two basic elements of Israel's strategic goals, which we assume to be legitimate and expressive of the crucial and consensual interests of the country as such, as a majority of its inhabitants perceive them: preserving conditions that will allow the Jews to continue exercising their right to self-determination in Israel, and assuring conditions under which Israel may continue to be a democratic, developed, and modern state that provides its inhabitants with a quality of life and welfare that is good and improving. We acknowledge the difference between these two goals, realize that they clash in the sense that one is particularistic and the other is general, and admit that the first-mentioned goal is heatedly disputed. We also realize that Israel has population groups that, at least at the rhetorical level, are unwilling to pay the price of modernity and development. Just the same, we believe that both goals enjoy a broad consensus in Israeli society and that it is crucial for the state to adopt and implement programs and policies that will help to fulfill them. A detailed presentation of these arguments, of course, oversteps the bounds of this position paper.<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, we reject the argument that the two goals in principle contradict each other in a way that may preclude the creation of effective policy or raise concern about the infringement of human rights. According to this argument, while a stable Jewish majority within the confines of the state is necessary for the fulfillment of the Jews' right to self-determination, this might force the state to act in ways that would infringe on the human rights of its citizens, foremost the Arab minority. Furthermore, an important element in the maintenance of Israel's Jewish majority is the absolute and relative growth of the *haredi* population—an increase that in itself challenges Israel's complexion as a democratic, modern, and developed state.

Indeed, there are tensions between the goals. They indicate that the reality is complex and that its implications for the adoption of policy may have different considerations. To our minds, however, the two goals are also complementary and well matched. Israel was established for the purpose of being a Jewish nation-state and most of its citizens prefer that it be so. Defeating this wish is inconsistent with democracy. Our premise is that the

advancement of the wellbeing of *all* citizens of Israel depends on political and social stability. This stability rests on the acceptance of Israel as a state where the Jewish people fulfills its right to self-determination, even by those who would prefer some other arrangement. Accordingly, any policy should be mindful of the need to *integrate* the two components of the overarching goal described. Such integration is also warranted by the fact that some of the challenges that Israel faces due to the increase in its *haredi* population also surface—in a different form—in the relatively swift proportional increase in the Muslim population, whose patterns of schooling and occupational integration are weak.

To assure the integration of the two goals—the fulfillment of Jewish self-determination and the assurance of Israel’s democratic, modern, and developed nature—Israel should act in a way that will concurrently maintain a stable Jewish majority and assure the existence of a developed state that serves all of its inhabitants’ welfare. To accomplish this, Israel should aim to have its inhabitants and citizens, irrespective of their religion and way of life, play an active role in social and economic life and make a decent living for themselves and their families. For this purpose, Israel should act in every legitimate way to influence two things: the size of its population—via fertility and migration—and the characteristics that would afford meaningful participation in social and economic life.

Policymaking in these domains is a highly complex issue. It entails, in addition to debate at the level of values, copious and diverse information that exceeds what we can present in this position paper. In this chapter, however, we will demonstrate the necessity and importance of reliable demographic data, at both the level of analysis of the social reality and the level of reliable projections, for the formation and implementation of such policies.

## **2. A Stable Jewish Majority in Israel**

We based the legitimacy of a policy that aims to maintain Israel’s Jewish majority on the argument that Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people

and should legitimately be kept that way. Before we address the question of policy, we need to relate to a principled question about the meaning of the Jewish majority: how large a majority does it take to justify, or to sustain in a stable manner, a state in which the Jewish people—and it alone—fulfills its right to political self-determination? It is a fascinating question that we have not addressed until now.

An ordinary democratic majority is 51 percent of the population. Some would reason, however, that such a majority, or even one approximating it, does not justify—and may not even allow—exclusive Jewish political self-determination due to the partial alienation that non-Jews would feel in a state that defines itself as a Jewish nation-state.<sup>48</sup> Those who argue that the minority need not reach 50 percent or even 40 percent for this purpose draw various and sundry ideas from these contentions. However important and fascinating this debate is, it is not one to be dealt with in this position paper.<sup>49</sup>

As we have seen, some believe that uncontrollable demographic processes will eventually erode Israel's Jewish majority. As our analysis shows, it is reasonable to state that a Jewish majority (including those not classified by religion) exceeding 75 percent may be sustained even without a policy that encourages large families by means of child allowances and that establishes a restrictive immigration policy.<sup>50</sup> We have also seen that 20 percent of the Arab residents of Israel live in eastern Jerusalem and are not Israel citizens. The question of their political affiliation is moot; indeed, some exclude them from Israel's Arab population altogether. The demographic data gathered in recent years also attest to a growing tendency among Israelis who have left the country to return and reestablish residence.

All these findings may fit into ways of thinking about how to reinforce the country's stable Jewish majority. Again we note that some policy directions that will slow the growth rate of the population at large and help to preserve the Jewish majority are also the ones that will enhance the social and economic involvement of all segments of the public in the advancement of Israel as a democratic and prosperous state.

Let us emphasize once again: these questions are highly complex and charged. We do not recommend the adoption of any particular policy. Our sole purpose is to point to possible ways of acting and to present demographic data that may support their feasibility and help to test their efficacy. Let us note that all the policies examined should comply with Israel's constraints as a democracy that upholds its inhabitants' and citizens' human rights. For example, any differential form of state intervention that aims to encourage growth among Jewish groups only would be considered illegitimate because it would not satisfy the imperative of non-discrimination among inhabitants on the basis of religion or nationality.

Presently we will examine three methods of action that may help to keep Israel's Jewish majority stable:<sup>51</sup>

- enhancing positive Jewish migration balance;
- diminishing immigration that does not integrate into Israel as a Jewish and democratic state;
- considering the possibility of redrawing the borders of Jerusalem so that all or part of the non-Jewish population within said borders would no longer be considered part of the population of the State of Israel.<sup>52</sup>

Below we describe the general contours of these options.

### *2.1 Enhancing Jewish Immigration*<sup>53</sup>

As we have seen, Jewish immigration was a major component in the growth rate of the Jewish population in the 1990s but has been of secondary importance in recent years. Today, its share—with emigrants factored in—stands at 17 percent of the total increase of Israel's population of Jews and others. As we have also seen, the working assumption in the CBS projections is that immigration is about to decline. Indeed, immigration from Eastern Europe and Ethiopia has nearly spent itself in recent years. Therefore, the pro-immigrant efforts have turned to the affluent countries, where the large majority of Diaspora Jews are concentrated today. Although the Diaspora population is large, actual potential immigration seems small at the present

time, estimated at less than 20,000 per year. Today, Jewish communities around the world are conducting an important debate about where *aliya* (Jewish immigration to Israel) fits into the contemporary Jewish and Zionist identity. Thus, the question of where *aliya* stands in Israel's planning and resource allocation is a political question of the highest order for the Jewish state and national institutions. The debate should include matters not only of ideological commitment but also of priorities in resource allocation.

It should be emphasised that Israel may also act to strengthen its Jewish majority by trying to stem emigration and bring back some of the Jewish residents who left the country and were taken off the records of the CBS. In this respect, perhaps contrary to the public impression, the number of emigrants has contracted while the number of returning Israelis has grown.<sup>54</sup> The year 2005 was a landmark in this sense, as the negative migration balance of Israelis stood at 11,500 as against roughly 20,000 in the intifada years and 15,000 or so in the course of the 1990s (CBS, 2007a). The formulation of a policy that focuses on this target population, which has deep roots in, and a profoundly emotional relationship with Israel, would contribute to making this group an important element in Israel's migration balance in coming years, one that can enhance the size and social strength of Israeli society generally and of its Jewish population particularly.<sup>55</sup>

## *2.2 Constraining Immigration that Does Not Integrate into Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State*

The Citizenship Law, as interpreted by the court, established a rather liberal family unification policy that allowed any Israeli citizen, by following a certain procedure, to naturalize a foreign spouse absent some personal factor that would preclude this. The law and its interpretation reflects a policy that Israel chose to adopt, not something that was required by human rights or international law. Human rights and international law give states much discretion in immigration affairs, including family unification. The Metzilah Center will devote a position paper to this topic, too. For the time being, we merely say that many other countries have allowed their immigration

policies to be dictated by their wish to assure internal cultural and civil cohesion.

Under Israel's historical and geographical conditions, the country is susceptible to large-scale family-unification immigration from nearby Arab countries and, in the main, from the Palestinian Authority areas, where the population has no status in Israel. Experience shows that much of this population rejects if not opposes Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. If so, Israel is justified in reviewing its family-unification policy.

As the foregoing demographic survey showed, 16 percent of the total increase in the country's Arab population in 2000 originated in net non-Jewish migration by reason of family unification. After the Citizenship Law was amended, the share of this factor fell to 4 percent in 2007.<sup>56</sup> If this statute is repealed or if the policy established under its auspices were to be modified significantly, the growth rate of Israel's Arab population in the next few years might be affected considerably. The rate of increase induced by family unification might even change the slowdown trend in the growth rate of the Arab population and set the Jewish majority back on the path of ongoing erosion.

### *2.3 Borders of Israel Jurisdiction in Eastern Jerusalem*

We hesitated to address this matter here, because Jerusalem is definitely one of the most intense focal points of the Israel–Palestinian conflict. We nonetheless decided to go ahead because the complex demographic, political, and social reality makes it a necessity. More than a quarter of a million Arabs, almost one-fifth of Israel's total Arab population, dwell in Jerusalem. Most are Israel residents but not Israel citizens. They became residents due to the government's unilateral decision to extend Israeli jurisdiction to Greater Jerusalem after the 1967 war. Their political affiliation is vague: they participate in Palestinian Authority elections, and although the State of Israel granted them the right to participate in municipal elections, they have long declined to exercise this right. Culturally and educationally, the Arab

education system in eastern Jerusalem follows the Palestinian curriculum and not the Israeli one.<sup>57</sup>

Several proposals for the contours of permanent status between Israel and the Palestinian Authority have been brought up; they envisage most of the Arab population as citizens of the Palestinian Authority. Obviously, the viability of such an arrangement and the range of political and other considerations for or against it are not the concern of this position paper. Just the same, the obvious relationship between the geopolitical conditions and their demographic significance cannot be ignored. If the inhabitants of eastern Jerusalem were not included in Israel's Arab population, it would take another fifteen years or so for this population to attain its current proportion and the rate of natural increase in the Arab sector would be much lower than it is today.<sup>58</sup> The question of whether to include the inhabitants of eastern Jerusalem in the population of inhabitants of Israel has even farther-reaching implications for the Jewish complexion of Israel's capital.<sup>59</sup>

### **3. Israel as a Developed and Modern Democracy that Allows Its Citizens to Make a Respectable Living**

The goal of preserving a stable Jewish majority is basically particularistic; the goal of enabling Israel to advance as a developed and prosperous democracy is shared by most inhabitants irrespective of religious and national differences. However, the policy that proposes to pursue these goals cannot be solely countrywide, general, and undifferentiated. Israel faces challenges in this regard because specific population groups, with distinct traits, find it difficult to integrate socially and to contribute to the country's economic and social strength at two levels currently: religious and national affiliation and spatial distribution.

As we have seen, parts of two groups, the *haredim* and the Muslims, stand at the focus of this debate. These groups are the country's fastest-growing populations, a matter that has various implications. The *haredi* and the Arab-Muslim populations account for almost one-fourth of Israel's total

population today but their representation in certain social and economic groups, such as the poor and the jobless, is much greater. Their trend of development suggests that their share in the Israeli population will increase immensely as time passes (Bank of Israel, 2007).<sup>60</sup> By 2030, it would seem, about half of the population aged 0-14 will be Muslim or *haredi*.

If the occupational integration patterns of masses of members of these communities remain limited, and if their patterns of training continue to be of the sort that will not enable them to fit into a competitive market, it stands to reason that their cycle of poverty will widen, their dependence on transfer payments will grow, their growth will contract, and relations between the productive segments of the population and those being supported will change for the worse. This projection becomes much worse when one recalls that Israel's long life expectancy portends an increase in the population of the aged. Most of them, too, are positioned outside the cycle of productive labor and require social services.

Today, the two aforementioned communities are minorities. However, according to the projection that we propose, their share in Israel's population will grow steadily. Thus, this demographic projection may have far-reaching implications for the socioeconomic situation of the entire Israeli population.

When dealing with large population groups, the state should take action in several integrated ways to cope with, and prepare for, the foreseen reality. It may establish **positive incentives for the acquisition of schooling and the enhancement of labor-force participation**.<sup>61</sup> It may also refrain from creating incentives for the raising of families that lack earning skills and cannot fit into a competitive economy. The state is also responsible for furnishing an education system that, at all levels, allows young people to acquire working skills and, subsequently, to integrate into the employment market. We should mention that civil cohesion and democracy are additional goals that are not necessarily linked to the social and economic level of individuals and groups.

These measures should be implemented while upholding human rights and respecting these singular groups' cultures and traditions. It would be both efficient and wise to establish and implement such a policy in cooperation with leading personalities in the communities and with special attention to spatial aspects. It is proper, however, to distribute the burden associated with coexistence in one state among all segments of the public and to ask all sectors of the population to contribute to the country's strength. This interest justifies the adoption of policies that will make all parts of the population better able to integrate into the country's civil, social, and economic activity.<sup>62</sup>

### *3.1 Child Allowances and the Poverty Line*

The state has a legitimate interest in reducing the size of populations that typically exhibit a combination of large families, poor economic-integration skills, and low labor-force participation, because they tend to be weak populations that find it difficult to break out of the cycle of poverty. Liberal states do not tend to intervene directly in family-planning and lifestyle issues. However, the state does not have to encourage, subsidize, and economically reward demographic trends that clash with its national interest.

We should make it clear that not increasing child allowances does not mean reducing state support for the education, upbringing, and training of the young generation. On the contrary: we mean by this that the state's support in these matters should be given in a way that will encourage tendencies that correspond to its interests—and the long-term interests of the groups and individuals themselves. When households receive direct transfer payments, the state cannot make sure that the money is indeed invested in the education and training of the young generation.

For many years, for complex political reasons, Israel's child benefits were more generous than the standard in most countries. As stated, the switch to a universal allowance system and the reduction of the allowance evidently had an effect on large families. Although the relationship among transfer

payments, family size, and poverty is disputed, in the long term the cut-back in direct allowances seems to have reduced the size of the subsidized population, encouraged its members to accept jobs, and, ultimately, mitigated Israel's poverty rates. Indeed, the *haredi* poverty rate has been falling in recent years despite the steep slashing of child allowances. This is due to a combination of lower fertility and more labor-force participation (Bank of Israel, 2007).

Thus, the question of how large the allowances should be and how to structure them is an ideological issue of the highest order. It is intensively disputed among political parties and public voices. We are not about to take a stance; our role is to introduce to decision-makers the probable demographic significance of re-adopting child allowances that are not structured in a way that will combine the subsidization of childraising with change in patterns of vocational training and integration into the job market.

The issue is undeniably intricate. The decisions that it entails also require an effort to contend with the aspects that we have noted. One possible implication of reverting to large child allowances is a halt in the downward trend of fertility rates among weak population groups and mitigation of the incentive to participate in the labor force. We should note that labor-force participation has economic and social implications that transcend the question of one's personal ability to lift oneself out of poverty.

One may propose additional policies that may enhance the ability of members of these groups to fit into Israel's economy and society so that their rapid growth will actually become a socioeconomic advantage and not a disadvantage. Let us note that the strengthening of educational achievements and of women's predisposition to work outside the home affects not only the family's socioeconomic situation but also its size.

The deployment that would respond to these groups' needs may also include specific elements designed to improve the ability of members of the group to make the most of their capabilities and skills so that they can seize suitable employment opportunities and climb out of the poverty cycle. To pursue goals of this nature, thought should be invested in the school

curriculum and in sophisticated and sensitive ways of coping with the cultural characteristics of the groups at issue. Three such elements are noteworthy: strict attention to the quality and level of core studies in schools, which equip pupils with occupational skills and the fundamentals of civics education; broadening the predisposition to social integration via military or civic service; and establishing a pro-employment welfare, planning, and industrialization policy.<sup>63</sup> All of these, we should note, have not only important cultural characteristics but also spatial aspects.<sup>64</sup>

### *3.2 Core Studies in Primary and Secondary Schooling*

An important vehicle that a state can use to enhance civil cohesion, the level of schooling, and the ability of its population, with all its segments, to integrate socially and economically is the public education system. The education system may influence not only the size and growth rate of the population but also its socioeconomic strength. Israel acknowledges the multiple nature of its population groups and expresses this realization, among other ways, by allowing special school systems to exist. It attempts to attain its common goals by means of “core studies” that aim to provide the entire pupil population with basic skills, civics education, and basic contents of study that are shared by all.<sup>65</sup>

In practice, however, both of our focal groups—the *haredim* and segments of the Arab-Muslim population—do not receive sufficient support and inspection from the education system in these respects.

*Haredi* education is sex-separated. Girls’ curricula usually include a reasonable level of secular studies, including secondary schools, even though few of these schools allow their students to take the matriculation examinations. Among boys, the situation is more complex. About half of the boys receive primary schooling in institutions that are “recognized but unofficial”; such schools usually satisfy the Ministry of Education’s core requirements. The other half attend “exempt” institutions that are partly state-funded and, by law, are supposed to teach 55 percent of the core curriculum. However, inspection for compliance with the law is severely limited and, practically

speaking, these schools do not obey the rules. The situation at the secondary level is simpler: by and large, *haredi* institutions for boys do not teach secular subjects at all.<sup>66</sup>

The Arab education system today shows no evident tendency to avoid core studies (with the exception of “adjusted” civics studies). However, the dropout rate is relatively high, especially among Muslim women who belong to communities that do not encourage women to be independent. Overall, achievements in the Arab State education system are relatively poor.<sup>67</sup> Hence, much of this system as well rarely equips pupils with solid integration skills for life and work in modern society.

Consequently, a growing share of Israel’s population of children is denied basic education for future participation in the employment market. The share of *haredi* pupils in total school enrolment climbed from 7.5 percent in 1992 to 15.5 percent in 2008 and, according to the Ministry of Education projection for first grade, will surpass 20 percent in 2012. Admittedly, as noted above, *haredi* women take secular subjects at the secondary level as well; therefore, half of the *haredi* pupils acquire labor-market skills, albeit without matriculation and without going on to academic studies.<sup>68</sup> The slowdown in the *haredi* fertility rate may change the rate of increase somewhat but will not change the trend.

### 3.3 *National Civic Service*

The fabric of life in any country is based in part on a sense of belonging that all inhabitants and citizens of the country share. In Israel, where military service is a general obligation, serving in the army is a unifying mechanism of immense importance. As we have seen, changes in the size of the *haredi* population are having a dramatic effect on the extent of exemption from military service. A large majority of Muslim Arabs are not even asked to report for induction.<sup>69</sup>

In early 2008, a National Civic Service Administration began to operate in Israel. Its two main target populations are *haredim* and Arabs, most of whom do not serve in the Israel Defence Forces. National civic service is

supposed to promote three integrated goals. The first is to enhance civic cohesion and the principle that coexistence in civil society is based on a web of rights, expectations, and mutual responsibilities that also entail mandatory participation and contribution. The second goal is to strengthen the social basis that plays a role in the lives of all inhabitants of the country. The third goal is to enhance citizens' inclination and ability to achieve social integration and contribute to national product.

We should also note that resistance to the civic service program exists in both groups. The resistance poses a great challenge to the success of these programs, and this challenge also requires preparation and determination.<sup>70</sup>

The limited experience gained in the implementation of these programs shows that everyone gains from having them. The young people who take part in them acquire experience in constructive activity in their communities, occupational experience, and social and economic independence. The programs in which the national civic service volunteers serve gain from the presence of committed young personnel, whose chances of eventual integration into the labor force increases significantly.<sup>71</sup>

### *3.4 Encouragement of Labor-Force Participation*

Weak labor-force participation is a principal factor in sluggish growth and disparity in society's ability to meet its members' needs. The two main groups in Israel that have especially low participation rates are Arab women, especially in sub-societies that due to cultural considerations limit the legitimacy of working outside the home, and *haredi* men. Among Arab women at large, the participation rate is less than 20 percent (as against 56 percent among Jewish women) and among *haredi* men it is 28 percent (as against 65 percent of Jewish men) (Bank of Israel, 2007).

In both cases, the low labor-market participation is based on a combination of ideological resistance, cultural affinities, and lack of effective job-market integration skills. As stated, changing these attitudes is difficult and may be very time-consuming. For this very reason, it is crucial

for decision-makers to review the challenges that they face and formulate a long-term firm policy in this matter instead of settling for stopgap solutions.

The attempt being made today is based on the near-term wish to encourage going out to work by cutting back on welfare payments. The most visible program in this matter is *Orot la-Ta'asuqa* (a phrase denoting “lighting the path to employment”), an Israeli version of the Wisconsin program, meant mainly for persons with poor schooling. Although *Orot la-Ta'asuqa* is an important attempt, the main investment in the long run should be made in higher education, in encouraging the access of peripheral areas, and encouragement of local industry. These efforts should focus on communities and areas where population groups with low participation rates concentrate—and should be mindful of these groups’ special characteristics. It is illuminating to discover that the labor-force participation rate of Muslim women who have 13+ years of schooling is more than 50 percent. This gives clear evidence of the direction of action that may yield favorable results.<sup>72</sup>

The *haredi* employment rate is also very low, especially among men. It is no simple matter to induce *haredi* men to join the labor market, because over many years a relation has taken shape between “*haredism*” and not serving in the army, attending yeshiva, and not being employed. Given the growth of this population group, this has been having a macro effect on Israeli society and its economy in recent years, and the effect is expected to escalate as the years pass. As we have seen, changes relating to subsidies (child allowances and others) have had a dramatic effect on the *haredi* population, reflected in the surprising decline in the *haredi* poverty rate. The reason for the decline is the significant entry of *haredim*—men and women—into the labor market due to economic pressure. Thus, in 2001-2006, the *haredi* participation rate rose from 31 percent to 37 percent (as against 58.5 percent of the Jewish population at large). Most of the change took place among *haredi* women, who are better equipped than men with tools that allow them to join the labor market.<sup>73</sup>

A *yeshiva* student who joins the labor market encounters many problems that go beyond the purview of this position paper (Cohen, 2006). Problems related to the level of prior training were discussed in the previous section. Notably, the younger such a person is when he enters the labor market, the more learning capacity and the more time to devote to training he will have. Consequently, the policy of subsidizing *yeshiva* students over the age of twenty-three should be reconsidered.<sup>74</sup> Concurrently, it is possible to offer increased subsidies to *haredim* who enroll in pre-academic, higher-education, and vocational-training programs.

#### 4. Conclusion

Public policy influences demographic processes, on the one hand, and is expected to be influenced by and prepared for such changes, on the other hand. However, it is important to observe the feedback that exists between these phenomena: correct preparation for current demographic conditions will ultimately affect future demographic processes.

This chapter dealt with two matters that, despite their different implications, cross the lines of the different population groups discussed. The first was the Jewish majority that Israel must have if the Jews are to have the ability to defend themselves as individuals and as a people and to exercise their right to self-determination. Opposite the Jewish majority stands the native Arab minority, and next to both of them are the small groups of “Not Classified by Religion” and “Others,” which usually assimilate socially into the Jewish sector. We have seen that the long-term projection flowing from existing trends allows the Jewish majority to hold firm at around 75 percent of the population. Given the existing trends, Israel is projected to continue to have a large, national, and assertive Arab minority that uses the tools of democracy to represent its interests. However, there is no inexorable drift toward a binational state.

The second matter of concern in this chapter was Israel as a developed, modern, and prosperous democracy. The population groups that challenge this objective are two: *haredi* Jews and the traditional Muslim segments

of the Arab population. The way in which the schooling of these population groups generally, and their higher schooling particularly, is treated; the extent of their occupational integration; and the method used to subsidize the weak groups among them will have a steadily growing effect on Israeli society at large.

The complex relationship between these two questions, the relevance of demography for them, and the policy implications of the matter are issues that must appear on decision-makers' agenda and be an inseparable part of their awareness. Our purpose in presenting these challenges is to signal the need to tackle both concurrently. As stated, they contain numerous complex ideological and social questions. Decision makers must familiarize themselves with the data and cope with them.

If we have managed to persuade the reader that such is the case, we may declare our mission a success.

## Notes

1. The components of Israel's overarching goal are discussed at greater length below. See also Gavison. 2007.

2. In some places in this document, we relate to the religious element (Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, and Not Classified by Religion), following the lead of the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), but elsewhere we refer to the national criterion (Jews, others, and Arabs). The difference between the typologies usually boils down to the non-Arab Christian population, which numbers all of 26,000 people. Basing ourselves on the CBS, we treat Druze and Circassians as part of the Arab population even though this is a complex issue. These data already illustrate what we said above. Some attribute the very decision to base the classification on religion and not on nationality as an indicator of political bias.

3. Since 1967, the non-Jewish population of eastern Jerusalem has been included in the population of Israel even though few members of this group hold Israel citizenship. Since 1982, the non-Jewish population of the Golan Heights has also been included.

4. The share of Jews in the population is, of course, a critical statistic for those who wish to preserve a Jewish majority in order to avoid risking the stability of Israel as the country where the Jewish people fulfills its right to self-determination. Here we show how different working assumptions about the interpretation and processing of the data may elicit substantially different proportions of Jews in the "Israeli population" at the beginning of 2007. In Alternative 1, the share of Jews in the total present Israeli population (i.e., including those not classified by religion and foreign workers) is 73.9 percent. Alternative 2, which excludes foreign workers from the present population (and is the alternative on which we base ourselves in this document) brings the proportion of Jews up to 75.8 percent. In Alternative 3, which also excludes the Arabs of eastern Jerusalem and the Druze and Muslim residents of the Golan Heights from the count, the share of Jews rises to 79 percent. Finally, Alternative 4, which is based on the present Israeli population in Alternative 3 but shifts the "not classified by religion" group to the Jewish count, boosts the share of Jews to 83.1 percent.

5. This population does not include spouses of Law of Return eligibles who profess another religion (usually Christians); we included them with Israel's Christian population. Therefore, not all members of the Christian group are necessarily Arab. This is another immensely important decision on the part of the Central

Bureau of Statistics. On the one hand, it concerns a rather large group of non-Jews. On the other hand, it creates a category whose broader affiliation is unclear. Social analysis may choose whether to include this group with the Jews or to keep it separate. One can muster solid arguments in either direction. Importantly, the way this group is treated affects the evaluation of the data.

6. For the sake of clarity, we should state that a given group's annual rate of natural increase (excluding immigration) is a function of its fertility rate, mortality rate, and its age distribution. A group with a large proportion of women of fertility age may grow more quickly than a group that has a smaller proportion of such women even if its initial fertility rate is lower than that of the other group.

7. As stated, we have followed the lead of CBS in these matters. An additional reason for doing this is that the CBS' decisions in these matters are very sensible. Two things should be mentioned. First, estimations, projections, and data are sometimes based on an explicit—and possibly justified—decision to deviate from the CBS' premises. It is important to clarify and interpret such decisions. Second, in certain contexts, e.g., housing, healthcare, and education infrastructures, the number of persons who are actually in the country is no less important than the number of people who appear in the population records.

8. In the case of religious subgroups, a third factor is added: change/correction of religion. Until 1995, the CBS included changes and corrections in its annual migration-balance data, but since 1996 it has been impossible to calculate this balance separately.

9. A large majority of emigrants belong to the Jews-and-Others group (95 percent), as do returning Israelis (93 percent).

10. This figure is seriously disputed and there have been many difficulties in gathering data for policymaking purposes. This situation illustrates two of our main arguments: sometimes critical data are susceptible to political bias, and reliable and accurate data are nevertheless essential for intelligent decision-making.

11. In 1990–1995, there was no classification for persons who professed no religion; they were lumped together with the Christians. The classifications were separated in 1996, making the data more accurate.

12. However, this description may explain why the growth rate of the Christian population resembles that of the Jewish population even though this population has lower fertility rates.

13. A small part of the increase in this population group traces to switching of religion or correction of previously reported religion, largely by people who defined themselves as Jewish for the Ministry of Interior records when they reached Israel but later, being unable to prove their Jewishness, were reassigned to this group. In

1996-2006, around 18,000 persons “corrected” their religion—9 percent of the total growth of the “Not Classified by Religion” population.

14. A rather large proportion of people who live in the country’s southern areas, mainly Ashdod and Ashkelon, consider the Tel Aviv area their center of economic and sociocultural activity. If we relate to the inhabitants of these areas as well, more than 56 percent of the Jewish population inhabits the area that may be termed the “center of the country.”

15. Obviously it is difficult to work out an agreed formal indicator that would answer the questions of “Who is secular?” and “Who is *haredi*?” We found, however, that the self-definition indicator is the best. In assessing future employment patterns, we related to the school system: the training given in the State and State-Religious systems is materially different from that offered by systems under *haredi* supervision.

16. The Bank of Israel Annual Report 2007 reports a moderate increase: from 5 percent of the total population in 1980 to 8 percent in 2006. See Bank of Israel, 2007.

17. Other studies propose similar incidence of the various religiosity categories, with a slightly lower proportion of *haredim* and a slightly higher share of the traditional. See, for example, the CBS Social Survey (CBS, 2006a) and Ben-Rafael, 2006.

18. Furthermore, each of the polar groups on the religious-identity continuum includes many people who exert strong political, economic, and social influence on public life at large.

19. Culled from CBS 2006a. It is hard to know what one may learn from these data, bearing in mind that they still lack an indicator of development and that the categories pertaining to Arabs are different from those pertaining in this survey to Jews. While the categories of Jews are largely phrased in the affirmative—“secular” and “traditional”—some of those for Arabs are phrased in the negative, such as “not-religious” and “totally not-religious.” A different phrasing might elicit different results. It is unclear why identical criteria for all sectors were not adopted; uniformity would have made the results more accurate and comparable.

20. Hereinafter, we define a “birth rate” as the ratio of total births in the population during a given period to population size (multiplied by 1000). “Total fertility,” in contrast, is the average expected number of children per woman irrespective of marital status, assuming the continuation of existing rates by age and of women’s survival to the end of their reproduction years.

21. The CBS does not publish data on religiosity. In Rishon Lezion, for example, where 96 percent of the inhabitants define themselves as secular or traditional,

the fertility rate in 2006 was 2.03. Only two Western countries exhibit similar rates: the United States and New Zealand. Among the non-*haredi* religious, the fertility rate is 4. See DellaPergola and Rebhun, 2001.

22. Notably, we relate to religion groups even though such a sweeping reference may be misleading due to important differences within these subgroups. Within the Jewish population, for example, there is a large difference between the national-religious and the secular, and among the Muslims there are large disparities between those with modern schooling and traditional groups that stick to an Islamic approach. Furthermore, when fertility and families are at issue, women's status and role in family and society are important variables; they are not always uniform within the religious groups of interest in our inquiry.

23. This follows Member Knesset Shmuel Halpert's amendment in 2000. Before the amendment, the allowance for fourth children and above was "only" 3.5-4 times greater than that for the first child.

24. According to a special CBS study on *haredi* society. See Gurovich and Cohen-Kastro, 2004.

25. As against the 9 percent *haredim* in the Jewish population at large. The data are approximate and are examined on the basis of the different school systems in which the children are enrolled. Based on the CBS outlook for the education system in 2012 (CBS 2007b).

26. The average number of children aged 0-2 per *haredi* family declined during these years by 18 percent, from 0.45 to 0.37. See also Bank of Israel, 2007.

27. Another reason for the rapid growth of the *haredi* population is young age upon marriage and upon birth of first child. The CBS data show that in 2001, the average age upon marriage was 20 among of *haredi* women as against 25 among the Jewish population at large. See Gurovich and Cohen-Kastro, 2004.

28. This also explains why we preceded the discussion of this group to that of the other religious groups, which are larger and more central in the Israeli population.

29. The CBS (CBS, 2006b) found that fertility patterns of women from the former Soviet Union who immigrated to Israel in 1990 were slightly higher than those among women who immigrated in 2000. Therefore, it may be that the more time immigrant women stay in Israel, the more their fertility rates will resemble those of Israel-born secular women.

30. It is not easy to trace the reasons for this increase in fertility rate due to the complexity of the processes involved. Just the same, one may argue that an important reason for the increase is changes in breast-feeding patterns that enhanced fertility. See Schellekens and Eisenbach, 2002.

31. The CIA's annual world factbook (The World Factbook 2008) projects the following fertility rates in 2008: Syria 3.21, Egypt 2.77, Jordan 2.47, Lebanon 1.87, Iran 1.71. See also UN data for 2000–2005 in United Nations 2007. The data express the steep decrease in fertility in the Arab states, which in the 1970s led the class of countries with the world's highest birthrates. Today, these countries' average birth rates do not exceed those of Israeli Jews. The data also refute the common perception of there being a relationship between Islamic fundamentalism and high birthrates. Iran is a salient case in point; it has been encouraging family planning for years and the results have not taken long to show up.

32. Importantly, however, the disparity between Jews and Muslim Arabs in age upon first childbirth remains large: 27.7 and only 23.3, respectively, in 2006.

33. We use conventional generalizations in reference to the relationship between schooling and family size. Importantly, since this correlation pertains to general education, it may not be relevant for *haredim* who attend *Yeshivot* (religious academies) for many years.

34. The rate that is needed to maintain the size of a population (irrespective of migration). The replacement rate is slightly higher than 2 children per woman due to the need to factor in a low rate of mortality up to fertility age. The Christian and Druze birth rate verges on that of Israel's secular and traditional women.

35. Notably, a population's rate of natural increase is not determined by its fertility rate alone; it is also affected by the share of the fertility-age population in the group examined. There are more births per thousand among Druze women than among Jewish women, even though the Druze fertility rate has become lower than that of the Jews. Furthermore, the mortality rate is lower. Since the Druze population is younger than the Jewish population, it takes several years for demographic changes to find expression. This phenomenon, known as "demographic momentum," persists even after some meaningful change occurs.

36. This position paper does not deal with Israel's immigration policy and its effects on the demographic trends. This issue will be treated at length in a special paper by Shlomo Avineri, Liav Orgad, and Amnon Rubinstein (in press).

37. For this reason, it is important to examine and update the premises that underlie the projections.

38. Among the Jews: from 53,000 in the first half-decade (2006–2010) to 15,000 in the last half-decade (2026–2030) and from 16,000 to 4,000, respectively, among those not classified by religion. The balance of out-migrants and returning migrants in the Arab population is slightly negative (around 1,000 in 2005). In addition, there is a positive migration balance due to family unification. If a severely restrictive policy is applied, the balance of out-migrants may be almost totally offset by movement of migrants in view of family unification. If a different policy is applied, a larger scale of Arab immigration should be taken into account.

39. It is of interest to compare the CBS' most recent projection (2008) with its previous projection (2004). The 2004 projection anticipated the share of Arabs at 25 percent of the total population in 2025; the 2008 projection did not expect this proportion to be attained until more than a decade later. According to the 2004 projection, 36.2 percent of children aged 0–4 in Israel will be Arab in 2025, but the CBS' middle outlook in 2008 foresees a rate of 30.3 percent in 2030. Notably, we project a 27.4 percent rate in 2030 (see below). In 2004, various sober projections suggested that Israel would become a de facto binational state in the not-distant future (the premise being that a proportion of minorities verging on 30 percent is indicative of a de facto binational state); see Sheleg (2004). A more up-to-date view (2008) indicates that this possibility has receded somewhat although has not disappeared altogether. Therefore, our analysis is compatible with some of the assumptions of those who claim that the directionality of the demographic trend has turned around (see Feitelson, 2008). However, we do not consider these changes large enough to justify the abandonment of concern about the possible erosion of the Jewish majority absent an appropriate policy.

40. The CBS offers two additional projections: high and low. The high alternative proposes a slow decline in the fertility rate; the low alternative suggests a rapid fall in fertility in the direction of the replacement rate. Since these alternatives relate to all population groups, the changes in each group's internal rate are rather small.

41. Christians and those not classified by religion will maintain their current fertility rates (2.1 and 1.6, respectively) whereas the Druze rate will fall again, to 2.1 children per woman.

42. Where social services are concerned, account should be taken not only of people who hold Israel resident status but those who are actually in the country. Two groups in the latter category—labor migrants and asylum seekers—tend to be younger than the population at large.

43. This position paper does not deal directly with the implications of population and subgroup size for the parliamentary map, representation in the Knesset, and citizens' attitudes toward democracy and the institutions of state. These, of course, are momentous issues that rest in the background of some of these demographic debates, but we did not believe it correct to take a stance on them.

44. As stated, there are no unequivocal and reliable answers to the question of "Who is a *haredi*?" Accordingly, these findings should be read cautiously. As demonstrated above, the estimate of 2.5 percent as the *haredi* share of the population in 1990 may be an underestimate. According to Bank of Israel (2007), *haredim* already accounted for 5 percent of the population by 1980. However, the characteristics of much of the *haredi* population are singular enough to justify a separate review of the projections as to their share in the population.

45. This projection is based on a fertility rate of six children per *haredi* woman (nearly 25 percent lower than today's rate). The research group also broaches an

additional possibility: that about one-fourth of the *haredi* population will switch to fertility patterns resembling those of the majority population. If this happens, of course, *haredi* society will grow at a more moderate pace.

46. For example, many European countries are trying to increase the fertility of their European populations. Fertility rates in all European countries have fallen below the replacement rate.

47. For a detailed and grounded presentation of the arguments, see Gavison, 2007.

48. This is a complicated issue, especially under conditions in which the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel will have, according to the plan, a nation-state of its own alongside the state of Israel while the Jews will have no other state in which they constitute the majority. Discussion of this point, however, oversteps the limits of this position paper.

49. For example, it is not clear what the determining question is: is it the size of the majority or the size of the minority? The difference is important if the population is divided among more than two national communities, as has been the case in Israel in recent decades. Those who insist that an 80 percent majority is needed, for example, believe that Israel already lacks an adequate “Jewish majority.” For this purpose, it is important to differentiate when asking about the share of the Jewish majority and that of the Arab minority. There is a big difference between a situation in which Jews account for 70 percent and Arabs 30 percent and one in which Jews account for 70 percent, Arabs 20 percent, and 10 percent of the population neither. The difference is important mainly when the assimilation patterns of those who are neither Jewish nor Arab are examined.

50. As stated, a separate Metzilah Center position paper will take up the issue of Israel’s immigration policy. Here we note only that the state has more discretion in immigration affairs than in intervention in family planning, because persons who are neither citizens nor residents have no intrinsic right to enter and settle in the country.

51. This is not an exhaustive list. Additional ideas have been brought up, e.g., a swap of Jewish- and Arab-populated territories between Israel and the State of Palestine as part of a peace treaty. This is a complex idea; it is not racist per se and it can be implemented in legal ways without infringing on human rights. For discussion, see Arieli and Schwarts and Tagari (2006) and Orgad et al. (2006). We do not address this idea and others, such as the accelerated conversion of all non-Jews, in this position paper.

52. This document does not deal with the political, ideological, or legal aspects of such a decision. Obviously it is a political and ideological decision of the highest order and its political viability is uncertain. Our goal is to stress that in many respects, the group of eastern Jerusalem Arabs remains unique within Israel’s popu-

lation and that, sooner or later, it will be necessary to choose one of two options: to consider it an integral part of the population of Israel and award it the right to citizenship, or to strengthen the elements that distinguish it from the population of Israel—Jewish and Arabs—and sever this population's residency relationship with the State of Israel.

53. Here we will not take up the question of whether it is justified to prefer Jews over non-Jews in immigrating to Israel. Another position paper, focusing on the Law of Return and its justifications and limits, will deal with this topic. However, we should say briefly that, in our opinion, the principle of return is justified and does no offense to the rules of international law and human rights.

54. As stated, the overwhelming majority of emigrants belong to the Jewish-and-other group (95 percent), as do returning Israelis (93 percent).

55. This effort may pay off in view of the economic crisis that has been battering many Western countries, foremost the United States, since the summer of 2008. The effects of the crisis will apparently be long-lasting, causing employment opportunities and economic-advancement possibilities in these countries to contract appreciably. Thus, the crisis may help Israel to retain its residents and attract citizens who are living elsewhere.

56. The rate includes those who are unified but not their Israel-born children. Therefore, the effect of unification on the total increase is greater than the data reflect.

57. Due to these differences, some do not include the Arabs of eastern Jerusalem in the population of Israel. The most prominent excluders are those who belittle the importance and intensity of the "demographic threat." See, for example, Haider (2006). These differences even create in-between situations such as those that affect the education system, in which the Municipality of Jerusalem and the State of Israel are responsible for providing education services and education infrastructure in eastern Jerusalem, but in practice Israel's responsibility for the education system in that part of the city is limited.

58. In addition to its large share in Israel's Arab population, the population of eastern Jerusalem has the highest growth rate among Arabs of Israel with the exception of the Negev Bedouin.

59. The Jerusalem question is, of course, linked with that of the partitioning of the entire country. Some opponents of border changes in Jerusalem also favor the one-state principle and back their proposal with demographic reasoning. See, for example, Zimmerman et al. (2006) and Feitelson (2006).

60. In our estimation, these groups will account for 38 percent of Israel's total population in 2030.

61. For a distinction between short-term and long-term action, see Ben-David et al. (2006).

62. Some believe that this goal should also affect Israel's immigration policy. Israel's immigration rules, for the time being, are not based on economic and social considerations at all. Such considerations appear in many countries' immigration policies. The wish to promote the integration of these goals will make it necessary to reexamine the integration of such elements into the immigration considerations, so that the added population created by immigration—irrespective of its national basis—may contribute to the strength and prosperity of Israeli society.

63. These are complex issues. It is no easy matter to change attitudes and tendencies in multicultural societies, especially those typified by attitudes of separatism, hostility, and protracted conflict. Resistance may surface not only to the policy itself but also to its main goals. Such is the case among *haredim* and Arabs alike. Accordingly, we cannot offer detailed recommendations here. Nevertheless, below we add a few words about the current reality and the contribution that each of these mechanisms may make

64. For example, *haredim* usually dwell in urban environments that enable relatively easy integration into the labor force. Some of the Arab population lives in villages in peripheral areas. For Arab women to enter the job market, it is usually necessary to find workplaces near their homes.

65. Later in this chapter we focus on education toward labor-force participation and social integration, but core studies and civics studies are no less important for the requirements of civil cohesion and democracy. Furthermore, while economic-integration skills may be acquired, at least in part, after the school years, there is no other practical way of imparting civics education and core subject matter to all pupils in Israel.

66. This matter has long been central in the public debate. In 2004, the High Court of Justice ruled that the state must not pay for education that does not include core studies. When an attempt was made to enforce the ruling, the Knesset (July 2008) passed a "HCJ bypass" law that allows *haredi* schools to receive some public funding even without inspection.

67. In 2005, the matriculation certificate eligibility rate was 55 percent in the Jewish sector and 47 percent in the Arab sector. The data are no less significant when the rate at issue concerns eligibility for a matriculation certificate that satisfies the universities' admission threshold. The disparities were wider at the level of subgroups: the eligibility rate was 61-64 percent in the State, State-Religious, and Christian education systems, 45 percent in the Muslim sector, and 9 percent (!) in the *haredi* sector.

68. Academization trends among *haredim*, mainly among women, have come into sight in recent years.

69. Indeed, among the Bedouin population, which is typified by large representation in traditional Muslim groups that are known for high fertility and low labor-market participation, it has been customary to volunteer for military service. In recent years, this tendency has weakened and its legitimacy in the community has been declining seriously.

70. Here, as in all aspects of a policy that tackles such tendencies and attitudes in social groups, it is important to thoroughly examine the characteristics of the groups and the reasons for, and the intensity of, their opposition. The opposition in this case evidently transcends the question of a community leadership that protects members of a unique group from coercive assimilation by the state. In Arab society, the matter also involves internal power struggles over the preservation of norms relating to women's status and the legitimacy of women's integration into Israel's society and labor market.

71. The quantitative measurement is very important in estimating the success of the program, especially in regard to the *haredi* population. An important goal in establishing the national civic service system is to enable young *haredim* to join the cycles of advanced schooling and employment at a relatively early age. At present, 7,000 *haredim* join the cadres of full-time religious scholars each year. The Administration's projection for *haredi* enlistment in national civic service in 2012 speak of only 2,000 per year.

72. In this regard, too, the policy should relate sensitively to the differences among communities and act in cooperation with community leadership.

73. The *haredi* employment rate rose from 23.2 percent to 27.7 percent among men and from 42.1 percent to 49.4 percent among women.

74. The age of twenty-three also relates to the previous section and the question of national civic service. At this age, yeshiva men may opt for a "year of decision" away from their academies and may begin to perform civilian national service. Alternately, they may enlist in civilian national service at age twenty-two and forgo the "year of decision." If the state comes down in favor of downsizing the *haredi* "society of learners," it should express this by means of positive and negative incentives.

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