

ISRAEL

Whole country

Israeli demography is one of the region's best documented. Even so, there are difficulties with the total population size claimed, which includes the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem and the Syrians living in the Golan Heights, over 200 000 people in all.

While Israeli fertility - the all-population rate (2.88 children per



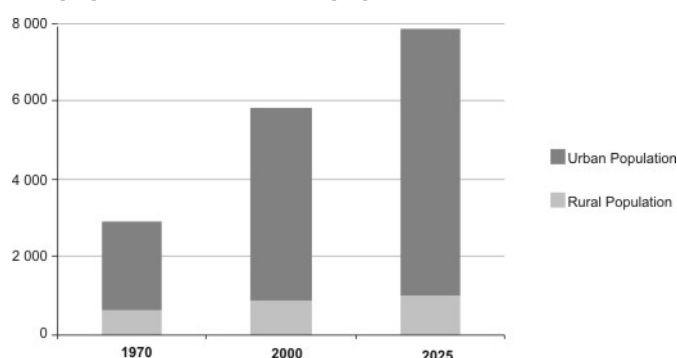
woman) and its disaggregated Jewish (2.56) and Arabic (4.15) components - have been precisely calculated, it is more difficult to say how it will evolve, since no clear trend stands out.

The underlying assumption of the last official Israeli projections - a 0.9% annual decrease in TFR, a 1.9% decline in Arab fertility, net Jewish immigration of 90 000 in 1995-2000 turning into net emigration of 10 000 in 2000-2005 and zero thereafter - have been used and projected here. Total population fertility will decline, but remain above-replacement (2.20) in 2025. Arab fertility decline will account for most of the Israeli decrease. The current 44% excess Arab-over-Jewish fertility is set to fall to 8% by 2025. The evidence is, however, that Arab fertility in Israel has remained stable over the past 10 years.

Israel will increase its population (within its 1967 borders) by a substantial 34% from 5.8 million today to 7.9 million in 2025. This is fairly close to the UN projection, discounting the non-Israeli Arab populations of the occupied territories of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

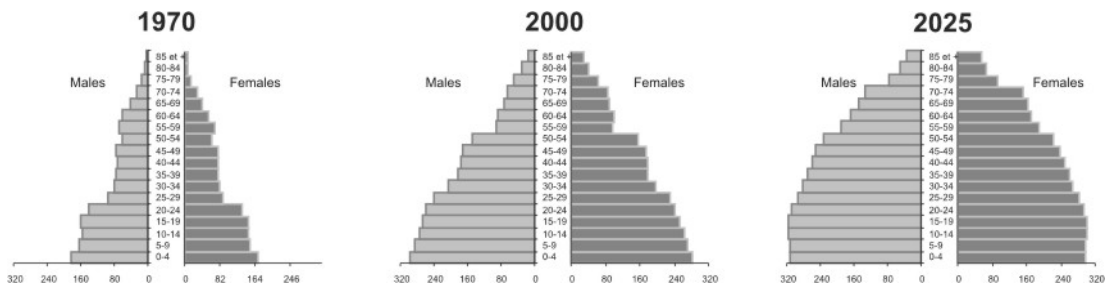
Israel is highly urbanized - 85.2% of its population live in urban areas of over 10 000 people. The 25-year urban growth rate, therefore, will be very close to, but slightly above, the total population rate, rising to 87.3% by 2025.

Figure 75. Rural population and urban population 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)



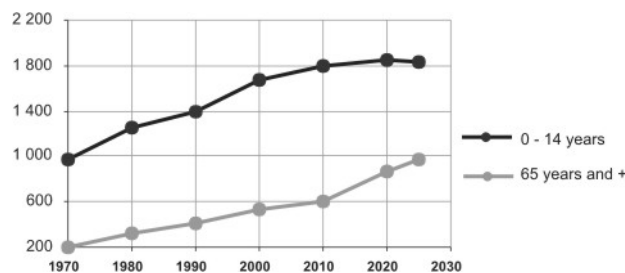
Because the country's particular circumstances make the standard descriptive characteristics - growth rate, ageing, total labour force entries - highly unpredictable, it is more relevant to look here at the trends for its two population components: Jewish and Arab.

Figure 76. Population age structure (by 5-year age groups) 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)



Of the 2 million new Israelis who will be added in the next 25 years, 662 000 to 1.1 million will be Arabs (or rather non-Jews, to account for a small volume of Christian immigration from the former Soviet Union), accounting for between 33 and 50% of total growth. This shows the decisive contribution of Israeli Arabs to Israeli population growth - something that has often gone unrecognized for want of long-term population projections. The population growth trend will have a specific geographic profile, because Israeli Arabs are not uniformly distributed throughout the territory. Arab population density is higher in the north, to within a few kilometres of Tel Aviv, than elsewhere, and there is even an Arab population majority in Galilee. The Arab population is again increasing in the Negev.

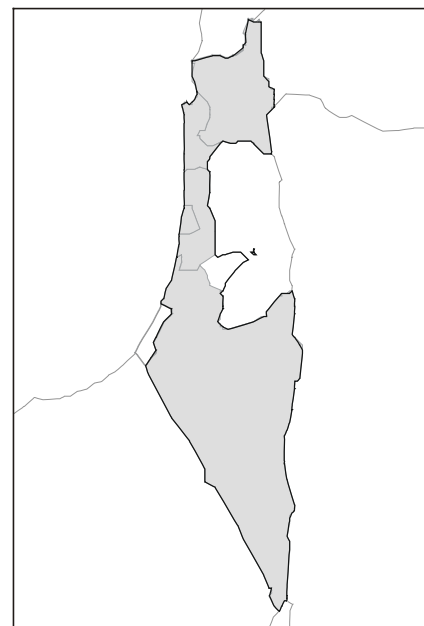
Figure 77. Populations aged 15-and-under and 65-and-over, 1970-2025 (in thousands)



Mediterranean coastal regions

As defined by the Blue Plan, almost all of Israel is Mediterranean. There are 5 Mediterranean coastal regions: the Central, Tel Aviv, Northern, Southern and Haifa districts. Only the district of Jerusalem is not regarded as coastal.

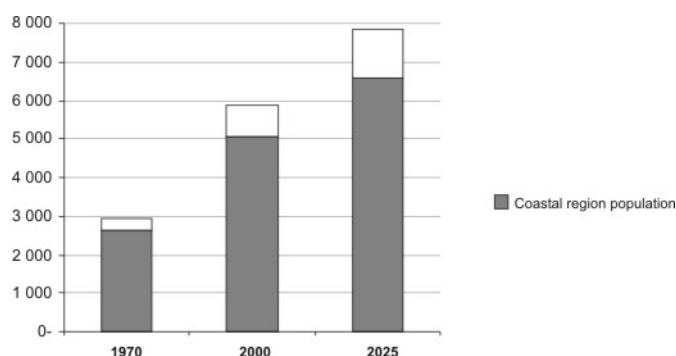
These coastal districts achieved remarkable population growth between 1970 and 1995, almost doubling their population from 2.6 to 4.8 million people at a mean annual rate of growth of 2.5%. Even so, their total population share fell slightly to 87.6% in 1995 from 89.4% in 1970. The Central district achieved notable growth, benefiting much more from Tel Aviv's urban growth (3.24% a year) than did the Tel Aviv district itself (1.17%). The Northern and Southern districts gained from a combination of very high Israeli Palestinian population growth, and Jewish and non-Jewish immigration from the



former USSR since 1990 especially. By contrast, the Haifa district experienced only very limited growth of 1.93%.

Over the next 25 years, Israel's coastal population will continue to grow at a mean annual rate of 1.07%, adding 1.5 million people to the existing coastal population of 5 million. The non-Mediterranean district of Jerusalem will probably see even higher growth (1.86% a year) due to a steady flow of immigration from the former USSR, and especially, the high fertility of its orthodox Jewish population. So, the Mediterranean districts will continue a relative decline, with a total population share falling from 86.2% in 2000 to 83.8% by 2025.

Figure 78. Mediterranean coastal regions population as a share of total population 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)



The Israeli coast is highly urbanized, and growth among urban areas of over 10 000 people outpaced the all-population rate at 2.46% and 2.2%, respectively, between 1970 and 2000. But there is only one major coastal conurbation - Tel Aviv whose nearly 2 million people (1.920 million in 1995) then accounted for approximately 41% of the country's coastal urban population. Haifa, one-fourth the size, has only 462 000 people and very tentative recent population growth of 1.5% a year between 1970 and 1995. The other large urban areas in what are classed as coastal districts are Beersheba (161 000 people, mean annual rate of growth 3.0%) which is in fact well away from the Mediterranean, Netanaya (147 000 and 3.3%) and Ashdod (129 000 and 6.2%). Nazareth, with 150 000 people in 1995, is in fact scattered between the Arab town of Nazareth, and its various mainly Jewish suburbs, and so is not an urban area in the strict sense.

The country will continue to urbanize over the period 2000-2025, with the population of urban areas of over 10 000 people growing at the mean annual rate of 1.14% (against 2% in Jerusalem). As a result, the coastal urban population will have added an extra 1.385 million people to the existing 4.2 million by 2025. Meanwhile, the urbanization rate will rise from 83.5% to 85.0%.

Figure 79. Rural and urban population of the Mediterranean coastal regions 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)

