

LEBANON

Whole country

Lebanon has a population of approximately 3.2 million in 2000, comprised of Lebanese and foreign residents excluding Syrian workers and Palestinians living in refugee camps. With normal population growth - i.e., without the 1975-1990 war and accompanying mass emigration - Lebanon's population would have topped 4 million, taking into account war losses estimated at 1.1 million people, comprising 100 000 dead and missing, and 1 million who fled the country.



Lebanon's fertility transition is ahead of the Arab world, having onset in the inter-war period among Christians, followed shortly thereafter among Muslims. Faith-based fertility behaviour differentials are now all-but nonexistent. While fertility cannot be directly calculated by religious identity, it can be accounted for by region of residence. The long renowned high Shiite fertility has rapidly caught up with that of the Christian community, bringing fertility in the mainly Shiite regions into line with that of the chiefly Christian Lebanon Mountains. Lebanese fertility has now fallen to within decimal points of the 2.1 children per woman level. It was still 4.23 in 1978, 3.76 in 1983, 3.08 in 1988, 2.53 in 1993 and 2.42 in 1994. In 2000, it is the lowest in the Arab world.

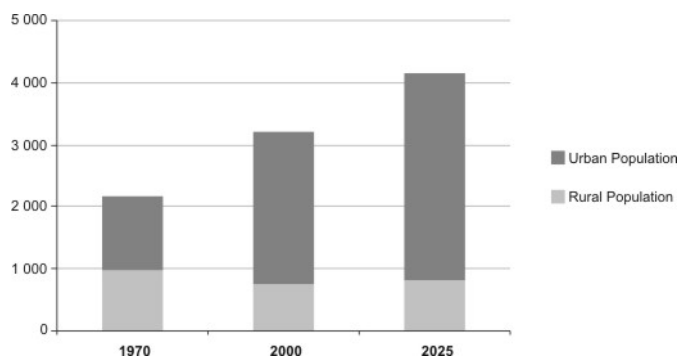
A high enrolment ratio has been a major factor in the fertility decline. Most of the female population falls into the better-educated groups (middle, secondary and higher) where fertility is now very low and has even fallen well below replacement among secondary- and higher-educated women.

Projections for Lebanon must err on the side of caution. The TFR could even plummet below replacement, in line with that of the majority of women - i.e., secondary- and higher-educated - at 1.74 children per woman.

This projection, however, forecasts significant growth potential in the next 25 years, adding 941 000 people at a rate of 29.3%. The rate of increase will be above 10 per thousand until 2010-2015. Depending on geopolitical developments, return migration may accelerate, producing a sharp rise in growth. On the other hand, the highly-skilled labour pool means that continuing emigration cannot be ruled out. Notwithstanding significant immigration and emigration, the balance of migration could be zero.

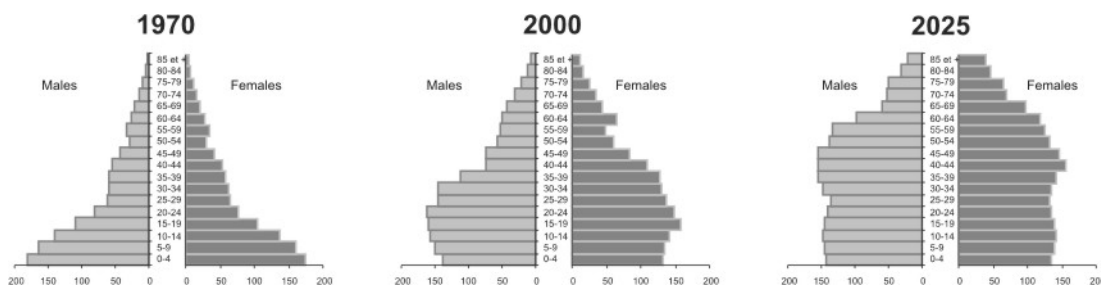
Lebanon's chief demographic problem, stemming from its geographical makeup, will be its high population density - over 300 people/km² - combined with very high urbanization, the current rate of 76.8% rising to 80.1% by 2025.

Figure 70. Rural population and urban population 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)



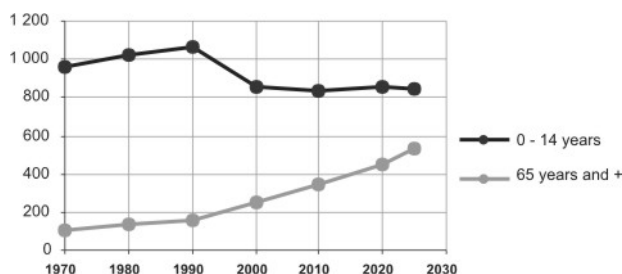
Lebanon's already quite large population of over-65s - 7.8% in 2000 - will increase to 12.8% by 2025, while the proportion of under-15s will decline steadily from 26.8% in 2000 to 20.5 by 2025.

Figure 71. Population age structure (by 5-year age groups) 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)



By contrast, its early transition means that gross labour force entries will decline while exits rise rapidly.

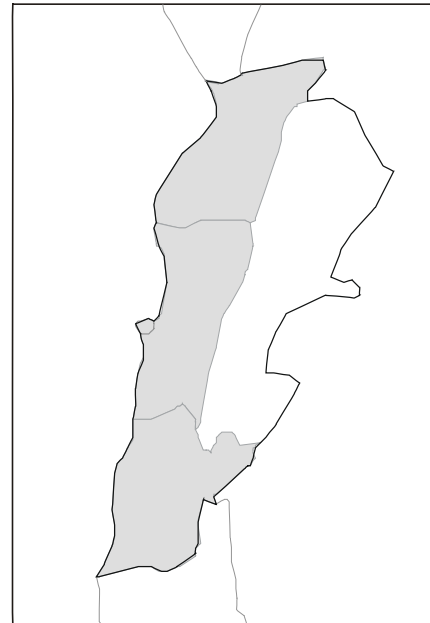
Figure 72. Populations aged 15-and-under and 65-and-over, 1970-2025 (in thousands)



Mediterranean coastal regions

More than nine in ten Lebanese live in one of the 4 Mediterranean regions (mohafazats) - Beirut, Lebanon Mountains, Northern Lebanon and Southern Lebanon - with a combined population of 2.9 million in 2000. Even the one non-Mediterranean mohafazat - Békaa (300 000 people) - is within 50 kilometres of the coast.

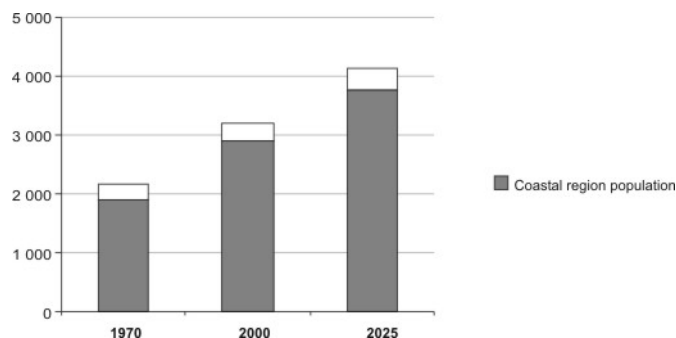
From 1970 to 1990, Lebanon's Mediterranean coastal population growth consistently level-pegged the all-country rate of 1.9% a year, and significantly outpaced that of the one non-Mediterranean mohafazat, Békaa. That overall Mediterranean growth, however, had a very mixed composition. The population of Northern Lebanon remained almost stationary over the period, while the city of Beirut (suburbs excluded) grew at the fairly low mean annual rate of 1.1%. This contrasts with the very high



mean annual rate of 3.5% in the Lebanon Mountains, which includes the capital's suburbs. Southern Lebanon falls in the middle with annual growth of 2.0%.

Most of Lebanon's population growth will still be concentrated on its seaboard over the next 25 years, admittedly at a low rate of increase of just over 1% a year, but nevertheless adding 860 000 people to the existing 2.9 million.

Figure 73. Mediterranean coastal regions population as a share of total population 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)



Lebanon's Mediterranean urban population grew rapidly from 1970 to 1995, adding over a million people in adverse political and economic circumstances. Needless to say, Beirut and its suburbs accounted for the bulk, gaining 735 000 extra people at a mean annual rate of growth of 3.0% a year. Tripoli, by contrast, grew very little, from 187 000 to just 211 000 people. A rate of increase equal to that of Beirut took Saïda past the 100 000 mark with a population of 148 000 in 1995.

The Lebanese coast is already highly urbanized (81.1% in 2000) and will get more so - 84.3% by 2025. Population growth in the Mediterranean coastal urban areas (1.2%) will be significantly above the all-Mediterranean zone rate (1.0%), adding 821 000 people to the coastal urban areas - Beirut in particular - by 2025.

Figure 74. Rural and urban population of the Mediterranean coastal regions 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)

