

# **Alternative Futures of the Jewish People: Demographic Developments and Impacts**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Is there a global Jewish demographic crisis? Will there be a Jewish Diaspora in the year 2100? Will the State of Israel have a Jewish majority by 2050?

At the dawn of the 21st century, these and similar questions centrally animate scientific and public discourse about changing Jewish population trends and their implications. New population estimates from several large Jewish communities in the United States, East and West Europe, Latin America, and South Africa indicate a declining course related in part to large scale migration but not less significantly to growing assimilation, outmarriage, low birth rates and ageing.

A negative balance of Jewish births and deaths now prevails in most Jewish communities worldwide with the prominent exception of Israel. Across the Jewish Diaspora, more frequent choice of marriage partners from outside the Jewish community is associated with growing percentages of children not raised Jewishly. The consequent erosion of the younger generation has produced a steady process of Jewish population ageing, leading in turn to higher death rates and population decrease. Further major consequences of ongoing family and cultural changes are the blurring of Jewish identification boundaries and growing complexities in defining the Jewish collective. In Israel, Jewish population grows naturally but the demographic balance of Jews and non-Jews produces a problematic equation critically related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

These demographic issues intensely affect the shifting location of major centers of cultural influence and the prevalence of harmony or tensions within contemporary Jewish society. Demography also crucially affects the nature of relationships between Jews and the outside world, namely the weight of Jewish communities facing competition with the majority or other minority groups in contemporary societies.

The strategic build-up of demographic patterns among world Jewry calls for urgent assessment, policy formulations and well-considered decision-making aimed at reversing or moderating the impact of negative trends, and stimulating positive developments.

## EMERGING TRENDS

### Population Size

There may be fewer Jews in the world than commonly thought, and if the current demographic trends continue unchanged, there might be even fewer in the future. At the beginning of 2005, world Jewry was estimated at just about 13 million against 11 million in 1945 after the Shoah. It took 13 years to add one million Jews after the tragic human losses of World War II, but the subsequent 47 years were barely sufficient to add another million.

Since 1970, the world Jewish population practically stands at *zero population growth* with a total growth of less than 3% (or 0.08% annually), as against an increase of over 73% (1.6% annually) in the world's total population (see Table 1). The relative weight of Jews among the world's total inhabitants steadily diminished and currently corresponds to 2.1 per 1000 of world population (one Jew for every 486 people on earth). Of the total world population growth since 1945 and up to 2004 (over 4 billion individuals) Jews constituted half of one thousandth.

**TABLE 1. WORLD JEWISH AND TOTAL POPULATION, 1945-2004**

Year	Jewish population		World population		Jews per 1000
	Thousands	% change	Millions	% change	
1945	11,000	-	2,350	-	4.7
1970	12,645	+15.0	3,637	+54.8	3.5
2004	12,990	+2.7	6,314	+73.6	2.1
1945-2004	+1,990	+18.1	+4,046	+172.2	0.5

Source: DellaPergola (2004); United Nations (2004); Population Reference Bureau (2004).

### Population Definitions

These estimates reflect a concept of core *Jewish population* inclusive of people who in censuses or surveys say they are Jewish, or do not express a definite identificational preference but are of Jewish parentage and do not have another religious identification. It should be noted that this is not a *Halakhic* definitional criterion, though it broadly overlaps it. This is a rather loose definition and does not imply any specific Jewish knowledge, belief, behavior or affiliation. Being enumerated in the core Jewish population only requires a readiness not to resolutely deny one's own Jewish origin or belonging, no matter how expressed.

The Jewish population defined through such empirical and clearly not normative criteria stands at the core of a more complex and extended configuration. Indeed, the 13 million Jews estimated worldwide at the dawn of the 21st century are intimately connected to several more millions of people. Some of the latter have Jewish origins or family connections but are not currently Jewish, whether because they changed their own identification, or are the non-Jewish children of intermarried parents, or are the non-Jewish partners in intermarried households. Jewish and non-Jewish mates in these households share and mutually affect each other's daily life experience, social and economic concerns and cultural environment. The household, and not only the individual, actually constitutes the relevant unit for social policy considerations.

The following examples indicate the extent of variation of core and enlarged Jewish populations in selected countries. Note that the criteria followed in the ensuing comparisons are not uniform. In the Russian Republic in 2004, the Jewish population was estimated at 243,000 and the enlarged population including all non-Jewish members in the respective households was estimated at 486,000, a difference of 100%. In the United States in 2001, based on the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) a core Jewish population of 5.3 million stood at the heart of an enlarged population estimated at 8.8 million, a difference of 66%. In the Netherlands, a 2000 survey found 30,000 Jews by matrilineal descent and another 13,000 by patrilineal descent, a 43% difference. In Brazil, according to the 1991 census, the reported Jewish population of 86,000 was part of an enlarged population of 117,000 in Jewish households, a difference of 36%. In France, according to a 2002 survey, 500,000 Jews had at least another 75,000 non-Jewish household members, a 15% difference.

In Israel at the beginning of 2005, 5,232,000 Jews lived together with 290,000 non-Jewish family members, mostly in families that had immigrated from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) under the law of Return, a difference of about 6%.

The gap between the number of individuals covered by the enlarged and core definitions tends to increase together with growing rates of out-marriage. Often, an increase in the enlarged population can coexist with a reduction of the respective core population.

An estimate of the total number of people eligible for the Law of Return would be even higher, as it would also incorporate non-Jewish children and grandchildren of Jews and their spouses. Indeed, recent immigration to Israel has significantly drawn from the non-Jewish fringes of the eligible constituency in the Diaspora.

The example of alternative Jewish population estimates in the U.S. reported in Table 2 vividly illustrates the wide variation that may underlie

different definitional criteria. In 2001, American Jewry comprised a vibrantly Jewish and partly segregated nucleus of slightly over half a million Orthodox, expanded to a 1.5 million strong actively involved Jewish community, a 3 million nominal community membership, a 5.2-5.3 million core Jewish population by demographic criteria, 6.7 million persons with Jewish parentage, 8.8 members of households with at least one core Jew, and probably about 10 million eligible by the Law of Return criteria. The implications for sociodemographic analysis and for the meaning for Jewish community existence are as diverse as the range between half a million and 10 million individuals.

**TABLE 2. U.S. JEWISH POPULATION: ALTERNATIVE DEFINITIONAL CRITERIA, 2001**

Criterion	Millions	Trend
A = Ancestry: have Jewish parents	6.7	Growth
B = Belief: declare to be Jewish	4.3-4.4	Decline
C = Community: Jewish organization affiliated	3.0	Decline
Of which: actually volunteer	1.5	Decline
D = Demography: core Jewish population	5.2-5.3	Decline
E = Enlarged: population in Jewish households	8.8	Growth
R = Law of Return: eligible for migration to Israel	± 10.0	Growth
O = Orthodox: Jewish denomination preferred	0.5-0.6	Growth

Source: National Jewish Population Survey 2001.

### Population Geography

World Jewish population estimates reflect recent downward revisions in the population estimates in the two largest Jewish communities out of Israel, the United States and France. In both countries, the Jewish population around 2001 was reassessed to be about 5% less than it was in 1990. In the United States, the previous total of 5.5 million in 1990 was expected to have grown to 5.7 million due to continuing Jewish immigration from East Europe, Latin America, South Africa and the Middle East. Instead, two new studies found a lower result: 5.35 million according to the American Jewish Identity Survey (AJIS), and 5.2 million according to the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS). There were therefore *300,000 to 400,000 fewer people identifying as core Jews in the United States*, than previously expected.

In France, a new study in 2002 found 500,000 core Jews, 25,000 fewer than had been estimated in 1990. In several other countries, Jewish population decline has been a rule for several years. In the U.K. the official census of 2001 unveiled a Jewish population of 267,000, as against significantly higher estimates over the preceding decades. In Brazil, a community that has been doing comparatively well, the last published national censuses indicated a decline in the number of Jews, from 94,000 in 1981 to 87,000 in 1991 and the same in 2001. Some of these figures may be interpreted as underestimates as parts of the Jewish public prefer not to identify themselves as such on public records. The necessary rounding-up is incorporated in our estimates.

In Canada, according to the 2001 census, the longstanding trend of Jewish population growth continued to a limited extent. Since 1991 the core Jewish population grew by 15,000 – to 371,000 – but this reflected an immigration of about 25,000 Jews over the inter-censal period. Without new immigrants the numbers would have gone down. To a question on ethnic ancestry (regardless of current religion), the number of Canadians who identified as Jewish and nothing else diminished from 245,600 in 1991 to 186,500 in 2001 (-24%); the number of those who identified as Jewish *and* something else increased from 123,700 to 162,100 (+31%).

Australia, along with New Zealand, is one of the few other countries where continuing immigration produced a Jewish population increase. The more evident case in point is Germany whose Jewish population nearly tripled since the fall of the Berlin Wall, national reunion, and the inception of large-scale immigration from the FSU.

Table 3 presents an overview of the changes in Jewish population size that occurred between 1970 and 2004 in the countries that hosted the 15 largest Jewish communities at either date. Declining or stagnating Jewish populations are explained in some countries primarily by a steady outflow of Jewish emigrants, as in the case of the republics of the Former Soviet Union (FSU), South Africa or Argentina. Since World War II, about 4.8 million Jews were involved in international migration: 1.9 million between 1948 and 1968; 1 million between 1969 and 1988; and 1.9 million between 1989 and 2002. Israel received over 60% of the total migrants, while about 40% went to the main Western countries.

Significant changes occurred in the Jewish population of different countries since 1970. Between 1970 and 2004, the number of Jews declined by 70% in Russia, 85% in Belarus, 89% in Ukraine, 95% in Moldova and Uzbekistan. Declines of 91% occurred in North Africa, 85% in Iran, 37% in South Africa, and 34% in Argentina. Ageing mostly stands behind decreases of 23% in the United Kingdom and 29% in Hungary. Minor decreases of less than 10% also appear in countries like the United States, France or Belgium.

Among countries with Jewish population increases between 1970 and 2004, Germany recorded the highest percent growth (273%), followed by Israel (100%), Australia (55%), Canada (30%), Mexico (14%), and Brazil (8%). Israel's growth in absolute terms obviously was by far the most conspicuous.

**TABLE 3. JEWISH POPULATION ESTIMATES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES, 1970-2005**

Country <sup>a</sup>	1970		2005		Jewish population % change 1970-2004
	Core Jewish population	World rank	Core Jewish population	World rank	
<b>United States</b>	5,400,000	1	5,280,000	1	-2
<b>Israel</b>	2,582,000	2	5,235,000	2	+103
<b>Russia</b>	808,000	3	235,000	6	-71
<b>Ukraine</b>	777,000	4	84,000	11	-89
<b>France</b>	530,000	5	494,000	3	-7
<b>United Kingdom</b>	390,000	6	298,000	5	-24
<b>Canada</b>	286,000	7	372,000	4	+30
<b>Argentina</b>	282,000	8	185,000	7	-34
<b>Belarus</b>	148,000	9	21,000	18	-86
<b>South Africa</b>	118,000	10	73,000	12	-38
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	103,000	11	5,000	32	-95
<b>Moldova</b>	98,000	12	5,000	33	-95
<b>Brazil</b>	90,000	13	97,000	10	+7
<b>Iran</b>	72,000	14	11,000	26	-85
<b>Hungary</b>	70,000	15	50,000	13	-29
<b>Australia</b>	65,000	17	102,000	9	+57
<b>Mexico</b>	35,000	23	40,000	14	+14
<b>Belgium</b>	33,000	24	31,000	15	-6
<b>Germany</b>	30,000	27	115,000	8	+283

<sup>a</sup> Arrayed by size in 1970.

Source: DellaPergola (2005), UJC (2002), Statistics Canada (2001), Decol (1999), Cohen (2002), Ukraine Goskomstat (2002), Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle (2002), Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001), Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2002).

As a consequence the ranking of countries holding major Jewish populations sharply changed between 1970 and 2004. For example, Russia

passed from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, Ukraine from 4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>, Belarus from 9<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, Moldova from 12<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, Iran from 14<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>. On the rising side, Canada passed from 7<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, Brazil from 13<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, and most strikingly Germany from 27<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>.

### Vital Statistics

In addition to geographical mobility, the balance of Jewish births and deaths (vital change) and of Jewish neophytes and assimilation (identificational change) appears to be clearly in the negative (see Table 4). For example, in the Russian Republic in 2000, over 8,000 recorded Jews died, versus only 600 recorded Jewish births – a net loss of 7,605. In the United Kingdom in 2002, about 3,670 Jews died versus 2,665 Jewish births – a net loss of 1,005. In Germany, the Jewish community experienced a three-fold population increase due to the significant inflow of new immigrants from the FSU. However, in 2003 164 Jewish births were recorded versus 1,188 Jewish deaths – a net loss of 1,024.

**TABLE 4. JEWISH VITAL STATISTICS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES**

Country and Year	Births	Deaths	Difference
<b>Russian Republic</b>			
1988	3,710 <sup>a</sup>	13,826	-10,116
2000	613 <sup>b</sup>	8,218	-7,605
<b>United Kingdom</b>			
1991	3,200	4,500	-1,300
2002	2,665	3,670	-1,005
<b>Germany</b>			
1990	109	431	-322
2003	164	1,188	-1,024
<b>Israel</b>			
1990	73,851	25,759	45,092
2004	100,108	33,062	67,046

<sup>a</sup> Births to Jewish mothers, of which 2,148 to non-Jewish fathers. Assuming as many births to Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers, the total births would be 5,858.

<sup>b</sup> Births to Jewish mothers, of which 444 to non-Jewish fathers. Assuming as many births to Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers, the total births would be 1,057.

Source: Tolts (2002), Schmool (2002), Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle (2002), Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2002).

Israel offers the only real exception to these recessive demographic trends. Steady immigration produced a doubling of Israel's Jewish population

between 1970 and 2004, and was reinforced by significant Jewish natural increase. In 1990, 73,900 Jewish births and 25,800 Jewish deaths produced a natural increase of 45,100. In 2004, 100,108 Jews were born and 33,062 died in Israel, producing a net increase of 67,046. Incidentally, this was the first time that more than 100,000 Jewish babies were born in Israel. Strong Jewish community identity is an important intervening factor in Jewish fertility levels in Israel, resulting in larger families than among Jews who live in other countries. The phenomenon of assimilation and the consequent identificational loss of Jewish children are far less statistically significant in Israel than elsewhere. As a consequence, in recent years Jewish population increase in Israel more or less compensated for Jewish population decline in the Diaspora. At the beginning of 2005, Israel's Jewish population (5.2 million) constituted about 40% of the world's total.

### **Out-Marriage**

Low Jewish birth rates and population ageing are enhanced by high and continually increasing frequencies of out-marriage (see Table 5).

Around the year 2000, in the Russian Republic about 70% of Jewish women and 80% of Jewish men married non-Jewish partners. In the United States, and in several medium-size European Jewish communities, the frequency was above 50%. In France and the UK, it was above 40%. In Canada and Australia the percentage of out-marriage was above 25%. In South Africa and Venezuela it was above 15%. Of the major Jewish communities probably only Mexico had a rate of out-marriage below 15%. In Israel, the rate of out-marriage approached 5% reflecting the size of the non-Jewish population immigrated under the Law of Return. Many of these out-marriages are actually performed in Cyprus, raising the intriguing question of the position of the Israeli legal system facing the needs of a growing number of citizens whose religion is not Jewish.

On average, around the year 2000, out-marriages involved about 31% of all Jews currently marrying worldwide, and 48% of all Jews marrying in the Diaspora.

The percentage of children of out-marriages raised as Jewish during the early 1990s was about 20% in both the U.S. and the Russian Republic. In 2001, the proportion of Jewish children of out-marriages had grown in U.S. but it probably remained in the range of one third. The compound effect of low birth rates, non-identification with Judaism of many children of out-marriages, and ageing clearly explains the Jewish population erosion just outlined.

A further factor of Jewish population erosion likely to emerge from recent demographic trends is the disenchantment and disaffiliation among



large sections of the younger adult Jewish population – comparatively more frequent among the out-married and possibly also associated with less desire to have children.

**TABLE 5. WORLD JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, BY FREQUENCY OF CURRENT OUT-MARRIAGES AROUND 2000**

Current rate of Jews marrying non-Jews <sup>a</sup>	Country <sup>b</sup>	Jewish population	
		N. thousands	%
	Total	12,950	100.0
<b>0-0.9%</b>	West Bank-Gaza (Yesh"a) <sup>1</sup>	215	1.7
<b>1-4.9%</b>	Israel <sup>1</sup> , Yemen <sup>4</sup>	4,879	37.7
<b>5-14.9%</b>	Mexico <sup>1</sup> , Gibraltar <sup>4</sup> , China <sup>4</sup> , Iran <sup>4</sup> , Syria <sup>4</sup> , North Africa <sup>4</sup>	60	0.4
<b>15-24.9%</b>	Bahamas <sup>4</sup> , Costa Rica <sup>4</sup> , Guatemala <sup>2</sup> , Venezuela <sup>1</sup> , India <sup>3</sup> , Japan <sup>4</sup> , Singapore <sup>4</sup> , South Africa <sup>3</sup>	101	0.8
<b>25-34.9%</b>	Canada <sup>1</sup> , Chile <sup>2</sup> , Latin America not else stated <sup>4</sup> , Turkey <sup>2</sup> , Africa not else stated <sup>4</sup> , Australia <sup>1</sup> , New Zealand <sup>3</sup>	535	4.1
<b>35-44.9%</b>	Argentina <sup>3</sup> , Brazil <sup>2</sup> , Uruguay <sup>2</sup> , France <sup>1</sup> , United Kingdom <sup>1</sup> , West Europe not else stated <sup>3</sup>	1,176	9.1
<b>45-54.9%</b>	United States <sup>1</sup> , Italy <sup>2</sup> , Netherlands <sup>1</sup> , Switzerland <sup>1</sup> , FSU in Asia <sup>3</sup>	5,400	41.7
<b>55-74.9%</b>	Austria <sup>1</sup> , Germany <sup>1</sup> , East Europe (besides FSU) <sup>3</sup>	194	1.5
<b>75% +</b>	FSU in Europe <sup>2</sup> , Cuba <sup>3</sup>	390	3.0
<b>Average rate</b>	World	30.8%	
	Diaspora	48.3%	

a Not Jewish at time of marriage. Out-marriage figures are countrywide or regional estimates. This table ignores variation in out-marriage frequencies within countries.

b Data quality rated as follows: 1 Recent and reliable data; 2 Partial or less recent data of sufficient quality; 3 Rather outdated or incomplete data; 4 Conjectural.

Source: Kosmin et al. (1991), Kotler-Berkowitz et al. (2003), Cohen (2002), Goskomstat (1994).

## **MAJOR IMPLICATIONS**

### **Globalization Patterns**

The trends described so far need to be understood in the context of major trends affecting the contemporary world system. The total amount and geographical distribution of World Jewry's human resources and creative abilities are deeply affected by these global trends and by their implications for demography.

The location of Jews on the world map increasingly corresponds to the ranking of countries by the Index of Human Development, an international measure of the quality of life, published annually by the United Nations Development Programme. Over 90% of world's Jewry now live in the top 20% of more developed countries, in North America, Western Europe and Israel. Israel was ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> among 190 nations in 2002, but prolonged security tensions and economic recession challenged the stability of Israel's ranking.

The two major Jewish population centers in the United States and Israel now jointly comprise some 80% of world Jewry. After ten years of rapid growth, Israel's Jewish population passed the important 5 million mark in 2001. In 2005, at 5.235 million, it was closely approaching the size of U.S. Jewry (as noted, about 5.3 million in 2001 but declining).

Sharp ups and downs in the volume and direction of Jewish international migration were stimulated by the major geopolitical changes of the 1990s. The volume of *aliyah* without doubt reflects value-oriented motivations, but its frequency primarily reflects the variation of standards of living and political situations across the countries of origin of migrants. As further proof, the frequency of emigration from Israel closely matches the frequency of *aliyah* from countries of a socioeconomic level similar to Israel's.

Jews have become increasingly urban, well educated and economically specialized. Well above 50% of world Jewry now live in six major metropolitan areas, in and around New York, Los Angeles, and Southern Florida in the United States, and in and around Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa in Israel. During the 1990s, Greater Tel Aviv took away from Greater New York the title of "largest Jewish city of the world".

Changing international and intra-country geographical distributions reflect the intensive interplay of employment and cultural resources generally available in society with the peculiar socioeconomic profile of Jewish populations. Jews have long been and continue to be characterized by significantly higher than average educational attainment. The ensuing occupational specializations involve a search for places of residence apt to

offer a wide range and adequate sophistication of service and production activities. Jews are primarily visible in higher education and research, the liberal professions, management, and of last – much more than in the past – in public administration.

In recent years, reflecting a continuous expansion of the higher educational system, the profile of Israel's Jewish labor force has become more similar to the socioeconomic characteristics of Jews in the Diaspora. It also has become more dependent on the availability of non-Jewish workers. Much of the blue-collar Jewish labor force in Israel has been replaced by Arab or foreign labor. At the macroeconomic level, the economy of Israel and of several other countries hosting large Jewish communities has been negatively affected by temporary recessions in international markets, but it also has benefited from global recoveries, confirming the strong relationship that exists between globalization and changes in Jewish society.

Residential and socioeconomic mobility changes are powerfully related to Jewish demographic trends, not only through the constraints of available resources but also through the effect of pertinent values and social norms. Recent changes in Jewish identification are both a consequence of broader social and cultural change, and a cause for a wide array of processes within the Jewish community. *Jewish identification* tends to become *more diverse and pluralistic* and *less focused on a common set of basic values*. Identification has tended to shift from more religious to more secular, from ethnic to cultural, from community oriented to more individualistic or universalistic. Preserving coherence and solidarity within world Jewry is not a lesser concern than the challenge of Jewish identification and continuity. Demographic trends tend to reflect such internal differences and dilemmas.

### **Population Projections: World Jewry**

Population projections are not reliable prophecies, but they may help to better grasp the longer-term implications of a continuation of current trends, and the alternatives possibly induced by changes in current trends. Projections several tens of years ahead cannot be considered more than speculative. However, projections over a 10 or 20 years span have often been shown to portray actual trends with reasonable accuracy.

World Jewish population size is expected to remain relatively stable if the main current features of international migration and family formation continue unchanged (see Table 6). A total Jewish population increase of about half a million may be expected by 2020, to a world total of 13.5 million. This would reflect an increase of about one million in Israel and a decrease of about half a million in the aggregate of Diaspora communities.

**TABLE 6. JEWISH POPULATION PROJECTIONS<sup>a</sup>, BY MAJOR REGIONS, 2010-2020 - THOUSANDS<sup>b</sup>**

Region	2010	2020
<b>Medium fertility assumption</b>		
<b>Total world</b>	<b>13,151</b>	<b>13,558</b>
Diaspora	7,586	7,329
Israel	5,565	6,229
North America	5,625	5,581
Latin America	394	364
Europe	1,084	1,030
FSU	286	173
Asia, Africa, Oceania	196	183
<b>Higher fertility assumption</b>		
<b>Total world</b>	<b>13,639</b>	<b>14,409</b>
Diaspora	7,862	7,795
Israel	5,777	6,614
<b>Lower fertility assumption</b>		
<b>Total world</b>	<b>12,658</b>	<b>12,713</b>
Diaspora	7,309	6,872
Israel	5,349	5,841

<sup>a</sup> Assuming age-specific Jewish international migration and fertility levels as of late 1990s, and fertility variation.

<sup>b</sup> Projection baseline: 1995. Minor discrepancies due to rounding.

<sup>c</sup> Out of world total.

Source: adjusted and updated from DellaPergola, Rebhun, Tolts (2000).

Table 6 also outlines a range of possible future developments. Under the higher assumption of a very minor increase in Jewish fertility (+0.4 of a child per woman), world Jewish population might grow by an additional 8-900,000 people by 2020. Under the lower assumption of a similarly minor Jewish fertility decrease (-0.4 of a child per woman), the Jewish population total would be 8-900,000 lower than in the medium assumption and would actually diminish to 2-300,000 below the 2005 world total. In longer term prospective, and based on the same assumptions of different levels of fertility and assimilation, projections to the year 2050 show a cumulated difference of about *2.5 million more*, according to the higher assumption, or *2.5 million less*, according to the lower assumption.

The expected share of Israel's Jewish population out of total World Jewry is expected to increase mostly because of its younger age composition and significantly higher fertility levels (Table 7). The data demonstrate the effects of different combinations of high and low assumptions in Israel and the

Diaspora, respectively. Different ongoing demographic patterns stand behind Israel's growing share of world Jewry, and may lead sometimes between 2020 and 2030 to a majority of all Jews living in Israel out of total world Jewish population distribution.

**TABLE 7. JEWISH POPULATION DISTRIBUTION<sup>a</sup>, BY VARIOUS ASSUMPTIONS, 2010-2020 - PERCENTAGES**

Region and scenario	2010	2020
<b>Medium fertility assumption</b>		
<b>Total world</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Israel	42	46
North America	43	41
Other countries	15	13
<b>Percent in Israel if:</b>		
Diaspora high assumption and Israel low assumption	41	43
Diaspora low assumption and Israel high assumption	44	49

<sup>a</sup> See Table 6.

Jewish fertility in the Diaspora is lower than among the total population in most countries. Low fertility is the main determinant of population ageing, which in turn tends to create a surplus of Jewish deaths over births and a highly skewed age composition. Significant differences already exist in age composition in Israel and in the Diaspora (see Table 8).

**TABLE 8. DISTRIBUTION OF WORLD JEWISH POPULATION AGED 0-14 AND 65+, 2000-2020 - MEDIUM PROJECTION PERCENTAGES**

Region	2000		2020	
	0-14	65+	0-14	65+
<b>Total world</b>	100	100	100	100
<b>Israel</b>	49	27	59	32
<b>North America</b>	40	49	33	52
<b>Other countries</b>	11	24	8	16

Source: DellaPergola, Rebhun, Tolts (2000).

Israel already holds one half of all Jewish children worldwide below 15, and will substantially increase its share of global Jewish youth in the future. Jewish communities in the Diaspora comprise a disproportionate share of the Jewish elderly. By 2020, more than half of all Jews aged 65 and over will be located in North America, whereas only about one third of all Jewish children will be located there.

### **Population Projections: Israel and Palestine**

Jewish demography is also deeply intertwined with *the Palestinian-Israeli conflict*. Jewish fertility is not low in Israel (2.6 children being born currently on the average per woman), but fertility among Muslims in Israel (4.5 children), the West Bank (over 5) and Gaza (over 6), is significantly higher. Both Jews and non-Jews in Israel and in the territories have more children than would be expected in a population of equivalent socioeconomic development. This probably reflects the intervention of value-oriented choices in a situation of prolonged conflict.

Differential demographic growth of Jews and Palestinians will determine the share of each group in the make-up of the total population in Israel and the territories. The related question is *who holds the majority* and *what majority* out of the total population between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. According to different geographical boundaries and different population definitions, Jews in the State of Israel may preserve a substantial majority of total population by 2020, or may constitute a minority of the total already by 2010 (see Table 9).

It should be noted that the data in Table 9 refer to an enlarged Jewish population definition inclusive of several hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish immigrants who in daily social life are part and parcel of the Jewish sector of Israeli society. The population estimates also exclude the several hundred thousands foreign-workers that to a large extent have come to substitute the Palestinian labor force within the Israeli economy.

The projections presented in Table 9 reflect a medium assumption by which the currently higher fertility of Arabs in Israel and the territories will gradually equalize the Jewish fertility level by 2050. By 2020, Israel would have a Jewish majority of 77% within the "Green line", or the territory held by Israel before the 1967 War, plus East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. A Jewish majority of 56% would obtain within the aggregate of Israel and the West Bank. Adding the Gaza strip, the percentage of Jews (including non-Jewish immigrants) would fall to 47%.

**TABLE 9. PERCENT OF JEWS<sup>a</sup> IN THE TOTAL POPULATION OF ISRAEL AND THE TERRITORIES WEST OF THE JORDAN, 2000-2020 MEDIUM PROJECTIONS<sup>b</sup>**

Year	Israel with West Bank and Gaza	Israel with West Bank	Israel
2000	55	63	81
2010	51	59	79
2020	47	56	77

<sup>a</sup> Including non-Jewish immigrants from Former Soviet Union. Not including foreign workers and illegal residents.

<sup>b</sup> Assuming gradual decline of Palestinian fertility to equalize Jewish fertility by 2050.

Source: DellaPergola (2003).

Table 10 shows various combinations of hypotheses about faster or slower population growth among Jews and Arabs in Israel, with or without the Palestinian territories. While the range of variation is quite substantial, an expected erosion of Jewish percentages is the common thread of all scenarios.

**TABLE 10. PERCENT OF JEWS (ENLARGED) OUT OF TOTAL ISRAEL AND PALESTINE POPULATION, MAXIMUM-MINIMUM JEWISH AND PALESTINIAN SCENARIOS, 2010-2020**

Population and scenario	2010	2020
<b>Israel, West Bank and Gaza</b>		
Jewish enlarged high assumption with Arab/Palestinian low assumption	56	54
Jewish enlarged low assumption with Arab/Palestinian high assumption	49	42
<b>Israel</b>		
Jewish enlarged high assumption with Arab/Palestinian low assumption	80	79
Jewish enlarged low assumption with Arab/Palestinian high assumption	79	75

Source: see table 9.

Age composition and the different distribution between Jews and Palestinians within different age groups constitute a further important outcome of population trends and scenarios. Palestinians have a much younger age composition, primarily reflecting higher fertility. Table 11

outlines the Jewish enlarged share of total population in Israel with and without the territories. The younger the population, the lower the proportion of Jews out of the total. By 2000, among the population below age 15 within the whole of Israel and territories, about forty percent were Jewish and about sixty percent were Arabs/Palestinians. Within the State of Israel, over 25% of children are Arabs.

**TABLE 11. PERCENT OF JEWS (ENLARGED) AMONG TOTAL POPULATION WITHIN EACH AGE GROUP, 2000-2020 MEDIUM PROJECTIONS**

Age	2000	2010	2020
<b>Israel, West Bank and Gaza</b>			
0-14	42	38	35
15-24	51	44	40
25-44	59	54	48
45-64	73	69	60
65+	81	78	77
<b>Israel<sup>a</sup></b>			
0-14	74	71	70
15-24	79	75	72
25-44	82	80	78
45-64	89	87	83
65+	94	92	91

<sup>a</sup> Including East Jerusalem and Golan Heights. Including Jewish households in West Bank and Gaza. Not including foreign workers who are temporary residents.

Source: computed from DellaPergola (2003).

Between ages 15 and 24 – typically the period of military service and of the more active militancy on the Palestinian side – the current ratio between the two population groups is roughly fifty-fifty. Numbers may not be the most important thing strategically, but they cannot be ignored altogether from the more acutely practical context of the ongoing conflict. The proportions of Jews become gradually higher among older age groups. Over time, the proportion of Jews tends to diminish at all age groups.

The projected population increments illustrate the amount and age-specific geographical location of the investments necessary to adequately absorb the needs related to those population increases. Even within Israel, expected population growth between 2000 and 2010 in each age group is not proportionally distributed as in the current population. It tends to be more than proportionally Arab/Palestinian among children and younger adults. This means that any social investments in educational facilities and



labor opportunities should take into account who and where the affected customers will be. Will these investments be distributed adequately or not? In the affirmative, the distribution of current allocations by major population groups will have to be radically changed. In the negative, there might follow a sense of frustration and discontent among those who feel their needs are not being adequately met. Will then the nature of social investments have an effect on ethnic identities, on political perceptions, and on the actions that will follow? Forthcoming demographic changes set the scene for intriguing policy challenges in Israel and Palestine.

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