

Chapter I: Demographic Situation in Jordan

Introduction

Substantial demographic changes have taken place in Jordan during the second half of the past century. This was a result of a variety of local, regional and international conditions which noticeably affected the population, household structure, population growth rates, spatial distribution, marriage patterns, fertility, mortality, migration levels and health and educational levels.

Jordan also achieved tangible progress in the various socio-economic development fields during the second half of the 20th century. Jordanian women's status improved markedly in comparison with their counterparts in other countries, especially in the areas of education, health and socio-economic participation. However, their participation in political life is still limited.

When linked with development, demographic factors form a cornerstone for the success of development processes. The study of demographic factors includes the identification of changes in population size and structure along with the underlying factors of these changes. It also includes analysis of the three major components of population dynamics: fertility, mortality and migration.

This chapter highlights Jordan's demographic situation and population trends. It covers population size, growth, structure, spatial distribution, basic social and marital characteristics, fertility, mortality, migration, household size, available public amenities and possession of durable goods. Women's basic characteristics and related indicators are also emphasized. The issues studied are traced over a period of nearly three decades. The analysis in this chapter is based primarily on data available from various population censuses, sample survey findings and other sources.

Population Size and Structure

Population Size

In any society, population size is determined by three major factors: births, deaths and migration. Data available from population censuses conducted by the Department of Statistics showed that Jordan's population has increased by eight-fold (809%) during the period of 1952-2002.

The increase was higher among males (824%) than among females (793%) (Table 1.1). The largest part of this increase occurred between 1961 and 1979, where the population more than doubled (137%) in 18 years.

The gap between vital rates as well as net immigration has increased the size of population in Jordan by eightfold during the period of 1952-2002.

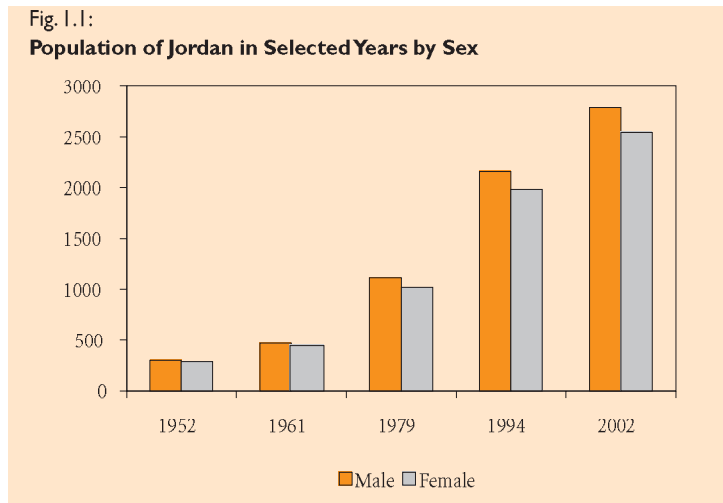
As a result of population dynamics, the rate of population growth has declined from 5 percent in 1952-1979 to 3.2 percent in 1994-2002. If the current 2.8 percent growth rate persists, Jordan's population will double in 25 years.

Table 1.1:
Jordan's Population Taken from 1952, 1961, 1979 and 1994 Censuses and Estimated Population for 2002 by Sex (in 000)

Year	Total	Sex	
		Male	Female
1952	586.2	301.7	284.5
1961	900.8	469.4	431.4
1979	2133.0	1115.8	1017.2
1994	4139.4	2160.7	1978.7
*2002	5329.0	2787.1	2541.9

*Department of Statistics, "Statistical Yearbook," 2002

Fig. 1.1:
Population of Jordan in Selected Years by Sex



Jordan's population misdistribution is reflected in the fact that 10% of the total population live on 50% of the total area (southern region), while 63% of the population live on 17% of the total area (Middle region).

This accelerated growth in population size was mainly due to internal and international migration flows, particularly forced migration from occupied Palestine in 1948 and the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967; the influx of Arab and foreign workers; and the return of tens of thousands of Jordanians abroad as a result of the Gulf crisis in 1990.

Population Growth Rates

The rate of population growth in Jordan has been high, especially in the second half of the past century. It is one of the highest

rates in the world. Its large and unprecedented increase resulted from the widening gap between birth and death rates, on one hand, and reciprocal flows of migration, on the other.

Table 1.2 shows that the rate of population growth was around five percent during 1952-1979 and that it declined steadily between 1979 and 1994, then dropped sharply to 3.2 percent (or by 27%) during 1994-2002.

It is noteworthy that the rate of population growth was estimated at 2.8 percent in 2002. Consequently, if this rate persists at this level, Jordan's population will double in 25 years to reach around 11 million in 2030.

Population Spatial Distribution

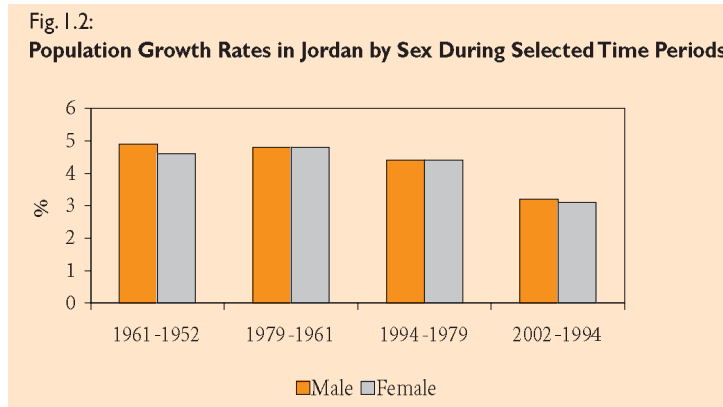
The population distribution in Jordan is affected by a variety of factors, among them reciprocal migration streams and socio-economic development regional disparities. Figures in Table 1.3 indicate that about two-fifths (2/5) of the total population (38%) live in the Amman governorate, followed by the Irbid and Zarqa governorates (18% and 15%, respectively).

Table 1.2:
Population Growth Rates in Jordan by Sex for Selected Periods

Period	Total	Rate of Growth (%)	
		Male	Female
1961-1952	4.8	4.9	4.6
1979-1961	4.8	4.8	4.8
1994-1979	4.4	4.4	4.4
2002-1994	3.2	3.2	3.1

Source: Calculated from Table 1.1 above.

Fig. 1.2:
Population Growth Rates in Jordan by Sex During Selected Time Periods



The mis-distribution of population is further aggravated when regions are taken into consideration. About 10% of the total population live in the southern region (Karak, Tafila, Ma'an and Aqaba governorates), which forms half of the total area of the Kingdom. The population of the northern region (Irbid, Mafraq, Jerash and Ajloun governorates) constitutes around 27% of the total population, on almost one-third (1/3) of the Kingdom's total area. Furthermore, around two-thirds (2/3) of the total population (63%) inhabits the Middle

Table 1.3:**Percentage Distribution of Jordan's Population by Governorate and Sex from the 1994 Census and Estimation for 2002 (in 000)**

Governorate	1994			2002*		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Amman	38.1	38.1	38.0	38.1	38.1	38.0
Balqa	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.5
Zarqa	15.4	15.4	15.5	15.7	15.7	15.8
Madaba	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.6
Irbid	18.2	18.0	18.4	17.8	17.7	18.0
Ma'raq	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.6
Jerash	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.0
Ajloun	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.3
Karak	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0
Tafila	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Ma'an	1.9	2.0	1.8	2.0	2.0	1.9
Aqaba	1.9	2.1	1.8	2.0	2.2	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	4139.4	2160.7	1978.7	5329.0	2787.1	2541.9

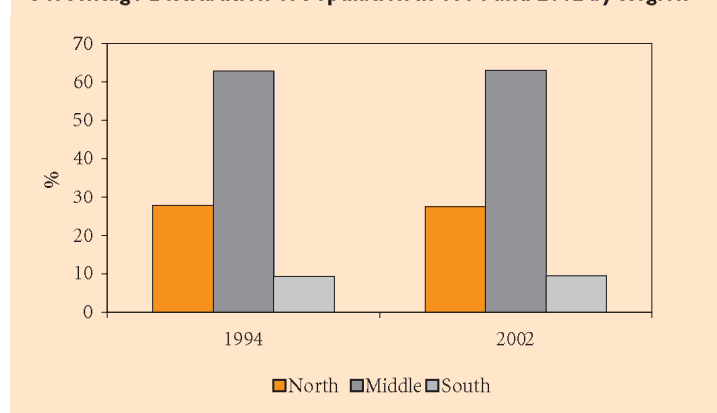
The proportion of non-Jordanians in the Kingdom rose from 4.2 percent in 1979 to 7.6 percent of the total population in 1994. Non-Jordanian females constituted 35% of the total non-Jordanian urban population.

* Department of Statistics, "Statistical Yearbook," 2002.

region (Amman, Balqa, Zarqa and Madaba governorates), which constitutes 17% of the total area of the Kingdom.

The high population density in the Middle region is basically attributed to the fact that it contains the capital city of Amman, which is the administrative, commercial and economic center that attracts people, especially males, in search of better job opportunities.

Table 1.4 shows that the proportion of the urban population rose by 32% (from 59% in 1979 to 78% in 1994), while the rural population decreased from 41% to 22% during the same period. These differences are mainly due to the varied definitions of urban and rural localities used in the 1979 and 1994 population censuses along with the frequent changes in administrative

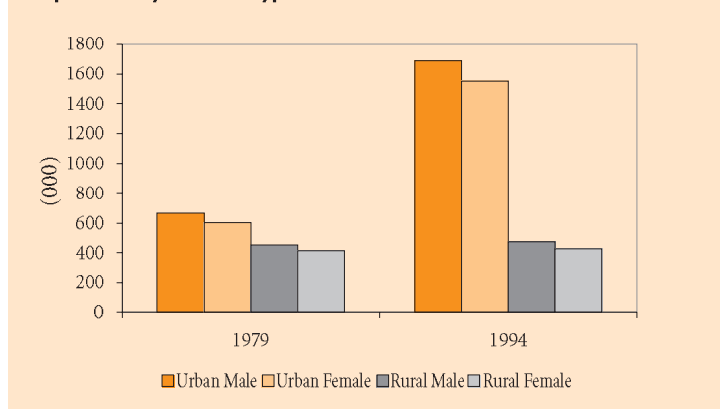
Fig. 1.3: Percentage Distribution of Population in 1994 and 2002 by Region

borders of many localities, especially urban ones. Furthermore, urban areas attract people. Males constituted 52% of the total urban population in both 1979 and 1994, compared to 48% females.

Table 1.4:**Population by Sex and Type of Locale from the 1979 and 1994 Censuses (in 000)**

Year	Total	Urban		Rural		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1979	1266.6	665.0	601.6	866.3	450.8	415.5
1994	3238.7	1687.5	1551.2	900.7	473.2	427.5

Fig. 1.4:
Population by Sex and Type of Locale from the 1979 and 1994 Censuses



The proportion of non-Jordanians living in Jordan increased from 4.2 percent of the total population in 1979 to 7.6 percent in 1994 (Table 1.5). This increase is ascribed to the exclusion of non-Jordanians (particularly guest workers) in the 1979 census, as well as to the influx of guest workers during the period examined.

Table 1.5 also shows that the proportion of non-Jordanian females was 35% of the total non-Jordanian urban population in 1979 and 1994, while their proportion in rural areas declined from 32% of the total non-Jordanian rural population in 1979 to 20% in 1994.

Table 1.5:
Non-Jordanian Population in Jordan According to Sex and Type of Locale, from the 1979 and 1994 Censuses (in 000)

Year	Total	Urban		Rural		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1979	58.4	38.3	20.0	30.6	20.9	9.7
1994	269.3	172.4	96.9	45.7	36.7	9.0

Age-Sex Structure

The age structure of Jordan's population has experienced considerable changes in the past three decades. The results of the 1979 Population and Housing Census revealed that about half of the population (49%) was less than 15 years old. This indicates a young population. Due to tangible changes in fertility and mortality levels, particularly between 1979 and 1994, the proportion of those under the age of 15 declined to 42% in 1994 (or by 15%), then to 38% in 2002 (Table 1.6).

Table 1.6:
Percentage Distribution of the Population from the 1979 and 1994 Censuses and the Estimation for 2002 by Age Groups and Sex

Age Group	1979		1994		2002*	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
4-0	18.4	19.0	14.6	15.2	12.1	12.1
9-5	16.7	17.1	13.4	14.0	13.3	13.3
14-10	14.3	14.5	12.6	13.0	12.4	12.4
19-15	11.3	11.1	11.6	11.7	12.5	12.1
24-20	8.2	7.5	11.3	10.6	11.5	9.9
29-25	5.9	5.5	9.7	8.6	8.3	8.1
34-30	4.9	5.2	6.7	6.4	6.6	7.4
39-35	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.6	5.3	5.7
44-40	4.1	4.1	3.4	3.4	3.7	4.3
49-45	3.2	3.2	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.4
54-50	2.5	2.4	2.8	2.7	2.6	3.1
59-55	1.7	1.7	2.2	2.2	2.6	2.7
64-60	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.7	2.4	2.0
65+	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.6	3.6	3.4
Unspecified	-	-	0.1	0.1	-	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	1115.8	1017.2	2160.7	1978.7	2787.1	2541.9

* Department of Statistics, "Statistical Yearbook," 2002.

Despite the decline in the proportion of the population under the age of 15 from 49% in 1979 to 38% in 1994, Jordan's population is still young.

The decline in the proportion of the youngest age group (0-14) is true for both males and females. It was slightly higher among females than males (25% and 23%, respectively). Consequently, the proportion of the population of working age (15-64) increased by 11 percentage points (from 48% in 1979 to 59% in 2002). The proportion of the elderly population (65+) also rose from 2.7 percent to 3.2 percent during those years.

Due to the continuing changes in the age structure in Jordan, the demographic dependency ratio (those under the age of 15 plus those aged 65 and above divided by those 15-64 years of age) dropped from 84 persons in 1979 to 70 persons in 2002. In other words, every 100 persons of working age subsidize 70 other people in addition to themselves.

In reality, the dependency ratio is much higher than that stated above. Not all people of working age are economically active. This category is comprised of housewives (according to the definitions used to determine economic activity), students, the disabled, those in reform institutions and pensioners, among others. Data from periodic employment and unemployment surveys conducted by the Department of Statistics has shown that the crude activity rate (those in the labor force aged 15 and over divided by the total population) was around 24 per 100 people in 2002. In other words, the dependency ratio amounts to 1: 4, which means that every economically active person is responsible for subsidizing four people, including him or herself.

Sex Ratio

Sex ratio is defined as the number of females per 100 males or vice versa. Table 1.7 shows that there are fewer females than males in Jordan across almost all age groups (it is most pronounced in the 15-29 age group) in the years under study, with the exception of some age groups in 2002, where there are more females than males.

The existence of more males than females is due to the changes in mortality patterns among males as a result of the improvement in health and living conditions in Jordan as well as the sharp decline in their mortality

Fig. 1.5:
Population Pyramid for Jordan, 1979

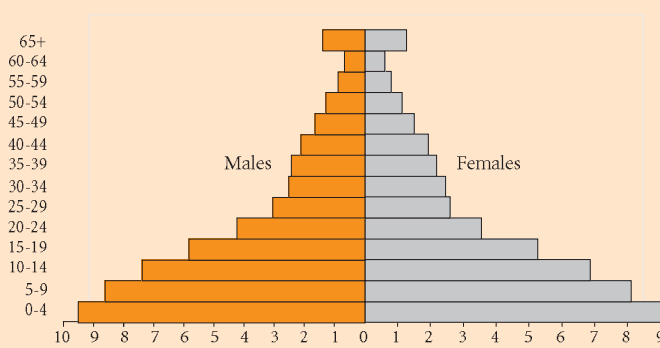


Fig. 1.6:
Population Pyramid for Jordan, 2002

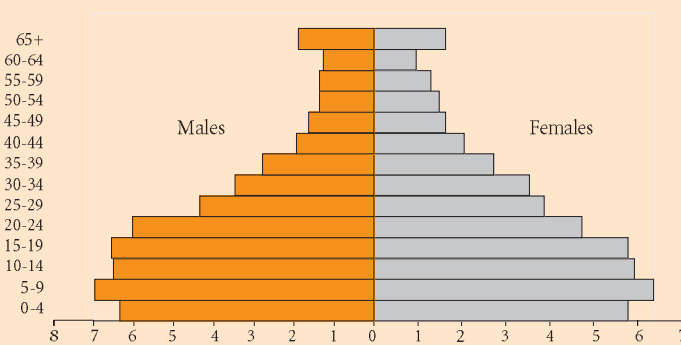


Table 1.7:
Sex Ratio According to Age Group from the 1979 and 1994 Censuses and the Estimation for 2002

Age Group	*Sex Ratio		
	1979	1994	**2002
4-0	94.2	95.0	91.2
9-5	93.5	95.5	91.2
14-10	92.0	95.1	91.2
19-15	89.3	92.5	88.1
24-20	82.8	86.1	78.7
29-25	85.5	81.0	88.9
34-30	97.1	87.1	102.8
39-35	89.0	91.6	98.4
44-40	92.1	93.0	106.7
49-45	90.4	101.7	100.5
54-50	86.0	86.9	109.6
59-55	93.2	89.7	94.9
64-60	94.1	92.9	75.3
65+	91.5	99.3	85.9
Unspecified	-	71.1	-
Total	91.2	91.6	91.2

*Sex Ratio = Number of females per 100 males.

**Department of Statistics, "Statistical Yearbook," 2002.

Fig. 1.7
Sex Ratio According to Age Group in 1979 and 2002

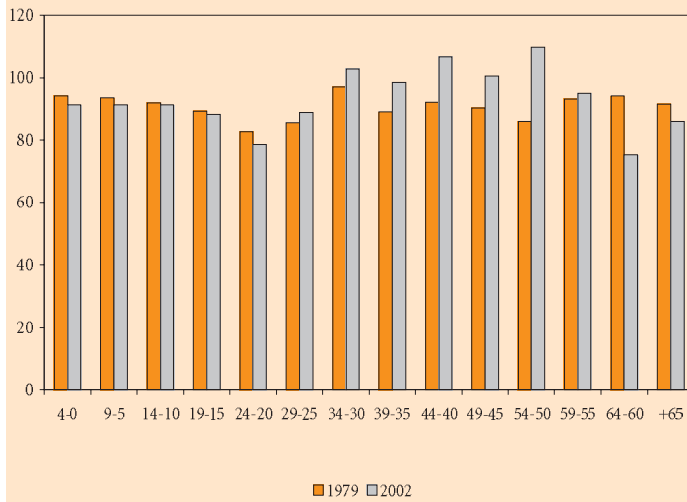


Table 1.8:
Youth Proportion and Aging Index by Sex Taken from the 1979 and 1994 Censuses and Selected Years

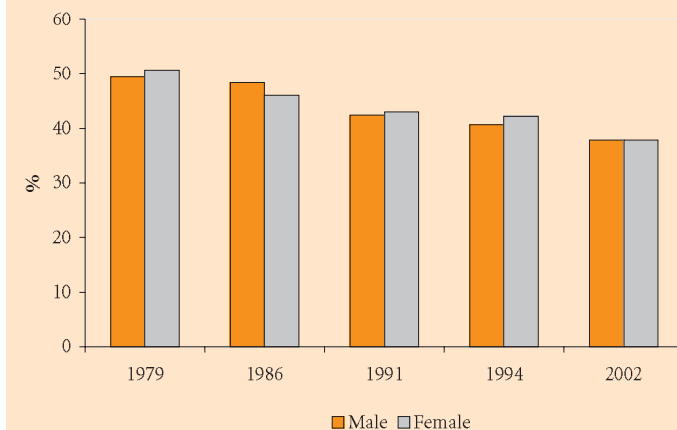
Year	**Youth Proportion		***Aging Index	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1979	49.4	50.6	5.5	5.4
*1986	48.4	46.0	5.6	5.5
*1991	42.4	43.0	6.7	5.5
1994	40.6	42.2	6.0	6.2
*2002	37.8	37.8	9.5	9.5

* Department of Statistics, "Statistical Yearbook," 1986, 1991 and 2002.

** Youth proportion = Population aged 0-14 divided by total population (by sex).

*** Aging index = Population aged 65 and above divided by population aged 0-14 (by sex).

Fig. 1.8:
Youth Proportion by Sex for Selected Years



levels which has eventually narrowed the gap between sexes. The higher number of males in the category of age 15 and above is mainly due to the return of tens of thousands of Jordanians (mostly males) from abroad as a result of the 1990 Gulf crisis.

In categories in which females outnumbered males, the reason may be attributed in part to the return of many Jordanians to Gulf states in which they used to work, on one hand, and the incidence of many others deciding to leave Jordan to work in the Gulf or elsewhere, on the other.

Youth Proportion and Aging Index

The youth proportion is the number of the population under the age of 15 divided by the total population. The higher the proportion is, the younger the population. Figures in Table 1.8 clearly indicate that Jordanian society has been a young one—especially in the 1970's and 1980's, when nearly half (49%) of the population was under the age of 15

The youth proportion began to gradually decline during the 1990's and it accelerated its pace at the onset of the new millennium. In 2002, the proportion of those under 15 dropped to 38% for both males and females. The decline was higher for females than for males (25% and 23%, respectively), and this is primarily attributed to the decline in fertility levels during the abovementioned period.

The aging index denotes the ratio of the population 65 years and over to the population less than 15 years old. The higher the value, the more elderly the population. Table 1.8 shows that the value of the index did not exceed 5.5 percent in 1979 for either sex. It rose steadily until the 1990's and then increased sharply at the outset of the new millennium by 73% for males, compared with 76% for females between 1979 and 2002. This indicates an increasingly gradual transformation of Jordanian society towards aging. The substantial decline in fertility and mortality levels accounts for this increase.

Population Median Age

The median age is the age at which half of the population lies under and half lies above.