



Science and Politics in Demographic Planning: The Question of Encouraging Arab Emigration from the Territories

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Israeli public discourse around the demographic balance between Jews and Arabs in the Land of Israel/Palestine, tends to coalesce around the need for a political agreement. According to this view, Israel must decide between permanently holding onto the post-1967 territories along with their Arab residents, or giving up the territories in order to maintain a solid Jewish majority within the geographical area of the state. This article explores how researchers from the social sciences sought to offer an alternative to the 1967 Israeli leadership, in order to formulate a different, more dynamic demographic policy, which could alter the demography without the use of coercive measures. The researchers formulated a plan for demographic change between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea that would significantly reduce the number of Palestinian Arabs in the territories, especially the population of 1948 refugees. One principle of the plan was that those who were not in the West Bank at the time of the census in September 1967 could not return to it. A second principle was that employment and education needs were the main “push” factors at Israel’s disposal to encourage Arab emigration. A third principle was that the government must maintain secrecy with respect to any policy of encouraging emigration, so as not to provoke mass opposition by the population of the territories.

Keywords: Demography, social sciences, Palestinians, military conquest, military rule, the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS)

Introduction

The desire to create a Jewish majority in the Land of Israel was one of the foundations of the Zionist movement. This aspiration also gradually became one of the main causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. What Jews understood as a return to their historic homeland in order to create one place in the world where Jews were

not a minority group, was perceived by the Arabs as an invasion that threatened to turn them from a majority into a minority (Gorny 1985, 12; Cohen 2013, 237; Morris 2003, 634). The Zionist demographic objective was fulfilled when the Jewish-Israeli forces defeated the Arabs in the 1948 war. Following the war, the State of Israel was established on parts of the Land of Israel

/ Mandate Palestine, and a Jewish majority was achieved by means of the displacement of about 700,000 Arabs from the country and the opening of the country's gates to unlimited Jewish immigration.

The results of the Six Day War in June 1967 upset the demographic balance. IDF forces conquered the remaining parts of the Land of Israel within its historical Mandate borders, that is, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where about a million Palestinian Arabs lived at that time (about 2.4 million Jews and about 400,000 Arabs lived in Israel at that time). The government, like most of the Jewish public, was interested in including these territories in the State of Israel, but not their large Arab populations, precisely because from the Israeli perspective the size of this population threatened to undermine the solid Jewish majority within the state. Then prime minister Levi Eshkol aptly described this dilemma using a metaphor: After the war he wanted to receive the dowry (the West Bank and Gaza Strip) without the bride (the Palestinian people) (Raz 2012, 3).

Israeli public discourse since 1967 has offered no solution to the issue of “the bride and the dowry” without a political agreement: Israel must decide at some stage between permanently holding onto the territories or relinquishing them in order to maintain a solid Jewish majority in the state in the long term. This article shows that the Israeli leadership and scientists who served it imagined that the demographic situation in the country would be more dynamic in the first few months after the 1967 war. They sought to plan and implement a demographic shift between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea that would significantly reduce the number of Palestinian Arabs in the territories, especially the population of 1948 refugees. They hoped at least to diminish the severity of the demographic problem at that time, and perhaps to keep possibilities open for more significant changes in the future. Their primary tools of choice were economic measures.

This article discusses three Israeli initiatives for such demographic planning. The first was the 1967 census. This census was conducted by Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) employees in September 1967. Although the census was carried out by professionals from an institution with a respectable scientific reputation, it had two clear political goals: to prove that the number of 1948 refugees in the territories was lower than in UNRWA reports, and to minimize the number of residents in the West Bank. The second initiative was an economic survey of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The survey enabled Israeli economists to propose a series of policy measures to reduce the number of Palestinians under their control in general, and to make it easier for refugees to leave the Gaza Strip in particular. The third initiative was also a research initiative, led by Israeli researchers from the social sciences. These studies provided the Israeli leadership with tools to plan the encouragement of Arab emigration from the territories with minimum opposition. Shortly after the Six Day War, the three initiatives together created a database and policy measures that aimed to fulfill geopolitical objectives of the Israeli government with respect to Palestinian demography.

The Census: Bureaucratic Displacement

On June 18 and 19, 1967, CBS director Roberto Bachi met with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Military Governorate, the Military Intelligence Directorate (MID), the Shin Bet, the Office of the Advisor on Arab Affairs in the Prime Minister's Office, and the Ministry of Interior, in order to discuss conducting a census in the newly conquered territories. It was the staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who initiated the meeting on this topic. In the 19 years preceding the war, Israeli representatives had waged an ongoing diplomatic struggle in the international arena on the issue of the Palestinian refugees, during which they claimed, based on MID assessments, that UNRWA and

the Arab countries had inflated the numbers of refugees. The importance of accurate data on the number of refugees stemmed from the scope of potential future demands on Israel in a peace agreement, to absorb or resettle a certain percentage of the total number of refugees.

The higher the official number of refugees, the higher the number of people Israel would have to take in. At that time, when Israel had suddenly taken control of a large portion of the refugee camps, Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff sought to show the world the real number of refugees using scientific methods. In this way, any future negotiations with the Arab countries, whether Israel remained in the territories or not, would be based on the new numbers found in the census and not on the inaccurate numbers used before then. Immediately after the Six Day War, the leaders of the State of Israel expected that the clear victory would lead to diplomatic negotiations, during which the Arab countries would accept Israeli terms that they had refused so far. One of the expectations was that a solution to the Palestinian refugee problem would be found by resettling the vast majority of them outside of the State of Israel.

During the census the Military Governorate imposed a complete lockdown, to ensure that residents would be at home when the CBS census-takers knocked on their doors, and to ensure that only those who were physically present in the conquered territories on the day of the census would be counted, and no one else.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated the meeting with CBS staff in order to prepare for such future negotiations by gathering all of the relevant figures, but they were not the only stakeholders in the census. Representatives of the security forces said in the meeting that they were interested in having a list of names of all of the people in the territories and needed an analysis of the demographic and economic

character of the population. This information, they said, would provide them with a crucial means of control. The census was approved on July 11, 1967 at the Ministerial Committee on the Interior and Services. However, CBS staff requested that its implementation be kept secret in order to prevent UNRWA employees from organizing “acts of sabotage” against it in the meantime. UNRWA’s employees received notice of the census only a few days before it began “as a courtesy” (*The Census 1967; Population Census 1967; Census in the West Bank and Gaza and UNRWA 1967*).

The census was conducted over a few days in each of the three areas: In the Gaza Strip from September 10 to 14, 1967; in the northern West Bank from September 17 to 19; and in the southern West Bank from September 21 to 29. The Israeli census-takers, Arabic-speakers accompanied by security forces, went from home to home in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (about 200,000 “home visits” in total) until they had visited all the residents in the territories.

During the census the Military Governorate imposed a complete lockdown, to ensure that residents would be at home when the CBS census-takers knocked on their doors, and to ensure that only those who were physically present in the conquered territories on the day of the census would be counted, and no one else. In each home they conducted a ten-minute interview, in which they asked set questions on demographic and economic topics. Among others, the interviewers asked the names of all the family members, their family status, their ages, their number of children, their religion and their professions. Couples with children were asked how many of their children live abroad—a question that aimed to achieve a snapshot of the number of emigrants. The questionnaire also included these two questions: Where did the family members live in 1947? Did the members of the household receive assistance from UNRWA? These two questions aimed to determine the number of 1948 refugees in the territories. A longer interview that lasted for

half an hour was conducted in a representative sample of 20% of the homes. The census-takers were instructed to count only people they saw with their own eyes. The only people counted who were not physically present in the home were family members who were abroad, but they were noted in a separate list and not as part of the list of residents. At the end of each interview, the census-takers gave the father of the household a slip of paper that confirmed that he and his family members were present in their home on the day of the census and were counted for the purposes of the census. The residents were told that the Military Governorate would later replace the slip of paper with an ID card (this was done within a few months). Those who were outside of the West Bank or the Gaza Strip on the day of the census, such as the “emigrant” family members who were counted separately, were not listed on the slips of paper and were not entitled to an ID card. As a result of this technical procedure, they were denied the possibility of returning, and their emigration became permanent. At the conclusion of the census, the officer of the Military Governorate’s statistics staff reported with satisfaction that “there were no problems of refusal.” The census was hailed as a success (*The Census 1967; Minutes from Meeting on Performing the Act of Registry 1967; Government Meeting 74/5727 1967b; Population Census 1967; Minutes of Smaller Coordination Committee 1967; Meeting Minutes 1967; Organizational Process of Census 1967*).

The government ministries and the Military Governorate in the territories gathered an enormous amount of demographic and economic data. On October 1, 1967, Roberto Bachi presented the census’s main findings to the government, revealing for the first time basic demographic data on the population in the territories. In the West Bank 602,607 people were counted, of whom 107,566 were 1948 refugees. In the Gaza Strip 392,563 people were counted, of whom 204,855 were 1948 refugees. According to the CBS’s count, the number of

residents in the West Bank was considerably lower than expected.

Based on Jordanian government figures, CBS employees and the government expected to find about 250,000 more people in the West Bank than were counted. The reason for the considerable gap in the numbers was inherent in the methodology of the counting. CBS decided that only those who were in their homes when the census was conducted were residents of the West Bank. 200,000 residents who had fled, were expelled, or were displaced by the Israeli forces in the period between June and September 1967 were not counted as residents. 200,000 additional residents who left the West Bank during the period between 1949 and 1967 for the purposes of study and work, that is, temporary purposes, were also not counted. The “emigration” of 80% of them, according to Bachi, had been a relocation within the Kingdom of Jordan; that is, they did not choose to emigrate from their country—Jordan. The CBS chose not to check which of the residents of the West Bank who had left it during this period, did so permanently, and which maintained ties with it, for example through frequent visits, as they were entitled to enter the West Bank whenever they chose by virtue of their Jordanian citizenship.

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Thus, in effect, it was the Israeli counting method that displaced at least 200,000 people (who had left between June and September 1967), and at most 400,000 people (including all those who left between 1949 and 1967). As for the 1948 refugees, the total number of refugees was thus 312,421. This figure was about half of the figure of 627,000 refugees that UNRWA

provided on the eve of the Six Day War. In this case too, the Israeli figure did not take into account that about 100,000 1948 refugees were displaced from the West Bank during and immediately after the war, with no possibility of returning to the West Bank. Nevertheless, a considerable gap remains between the number reported by UNRWA and the figure that the CBS employees found (*Government Meeting 74/5727 1967b*; CBS 1967; CBS 1970).

The initial motivation for holding the census was political—the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ desire to count the exact number of 1948 refugees in the territories in order to prove that their number was lower than what UNRWA reported, and the desire of the Military Governorate for information on the population now subject to their control. The most significant result of the census was also political—the permanent displacement from the West Bank of up to 400,000 Palestinians. Using the census, the State of Israel considerably reduced the number of residents of the West Bank. The figures were convenient for the Israeli leadership, and in order to boost their credibility, the political leadership emphasized the professional methods used in the process.¹

Demography and Social Sciences

The government’s discussions on Israel’s territorial-demographic stance prompted Prime Minister Eshkol’s decision to establish an expert committee to help him formulate demographic policy. Various voices were heard within the government regarding the future of the territories and their population, but a relevant knowledge base was lacking. Questions such as where it was best to settle refugees (in the case of a political agreement), in the West Bank or El-Arish in the Sinai; and questions on the incorporation of a large Arab population under Israeli rule, required professional examination. At the government meeting on July 16, 1967, five days after the decision to conduct the statistical census, Prime Minister Eshkol announced the establishment of a committee to study the

economic and social implications of the new Israeli “empire” (as Levi Eshkol described it in that meeting). He emphasized to government members the shared aspiration to encourage Arab emigration and to plan practical proposals regarding the 1948 refugees; and stated that fulfilling these goals depended on professional knowledge and feasible schemes.

The committee’s official name was The Committee for the Development of the Administrated Territories (*Government Meeting 1967 5727/59a*). The letter of appointment of the committee’s members stated that they were to prepare a plan to develop the territories while examining economic, security, and social aspects, and placing an emphasis on finding solutions to the refugee problem by rehabilitating them within Israel and Arab countries and via “their emigration overseas” (The Committee for the Development of the Held Territories 1967a; *From Prime Minister Levi Eshkol 1967*). The term development was not understood as aiming to benefit the residents of the territories but rather as a collection of economic measures to further Israel’s policy goals.

The committee was composed of senior Israeli researchers and academics: the economists Michael Bruno and Don Patinkin, the demographer and director of the CBS Roberto Bachi, the sociologist Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, and the mathematician Aryeh Dvoretzky. Three senior officials from the Israeli security and civilian services were added to the committee: Lieutenant-General Tzvi Tzur, the former chief of staff and commander of the Gaza Strip during the Israeli occupation in 1956-1957, and since June 1967 an advisor to Minister of Defense Dayan on the conquered territories; Ya’akov Arnon, the Director-General of the Ministry of Finance and head of the director-general’s committee for handling civilian issues in the held territories; and Raanan Weitz, head of the settlement department of the Jewish Agency, who had a wealth of experience resettling Jewish refugees and immigrants in the State of Israel. The composition of the committee—academics

combined with three senior officials—, aimed to create a promising combination of academic knowledge, practical experience and security considerations. In order to fulfill the goals of the committee, the prime minister permitted its members to hold any survey or study of the conquered territories and their population that seemed necessary to them (*The Committee for the Development of the Administrated Territories* 1967a).

The Economic Report: Employment and Emigration

The committee was divided into two research teams: an economic research team and a social research team. The economic team consisted of nine economists (Miriam Beham, Yoram Ben-Porat, Haim Ben-Shahar, Eitan Berglas, Nadav Halevi, Giora Hanoch, Ezra Sadan, and Yakir Plessner) and was headed by Michael Bruno. Their work was based on economic, social, and demographic data from the Jordanian census conducted in 1961, on data collected by the Economic Planning Authority in the Prime Minister's Office, and on data that the Central Bureau of Statistics started to collect. On September 10, 1967, less than two months after its establishment, the economic team submitted its findings (hereinafter, the Bruno Report). These were approved by all of the committee's members and submitted to the prime minister a few days later.

The Bruno Report presented the prime minister with an ambitious and detailed decade-long plan whose goals were: emptying the Gaza Strip of 1948 refugees; resettling those refugees in the West Bank; and encouraging Palestinian emigration (in general) from the territories. The Israeli government's plan at that time was to encourage the Gaza Strip's refugee population to move to other places, including the West Bank, in order to annex the Gaza Strip to Israel without a significant "demographic problem" (Shafer Raviv 2021, 343-347).

According to Bruno, the decade-long plan would begin with the large-scale construction

of housing in the West Bank for the refugee population. Since this would create great demand for workers in the construction industry in the West Bank, unemployed refugees from Gaza would begin moving to the construction sites. Afterwards their family members would gradually move, and they could be housed in the same homes that had just been built. In the next stage, the state would industrialize the West Bank with labor-intensive factories such as textiles, which could take in a large number of unskilled workers. This industry would also absorb the construction workers after the construction projects were completed, along with the rest of the unemployed refugee population.

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Bruno presented a detailed timetable, guaranteeing that within ten years it would be possible to move 50,000 refugee families or 250,000 people from the refugee camps (mainly those in Gaza) to resettlement in the West Bank. According to the plan, about 2,000 families could move in 1968; about 4,000 families each year from 1969 to 1971; and about 5,000 families each year from 1972 to 1978. After all of the families had moved to their new homes and the heads of the families were integrated in the new workplaces, it would be possible to "completely eliminate" the refugee camps. The plan also guaranteed that at the end of ten years, only the original residents of Gaza would continue to live there. During the implementation of the plan, it was determined that the government would not need to invest in the economic development of the Gaza Strip due to a "significant decrease" in its population (Bruno 1967).

A second topic in the Bruno Report was encouraging the emigration of Palestinians—

whether they were permanent residents or refugees—from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, to outside of the areas under Israel’s control. Bruno’s plan was based on trends of emigration from the West Bank that existed during the Jordanian period and on providing additional incentives to expedite it. The economic team analyzed Jordanian census data from 1961 and discovered that from 1952 to 1961 about 2.5% of the West Bank population emigrated each year, totaling about 200,000 residents by the end of the period—half of them moved to the East Bank (that is, in practice they remained inside the country of Jordan) and the other half left Jordan. Out of the latter, about 80% emigrated to other Arab countries, mainly to Kuwait, and the rest moved to countries overseas, especially in South America. According to data collected by the members of the economic team, most of the emigrants during the Jordanian period had a distinct profile—young unmarried men with a profession and a relatively high level of education. This profile fit the demands in the labor market in the countries they arrived in or in the growing capital of Jordan.

The search for employment, they found, was the main reason for emigration from the West Bank during that period, and Bruno expected that employment emigration trends from the Jordanian period would continue also under Israeli rule. However, Bruno admitted the inherent contradiction between the factors that pushed young people to emigrate from the West Bank during the Jordanian period and the development plan that he himself proposed. In his economic view, development was a necessary condition for the resettlement of refugees from the Gaza Strip in the West Bank, as such development would necessarily lead to the creation of demand for workers in the local market. But if talented young people from the West Bank could find sources of employment close to home, then their main reason for emigrating would no longer apply.

Bruno sought to overcome this contradiction between emigration and development via a proactive policy of encouraging the emigration of young people from the West Bank alongside the implementation of his decade-long plan. The measures that he recommended as part of this policy were:

1. To increase government investment in education and professional training. Bruno’s economic development plan was set to increase the number of unskilled jobs in the West Bank. In contrast, the international labor market valued workers with higher levels of education. Bruno noted, for example, that the demand for teachers in Arab countries was high, and therefore a good place to start was by increasing the number of professional training positions for teaching. Under the category of investment in education, Bruno also included a recommendation to grant scholarships to young people from the territories to encourage them to pursue higher education abroad.
2. To grant personal compensation in a “liquid form” to those going abroad, in return for their property, which would be left behind.
3. To permit anyone wishing to leave the territory of Israel to reserve the right to return. The reason for this, Bruno stated, was that a large portion of the emigrants during the Jordanian period left as temporary migrants who held temporary resident visas in other countries, as migrant workers or for studies. Only afterwards did some of the temporary migrants choose to settle in their new countries, and only then did family members tend to join them. Consequently, Bruno believed that temporary migration had a high likelihood of becoming permanent. But if the temporary migrants had known in advance that they could never return to their homeland, most of them would not have left in the first place. Providing the possibility of return to everyone who left, Bruno stated, would reopen the doors of

temporary emigration and ultimately create a trend of permanent emigration.

4. To keep the policy of encouraging emigration a secret. Bruno explained that the issue was “sensitive” and “very dangerous” politically, so there was a need to present the measures covertly. He recommended that the government engage international migration organizations, so that actions such as travel and housing arrangements would not be carried out directly by Israeli agencies.
5. To quickly adopt the proposed policy of encouraging emigration in order to act prior to the emergence of a “leadership and clear political aspirations” (Bruno 1967).

The Bruno Report presented a work plan for fulfilling the vision of eliminating the refugee population by emptying out the refugee camps in the Gaza Strip and transferring refugees to the West Bank and to other countries within one decade. The report linked the desired demographic change to the employment structure and workforce. It divided the refugee population between skilled and unskilled labor. For the latter it proposed a state industrialization process in labor-intensive fields (in a way reminiscent of the industrialization of development towns implemented by the government during the 1960s), and for the former it offered a “departure package” in order to encourage their emigration to other countries. The report’s authors recognized the political sensitivity of their proposals, although they did not describe them in the report itself, so they recommended implementing both parts of the initiative covertly.

The Social Report: Emigration, Employment, Education

The committee’s social team was composed of researchers from the social sciences including sociologists, anthropologists, a political scientist, an economist, and a historian. The team’s members dispersed to conduct focused field studies in the Palestinian towns, villages, and refugee camps in the West Bank and the

Gaza Strip, equipped with questionnaires and ready to hold interviews. The political scientist Nimrod Raphaeli prepared two research reports, one on the residents of the Jabalia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip and the other on Palestinians leaving for the East Bank via the Allenby Bridge; the economist Yoram Ben-Porat, the anthropologist Emanuel Marx, and the historian Shimon Shamir conducted a study together on the residents of the Jalazone refugee camp in the West Bank; the sociologist Aharon Ben-Ami—about the residents of the village of Sinjil in the West Bank; the anthropologist Arik Cohen—about the residents of the town of Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip and about the residents of the town of Nablus in the West Bank; and the sociologist Yochanan Peres conducted a sample survey of residents of the West Bank from different regions. The coordinator of the social team was the sociologist Rivkah Bar-Yosef, and she also prepared the concluding report on the team’s work. Before they went out into the field, the Military Governorate issued special travel permits to the members of the team so that they would be able to move freely in the territories, and instructed its staff to help them in any possible way to further the success of their work (*The Committee for the Development of the Held Territories* 1967b).

On September 10, 1967, the social team submitted an interim report on its findings together with the submission of the final report of the economic team. The final papers, including a summary report of all of the studies, was submitted in February 1968 and the findings were then sent to the prime minister.

The members of the social team focused their attention on the two issues that the Bruno Report also discussed: Resolving the refugee problem and encouraging emigration. The field studies discovered two prominent characteristics of the refugee population in the camps: The first was that since their displacement in the 1948 war, the refugees had undergone a significant process of modernization. The beliefs and values that had characterized their rural and traditional

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society until 1948 ceased to be relevant after people lost their lands and their homes.

In their new situation, parents stopped orienting their children towards agricultural work as they had done for generations, and instead encouraged them to acquire education and professional knowledge that would be suitable for the industrialized world. Education became an important goal in the eyes of the refugee population, and its acquisition became the only means of improving their living conditions in the future (*Survey of the Social Problems* 1967; Elnajjar 1993, 34-50). UNRWA's education system was an improvement on the Jordanian or Egyptian ones, and so the second-generation of 1948 refugees could be characterized as a more educated social force compared to the rest of Arab society. Hence the most important distinction between the first generation of refugees who were displaced from their lands and the second generation who grew up in the camps, was the level of education. For example, a study in the Jabalia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip found that the illiteracy rate among members of the first generation was 71%, compared to only 7% among the second generation. This educated and professional generation in Palestinian society, the researchers speculated, would continue to move away from the traditional society of its fathers and would adapt its lifestyle to the characteristics of modern society. Aside from education, modernity included characteristics such as urbanization, secularity, and mobility, which themselves contributed to the potential for emigration. However, the report's writers

warned, modern man is also characterized by a high level of political awareness, public involvement, and the adoption of nationalist ideas. The modernization process among the refugee population did indeed raise the chances of emigration, but at the same time increased the potential for opposition to the State of Israel (Ben-Porat et al. 1968, 22, 25, 47; Bar-Yosef 1968, 7-9; *Survey of the Social Problems* 1967; Raphaeli 1968, 7, 14-15, 29-30).

The second characteristic of the refugee population that the members of the social team noted, was their tenacious belief in the idea of returning to their original lands and homes in the State of Israel, and their opposition to other solutions, such as receiving compensation. For example, when the sociologist Yohanan Peres asked refugees in the West Bank what they think is the best solution to their predicament, 86% of them answered that the only solution is to return to their previous homes in Israel (Peres 1968, 12-13).

The orientalist Shimon Shamir claimed that refugees from the first, traditional generation, held this position mainly out of hope of restoring their lost dignity—which in their eyes was connected to land ownership. For example, one interviewee said to Shamir: "I will not give up on my land for all the wealth in the world." But members of the second generation of refugees supported the idea of return out of nationalist aspirations (Ben-Porat et al. 1968, 70-72).

Despite their personal desire to acquire an education and a profession in order to integrate into the urban and industrialized world and despite their distance from agricultural work, the sociologist Rivkah Bar-Yosef noted that second-generation refugees still demanded to return to the rural lands of their fathers in order to fulfill nationalist aspirations (Bar-Yosef 1968, 9). The fact that they insisted on returning to their agricultural lands and were willing to live as refugees until then was a contradiction that was difficult to resolve for the social scientists.

The researchers pointed out the difference between the Palestinian refugees and the Jewish

immigrants in the 1950s, who wished more than anything else to leave the transit camps and settle in permanent housing. The explanations for the Palestinian refugees' opposition to any other solution, such as compensation were: The important status of refugee in the inter-Arab arena, as those who carried the burden of the struggle against the State of Israel; the encouragement of these attitudes by the UNRWA workers themselves; and even the services and material benefits they received as part of life in the refugee camps (*Survey of the Social Problems* 1967).

These findings led the social team to several key recommendations: First, that a precondition for any attempt at resettlement or encouraging emigration was secrecy. Whether the refugees were motivated by agricultural-rural values or by nationalist ideology, their demand and their aspiration to return to their original homes were deeply ingrained in their consciousness. Thus, any public or official attempt by the State of Israel to empty out the refugee camps and permanently eliminate them was expected to encounter "collective resistance" (Ben-Ami 1968, 20-21; Ben-Porat et al. 1968, 57, 71-73; Peres 1968, 12; *Survey of the Social Problems* 1967; Raphaeli 1968, 35-38). A better course of action in their opinion, was to appeal to the refugees' personal aspirations to acquire an education, a profession, and work. If Israel encouraged modernization processes among the refugee population, they believed, it would accelerate their departure from the refugee camps, which would outwardly appear "spontaneous." According to Bar-Yosef, the conditions in the refugee camps were not so different from in other rural areas around the world, and there too modernization processes had pushed young people towards the industrialized cities (Bar-Yosef 1968, 7).

Encouraging Palestinian emigration from the territories in general was, as mentioned above, the second topic that the social researchers focused on. Going out into the field enabled the Israeli researchers to ask Palestinians why they

intended to emigrate or why they chose to stay. The political scientist Nimrod Raphaeli set up an interview station at the Allenby Bridge where, during September and October, he interviewed a sample of 500 people a few minutes before they crossed to the East Bank.

The respondents were not aware that the interviewer was a researcher from the university, because they were directed to him by soldiers and because Raphaeli himself did not divulge this information to them. He preferred that the respondents assume that the interview was a necessary part of the departure process. In his research report, Raphaeli claimed that the demographic characteristics of the interviewees were similar to the demographic characteristics of the emigrants from the West Bank during the Jordanian period. 79% of them were young people, aged 16-40, 87% were male, 41% had over nine years of education (a relatively high figure compared to the population of other Arab countries, according to Raphaeli), 65% were urban, and 78% were unemployed. In addition, 85% of Raphaeli's interviewees believed that their emigration was temporary, and that in the future they would return to their homes in the West Bank.

His conclusion was that despite the war and the Israeli occupation regime, work emigration continued to be the main reason residents left. However, Raphaeli also pointed out two important differences between the two periods. After the Six Day War, 42.5% of the interviewees declared that they were on their way to reunite with family members. These family members were in many cases temporary migrant workers who had left during the Jordanian period and would send money to their families, but following the war the connection with them was lost and they were prohibited from returning to the West Bank. Thus Israeli rule made their temporary emigration from the West Bank during the Jordanian period into permanent emigration. In addition, Raphaeli's assessment was that after the war "fear of Jewish rule" was a central push factor for leaving, but he

assumed that his interviewees were not eager to reveal this information to him (*Emigration to Jordan* 1967).

While Raphaeli interviewed residents who were on their way out of the West Bank, other field studies focused on residents who remained in their places of residence in towns, villages, and refugee camps. The Israeli researchers took an interest in the question of why there were Palestinians who did not choose to emigrate. When they were asked about this in a survey of the sociologist Yohanan Peres, 90% of respondents answered that they were not at all interested in emigration, and when they were asked why, 67% of them answered “this is my homeland” or “this is where I was born.” The sociologist Aharon Ben-Ami found that young people in the village of Sinjil had adopted modern characteristics such as getting an education and looking for a “different future” than that of their agricultural ancestors, and thereby fit the profile of potential migrant workers. But these young people were also reluctant about the idea of completely disconnecting from the rural lifestyle and from the values of traditional society. Ben-Ami noticed that they were interested at most in temporary emigration, after which they would return to their families in the village (Ben-Ami 1968, 6-9, 24-25).

The best case scenario in the eyes of the researchers Peres and Ben-Ami, was for young people from the territories to leave for the purpose of work and study that would seem to them to be only temporary, but in practice many of them would settle in their new countries and prefer to remain in them, and that over time their family members who had stayed behind would also join them.

Yohanan Peres and Aharon Ben-Ami concluded that the strong connection that the residents of the West Bank had with their land and society made the possibility of permanent mass emigration unlikely (Peres 1968, 18-19). In

their opinion, Israel could encourage at most temporary emigration, and the best way to do so would be to allow anyone interested to leave and return. The best case scenario in the eyes of the researchers Peres and Ben-Ami, was for young people from the territories to leave for the purpose of work and study that would seem to them to be only temporary, but in practice many of them would settle in their new countries and prefer to remain in them, and that over time their family members who had stayed behind would also join them. Thus, they believed, like the economists of the Bruno Report, the departure of one temporary migrant worker could in the long term end with the permanent departure of an entire family (*The Committee’s Conclusions Regarding the Report* 1967; *The Committee’s Conclusions Regarding the Survey* 1967; *Survey of the Social Problems* 1967).

Conclusion: Israel, Science, and Demography

After the end of the Six Day War, the Israeli government faced a dilemma between a desire for territory that was part of the homeland and a lack of desire for the people that lived in the conquered territories. The Israeli leadership related to the demographic situation between Jews and Arabs in the whole territory of the Land of Israel/Palestine as a dynamic situation. The first initiative by the Israeli government was to gather demographic, economic, and social data in order to analyze its options for bringing about change in the numerical balance between Jews and Arabs in the state. The two most pressing demographic issues were settling the 1948 refugee problem and incentivizing the emigration of Palestinians to other countries.

As we have seen, professionals from the Israeli CBS carried out a census of the residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as early as September 1967. The planning of the census began a few days after the end of the Six Day War. The counting method selected by the CBS staff aimed to fulfill a political Zionist objective: to

minimize the number of Arabs who would remain under Israeli rule, and in this way to ensure as large a Jewish majority as possible within the area of the Land of Israel. The CBS's method of counting considered the 200,000 Palestinians who had fled the West Bank between June and September 1967 "emigrants," even though they had just fled from a war zone. There should not have been any doubt that this population had fled the West Bank due to the state of war, that is, due to uncertainty regarding its fate and security, and not out of free choice. The CBS also considered all of the 200,000 Palestinians who had left the West Bank from 1949 to 1967 as "emigrants." While this group was indeed composed of people who had left of their own free will, it did not seem important to the CBS census-takers whether these were people with links to family members or to their original place of residence, which were expressed, for example, in frequent visits, or whether such links could indicate that they had only left temporarily, for example for the purpose of study. Furthermore, 80% of that group continued to live in the East Bank, meaning continued to live in the same country—Jordan—and not in another country. They had no reason to consider themselves emigrants from one country to another country, but rather as people who had changed their place of residence within the same country, and they had no reason to believe that they would not be able to return to their original area of residence. But what the CBS census-takers had in mind was not to establish the most accurate number of residents of the West Bank, but how, without losing scientific credibility, to minimize the number of Palestinian residents under Israeli rule.

The demographic picture that was produced by the CBS census methodology looked good to Israeli eyes: the number of Palestinians was lower than what they thought, including the number of refugees. Nevertheless, the figures were still not low enough to support a government decision of annexation, without creating a "demographic problem." Israeli researchers from the social

sciences analyzed the government's options to reduce the Arab population. The team of economists recommended a policy that combined industrialization of the West Bank with labor-intensive industry, while providing incentives to those who sought to leave for other countries. The industrialization of the West Bank aimed primarily to attract refugees without a profession from the Gaza Strip, as part of an attempt to eliminate the refugee problem there, while the incentives aimed to push members of the educated class among residents of the West Bank towards emigration. The team of researchers from the social sciences identified that a natural process of modernization leads to negative net migration from the territories, even without providing incentives. They also pointed out a connection between that process of modernization and the rise in ideological awareness and a tendency to oppose Israel for political reasons.

The demographic study headed by Prof. Roberto Bachi, the economic study led by Prof. Michael Bruno, and the social studies under the supervision of Prof. Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, were at first kept secret. The reason was similar in all three cases: if the Palestinian population knew about Israeli plans, it would stop cooperating with its Israeli rulers and initiate steps to deliberately disrupt them.

To the extent that it is possible to discern from archival sources, encouraging emigration from the territories with a clear aim of reducing the residents of the territories, was an Israeli policy for only a short period of time. During this period, the policy of encouraging emigration relied mainly on the high level of unemployment and low standard of living as the main push factors for emigration from the territories. According to CBS figures, between September 1967 (when the census was conducted) and December 1968, 28,000 people permanently left the West Bank, and 44,600 permanently left the Gaza Strip.

The number of people leaving started to decline considerably in 1969, due to the new Israeli policy of raising the standard of living of

the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and reducing unemployment. Israel's main method of doing so was by allowing unemployed people from the territories to work in the Israeli economy. Thus it consciously put an end to its original demographic aspirations.

While from 1969 to 1974 there continued to be a negative balance of migration from the territories, the average number of people leaving the West Bank each year was 2,650, and 2,133 for the Gaza Strip. Due to a considerable increase in demand for workers in the oil industry in the Arab countries following the global oil crisis in the 1970s, and the shortage of employment for Palestinians who were not manual laborers in agricultural fields and construction sites in Israel, the average annual number of people leaving increased to 12,340 from the West Bank and 4,020 from the Gaza Strip in the second half of the 1970s.

The main characteristic of those who left was a relatively high level of education and a profession (Abu-Lughod 1984, 262-263; Gabriel & Sabatello 1986). As the economist Michael Bruno foresaw as early as 1967, those who left were characterized as professionals, while those without professions remained in the country in blue-collar jobs. While Bruno predicted that Israel would industrialize the West Bank, the government chose to resolve the shortage of work in the territories by permitting them to work in Israel, giving up on the proactive industrialization of the West Bank (Shafer-Raviv 2021, 9-33).

Israeli government and military personnel drew great value from the information that the social science researchers had produced for them in their social and demographic studies. In 1971, 25 social studies were completed or were in various stages of implementation. These figures show that academic studies about Palestinian society in the territories became a routine practice under Israeli rule during those years (*List of Studies on the Territories* 1971). However, the social scientists themselves, in particular most of those who had participated in studies of Palestinian society in 1967, tended

to be identified as holding dovish positions that opposed prolonged control of the territories ("Their Path Is Not Our Path" 1980).

Even though the policy of encouraging emigration was never fully adopted, this initial period of rule in the territories was critical in terms of how the Israeli leadership discovered the parameters that influenced Palestinian demography. Lowering the standard of living and raising the level of unemployment led masses to emigrate, but also raised the potential for resistance to Israel in the territories. Thus the Israeli leadership needed to make a difficult choice between pacifying the masses and demographic aspirations.

Educated young people were the most likely population to emigrate, hence encouraging education was equivalent to encouraging emigration. But educated young people also tended to join political movements. Hence the expansion of education was also equivalent to increasing the level of resistance. UNRWA was found to have made efforts to present a larger number of 1948 refugees than the actual number, thus creating political difficulties for Israel. However, the organization also granted the refugees a high level of education, thus becoming a body that in practice encouraged their emigration. This complex system of parameters was revealed to decision-makers as early as the end of the 1960s, and it remained relevant for Israeli decision-makers in the following decades.

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- 1 Another substantive demographic analysis conducted by the CBS was on mortality and birth rates. Roberto Bachi expected that the mortality rate among the residents of the territories would decline over the years due to processes of modernization, and therefore the pace of growth of the Palestinian population would increase. However, both Bachi and Prime Minister Levi Eshkol preferred not to develop policy in this area, unlike with emigration. A proposal raised by Eshkol—to encourage education among Arab women in the territories in order to lower the birthrate—was rejected immediately, as it was not expected to lead to any results in the foreseeable future (*Meeting on the Topic of the Refugees with Bachi and Dvoretzky*, 1967).