

## **A. MAIN FINDINGS<sup>1</sup>**

### **1. Characteristics of Households<sup>2</sup>**

#### **1.1 Number of Households and their Size**

In 2002 the number of households in Israel was estimated at approximately 1.85 million, of which 1.57 million were Jewish (85%) and approximately 236,800 were Arab (13%). The rest of the households (approximately 47,700) were households of "Others".<sup>3</sup>

The average number of persons per household in Israel is 3.4. The average number of persons per household in the Jewish population is 3.1, compared with 5.1 in the Arab population. The main reasons for this difference are the higher fertility of the Arab population, and differences in housing patterns between the two populations.

#### **1.2 Changes in the Number and Size of Households – 1960-2002**

As noted, the number of households in Israel in 2002 totaled approximately 1.85 million. By contrast, in 1960 their number was estimated at only 549,000.<sup>4</sup> Concurrently, the average number of persons per household decreased, from 3.9 in 1960 to 3.4 in 2002.

This rise reflects mainly the increase which occurred in the country's population as the result of a high fertility rate and immigration; but it was also due to social and demographic processes, such as a rise in the tendency of single youths to reside apart from their parents, changes in patterns of marriage and fertility, aging of the population, etc.

#### **Historic changes in the size of Jewish households**

Among the Jewish population, the percentage of one-person households has doubled from 10% in 1960 to 20% in 2002. Concurrently, during that same period, a great decline occurred in the proportion of large households, which include seven or more persons, from 9% to 4%. These changes are reflected in the decline that occurred in the average number of persons per household during that period, from 3.8 to only 3.1.

#### **Historic changes in the size of households of Arabs and Others<sup>5</sup>**

During the '60s and '70s there was a rise in the average number of persons per household in this population (from 5.6 persons per household in 1960, to 6.5 persons in 1979). At the

---

<sup>1</sup> The data in this chapter relate to 2002, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>2</sup> The data on households include only private households, see Chap. B.

<sup>3</sup> See definition "Religion/Population group" in Chap. B.

<sup>4</sup> In 1960 the data also included the Bedouin in the South and kibbutzim.

<sup>5</sup> Up to the beginning of the '90s, the non-Jewish population (see definition "Religion/Population group" in Chap. B) included mainly the Arab population. Following the wave of immigration in the '90s, populations which are not Arab (non-Arab Christians or those not classified by religion) were added to the non-Jewish population. Up to 2000 it was impossible to completely separate Arab households from non-Jewish households that are not Arab ("Others"). This separation only became possible in the Labour Force Survey as of 2001. That year, approximately 83% of non-Jewish households were Arab, and the rest – approximately 17% – Others. In this publication a distinction has been made between three population groups: Jews, Arabs, and Others, beginning with 2001 data.

beginning of the '80s a downward trend began in the average number of persons per household among Arabs and Others, which reached 4.7 persons per household in 2002.

The decline found in the '90s can be partially attributed to the addition of households in the population of "Others" to the Arab households. The population of "Others", which mainly includes non-Jewish immigrants from the former USSR, is characterized by a lower fertility rate, and its households are smaller than those in the Arab population.

### **1.3 Composition of Households**

Most households in Israel are "family" households (1.49 million households, 81% of private households), in which at least one family<sup>1</sup> resides. The rest of the households (approximately 335,600) are "non-family" households, in most of which (91%) one person resides, and in the rest – several persons with no family relationship among them reside.

Among Jewish households 73% are one-family households, approximately 3% are households with one family and others (who are not part of the nuclear family in that household – such as a parent with his child's family, a person with their sibling's family, etc.), and approximately 2% have two or more families. The rest of the Jewish households (21%) are non-family households. Among Arab households, 89% are one-family households, 2% have one family and others, 4% have two or more families, and another approximately 5% are non-family households (approximately one-quarter of the proportion in the Jewish population).

#### **Number of generations in the household<sup>2</sup>**

In the Jewish population, 24% of family households have only one generation, 72% have two generations, and approximately 5% have three or more generations (see Table 6). However, in the Arab population, family households with only one generation are much less common – approximately 8% (which results from, among other reasons, a relatively low number of couples who live alone in a household, without children). 87% of Arab family households have two generations, and the rest – 5% – have three or more generations.

## **2. Composition of Families**

Living with one's family is the most common form of residence. 88% of the Jewish population, and 97% of the Arab population, aged 15 and over, live with their nuclear families.

Most families (90%) live alone in the household, with no others (who are not part of the family), and with no additional family in the household.

In 2002 there were 1.54 million families in Israel, of which 23% were without children (families composed of couples only), and the rest included at least one child (of all ages). 58% of all families included at least one child aged up to 17; in 11% of the families the youngest child's age was 18-24; and among the rest of the families (8% of all families) the youngest child's age was 25 and over.

---

<sup>1</sup> See definition of "Family" in Chap. B.

<sup>2</sup> See definition of "Number of generations in a household" in Chap. B.

The most common type of family (65% of all families) had a traditional composition – i.e., a couple with at least one child (of all ages). Families of a couple with no children constituted 23% of all families, and approximately 12% were lone-parent families. A small number of families were those of siblings without spouses or children of their own, or grandparents and grandchildren.

The average number of persons per family is 3.6 in the Jewish population and 5.0 in the Arab population. In Jewish families with children of all ages, there is an average of one child less per family than among Arab families (2.26 compared with 3.34, respectively – see Table 19); this reflects mainly the younger age at marriage among Arabs, and the differences in fertility rates between the Jewish and Arab populations.

The number of couples in Israel in 2002 was estimated at 1,344,900. Approximately one fourth of all couples were couples without children in the household, and the rest – 74% – were couples with children (of all ages).

## **2.1 Couples without children**

26% of all couples are couples without children. Most couples without children are adult couples who have passed the age of fertility and raising children. Among Jews there was a higher percentage of couples without children, out of the total number of couples – 29%, compared with approximately 10% among Arabs. One of the reasons for this is the fact that the Jewish population is older than the Arab population.

## **2.2 Families with children (of all ages)**

### **Couples with children**

The percentage of couples with children whose youngest child is up to 17, out of the total number of families, is much higher among Arabs than among Jews (70% compared with 48%, respectively). This is mainly due to the higher fertility rate of the Arab population, compared to the Jewish one.

### **Lone-Parent Families**

Lone-parent families with children (of all ages) constitute almost 12% of all families, approximately 16% of families with children, 13% of families in which the youngest child's age is up to 24, and approximately 10% of families in which the youngest child's age is up to 17. In total, there are 98,300 lone-parent families in which the youngest child's age is up to 17 (see Tables 20, 21).

### **Lone-Parent Families with Children up to Age 17, by Main Characteristics**

#### **Population group**

Of all Jewish families with children up to age 17, 12% are lone-parent families, compared with only approximately 5% among Arab families (see Table 21). The differences result mainly from the higher divorce rate among the Jewish population than the Arab population.

## **Sex of parent**

In 91% of lone-parent families in which the youngest child's age is up to 17, the parent is the mother, and in the rest – the father (see Table 31).

## **Parent's marital status**

In 54% of lone-parent families in which the youngest child's age is up to 17 the parent is divorced; in 14% the parent is widowed; and in approximately 14% the parent has never married. In the rest of the families (approximately 18%) the parent is married but lives separately.<sup>1</sup> In the Jewish population the parent's common marital status is divorced (57%), whereas among Arabs it is widowed (37%).

## **Children in lone-parent families**

Approximately 169,000 children aged up to 17, which constitutes approximately 8% of all children in this age group, live in lone-parent families (see Tables 23, 35). 91% of them live with their mothers. Approximately one-third of children aged up to 17 live in lone-parent families without additional siblings aged up to 17 in the household, compared with 13% of the children who live with a pair of parents.

## **2.3 Cohabitation**

There are 35,700 unmarried couples in Israel, which constitutes 2.7% of the total number of couples, and approximately 2% of the total number of families.

### **Age**

The age composition of cohabiting couples is relatively young compared with married couples (see Tables 27, 28). Approximately one-half of the men and women living together without being married are less than 35 years of age, and a large proportion are aged 25-29.

### **Marital status**

59% of all those cohabiting are single, 25% of them are divorced, 12% are widowed, and the rest (approximately 3%) are married to other spouses but do not live with them.

### **Religion**

94% of all cohabiting couples are Jews,<sup>2</sup> compared with 81% of the married couples.

### **Education**

The percentage of those holding an academic degree is higher among cohabiting men and women (35%) than among those living together as a married couple (23%). Even if an attempt is made to neutralize, to a certain extent, the possible influence of the age element, and only men and women up to the age of 34 – for instance – are examined, it will be found

---

<sup>1</sup> Including families in which the parent is married, but his/her spouse is not present in the household, or does not belong to the survey population (see definition of "Survey Population", Chap. B). In 2002, these families constituted approximately 2% of all lone-parent families with children of all ages, and approximately 5% of all lone-parent families with children aged up to 17.

<sup>2</sup> The rest of the unmarried couples are mainly couples of "Others" (see definition of "Religion/Population group" in Chap. B).

that the percentage of those holding an academic degree among those cohabiting is higher than that among married couples (37% and 21%, respectively).

### **Family composition**

72% of cohabiting couples have no children, compared with one-quarter of the married couples.

## **3. Special Populations**

### **3.1 Immigrants of 1990 and After from the Former USSR<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Households with immigrants from the former USSR<sup>2</sup>**

In Israel there are 291,200 households with immigrants from the former USSR, which constitute 16% of all households. The population of immigrants from the former USSR constitutes approximately 14% of the total population of Israel.

The average number of persons per household among immigrants from the former USSR is 2.9, compared with 3.1 in the entire Jewish population.

67% of the households of immigrants from the former USSR are one-family households, compared with 73% of households in the entire Jewish population. The proportion of households with a less typical composition – one-family households with others, and households with two or more families – is over three times greater among immigrants from the former USSR than among the entire Jewish population (17% and 5%, respectively). Non-family households are less common among immigrants from the former USSR than among the entire Jewish population (16% and 21%, respectively).

#### **Families with immigrants from the former USSR<sup>3</sup>**

There are 261,300 families with immigrants from the former USSR in Israel, and they constitute approximately 17% of all families in Israel.

19% of them (48,600) are lone-parent families, compared with approximately 13% of all Jewish families. This reflects, among other things, the relatively high divorce rate among the immigrants.

The proportion of families of couples with children, out of all families, is lower among immigrants from the former USSR (50%) than among the entire Jewish population (61%). It can be assumed that the low fertility rate, added to the older age composition of the immigrants from the former USSR, play an important role in creating these differences. In addition, the ratio of families of couples without children is higher among immigrants from the former USSR than among the entire Jewish population (30% and 25%, respectively).

The average number of children up to age 17 in families with children of this age group, is 1.49 among the immigrants from the former USSR, compared with 2.16 among the entire Jewish population.

---

<sup>1</sup> From here on: Immigrants from the former USSR.

<sup>2</sup> Households with at least one immigrant who arrived in 1990 and after from the former USSR.

<sup>3</sup> Families with at least one immigrant who arrived in 1990 and after from the former USSR.

### **3.2 Living Alone – One-Person Households**

In 2002 there were approximately 325,000 people in Israel, aged 18 and over, living alone in a private household, compared with approximately 60,000 people at the beginning of the '60s. The ratio of those living alone, out of the total adult population, also rose (from approximately 4% at the beginning of the '60s, to approximately 7% in 2002); and their share of all households also rose (from approximately 10% to approximately 18%, respectively).

#### **Population group**

95% of those living alone are Jews, and 3.4% are Arabs.

The percentage of households of those living alone in the Jewish population stands at 20%, a percentage four times higher than that in the Arab population (approximately 5%).

#### **Sex**

Almost two-thirds of those living alone are women (63%), although the fact that at younger ages more men live alone than women.

#### **Marital status**

The largest group of those living alone is that of those widowed (44% of those living alone); after them, are those who were never married (33%), those who are divorced (19%), and finally – those who are married but separated (4%).

The most common reason for living alone among women is widowhood (58%), and among men – bachelorhood (49%). The second most common reason among women is bachelorhood (24%), and among men – divorce (25%).

#### **The percentage of those living alone in their age group**

Among the young, the percentage of those living alone is greater among men than among women, due to men's higher age at marriage (approximately 8% of men aged 25-29 live alone, compared with approximately 5% of women; approximately 7% of men aged 30-34 live alone, compared with approximately 4% of women). Among those aged 35-44, the percentage of those living alone is still higher among men than among women (6% and 3%, respectively). In the 45-54 age group, there is a similar percentage of men and women living alone (approximately 4%); whereas in the 55-64 age group, a higher percentage of women live alone, compared to men (14% compared with 6%, respectively). At age 65 and over, the percentage of women living alone stands at 35%, compared with approximately 12% of the men at this age.

#### **Living alone as a stage in the life cycle**

Three separate groups can be distinguished among those who live alone, which reflect different stages in the cycle of life: youths who have left their parents' home but have not yet married; middle-aged people, a large part of whom have divorced or separated from their spouses; and elderly, who have been widowed.

### **Those aged 18-34, who live alone<sup>1</sup>**

Approximately 72,000 of people aged 18-34 live alone, and they constitute 22% of all those who live alone. The percentage of those living alone out of this age group has doubled since the beginning of the '60s, from approximately 2% to approximately 4% in 2002.

This group mainly includes youths who have left their parents' home and are not yet married. In this age group 90% of the men and women who live alone are single, due to a delay of marriage. In terms of gender composition, there is a majority of men, who constitute 58% of the people living alone.

74% of those aged 18-34 who live alone have completed 13 years of schooling and more, compared with 43% of all those in this age group. In addition, 45% of those aged 18-34 who live alone have an academic occupation, either administrative or professional; a percentage that is more than double their share among all those in the same age group (19%).

### **Those aged 35-64, who live alone**

Approximately 106,000 people aged 35-64 live alone, and they constitute 33% of all those who live alone.

45% of those who live alone at this age are men. Many of those living alone at this age were divorced or separated from their spouses, and now live separately from their families. Among men, 40% are single and 44% are divorced. This is in contrast to women, of which 32% are single, 34% are divorced and 31% are widowed.

### **Those aged 65 and over, who live alone**

Approximately 147,000 people aged 65 and over live alone, and they constitute 45% of all those living alone. The ratio of those living alone among the elderly has doubled since the beginning of the '60s, from approximately 13% to 25% in 2002.

Almost 69% of this group are widowed women. In total, 79% of those living alone at this age are women.

Among men of this age who live alone, two-thirds (66%) are widowers, and approximately 20% are divorced. This is in contrast to 87% widows among the women, and approximately 9% who are divorced.

---

<sup>1</sup> See: Einhorn, S. *Living Arrangements of Young Adults in Israel in 2000, by Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics*, The Central Bureau of Statistics, Working Paper Series, no. 17, 2005.