



**The Jewish Settlement System in Judea and Samaria:
Key Variables, Trends, Strengths and Weaknesses**

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Executive Summary

The report points to a widening gap between the rapid spatial expansion of Israeli settlement in Judea and Samaria and demographic, functional and municipal resilience that is not developing at anything like the same pace. Between 2010 and 2020 there was relative stability in the number of Jewish localities in the regional councils, but between 2020 and 2025 there was a significant jump: the number of localities in the regional councils rose from 105 in 2010 to 149 in 2025. Most of the growth occurred in Mateh Binyamin, Shomron, Har Hevron, Gush Etzion and the Jordan Valley. By contrast, the number of cities remained four throughout the entire period, and the number of local councils changed only marginally. In other words, most of the development is not urban and does not reflect the construction of new large population centers, but rather the expansion of the settlement space through regional councils, small localities and outposts.

The sharpest figure concerns outposts. The number of outposts in the regional councils stood at 95 in 2010, remained 95 in 2015, rose to 131 in 2020, and jumped to 238 in 2025. In other words, 107 outposts were added between 2020 and 2025. The increase is especially prominent in Mateh Binyamin, Shomron, Har Hevron, Gush Etzion and the Jordan Valley. Thus, outposts are becoming a central component in shaping the spatial distribution of settlement, even though they do not necessarily generate a stable demographic base, full services or sustainable municipal capacity. This is precisely where a map with many points may mislead anyone who confuses presence on the ground with a functioning settlement system.

Demographically, the report emphasizes that most Jewish localities in Judea and Samaria remain small, while most of the population is concentrated in a limited number of urban and large localities, mainly Modi'in Illit, Beitar Illit, Ma'ale Adumim, Ariel and Giv'at Ze'ev (about half of all Israelis). It is therefore necessary to distinguish between spatial expansion and demographic weight. Settlement is expanding across the space, but its demographic center of gravity remains limited and concentrated. This is a two-headed structure: on one side, many small localities, outposts and farms; on the other, a relatively small number of dense, large localities with real population weight.

The annual growth rate is also not uniform. In 2025, a more complex picture is evident than in the past: alongside localities that continue to grow at a significant pace, there is an increasing number of localities with low growth, stagnation or decline. Natural increase remains the most stable engine of growth, mainly in large localities with a young population, while migration balances, especially internal migration, are weaker and even negative in some localities. It follows that demographic growth in Judea and Samaria does not necessarily stem from a broad attraction of new population, but in many cases from a young age structure and natural increase. International migration is a limited and secondary component and does not change the overall picture.

The age structure explains a central part of this dynamic. In localities where the share of residents up to age 19 is high, natural increase continues to support growth even when migration is not positive. By contrast, localities with a higher share of adult population are more dependent on migration balances, and are therefore more vulnerable to stagnation or decline. The Haredi variable adds an important dimension: the Haredi population is concentrated in several focal points, mainly in the western area and around Jerusalem, and contributes to a young age structure, high natural increase and high density. However, Haredi character does not define settlement as a whole, and therefore should not be seen as an overall demographic solution for the entire space.

The synthesis emphasizes that the weakness of the current system is not only demographic, but also functional and municipal. Current policy focuses on spatial expansion, but does not produce sufficient demographic and functional thickening. There is no clear settlement hierarchy between cities, medium-sized localities, small localities and outposts; there is no sufficient concentration of investment in more varied and denser housing in the large and medium-sized localities; and there is no sufficient connection between residential construction and local and regional employment. In practice, a large part of the system functions as a commuter-dependent residential area, in which residents live in Judea and Samaria but consume employment, services and centers of daily life inside the Green Line.

The report also identifies a structural weakness in the field of transportation: instead of strengthening public transportation axes between population centers, investment tends to serve a broad dispersion of small settlement points. This is joined by a weak municipal and fiscal base in many of the authorities, high dependence on grants and government transfers, the absence of significant own-source revenues from employment and commerce, the absence of regional clusters and shared services, weak professional capacity among local authorities, and the absence of an annual indicators dashboard for each locality. Without systematic measurement of population, growth, migration, density, revenues, employment, travel times and services, it is difficult to conduct responsible policy. It is easier, of course, to continue admiring arrows on a map. It is cheaper than thinking.

The comparison between the authorities in Judea and Samaria and all authorities in Israel in 2024 shows that there is no single budgetary model, but rather deep variation by type of authority. The cities in Judea and Samaria, in which 219,361 residents live, show low own-source revenues, a regular budget per capita that is about one-third lower than the national urban average, and government dependence that does not exceed their demographic weight. The local councils, by contrast, enjoy a relative budgetary advantage compared with all local councils in Israel. The sharpest gap is found in the regional councils: although their share of the population of all regional councils is 17.2%, they receive 29.7% of government participation in the development budget. The conclusion: a weaker own-source base, more government, and above all more development investment in areas that serve spatial expansion.

The report's main conclusion is that settlement in Judea and Samaria is expanding rapidly in space, but is not necessarily becoming a stable, uniform and sustainable system. The multiplication of localities and outposts strengthens spatial hold, but does not guarantee demographic, economic or municipal resilience. If the trends continue, the distinction between territorial expansion and real demographic growth is expected to become even sharper over the coming decade: more localities and outposts on the ground, but a population concentrated mainly in cities and in large, young and dense growth centers. In other words, the system may

become broader, but not necessarily stronger; more dispersed, but not necessarily more stable; more present in space, but not necessarily demographically and functionally sustainable.

A. Main Variables

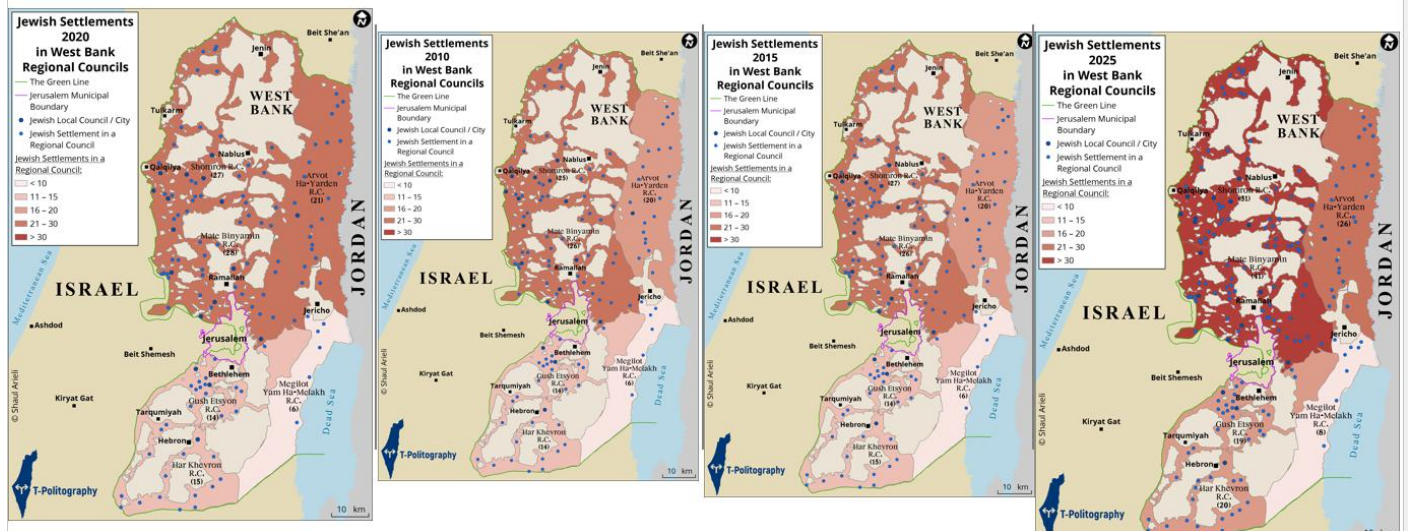
1. Jewish Localities in the Regional Councils

The multi-year trend in the number of Jewish localities in the regional councils points to two different periods: relative stability between 2010 and 2020, followed by a significant jump by 2025. In 2010, 105 Jewish localities were counted in the regional councils: Shomron 25, Jordan Valley 20, Mateh Binyamin 26, Gush Etzion 14, Megillot Dead Sea 6 and Har Hevron 14. In 2015, the total number rose to 111, mainly due to a moderate increase in Shomron, the Jordan Valley, Mateh Binyamin and Har Hevron. In 2020, the structure remained almost unchanged: Shomron 27, Jordan Valley 21, Mateh Binyamin 28, Gush Etzion 14, Megillot 6 and Har Hevron 15.

The significant transition appears in 2025. The total number of localities rises to 149; Mateh Binyamin becomes the most prominent council, with 41 localities, compared with 28 in 2020. Shomron rises to 35, the Jordan Valley to 26, Gush Etzion to 19, Megillot to 8 and Har Hevron to 20. In other words, most of the change is not gradual over the entire period, but is concentrated between 2020 and 2025. The spatial picture shows that the growth is not uniform: it is especially strong in Mateh Binyamin and Shomron, but is also evident in Har Hevron, Gush Etzion and the Jordan Valley. Megillot remains the smallest council in terms of number of localities, even after the increase.

It should be noted that the number of cities, four, did not change throughout the entire period. In other words, there was no significant growth in the local councils, except for Giv'at Ze'ev, which led to its declaration as a city. The number of local councils rose from 13 to only 14, with the declaration of Sha'ar HaShomron. But it should be noted that this too was cancelled in the past year and is supposed to become a regional council.

In summary, the variable points to clear institutional-spatial expansion over a decade and a half, but mainly in recent years. Up to 2020 the system was fairly stable; from 2020 to 2025 there was a structural change in the number of localities in the regional councils.



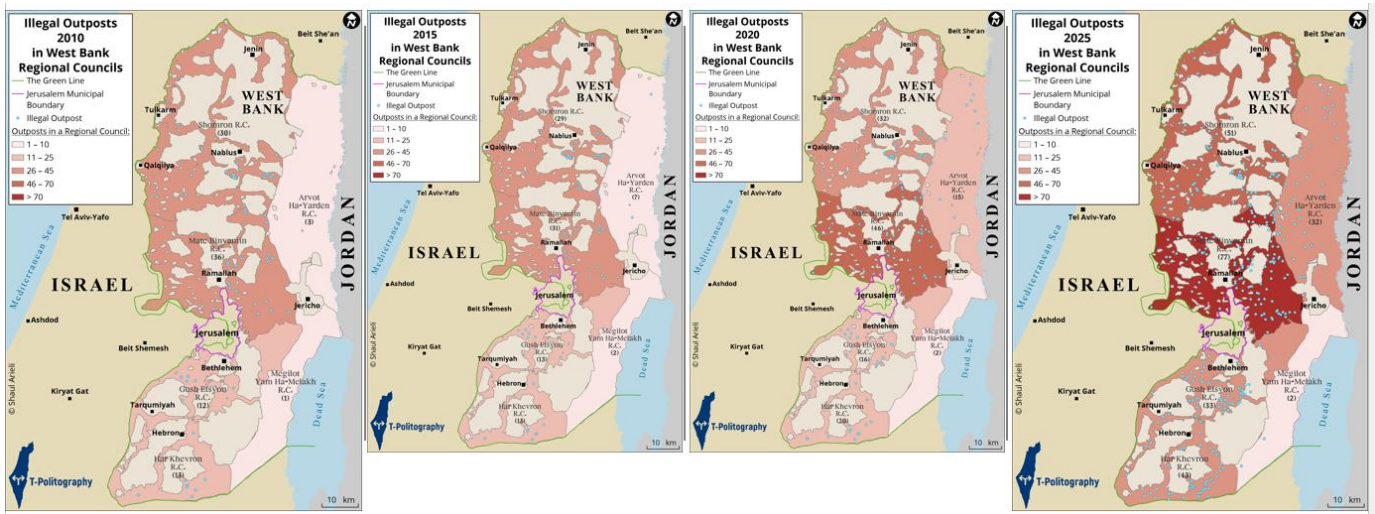
2. Outposts in the Regional Councils

In the outposts variable, a much sharper trend is evident than in the recognized localities. In 2010, 95 outposts appeared on the map in the regional councils: Mateh Binyamin 36, Shomron 30, Har Hevron 13, Gush Etzion 12, Jordan Valley 3 and Megillot Dead Sea 1. In 2015 the total number remained 95, but there was an internal shift: the Jordan Valley rose from 3 to 7, Megillot from 1 to 2, Gush Etzion from 12 to 13, while Shomron and Mateh Binyamin declined slightly. In other words, up to 2015 there was no overall growth, but rather an internal movement among the councils.

From 2020 a clear acceleration trend begins. The total number of outposts rises to 131: Mateh Binyamin 46, Shomron 32, Har Hevron 20, Gush Etzion 16, Jordan Valley 15 and Megillot 2. In 2025 there is already a sharp jump: 238 outposts. Mateh Binyamin reaches 77, Shomron 51, Har Hevron 43, Gush Etzion and the Jordan Valley 33 and 32 respectively, and Megillot remains at 2.

The meaning is that the main change occurred between 2020 and 2025: an addition of 107 outposts in a single period. The increase is especially prominent in Mateh Binyamin, but also in

Har Hevron, Shomron, Gush Etzion and the Jordan Valley. By contrast, Megillot barely participates in the expansion trend. The map shows that outposts are not a marginal phenomenon spatially: they multiply mainly in the large councils, and create an additional layer of Jewish presence outside the official settlement system. This is the variable in which the expansion between 2020 and 2025 is the sharpest. It should be noted that the cities and local councils generally do not hold outposts or farms.



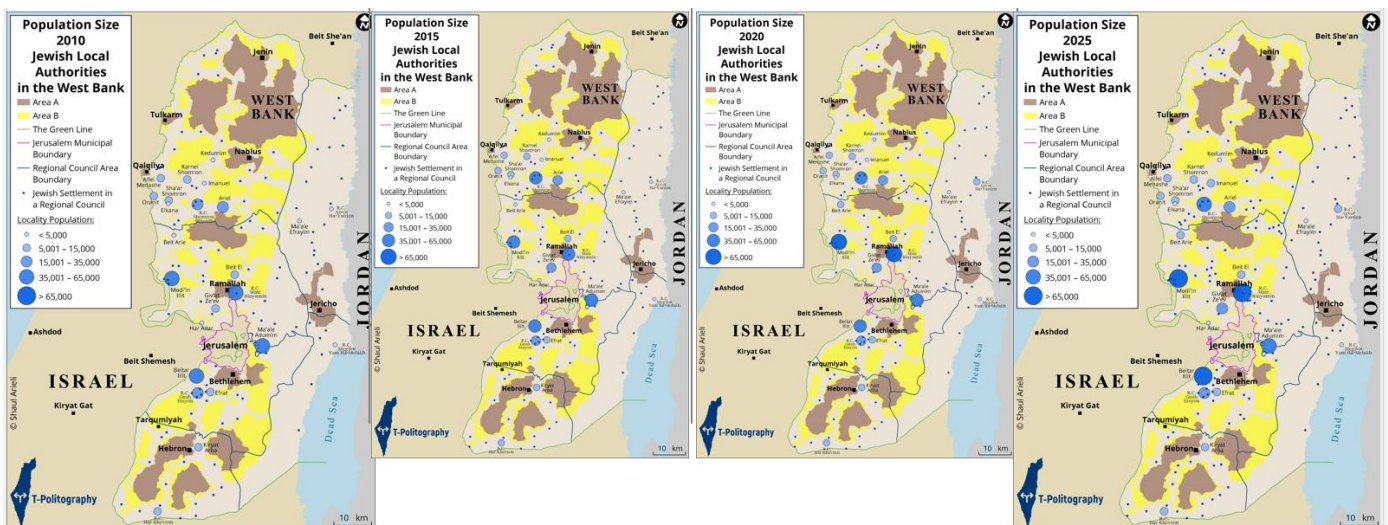
3. Size of the Israeli Population in Judea and Samaria

The size of the population in 2010, 2015, 2020 and 2025 follows a consistent pattern: most Jewish localities in the West Bank are small localities, while most of the population is concentrated in a limited number of urban and large localities. The map categories distinguish between localities of up to 5,000 residents, 5,001-15,000, 15,001-35,000, 35,001-65,000 and more than 65,000. Over the years, the weight of the large localities has increased, but this does not change the fact that the broad spatial distribution rests on a large number of small settlement points.

In 2010, a distinction between the large urban localities and the rest of the space is already evident. Modi'in Illit, Beitar Illit, Ma'ale Adumim, Ariel and Giv'at Ze'ev stand out more than the rural and communal localities. In 2015, and even more so in 2020, the category of large localities expands, mainly in the western West Bank and in the Jerusalem area. By 2025, the dominance of

the large urban localities stands out even more, especially those in which the population is growing rapidly.

The research significance is that one must distinguish between "spatial expansion" and "demographic weight.". The map shows many small localities spread over a large area, but population growth is not distributed among them equally. A large part of it is concentrated in the large urban localities. Therefore, demographically, Jewish settlement in the West Bank is not only a network of rural or communal localities, but a two-headed system: on one side, a broad distribution of small localities, and on the other, a concentration of population in several cities and large localities. This is a stable pattern over all the years, and it strengthens by 2025.



4. Annual Growth¹

The annual growth rate presents a different picture from population size. Here the size of the locality is not measured, but rather its annual rate of change. The map categories include localities with negative growth, localities with almost no growth, and localities in higher growth ranges up to 15%. Therefore, this variable makes it possible to distinguish between large localities

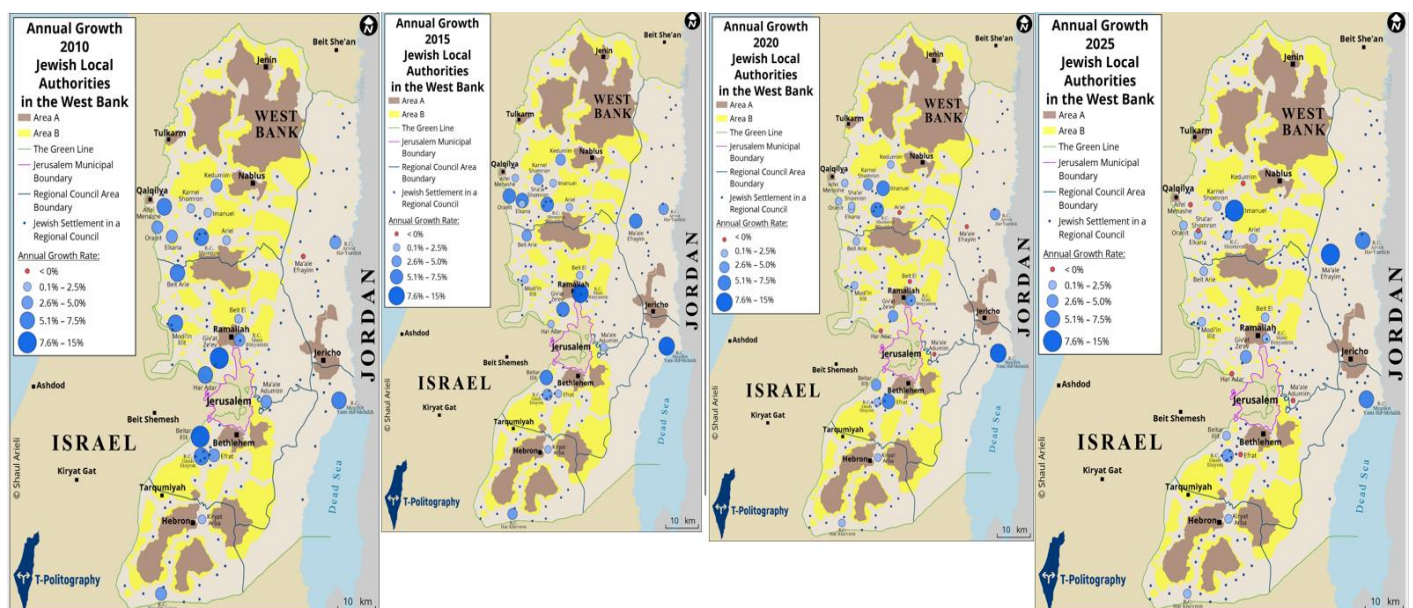
¹ **Annual growth:** Population growth during a given period is the result of three components: birth, death, and total net migration. The change may be positive (the population has increased) or negative (the population has decreased).

that are growing slowly and small localities that can show high growth rates because of a low population base.

In 2010, growth centers appear in several areas, especially in the larger localities and in some of the small localities. In 2015, the picture is still relatively positive: there is a distribution of localities colored in medium and high growth categories, mainly in the western West Bank, in the Jerusalem area and in parts of Shomron. In 2020, the trend continues, but a more mixed map can already be seen, in which alongside localities growing at a high pace there are also localities growing at a moderate or negative pace.

In 2025, the picture becomes more complex. The high growth rates are not distributed uniformly, but appear in several focal points. At the same time, localities with low or negative growth rates multiply. It follows that overall demographic growth does not necessarily indicate broad growth throughout settlement. Some localities continue to grow at a significant pace, while others approach stagnation and even decline.

The meaning is that the settlement system is becoming more differentiated. There is no uniform trend of demographic expansion in all localities. Growth is concentrated in specific focal points, while in other localities the demographic pull is weaker. This variable is especially important because it shows the quality of growth, and not only its overall scope.



5. Natural Growth²

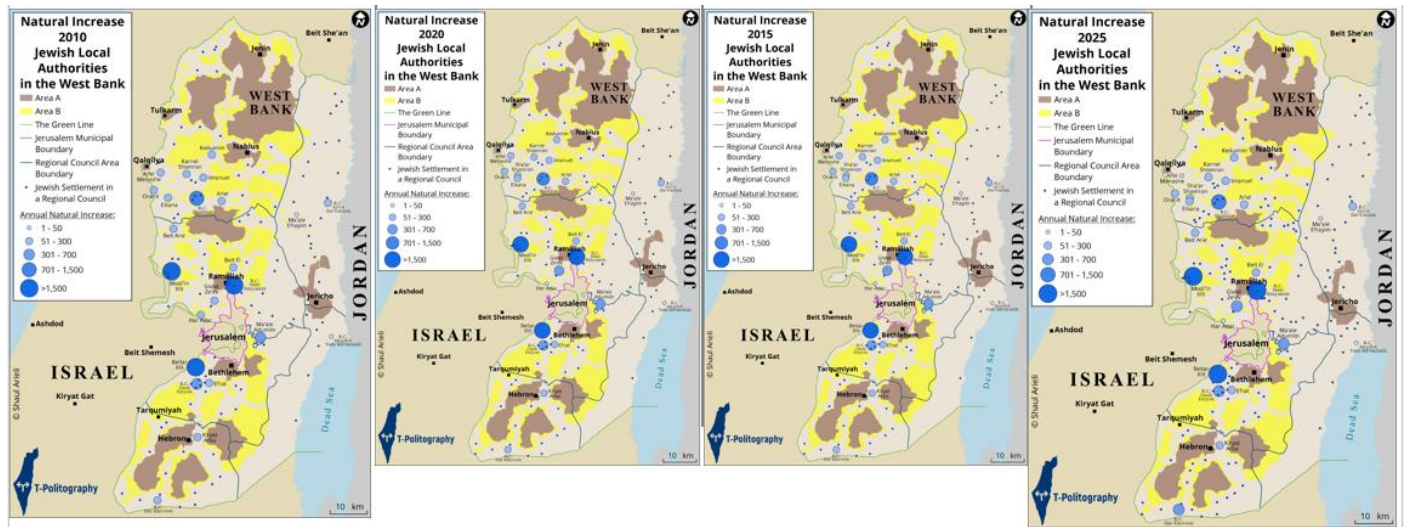
Natural increase is one of the central variables for understanding demographic growth in Jewish settlement in the West Bank. Unlike the annual growth rate, here the measure is the absolute number of population additions arising from the gap between births and deaths. The map categories range from 1-50, through 51-300, 301-700, 701-1,500 and over 1,500. Therefore, the large localities receive more significant weight, because the absolute number of births in them is also higher.

Throughout the entire period, from 2010 to 2025, natural increase is concentrated mainly in the large urban localities and in localities with a young age structure. Modi'in Illit and Beitar Illit stand out especially in the maps, as do other large localities in the Jerusalem area and in the western West Bank. In the smaller localities, mainly in the regional councils, natural increase usually appears in lower categories. This does not necessarily indicate a low birth rate, but rather a small population base.

The multi-year trend points to relative stability of the natural increase engine. Unlike the migration balances, in which changes, fluctuations and even a shift to negative balances are seen in some localities, natural increase remains a significant and consistent source of growth. In 2025 it continues to appear as a central engine of population addition in the large localities.

The research significance is that demographic growth in settlement does not rely only on population moving in from outside. In certain places, and especially in localities with a young and large population, natural increase alone generates a considerable population addition. Therefore, even when internal or overall migration weakens, settlement can continue to grow because of the age structure and natural increase.

² **Natural growth** – the difference between births and deaths for a given population in a given period.



6. Total Migration Balance³

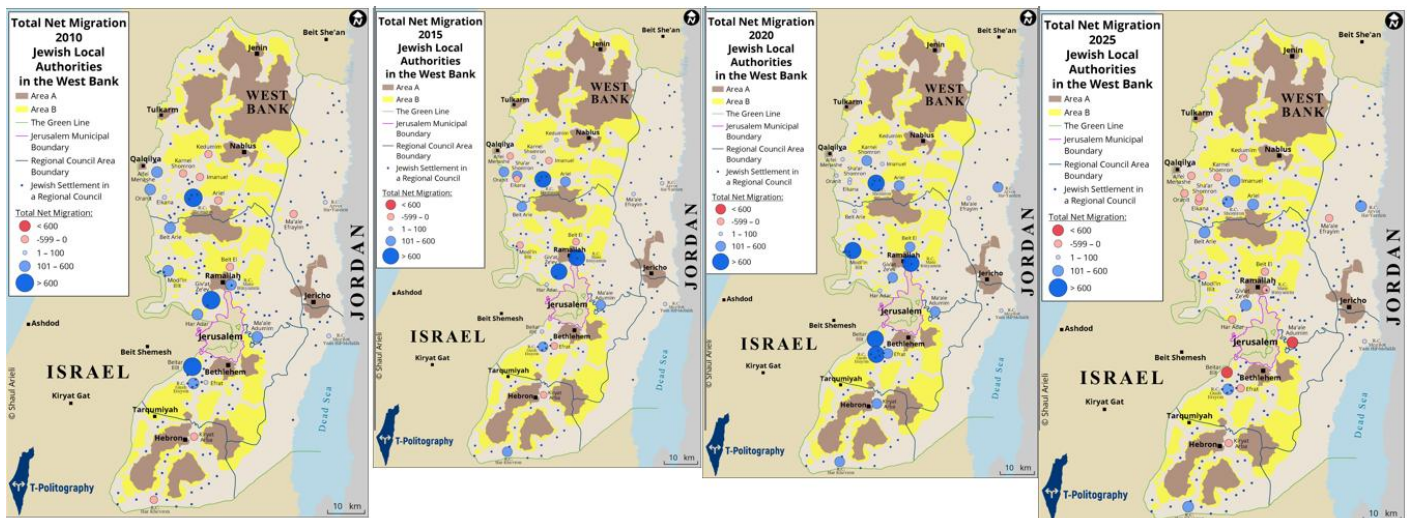
The overall migration balance presents the gap between entries and exits, and it is fundamentally different from natural increase. Whereas natural increase reflects an internal process of the population, the migration balance examines the locality's pulling power in relation to population movement. The maps show positive and negative balances, with blue marking a positive balance and red marking a negative balance. The marking ranges reach above 600, making it possible to identify both significant attraction centers and departure centers.

In 2010, several positive migration centers appear, mainly in the large localities and in localities close to the Jerusalem and central region. Alongside these, there are also negative centers, but they do not dominate the map. In 2015 the picture is similar: the overall migration balance is still positive in several central focal points, but is already not uniform throughout the space. In 2020, greater complexity is evident, with localities in which the balance is positive alongside localities in which the balance is negative.

³ **Total migration balance:** change in the area of residence of a given population due to the physical movement of individuals, i.e. – the difference between the number of migrants arriving in a given area and the number of migrants leaving that area. When the number of individuals arriving in an area is greater than the number leaving, the migration balance is positive. When the number leaving the area is greater than the number arriving, the migration balance is negative. The migration balance includes the domestic migration balance and the international migration balance.

In 2025, a weakening of overall migration as a broad engine of growth is evident. More negative markings appear, and the positive balance is concentrated in only several localities. The meaning is that continued demographic growth is not necessarily the result of the attraction of a new population to all settlement. On the contrary: in some localities there is net departure.

The comparison between the overall migration balance and natural increase is especially important. It indicates that overall growth can continue even when migration weakens, because natural increase compensates for this in large and young localities. It follows that settlement does not present a uniform model of "attraction," but rather a split model: limited attraction centers alongside localities in which migration does not support growth.



7. Internal Migration

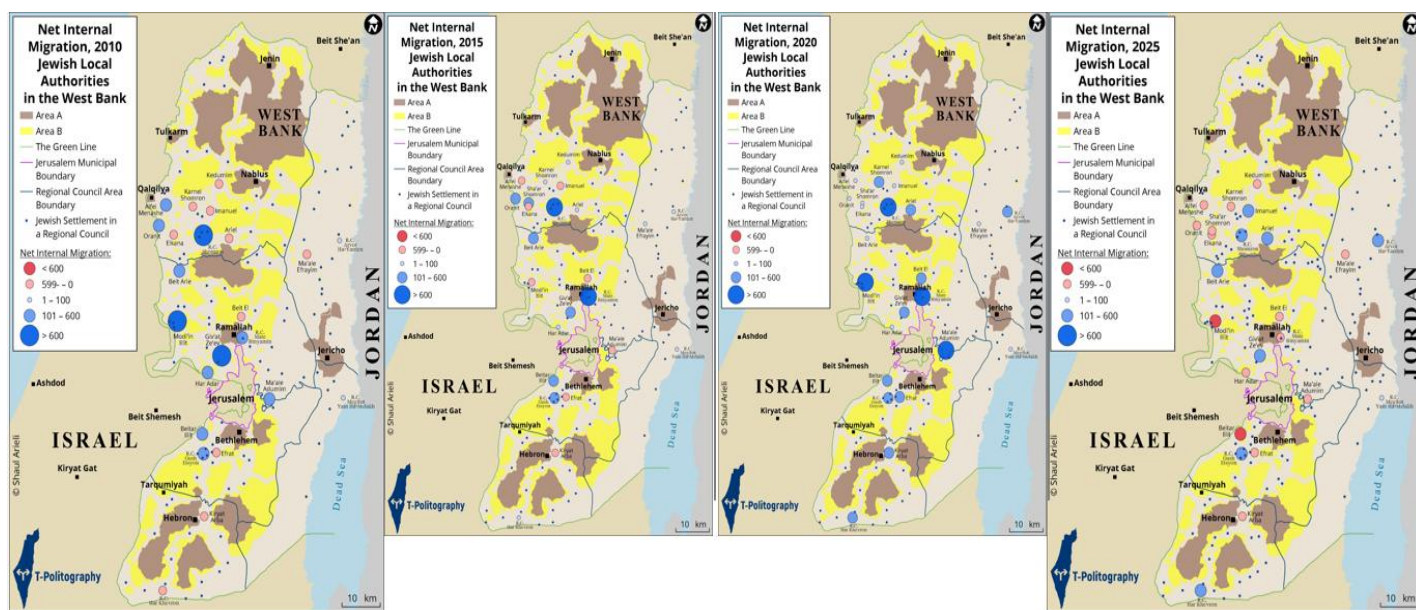
Internal migration examines population movement between localities within the Israeli system, as distinct from international migration. This is an important variable because it shows the extent to which the West Bank localities succeed in attracting residents from other localities, and the extent to which they lose population to other places. In the maps, as in the overall migration balance, blue marks a positive balance and red marks a negative balance.

In 2010, internal migration is positive in several focal points, mainly in large localities or in localities with relative accessibility to central Israel and Jerusalem. Alongside this, there are also

localities in which the balance is low or negative. In 2015 this pattern continues: there is no uniform movement toward all settlement, but rather point-specific attraction. In 2020, the picture becomes more mixed, with some localities continuing to attract internal population and others showing a weaker balance.

In 2025, a trend of weakening in the internal migration balance is evident in a considerable part of the map. More negative markings appear, and the positive balance remains concentrated in several focal points. It follows that internal migration cannot serve as a general explanation for demographic growth in settlement. It explains growth in only some of the localities, while in other places it actually indicates erosion or lack of attraction.

The meaning is that Jewish settlement in the West Bank is not a uniform housing market. It includes localities that succeed in attracting residents from within Israel, and other localities that lose residents. When internal migration is compared with natural increase, a clear conclusion emerges: in many places, growth stems more from the internal demographic structure than from positive internal migration. This is a significant finding for understanding the demographic stability of settlement.



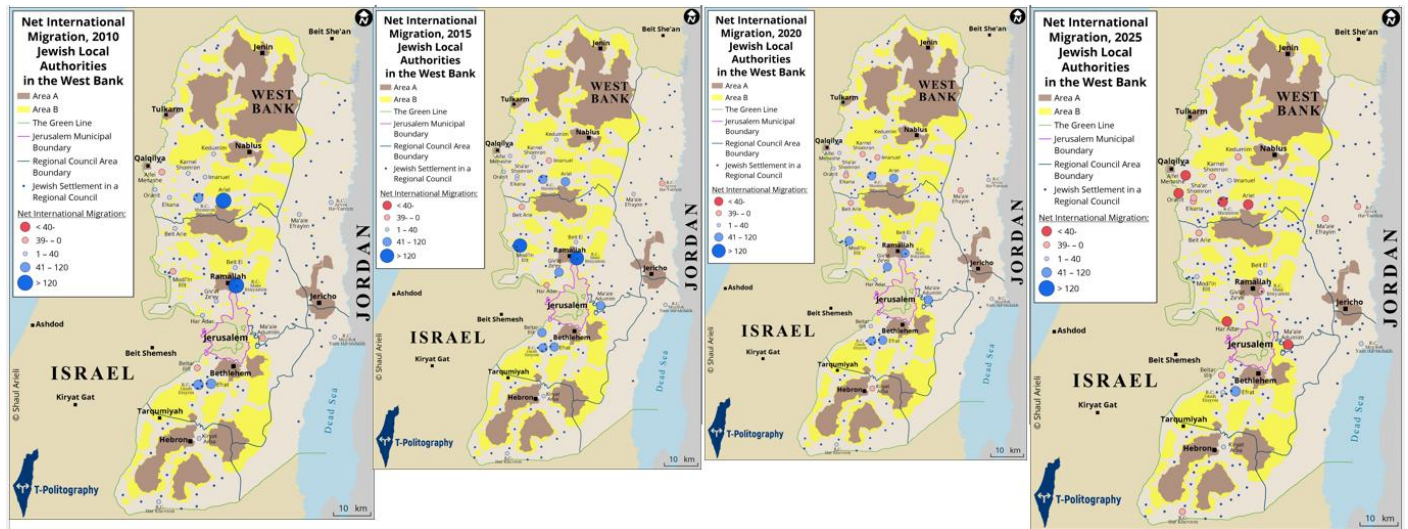
8. International Migration

International migration is presented on the maps on a smaller scale than overall and internal migration. The map categories range from a negative balance, through a low balance, to a positive balance of over 120. The ranges themselves show that this is a variable with smaller numerical weight than natural increase or internal migration. Therefore, its importance is not necessarily in the overall scope, but in identifying point-specific areas of influence.

In 2010, isolated centers of positive international migration are visible, alongside many localities in which the contribution is low or marginal. In 2015 the picture is similar: international migration does not change the overall demographic structure, but adds a limited component in certain localities. In 2020, several clearer positive centers appear, but this is still not a broad distribution or a central demographic engine.

In 2025, there is a notable increase in the number of localities in which the international balance is negative or low. Even when positive centers exist, they do not change the overall picture: international migration does not explain most of the growth in settlement. Compared with natural increase, in which large and significant centers appear, international migration remains a secondary variable.

The research significance is that one must be cautious about attributing demographic growth in settlement to aliyah or migration from abroad. According to the maps, this component exists but is limited. It may affect certain localities in certain years, but it does not change the overall pattern: settlement grows mainly through natural increase, and in some places also through internal migration. International migration is an accompanying factor, not a leading factor.



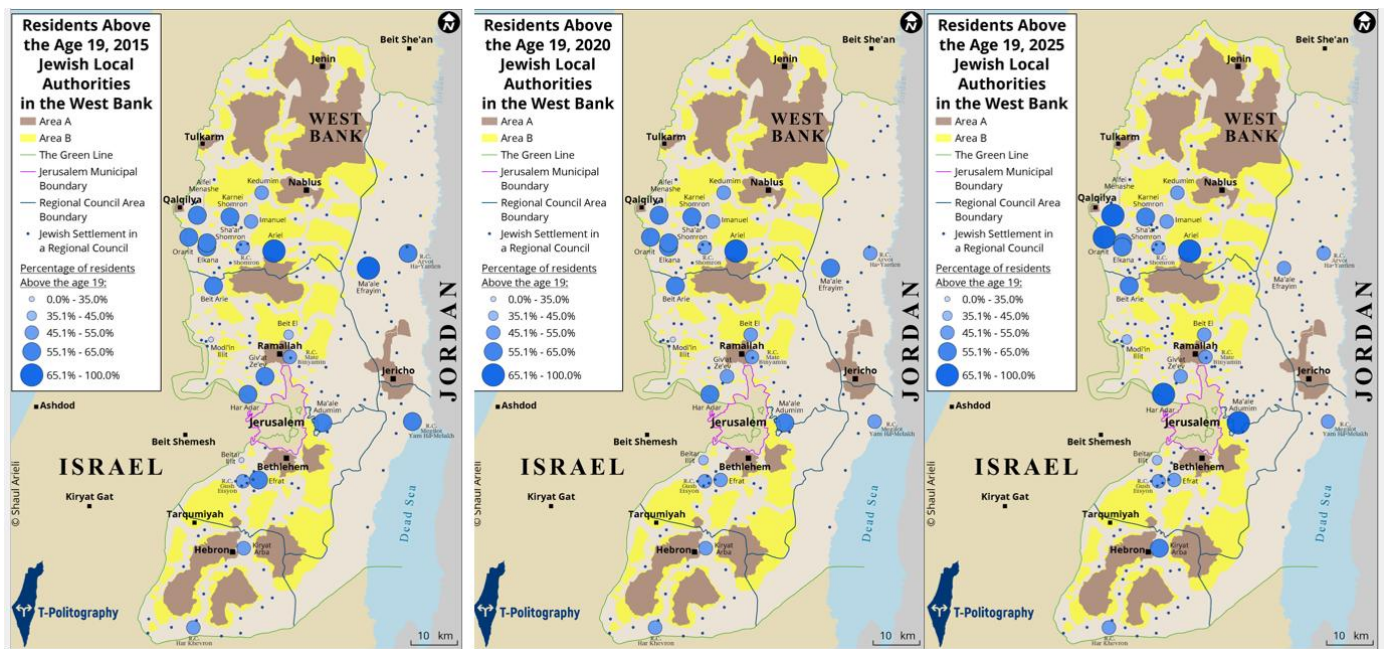
9. Residents Over Age 19

The maps of the share of residents over age 19 appear for the years 2015, 2020 and 2025, and therefore the multi-year analysis here focuses only on the last decade. The map categories range from 0%-35% to 65.1%-100%. The variable makes it possible to distinguish between very young localities, in which the share of children is high, and more mature localities, in which the share of adults is high.

Across the three years presented, a fairly stable picture emerges: a high share of people aged 19 and over appears mainly in older, smaller localities, or those whose population structure is less young. By contrast, in localities in which young families and children are a central component, the share of people aged 19 and over is lower. This gap is especially prominent when compared with the map of residents up to age 19.

In 2015 there is already a clear distinction between young localities and more mature localities. In 2020 the pattern is maintained, and in 2025 there is no revolutionary change in the distribution. In other words, there is no uniform "aging" of settlement as a whole, but rather the continued existence of significant differences between types of localities. Some of the localities maintain a very young structure, while others show a higher share of adult population.

The meaning is that the age structure in settlement is not uniform. There are localities in which the share of adults is relatively high, but there are also focal points in which children and youth constitute a central part of the population. This explains why natural increase remains significant: in places where the share of people aged 19 and under is high, the potential for internal growth is higher. Therefore, the age variable is a key to understanding the other growth variables.



10. Residents Up to Age 19

The map of residents up to age 19 is largely the mirror image of the map of residents over age 19. Here too, the years 2015, 2020 and 2025 are shown, and the categories reach very high shares of young population. The variable is important because it points to the depth of the young demographic structure in settlement, and not only to the total number of residents.

In 2015, localities in which the share of children and youth is especially high stand out. These are mainly localities with a young family population, and especially urban or communal localities in which large families have significant weight. In 2020 the picture is maintained: the young population centers do not disappear, but continue to appear in the same general areas. In 2025

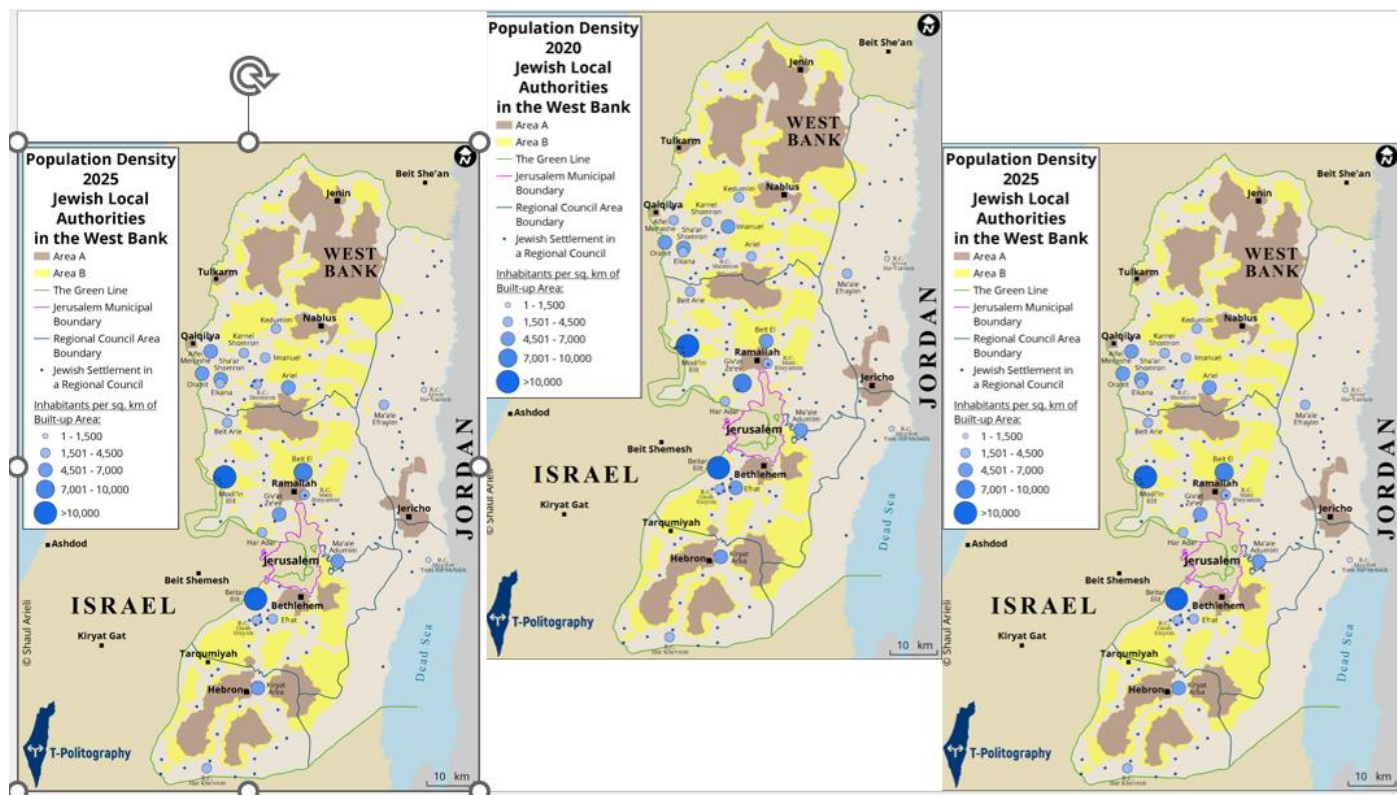
11. Population Density

The population density maps for the years 2015, 2020 and 2025 present the number of residents per square kilometer in the built-up area. The map categories range from 1-1,500 residents per square kilometer to over 10,000. This is an important variable because it separates population size from the pattern of land use. A large locality is not necessarily dense, and a small locality is not necessarily sparse if its built-up area is limited.

Throughout the period, a distinction is evident between dense urban localities and more rural, communal or dispersed localities. In 2015, high-density centers are already visible, mainly in urban localities with concentrated construction. In 2020 these centers are maintained and even become more pronounced. In 2025 the same trend continues: high density is concentrated in several localities, while a large part of the settlement space remains at low or medium density.

This pattern is especially important against the background of the map of localities and outposts. The number of localities and outposts indicates a broad spatial distribution, but the density map shows that the population itself is not dispersed in the same way. There is a gap between spatial control through many settlement points and demographic concentration in fewer, denser localities.

Therefore, the central conclusion is that settlement combines two different models: a dense urban model, in which a large population lives in a relatively limited built-up area; and a more sparse spatial model, in which many localities are spread over large areas but house a relatively small population. By 2025 this gap is not narrowing, but remains a basic feature of the settlement structure.



12. Haredim

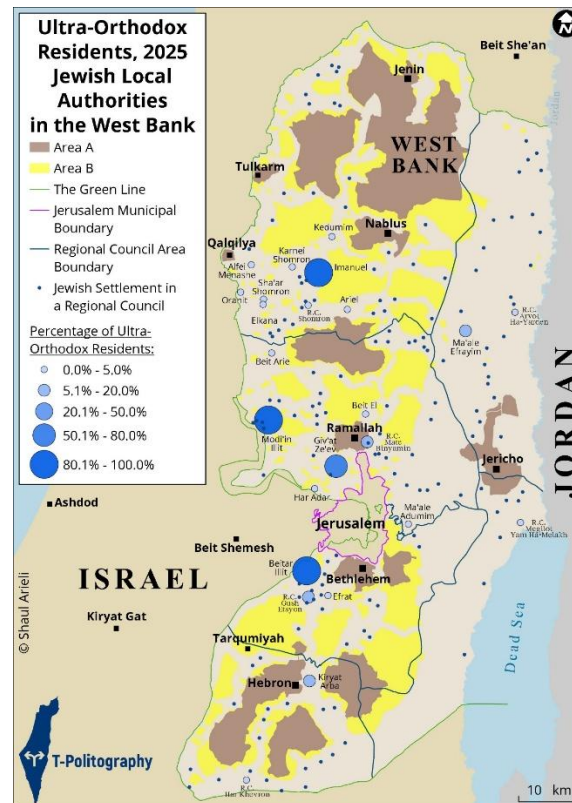
The map indicates that the Haredi population is not distributed uniformly across Jewish settlement in the West Bank, but rather is concentrated in several clear focal points. The prominent concentrations are found mainly in urban or semi-urban localities, especially in the western area and around Jerusalem.

The variable helps explain several of the patterns seen in the previous maps. In Haredi localities, or in localities where there is a significant Haredi presence, one may expect a younger age structure, a higher share of residents up to age 19, more substantial natural increase and, at times, higher population density. Therefore, although the map does not allow for trend analysis, it does provide an interpretive key for understanding the age variables, natural increase and density.

It is important to emphasize: Haredi character does not characterize the entire settlement space. There are extensive areas, mainly in the regional councils and in more sparse spaces, where the

Haredi marking is small or absent. In other words, settlement cannot be discussed as a single social bloc. Within it there are areas and localities with a distinct Haredi profile, alongside areas with a different profile.

Therefore, the description of the variable for 2025 is one of selective concentration: Haredim constitute a significant demographic component in certain focal points, but not a uniform spatial phenomenon. From a research perspective, this is a central explanatory variable, but not a variable that by itself allows one to determine a direction of change over time.



13. Authority Budgets

The comparison between the Jewish authorities in Judea and Samaria and all authorities in Israel in 2024, according to the authority file published by the Central Bureau of Statistics at the end of June, regarding the regular (current) budget and the extraordinary (development) budget, requires methodological caution. Therefore, the comparison was made within each type of authority separately: cities, local councils and regional councils compared with their counterparts

throughout Israel. In Judea and Samaria there are 24 authorities: four cities, fourteen local councils and six regional councils: Gush Etzion, Har Hevron, Megillot Dead Sea, Mateh Binyamin, Jordan Valley and Shomron.

The picture that emerges from the data is complex, but the direction is clear: in Judea and Samaria there is no single budgetary model. The cities show a pattern of relatively low revenues per capita and high dependence on certain government budgets; the local councils actually show a relative budgetary advantage compared with all local councils in Israel; while the regional councils expose the most significant gap between their share of the population and their share of government funds, mainly in the extraordinary budget. In other words, the story is not "all of Judea and Samaria receives more" or "all of Judea and Samaria receives less," but rather how the money is allocated, to which type of authority, and in which budgetary item.

In the four cities - Ariel, Beitar Illit, Modi'in Illit and Ma'ale Adumim - 219,361 residents lived at the end of 2024. Their share of the total population of cities in Israel is 2.9%. However, the share of the cities in Judea and Samaria of total receipts of all cities in Israel stands at only 1.9%. In other words, relative to their demographic weight, the cities in Judea and Samaria receive a lower share of total urban receipts. Their own-source revenues are also very low relative to their share of the population: they constitute only 1.4% of total own-source revenues of all cities, and their own-source revenues from property tax are only 1.1%. This is a dramatic gap that indicates a relatively weak local economic base, and especially a low weight of business and employment-related property tax.

This figure is especially important because it shows that the budgetary weakness of the cities in Judea and Samaria does not stem only from government decisions, but also from the socio-economic composition and the structure of revenue sources. The two largest cities in the group are Modi'in Illit and Beitar Illit, Haredi cities with relatively low own-source revenues, whose population constitutes one-third of the population of Judea and Samaria and is almost three times larger than the population of the two secular cities. Therefore, revenues per capita in the regular budget in the cities stand at only NIS 6,704, compared with NIS 9,796 in all cities in Israel.

Expenditure per capita in the regular budget is almost identical at its low level: NIS 6,728 in the cities of Judea and Samaria compared with NIS 9,830 in all cities. In other words, the cities in Judea and Samaria do not enjoy a budget surplus per capita; on the contrary, they operate at a level of revenue and expenditure per capita that is about one-third lower than the national urban average.

However, when government components are examined, a more balanced picture emerges. The share of the cities in Judea and Samaria in government revenues in the regular budget is 2.8%, almost identical to their share of the population of cities. Their share of government participation in the extraordinary budget is 3.1%, slightly above their share of the population. In revenues from the Ministry of Welfare they stand at 2.9%, again almost according to their demographic share. By contrast, in revenues from the Ministry of Education their share is lower, 2.1%, and in expenditures for labor costs in education their share is especially low, only 0.9%. The meaning is that among the cities there is no evidence of an overall surplus, but rather the opposite: own-source weakness, low revenue per capita, and government reliance that does not significantly exceed their share of the population. This is not entirely surprising because the populations of Modi'in Illit and Beitar Illit are Haredi, while the populations of Ma'ale Adumim and Ariel are secular. In other words, they are not the political base of the minister of finance, nor of the ministries operating in Judea and Samaria, such as the Ministry of Heritage. In addition, the cities do not hold illegal outposts or grazing farms, and their residents generally do not take part in Jewish terrorism. In other words, they do not participate in the strategic effort led by the government to push Palestinians out and expel them from Area C.

In the local councils the picture is different. The fourteen local councils in Judea and Samaria - half of them religious-national, five secular and two Haredi - number 115,224 residents, who constitute 8.4% of the total population of local councils in Israel. But their share of total receipts of all local councils stands at 10.2%, higher than their share of the population. Their share of government revenues in the regular budget is 9.7%, and in government participation in the extraordinary budget 10.6%. Their own-source revenues are also higher than their demographic

share: 11.2% of total own-source revenues of all local councils, and 9.8% of own-source revenues from property tax. In other words, unlike the cities, the local councils in Judea and Samaria are not budgetarily weak relative to their comparison group.

This is especially prominent in per capita indicators. Revenues per capita in the regular budget in the local councils in Judea and Samaria stand at NIS 10,363, compared with NIS 8,368 in all local councils in Israel. Expenditure per capita in the regular budget stands at NIS 10,592 compared with NIS 8,503 nationwide. This is an advantage of about one-quarter relative to the national average of the same type of authority. Here one can already speak of a relative budgetary advantage, not as a slogan but as a numerical finding. Still, precision is also required here: in revenues from the Ministry of Education, the share of the councils in Judea and Samaria is 8.4%, almost identical to their share of the population, and in revenues from the Ministry of Welfare 8.7%, slightly above their share. In expenditures for labor costs in education, their share is actually lower than their share of the population, 7.0%. In other words, the overall advantage does not necessarily derive from a single education item, but from a combination of own-source revenues, overall receipts and government transfers.

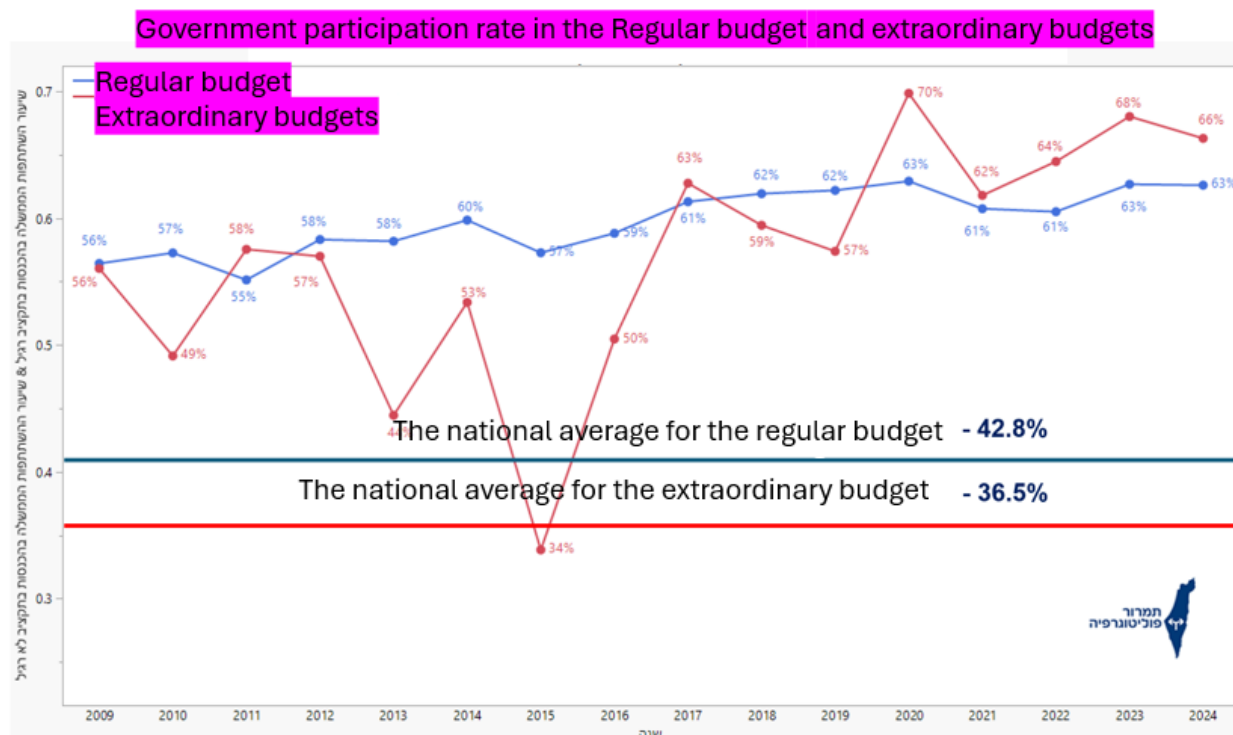
The sharpest finding is found in the regional councils. The six regional councils in Judea and Samaria - the very small secular Megillot, the mixed Jordan Valley, and the other four religious-national councils that manage more than 95 percent of the various Jewish localities - numbered 180,010 residents at the end of 2024, who constituted 17.2% of the total population of regional councils in Israel. Their share of total receipts of all regional councils is 16.5%, slightly below their share of the population. On the face of it, there is no preference here. But when total receipts are broken down into their sources, an entirely different mechanism is revealed: the share of the regional councils in Judea and Samaria in government revenues in the regular budget is 22.4%, and their share in government participation in the extraordinary budget reaches 29.7%. In other words, although they hold 17.2% of the population of the regional councils, they receive almost one-third of government participation in the extraordinary budget of all regional councils in Israel.

This is the most central figure in the analysis. It points to clear government preference in the financing of development, infrastructure and investments that are not part of the regular current budget. The extraordinary budget is the place where policy becomes concrete, road, public buildings and infrastructure, as well as farms and outposts. When the share of the six regional councils in Judea and Samaria in this budget is 1.72 times higher than their share of the population of the regional councils, this is a finding with political and spatial significance, not merely accounting significance. This is not a marginal error in a table, but evidence of an allocation pattern.

Precisely for this reason it is also important to note that in the regional councils in Judea and Samaria, own-source revenues are relatively weak. Their share of total own-source revenues of all regional councils is only 9.5%, and their share of own-source revenues from property tax is 9.1%, far below their share of the population. In other words, the regional councils in Judea and Samaria do not rely on a strong local revenue base; they rely much more significantly on the government. This is also evident in revenues from the Ministry of Education: their share stands at 21.3%, higher than their share of the population, and in revenues from the Ministry of Welfare 18.7%, slightly above their share. By contrast, in expenditures for labor costs in education, their share is 16.0%, slightly below their demographic share.

The per capita indicators add an important layer: revenues per capita in the regular budget in the regional councils in Judea and Samaria are NIS 11,706, compared with NIS 12,505 in all regional councils in Israel. Expenditure per capita is NIS 11,822 compared with NIS 12,551. In other words, despite clear government preference in the government components and especially in the extraordinary budget, the regular budget per capita in the regional councils in Judea and Samaria is slightly lower than the national average of the regional councils, but higher than the local councils and cities in Judea and Samaria. The likely explanation lies in the composition of the sources: fewer own-source revenues and less property tax, much more government. This is budgetary dependence, not local economic strength.

The overall conclusion is that comparison of the authorities in Judea and Samaria with the country as a whole cannot be limited to the question of how much money comes in. The right question is where the money comes from, to which type of authority, and in which budget item. In the cities of Judea and Samaria, relative budgetary weakness is evident, mainly due to low own-source revenues and low revenues per capita. In the local councils, a budgetary advantage is evident compared with all local councils in Israel. In the regional councils, the most significant political-budgetary pattern is exposed: a relatively low own-source revenue base, alongside especially high government participation, mainly in the extraordinary budget. This is the place where government policy does not hide behind balancing formulas or technical definitions. It appears first in the numbers themselves: less own capacity, more government, and above all more development investment in an area whose political and legal status is outside Israel's sovereignty. And second, in the construction and ongoing financing of illegal outposts, the establishment of grazing farms and their maintenance in almost every field, the paving of bypass roads to isolated settlements, the granting of various tax benefits, and development within the council areas.



B. Relationships Among the Various Variables

The combined examination of the variables points to a fundamental gap between the spatial distribution of Jewish settlement in the West Bank and its demographic weight. The number of Jewish localities in the regional councils and the number of outposts point to a clear expansion of spatial presence, mainly between 2020 and 2025. However, the population size map shows that the spatial addition does not necessarily overlap with a significant demographic addition in every settlement point. In other words, the multiplication of localities and outposts increases dispersal and spatial visibility, but most of the population continues to be concentrated in a relatively limited number of large and urban localities. This is a central relationship: broad spatial expansion alongside more limited demographic concentration.

Another relationship exists among population size, natural increase and age structure. The large localities, especially those with a high share of young population, are also more significant centers of natural increase. The map of residents up to age 19 and the map of residents over age 19 help explain why in some localities demographic growth continues even when the migration balance is not necessarily positive. A locality with a very young population generates higher internal growth, and therefore natural increase can serve as a relatively independent engine of growth. In this sense, the age variables are not merely a demographic description, but a key to understanding growth trends.

The relationship between annual growth and the overall migration balance, internal migration and international migration is more complex. The annual growth rate does not derive from one source. In some localities it rests on natural increase; in others it may also be supported by positive migration. However, the maps indicate that migration is not a uniform engine throughout settlement. There are attraction centers, but also localities in which the balance is negative or weak. Therefore, one should not infer from the overall growth of settlement an equal pulling power of all localities. That would be too convenient, and therefore of course also inaccurate.

The distinction between internal migration and international migration strengthens this conclusion. Internal migration is a more significant component for understanding population movement within the Israeli system, but it too is not uniform. International migration appears as a more limited component, with point-specific influence and not as a central engine of the system as a whole. Therefore, when the three migration variables are added to natural increase, a clear picture emerges: the demographic growth of settlement rests to a large extent on internal processes, and not on residents moving in from outside.

The density variable adds an important dimension to the relationships among the variables. Large and dense localities are not similar to small and sparse localities, even if both belong to the same settlement system. High density is related mainly to urban localities, where a large population is concentrated in a relatively limited built-up area. By contrast, the multiplication of localities and outposts in the regional councils expresses a broader distribution, but not necessarily high density or significant demographic weight. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish among three different dimensions: the number of settlement points, the number of residents, and population density.

The Haredi variable helps interpret some of the demographic relationships. Concentrations of Haredi population are generally related to a young age structure, higher natural increase and higher density in certain localities. However, the Haredi concentration is not distributed uniformly throughout the West Bank, but is focused in several localities and areas. It should therefore not be seen as a general characteristic of all settlement, but rather as a very important demographic component in certain focal points.

C. Summary of All Variables

The overall analysis of the variables points to a complex settlement system that cannot be described through a single measure. On the one hand, between 2010 and 2025 there is significant expansion in the number of Jewish localities in the regional councils, and especially in the number of outposts. On the other hand, the population size map shows that most of the demographic

weight is not necessarily located in those many points spread across the space, but rather in several large, urban and denser localities. Therefore, the central picture is a gap between broad spatial distribution and clear demographic concentration.

The demographic variables show that population growth is not uniform. The annual growth rate varies among localities, and in some of them there are even signs of slowdown or a negative balance. By contrast, natural increase remains a stable and significant engine, mainly in the large localities and in localities with a young population. It follows that the continued overall growth of settlement is not necessarily evidence of broad population attraction from outside, but in many cases the result of an internal demographic structure.

The migration variables strengthen this conclusion. The overall migration balance and internal migration point to significant differences among localities: there are localities that continue to attract population, and there are those that lose population or show a weak balance. International migration appears to be a more secondary variable, with point-specific rather than systemic influence. Therefore, there is no basis for describing settlement as one space that is entirely in a phase of demographic attraction. Reality is less convenient for slogans, as usual.

The age structure is one of the important keys to understanding the overall picture. A high share of residents up to age 19 in some localities explains the strength of natural increase and continued internal growth. By contrast, in localities where the share of people aged 19 and over is higher, the growth pattern may be more moderate and more dependent on migration balances. These differences show that "settlement" is not a uniform demographic unit, but a collection of localities with very different profiles.

Population density also emphasizes the internal split. In certain urban localities there is a high concentration of population in a limited built-up area, while in the regional councils and in other spaces there is a broader and more sparse distribution. Thus, a dual system is created: dense and demographic urban settlement, alongside dispersed spatial settlement that shapes presence on the ground but does not necessarily carry the main population weight.

The Haredi variable adds an important explanatory layer to the picture. It points to significant Haredi concentrations in several focal points, mainly around large localities and the Jerusalem area, and not to a uniform distribution throughout all settlement. Therefore, it helps explain the relationship among young population, natural increase and density, but does not make it possible to determine a multi-year trend by itself.

In summary, all the variables depict a system in which spatial expansion is accelerating, mainly through the multiplication of localities and outposts; demographic growth is concentrated in large localities with a young population; migration is not uniform and does not by itself explain the growth; and the socio-demographic structure, including the Haredi component, affects patterns of growth and density. This is not a picture of uniform development, but of a split system: a small number of large and dense population centers, many small settlement points, and outposts that greatly expand the spatial distribution.

D. The Demographic, Functional and Municipal Weakness of Settlement

First, the policy being pursued is one of spatial expansion and not of demographic and functional thickening. The central finding is the gap between the growth in the number of localities and outposts and the concentration of most of the population in a limited number of large, urban and dense localities. The number of localities in the regional councils rose to 149 in 2025, and the number of outposts reached 238, but the demographic weight remains concentrated mainly in the cities and large localities. Nevertheless, the emphasis today is on adding small localities and outposts, instead of strengthening the localities with growth, services, employment and density potential.

Second, the settlement system lacks a clear settlement hierarchy: cities and large localities as demographic anchors; medium-sized localities as secondary centers; small localities as community localities; and outposts and farms as a component that should not be seen as a stable demographic base as long as it does not meet thresholds of population, planning, infrastructure and services. Without such a hierarchy, the system will continue to be split: a few large

population centers and many small points, expensive to maintain and sparse in population. In planning terms, this is not resilience; it is expensive dispersion masquerading as strategy.

Third, there is no concentration of investment in more varied and denser housing in the large and medium-sized localities. Policy focuses on single-family homes, and not on multi-family construction, small apartments for young couples, long-term rental apartments, solutions for large families and renewal within built-up areas. OECD planning literature emphasizes that compact development patterns, higher density and public transportation planning together can prevent costly and inefficient patterns of dependence on private vehicles.

Fourth, there is no connection between residential construction and local and regional employment. The current system is a commuter-dependent residential area: people live in Judea and Samaria, but work, consume services and manage their economic lives outside the localities. The system is unstable because there is no development in it of regional employment areas, commerce, services, post-secondary educational institutions, vocational training and remote-work infrastructure. The OECD emphasizes that accessibility to services, jobs and transportation is a central condition for vital regional communities, and that the absence of services reinforces territorial disparities.

Fifth, the transportation priorities are extremely problematic: budgets are invested in providing access to every small settlement point, and less in strong public transportation axes between population centers. The existing transportation system weakens the cities and the medium-sized localities, and encourages broad dispersion of the population. All the components of proper transportation are absent: high frequency, connectivity to Jerusalem, the Dan Region and Be'er Sheva according to area, park-and-ride facilities, public transportation lanes, and the integration of residential planning with efficient transportation stations.

Sixth, the municipal and fiscal base of the authorities is extremely weak. The authorities rely mainly on grants and government transfers. They lack own-source revenues, mainly from employment, commerce and services.

Seventh, there are no regional clusters and shared services among authorities. The multiplication of small localities makes it difficult to provide high-quality services, and there is no regional cooperation in education, welfare, waste disposal, internal transportation, emergency services, planning and environment.

Eighth, the Haredi localities are a demographic engine, but this engine lacks a dedicated policy. The Haredi concentrations are related to a young age structure, high natural increase and density, but they lack adapted planning such as dense but high-quality housing, educational institutions, strong public transportation, employment for women and men, vocational training and urban services on a large scale. Therefore, natural increase enlarges the population, but does not necessarily increase economic and municipal resilience.

Ninth, internal migration is negative. Growth is not uniform, and in some localities migration is weak or negative. Therefore, growth occurs through natural increase. The reasons for negative migration are varied: housing prices, employment, transportation, personal security, education, quality of life or absence of services. A locality that does not succeed in attracting population over time does not truly grow stronger.

Tenth, there is no determination of sustainability thresholds before further expansion. Current policy is to add a new settlement point or regularize an outpost without a complete plan for water, sewage, electricity, roads, education, health, public transportation, security, an operating budget and municipal capacity.

Eleventh, the professional capacity of the local authorities is very weak. For sustainable demographic planning, they lack engineering departments, strategic planning, data analysis, budget management, transportation planning, education and welfare.

Twelfth, there is no annual indicators dashboard for every locality: number of residents, annual growth rate, natural increase, overall migration balance, internal migration, share of children, share of people aged 19 and over, density, own-source revenues, jobs, travel times to services, availability of public transportation, classrooms, health services and budget balance. The absence

of such measurement allows development to proceed through slogans, meaning decision-making without responsibility.

In conclusion, current policy is one of infatuation with distribution on the map, and much less of building a system capable of sustaining people, families and authorities over time. If the trends described continue over the coming decade, the overall picture in the West Bank will be of a Jewish settlement system that is broader in space, but not necessarily stronger in a uniform demographic sense. The number of localities and outposts is expected to continue growing, especially in the regional councils where the prominent acceleration between 2020 and 2025 was evident; in other words, the Jewish presence on the ground will be more dispersed, more point-based, and have a greater spatial impact. However, most of the demographic weight will continue to be concentrated in a relatively limited number of large, dense and young localities, mainly those relying on high natural increase. By contrast, many small localities may remain sparsely populated, and even show stagnation or a negative migration balance. Therefore, in ten years the distinction between territorial expansion and real demographic growth may become even sharper: more settlement points and outposts on the map, but a population concentrated mainly in the cities and large localities. The Haredi variable is expected to continue affecting the age structure, natural increase and density in certain focal points, but not to turn settlement as a whole into something Haredi or uniform. In research terms, this will likely be a more polarized system: dense, young and growing in several focal points; dispersed, sparse and less stable in other spaces. In short, more hold on the space, but not necessarily more demographic resilience everywhere.