

Demographic Development in the Mediterranean Area

by Luigi di Comite and Maria Rosaria Carli

1. Introduction

Any expert in population problems knows well that the area of the Mediterranean basin - where the populations belonging to three continents, extremely heterogeneous on account of traditions, education, religion, culture, economic resources, etc., meet - represents one of the world areas in which new economic and social orders are emerging, also because of the coexistence of very different demographic trends.

Having already analysed on previous occasions the demographic aspects of this problem, from the point of view both of the differentiated demographic dynamics (Di Comite, 1988; Blangiardo Di-Comite, 1989) and of the migratory flows concerning the Mediterranean area (Di Comite, 1985; Di Comite, 1989), this time we intend to make a brief review of the main differences that can be observed, at present and in the future, about the demographic balances in this area, studying the U.N. data, that are quite similar to one another.

2. The Differential Demographic Growth

Before analysing the demographic situation of the Mediterranean area, it is very useful to make some considerations about the present world trend, according to what has already been observed on previous occasions (Vallin, 1986; Di Comite - Cutrignelli, 1989).

The data shown in Table 1, even if synthetic, give quite a precise idea of the recent world dynamics and of its future evolution - according to the average variable of the demographic forecasts published by the United Nations in 1986 (United Nations, 1986).

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The world population, that at present is little more than 5 billion, was nearly 2.5 billion in 1950; as a matter of fact, in less than forty years, the world population has doubled.

Continuing in its development, it is bound to reach more than 6 billion before the end of this century and 8.2 billion in 2025.

Tab. 1 - World demographic evolution for geographic area, 1950 - 2025

GEOGRAPHIC AREAS	POPULATION (in million)				1000 r			
	1950	1980	2000	2025	1950-80	1980-2000	2000-25	1950-2025
Whole World	2516	4450	6122	8206	19,2	16,1	11,8	15,9
Developed countries	832	1137	1277	1396	10,5	5,8	3,6	6,9
Developing Countries	1684	3313	4845	6809	22,8	19,2	13,7	18,8
Africa	224	479	872	1617	25,7	30,4	25,0	26,7
Eastern Asia	671	1176	1475	1721	18,9	11,4	6,2	12,6
Southern Asia	704	1408	2074	2814	23,4	19,6	12,3	18,6
Latin America	165	361	546	779	26,4	20,9	14,3	20,9
North America	166	252	297	345	14,0	8,2	6,0	9,8
Europe	392	485	512	524	7,1	2,7	0,9	3,9
U.S.S.R.	180	265	315	368	13,0	8,7	6,2	9,6
Oceania	13	23	30	38	19,2	13,4	9,5	14,4
E.E.C.	259	318	330	329	6,9	1,9	-0,1	3,2
Mediterranean Area	220,3	342,5	444,7	559,4	14,8	13,1	9,2	12,5
a) Europe	150,2	193,1	209,4	217,7	8,4	4,1	1,6	5,0
b) Asia	27,5	60,4	92,8	136,7	26,6	21,7	15,6	21,6
c) Africa	42,6	88,9	142,4	205,0	24,8	23,8	14,7	21,2

Source: United Nations (1986)

Briefly, as is clearly shown by the annual average variation rates calculated by

$$r = \left(\frac{P_t + h^{1/h}}{P_t} \right) - 1,$$

the development speed of the population should undergo progressive contractions, because the value of r is 19.2% in 1950-80, 16.1% in 1980-2000 and 11.8% in the following 25 years.

However, the main problem linked to the world population growth is, above all, the huge heterogeneity that can be observed moving from the developed countries to the developing ones, in other words, from one continent to another.

According to these considerations, we feel it necessary to underline some data shown in Table 1, even if we are obliged to leave out other aspects of this phenomenon:

- the population percentage belonging to the developed countries shrinks remarkably from 33.1% in 1950 to 17.0% in 2025;
- the African population incidence grows very rapidly from 8.9% in 1950 to 19.7% in 2025;

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- (c) the European population decreases considerably from 15.6% in 1950 to 6.4% in 2025;
- (d) even the Mediterranean population diminishes from 8.8% in 1950 to 6.8% in 2025.

It is quite evident that this evolution is greatly affected by the different levels in birth and death rates. The natural growth rate that is at present reckoned, all over the world, about 17%, varies considerably passing from the developed countries (5%) to the developing ones (21%); moreover, even inside these two groups we can observe several heterogeneous situations because:

- (a) in a large number of developed countries the rate is negative, null or even more than 1%;
- (b) in a much larger number of developing countries, the rate is more than 30%.

3. Natural Movement and Demographic Growth in the Mediterranean Area

At present in the Mediterranean area, there are extreme situations as far as the natural movement, and therefore, the population growth strength is involved.

In the 18 countries that, even on other occasions (Di Comite, 1988) we have mentioned as belonging to this area (see Table 2), there are crude birth rates reaching 40%, (Syria and Algeria) and rates of 10-11%. (Italy, Spain, Greece, etc.) which are not enough to guarantee the generation substitution.

Tab. 2 - Estimation on the doubling time of the demographic size of the Mediterranean countries, based on the birth and death situation (1986)

Countries	Crude Rates (%.)		Difference (1000 r)	$t = \frac{\log 2}{\log (1+r)}$
	birth	death		
Portugal	12	9	3	231,4
Spain	11	8	3	323,4
France	14	10	4	173,6
Italy	10	9	1	693,5
Yugoslavia	15	9	6	115,9
Albania	25	6	19	36,9
Greece	11	10	1	693,5
Malta	15	8	7	99,4
Turkey	30	8	22	31,9
Syria	44	6	38	18,6
Lebanon	28	7	21	33,4
Israel	23	7	16	43,7
Cyprus	19	9	10	69,7
Egypt	38	9	29	24,2
Lybia	39	8	31	22,7
Tunisia	32	7	25	28,1
Algeria	42	10	32	22,0
Morocco	36	10	26	27,0

Actually, at present, the natural growth of these populations is essentially guaranteed by the low crude death rates, due to the favourable age structure of the population, and is bound to disappear progressively with the development of the demographic aging processes.

Leaving out the future evolution of fertility and mortality in these countries, let us consider the present situation observing the data in Table 2 and particularly the data on the natural growth rate, that can be reckoned as the difference existing between the birth and death rates. These data become more and more interesting if we consider the ratio

$$t = \frac{\log 2}{\log (1+r)} \quad [2]$$

that is the doubling time (expressed in years) of a population growing according to the Malthusian hypothesis, because it gives us the possibility of estimating in a different way the size of the diversities already observed (see Fig. 1).

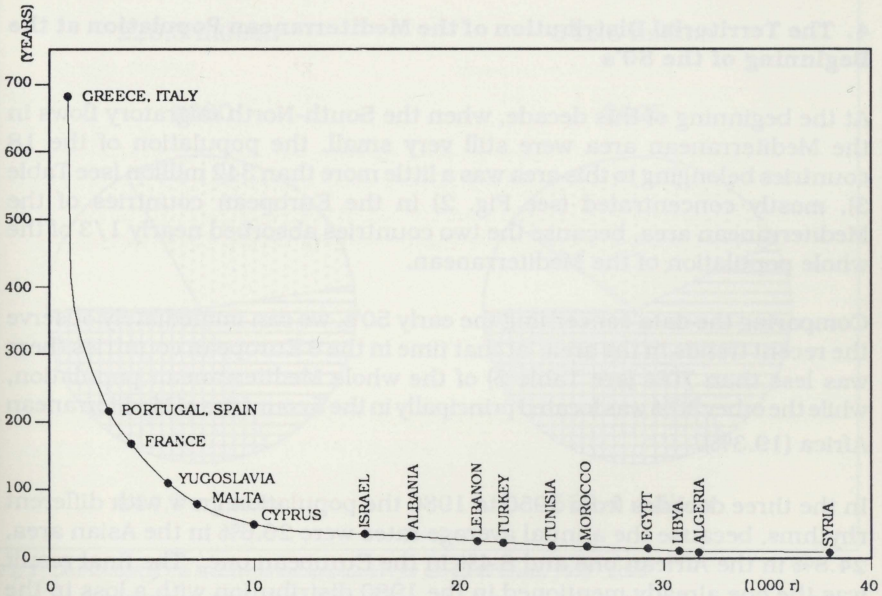


Fig 1 - Doubling time of a population developing according to the malthusian hypothesis

Just considering the natural movement and leaving out other important aspects such as the migratory flows and the structural characteristics of the populations, the data in Table 2 and Fig. 1 clearly show the dualism between the European shore countries and the Asian and African ones.

In most of the European countries the demographic transition processes have already ended and now there is a traditional or new post-transitional

phase (Van de Kaa, 1987), while, on the other hand, in a large number of Asian and African countries a population explosion is taking place with the due adaptations because of the case specificity (Trifa, 1988).

This consideration explains the heterogeneity in the Mediterranean countries, among which we can observe the cases of Italy and Greece with a natural growth rate of 1%, meaning that their population should double in more or less 700 years, and the case of Syria, with a rate of 38%, meaning that it should double its population in less than 20 years.

The coexistence of such situations in quite a limited territorial area like the Mediterranean one explains the importance of the demographic aspect in the progressive development and growth of the South-North migratory flows involving this area; in fact, these flows have contributed in determining the transition of countries such as Italy (Natale, 1988) and Spain (Munoz Peres and Izquierdo Escribano, 1989) from traditional emigration to new immigration areas.

4. The Territorial Distribution of the Mediterranean Population at the Beginning of the 80's

At the beginning of this decade, when the South-North migratory flows in the Mediterranean area were still very small, the population of the 18 countries belonging to this area was a little more than 342 million (see Table 3), mostly concentrated (see Fig. 2) in the European countries of the Mediterranean area, because the two countries absorbed nearly 1/3 of the whole population of the Mediterranean.

Comparing the data concerning the early 50's, we can immediately observe the recent trends in the area: at that time in the 8 European countries there was less than 70% (see Table 5) of the whole Mediterranean population, while the other 30% was located principally in the 5 countries of Mediterranean Africa (19.3%).

In the three decades from 1950 to 1980 the population grew with different rhythms, because the annual average rates were 26.6% in the Asian area, 24.8% in the African one and 8.4% in the European one. The final result was the one already mentioned in the 1980 distribution with a loss in the European demographic proportion in favour of a more dynamic Asian and African areas.

Each area was characterized by extremely differentiated situations both on account of the demographic size of the various countries and, above all, the population growth.

As far as the European area is concerned, Italy was the most populated

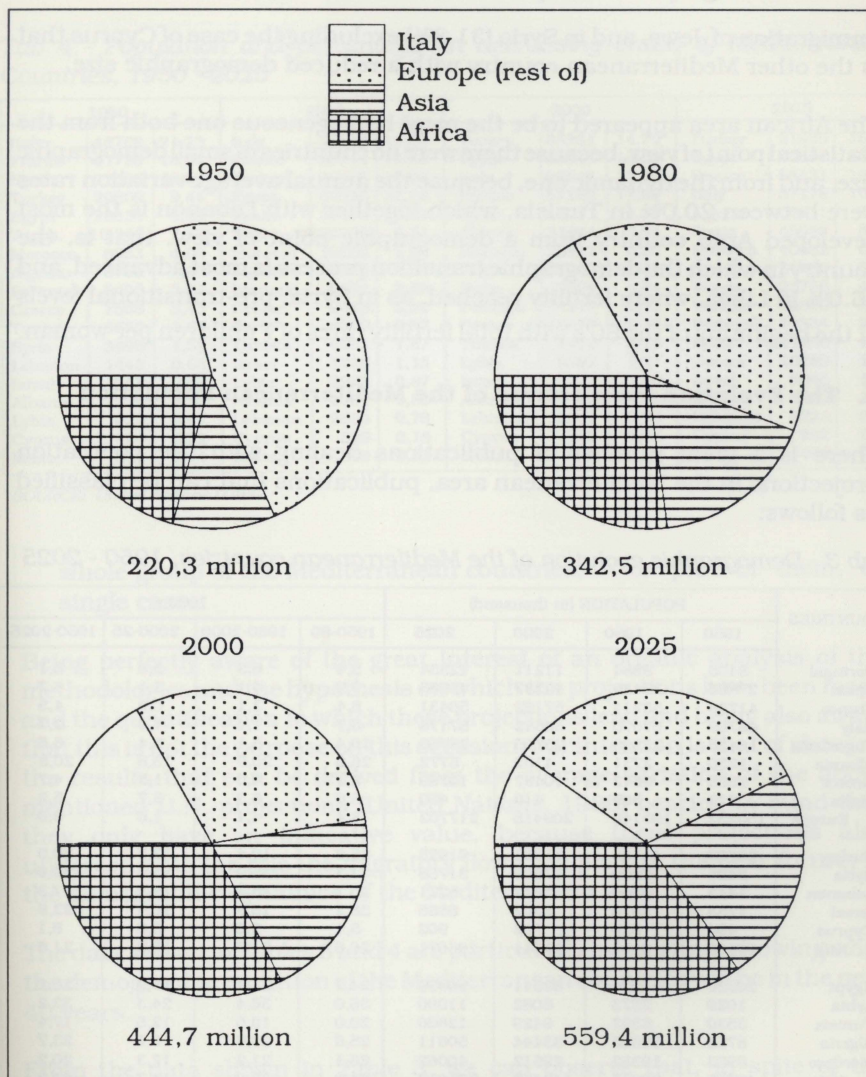


Fig 2 - Distribution of the Mediterranean population for territorial areas, 1950 - 2025

country with 57 million inhabitants and Malta occupied the last place of the list (see Table 4) with 400 thousand inhabitants; in the years from 1950 to 1980 the annual average growth rates were between 5.4% in Portugal, still characterized by emigration flows, and 26.9% in Albania which can be really considered as a rare example of closed population.

In Asia, where there is only one country of an ample demographic size, the situation was quite different because the annual average population variation rates were high especially in Israel (38.2%) due to the considerable

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immigration of Jews, and in Syria (31.3%) excluding the case of Cyprus that is the other Mediterranean country with a reduced demographic size.

The African area appeared to be the most homogeneous one both from the statistical point of view, because there were no countries of small demographic size, and from the dynamic one, because the annual average variation rates were between 20.0% in Tunisia, which together with Lebanon is the most developed Arab country from a demographic point of view, that is, the country in which the demographic transition process is most advanced, and 36.0% in Libya, where fertility reached, as in Syria, pre-transitional levels at the beginning of the 80's with total fertility rates of 7 children per woman.

5. The Evolution Perspectives of the Mediterranean Population

There is a great number of publications dealing with the population projections in the Mediterranean area, publications that can be classified as follows:

Tab 3 - Demographic evolution of the Mediterranean countries, 1950 - 2025

COUNTRIES	POPULATION (in thousand)				1000 r			
	1950	1980	2000	2025	1950-80	1980-2000	2000-25	1950-2025
Portugal	8405	9884	11211	12334	5,4	6,3	3,8	5,1
Spain	27868	37430	42237	45983	9,9	6,1	3,4	6,7
France	41736	53714	57162	58431	8,4	3,1	0,9	4,5
Italy	46769	57070	58642	57178	6,7	1,4	-1,0	2,7
Yugoslavia	16436	22299	25206	26756	10,4	6,1	2,4	6,6
Albania	1230	2731	4102	5772	26,9	20,5	13,8	20,8
Greece	7566	9643	10437	10789	8,1	4,0	1,3	4,7
Malta	312	369	418	459	5,6	6,3	3,7	5,2
Europe	150232	193140	209415	217702	8,4	4,1	1,6	5,0
Turkey	20809	44468	65351	91925	25,6	19,4	13,7	20,0
Syria	3495	8800	17809	31758	31,3	35,9	23,4	29,9
Lebanon	1443	2669	3617	5221	20,7	15,3	14,8	17,3
Israel	1258	3878	5302	6865	38,2	15,8	10,4	22,9
Cyprus	494	629	762	902	8,1	9,6	6,8	8,1
Asia	27499	6044	92841	136671	26,6	21,7	15,6	21,6
Egypt	20330	41520	63941	90399	24,1	21,8	13,9	20,1
Lybia	1029	2973	6082	11090	36,0	36,4	24,3	32,2
Tunisia	3530	6392	9429	12860	20,0	19,6	12,5	17,4
Algeria	8753	18666	33444	50611	25,6	29,6	16,7	23,7
Morocco	8953	19382	29512	40062	26,1	21,2	12,3	20,2
Africa	42595	88933	142408	205022	24,8	23,8	14,7	21,2
Total	220326	342517	444664	559395	14,8	13,1	8,2	12,5

Source: United Nations (1986)

- (a) projections made by international bodies, such as the United Nations and the World Bank, grouping all the world countries, and, therefore, the Mediterranean ones;
- (b) projections made by the National Statistic Institutes, dealing with single countries;
- (c) projections made by single experts or research bodies dealing with the

Tab 4 - Population and percentage (in decreasing order) of Mediterranean Countries, 1950 - 2025

1950			1980			2000			2025		
Italy	46769	21,23	Italy	57070	16,66	Turkey	65351	14,70	Turkey	91925	16,43
France	41736	18,94	France	53714	15,68	Egypt	63941	14,38	Egypt	90399	16,16
Spain	27868	18,94	Turkey	44468	12,98	Italy	58642	13,19	France	58431	10,45
Turkey	20809	9,44	Egypt	41520	12,12	France	57162	12,86	Italy	57178	10,22
Egypt	20330	9,23	Spain	37430	10,93	Spain	42237	9,50	Algeria	50611	9,05
Yugos.	16,346	7,42	Yugos.	22299	6,51	Algeria	33444	7,52	Spain	45983	8,22
Morocco	8953	4,06	Morocco	19382	5,66	Morocco	29512	6,64	Morocco	40062	6,64
Algeria	8753	3,97	Algeria	18666	5,45	Yugos.	25206	5,67	Syria	31758	5,68
Portugal	8405	3,81	Portugal	9884	2,89	Syria	17809	4,01	Yugos.	26756	4,78
Greece	7566	3,43	Greece	9643	2,82	Portugal	11211	2,52	Tunisia	12860	2,30
Tunisia	3530	1,60	Syria	8800	2,57	Greece	10437	2,35	Portugal	12334	2,20
Syria	3495	1,59	Tunisia	6392	1,87	Tunisia	9429	2,12	Lybia	11090	1,98
Lebanon	1443	0,65	Israel	3878	1,13	Lybia	6082	1,37	Greece	10789	1,93
Israel	1258	0,57	Lybia	2973	0,87	Israel	5302	1,19	Israel	6865	1,23
Albania	1230	0,56	Albania	2731	0,80	Albania	4102	0,92	Albania	5772	1,03
Lybia	1029	0,47	Lebanon	2669	0,78	Lebanon	3617	0,81	Lebanon	5221	0,93
Cyprus	494	0,22	Cyprus	629	0,18	Cyprus	762	0,17	Cyprus	902	0,16
Malta	312	0,14	Malta	369	0,11	Malta	418	0,09	Malta	459	0,08

SOURCE: United Nations (1986)

whole group of the Mediterranean countries, or part of them, or single cases.

Being perfectly aware of the great interest of an organic analysis of the methodologies and the hypothesis on which the projections have been made and the quantification to which these projections lead and being also aware that this is not the purpose on this occasion, our intention is that of showing the results that can be derived from the average variation of the above mentioned U.N. projections (United Nations, 1986) bearing in mind that they only have an indicative value, because these projections also underestimate the role the migratory flows will play, in the near future, in the demographic dynamics of the Mediterranean area.

The data shown in Tables 3 and 4 are particularly interesting, showing what the demographic evolution of the Mediterranean countries will be in the next 40 years.

From the data shown in Table 3, we can observe that, in spite of the progressive general contraction of the annual average variation rates, the population should continue to grow except in Italy.

As far as Italy is concerned, we can expect in 2025 a population that is lower than the one foreseen for 2000: and this is because of the low fertility rates and the hypothesis which is - according to us quite unreal - of a negative migratory settlement with the foreign countries; while, at present, in our country we observe a progressive expansion of immigration from the developing countries, including the African and Asian shore of the Mediterranean area (Golini, 1988; Manese, 1989).

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Referring to the period 2000-2025, that is the period in which the above mentioned rates are lower, there should still exist such countries as Libya and Syria with rates of more than 20%, or Turkey, Lebanon, Algeria and Egypt with rates of about 15%. The European shore countries, with the exception of Albania, should have rates lower than 4%, including the negative one in Italy, in sharp contrast with what we have observed on the African and Asian shore.

The consequences of these heterogeneities are evident if we observe the data shown in Tables 4 and 5, or Figures 2 and 3.

From a demographic point of view (see Table 4), we observe a progressive loss of importance of the European countries in favour of the Asian and African ones: the most significant cases are Italy, that was first until 1980 and will now be fourth in 2025, and Turkey and Egypt in 2025 will have first and second places on the list, with a much bigger population than France, which by then will be third.

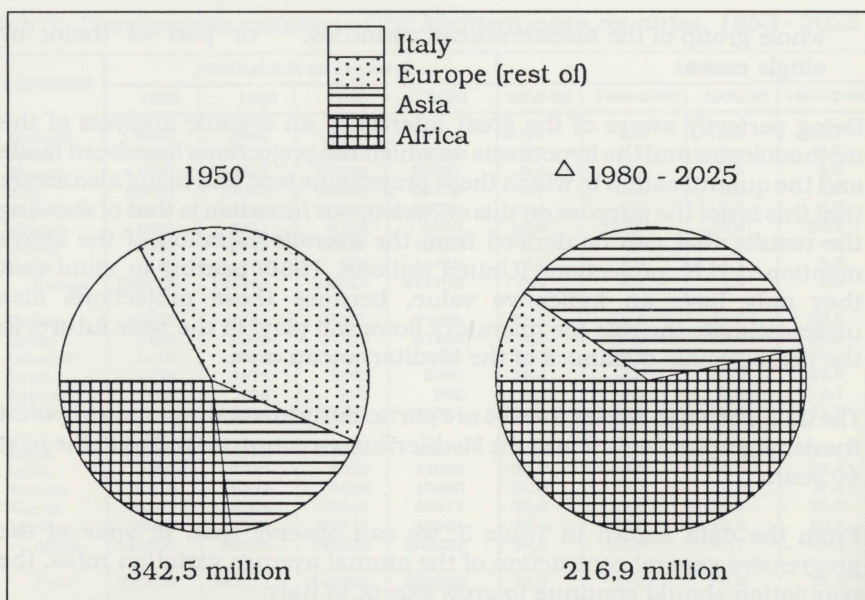


Fig 3 - Population observed in the Mediterranean area and population increase. 1980 - 2025

From the point of view of population growth, Fig. 3 and the data in Table 5 show that the population growth in the period 1980-2025 is concentrated in the African and Asian countries of the Mediterranean area, because for the European countries an increase of less than 25 million inhabitants has been foreseen, much less than the one observed in the period 1950-1980 (about 43 million).

Tab 5 - Mediterranean population percentage and increase, 1950 - 2025

COUNTRIES	PERCENTAGE				POPULATION INCREASE (in thousand)		
	1950	1980	2000	2025	1950 - 1980	198 - 2025	1950 - 2025
Portugal	3,81	2,89	2,52	2,20	1479	2450	3929
Spain	12,65	10,93	9,50	8,22	9562	8553	18115
France	18,94	15,68	12,86	10,45	11978	4717	16695
Italy	21,23	16,66	13,18	10,22	10301	108	10409
Yugoslavia	7,42	6,51	5,67	4,78	5953	4457	10410
Albania	0,56	0,80	0,92	1,03	1501	3041	4542
Greece	3,43	2,82	2,35	1,93	2077	1146	3223
Malta	0,14	0,11	0,09	0,08	57	90	147
EUROPE	68,19	56,39	47,10	38,92	42908	24562	67470
Turkey	9,44	12,98	14,70	16,43	23659	47457	71116
Syria	1,59	2,57	4,01	5,68	5305	22958	28263
Lebanon	0,65	0,78	0,81	0,93	1226	2552	3778
Israel	0,57	1,13	1,19	1,23	2620	2987	5607
Cyprus	0,22	0,18	0,17	0,16	135	273	408
ASIA	12,48	17,65	20,88	24,43	32945	76227	109172
Egypt	9,23	12,12	14,38	16,16	21190	48879	70069
Lybia	0,47	0,87	1,37	1,98	1944	8117	10061
Tunisia	1,60	1,97	2,12	2,30	2862	6468	9330
Algeria	3,97	5,45	7,52	9,05	9913	31945	41858
Morocco	4,06	5,66	6,64	7,16	10429	20680	31109
AFRICA	19,33	25,96	32,03	36,65	46338	116089	163437
TOTAL	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	122191	216878	339069

SOURCE: United Nations (1986)

Considering that in 5 countries (Egypt, Turkey, Algeria, Syria and Morocco) the population growth foreseen for the period 1980-2025 is more than 20 million and that most of them are already emigration countries, it is easy to observe that the excessive demographic growth of these populations will cause a more accentuated emigration propension and that part of these populations should be living in the destination countries and not in their countries of origin at the end of this period.

This consideration is confirmed by the data on the population in working age shown in Table 6: these data show that the population will grow in the Asian and African countries more than the total population growth.

The resulting increase in the labour offer that will be absorbed with difficulty in the countries of origin will become a factor that will increase the tendency to migrate.

In 2025, because of the migratory phenomena, the European population of the Mediterranean area should be greater and the African and Asian one should be lower than the data we show here, and which the European countries with a history of emigration (Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece) will have, in the future, ethnic differentiated populations, as is already happening in Great Britain and the Netherlands.

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Tab. 6- Population in working age (in thousand) of the mediterranean countries, 1950 - 2025

COUNTRIES	P (15 - 64)				[P(15 - 64) / P(0 - W)] x 100			
	1950	1980	2000	2025	1950	1980	2000	2025
Portugal	5341	6287	7327	8022	63,5	63,6	65,4	65,0
Spain	18285	23485	27425	30076	65,6	62,7	64,9	65,4
France	27508	34247	37888	36750	65,9	63,8	66,3	62,9
Italy	30598	36843	38704	36275	65,4	64,6	66,0	63,4
Yugoslavia	10334	14770	16862	17102	63,2	66,2	66,9	62,9
Albania	665	1582	2574	3764	54,1	57,9	62,7	65,2
Greece	4884	6176	6654	6860	64,6	64,0	63,8	63,6
Malta	185	248	286	288	59,3	67,2	68,4	62,7
EUROPE	97800	123638	137720	139137	65,1	64,0	65,8	63,9
Turkey	12148	25228	4088	60750	58,4	56,7	62,6	66,1
Syria	1893	4338	9124	20687	54,2	49,3	51,2	65,1
Lebanon	844	1455	2188	3498	58,5	54,5	60,5	67,0
Israel	810	2268	3405	4471	64,4	58,5	64,2	65,1
Cyprus	294	411	511	565	59,5	65,3	67,1	62,6
ASIA	15989	33700	56113	89971	58,1	55,8	60,4	65,8
Egypt	11660	23218	39378	61263	57,4	55,9	61,6	67,8
Lybia	549	1519	3191	7014	53,4	51,1	52,5	63,2
Tunisia	1955	3431	5921	8897	55,4	53,7	62,8	69,2
Algeria	4857	9253	18683	34759	55,5	49,6	55,9	68,7
Morocco	4722	10217	18577	27583	52,7	52,7	62,9	68,9
TOTAL	137532	204976	279583	368624	62,4	59,8	62,9	65,9

Source: United Nations (1986)

6. Conclusion

The considerations developed in these pages might confirm the preoccupation about the demographic future of the Western European countries, Italy included, even considering the future demographic balance of the Mediterranean countries (Sauvy, 1987).

However, even if we are aware of the problems created by the differentiated growth of population in the near future, we would not agree with this pessimistic point of view if socio-economic programmes of cooperation between the developed countries of the European side of the Mediterranean and the developing countries of the Asian and African side take place.

First of all, a new intervention policy in the demographic field should be applied, aiming at reducing fertility where it reaches still pre-transitional levels, creating an explosive demographic growth and regular migration flows due to existing economic gaps, originating from the Asian and African side of the Mediterranean area and directed to the more developed Western European countries.

We also look forward to the spread of new initiatives such as the recent SIMED (Lebon, 1989) created by the International Labour Office, which is an observation system and information exchange between the Mediterranean Countries concerning the labour market and the international migrations.

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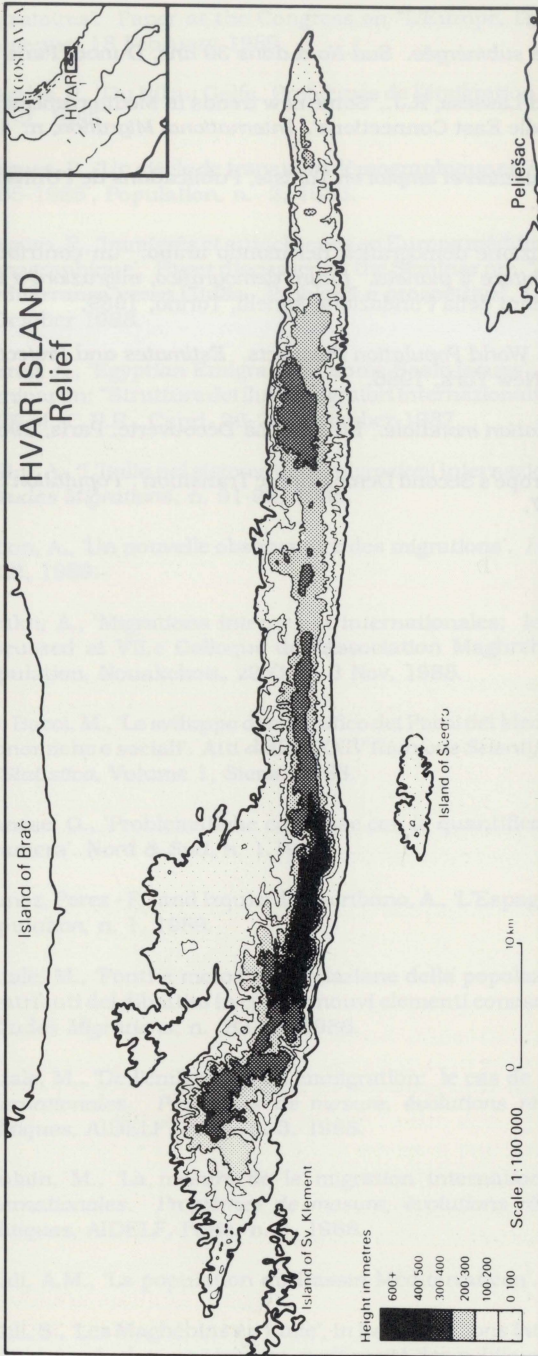


Fig. 1a- Relief map of Hvar Island, Yugoslavia