

The size and the age composition of the family determines the extent of labor available for production. Obviously, the larger the size of the family, the greater the amount of land that could be cultivated. Alternatively, in cases where family labor is more than sufficient for cultivating the land, a family member or more can work outside for wages when and if available and thus provide extra income for the family. The possibility of working for wages and the extent of available labor for use on the household's land are also determined by the age composition of the family. The more there are family members of working age relative to the total size of the family (dependency ratio), the greater the resources available to the family. In Palestine, I assume that among the population engaged in agriculture, that the better off a family was, the larger the size of the family, generally speaking. In the Palestinian rural areas, as in other rural societies, there was a high and equal birth rate among the different strata of the peasantry who were undifferentiated in their cultural attitudes toward procreation and other matters. The difference in family size derived from the variation in mortality rates among the different strata. Given the time period under discussion, and in spite of the relative improvement in health conditions, infant mortality was also determined by access to different health services, nutrition, and quality of dwelling. Families with more financial resources were better able to provide these conditions and thus had lower mortality rates.

As for the characteristic of the holding, this involved its geographical location, fertility, and kind of soil. The amount of rainfall varied substantially