

De facto population during the Covid-19 crisis

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Population measured in censuses is the 'usually resident population'. The functionality of this definition is clearly recognized. However, additional definitions are discussed, given the mobility of the population and its multiple places of consumption. Covid-19 has changed mobility patterns, inter- and intra-nationally, at least for the short-run. It is not clear yet what kind of residual influence, if at all, will be observed in the long-run.

Since the world slipped into the pandemic in a gradual process, people had time for decision-making regarding their geographic location, and governments had time to form policy regarding foreigners, before borders were closed. As a result, Israel has experienced a significant decline in the number of Israelis getting out of the country, among which are potential emigrants, while Israelis living abroad decided to come back and stay in Israel during the crisis (one may assume that the nation-state is perceived as a shelter for its residents and for its citizens during such crisis). At the same time, foreign workers were granted visa extension while new applications for working visa were not approved. In census terms, there is a non-census population of Israelis living usually abroad but de-facto staying in the country, and more foreigners are present for more than a year in the country and therefore are included in the census population, although the total number of foreign workers has not actually changed. The functionality of the definition of census population is hence somewhat hampered.

Within the country, there is a similar pattern of limited and changed mobility - of people who are on leave from work or whose lose their jobs, of people working from home, at least partially, of students leaving their dormitories or their rented apartment and going back to their parents' house etc. Not only do places of consumption become limited, but also the number of places of residence used for work or education changes. This may have an impact on the population size in localities inhabited by these specific population groups, but even if it is a temporary phenomenon, forming the census population base this year may have a long-run impact.

In the presentation, I will present some data and the questions to be asked regarding the census questionnaire and possible results.