

# Demographic Forces in S.A.

A recent paper by Professor J. L. Sadie, demographer of international repute, delineating the statistical picture of the South African demographic scene presents a great deal of significant material. It contains comparative analyses of population growth and its causative factors from 1936-1975, as also population projections for the year 2000. The paper, "The Demographic Forces in South Africa" is available in the Institute's library. It is based on data obtained from the Department of Statistics which were evaluated and adjusted according to a methodology described in Sadie's "Projection of the South African Population 1970 to 2020". The figures relating to the African population exclude the foreign-born, the majority temporary male workers — 490 000 in 1975.

From 1936 to 1975 total population grew 2,6 times, from 9,7 million to over 25 million, an increase in growth rate from 2 % in 1936-1946 to 2,8 % in 1960-1975 per annum, an increase which is by world standards in the upper reaches, but one which may be expected to decline or, at a minimum, not to rise further.

The growth rates of the four main population groups have been very different and there have consequently been changes in the ethnic composition of the total population, as shown by the figures in Table A (extracted from the table for quinquennia given by Sadie).

While the white percentage has decreased from 20,7 to 16,9 that of the three other groups has increased, Africans registering the largest rise. This occurred despite a net immigration of 451 000 whites since the end of World War II. Immigration boosted the white population growth rate from 1,50 to 2,16 % per annum from 1970 to 1975. But obviously immigration is a volatile element which may change dramatically from one year to the next.

After analysing the implications of the changing magnitudes of births and deaths since 1936 among the four groups and discussing their probable position in relation to the postulated five phases of the growth cycle, Sadie discusses fertility and the differences in reproductive habits of these groups as shown in a table of age specific fertility rates. White women, with an average in 1970-1975 of 3,1 children per woman during the reproductive period, have their children in a shorter period and register a sharp drop in fertility after the age of 34. Asian women, with an average of 3,6 children per woman, are moving towards the procreative pattern of the

whites. "The very high fertility rates among young Coloured women, particularly those less than 20 years old, is in large part a function of extra marital relations which are responsible for an illegitimacy component of upwards of one-third." They average 6,0 and Africans 6,1 children per woman, reproduction among the latter group being spread over the longest period, with quite substantial numbers being born to women aged over 50. The projection of the number of children per woman for the year 2000 is 2,6 for whites, 2,9 for Asians, 4,3 for Coloured, and 5,0 for Africans.

Sadie deals in some detail with comparative statistics relating to expectation of life at birth. These show for all four groups, an improvement in health standards, a higher expectation of life for females, as well as a more rapid improvement for men than for women. Since 1955, "there has been almost complete stagnation in the expected years of life of males as a result, mostly, of deaths by violence (accidents) and heart failure". Among whites the differential expectancy between females and males rose from 4,1 to 7,9, among the Coloured from 0,6 to 6,7, among Asians from 1,8 to 4,6 and among Africans from 0,9 to 7,4 years. At the same time there are marked differences among the four groups. The highest life expectancy among females in 1975 was that of whites, namely 73 years, and the lowest that of Coloured women, namely 57,2 years.

Infant mortality rates have decreased for all four groups, the decrease for whites, from 53 in 1936 to 19 per thousand live births in 1975, being the largest. In 1975 the Asian rate was 37, the Coloured 96, and the African 94.

## Population Projections

The section on "Prospects for Future Growth" gives crude birth and death rates for 1995 to 2000 and the population projection as shown in Table C.

On this basis, the population will increase, excluding immigration, by 70 000 whites (5,8 %), 20 000 Asians (1,7 %), 120 000 Coloured (9,9 %) and one million Africans (82,6 %), a total of 1 210 000 each year.

By 1975, 88 % of the white and Asian, 76 % of the Coloured and 35 % of the African people were living in the urban areas. Sadie's projection is given in Table D.

These figures imply, says Sadie, "that South Africa will have to build the equivalent of a city of 530 000 inhabitants each year to accommodate that part of the growth which will, at a minimum, be channeled to towns and cities". Moreover, as regards Africans, the assumed 45 % rate of urbanization would still leave 22 million people on the land by the year

2000. In 1970 there were 757 000 male migrants from the homelands. Hence, unless industrialization in the homelands expands rapidly and existing labour regulations are changed, the number of temporary migrants is likely to double, or more.

## Dependency Ratios

The concluding section, significantly headed "The Quality of the Population", deals with age composition and dependency ratios, and gives the rele-

vant statistics. The Coloured and African populations, with their high fertility and declining mortality rates, the latter usually saving many more young than older lives, have respectively 45 % and 44 % children under 15 years. Their dependency ratio (children 0-14 years plus people over 65 years as a percentage of those in the 15-64 years productive age group) is close on 100. By contrast, the Asians and particularly the white population, as a result of declining levels of fertility, have an economically advantageous age composition. The rapid rate of renewal and the youthful age structure of the Coloured and African labour forces affects these groups disadvantageously. Sadie points to the evidence that "deficient human material arises from a rapid succession of pregnancies" and to other deleterious consequences of large family size and frequency of births. He concludes that, although many other factors have to be taken into account, there are good grounds for the suggestion that a reduction in a population growth will produce highly beneficial results.

E. H.

Table A

Population Numbers by Ethnic Group

|          | 1936      | %     | 1975       | %     |
|----------|-----------|-------|------------|-------|
| White    | 2 003 000 | 20,7  | 4 258 000  | 16,9  |
| Asian    | 227 600   | 2,3   | 733 800    | 2,9   |
| Coloured | 820 000   | 8,5   | 2 432 000  | 9,6   |
| African  | 6 643 000 | 68,5  | 17 823 000 | 70,6  |
| Total    | 9 693 600 | 100,0 | 25 246 800 | 100,0 |

Table B

The Components of Natural Increase (Rates per 1000)

|          | Birth Rate |           | Death Rate |           | Natural Increase |           |
|----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|
|          | 1936-1941  | 1970-1975 | 1936-1941  | 1970-1975 | 1936-1941        | 1970-1975 |
| White    | 25,0       | 23,3      | 9,6        | 8,3       | 15,4             | 15,0      |
| Asian    | 45,2       | 30,5      | 13,4       | 6,6       | 31,8             | 23,9      |
| Coloured | 44,3       | 42,6      | 21,6       | 13,0      | 22,7             | 29,6      |
| African  | 43,0       | 40,5      | 22,6       | 11,7      | 20,4             | 28,8      |

Table C

Population Numbers in the Year 2000

|          | Without Immigration | %     | With Immigration (Immigration at assumed net 30 000 p.a.) | %     |
|----------|---------------------|-------|---|-------|
| White    | 5 910 000           | 12,0  | 7 075 000   | 14,0  |
| Asian    | 1 215 000           | 2,5   | 1 215 000   | 2,4   |
| Coloured | 4 890 000           | 9,9   | 4 890 000   | 9,7   |
| African  | 37 293 000          | 75,6  | 37 293 000  | 73,9  |
| Total    | 49 308 000          | 100,0 | 50 473 000  | 100,0 |

Table D

Projected Urban Population

|          | 1975       | 2000       | Increase   |
|----------|------------|------------|------------|
| White    | 3 768 000  | 5 436 000  | 1 668 000  |
| Asian    | 648 000    | 1 130 000  | 482 000    |
| Coloured | 1 850 000  | 4 185 000  | 2 335 000  |
| African  | 6 240 000  | 15 000 000 | 8 760 000  |
| Total    | 12 506 000 | 25 751 000 | 13 245 000 |

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