

## **Population and Household Census, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2010: Facts and Figures**

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### **Abstract**

*Saudi Arabia, a country on the verge of demographic transition, experiences a rapid growth in population – both native and expatriate. Ministry of Economics and Planning published a report entitled “Population and Housing Census 2010”, recently. In comparison to previous censuses there is an accelerated growth of both native and expatriates in the Kingdom. The growth trends vary across its 13 regions. Regions with large urban infrastructure – Riyadh, Makkah Al-Mokarramah and Eastern Region - grew in its population over the four decades, remarkably. A proportional growth of population – both native and expatriate, urbanization, rural to urban migration and varying life styles are reflected.*

### **Introduction**

Saudi Arabia, the largest country in the Arabian Peninsula is going through changes on all dimensions of its demography since its formation. Size of population had expanded tremendously due to natural increase and immigration. Population growth in the Kingdom impacted upon age structure pressurizing sectors of education, labor force and women’s participation in employment. This growth had reasons namely pronatalist policies and declaration of birth control in any form and under any circumstance as contrary to the faith of Islam (Winckler, 1997); leading to high fertility in a low mortality set up (Omran and Roudi, 1993). Birth rates are falling in the Kingdom as a result of increase in education and age at marriage (Al Mazrou et al., 1995; Al Nasser and Bamgboye, 1992). Population size and household size over the Census years were assessed in this paper.

### **Methodology**

Ministry of Economics and Planning released “Population and Housing 2010 Census” report recently. Previous Censuses conducted in the Kingdom (1974, 1992 and 2004) were compared with the current census.

### **Results and Discussion**

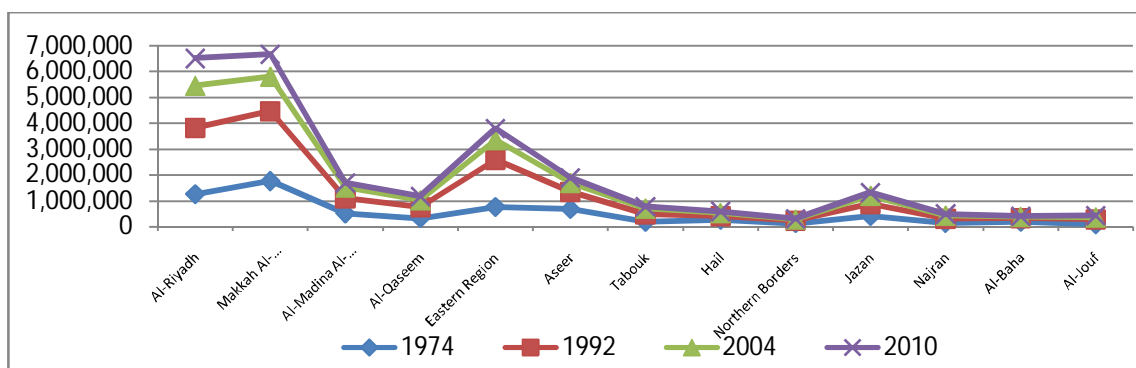
As per the Population and Household Census 2010 Final results, the population of Saudi Arabia has been counted at 26,090,555 with 74.1 percent of native Saudi population (Table 1). An extremely immigrated country, Saudi Arabia has its accommodating capability due to the vast land area, with known potential and natural resources (AlKhalifeh, 1993;). This population shall be understood from two points - native-foreigner (Saudi-Non Saudi) distribution and regional distribution, which are crucial from the policy perspectives at this juncture of population policy and strategy development stage. Saudi population has higher proportion in less urbanized regions like, Northern Borders, Al Baha and Tabouk. On the contrary, Non Saudi population proportion being higher in highly urbanized regions like, Al-Riyadh, Makkah Al-Mokarramah, Al-Madinah Al-Monawarah and Eastern Region. Al-Riyadh region has Riyadh metropolitan capital city; Makkah Al-Mokarramah has Jeddah metropolis and the holy city of Makkah; Al-Madina Al-Monwarah has the holy city of Madina and Eastern Region has the city of Dammam and Jubail industrial zone. Increased developments leading to manpower requirements bring expatriates to urbanized administrative (geographic) regions (Ashwan et al., 2012; Khraif, 2007; Khraif, 2000).

**Table 1 Population Size and Percentage distribution – 2010**

	Saudi			Non Saudi			Total		
	Population	Percent	Percent by regions	Population	Percent	Percent by regions	Population	Percent	Percent by regions
Al-Riyadh	4506321	69.3	23.3	1999188	30.7	29.6	6505509	100.0	24.9
Makkah Al-Mokarramah	4279013	64.2	22.1	2383581	35.8	35.3	6662597	100.0	25.5
Al-Madina Al-Monawarah	1295918	76.5	6.7	398831	23.5	5.9	1694749	100.0	6.5
Al-Qaseem	957419	80.8	5.0	226946	19.2	3.4	1184365	100.0	4.5
Eastern Region	2971646	78.2	15.4	828127	21.8	12.3	3799773	100.0	14.6
Aseer	1626418	85.7	8.4	270818	14.3	4.0	1897236	100.0	7.3
Tabouk	672702	86.5	3.5	104978	13.5	1.6	777680	100.0	3.0
Hail	507601	85.6	2.6	85707	14.4	1.3	593308	100.0	2.3
Northern Borders	274250	88.0	1.4	37223	12.0	0.6	311473	100.0	1.2
Jazan	1121527	84.2	5.8	210735	15.8	3.1	1332262	100.0	5.1
Najran	409506	82.5	2.1	87107	17.5	1.3	496613	100.0	1.9
Al-Baha	354586	87.2	1.8	52138	12.8	0.8	406724	100.0	1.6
Al-Jouf	358467	83.7	1.9	69799	16.3	1.0	428266	100.0	1.6
Total	19335377	74.1	100.0	6755178	25.9	100.0	26090555	100.0	100.0

Population of the Kingdom increased from a mere 3.3 million in 1962/63 (Ashwan, 1990) to 26.1 million in 2010 (19.3 million Saudi and 6.8 million Non Saudi) through 6.7 million in 1974 (5.9 million Saudi and 0.8 million Non Saudi); 16.9 million in 1992 (12.3 million Saudi and 4.6 million Non Saudi); 22.7 million in 2004 (16.5 million Saudi and 8.4 million Non Saudi) (Kingdom of Saudi Araia, 1974, 1992, 2004, 2012). These data registered a higher growth of population in the Kingdom.

But population growth reported a huge mark in certain regions namely Riyadh, Makkah and Eastern Region significantly and Jazan region in a minor way. Khraif (2007) brought out urbanization trends and growth of cities in the Kingdom, both large and small as well as concepts like primate city and rank size rule. His findings of six major cities that carry 57 percent of urban population and 46 percent of total population (in 2004) explain the intensity of urban growth in the Kingdom. Further, the east west corridor of urban concentration strengthened in terms of population size during 2004-2010. Urbanization trends during 1962-74 – rural to urban migration – imply an alarming growth of primate city leading to crises in public services (Makki, 1986). Not only the Saudi population but also the Non Saudi population contributed to such a growth in these regions. Urbanization accompanied by development of state of the art infrastructure in these regions has relation with unpredicted population growth. Non Saudi population increased from its low to its height in almost all regions, especially urbanized regions whereas Saudi population grew significantly in Eastern Region.



**Fig. 1 Increase in Total population 1974 to 2010**

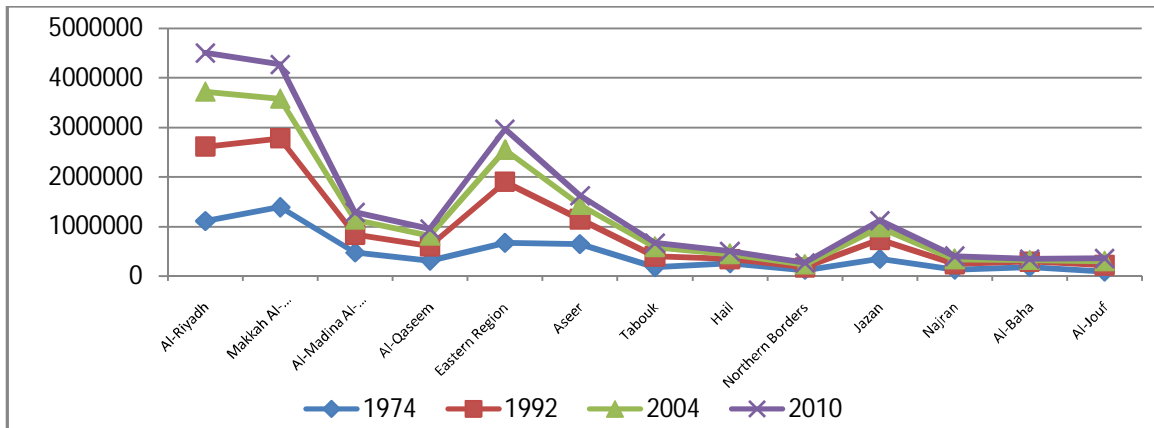


Fig. 2 Increase in Saudi population 1974 to 2010

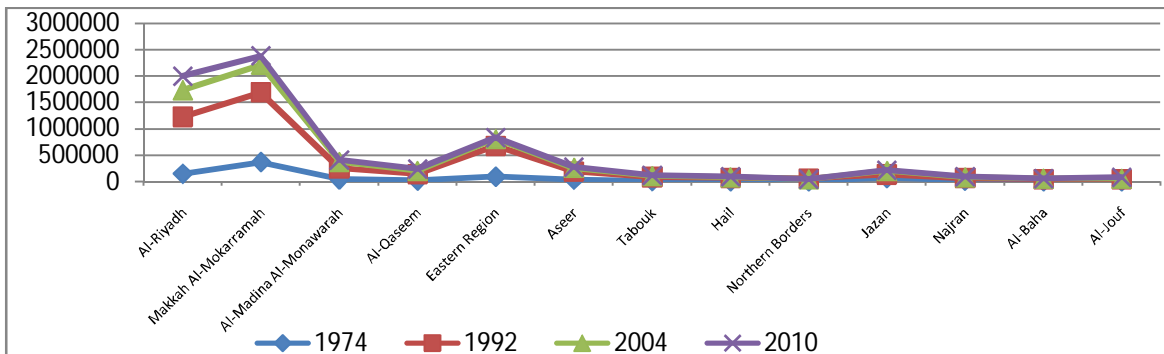


Fig. 3 Increase in Non Saudi population 1974 to 2010

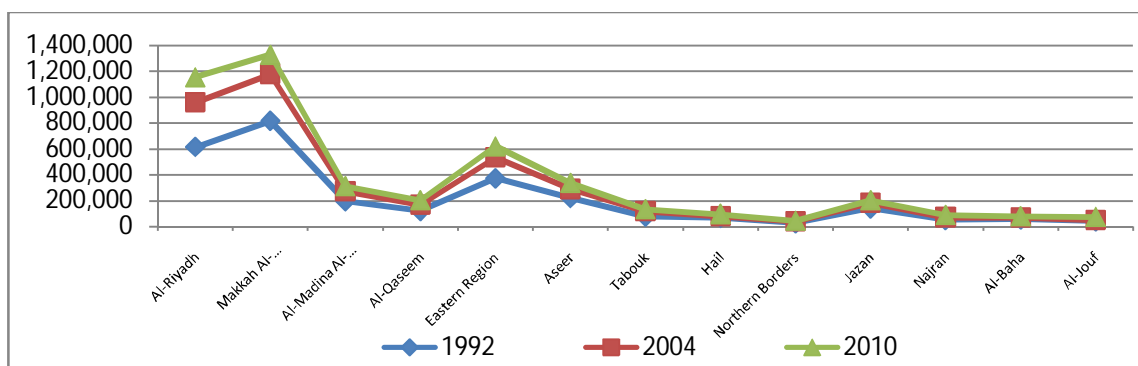
As per the 2010 Census, the number of households in Saudi Arabia reached a total of 4.7 million (3.0 million Saudi and 1.7 million Non Saudi households). While the Saudi households have 6.4 persons each, Non Saudi households have 4 persons each; showing the large families retained by Saudi households, in comparison (Table 2). The currently declining fertility levels combined with increasing life expectancy and ageing of population (Khraif, 2009; Khraif, 2001; Asharaf and Segae, 2012; Ashwan et al., 2012) keep such trends to continue in the coming years. Number of households is, proportionately, higher in Riyadh, Makkah Al-Mokarramah and Eastern Region; in case of both Saudi and Non Saudi but the household size (persons per household) varies from 5.0 in Makkah Al-Mokarramah to 7.3 in Northern Borders. Residential movements to the administrative capital of Riyadh were majorly long distance ones, for reasons like, buying or building a home, increase in family size, affordability of a better dwelling, evacuation by owner or inadequate services (Khraif, 1994); bringing people close to the city. Similar trends and reasons like adjustment, induced and forced movements have influenced housing density in other major urban areas as well.

**Table 2: Number of households, persons per households and percentage distribution – 2010**

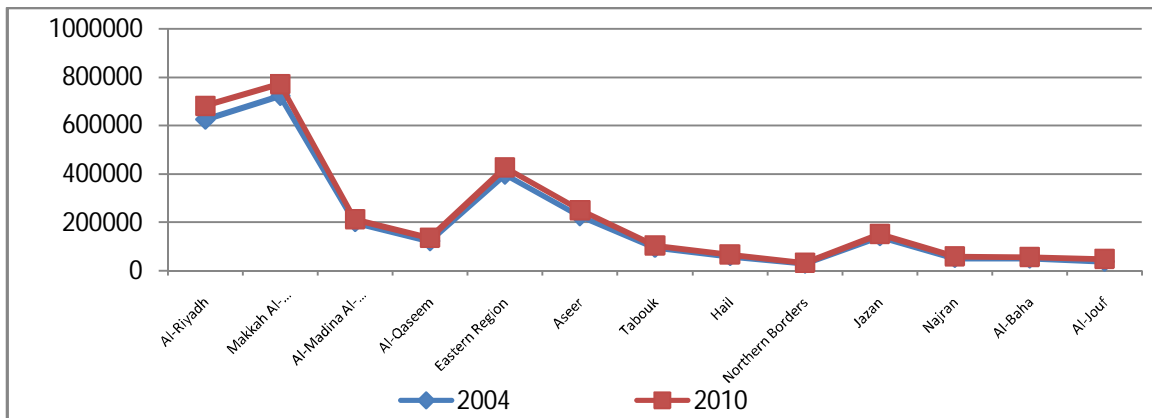
	Saudi			Non Saudi			Total		
	Households	Population/ Households	Percent households	Households	Population/ Households	Percent households	Households	Population/ Households	Percent households
Al-Riyadh	681591	6.6	22.7	474286	4.2	28.6	1155877	5.6	24.8
Makkah Al-Mokarramah	772151	5.5	25.7	556762	4.3	33.6	1328913	5.0	28.5
Al-Madina Al-Monawarah	211972	6.1	7.1	97323	4.1	5.9	309295	5.5	6.6
Al-Qaseem	135367	7.1	4.5	67307	3.4	4.1	202674	5.8	4.4
Eastern Region	426851	7.0	14.2	192508	4.3	11.6	619359	6.1	13.3
Aseer	250880	6.5	8.4	85418	3.2	5.2	336298	5.6	7.2
Tabouk	103472	6.5	3.4	29745	3.5	1.8	133217	5.8	2.9
Hail	68148	7.4	2.3	26508	3.2	1.6	94656	6.3	2.0
Northern Borders	32835	8.4	1.1	10072	3.7	0.6	42907	7.3	0.9
Jazan	151803	7.4	5.1	48780	4.3	2.9	200583	6.6	4.3
Najran	59058	6.9	2.0	26374	3.3	1.6	85432	5.8	1.8
Al-Baha	55651	6.4	1.9	19839	2.6	1.2	75490	5.4	1.6
Al-Jouf	49439	7.3	1.6	20987	3.3	1.3	70426	6.1	1.5
Total	2999218	6.4	100.0	1655909	4.1	100.0	4655127	5.6	100.0

Saudi household sizes remained highest in Northern Borders (8.4), followed by Hail and Jazan (7.4), Al Jouf (7.3), Al-Qaseem (7.1) and Eastern Region (7.0) in the order. Makkah Al-Mokarramah region has the smallest households (5.5 persons each), followed by Al-Madina Al-Monawarah (6.1 persons each). In comparison Non Saudi households retains small size (4.1 persons) in all the regions; ranging from 2.6 (Al-Baha) to 4.3 (Makkah Al-Mokarramah, Eastern Region and Jazan), which may be due to their immigration status (Khraif, 2000; Khraif, 2007).

Number of households, as a function of population, increased along the census years that Makkah Al-Mokarramah region had the highest increase, followed by Riyadh, Eastern Region and Jazan in the order. Comparatively, the 1992-2004 periods registered a higher increase. Increase in Saudi households during 2004-2010 was comparatively lesser than that of total households. Saudi households increased in regions namely, Riyadh, Makkah Al-Mokarramah and Eastern Region. In other regions their increase is either negligible like that happened in Al-Qaseem, Aseer, Hail and Al-Jouf regions or nil like Al-Madina Al-Monawarah, Northern Borders, Jazan, Najran and Al-Baha regions.



**Fig. 4 Increase in Total households 1992 to 2010**



**Fig. 5 Increase in Saudi households 2004 to 2010**

Faster growth of population in Saudi Arabia – native as well as expatriate, resulted from economic progress and development and progress in public infrastructure including housing, health care, education and public utilities creates concerns of sex ratio, age distribution and resultant public health (Asharaf and Mouselhy, 2012).

### **Conclusions**

The above analysis based on national census 1974, 1992, 2004 and 2010 highlight the increasing size of population in the Kingdom – both native and expatriate, over the period. It has brought out the facts namely,

- There is growth in population – both native and expatriate, proportionally.
- There are certain regions – Riyadh, Makkah Al-Mokarramah, Eastern Region and Jazan that experienced a fast increase of population as well as households.
- Region wise population growth indicates an urbanization and related infrastructure development.
- Fast increasing native population in regions like Riyadh, Makkah Al-Mokarramah, Eastern Region and Jazan shows rural to urban migration.
- High concentration of expatriate population in the above mentioned four regions shows varying life style of native population.

Saudi Arabia's population size and growth has implications on policy making to strengthen the public utility service provisions. The recently released Census 2010 Population and Household Tables shall facilitate this noble purpose.

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