

# **Urbanisation and Migration in Saudi Arabia: The Case of Buraydah City**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is an examination of urbanisation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and a further examination of urbanisation in Saudi Arabia; more specifically, the drivers, patterns and consequences of migration urbanisation are addressed. The case study examines the experiences of migration and urbanisation in Buraydah City in Saudi Arabia and focuses on three groups of migrants; namely, urban to urban migrants, villagers and Bedouin from desert areas in order to gain the perspectives of different types of migrants experiencing the same migration. The study adopts a multi-dimensional approach to understanding such processes in that it considers the political and socio-cultural aspects as well as the economic aspects as factors. The MENA region is experiencing one of the fastest rates of urbanisation in the world and is unique because it has rich and poor nations as well as nations that are experiencing conflict. These factors have led to mass migration within and from outside the region, directly impacting urbanisation. Moreover, Buraydah City in Saudi Arabia is used as a case study because it is a medium-sized city and most urbanisation is being witnessed in cities of this size, and has been neglected in the literature. Urbanisation in Buraydah City was investigated through a field study which involved a questionnaire, interviews and oral histories and the results were analysed using SPSS and NVivo software. Moreover, a general mapping of patterns of urbanisation and population growth in MENA and Saudi Arabia using GIS. The results of the study suggest that although there is diversity within MENA in terms of urbanisation as a result of its economic diversity, government policy and conflicts, on the whole the region shows universality. The study also showed that Saudi Arabia has similar drivers of urbanisation to that of MENA; however, in contrast, the consequences for migrants were found to be positive. The main driver was the search for work; the specific reasons behind this driver differed from country to country. The study also found that besides differences in drivers and consequences between the migrant groups, there were also generational differences.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

- ANOVA: Analysis of Variance
- ARAMCO: Arabian American Oil Company
- CIA: Central Intelligence Agency
- GaWC: Global and World City
- GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council
- GCMR: Greater Cairo Metropolitan Region
- GDP: Gross Domestic Product
- GIS: Geographic Information System
- IFS: Islamic Financial Services
- ILO: International Labour Organisation
- IMF: International Monetary Fund
- IOM: International Organisation for Migration
- MENA: Middle East and North Africa
- MOMRA: Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs
- OPEC: Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
- SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
- SR: Saudi Riyal
- UAE: United Arab Emirates
- UGBP: Urban Growth Boundary Policy
- UN: United Nations
- UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme
- UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
- USA: United States of America
- USD: United States Dollar

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Urbanisation

This study presents an analysis of urbanisation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), in order to understand the trends, causes and consequences. Furthermore, it presents a detailed analysis of the patterns and processes of urbanisation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and in particular of the patterns, trends, causes and consequences of urbanisation and migration in Buraydah City in Saudi Arabia. Buraydah City has been selected as the case study because it is experiencing rapid urbanisation as a result of internal migration within Saudi Arabia and that it is a medium-sized city, the latter is relevant because most urbanisation in MENA is taking place in cities of this size. The study examines MENA in the context of the developing world and the countries of MENA within the context of the region itself, in terms of rapid urbanisation, its drivers and consequences, with particular reference to urban geographies and the experience of migrants.

The central argument of this study is that the nature of urbanisation in MENA is different and distinct from that experienced elsewhere in the 'developing world'; at this point it should be noted that MENA as a whole is considered economically to be in the low and middle income bracket by the World Bank (2009d) and can be compared to other regions in the same category, such as Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. Although there are significant differences in the nature of urbanisation within MENA due to the fact that it is comprised of rich and poor countries as well as countries experiencing conflict, the states in the region share common characteristics that distinguish them from other developing economies; these include a large young population, high unemployment, language, culture and religion.

However, there are other implications in the examination of urbanisation and urban geography besides the economic as suggested by Yacobi and Shechter (2005) that

urbanisation is a political and socio-cultural as well as economic complexity, and Shechter and Yacobi (2005) say that Middle Eastern cities are economic, socio-cultural and political complexities. Therefore, this study adopts a multidimensional approach (Figure 1.1) to understand the processes of urbanisation and migration in MENA, and Saudi Arabia. More specifically, as part of the analytical framework the study will examine the social, cultural and political aspects of urbanisation and the urban geography, as well as the economic aspects in Buraydah City, a medium-sized city in MENA.

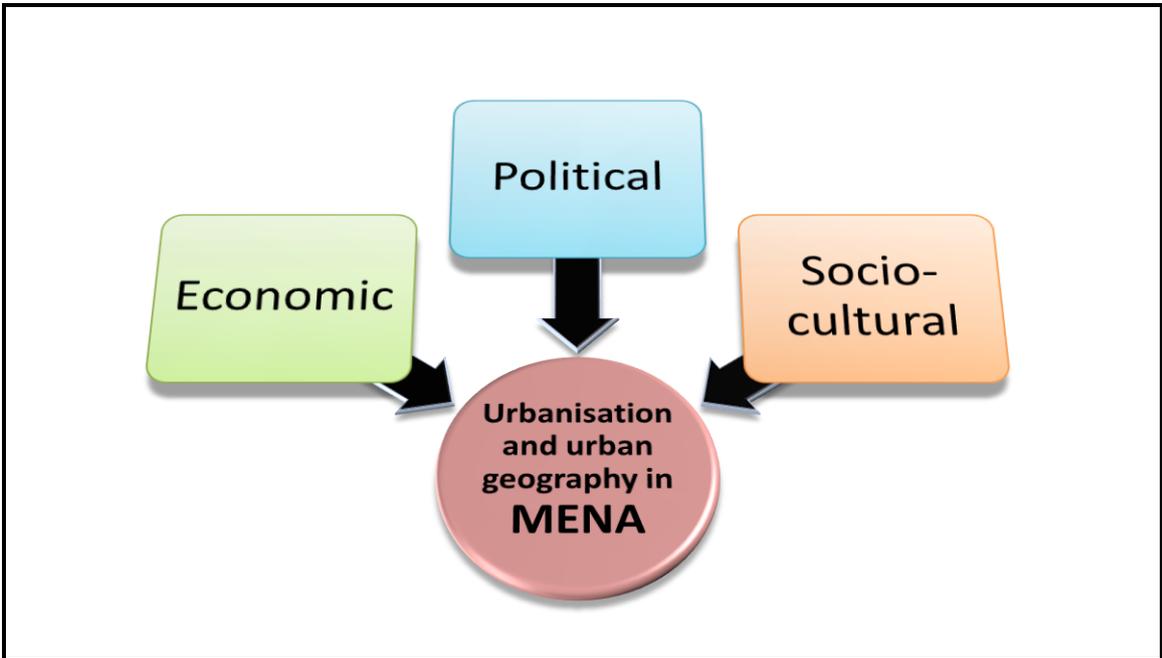


Figure 1.1 Multidimensional Approach to Urbanisation and Urban Geography in MENA.

According to Pacione (2009) although every city has an individual character, all urban places have common characteristics such as residential areas, commercial areas and infrastructure, moreover, all cities share similar processes and problems of urbanisation. It is these common characteristics that are the result of the interaction between economic, social, demographic, political and cultural factors that shape the urban geography (Pacione, 2009). Not only do these factors play their role in the process of urbanisation and influence the urban geography, they also have an effect on migrant’s perception and experiences of the urban geography. Because this study is concerned

with examining specifically, urbanisation and migration in Saudi Arabia, it is imperative that these influencing factors are considered.

It is one of the main motivations of this study to examine migration and urbanisation in a medium-sized city, something that has clearly been neglected in the literature regarding MENA and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, this neglect is more serious because not only the literature, but also national governments in the region, neglect cities of this size. The UN suggested that reformed urban planning must give more attention to small and medium-sized cities, especially in developing countries where too much planning focus is centred on large cities (United Nations, 2009b). In regards to the latter, this study shows that one of the issues that have affected urbanisation and the urban geography in Saudi Arabia has been centralised planning and financial neglect of small and medium-sized towns and cities. Further justification is that it is a phenomenon of MENA that there has been a large increase in the populations of medium-sized towns (Dumper and Stanley, 2007), in other words, much of the urban experience is taking place in cities of this size.

In support of the above, much of the literature is focussed on large cities in the region such as Cairo, Dubai, Jeddah, Riyadh and Tehran (Khraif, 1992, Elsheshtawy, 2008, Bloch, 2010, Pacione, 2005, Fahmi and Sutton, 2008, Madanipour, 2006) and well-known conflict zones such as Palestine and Lebanon (Graham, 2002, Ramadan, 2009). Therefore, it is felt that these major urban centres are not entirely representative of the region.

Urbanisation typically occurs when certain changes take place. The first change is the movement of people from rural to urban areas to engage in work that is non-rural; the second, which is of particular relevance to this study, are the related changes in individuals' lifestyles as a result of leaving rural areas, and the third is population increase, which is often blamed as a cause of problems associated with urbanisation, such as overcrowding (Brunn et al., 2008). Kaplan et al., (2004) suggested that urbanisation occurs predominantly when countries evolve from agrarian to industrial economies. As an attractor of migration, urban areas are the result of investment, which creates job opportunities through attracting businesses and therefore, become magnets for migrants (United Nations Population Division, 2008a). However, business may not be

the only factor that migrants to a city; it has been suggested by Brunn et al., (2008) that cities serve different purposes; some are centres for trade and commerce (such as Buraydah City) some are transportation centres and some provide specialised services for recreation, government and religious pilgrimage. Additionally, the rate of urbanisation and the economic and demographic characteristics of urbanisation differ from one country to another (LeGates, 2006).

The rapid increase of the world's urban population coupled with the slowing growth of the rural population has led to a major redistribution of populations (United Nations, 2008b). In 1800, three per cent of the world's population was urbanised, by 1900 it was 14 per cent (Population Reference Bureau, 2010) and by In 1950, 29 per cent of the world's population lived in urban areas (Figure 1.2); by 2000 the proportion of urban dwellers had risen to 47 per cent (United Nations, 2008c). In 2006, there were almost 400 cities around the world comprising more than one million residents; furthermore, about 70 per cent of these were in developing countries (Cohen, 2006). The increase has continued until the present time and has now reached about 50 per cent; based on current figures the United Nations expects it to reach 60 per cent by 2030. By 2050 the share of the urban population of the world is expected to be around 70 per cent (United Nations, 2008b, pp: 74-75).

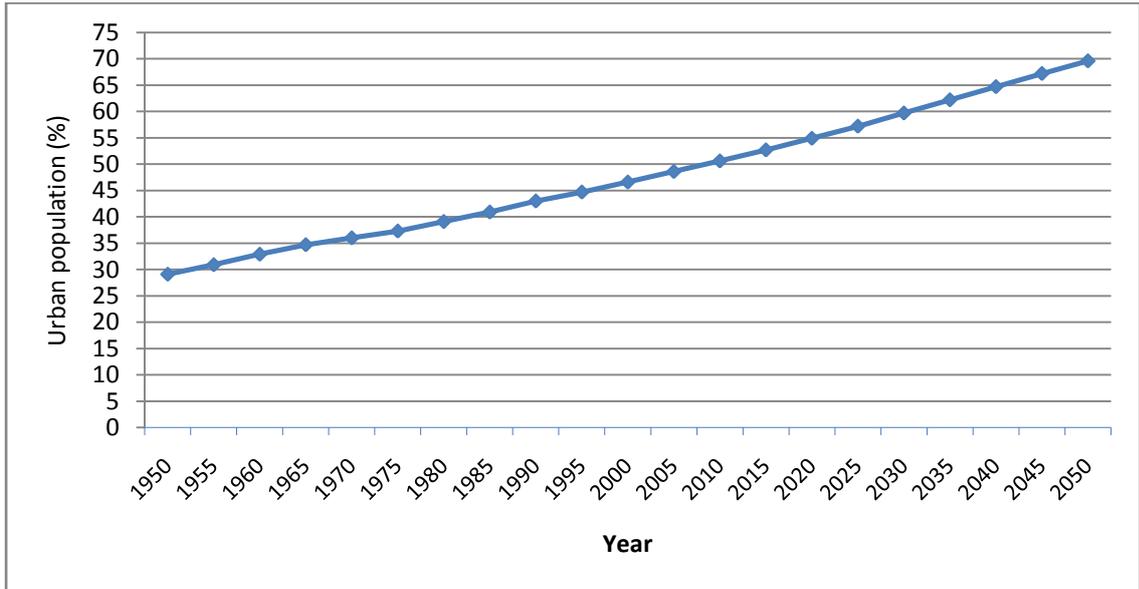


Figure 1.2: World urban population from 1950-2050. Source: United Nations (2008c).

## 1.2 Aims and objectives

This study aims to identify the distinguishing elements of the processes of urbanisation and urban geographies in MENA, and more specifically the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia using Buraydah City the case study. The study is based on the hypothesis that the MENA region as a whole is witnessing a distinctive process of rapid urbanisation in comparison to other developing world regions, and within its borders there is diversity of such processes, moreover, this diversity in the region also extends to urban geographies. Within MENA the countries are diversified, some are economically successful, some are poor and some are plagued by conflict, therefore, the drivers and consequences of urbanisation and the nature of urban geographies may be different.

This study seeks to identify the processes of urbanisation, with an emphasis on migration as one such process, and the distinct urban geographies of the region and how such processes are taking place in a medium-sized city in MENA. Moreover, there is a focus on urbanisation and migration and the resulting urban experiences of migrants in Saudi Arabia, using Buraydah City as a case study where the different narratives about the life of migrants in the city are examined. Because of the lack of empirical studies of urbanisation and migration in Saudi Arabia, specifically in medium-sized cities, this study aims to achieve the following:

1. To identify urban geographies and the processes of rapid urbanisation in the Middle East and North Africa region and explain the distinguishing elements of urban geography and urbanisation in MENA through achieving the following objectives:

- To conduct a review of existing academic research on the trends, causes and consequences of urbanisation, with particular reference to 'developing world urbanisation' and the nature of urban geographies in the states of MENA.
- To conduct an empirical study of the patterns and processes of urbanisation and migration, and a study of the distinct urban geography in the countries of the MENA region.

2. To identify the distinguishing elements of rapid urbanisation and urban geography in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and explain these elements through the following objectives:

- To conduct a detailed analysis of urban geography and the patterns and processes of urbanisation and migration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to include analysis of the structure of the urban hierarchy and a mapping of the urban geography of the country.
- To conduct a comparative analysis of urbanisation and urban geography between Saudi Arabia and other countries in MENA.

3. To present a detailed analysis of urban geography and the drivers and consequences of urbanisation and migration in Buraydah City, through the following objectives:

- To conduct a case study of urbanisation and migration in Buraydah City.
- To examine migrants' experiences of migration and urban life.

### **1.3 The study area**

This section describes some key geographical characteristics of the research areas for this study, namely MENA, Saudi Arabia and Buraydah City. Moreover, it provides an overview of the geography of the study area.

#### **1.3.1 The Middle East and North Africa**

According to the World Bank classification (2010c), the MENA Region includes 21 countries (Figure 1.3): seven in the Arab Gulf (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Yemen), and 14 other countries (Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza). Three of the world's major religions; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam originated in the region, and MENA contains some of the world's oldest cities (Fahimi et al., 2007). For the purposes of this study, the West Bank and Gaza will be considered together as Palestine and Malta will be excluded, as it is part of the European Union.



Figure 1.3: Countries of the Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA). Source: World Map (2008).

### 1.3.2 Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is located in the Middle East. The Kingdom is surrounded by the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf to the west; the United Arab Emirates and Qatar to the east; Kuwait, Iraq, and Jordan lie to the north; and to the south, Yemen and the Sultanate of Oman (Figure 1.4). The country occupies four fifths of the Arabian Peninsula, an area of more than 2,250,000 square kilometres (Foreign Ministry, 2008). In Saudi Arabia, there are 13 administrative regions.



Figure1.4: Map of Saudi Arabia and Buraydah City in Al Qassim region. Source: Digital Vector Maps (2006).

### 1.3.3 Buraydah City

Buraydah City is the capital of Al Qassim and is located in the north central area of the region (Figure 1.4). Buraydah is located between latitudes  $26^{\circ} 44'$  and  $26^{\circ} 18'$  north, and between longitudes  $43^{\circ} 52'$  and  $43^{\circ} 51'$  east and lies between 600 and 650 metres above sea level. The city is the largest in the region, occupying an area of about 600 square kilometres and is located at an important point at the junction of major trade routes in the Kingdom. On the parameters of the city are the towns of Al Butayn to the north, Al Asyah, At Tarafiyah and Al Rubaiah to the east, Unayzah to the south and Al Bukayriyah to the west (Hassan, 2006).

## 1.4 Urbanisation in the Developed and Developing World

Over the period 1950 to 2050 (Figure 1.5) the global urban population is anticipated to have tripled to reach 6.49 billion (United Nations, 2008c). While urbanisation has slowed

down considerably in developed countries, in developing countries the rate of urbanisation is continuing to rise because of continuous economic development. Evidence of increasing urbanisation in the developing world is that in 2000, the urban population in developed countries was 0.9 billion, while in developing countries it was 1.9 billion. In 2005, there were 3.2 billion urban residents in the world, about four times as many as in 1950 (Brunn et al., 2008, p: 6) and by 2020, one billion of the global urban population is expected to be living in developed countries and 3.25 billion in developing countries (United Nations, 2008c).

At this point it is important to note that although the United Nations report that there is no established convention for designating “developed” and “developing”, they do follow a common practice that would place the countries of MENA as developing nations, except for Israel which is considered developed (United Nations, 2010a). This has been adopted for this study because much of the data about countries are taken from the United Nations.

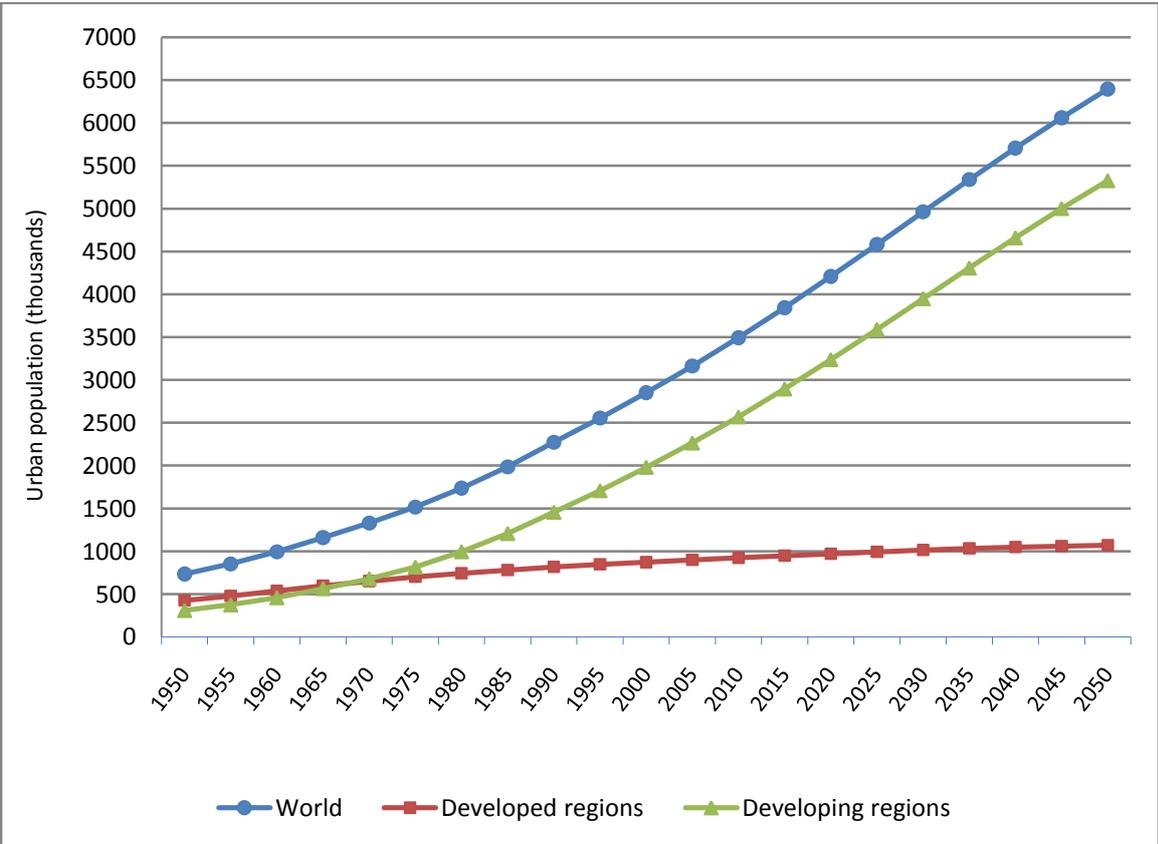


Figure 1.5: World urban population by developed and developing regions, 1950-2050. Source: United Nations (2008c).

Urbanisation and city growth in the developing world are characterised by the rapidity of urban change, urbanisation outpacing industrialisation and a high rate of urban population growth, because of both migration and natural increase (Abidemi, 2007), indeed, high fertility rates are a contributory factor (United Nations, 2008c). It has only been relatively recently that the developing world has started to pay attention to the rapidity of urbanisation; and the consequential need for increased investment in rural development to stem the rate of urbanisation (Tibaijuka, 2007).

### **1.5 Urbanisation in the Middle East and North Africa**

The MENA region consists of three sub-regions; North Africa, Western Asia and the Arabian Peninsula (MESH, 2008). Urbanisation in the region is attributed to rapid population growth and migration because of economic growth. The rate of natural increase of population for MENA was 1.9 percent in 2010, higher than the world at 1.2 per cent, and although the rate for MENA is higher than other developing regions, such as Latin America at 1.3 per cent, it is exceeded by Western and Eastern Africa at 2.6 and 2.7 per cent respectively for the same year (Population Reference Bureau, 2010, pp: 6-8). The reasons for high population growth rates are very high fertility rates in the region, combined with decreasing mortality rates. In 2009, the highest fertility rates were in Yemen at 5.5 births per female, Palestine at 4.6 and Saudi Arabia 3.9; this was in sharp contrast to the United States at 2.1 and the United Kingdom at 1.9 (Population Reference Bureau, 2009, p: 8).

Economic prosperity in the region from oil revenues has had an effect on urbanisation and migration in MENA. The region experienced increasing elasticity of GDP growth with respect to poverty reduction during the oil boom (World Bank, 2003c), leading to urbanisation and internal and international migration (Adams and Page, 2001). The population more than doubled between 1970 and 2001, rising from 173 to 386 million people. By 2002, the population of MENA was growing by two per cent per year, and in the same year about 60 per cent of MENA's population lived in urban areas (Roudi-Fahimi et al., 2002, p: 4). By 2009, 73.2 percent of MENA's population were urbanised (United Nations, 2009e).

As stated previously, MENA comprises of three sub-regions; the Arabian Peninsula, Western Asia and North Africa and this study will show that there are different experiences between them in terms of economy, population growth, urbanisation and migration. In 2007, 50 per cent of the population growth in MENA was from the Western Asia region from countries such as Jordan and Syria, North Africa, which includes Libya and Algeria, accounted for 36 per cent in the same year. These figures are in contrast to the contribution to population growth from the Arabian Peninsula, where the relative proportion of population growth is expected to increase from 14 per cent in 2007 to a projected 18 per cent in 2050 (Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2007, p: 5) (Figure 1.6).

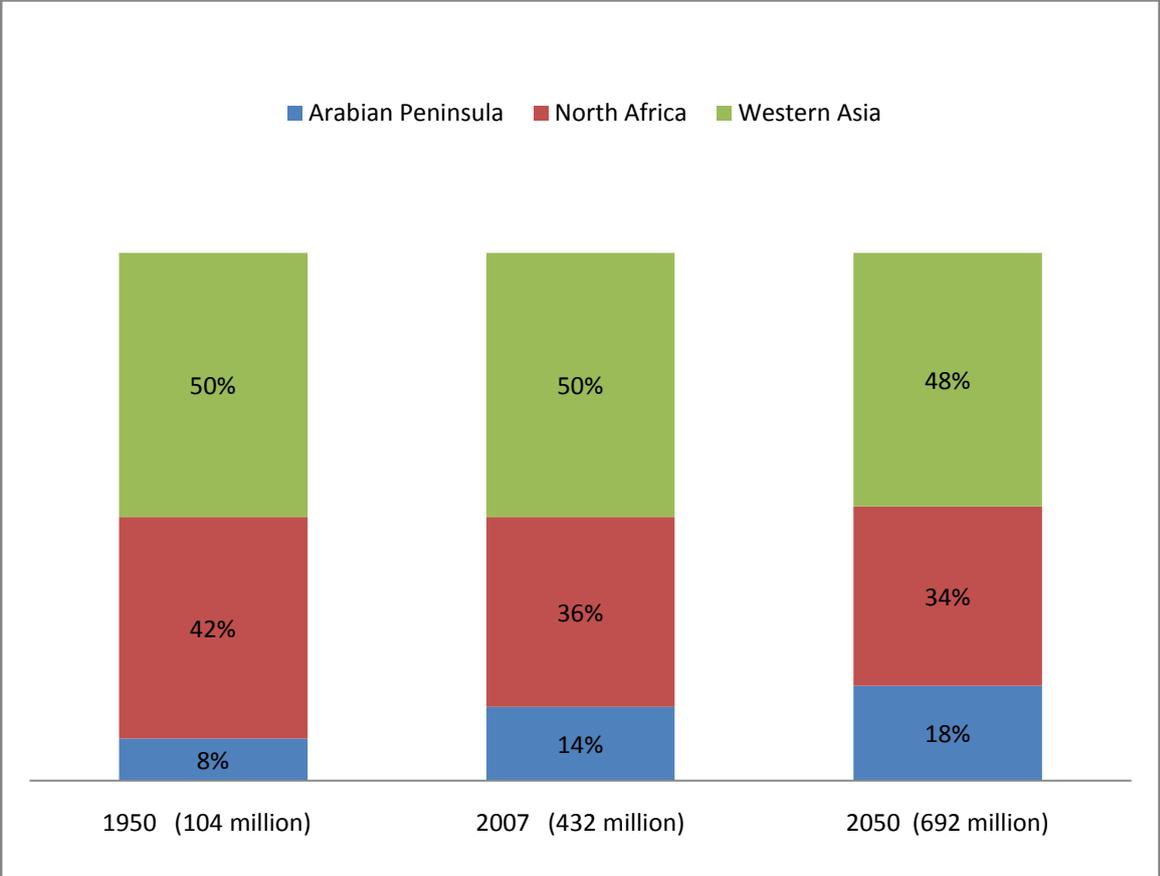


Figure 1.6: Population Growth in the MENA Regions: 1950, 2007 and 2050. Source: Roudi-Fahimi and Kent (2007).

**1.6 Urbanisation in Saudi Arabia**

Rapid urbanisation has been due to the exploitation of oil and its role in economic activity and started a process of rapid urbanisation in Saudi Arabia. According to Glasze and Alkhayyal (2002), this affected Saudi Arabia in two ways: first, it assured growing

individual prosperity for many Saudi citizens and second, it financed the development of a modern transport, health care and education infrastructure. This has resulted in a sharp increase in urbanisation since the 1950s, and although since the 1980s the rate of urbanisation has slowed down, it is still projected to continue to increase (United Nations, 2008c). However, according to Al-Hathloul and Edadan (1995) other factors, in addition to the wealth from oil have contributed to the high rate of economic growth and the level of economic development that is unique to Saudi Arabia, such as historically it has never been under the influence of colonial control and (more importantly) it has not suffered from political instability. This political dimension has been a significant factor in urbanisation, with the firm political will of a stable government and economic resources; Saudi Arabia has been able to develop a modern urban economy relatively quickly. This study will show that the positive experiences of urbanisation for internal migrants is a reflection of the success of government policy related to managing such a rapid pace of urbanisation.

However, this positive start has been undermined by recent problems that have emerged in Saudi Arabia. According to Karam (2010) Saudi Arabia is sitting on a housing time bomb, the country is not able to meet its housing demand and currently there is a shortage of approximately two million homes. The main reason for this has been a virtually non-existent mortgage market that only benefits the rich and those who already own property; in fact, only 30 per cent of Saudis own their own homes. Al-Hathloul and Edadan (1995) say there are many developments and urban strategy plans in place, such as Master Plans and Action Area Plans; however, their implementation has been unsatisfactory and has led to the unstructured growth of cities. It was argued by Daghistani (1993) that the reason these Master Plans are not suitable for implementation is that although they are effective in terms of creating a vision of how a city should look in the future, they do not consider the long-term strategy and the timing of the development that is required.

More recent Development Plans (since the Third plan in 1980) have recognised the problem of regional disparity; and disparity within regions, especially between rural and urban areas, which has been one of the drivers of rural to urban migration, and

addressing such an imbalance has been addressed by the Saudi government in the Seventh Development Plan by stemming rural to urban migration (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2001). In 2007, Saudi Arabia reached a high level of urbanisation, with more than 80 per cent of its population living in urban areas (United Nations Population Division, 2008b). In 1950 it was 21 per cent and the figure is expected to reach 90 per cent by 2050 (United Nations, 2008c) (Figure 1.7).

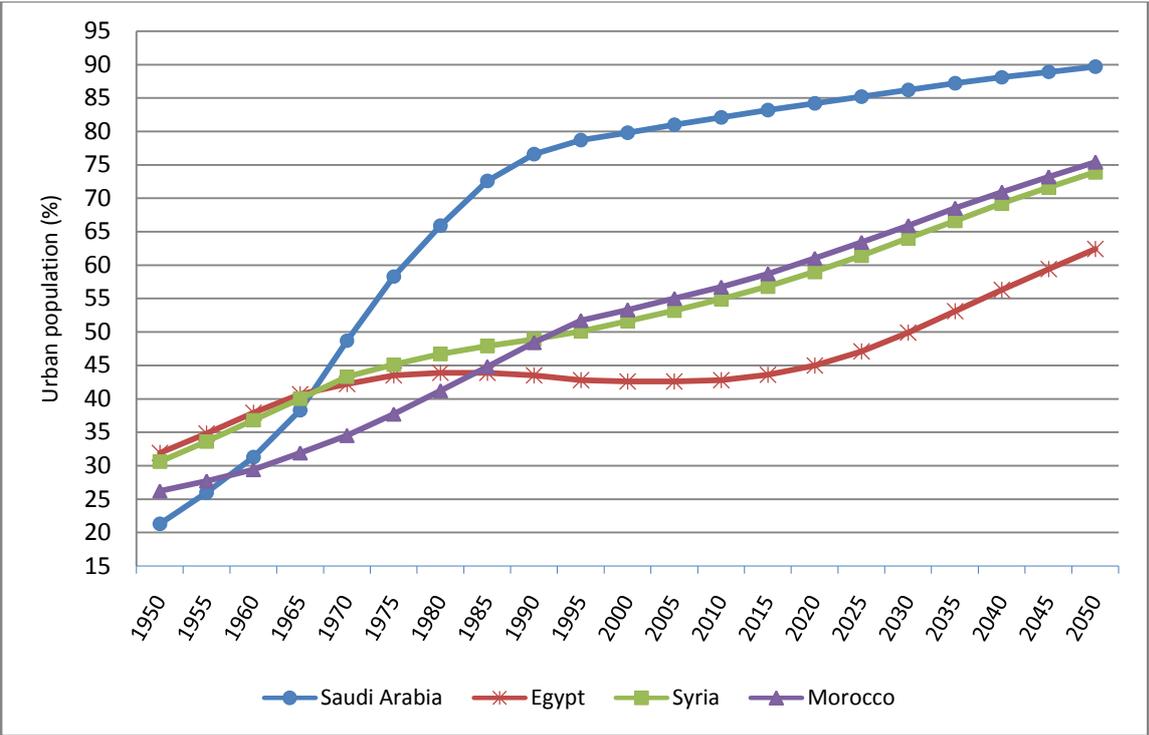


Figure 1.7: Percentage of urban population in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Morocco 1950-2050. Source: United Nations (2008c).

Disparity in the country has also presented itself in the form of urban primacy. There are very few primate cities in the Kingdom, Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam, and they have been the recipients of political attention in terms of development and investment. However, there is clear evidence presented in this study that the government has responded to this issue, reflected in the growth and prosperity of small and medium-sized cities.

In comparison to other countries in MENA, rates of urbanisation in Saudi Arabia are higher; for example in Egypt, between 1950 and the present day, the level of urbanisation increased from 32 per cent to 42 per cent, in Syria it rose from 30.6 per

cent to a forecasted 53 per cent, and in Morocco it rose from 26 percent to 55 per cent (Figure 1.7) (United Nations, 2008c). These countries share a commonality with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf in that they have also shown a stabilisation of urbanisation over recent years. However, Saudi Arabia has not been plagued by any of the problems such as massive urban sprawl and slum settlements. Indeed, this study shows the Kingdom shares many similarities with its neighbours while at the same time there are many differences.

### **1.7 Urbanisation in Buraydah City**

Buraydah City is the most important city in the Al Qassim region, because it is the capital and the headquarters of the Governor, the Local Council, and regional branches of government departments (Hassan, 2006). The city is also home to many of the region's services including hospitals and institutes of higher learning. Buraydah City is one of the fastest growing urban areas in Saudi Arabia and bears witness to the process of urbanisation in striking and visible ways. In the last 50 years the city has experienced significant change, which has coincided with the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia and a resulting increase in revenues, which have been the main factors leading to the transformation of the area in general and of Buraydah City in particular (Al-Mosalam, 2005).

The availability of education, continued trade and prosperity has meant Buraydah City has become one of the largest commercial cities in the area; moreover, there has been continuous population growth, much of it resulting from the migration of people attracted by the available work and facilities (Al-Rabdi, 2001). Buraydah City hosts the largest date market in the world; it attracts many buyers and sellers from within the Kingdom and buyers from other countries in the Gulf region (Ageel, 2008). Additionally, it has the world's largest camel market, which employs many migrant workers who then settle in Buraydah City (Buraydah Municipality, 2005).

Buraydah city has attracted a very high level of migration, especially from rural populations and nomadic Bedouins. According to Al-Rabdi (2005), although the Bedouin

are traditionally a homogenous group, they are well integrated into Buraydah city life and form a part of Buraydah's heterogeneous society. The nomadic Bedouin are significant to the study because nationally they are mostly concentrated in the desert areas to the North of Buraydah City.

In 1962 the population of Buraydah City was 35,000; the population had doubled to 70,000 by 1974, but by 1992 the population experienced a sharp increase and reached more than 248,000. This increase has continued and in 2004 where it had reached over 379,625, 37.2 per cent of the population of Al Qassim (Division of Population Statistics, 1962-2004). The recent 2010 census gives the population at 467,410 (Division of Population Statistics, 2010).

This rapid population growth and urbanisation is taking place in what is a medium-sized city, this in itself is a significant factor as much of the urbanisation in the Kingdom, and in the region, is taking place in cities of this size. The information presented above focuses on the political and economic dimensions of urbanisation in the city, however, urbanisation has consequences that affect the experiences and personal lives of those migrating to cities that are both causing and witnessing such processes. Therefore, there are social and cultural dimensions to be considered as well, not only are such social factors the consequence of urbanisation and part of urban experience, but they are also contributory factors to migration and consequently, urbanisation. Thus, this study adopts a multidimensional approach in understanding the causes, trends and consequences of migration in Buraydah City.

## **1.8 Rationale for the Study**

In comparison to other developing world regions, MENA is distinctive; the region stretches across a vast area from Western Sahara in the west to Oman and Iran in the east and is composed of a myriad of developed, developing and underdeveloped nations (World Bank, 2010d). Within MENA there are poor countries such as Egypt that neighbour rich countries such as Israel; Saudi Arabia, also a wealthy nation, is a neighbour of Yemen, a poor country. Besides the economic disparity there are also some

countries that are plagued by conflict. Moreover, although MENA may have different experiences of urbanisation within, due to the aforementioned factors, as a whole there are also common characteristics which are different to other regions of the developing world.

This study will highlight these distinct aspects in comparison to wider global patterns. Moreover, the study is valuable in showing that an academic approach to urbanisation in the developing world does not necessarily follow the assumptions of current theories, that such processes are unique in MENA and indeed Saudi Arabia. It is also important for the governments of the MENA region to understand the driving forces behind rapid urbanisation and population growth. Furthermore, given the recent civil unrest in MENA which has been partly blamed on issues such as housing shortages and living conditions, it is important to understand the reasons behind the consequences of rapid urbanisation.

What takes place in MENA politically, socially and economically can have wide reaching implications for surrounding countries. Most studies on MENA focus on issues such as education, social studies, health, politics and population growth; however, there is a lack of examination of the phenomenon of rapid urbanisation, along with its causes and consequences. Saudi Arabia is experiencing the highest rate of urbanisation in MENA and therefore warrants research. The study argues that although there are differences between the countries in MENA, in terms of the experience of urbanisation, there are also common experiences between them. In light of this, Saudi Arabia displays differences such as being wealthy, having substantial urban planning strategies and being a major recipient of migrant workers, however, it shares many common traits with the rest of the region; for example, housing shortages, underdeveloped mortgage markets, a large young population and centralised government.

A further justification is that previous studies about migration within MENA and Saudi Arabia have focused on migration to the larger cities and to some extent have neglected the small and medium-sized cities such as Buraydah City, thus, there is a need to study migration to small and medium-sized cities in the Kingdom. However, this is not the only

rationale for studying a medium-sized city, MENA is characterised mostly by cities of this size, and the literature has shown that much of the urban life, trade, education and migration is taking place in these cities.

For Buraydah City, it has been shown that there has been little in the way of studies of rapid urbanisation and its consequences, and more specifically the experiences of different types of migrant, especially the Bedouin. Although the author has found studies examining migration to Buraydah City (e.g. Alayoubi and Alshabaan, 2009), these studies are about migrants generally and only focus on the urban consequences, such as housing issues and unplanned development of urban areas. Therefore, there is a need to examine the motivations and experiences of the migrants and their migration trends. Moreover, with most cities globally, migrants come from rural areas and other cities; however, in Buraydah City there is the added phenomenon of Bedouin migration directly from the desert. Therefore, it is important to address these three groups individually.

## Structure of the Thesis

**Chapter One: Introduction**

**Chapter Two: Literature review**

**Chapter Three: Methodology**

**Chapter Four: Urbanisation in MENA**

**Chapter Five: Urbanisation in Saudi Arabia**

**Chapter Six: Urbanisation and migration in  
Buraydah City**

**Chapter Seven: Patterns and Drivers of migration  
in Buraydah Cit**

**Chapter Eight: The Experience of Migration and  
Urbanisation in Buraydah City**

**Chapter Nine: Conclusion**

# Chapter Two

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This literature review analyses theories, models, patterns and processes of urbanisation and urban geography with the aim of identifying a gap in our knowledge of the urban geographies of the MENA region, and specifically of medium-sized cities within the region. In reference to the latter, there has been a dramatic increase in populations living in small and medium-sized towns in MENA (Dumper and Stanely, 2007). The chapter first addresses urbanisation in the world and then addresses theories and patterns pertaining to the developing world, before moving on to discuss urbanisation and urban geography in the MENA region, the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia.

According to the IMF MENA has its poorer countries such as Yemen and Egypt, two of the poorest countries in the region in terms of GDP per capita (International Monetary Fund, 2010), and richer countries such as the Gulf States with a more positive experience of urbanisation. Moreover, the region is plagued by conflict in some areas; which can affect migratory patterns. In addition, urbanisation has been occurring in tandem with globalisation, which has had significant effects on the type and pace of urbanisation experienced.

In the examination of urbanisation and urban geography, urban theory can be considered as a set of explanations which show how cities are formed, how cities function and how cities change (Hubbard, 2006). According to Hall (2001 p.1), it has to be determined whether changes in urban areas are simply piecemeal or gradual changes, or whether changes are “more fundamental processes of transformation”. Hall (2001) does caution that, when we consider such significant transformations we must not always take the visual evidence and the discourse of change at face value; rather we should be objective in considering the significance of urban change as it varies between

cities and with regards to how these changes affect the character of urban life. In addition to such concerns, this chapter considers the economic, political, cultural and social factors that affect, and are affected by, changes in urbanisation and urban geography.

Cities have a strong influence on the social life of people because they are the initiating and controlling centre of economic, political and cultural activity. They grow organically but do not occur spontaneously and thus represent the influences of previous cultures that have impacted on present day experiences. The literature discussed also highlights the importance of remembering that there is an interrelationship between geography, history, economics and political science; we should not see the city as a physical entity if we want to arrive at a concept of urbanism as a mode of life (Levy, 2008). Therefore, with consideration of the abovementioned ideas, this study, as well as the review of the literature, adopt a multidimensional approach, i.e. looking at all factors –economic, political and socio-cultural, as such factors are responsible for urbanisation and urban geography in medium-sized cities in the region. Yacobi and Schechter (2005 p.500) said in relation to studying the Middle East: “We would welcome any future work that brings our suggestion here, namely to integrate political economy with the study of urban development and city life, to bear on more specific research on urbanism in the Middle East.” Moreover, Brunn et al. (2008) present a model of urban geography which shows the interaction between political, cultural, environmental and economic geography which come together to form the urban geography in the context of space and place, drivers and outcomes, patterns and processes and human interaction.

These writers have supported an inter-disciplinary approach to studying urban geography in MENA, namely between the economic, political and socio-cultural. Indeed, this study aims to look at the drivers or motivators for migration to urban areas, and the consequences or experiences of urban life, where it is appropriate to adopt a multidimensional approach.

## 2.2 Urbanisation

Urbanisation is a relatively recent trend, according to Pacione (2009, p: 68); indeed, at the end of the nineteenth century only North West Europe, the United States and Britain had levels of urbanisation of more than 25 per cent. Rapid urbanisation first manifested in the developed world as a response to industrialisation (Sclar et al., 2005). The burgeoning industries in the United States and Europe required labour, prompting migration from rural areas to industrial centres and leading to housing requirements for the new labour force. In Europe, in 2006, approximately 75 per cent of the population lived in urban areas (European Environment Agency, 2006). Despite the figures, in the developed world where urbanisation was first experienced, there is an emerging shift towards counter urbanisation, a process of internal migration away from major cities first observed in the USA and later in Britain, Canada, Western Europe and Australia. As urbanisation reaches high levels in developed nations, it is inevitable that the migration from rural to urban areas will be much slower than in the developing world (Schmidhuber and Shettya, 2003). The developed world is classified by the World Bank as industrially advanced countries and high income countries where people enjoy a high standard of living, however, they exclude Israel, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore and Hong Kong; as for developing countries they are those with a low or middle level GNP per capita and include the aforementioned five countries (World Bank, 2004).

Consistent with the view that financial factors are not always solely responsible for the growth of cities, Smith (2001) argues that the assumption of an economic view point should be replaced by the view that nations are responsible for the formation and reconstitution of transnational relationships, and that people are the actors shaping transnational urbanism: in other words, they influence urbanism across national boundaries, and are not passive objects controlled by economic logistics. It is in fact the local social structure, politics and taxation policy that are the factors influencing urban change, but these can also make cities important loci of political and economic activity, more so than the nation state (Pacione, 2001).

Moreover, there have been propositions explaining how cities are formed as a result of social interests and values; although great importance should be ascribed to technological and economic factors (Castells, 1983). Pacione (2001) argues that urban change is influenced by historical and local factors that are mediated by other general forces for change. Such local factors can include the local geography, according to Kim (2008), spatial inequalities in relation to cities generally arise for two main reasons based on two geographical features: the first feature relates to the natural resources a city has and its geographic location in relation to sea ports and rivers, and the second feature is related to the concentration of human interaction. Economic development can benefit from of these characteristics of geography, and resulting spatial inequalities may even be advantageous as productivity increases.

### **2.3 Urbanisation in the Developing World**

The majority of the world's population is comprised of urban dwellers living in developing world cities (Kaplan et al., 2004) and this is reflected by high rates of urbanisation in these countries (Constantino-David, 2001), by 2030, 78 per cent of urban dwellers are expected to live in the developing world (Burdett and Sudjic, 2007, p: 58). Veron (2007) stated that such growth is faster in the developing world than anywhere else, and attributed this to rapid population growth contributing to urbanisation from two sources; firstly, through natural increases in urban areas and secondly, as a result of the mass exodus from rural areas, due to (perceived) economic opportunities. However, Cohen (2004) proposes caution when examining urban change in the developing world by questioning the traditional distinctions made between rural and urban which are becoming increasingly obsolete in view of the characteristics of the global economy.

According to Akporji et al. (2009) only some developing countries have shown political commitment to dealing with urbanisation. There are a number of reasons for this which includes government disengagement from urban and housing sectors and a lack of safety net programs and policies to alleviate poverty, leading to inequality in wealth, resources and housing distribution (Durand-Lasserve, 2006). Spatial inequality is another problem now found in many developing countries (Kim, 2008) supported by the United Nations

(2009a) who say that in poorer cities spatial forms are shaped by low-income households who try to secure land that is affordable and in a good location, these areas are referred to as peri-urban areas which lead to new urban forms where most rapid urban growth taking place.

### **2.3.1 Drivers for urbanisation in developing countries**

An examination of economic, technological and political factors as drivers for urbanisation is intrinsic when formulating urban theory, and is currently necessary in the context of non-western or developing countries. Politically and economically speaking, there is unquestionably great diversity amongst the countries and cities of the developing world. Some, like the countries of OPEC, have become wealthy because of oil revenues, and others, like many African states, have suffered from economic and social deprivation. Other factors leading to diversity are the built environment, ethnic diversity, economic policy, differing histories, geographic location and culture.

Although natural population growth is a major contributing factor to urbanisation, migration, especially rural to urban migration, has also been an important factor (Masika et al., 1997). Kainth (2009) identified the most significant factor driving migration to be better employment opportunities; Kainth (2009) also suggested there are push and pull factors; push factors included unemployment and poor economic conditions and the pull factors are better opportunities for employment, higher wages, improved working conditions and better facilities. Migrants have also been encouraged by the information that they have received from friends and relatives who have already migrated to a city (Kok and Collinson, 2006). Moreover, the characteristics of migrants also has an effect on the causes of migration, according to Islam and Siddiqi (2010) age, education, occupation, income and family affect migration drivers.

If we examine the developing regions as a whole we find similarities in terms of drivers for migration to urban areas. These are based on perceptions of the urban environment in contrast to the rural one, for example; opportunities and services in urban areas related to employment and education; better shelter public services, and centres of culture and technological development (UNEP, 2002), for example, migration from rural areas to cities frequently occurs in Latin America because migrants are searching for

better public services (McSweeney and Jokisch, 2007) and because of a deterioration of rural living standards (Almandoz, 2006). In fact, the disparity in incomes between farmers and urban workers has increased, in Asia, for example, the percentage of farmers' income in relation to urban workers was 97 percent in 1990, decreasing to 73 percent by 2002 (Fernando, 2008 p.9).

The fact that employment is a pull factor, migration to urban centres is not necessarily related to demand for labour in those urban centres (Veron, 2007). Received understanding of the relationship between urbanisation and the development of an economy is predominantly based on the premise that there is an excess of urbanisation, which leads to issues of not finding work, however, Bertinelli and Strobl (2007) question this approach, because they are unsure whether the relationship between urbanisation and development in developing countries follows the same patterns as those identified from the history of industrialised nations.

### **2.3.2 Migration**

The varying situational contexts applied to developing countries raises a number of issues in respect to the issue of migration to urban areas, both internationally and internally as discussed here. Kainth (2009) recognised that migration is a global phenomenon that is driven by social and cultural factors and not just economic factors, and it is one that usually takes place from less economically developed areas to more economically developed areas. Although migration generally has been the result of a lack of development among certain nations, the idea has been put forward by Laczko (2008) that migration may actually contribute to development. In support of this, not only does migration benefit the individual, but also supports development, especially for relieving labour pressures; in fact, rural to urban migration is seen as economically beneficial to a country because it allows human resources to move around internally (Bhuyan et al., 2001). However, according to Bhuyan et al., (2001), the rate of migration often exceeds job creation in urban areas, and this places pressure on industry as well as urban services.

Although rural to urban migration seems to increasingly be the most common form of internal migration, especially in Asia; it should be remembered that in other areas such

as Latin America and Egypt, there is high urban to urban migration (Deshingkar and Natali, 2008). This fact is often neglected and may also be the case that internal migration can take place with people moving from cities back to rural areas (DeWind and Holdaway, 2008), a form of reverse migration.

### **2.3.3 The consequences of migration**

There are a number of consequences of migration; some are viewed negatively, such as the increase in slum dwellings on the fringes of cities, whilst others are more positive, such as improvements to healthcare and education for the inhabitants of the more established cities. The growth rate in rural populations in the developing world is predicted to become negative at -0.71 per cent somewhere between 2025 and 2050 (United Nations, 2009e). As a result, government spending is mostly targeted on urban areas, neglecting rural areas. This section will focus on the broader negative and positive consequences of rural to urban migration in the developing world, as identified in existing literature.

Much of the literature on the consequences of rural to urban migration reveals a negative interpretation of the facts. Some of the disadvantages mentioned by Andersen (2002) are crime, pollution and congestion. Additionally, Bloom and Khanna (2007) reported that although rapid urbanisation may increase incomes, it also increases urban poverty. There are concerns that the size and densities of urban populations in developing countries may lead to health issues, unsustainable environments and even civil unrest (Brockhoff, 2000). However, it has been suggested that these problems are not solely due to population pressures but rather because of inadequate responses from local governments, lack of accountability, poor management, improper deployment of community resources and lack of private-sector involvement (Brockhoff and Brennan, 1998). Alternatively, it has been suggested by Kok and Collinson (2006) that providing the receiving areas are economically strong then migration will not have the aforementioned negative impacts, moreover, they also refute the idea that migration creates urban unemployment, rather unemployment is simply moved from the rural to the urban.

However, there is one area where governments in the developing world can be credited with the positive outcomes of urbanisation that is in the provision of healthcare, where according to Schmidhuber and Shettya (2003), this has had a positive impact on the age structure of urban populations and their families, something that will doubtless attract migrants. Furthermore, the process of urbanisation has also helped to reduce overall poverty figures for countries; this however, does not necessarily mean that urban poverty does not exist, as Ravallion et al. (2007) suggest. Indeed, it may simply mean that rural poverty has decreased as the population has transferred to urban centres through migration.

Another benefit of urbanisation appears to derive from the fact that it is cheaper to provide services such as water and electricity when people are gathered together in urban areas and the economies of scale in cities increase economic opportunities and income. In support of this Henerson (2002) suggests that a defining characteristic of urbanisation in the developing world is the high concentration of populations in very large cities, or the phenomenon of urban primacy; describing this as an advantage because it reduces infrastructure costs. This notion has also been considered by Brockerhoff and Brennan (1998) who went on to state that there is an argument that in developing countries living conditions are far better for people who live in larger cities than smaller cities, town and villages. However, there has been a suggestion by Brockerhoff and Brennan (1998) that the gap between large cities and medium-sized cities, in terms of living conditions, is closing as medium-sized cities witness improvements. However, in contrast to the idea that a concentration of people living in urban areas actually reduces costs, there is the argument that urbanisation causes an increase in resource consumption per capita (Shen et al., 2005).

## **2.4 Urbanisation and Urban Geography in MENA**

This section presents a general introduction to the processes of urbanisation in the MENA region and identifies existing research findings on the urban geography, which results from such processes. The study of MENA's urban geography includes a study of towns and cities, their morphology and the spatial patterns that result from different

urban processes. There is a wide variation in urban geography and urbanisation in the region because of a wide array influences such as conflict, wealth from oil and poverty.

The review of the literature shows that there is socioeconomic and political diversity within MENA, the region has politically and economically open as well as isolated countries, and this diversity has given rise to different urban issues, such as slums (Davis, 2006, Fahmi and Sutton, 2008, Stewart et al., 2004), the effects of conflict on the urban (Ramadan, 2009, Graham, 2002, Fregonese, 2009), and rapid urbanisation in Dubai (Bloch, 2010, Davis, 2007). However, there are similarities within MENA that have a significant influence on urbanisation and migration. The literature shows that MENA, as a whole, is characterised by rapid population growth, rapid urbanisation, a large young population, high unemployment, housing shortages, low level of private sector involvement in the housing provision and underdeveloped mortgage markets. All of these factors together are distinctive to the region and have significant implications for urbanisation and the urban geography; therefore, it is necessary to address the region as a whole, as well as the diverse attributes within.

#### **2.4.1 Urbanisation in MENA**

There is no question that the MENA region is currently experiencing urbanisation in a similar way to that of other developing regions; however, because MENA is so economically and politically diverse (as discussed above), the drivers behind urbanisation are subject to variation. It is important when examining the urban landscape in MENA, to consider how the economic, political and cultural complexities interact with the landscapes; ideally, there should be a wider, cross-disciplinary examination or a more integrative approach to urbanism for MENA (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005) because such an approach has not been applied to the region.

Although the cities of MENA are very diverse, they also share a commonality in terms of history, culture, language, political organisation and spatial structure; however, their distinctiveness is gradually eroding because of globalisation and neoliberal and international politics (Silver, 2010). A similar point is presented by Dumper and Stanley (2007) who say that there is a high degree of differentiation at the city level and superficial similarities, such as culture and religion, are superseded by the sub areas of

MENA which are differentiated in terms of geography, climate and economy. They also state that despite this internal differentiation and the hardening of borders, MENA is still well interlinked and shares religious, linguistic and historic experiences that mean the region lends itself to being studied as a whole.

Yacobi and Shechter (2005) also consider that the region should be studied as a whole, as they state that the region and the nature of urbanisation is an economic, political and socio-cultural complexity. Unfortunately, this factor is only given limited attention by academic researchers who although state that urbanisation in MENA is a complexity that involves all three disciplines, they do not explain the intricacies or functionality of this complexity. Hall (2001) supports the idea that there should be a multidimensional approach, stating that the ramifications of changes to urbanisation are not only economic but are also social, cultural and political. Therefore, urbanisation in MENA is often approached from the viewpoint of economics, politics or socio-cultural influences separately; or where they are considered together they lack depth.

Indeed, each dimension has significant and specific impacts on urbanisation and urban geography in the region, as Yacobi and Shechter (2005) have said; economic factors are important because they determine the volume and quality of the built environment; political factors are related to the local and state government policies which shape urban spaces; and socio-cultural factors incorporate two important elements, first, socio-cultural transformations affect perceptions of urban space and second, socio-cultural transformations shape urban space itself (Yacobi and Shechter, 2005). In support of the gap identified in the literature, Unay (2011) reports that much of the literature related to MENA is about political science and international relations and is motivated by the many conflicts in the MENA region. Unay (2011) also states that political economics looks at links between the political (conflicts, political ideologies) and the economic (production, trade, investment, finance); in this sense MENA is unique because complex political and economic trends have been intermingled. It is shown in later sections of this review how political and economic trends have an effect on the urban geography in MENA.

Rapid economic growth in the Middle East from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s was associated with large increases in real income per capita, industrialisation and

urbanisation (Narayan and Smyth, 2007). The labour force totalled some 104 million workers in 2000 and is projected to reach 185 million by 2020. As a result, 80 million new jobs will need to be created in the next decade (Yousef, 2004). Unfortunately, population growth and urbanisation are taking place in a region (i.e. MENA) that is generally performing poorly economically, has non-diverse economies, high unemployment and political instability.

An example of the negative effect of poverty and unemployment is that the balance of rural poverty is set to shift to urban poverty as there is high unemployment among the young in countries such as Morocco, Yemen and Egypt (Egset, 2000), an example of this urban poverty is Morocco where the growth of the urban labour force is greater than the rate of employment expansion, leading to unemployment, which in turn exacerbates urban poverty (Bishay, 1998). In MENA generally where there has been an increase in labour, which is increasingly young and educated (World Bank, 2003b) and there has been an associated increase in demand for housing and in turn the associated housing development has increased demand for labour (Baharoglu et al., 2005).

The above issues are due to poor governance, which have also been blamed for some of the problems associated with rapid urbanisation. It was asserted by El Araby (2002) that management policies lacked a comprehensive understanding of urban governance in the region, and that this could be a threat to the long term quality of urban areas, in developing regions generally. Together with the current problems related to growth in service provision and problems related to social, political and architectural change, officials also face the problems of overcrowding, insufficient infrastructure and changes in means of production (Dumper and Stanley, 2007). In his study of the GCMR (Greater Cairo Metropolitan Region), El Araby (2002) said that one of the problems of urban governance was that the government was unable to understand the frustration of the public and translate their needs into a workable policy. The United Nations (2008a) in their analysis of the governments of North Africa said that a colonial past had created a rigid civil service bureaucracy and a hierarchy with a distant and authoritarian relationship with the public.

Moreover, the United Nations (2008a) commenting on governance in MENA, found that the main problem was that government power was very much centralised across the entire region; however, there have been moves towards decentralisation. Tosun and Yilmaz (2008) also agree that the region has highly centralised government structures. In the Middle East and Western Asia governments have started to recognise these issues and give them priority; such responses include local elections in Saudi Arabia, Mayoral elections in Jordan and the constitutional reforms in Bahrain in 2002 (Adib, 2007). There has been even more pressure to reform with the recent civil unrest and revolutions taking place in the Middle East and North Africa. For example, according to The Economist (2011) the Kings of Jordan and Morocco have witnessed the demise of other presidents in the region, and therefore, they need to pre-empt any demands in order to stifle possible unrest.

In summary, the literature has shown that MENA is an economic, political and social complexity and that this multitude of factors has an influence on the urbanisation and urban geography of the region. Moreover, due the diversity within the region these factors have generated different experiences for different countries, something addressed in more detail later in this chapter, therefore, any examination of the region warrants a multidimensional approach. Despite the diversity the review has also justified treating the region as an entity due to commonly shared factors that also have a major impact on urbanisation and the urban geography.

#### **2.4.2 Migration to, from and within MENA**

Because the MENA region is so economically diverse within, as previously suggested, there are countries that are economically successful that are labour importers, such as countries in the Gulf, and there are countries which are low economic performers and have to become labour exporters, such as Morocco. El Gawady and El Din (2008) stated that high unemployment in the non-oil producing countries of MENA has been a concern for public policy and has been attributed to low education levels. Unfortunately, these non-oil producing countries hold about 80 percent of the region's population. This has caused migratory movements to, from and within MENA. In relation to emigration, in 2010, MENA had an emigrant stock of 18.1 million, over five percent of the total

population, popular emigration countries include Morocco, Egypt and Syria; and in terms of immigration within the region, there are 12 million immigrants from countries such as those mentioned above and Libya, Yemen, Jordan and the West Bank and Gaza (Ratha et al., 2011 p.29).

MENA has a low incidence of poverty in comparison to other developing regions because of remittances to be sent back to the region (Adams and Page, 2003). A key destination point for regional migrants has been the Gulf States, taking the pressure off labour markets and redistributing wealth within the region in the form of workers' remittances. Morocco for example has long had a policy of encouraging emigration so that it can manage unemployment levels at home, a policy that was imitated by other countries in North Africa (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005), although it has been suggested by the World Bank (2010b) that in 2009 and 2010 there has been a significant decrease in remittances due to the economic downturn, something the country depends on more than any other country in the region. Moreover, according to Gubert et al. (2009) the prediction is that in the future the demographic pressure will remain because of increase in youth and people living longer which will lead to an expansion of the working age population.

In fact, intra-regional migration in MENA is seen as a substitute for the reform that is needed to alleviate labour pressure, however, migration is no longer sufficient to solve the current unemployment situation, even if oil prices were to peak, it would not be enough to absorb the region's labour force; this is compounded by the fact that Europe is not as welcoming as it used to be (Sullivan and Nadgrodkiewicz, 2008). Furthermore, the recent civil unrest in the region has brought more uncertainty for the future of migration and remittances, and this uncertainty is worsened by the global financial situation (Mohapatra et al., 2011). It has been suggested by Stanley (2003) that a way forward for MENA in terms of development would be to increase interconnectivity between its countries to create a fertile crescent of interlinked cities; conjoined in terms of labour flows, capital, trade and services.

According to Fargues (2002) theories of international migration are based on economic and social factors as drivers for migration, however, looking at MENA over the last 50 years has shown that migration is also significantly influenced by international political

issues, especially conflict. An example of how political instability and conflict can seriously affect outbound migration from a country is Lebanon, where according to Fersan (2010, p: 16) it is mostly educated people that migrate from the country, referred to as a “brain drain”. In MENA it has also been the case that economic factors themselves have led to conflict. The result of not meeting economic challenges has been dramatically illustrated by recent uprisings against governments across the region. For example, it has been suggested by Klein (2011) that high unemployment among Egyptians, approximately a quarter, is often given as the reason for the recent revolution.

Although oil wealth is often singled out as the sole factor responsible for the need to attract migrants, according to Madbouly (2009) there are a number of other features of the Gulf countries that attract foreign labour such as low indigenous participation in the work force, especially among women, small indigenous populations, locals not being inclined to work in the private sector, and low education levels. According to Colton (2010), the locals of Gulf countries in the past were too low in number and insufficiently educated to meet local labour needs; however, governments still had to look after their indigenous populations by heavily subsidising the public sector and employing nationals. This influx of labour into the Gulf States has led to rapid urbanisation (Al-Katheeri, 2006).

There has been a suggestion by Fargues (2008) that all MENA countries excluding GCC and Libya are now both destination and origin countries, this is a shift away from the situation between 1960 and 1990 where the region was divided into destination countries like the oil rich Gulf States, and origin countries which was the rest of the region. A very important point to note is that even the large oil producers such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have their own domestic unemployment issues.

It would certainly be inaccurate to classify all of the migrant workers in the Gulf as one group; according to Rhys (2010) they are a complex group, and they may be distinguished from each other by where they come from, the type of work they do and the type of visa they have. The destination cities also vary amongst different migrant groups; some prefer those cities that have been cultural centres for hundreds of years;

whilst others, driven by the demands of the new construction industry prefer the newer cities that have emerged with globalisation, to service the global market.

The recent uprisings in the region have also had an impact on migration, for example, the conflict in Libya has created a mass exodus of migrants fleeing to their own countries, and third country nationals fleeing as well. According to the IOM by the end of August, 2011 a total of 972295 people had fled Libya to neighbouring countries, including Italy and Malta (International Organisation for Migration, 2011b p.1). People fleeing the conflict in Libya also have an economic impact. According to Santi et al. (2011 p.8) there were over 92,000 Tunisians in Libya in 2010 and in 2011 over 41,000 had returned home and this will significantly reduce the remittances received by Tunisia.

### **2.4.3 The cities in MENA**

The cities of MENA are as diverse as the region itself; MENA has some of the oldest cities in the world such as Baghdad, Tunis, Cairo and Damascus, and most of these cities have a historic core, which displays Islamic architecture, and a spatial design suited to Islamic societies. According to Atash (1993), as the cities in MENA have grown the traditional core has become surrounded by urban areas that are very different to the core in terms of town planning and design.

While there has been much written about the Islamic influences on the shape of cities there has been little discussion about the role that is played by economic reforms, regional politics and social-cultural changes in shaping cities in MENA (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005). Given that most of the population of MENA is urbanised and it is experiencing rapid urbanisation, it is surprising that there is such a gap in the research.

Shechter and Yacobi (2005) say that research into urbanisation in the West has undergone change over the last twenty years, the city is now studied as a socio-political arena focussing on the strong influences of capitalism, nationalism and globalisation on urban spaces; as a result of this approach there is a better understanding of the re-organisation of urban regimes and the movement of people that is shaping city life; we now understand how complex social relations influence urban planning and policies, the problem is that this change in the approach to research has yet been applied to MENA.

It is true that the approach to studying cities in MENA is moving away from the traditional 'Oriental' or 'Islamic' city focus, however, there is still some way to go until cities such as Damascus are studied in a comparative manner, moreover, this delay is surprising because there is an abundance of research and interest in politics in MENA (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005 p.183). Furthermore, there is frequent debate among academics about whether or not it is useful to use the term 'Islamic' when studying the cities of MENA, because there is an idea that this term involves a romanticised vision of cities in MENA; however, it has been considered a useful approach because it shows how Islamic culture and law shaped the urban form (Dumper and Stanley, 2007).

In further support of a different approach, in researching the cities in MENA it is better not to homogenise the experiences as simply being "Middle Eastern", or to employ one monolithic approach to understanding the production of space, rather, the variety of shared experiences responsible for shaping cities in the Middle East should be elicited (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005 p.184).

According to Shechter and Yacobi (2005) globalisation is noticeable in the cities of MENA in the commerce, business and leisure districts; the buildings in these areas are often representative of a postmodern global vision, ignoring the essence of their surroundings in terms of their aesthetic, moreover, as polarisation of the urban environment is created by buildings such as shopping malls and designer boutiques, the less affluent take part in this consumption through window shopping. However, the experience is mostly negative for the less affluent, Silver (2010) states that the wealth enjoyed by Westerners and Arabs in shopping malls and pleasure palaces in the Middle East, is in stark contrast to the poverty of informal housing areas in Cairo and the refugee camps of Beirut.

#### **2.4.4 Global urban geography applied to MENA's cities**

It is apparent in MENA's cities that the urban geography is affected by their position as a part of a global urban geography. However, it should be noted that it is not the intention of this study to examine in depth about how cities in MENA form part of a world city network or to address the gaps in this area for MENA, however, it will be shown that MENA does exhibit qualities of other world or global cities. Furthermore, according to

Hall (2001 p.4) it is better to “think of cities having different roles and positions in the world economy” meaning it is not possible to look at the processes that shape cities by only looking within them, we must also look at the processes beyond their boundaries because of the influence on urban development exerted by a city’s position in the world economy (Hall, 2001).

Despite this reality, much of the Global and World City (GaWC) literature (Pacione, 2001; Sassen, 2001; Kaplan, 2004; Brunn et al., 2008) neglects many of the countries in MENA. In fact, according to Bassens et al. (2010 p.36) if the cities of MENA were looked at through the ‘Sassen/GaWC lens’ then they would not be considered as networked in transnational flows. Examination of Taylor’s (2004) work on world city networks shows considerable neglect of MENA; his model from 2001 which was called the ‘international economy as a mosaic’ (Taylor, 2004, p.29) only included Egypt and Israel from the MENA region; in another model Taylor (2004 p.30) referred to ‘cities as nodes in a global economy’ and the only city from MENA was Cairo. In the lowest category of world cities, Gamma, of which there are 35 cities, there were no cities from MENA at all (Beaverstock et al., 1999 p.445).

In addition; the study of networks in relation to transnational urbanism for cities of the Middle East has been scattered and undeveloped, even though network trends and processes are emerging in the region (Stanley, 2005). Bodenstaff (2008) argues that although global city criteria do not apply to non first-world countries, cities in MENA do form connections to some extent; however, they have no global command functions; moreover, Bodenstaff (2008) provides the example of Cairo and states that it is not a global city because it has failed to attract outside investment, does not have a strategic vision and does not have financial resources.

However, there is an argument that cities in MENA are part of a global financial network. Bassens et al. (2010) argue that Islamic Financial Services (IFS) provided by the countries of MENA may provide a different economic process for looking at world city formation. However, although global networks of banking and finance are the most powerful, they should not be considered in isolation. There are other forms of power within networks and hierarchies that have significant influence, such as the exchange of communication,

mentioned above, and facilitation; examples include religious places like Mecca and Rome or cultural centres such as Hollywood (Massey, 1999).

According to Graham (2006) after the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 there has been a further change in the perception of cities in MENA, more specifically, there has been a reworking of imaginative geographies which have separated the so called US 'homeland' from those cities in MENA that are perceived to be sources of terrorists threats. The imagined urban geographies in the US need to be reworked to address the idea of a threat to international security; meanwhile, the imagined geographies of Arab cities have been reworked to construct an idea that they are simply 'terrorist nests'. These two imagined geographies are being treated together in the form of an integrated 'battlespace' (Graham, 2006 p.255). However, recent developments in the region i.e. the Arab Spring may change this perception that the region is simply a home for terrorists. Gardner (2011) states that the removal of undemocratic regimes removes one of the grievances of terrorists, however, he also states that terrorist organisations may try to exploit the situation.

#### **2.4.5 Traditional urban geography in MENA**

In terms of the structure and space of the cities in much of MENA, many are based on classical urban geography and are centred around the citadel structure, predicated on an Islamic spatial form influenced by religion. The centre was the traditional citadel, or residence of those in power, surrounded by a walled city; containing the mosque, schools and the market, and limited open public spaces (Silver, 2010). There is a recognition of the role of both climate and Islamic jurisprudence when discussing the shaping of the cities in MENA, for example enclosed courtyards, narrow streets, slatted windows, high walls between residences and specific points of entry for guests (Dumper and Stanley, 2007). There are indeed three views of the city and the template for their design: firstly, that the cities should be bound by geographical territoriality (Amin and Thrift, 2002), expressing their walled boundedness, as with the citadel; secondly an intention to suppress reference to the geographical and see the city as "a space of flows", a more modern approach; and thirdly a decision to accept and integrate both

aspects of a city (Stanley, 2005 p.190). All three approaches are present in the MENA region.

Moreover, there has been recent urban renewal in the region whereby the “modern” (colonial) and the “traditional” (Islamic) are being renovated and rediscovered by locals and international investors who are interested in preservation, however, the negative side of this has been the removal of existing residents replaced by people who are more affluent, this reshaping of these cities such as Beirut, Damascus and Jaffa is principally motivated by ideas of local identity and nostalgia (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005 p.186).

However, it has been claimed by Atash (1993) that cities in MENA are fragmented due to the fact that they are comprised of different components, i.e. the historic cores (Islamic), the colonial quarters, post colonial urban development’s and squatter settlements, each of these fragments has its own character and is a unique economic and social environment; there are two main problems with this, firstly, the historic core is losing economic, political and cultural significance and secondly, the new developments have no cultural identity and are not linked with the historic core.

The current urban fabric of older cities in MENA has also been affected by government policies and rapid population growth. As the traditional core of the cities deteriorates and the upper working classes move into the colonial areas vacated by Europeans, the poor are left in the cities’ inner cores in dilapidated conditions, with in-migration from rural areas prompting the appearance of squatter settlements on their periphery (Atash, 1993).

## **2.5 Urbanisation and urban geography in MENA: Poverty in MENA**

This section will focus on the concerns of the poorer nations within the MENA region in relation to urbanisation and urban geography; the principle two being the consequences of out migration from the poorest cities, and the unimpeded rapid development of slums within the boundaries of the cities. Due to the volume of literature found it is possible to highlight some of these issues using Cairo as an example case study (as discussed above Egypt has been included in a number of studies into urban poverty in the developing

world). The evolution of cities in the face of poverty brings up a number of issues, relating to planning, the limited availability of low cost housing and the government's role in the provision of services to areas of informal housing.

### **2.5.1 Poverty and slums in MENA's cities**

Privatisation in MENA has brought about the creation of city spaces that can best be described as informal; this has been a result of a change in the relationship between the state and their citizens because governments are less able to provide services, thus people take the responsibility to find housing upon themselves to build their own housing, in places such as Cairo and Alexandria it is also a part of urban life for the middle and lower-middle classes (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005). In support of this Bayat and Denis (2000) say that there is a move away from state planned and managed urbanisation to more private and spontaneous urbanisation by the people themselves, challenging assumptions made about informal cities and their association with political and social problems. However, according to Shechter and Yacobi (2005) the informality i.e. informal housing, should not be considered as separate from the formal economy and construction, in MENA the informal and formal are interlinked in a way that embodies the urban experience, this informality is actually accepted by governments and used to mitigate their responsibility.

However, governments are to blame for the housing situation in the region, according to Baharoglu et al., (2005) the problem in terms of housing in MENA is more about affordability than availability, also supported by Fahmi and Sutton (2008), who identifies this as the main problem in Cairo and North Africa as a whole. The latter point is in contrast to Latin America, where housing availability is the problem (Balchin and Stewart, 2001). However, these studies are based on large cities and there is no information available for this issue in relation to medium-sized cities in MENA specifically.

Alternatively, it has also been suggested by Saidi (2007) that both housing availability and affordability have contributed to the problem of housing in MENA, that financing facilities for housing are inadequate and there is no access to finance for people in low to middle income brackets; additionally, housing market growth has been impeded by a

lack of an adequate legal framework that protects property rights. As a response to these housing issues, Keivani et al. (2008) in a study about the public management of urban land in Iran suggested that that governments could improve low and middle income housing provision by providing land in parallel with markets and those governments should develop property rights.

It has been shown more recently that the housing crisis in MENA can be partly the cause of significant civil unrest. There is strong evidence that the living conditions of the people have been poor prompting discontent. It has been asserted that an estimated 35 percent of the population of the Arab world are not satisfied with their standard of living, and in Yemen this figure is as high as 53 percent (Breisinger et al., 2011 p.1). However, in relation to the rest of the developing world MENA has the lowest urban poverty and is atypical in its relatively low incidence of slums (Baker, 2008).

### **2.5.2 Cairo: A case study**

A classic example of a city that has negative urban experiences as a result of poverty is Cairo. It has been suggested by Fahmi and Sutton (2008) that there are often generalisations made about the housing crisis and slums in Cairo that conceal considerable variation in the urban processes. As is also suggested by Pacione (2005), in Cairo the poor live in the old central part of the city which is overcrowded and has poor facilities (Fahmi and Sutton, 2008).

However, despite housing problems, the people of Cairo do have a number of choices when it comes to housing. According to Davis (2006) this is a reflection of the complexity of the urban in the city, their choices include: renting, if they want a job in the centre, this is secure but they can never buy; being centrally located in informal housing; squatting on publically owned land on the outskirts of Cairo, there are disadvantages which are the high cost of commuting and poor infrastructure; or finally, buying a site for a house in one of the semi-informal developments on land purchased from Bedouin or peasants, this gives residents a legal tenure but no building authorisation.

Again, the issue of affordability and not availability arises in this case. There has been a rapid increase in the population of Cairo so it would make sense that the associated

housing problems are related to availability, however, according to Fahmi and Sutton (2008) there are many vacant dwellings in Cairo with estimates ranging from the hundreds of thousands to the millions, which can be found in most districts. In contrast, Cohen (2004) suggests that because of rural to urban migration and rapid population growth in Cairo there is a shortage of housing in the City. Fahmi and Sutton (2008) say that newly-wed couples cannot afford to buy or rent and although rentals may be affordable to many, the up-front money is too much; this is also an issue for the lower-middle classes who comprise the majority of Cairo's population.

The result of this housing situation is that a large proportion of Cairo's population live in communities and slums, in fact Cairo as a mega-city owes its physical development to informal settlements (Harre-Rogers, 2006) and despite the fact there is a need to address the housing needs of those on limited incomes, the government policy has encouraged the building of luxury housing, this has created a large disparity between supply and demand of housing for the poor (Fahmi and Sutton, 2008).

In response to the aforementioned problems, Egypt's population and demographic policies were formerly to establish new urban centres in the desert designed to attract people away from Greater Cairo and redistribute the country's population more evenly around the country. Many of these new cities are located within 40 km of Greater Cairo and can therefore, benefit from service provision and the larger economy of Greater Cairo, however, there are towns that have been built that are designed to be economically independent of Greater Cairo in order to reduce the need for people to commute (Stewart, 1996).

Unfortunately, these strategies of building new towns, which are a mixture of new town, low-cost housing schemes and overspill estates to the east and west of Cairo, has failed because they have failed to persuade people to move to these areas, although they have attracted factories and jobs; the main reasons for this is because these areas lack sufficient educational and social infrastructure and interestingly, people prefer to stay in a familiar environment in Greater Cairo; rather than a desert city with monotonous architecture (Fahmi and Sutton, 2008).

However, there is evidence of the move to decentralisation that is taking place in Cairo, a study by Stewart et al. (2004) showed that there was significant decentralisation, mainly related to population change in the metropolitan area where people have moved to newly created towns in the desert, and as a result there has been a significant increase in population density in the new areas. Their study also identified specific urban characteristics which showed areas of density decline in the poorer central areas of Cairo from which people moved for better housing; areas of increasing density which is primary urban growth on the periphery, where people were encouraged to move using a ring road as an incentive, and finally, stable areas which appeared in a ring around the central unpopulated areas. People, mostly middle class, stay in these areas because of good housing conditions and the population and urban expansion remains stable because there is no more room for further housing construction. These stable areas are a representation of polarised land use and population density, 90 percent of urban areas are targeted at the more affluent and only 10 percent are for the poor, this is a legacy of colonisation and the inheritance of the post colonial affluent few (Davis, 2006).

## **2.6 Urbanisation and urban geography in MENA: The oil rich Gulf States**

In contrast to the poorer countries of MENA, is the experience of the urban inhabitants of the oil rich Gulf States; such as Dubai, Qatar and Sharjah, which has not always been positive. The oil producing states of the Gulf region have experienced significant economic and social changes, however, this change has not only been due to oil but also to the modernisation of economies and political reform which has resulted in uncontrolled urban growth which has been accentuated by the presence of foreign workers, influencing both the shape and character of cities in the region (Mokhtar and Abdelghani, 2011). This rapid change has meant that planning practice is always ahead of planning theory in rapidly urbanising contexts; this is because future plans have to continuously change to keep pace with the pressures of development and contextual changes (Ouf, 2007).

A significant aspect of the urban geography in the Gulf States has been the creation of spaces by migrants, Kellett (2003) states that most analysis of settlements has focussed

on areas designed by specialist professionals for affluent populations. However, a study of self-made environments, or informal spaces, (i.e. made by migrants) in and around cities has been neglected. Kellett (2003) suggested three main attributes of these informal spaces which are: spaces are conceived and built by occupants independent of professional advice, occupation and construction take place at the same time because of necessity, and finally, these places are often undergoing a process of dynamic change and the occupants show creativity and initiative with limited resources. The spaces that are created by migrants are local but have global links. Although the global / local dichotomy is receiving a lot of attention; in this interaction the global is a space of sameness where economic flows take place, and the local is a place of difference and struggle. It has been suggested by ElSheshtawy (2008) that this idea is inaccurate because it presents limitations; there is a need to adjust the theory to also include the regional, national and supranational, short of global. For example Benton-Short et al. (2005 p.957) argued that 'global immigrant destinations are the nodes from which complex linkages are formed with the economic periphery'. This was further supported by Price and Benton-Short (2007) who observed large scale immigration to be creating new and more immigrant destinations which are often overlooked; these are destinations that have different forms, are often diverse and are linked through transnational connections.

In relation to the above assertions regarding immigrant destinations with different forms, a distinctive characteristic of the urban geography of the oil rich Gulf States is that there are hidden spaces, which have, according to ElSheshtawy (2008), been forgotten. In studying these spaces ElSheshtawy (2008) employed a theoretical framework that encompasses the idea of the 'everyday' and the transnational connections which connect the global and the local. He found that these processes were taking place in these forgotten spaces. More specifically, these forgotten spaces in the area of study, Dubai, had low-income migrant communities that exchanged information and money with their countries of origin and these areas are affected spatially by a concentration of these migrants and their activities; this is evidenced by the presence of shops, restaurants and other service outlets that service this expatriate group. In relation to this, Allen (1999 p. 54) talked about the difficulty of grasping the whole of a city because

it is not a single entity and mentions 'many worlds within cities' meaning by moving through city streets we enter different worlds.

### **2.6.1 Dubai: A case study**

Dubai was developed very quickly and was founded on oil wealth and has been shaped by its pursuit of economic growth, much of the need to increase housing and business capacity in Dubai was due the influx of expatriate workers and tourists (Bloch, 2010). There has been competition among 21<sup>st</sup> Century metropolises for urban primacy; this included Dubai which has undertaken an urban revolution to gain rank in the 'world urban hierarchy', however, closer analysis of urban restructuring in the Emirate shows that it has resulted in detrimental social problems, in its pursuit of icons and vertical cities, Dubai may be on course to serious social consequences (Acuto, 2010 p.272). The relevance of the case of Dubai is that it has been suggested by Bloch (2010) that building practices in Dubai are influencing suburbanisation in the rest of the Middle East, as well as Asia and Africa.

Pacione (2005) suggests that urban expansion occurred over four phases in Dubai: slow growth and limited physical expansion because of limited economic growth, compact growth based on a master plan which introduced zoning and a road systems; in line with the pre-oil economy, planned suburban growth because of availability of capital and finally, in a period from 1980 until 2005, a period of rapid urbanisation in terms of diversity. However, recent economic developments may add another phase to this process. According to Bloch (2010) the global economic crisis brought about an end to Dubai's economic boom towards the end of 2008 which resulted in a slowdown in construction, that real estate development will no longer, for the time being, be an economic priority.

There are now plans to develop the city in a planned phase next to existing built up areas instead of having leapfrog developments, a central element of this urban development, and part of the overall strategy to establish Dubai as a global hub for commerce, is to build 'cities within cities'; these involve mega projects comprised of: Internet city, Media city, Festival city, Dubai Marina and International city (Pacione, 2005 p.262). Davis (2007 p. 53) states that these individual mega projects should not be considered as stand alone

“crazy” projects but are part of building the Dubai brand, moreover, Davis (2007 p. 53) cites a quotation by George Katodrytis which states: “Dubai is the prototype of the new post-global city, which creates appetites rather than solves problems”.

A problem in Dubai encouraged by political, economic and social conditions is urban densification; this densification makes it logical to abandon residential areas and move to cheaper high-rise housing mixed up with the current high-rise developments. This creates ecological voids where detached homes should have been (Wilson, 2010). In support of this, the urban geography of Dubai has been described by ElSheshtawy (2008) as fragmentary because it is composed of many, disconnected centres separated by multi-lane highways; and because of this there is little significant pedestrian circulation or conventional urban fabric.

Although there are spaces created by migrant groups, it is not reasonable to say that it is only the behaviour of the expatriate communities that are responsible for the creation of the spaces in Dubai. The position of the city’s land development policy and housing policy makes a clear distinction between the citizen and the expatriate; each group is allocated different spaces, which leads to spatial segregation on ethnic lines, in some areas of the old city people have moved out because Indians and Pakistanis have moved in (ElSheshtawy, 2008). Pacione (2005) says that land allocation policy in Dubai is based on a distinction between expatriate and citizen housing needs, for the nationals there are policies aimed at meeting local housing needs and replacing dilapidated houses and the allocation of new housing plots to which citizens are entitled, and expatriate needs are to be met by the private sector.

Moreover, housing policy in Dubai has been greatly responsible for physical development in the following ways: housing plots are allocated to individuals and not families, thus increasing the land area required for citizens, new housing plots have been located on the periphery encouraging suburbanisation and so-called ‘dormitory communities’ and the government’s discouragement of low cost expatriate housing (Pacione, 2005 p.262). More generally, economic and ecological complications in Dubai have been made worse by rapid expansion, a top-down approach to urbanism and the building of single-phase mega projects, this has, for example, created landscape issues

that are unable to respond to socio-cultural, economic and environmental changes (Wilson, 2010).

Evidence of this is that the design of spatial form has not always been successful in Dubai; there have been complaints from local residents that developers abandoned plans to build social and recreational spaces. According to Wilson (2010) this is a case of building the towers first with social spaces and requirements being only afterthoughts. It has been claimed by Acuto (2010) that the pursuit of distinguishing Dubai in the world city network by creating novel icons has only resulted in a conurbation of construction sites and monotonous 'hypercomfortable and hyperexclusive' spaces which are designed to seduce the visitor, however, this has failed to create any 'sense of urban cohesion and vitality' (Acuto, 2010 p.282). Moreover, there is also the sense that Dubai is a large building site void of community spirit (ElSheshtawy, 2008).

It has been suggested by Acuto (2010) that one aspect of vertical cities such as Dubai is not only the creation of inhuman dimensions but also the endeavour to create a city within a city where its urbanism is an attempt to create comfort zones for expatriates, who only stay temporarily, to the detriment of locals. However, this architectural megalomania is not irrational if Dubai is to be a luxury consumers' paradise for the whole of the Middle East and South Asia (Davis, 2007).

It has been suggested by Pacione (2005) that in contrast to many of the industrialised cities of the west which are trying to effect urban regeneration, Dubai is in the process of urban generation. According to Davis (2007 p.51) Dubai is the "new global icon of imagineered urbanism". Indeed; a very significant point is that although Dubai faces common problems with the developing world, such as providing infrastructure in the context of rapid urbanisation, it is different in that it has economic strength, political stability, no legacy of industrial dereliction, no urban sprawl and clear development planning to create a twenty-first century city (Pacione, 2005). However, post 2008 the economic crisis faced by Dubai places doubt on the country's political stability in relation to handling the crisis, in fact according to Bloch (2010) the government were in denial of a pending crisis despite warning signs.

## **2.6.2 Spatial zones: The impact of socio-political and economic divisions**

The fragmented and segregated nature of cities has led to a discussion amongst theorists of a spatial zoning strategy that occurs as a part of the city design. This kind of zoning is often based on wealth and poverty, but social status, nationality of origin and political relations all influence the existence of different areas within the cities inhabited by different groups.

The relevance of such zones was discussed by Nagy (2006) in relation to Doha, Qatar, where the urban landscape consists of a multiplicity of cultural spaces with transnational populations. However, despite the fact such spaces exist here, Nagy (2006) suggests that cities in the Arabian Peninsula do not have ethnic spaces surrounded by rigid boundaries, it is easy for people who are not residents to enter these spaces and use the services within; for example Arab or European customers visiting an Indian barber: this is in sharp contrast to Sao Paulo which is characterised by a city of walls (ElSheshtawy, 2008). Social, political and economic relationships between groups is played out in neighbourhoods of cities around the world and these relations show themselves in spatial form e.g. segregation, shanty towns and ethnic enclaves, in fact it is the policy of the government that Qatari housing areas are distinct from expatriate housing areas (Nagy, 2006).

The tendency towards spatial zones that may be socially exclusive relates to strong concerns about the exertion of the socio-political influence of expatriate workers in the Gulf area generally. Despite their need for migrant workers, the Gulf States have reacted to the potential disadvantages of the mass influx of migrants from Asia, as physically manifested within urban areas. It has been argued by Winckler (2010) that in many industrialised nations the immigrant population can become the majority and take over, and he mentions the policies of the Gulf States, whereby the ruling royal families do not allow the nationalising of immigrants. Dito (2008) stated that in consideration of the size of the migrant population in the Gulf States, the concern has moved away from labour market issues to concerns about identity and foreign workers creating democratic imbalances. However, the Arab Spring of 2011 has significant implications for foreign workers in MENA. According to Douglas (2011) the unrest has implications for the

composition and size of foreign workers in the Gulf States, mainly because, for example, the uprisings in Syria and Egypt will cause more Arabs to seek work in the Gulf countries, or even embolden foreign workers to demand more rights.

Beyond the cultural and social impact, Rahman (2010) questioned whether the presence of migrant workers is an economic asset or a security risk; he suggested that migrant workers in the Gulf region are considered to be a security risk and as a result Gulf countries have become stricter in their recruitment policies. Bahrain and the Secretary-General for the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) consider foreign labour as a threat to the region's future; however, this view is not shared by the ILO (International Labour Organisation) that believes migrant workers are not appreciated and are underpaid.

## **2.7 Urbanisation and urban geography in MENA: The conflict zones**

One characteristic of MENA that cannot be ignored in terms of its impact on urban geography is its many conflict zones. This has had a direct effect on the processes of urbanisation, patterns of migration and urban spatial form. The latter will now be addressed with an analysis of how different conflicts in the region have negatively affected urban areas, sometimes referred to as urbicide.

### **2.7.1 Urbicide**

Ramadan (2009 p.156) defines urbicide as 'violence against or killing the city', in reference to the destruction of cultural symbols and everyday places during the genocide in Bosnia. This urbicide as a concept is useful for interpreting the links between urban space and political violence (Fregonese, 2009). Perhaps the most well-known case of conflict impacting urban geography is Israel and the occupied territories. According to Graham (2002 p.642) the claim by Ariel Sharon that invasion of the occupied territories sought to destroy terrorist infrastructure was unfounded, and that the real intention of Sharon's invasion was to 'destroy the urban, civil and infrastructural foundations of the proto-Palestinian state' also termed as a process of 'urbicide'. Ramadan (2009) also mentioned 'urbicide' when discussing the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian refugee camp in northern Lebanon. More specifically, the invasions were intended to undermine the

modernisation and infrastructure of Palestinian cities by destroying water tanks, electronic communications, roads, houses and hospitals; they are part of a wider destruction targeted at Palestinian areas, which includes impeding the development of Palestinian settlements inside Israel and the building of numerous Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza (Graham, 2002).

Iraq also provides an example of how the urban is used in warfare. According to Graham (2004) Iraq was a modern and highly urbanised society that has been put back to a pre-industrial age by sanctions, bombing and state violence. It has been argued by Riley (2011) that the battle and counter insurgency in Sadr city, Iraq is a clear example of violence against an urban area, the people who live there, and therefore, urbanity itself when examined in light of literature on urbicide.

However, the impact of conflict on the urban geography does not end with the invasion of urban areas. According to Ramadan (2009) there are spaces in some countries where the law of that country does not apply, he provides an example of a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, it was destroyed by the conflict but following the conflict it was vandalised and looted, there was complete destruction in addition to what happened militarily. As a result Ramadan (2009) highlighted that within Lebanon there was a space that was not Lebanon, i.e. there was a void in terms of sovereignty and legality, which encouraged the 'urbicide'. These spaces have been referred to as 'sovereignities of extraterritoriality' by Weizman (2007) where sovereign law is deliberately suspended. This type of space was also identified by Bayat and Denis (2000 p.185) in Imbaba, one of Cairo's informal settlements, which was 'taken over' by an Islamist organisation called *Al Gama'a al-Islamiyya* which created a state within the state in Egypt.

### **2.7.2 Cities of conflict**

Perhaps the best example of a divided city in MENA as a result of conflict is Beirut which exhibits urban polarisation. As Beirut's population became more segregated in terms of religious belief, it created antagonistic enclaves separated by a no man's land known as the green line, dividing the Christian East from the Muslim West (Ramadan, 2009). According to Silver (2010) urban division is a predictable and unavoidable sequence where insecurity leads to ethnic violence and then internal partition. It has been

suggested by Schechla (2009) that although there has been extreme physical destruction and economic loss because of military conflict, cross border conflict and internal conflict has affected even those major cities in the Middle East that are far from these battles, because of the involuntary displacement of millions of refugees.

Schechla (2009) states that together with the physical changes to cities as an indirect result of conflict, there is also the problem of social cohesion due to an unequal distribution of resources, compounded by the movements of labourers from poorer countries. This is very apparent in Baghdad, Iraq where before the US-led invasion that toppled Saddam in 2003, Sunni, Shiite and Christians lived together, however, after the invasion and the resulting sectarian violence, neighbourhoods were divided over faith lines (Turner, 2011). However, Schechla (2009) also cites urbanists, who argue that as a result of conflict the constant reshuffling of populations and new construction of housing represent positive growth for a city. There are other problems in the region more generally that are associated with political conflict. In Iran urban planning has also been affected by political conflict. Tehran went through a period that can be divided into three phases, they were the revolution phase (1979 - 1988), reconstruction phase (1989 – 1996) and the reform phase (1997 – 2004) each one of these phases had its own approach to urban planning (Madanipour, 2006). Although Tehran has a master plan for urban development (1968) its implementation was disrupted by the revolution and any growth since has been piecemeal; in the reconstruction phase in the 1990s some of the original limitations of the master plan were relaxed, this phase included giving more responsibility to the municipality.

All of the problems mentioned above as associated with conflict and its consequences have an effect on urban areas. Schechla (2009) states that these issues present common challenges for urban policy makers because they always have to be ready to accommodate population shifts that are incremental and abrupt. Basra in Iraq has experienced population movements, and according to the United Nations (2006) the problems of housing shortages and inadequate municipal services are compounded by population movements and displacement. Moreover, Basra has many informal settlements that appeared during the wars and sanctions which has created a city with no proper urban structure, finally, in post-war countries such as Iraq there are numerous

complex problems to meet the ever changing needs of a growing population and the master planning approach in this respect, can be deficient (United nation, 2006).

## **2.8 Urbanisation and urban geography in Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia has been transformed into a modern developing nation during the 70 years since its creation; its towns and cities have been transformed by rapid urban growth, this rapid growth has indeed been due to wealth generated by oil (Ashwan, 1990). By 1981 Saudi Arabia had become one of the richest, most important countries in the world. Interestingly, according to Lindsey (2006), the country has developed more rapidly than any country in modern history. Urbanisation in Saudi Arabia was further prompted by the introduction of development plans during the 1970s, and rapid urbanisation continued throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. However, during the 1990s there was a gradual decline in terms of urban development, partly due to the Gulf war and low oil prices (Al-But'hie and Eben Saleh, 2002).

According to Basha (1988), urbanisation in Saudi Arabia has been distinctive in the developing world in that it has developed through a number of phases; the traditional, modern, rapid growth and stabilised growth phases. The traditional stage was before the discovery of oil; the country was poor and was the least urbanised in the Middle East. The modern phase followed on from the discovery of oil and was characterised by the associated development. The rapid growth phase coincided with a rapid increase in the price of oil in 1974, which greatly increased the country's wealth, causing cities to become centres for consumption rather than production. Finally, there was a stabilised growth phase, which was marked by the decrease in the price of oil in the mid-1980s (Basha, 1988).

In consideration of urbanisation and development in Saudi Arabia, the country's five-year development plans have placed an emphasis on reducing regional disparities. These regional disparities have been often blamed for problems associated with urbanisation. For example, it has been suggested by Henerson (2002) that investment in public

services in areas outside of the main cities is too low. This is the case in Saudi Arabia where there has been a major issue of urban primacy and the need for decentralisation.

However, this is not to suggest that the major urban centres are immune to problems. A study by Mandeli (2010) showed that there are management issues in relation to urban management in Saudi Arabia; they cite the case of Jeddah where problems are related to the numerous agencies involved and the conflicts between them and they suggest legislation as a solution.

These primate cities not only receive attention by the government but much of the literature related to urbanisation and urban geography in Saudi Arabia is about a few of the major urban centres, for example: Garba's (2004) study about the need for improved urban governance of Riyadh, Mandeli's (2010) study of the urban management problems in Jeddah, Glasze and Alkhayyal's (2002) about the re-emergence of traditional spatial forms in Riyadh, Struyk's (2005) work related to the quality of housing in Riyadh, Al Otaibi's (2004) work on housing in Jeddah, the International Organisation for Migration's (2010) study of migration to Riyadh, Jeddah and Medinah, and Al-Hemaidi's (2001) paper on the built environment in Riyadh, interestingly, Al-Hemaidi (2001 p.179) states that "The aim of this paper is to identify and analyze the types of built environment in Riyadh, as an example of Saudi Arabia's cities", this is unfortunate that a writer would consider the capital as representative of other cities in the Kingdom.

Any examination of the causes of urbanisation in Saudi Arabia cannot ignore the issue of migration. According to Basha (1988) there are two major factors that have caused substantial population growth in Saudi Arabia in large cities; firstly, internal migration and secondly, international labour migration. Al-Sheikh (2000) examined the effect of migration on Riyadh, and found that because many migrants came from other cities their economic situation did not improve and newer migrants had the same income as migrants who arrived much earlier. However, the story does not necessarily end in urbanisation as it has been shown by Khraif (1992) that some migrants will return to rural areas and there are a number of influencing factors that determine a migrant's intention to stay such as having parents in the rural areas or home ownership in the city.

Al Amoudi (1994) studied the drivers for rural to urban migration to Jeddah and focussed on the characteristics of migrants and their destination points, this study found that there was an overall positive experience for migrants living in an urban environment, moreover, it was found these migrants readily changed their external appearance and way of speaking. It should be noted that the flow of population from rural areas has also been influenced by factors such as land grants, the availability of recreational services and public utilities as well as the desire of some to live away from the strict social constraints that characterise a rural existence and Bedouin settlements (Alkhraif, 2007b). In terms of the demographics of migrants to Riyadh, it was found that they were generally young (Alsakran, 1995).

According to Al Sharif (1994) much of the internal migrants come not only from villages and rural areas but also from the desert, the consequences of this have been an increase in traffic congestion and higher rents. A significant proportion of internal migrants in the Kingdom are Bedouin, their migration and subsequent sedentarisation have had a significant impact on urbanisation and urban geography. The Bedouin were first settled as part of policy to unify the Kingdom and also to ensure that they were available for military service (Dar al Liwa, 2000). The concerted efforts of governments to settle their Bedouin populations have been met with resistance, in the case of the Bedouin in the Negev, forced sedentarisation meant that the Bedouin actually held onto their culture and traditions by adapting them in a new urban environment (Abu-Saad, 2008), even adapting houses in urban areas to their culture (Dezuari, 2009), although it has been claimed by Ben-Israel (2008) that the Negev Bedouin adopt a more Islamic, non-tribal culture in the urban environment. However, the concerted effort to sedentarise the Bedouin was not the only driver of change. Another aspect leading to the decline of the nomadic lifestyle of the Bedouin was the mechanisation of the nomads' movements and commercialisation of their activities (Abdalla et al., 1999). Furthermore the provision of communication networks, mechanised agriculture, provision of health facilities, schools and finally the transfer of power from the tribal chief to the central government (Heady, 1972), all aided urbanisation.

### **2.8.1 Urban Geography in Saudi Arabia**

According to Alkhedheiri (2002) many of the problems experienced as a result of the urbanisation process in Saudi Arabia can be blamed on poor planning resulting from the adoption of Western urban planning strategies (specifically those of the United States), the result was a grid iron pattern of housing characterised by the square lot, villa type houses and setbacks, all influenced by American housing styles which was completely alien to Saudi culture and traditional urban planning. This idea has been supported by Al-Hemaidi (2001) who says that there has been cultural conflict as a result of foreign planning principles. Moreover, Mubarak (2004 p.585) states that in Riyadh “Contemporary urbanized areas are alien to the cultural experiences of most inhabitants”.

Eben Saleh (2001) also criticises this modern, Western intervention, he says there is a noticeable difference between traditional or vernacular design and the modern design of houses in Saudi Arabia and there has been much debate about the success of each, with traditional styles seen as a way of creating environments that are safe and provide a sense of place, and vernacular designs as unidentifiable and unsafe. Moreover, in the examination of urbanisation it is important to consider housing because according to Al Otaibi (2004) the style, age and aesthetics of housing are representative factors of a community’s character.

However, there is an argument (Glasze and Alkhayyal, 2002) that shows that the western-influenced villa design confined within gated compounds represents a resurgence of fragmented settlement patterns found in old towns, these authors say that new compounds in Riyadh that have several villas may represent a revival of sociospatial patterns because these compounds follow a principle of spatial seclusion of different cultural and religious groups. These writers say that such organisation is a principle of many Arab towns, especially Riyadh that was once a collection of clusters of courtyards houses.

One area where the rapid urbanisation experienced by Saudi Arabia has had a significant impact is on the identity of certain towns’ communities. Al-Hathloul and Mughal (1999), who examined the impact of rapid and unprecedented urbanisation on community

identity using Al-Badai, a small town in the administrative region of Riyadh, addressed this issue. Their study found that existing towns are finding it difficult to retain their cultural identities, and that in an attempt to solve this problem some towns have used the architecture of buildings, which incorporates the traditional Saudi lifestyle of traditional settlements, and landscape architecture using traditional and indigenous shrubs and trees.

However, these solutions may be superficial. Al-Hathloul and Edadan (1995) say that local authorities in Saudi Arabia have a narrow view of urbanisation, tending to focus on the visible aspects of urban areas for a quick fix solution to urban problems. Although, to be fair Saudi Arabia has witnessed rapid urban growth never before seen in the Arabian Peninsula and this has put pressure on the agencies responsible for urban planning and management (Daghistani, 1993).

Physical evidence that urban planning has not been completely successful has been presented by Aina et al. (2008) in their analysis of changes in land use and land cover in Riyadh, they state that urban growth management strategies have not been successful which confirms the urban theory of coalescence and diffusion. Mandeli (2008) studied urban planning and management in Jeddah and found that although such plans have created a high quality infrastructure in some major urban centres; longer-term problems continue especially uncontrolled developments on the edge of cities. In relation to this, Mubarak (2004) examined the socio-economic and political factors of urban morphology in Riyadh and said that government policy has created dysfunctional urban sprawl by allocating large housing plots and very wide roads.

On a national level, the concentration of the urban population in the primary cities has led to neglect of the peripheral regions and the failure to take advantage of the natural resources of those regions. This neglect has led to a marked regional imbalance in the development of the country, resulting in a disproportionate concentration of urban populations in the primary, larger urban centres, which has caused regional disparities (Alkhedheiri, 2002). Evidently, there is a necessity to decentralise urban management, as it is clear that this has contributed to the urban problems; however, throughout the country in many cities the effort to decentralise the municipalities has been minimal.

Henderson (2010) states that inequality is enhanced by government policies favouring certain cities or by local government policies, encouraging migrants not to migrate by only offering poor living conditions.

Having primate cities, however, is certainly not unique to Saudi Arabia; in fact according to Pacione (2009 p.78) the 'primate city phase' is the first stage of urbanisation where the economic activity is concentrated in a limited number of primate cities. However, Pacione (2009) also describes the first sub-phase of the primate city phase and says that such cities attract much of the inter-regional migration; this is not the case in Saudi Arabia because it has been the cities close to the oil fields that have attracted most of the migrants.

This regional disparity within the Kingdom was in fact recognised by the government who said in their development plans that the potential for conflict between local development objectives and national economic objectives persisted, however, the government provided explanation and justification for this conflict which results in regional imbalances, their reasons included the need to concentrate industrial activities, the cost of addressing imbalances and that disparity may in fact be beneficial (Alkhedheiri, 2002). However, it was noted by the Ministry of Economy and Planning, when discussing the success of the eighth development plan, that it is essential to align the National Spatial Strategy with the municipalities' services strategy to ensure that the development among the Kingdom's regions is balanced (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2008a).

An example of this disparity is Riyadh, because of rapid development, rapid population growth and the introduction of the car; Riyadh passed through some significant changes and became one of the fastest growing cities in the Middle East (Aina et al., 2008). Riyadh has risen as the dominant city because it is the capital and therefore has received considerable attention in terms of urban planning and urban development (Alkhraif, 2007b). Moreover, Riyadh is considered to be the centre of urban activity as geographically it sits on the crossroads of the urban concentrations of the east and the west of the country (Al-Hemaidi, 2001).

People migrating to more developed primate cities further compounds the problem of regional disparity as governments are more inclined to invest more time and money into those areas, additionally, there may be an absence of links between the two types of area, with the result that the lesser developed areas are not influenced by social and technological change, furthering regional disparity (Alkhedheiri, 2002). Regional disparity is not unique to Saudi Arabia in the region it is also found in Iran where rural to urban migration has led to a change in the hierarchy of the urbanisation system and a geographical pattern that is inharmonious and uncoordinated (Fanni, 2006).

Hassan (2001) stated that the country faced housing shortages due to an influx of migrant labour between 1970 and 2000, and despite the improvement in management, there were still urban-related problems in Riyadh, such as the spread of squatter settlements and a further increase in the demand for housing (Garba, 2004). Moreover, Karam (2010) says that there is a housing shortfall of 2 million homes and that only 30 percent of Saudis own their own home. Indeed, it is not only the migrant inflows from overseas that have increased the demand on housing but also from internal migrants from rural areas and the desert (Al Sharif, 1994).

In the past, as suggested by Mubarak (1999), there has been a significant decrease in the government's commitment to housing and this combined with a poorly developed private housing sector has led to housing that is custom built and self-financed, moreover, the government need to consider cultural attributes, family structure and financing methods when approaching housing policy.

More recently, there have been some significant developments in terms of housing in the Kingdom. Opoku and Abdul-Muhmin (2010) say that because there has been significant growth in the Saudi housing market, an increase in the cost of housing, and a decrease in disposable incomes, there has been more of a preference towards housing for the low-income market. This has resulted not only in a change of preference for types of dwelling but also a change in preference for tenure options; moreover, these preferences differ within different subsections of society. According to Al Otaibi (2004) referring to housing in Jeddah, it has been a central goal of government plans to provide

the country's citizens with safe and decent housing and this goal is echoed throughout the public and private sectors.

Foreign labour has played a significant role in shaping the urban environment, according to Al Gabbani (2009) the creation of spaces is taking place Riyadh, Jeddah and Makkah, which has to a certain extent, created culturally divided cities in the Kingdom based on nationality. However, it has been suggested by Bourland et al. (2006) that although the expatriate population of Saudi Arabia is large and has contributed significantly to population growth and therefore urban population growth, it has not had the expected effect on urbanisation, because the majority of the expatriate workforce receiving low incomes, an average of SR 2,354 in 2000, and ordinarily they do not purchase properties, most of them are males and share rented apartments with other males. Moreover, they tend to live in the older parts of cities (Al-Gabbani, 2009).

In relation to the abovementioned spaces, the global cities literature demonstrates how external links with other countries have been shown to have significance in shaping the urban environment. However, Saudi Arabia has been neglected by the majority of researchers. Of those that have considered Saudi cities, Price and Benton-Short (2007) have identified Riyadh and Jeddah as examples of three of the world's largest immigrant destinations. Saudi Arabia has more foreign born migrants than Canada or the UK and when we also consider all the factors that make global cities e.g. accumulation of capital, command points of world economy, headquarters for large companies and hubs for global transportation; it is clear that Riyadh and Jeddah have such features. According to Silver (2010) it is surprising that the cities of Mecca and Medina have been bypassed by the global city discourse because they are global religious centres. In fact cities in MENA "manifest the same tensions as cities of other regions between global markets and informal economies, state collectivism and privatization, tradition and modernity, religiosity and secularism, nationalism and universalism" (Silver, 2010 p.348).

### **2.8.2 Significance of Medium-Sized Cities in MENA and Saudi Arabia**

From the review of the literature it has been clear that there is a significant gap in the research about medium-sized cities in relation to urbanisation and migration, this neglect may for some reason suggest that urban centres of this size have very little

significance, however, it will now be shown that medium-sized cities have equal significance to large cities in Saudi Arabia, as well as the MENA region as a whole.

There are very few primate cities in MENA but there are also many medium-sized cities, in fact according to Dumper and Stanley (2007) there has been sharp increase in the population of small and medium-sized cities across the region. According to Al Rabdi (2008), in Saudi Arabia the population of medium-sized cities will increase in the future, not only because of natural increase but also because of the influx of local and foreign migrants, moreover, medium-sized cities will gain a greater share of their region's population and therefore, a greater share of the urban population.

An interesting dynamic also related to urbanisation in medium-sized cities is migration from cities of this size from major cities. According to the Ministry of Economy and Planning (1995) reverse migration, in this case from large to medium-sized cities, is taking place across Saudi Arabia suggesting an improvement in services and social facilities (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 1985) and work opportunities in cities of this size, and discontent with the busy and expensive life in major cities. Moreover, it has also been suggested by the Ministry of Economy Planning (1985) that when people return to their region of origin they do not necessarily go back to their rural place of origin. This process has been addressed by Falkingham et al. (2011) who say that return migrations out from large cities is due to economic and social forces such as poverty and the length of stay in the city.

Due to the aforementioned disparity between major urban centres and smaller cities, the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (2000) endeavoured to enhance the role played in development by small and medium-sized cities to overcome the imbalance. In fact in support of this, in terms of economic activity the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (2000) say that the manufacturing industry have moved to medium-sized cities from larger cities. Therefore, it is important to understand the urbanisation and urban geography of these cities because they will have an impact on the countries future as much as the major cities.

## 2.9 Conclusion

This chapter revealed that the region has its own experience of processes and patterns of urbanisation; unique qualities included housing issues, population growth and a high youth population; it has also shown that political governance has had a huge impact on failures and successes. More importantly, however, it is distinct in its patterns of migration, more specifically inter- and intra-regional which plays a significant role in urban processes. Much of the theory that is available regarding urbanisation cannot be readily applied to such a diverse region.

The first most noticeable aspect of the literature is that although it covers urbanisation processes and urban geography in MENA and the drivers, patterns and consequences, there is a distinct neglect of these processes with regards to medium-sized cities. This is evidenced by the fact that all distinctive patterns and processes of urbanisation and examinations of urban geography are conducted in relation to large archetypal cities such as Cairo and Tehran and city states like Dubai. MENA is characterised by having many medium-sized cities and very few primate cities; therefore most people in MENA are experiencing urbanism in cities of this size.

The literature also revealed that there was a considerable focus on the economic factors in urbanisation and the urban geography of MENA and a neglect of the political and socio-cultural factors. However, it is also apparent that there is increasing recognition that processes of urbanisation and urban geography have to be considered in light of the political, social and cultural and not just the economic or developmental, this is evidenced by an increase in literature related to these areas, but also by considerable criticism of the Global / World cities literature that focuses primarily on economic aspects of cities, a result of which is an almost complete neglect of the cities in MENA. Additionally, the literature does show some evidence that there is a lack of multidimensional examination of urbanisation and urban geography in MENA, although there is evidence that the economic, political and socio-cultural are considered together, most of the literature can be grouped according to these areas, there needs to be more a more multidimensional conversation. Another criticism put forward in the literature is

that for too long MENA has been considered in light of Oriental or Islamic approaches which lead to an outdated impression of many of the countries in the region.

This review has also highlighted the importance of the need to examine the lived urban experience, almost all of the theories specific to the region; especially those related to the urban geography, are related to distinctive characteristics, i.e. rich oil states, poor countries with slums and conflict zones, all considerations of these aspects are often discussed partly in terms of the lived urban experience. Moreover, there was an indication that socio-cultural changes and variations affect how people perceive their urban environment; this has implications, for example, when studying why people of different cultural backgrounds migrate to a city.

In the case of Saudi Arabia there is a lack of research into internal migration for economic reasons. There have been studies focusing on the internal migration of the Bedouin in Saudi Arabia (The Library of Congress Country Studies and the CIA World Factbook, 1992); however, these studies are dated and relate to Saudi Arabia in general. They do briefly discuss the economic problems that may cause migration. There is however, a lack of discussion about what it is that which attracts migrants to the cities; indeed, the wider economic success of Saudi Arabia, its amenities and infrastructure are clearly well suited to accommodating such migrants. Moreover, there has been research into the effects that migrants have had on society, especially in the Gulf States, but there has not been proper analysis of effects on migrants' lives or more in-depth analysis of different types of migrants. Literature on Qatar showed how social relationships between different social groups significantly impacted on spatial form, but this highlighted a lack of attention to the different social groupings of individuals within a country, something lacking in the literature.

Moreover, in relation to rural to urban migration within Saudi Arabia much of the literature also focuses on migration to major urban centres, for example Al Amoudi's (1994) study of migration to Jeddah, Al Amoudi's study is similar to this study in terms of the aims and objectives, however, there are major differences, firstly, there is only a focus on migrants generally and secondly, it is about Jeddah, a major city in Saudi Arabia.

Alkhraif's (2007b) study of urbanisation in Saudi Arabia also focuses on migration; however, it is also for the Kingdom generally.

Although when examining the literature about urban geography in MENA there is mention about networks of cities or world city networks (e.g. Yacobi and Schechter (2005)), much of this is related to the major urban centres in the region such as Dubai and also conflict cities (for example spaces within spaces). While this is appropriate for examining urban geography in MENA and is included in Chapter Four as part of the general trends in urban geography, this study is more concerned with the trends, drivers and consequences of urbanisation and migration at the medium-city level and is not specifically concerned with finding out if and how medium-sized cities link into any regional or global network, although this is a subject for any future research.

In summary, there is a lack of study of the political and socio-cultural factors that affect the drivers and consequences of urbanisation and urban life (experiences and perceptions) in medium-sized cities in MENA. These socio-cultural factors in relation to drivers and consequences of migration/urbanisation can be considered in terms of socio-cultural reasons for migrating to urban areas, influences on urban landscape and influences on perception of urban life and space. In light of the above-summarised points, this thesis positions itself as a study that contributes to the knowledge of urban geographies in MENA, more specifically, it contributes to the understanding of medium-sized cities which this literature review has shown to be neglected, the approach to this understanding will be multidimensional through a social, political as well as economic perspective.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The literature review revealed that there was insufficient study about the trends, drivers and consequences of the processes of urbanisation and urban geography for medium-size cities in the MENA region. Moreover, it was also found that there was a lack of emphasis on the social, cultural and political aspects of the aforementioned processes; the stronger emphasis in the literature was on the economic. Overall, there is a lack of study of the social, cultural and political factors in relation to drivers and consequences of urbanisation, and how these factors affect and are affected by urban geography in medium-sized cities in MENA. Yacobi and Shechter (2005) suggest that there is more awareness of complex social relations in relation to urban planning and policies in the West, however, this understanding has not fully made an impact on cities in MENA which are economic, social cultural and political complexities, unfortunately, there has been insufficient discussion about how these issues shape cities. These writers (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005) do recognise the role of the economic but also stress that cities in MENA are political and socio-cultural complexities as well.

The main aim of this study is to analyse rapid urbanisation, its drivers and consequences and urban geography in the Middle East and North Africa, and more specifically the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study aims to provide a detailed analysis of the processes of urbanisation, including migration and the urban geography in Buraydah City. The study employs both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This chapter presents the primary research methodology employed and justifies the research instruments adopted. A visual representation of the methodology is presented in Figure 3.3. The field survey took place between 1 May 2009 and 30 September 2009.

### **3.2 Appropriate Methodology**

In order for a researcher to achieve the aims of a study, it is important to select the appropriate methodology. There are two kinds of research methodology, quantitative and qualitative; they can be used separately or viewed as complementary. Qualitative research is becoming increasingly popular because it is particularly relevant for studying social situations because of the pluralisation of life worlds, no longer are more traditional social equalities relevant, there is now new emphasis on the diversity of milieus, lifestyle and subcultures (Flick, 2009). Qualitative methods include interviews, observations and analysis of archival documents, while the quantitative method includes experiments and quantitative surveys (Osborne, 2008). Qualitative research typically examines behaviour, meanings, attitudes, opinions and experiences and is designed to acquire an in-depth opinion from the subjects.

To achieve the aims of this study, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the motivations and experiences of the migrants, and qualitative methodologies allow the researcher to explore feelings and experiences using interviews and discussion; such methods are being increasingly employed by geographers (Limb and Dwyer, 2001). Qualitative techniques are now very much part of geographical studies because researchers typically do not want to focus exclusively on quantitative data, which do not yield much 'insight into human experience' (Robinson, 1998, p: 408). Quantitative research, on the other hand, is a research strategy that emphasises statistics and numbers and is more of a deductive approach; having a view of social reality that is external, objective and constant (Bryman and Teevan, 2005) rather than internal and subjective.

The research methods adopted here were determined by the aims of the study. The aims and objectives require that there is a review of the existing literature discussing urbanisation in MENA, Saudi Arabia and Buraydah City and an empirical study of the same phenomenon; these form both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research (Table 3.1). The primary research relates to collating a detailed analysis of the drivers and consequences of urbanisation and migration in Buraydah City by conducting a case

study of the trends, drivers and consequences of urbanisation and migration and the political, social and cultural aspects of the urban geography. Three methods were chosen: questionnaires, interviews and oral histories.

Table 3.1 Quantitative and qualitative data sources

Data Type	MENA / Saudi Arabia	Buraydah City
<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Literature review</b> – books, journals and previous studies <b>World Bank data</b> – periodical reports <b>United Nations</b> – Population Statistics <b>Division Population Statistics (Saudi Government)</b> – census data <b>CIA</b> – Statistics <b>Ministry of Finance and National Economy</b> – reports	<b>Literature review</b> – books, journals and previous studies <b>Buraydah infirmaries</b> – migrant data <b>Division Population Statistics (Saudi Government)</b> – census data <b>Libraries</b> – Riyadh / Buraydah maps and pamphlets <b>Primary Data</b> – interviews and questionnaires
<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Literature review</b> – books, journals and previous studies. <b>World Bank data</b> – periodical reports <b>United Nations</b> – reports <b>Ministry of Economy and Planning (Saudi Arabia)</b> – development plans <b>Saudi Municipalities</b> – maps and local publications	<b>Literature review</b> – books, journals and previous studies <b>Buraydah infirmaries</b> – migrant data <b>Libraries</b> – Riyadh / Buraydah maps and pamphlets <b>Primary Data</b> – interviews, questionnaires and oral histories

Source: Author (2011).

### 3.3 Data Collection Methods

For this study, a multi-method approach was adopted to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The research instruments chosen were questionnaires, interviews and oral histories. This section will provide an overview of these methods, their advantages and potential disadvantages, and a justification of their appropriateness in achieving the aims of the study.

#### 3.3.1 Questionnaires

There were a number of reasons for using questionnaires which will now be discussed. Questionnaires are often useful when they are used with other research instruments,

this is because a multi-method approach is more appropriate because one type of approach is often not enough (Gillham, 2000). The questionnaires gathered data related to demographics and when migrants moved to the city, how often they have moved and their reasons for migration, this data is complimentary to the qualitative data that is gathered from the interviews and oral histories.

Another advantage of questionnaires is that they are quicker and cheaper to administer (Bryman, 2008). However, one disadvantage of the questionnaire is that the researcher, or others involved, may introduce bias to the study (Oppenheim, 1992). Other disadvantages of questionnaires include the lack of ability to prompt or probe, and that the respondent may read the questionnaire as a whole before completing the questions, meaning that the questions may not be treated independently (Bryman, 2008).

The questionnaires used both open and closed questions. It is common for many surveys to mix open and closed questions because they seek to gain both descriptive and analytical answers (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). Closed questions are typically preferable for a survey (Bryman, 2001) where quantitative analysis of the data is intended, as the respondent is given a choice from predetermined answers (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). However, there are disadvantages to using closed questions; i.e. they may not reveal attitudes and feelings and respondents do not have the opportunity to explain their answers (Bryman, 2008), or respondents are limited in their responses and are unable to qualify their answers in response to closed questions (Walonick, 2007). This is compensated for here by the use of open questions. To overcome the disadvantages there was an opportunity for additional comments on the questionnaire; for example, the 'no' response for 'did your family migrate with you?' if followed by an opportunity to state why. It should be remembered however, that open questions also have their disadvantages; they can be time consuming because respondents may talk for longer and the responses have to be coded for analysis, and finally, the recording of responses may vary between those conducting the questionnaire, mainly due to the difficulty of recording verbatim the respondents' answers (Bryman, 2008).

In relation to the open questioning used in the questionnaires, they are an indispensable tool in human geography for gathering primary data about people's behaviour and attitudes (Flowerdew and Martin, 1997), they have certain advantages, mainly to gain detailed and in-depth qualitative information. By using open questions the respondents have more scope to elaborate and initiate a general discussion or provide answers that would not have been predicted by the researcher (Robinson, 1998). Moreover, although most open questions in a questionnaire require simple and factual answers, it is sometimes the case that the researcher requires more free-ranging responses, allowing the researcher to uncover the unexpected and the unknown (Gillham, 2000). Care must be taken in the design of the questionnaire, so as not to include too many questions, as this may cause respondents to rush their answers (Milne, 1999), result in response fatigue, or result in the questionnaire not being answered at all (Bryman, 2008).

For the purpose of this study only three types of migrant (desert, village and city migrants) from within Saudi Arabia will be considered. Additionally, dividing the migrants into these three sub groups should reveal different experiences of migration instead of simply looking at migrants as a single group. Moreover, there must be consideration of the relationship between migration and the variables at the place of destination.

It was decided before the field study that there should be approximately 100 respondents to the questionnaire. The researcher identified four neighbourhoods with the highest populations of migrants; this information was obtained from the infirmaries (local health centres that have information about peoples' place of birth and where they grew up). This type of sampling was chosen to set the proportions for each of the three types of migrant because any random sampling may miss certain identified migrant types, and it ensured that non-migrants were not questioned. The migrant neighbourhoods were Aldahe, approximately 10 square kilometres with 2000 households and a migrant population of approximately 30 percent, Alaskan, approximately 8 square kilometres with 2619 households with a migrant population of approximately 20 percent, Alngaa, approximately 4 square kilometres with 890 households and a migrant population of approximately 80 percent, and finally



This provided a total of 2276 identified migrants; to extract the sample from this population the stratified sampling method was employed. The reason for using this method is that it is appropriate for sampling a group that is comprised of sub-groups; in this case, Bedouin, village and city migrants, and the resulting sample should reflect the distribution of the total population (Bryman, 2008). Table 3.2 shows how the stratified sampling was calculated for the migrant population:

Table 3.2 Sub Groups from Total Population

<b>Migrant Type</b>	<b>Number of Migrants</b>
Bedouin	910
Village	684
City	682
Total	2276

Source: Author’s survey (2009).

The next stage was to calculate the percentage of each sub-group within the population:

- Bedouin        40 per cent
- Village        30 per cent
- City            29.9 per cent

It was mentioned previously that approximately 100 respondents would be required, which would provide a sample size of approximately 4.4 per cent; however, generally the larger the sample the greater the accuracy, as the sample size is a compromise between accuracy and resources available in the field work (Rice, 2003). Thus, it was decided to increase the sample size to five per cent, which provided 115 respondents. Using 115 respondents provided the following proportions of the three sub-groups:

- Bedouin        45 (40 per cent)
- Village        35 (30 per cent)
- City            35 (29.9 per cent)

The above groups were further divided into those who have arrived in the last ten years; and migrants who have lived in Buraydah City for longer than ten years. The reason for the latter subdivision is that the drivers for migration and experiences of urban life may have differed at various points in history. In the sample, there is an almost even distribution of migrants who have been in Buraydah City longer than ten years, and those who have been in the city less than ten years.

The questionnaires consisted of five sections (see Appendix 2), with a total 28 questions developed with two elements; firstly, the quantitative element used to gather information about demographics, migratory patterns both to and within Buraydah City, type of tenure and housing status, and drivers for migration; and secondly, the qualitative element, which focused on the migrant's experiences of urban life and intentions to migrate from Buraydah City.

For the questionnaires, there was a pilot study to test their design, clarity of questions and presentation. Each questionnaire was tested on five people to check: if they understood the questions; if there was any ambiguity; what the likely response rate was; and how long they took to answer it. Furthermore, the questionnaire was given to two lecturers at the researcher's university to check if the questions related to the aims of the study. There were no changes made as a result of the pilot study, beyond altering a few words and approaches that may be potentially viewed as culturally insensitive. Finally, the pilot survey also served to minimise error; because there were two other assistants involved in the field study, it was important to brief them first to ensure that the questionnaire was administered in a standard way.

### **3.3.2 Interviews**

Over recent decades, there has been debate in the geography arena about the use and validity of semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Many geographers are moving to these more intensive methods in order to investigate social processes in geographical patterns; moreover, interviews can be used to address a wide range of subjects (Longhurst, 2003). Advantages of qualitative research are that information gained from interviews allows motives to be discerned, and makes interpretation easier; however,

the key disadvantages are that the interviewer may inject their bias and the process is subjective as opposed to scientific (Robinson, 1998). Qualitative interviewing is appropriate for a narrative or biographical approach where the researcher wants a discussion or specific stories told by the interviewee (Mason, 2002). Responses from the subjects would be more likely to contain more information, such as feelings about, and reasons for, migration to Buraydah City. The process is more of an indirect way to access or probe for in-depth information and allows the respondents more scope to elaborate. Interviews can produce rich data and insights into feelings and opinions (Westat, 2002). This approach has been criticised, however, in that interviewers may impose their own views/bias, and that it is therefore a subjective process (Robinson, 1998). Interviews may contain a mix of unstructured or semi-structured questions because they are conversational and each one can probe for different information according to the experiences of the interviewees, additionally they are designed to create a dialogue rather than to interrogate (Flowerdew and Martin, 2005).

The disadvantages of interviews are that they are more time consuming and costly (Opdenakker, 2006) and appointments need to be administered and contingency plans must be in place for cancelled appointments. It should also be remembered, that interviewing is a complex process and the researcher must understand the dynamics and various strategies beforehand (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). These dynamics are particularly important for consideration in different cultural contexts, if the respondents (particularly in this case Bedouin and villagers) feel that there are unequal power relations then they can hold back in cooperating with the researcher. Moreover, interviewers must exercise flexibility when administering interviews for different types of people or circumstances. If the respondents feel the researcher has a certain amount of power (the researcher is a lecturer and lecturers in Saudi Arabia are held in high regard) then the respondents may tell the researcher what they think they want them to hear (Flowerdew and Martin, 2005). In light of this, the researcher should exercise humility and accord the respondents' full respect.

The interviews endeavoured to acquire information about the consequences of migrating to Buraydah City itself, any problems the migrants face in settling down,

opinions about the quality of urban life, work opportunities and the overall drivers for migration. The interview follows a semi-structured format and the questioning was conducted by the researcher. Moreover, the interviews were conducted face-to-face to take advantage of social cues such as body language and tone of voice (Opdenakker, 2006); this allowed the interviewer to record these emotional cues that accompanied the responses in order to gain a more in-depth insight into the interviewees' feelings and opinions about migration to Buraydah City. Prior to the interviews permission was sought and appointments were made. The interviews consisted of 18 questions and each lasted for approximately one hour. The interviews with the Bedouin were conducted in their homes. The interviews were recorded in writing due to cultural sensitivity; the reasons they were not recorded digitally were suspicion and worries about jealousy, something found in Arab culture. In fact interviewing in different cultural contexts, especially in less developed countries, requires researchers to be sensitive to the power relations that exist between interviewer and respondents (Flowerdew and Martin, 2005).

There were 60 interviews, 20 for Bedouin, 20 for villagers and 20 for migrants from other cities. The sample was taken from the same population identified from the infirmaries information; it involved different people from the questionnaires, and the respondents were chosen randomly, as long as they fit the above criteria. Each group was divided equally into those who have migrated to Buraydah City in the last ten years and those who have lived in Buraydah City for longer than ten years. This sub-categorisation was done for the same reasons as with the questionnaires; i.e. that different points in history may yield different findings. As a contingency against cancellations, missed appointments and non responses, an additional 10 respondents for each group was identified (this high number was due to the researcher's previous experiences with the target group). A copy of the interview questions is available in Appendix 3.

Pilot interviews were conducted to ensure the clarity of the questions and to check their duration. The assistance of two lecturers at the researcher's university was sought for this. There were four pilot interviews in total and the main finding was that some of the

questions had to be changed because of cultural etiquette; this was due to some subtleties in the Arabic language.

### **3.3.3 Oral Histories**

Oral histories have been defined by Bryman (2008) as mostly an unstructured interview where the respondents are asked to recall and reflect on events from their past. Oral histories are very much a personal account based on personal experience and perceptions (Charlton et al., 2006). Because oral histories are different in terms of narrative form, orality and subjectivity and the relationship between researcher and respondent, this is considered strength instead of a weakness (Portelli, 2006). It should be remembered, however, that information gathered from oral histories may be as reliable or unreliable as other methods of research; oral histories have been known to produce some spurious information and the respondents' view of the experience under examination may have changed due to subsequent events (Ritchie, 2003).

The oral histories were conducted after the respondents had been identified as being migrants who are senior citizens above the age of 65; again, this information was obtained from the infirmaries. Oral histories were used to gather historical qualitative information from 24 migrants; eight from each migrant group. The oral history information was recorded in writing, again, because of cultural reasons. It has been the case that people can be deterred from being interviewed because someone 'thrusts a microphone two inches from a person's mouth' (Howarth, 1999) and culturally, it was difficult to audio record the respondents in this study because they felt it was an invasion of their privacy. Indeed, many of the respondents specifically requested that there should be no recording; therefore, the researcher took written notes throughout to ensure uniformity of the research method. The oral histories were conducted in the participants' households, so as to ensure they were relaxed in a familiar environment. In their homes they also have access to documents and photographs from their past. They were informed beforehand about the purpose of the oral history.

There were nine questions pertaining to life before migration, the migration itself and life after migration. Each oral history interview lasted for approximately one and a half

hours. The central issue of migrating to Buraydah City was discussed to gather historical information. The questions were designed to allow the respondents to talk in depth and at length about their experiences. A sample of the oral history questions is available in Appendix 4.

### **3.4 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics are important to protect all of the participants of a study, and in some countries they are particularly important because of ethnic diversity (Flick, 2009). The researcher took into account the ethical considerations of Islamic, Arab and more specifically, Bedouin culture. Gender issues were also considered; because of cultural reasons, it was not possible to interview women as the researcher is a male and this is simply not allowed in Saudi culture, even more so in Bedouin and village culture. There were female respondents to the questionnaires as no direct contact was involved, and often the questionnaires were completed in the presence of the women's relatives. When interviewing the Bedouin, sensitivity was required, as they vary in terms of their social etiquette and are suspicious about outsiders, especially those asking questions about their personal life. Because they have very different customs to other Saudis, the researcher had to be careful when talking to them.

Ethics always require that research is based on informed consent and that participants are not misled about the aims of the study (Flick, 2009). To obtain the participants' informed consent they were informed that their privacy would be protected in the study. They were provided with a participation consent form and a participant information form (Appendix 1), which included information about their right to participate voluntarily and the right to withdraw at any time, the purpose and procedures of the study, and the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. Finally, the university's ethical review process was conducted and the research was approved before the researcher could continue with the field survey.

### **3.5 Primary Data Analysis Tools**

There are advantages to using software for analysing qualitative data. Firstly, it is far quicker to manage, search and display data, however, this has to be taken in consideration against the time it takes to decide a program, installation and learning how to use it; secondly, it increases the quality of qualitative research (Flick, 2009). This study aimed to use both quantitative and qualitative methods; as a result, a combination of tools was used to analyse the data. The tools used were SPSS, for quantitative analysis, and NVivo for qualitative analysis.

#### **3.5.1 SPSS**

The SPSS program is specifically designed to perform statistical operations and facilitate data analysis, and is most widely used in statistic analyses; moreover, there is considerable information available about its use (Miller et al., 2002). It can analyse quantitative data very quickly (Bryman and Cramer, 2001) and was used for the analysis of quantitative data from the questionnaires of the household survey, using appropriate statistical techniques. Additionally, SPSS -15 was used to carry out quantitative analysis of the relationships between the studies variables. The tests that were used were: the Chi-square test to compare two or more groups, Mean, Median and Mode test, T-Test to test if the means of the three groups are statistically different from each other and finally; ANOVA to test whether or not the means of the three migrant groups are equal (Figure 3.2).

	region	sex	age	maritalstatus	qualificate	employment	curremply	workplace	adultlive	childlive	q93	carsno	income	neighborhood	housetype	teni
1	1	2	32	2	6	1	teacher	1	1	1	temporary	1	6	alnoor	1	
2	1	1	30	1	7	1	dentist	1	2	1	permenant	1	5	alnakheel	2	
3	1	1	34	2	5	1	nursing	1	1	2	permenant	2	8	fayzyah	1	
4	1	1	34	2	6	1	central switch	1	4	1	permenant	4	2	saifa	1	
5	1	1	26	2	4	2	accountant	1	1	1	temporary	1	2	aleskan	1	
6	1	1	25	2	6	1	employee	1	1	0	permenant	3	3	alqaseah	2	
7	1	1	30	1	2	1	security guard	1	2	2	permenant	4	3	aljameen	1	
8	1	1	27	1	6	1	employee	2	1	2	temporary	1	2	alamm	1	
9	1	2	65	4	1	3	housemaid	1	2	1	seasonal	2	2	almuntazah	3	
10	1	1	61	2	4	1	teacher	1	4	2	permenant	4	8	jumeannah	1	
11	1	2	42	2	4	1	employee	1	2	1	permenant	1	3	meshal	1	
12	1	1	33	2	6	1	employee	1	1	1	seasonal	1	3	alofaq	1	
13	1	1	23	1	4	1	soldier	2	3	3	permenant	2	3	zerai	1	
14	1	2	27	1	6	1	employee	1	1	2	seasonal	1	4	fayzyah	1	
15	1	1	40	3	4	6	free bussiness	1	2	1	permenant	1	1	alsafa	3	
16	1	1	21	1	5	1	employee	1	2	0	permenant	4	2	alraboah	1	
17	1	1	48	2	5	1	employee	3	1	1	permenant	1	6	alsafa	5	
18	1	1	29	1	6	1	employee	1	1	0	permenant	1	6	alofaq	5	
19	1	1	27	1	6	1	employee	1	1	0	permenant	1	4	airashdiat	2	
20	1	1	29	2	4	1	employee	1	1	2	permenant	3	7	alsalmeah	3	
21	1	1	44	2	4	1	dataentry	1	4	2	permenant	2	4	alsafa	1	
22	1	2	38	2	6	1	employee	1	2	1	seasonal	1	5	alsafa	3	
23	1	1	52	2	7	1	employee	1	2	0	temporary	1	9	khobeeb	2	
24	1	1	26	3	4	1	employee	1	2	1	temporary	0	3	aldhahi	2	
25	1	1	35	2	6	1	employee	1	1	2	temporary	1	6	almuntazah	2	
26	1	1	29	2	5	1	employee	1	1	1	seasonal	2	3	jumeannah	1	
27	1	1	29	2	4	1	employee	1	1	1	temporary	1	4	sultanah	2	
28	1	1	30	2	4	1	employee	1	1	1	temporary	1	4	south buraidah	2	
29	1	1	24	1	4	1	agriculture	1	1	1	seasonal	2	3	almuntazah	3	
30	1	1	27	1	5	1	employee	1	1	0	permenant	2	4	alsalmyah	2	
31	1	1	47	2	4	4	retired	1	1	2	permenant	1	2	alsafa	2	

Figure 3.2: An example of the SPSS interface. Source: Author (2009).

### 3.5.2 NVivo

NVivo is a program used to assist in qualitative data analysis; it can help analyse the qualitative data from the interview transcripts, from participant observation, field notes, audio recordings and other documents (Skinns and Sanders, 2007). Coding allows words or phrases that are in the text to reveal a sense of people’s collective feelings at a particular time (Walsh, 2003). In this study, in order to categorise the data into meaningful concepts, categories and themes, coding was conducted. The researcher considered initial categories using open coding, and then moved on to a more systematic reflection of the data to create a new list of categories. To put it another way, axial coding was applied to place the categories and concepts into core themes, this was undertaken by direct examination of the data. Axial coding allows various codes to be grouped around a common word that has a variety of meaning – in other words thematic area. Ideas were organised and coded in an NVIVO interface.

This software allows the researcher to identify the way data and ideas are linked. It employs sets for grouping data and attributes for organising ideas that occur in the data.

The system helps to identify commonalities, differences, frequency and patterns in the ideas, opinions and experiences obtained from the interviews (Skinns and Sanders, 2007). Importantly, it removes the need to conduct these tasks manually allowing the researcher more time to explore the trends (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2006).

The researcher can change the method of analysis to suit their requirements. However, this method is resource intensive. NVivo is not able to code themes, perform analysis or interpret the results; the researcher must perform these tasks. Another disadvantage is that it may encourage attempts to quantify qualitative data, or to separate or abstract the qualitative data from its original meaning or context (Skinns and Sanders, 2007). This study employed the NVivo 7 analysis of the transcripts from the interviews and oral histories to uncover the relationships between the ideas expressed.

It should be noted that the respondents were individually referenced in this study. The following is an explanation of these references:

#### 1. Interviews

I = Interview

B = Bedouin

V = Village

C = City

<10, >10 = less than and longer than 10 years with date

Example:

(I B > 10 DA 20/7/09) I = Interview, B = Bedouin, >10 = longer than 10 years, DA respondent number and date

(I V < 10 VA 20/7/09) I = Interview, V = Village, <10 = less than 10 years, VA = respondent number and date

(I C > 10 AD 20/7/09) I = Interview, C = City, >10 = longer than 10 years, AD = respondent number and date

## 2. Oral History

(OH Bedouin 7 20/7/09) OH = Oral History, Bedouin, Respondent number 7 and date

### **3.6 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**

A GIS is an information system that allows users to store, compile, analyse, retrieve and also display mapped data. A GIS uses data from maps, satellite images and aerial photos; and is particularly useful in urban demographic studies (Falbo et al., 2002). The system can display data in the form of maps and illustrate an important phenomenon, and such maps are a good mechanism for describing objects and their attributes. These techniques can represent particular models of the real world (Bernhardsen, 2002). A GIS can show how cities grow and change dynamically, and also illustrates urban sprawl (Maguire et al., 2005). In this study GIS techniques were used to illustrate the spatial distribution of the urban areas in MENA and Saudi Arabia. GIS were also used to show the spatial distribution of migrants in Buraydah City. A disadvantage of GIS is that if the data is handled inappropriately it can lead to inappropriate geographic outcomes, which is detrimental to understanding how the geographic data can be fully utilised and treated (Galati, 2006).

### **3.7 Limitations of the Methodology**

Limitations in geographical research, such as the power relationship between research and respondent, can either provide a limited or exaggerated response and is a particularly issue in this study. Because of Saudi culture, the respondents, especially the Bedouin, may treat the researcher with either respect or suspicion; or indeed the researcher's assistant may also be perceived in different ways, which could affect the responses received. Moreover, Saudi culture is rife with suspicion and concern about jealousy; therefore, some people are reluctant to give too much information. All of

these factors may amplify the common problems associated with the relationship between researcher and respondent.

Another issue, also related to culture, is that only a limited number of females could be interviewed; however, women's experience of migration and urbanisation is invaluable in this study. It has been suggested by Gluck (2006) that historians would like to recover women's voices, that this is an important way of empowering women and is even a way of documenting their experiences of subordination, something that is relevant to the decision making in terms of migration and urbanisation.

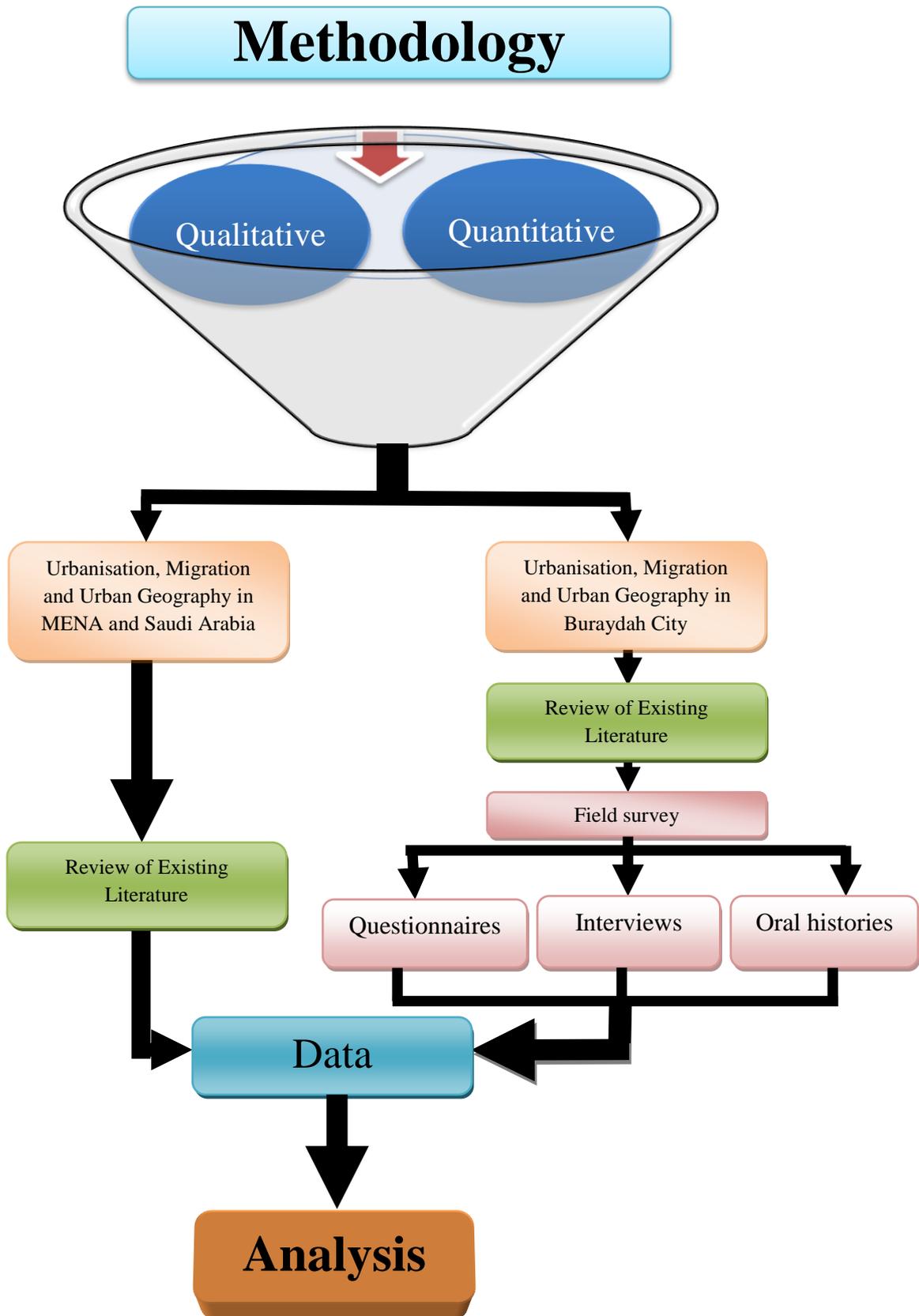


Figure 3.3 Methodology process – qualitative and quantitative data.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **URBANISATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is currently experiencing distinctive and rapid urbanisation, which has placed the urban infrastructure under pressure over the last 10 years (Bjerde, 2008). According to the Australian Trade Commission (2009), the MENA region had a population of 320 million in 2009, which is predicted to reach 430 million by 2020, of which 280 million are projected to be urbanised. This will represent an increase of 65 percent for the urban population, in comparison with the rural population increase that is projected to be only 8.5 percent. In terms of GDP, over the next five years, MENA is predicted to be among the fastest growing regions in the world, due primarily to the revenues from oil and gas; MENA has 70 percent of the world's oil and 46 percent of the world's gas reserves (Australian Trade Commission, 2009).

Moreover, this chapter presents the distinct urban geographies that are found within MENA, although the region shows similarities in terms of patterns of urbanisation and the resulting urban geographies generally; there is also a wide variety of urban geographies in the region as a result of different economic, political and socio-cultural factors, prompting a multidimensional approach. These factors manifest themselves in striking ways in a region that has political instability, conflict zones and extreme poverty and wealth.

#### **4.2 Urbanisation in the Developing World**

In order to highlight the distinctive characteristics of urbanisation in MENA it is necessary to examine the region in a developing world context for comparative purposes. Urbanisation in the developing world is not a uniform phenomenon; there are

a number of different processes taking place, which have led to the rise of different structures of cities in the developing world (Pacione, 2001).

In 2009 the region with the highest percentage of people living in urban areas was North America with 81.9 percent; followed by Latin America, 79.3 percent, and Europe, 72.5 percent, whilst MENA stood at 73.2 percent (Figure 4.1) (United Nations, 2009e).

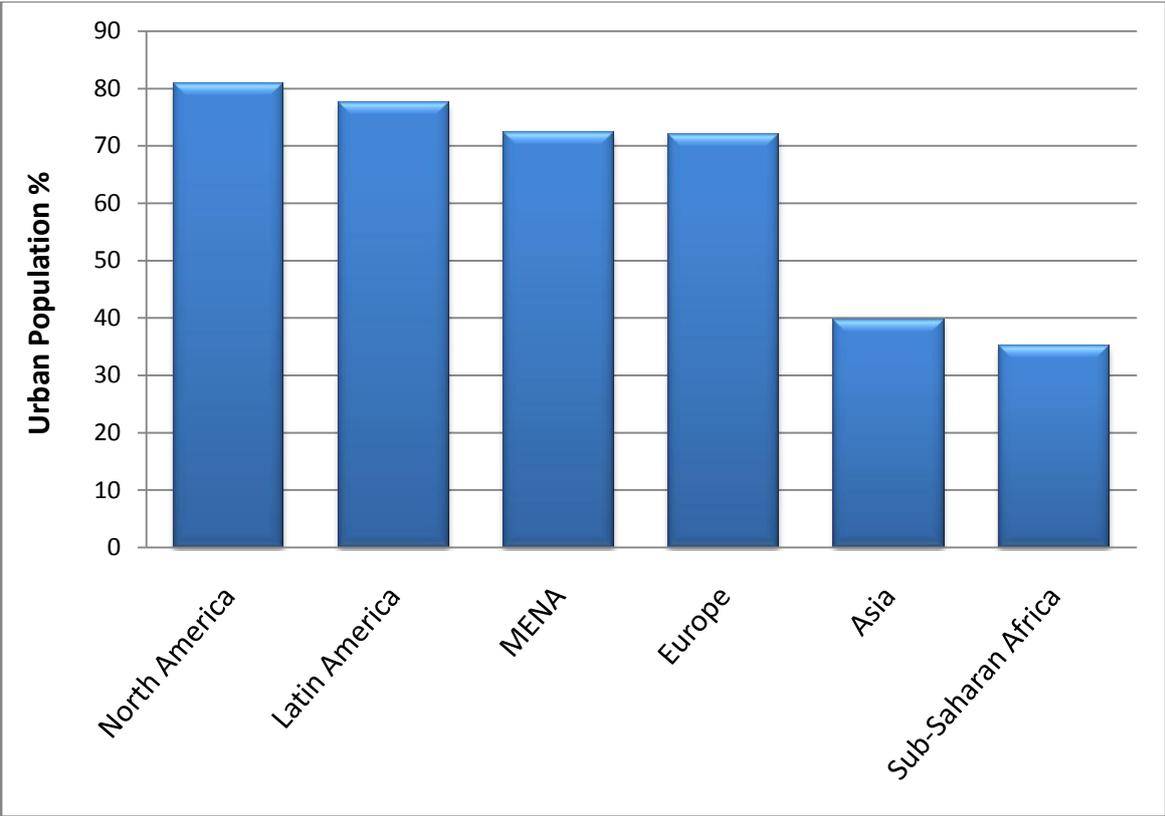


Figure 4.1: Percentage Urban (%) by World Regions in 2009. Source: United Nations (2009e).

Between 2005 and 2010 in terms of the rate of urbanisation, MENA possessed a growth rate of 2.4 percent, and is only exceeded by Sub-Saharan Africa at 3.71 percent. MENA’s rate of urban growth was very close to that of Asia which stood at 2.28 percent. Between 2005 and 2010, Latin America, another developing region, had a relatively low rate of urban growth at 1.6 percent; a figure closer to the 1.31 percent of North America for the same period (Figure 4.2).

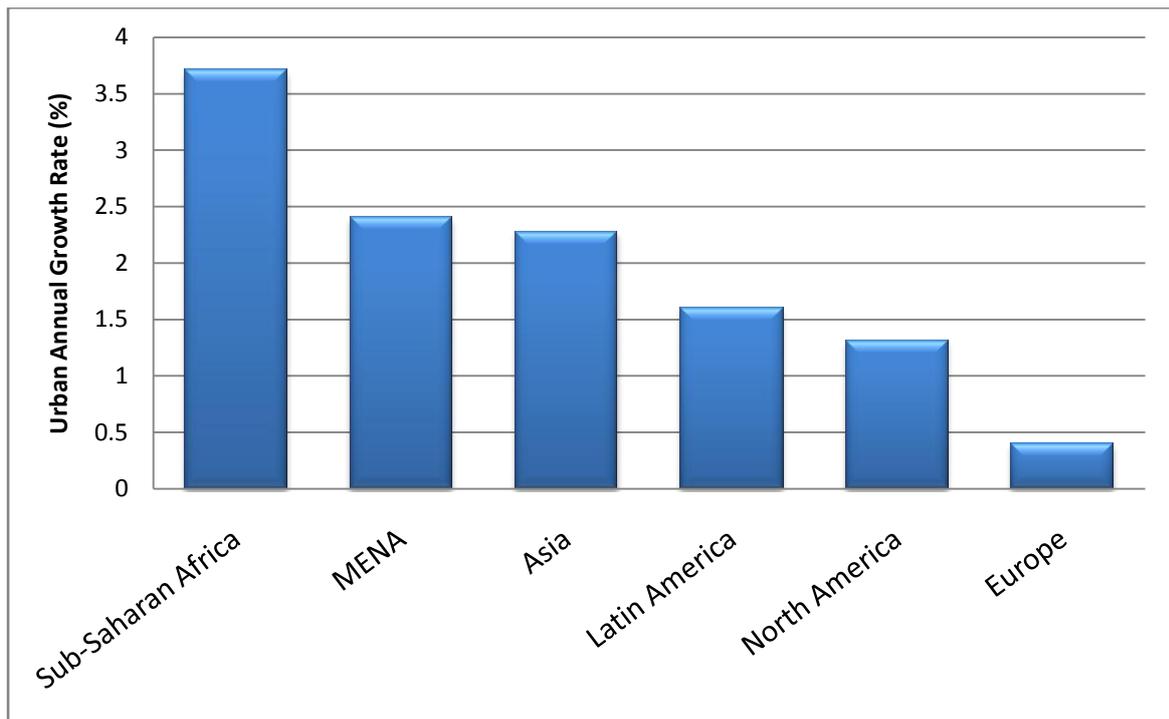


Figure 4.2 Urban annual growth rates by World region 2005-2010. Source: United Nations (2010c).

Another negative consequence of rapid urbanisation in the developing world is the proliferation of slums and many regions are increasingly faced with such a problem (Baker and McLain, 2009). In fact, one in three urban dwellers (or one billion people) the equivalent to one sixth of the world's population, live in this environment. Moreover, the housing needs of the urban poor are often overlooked in the preference for economic development and land use (Kotter, 2004).

### 4.3 Patterns of Urbanisation in MENA

Upon examination of the patterns of urbanisation within MENA it can be seen that the region as a whole does not have a collective experience, individual countries exhibit different patterns of urbanisation, supported by the fact that the region is characterised by poverty, wealth and conflict. It has been forecast by the United Nations (2008a) that by 2030 5 countries in MENA will have an urban population of more than 90 percent: Kuwait 98.7 percent; Qatar 96.9 percent; Israel 93 percent and Lebanon 90 percent (Table 4.1). Indeed, in 2009 the countries in MENA that exhibited the highest urban

population were Kuwait, Qatar and Israel, of which the ranking has remained the same since 1990 (United Nations, 2008c, 2009e).

In 2000, countries with a lower percentage of urban population were Yemen 26.3 percent; Egypt 42.6 percent and Syria 51.6 percent (Table 4.1), by 2005 there was an increase to 28.9 percent in Yemen; 42.6 percent in Egypt and 53.2 per cent in Syria (United Nations, 2008c) and in 2010, Yemen 31.8 per cent; Egypt 43.4 per cent and Syria 55.7 per cent (United Nations, 2010d). In 2007, Cairo was the most populated city in MENA with a population of 11,893,000 (United Nations, 2008c).

Table 4.1: Percentage of Urban Population in MENA Countries, 1950-2050

Country												
Algeria	22.2	30.5	39.5	43.5	52.1	59.8	66.5	71.9	76.2	80.1	83.5	
Bahrain	64.4	82.3	83.8	86.1	88.1	88.4	88.6	89.4	90.6	91.8	92.8	
Djibouti	39.8	50.3	61.8	72.1	75.7	83.3	88.1	90.6	92.0	93.2	94.2	
Egypt	31.9	37.9	42.2	43.9	43.5	42.6	42.8	45.0	49.9	56.3	62.4	
Iran	27.5	33.7	41.2	49.7	56.3	64.2	69.5	74.0	77.9	81.2	84.1	
Iraq	35.1	42.9	56.2	65.5	69.7	67.8	66.4	67.3	70.5	74.3	77.8	
Israel	71.0	76.8	84.2	88.6	90.4	91.4	91.7	92.2	93.0	93.9	94.6	
Jordan	37.0	50.9	56.0	59.9	72.2	78.3	78.5	79.8	82.0	84.3	86.4	
Kuwait	61.5	74.9	85.7	94.8	98.0	98.2	98.4	98.6	98.7	98.9	99.0	
Lebanon	32.0	42.3	59.5	73.7	83.1	86.0	87.2	88.6	90.0	91.3	92.4	
Libya	19.5	27.3	49.7	70.1	75.7	76.4	77.9	80.3	82.9	85.2	87.2	
Morocco	26.2	29.4	34.5	41.2	48.4	53.3	56.7	61.0	65.9	70.9	75.4	
Palestine	37.3	44.0	54.3	62.4	67.9	71.5	72.1	74.1	77.2	80.3	83.0	
Oman	8.6	16.4	29.7	47.6	66.1	71.6	71.7	73.3	76.4	79.5	82.3	
Qatar	79.2	85.2	88.4	89.4	92.2	94.9		96.5	96.9	97.3	97.6	
Saudi					76.6	79.8	82.1	84.2	86.2	88.1	89.7	
Syria	30.6	36.8	43.3	46.7	48.9	51.6	54.9	59.0	64.0	69.2	73.9	
Tunisia	32.3	37.5	43.5	50.6	57.9	63.4	67.3	71.2	75.2	78.8	82.0	
UAE	54.5	73.5	77.7	80.7	79.1	77.8	78.0	80.0	82.4	84.7	86.7	
Yemen	5.8	9.1	13.3	16.5	20.9	26.3	31.8	38.2	45.3	52.8	60.2	

Source: United Nations (2008c and 2009e).

For Saudi Arabia the increase in the country's percentage of urban population has been steady from 72.6 percent in 1985 to 79.8 percent in 2000 and 82.1 percent in 2010, and the for the UAE 80.3 percent in 2000 and 84.1percent in 2010 (United Nations, 2010d).

In relation to the rate of urbanisation, an interesting point to note is that both Qatar and the UAE are resource-rich with wealthy economies related to the oil and gas industries

and are geographically small, which explains their high urbanisation rates. In contrast, Yemen has a poorer economy with a large geographic area, however, all three countries have demonstrated the fastest growing urban populations, in fact between 2005 and 2010 Yemen has exhibited the highest rate of urbanisation in the region at 4.86 percent in comparison to approximately 2.4 percent for all MENA (Figure 4.3)(United Nations, 2008c).

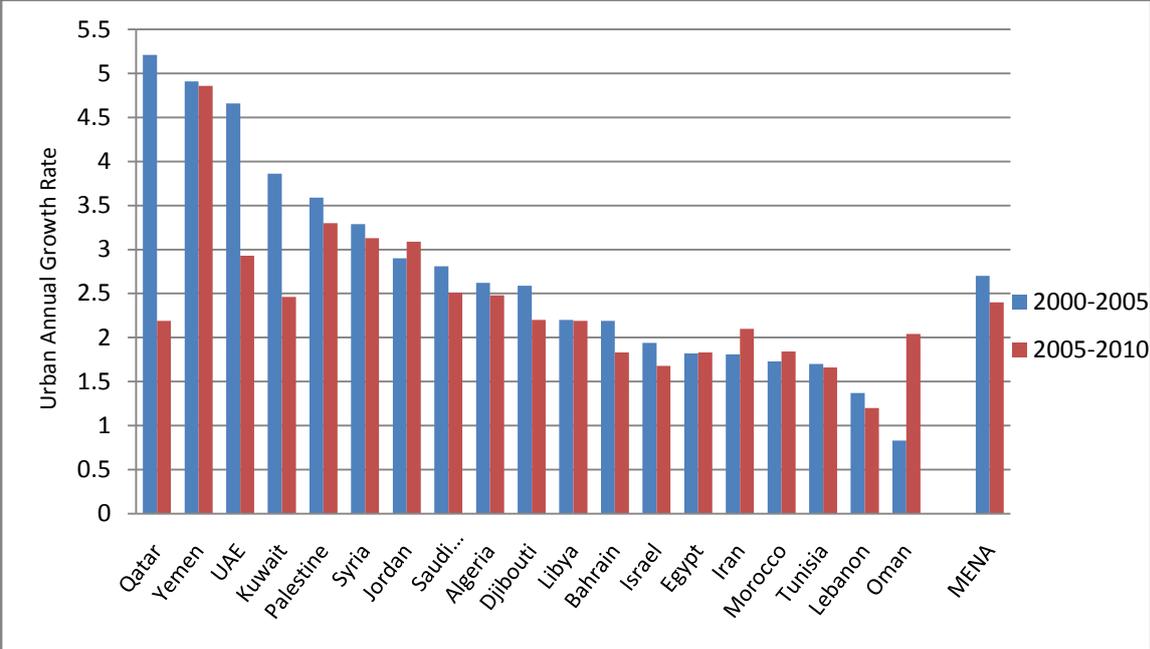


Figure 4.3: Urban Annual Growth Rate 2000 – 2005, 2005 – 2010. Source: United Nations (2008c).

Figure 4.4 illustrates the rural and urban growth rates in the countries of MENA between 2005 and 2010, there are a number of countries that are projected to have a negative growth in the rural population for the same period; namely Djibouti -1.4 percent; Algeria -3.1 percent; Tunisia -0.07 percent and Iran -0.26 percent (United Nations, 2008c).

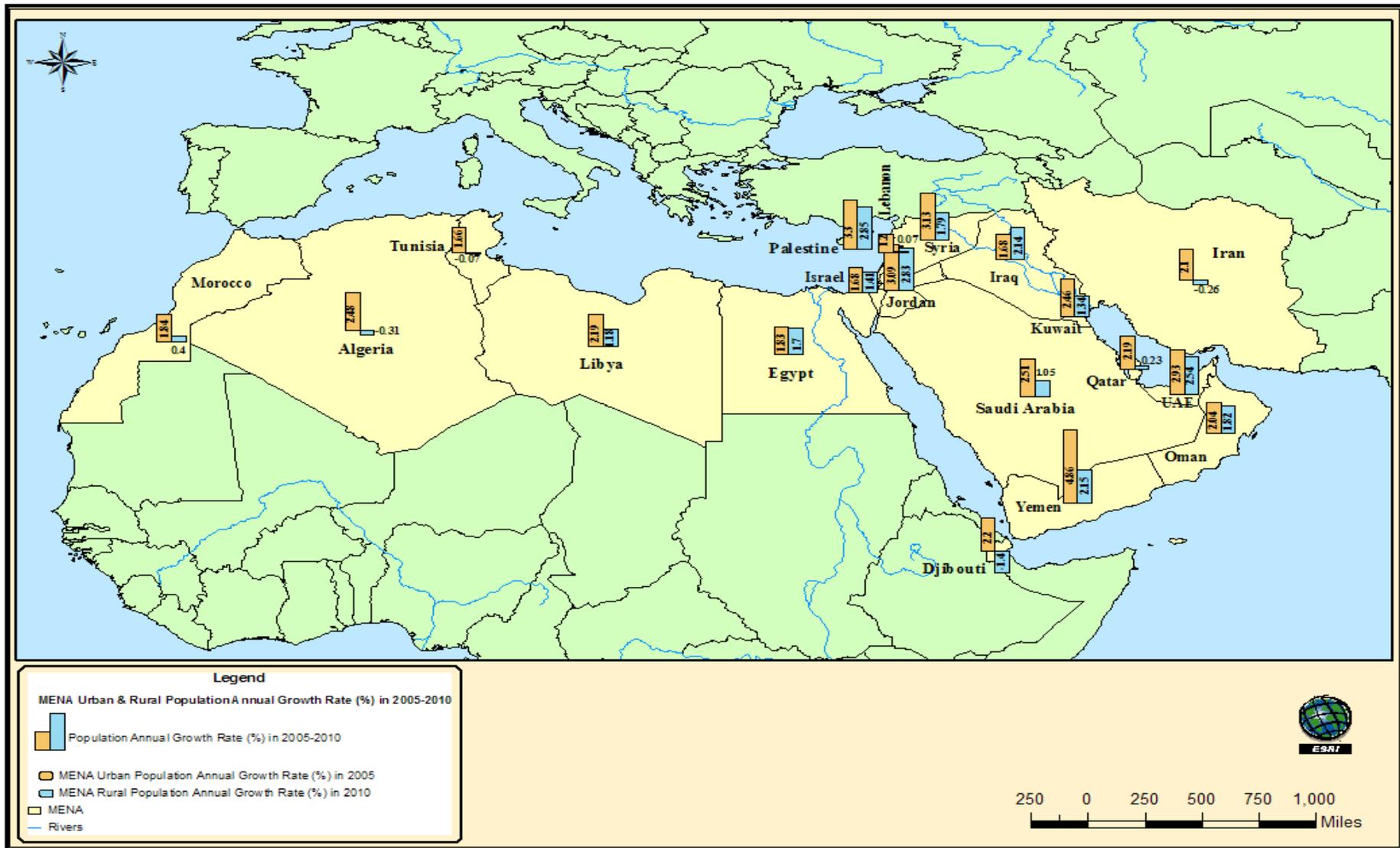


Figure 4.4: Map of Rural and Urban Annual Growth Rate (%) in Countries of MENA, 2005-2010. Source: United Nation (2008c).

It may be misleading, though, to look at the percentage of urbanisation in isolation. The aforementioned countries that show a high percentage of urbanisation are often smaller in size with high population densities. For example, in 2008, Kuwait, a small country in the region, had one of the highest percentages of urban populations in MENA, at 98 percent, and did not have a high population density like that of Palestine and Lebanon (Figure 4.5). There is no apparent relationship between population density and the percentage of urbanisation. This is further proven by two other small countries Qatar and Djibouti which had a percentage of urban population of 100 percent and 87 percent respectively; however, with lower population densities (Population Reference Bureau, 2008a).

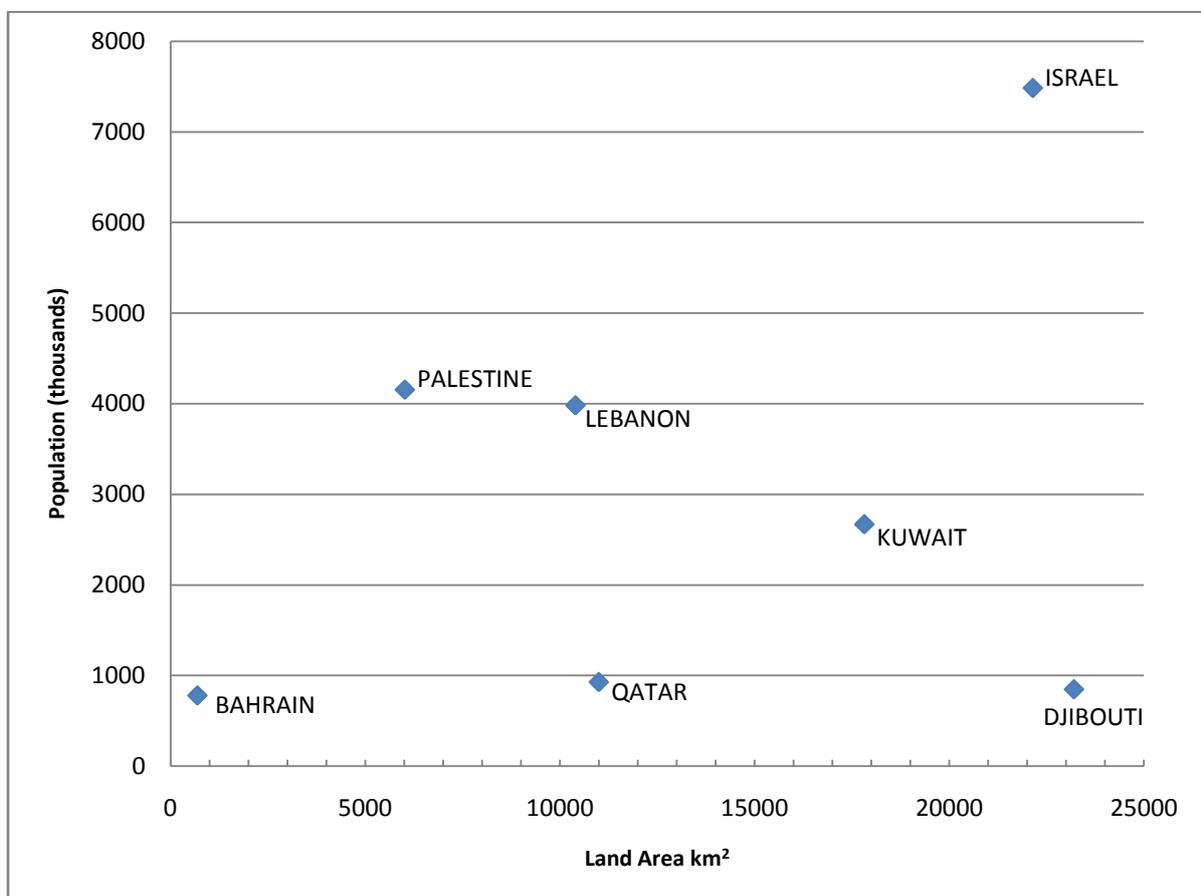


Figure 4.5: Population densities of small countries in MENA. Source: Population Reference Bureau (2008a).

In terms of the economic dimension of patterns of urbanisation there is a relationship between GDP and urbanisation. In line with the rapid urbanisation, the annual GDP growth for MENA in 2010 was 4.085 per cent, and the figure for 2011 is projected to be 5.080 per cent (International Monetary Fund, 2010). In 2005 the Arabian Peninsula experienced a

higher percentage of urban population at an average of 77.3 per cent, Western Asia at 73.6 per cent and Northern Africa at 64.9 percent (United Nations, 2008c). It appears that the most economically strong sub-region, the Arabian Peninsula, has the highest percentage of urban population compared to Northern Africa, considered economically poor, with the lowest percentage of urban population.

This is further illustrated by a closer examination of the relationship between GDP per capita (expressed in thousands USD) and the percentage of urban population in 2010 for individual countries (Figure 4.6). Qatar, for example, showed the highest GDP per capita in MENA at 74.4 together with the second highest percentage of urban population at 95.8 percent. Kuwait had a GDP per capita of 32.5 and an urban population of 98.4 percent, moreover, Libya which is also an oil producer, had 77.9 percent urbanisation and a GDP per capita of 12 (Figure 4.6).

In contrast, the poorer countries of MENA showed lower percentages of urbanisation; for example, in 2010, Yemen had the lowest GDP per capita in MENA at 1.2 and the lowest urban population at 31.8 percent; and Syria had a GDP per capita of 2.9 and an urban population of 55.7 percent, and finally, Egypt with a GDP per capita of 2.8 and only 43.4 percent urbanised, for the same year (Figure 4.6) (United Nations, 2010d, International Monetary Fund, 2010).

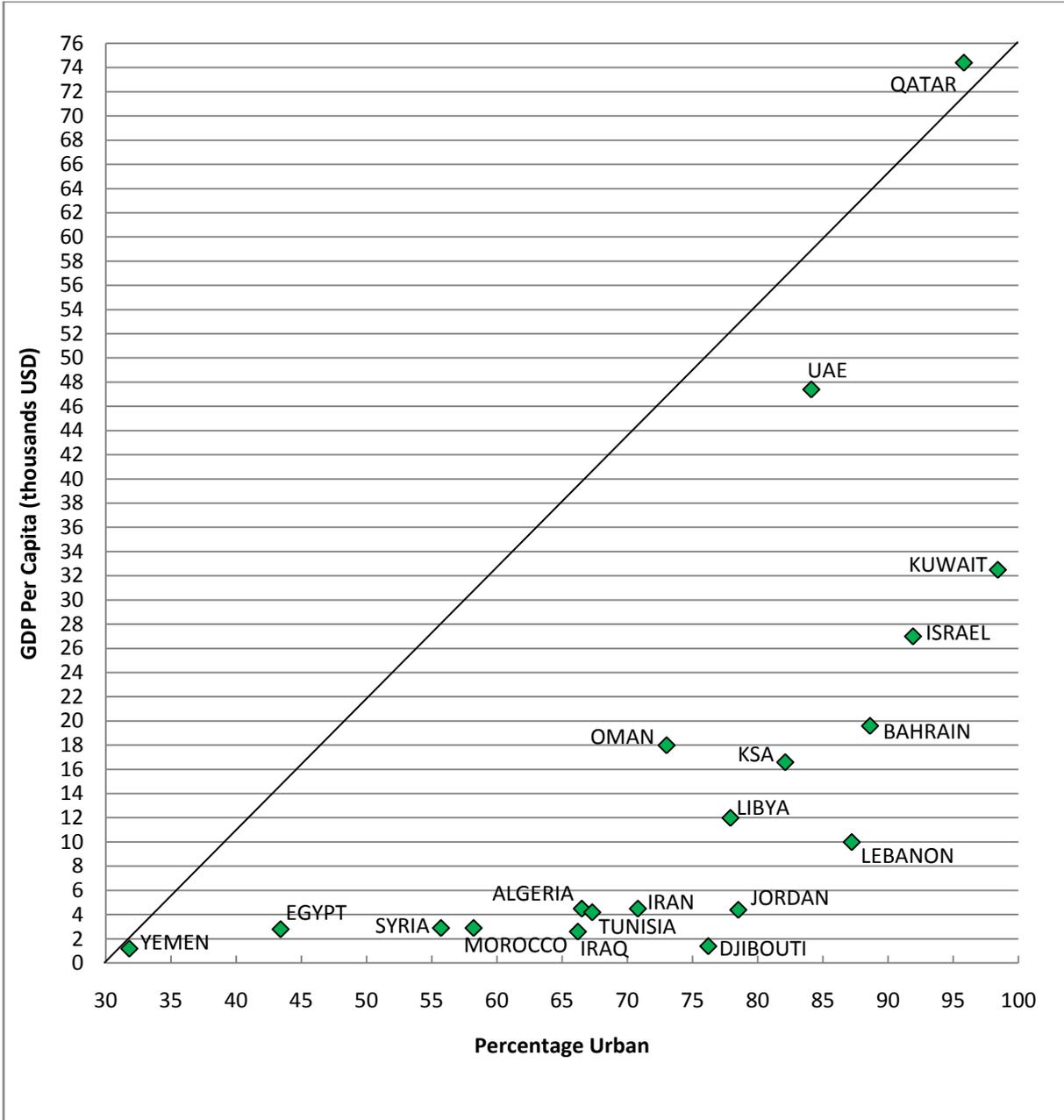


Figure 4.6: Percentage of Urban Population and GDP Per Capita in MENA, 2010. Source: United Nations (2010d) and International Monetary Fund (2010).

#### 4.4 Drivers of Urbanisation in MENA

Combinations of economic, political and socio-cultural factors have contributed to rapid urbanisation in MENA. In terms of demographics, the region has witnessed rapid population growth and has experienced an increase in population greater than any other region in the world. It has already been mentioned that MENA is characterised economic diversity; this has led to a significant rate of internal migration, which has contributed to urbanisation.

Besides internal migration, there has been a significant amount of external migration both to and from the region, this is mainly due to economic factors, and it has had an effect on the culture and urban landscape in some recipient countries.

#### **4.4.1 Population Patterns in MENA**

In 2010 the total population for MENA stood at 385.1 million (Population Reference Bureau, 2010). Although the population of the region as a whole is increasing, there are distinct differences in the population growth rates between the regions and countries of MENA. The region with the lowest population ratio increase is Northern Africa; however, this figure is skewed by Libya because it has a high percentage of foreign-born workers, 11 percent of the total population, due to the oil industry; and none of the other countries in Northern Africa has a foreign-born population exceeding one percent (Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2007). However, this has now changed with the recent uprising in Libya, it is reported that out of 2.5 million foreign workers, 700,000 fled the country prior to the crisis (Mohapatra et al., 2011 p.5) increasing to 994198 in September of 2011 (International Organisation for Migration, 2011a). In contrast, the Arabian Peninsula, for example Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, had a population growth ratio of 7 between 1950 and 2007, the highest in MENA (Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2007). This coincides with a population growth rate for this sub-region of 3.1 percent in 2007; this is not only the highest in MENA, but the highest for any region in the developing world, and higher than the developing world as a whole (Dito, 2008).

In 2000 there were 16 cities in MENA with a population of more than one million (United Nations, 2004) and by 2010 there were 32, of which three, Tehran, Baghdad and Cairo, had a population of more than five million (United Nations, 2010d) and the number over the 1 million mark is projected to be 38 by 2015 (United Nations, 2008a). In 2010 Iran had eight cities with a population of more than one million including the capital Tehran, followed by Saudi Arabia with four cities, including Riyadh (United Nations, 2010d). The region also has two megacities, those with an urban agglomeration of more than 10,000,000 residents, in Tehran and Cairo (Bjerde, 2008); (Ziv and Cox, 2007).

The different population growth experiences can be partly explained by the different economic situations in each of the three distinct sub-regions and the countries within MENA. It can be seen that the poorest area of MENA, Northern Africa, has experienced lower population growth at 1.5 percent between 2005 and 2010, the more economically successful area of the Arabian Peninsula had an average population growth rate of 7.3 percent for the same period, with individual countries experiencing very high population growth such as Bahrain 11 percent, United Arab Emirates 12.3 percent and Qatar 15.2 percent for the same period (United Nations, 2010d). However, Saudi Arabia, despite being one of the richer Gulf States, has exhibited an average population growth rate of 2.7 percent between 2005 and 2010, below the average of 11 percent for the three sub regions combined (United Nations, 2010d); this was in clear contrast to the other Gulf States.

There are two distinctive attributes of the countries of the Gulf States that have contributed to their demographic situation, namely improvements in health services and the presence of foreign workers. Kuwait, for example, had an infant mortality rate of 10 per 1000 (under five years of age) in 2009, this was low compared to an average for MENA of 33 for the same year (World Bank, 2010f). Moreover, life expectancy in the Gulf States is among the highest in the region; for example Emiratis and Kuwaitis had a life expectancy of 78 years in 2009 (World Bank, 2010f). Therefore, it appears that the relationship between population growth and wealth of a country is mutually reinforcing; on the one hand economic success improves health care, lowering infant mortality, thus contributing to the increase in population, while on the other hand, an increase in foreign-born workers greatly increases the population whilst at the same time contributing to economic success.

Another factor that has affected population change in MENA has been an increase in fertility rates brought about by social and economic change such as improved health services. Although MENA had a high total fertility rate in 2009 of 2.7 (births per woman), it was not the highest in the developing world; in fact it was exceeded by Sub-Saharan Africa at 5.0 and South Asia at 2.8 for the same year, interestingly, MENA's total fertility was the exact average for the developing world as a whole (World Bank, 2010f). However, in parallel with a rapid increase in MENA's population, the region has witnessed an overall decrease in fertility rates (Population Reference Bureau, 2001). Only three countries in MENA have

shown an increase in fertility rates between 2005 and 2008: Iran, Kuwait and Israel (Population Reference Bureau, 2008b). Despite these decreases, one third of the region's population is under the age of 15 and in the next 15 years these young people will become of childbearing age. Additionally, the elderly population, 60 years and above, is also increasing (Population Reference Bureau, 2001).

The vast majority of MENA's population is Muslim and traditionally there was much importance attached to the role of the family as it provides mutual social and economic support; and it is thought that this cultural dimension slowed MENA's transition to lower fertility rates. In Israel, for example, Muslim women had on average four children in 2005 in comparison to Jewish women who had an average of 2.7 and Christian women 2.2; it is believed that the recent decrease in fertility rates is due to delayed marriage and an increased awareness and acceptance of family planning practices (Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2007) particularly in Egypt and Morocco (Fargues, 2006).

#### **4.4.2 Comparison of Population Growth Patterns in MENA with Other World Regions**

In the period between 1950 and 2000 the population of MENA increased from 100 million to 380 million; a ratio of population size increase of 3.7, greater than any other region in the world, whilst Asia experienced a ratio of 2.6 and Europe only 1.3 for the same period. Sub-Saharan Africa had the closest rate of increase to MENA, a ratio of population size of 3.6 (Figure 4.7) (Population Reference Bureau, 2001, p: 1). By 2008 the population of the region was approximately 363.7 million, an increase of nearly 14 million in one year (Population Reference Bureau, 2008a).

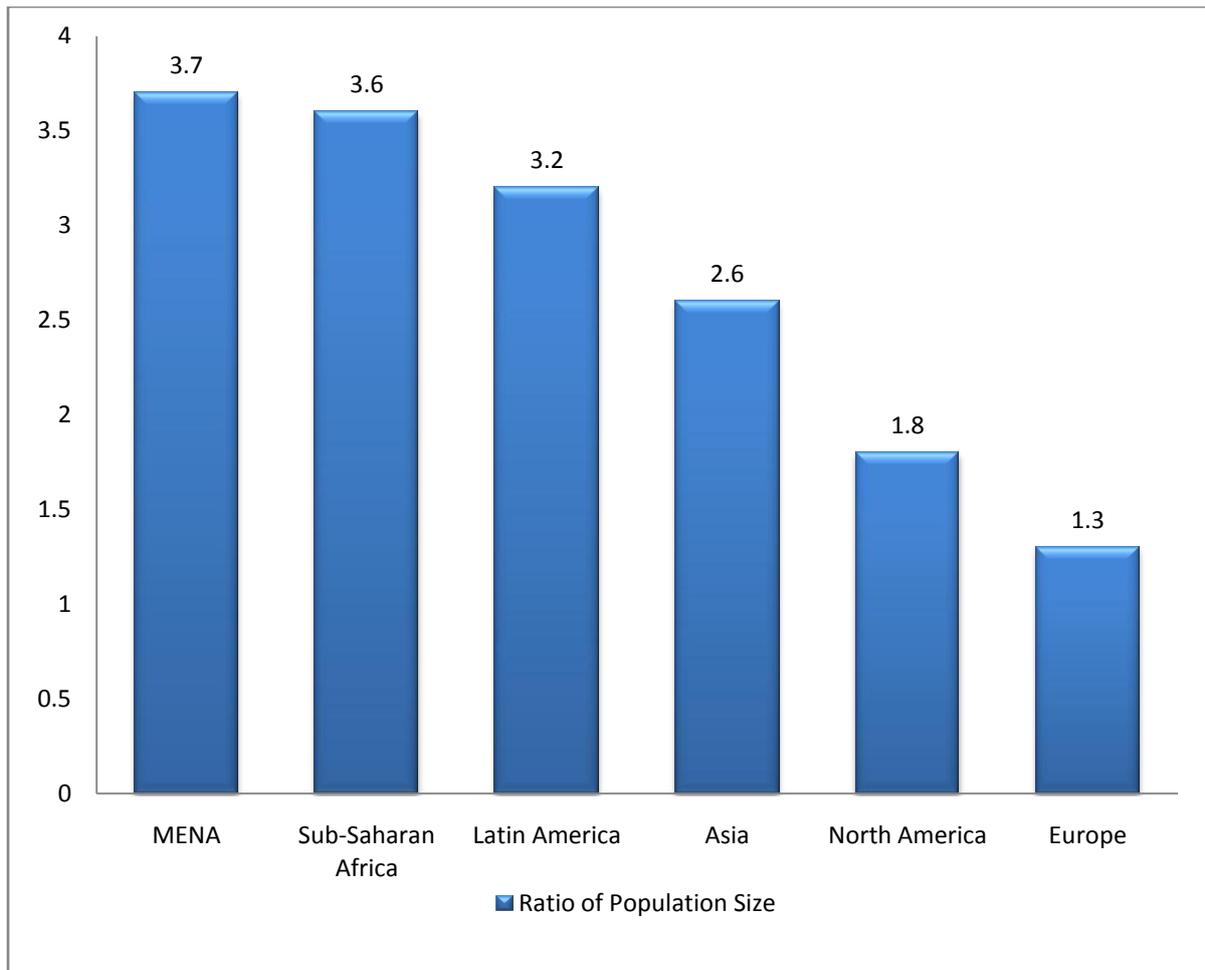


Figure 4.7: Ratio of Population Size from 2000 to Population Size 1950. Source: Population Reference Bureau (2001).

High population growth is a problem in the developing world, according to the United Nations (2010b). Population growth, particularly when not associated with equivalent rates of economic growth, creates an unsustainable demand for public services such as education and healthcare, and much like MENA there has been a dramatic increase in the number of young people. Moreover, the developing world is home to two thirds of the global population over 60, half of whom are living in Asia; although the number of older people as a percentage is currently higher in the developed world (United Nations, 2009c). The increase in the elderly population is also taking place in MENA; for example in Egypt the number of those who are 60 years and over is forecast to increase from the 4.3 million recorded in 2000, to 23.7 million by 2050, and in Saudi Arabia the rise is expected to be from one million to 7.7 million (Madbouly, 2009). In terms of young people, MENA is characterised by a swelling young population, especially of those aged between 16 and 24 years (World Bank, 2009b, p: 9).

Examining the period from 1990 to 2008, the annual average population growth for MENA was two percent; again this was the second highest rate after Sub-Saharan Africa at 2.6 percent, the lowest growth rate occurred in Europe and Central Asia at 0.1 percent. However, this was the only region in the developing world that is projected to experience an increase for the period 2008 to 2015 (World Bank, 2010d, p: 64).

#### **4.4.3 Migration in MENA**

Migration has an effect on urbanisation in a number of ways. Migrant workers can be involved in property development in a host country and they also need to be accommodated. The movement of labour can also have a very strong effect on the population dynamics of a country; an example of which is Qatar where the vast majority of its population are expatriate workers, and an increase in population has resulted in an increase in urbanisation. Furthermore, expatriate workers can have an effect on the type of urbanisation that takes place; for example South Asian workers in Saudi Arabia choose to squat in older buildings in the centres of towns and cities. The most apparent relationship between migration and urbanisation is the effect of rural to urban migration, whereby those seeking better opportunities in urban areas require housing.

MENA is quite distinctive in terms of migration in comparison to other developing regions. There has been migration both within MENA and to and from MENA. The North African sub region of MENA provides an example; there has been emigration from North Africa to Europe and countries in North Africa depend on workers' remittances from intra-regional migration to the oil-producing Gulf States. Moreover, in MENA there is also forced migration due to conflict, for example from Iraq and Palestine and more recently Syrian refugees fleeing into Turkey from the advancing Syrian army (Hadid, 2011) and refugees from the unrest in Libya and Tunisia fleeing to Europe (Lambert, 2011). These migratory movements have been in a continuous state of flux, and the region has had the highest share of migrant populations in the world (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005). Countries with high emigration include Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Palestine and Yemen; whilst countries with high immigration include Libya and the Gulf States (World Bank, 2009a).

It has been shown that significant increase in the labour market directly affects migration within countries, in particular rural to urban migration and intra-regional migration to the Gulf States as well as inter-regional migration. Between 2000 and 2010 an estimated 40 million people joined the workforce in MENA, an increase of 40 percent. This expansion of labour is currently the fastest in the world (World Bank, 2007, p: 27). This increase in the labour market has been attributed to population growth, however, this may not necessarily be a problem; the region's population growth can drive economic growth if new entrants to the labour market are productively employed, for this there needs to be reform of the public sector and less government constraints placed on the private sector (Sullivan and Nadgrodkiewicz, 2008).

The working age population in MENA is also increasing rapidly and the region has the highest economically active-to-inactive ratio in the world. This dependency ratio, i.e. the ratio between the total number of people below the age of 15 and above the age of 60 against those of working age, was 0.6 in 2006 and 0.56 in 2008 (World Bank, 2006, 2010a, p: 64). Because of the youth bulge in the region there is particularly a problem with unemployment among the young, in some countries between 20 and 25 percent, this situation will be further compounded in the short term by the civil unrest in the region, however, it is yet, at the time of writing, to be realised and assessed (Akhtar, 2011). Additionally, although the region has weathered the global economic crisis relatively well (Akhtar, 2011), there is still an indication that the economic crisis has weakened further the region's ability to create new jobs (World Bank, 2009b).

The inflow of workers' remittances, a reflection of workers emigrating from the region for work, suggests that MENA overall is more of an importer of labour than an exporter. The clear evidence for this suggestion is the fact that, as a region, MENA has received the lowest amount of workers' remittances than any other developing region in the world except Sub-Saharan Africa (Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2007). In fact in 2008 MENA received 33.8 billion (US \$) and there was a decrease in remittances by 6 percent in 2009 and estimates for 2010 are less promising (World Bank, 2010g p. 28 - 29). Indeed, there has been a tightening of Europe's immigration rules due to new inflows of migrant workers from Turkey, Asia and the new member states of the European Union (De Silva and Silva-Jauregui, 2004). In light of

the more recent civil unrest in MENA, it is predicted that the growth in the flow of remittances will reduce by half in 2011 (Mohapatra et al. 2011).

The main destination point for migrants from within MENA has always been the Gulf States; the vast majority of migrants come from Egypt and the Mashrek countries, e.g. Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon (World Bank, 2009c). Indeed the Gulf States are also a magnet for foreign workers from outside MENA. It is estimated that there are between 15 and 20 million migrants working the GCC countries, namely Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman, these countries are heavily dependent on foreign labour (International Trade Union Federation, 2010), for example Qatar's foreign-born population is 85 percent; and 90 percent of the labour force is foreign (US Department of State, 2010), in 2010 Saudi Arabia had approximately 7.3 million migrants, the highest among the Gulf states (International Organisation for Migration, 2010 p.209). Further evidence of a high percentage of foreign workers in the Gulf States is the outflow of workers' remittances to their home countries. In 2008, Saudi Arabia had an outflow of remittances of more than 15 billion (US \$) the fourth largest remittance sending country globally, followed by Oman with more than 5 billion (US \$) (International Organisation for Migration, 2010 p. 211).

However, the Gulf States are losing their appeal for expatriate workers because of an increase in the cost of living due to high inflation. Therefore, the Gulf countries are less able to absorb MENA's excess labour force, thus increasing levels of unemployment in the region (De Silva and Silva-Jauregui, 2004). This is unfortunate because MENA has traditionally used migration as a way of relieving labour pressures. However, intra-regional migration is no longer a solution to such pressures because the Gulf region now prefers to recruit cheaper labour from Asia (Sullivan and Nadgrodkiewicz, 2008).

This increase of workers from Asia occupying unskilled jobs is because not only are they cheaper to hire, but are more accepting of poor working conditions. Most notably there has been an increase in migration to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (World Bank, 2008a). However, recent economic developments in the Emirates for example, have made the prospect of working there even less appealing for foreign workers (International Trade Union Confederation, 2010).

A discussion of migratory patterns in MENA would not be complete without mention of conflict, one of the prominent features of the region. There are the more longer term problems such as in Palestine and Iraq, it will be discussed how these conflicts affect migration patterns in the region, and the more recent conflicts in Tunisia, Libya and Syria have also caused an exodus of migrants from these countries.

For Palestine there are two main reasons why people emigrate, the first is that the country has very high unemployment; in 2008 the unemployment rate was 41.3 percent in the Gaza Strip (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009a, c). The second is as a result of refugees fleeing conflict in the Palestinian territories, many of whom have migrated to Jordan. This emigration has been evidenced by a decline in the population growth rate, from 3.5 per cent in 2005 to 2.7 per cent in 2009 (World Bank, 2010f).

Jordan witnessed a significant degree of migration activity in 2007, not only attributable to Palestinian refugees, who were estimated to be 1,835,704 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009b), but also because of the number of Iraqi refugees living in Jordan, which was estimated to be between 450,000 and 500,000 (Arouri, 2008). Jordan's economy is closely linked with mobility both from the acceptance of forced migrants from Palestine and remittances received from skilled Jordanians working in the Gulf countries (Chatelard, 2004).

Iraq, because of the recent conflict, has witnessed a very distinctive migration of its own nationals. In 2008 there were more people fleeing Iraq than returning, contrary to reports made by the Iraqi government. It was estimated that 1200 people a day left compared to 700 returning to the country. There are currently 4.5 million displaced Iraqis and more than half of them are refugees; and over the past year only five percent have returned to their homes (Tirman, 2009). Additionally, Egypt has accommodated many refugees from the conflict in Sudan (De Silva and Silva-Jauregui, 2004). This phenomenon of migrant refugees is significant across the entire region.

The recent Arab Spring and the associated conflicts have created refugees that have had to flee to neighbouring countries and also refugees who are displaced within their own

country, the latter, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and total 243,000 within Libya alone. The continuing conflict in Libya is forcing refugees to migrate from the Western Mountains region to south-eastern Tunisia (United Nations, 2011) and over one million refugees have fled Libya to neighbouring countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Chad and Niger (Coghlan, 2011) and in the same conflict an estimated 600,000 Egyptians have returned home (Cousins, 2011). Because of the civil unrest in Syria, refugees are fleeing the border into neighbouring Turkey; however, Syrian troops have heavily cracked down on this as it is considered an embarrassment for the Syrian government (Associated Press, 2011).

The above discussion offers two main reasons for migration within MENA; namely conflict and economic opportunity. Other regions of the developing world may not share conflict as a significant driver of migration, although it appears that a common factor linking all developing regions is the economic factor of seeking work. Migratory patterns within this region have been well established and there has been a complex system of labour recruitment, characterised by the increasing involvement of women (United Nations, 2003). Moreover, there are also political factors that influence migration within a region; Latin American migratory patterns have been influenced by political change, as the region has been through a transition from authoritarian to democratic government. Political regimes have also influenced the type of person who has emigrated from this region (Hiskey and Orces, 2010). Sub-Saharan Africa also shares a driving factor of migration with MENA, namely conflict, in Eastern Africa since the 1980s conflict has resulted in forced migration of refugees, and much like South East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa is increasingly characterised by female migrants who are moving independently of their spouses, although unfortunately many of these women are victims of illegal trafficking (Adebusoye, 2006).

#### **4.4.4 Rural to Urban Migration in MENA**

The above discussion has focussed on intra-regional and inter-regional migration. When discussing migration in general terms 'migration' tends to be synonymous with one type of migration, i.e. international migration. In many countries, however, it is internal migration that is important in terms of the movement of people and the flow of remittances; especially in countries with high levels of regional inequality (Deshingkar and Natali, 2008).

The latter point is significant to this study, which examines internal migration in a general context including urban to urban as well as rural to urban migration.

Poverty has led the rural population to migrate to the large cities, particularly in Egypt, Morocco, Yemen and Iran, with no employment prospects or sufficient access to social services; and therefore this population has become the urban poor (Bishay, 1998). Additionally, the increase in overall population growth had led to an increase in the rural population, potentially increasing the likelihood of rural to urban migration (Roudi-Fahimi et al., 2008). Amongst men and women in MENA there are increased expectations for work opportunities; however the economies of the region are being placed under strain because of high population growth, which is adding more job seekers to the labour force (World Bank, 2003a) and fuelling a drive to seek employment in urban areas.

This would suggest that there is a simple driver behind internal migration, i.e. the pursuit of economic gain, however, this over simplifies the dreams and aspirations that people have, people also migrate to urban areas to enjoy a better standard of living. Syria for example is relatively rich in comparison with some of its neighbours; however, a quarter of the population live below the poverty line and basic services such as electricity, drinking water and healthcare services are insufficient in rural areas, while the cities offer better schools, hospitals and other services (United Nations, 2008a), the population desires a better life, particularly for their children (Short, 1996).

During the 1960s, migration was viewed as a result of disparities in job opportunities, but it was also considered as the mechanism for removing these disparities, i.e. linking labour with demand and thus promoting economic development (Pacione, 2001). However, Bishay (1998) suggested that the internal rural-urban migration in MENA created the problem of increased unemployment; because the urban labour force grows faster than employment expansion in urban areas, as is the case in Morocco. These factors are also present on a global scale. Efforts to reduce this problem include investing in rural areas to reduce poverty and thus ease the pressure off rural-urban migration (World Bank, 2002). To stem the flow of rural to urban migration has been an integral part of the development plans in the region, in Saudi Arabia government policy has aimed to stem rural to urban migration.

When examining internal migration within MENA, the movement of the region's Bedouin people must also be considered, this is because they were at one point a mainly nomadic group and their subsequent sedentarisation and migration to urban areas has been a unique experience. The region's Bedouin are becoming more sedentarised; in Jordan for example, during the 1920s, 46 percent of the Bedouin population were non-sedentarised, however, by the 1990s it was only 10 percent (Sueyoshi and Ohtsuka, 2008). This section examines some of the Bedouin groups in MENA and the reasons for their sedentarisation and migration to urban areas. There are some Bedouin in MENA who have been forced to become urbanised; for example the Bedouin of the Negev in Israel and also the Bedouin in Saudi Arabia as part of a politically concerted effort.

The situation for many of the Bedouin in MENA is far from satisfactory, economic development and political strategy have impacted, too often detrimentally, on their lives. For example, in the Negev Desert there are approximately 140,000 Bedouin, of whom 70,000 are urbanised in seven townships, these townships only have basic urban services and have the lowest incomes and highest unemployment levels in the country (Rangwala, 2004). In comparison to the rest of Israeli society, they have an infant mortality rate three times higher than that for Jewish babies, and 60 percent of their children live below the poverty line. Such populations are forced to live in impoverished urban areas, thus being denied their right to adequate housing (Rangwala, 2004). For the majority of the Bedouin who do have jobs outside of their townships, most are employed as unskilled labourers (Sinai, 2009).

Development of urban areas has had a detrimental effect on the traditional lives of the Bedouin in the South Sinai of Egypt, where urban development has denied this population access to grazing land and fishing on the coast; however, there are some positive aspects such as the provision of education (Ali, 1998). Additionally, some Bedouin have profited from the tourism industry, for example providing camel rides to the summit of Mount Sinai (Teague, 2009). For many, though, these apparent business opportunities have not been as a result of personal choice because over recent years, a severe drought has caused the Bedouin to seek a living in the coastal tourist areas of Egypt (Eid, 2008). The Bedouin believe in a principle whereby if the piece of land is improved then it is owned. The Bedouin have

built concrete foundations near their homes, in order to achieve permanence; however, the government has destroyed these neighbourhoods. Most of the Bedouin have therefore given up their land by the coast and have moved inland into the hills (Teague, 2009).

#### **4.5 Urban Geography in MENA**

Historically, the traditional Middle Eastern city was characterised by important religious and economic activities, with the Mosque in the centre and the residences arranged in order of their economic and religious importance, that there was a moral centre as well as economic centre, moreover, these traditional cities were a labyrinth of passage ways that eventually lead to the centre (O'Meara, 2008). However, in more recent times, the urban geography of MENA has in many places been influenced by European urban practices. Particularly, during the later part of the Ottoman Empire town planning was influenced by European political interference and early European modernism also influenced city officials and entrepreneurs, the effect of which was cityscapes which resembled the latest Parisian fashion, for example in Cairo, where buildings and public spaces were an adaptation of European models (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005).

A clear example of such an approach was when Khedive Isma'il the ruler of Egypt (1863 -79) visited the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1867 and was inspired by the plans of Baron Haussmann which transformed Paris, when he returned to Cairo he "Hausmannised" the city which significantly changed its size and layout and affected any future development (Rabbat, 2008 p.16). This European influence also appears in the pursuit of preserving Islamic architectural heritage in North Africa by the European colonising powers, at this time tourism was important to the economies of these colonies and the preserving the culture was an important consideration in designing the regions architecture and also urban planning (McLaren, 2008).

However, the emergence of Westernised urban spaces created divided cities, divided between the new imported modern spaces consisting of public buildings and residential neighbourhoods and the old city which represents traditional and local life, however, this

separation was not entirely complete because housing areas and spaces for work and leisure were not entirely exclusive, therefore, it is suggested that any examination of contemporary cities spaces should consider them as an amalgam of the traditional and modern (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005). The urban reality and the nature of life in cities in the Middle East have been altered by capital from oil revenues and high levels of privatisation; there has been aggressive investment in the region that results in intense urban restructuring which unfortunately neglects urban historical heritage, especially in the historical core of cities, and urban regeneration (Daher, 2008).

More recently, over the last few decades there has been a revival of Islam as a cultural identity in architecture; unfortunately this has been done badly. Too often architects use arbitrary forms which are actually very much removed from their historic and geographic contexts, for example, in the new cities around Cairo architecture displays revivalist motifs “distorted through a Disneyesque vision of contemporary suburban living in the West” which eventually will lead to a new globalised identity that has no local flavour (Rabbat, 2008 p.18). Unfortunately, in Cairo this blindly borrowing from the past has become more acceptable where architects even make exact copies of the past which do not sit with today’s context and functional requirements (Salama, 2008a).

The above discussion is about architecture which has had a significant influence on the cities in the region. However, there are recent movements in the region which go beyond considering only the architecture in consideration of urban concerns; this has led to two narratives in the region that define the evolution of the built environment, one from the poorer countries and one from oil-rich gulf states, an example of the former is the reconstruction of Beirut which focussed on urbanism rather than architecture and an example of the latter are the urban developments in Dubai which aim to promote a global identity rather a local identity (Al Asad, 2008).

Cities of MENA are part of a wider regional network and transitional flows between and through these cities, it is true that cities in MENA have a physical location in geography that they are enclosed by boundaries, however, they also have flows and exchanges between them (Stanley, 2005) which significantly influence their urban geography. An example of this

is the forgotten spaces in Dubai, which are lived in by low-income migrant communities that exchanged information and money with their countries of origin; these areas are affected spatially by a concentration of these migrants and their activities; this is evidenced by the presence of shops, restaurants and other service outlets that service this expatriate group. These forgotten areas are significant in two ways, firstly, the spatial form is influenced by the migrants' activities, and secondly, global links are established through communication and the transfer of remittances (ElSheshtawy, 2008).

Another factor in relation to networks, that has to be considered in the examination of urban geography in MENA, is the idea of 'world city network' suggested by Taylor (2004). Taylor (2004) also brings attention to the fact that cities in the Middle East feature poorly in the global city hierarchy. It has been the motivated pursuit of attaining rank in this network (Stanley, 2005) that can negatively affect the urban environment. A classic example of this has been shown in Dubai which has undertaken an urban revolution to gain rank in the 'world urban hierarchy', however, closer analysis of urban restructuring in the Emirate shows that it has resulted in detrimental social problems, in its pursuit of icons and vertical cities, Dubai may be on course to serious social consequences (Acuto, 2010 p.272). There has indeed been an attempt by a number of countries in the region to attract the attention of a globalising world, for example the Burj Khalifa, unfortunately, the effects of this on the built and human environment have not been assessed (Mahgoub and Al-Omair, 2008). However, this is not to say that there has been complete neglect of the built environment in constructing buildings that have globalised architecture. In Doha, for example, which has fast-paced urban development; there are innovative approaches to design being employed which has led to the creation of responsive environments (Salama, 2008b).

While the abovementioned globalising forces have clearly had an impact in the urban geography in Gulf States, in Tehran there is an impediment to globalising forces that has been shown to have an impact on the region's urban geography, which are the historical architectural artefacts that reflect strong religious and cultural forces that influence information and people (Marefat, 2008) these have not been significantly present in Gulf States such as the Emirates and Qatar.

Some parts of the MENA region have a large amount of informal housing; in some areas the proportion is as high as 20-40 percent (Bjerde, 2008) and this is a particular problem in Morocco, Yemen, Lebanon, Jordan, Tunisia and Algeria (Baharoglu et al., 2005). According to the World Bank (2008b) this is a result of a combination of the high cost of land and formal housing and inefficient land management, which resulted in many squatter settlements. It is not fair, however, to place blame entirely on the governments, much of the informal settlements that have appeared in small or non-oil producing countries are the result of workers' remittances being sent back from the Gulf States as part of an "hidden economy" which have influenced building on peripheral areas creating suburbanisation, for example in Egypt (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005).

However, it is important to define the difference between informal settlements and slums: according to Madbouly (2009, p: 11) informal settlements are the housing stock that is not in compliance with official regulations, and slums are defined as "deteriorated living conditions and low levels of access to basic services". Egypt is a classic example revealing the characteristics of urbanisation and the associated problems in the region; it has a high population density with 95 percent of its population living in 5.5 percent of the total area (Goujon et al., 2007). Cairo is the most populated city in MENA with a population of 10.9 million in 2009 (United Nations, 2010c, p: 6). Moreover, 30 percent of the urban population of Egypt live in conditions that have limited services and tenure security (Madbouly, 2009, p: 14).

Consideration must be given to the political inadequacies that are directly responsible for shaping the urban geography in MENA, these factors present themselves in a number of ways, for example the inability to provide the ability to purchase housing, the mismanagement of urban space and the poor provision of urban services. The early creation of national states and colonisation of territories that were formerly part of the Ottoman Empire created a political transformation that influenced the spatial form of cities, later with the emergence of nation states local governments were more involved in transforming cities, building symbolic, iconic monuments (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005). However, governments in the region have been neglectful and should be held responsible for not properly developing mechanisms that allow proper accessibility to housing.

In Cairo the failings by the government to provide adequate housing has been a result of a broader economic approach, to put it simply, the government has devolved much of the responsibility for real estate generation to the private sector, however, the private sector became aggressively involved and had too much power leading to the building of large, luxury office developments within the city's urban perimeter and housing projects in Cairo's new suburbs only aimed at the affluent and the middle class (Salama, 2008a) significantly influencing the urban geography. This has also been the case in Amman and Damascus where the private sector in partnership with government have engage in post-reconstruction programs, however, the similar criticism is that these are real estate projects where history and heritage are only represented through "Disneyfied pastiche representations" (Daher, 2008 p.23) leading to an urban morphology that is only intended for consumption and entertainment for affluent Gulf tourists and the local rich (Daher, 2008).

According to the World Bank (2008b), rapid urbanisation has weakened local government institutions in MENA; this has been further compounded by rapid population growth and high unemployment, which in turn has affected local authorities' ability to attract the necessary private investment for economic growth and for improving the life of the urban poor. The ability of local authorities has also been impeded by the centralisation of authority and planning. It has been recognised by the Saudi, Yemeni and Egyptian authorities that there is a need for decentralisation. For example, in the case of the slums in Cairo it has been recognised by El Araby (2002) that there is need for decentralisation of political power. In order to meet the challenges of MENA's urbanisation, in order to create productive, liveable cities, efficient management, economic competitiveness and financial viability is required. All of this is only possible by enhancing local authority planning capacity and the further promotion of decentralisation (Madbouly, 2009).

## 4.6 Conclusion

Having examined urbanisation in MENA it was found that the processes and drivers and consequences are diverse. MENA also has common urban processes that distinguish it from the rest of the developing world. In relation to the latter point, the chapter highlights some of the unique qualities associated with MENA; for example the economic, political, social and cultural factors that play a role in both urbanisation and in shaping the urban geography of the region. Conversely, there are also many similarities with other regions, the most obvious of which are related to rural to urban migration as a result of people seeking employment or a better standard of living; issues related to the need to decentralise urban planning and the population dynamics where MENA is not significantly different to other developing regions. Moreover, this chapter has shown that not only is there is diversity in MENA, but there are also differences between the three sub-regions, this was illustrated by examination of how economic factors had an effect of urbanisation.

Unique to MENA is the phenomenon of population dynamics. There have been great improvements in health care in this region and a massive influx of migrant workers. As a result, the region has witnessed rapid population growth, which has been the fastest in the developing world, and the region has also been slower to lower its rates of fertility due to associated cultural factors. It has also been shown that improvements in healthcare have had two countervailing tendencies: firstly to increase population growth by reducing child mortality and secondly to slow down the population through education about family planning. The most noticeable result of this has been the creation of a very large youth population and as a result the region is now facing the problem of finding employment for this increasing young population.

Another unique attribute of MENA has been migration, not only for the obvious economic reasons, but also as a consequence of political strategy i.e. sedentarisation of Bedouin and also conflict. Migratory flows having been very diverse, for example, to and from the region and within the region for economic purposes and also within sub regions due to conflict. The latter, i.e. conflict, now presents another new distinctive attribute of MENA, some interesting considerations should arise from the recent civil unrest or Arab Spring in the

region, this adds a new chapter of conflict to the already long standing conflicts in the region, such as Palestine and Iraq, it may be too early to judge the impact these new conflicts have on longer term urbanisation, however, currently it is clear how they are impacting on migration in the form of refugees and turning cities into conflict zones such as in Syria and Egypt. In fact, besides political oppression, economic and social problems have been largely blamed for the recent civil unrest in the region.

This study examines the processes, i.e. the drivers, trends and consequences of urbanisation, and also the resulting urban geography through a multidimensional lens which considers the roles played by economic, political, social and cultural factors in such processes. It has been shown that there is wide variety of ways that these factors play out in the region, for example the effect on urban geography of wealth, poverty, and conflict as well as social and cultural influences. Therefore, this further suggests that there is wide diversity in MENA in relation to these factors and the urbanisation and urban geography that they affect.

More specifically, this chapter has shown how a diversity of urban geographies in the region has been shaped by very different historical experiences, from the colonial influences in Cairo to the more recent pursuit of global recognition in Dubai. And although the region is predominantly Islamic both now and in history, this dimension has also impacted on the urban geography in different ways; through both the successful and unsuccessful revivalist movements in Islamic architecture and the attempt to preserve historical artefacts for the tourism industry.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### URBANISATION IN SAUDI ARABIA

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the urban geography and processes of urbanisation in Saudi Arabia in order to identify the distinguishing elements. This includes an examination of the historical aspects of urbanisation and government policy to provide a comprehensive account of the evolution of urbanisation within the Kingdom. Migration is also discussed to examine patterns of inter- and intra-regional movement and to identify how such movement has affected urbanisation and population growth in the country. Moreover, because the Kingdom has a large Bedouin population, the reasons for, and the consequences of, Bedouin migration and subsequent sedentarisation are also examined.

The focus of this study is urbanisation, urban geography and migration in Buraydah city in the Al Qassim region. It is important to understand these processes in the context in which Buraydah lies, i.e. the Kingdom as a whole. National policy, regional imbalances and local economics are all contributing factors to urbanisation and migration; moreover it is hypothesised that each region has its own experiences and may influence the experiences of other regions.

It can be surmised that Saudis now prefer city life; the modernisation of Saudi Arabia has encouraged much of the population to relocate from rural and Bedouin areas to urban areas to search for employment and superior services (Assead, 2007). The rapid growth rates of Saudi cities has created demand to develop expansive areas to meet housing, commercial, industrial and other land use needs. Consequently, Saudi Arabia is enduring a housing shortage and this will require significant investment to add a required one million homes by 2012 (Opoku and Abdul-Muhmin, 2010). The experience of urbanisation and resulting urban geography has not been without its difficulties, as highlighted in this chapter.

## 5.2 Population

Population growth is a significant factor driving urbanisation in Saudi Arabia and has a direct effect on development; according to the Ministry of Economy and Planning (2010) almost two thirds of the population in 2004 live in three regions, namely, Riyadh, Makkah and Ash Sharqiyah. The Ministry are concerned that the population growth in the Kingdom will have serious implications in terms of its effect on provision of services and the associated problems of rapid expansion of urban centres, such as traffic jams, pollution, sanitation and adequate housing.

Saudi Arabia has witnessed rapid population growth. The estimated population of Saudi Arabia in 1932 was two million increasing to 3.7 million in 1952, five million in 1962, 7 million in 1974; it passed the ten million barrier in 1982, and in 2004 it was 22 million (Figure 5.1) (Al-Rabdi, 2005). There is a parallel between population growth and urbanisation, as 1974 saw the beginning of an oil boom and an influx of foreign labour adding to the population growth. By 2009, the population had reached 25.7 million (United Nations, 2009e) and in 2010 it was 27.1 million (Central Department of Statistics and Information, 2010). It is expected to increase to 28.19 million in 2014 and 33.11 million in 2024 (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010 p.51). The population density in Saudi Arabia has increased during the past three decades from less than two people (1.70) per km<sup>2</sup> in 196 , to 11 per km<sup>2</sup> in 2004 (Alkhraif, 2008) and 12 per km<sup>2</sup> in 2007 (World Bank, 2009d).

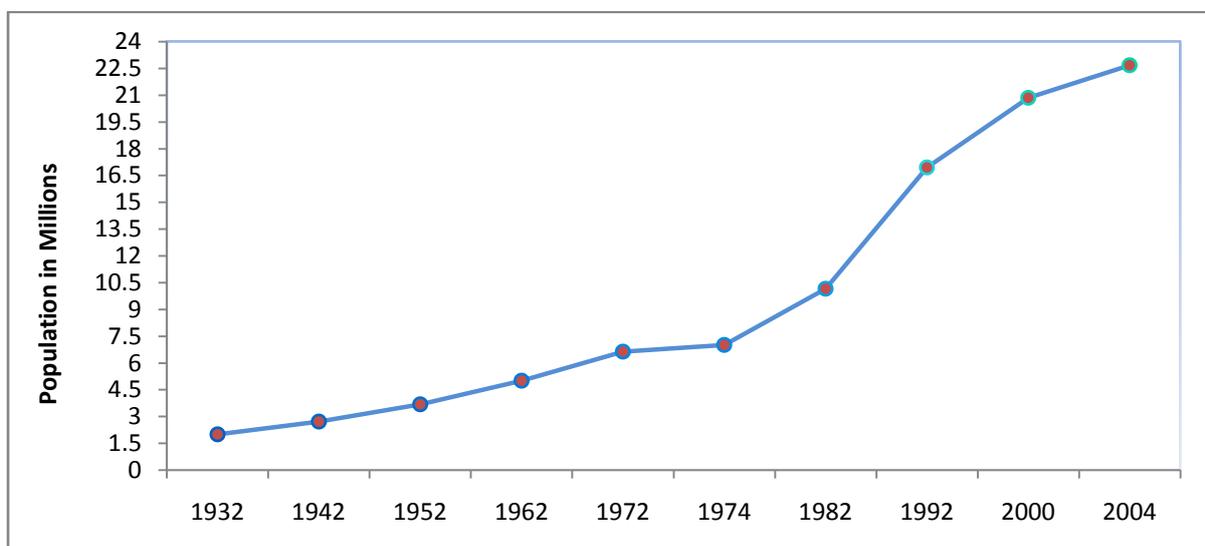


Figure 5.1: Population growth in Saudi Arabia: 1932-2004. Source: Al-Rabdi (2005).

The two main regions with the highest urban agglomerations were Makkah and Riyadh in 1974 the remaining regions all had a population of below one million. By 1992, there was a sudden increase in the populations for the Makkah and Riyadh regions as well as the Ash Sharqiyah region. For the remainder of the regions there was an overall steady increase with no significant changes. In 2004, the pattern remained the same with a steady increase for most of the regions. Notably, however, although Ash Sharqiyahs' population climbed significantly, both Makkah and Riyadh showed the sharpest increase to more than five million inhabitants each (Figure 5.2). Overall, the pattern demonstrates that in terms of population geography there is a clear regional disparity, with three regions enjoying most of the population growth.

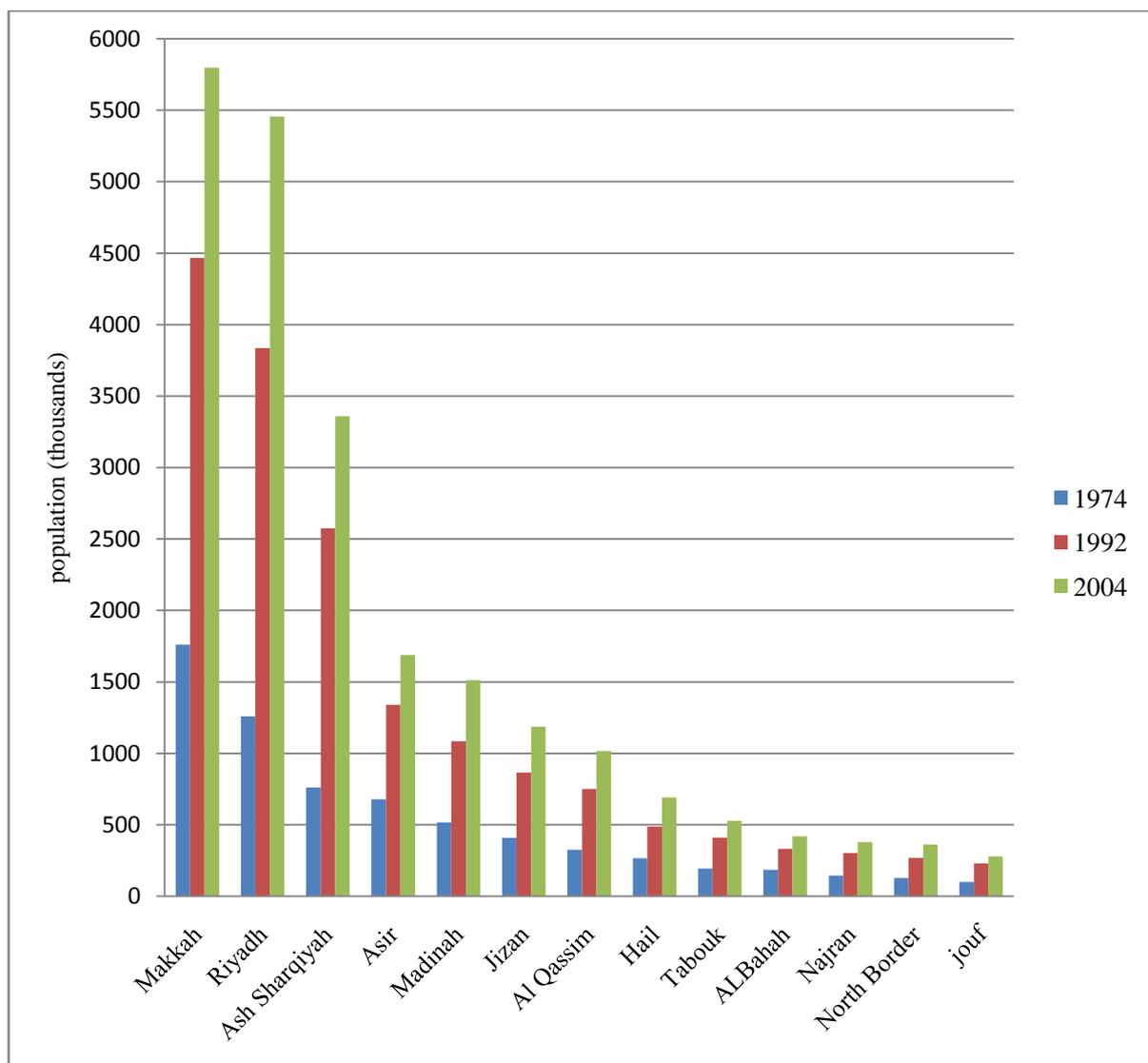


Figure 5.2: Populations by Region, 1974, 1992, 2004. Source: Division of Population Statistics (1974-2004).

Figure 5.3 shows the population density of the various administrative regions. In 2004 the Jizan region possessed the highest density with up to 88 people per km<sup>2</sup>, notwithstanding the high rates of migration from this region; the population density there has increased significantly over recent years. This indicates high levels of natural increase in this region, further supported by the fact that there has been a decline in the proportion of non-Saudis (Alkhraif, 2008).

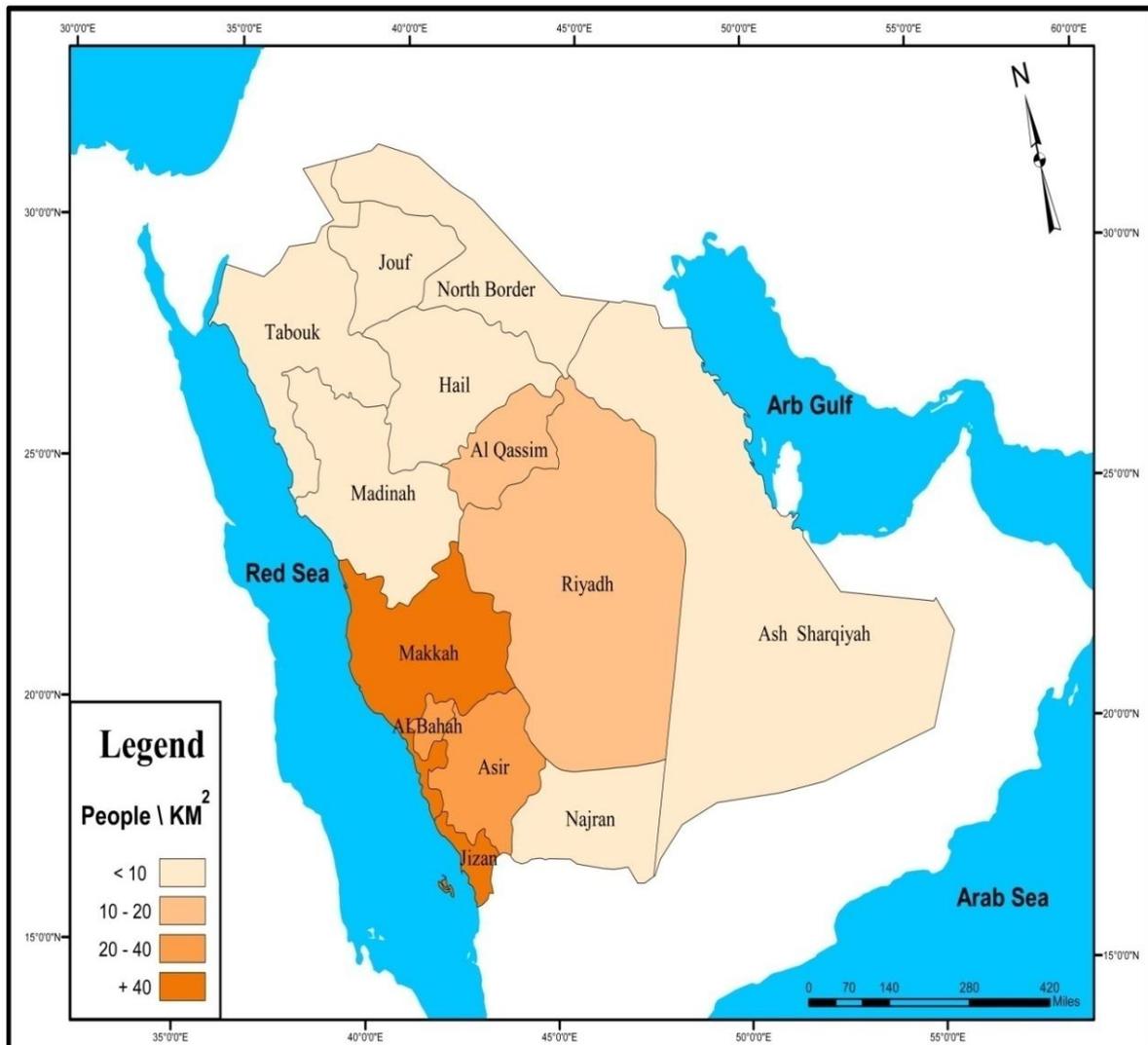


Figure 5.3: Map of Density of population in Saudi Arabia in 2004. Source: Alkhraif (2008).

The economic dimension affects and is affected by demographic changes in the Kingdom, in fact there is a definite interplay between the two. One way that economic prosperity affects demographics, according to the Saudi Central Department of Statistics (2004), is that the high natural growth of the Saudi population is due to an improvement in health services

resulting in high fertility rates. However, fertility rates have remained steady, between 2000 and 2005 3.18 births per woman (United Nations, 2009d), and by 2008 there was a very slight decrease to 3.1 (World Bank, 2010e) although the dramatic decrease in infant mortality rates at birth may have offset this. Between 1950 and 1955 there were 200 deaths per 1,000 births (United Nations, 2009d) decreasing to 21 per 1,000 births in 2008 (World Bank, 2010e).

The other side of this dynamic, i.e. population growth affecting economy has been suggested by Albatel (2005) who examined the relationship between population growth and economic performance in the Kingdom. This study has found that if population growth negatively affects the supply and demand of savings it has a negative effect on savings and economic growth; more specifically, he states that a high dependency ratio (i.e. the ratio of those too young or old to work against the working population) is the culprit and affects savings and consequently the Saudi economy. However, the overall dependency ratio for Saudis is set to decrease from 4.7 in 2009, 4.1 in 2014 and 3.3 in 2024 (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010 p.51). This interplay between the two variables has also been recognised by the Saudi government, the Ministry of Economy and Planning in its seventh development plan states: "While demographic variables have direct and immediate impacts on economic development, the impacts of economic development (with its social and cultural dimensions) on demographic changes take a longer time" (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2001 p.77). Furthermore the Ministry of Economy and Planning (2001) brings attention to the various ways that demographic variables have economic implications, namely: rate of population growth, age structure, spatial distribution and population density and rate of participation in the workforce.

A demographic feature of Saudi Arabia that has significant implications for economic and social development, the provision of housing and urbanisation is that the Kingdom is characterised by a young population; the median age is 17.3 years. It is noteworthy that over 40 per cent of the population are under the age of 15 years (Central Department of Statistics, 2004). The young population has resulted in an increase in demand for housing both immediately and in forthcoming years, when those currently below 15 years of age will reach marriageable age and require housing (Bourland et al., 2006). However, it should be

noted that population growth may stimulate technological innovation and therefore help an economy to grow (Albatel, 2005). This large young population has a direct effect on the standard of living in the Kingdom. The Ministry of Economy and Planning (2010) in the Ninth Development Plan maintains that although a large young population is an asset through maximum utilisation of this group, they do present some challenges in terms of the provision of health care, social services, recreational services and education and training.

### **5.3 Migration**

Migration, rural to urban and urban to urban, is another significant contributing factor to urbanisation in Saudi Arabia. Examination of the drivers behind migration reveals that migration has many contributory facets such as socio-cultural, political and economic reasons for migration. Moreover, these facets also need to be considered in the examination of the consequences of urbanisation for migrants i.e. their experience of life in their new city.

A major factor that has influenced rural to urban in the Kingdom has been the decline in opportunities in rural areas; traditional farming has become less economically rewarding and young people in rural areas tend to be more educated and seek a more rewarding life in the urban centres, which can satisfy their occupational aspirations. In fact, between the 1950s and the 1980s, there was a complete reversal in the rural-urban populations, with the rural population decreasing from 78 per cent to 19 per cent (AlWahid, 1992).

Previously it has been shown that the three administrative regions, Riyadh, Makkah and Ash Sharqiyah are home to most of the country's urban population, these regions are also the favoured destination point for migrants, this is supported by the International Organisation for Migration (2010) who say that major urban centres in the region such as Riyadh, Jeddah and Medinah attract the highest number. Approximately 70 percent of the total migrant population live in these regions where there are high levels of economic development and associated job opportunities, health, social and educational services; moreover, these three

regions are hubs of development and have the greatest share of commercial and industrial activities (Alkhraif, 2008).

Historically, from within MENA there were two sources of migration to the Kingdom: firstly, migrants from Jordan, Egypt and Iraq to work in education and the civil service, and secondly, unskilled labour from Yemen (Basha, 1988). In 2004 because of the influx of workers from outside MENA e.g. India, there has been a shift in the number and country of origin of migrants from within MENA, although Egypt was in second place, behind India, with nearly 14 percent of the total migrant population and Yemen with 10 percent, countries such as Jordan and Syria account for only 2 percent each far behind countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh (Al-Gabbani, 2009).

This external migration from other countries in MENA and South Asia has been due to the diminutive size of the Saudi population at the advent of rapid development, coupled with a lack of labour skills and low female participation, thus a need to recruit foreign workers arose (Al-Gabbani, 2009). Until recently (2009) Saudi Arabia actually exceeded the Emirates in terms of outflow of remittances to Bangladesh and Pakistan (Ratha et al., 2010). In 2009 foreign workers constituted 50.2 percent of the total labour force (Central Department of Statistics and Information, 2009) and 27 percent of the total population (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010 p. 51) and in 2010 it increased to 27.8 percent, which the government considers too high (International Organisation for Migration, 2010 p.116). This projection by the government may be based on predictions about the country's Saudization programme that aims at decreasing the expatriate population giving more jobs to Saudis, more specifically, the Saudi Arabian Manpower Council has placed restrictions on foreigner labour in 34 professions and is aiming for a ten per cent limit on the total number of foreign workers (World Bank, 2009a. p.51).

Again, it was the three regions of Makkah, Riyadh and Ash Sharqiyah that showed significant results in terms of number of non-Saudis living in each region, the Makkah region being the highest. The Makkah region is the main arrival point for foreigners from overseas and pilgrims visiting Makkah city often remain, albeit often illegally, in search of work (Al-Gabbani, 2009). Furthermore, this was evidenced by the fact that when the Saudi

government offered an amnesty to illegal immigrants to leave the country, 350,000 took up the offer, the majority of whom arrived as pilgrims to Makkah (Bchir, 2007).

### **5.3.1 Bedouin Migration and Sedentarisation**

When discussing migration and urbanisation in Saudi Arabia it is important to examine the migration and sedentarisation of the Bedouin because this is one of the distinctive aspects of such processes in the country. The Bedouin were first settled in a politically motivated effort in 1912 by the founder of Saudi Arabia, King Abdulaziz, as part of the process of unifying the Kingdom as a modern nation state (Dar al Liwa, 2000). Part of this unification was to control the scattered Bedouin by establishing the first “planned” Bedouin settlement at a place called Artawiyah, approximately 300 kilometres north of Riyadh (Shamekh, 1975). The settlements were known as Hijars and by 1982 there were 4,020 around the country, with these become stepping stones for further migration of the Bedouin to the cities (Alkhedheiri, 2002). Subsequently, the Bedouin left their communities for rapidly growing urban areas and became government and private sector employees and professionals; contributing to rapid urban growth in the Kingdom (Lindsey, 2006). After the unification, many Bedouins settled in Najd, Hijaz, and Ash Sharqiya and in the Northern Border region (Alkhraif et al., 2008). Bedouin settlements have been fundamental to urbanisation, population distribution and population movements associated directly or indirectly with internal and external, programmes and development plans (Al-Rabdi, 2000).

The results of the General Census of Population and Housing in 1974 showed the number of non-sedentarised Bedouin population stood at 1,883,987, equivalent to more than a quarter of the Kingdom’s population (27 per cent) of which 16 per cent were in the Riyadh region. In comparing the size of the non-sedentarised population of Bedouin in 1932 and 1974, some significant decreases were revealed in many areas such as Riyadh, Al Qassim, Hail, Ash Sharqiya and Madinah. For example, the percentage of the population of the desert in Ash Sharqiyah was about 67 per cent in 1932 and almost 10 per cent in 1974, partly due to the economic development in the Kingdom and the migration of large numbers of the population of the desert to the cities and villages (Alkhraif et al., 2008), as mentioned above. This is a more recent phenomenon related to economic development, in contrast to being

sedentarised during the unification of the country to fight in civil struggles in the past which was politically motivated.

It is imperative to note that the findings of censuses of population and housing, namely the 1992 and 2004 censuses, did not include statistics on the number of inhabitants of the desert their demographic characteristics, or economic and social development (Alkhraif et al., 2008). Without such information, it is difficult to determine migration and urbanisation patterns. To date there has not been any in-depth study conducted on the experiences of migration and urbanisation of the Bedouin. As part of this study's investigation into these experiences, an analysis of the Bedouin is presented in chapter eight.

#### **5.4 Urbanisation and Government Policy**

The political aspects of urbanisation in Saudi Arabia need consideration because they have played a major role in the processes of urbanisation and shaping the urban geography. There have been both positive and negative experiences as a result of local and national policy in the Kingdom. It is apparent that the rapid spatial expansion of cities is the result of the government's initiatives toward urban development (Garba, 2004). The most prominent examples of such policies and agendas during the last 40 years are the land grant policy and interest-free loans, which led to a massive explosion in suburban areas of major cities such as Riyadh and Jeddah. These policies allowed for hundreds of thousands of residential land plots to be distributed to citizens free of charge (Mandeli, 2008). Moreover, it was the intention of the government to ensure that its citizens owned the land (United Nations, 2002).

As described above, since 1950 the urban population has increased rapidly (Figure 5.4). The central government has been largely responsible for urban growth by allowing large lots and wide streets, whilst urban sprawl is characterised by undeveloped sub-divisions. The government has been responsible for ill-planned and premature sub-divisioning of desert areas; this characterises the peripheral desert landscape by allowing land developers and speculators free rein (Mubarak, 2004).

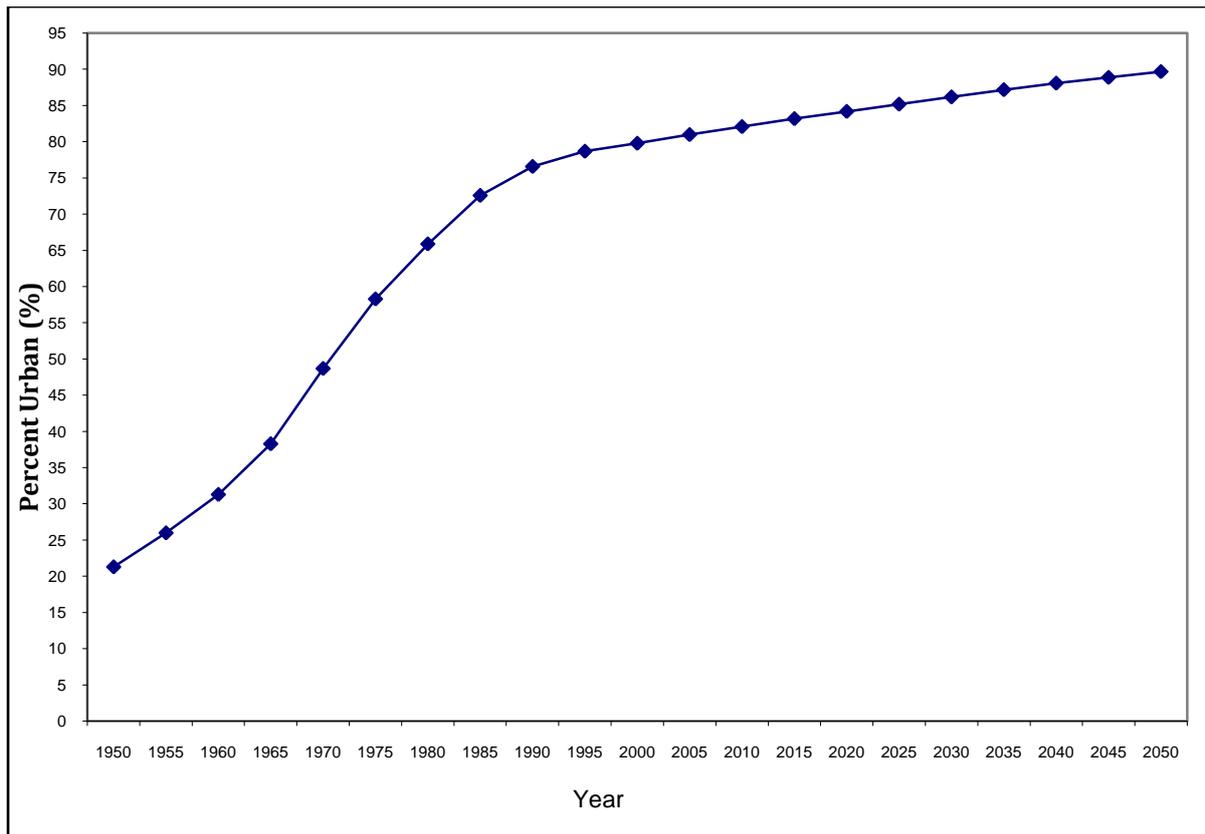


Figure 5.4: Percentage of Urban Population in Saudi Arabia 1950-2050. Source: United Nations (2008c).

#### 5.4.1 Historical Phases of Urbanisation and Government Policy

Since the establishment of Saudi Arabia in 1932, policy makers have considered urban growth beneficial for both the economy and social development. Until the present day, the authorities have encouraged the extension of municipal boundaries, and this has remained a primary objective of the government (Mandeli, 2008). There is a pressing need to develop institutional structures in concurrence with the rapid growth (Garba, 2004) and indeed, there have been numerous and diverse attempts put in place as a response to sprawling development (Mandeli, 2008). Unfortunately, upon review of government strategies, there is an indication that despite their effectiveness in achieving high quality infrastructure in some areas of major cities in the short term, there is a prediction that the longer-term outlook is less optimistic because of the many urban problems that persist in these cities. These include uncontrolled developments on the fringes and are characterised by inadequate urban services, rapidly increasing land prices and building costs, and an increase in slums (Mandeli, 2008).

Prior to the unification of the Kingdom by King Abdul Aziz, i.e. before 1912, the majority of the population lived in villages that dotted the desert or in the bases of valleys and oases. This time was characterised by small cities, surrounded by defensive walls, with the majority of buildings and homes constructed from mud or mud and stone (Figure 5.5). Urban centres were close to water and natural defences against tribal raids Al-Homiedan (2007). The focus of most cities in this period was in the Hijaz area, for example Makkah, Jeddah, Taif and Yanbu. In the region of Riyadh, with the exception of the city of Riyadh there were only scattered villages and towns such as Al-Kharj, Hotat Bani Tamim and Dawadmi (Alkhraif, 2007a).

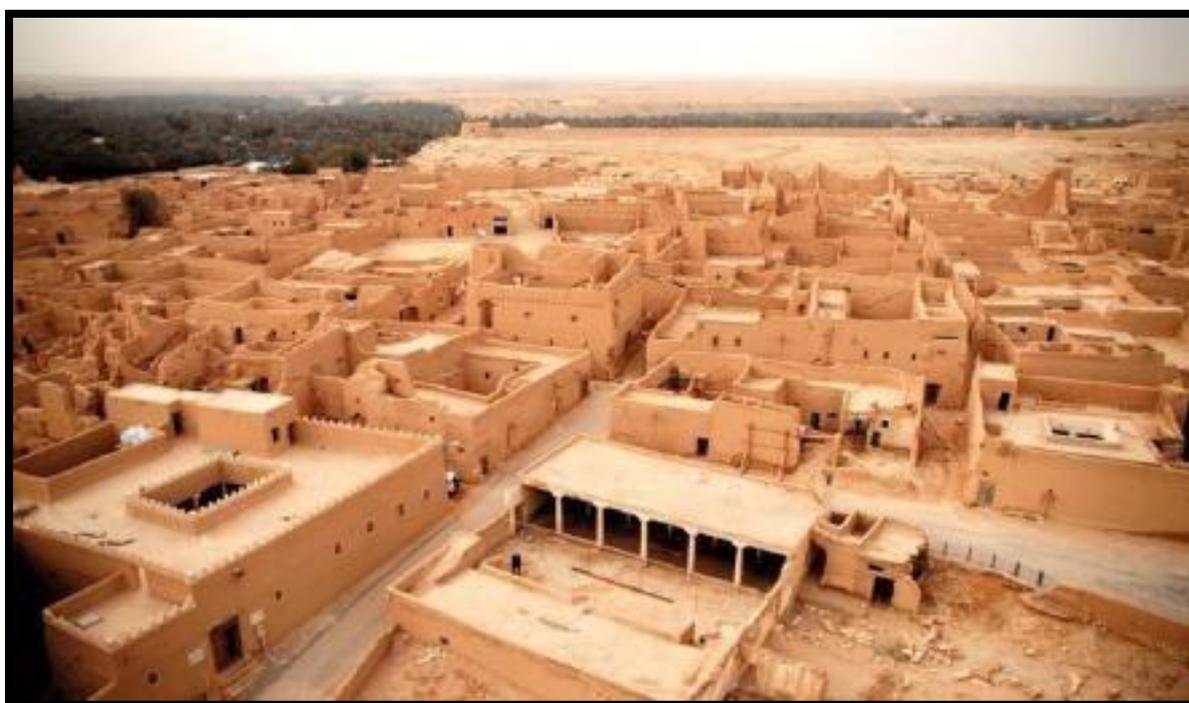


Figure 5.5: Photo of Traditional Mud Houses. Source: AL-Riyadh Newspaper (2008b).

The Royal order in 1937 to extend the Makkah municipality statute to all other municipalities was the first step towards comprehensive urban planning in the Kingdom. These statutes guided the local municipalities on how to organise the town and to maintain its beauty and scenic setting (Alkhedheiri, 2002). This was followed by King Abdul-Aziz's instruction to found Al Khobar in 1938; this order was intended to encourage urbanisation by providing guidelines on building practices (Al-Said, 2003).

The next significant development in the Kingdom was the production of oil in commercial quantities; this was reflected in the growth of cities, the influx of foreign labour and the emergence of large-scale projects for the settlement of the desert, i.e. the encouraged sedentarisation of the Bedouin. In parallel with the growth of large cities, the emergence of squatter settlements was apparent within cities and in villages. At this stage, there was the expansion of some cities outside the old walls, which marked the appearance of building materials such as iron and cement as an alternative to mud and stones and new types of buildings such as villas and high-rise buildings (Alkhraif, 2007a) such as flats and apartments (Al-Otaibi, 2004).

The next milestone was the introduction of the gridiron design; this originated from the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO), which established three new oil camps at Dhahran, Ras Tanoura and Abqaiq and used the gridiron pattern for housing areas. Simultaneously, growth in the older towns continued in the same old organic style that was traditional of Arab cities, of narrow winding and irregular streets (Alkhedheiri, 2002). However, the gridiron pattern was firmly established by a circular sent out by the government in 1960 to all municipalities (Al-Said, 2003). As part of the gridiron formation, ARAMCO were responsible for the square lot and villa-type dwelling and their architects, the only ones in the Kingdom at the time came up with 'international Mediterranean' style homes (Alkhedheiri, 2002). This established an alternative design and introduced Mediterranean-style detached houses as standard (Numan et al., 2001), with villas the type most favoured by employees. The gridiron pattern and the villa used in Al Malaz (Figure 5.6) became a model that would be used all over Saudi Arabia during the 1960s and 1970s (Alkhedheiri, 2002). Unfortunately, after the introduction of these patterns the streets no longer benefitted from the inherent shading provided by the traditional towns; therefore protection from the hot climate is lost with the open setback design of the villa (Moustapha et al., 1985).



Figure 5.6: Photo of Gridiron system Al Malaz. Source: Alsaha (2008).

During the late 1960s the Saudi government sought to control urban growth, focusing on Riyadh, the fastest growing and pre-eminent city, they engaged the services of an international consulting firm Doxiadis Associates to develop a master plan (Alkhedheiri, 2002); again it represented a departure from the traditional design approaches. Over time, the Doxiadis plan was extended to accommodate the sub-dividing process. There were three main principles of the Doxiadis plan which included the gridiron plan, with a system of highways that goes around giant two square kilometres blocks, zoning regulations, which include the density and type of housing development, as well as the minimum size of lots for new housing areas, based on the American suburb design, and finally, detailed design of Action Area Plans, aimed at revitalising the centre of the city.

These plans were intended to make the urban systems more economical and efficient in line with the nation's growth plans. An unfortunate consequence of these plans was that the population was divided according to economic status, thus imposing a socio-economic map on the population (Mubarak, 2004). Despite the improvement in management, however,

there were still urban-related problems in Riyadh, such as the spread of squatter settlements and a further increase in the demand for housing (Garba, 2004).

As a result of the oil boom in the 1970s, those who owned vast amounts of land realised the economic potential of creating roads and plots for housing and they did this beyond the established boundaries of the city. This pattern continued until, in 1977, it surpassed the Doxiadis plan (designed for 300 km<sup>2</sup>) to cover 700 km<sup>2</sup>, creating urban sprawl on an unprecedented scale. In response to this, in 1976, the Ministry for Municipal and Rural Affairs employed the services of the French organisation, SCET International. The SCET revised the original master plan, which was completed in 1982 and included 250 km<sup>2</sup> of approved sub-divisions (Mubarak, 2004).

Because of rapid urban growth, it was decided by the Saudi government in 1984 to delineate the urban growth boundaries; this enabled the pace and direction of growth to be coordinated with the provision of infrastructure in the future. The objectives of the boundaries were to control the horizontal growth of cities by encouraging urban infill, thus making urban areas more compact, to prohibit development in natural areas, to reduce the need for costly infrastructure, to assist in the facilitation of public authorities' tasks, to maintain agricultural areas and areas of cultural interest, and finally, to provide base line data for urban planning and land use (Alkhedheiri, 2002). The government attempted at the national level to implement the delineation of urban growth boundaries for 100 cities at the same time. More recent methods to assess urban sustainability have included the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) that can be used to evaluate the aforementioned planning processes, master plans and land use (Alshuwaikhat and Aina, 2006) and the use of spatial analytical tools, which simulate and provide probable outcomes of urban planning policies (Al Ahmadi et al., 2008).

#### **5.4.2 Decentralisation**

In light of government policy, it is necessary to address the issue of decentralisation in the Kingdom, as one of the main impediments to urban planning has been overly centralised power and planning. Although there have been efforts toward decentralisation in the major cities involving the creation of peripheral sub-municipalities, these municipalities have had

limited powers while the real decision-making powers still lie with the central authority (Mubarak, 2004). Nevertheless, there have been more recent efforts to implement decentralisation; the United Nations (2009b) reported that there are projects to boost the efforts of MOMRA in the implementation of regional urban planning and the United Nations Development program is involved in helping to promote decentralisation in Saudi Arabia.

A primary contributing factor affecting the implementation of decentralisation is the hierarchical and inflexible structure of the government bureaucracy responsible for urban planning (see Figure 5.7). It has been argued by Eben Saleh (1999) that in order to gain local cooperation in the area of urban development it is necessary to facilitate local participation. However, the problem of centralised power remained, because in 2007, local authorities were still merely extensions of the ministries of central government (Adib, 2007).

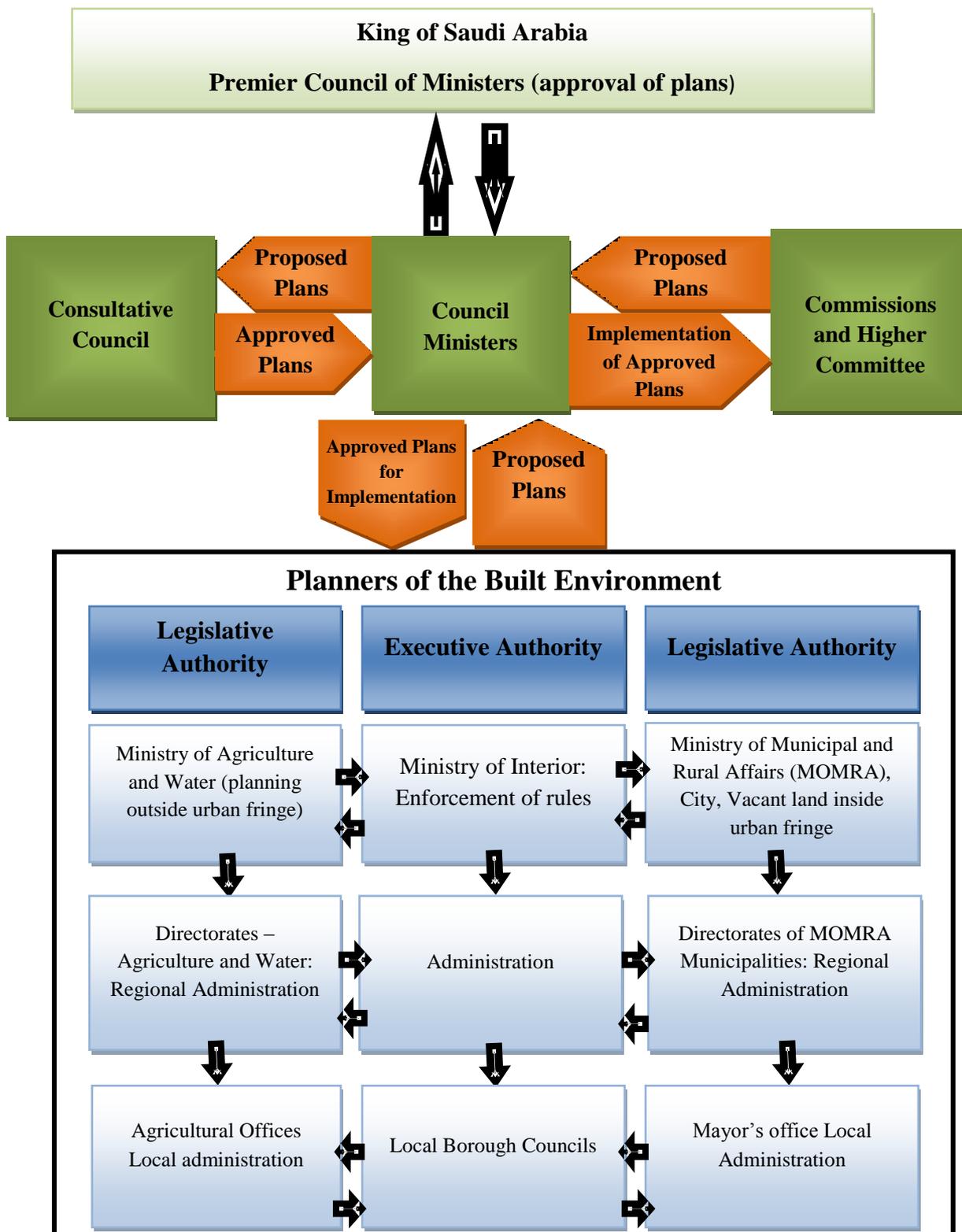


Figure 5.7: Bureaucratic hierarchies of government departments for built environment. Source: Al-But'hie and Eben Saleh (2002).

### 5.4.3 Development Plans

Due to revenue from oil and the resulting wealth, the Kingdom was able to embark on a number of development plans. As already mentioned Riyadh, Makkah and Jeddah were experiencing the most urbanisation and, according to Alkhedheiri (2002), were the main recipients of migrants. The disparity between these three main urban centres and the rest of the country became an issue to be addressed by the government who wanted to avoid resources being concentrated in a few urban areas (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 1980).

In an attempt to resolve the abovementioned problems the government initiated a programme of formulating urban, regional and national plans. These plans were for periods of five years, known as Five Year National Plans (Alkhedheiri, 2002), the first was introduced in 1970 and they have continued until the latest plan, the Ninth Development Plan (2010 - 2014).

The provision of housing was emphasised in the first plan that encouraged the ownership of dwellings, which included all forms such as villas, apartments and even mud houses. This policy was pursued in the belief that people who have proper housing are more productive. The intention was two-fold, firstly to increase the number of dwellings and secondly to improve the quality of existing dwellings. During this period, migration from rural to urban areas was not being met by adequate provision of urban housing; the government recognised this and addressed the situation, especially with the provision of low-cost housing (Central Planning Organization, 1970).

The third plan focussed on the need to create a wider distribution of people throughout the Kingdom as a response to regional disparity and mass rural to urban migration. The plan sought to ensure that all centres of economic activity, including rural areas, had a sufficient population, due to the perceived predicament that centres for industrial growth had always been concentrated in large cities (Mishkes, 2001). The fifth plan (1990-1995) also emphasised this issue. It sought to balance regional development by meeting the population's needs and the utilising existing facilities through growth centres in the hope

that this would eliminate the fragmentation of development efforts (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 1990).

In the seventh development plan (2000-2005), migration and regional disparities were again discussed, as was the proposal that rural to urban migration should be limited to avoid bottlenecks in urban development; this was evidenced by the plan's intention to reduce internal migration. Furthermore, the theme of limiting rural to urban migration continued in the plan when addressing the disparities between rural and urban areas. The plan stated that village clusters were appropriate for the provision of basic services to maximise the number of people who lived there and should become places of increased economic activities, which it was hoped, would limit the migration of the population to the cities (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2001) this is clearly a continuance of previous plans.

The eighth plan (2005-2010) provides valuable insight into where Saudi Arabia needed to be in terms of development. Firstly, the plan brought attention to the inconsistency between urban planning and housing needs. Here the plan suggested that the problem was that the main cities have a high population density, which leads to a greater demand for housing - this demand then causes house prices to increase so that many social groups cannot afford housing. The underlying reasons for this problem are: firstly, the scarcity of developed land within the cities, together with the ever-increasing urban population; and secondly, the imposed limitations of the urban boundaries (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2007). This former point is noteworthy, in that in an attempt to stem the problem of urban sprawl by limiting and controlling urban boundaries and development, they have created a situation of a shortage of housing for lower income groups. These groups will then naturally settle in possibly unplanned peripheral areas, or in cheaper peripheral areas, thus providing more incentive for the unscrupulous land developers to continue sub-dividing land. There is an indication; however, that the ministry understands this as the plan stated its intention to provide additional residential land within the boundaries of large cities and to encourage more vertical urban development, i.e. high-rise buildings (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2007).

In a report by the Ministry of Economy and Planning, when highlighting their millennium development goals, they stated that they are endeavouring to control random expansion of urban areas as part of the pursuit of balancing regional development and the development of rural areas. Furthermore, they expressed an objective of ensuring the increase of residential housing within the urban boundaries, particularly for major cities, in order to avoid urban sprawl (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2008b). The ninth plan (2010-2014) focuses on improving the standard of living for Saudi citizens with the focus on providing housing to alleviate the country's housing shortage (Abdul Ghafour and Hanware, 2010). Moreover, the government is considering how to achieve population balance among and within regions, by examining the advantages of each region, to achieve regionally balanced development and reduce centralised management (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010).

## **5.5 The Urban Geography of Saudi Arabia**

As described above, rapid urbanisation has placed great pressure on the existing towns to evolve and there has been a shift in the population from the older parts of towns to the newer parts, which has weakened the traditional city centres as the new areas provide nodes for activity. Besides these changes to the existing towns, there was also the creation of new towns built as a response to the needs of activities associated with a rapidly developing economy, among which were industrial towns and military towns (Al-Hathloul and Mughal, 1999).

Historically, prior to the 1950s, the traditional type of housing continued to spread beyond the city walls. These traditionally built communities were referred to as Hilal and established the early outward growth beyond the walled city; they were inhabited by town folk and Bedouin tribes and were seen as the place of transition from nomadism and rural life to the integration into urban society. Hilal communities comprised of mud built houses surrounding a central courtyard. It was in the 1950s when these types of dwellings were no longer the typical houses of the middle class and were replaced (Mubarak, 2004).

When rapid development took place in the 1950s and 1960s, a system of straight and wide roads was constructed to allow easy access to the new urban areas. During this construction, any traditional dwellings that were in the way were simply demolished, thus destroying the once unique social spaces where children used to play and the elderly would meet for conversation (Al-Hemaidi, 2001). The physical transformation of older more traditional areas is taking place in many cities, yet they are not always simply destroyed. In Hofuf in Saudi Arabia for example, traditional buildings in the old part of town are now being used for modern commercial purposes (Al-Naim and Mahmud, 2007). Another use for these traditional dwellings is to house foreign workers; however, it has been claimed by Al-Hemaidi (2001) that they are not maintained properly and are often used by foreign workers who are not concerned with preserving the property. Another difficulty for these traditional residences was that high-rise buildings were erected above them, which eliminated the privacy (Figure 5.8) for which they had originally been designed.



Figure 5.8: Photo of high-rise Residences above traditional houses. Source: AL-Riyadh Newspaper (2009).

The town of Al- Badai, located in the Al-Qassim region, is an example of a town that has passed through the aforementioned process. It is a typical small- to medium-sized town; and until the advent of development in 1950 it was very traditional. Following the construction of a highway between Madinah and Riyadh the town expanded southward in order to take advantage of economic activities along the highway. These extensions grew to be seven times larger than the old town and the town's new centre became the intersection of the highway system; however, the local authorities were left with the problem of trying to organise these ill-planned extensions and with limited resources (Al-Hathloul and Mughal, 1999).

The switch from traditional mud-built dwellings to modern imported villa dwellings was, however, not immediate; there was a transitional stage. This transition began with the introduction of imported modern construction materials and methods to replace the more feeble mud construction with that of solid cement blocks. Moreover, as the demand for housing grew, and because of a backlog of demand for housing which could not be accommodated by traditional methods of building, there was a sudden demand for the small 'popular Arab' houses and apartments (Figure 5.9) which were based on the same floor plan as the traditional mud houses. They were simple and inexpensive to build and designed essentially for low-income immigrant workers. This stage was to last until the proliferation of the villa-type properties that were to arise in the 1950s and 1960s (Mubarak, 1999).



Figure 5.9: A popular Arab house of transitional stage. Source: AL-Riyadh Newspaper (2008c).

The layout of the villas (Figure 5.10) in the gridiron formation, introduced by the architects of the oil companies, came with open wide roads, which bring their own detrimental problems. Due to the width they encourage cars to drive fast and there are no public pavements. There are no areas for local activities or for children to play; thus these areas are particularly dangerous because of the fast traffic (Al-Hemaidi, 2001). Additionally, as part of the proliferation of new housing developments came the construction of apartments. The design of these apartments (Figure 5.11) was almost the opposite of the traditional inward-facing type dwellings; for instance, the doors and windows were wide and opened up onto to straight streets, a style borrowed from the Mediterranean (Mubarak, 2004).

There have been efforts by architects and designers to mix the Western with the traditional and the Arab-Islamic, which is clearly reflected in the urban environment, there are buildings which imitate traditional forms, however, the architecture generally in Saudi Arabia is borrowed from different sources such as Greek and Roman and has resulted in an environment that focuses on the impact of these forms, rather than focussing on the people and their relationship with the built environment (Al-Naim, 2008).



Figure 5.10: An example of a Villa in Riyadh. Source: AL-Riyadh Newspaper (2008d).



Figure 5.11: Apartments in Riyadh. Source: AL-Riyadh Newspaper (2008a).

### 5.5.1 Settlement Size and Number

Although there was no change in the rank order of the three major cities in Saudi Arabia (Riyadh - Jeddah - Makkah) from 1974 to 2004 in terms of being the largest urban centres, there are many changes in the rankings of other cities. These changes reflect developments in the cities in the areas of industry, trade and public policies as well as what is happening in the villages or small towns close to the industrial cities (Alkhraif, 2007a).

Since the 1970s there has been an increase in the number of cities and their sizes resulting in a decrease in the level of urban primacy. Not only does this show an increase in population and subsequent urbanisation but it also offers an insight into the migration of people around the Kingdom, e.g. urban to urban migration, those moving from the primary cities to secondary and tertiary cities, rural to urban migration and an increase in immigrants (Alkhraif, 2007a).

When analysing the relationship between the percentage of urban inhabitants of the regions living in the main cities and the number of new towns in each region, some interesting patterns emerge. These patterns have implications for both population growth and patterns of migration, both inter- and intra-regional, for each region. Interestingly, there is no common pattern among all of the regions, which could be an indication that each region is experiencing different population growth and migration patterns, which could be a result of local economic conditions and regional governmental policy.

In 1974 it was clear that the regions fell into three categories: the primary regions which included Ash Sharqiyah, Makkah and Riyadh, the secondary regions which included Tabouk, Madinah, Al Qassim, Najran, Jouf and the Northern Borders and the tertiary regions which included Jizan, Hail, Asir and AlBahah. An interesting point to note is that the region, which hosts the capital, Riyadh, was in third place after Ash Sharqiyah and Makkah. Ash Sharqiyah is home to most of the country's oil reserves and is well known for having a high percentage of ground water (Alkhraif, 2007b).

By 1992, there had been an overall increase in the rate of urbanisation for all regions. In 2004 the same pattern continued; there was an overall increase in urbanisation for all of the regions and still a distinctive group at the top. Furthermore, there was a distinctive bottom group. Again, the region that does not clearly fall into either groups and remains in the middle is Al Qassim.

By 2004 there was a wide variation in urbanisation between the administrative regions, from more than 90 per cent in Ash Sharqiyah and Riyadh, 80 per cent in both Makkah and Madinah, less than 50 per cent in Al Bahah and Asir and less than 40 per cent in Jizan, Tabuk, Jouf and Northern Border (Figure 5.12) (Alkhraif, 2007b).

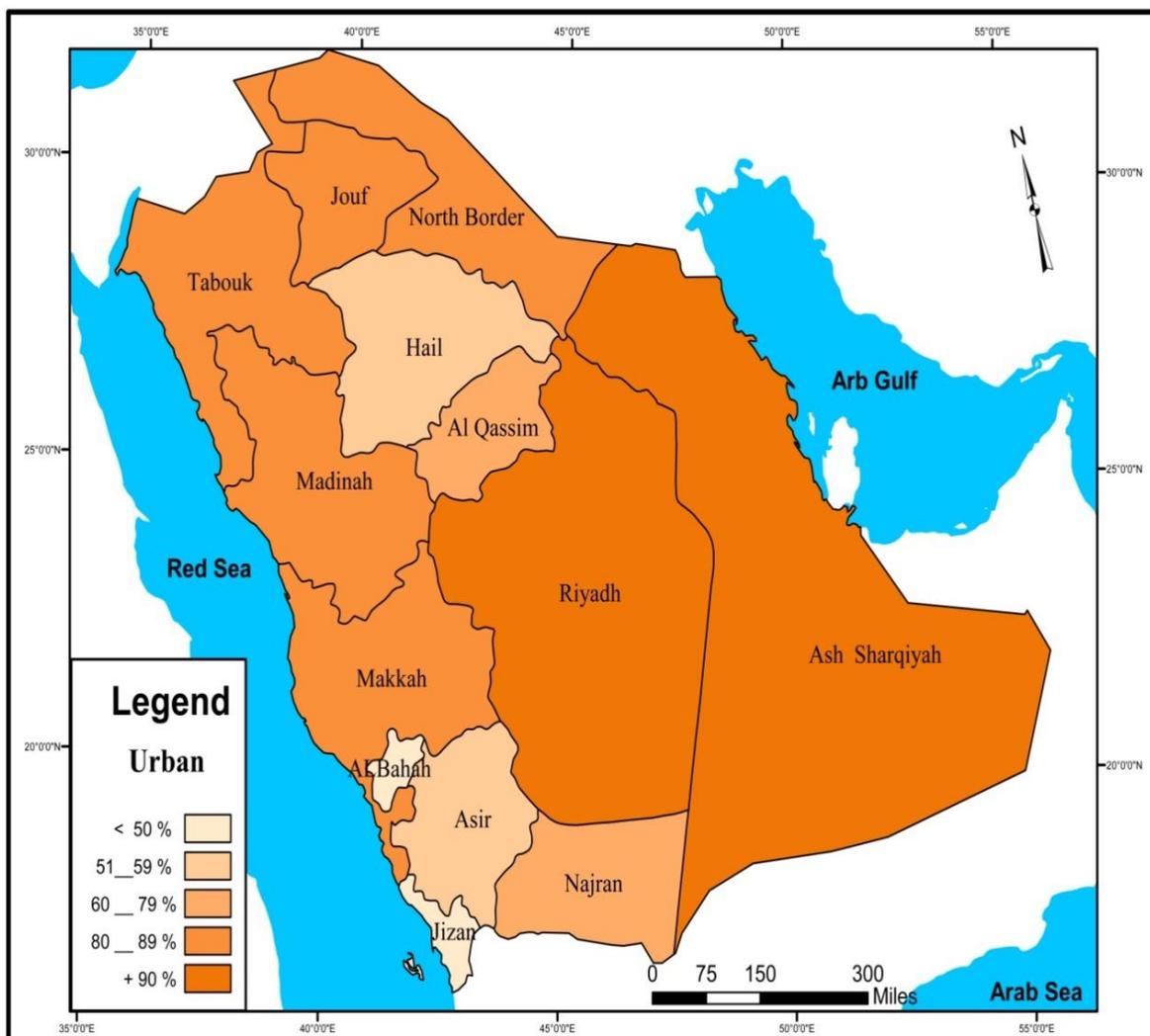


Figure 5.12: Map of Percentage of urbanisation in the administrative regions of Saudi Arabia, 2004. Source: Alkhraif (2007b).

It is striking that the regions of Riyadh and Makkah accommodated more than half of the urban population in Saudi Arabia in 2004; moreover, more than two-thirds of the urban population in the Kingdom (65 per cent) live in just three regions: Makkah, Riyadh and Ash Sharqiyah (Alkhraif, 2007b). Additionally, the three regions of Makkah, Riyadh and Ash Sharqiyah have witnessed high population growth due to internal migration (Central Department of Statistics, 2004).

In 1974, the major cities could be grouped distinctively based on their share of the total urban population in each region. The first group held over 85 per cent of their region's urban population and included Hail, Bulgarshi, Madinah, Riyadh, Najran and Tabouk. The remainder of the major cities were all below 60 per cent for the same year. By 1992, the major cities started to lose their urban inhabitants to the increasing number of new towns in each region; overall there was a decrease in the trend of urban primacy. However, by 2004, the trend had changed: there was no decrease in urban primacy as might be expected with an increasing population and increasing number of towns, the reality was different. Seven of the 13 primary cities began to show an increase in their share of the urban population in their respective regions (Alkhraif, 2007a).

The above patterns of migration clearly show that there was urban primacy in Saudi Arabia; these primate cities attracted most of the internal migrants. Theories of the reasons for primate cities offer various suggestions: such as the primate cities being the result of external influences or a result of a country's colonial past (Pacione, 2009). However, external influence can only be attributed to cities such as Medinah, Makkah and Jeddah as a result of religious pilgrimage from around the world. The case of Riyadh cannot be explained by this or indeed by the presence of oil. The only theoretical explanation for Riyadh's urban primacy is that national forces such as nationalism determined the city's importance as Riyadh was established as the capital after unification.

To test the idea of urban primacy against in a situation where there is rapid population growth and an increase in new towns, it is important examine the relationship between the main cities' share of the urban population for the region and the number of new towns in that region. Overall, the number of new towns for 1974, 1992 and 2004 shows a direct

relationship with urban populations in the main cities (Figure 5.13). Some main cities have shown a significant decrease in their share of the urban population and a corresponding increase in the number of new towns for that region.

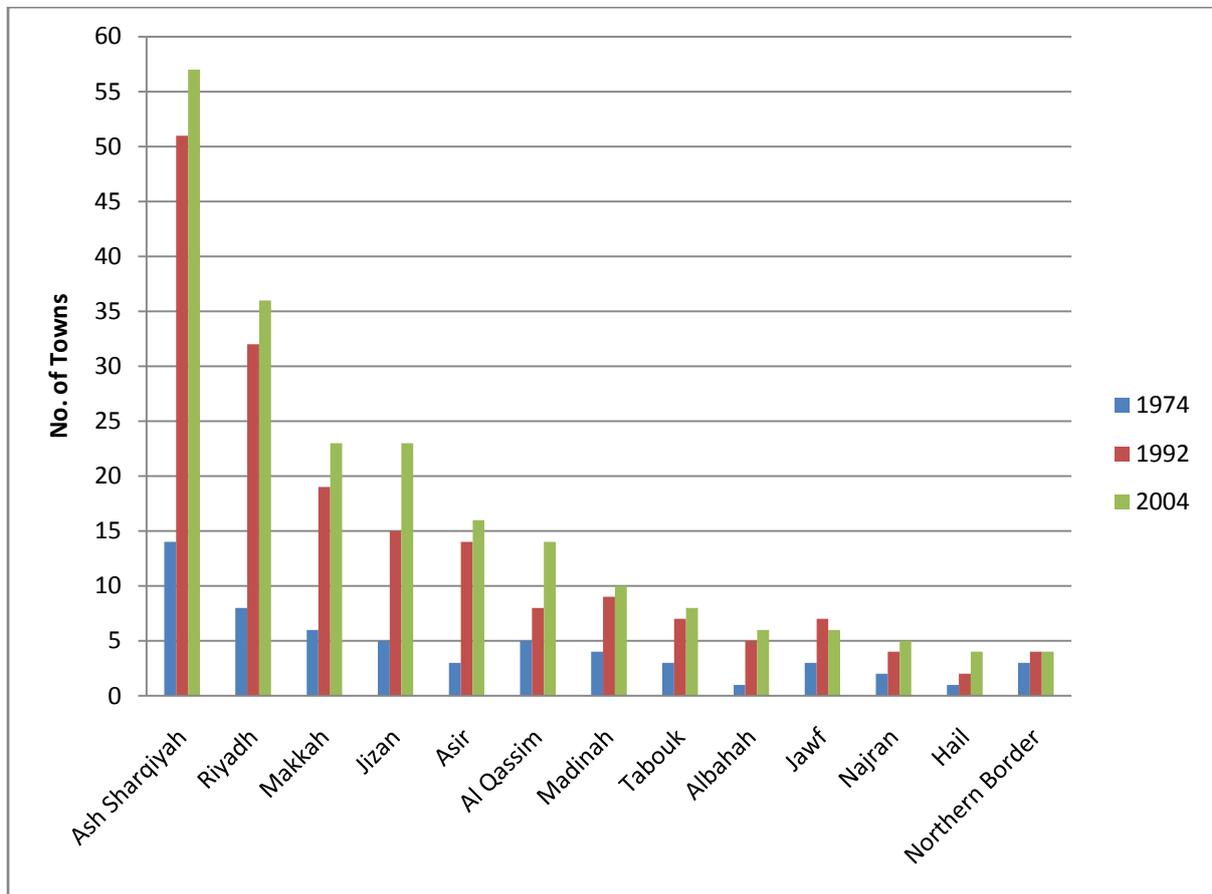


Figure 5.13: Numbers of Towns for Each Region 1974, 1992 and 2004. Source: Alkhraif (2007b).

Figure 5.13 demonstrates that for each consecutive decade, there has been a general increase in the number of towns for most regions, and although there has been a general correlation between number of towns and urban population in the main cities, there have been some exceptions to this pattern. Towns are considered if they have a population of 25,000 or more (Alkhraif, 2007b).

Jeddah, the primary city in the Makkah region, showed a steady increase in its share of the urban population for the region (Figure 5.14) from 48.9 per cent in 1974 to 55.1 per cent in 1992 and 55.2 per cent in 2004. However, the region also showed a significant increase in

the number of new towns (Figure 5.13), from six towns in 1974 to 19 towns in 1992 and 23 towns in 2004 (Alkhraif, 2007b). An explanation for this is that the region as a whole witnessed high population growth for the same period. In 1974 the population of the Makkah region was 1,760,216; in 1992, 4,467,670, and in 2004 it was 5,797,971 (Al Rabdi, 2005). This shows new town's absorbed urban inhabitants as well as Jeddah itself; thus maintaining or possibly increasing its percentage of the urban population in Jeddah.

Riyadh showed a gradual decrease in Riyadh's share of the urban population (Figure 5.14) with a corresponding increase in the number of towns for the Riyadh region (Figure 5.13). In 2004, however, the percentage share of urban inhabitants for Riyadh city increased even with an increase in the number of towns in the region (Alkhraif, 2007b). Other cities in the administrative region of Riyadh have not been the focus of urban studies nor have they received comprehensive urban plans during recent decades; the capital Riyadh has been the focal point for most activities. In fact Riyadh has a population 20 times greater than Al Kharj, the next largest city in the Riyadh region (Alkhraif, 2007a).

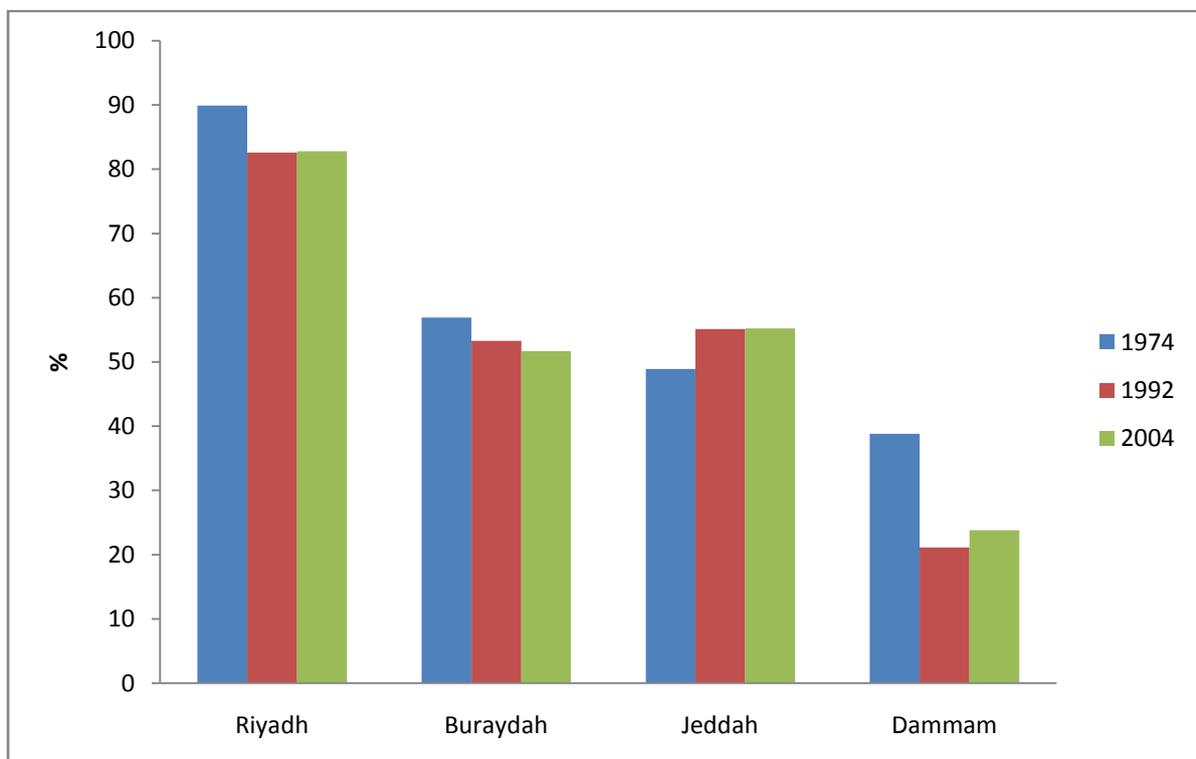


Figure 5.14: Primary Cities Share of Urban Population for Respective Region (Riyadh, Al Qassim, Makkah and Ash Sharqiyah). Source: Alkhraif (2007a).

Remarkably, Ash Sharqiyah had more towns than any other region in Saudi Arabia with 14 towns in 1974, 51 towns in 1992 and 57 towns in 2004. Given that Ash Sharqiyah has more towns than any other region with a relatively small population, this suggests the towns are relatively small in size. It is interesting to note that the significant increase in the number of towns in the Ash Sharqiyah region between 1974 and 1992 coincides with newly discovered oil reserves in the same area for the same period (Figure 5.15).

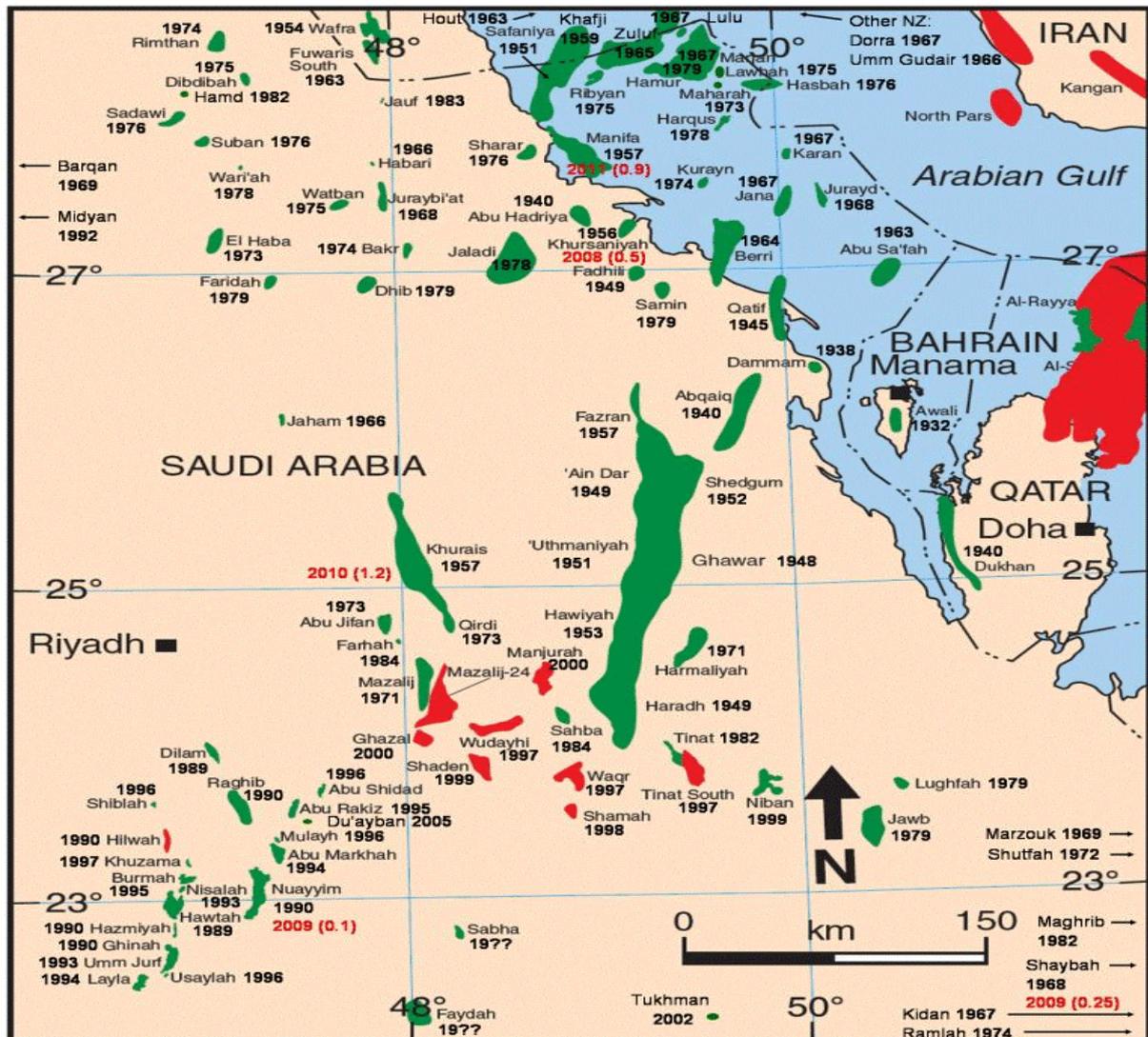


Figure 5.15: Oil reserves in Ash Sharqiyah region by year of discovery. Source: The Oil Drum (2008).

The smallest region in Saudi Arabia is the Al Bahah region and it has shown the most significant results in terms of change. In 1974 the only town in the Al Bahah region was Bulgarshi which had 100 per cent of the urban population for the Al Bahah region. By 1992 a significant change had taken place; the city of Al Bahah became the primary city with only

32.88 per cent of the urban population for the region, reflective of an increase in the number of towns in the Al Bahah region from one in 1974 to five in 1992.

## **5.6 Consequences of Rapid Urban Growth in Saudi Arabia**

Al-Hathloul (1981) argues that urbanisation can have a distorted nature, meaning that it is often unplanned and seemingly random; this has created problems all over the world and has been a concern for policy makers in most developing countries. The problems are well known and include leapfrog development (unplanned and uncontrolled urban development on the edge of cities), scattered settlements, unregulated population growth, increase in cost of housing, poor public services; social differences, traffic problems, and environmental problems.

Overall, this rapid urban growth, which until recently has not been considered a major concern, has now become part of the Saudi government's national agenda. Moreover, although there are positive efforts by the government, evidenced by the aforementioned multitude of government plans, local municipalities in Saudi Arabia appear to be inadequately equipped to cope with the problems of rapid urbanisation. Urban sprawl forces the municipalities to expand their jurisdiction to incorporate the population growth and, because the administrative jurisdiction increases due to a growth in the size of the administrative regions, the local authorities are unable to exert sufficient control over them (Mandeli, 2008). There has also been a lack of communication between the ministries in the provision of the various resources required to manage urban growth (Gamboa, 2008).

One problem associated with urban sprawl in Saudi Arabia, due to the rapid expansion of the cities, is that the planning measures taken are aimed at trying to keep up with the rapid expansion rather than being an effective plan to direct such expansion (Alkhedheiri, 2002). Indeed, the expansion of Riyadh beyond the city's original walls provided an opportunity for almost unlimited growth; however, this presented a problem to the authorities, as they were unable to provide the necessary services for those areas (Gambia, 2008). It should be

remembered, though, that most cities in Saudi Arabia are of manageable size in comparison to other cities in the developing world (United Nations, 2001).

Sub-divisioning of land, i.e. dividing and allocating land and applying basic infrastructure for the purpose of housing development, continued throughout the country until the 1980s. To stop this process, and the associated urban sprawl, the council of Ministers adopted the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs' (MOMRA) proposal of the Urban Growth Boundary Policy (UGBP) in 1989, so as to keep the sub-divisioning process in check (UGBP is a line on the map of a city that shows the phases of growth). Such policies, aimed at managing growth were designed to prevent leapfrog development. Although these plans were adopted by central government they were only enforced selectively, evidence for which is the continuous sub-division of land by developers, with complete disregard for future consequences (Mubarak, 2004).

Urban sprawl was also affected both directly and indirectly by the urban growth boundaries implemented with the support of the central government in 1984. Firstly, urban sprawl was affected by such policies by the introduction of an imposition of a two-year ban on the further sub-dividing of land no matter where it was to take place; secondly, introducing urban protection zones around the cities was an effective mechanism to control the urban sprawl (Al-Hathloul and Mughal, 2004). Although urban sprawl draws criticism, Pacione (2009) suggests that it does have some advantages such as allowing the land to be protected by property rights; however, it has been shown that in Saudi Arabia property rights are not secure, as is the case in the rest of MENA, and is thus may not be an advantage in the Kingdom.

Another consequence of rapid urbanisation is the loss of the traditional environment. Urban growth in Saudi Arabia post the oil booms has not followed the traditional planning strategies, which had arisen through centuries of trial and error, conforming to the demands of the peoples' culture and traditions. Traditionally built environments reflect local identity, and were characterised by one or two storey courtyard-type dwellings, which were deliberately designed to provide privacy and shade (Al-Hemaidi, 2001). Indeed, the urban

design of the traditional Arab town was influenced by the religion of its inhabitants and the hot arid climate (Moustapha et al., 1985).

There has been a transformation from the traditional to the modern; this has resulted in a compromise between traditional cultural and religious values and modernity (Al-Naim and Mahmud, 2007). Government policy has played a role in the compromise of culture in building design. In 1974 the government created the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, which, in response to a shortfall in housing launched the 'crash' or 'rush' housing. These were large high-rise apartment buildings on the outskirts of major cities. They were the greatest shift away from the traditional approach, and the design prioritised efficiency over privacy; fortunately, however, they only accounted for a small percentage of state housing (Mubarak, 2004).

That is not to say that this drawback has not gone unnoticed by the Saudi government. Subsequently, planners and architects are working together with the government to overcome this problem by attempting to create a harmonious link between the built environments of the past with those of the present. Thus a new approach towards urban planning has emerged; this new or third type of approach aims at creating a synergy between traditional and contemporary planning approaches in an attempt to overcome the negative aspects of both (Al-Hemaidi, 2001).

## **5.7 Conclusion**

For the most part the drivers of urbanisation in Saudi Arabia are the same as those in the rest of the MENA region and to a certain extent the developing world; that is, population growth due to natural increase and internal and external migration. This chapter has shown, however, that although the drivers are similar, the processes and patterns of urbanisation are distinctive to the country, even in the context of the MENA region. Saudi Arabia has witnessed an explosion in population growth due to improvements in health services and the influx of foreign labour that takes part in the country's development.

The patterns and drivers of migration within Saudi Arabia are similar to those in the rest of the developing world; that is that people migrate from rural to urban and urban to urban in search of work and a better standard of living. Not only does migration occur within Saudi Arabia, but the country is also a major recipient of intra-regional migration. The reason for the latter has been the explosion in development due to oil revenues, something only shared with some neighbouring Gulf States and Libya. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has seen migration of the Bedouin from the desert and rural areas to urban areas, at first as a result of a political effort to settle the Bedouin, although in more recent times the Bedouin have migrated of their own accord in search of better opportunities.

Evidence of urban primacy is found in Saudi Arabia, and although it currently only applies to a few cities, it is on the increase in those cities with a corresponding decrease in other regions of the country. However, urban primacy is not as strong as it is in other developing world cities, such as those in Latin America. One phenomenon that can be linked to this urban primacy is the regional disparity in terms of development, something that is evidently being addressed by the Saudi Arabia government, as well as the issue of the need to decentralise decision-making powers to the local authorities to allow them freedom in local urban planning.

In relation to the government's responses to the problems of urbanisation there have been successive comprehensive plans and initiatives over recent decades, and it is those combined with the available financial resources that have meant that Saudi Arabia has been through rapid urbanisation without suffering in the same way as other developing countries. There is evidence of urban sprawl in the Kingdom, partly due to ineffective local governments and partly due to corruption; however, despite this, the government has coped well, avoiding serious problems such as the slum developments.

In relation to urban geography, this chapter has shown that there is a diverse urban system within the Kingdom, especially in terms of the number and sizes of cities in each state and urban the urban primacy. Moreover, there is also a wide variety of patterns and processes that have followed these diverse urban geographies. This draws a close on the similarity with the rest of MENA because such diversity inhibits any comparisons with other countries.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the urban geography of Saudi Arabia is that urban spaces have shifted significantly from the traditional, which was suitable for climate and culture, to the modern gridiron formation imported from the West. This is as a result of the oil industry and the associated relationship with Western oil companies; such changes took place in a relatively short period of time and, unlike other countries around the world, the desire to regain the traditional is for practical living purposes and not just as a source of revenue from tourism.

Despite the urban primacy, much of the urbanisation and the associated experiences of the urban geography are taking place in medium-sized cities. These cities are now significant recipients of migrants in the Kingdom and are often preferable destination points over larger cities. Therefore, the following chapter will examine urbanisation, migration and the urban geography in Buraydah City to show that medium-sized cities are witnessing rapid urbanisation. More specifically, the following chapter will show the attributes of this medium-sized city that attract migrants, urbanisation patterns, the urban space and the local government's response to rapid urbanisation.

## CHAPTER SIX

### URBANISATION AND MIGRATION IN BURAYDAH CITY

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the patterns and processes of urbanisation in Buraydah City, specifically the factors contributing to urbanisation and the drivers behind rural to urban migration. Moreover, it presents the urban geography of the city and in more detail, its urban spaces. The chapter also considers how the national context of development initiatives affects Buraydah City in its regional context and also considers the influence of local government. The distinguishing characteristics of Buraydah City, e.g. geographic location, topography and economic activity, are examined in relation to their impact on urbanisation. Secondary data are included in this chapter and have been obtained from various sources including previous studies of Buraydah City, local authorities, Ministries and academic sources; although it should be noted that secondary data on Buraydah City are limited.

It is the urban centres in the Kingdom that have benefitted the most from opportunities to create employment and to provide more facilities and services (High Authority for the development of the city of Riyadh, 1999). For example, it was indicated in the third development plan (1980-1985: 67) that there had been far-reaching changes in all the cities and villages in the Kingdom in terms of services and the standard of living for the citizens (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 1980). However, there have also been significant changes in the distribution of the population and high rates of migration to the cities, especially large cities, which have grown at the expense of small and medium-sized cities over recent decades (High Authority for the development of the city of Riyadh, 1999).

## 6.2 Buraydah City in Developing World Context

Besides natural population increase, migration has played a major role in urbanisation in Buraydah City. The drivers for migration, e.g. the search for work, are very similar for Buraydah City and other cities in the developing world, but the experiences may be different -something that will be determined in chapter eight. In less developed countries urban dwellers do not necessarily enjoy the prosperity that they sought (Varela, 1998). In fact, in China, approximately a third of migrants return to their original homes because it is difficult for them to find the jobs they are looking for to sustain them into retirement (Deshingkar and Natali, 2008) and cities in the developing world are commonly characterised by surplus labour and underemployment (Sijuwade, 2010). However, in Saudi Arabia the government has had the necessary financial resources to overcome such issues, and subsequently implemented plans for urbanisation.

Although there has been urban sprawl (discussed in chapter five) the country has not suffered severely from problems such as slums; as experienced by other developing countries where finance and planning are not supported by governments (Bloom and Khanna, 2007). The problem of slums is often associated with the uncontrolled flow of rural to urban migrants where governments are not able to keep up with the demands for housing and services in urban areas. According to Boadi et al. (2005) urbanisation without development means that urban economy cannot absorb migrants leading to greater urban poverty. This is a situation that is compounded by the inadequate provision of infrastructure and services to support this urban growth. This view has been supported by Pacione (2009) who says that the deterioration in services is because there is a mismatch between urbanisation and economic growth. In most developing countries governments hold a negative opinion on the subject of urbanisation and advocate policies to decrease or even reverse migration to cities (White et al., 2005). In Bangladesh, for example, the policy of reverse migration is engineered so as to alleviate poverty in rural areas by creating jobs and opportunities (Bhuyan et al., 2001). The government in Saudi Arabia has also recognised this problem and is engaged in national plans to stem the flow of rural to urban migration by improving rural areas; such policies are laid out in development plans and include limiting migration to urban centres by improving standards of living and job opportunities, and

providing better infrastructure in rural settlements (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2001). This is part of an overall effort to improve living condition in towns and villages in order to achieve balanced development (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010).

Another determinant of urban growth in the developing world is the expansion of boundaries leading to the annexing of surrounding areas (Kasarda and Crenshaw, 1991). Although no physical migration takes place, the result is still similar to rural to urban migration in that there is a shift in residence from the rural to the urban (Mears, 1997) in relation to this Buraydah City has also grown to incorporate surrounding villages (Al Rabdi, 2001).

Therefore, upon examination of the factors that drive and affect urbanisation in Buraydah City in comparison to the developing world in general, it can be seen that there are similarities in terms of migration and its drivers, e.g. the search for work and the recognition of the need to control rural to urban flow. However, while there are often failings by governments in the developing world to manage the inflow of rural to urban migrants, e.g. lack of sufficient work opportunities and poor municipal services, which lead to urban poverty and slums, it has been shown in the previous chapter that the experience for Saudi Arabia generally, has been more positive. This chapter examines the specific experience of Buraydah City in relation to urbanisation.

### **6.3 Drivers of Urbanisation**

Drivers of urbanisation in Buraydah City include population growth and migration, including rural to urban migration and geographic location. The city shares the same experiences as other cities in the Kingdom in terms of population dynamics and the influx of both local and foreign migrants. However, for the latter, Buraydah City is different in that it is located geographically at the crossroads of the country, and indeed the whole Gulf region, with close proximity to rural and desert areas which significantly influences migration to the city.

### 6.3.1 Population Growth

Population growth in Buraydah City is from both natural increase and migration. The earliest population estimate for Buraydah City was 6000 made in 1834 by Schimber. The first formal government estimate was 35,000 in 1962, and by 2010 the population had reached 467,410 (Division of Population Statistics, 2010) (Table 6.1). Figure 6.1 clearly shows Buraydah's population in comparison to other cities in Al Qassim.

Table 6.1: Population of Buraydah City, 1834 - 2010

Year	Population	Estimated by
	6,000	Schimber
	-	Palgrave
	5,000	Dowtey
	10,000	Hobair
	25,000	AlBustani
	8,000 -12,000	Nolder
	12,000	Hussein Hosni
	7500	Lorimer
	24,000	Leachmam
	20,000	Philby
	30,000	Hafiz Wahba
	30,000	Twitchell
	30,000	Pakistani mission
	35,000	Division Population Statistics
	46,490	Doksiades
	69,924	Division Population Statistics
	248,636	Division Population Statistics
	379,625	Division Population Statistics
	467,410	Division Population Statistics

Source: Al-Rabdi (1992) and Division Population Statistics (1974, 1992, 2004, 2010).

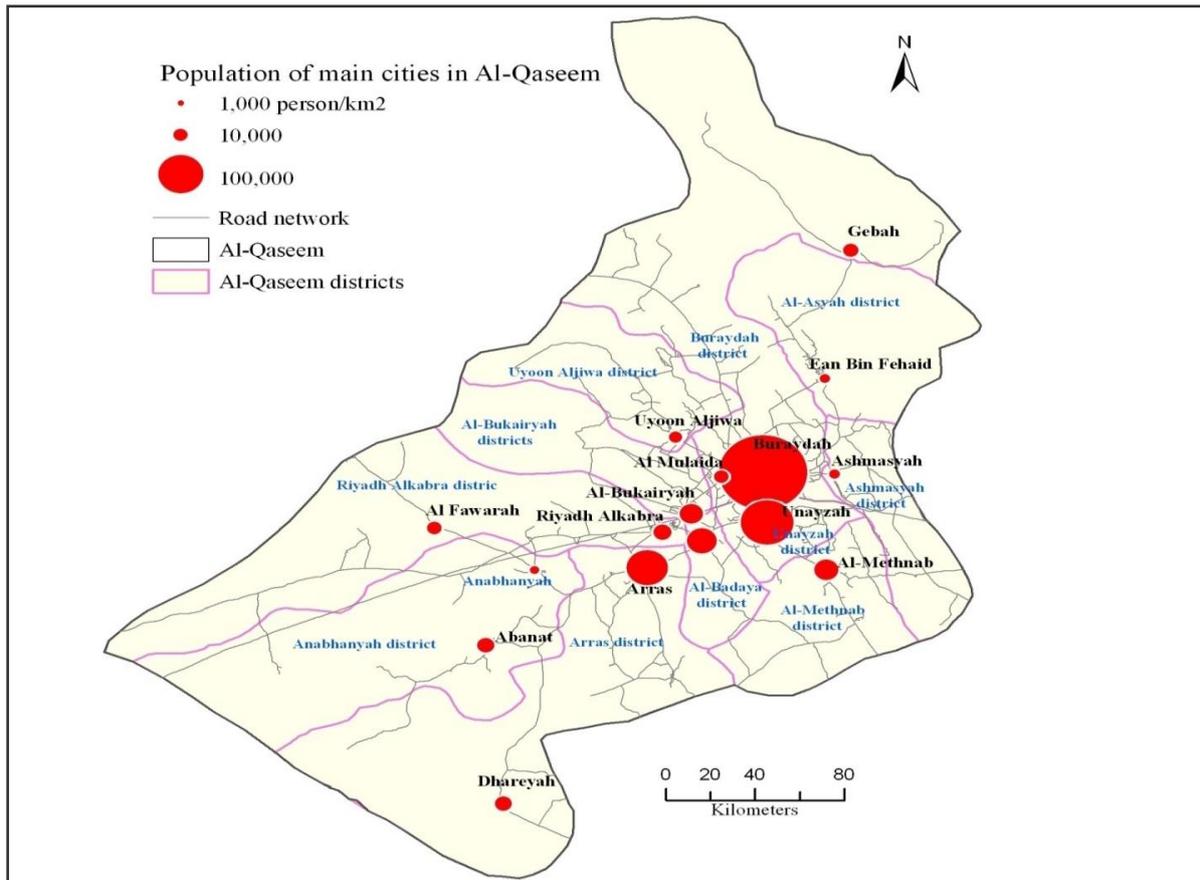


Figure 6.1: Map of Population in Al Qassim Area, 2004. Source: Aldakhil (2007).

Between 1974 and 2004 the average rate of population growth was 5.17 percent annually (Table 6.2). This was mainly due to Buraydah's proximity to rural areas (Kassem, 2005) and according to Al-Rabdi (2001) the surrounding villages were a source of migrants and a strong hinterland to Buraydah City. Moreover, in terms of economic drivers for this migration, during the period between 1974 and 1992 Buraydah City grew significantly as a result of oil revenues (Al Rabdi, 1992). In 2004 the Central Department of Statistics identified Buraydah as the largest city in the Al Qassim region, with 49 percent of the region's population, followed by Unayzah with only 14 percent (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2007). Throughout the period between 1974 and 2004 Buraydah City consistently experienced a higher average annual population growth rate than the remainder of the Al Qassim region and the country as a whole (Table 6.2). Much of the population growth in Buraydah City was due to natural increase, however, both internal and external migration were also factors contributing to population growth (Al-Rabdi, 2008). In 2004, 38.92 percent of the non-Saudi population of the Al Qassim region lived in Buraydah City.

Table 6.2: Average annual population growth rate (%) of Buraydah City compared to the Al Qassim Region and Saudi Arabia

Period	Saudi Arabia	Al Qassim Region	Buraydah City
1974 – 1992	5.03	4.77	6.68
1992 – 2004	2.45	2.56	2.94
1974 – 2004	3.99	3.88	5.17

Source: Al-Rabdi (2008).

Not only is the population poised to continue to grow, but Buraydah City’s share of the total population of the Al Qassim region as a proportion is also set to increase (Al-Rabdi, 2008). Notably, the population of Buraydah City is forecast to triple over the next 35 years; however, the corresponding increase in the city’s share of the region’s population is only set to increase by approximately 5 percent in the same period (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Estimated future population of Buraydah City and Al Qassim region with percentage of Al Qassim population living in Buraydah City (2015-2050)

Year	Buraydah City	Al Qassim Region	Percentage Al Qassim in Buraydah City
2015	522477	1342638	38.91
2020	604274	1523751	39.66
2025	698996	1729465	40.42
2030	808708	1963145	41.19
2035	935805	2228624	41.99
2040	1083072	2530262	42.80
2045	1253743	2873023	43.64
2050	1451579	3262557	44.49

Source: Al-Rabdi (2008).

Buraydah City is characterised by a young population, like that of the rest of the Kingdom, with 67.9 percent below the age of 24 (Kassem, 2007). The Gulf region as a whole also has a very young population, with 29 percent below the age of 15 in 2008 and only a slight drop to 24 percent expected by 2020 (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2009). This has implications for work opportunities in the city where there are large numbers of young people competing for jobs.

### 6.3.2 Migration

Part of the justification for this study is that there is very little research about urbanisation and migration in Buraydah City; however, this is not to say that studies about medium-sized towns are non-existent. A study by Al Arishi in 2002 focussed on migration to Samdah, a

medium-sized city in the south of the Kingdom, and found that the main driver for migration was the search for work. In 2004, a study by Albassam focused on migration to Unayzah, a medium-sized town in the Al Qassim region and also found that the search for work was the main driver; however, these studies focused on migrants generally and did not examine the different types of migrants. Thus, it should not be assumed that all migrant groups are the same or that they have the same goals and experiences of migration, an issue that is addressed in chapter eight.

The Fourth Development Plan (1985-1990) noted that there was significant migration within the Kingdom, and that the Central (including Al Qassim) and Western regions were gaining population over the Northern and South Western regions. Moreover, statistical surveys carried out by the Ministry of Economy and Planning showed that there was more migration within regions rather than inter-regional migration; this is significant in consideration of migration from within the Al Qassim region to Buraydah City. This intra- rather than inter-state migration is also evident in most of the regions across India; however, unlike Saudi Arabia this is attributed to the migration of women (Mitra and Murayama, 2008). In addition, the fourth development plan also noted that people were returning to their original region, but not necessarily to their rural place of origin (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 1985). The reason for such migration was thought to be improvement of municipal and social facilities (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 1985).

There has, however, also been a reverse in migration patterns across Saudi Arabia, as people who left for larger cities with better services are now returning to medium-sized cities such as Buraydah City, providing evidence that work opportunities and services in provincial towns have improved (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 1995), this is supported by the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (2000) who say that the manufacturing industry in Saudi Arabia has moved to medium-sized cities from larger cities, moreover, Al Rabdi (2008) says that the population of medium-sized cities will increase because of the influx of local migrants. This is a possible indication that development plans are successful and that the government has improved living standards and opportunities in smaller size towns. Currently there are no studies about reverse migration from Buraydah City; the intention of migrants to leave Buraydah City and return to their place of origin is addressed

in chapter eight. In other parts of the developing world, though, reverse migration is not due to an improvement in the smaller urban settlements but rather, according to Brouckerhoff (2000), due to weak city economies; for example in the Ivory Coast and Guinea. In Syria, for example, poor housing has been the cause of reverse migration back to rural areas (Khawaja, 2002).

In Buraydah City the numbers of immigrants increased the number of families living in the north-east of the city during the period 1950-1970. Some of these migrants were skilled in crafts such as clothing and textiles and came to Buraydah City from various regions outside of the Al Qassim region, believing its economic prospects to be better than that of other regions. Additionally, many of these migrants came from other towns and cities (Al-Rabdi, 2001). The economic interdependence between the population in the villages (Al Butayn, Al Tarafiyah, Al Rubaiah and Al Shaqah, Figure 6.2) and towns (Unayzah, Al Bukayriyah, Al Asyah, Ayoonaljawa and Albadaya, Figure 6.2) that surround Buraydah City and the population of the city itself, have led to migration to the city (Al-Rabdi, 2001). However, the trade relationship between urban and rural areas and the resulting migration is not as simple as has been mentioned; there are further dynamics to this relationship in the Al Qassim region. The finance for agricultural activities comes from financiers in Buraydah City; these same financiers control the markets in the city and compel farmers to sell their produce at a lower price to increase their own profits. This has meant that some farmers have had to cease farming and migrate to Buraydah City to search for alternative sources of income (Al-Rabdi, 2001). Another cause of rural to urban migration has been the surplus of Saudis in the agricultural labour market due to the influx of foreign labour to rural areas; as a consequence of this surplus, many Saudis have gone in search of work in the city (Al Sharif, 1994). In fact, in 2008, nine percent of the foreign labour force in the Kingdom worked on farms (Al Gabbani, 2009) and in Buraydah, in 2004, 10.8 percent of the 77,558 foreign worker population worked on farms (Kassem, 2007). This inevitably has had a significant impact on the population of Buraydah City.

Buraydah City has also been a migrant destination for the Bedouin for whom the driving force behind the search for economic prosperity was further increased by the fact that they are economically disadvantaged. There were some Bedouin, especially in the Al Qassim

region near Buraydah City who, after the discovery of oil, migrated to Buraydah City for economic purposes, and for the relative ease of urban life in comparison to the challenging life in the rural areas and deserts (Shamekh, 1975). The Bedouin have always been close to Buraydah City since the beginning of the nineteenth Century; in fact before the discovery of oil the Najd region comprised of three sub-regions, the sand dunes of the Dahna desert, range land with water points inhabited by the Bedouin and fertile land with oases, all of which created a linear pattern, from north to south, of Bedouin settlements from Al-Kharj (near Riyadh) to Buraydah City (Al-Hathloul and Edadan, 1993).

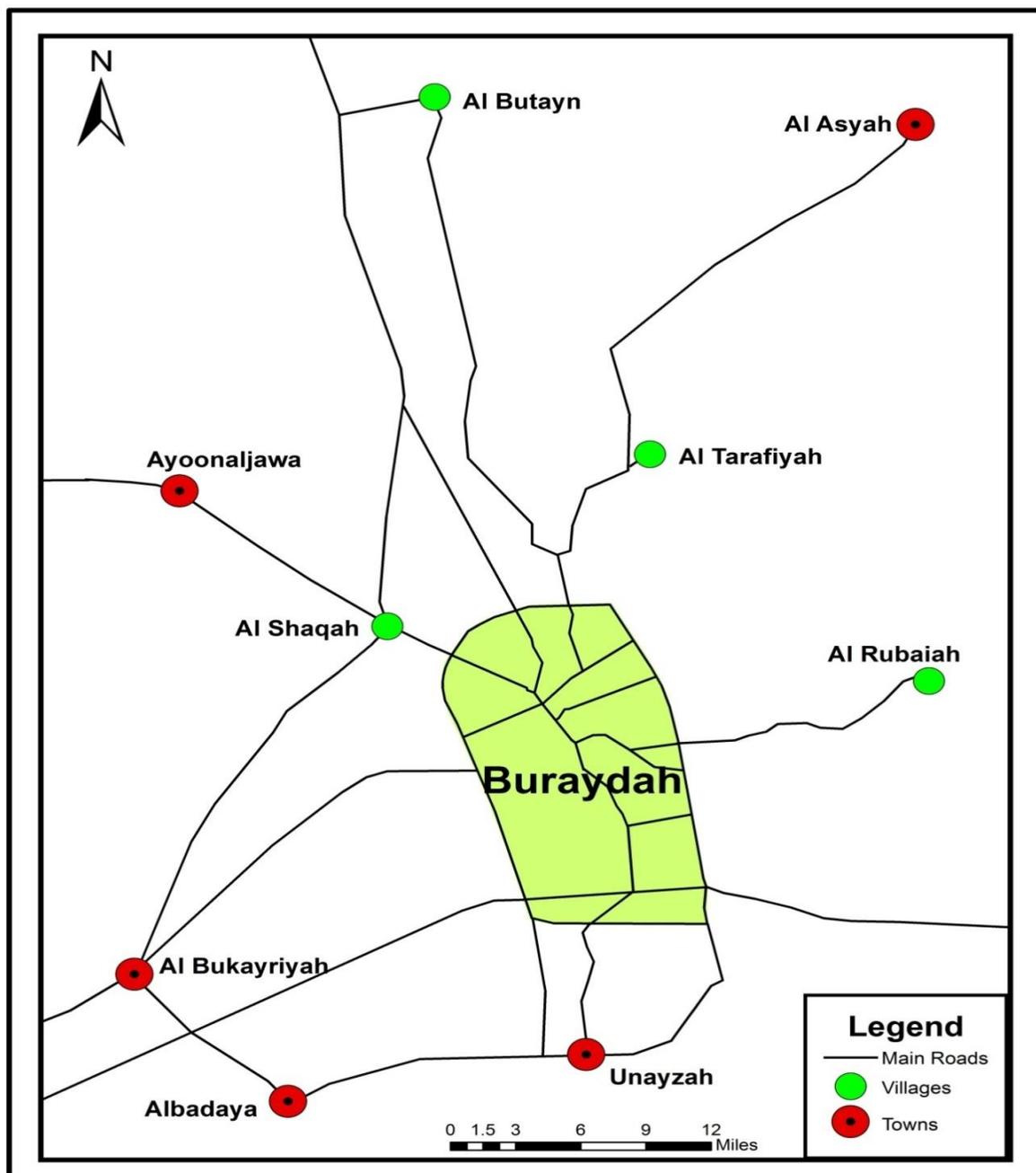


Figure 6.2: Map of towns and villages surrounding Buraydah City. Source: Author (2009).

In addition to Saudi migrants from within Saudi Arabia, another significant migrant group in Buraydah City are foreign workers. The city is no different to other cities in the Kingdom in terms of its having a large foreign-worker population; the largest group by far originate from the Indian subcontinent, with the largest group from within the MENA region being the Egyptians (Kassem, 2007). Overall, the foreign migrant population of Buraydah City is steadily increasing, it stood at 20 percent in 2004 (Kassem, 2007) and by 2010 it had increased to 26 percent (Division of Population Statistics, 2010). This increase has been partly due to real estate development as many of them are employed in the construction industry.

The significant number of foreign workers in Buraydah City has an effect on the demographics in the city in terms of gender, according to Kassem (2007) there are more men than women in Buraydah City because there are significant numbers of male foreign workers in the city; when examining the ratio of male to female Saudis, however, the male majority is not significant. The non-Saudi female population is mostly employed in hospitals and domestic service. Most of the Saudi female population are employed in single-sex education or healthcare (Doumato, 2009). Although Saudi women do work in Saudi Arabia, they comprise less than 15 per cent of the total workforce. The Al Qassim region has the lowest female unemployment rate in the Kingdom at 17 per cent; the region is conservative in terms of culture and many women are employed as teachers in the schools and universities (Business Intelligence Middle East, 2010).

### **6.3.3 Geographical Location**

Buraydah City is the capital of the Al Qassim region in Saudi Arabia, and is the location of all the government departments in the area. Moreover, the city is the main commercial area in the Al Qassim region and has markets that are the main trading centres for a wide area and many residents of surrounding villages rely on these markets for their daily provisions (Al Rabdi, 1992). Buraydah City is centrally located in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula making it an important crossroads for trade and a transit point for pilgrimage to Makkah. Because of the seaports in the north-west on the Red Sea it is a conduit for people travelling from the east of the Arabian peninsula to Egypt and the rest of Africa and vice versa (Kassem, 2005). Buraydah City has stood on inter-regional trade routes since before the national unification:

firstly, it was on the pilgrimage route to Makkah from Basra in Iraq and secondly, it lay on two coffee routes, one from the Red Sea and one from the Sham region (modern day Jordan and Syria), both crossing through the Najd region and Buraydah City, to Yemen in the south (Al-Hathloul and Edadan, 1993). In 1872 the people of Buraydah City were trading with neighbouring countries, especially Iraq; in the period after 1872 trade was extended to other countries such as Syria, Palestine, Egypt. The opening of this trade meant that consumers for local products were widespread beyond the region, providing Buraydah City with new markets for livestock and agricultural products such as the local camels, cows, horses and dates (Al-Rabdi, 2001) (Figures 6.3 and 6.4).



Figure 6.3: Date traders in Buraydah City. Source: Buraydahcity (2009).



Figure 6.4: A scene from a Camel fair in Buraydah City. Source: Buraydahcity (2009).

Its geographical location served to increase the importance of the city as a transit point for those travelling across the peninsular in all directions (Figure 6.5) for trade as it played a significant role in servicing such travel; for example, guest houses, hotels, restaurants and vehicle service stations. Although those travelling were transient, the urban scale of the city was influenced by the building of these services and housing areas for those people who worked there, especially at the city's entrances (Kassem, 2005). Prior to the national unification in 1932 the central region of the Najd (including Buraydah City) attracted a greater population than the desert regions to the north, mainly due to the availability of water and fertile soil (Al-Hathloul and Edadan, 1993).

The King Abdul Aziz road (Figures 6.6 and 6.7) is the main artery of the city as it divides the centre. The road is home to major government departments such as the Secretariat and the King Khaled Cultural Centre. Much of the economic and commercial activity in Buraydah City depends on this road. The road crosses the city from north to south and receives traffic from the entire South, from Riyadh, Unayzah and other cities of Al Qassim (Al-Mansor, 2005). This road has been instrumental in shaping the urban landscape of the city.

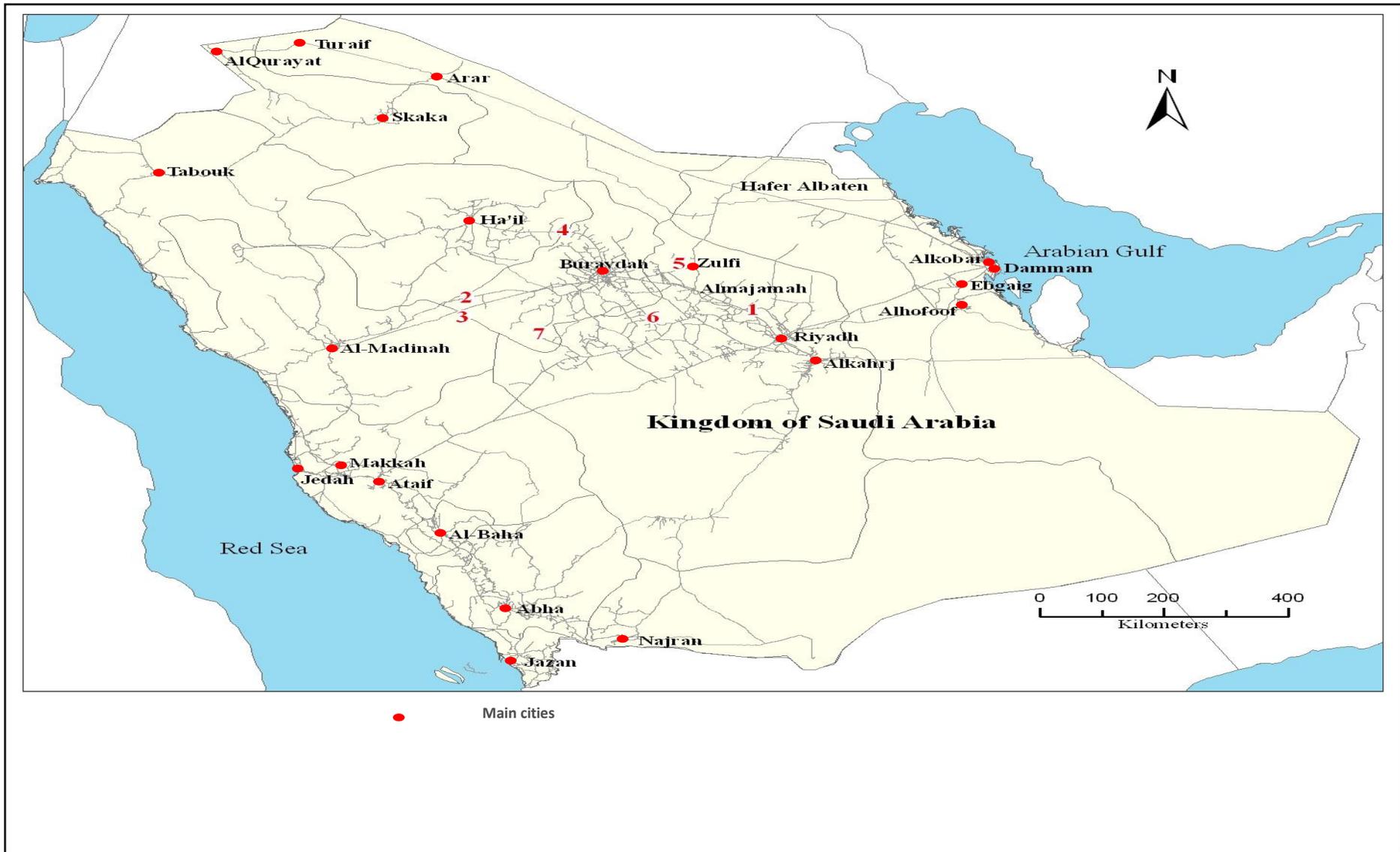


Figure 6.5: Map of major roads linking Buraydah City with other major cities in Saudi Arabia. Source:Aldakhil(2007).



Figure 6.6: King Abdul Aziz Road, Buraydah City, 1950. Source:Alsaha(2009).



Figure 6.7: King Abdul Aziz Road, Buraydah City. Source: Alhandasa (2009).

#### **6.4 Government Policy and Buraydah City**

Much of the government policy towards development in the Kingdom has focused on eliminating regional disparity. This has been emphasised in the national five year

development plans. This section focuses on these plans and provides an analysis of their affect on urbanisation and, more specifically, examines how national policy plays out in the Al Qassim region and in Buraydah City, and assesses the extent to which the local Buraydah municipal authorities have autonomy in policy making in relation to urbanisation.

#### **6.4.1 Development Plans**

The government's development plans sought to increase development after the discovery of oil resulted in people migrating to cities. The local government in Buraydah City pursued the planning and organisation of neighbourhoods and issued many building permits, selected sites and construction plans, identified land uses, and worked toward providing a much needed infrastructure of roads, electricity and water in preparation for the building developments (Kassem, 2005).

However, Buraydah City may have been a beneficiary of regional disparities (presented in chapter five), the Fourth Plan (1985 – 1990) mentioned that such regional imbalances were partly due to the patterns of rural-urban migration and that it was the central regions, the location of Buraydah City, and the western regions that were provided with the highest level of services (Ministry of Economy and Planning 1980).

Moreover, such disparity can also be caused by many goods being produced in one place and transported a very short distance to markets within that place (Venables, 2003). This is certainly the case in Buraydah City, because as mentioned before, it is home to the world's largest date and camel markets and the largest pharmaceutical manufacturer in MENA and is also referred to (Hassan, 2006) as the vegetable basket of the country. Trade in dates is particularly strong; in 2011 Buraydah City hosted the world's largest date festival (Al- harbi, 2011). In light of this, although there is evidence of regional disparity, with primate cities being the main recipients of government investment, there has been no evidence so far that Buraydah City has been neglected in this respect and some evidence that it has in fact been a beneficiary of governmental support.

Despite the fact there have been economic disparities between Saudi cities; the population growth is high for the entire Kingdom. Except for some small towns, there were high rates of

growth for most of the medium-sized towns which has led to the change in their size. Buraydah City, for example, rose from ninth largest city in 1974 to eighth largest in 2004 (Alkhraif, 2007). According to Alkhraif (2000) this is linked to economic growth witnessed in the Kingdom, the implementation of many projects and development plans over recent decades. The national urban strategy of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, for the year 2000, placed great importance on the development of a balanced system of urban centres in the Kingdom and its regions, particularly focusing on small- and medium-sized cities (Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, 2000). Part of this approach was to devolve power to regional authorities; this allowed the central government to concentrate on issues of a national nature (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 1995). Urban development at the local level has worked; this success has been achieved by the establishment of independent organisations at local level in the urban centres. In the developing world generally, local level planning and management is becoming essential because of the increase in urbanisation and associated problems (Qureshi et al., 2009). However, by the time the seventh plan was initiated there was evidence that these regional plans were still being developed and implemented by central government; the plan discusses how the Ministry of Economy and Planning will gather information about each region, identify constraints and issues and put forward a development strategy for each region according to any resources that are available (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2001). Again, the planning is central and there is no mention of devolving planning to the regional authorities.

#### **6.4.2 Land Management Strategy**

The administrative and planning bodies in the Al Qassim region play an active role in contributing to the identification of developmental requirements and the initiation of programmes and projects in coordination with national government. This local involvement is part of a national long-term comprehensive development strategy which includes economic, social and urban aspects (Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, 2000). According to the Buraydah Municipality (2005), prior to the oil boom in 1974 there were large areas of unused land, owned by the government and private land owners, around Buraydah City; but, as a result of the oil boom the price of this land increased, compelling some people in Buraydah City to stake a claim on this land. Although any claim was illegal,

as the land did not belong to them, they were determined to own it. Furthermore, among these people there were disputes about who 'owned' what piece of land; this led to much litigation in the courts between false claims and the rightful claims of private landowners. The response to this problem from the local government was threefold: firstly, to retain the land as government-owned and delay any development; secondly, to allocate the land for public use, i.e. public parks, schools and hospitals; and finally, to allocate it to members of the public for housing development. Between 2000 and 2005 the local authority gave away 24,564 plots for housing development on a first come first served basis (Buraydah Municipality, 2005).

The local authorities have also put available land to good use by leasing to it private businesses for the purpose of building shopping malls, theme parks and recreation centres. There are two advantages to this; firstly it generates revenue for the municipality, which has steadily increased from SR 14,521,891 in 2000 to SR 27,454,611 in 2005 to a predicted SR 33,371,251 for 2010, and secondly, it helps to stimulate the private economy (Buraydah Municipality, 2005).

In order to manage the issuing of building permits the local authorities in Buraydah City have employed the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to analyse land use in the city. The system is also used to collect and document data for maintenance projects, storm water drainage and waste management. Overall, GIS is employed to construct a geographic database at the city level to help improve the quality of municipal services and government departments. The maps are also used for planning spatial distribution for business sector areas (Buraydah Municipality, 2005).

## **6.5 Patterns of Urbanisation**

Currently there are 69 neighbourhoods in the city, a map of these neighbourhoods is presented in chapter seven (Secretariat Al Qassim area, 2009). There is some documented work by travellers who visited the city from outside the country that tell us something about life in the city in the past. The Al Riyadh newspaper reported that in 1862 William Palgrave

came to Buraydah City; he was the first European traveller to cross the Central Arabian Peninsula (Al-Riyadh Newspaper, 2007, 22). He observed the commercial and agricultural activity and spoke about the markets, describing the butcher's shops, fabrics, fruits, and the houses built of mud and stones, and stressed that some buildings had been standing for five hundred years. He described the population as tradesmen and noticed there were very few Bedouins in the city (Al-Riyadh Newspaper, 2007, 22). He observed that the Bedouin did not seem to be migrating to Buraydah City at this time, although they did frequent Buraydah City for trade. In 1906, in his description of Buraydah City, Lorimer said that it was an important commercial and trade centre and activity peaked every four months, when the Bedouin returned to buy dates, rice and cloth from the city, and sometimes erected tents outside the walls to conduct trade (Al-Mansor, 2005). Even today, although the spatial form of Buraydah City has changed from the traditional narrow streets and inward facing courtyards, the city still retains its key role as a centre for trade, but its influence has travelled beyond national borders.

There is little academic work on the history of the aforementioned wall that surrounded Buraydah City. The earlier growth of the city was in the form of circles, each consecutive circle growing larger than the previous circle and each circle being surrounded by a defensive wall (Al-Rabdi, 2001). This mud wall would be closed every day at sundown until sunrise (Hassan, 2006). Each Amir (Mayor) built a new wall leaving the old wall behind with access points for greater protection (Al-Rabdi, 2001). The earliest record of the wall dates from 1741 when the area of the town contained within the walls was approximately 8,000 square metres, with the wall having a circumference of more than 360 metres. It was the protection afforded by this wall that encouraged people to migrate to Buraydah City from surrounding towns that did not have protective walls (Al-Rabdi, 2001). In 1819 a new wall was built which increased the radius of the original boundary by 20 metres with a circumference of 565 metres, and a total area of approximately 17,000 square metres. At this time the growth of Buraydah City was chiefly to the north and north-west; however, growth to the south and the south-west was limited due to the presence of sand dunes and the ArRummah Valley, the population at that time was 1,360. The area surrounded by the physical boundary, i.e. the mud wall, was about 30,000 square meters in 1887. In 1908 the growth of the city continued towards the north, north-west and south-east until the 1960s,

following the road from Riyadh to Hail and the northern areas that intersected Buraydah; this increased the length of Buraydah City by 1,250 metres in this direction and between 450 to 650 metres east to west (Figure 6.8) (Al-Rabdi, 2001). The fact that Buraydah City was originally a walled town that grew beyond this boundary is nothing unusual in MENA; in fact at the centre of most Islamic cities is a walled fortress, and over time cities tended to grow concentrically out from the original boundary (Brunn et al., 2008).

During the 1950s, the new economy allowed new roads to be built within Buraydah City and other towns in the Al Qassim region, which helped intra-regional trade with Buraydah City as the hub (Figure 6.9) (Al- Mosalam, 2005). With the introduction of the motor vehicle Buraydah City became an important internal transportation hub because it lay on the crossroads between Riyadh and Hail in the north and Riyadh to Makkah, Jedah and Madinah in the west. The scale of Buraydah City increased due to an increase in the issuing of building permits in 1963, which led to the establishment of supermarkets and other retail outlets. Additionally, the electricity company established more networks allowing for some vital projects such as hospitals and industrial areas (Al-Mansor, 2005). Buraydah City expanded towards the east, where it began colonising areas where sand dunes once stood. During the 1970s the urban areas spread along the ever important road between Riyadh and Hail, which ran in a north-westerly direction. Urbanisation was characterised by building up to one kilometre either side of the road. This new expansion took advantage of economic activities along this road, i.e. industries and services that could serve and benefit from this main artery (Al-Rabdi, 2001). The 20 year period between 1960 and 1980 witnessed an increase in urbanisation greater than any previous period since the beginning of Buraydah's urbanisation.

Chapter five discussed the issue of the grid iron layout of urban areas; these were present in Buraydah City before the first development plan (1970), as there was reference to this before the first plan when there was progress in extending the grid of asphalted roads in the major towns and cities in the Kingdom (Central Planning Organization, 1970). This grid iron pattern, imported from the west, is a characteristic of Buraydah City.

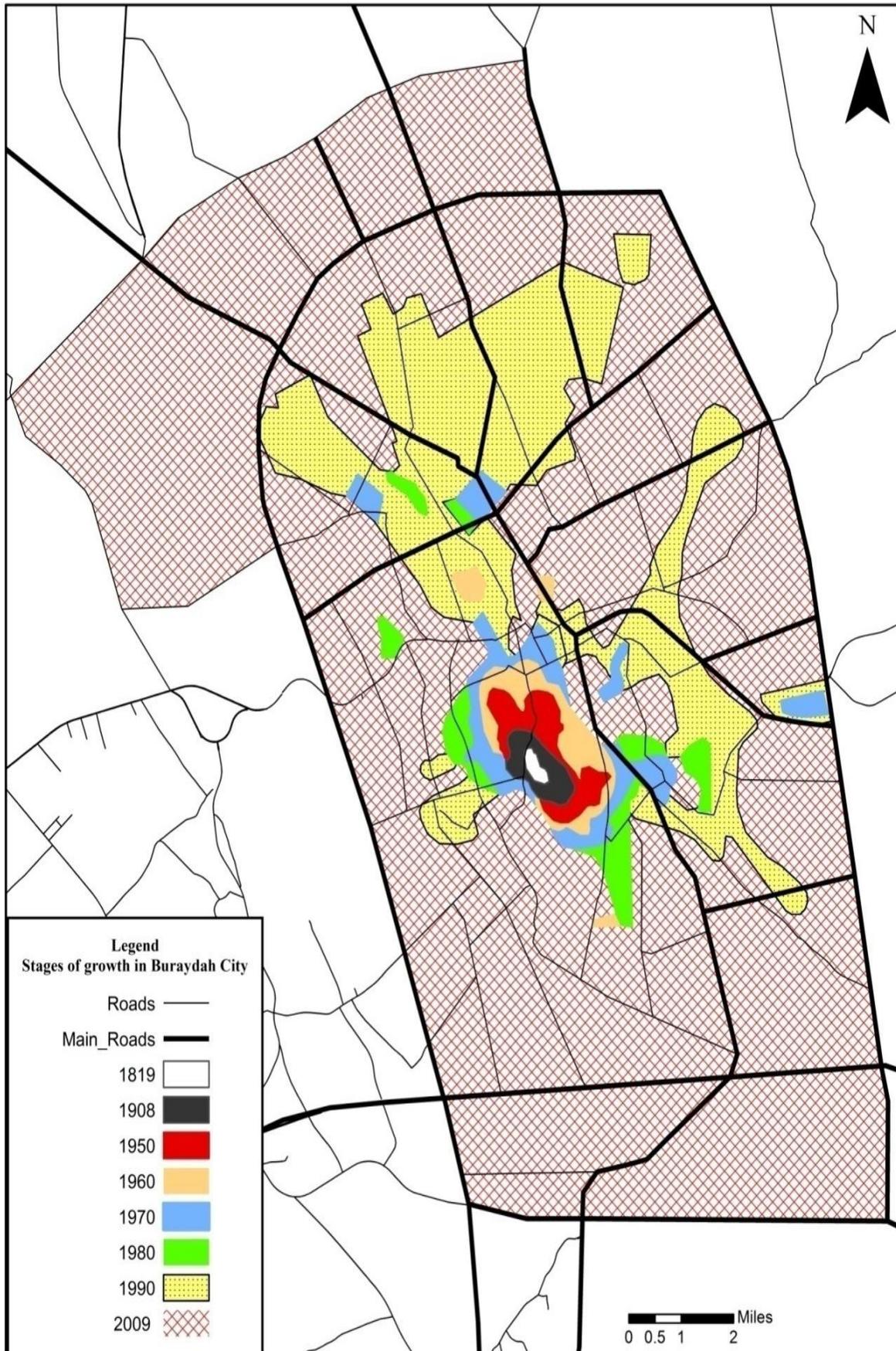


Figure 6.8: Map of phases of growth of the Buraydah City from 1819-2009. Source: AlRabdi (2001) and Author (2009).



Figure 6.9: Photo of Main Road, Buraydah City 1950s. Source: Alsaha (2009).

The total urban area of Buraydah City was approximately 11 km<sup>2</sup> in 1980; this represented an increase of 6.2km<sup>2</sup> since 1960, approximately 56 percent. In comparison, by 2005 the total area of the city was 92.3 square kilometres, a significantly high increase of 831 percent since 1980, and an average annual increase of 29.3 percent (Kassem, 2006). In the northern districts of the city the area of urbanisation was 5.8 km<sup>2</sup> by 1980. This was followed in the same year by an extension to the east along the old Riyadh road of the Al Usaytah neighbourhood which grew to become 3 km<sup>2</sup> comprising nearly a third of the physical scale of the city. The south and west areas saw much slower urban growth, less than the north, north-west and north-east, accounting for only 21 percent of the total area. This slow growth was due to the presence of sand dunes (Al Rabdi, 2001). However, there is evidence that the sand dunes are present in other areas, during the 1980s some government departments and residential areas were scattered towards the north, the east and the south east due to the presence of sand dunes in the north east.

According to Al-Rabdi, 2001, during the 1980s, the urban expansion of Buraydah City was unplanned and city features extended without any controls or specific plans so was

characterised by new sprawling neighbourhoods. However, there were development plans in place at this time, i.e. the Third Development Plan (1980-1985), but Al-Rabdi does go on to say that some of those unplanned neighbourhoods developed outside the general plan of the city, referring to urban expansion that was contrary to regulations.

Growth of Buraydah City during the 1990s to the north and east was far quicker than growth towards the south and took the form of interconnected scattered neighbourhoods (Figure 6.8). Another factor, besides the sand dunes, that led to this scattered pattern of growth was the good soil fertility and water levels near the surface of the ground in the south and south east; important for farming which is an essential part of Buraydah City's economy. There was some construction and extension towards the south-east in the form of the emergence of small urban areas. Since the 1990s the local municipality has removed the sand dunes in the east and consequently, the east has experienced rapid urbanisation, with this part of the city now being the location of the main markets and squares (Al-Rabdi, 2001).

## **6.6 Consequences of Urbanisation in Buraydah City**

Although until now much of the evidence has pointed to the fact that urbanisation in Saudi Arabia has been without problems due to planning and finance, there are some issues with the urban landscape in Buraydah City. The local authority in Buraydah City (Buraydah Municipality) has embarked on many schemes to rectify the various problems that plague the urban environment; such problems include flooded waste ground, fly tipping, poor drainage and unsightly areas used for raising cattle within the city, all of which have a significant impact on people's experience of urban life within Buraydah City. These problems are the result of poor urban management and responses to population increase. To tackle these problems the Buraydah Municipality developed a strategy (Comprehensive Plan for Improvement of Buraydah) that was to be implemented between 2005 and 2010 (Buraydah Municipality, 2005); this plan began by identifying the above issues and then provides a strategy for solving these problems. Until late 2011 no report has been made available on the progress of this improvement plan.

The roads in urban areas are very basic and in poor condition and are surrounded by waste ground, which is commonly used for fly tipping (Figure 6.10). The areas between some of the roads are at a lower level than the roads themselves and when it rains these areas become flooded becoming breeding grounds for malaria (Figure 6.11). In fact there are 38 of these flooded areas in the city in between housing areas, totalling an area of 2,337,200 square metres. In 2005, the local council embarked on a scheme to resolve this problem by filling these areas with sand, and effectively completed this in 41 percent of the total affected area in the same year (Buraydah Municipality, 2005). Further problems include dilapidated roads that present a health and safety risk because they make it extremely difficult for emergency services to access areas (Alayoubi and Alshabaan, 2009).



Figure 6.10: Photo of fly tipping on waste ground between housing areas. Source: Alayoubi and Alshabaan (2009).



Figure 6.11: An example of flooded areas between roads in Buraydah City. Source: Alayoubi and Alshabaan (2009).

Buraydah City is plagued, much like many cities in the Kingdom, by floods. Although it does not rain often, when it does the drainage systems cannot cope and many housing areas become flooded. Moreover, the streets and pavements do not effectively absorb rain water, and this, combined with a lack of green areas, is one of the main reasons for flooding in urban areas around the developing world (Graeml, 2004). Poor planning by the local council is often blamed for this flooding. The Buraydah City authorities have now improved the drainage systems, having completed 60 percent of improvements by 2005, this has included, as part of Buraydah City's strategic plan (2005-2010), building storm drains and new pumping stations, that have cost SR 185 million (approximately £30.8 million), to transfer surplus water to irrigate crops. Furthermore, the local authorities have built many parks that help to absorb rain water, are better for the environment and which provide more recreational space for the population (Buraydah Municipality, 2005).

In terms of the aesthetics of urban areas there have been a number of issues that the local authorities have had to address. The city has been plagued by issues that cause unsightliness; namely, car workshops, informal outdoor second-hand markets within

housing areas and old indoor markets. Another problem that affects the aesthetics of Buraydah City, and indeed nationally, is poor building quality and building violations due to unscrupulous developers, resulting in buildings becoming derelict and unsightly. Further evidence of insufficient planning is related to the fact that areas on the periphery of the developments are often left as waste grounds (Plate 6.1); these are vacant and often objectionable to look at in terms of planning and development. The challenges posed by rapid urbanisation have therefore been met to a certain extent, but without consideration for the creation of a beautiful and functional urban environment.



Plate 6.1: A Photo of waste ground between housing areas. Source: Author (2009).

In response to these issues there are plans that seek to improve architectural design and urban landscaping. More specifically, areas in between and next to roads have been visually enhanced with landscaping and the facades of existing buildings have been modified. Moreover, there was the introduction of guidelines governing bill boards, litter bins, seating in public spaces and fountains (Buraydah Municipality, 2005). However, the overall layout of housing areas is based on the grid-iron system and what seem to be lost in Buraydah City is the traditional Arab urban environments that often had spaces where the people could come together and socialise (Moustapha et al., 1985). Unfortunately, because of this new

urban layout the unique open spaces which were previously utilised for socialising have been destroyed, and thus the traditional function of the street as an area of social activity has been altered (Al-Hemaidi, 2001).

Another issue that has had an impact on the urban geography in the city has been the arrival of migrants who cannot afford housing in the city and then build housing on the periphery as a temporary measure until they are in a better situation financially. It is common in West Africa for example, for migrants to settle on the outskirts of cities when they first arrive until they can afford to buy land to build their own house (Beauchemin and Bocquier, 2003). There are a number of ways that migrants acquire this land: firstly, they can purchase it directly from the private owners without the knowledge of the local authorities; secondly, by squatting on land where there is no clear title deed and; thirdly, by moving onto land between and around unclaimed developments (Alayoubi and Alshabaan, 2009). The aforementioned type of squatting is similar to one of the types of squatting that takes place in Nigeria, which is where migrants squat on illegally acquired land, as opposed to in slums arising from the decay of existing structures (Fourchard, 2003).

The characteristics of housing in these areas reflect the same building techniques of rural areas, they are neither old, i.e. mud houses, or new, i.e. villas. The proliferation of these areas has caused problems, which include encroachment onto agricultural, private and government land, pollution and disease, and although municipal authorities in Buraydah City have intervened by providing additional municipal services, there are still areas that need urgent improvement. These areas do not have the required preparation and regulation and result in an urban pattern that is irregular (Alayoubi and Alshabaan, 2009). However, in Buraydah City the local authorities are to blame for these problems because they have not implemented the requisite regulatory policies for house building for those of modest income; moreover, private real estate developers are also to blame because they do not build cost housing in the city (Alayoubi and Alshabaan, 2009).

## 6.7 Conclusion

Although there are political, economic and social factors that play a role in influencing the urban geography of Buraydah City, this chapter has shown that there have also been physical influences. The growth pattern of Buraydah City has been concentric, with each phase of growth initially being delimited by a surrounding wall, this is something found in other traditional Arab cities. However, the distinguishing characteristic of Buraydah City is that the growth has also been scattered due to the local topography and has also grown along the north-south highway that intersects the city. Moreover, the rate of growth of the city has been largely due to its location and importance in local, national and regional trade and travel which has caused the city to be a significant attractor of migrants.

Political factors have also played a role in shaping the urban geography in the city. Although local government has been shown to implement municipal plans, they have also failed to provide developers with the necessary regulations for building satisfactory housing and failed to stop them creating unregulated urban sprawl and national government has been responsible for grid-iron layouts. However, it has been shown that Buraydah City has been the beneficiary of development investment from the central government. Policy has also had an impact on migration, for example, allowing foreign migrants to participate in the building boom, arranged settlement of the Bedouin and the provision of services and investment in Buraydah City which have created pull factors to attract migrants. Currently there is no literature available about the lived experiences of migrants in Buraydah City which may include how they are affected by both the positive and negative aspects of urban spaces.

Economic factors have affected the city in terms of encouraging migration and trade. The industry in the city is on a large scale and has encouraged many economic migrants from within the Al Qassim, as well as from within and outside of the country. However, the geographic location and the associated economic growth have also had an effect on the physical urban geography of the city in the form of urban growth along the King Abdul Aziz Road which followed trade.

The social structure of Buraydah City is indeed quite complex because there are many internal and external influences. A significant foreign population and the arrival of nomadic

Bedouin have had an impact on the demographics of the city; moreover, much like MENA as a whole the city is also affected by an increasingly young and educated demographic. The urban environment itself was shown to have a number of problems which may affect life in the city, these included untidy and unsightly areas and poor regulation of housing development. The patterns and drivers of urbanisation and migration in Buraydah City are examined in the following chapter, and lived experiences of migration to the city are examined as part of the primary research into Buraydah City in Chapter Eight.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### PATTERNS AND DRIVERS OF MIGRATION IN BURAYDAH CITY

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the patterns and drivers of migration and urbanisation in Buraydah City. A multidimensional approach is adopted, because as already explained, economic, political, social and cultural factors are necessary to understanding how such processes relate to migrants' drivers for migration. Moreover, according to Islam and Siddiqi (2010) drivers for migration can be classified as economic, demographic, social, political, educational, cultural and geographical. In relation to culture as a driver, Islam and Siddiqi (2010) say that urban centres are the main places for cultural activity which is a pull factor for migrants. There has been research into migration within Saudi Arabia (Khraif, 1992, Alkhraif, 2007), which considers the socioeconomic and demographic variables affecting migrants in the country, but there is no consideration in the literature of other variables such as different cultural groups. This study considers cultural diversity as there are distinctive groups within Saudi Arabia, i.e. Bedouin, villager and urban dweller, which cannot be ignored in relation to the drivers for migration. Each of these groups represents a different cultural identity within Saudi Arabia, townfolk are referred to as 'hathari' or town dwellers who are culturally distinct from the nomadic Bedouin who have their own peculiar traditions, and the villagers belong to neither group and have their own culture and traditions. Characteristics associated with each migrant group primarily included the economic and demographic characteristics and this chapter begins by presenting these in relation to all the migrants generally, and then for each migrant group individually in order to understand how such characteristics inform migration decisions.

Much of the literature (Kainth, 2009; Almandoz, 2006) acknowledges that there are multiple factors in the places of origin that drive migration, including meso-level i.e. socio-economic conditions in the place of origin, and macro-level conditions i.e. uneven development on a national level (Waddington and Sabates-Wheeler, 2003) e.g. too much investment in

primate cities which is the case in Saudi Arabia. Indeed the same applies to destinations as attracting migrants, including employment opportunities, better municipal services and improved housing conditions (McSweeney and Jokisch, 2007; Brunn et al., 2008).

## **7.2 Demographic Characteristics of Migrants**

Understanding demographic traits, such as the economic and social status and educational levels of migrants, provides insight into the drivers for migration. In support of this, Islam and Siddiqi (2010) commented that age, sex, marital status, occupation and education affect the tendency to migrate, across different socio-economic groups, for example most migrants are married and young. Moreover, the characteristics of migrants, their place of origin and members of their household can determine a migrant's success upon reaching their place of destination (Mora and Taylor, 2005).

Although demographics in relation to migration have been extensively researched for the developing world (Dumper and Stanley, 2007, International Organisation for Migration, 2010) and MENA and Saudi Arabia (Al-Sheikh, 2000; Khraif, 1992 and 2007; Al Amoudi, 1994; Alsakran, 1995; Al Sharif, 1994), none have considered medium-sized cities. Moreover, a thorough review of previous research identified a single study in relation to Saudi Arabia that considers demographic characteristics; that by Khraif (1992) that showed that income and home ownership influences the decision to migrate. Although a relevant study, it focused on a major city, Riyadh, and was conducted almost twenty years ago highlighting the need for a more current study.

### **7.2.1 Age**

When addressing the issue of demographic determination of migrant behaviour the first area of focus identified was age. It was found that the majority of migrants were young, as is the case with migrants in MENA generally, and as has been found by a number of studies of migrants in Saudi Arabia (Al Amoudi, 1994; Alsakran, 1995; Al-Sheikh, 2000) and the developing world as a whole (Population Resource Centre, 2010; Orozco and Fedewa, 2005). The largest group, 36.5 percent (n=115) of respondents to the questionnaires were between

20 and 29 years, with the average age of migrants being 35.8 years; in the case of the interview respondents the average age was 35.9 years (Figure 7.1). From the questionnaires, there was no statistically significant difference found in the mean ages of migrants from all the places of origin, i.e. cities, villages and desert or between the mean ages of the migrants within those groups.

It should be noted that 83.5 per cent of the 115 respondents to the questionnaire and 93 percent of the interviewees were male. It was not possible for the researcher to converse with women because of cultural sensitivities; this was more of a problem because the researcher was not a close relative and this aspect of Saudi culture is particularly strong amongst the Bedouin. Those women who were questioned were single mothers with no male guardians and therefore not representative of women migrants more generally.

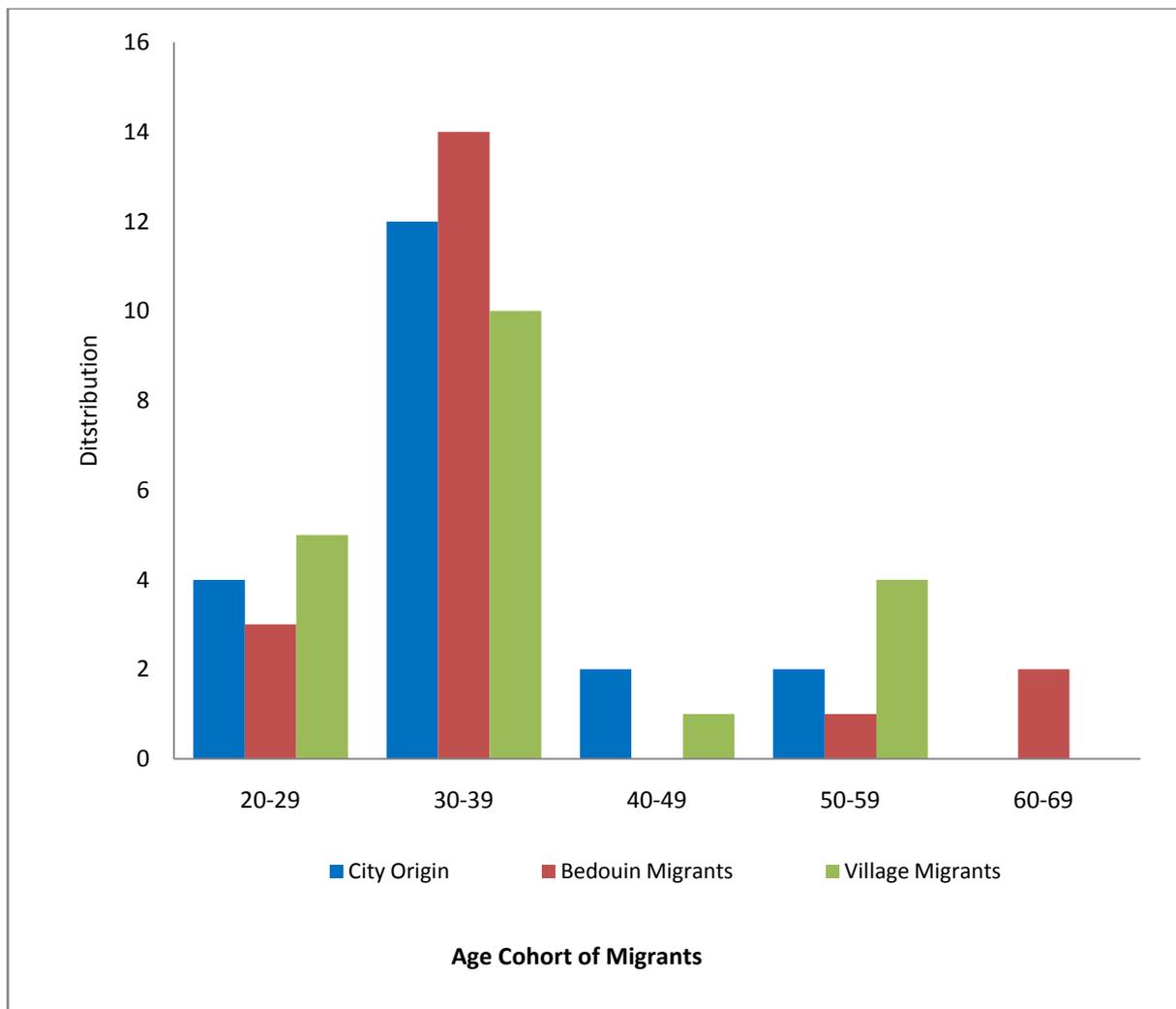


Figure 7.1: Age distribution by interviewees' place of origin. Source: Author's survey (2009).

### 7.2.2 Household Size

Overall, the size of the migrant households sampled in this study were found to be small in terms of the number of adults and children; the majority were comprised of less than three persons including children and this applied for each migrant group. Over 60 per cent of the migrant households, responding to the questionnaires had less than three children (Table 7.1). There has in fact been a decline in fertility rates in Saudi Arabia; in 2000 the rate was 4.2 (births per woman), 3.2 in 2007 and 3.1 in 2008 (World Bank, 2010e), however, this may not reflect the fertility rates of the migrant groups which were not researched.

Table 7.1: Number of People per Migrant Household by Place of Origin (n=115)

<b>Adults</b>							
<b>Number of people</b>	<b>City</b>		<b>Village</b>		<b>Desert (Bedouin)</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>(No)</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>(No)</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>(No)</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>(%)</b>
< 3	21	60	19	54.3	28	62.2	59.1
3 – 5	9	25.7	11	31.4	9	20	25.2
6 – 8	1	2.9	4	11.4	4	9	7.8
9 and over	4	11.4	1	2.9	4	9	7.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Children</b>							
None	6	17.1	2	5.7	8	17.9	15.7
< 3	18	51.5	23	65.7	29	64.4	60.9
3 – 5	9	25.7	8	22.8	6	13.3	19.1
6 – 8	2	5.7	2	5.7	2	4.4	4.3
9 and over	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author's survey (2009).

Only 2.9 percent of households including migrants from villages had more than nine adults, the lowest among all migrants; however, this is not to say that village households have fewer adults because those households with between 6 and 8 adults showed the highest percentage at 11.4 per cent; in contrast, only 2.9 per cent of migrant households from other cities responding to the questionnaire had between six and eight adults, the lowest of all groups; however, 11.4 per cent of households of migrants from other cities had an average of more than nine adults per household, by far the highest of all the three migrant groups (Table 7.1).

### **7.2.3 Marriage**

From the questionnaires, it was found that 62.6 per cent of the migrants were married and 27.8 percent (n=115) were single. Saudi Arabia is a very conservative country and the vast majority of people aim to marry as soon as it is financially possible. This study explores the possibility that being married with children is a motivating factor for migration, addressed in section 7.4. Migration is often undertaken in consideration of children; for the sake of education, health care and other amenities and more opportunities for work to support the family unit (see section 7.4). The incidence of divorce was low at 6.7 per cent.

### **7.2.4 Education**

A generally high level of education was observed amongst the migrants; all had secondary education and 44.4 per cent had attended higher education. This finding was in contrast to a study conducted by Kassem (2004), which examined the educational level of Buraydah City residents as a whole and found only 11 per cent had been in higher education. A generally high level of education in comparison to the overall population is found amongst migrants from all around Saudi Arabia (Al Thubaity, 1981; Mackie, 1989; Alsakran, 1995, Al-Sheikh, 2000). These higher education levels are reflected in migrants throughout the MENA region as a whole; however, in contrast to Buraydah City, they are also coupled with high levels of unemployment (Sullivan and Nadgrodkiewicz, 2008). This high level of education among internal migrants in Saudi Arabia and MENA contrasts with other developing regions such as South Asia, where inequality in terms of access to education has been one of the main causes of migration (Natali, 2008). The female respondents to the questionnaires were also found to have a high level of education; in fact, nearly all had a university degree.

### **7.2.5 Economic**

The economic motivators for migration are interesting in light of the level of education and age of the migrants, as discussed above. Although a third of the respondents to the questionnaire earned less than SR 3000 per month (SR 1000 being what is typically paid to foreign manual labour), low for Saudi citizens, nearly half earned above the national average of USD15,500 in 2008 (UNICEF, 2010); approximately SR 5000 per month. It is difficult to see how the lower income families survive on such a low income, however, there are no official

recent figures regarding what constitutes the poverty line in Saudi Arabia (World Bank, 2010d). The largest group, 22.6 percent, earned between SR 3000 and SR 4999 per month (1USD = 3.75 Saudi Riyals, 1GBP = 6.2 Saudi Riyals), which correlates with Albassam (2004), where 23 percent were found to be in the same income bracket in neighbouring Unayzah. There were a significant proportion of migrants, 24.3 percent, who had a high income level, i.e. between SR 7000 and SR 15000 per month. Therefore, a wide variation in monthly income exists amongst migrants, consistent with the wide variation in education levels. A correlation was found indicating a strong relationship between a high level of education and a high income (using a Chi Square (P-value of 0.000)).

### **7.2.6 Employment**

A further reflection of the relatively high education levels of migrants is their employment status, the rate of employment was high among respondents to the questionnaires, with 81.7 per cent of migrants in employment, of which 13.9 per cent are self employed or run their own businesses. Unemployment, is at 12.2 per cent, similar to the national level of 11.8 per cent for 2009 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009d) and 11.8 per cent for the Middle East overall and 10.9 per cent for North Africa in 2008 (Sullivan and Nadgrodkiewicz, 2008).

A large number of the migrants, 64.3 percent, were employed by the government; supporting the earlier findings of Al-Sheikh (2000) and Albassam (2004) which showed similar figures for Riyadh and Unayzah respectively, and MENA as a whole (World Bank, 2009c). This shows that there are jobs readily available in the government sector, and reflects the ease of finding employment (see more in chapter eight). The search for work was indeed a driver for migration in the sense that migrants were looking to improve their job and career opportunities, this is presented in more detail in section 7.4.

## **7.3 Patterns of Migration**

This section examines migration to Buraydah City; including the origins of the migrants, i.e. from within or outside the Al Qassim region, which neighbourhoods they prefer, when they first migrated and how long they have been in Buraydah City. An important finding is that

Buraydah City, as a medium-sized city, is a draw for migrants, even from the capital, Riyadh. This is in contrast to theories of modernisation and dependency, which suggest that populations outside of major urban centres, in this case Riyadh, are disadvantaged (Brockhoff and Brennan, 1998) as a result of reduced investment in municipal services (Henerson, 2002) compared to that focused on larger cities (AlKhraif, 2007b). In fact, this has indeed been an issue in Saudi Arabia and migrants are more often attracted to major urban cities such as Riyadh encouraging the government to invest more time and resources there (Alkhedheiri, 2002).

However, this study's finding, i.e. migration from Riyadh to Buraydah City, is in agreement with more recent literature that has focused on Saudi Arabia and the relationship between major and medium-sized cities. There has been a sharp increase in the population of medium-sized cities in MENA generally and Saudi Arabia specifically (Dumper and Stanley, 2007; Al Rabdi, 2008), principally due to the influx of local migrants, as well as due to natural population growth. Moreover, it has been a policy of the government to enhance the economic role played by medium-sized cities to redress the inequalities caused by urban primacy. As a result the manufacturing industry in the country has grown in medium-sized cities (Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, 2000). This is also the case in Latin America, where the high land and labour costs in the major cities have resulted in secondary cities attracting more manufacturing (Cohen, 2004). Moreover, it has also been claimed by Brockhoff and Brennan (1998) that large cities in developing countries are losing their superiority because of economic stagnation and rapid population growth, and because of the perceptions amongst people that living conditions are better in smaller cities; something found in this study.

### **7.3.1 Sources of Migration**

The majority of migrants to Buraydah City migrated from within the Al Qassim region (75 percent, n=115; Table 7.2), and more than half of these migrants were Bedouin from desert areas. Therefore, for the migrants in this study it can be concluded that Buraydah City attracts migrants mostly from the local vicinity, i.e. from within Al Qassim itself. Moreover, this suggests that proximity may be a factor allowing Buraydah City to attract migrants, however, there were also many migrants (24.4 percent n=115) who migrated from other

regions in the country, thus proximity was not a factor, for example, there were more migrants from Jouf in the far north of the country than from neighbouring Hail, and more migrants from Makkah than from neighbouring Madinah (see figure 7.2). Therefore, this suggests that Buraydah City has attractions that exceed mere proximity. Figure 7.3 shows the distribution of the places of origin of the migrants in terms of type of region: desert, villages and cities.

Table 7.2 Region of origin of migrants before migration to Buraydah City

Place of Origin	Frequency	Percent
Desert Al Qassim Region (Bedouin)	45	39.1
Al Qassim Region (village and city migrants)	42	36.5
Riyadh (city migrants)	14	12.2
Ash Sharqiyah (city migrants)	5	4.3
Makkah (city migrants)	4	3.5
Jouf (city migrants)	2	1.7
Asir (city migrants)	1	0.9
Hail (city migrants)	1	0.9
Madinah (city migrants)	1	0.9
Total	115	100

Source: Author's survey (2009).

The results show that there was no intermediary migration before coming to Buraydah for the Bedouin migrants; they came directly from the desert areas and not from the Hijars. The Hijars were purpose-built settlements, dating from as early as 1912, initiated by King Abd Al Aziz Ibn Saud to settle the Bedouin (Shamekh, 1975). The Bedouin came directly from small non-permanent encampments in the desert, and had previously moved around within the Al Qassim region.

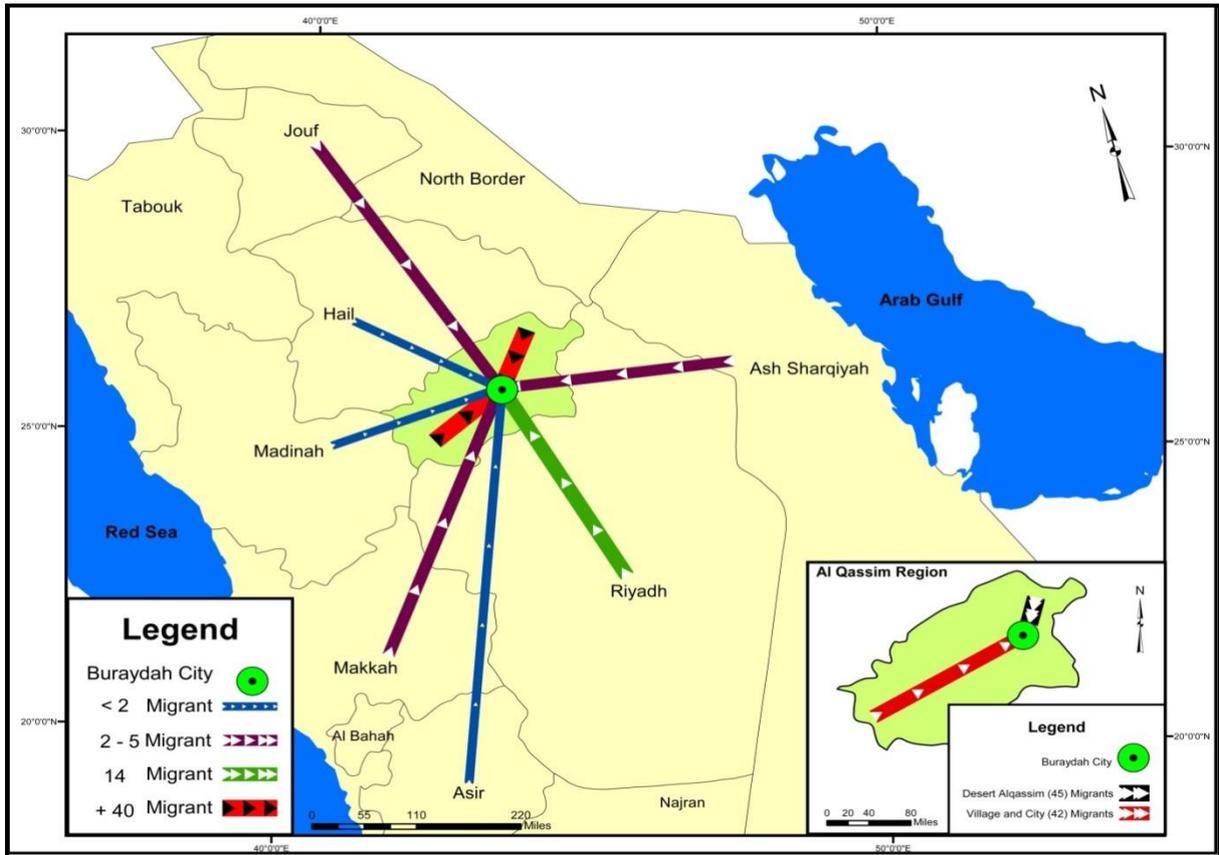


Figure 7.2: Map of pattern and levels of migration from regions to Buraydah City by head of household. Source: Author's survey (2009).

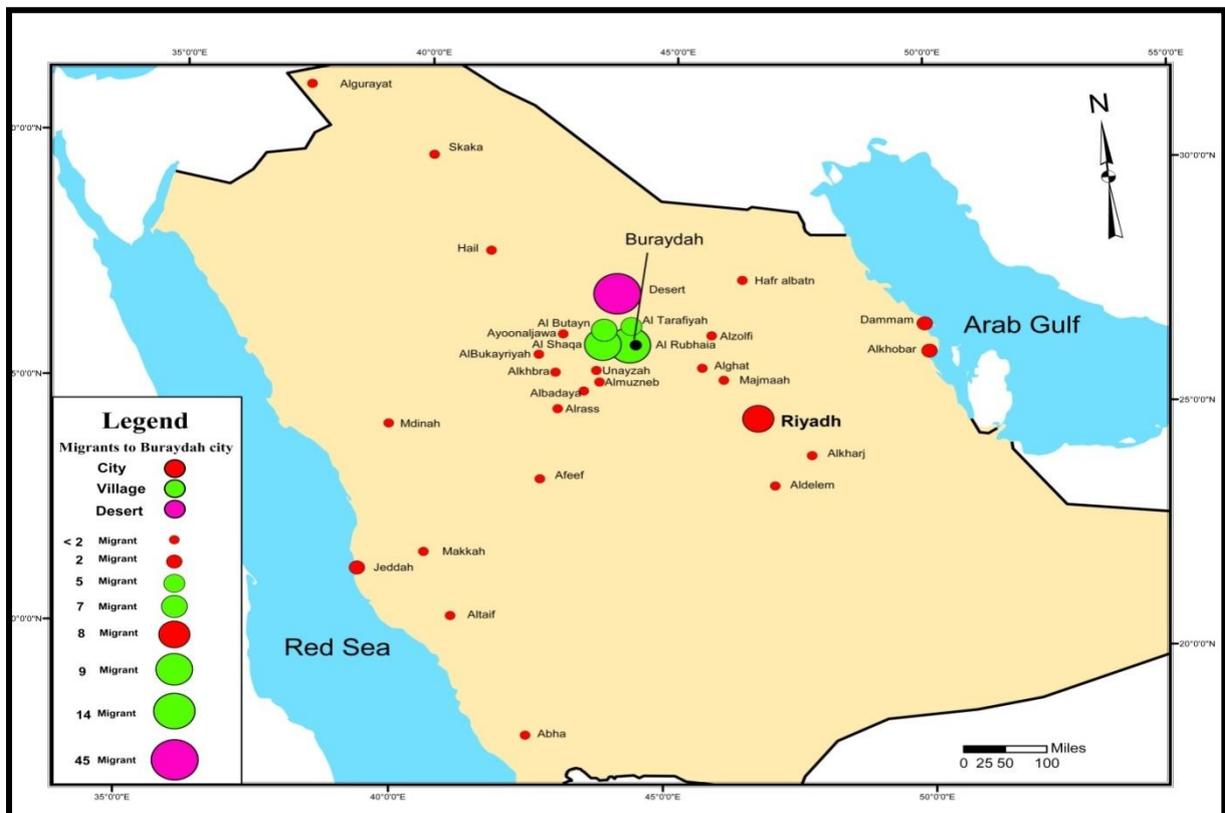


Figure 7.3: Map of Desert, Villages in close proximity to Buraydah City and Cities of origin of migrants to Buraydah City. Source: Author's survey (2009).

### 7.3.2 Migration Destination Points in Buraydah City

For the purposes of the field survey sample, four neighbourhoods were identified as having large populations of migrants: Aldahe, Alaskan, Alngga and Jomeanah (refer to Chapter Three where selection and justification of these sites is presented in more detail). Although these areas are where the migrants lived at the time of the field study, this section is concerned with where migrants first settled upon arrival in Buraydah City. These patterns provide insight into the behaviour and experiences of the migrants.

Migrants to Buraydah City settled in different districts immediately after their arrival. The study found that there was a wide distribution of destination points, evidenced by the fact that each of the 49 districts in the city (Figure 7.4) received migrants, with the exception of the Bedouin who were concentrated in four neighbourhoods: Alsaфра, Alfauzeaa, Aldahe and Alaskan. Three of these areas, Alfauzeaa with ten Bedouin households and Alsaфра and Alaskan with six and four Bedouin households respectively, were found in the centre of the city and are older neighbourhoods, popular with foreign migrants from the Indian Sub-Continent due to cheaper rents, something claimed by the Bedouin in this study. This pattern is also found in cities like Cairo and Maghreb where the poorer migrants choose to live in the central older areas of the cities (Fahmi and Sutton, 2008).

Of the sample surveyed for questionnaires (n=115), about a quarter of the migrants considered their first home to be temporary, and themselves in a transitional stage upon arrival. However, upon further examination it was found that over half (53 percent) remained; this was especially true amongst Bedouin migrants, although initially they had felt that their first home was temporary. Moreover, it was observed that the sample neighbourhoods had large Bedouin populations and this suggested that the Bedouin preferred to stay together. The main reason given for this was that they preferred to stay with family and tribe members when they arrived in Buraydah City, for example:

*No I never moved because I prefer to stay close to my kabila members it is better we are together because we support each other, and this is our tradition because it would be very bad manners to move to another place (I B <10 BI, 24/6/09).*

*I have not moved once. I lodged with my brothers (I B <10 BC, 24/6/09).*

The high level of permanency reported in this study is in contrast to suggestions by Al Sharif (1994), who commented that the establishing of nomad encampments on the outskirts of towns is only a transitional phase that precedes people merging into society. Al Sharif (1994) said that the Bedouin would settle on the periphery of towns to assess them before moving in. A contribution of this study is that it found that there is no transitional stage, the Bedouin were nomadic and came directly from the desert, settled in the abovementioned neighbourhoods, and rarely moved after that. This desire to stay in the same neighbourhood as other Bedouin becomes clearer in subsequent sections that address the drivers and consequences of Bedouin migration to Buraydah City. There have been no other recent studies that address the mobility of migrants within cities in Saudi Arabia.



## 7.4 Drivers of Migration

This research has identified a number of reasons why individuals and families migrate to Buraydah City and has also revealed that there are 'push' factors (i.e. factors associated with life before migration that motivate people to migrate), and pull factors (i.e. aspects of an urban environment that attract migrants). In fact it has been suggested by Malecki and Ewers (2007) that push factors, such as disparity between high incomes and low incomes in less -developed countries have promoted migration, and in MENA those with ambition and an education, as well as those who are poor and unskilled, are motivated by push and pull factors to migrate to urban areas (Hobbs, 2009). In this study reasons for migration included seeking employment, education, marriage, seeking a higher standard of living, trade and joining other members of the family. It should be noted that in this study there are more than just economic factors given as drivers for migration, this was also found to be the case in a study of migrants in Vietnam where there was mix of motives for migration, for example, economic determinants mixed with ecological determinants (Noi, 2010).

Although it was found that there were common drivers among the different migrant groups, i.e. employment, these drivers varied between the groups. For example, employment as a driver for migrants from other cities was often due to relocation by employers, whereas employment as a driver for migrants from villages was often due to lack of employment opportunities. Moreover, there was a variation in the drivers within the groups.

Life before migration was an important determining factor in the decision to migrate, it was found that conditions in the places of origin of the migrants were push factors for migration. The study did find that these push factors were in fact different for each migrant group and that they were largely specific to their place of origin and were related to different areas; including employment opportunities, boredom, lack of facilities and hardship. These are discussed in more detail in sections 7.4.4, 7.4.5 and 7.4.6, relating to each migrant group after an overview of key drivers across the migrant groups.

### **7.4.1 Employment**

The study shows that a key concern identified by migrants in their place of origin prior to migration was that there were limited opportunities for employment or career advancement. Correspondingly, the study found that the primary driver for migration to Buraydah City was employment for all migrant groups. Evidence of this is provided in sections 7.4.4, 7.4.5 and 7.4.6 where individual migrants groups are addressed. According to Kainth (2009), better opportunities for employment is a very significant factor in motivating people to migrate in the developing world, especially when linked with a lack of job opportunities in their place of origin, something that was confirmed by this study. There was common agreement in the interviews that the decision to migrate was based on the prospect of finding suitable employment; and optimism was very high among those who were older and those that had migrated earlier in contrast to the younger migrants. The latter were less optimistic which is no surprise given the fact that there is high unemployment among the young in Saudi Arabia as well as the rest of MENA. The government in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010) has recognised there is a pressing need to create jobs for the increasing number of young people entering the job market.

Pacione (2009) identified a spectrum of migrants; ranging from those with impoverished backgrounds, who are willing to do the most menial of tasks, and those who are from a privileged rural background and expect to enter careers in administration or the professions. The migrants in this study from the rural areas and the desert fall into the latter group, as they have a high level of education relative to non-migrants and have an expectation of securing suitable employment. However, they are not, as Pacione (2009) suggests, a privileged few; indeed, the vast majority of migrants in this study had achieved at least secondary education, with nearly half completing higher education.

The government has recognised an increase in the amount of migration to medium-sized cities from major cities and rural areas due to an increase in work opportunities in cities of this size, as observed in this study. This demonstrates that there has been a shift in the location of economic development from a regional disparity and imbalanced economic

investment in primate cities to an increasing economic focus on medium-sized cities. A result of this has been there are more employment opportunities in medium-sized cities leading to greater migration and subsequently population growth. According to Pacione (2009), such migration is a normal response to the increase in economic development of medium-sized cities, characterised by a relative loss of population from primate cities, referred to as ‘population turnaround’ or ‘polarisation reversal’ (Pacione 2009, p.79).

Finally, the opportunity for trade was also found to be a significant driver among all migrant groups. This study has shown that Buraydah City was built on trade and that there is a historical link with both Bedouin and villagers migrating to Buraydah City to trade in agricultural products. The migrants in this study clearly felt that the city was an excellent place for trade; in this case the trade was mostly in dates. In fact, the study found that a number of the migrants were self-employed and had their own businesses, which they wanted to expand and establish in Buraydah City.

#### 7.4.2 Education

Although education as a driver for migration was not as strong a motive as employment, it was found to be equally important for all three migrant groups. Indeed, there was a high level of education among all migrant groups, especially the Bedouin (Table 7.3).

Table 7.3: Relationship between education and place of origin

Highest Qualification	Region			Total
	City	Village	Desert	
None	1	2	0	3
Primary education	1	3	5	9
Intermediate education	0	5	10	15
Secondary education	14	6	12	32
Certificate/Diploma	5	6	10	21
University degree	12	12	6	30
Postgraduate	2	1	2	5
Total	35	35	45	115
Chi-Square-value=20.714		d.f.=12		P-value=0.055

Source: Author’s survey (2009).

Moreover, the study has already shown that where the migrants were well educated and were seeking education for their children (or in some cases for themselves), the main focus was on higher education. This is understandable as the study found the standard of education in the places of origin is high and would not be considered as significant push factors affecting the migrants themselves. However, a contradiction arises here; where the migrants did state education as a driver they talked about limited educational opportunities for their children in their places of origin despite their having received a good education. This raises the question of why they perceived education in the city as much better.

The likelihood is that evidence from the study suggests that the driver relating to education is in relation to higher education. Those who cited education as important were older migrants who were in their late fifties or early sixties; when they had migrated; their children were approaching the age for higher education, one Bedouin migrant who was 60 years of age at the time of study said:

*I moved for a better future and wanted my children to continue their studies at college in Buraydah City (OH Bedouin 8, 11/7/09).*

In addition, describing what he thought about facilities and services in Buraydah City, he said:

*I think that both the healthcare and education facilities are excellent, I think that my children will have a much better future than me and I am proud of that (I B > 10 DD, 27/6/09).*

Another migrant who was 50 years of age at the time of study and had a son who was also ready to go into higher education said:

*The main reason I moved was because of work but I also wanted my son to go to college and it is much cheaper for us to live in the city than to pay for my son to rent an apartment with his friends, or to pay for his travel back to our village every weekend (IV >10 ZE, 23/7/09).*

Moreover, responses from the younger migrants also provided an answer to this question, one migrant from the village, who was 26 years of age, said:

*I moved for the purpose of pursuing a job and completing my studies. Yes my brothers encouraged me (IV <10 VH, 22/7/09).*

This was also the case with another migrant from the village, who was 34 years of age, he said:

*I moved for reasons of study and to join my father and relatives (IV <10 VD, 22/7/09).*

Finally, nearly half of the migrants who responded to the questionnaire (Table 7.3) and a third of those interviewed had already been the recipients of higher education in Buraydah City. It should be noted that all Bedouin and village migrants who have experience of higher education attended institutions in Buraydah City.

With the high level of education found among migrants it was not surprising that education was not a significant driver in this study. This is in contrast to the findings in the literature, where education is often cited as the driver; for example, the perception is that educational facilities are better in urban areas (UNEP, 2002); in Africa (Sahn and Stifel, 2002) and in South America (Andersen, 2002) migration has been spurred by inequalities in education (Brunn et al. 2008).

#### **7.4.3 Family and Marital Influences**

The study found that reasons associated with the family were also drivers for migration. Family reasons included; joining extended family members in Buraydah City or to a lesser extent to get married (this was rare). Moreover, having relatives already living in Buraydah City was found to further motivate migrants in addition other main drivers such as employment, this was because they had the support of relatives and the benefit of their experience in the city. Indeed, social organisation in MENA is characterised by kinship ties, which are often used to strengthen the economic ability of households in times of financial stress or conflict (Tzannatos, 2000). As for the desire to join relatives in the city, this was especially prevalent among the Bedouin and villagers. This desire to maintain kinship goes against the idea that a feature of urbanisation is the weakening of social bonds, both kin and non-kin (White and Guest, 2003). Besides the fact that family played a role in driving migration, e.g. having relatives in Buraydah City to join or to give advice, the experience of

migration in the city was also influenced by having relatives in the city where bonds, especially among the Bedouin, were kept.

Furthermore, there was a significant level of immediate family involvement in the decision to migrate, with family members encouraging migration. In fact, half of those who were questioned made the decision in consultation with their families. Although the head of the household is responsible for making the overall decision to migrate in Saudi Arabia, in accordance with Islamic tradition, any decisions that affects the family should involve the whole family; this tradition is especially prevalent among the Bedouin and villagers, as revealed by the study. There was however, some variation between the migrant groups in this respect, 55.6 percent of the Bedouin and 54.3 percent of the migrants from other cities made the decision in consultation with their family, in contrast with only 40 percent of the village migrants.

#### **7.4.4 Drivers for Bedouin Migrants**

Much of the literature about migration in the developing world generally, and within, from and to MENA presents the idea that people migrate for the sake of work and as a livelihood strategy for the poor, this has been the case in West Africa which is evidenced by the flow of remittances to place of origin (Black et al. 2004). This study has found that the drivers for Bedouin migrants have been for work and other benefits found in urban centres; however, there was no evidence that life before migration was plagued by poverty, it was more characterised by the difficulty of Bedouin life specifically, meaning the daily practices required for cattle rearing and food preparation, and the limited opportunities in desert areas rather than poverty. In contrast, Waddington and Sabates-Wheeler (2003) say that migration is a strategy undertaken to improve livelihood for the poor and the better off in the developing world.

There was a common agreement among the Bedouin that life in the desert was uncomfortable, for example:

*We suffered from extreme changes in the weather, as you know the desert is very hot during the day and very cold at night, you could feel the cold in your bones (OH Bedouin 3, 10/7/09).*

*Life in the desert was not good. It was a life full of stress and hardship and also fear that we would become poor, you have to really work hard just to get the basic things like food, and we even have to travel to collect water in a water tanker from the nearest village or town (OH Bedouin 6, 11/7/09).*

Moreover, Bedouin migrants from the desert aged between 66 and 75 years, interviewed in the oral histories, spoke about living in tents made from goat's wool and about how they suffered the extreme weather conditions; they complained about sand storms which caused discomfort to the eyes, nose and ears.

There was a general consensus among the Bedouin migrants that they had experienced limited income and work opportunities, only rearing and selling livestock was available, in their place of origin and correspondingly this was a push factor that motivated them to migrate for better employment opportunities; for example:

*There were only two activities in the desert areas which were herding cattle and seasonal trading (I B < 10 BA, 25/6/09).*

*I feel that life in the desert was very primitive and very difficult, it became more and more difficult to make money from selling livestock because the price of animal feed is increasing all the time and we needed it now more than before because there were limited places to let our livestock graze (OH Bedouin 5, 11/7/09).*

Employment differed as a driver between different age groups; the older migrants were motivated by employment and felt there was an abundance of opportunities in Buraydah City, in contrast to their place of origin, and were confident that they would find employment, this was partly due to the fact that some Bedouin had relatives already living in the city:

*I moved to work in the security industry. My kinsmen encouraged me because they were already doing that job and they recommended it (I B < 10 BH, 24/6/09).*

*I moved for work reasons and I was encouraged by relatives who already live in Buraydah City (I B < 10 BD, 25/6/09).*

In contrast, those who arrived more recently were not as optimistic about their prospects of employment, although they were driven by the lack of job opportunities in their place of origin. This study's findings, contrast with those of Islam and Siddiqi (2010) who observed that older people do not like to migrate despite suffering in their place of origin.

In their case, the Bedouin expressed a sense of freedom in regards of their decision to migrate; commenting they were under little pressure to find work in terms of finance. This may seem contradictory in light of the push factors described above, however it is important to see there is a distinction between limited opportunities and poverty in regards to living in desert areas. Chamratrithirong (2007), writing about rural to urban migration in Thailand, observed that the decision to migrate was not only economic but also innovating and rational in nature; with success measured not only by income but in terms of working experience and improved housing conditions. This study found there was a level of careful consideration and planning in the decision making process, for example:

*No one encouraged me, I made the decision myself and I planned it very carefully, you cannot rush these things and I had to be sure it was the right thing to do. There were some members of the family who said it was not a good idea but I ignored them because I think they were jealous (I B < 10 BA, 25/6/09).*

A higher proportion of self-employment was observed amongst the Bedouin migrants; they engaged in rearing cattle to raise income in urban areas. Therefore, for these particular Bedouin, although they have moved into urban areas, they still relied on traditional practices for income generation. Upon further investigation, these Bedouin said they felt that they would be able to engage in more trade in the city and this was the driver for their migration. Moreover, the researcher observed in the field study that a number of the

migrants were engaged in selling cattle to the public informally; it has been suggested by Ndoen et al. (2000) in a study of rural to urban migration in Indonesia, that informal networks are critical in attracting and retaining migrants in a particular place; more so than other variables, such as education and experience.

In terms of family reasons, the Bedouin's decision to migrate was also influenced by having relatives in Buraydah City, this finding agrees with a study by Kok and Collinson (2006) who stated that people who want to migrate are influenced by information given to them by their relatives and friends who are already living in the alternative place of residence.

Moreover, the family was important in informing the decision making process, both in terms of considering family issues in relation to other drivers and having direct involvement in decision-making. For example, where the main driver was the search for work, migrants also felt that work would bring prosperity and opportunities for their children in what was anticipated to be a better urban environment. There are numerous examples of migrants expressing these ideas:

*There were many reasons to move to Buraydah, which were the search for work and raising the standards of living, seeking the general services and bringing up children in a socially developed environment (OH Bedouin 1, 10/7/09).*

*It was the suggestion of my sons that we should move to Buraydah because they wanted a better future so I agreed with them (OH Bedouin 5, 11/7/09).*

*Thanks are due to Allah. My elder son works in the general security and the younger is doing a scholarship. I think they are contented (OH Bedouin 7, 11/7/09).*

Indeed the Bedouin have very close tribal and family ties and this explains the family involvement; however, none of the Bedouin mentioned their family as the primary reason for migration. This was surprising given that the Bedouin value kinship and tribal ties and it would be reasonable to expect members of the larger or extended family to follow their relatives. Marriage was not considered a significant factor in relation to migration; in fact

only one Bedouin respondent cited it as the only reason for migrating. For the Bedouin migrants 60 per cent were married, 28.9 per cent were single and 6.7 per cent were divorced when they migrated; this was consistent with the migrant groups as a whole.

#### **7.4.5 Drivers for Village Migrants**

The theme of hardship in the place of origin was also relevant for the villagers who participated in the research; they felt that life in the villages was boring and monotonous with a daily routine which was difficult. In the positive reflections of life in Buraydah City, which are presented later in this chapter, reference is made to the hardship and monotony of life in the village when comparing the two. It was commented that after evening prayers they went straight to bed, one of the village migrants said:

*We were tired from the work and we had to wake up early the next day to start again, I don't want to complain too much but it was boring sometimes and we did not have time to spend with our families (OH villager 8, 13/7/09).*

One of the migrants from the village, 39 at the time of interview, also felt the same way about village life:

*I miss nothing about the village because I was not happy there, it was very boring and I did not want to stay there all my life .... Because there is nothing to do, especially in the evenings (IV < 10 VC, 22/7/09).*

This study also found that the village migrants felt that they were missing out on the wealth and development taking place in the country and they wanted to be involved; some of them were resentful about the fact that they had to work long hours and people in the towns and cities had an easier life. The elderly migrants who had moved from the villages often complained about housing conditions in their place of origin; they had been living in mud houses which, although they were cool in the hot climate, were felt to be too simple and that they looked forward to living in a proper house. The elderly village migrants described

the lack of health and recreational facilities, electricity and transportation; one of the village migrants complained that:

*Services were very limited in the village, although there was a school, there were not many shops (OH villager 4, 12/7/09).*

Much like the Bedouin migrants, the majority of the village migrants made reference to the fact that there were limited work opportunities in the village and there were complaints about low pay. One of the villagers who had been in Buraydah less than ten years said:

*The jobs in the village are boring and do not pay much, I wanted to take advantage of the development because it is our right as Saudis to be involved (I V < 10 VA, 22/7/09).*

This was also the case for older village migrants also complained that work opportunities in the village were limited, and that they could only be farmers, cattle herders or Islamic teachers; in addition, there was no stability in terms of income as one elderly migrant from a village said:

*Our income changed throughout the year depending on religious holidays and demand for our dates (OH villager 3, 12/7/09).*

Job opportunities and poor salaries in another part of the developing world, China, are blamed on a surplus of farming labour in rural areas resulting in low wages; in the case of China promoting rural to urban migration is found to reduce the surplus, help migrants to seek employment in cities and to increase the wages of rural farmers (Liu, 2003). However, as has been clearly shown in this study, the government in Saudi Arabia wishes to stem the flow of rural to urban migration to alleviate the pressure on urban areas and to balance the development occurring across the country. To achieve this there has been a policy to improve education facilities in rural areas and to attract investment to develop those areas so as to keep rural people from migrating, the opposite to the aforementioned Chinese policy. This study has also found that rural to urban migration from the villages has mostly

involved educated individuals who want to improve their career opportunities; therefore, the migrants in this study had benefitted from improved educational facilities, but the development in rural areas was insufficient to encourage them to remain there. In support of this idea Chamrathirong (2007) explained that the socio-economic improvement of rural inhabitants is mainly superficial and so does not retain the rural population, rather it encourages people to migrate from rural areas.

Furthermore, because the village migrants in this study were well educated, well over half having been in higher education, this suggests that the rural areas are losing people who would have been capable of improving or contributing to the development of rural areas. This was also found in a study of rural to urban migration focusing on Riyadh (Alsakran and Muneer, 2009). However, Alsakran and Muneer (2009) also suggested that migrants were younger and better educated than the older people in the rural areas that they left behind; this was not the case in this study of village migrants, many of those with an education were found to be older, for example there were two migrants who were aged 34 and 42 years who had arrived in the last ten years and completed higher education. In MENA there is a link between low education and unemployment problems, however, it has been shown that both low education levels (El Gawady and El Din, 2008), e.g. in the case of outbound migration from Morocco (Gubert et al., 2009) and high education levels and the brain drain to Europe (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005) have been the drivers of migration. Therefore, the findings of this study are different because a large majority of the migrants were educated.

#### **7.4.6 Drivers for City Migrants**

For those who migrated from other towns and cities, the story was different, there was no feeling of hardship in their place of origin and the complaints were mostly related to limited income and work opportunities and complaints about municipal services, the poor urban environment and health and recreational facilities; one elderly migrant said:

*There were no recreational facilities in our old town, in Buraydah there are many parks for the family and also many restaurants and shopping malls (OH City 2, 14/7/09).*

Moreover, a significant number felt that there was little security in their place of origin in terms of property and personal security, and they thought that Buraydah City would have more police and therefore, more security. Other issues referred to regarding other cities and towns included the cleanliness of the streets; migrants felt that the local and national government did not care about this issue. Correspondingly, this study found that the search for a better urban environment was a driver among city migrants. In fact, there was an increase in migration to medium-sized cities from other cities in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 1985) because of improvements in municipal services and social facilities (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 1995).

Although employment was the main driver for migration, over a third of them were already employed (82.8 per cent) and the reason for their migration was relocation by their employers and not the search for work:

*I was not influenced by the prospect of employment because my employer sent me to Buraydah as part of my job and I have been here since then (I C >10 CB, 6/8/09).*

*I came to Buraydah City because of my employer, I did have a choice but they offered me a better position and a better salary and it was easier for me to achieve a higher position in the company (I C < 10 AG, 3/8/09).*

*I moved to Buraydah because my company sent me here, I did not like the idea at first because it is very stressful to move house and change everything, especially the children's school, but my wife really liked the idea of living in Buraydah City (I C < 10 AI, 3/8/09).*

Very few of these migrants cited the search for work as a driver; there was one interviewee, who said:

*I moved to seek work, promotion and better services (I C > 10 CF, 6/8/09).*

Joining family members was also found to be a driver for migrants from other cities, as some of the city migrants were rejoining their relatives from the wider family unit who had migrated before them. One city migrant said:

*I moved to follow my family who were already living in Buraydah City, all my uncles and cousins were there and we wanted to be with them, I prefer it if all of us are together because we help each and it is better for my wife because she has more cousins to socialise with when I am at work (I C < 10 AH, 4/8/09).*

Therefore, this shows that there are two distinct groups within the city migrants; those relocated by their employers and those migrating to join other family members. The latter motivation was more expected from the Bedouin and villagers because of close family ties, but, this study reveals that family ties are strong amongst urbanites as well. Evidence of city migrants joining family members was the fact that they have very large households, even in comparison to other migrant groups. The large number of adults in these households is reflective of the fact migrants were often found to be living with their extended families. Evidence of this is for two reasons; firstly, they did not have enough offspring that may have reached adulthood to account for having many adults, and secondly, half of the respondents were too young to have offspring who had reached adulthood.

## **7.5 The Migration – pre-migratory emotions**

Thus far, the study has presented the patterns of migration and the drivers behind migration. Before the study moves on to describe the experiences of migration informing relocation to Buraydah City i.e. the experience of living in Buraydah City, it is important to report on one of the significant findings of the study; that is the high level of anxiety, apprehension and expectations among migrants in relation to the prospect of migration.

It was found that there were varying degrees of discrepancy between pre-migratory expectations and feelings and the post-migratory experience; moreover, it was discovered that pre-migratory and post-migratory experiences differed between the generations. The post-migratory experiences are presented in the following chapter. Overall, the older

migrants had a high level of anxiety about the prospect of urban life coupled with a high positive expectation of securing employment; in contrast, the younger migrants had a low level of concern or a higher optimism about the prospect of urban life coupled with a negative expectation of securing employment. This section will provide insight into these factors, in relation to the generational differences and the different migrant groups; it is important to address pre-migratory feelings in order to compare them with post-migratory experiences.

### **7.5.1 Negative Feelings about Migration**

The migrants expressed negative feelings about the prospect of migration, these feelings were expressed as anxiety, apprehension and a general uncertainty. These feelings were expressed as a result of different yet specific concerns between the migrant groups, and where there were differences within the groups, it was often varied between groups and generations. Yue et al. (2010) noted that older rural to urban migrants are more concerned about the type of job they will acquire and are motivated by the desire to improve the situation of their family; whereas younger migrants see migration as an economic investment. In this study older migrants expressed more negative feelings about the prospect of migration, this was mainly due to the circumstances at the time, such as not having the benefit of other's experiences, which created a sense of the unknown, whereas the younger migrants did have the benefit of others' experiences.

Specifically, for elderly Bedouin migrants there was a sense of uncertainty and apprehension about migration. This was due to the fact that the Bedouin migrants acknowledged the differences between their desert environment and the urban environment of the city, and the different lifestyles in each and they acknowledged a concern about unfamiliar and diverse cultures and their ability to adapt:

*We were not sure what we would find there because we did not know much about the city, I was very worried about moving to Buraydah and I think my family was as well, but we all knew that we would settle in eventually (OH Bedouin 6, 11/7/09).*

Although elderly migrants from the villages also expressed concerns about their lack of experience in an urban environment, unlike the Bedouin, they provided more detail about

their specific concerns such as language issues, social differences, adaptation and unfamiliarity with city regulations. An elderly migrant from the village stated:

*We thought it would take us a lifetime to adapt, we didn't know if it was going to be easier or more difficult or if it was worth the effort (OH villager 3, 12/7/09).*

These concerns were also expressed by one migrant who was 52 at the time of the interview:

*I moved to search for a job. I was encouraged by my brothers, I don't think I would have moved without their encouragement because I was worried about life in the city. I didn't know anything and I thought I might be a stranger there, I only had my brothers (I V >10 ZB, 23/7/09).*

As for the younger migrants their negative feelings were related to pessimism about the prospect of securing employment, even though it was found to be a major driver for them; one migrant who came from another city within the last ten years said:

*I did migrate for employment yes, but I felt there are no chances for vacancies (IC <10 AE, 4/8/09).*

The apprehension about finding work amongst the younger, more recent migrants was related to the fact that they had higher aspirations and expectations regarding the kind of work they were looking for, which reduced their confidence. In fact, in the interviews these migrants often expressed the idea that they were entitled to higher or better positions:

*I was greatly influenced by work. I have a security management certificate and wanted a management position, but there are many people who are older than me and have more experience (I B < 10 BF, 24/6/09).*

*I remember that I was worried about finding a job in Buraydah, so I decided to try to find a job first before I moved. At that time it was not easy to find a suitable job even though we had qualifications, but it is not as bad as the situation now where many young graduates cannot find a job at all (I V <10 VF, 22/7/09).*

The majority of those who migrated from other cities were apprehensive about moving, and surprisingly, the reason given by most of them was concern about not being able to adapt to a new urban environment, this was more evident here than in other migrant groups. One of the migrants said that:

*Buraydah is very different to our home town because it is very large (I C > 10 AF, 6/8/09).*

One Bedouin respondent stated that:

*My relatives went to Buraydah before me and they returned because they had a bad experience so that made me more worried, I think that they did not like the people there and that no one wanted to help them or welcome them, my cousin cursed the people there and said he would not go back again (I B < 10 BG, 25/6/09).*

Financial concerns were also reported among all migrant groups, some migrants arrived with a limited amount of money and were anxious about whether this would last them until employment was secured, another financial concern was that their income would not be sufficient for city life; as one Bedouin stated:

*I didn't know if my limited income would be enough to live on in the city because many of my friends told me life was expensive and there were many things to think about, especially the rent for the house (I B < 10 BB, 24/6/09).*

The apprehension that was felt by migrants from the desert and villages was due to the differences between the rural/desert and the urban environment; however, migrants from other cities shared similar concerns about moving to a new, more sophisticated urban environment. With reference to the framework of this study, the feelings about migrating to Buraydah City were very much based on social concerns, i.e. fitting in to an urban environment, the consequences for their family and also economic concerns. The economic opportunities were enough to help the migrants surveyed here overcome their other concerns. This is in contrast with the situation in much of the developing world and also elsewhere within MENA, where migration to urban areas can mean moving to slums and

squatter settlements (Davis, 2006) and experiencing urban poverty despite increased incomes (Bloom and Khanna, 2007). Therefore, in comparison to poorer developing nations, migrants in Saudi Arabia can be said not to face serious problems; anxiety over lifestyle is a fair trade when measured against the likely prospect of increased income.

### **7.5.2 Positive Feelings about Migration**

Anxiety and concerns about migration were always accompanied by positive feelings of optimism and expectations of achieving the aims of the migration, such as finding work or creating a better future for migrants' families. These positive feelings, in combination with the push and pull factors discussed in the previous section in relation to drivers, were stronger than the negative concerns, it should be noted that the negative concerns were clearly not overwhelming as the migrants chose to migrate.

According to elderly respondents from the villages they were generally positive about migrating to Buraydah City, one respondent stated:

*Moving to Buraydah would mean a brighter future for us and our children, we want them to have a good education and when they have finished there will be more opportunities for them to find a career, we want them to have a better life than we had, this is my responsibility (OH villager 1, 12/7/09).*

Thus, their children had some influence on the process as they were often mentioned, where there was optimism and expectation the villagers also spoke about their children in terms of opportunities and in relation to the boredom associated with village life, one village migrant stated that:

*The younger members of the family were happy to migrate because village life was boring (OH villager 5, 13/7/09).*

Those who migrated from other cities also referenced their children's future when describing how they felt about migration. According to Yue et al. (2010), writing about rural to urban migrants in China, for older generation family responsibility was a determinant of intentions to migrate.

The younger Bedouin were found to experience less anxiety and have more expectations regarding life at their destination, this was the case for the younger members of the elderly migrants' families and the younger migrants who responded to the questionnaires and interviews. In addition, those who arrived more recently had access to more information about the city, which encouraged the sense of confidence and expectation. It has been suggested by Zhang et al. (2009) that a positive pre-migratory expectation about life in the future destination has a positive effect on the post-migratory quality of life. In Chapter Eight the experiences of post-migratory life are examined which shed light on the latter point. However, it has been suggested by Mckelvey and Webb (1996) that if the migrants are over optimistic then expectatations can then be unrealistic, leading to a greater discrepancy between expectations and the actual experience, having a negative effect on the post-migratory experience. It should be noted at this point that although looking at the pre-migratory emotions is useful when understanding the drivers and consequences of migration, this study examined these emotions retrospectively and so recollection bias may exist (Mckelvey and Webb, 1996).

Having investigated pre-migratory emotions it is necessary to present the actual experiences of the migrants living in Buraydah City, which by comparison should highlight the validity of the concerns and expectations mentioned above contributing to ideas about pre-migratory expectations and post migratory experiences, such as Zhang et al. (2009). In accordance with the framework of this study, the urban experience will be examined in consideration of economic, political, social and cultural factors. The benefits of life in Buraydah City were very much highlighted by the positive opinions of migrants generally regarding facilities such as health care, education and recreation as revealed in detail in the following chapter.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

The main driver for migration for all of the migrants groups was work, this was the case in the developing world generally (Kainth, 2009) and MENA (Dito, 2008, Madbouly, 2009), however, a simple need to find work, was not the case, and the situation was found to far more complex and included variables such as place of origin, time of migration and generational difference. For example, although the study identified a number of drivers for

migration (work, education, family and standard of living), these were not mutually exclusive with more than one driver typically found to be significant. This was particularly apparent in reference to the decision making process; whereby, for example, the driver of employment was contributed to by the driver of better education opportunities for children, indeed this has been recognised in the literature (Brunn et al., 2008, Fargues, 2002). Furthermore, various influences on the decision to migrate revealed involvement by other family members, whose suggestions were derived from different aspirations, which together determined the decision to migrate, this agrees with Kok and Collinson (2006) who says that migrants are encouraged by relatives who are already in the place of destination.

This study divided migrants into three groups according to their place of origin i.e. desert areas, villages and other towns and cities; this was done to establish the different experiences of each group. It was found that there were similarities and differences between the groups and within the groups, specifically generational differences, in terms of the drivers and consequences of urbanisation for migrants. It was important to consider the cultural dimension because according to Kainth (2009) migration is also driven by social and cultural factors and such factors should be considered as part of a cross-disciplinary approach (Shechter and Yacobi, 2005). Although employment was the main driver for all groups, it manifested in different ways; for example seeking employment, relocation by employer, career related motivation and trade. In the case of generational differences within the groups these were related to pre-migratory expectations and post-migratory experiences (e.g. the difficulty in finding employment and housing or being satisfied by the urban environment) making it difficult to formulate an overall idea about the drivers for any one group. Although the study examined all migrant groups, it revealed some interesting findings about the Bedouin migrants in particular that were unexpected, for example, they migrated direct from the desert to the city with no intermediary migration first. In addition, the Bedouin were the only group that liked to live in the same neighbourhoods as one another.

This chapter also revealed the emotional aspects of migration, providing a meaningful insight into feelings about the prospect of migration. More specifically, the migrants were anxious and worried about migration and life in a new environment; this was coupled with a

sense of apprehension regarding whether or migrating is a good idea. More positively, however, the migrants felt a sense of expectation, that Buraydah City would fulfil their expectations.

Buraydah City is a medium-sized city but this was not found to be a disadvantage in terms of attracting migrants; the city even pulled migrants from Riyadh. The city was discovered to appeal to different types of migrants, including those from other cities, who were particularly satisfied with urban life there. Thus, the city was identified as having many pull factors, although push factors were equally important, i.e. the negative aspects of the places of origin that also prompted migration. Further evidence of Buraydah City as an attractor is the fact that the results showed that proximity to the city was not a factor for migration. The idea that Buraydah City is an attractor of migrants is in agreement with the literature (Dumper and Stanley, 2007, Al Rabdi, 2008, Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs, 2000) that medium-sized cities are the newly emerging economic centres in the region. This chapter has covered the drivers and the pre-migratory issues, in order to understand the entire experience of migration and urbanisation for the migrants it is necessary to examine their experience upon arrival in the city, or the post-migratory issues. Therefore, the experiences of migrants' life in Buraydah City are addressed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE EXPERIENCE OF MIGRATION AND URBANISATION IN BURYDAH CITY

#### 8.1 Introduction

Chapter six provided an analysis of the patterns and processes of urbanisation in Buraydah City, discussing the trends, drivers and consequences from the viewpoints of other writers, and considering government policy as a factor in such processes. Chapter six also addressed these patterns and how Buraydah City was distinguished within the context of MENA, however, there was insufficient empirical information available regarding migrant's experiences of migration and urbanisation in Buraydah City.

In accordance with the framework of this study, it is necessary to consider the economic, political and social factors that play a role in migration and urbanisation in Buraydah City. This assertion is supported by Yacobi and Shechter (2005, p.499) who argued that: "Urbanisation is an economic, political, and socio-cultural complexity...Municipal and state decision making further shape the nature of urban spaces, and socio-cultural transformations influence perceived notions of the lived space", the perceived notions of the lived space are how people see their urban environment. This need for a multidimensional approach is also supported by Brunn et al. (2008) who say that urban geography is about the interactions between the political, cultural, environmental and economic in the context of space and place. Shechter and Yacobi (2005) stated that in the examination of urban dwellers, urban planning and political decision-making and the effect of each on cityscapes, there is a need for more elaborate discussion regarding the Middle East which has been understudied. This study of Buraydah City pays particular attention to the social aspects of the migrant's experiences because according to Levy (2008) there have been numerous attempts to isolate characteristics of urban life in line with various disciplines i.e. geography, history, economics and political science. According to Amin and Thrift (2002), urban theory has moved towards an understanding of the plural nature of urban life, meaning that there is a new co-existence between different classes of people,

social groups and cultures that combine to create the 'complex spirit of the urban' (Amin and Thrift, 2002, p.8).

This chapter begins by examining the overall experiences of all of the migrant groups of life in a new urban environment; it covers areas such as the experience of finding employment, financial issues and housing. The review of the literature has shown that finding employment is a major part of the experience of migration and urbanisation and a determinant of success, especially as work is always the main driver, unfortunately, in much of the developing world the experience has been negative (Deshingkar and Natali, 2008, Sijuwade, 2010). This has also been the case for housing where many migrants have to squat or live in slum settlements (Fourchard, 2003, Beauchemin and Bocquier, 2003) another negative aspect of migration experiences. Thereafter, there is a more detailed analysis of the experiences of each individual migrant groups, highlighting the unique and specific experiences they have encountered. The reason for addressing these different groups is that migration is also driven by social and cultural factors (Kainth, 2009, Shechter and Yacobi, 2005) and such cultural differences between nomadic Bedouin, urban dwellers and villagers should not be ignored, moreover, as well as cities offering education, employment, urban services and housing they are also centres for cultural development (UNEP, 2002). Furthermore, it is a contribution of this study that it addresses the experiences of different cultural groups, because in MENA at the city level people are often seen as culturally similar, which is only considered as a superficial similarity (Dumper and Stanley, 2007) and there is no evidence of different cultural groups being compared in the same migration experience in a medium-sized in the region. Finally, there is a presentation of out migration intentions of the migrants, which is, as the study suggests, a reflection of their experience in the city.

## **8.2 Experiences of Urbanisation for Migrants**

One of the main findings of this study is that there were differences or discrepancies between the pre-migratory expectations and the reality of what the migrants found. Indeed these discrepancies had a significant effect on the success or failure of the migration and the experiences and perceptions of life in the destination. Mostly the experiences were

considered a success because migrants' hopes for finding employment and a better quality of life were met and most of their fears were allayed as they quickly adapted to life in the city.

Concerns among the migrants about the prospect of life in Buraydah City were very short-lived, amongst those who were originally apprehensive their fears were unfounded as they enjoyed life in the city. This was found to be the case for all migrant groups, whose concerns were allayed over time. More specifically, there was an overall positive experience of life in Buraydah City due to an improvement in the lives of the migrants in terms of employment, housing, municipal services and general quality of life. These experiences of urban life for the migrants are discussed in detail below.

The literature review in this study showed that in much of the developing world the experience of migrating to an urban area is negative, for example, there is no access to decent housing with only rudimentary shelters or squatter settlements available to migrants (Pacione, 2009). Experiences associated with finding work can also be negative; too many people in the developing world are competing for too few jobs. As a consequence social problems can arise as a result of competition for services and space (Brunn et. al, 2008). This study has shown that the experience of migrants moving to Buraydah City has been very different to that elsewhere in the region. Those interviewed and surveyed reported a generally positive experience in terms of finding or achieving what they migrated for. Overall, the migrants have been satisfied with life in the city and have shown little intention of leaving. Moreover, the few criticisms, mainly regarded the state of the roads or recommendations for the improvement of urban facilities.

### **8.2.1 Urban Experiences**

The majority of the migrants felt that life in Buraydah City was either good, excellent, or that they were contented and most of the migrants felt that they had achieved their aims in migrating to the city. Moreover, the positive opinion of migration and urbanisation in the city was compared with reflections about the difficulties of life in their place of origin.

The study reveals different aspects of the overall migration experience and suggests that each migrant group experiences them differently; however, there were also many shared experiences, especially in terms of the financial difficulties of urban life.

The discussion began with the complaints that were made by the migrants about Buraydah City. There was a consensus about the unsightliness and poor conditions of the roads; a Bedouin respondent to the interviews who had arrived in the last ten years said:

*The streets are too narrow and not well paved and the drainage systems need work, I was surprised about this because there is a local municipal authority in Buraydah who are responsible for this (I B < 10 BD, 25/6/09).*

The condition of the roads was the only major complaint (Plate 8.1), although there was a clear generational difference where most recently arrived migrants complained compared to only 20 percent of those who arrived more than ten years ago. Other concerns were very few, and insignificant by comparison, and included the condition of the side streets, particularly in reference to paving and lighting. Overall, this suggests a high level of satisfaction with the city, the second most popular response to the question about what they would improve was 'nothing'.



Plate 8.1: Poor quality roads and paving in Buraydah City. Source: Author's survey (2009).

The study has already established that the main driver for migration was the search for work, therefore, the experience and success of finding suitable employment is a reflection of the success or failure of the migration. Upon arrival in Buraydah City, a significant proportion of the recently arrived migrants interviewed, faced some difficulties in gaining suitable employment. A statement made by one of the recently arrived Bedouin migrants supported this:

*I think the reason that there were not so many jobs available was because the earlier migrants took the better jobs (I B < 10 BJ, 25/6/09).*

The obstacles to employment revealed by this study were gleaned from interviewing all the migrant groups. Figure 8.1 provides a visual representation of obstacles to employment obtained from the interview process; those at the top of the figure show the most significant obstacles. Having sufficient experience was a significant issue for all the migrants who arrived in the last ten years, many of the jobs that were available required a certain level of skill or experience, and complaints included the nature of the work, aggressive managers and the feeling that there are not enough recruitment agencies:

*I found it difficult to find a job because I did not have enough experience, I think that companies prefer people who are from the city and have a lot of experience already of working in the city (I B < 10 BB, 24/6/09).*

*They demand experience in private organizations and governmental posts and the vacancies are rare (I C < 10 AA, 3/8/09).*

*First, they would demand experience. How could we have experience since we have never worked before? (I V < 10 VC, 22/7/09).*

A more serious concern was that for those who had achieved higher education there were no jobs available to suit the migrant's level of education:

*Though I have been married for six years and I am a university degree holder, I am unable to find a job (I B < 10 BI, 24/6/09).*

The issue of being educated and facing difficulty finding employment due to a lack of vacancies is a significant issue that faces the country. Saudi Arabia has high unemployment levels among its own nationals and the country is only now involved in enforcing Saudisation policies in the private sector.

*I faced problems with all the jobs that I applied to. The salary is low while the working hours are long and does not suit my qualifications (I V < 10 VH, 22/7/09).*

In contrast to the abovementioned problems faced by more recently arrived migrants, a majority of those who had migrated more than ten years ago and the elderly migrants, felt that there had been many job opportunities and that they did not face any difficulties. This directly reflects another finding of this study that earlier migrants were optimistic about employment prospects and younger, more recent migrants had concerns. Some of the older migrants said in support of this:

*I did not face any problems finding work, it was easy for us at that time (I B > 10 DD, 27/6/09).*

*There were many work opportunities in Buraydah, so I did not have any problems finding a job. When I first came there were lots of chances of work even for the secondary graduates (IV >10 ZE, 23/7/09).*

Low salaries were also a concern for all the migrants; in fact, low salaries were one of the initial drivers cited for migration:

*The low payment for Saudi salaries, even though we are qualification holders (I C < 10 AD, 3/8/09).*

*I faced the problem of low salary and the nature of work (I C <10 AI, 3/8/09).*

*I faced the problems of low payment and the aggressive managers (I B < 10 BF, 24/6/09).*

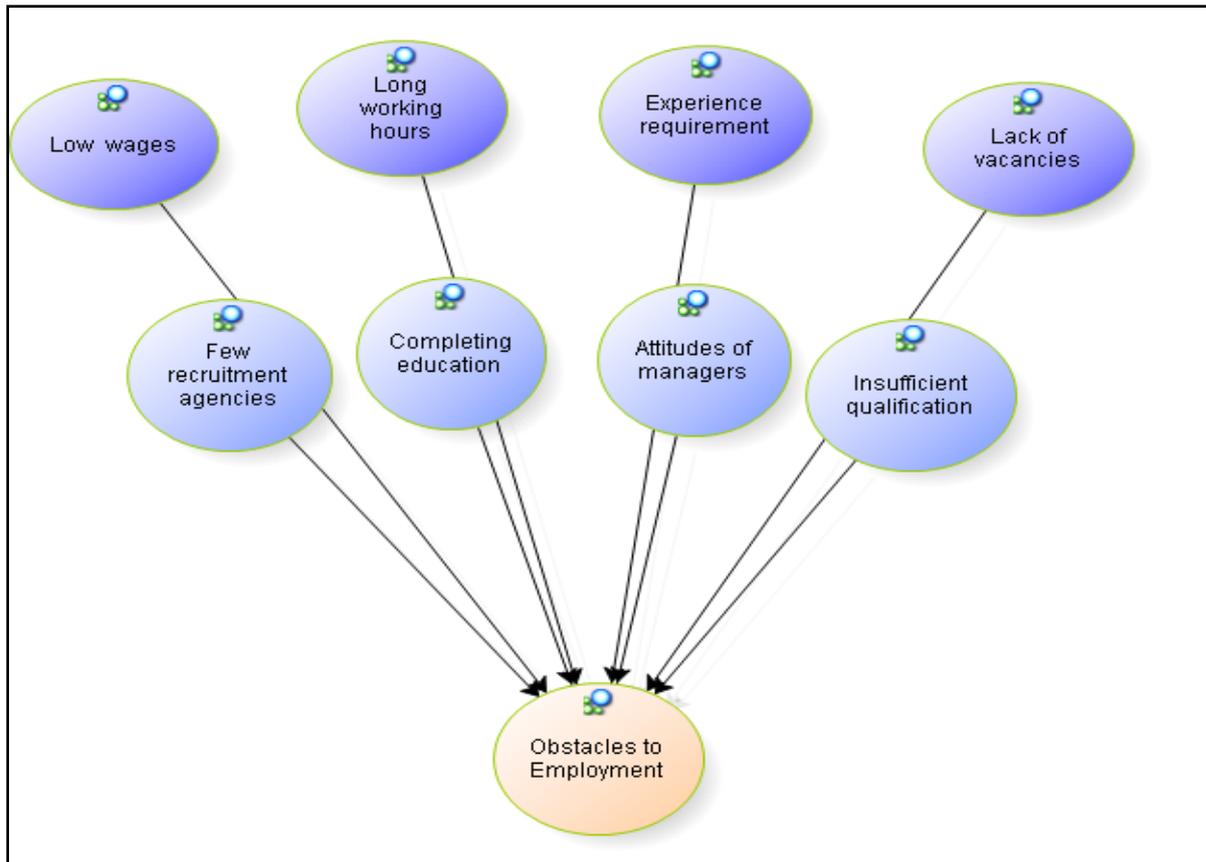


Figure 8.1: Obstacles to all migrants securing employment. Source: Author's survey (2009).

The relationship between income in Buraydah City and the search for work as a driver for migration was important. It was found from the questionnaires that there was a significant relationship (Chi Square =136.661 and P= 0.00) between the reasons for migration and the monthly household income after migration. For example, if the migrant came to Buraydah City seeking work then they had an associated higher income than, for example, someone who came for different reasons such as seeking an education. Therefore, many of those who were seeking employment achieved upward mobility in terms of their income. In contrast, according to Dumper and Stanley (2007) newly arrived migrants in cities in MENA often face unemployment. However, it has been claimed by Kabbani and Kothari (2005), that although MENA shares commonalities in terms of employment, e.g. high unemployment among the

large young population, there are unique situations in MENA due to government policies that create different employment situations, e.g. Saudi Arabia's prioritising its own citizens for jobs. A point to note here is that the field study was conducted in 2009 and since then the employment prospects for Saudi citizens have significantly improved. In 2011, the Nitaqat Saudisation programme was introduced, whereby companies are now required to achieve a specific quota of Saudi employees or face penalties. This has created a boon for Saudis seeking work; before this policy was implemented many young people found it difficult to secure work, but now companies are keen to attract them in order to fulfil the required Nitaqat quotas (Wahab, 2011).

A common theme that emerged throughout the study related to the financial difficulties experienced by migrants upon arrival in Buraydah City, most of which are related to higher rents or mortgage repayments. All groups expressed such difficulties, to a greater or lesser extent. In addition to housing costs, the urban environment presented financial challenges for the individual in that it is often more expensive to live in a city than in the desert or a village. Moreover, the migrants had to learn to manage their finances in a different way because there were more costs to consider in the city, e.g. transportation, amenities and education.

The results show that the migrants perceived there was a definite relationship between urban life and increased expense, something that would have implications for their perception of the city in relation to why they migrated, e.g. financial gain, regarding which their responses showed an element of disappointment. Moreover, this study showed that the financial burdens were the same and experienced by all migrants regardless of their place of origin. However, an issue that should be considered is that the issue of finance may be a sensitive subject of discussion for most migrants, and it is an especially sensitive one for the Bedouin. Thus, the responses to this enquiry were often short, revealing very little information. This is because the belief that the less said about one's finances the better (silence affords protection from jealous eyes) is very much embedded in Arab and Muslim culture. The researcher predicted that questions about finances would be sensitive, and this was confirmed by the short, reluctant answers.

### 8.2.2 Housing

The type of housing in which the migrants live is very much part of the overall urban experience of life in Buraydah City. Much of the literature mentions that the inadequate provision of housing is a major factor in a negative experience of urbanisation (Bloom and Khanna, 2007, Brockerhoff and Brennan, 1998, Bayat and Denis, 2000) and that urbanisation itself leads to housing shortage issues (Bhuyan et al., 2001) and that better housing is a driver for migration (Brunn et al., 2008). Therefore, the consequences of migration in terms of housing are relevant in examining the overall experience of urbanisation. The type of housing is also a reflection of the social class of the migrants, in fact studies of urban sociology have examined 'housing classes' in relation to ethnic minorities, and housing access where it is argued that access to housing is not based on a migrants job, but rather on their ethnicity; and that ethnic minorities are discriminated against even by the state in housing provision (Hall, 2001 p.27). This forms part of the justification for looking at the housing status of the migrants, because it is related to social aspects, which are part of the multidimensional approach in this study. The migrants in this study had a positive housing experience, both in terms of the class of housing and the ease of finding suitable housing. One of the reasons for this is that the government have provided soft loans to migrants to buy houses, something that was established in 1974 and was available for all migrants. The experience for migrants in this study was in stark contrast to other parts of the MENA region and the developing world generally. For example, Cairo is plagued by squatter settlements, semi-formal and poor quality housing and insecure tenures, even for those who are working (Davis, 2006). According to Pacione (2009), types of housing in the Third World frequently comprise of public housing where rents are too high for the poor, squatter settlements with very little access to municipal services and slums.

Moreover, whether or not migrants own their homes and whether they are permanent or temporary often reflects their financial status, their intention to stay settled and their satisfaction with where they live. In fact, in a study by Khraif (1992) on migration in Riyadh, found that owning a home was the most influential factor in encouraging a migrant not to return to their place of origin. This section of the study will therefore address the types of housing available to migrants, occupancy; mobility after arrival in the city, satisfaction with

housing, and the overall experience related to finding suitable housing and associated support.

Overall, the study found that the most popular type of housing is the villa, with over half of the migrants preferring this type of accommodation. This confirms other studies carried out by Al-Sheikh (2000) and Al Arishi (2002) that found villas to be the most popular internal migrant dwellings in Saudi Arabia. The villa type dwelling is at the highest level in terms of housing classes (Plate 8.2).



Plate 8.2: An example of a Villa under construction in Jomeanah, Buraydah City. Source: Author's survey (2009).

There was a significant relationship between income and type of housing, and although this was expected, it was interesting to note that there was a high level of ownership of villas amongst the lower income groups as well as amongst the higher earners. In fact, for migrants who were in the lower income bracket, between SR 1000 – SR 2999, an equal number lived in flats and villas (Table 8.1).

Apartments were the next most popular type of dwelling, their lower level of popularity in comparison to villas was not due to large family sizes because most of the migrant households had small families. Unfortunately, apartments do not create a sense of an

Islamic environment; there is no sense of privacy (Mubarak, 2004) and although the villas have been criticised for being alien to Saudi culture and traditional Islamic urban spaces (Al-Hemaidi , 2001), they are surrounded on all sides by gardens and a wall and afford the occupants more privacy than apartments. Moreover, there is the argument put forward by Glasze and Alkhayyal (2002) that the villa design, clustered in gated compounds is in fact a revival of sociospatial patterns found in traditional Arab towns. Although it should be remembered that upon examination, apartments are popular generally in Buraydah City and there are many new developments (Plate 8.3).

Table 8.1: Type of housing and household monthly income

Type of house Monthly Income	Villa	Flat	Old house	Mud house	other	Total
< 1000 SR	4	5	6	1	0	16
1000-2999	7	7	3	0	1	18
3000-4999	13	9	4	0	0	26
5000-6999	16	5	1	0	0	22
7000 – 8999	4	5	1	0	0	10
9000-10999	6	1	0	0	3	10
11000-12999	0	0	2	0	1	3
13000-14999	5	0	0	0	0	5
>=15000	3	1	0	0	1	5
Total	58	33	17	1	6	115
Chi-Square-value=60.133			d.f.=32		P-value=0.002	

By using the Chi Square test for independence, there is a strong relationship shown between the type of housing and monthly income, providing a P- value of 0.002. Author's survey (2009).



Plate 8.3: Apartments under construction in Buraydah City. Author's survey (2009).

Some of the respondents, 14.8 percent, lived in older houses, built after mud houses were abandoned but in advance of the modern villa type dwelling. Such accommodation was based on the old Arab-style dwelling house, but constructed with modern materials. They are found to be cheap to rent and so are often used as temporary homes before migrants can afford housing that is more permanent. Very few of the migrants had moved into the old, traditional mud houses, as these are known for their lack of modern sanitation facilities.

Overall, there has been no significant difference in housing type preference between different migrant groups. One explanation for this can be found in a study by Nagy (2006) about migration in Qatar, where although cultural differences among Qataris affected their choice of housing, this has been minimal because housing and land policies are the same for all Qataris; this is also true in relation to Saudi government policy where there is allocation of land and housing soft loans.

In addition to high housing standards, the migrants generally reported that it was easy to find their first home in the city. The Bedouin migrants who arrived more than ten years ago also had positive experience in terms of finding a house and in being supported by the government, in fact 70 per cent stated that there were no problems at all and only 20 per cent cited difficulties because of high house prices. Moreover, the majority felt that they received full support from the government upon arrival in Buraydah City. Even greater support was experienced by the Bedouin who arrived in the last ten years; this is in contrast to the high level of dissatisfaction with the support among village and city migrants. This is a reflection of more recent government policies, intended to control the flow of rural to urban migration, and to settle the Bedouin, which could be seen as a form of positive discrimination.

The study found marked diversity among the migrants in terms of their first home being temporary or permanent. Of the Bedouin who migrated in the last ten years, 60 per cent felt that their first home was temporary. There were two main reasons cited for moving into temporary accommodation; firstly, on a trial basis whilst they determined if city life suited them, and secondly, because they were unable to afford permanent or more desirable housing until they had established themselves financially:

*Yes I am still searching for a permanent house, the problem is that I cannot afford one now it will take a few more years (I B < 10 BH, 24/6/09).*

Although it may seem contradictory that despite government support, some migrants were unable to afford their desired properties upon arrival in the city, however, the soft loan system in Saudi Arabia operates on a waiting list system and people have to wait a number of years until they are eligible.

*Yes it is temporary because it is my dream to own a house, that is one of the reasons I came to Buraydah City, I don't want to live in a tent any more, the government try to support us so we must take their help (I B < 10 BJ, 25/6/09).*

Interestingly, the study found that the intention to move to other accommodation did not reflect dissatisfaction with the first home. Bedouin migrants expressed complete satisfaction with their first home in the city, despite their intentions to move. As mentioned previously, nomadic life was difficult and demanding and there was often a lack of services in the desert areas, which makes urban life easy by comparison:

*It was good we really liked having a house, to be honest I think we were grateful for our situation, before the life in the desert was uncomfortable and a house made us very happy, we were excited with our first home (I B > 10 DI, 27/6/09).*

*Yes, I felt at that time my first house was temporary because I wanted to see the life in Buraydah first. Maybe there was a better area to move to or maybe we would leave the city to go back to the desert life. I had to be cautious, this is our Bedouin way, we will only settle if we are sure about the place (I B > 10 DC, 27/6/09).*

In contrast, for the village migrants who had a high expectation that their first home would be permanent, there was a corresponding high level of satisfaction of 90 percent with their first homes; one of village migrant said:

*It was excellent satisfaction the quality of the house was much higher than in the village, our house in the village was nice but it was very basic and decrepit (I V < 10 VC, 22/7/09).*

The study found a significant amount of mobility among those migrants who cited work-related reasons. For all city migrants a majority said that their housing was temporary due to work. This has been identified as the case in the rest of the developing world; for example in South Africa migrant workers often prefer to rent accommodation (mostly high rise apartment blocks) and have little desire to own a home (Poulsen, 2010).

Whether the migrants rented or owned their homes was another reflection of their urban experience and their financial capacity. In response to the questionnaire, the majority of the migrants, 60.9 per cent, owned their own homes and 37.4 per cent rented, in terms of interview respondents the level was 58.3 per cent. An explanation of high ownership rates can be associated with the financial assistance provided by the government to buy homes mentioned above. The majority owning their homes is not reflective of the situation in the remainder of MENA, where this study has shown affordability rather than availability as the main problem in terms of housing, with the exception of low cost housing (Baharoglu et al., 2005). The results of this study are consistent with the work of Al Arishi (2002) in relation to Samdah City migration in Saudi Arabia, and Albassam (2004), where the majority of migrants surveyed also owned their homes.

### **8.2.3 The Experience for Bedouin Migrants**

Although the experience of Bedouin migrants has been shaped by financial and housing issues, and indeed the literature shows that housing is a part of the Bedouin urbanisation experience (Dezuari, 2009), less tangible issues such as culture and the determination not to lose culture, even through adaptation of culture (Abu-Saad, 2008), is important in analysis of the experiences of urbanisation for Bedouin. When the Bedouin migrants spoke about their aspirations to find employment in Buraydah City, it was found that there was a generational difference, as older Bedouin migrants had high expectations about securing employment whereas younger migrants had concerns. These emotions were reflected in the actual

outcomes in Buraydah City, in the interviews 70 percent of the older migrants said they faced no problems at all in finding employment; of those who did, the main concern was the type of work and the salary. In contrast, the younger migrants' concerns were found to be realistic, 70 percent reported difficulty in finding employment. Moreover, they were specific comments given regarding the problems they had faced, which included having qualifications but no experience, lack of suitable employment and few recruitment agencies.

The Bedouin interviewees repeated the fact that life was tough in the desert and presented a corresponding high level of satisfaction with life in Buraydah City. However, again the experiences of the elderly Bedouin were different from those who were younger and had arrived more recently. The study revealed that such differences in experience were reflective of how the urban environment has changed over time. The elderly Bedouin observed that they often found difficulty with daily activities in the new and unfamiliar environment of the city. It was the unfamiliarity with the modernity of the city that the elderly Bedouin were uncomfortable about and had difficulty adapting to. The following are some examples of these difficulties, one of the elderly migrants said:

*I do not like the ATMs and I prefer to go to the bank to get my money, that way I can get help if I need it (OH Bedouin 2, 10/7/09).*

When probed further about difficulties in the city, the same Bedouin migrant said:

*We never had to get permission to do anything before, here in the city if you want to build something even on your own land you have to go to the local authority and give them your plans and it takes a long time to get permission. I don't like it, it is too complicated and I have to ask my son to help me (OH Bedouin 2, 10/7/09).*

Another elderly respondent stated that when he took an internal flight from Buraydah City to Riyadh he was surprised that no one would allow him to go to the front of the queue at the airport, he stated:

*Modern life is taking away people's manners; they do not respect older people, before we used to respect older people and help them, it seems that the people in the city do not have any feelings these days (OH Bedouin 4, 10/7/09).*

These complaints are from elderly people who have witnessed a dramatic change in lifestyle and are encountering a new attitude in tandem with burgeoning modernity. This has also been the case amongst some urbanised nomads in Mongolia, who do not have the skill set required for social interaction in urban life, regardless of how long they have lived in the urban environment (Belt, 2011). However, it was not only the transition from desert areas to the city that brought about a noticeable abrupt change in the lives of the Bedouin migrants and their perceptions of the city. The elderly migrants gave a historical account of life in the city before the oil boom in 1974, when they felt that life had been much simpler, and people much friendlier. Since the oil boom, the Bedouin have found that life has become increasingly stressful and relationships between the Bedouin in the city have been weakened in terms of tribal ties.

For the Bedouin who were interviewed and who arrived more recently there was a higher level of satisfaction with the urban environment. Indeed, there is a difference between older and younger generations in their attitude towards the urban environment, even when they have experienced the same socio-economic context (Yue et al., 2010). In Yue et al's (2010) study it was found that the younger generation are more willing to change to the types of work found in an urban environment, moreover, they have less of an attachment with their rural place of origin, this willingness and ability to adapt to an urban environment was found for the younger migrants in this study. There was more of an expression of comfort and ease from younger migrants; showing a positive experience stemming from a sense of familiarity with the urban centres. A Bedouin who arrived less than ten years ago was pleased with Buraydah City, stating:

*It is good, we always wanted to come to the city, we enjoy life here because there are lots of activities for us to do, I prefer the city, although we do visit our relatives in the Hijars (encampments) during the holidays (I B > 10 DA, 25/6/09).*

There was a significant amount of evidence to suggest that some of this familiarity derived from the fact that the more recently arrived Bedouin had relatives already in Buraydah City that gave them more confidence. In fact, 44 percent of the Bedouin had relatives migrating to Buraydah City, and this was further supported in the interviews, for example:

*I faced no difficulties because my brother owned a house in Buraydah and he was able to help us and give lots of valuable advice (I B < 10 BE, 25/6/09).*

*It is an excellent experience living in Buraydah and many of my friends have moved here as well so it does feel like home (I B < 10 BA, 25/6/09).*

*Yes, I have achieved what I wanted and praise is to Allah. I got a job, the members of my family got educated and I have been granted with lots more income (OH Bedouin 1, 10/7/09).*

Indeed, this study shows that there is a generational difference in the experience of adapting to an urban environment; this idea is supported in the literature by Dezuari (2009) who says that for Bedouin migrants the course of their adaptation depends on exposure to the environment as well as their generation and education levels.

Some Bedouin migrants claimed that life in the city has led to more health problems, precisely because they now lead a sedentary life-style and they are less active. Although the diet of the Bedouin was deemed simple, comprising mainly of lamb, bread, milk, dates and soups, the migrants felt that it was healthy in comparison to western-style food.

In terms of the facilities and services that are offered in an urban environment, the Bedouin migrants were extremely satisfied with healthcare, education, recreation and the social facilities available in the city. There were only a small number of dissenters among those who arrived more recently; they made recommendations such as improving healthcare facilities and providing more women-only recreational facilities. Here the findings show that the Bedouin had no major concerns about the government's provision of services. For other Bedouin groups, in the Negev for example, the provision of services and development

programs would be better if they considered social, cultural and religious concerns, and if not it can contribute to a negative experience of urbanisation (Dinero, 1996). However, in Buraydah City the Bedouin were almost indifferent to the issue of the provision of services; it would be fair to say that the government in Saudi Arabia would be considerate of religious and cultural concerns because they themselves are Muslim and descended from the tribes.

Although a significant number of the Bedouin, (22.2 per cent) earn between SR 1000 and SR 2999 per month, their income levels are generally on a par with, if not in excess of, the income of the other migrant groups. It was ascertained that the Bedouin have a higher percentage-earning rate of between SR 5000 and SR 8999 per month. A point to note here is that the Bedouin may be likely to say their income is much less, than it is for cultural reasons, as they are known to be extremely private about such matters (Lindsey, 2006). Despite the relatively high incomes of the Bedouin migrants, costs associated with housing were still a problem; such as keeping up with loan repayments from the bank and rents, there were numerous examples where this was cited:

*I faced problems of high rent costs and my debt to the bank (I B < 10 BE, 25/6/09).*

*I faced the difficulty of paying back the bank instalments (I B > 10 DB, 25/6/09).*

*Yes there were some financial problems because of rent (I B > 10 DD, 27/6/09).*

The extent to which migrants held on to their culture and traditions shows the influence that an urban environment has had. It was expected that those from rural areas and the desert might hold onto cultures that are specific to their places of origin and that the group with the strongest cultural identity and traditions would be the Bedouin. The meaning of tradition or culture was associated with their allegiance to the Kabila (tribe) and they were adamant that they would maintain their traditions in the city and continue social interactions with members of the same Kabila. One Bedouin migrant said:

*I maintained those traditions to the utmost...Mostly about being loyal to the Kabila (tribe). We meet our relatives every weekend and on many evenings during the week,*

*we drink tea and discuss issues related to the tribe. We also help each other, if one of us has a problem with money, we all give him money, this is the Bedouin tradition (I B > 10 DA, 25/6/09).*

Loyalty to the Kabila has translated itself into the city setting; it is demonstrated by living amongst other Bedouin in the city, and by helping each other, especially in terms of money and other aspects related to city life. In fact, this study found that the Bedouin had a tendency to migrate to neighbourhoods with other Bedouin, more so than the other migrants did. The loyalty to the Kabila never fades despite the loss of traditional ways of cooking and focuses on water management that are not necessary in the urban environment. This is affirmed by the International Crisis Group (2007) in reference to the Bedouin in the Sinai, who observed that the Bedouin identity in urban areas is not expressed as a specific way of life, i.e. nomadism, but rather as an identity expressed in terms of belonging to a group that defines itself as Bedouin. This was apparent from the interviews:

*I did not maintain the tradition and customs of the desert when I moved into the city... We don't need to do many of the things we did in the desert, like cooking in the ground and making butter using the traditional method. Some of my friends do like the traditions and try to keep them in their home, one of my friends has a replica well in the men's meeting room which looks like the inside of a Bedouin tent (I B > 10 DE, 27/6/09).*

*We came to the city to make life easier so why would we keep all of the traditional ways, we have to advance with the rest of the world, even in the desert many of my cousins have modern facilities like satellite phones and Kenwood (CB radio). I am a Bedouin and very proud of that and I will always be Bedouin but we have to change the way we live (I B > 10 DA, 25/6/09).*

Therefore, it seems that the Bedouin in Buraydah City are adamant that they will not give up their culture, especially that related to the tribe, this is in agreement with Abu-Saad (2008) who says that indigenous people around the world have survived efforts to assimilate them using urbanisation and have survived many attacks on their traditional social structures.

Upon examination of the evidence, the Bedouin have not fully integrated into the wider urban society, not only because they were found to be living among other Bedouin, but also because their social interactions were focused on other Bedouin from their Kabila. This is in contrast to Dar al Liwaa, (2000) who said there has been a complete integration into urban society in Saudi Arabia, reporting that the Bedouin have acquired new traditions, values and ideas; however, Dar al Liwaa (2000) does say that traditions have helped unify the tribes because of the Islamic faith. The latter was also found to be the case in this study where traditions also relate to religion for the Bedouin. Moreover, this is also in contrast to Dezuari (2009) who says that rural to urban migration of Bedouin is part of the global rural to urban economic transition and is characterised by an evolution from a tribal society to a more individualistic society, something not found in Buraydah City.

Although the study found that the Bedouin had adamantly claimed maintenance of their traditions, it was apparent that the nature of these traditions is changing. The structure of Bedouin tribes in Saudi Arabia comprise a main tribe with a common family name, within which there are sub families or sub tribes with their own family name; traditionally it is common for Bedouin to marry within their sub family. However, although the Bedouin have kept their affiliation with the main tribe, living in a city and mixing with other sub families from the same tribe has meant that tribal conflict has been almost eliminated. Therefore, what has happened is confirmed by Abu-Saad (2008) who says that urbanised Bedouin undergo a breakdown of traditional social structures and have to rebuild new social structures, especially in urban areas, something clearly evidenced in Buraydah City. Evidence of barriers being broken down within the main tribe is that marriage between sub families is now common, the simple reason being proximity. This is evidenced by a number of statements in the interviews; as one Bedouin migrant said:

*We still marry inside our Kabila (tribe) but now it is more common to see marriages between different families of the same Kabila, before this was rare, and there are even some who marry outside the Kabila (tribe) (I B < 10 BJ, 25/6/09).*

*We used to socialise a lot with people from our tribe and family and there were many marriages between the family, but since we came to the city we have lost this and people are more relaxed about who they marry (I B < 10 BC, 24/6/09).*

*When we meet together as a Kabila (tribe) to discuss issues the meeting is very big because all of the families come together, not like before in the desert where meetings were much smaller (I B < 10 BF, 24/6/09).*

The researcher then asked whether this affected inter-family marriage within the tribe, to which he replied:

*Marriage proposals and discussion of wedding plans take place at these meetings, it is very normal (I B < 10 BF, 24/6/09).*

In consideration of the aforementioned adherence to cultural practices, there was evidence that the migrants still held onto their traditional practices. For example, it was observed that Bedouin migrants were not immediately committed to settling down, some continued with raising cattle; it was in fact common for the Bedouin migrants to state that they were self-employed and it was observed that many of their businesses involved selling livestock (Plate 8.4). The Bedouin also retained cultural practices such as socialising in traditional tents, even after moving into modern homes (Plate 8.5), although these practices were only in the initial stage of transition.

Indeed this is clear evidence that the Bedouin are holding onto their culture, a very important part of their culture being the affiliation to the tribe. It has been suggested by Dezuari (2009) that in the process of transformation to the urban for Bedouin in the Negev, the traditional tent is symbolic of the common being and the house is representative of individualism and materialism. However, in this study many of the Bedouin settled almost immediately in villas and still claimed that they held onto tribal affiliations, in light of this, Dezuari (2009) does say that at a later stage the house becomes a summation of identity, extended and immediate family and social status and importantly, the values of the tent do not disappear but are merged with the concept of the new house.



Plate 8.4: A place for raising cattle on the periphery of Buraydah City. Source: Author's survey (2009).



Plate 8.5: Photo of Bedouin Tent in an Urban Area, Buraydah City. Source: Author (2009).

Moreover, in relation to housing there were no cultural reasons, specifically for Bedouin, for a preference of a particular type of housing. This is in contrast to Dezuari (2009) who says that there is a correspondence between culture and architecture for the Bedouin in the Negev. This means that there is an expression of cultural adaptation that is expressed in changes made to the architecture, for example, houses were made larger as an expression of status and wealth, even to the detriment of the interior (Dezuari, 2009). In this study of Bedouin migrants to Buraydah City, this was not found to be the case, these migrants showed no such expression of culture in the external architecture.

Another development that represents how far the Bedouin have adapted is their new dual sense of identity; in the study, they strongly identified themselves in terms of their tribe and Bedouin traditions but at the same time, they identified themselves as citizens of the nation and members of Buraydah City. The Bedouin migrants clearly expressed this affiliation to their city, country and tribe:

*I feel perfectly satisfied, this is my home and my children's home we are very happy here and will never leave (I B > 10 DG, 27/6/09).*

*I feel relaxed in Buraydah but I would move to another city for work, we are Hathar (city folk) like anyone else because things have really changed for us (I B > 10 DH, 27/6/09).*

*It's not unusual for us to live in a city we are all Saudi and we should all benefit from the economy, why should we stay in the desert and all the other Saudi citizens enjoy the money? (I B > 10 DD, 27/6/09).*

This sense of affiliation with wider society, amongst the Bedouin, is further strengthened by the fact they share the same religious beliefs. The Islamic faith is a unifying factor between Muslims, not only between the Bedouin and Hathar (city folk) of the Al Qassim region, but also between different ethnic groups around the world (Dar al Liwaa, 2000). This study found that migrants' assimilation into the city and with the people of the city has been

facilitated by their shared Islamic faith. This was expressed in a number of different ways, including in regards to feelings about being accepted into Buraydah City:

*It was a good feeling. I thought that it would be difficult I had a feeling that the people in Buraydah might not like us because we are Bedu (Bedouin), but they were fine with us; this is everyone's country and we must live together as Muslims (I B > 10 DA, 25/6/09).*

*The members of my family are the ones who encouraged me to move. I was hesitant of the idea of leaving at the beginning and scared to move, many of my Kabila had told me that Bedouin are treated differently. However, my wife went with her father when she was younger to do trading in Buraydah and she told me her father liked the people there, they had manners and always greeted him with Salam (Peace, the Islamic greeting); it was my wife that made me feel better (OH Bedouin 7, 11/7/09).*

When asked if his wife was right, he replied:

*Yes she was right, most of the people in Buraydah were nice to us, there were some who were rude, but if you are a Muslim you will accept your brother, in fact my new neighbours were very helpful and we have been friends for many years (OH Bedouin 7, 11/7/09).*

This idea is supported by Ben-Israel (2008) who says that when Bedouin in Israel are faced with hastened urbanisation they try to create a sense of space with an association between residential and institutional spaces and Islam, something that also prevailed in their previous Bedouin spatiality, however; this is replaced in the urban environment by a new urban Islamic, non-tribal culture and identity. However, although the urban Islamic is found for the Bedouin in Buraydah City, evidenced by an ease of transition into urban life because of their Islamic affiliations with townfolk, the non-tribal cultural is not found because Bedouin hold onto tribal ties in Buraydah City. A national and religious sense of belonging is an important factor affecting the Bedouin experience of sedentarisation. When King

Abdulaziz first settled the Bedouin he did so using an integrated strategic vision that included religious, social and economic dimensions to create a cohesive nation; in this the religious aspect was essential because it was used to teach the Bedouin how to settle (Dar al Liwaa, 2000).

#### **8.2.4 The Experience for Village Migrants**

The experience of elderly migrants from villages was similar to that of the Bedouin, there was an expression of anxiety and apprehension in the oral histories of the time before moving to Buraydah, as one migrant said:

*We had no experience of life in a city and did not understand that there would be many rules (OH villager 2, 12/7/09).*

The village migrants adapted very quickly, and there was a strong feeling that life in Buraydah City was better than that in the villages. This was in contrast to the experiences of the elderly Bedouin whose experience of living in the city remained negative with regards to developmental changes; the village migrants adapted over time:

*There are many more people here now than when I moved to Buraydah, but I have been here many years, my grandchildren were born here so Buraydah is home to me now (OH villager 6, 13/7/09).*

*We emerged gradually into city life and now I consider Buraydah to be a paradise (OH villager 1, 12/7/09).*

This sense of belonging to the urban community is confirmed by Falkingham et al. (2011) who says that over time migrants find urban life more acceptable, moreover, these authors (Falkingham et al., 2011) also suggest that ties with their places of origin become weaker and socio-economic ties with the host community become stronger. This is a process that

the village migrants in this study have passed through. The Bedouin on the other hand, have strong tribal ties that remain over time regardless of where they are living.

It has already been shown that there was a level of uncertainty and anxiety about migrating to Buraydah City, in terms of the urban social environment and the social interactions that take place there. Therefore, it is important to mention social consequences in relation to the overall experience of migrants; after all, they were arriving in the city from places with different social structures.

Some of the villagers who had arrived in Buraydah City more than 10 years ago experienced a sense of being victimised and discriminated against because of the way they spoke. A villager supported this idea, stating that when they arrived in Buraydah City they experienced discrimination because their behaviour was different to that of others:

*City people who laughed at our behaviour (I V > 10 ZD, 22/7/09).*

*We did not fully understand the ways of city life and the way we spoke was different (OH villager 3, 12/7/09).*

The discrimination took the form of general rudeness and their children also suffered from bullying. Discrimination was therefore a significant factor affecting migrants' quality of life. In a study by Zhang et al., (2009) it was found that discrimination, one such form being against accents, affected the quality of urban life directly. More relevant to this study, is the fact that people in modern cities in MENA experience not only the difficulties of migration itself but also problems of integration as new residents (Dumper and Stanley, 2007). The migrants in this study experienced a sense of alienation, and although they did suffer from some alienation in the form of rudeness, it was mild in comparison to the discrimination suffered by migrants elsewhere in the developing world. According to Morgan(2011) migrants are vulnerable and face serious problems such as violence, exploitation and trafficking, and often discrimination against female migrants for example, is embedded in formal structures. This study found no such severe discrimination.

There were few recommendations as to how to improve facilities, areas of concern included schools and healthcare sectors; only those who migrated in the last ten years expressed such concerns:

*Healthcare and education are both awful and I have had some bad experiences with both, the service in the hospital was awful because the staff were rude (I V <10 VB, 22/7/09).*

*I see them as very good, there are many schools and hospitals in Buraydah we have a choice and they are mostly good quality, I am very happy with these facilities (I V < 10 VA, 22/7/09).*

In consideration of the fact that besides the simple economic driver of searching for work, the literature strongly suggests that rural to urban migration is also driven by the desire for better housing, education, cultural and technological developments, better public services and healthcare (UNEP, 2002, McSweeney and Jokisch, 2007, Brunn et al., 2008). Moreover, there is a corresponding reflection of negative opinions of such standards in rural areas (Almandoz, 2006). In light of this, the low level of complaint about these attributes of the city is a reflection of a positive urban experience.

In terms of financial issues, the experiences of the village migrants who arrived in the last ten years was similar to that of the Bedouin, where the main complaint was the high repayments rates for loans from the banks and the high cost of living. The villagers were more aware of why city life was more expensive and expressed a clear association between higher living costs and life in the city, such comments provided evidence that they knew exactly why they were incurring such costs, for example:

*I faced difficulty in paying back the instalments to the bank for the car and I think that the cost of buying the house is too high, in the village I did not have these problems because I had an old Toyota pickup and did not need a car and I did not have a mortgage (I V < 10 VF, 22/7/09).*

*Generally there were no problems but I noticed that I spend more money, this is because my family wants to do activities during the weekend like eating in the restaurant or going shopping; in the village we did not do these activities, it was simple and boring but cheaper (I V < 10 VJ, 22/7/09).*

Interestingly, all of the village migrants who had been in Buraydah City for longer than ten years stated they had no financial problems at all. Given that more recently arrived village migrants had concerns about the cost of living, this suggests that such costs have been increasing over time, or that the migrants adjusted to the cost of living in a city.

The village migrants expressed a very strong, almost defensive affirmation that they retain their traditions while living in the city. When probed further on this issue in order to uncover what these traditions are, it was found that besides the commitment to and respect for family members, religion was a part of their cultural tradition. The respondents were in fact defensive in their replies because they felt that they were being questioned about whether or not life in the city had made them practise less as Muslims.

#### **8.2.5 The Experience for City Migrants**

In the case of the group of migrants drawn from other cities, the elderly migrants did not find what they expected, rather their expectations were exceeded. One respondent stated that:

*Buraydah City is completely different from my town...There are more places to go shopping, many businesses and it is easier to do paperwork like applying for a licence. In our city there were none of these facilities, we can enjoy life in the city (Buraydah) with our families because there are many restaurants we can go to at night, not like before in our city, it was boring (OH City 1, 14/7/09).*

Overall, there was a much higher degree of satisfaction amongst migrants who came from other cities and towns in comparison to other migrant groups. The study showed that 80 per cent found urban life in Buraydah City to be excellent. This shows that there was a large

positive discrepancy between pre-migratory expectations and post migratory experience, exceeding that reported by other migrant groups, and this will have positive effect on their mental health because of their realistic, not over optimistic expectations (Mckelvey and Webb, 1996). It is reasonable to suggest that because these migrants came from an urban environment they may have been in a better position to make an overall judgement about Buraydah City, in view of how it compares to other (possibly smaller) urban environments with fewer facilities. Whereas the villagers and Bedouin migrants had to adapt from a rural and nomadic way of life to an urban way of life, the city migrants were already used to urban life.

About half of those who migrated from other cities expressed the same financial concerns as the other migrants, i.e. monthly instalments to the banks and high rental costs, as the other migrant groups, an indication that they came from towns with cheaper housing costs, however, the remainder expressed that they had no financial difficulties at all.

The migrants from other cities strongly affirmed that they retain their traditional practices and culture in Buraydah City, much like the migrants from villages; there was also an acknowledgement that this meant their religion. Some of the migrants came from other cities larger than Buraydah, for example Riyadh and Damman, this allowed for a comparative opinion of Buraydah City based on these larger cities and revealed cultural differences. The theme of religion continued here and the migrants from the city also interpreted that part of culture and tradition was religion, for example:

*I am committed to my religion and it is my biggest issue (I C < 10 AI, 3/8/09).*

*The culture here is more conservative than in Riyadh...Buraydah is much more peaceful than Riyadh and more friendly (I C > 10 CI, 6/8/09).*

*There is nothing that I would change, the people here are very good Muslims because they practice the religion properly, there are many Mutawa (strong Muslims) and I like that because you can trust them. The only thing I don't like about Buraydah is the traffic (I C < 10 AC, 3/8/09).*

The Al Qassim region is known in Saudi Arabia for its religious conservatism, which is something that those who have migrated from other cities seem to express in a positive light. However, as with other migrant groups there was also a sense that culture and tradition were perceived as something that is part of the national identity; one migrant from another city said:

*Traditions and customs are the nation's culture and that is why I am committed to them (I C < 10 AJ, 3/8/09).*

The study found that there was more than one interpretation of what constitutes religion and culture. The original intention of the question regarding culture was to discover how the city had changed the migrants, but this was not achieved, as there was a strong understanding that tradition and culture referred to religion and affiliation with the nation; there was a strong sense of national Saudi identity amongst all migrant groups. This had significant implications for those migrating to and assimilating into the new city as the sense of belonging to a shared religion as well as having a collective national identity, helped to establish common ground between the migrants and those people are living in Buraydah City.

### **8.3 Out Migration – Intentions**

On the one hand, the intention to leave Buraydah City and the reasons associated with this are to some extent a reflection of migrants' individual experiences and satisfaction with the city. On the other hand, it was found in this study that such intentions were also a reflection of the positive aspects of life in migrant's places of origin, such as in reference to the peace and tranquillity of village life. Moreover, this study also found that the Saudi government is engaged in improving rural areas and this may contribute to reverse migration. An example of this occurring elsewhere is that of Ghana, where policy reforms favoured the rural sector, resulting in reverse migration (Anarfi et al., 2003). Among all the migrant groups for those who expressed an intention to migrate from the city there was a multitude of reasons given,

these included the search for better work, to study, the search for a better urban environment, the high cost of living and the lack of adequate healthcare facilities.

In consideration of the multidimensional approach of this study, it can be seen that out-migration from Buraydah City is influenced by socio-cultural, economic and political reasons. Falkingham et al. (2011) confirm this in a study of return migration in sub-Saharan Africa where socio-cultural, micro- and macroeconomic and political factors drive such processes; citing political policies designed to discourage rural to urban migration, as also relevant to Saudi Arabia.

In reference to the positive aspects of places of origin as motivation to return home, the majority of those interviewed missed the peace and tranquillity of rural or desert life, the feeling of safety and the proximity of family (Figure 8.2); however, the intention to leave Buraydah City was often linked to retirement. According to Falkingham et al., (2011) retirement is a justifiable reason to migrate back to one's place of origin and may be driven by the high costs of city living. Although there was significant reference made to the negative aspects of life before migration, positive points that were mentioned were related to tranquility and the family and were in fact both reminiscent of life before migration and based on hindsight upon arrival in the city, for example:

*I miss seeing my children everyday, now in the city we only see them on weekends because they are busy with work, we are all busy here in the city, the pace of life in the village was much slower, I think I prefer that kind of life (OH villager 7, 13/7/09).*

*Sometimes I worry about my health because the air in the city is polluted not like the village where the air was always fresh, especially in the mornings before sunrise. I think that maybe the food was much healthier and it was fresh (OH villager 8, 13/7/09).*

Positive opinions about migrant's places of origin were particularly strong for the Bedouin; however, one Bedouin migrant who considered returning said, when giving an oral history said:

*Things have changed a lot from the time we arrived, I now miss the peace and quiet of the desert because the city life is too busy, everyone is too busy. I dont think that my relatives who live outside of the city understand about the stress of city life (OH Bedouin 7, 11/7/09).*

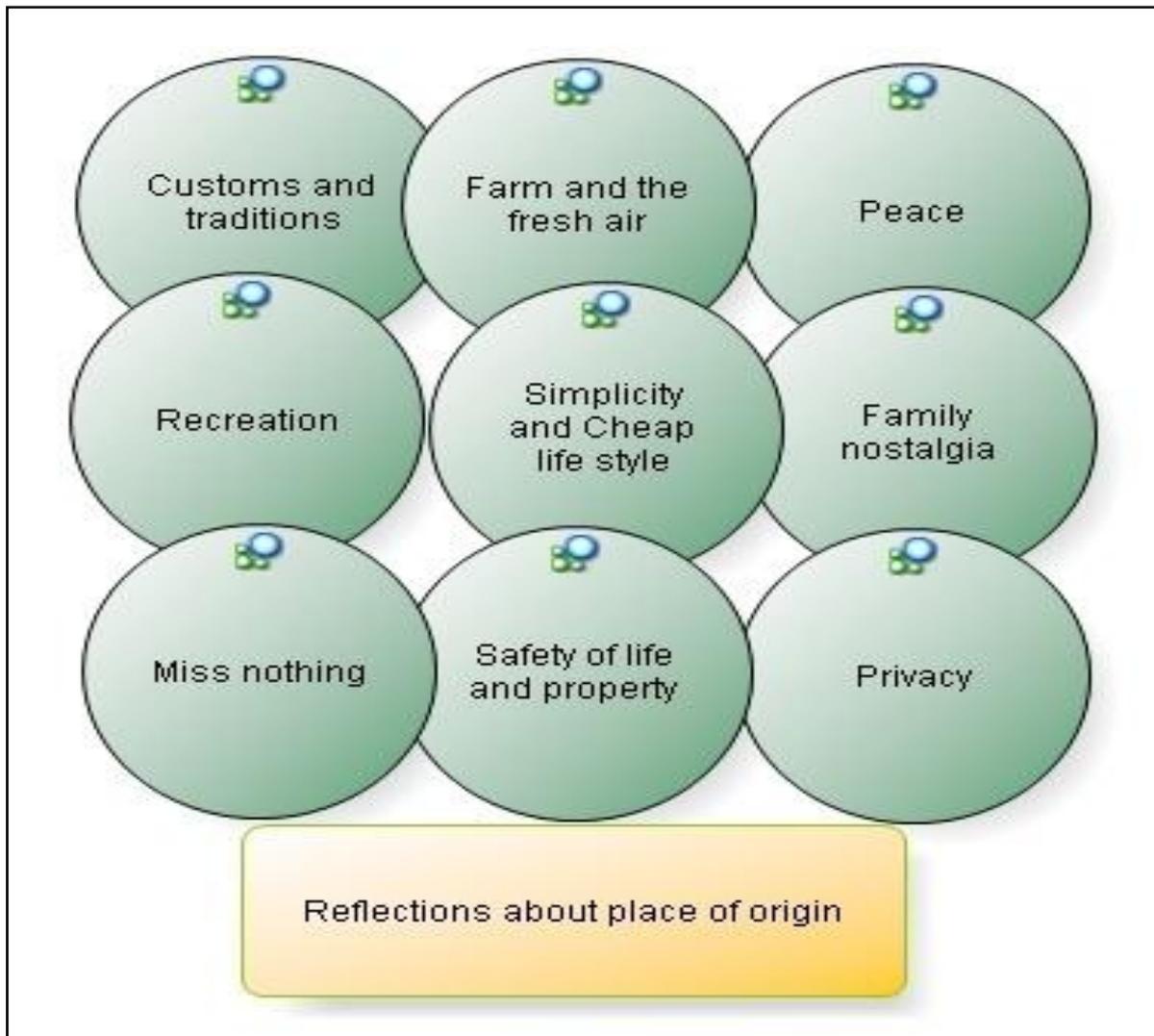


Figure 8.2: Positive aspects of migrants' place of origin expressed by all migrant groups. The overlap demonstrates the relationships between the various reasons indicated by respondents. Source: Author's survey (2009).

The Bedouin belong to a tribe and it was common for the tribe to often come together for meetings. The Bedouin that were interviewed said they missed these meetings and only took part in socialising with the tribe on special occasions such as at weddings and during religious festivals, one Bedouin who had arrived in the last ten years said:

*I miss having lots of family members around, we used to meet all the time, we still see members of our Kabila (tribe) but not like before (I B < 10 BB, 24/6/09).*

Mohanty (2009) observed that reverse migration is more for social reasons rather than economic reasons. However, in contrast with the latter, this study has shown that some city migrants would leave Buraydah City for economic reasons, as supported by Yue et al., (2010) who say that return migration among younger migrants in China is based on economic and reasons related to occupation. Moreover, the migrants from other cities had a strong desire to stay in Buraydah City and any out migration was not based on a desire to return to a nostalgic place of origin but rather the pursuit of better employment opportunities; showing employment is a stronger driver for such migrants.

#### **8.4 Conclusion**

This chapter reveals that the experience of the migrants coming to Buraydah City is very different from that experienced by migrants in the rest of the developing world. There are no slums, no squatter settlements and no homelessness. With other developing cities around the world, the main complaint is almost uniformly the proliferation of slums. Overall, the experience was positive and full of hope and aspiration, with aims being achieved; areas such as employment, a better standard of living and housing outcomes were particularly positive, again, in contrast to other developing world cities where there are difficulties of finding work through normal channels. Complaints about urban life were related mainly to adapting to life in the city and minor complaints related to the state of roads and pavements; overall, however, there was a high level of satisfaction with the city.

This study also found that there was a contrast between Buraydah City and the country as a whole. In the case of home ownership among migrants, there was a difference with the rest of Saudi Arabia. Most people in Saudi Arabia rent accommodation because they cannot afford to buy houses or the mechanisms are not in place for them to borrow, and this is exactly the case for MENA as well, where the issue is one of affordability not availability. However, the majority of migrants in this study owned their own homes, a complete

reversal of the general trend. Additionally, this trend is also in contrast to that in the developing world where the vast majority of migrants also rent their homes.

In further support of the level of satisfaction among migrants, only a minority expressed an intention to leave Buraydah City, and this was mostly for work or education reasons or retirement, not due to dissatisfaction with the city itself. This success in Buraydah City reflects the fact that Saudi Arabia has the financial capacity and the firm political will to manage the influx of migrants to its cities; perhaps this is why none of migrants blamed the authorities for negative experiences. Moreover, most intentions to migrate from Buraydah City in the future were based on positive aspects of life in the place of origin. Overall, the study showed that the intention for out migration was also due to political, economic and social factors.

Much the same as with drivers for migration, the experiences of migration varied between the migrant groups. The reasons behind these differences were a difference in the culture and place of origin of the migrants. For example, the village migrants in this study had settled well into life in Buraydah City, were comfortable that the city was their home, had established ties and integrated with the host community. In contrast, the Bedouin migrants found settling down difficult and maintained ties with their tribe, rather than integration with urban folk in the city. Moreover, the study also revealed that generation differences played a role in experiences of the city, and the decision to return to the place of origin. These findings supports that of Samers (2010) who noted that explanations of migration experiences might differ between people in relation to a different time and space, such that an overarching theory describing a reason for migration is impossible.

It is important to note that the chapter highlighted the various political, economic and socio-cultural factors that were instrumental in the process and experience of urbanisation. Examples include the government's support of migrants, particularly the Bedouin who arrived in the city much earlier, which was part of sedentarisation policy and the political, economic and socio-cultural factors that created an overall positive experience for migrants, e.g. the government's ability to manage migration to cities. Moreover, such factors have had an influence on the decision to migrate from the city.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CONCLUSION

#### 9.1 Introduction

This study has aimed to identify the distinguishing elements of urbanisation and the urban geographies of MENA, in particular in relation to Saudi Arabia, using the example of Buraydah City. In order to achieve these aims the researcher first reviewed the existing academic literature to evaluate previous research on urbanisation in MENA and Saudi Arabia. It is important to note that when conducting this review the existing literature and data related to Buraydah City was found to be very limited. Moreover, the literature highlighted the importance of medium-sized cities in that they are experiencing most of the urbanisation in Saudi Arabia, however, although there was this acknowledgement, there was no literature about the experiences of migration and urbanisation in cities of this size in the country. Therefore, there was a need to carry out new research in order to understand the nature of migration and urbanisation in this new urban arena, i.e. medium-sized cities. This involved collection and analysis of data from a number of secondary sources, including from the World Bank and the United Nations and Saudi government sources, as well as documents sourced from the local authorities in Buraydah City. This was supplemented by the generation of primary data by conducting a field study identifying the trends, drivers and consequences of urbanisation and migration in Buraydah City.

This study supported the central argument that although MENA shows diversity within itself, as a region it encompasses similar patterns and processes associated with urbanisation that are distinct in comparison with the remainder of the developing world. However, the results also show that diversity within MENA is itself significant and that this should not be ignored in pursuit of proof that MENA is distinct in the developing world context.

The study recognised three distinct geographic regions in MENA: Northern Africa, Western Asia and the Arabian Peninsula. This led to a geographic approach for some, but not all of the analysis. In general, it was found to be more beneficial for the purpose of discussion to divide the region into the richer countries, such as the Gulf States, and the poorer countries such as some North African countries and a third group for those countries that are experiencing conflict such as Iraq. These divisions were judged to be suitable because these characteristics were found to have a significant influence on the processes of both migration and urbanisation. With regards to conflict, it is important to mention that since the commencement of this thesis many more countries, including Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Syria and Yemen have experienced conflict as a result of the 'Arab Spring.' This study considered this and found, for example, that the conflict in Libya had a large impact on migratory patterns in North Africa, although it should be remembered that much of this conflict is a result of economic problems, for example in Egypt, and therefore, Egypt was considered in this study to be a poor country rather than a country with cities of conflict.

The study adopted a multidimensional approach in recognition of the fact, identified during the review of the literature (Yacobi and Shechter, 2005, Islam and Siddiqi, 2010, Brunn et al., 2008), that it is not just purely economic factors that play a role in the processes of migration and urbanisation. This approach incorporated consideration of factors which include the political and the social-cultural, it was also found that this approach provided a richer insight into urbanisation and migration and the results suggest that such factors should not be ignored, as evidenced by their role.

In order to distinguish urbanisation in Saudi Arabia from that in other countries in MENA, a detailed, comparative analysis of this process was conducted. One distinguishing element of spatial form identified in Saudi Arabia was the use of the gridiron pattern for development and the associated villa-type dwellings; this was due to the influence of American planners and had a significant and negative impact on urbanisation.

The study found that much of the literature about migration, urbanisation and urban geography in MENA has focused on the large cities such as Cairo. There is a distinct lack of literature regarding such processes in medium-sized cities, where, the study in fact also

revealed, most of the migration and urbanisation is currently taking place. This was the justification for choosing Buraydah City as the case study. In the study of migration and urbanisation in Buraydah City the same multidimensional approach was applied and the migrants were divided into three different migrant groups: those from villages, those from desert areas and those who migrated from other cities; these groups were further subdivided into those who migrated to Buraydah City more than ten years ago and those who had migrated there in the last ten years, in recognition of the economic and social-cultural differences between these groups and for comparative purposes.

## **9.2 MENA**

The first conclusion derived from this study is that although there is diversity within MENA in terms of urbanisation and the urban geography, the drivers of this urbanisation are universally applicable to the whole region. This universality of trends of urbanisation was found to be similar mainly because the region as a whole is experiencing rapid urbanisation, driven by rapid population growth and rural to urban migration. However, while these drivers may be the same on the surface, closer examination reveals that there is diversity between the countries and sub-regions of MENA. The region includes wealthy nations, poor nations and nations that are suffering from long term conflict; indeed more recent conflict, such as that in Libya and Yemen has produced a variety of urban geographies. Overall, however, MENA as a region is suffering from high unemployment, a large and still growing young population and rapid urbanisation, all factors that drive migration (and potentially social unrest).

Studies (Population Reference Bureau, 2001, 2008a) have suggested that overall rapid population growth is influencing those that live in the region. However, a significant finding of this study is that population growth is also variable throughout the region, and that economic diversity only influences this to a certain extent. The two contributing factors to population growth were found to be natural increase and an influx of foreign labour. The latter explains why there was diversity in terms of population growth between regions; in general, the Gulf region imports labour and North Africa exports labour. In support of this, it

was found that the influx of foreign labour to the Gulf region has led it to experience the highest population growth in the developing world (Dito, 2008).

In the examination of the urbanisation of migrants and urbanisation in MENA it was important to address the region as a whole in terms of economic, political and socio-cultural factors; this was in line with the multidimensional approach adopted for this study. It was found that by looking at the region using this approach migration, urbanisation and urban geography in the region have led to a variety of changes that affect each sub-region differently; despite the fact that common attributes were found to link the countries in MENA, especially in terms of urban geography. Indeed, it is the diversity within the region that has affected urban geography through increased migration and economic development.

One of the most interesting qualities of MENA is that it is polarised in terms of economic prosperity, at one end of the scale there are the poorer countries, such as Egypt, Morocco, Yemen and Djibouti and at the other there are very wealthy countries such as Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The variation in wealth has driven the processes of migration and urbanisation in the region and resulted in both positive and negative outcomes. An example of the dynamic of economic polarisation is the sharp contrast in levels of employment between the countries; however, it is precisely because of this contrast that migration internal to MENA occurs and redresses the internal employment imbalances within the region (Sullivan and Nadgrodkiewicz, 2008) and also impacting on urbanisation and urban geography.

Political diversity was also found in the region, such diversity presented itself in ways that were found to have differing effects on migration, urbanisation and the urban geography. Governments and their policies towards managing the process of urbanisation, and indeed its drivers, are a significant factor in the course followed by urbanisation in each country. In the main the region has been slow to implement policies and reforms to manage service provision in urban centres. Besides the fact that the rate of urbanisation in MENA is the second fastest in the developing world after Sub-Saharan Africa (United Nations, 2010c), it

has been difficult for governments to manage this in a region that it has not been uniformly economically successful. A crucial problem has been that local governments have not been given financial and political autonomy (United Nations, 2008a; Tosun and Yilmaz, 2008), as has been evident in Saudi Arabia, where resource allocation is highly centralised. However, there has been a move towards decentralisation within the region in countries such as Morocco, Lebanon, Yemen and Jordan. Despite this, the review of the literature suggests complete devolution is still far in the future. It is of course essential that there is transparency and accountability in the pursuit of fiscal decentralisation, in order to answer the demands for a better urban infrastructure. MENA is characterised by a young population that is reasonably well educated, and therefore there will be an increasing need to provide urban facilities to service this population in the future. The consequences of not doing so have already materialised with the recent civil unrest in the region that has, to a large extent, been blamed on poor unemployment prospects of a very young population.

Therefore, this study has shown that there are two facets to MENA; on the one side there is the complexity of the MENA region, which is very diverse and creates intricate dynamics that strongly influence migration and urbanisation, and on the other hand it is a region that shares many common characteristics such as religion, language and culture and shared experiences (Dumper and Stanley, 2007) such as rapid population growth, high unemployment, a large young population and housing issues, all of which also strongly affect urbanisation.

### **9.2.1 MENA and Developing World**

When MENA is placed in the context of being one of the world's developing regions and examined in terms of the percentage of population that is urbanised and the rate of urbanisation, MENA it is found to be neither unique nor special. It is clear from the research that the main driver towards urbanisation throughout the developing world has been economic growth (McGee, 1971, Bertinelli and Strobl, 2007, Cohen, 2006); this has been reported to be the case in Latin America and Asia as well as MENA.

In a developing world context MENA is distinctive in view of its large young population, high rates of civil service employment, patterns of internal migration, especially intraregional

(Ratha et al., 2011, Stanley, 2003) and importantly its patterns of urbanisation. Regarding the latter, this study has highlighted the distinctive factors to be the diversity in the drivers and the consequences of urbanisation, rather than the patterns themselves. This is not to say, however, that there is no diversity, there are atypical experiences of urbanisation in other regions of the developing world as well. Thus, in spite of the unique characteristics of MENA, the region does share some qualities with the developing world as a whole. The most obvious of these is the prevalence of rural to urban migration in the search for employment and a better way of life and the consequent need to decentralise urban planning. Overall, the distinctiveness of MENA and its complexity and diversity, as well as the diversity of other developing regions has limited comparisons to the basic notions of migration and urbanisation.

One area of concern that MENA shares with the developing world is the availability of suitable housing. There is a housing problem in MENA; although there is a large amount of informal housing (20–40 percent according to Bjerde, (2008)), the main issue is affordability and not availability, due to the lack of financial availability in the form of mortgage markets (Saidi, 2007) and, in many countries in the region, limited incomes. The issue of an undeveloped mortgage market has been blamed on cultural and religious aspects whereby the people have a disdain for debt and interest and the private sector is reluctant to provide mortgages due to a lack of legal framework to protect against defaulters. The reason for the weak legal framework is that the Islamic approach would favour the defaulter over the lender.

### **9.3 Saudi Arabia**

This study has revealed the overall picture associated with the trends, drivers and consequences of migration and urbanisation in Saudi Arabia, and in particular with reference to Buraydah City. The characteristics that were revealed have related to the influence of rapid population growth from natural increase and immigrant labour, the large young population, rapid urbanisation, problems of centralised governance, regional

disparity resulting in primate cities and housing supply issues, these are the same issues that are being experienced elsewhere in the region.

The drivers for urbanisation in Saudi Arabia are similar to those throughout MENA and the developing world and are reflective of the natural increase in the population (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2010) and the economic motivation that drives rural to urban migration. However, Saudi Arabia, much like the other Gulf States, is a labour importing country; therefore some of its population increase is due to the influx of foreign labour. This study, however, was especially concerned with the drivers for internal, rural to urban and urban to urban migration within Saudi Arabia, specifically migration to medium-sized cities, as discussed in more detail below.

A common problem in MENA has been the inability of national and local governments to provide much-needed municipal services in the face of rapid urbanisation (Mandeli, 2008), partly due to the lack of finance and partly due to the centralised nature of the government (Adib, 2007). The main reason why Saudi Arabia has had a much better experience is that, despite experiencing issues with centralisation and consequent urban sprawl, it has a government with a strong political will and the financial capacity to resolve such problems to provide much needed municipal services. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has implemented effective national planning strategies and has demonstrated the financial ability to support them. Throughout the stages of successive national planning strategies, power has been gradually devolved to the local authorities, as evidenced by the Fifth Development Plan in the 1990s, which placed emphasis on the regional aspects of planning that support local authorities to define their own development needs.

However, this does not mean that there have not been problems associated with urbanisation in Saudi Arabia as there remains a lack of decentralisation. The implementation of Master Plans and Development Plans, with regard to urban strategy, has to a certain extent been unsatisfactory, resulting in the unstructured growth of cities (Mandeli, 2008). Moreover, there has been a problem relating to the unofficial sub division of land in the Kingdom as a result of corrupt developers being allowed to continue with dishonest practices. It is reasonable to assert that such problems have been more recently resolved,

by employing successive and increasingly successful implementation of development plans based on the recognition of such issues. Another distinctive feature of the government and its management of development has been its commitment of more time and money to particular primary cities, such as Riyadh and Jeddah; this has resulted in the relative neglect of other smaller cities, including Buraydah City. This has led to skewed development. However, where Saudi Arabia differs is in its ability to manage the issue of rural to urban migration; interestingly, the results of the field study show that the majority of migrants to Buraydah City have had a relatively good experience, being able to find suitable employment and decent housing and reporting high level of satisfaction with the urban environment. Therefore, this is an indication that politically Saudi Arabia has the stability and competence to deal with rapid urbanisation. This is in contrast to other countries in MENA where migrants have been forced to migrate to find employment and have then frequently encountered issues related to inadequate or unavailable housing. Moreover, Saudi Arabia's migrant population is largely young (Al Amoudi, 1994; Alsakran, 1995; Al-Sheikh, 2000), as was reflected in the field study, where all the migrants surveyed were young and where there was variation in age no significant differences were found between the migrant groups.

Although the government has managed urbanisation relatively well, they have still been engaged in policies that have been seeking to stem the flow of rural to urban migration in order to control rapid urbanisation. The main form that these policies has taken is to develop rural areas to encourage people to remain. The results from the field study do show that there is a reasonably high level of education amongst village migrants, which is due in part to the fact that the government has improved educational services in rural areas. Therefore, in trying to stem the rural-urban flow (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2001) the government may have in fact encouraged it; as it appears to be the case that those who have a good education are more inclined to pursue a better lifestyle such as that associated with urban centres. Moreover, in relation to education, it has been an unexpected finding of the research that Bedouin and village migrants had higher levels of education than those from the cities; again this is a reflection of the success of governmental policy to improve education in rural areas.

The experience of the migrants to Buraydah City has been different to that of migrants to cities in the other poorer countries within MENA. As this study suggests, the experience of migrants in urban centres has been positive as most came in search of work and found it, as well as suitable housing, schools and health care; although the research found that it was easier for migrants who had migrated more than ten years previously to find work. The ease with which migrants found work may be due to the fact that a significant proportion of them in this study, and a majority in other studies (Al-Sheikh, 2000, Albassam, 2004), obtained work in the civil service.

Moreover, the results showed a high level of satisfaction with urban life in Buraydah City for all migrant groups, with the only indications of dissatisfaction given in relation to noise, the busy lifestyle and the condition of the roads and pavements. In contrast, the experience of settling in urban centres in other countries has been quite different. Many countries in MENA have slums as a result of rapid urbanisation, and while it is true that rapid urbanisation can increase incomes, it also increases the proliferation of slums, e.g. in Egypt and much of the rest of the developing world in general.

According to the literature, Saudi Arabia is plagued by a serious housing shortage and a virtually non-existent mortgage market (Karam, 2010), which is also a problem in much of MENA, although there are legal reforms due in the country which will give confidence to the private sector to give mortgages in an Islamic country. However, the majority of migrants in this study reported no problems in finding a home, of those who did they mostly cited difficulties in obtaining finance. Moreover, whilst literature and statistics suggests that only 30 percent of Saudis own their home (Karam, 2010), the majority of migrants in this study, over 60 percent, owned their own homes. Therefore, while the findings of the study, to a certain extent, do reflect the difficulty of buying a home in financial terms, they also contrast with the literature in terms of home ownership, the rate of which for migrants in this study is double the national average. Migrants were typically very satisfied with their first homes in the cities and they (especially the Bedouin migrants) also expressed a strong intention that their first home would be their permanent home. The study revealed that there was a wide dispersal of migrants in the city; however, it was found that the Bedouin concentrated themselves in areas where there were other Bedouin. This was supported by

the evidence of a large concentration of Bedouin in the older central parts of the city. Consequently, this study suggests that the experience of migrants in terms of housing was in contrast to that of the population as a whole.

The positive perceptions of migrants are also extended to their motivation to migrate. The reason most frequently given for migration to urban areas in Saudi Arabia was the search for work as a result of a lack of corresponding work opportunities in the village and desert areas; and also, albeit to a lesser extent, in other towns and cities. However, the evidence from the study suggests that there was no sense of desperation amongst the migrants seeking work; the unemployment levels for migrants were on a par with the national average. In most cases the search for jobs and the move to Buraydah City reflected a desire to increase incomes, improve lifestyles and join the modern world, as well as to provide more opportunities for their children. Among other reasons for migration were those related to family, with many migrants coming to Buraydah City to marry or to join other family members. However, there was variation found between the older and younger generations in terms of the different priorities, expectations and experiences. Although the main driver for both old and young migrants was work, driven mainly by a lack of opportunities in their places of origin, especially for villagers and Bedouin, the differences between generations were related to the pre-migratory emotions and post-migratory experiences. The main example of this is that the young were more pessimistic about the prospect of finding employment than older migrants; the only significant difference in terms of drivers generally was that the older migrants were more driven by education opportunities. Additionally, the cultural dimension also played a role in the different drivers and experiences of migration for the migrants, these were also different for each group, i.e. Bedouin, villagers and city folk and the study showed that this was related to their cultural background, an example of which was the Bedouin's desire to migrate to the same neighbourhoods and live together.

One of the aims of this study was to analyse urbanisation in Buraydah City and the justification for this was that there was a need to understand better the processes of migration and urbanisation in a medium-sized city, in light of a dearth of literature in relation to this. Indeed there have been numerous studies identified, which examine

migration and urbanisation in the region (Bjerde, 2008; United Nations, 2010d; Roudi-Fahimi and Kent, 2007), it is just that there is little relating to the relatively recent phenomenon of rapid growth in cities of a smaller size. This then raised a number of questions: why these cities? Why are they attracting migrants? Has this new urban geography come about as a result of economic and political changes? This study answered these questions and found that they were all interlinked; people were attracted to Buraydah City for work and economic opportunities because they were incentivised by the fact that there has been both economic and political investment in cities of this size in Saudi Arabia. Further evidence of this was that proximity to the city was not a complete determinant of migration, and that migrants from larger cities are also found in Buryadah City. In this regard this study has found a reason for the rapid growth, highlighting the sudden growth of medium-sized cities, which has significantly altered the urban geography of Saudi Arabia and the MENA region.

This study showed how the topography of Buraydah City influenced the growth and structure of the city. Buraydah City has physical characteristics such as sand dunes and a river that have impeded growth in certain directions. Moreover, other features on the landscape have also influenced the structure of the city and include graveyards and farmland.

#### **9.4 Policy Implications**

The main recommendation formulated based on the results of this study is to continue the process of decentralising governments within MENA. It has been recognised that many of the problems of urbanisation can be avoided if local and regional authorities are given more autonomy and finance to manage local urban planning. There is evidence that Saudi Arabia has recognised this problem and has taken some intentional steps to try and resolve the problems caused by over centralisation. This was clearly illustrated in the case of Buraydah City where local planning in urban spaces is very apparent.

As the results of this study suggest, the consequences of urbanisation are different within MENA; this is partly due to the effectiveness of central governments which vary in the region producing various urban outcomes. It is true that centralised government is an issue for the countries of MENA, however, the severity of the impact varies depending on the country, for example it has been shown that in Saudi Arabia poor local planning, at its worst leads to the relatively minor problems of urban sprawl and incremental urban planning (Al Hathloul and Edadan, 1995); whereas, in other countries poor planning caused by centralised government has resulted in slums, inadequate services and disease. This adds to the central argument that there is diversity within the region.

It has been suggested by this study that much of the success regarding the management of urbanisation in Saudi Arabia has been due to the country's oil wealth; however, it is important that the country should not continue to depend solely on oil revenues, as these are both volatile and finite. As oil production declines there will be a change to the economy, which will most likely once again result in a change in the urban landscape. It is anticipated that this will be characterised mainly by a decline in migration to and within the Kingdom. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has to find other sources of income and diversify its economy away from oil; this has to be done sooner rather than later because there is currently a problem with unemployment among the country's relatively large and young population. Unquestionably, a diverse and dynamic economy requires a well-managed urban landscape.

Governments in MENA need to reflect on how best to manage population growth within their countries, because population growth represents the single greatest threat to sustainable urban growth. In Saudi Arabia a spatial strategy aimed at reducing migration to the major cities to help prevent polarisation would be beneficial; this could include allocating more resources to small and medium-sized cities and developing local education facilities such as universities and colleges, as people migrate from rural areas for higher education. This study found that many migrants who came from other cities and towns were relocated by their employers, so policies within small and medium size cities to encourage business and investment will also help to redress the imbalances within the Kingdom. The government should remember; however, that policies designed to stem the

flow of migrants from urban areas, such as improving educational opportunities, have in fact educated migrants and increased their propensity to migrate.

The governments within MENA need to address the issue of secure property rights, as the lack of such rights adversely affects the real estate industry, preventing local firms from accessing land, deterring them from investing. Moreover, there needs to be a concerted move away from land reform to allow more scope to the private sector in terms of land development. The suitability of the housing market to match the population's needs should also be addressed, as more houses need to be built. According to Karam (2010), Saudi Arabia has a deficit of 2 million homes, and to increase the percentage of home ownership a reliable, regulated and trustworthy mortgage market needs to be developed. It is also important for the government to consider, in light of the country's rapid population growth, having more frequent censuses to assist in planning for housing needs.

It is reasonable to comment that the government of Saudi Arabia to date has seriously considered development and economic growth policies that are not solely dependent on oil revenues, in recognition of the fact that it is a finite resource. This study has shown that investment and economic development are increasingly taking place in medium-sized cities; therefore, it is of interest to the government to formulate policies that develop these urban centres to influence the direction of urbanisation.

## **9.5 Recommendations for Future Study**

There are a number of areas that have been addressed and discovered by this study which have wider implications for future study of urbanisation and urban geography in the developing world. These areas include the significance of medium-sized cities, the importance of addressing different groups in the same migration, the necessity of adopting a multidimensional approach and the overall positive experience of migrants.

Because there is a lack of studies focusing on medium-sized cities in Saudi Arabia and the developing world generally, it was not possible to compare this study with those of cities of

a similar size to Buraydah City. Therefore, there should be more studies of similar processes of migration and urbanisation in cities of this size; this would allow the findings of this study to be tested against others, verifying them and revealing whether or not Buraydah City is a unique case or a representative and generalisable example of a typical medium-sized city within the Kingdom. Moreover, the experiences of migration and urbanisation in medium-sized cities should be examined in the developing world because this is where much of the experience of urbanisation is taking place.

This study has focused on the experiences of migration and urbanisation amongst different categories of internal migrants in Saudi Arabia, however, much of the research about population growth, migration and urbanisation in MENA attends to the issue of intra-regional and inter-regional migration; with Saudi Arabia being one of the destination points. Although this study did consider the issue of foreign labour this aspect of migration was not included in the field study; therefore, future study could usefully investigate the experiences of urbanisation amongst these groups, because they characterise a significant portion of the urban population. Moreover, the consideration of different migrant groups in the same migration revealed different experiences between them and such an approach could be adopted in future studies, especially in developing countries where there is migration involving rural folk together with indigenous populations to highlight the different drivers and experiences between these groups.

The adoption of a multidimensional approach to understanding the drivers and consequences of migration and urbanisation was shown to be beneficial because it recognised that such processes are a complex system where economic, political and socio-cultural factors interact and determine outcomes. Clearly the economic was the most significant dimension, but to gain a true understanding of the thoughts behind drivers and consequences or experiences of migration, it is necessary to understand the role that is played by, for example, socio-cultural factors. The literature revealed a need for a multidimensional approach and the findings of this study demonstrate the importance of such an approach. Therefore, any future study should consider these factors and not just approach migration and urbanisation from a purely economic perspective which could be limiting.

Much has changed in the political landscape of MENA since the author began conducting this research. The Arab Spring (2011) has brought about changes in terms of conflict, migration, economics and overall political attitudes. This study did address these issues to a certain extent; however, these developments are ongoing. Therefore, because it has been shown that conflict has an impact on regional migration, any future study could examine the effects of conflict retrospectively, specifically in relation to migration, urbanisation and urban geography. In fact the recent problems of social unrest are partly a result of rapid urbanisation in the region and therefore, the results of this study, which show a positive experience for migrants, may serve as a basis for policy formulation to prevent civil unrest in MENA in the future. Moreover, the factors that have led to a positive experience of migration in this study could be further addressed academically, as most research relates to the negative side of migration and urbanisation in the developing world.

Amongst the limitations of this study was the fact that it was almost impossible for the researcher, as a male, to interview women due to cultural reasons. Women are the foundation of family life in Saudi Arabia and their experiences are just as relevant as those of men, therefore, any future study would benefit from employing female assistants for data collection. Another limitation of the study was that it was difficult to obtain data from the Bedouin; firstly because they come from the desert and are suspicious of being asked questions, and secondly that they were reluctant to share information and give their time. The reasons for this are firstly the Bedouin would regard a lecturer as having a high position and would be reluctant to criticise life in the city, and secondly, culturally they belong to a tribe which is very much a closed clique, and finally, they are concerned about jealousy and would be uncomfortable sharing information about family and income. Therefore, future studies should consider the implication that examining a cultural group may be affected by the specific cultural behaviour of that group.

The study also revealed that the MENA region is very diverse and that there are differences between countries and differences between the sub-regions of MENA. Therefore, for any future study the drivers, patterns and consequences of urbanisation could focus on a particular sub region or types of country; i.e. poor, rich or those in conflict. Moreover, in

relation to Saudi Arabia, the country could be examined in the context of the Gulf region in particular, rather than MENA as a whole.

This study pertains to those migrants surveyed; it is not known what percentage of migrants from, for example the desert areas of Al Qassim, leave for other major cities such as Riyadh. Thus, any future study that determined the preferred destination of migrants from Al Qassim would shed light on the popularity of Buraydah City. There is evidence to show that Buraydah enjoys special popularity as an urban centre, because the vast majority of those who migrated from outside of the Al Qassim region came from Riyadh.

It was found that some of the migrants from amongst the migrant groups were in fact self-employed entrepreneurs. These migrants did not migrate in search of work and they may even create jobs for other city dwellers, therefore, the drivers motivating them are different, and as yet unrepresented in literature (Ndoen et al., 2000). Thus, any future study should consider these migrants, their motivations to migrate and (in recognition of their entrepreneurial nature) the impact that they have on urbanisation in medium-sized cities in Saudi Arabia.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Participation Information**

#### **Urbanisation and Migration in Saudi Arabia: the case of Buraydah City**

Researcher: Ahmad Al Bassam (Ph.D student - Department of Geography, University of Leicester)

#### **Purpose of research**

The research is part of a Ph.D study intended to obtain your views and experiences about urbanisation and migration in Buraydah city, and hopes to get an in depth view of the reasons for and consequences of this process. The data collected from participants will help greatly in understanding and evaluating migration and urbanisation in Buraydah. It will be appreciated if participants answer questions fully and honestly.

Participants will be requested to take part in a questionnaire, interview or oral history. This study in the future, it is hoped, will help the local government to plan for a better Buraydah city. Additionally, the data will be used for the Ph.D thesis, academic publications and policy reports.

#### **Confidentiality**

The information obtained will be treated in strict confidence and will only be used for purposes of the study. Your name is not required in order to protect your anonymity. Participation is voluntary and participants have the right to withdraw at any time, without giving reasons, and any information obtained can be returned and not used for the study if the participant so wishes.

The researcher is grateful for your participation and will be happy to answer any questions you may have. Please complete the Informed consent sheet.

Thank you

Ahmad Al Bassam (Researcher)

## Appendix 2

### Questionnaire

Date of distribution:    /    / 2009

#### Section One: Characteristics of the head of the family

1. Place of birth:

Administrative region.....City .....Village..... Desert.....

If outside of Saudi Arabia, please state.....

2. Sex:        2-1. Male     2-2. Female

3. Date of birth.....

4. Marital status:

4-1. Single         4-2. Married

4-3. Divorced         4-4. Widow/widower

5. Highest educational qualification received:

5-1. None         5-2. Primary Education

5-3. Intermediate Education     5-4. Secondary Education

5-5. Certificate / Diploma     5-6. University degree

5-7. Postgraduate

6. Employment status:

6-1. Employed         6-2. Self employed

6-3. Unemployed         6-4. Retired

6-5. Unable to work, please specify  .....

6-7. Other  .....

7. Current employment: .....

8. Place of work:

8-1. Within Buraydah city

8-2. Outside Buraydah city  (Where?).....

8-3 Both within and outside Buraydah  please give details:.....

9. Number of people in household:

9-1. How many adults live in the household?

< 3  3 -5  6 -8  >9

9-2. How many children live in the household?

< 3  3-5  6-8  > 9

9-3. Do any family members live in the house temporarily or seasonally? Please give details.

.....

10. How many cars does your family have?

None  One  Two  Three  More than three

11. Head of household monthly income

- < 1000 R
- 1000 – 2999 R
- 3000 – 4999 R
- 5000 – 6999 R
- 7000 – 8999 R
- 9000 – 10999 R
- 11000 – 12999 R
- 13000 – 14000 R
- + 15000 R

**Section Two: House information**

12. Name of neighbourhood: .....

13. Type of housing:

13-1. Villa  13-2. Flat  13-3. Old house

13- 4. Mud house  13-5. Other  Please specify: .....

14. Type of tenure:

14-1. Owner  14-2. Lease  14-3 Other  Please specify

15. Is this the first house you have occupied in Buraydah city?

15-1. Yes  15-2. No

16. Have you lived in any other neighbourhoods in Buraydah city?

16-1. Yes                       16-2. No       If yes, please state where:.....

**Section Three: Migration to Buraydah city**

17. Where did you live immediately before coming to Buraydah City, and for how long?

Administrative region.....City..... Village.....  
Other..... Period (Years).....

18. Length of stay in each house in Buraydah city:

House 1. Address .....

Dated moved in..... Year    .....month    Date...../...../.....

Dated moved out..... Year    .....month    Date...../...../.....

House 2. Address .....

Dated moved in..... Year    .....month    Date...../...../.....

Dated moved out..... Year    .....month    Date...../...../.....

House 3. Address .....

Dated moved in..... Year    .....month    Date...../...../.....

Dated moved out..... Year    .....month    Date...../...../.....

House 4. Address .....

Dated moved in..... Year .....month Date...../...../.....

Dated moved out..... Year .....month Date...../...../.....

19. Who made the decision to move to Buraydah city? Please give details of their decision below:

19-1. Your decision alone  19-2. The family

19-3. Other  (who).....

20. When you migrated to Buraydah city, did your family migrate with you?

20-1. yes  20-2. No

If answer no, please state why:.....

If answer yes, how many family members moved to Buraydah city?

..... Male ..... Female

21. Were there any members of your family settled in Buraydah city before you migrated?

21-1. yes  21-2. No

If answered yes, please give details why.....

.....

**Section Four: Reasons of migration to Buraydah city**

22. What were the reasons for you to migrate to Buraydah city? (If there is more than one reason, please indicate the order of importance, 1 being the primary reason, 2 the secondary reason and so forth)

- 22-1. Attracted by urban environment
- 22-2. Search for work
- 22-3. Career advancement
- 22-4. Relocated by employer
- 22-5. Education
- 22-6. Marriage
- 22-7. for trade
- 22-8. Amenities
- 22-9. Health care
- 22-10. The presence of relatives and friends
- 22-11. other  please specify.....

**Section Five: Information about any intentions to migrate from Buraydah city in the future.**

23. Were your expectations fulfilled when you moved to Buraydah city? Please give details.  
.....

24. Please give details of any problems you faced when you migrated to Buraydah city.  
.....

25. Are you satisfied with living in Buraydah city? Please give details.  
.....

26. Do you want to migrate from Buraydah city to another area in the future?

26-1. Yes       26-2. No       26-3. Unsure

If the answer is yes, write the name of the region or city you wish to migrate to and when you intend to migrate.

(.....).

27. Please give details of any problems you have faced since moving to Buraydah city?

.....

28. If you intend to migration from Buraydah city, what is the reason?

28-1. Search for a better urban environment

28-2. Work

28-3. Lack of appropriate educational services

28-4. Lack of health services

28-5. High cost of living

28-6. To join relatives

28-7. The need to return to original home for various reasons

28-8. Climate

28-9. Retirement

28-10. Other reasons

.....

Please give further information of you chosen answer.

.....

If you would like to add any additional information or comments, please use space below.

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

### Appendix 3

#### Interview

DAY: .....

DATE ...../..... /2009

TIME: ..... am /pm

ADDRESS :

.....

Place of birth:

Administrative region.....City .....Village..... Desert.....

If outside of Saudi Arabia, please state.....

Sex: .....

Date of birth.....

Marital status: .....

Educational status:.....

Employment status: .....

Number of occupants in household: .....

1. When did you first move to Buraydah city?

---

---

---

2. Why did you move to Buraydah city? Did anyone encourage you?

---

---

---

3. How many times have you moved since coming to Buraydah city and why?

---

---

---

4. How satisfied were you with your first home in Buraydah city?

---

---

---

5. Did you consider your first home to be temporary, if so why?

---

---

---

6. To what extent did you feel that you were supported by local authorities in terms of housing when you first arrived in Buraydah city?

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---

7. What difficulties did you face in finding housing when you first came to Buraydah city?

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---

. To what extent was your decision influenced by the prospect of employment?

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9. Please discuss any problems faced when looking for suitable employment?

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---

---

10. What kind of financial difficulties did you face living in Buraydah city?

---

---

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11. How do you feel about public facilities such as health care and education?

---

---

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12. How do you feel about facilities for recreation and social events that help you socialize with other people?

---

---

---

. What do you miss, if anything, about rural / Bedouin life?

---

---

---

14. How do you feel about living in an urban environment?

---

---

---

15. To what extent have you maintained cultural traditions and identity?

---

---

---

16. To what extent do you feel comfortable that Buraydah city is now your permanent home?

---

---

---

17. Do you plan to leave Buraydah city in the future, if so why?

---

---

---

18. If you could change something about Buraydah city, what would it be?

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## Appendix 4

### Oral Histories

DAY: .....

DATE ...../..... /2009

TIME: ..... am /pm

ADDRESS:

.....

Place of birth:

Administrative region.....City .....Village..... Desert.....

If outside of Saudi Arabia, please state.....

Sex: .....

Date of birth.....

Marital status: .....

Educational status:.....

Employment status: .....

Number of occupants in household: .....

1. Please give a comparative account of life before and after Buraydah city?
2. What was life like in the city / rural area / desert before migration to Buraydah city?
3. Please tell me the reasons for your decision to migrate to Buraydah city?
4. How did you feel about the idea of moving to Buraydah city?
5. Can you tell me about the experience of the migration itself, how did it feel?

6. How do think other members of your family felt about the migration?
7. What was life like in Buraydah city when you first arrived, and how do you feel about Buraydah city now?
8. Was Buraydah city what you expected it to be?
9. Did you achieve your aspirations, the reasons for moving to Buraydah city?