

Extended Abstract

**Rethinking The Demography Of Iraq:
What Do We Think Today About What We Thought 12 Months Ago?**

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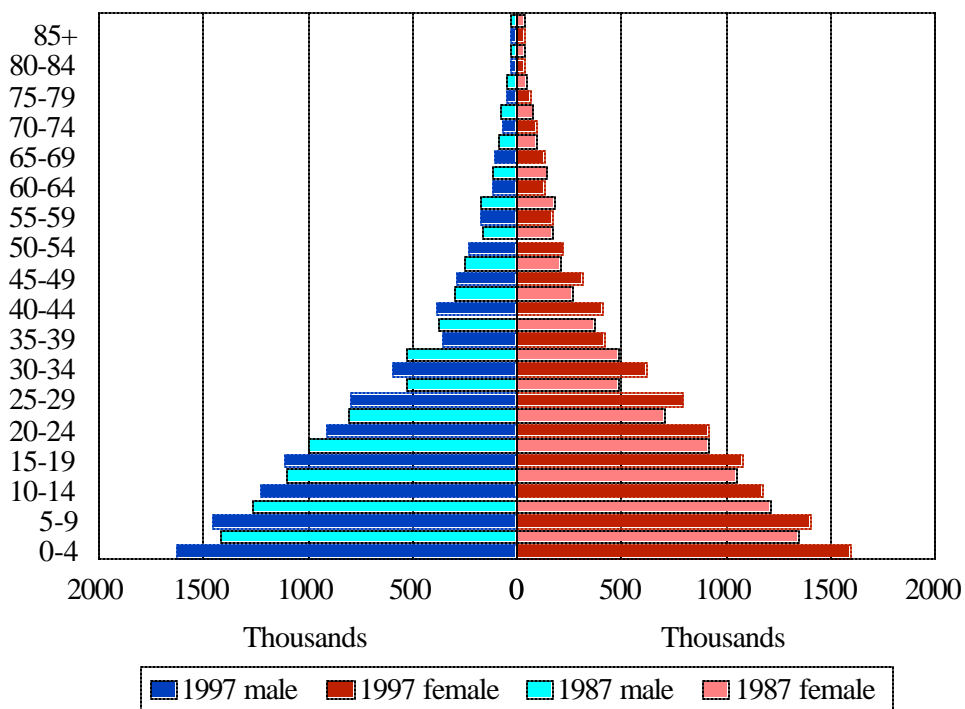
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Iraq's latest census was conducted in October of 1997.¹ A year ago neither the United Nations' Statistical Division nor the U.S. Census Bureau had any solid evidence that this census had been released and little to show that it had actually been carried out. Today, as the Republic of Iraq emerges from the shroud of secrecy imposed by the former regime, the country's Central Statistical Organization has begun to share the results of the 1997 General Census with the international community. And these results cause us to question our past assumptions about Iraq's population size, growth, and the components of change.

This poster presents demographic data from the 1997 census, including an evaluation of census data quality, and underscores sources of continuing uncertainty about Iraq's demography. The poster compares estimates of fertility, mortality, and current and future growth based on the census with Census Bureau and United Nations estimates prepared prior to the release of figures from the 1997 census. Finally, the poster also compares levels and trends in fertility and mortality derived from the 1997 census and previously available sources with levels of fertility and mortality of other countries in the Middle East and Western Asia.

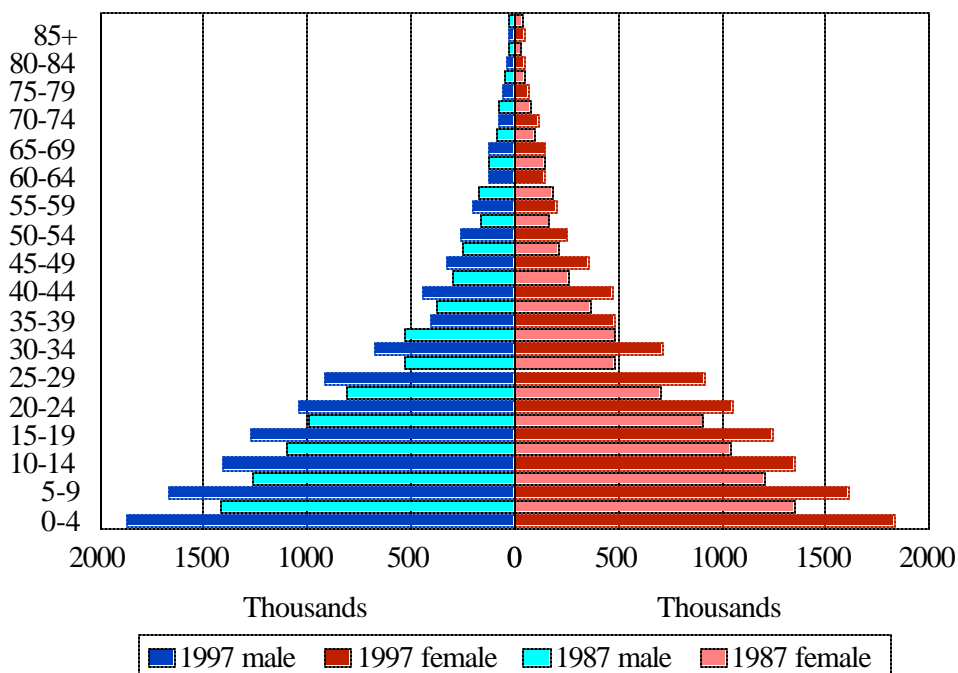
The poster is divided into three sections. The first presents data from the 1997 census taken from the national report, describes the problem of evaluating a census based on three fewer governorates than the previous census, and presents basic measures of census data quality. Figures 1 and 2, taken from the

Figure 1. 1997 vs. 1987 Census Population



Sources: Iraq (n.d.: Table 2/10; 1997: table 21).

Figure 2. Inflated 1997 vs. 1987 Census Population



Sources: Iraq (n.d.: Table 2/10; 1997: table 21) and U.S. Census Bureau, International Programs Center, unpublished table.

poster, show comparisons of the 1987 and 1997 censuses (18 and 15 governorates, respectively). Figure 2 shows an attempt to compensate for the more limited coverage in 1997.

The second part of the poster presents estimates of fertility and mortality based on 1997 census questions and lists issues unresolved by the census. Fertility has been estimated from census questions about children born during the 12 months prior to enumeration, children ever born by age of woman, and the age distribution under age 10. Child mortality during the 1990s has been estimated from census child survivorship questions (Table 1). In the absence of a diaspora and data problems, such estimates would allow the demographer to paint a consistent portrait of a population. Such is not the case for Iraq, unfortunately. Unresolved issues include the impact of the 1990-91 Gulf War on the age distribution, the impact of the 2003 invasion of Iraq by coalition forces, and the extent of underenumeration in what must be considered an administrative headcount as much as, or more than, a modern census. The second part of the poster also compares new estimates of fertility and mortality based on the 1997 census with assumed trends in these variables as they existed 12 months ago and discusses the impact these revisions will have on the Census Bureau's population projection for Iraq.

The third part of the poster compares estimated fertility, mortality, and population growth based on analysis of the 1997 General Census with rates estimated for other countries of the Middle East and Western Asia.

¹ The formal census date was October 16, 1997.

Table 1. Comparison of Under-5 Mortality Rates (q(5)) Calculated from Child-Survivorship Data from the 1997 Census with 1999 Child and Maternal Mortality Survey Estimates

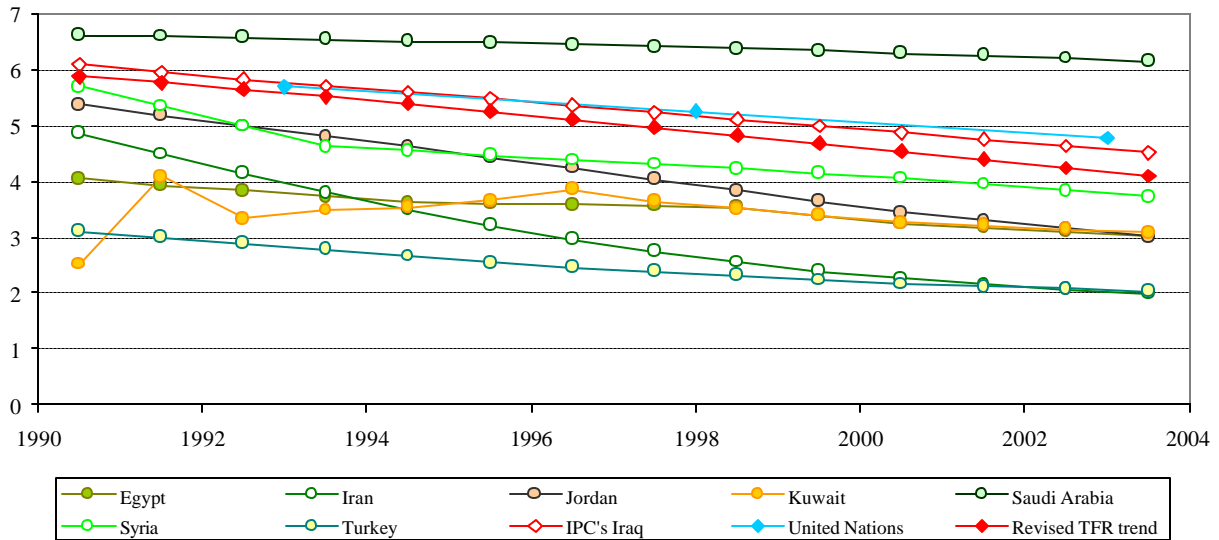
Age of women	Coale-Demeny South model mortality *		Coale-Demeny West model mortality		United Nations General model mortality		1999 Survey **	
	Reference date	Estimate	Reference date	Estimate	Reference date	Estimate	Reference date	Estimate
20-24	1993.9	100	1993.8	107	1994.3	116	1997	122
25-29	1992.2	101	1992.2	101	1992.5	104	1992	92
30-34	1990.6	96	1990.6	95	1991.3	95		
35-39	1989.0	92	1989.1	87	1990.2	87		
40-44	1987.2	98	1987.2	91	1988.7	90	1987	60

* Under-5 mortality, both sexes combined

** Estimates are approximate, based on data points from Jones (1999: chart 1) rather than on estimates by age of mother.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Programs Center, unpublished tables; Jones (1999).

Figure 3. Total Fertility for Iraq and Nearby Countries



References:

Iraq, Central Statistical Organization. 1997. *Results of the 1997 General Census. The Total for the Country Excluding the Autonomous Regions.* Baghdad: Council of Ministers, Planning Commission, Central Statistical Organization.

_____. n.d. [2001]. *Annual Abstract of Statistics: 2001*. Baghdad: Board of Ministers, Planning Commission, Central Statistical Organization, Publication & Public Relations Department.

Jones, Gavin. 1999. "Iraq -- Under-5 Mortality." Research note distributed by UNICEF to accompany the preliminary report of the 1999 Child and Maternal Mortality Survey. Downloaded from the Internet 8/1/03. URL <<http://www.unicef.org/reseval/pdfs/irqu5est.pdf>>