

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 079 456

UD 013 737

AUTHOR Rosser, Colin  
TITLE Urbanization in Tropical Africa: A Demographic Introduction. An International Urbanization Survey Report to the Ford Foundation.  
INSTITUTION Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y. International Urbanization Survey.  
PUB DATE 72  
NOTE 85p.  
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29  
DESCRIPTORS City Improvement; City Planning; Demography; Living Standards; Population Distribution; \*Population Growth; \*Rural Urban Differences; Urban Areas; \*Urban Immigration; \*Urbanization; Urban Population; Urban Slums  
IDENTIFIERS \*Tropical Africa

## ABSTRACT

The basic point which this discussion attempts to emphasize is that the political perception of urbanization in Tropical Africa tends to be dominated by concern with urban unemployment (and its social and political consequences) as the major, visible and explosive byproduct of the acceleration of rural-urban migration which has been one of the most striking features of the postwar period, and particularly the period since independence. Contents include: (1) definitions of the terms "urban" and "tropical Africa;" (2) the African urban inheritance; (3) Exploding cities in unexploding economies; (4) the rural-urban relationship; (5) the African Urban Experience; (6) the politics of urbanization. [For related documents in this series, see UD 013 731-013 736 and UD 013 738-013 744 for surveys of specific countries. For special studies analyzing urbanization in the Third World, see UD 013 745-UD 013 748.] (Author/SB)

ED 079456

---

An International  
Urbanization Survey Report  
to the Ford Foundation

---

**Urbanization in  
Tropical Africa**  
A Demographic  
Introduction

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
EDUCATION & WELFARE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO-  
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM  
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGIN-  
ATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS  
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRE-  
SENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

UD 013737

---

This working paper was prepared as supportive material for an International Survey of Urbanization in the developing countries, which was organized by the Ford Foundation late in 1970 and was completed late in 1972. The purpose of the Survey was to provide findings and recommendations to guide the Foundation in making informed judgments on its future participation in programs related to the urban condition in the less-developed countries.

The Survey was directed neither to perform nor to commission original research. Its work was to be reportorial, analytic, and indicative of program choices. To serve these objectives, the Survey was essentially a field operation in which the staff travelled widely in the countries where the Foundation maintains field offices and drew not only upon its own observations but upon the experience of Foundation personnel assigned to the developing countries. The staff's own field notes on phases of urbanization in specific countries were expanded into working papers both to record observations and to clarify the deductive processes and the analyses of data which were to form a demonstrable basis for the Survey's conclusions. Additional working papers were provided by Foundation personnel with a depth of field knowledge, and by consultants expert either in specific countries or in topics of special interest.

The Survey working papers and special studies were originally intended only for internal use. It became evident, however, that the body of material had values which argued for wider exposure. Accordingly, the Foundation is publishing the papers for those with special country or topical interests and for those interested in the material as a whole.

The working papers carry disclaimers appropriate to the circumstances of their preparation and to the limitations of their original purpose. The reader should not expect to find in them either the product of original research or a comprehensive treatment of the processes of urbanization in the particular country. Rather, they are occasional papers whose unity derives from their use as exemplary and illustrative material for the Survey.

But unity of form and substance is not the measure of their value. Each report and special study is an essay on some aspect of urbanization in the developing countries. In most instances, they are what a good essay should be—unmistakably personalized and therefore reflective of the insights and the convictions of informed authors.

#### **The International Urbanization Survey**

John P. Robin, Director  
Colin Rosser  
Frederick C. Terzo

ED 079456

Urbanization in Tropical Africa: a  
demographic introduction

by  
Colin Rosser

International Urbanization Survey  
The Ford Foundation

## C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
THE LEAST URBANIZED OF CONTINENTS	1
Definition of the Term "Urban"	9
Definition of the Term "Tropical Africa"	13
THE AFRICAN URBAN INHERITANCE	17
Urban Migration: The Movement to Ghana's Towns	27
EXPLODING CITIES IN UNEXPLODING ECONOMIES	31
THE RURAL-URBAN RELATIONSHIP	49
THE AFRICAN URBAN EXPERIENCE	54
THE POLITICS OF URBANIZATION	58

## THE LEAST URBANIZED OF CONTINENTS

The population of Tropical Africa is still overwhelmingly rural. Of the 1970 estimated population of 242 million, covering thirty-five countries, only some 26 million (or 11 per cent) lived in settlements with 20,000 or more inhabitants.

Africa is the least urbanized of continents, but this demographic fact belies the new importance of African cities. A decade ago the continent was a colonial patchwork and Africans a powerless people.<sup>4</sup> Today the caucus of independent African nations has a third of the votes in the General Assembly of the United Nations. At home, African Leaders are no longer traditional chiefs or renegade rousers of unrest, but are the holders of the economic, military and political power of the new nations. The habitat of this new elite is the city. Here is the center of commerce, the seat of government, the source of news and innovation and the point of contact with the outside world. As in other modernizing nations of diverse peoples, the emergence of national cultures in African countries is overwhelmingly an urban phenomenon. The bearers of these cultures are not to be found in yesterday's books with their wealth of material on tribal cultures and rural life, on colonial organization, and on history 'seen through blue eyes'. Even attempts to understand today's African as a mixture of primitive and modern runs the risk of overlooking him as a new kind of person dealing with new kinds of problems requiring new kinds of solutions.\*

Certainly one of these "new kinds of problems" is that of a dramatically increasing rate of urban growth. African urban areas, particularly the larger cities, now display the

---

\*

Horace Miner. "The City and Modernization: an Introduction", in The City in Modern Africa, Horace Miner, ed., London, Pall Mall Press, 1967, p. 1.

[2]

world's fastest rates of population increase. At current rates of growth, many of the larger cities (Kinshasa, Lagos, Dar es Salaam, Dakar, Addis Ababa, Lusaka, Accra, as examples) will double in size within the next decade--"exploding cities in unexploding economies" as the situation has been described in an excellent U.N. paper on the problem of urbanization in developing countries during the Second Development Decade.\* The characteristics and consequences of this situation of severe population pressure on the major cities, with an assessment of the current governmental responses, will be one of the main themes of this report.

It has been argued that aside from (and of course closely related to) the increasing plight of the major cities, the low and embryonic level of African urbanization in general offers unique development opportunities. Daniel Lerner, in an essay on the processes of modernization, concludes "that Africa's very lack of development makes it the most favored developing area in the world."\*\* This perhaps excessively optimistic judgment is based on the view that, because most new African states are largely uncommitted

---

\* U.N. Committee on Housing, Building & Planning, "Housing, Building and Planning in the Second Development Decade", E/C.6/90. New York, U.N., July 24, 1969, p. 29.

\*\* Daniel Lerner. "Comparative Analysis of Processes of Modernization". The City in Modern Africa, p. 38.

through past investment to specific lines of development, they have the most options open to them. Horace Miner suggests: "For most of Africa, the lack of cities in general, and of 'primate cities' in particular, means that there may still be an opportunity to urbanize without creating the misery which stamps pre-industrial cities and which attended unplanned urban growth in the 'developed' nations".\* Joseph Spengler, in another essay on African urbanization in the same book, displays a similar optimism.

The relative non-urbaness of Africa's population not only permits the development of a relatively favorable inter-urban distribution of population, but it can also permit the achievement of a better intra-urban disposition of residential, manufacturing and servicing activities than has been attained in many Western cities....Urban form not yet having come markedly into being in Africa except in the large primate cities, it cannot yet limit growth as it eventually will when growth has generated relatively inflexible form.\*\*

This hopeful view is the basis of the current growing interest in regional and spatial planning in almost all African countries, and of the obviously ubiquitous concern among planners in Africa (whether indigenous or foreign advisors) with new growth centers, industrial location policy, new communication networks, resettlement schemes, integrated rural-urban development as a technique of "organizing

---

\*

Horace Miner, op. cit., p. 13.

\*\*

Joseph J. Spengler. "Africa and the Theory of Optimum City Size". The City in Modern Africa, pp. 63-64.



[4]

the countryside," and with policies designed to influence population distribution--in essence, an attempt to discern and impose a systematic "voluntary geography," as it has been aptly described in the Senegal Plan.

Certainly discussion among academic and professional planners of the theories and urgencies of regional development in individual countries appears everywhere to run far ahead of political recognition of the strategic opportunities available. Similarly, it outpaces the political will and machinery for the effective translation of theory or policy into executive action. But this lively and growing interest in a deliberately created geography of national development, as clearly evidenced by the "second generation" of national plans, is one of the more promising features of the African development scene.

The demographic explosion of African cities pre- dominately a postwar phenomenon and so, even more recently, is the development of academic research interests in the sociology and economy of African urban areas and in the nature and processes of African urbanization. G.T. Trewartha and W. Zelinsky in their study of population patterns in Tropical Africa, writing in the early 1950s and using data from the immediate postwar period, estimated that only 8.5 million people of the total population in Tropical Africa then (121 million) lived in towns with five thousand or more inhabitants. They thus considered that in their general

survey "the relative insignificance of city-dwellers does not entitle them to detailed discussion."\*

In the last two decades the situation has changed strikingly--both with regard to the pace and scale of African urbanization and with regard to recognition of its importance as a field of research and academic interest. A recently compiled bibliography lists over a thousand publications, most of them appearing in the last ten years and yet makes no claim to being exhaustive.\*\* And it is clear from the scattered information that is available on the research programs of a wide variety of institutes, centers, and university departments in Africa, North America, and Europe, that a large number of studies of various aspects of African urbanization are currently in progress.

Understandably, no attempt has been made in the brief survey of African urbanization contained in this report to comprehend this extensive and rapidly-growing literature, or indeed to present a comprehensive account of the present state of knowledge of urbanization in Tropical Africa. Some

---

\*

G.T. Trewartha and W. Zelinsky. "Population patterns in Tropical Africa", Annals of the Association of American Geographers, XLIV, 1954, p. 144.

\*\*

Centre d'Etudes de Géographie Tropicale (CEGET) "Bibliographie Géographique des Etudes Urbaines en Afrique Tropical et a Madagascar", CEGET, Universitaire de Talence-Pessac, N.D. (1970).

[6]

basic understanding of the present situation, but for the limited purposes of this report, understanding has been sought in the convenient summaries, however inadequate, already available.

### THE POPULATION OF TROPICAL AFRICA

A clear and accurate picture of the present and expected demographic situation in individual countries is one of the essential ingredients in trying to understand the problems of urbanization. Among other things, urbanization means, of course, the redistribution of population and a change in the demographic balance between rural and urban. Recent demographic discussions--such as the most useful collection of papers in The Population of Tropical Africa,\* constantly reiterate the inadequacy and inaccuracy of census information on Africa.

Apart from the standard difficulties of census-taking in developing countries generally, it seems that the ethnic complexity of many newly-emerged African states has frequently made the census a subject of acute political controversy. This, for example, appears to have been the case with the Nigerian census of 1962 "which enumerated some

---

\* J.C. Caldwell and C. Okonjo, eds., The Population of Tropical Africa, London, Longmans Green & Co. Ltd., 1968.

millions more Nigerians than expected, became a centre of political controversy and was declared void without the release of any figures. In 1963, another census was organized hurriedly....It has since announced that 56 million persons were enumerated (as compared to the 38 million estimated, based on the 1952--53 census) and...the figure was probably over 60 million before it was scaled down prior to release. Few details of the 1963 census have yet been released but one matter which participants in the controversy seem agreed is that it was probably in error by 10 million or more people, a margin of error greater than the total population of most African countries...."

Political issues of this type concerned with the implications of the ethnic balance in individual countries have compounded the difficulties of obtaining accurate and essential demographic data in many African countries. Francophone countries generally appear to have sought a way out of this dilemma (and also to avoid the heavy costs of full censuses) by resort to intensive population sampling. However, while major disputes often exist regarding the present estimates of the total scale, distribution, and rates of growth of African populations, there appears to be less argument and much more accurate information--contained in

---

\*

J.C. Caldwell, "Introduction", to Part One, The Demographic Situation, The Population of Tropical Africa, p. 5.

frequent planning studies and socio-economic surveys--regarding the size and growth rates of the major cities. And demographers display marked optimism about the prospects for generally improved demographic information for Africa in the near future:

Demographic research in Africa until recently was handicapped by lack of up-to-date and reliable data. The position however is improving and is expected to improve considerably with the African programme for the 1970 round of censuses for population and housing. Today, only Ethiopia and Somalia, constituting together an estimated 8 per cent of the population of Africa, have not yet conducted nation-wide inquiries. Population censuses or demographic inquiries have been undertaken at least once for all other areas.\*

Pending the publication of the results of these latest censuses, this report relies heavily on the intensive and excellent Population Program Center of the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa, which has developed population estimates and projections (both for the total and urban populations) for individual countries, based on the latest available information. As a recent publication of ECA points out: "the figures on which computations of urbanization and rates of growth rest are themselves subject to errors and biases that occur in all processes of data collection, whether on a sample or complete enumeration basis. Notwithstanding the statistical pitfalls, the basic trends

---

\*

R.K. Som. "Some demographic indicators for Africa," The Population of Tropical Africa, p. 187

are clear and generally cannot be explained by errors in the data."\*

#### Definition of the Term "Urban"

In the interests of clarity, two terms--"urban" and "Tropical Africa"--require a brief explanation, since the definitions used here form the basis of the population estimates and projections given in this report. National definitions of the urban population vary widely from country to country--and sometimes from one government department to another inside country.

In Ethiopia, to take a somewhat extreme case, a publication of the Ministry of Interior identifies some 1,300 urban centers in the country, with a total estimated urban population of three million. Of this total, only 118 were urban settlements of more than 5,000 population in 1966--these contained 56 per cent of the total urban population (in only 9 per cent of the number of "towns"). The remainder are small settlements with populations of less than 5,000, a great many of them less than 2,000. The basic criterion of the Ministry of Interior definition of a "town" appears to be whether or not the settlement concerned comes under its

---

\* U.N. Economic Commission for Africa. "Size and Growth of Urban Population in Africa." E/CN.14/CAS.6/3. Addis Ababa, U.N. July 29, 1968.

jurisdiction. In effect, says Professor Mesfin of Haile Selassie Imperial University, a "town" can be any settlement, regardless of size, with a post office or a police station or a bar.\*

The Central Statistical Office (I.E.G.), on the other hand, uses four criteria to define urban centers: if the area is a chartered municipality; if it comes under the jurisdiction of the Municipality Department of the Ministry of the Interior; if it has some sort of local officer responsible for collecting service taxes; if it is taken to be a town by the chiefs and elders of the area. By this definition, the Central Statistical Office in 1967 identified 248 towns in Ethiopia with a total population of 1.9 million. Only 53 of these settlements had a population of more than 5,000.\*\*

In his essay on Ethiopian urbanization, Professor Mesfin uses yet another set of criteria "peculiar to Ethiopian conditions." "Hence any agglomeration is regarded as urban where at least 50 per cent of the working population are engaged in non-agricultural activity and where there is at least a weekly market and some permanent shops stocking a

---

\* W.M. Mesfin, "Problems of Urbanization in Ethiopia" (unpublished paper), Ethiopia, 1966.

\*\* Ernest H. Jurkat, "The Long View for Regional Development Strategy in Ethiopia", Unpublished paper of U.N. Regional Planning Advisor to the Planning Commission of the Imperial Ethiopian Government, February 1970.

variety of goods as well as some drinking houses. These are characteristic features of urban phenomena in Ethiopia. Other urban features are the angular (square or rectangular) type of houses and some simulation of road pattern. With this definition, Mesfin identifies 118 towns with a minimum population of 5,000, and a total urban population of 1.7 million.\*

By the standard U.N. definition of urban centers-- settlements with more than 20,000 persons--Ethiopia in 1970 has eleven towns and a total urban population of 1.2 million.

Other countries in Tropical Africa may not exhibit this internal confusion over the definition of "urban", but nonetheless vary widely in the definitions they use, as the following examples illustrate:

	National Definition of "Urban" Places**
Ghana	: Localities of 5,000 or more persons.
Kenya	: Settlements of over 2,000 inhabitants.

---

\* Mesfin, op. cit., p. 4.

\*\* U.N. Economic Commission for Africa, "Size and Growth of Urban Population in Africa", E/CN.14/CAS.6/3, Addis Ababa, 29 July 1968, Annex 1, pp. 1-6.



[12]

Nigeria	: Towns with populations of 20,000 or more inhabitants whose occupations are not mainly agrarian.
Tanganyika	: 33 gazetted townships.
Zambia	: Main towns and as many small townships as could be separately identified.
Gabon	: All localities of 1,000 or more persons.
Central African Republic	: Administrative posts and villages situated within a radius of five miles from such posts.
Congo-Kinshasa	: Agglomerations of 2,000 or more where the predominant economic activity is non-agricultural, and mixed agglomerations which are urban because of their type of economic activity but rural in size.
Uganda	: Towns, including small trading centers.
Senegal	: Cape Vert region and cities of Saint-Louis, Thies, Kaolack, Diourbol, Longa, and Ziguinchor.

These varied national definitions lead to a bewildering complexity in demographic calculations of the percentage of the total population which is counted as "urban". They make international comparison virtually impossible.

In this report the urban population of Tropical Africa has been defined according to the standard U.N. procedure, as the population living in towns of 20,000 or more inhabitants. It is on this basis that the urban population of Tropical Africa for 1970 has been calculated at 26 million,

or 11 per cent of the total population. This definition has at least the merits of simplicity and clarity, permits the use of readily-available U.N. estimates and projections, and allows rational international comparisons of degrees of urbanization and rates of urban growth.

Complete consistency (except in international comparisons using the U.N. standard definition) is however not possible. Most of the available analyses of urbanization for individual countries are naturally based on census reports and other government publications using the respective national definitions of urban and rural populations. Where this report examines the situation in particular countries, it will be necessary to make extensive use of their national analyses--though in each case an effort will be made to ensure that the relevant definition of "urban" is made explicit.

#### Definition of the Term "Tropical Africa"

A second difficulty in the assembly and organization of information on urbanization for the purposes of this survey lies in the varying geographical scope of the terms "Tropical Africa," "Sub-Saharan Africa," "Black Africa," or their French equivalents, used in a variety of studies and publications. Broadly speaking, these publications vary in two respects--whether or not to include Ethiopia, and sometimes the Sudan; and where to draw the southern boundary.

[14]

The decisions here seem largely arbitrary, and this difficulty can be quickly disposed of in this report. It is proposed to follow the U.N. practice in the recent important publication, The Growth of the World's Urban and Rural Population, 1920--2000,\* which divides Africa into three major areas--Northern Africa, Tropical Africa, and Southern Africa. This division is shown in the map on the following page.

Tropical Africa, by this definition, includes the countries (with total populations, and urban populations in settlements of over 20,000 persons) listed in Table I.

Tropical Africa therefore covers 35 countries. Of these, 22 countries each have total populations of less than five million; eight have between five and ten million; and only five (Nigeria, Congo-Kinshasa, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania) have more than ten million.

Tropical Africa in 1970 had only 11 per cent of its population in urban areas, compared with 15 per cent for all the less developed regions of the world, and 30 per cent for the world as a whole. As can be seen from the figures given, there is considerable variation from country to country in Tropical Africa in the degree of urbanization. The highest urban percentage occurs in Congo Brazzaville with one-third of its 900,000 population urban, almost all in the single city of Brazzaville. Senegal, Zambia, and Rhodesia each

\*  
United Nations, Growth of the World's Urban and Rural Population, 1920-2000, New York, United Nations, 1969.

FIG. 1

URBANIZATION LEVELS IN MAJOR REGIONS OF THE WORLD

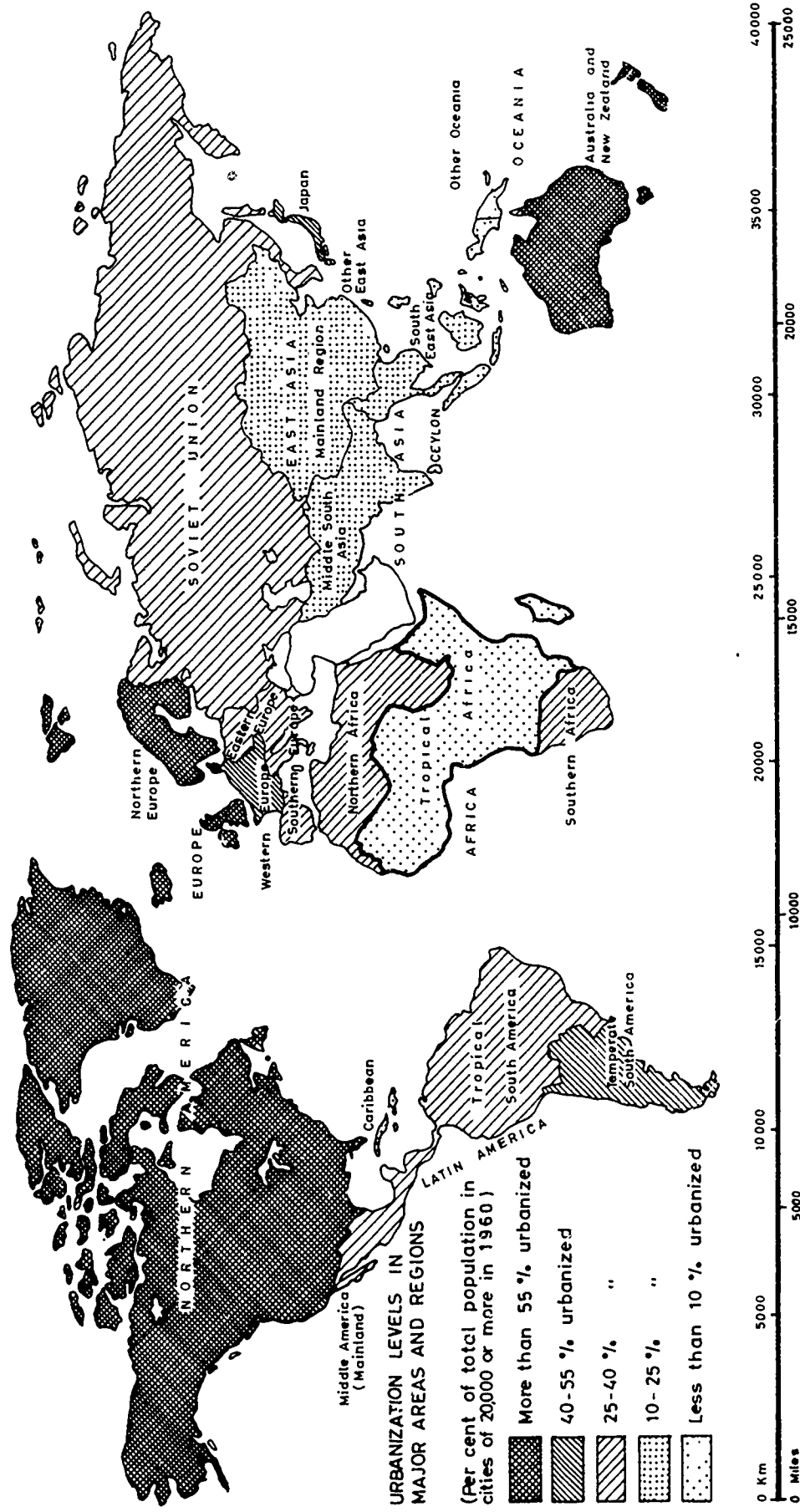


TABLE 1  
Population Estimates, Tropical Africa, 1970

Country	Total Population (millions)	Urban Population (millions)	% Urban
TOTAL	242.3	26.2	11
WEST AFRICA	111.9	15.8	14
CENTRAL AFRICA	35.5	3.9	11
EAST AFRICA	94.9	6.5	7
<u>WEST AFRICA</u>	<u>111.9</u>	<u>15.8</u>	<u>14</u>
Nigeria	66.1	10.1	15
Ghana	9.0	1.6	18
Upper Volta	5.3	0.2	4
Mali	5.1	0.4	8
Ivory Coast	4.3	0.8	19
Guinea	3.9	0.4	10
Senegal	3.9	1.1	26
Niger	3.8	0.2	5
Dahomey	2.7	0.3	11
Sierra Leone	2.6	0.4	13
Togo	1.8	0.2	11
Liberia	1.2	0.2	17
Mauritania	1.2	0.02	2
Portuguese Guinea	.6	0.02	3
Gambia	.4	0.03	7
<u>CENTRAL AFRICA</u>	<u>35.5</u>	<u>3.9</u>	<u>11</u>
Congo-Kinshasa	17.4	2.2	13
Cameroon	5.7	0.4	7
Chad	3.7	0.3	8
Central African Republic	1.5	0.2	13
Congo Brazzaville	.9	0.3	33
Equatorial Guinea	.3	0.03	10
Angola	5.5	0.4	7
Gabon	.5	0.06	12
<u>EAST AFRICA</u>	<u>94.9</u>	<u>6.5</u>	<u>7</u>
Ethiopia	25	1.2	5
Tanzania	13.2	0.7	5
Kenya	10.8	0.8	7
Uganda	8.5	0.2	2
Madagascar	6.9	0.7	10
Malawi	4.4	0.2	5
Zambia	4.3	1.0	23
Rwanda	3.5	-	-
Burundi	3.6	0.08	2
Somalia	2.7	0.3	11
Rhodesia	4.5	1.1	24
Mozambique	7.5	0.2	3

Source: Demography and Social Statistics Section, Economic Commission for Africa (data from ECA worksheets).

have about one-fourth of their total population urban. At the other extreme lie the West African territories of Upper Volta, Mauritania, Dahomey, and Portuguese Guinea, with 5 per cent or less of their populations in urban areas. The East African group of Ethiopia and the three countries of the East African Community also exhibit a low level of urbanization as of 1970.

These countries, however, all have two basic demographic facts in common: rates of total population growth (around 3 per cent per annum) and of the growth of the urban population (about 5--6 per cent) which are among the highest for any of the world's regions. U.N. population projections for Tropical Africa indicate that the total population of these 35 countries will reach 303 million by 1980, 395 million by 1990, and 525 million by 2000, thus more than doubling in size within the next thirty years. If present trends continue, urban population is expected to reach 37 million by 1980, 62 million by 1990, and 106 million by 2000, thus multiplying fivefold in thirty years. Under the present conditions, the major impact of this astonishing population increase will be on the existing cities. This is the essence of the urbanization problem in Tropical Africa.

In this report, summary information, where available, has been used on all 35 countries. The main concern, however, has been with an assessment of the urbanization situation in the countries visited during the field survey.

These included Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia in East Africa, and Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Congo-Kinshasa in West Africa. These nine countries alone contain almost two-thirds of the population of Tropical Africa, and (apart from Rhodesia) almost all the major cities and main areas of economic production and potential.

#### THE AFRICAN URBAN INHERITANCE

In 1906, there was only one city, Ibadan, in Tropical Africa with a population of more than 100,000 inhabitants. By the early 1960s, there were 57 such cities. Thirty-two were in West Africa (23 in Nigeria alone), ten in Central Africa, and fifteen in East Africa. Of the 35 countries in Tropical Africa in the 1960s, all except nine had at least one city of more than 100,000 people.

By 1970, two cities--Greater Lagos as well as Kinshasa--had passed the million mark, and five other cities--Ibadan, Dakar, Accra, Addis Ababa, and Nairobi--had more than 500,000 inhabitants.

In the words of the Kinshasa Plan: "Qui, il y a cent ans, aurait prévu que, aux bords du Stanley-Pool, là où en amont des rapides s'étale un énorme bassin navigable, on aurait aujourd'hui, face en face, deux capitales dont l'une de plus d'un million d'habitants? Qui a prévu que Kinshasa, entre 1960 et 1966, doublerait, au moins, sa

population?"\*

The experience of urbanization in Tropical Africa is essentially a twentieth century phenomenon and, with the partial exception of the special case of traditional African urbanism in parts of West Africa, basically a product of Africa's colonial history. "The great majority of the towns of Africa today owe their origin in large measure--at least outside West Africa--to non-African initiative. This general statement is not invalidated by the existence of ancient cities and towns on or near the shore of the Indian Ocean, such as Zanzibar, since these were mostly Arab creations that were concerned with trade across the Indian Ocean."\*\*

Only in West Africa, and particularly among the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, is there evidence of an indigenous African urban tradition. The most remarkable example of this is the "black metropolis" of Ibadan well described in numerous

---

\*  
Who, 100 years ago, would have foreseen that on the shores of Stanley Pool, between the headwaters and the rapids, where an enormous navigable basin spreads, we would have today two capitals face-to-face, one of which has more than one million inhabitants? Who foresaw that Kinshasa between 1960 and 1966 would at least double its population? Mission Francaise D'Etudes D'Urbanisme, Kinshasa: Plan Local D'Amenagement, Kinshasa, July 1967, p. 1.

\*\*  
R.W. Steel. "The Towns of Tropical Africa," Essays on African Population, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 253.



sociological studies.\* The Yoruba urban tradition, with its complex pattern of rural-urban interdependence, is unique in Tropical Africa. "Towns like Abeokuta, Ife, Iwo, Ogbomosho, Oshogbo, Oyo and, above all, Ibadan have for many years played a leading role in the development of the Yoruba states, and in the 1952 census, 47 per cent of the population of the Yoruba region was recorded as living in settlements of 5,000 or more inhabitants. By contrast the Ibo, the dominant tribe east of the Niger, have never been town-dwellers and only 14 per cent of the population of the Eastern Region were classed as urban in the 1953 census."\*\*

In other parts of West Africa, preceding the phase of Western colonialism, there were a number of old-established towns, centers of Moslem emirates like Kano, or headquarters of paramount chiefs like Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti. These, however, seem to have remained small despite their long history, until the arrival of European colonial administrations and the development of road and rail communications. As with newly-established colonial centers, their

---

\* Akin L. Mabogunje. Urbanization in Nigeria. London, University of London Press, Ltd. 1968; and P.C. Lloyd; A.L. Mabogunje and B. Awe, eds., The City of Ibadan. London, Cambridge University Press, 1967.

\*\*

R.W. Steel, Ibid, p. 253.

remarkable growth is a recent phenomenon--Kumasi, for example, grew from 3,000 in 1901 to 180,000 by 1960; and Kano from 30,000 in 1903 to 295,000 by 1963, and to an estimated 415,000 by 1967.

Elsewhere in Africa the general picture is very different from that of parts of West Africa. Away from the coasts there were very few large settlements. This is specially true of those areas where lawlessness prevailed and where formal government, and law and order, were established only during the latter years of the nineteenth century. J. Dresch has noted that in the Congo basin the Bantu nowhere built settlements of greater complexity and size than the agricultural village before the coming of the European; and G.T. Trewartha and W. Zelinsky emphasize that every one of 'the 167 towns of the Belgian Congo and the 14 of Ruanda-Urundi was located, planned and built by Belgians with Africans playing a passive role.' Indeed over most of Tropical Africa there seem to have been relatively few villages in the past; the usual pattern of settlement was the isolated group of huts, or more commonly the scattering of homesteads throughout the countryside...Even today nucleated settlement remains a comparative rarity over most parts of Tropical Africa, particularly in the Congo basin, East Africa, Ethiopia and the Sudan.\*

This latter point requires further emphasis. For large parts of Tropical Africa, perhaps the greater part, the contemporary development problem is not merely that of creating intermediary towns between the dominant primate city and the village as part of a balance hierarchy of settlement: it is that of organizing nucleated settlement at the lowest level. This theme is reiterated in development plans for nation after nation. It is in part the origin of

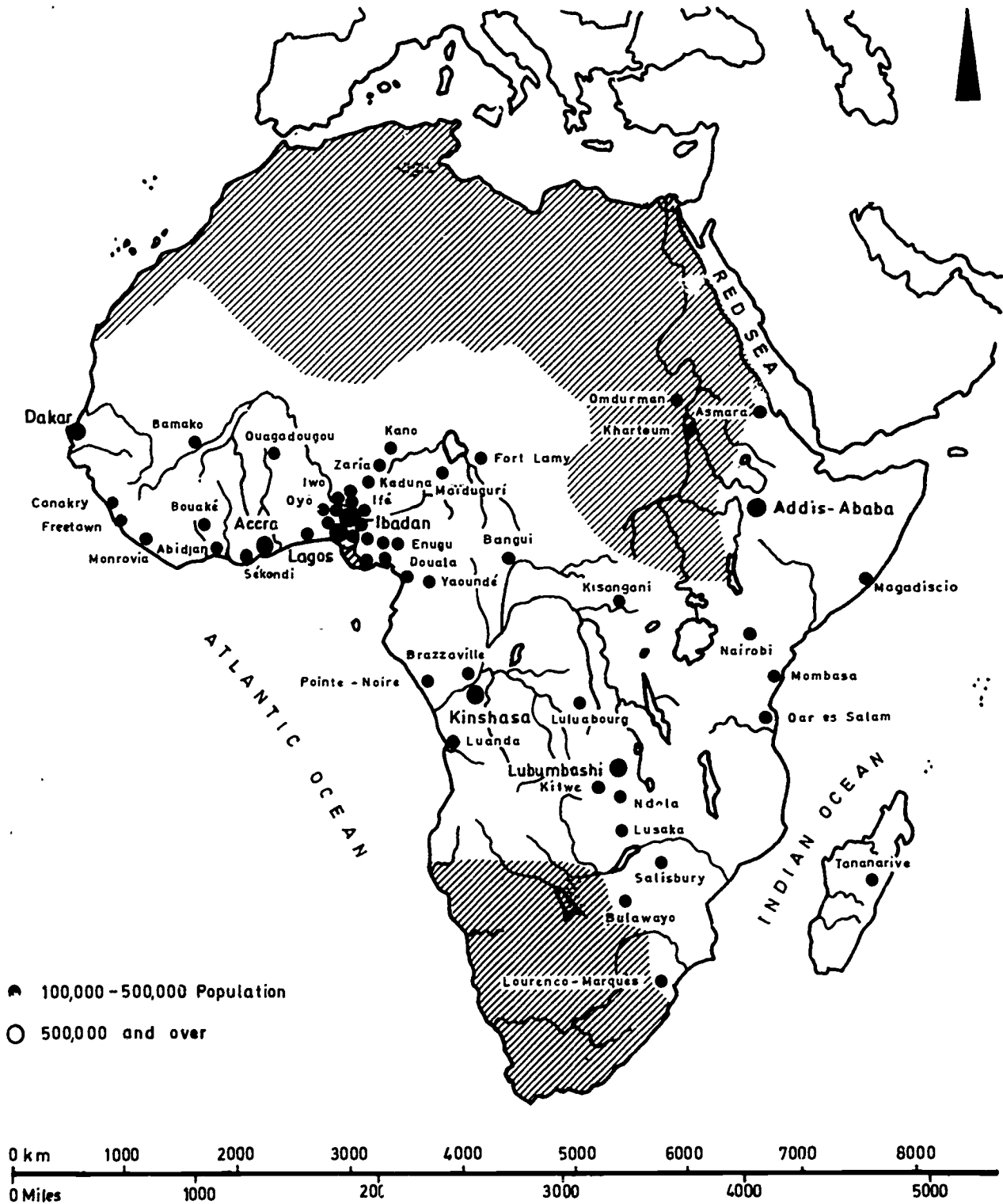
---

\*

R.W. Steel, Ibid, p. 256.

TROPICAL AFRICA, 1968:  
CITIES OF MORE THAN 100,000 POPULATION

FIG. 2



URBANIZATION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

the planned ujamaa village settlement schemes in Tanzania ("the first necessity is for people to come together to live in villages, so that it becomes feasible for them to work together and obtain the social and economic advantages of cooperation" \*); of the excellent Doxiadis Associates report on Zambia \*\*; of much of the development literature on Francophone Africa. In Ethiopia,

According to a conservative estimate, out of the total population of 22,500,000, not more than 2,000,000 live in towns and large villages. The great mass of the population, 20,000,000 or more, live sparsely scattered all over the mountains, hills, valleys and plains. Under such conditions, even more advanced nations having greater financial and technological resources under their command, could not possibly provide for health, education, transportation, communication, agricultural extension, markets and other similar services to millions and millions of people scattered over the length and breadth of a vast country like Ethiopia. Ways and means must be found to induce people in each and every area of the country to live in common.\*\*\*

Apart from the special situation of West Africa, and more particularly of Western Nigeria, the great African

---

\*

A.O. Ellman. "Progress, Problems and Prospects in Ujamaa Development in Tanzania." E.R.B. Paper 70.18. (Unpublished paper) Dar es Salaam, Economic Research Bureau, University College, 1970, p. 3.

\*\*

Doxiadis Associates, Zambia: Organization of the Countryside, Athens, Doxiadis Associates, June 1969.

\*\*\*

Imperial Ethiopian Government Ministry of Planning and Development. Regional Aspects of National Planning in Ethiopia, Part II. App. O, Addis Ababa, 1967, p. 2.

paradox is that of the co-existence of immense and rapidly-growing cities on the one hand and of the relative absence of organized village communities on the other. This reflects the impact of European administration on the traditional societies of Africa. The result was the formation of what William Hance calls "an islandic pattern of economic activity," a collection of "productive islands often set in vast seas of emptiness."<sup>\*</sup>

European penetration of the interior--with all its consequences relating to urban and economic development--only occurred in the early decades of this century. A large number of the cities of Tropical Africa are port cities, or transport centers strung out like beads on a string along the "line of rail," still the dominant man-made geographical feature in almost all African countries. The lines of communication were, and indeed still are, oriented towards the ports. The urban centers that developed along them were essentially transmission centers for the dispatch of primary products from local mines and plantations to Europe and North America, in return for western manufactures. Dakar, Lagos, Accra, Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, were all cities looking outward to world markets and to the exchange of primary for industrial products. "They did not grow up, like the

---

\*

William A. Hance, The Geography of Modern Africa, New York, Columbia University Press, 1964, p. 46.

cities of Europe and North America, in the wake of local diversification and sustained development. They were, in a real sense, larger than and ahead of the economy sustaining them."\*

The inland cities were mainly a product of the railways inland from the ports. The 589 mile line from Mombasa to Kisumu was begun in 1896 (principally to link the Kingdom of Buganda with the coast and to consolidate Britain's imperial ambitions) and reached Lake Victoria in 1901.

Nairobi owes its origin to a railway camp situated for construction convenience along this route. The main railway lines in Nigeria were constructed between 1895 and 1930.

"By 1912, a new integration had been imposed on a strip of area some 700 miles long from Lagos on the Coast to Kano in the extreme north....In 1913 an easterly line based on Port Harcourt was begun. It reached the coalfields at Enugu in 1916, Makurdi on the Benue River in 1923 and joined up with the Lagos-Kano line at Kaduna in 1926."\*\* In Ghana, the Accra-Kumasi line was begun in 1910 and was completed in 1923.

In Zambia, the "line of rail" is particularly dominant. Livingstone, the capital of Northern Rhodesia until

---

\* U.N. Committee on Housing, Building and Planning. op. cit., p. 16.

\*\* Akin L. Mabogunje, op. cit., p. 144.

1935, grew up alongside the Victoria Falls railway bridge over the Zambesi, and the line cut through the center of the country and through the then uninhabited district now known as the Copperbelt, into the rich mineral area of Katanga in the Belgian Congo. The rapid rise of the towns of the Copperbelt is a direct result of the mining industry, and has taken place wholly in the past four decades. None of the six towns of the Copperbelt was much more than a mining camp before the Second World War. All originated as mining communities built and serviced by the mining companies. By 1959, the Copperbelt's population had mushroomed to 337,000, including 40,000 Europeans. By 1963, the population had grown to 544,000; and in the latest census of 1969, the total Copperbelt population had soared to 814,000, an increase of 50 per cent in six years.

The ten main towns of Zambia, with populations in excess of 20,000, are all located along this single line of rail. In 1969, these ten towns had a total population of 1,027,000 which is 25 per cent of the population of the country as a whole. And though Zambia is a very large country in area--290,000 square miles or larger than France, Belgium and the Netherlands combined--40 per cent (or 1.6 million) of its population of just over four million live in a zone 25 miles wide on either side of the railroad. The rest of this vast territory has a density of less than three persons per square mile.

The major cities of Tropical Africa, the "export" orientation of the road and railways networks, and the emphasis on mining and plantation agriculture for primary products, are essentially the result of European exploitation. For the newly-independent African states, they represent a legacy of colonialism. Sixteen of the 57 cities over 100,000 population in the 1960s were coastal ports or river ports, and almost all the others (apart from the Yoruba group of towns), owe their dramatic growth to their location on the port-linked colonial railway systems (for most countries a single line from the interior to the coast). But the African urban inheritance at independence was in many ways more complex than this legacy of European-built and European-managed primate cities heavily dependent on overseas European economies for their economic health and social progress.

Compressed into the brief historical span of the first half of this century, this colonial exploitation of a hitherto undeveloped continent produced dramatic changes in the way of life of a great many Africans. Describing economic life at the turn of the century, Kimble pointed out that "Before the present century, almost every sub-Saharan African earned his living by gathering food (including hunting and fishing), by cultivating crops or by herding, or by



a combination of these activities." \* Within the span of two generations, millions of Africans have made the trek from the bush to the modern city to become participants overnight in an industrial society, and millions more have become involved in the monetized economy of cash crops, railways, roads and mammy lorries, cinemas and secondary schools. One of the dominant facts of twentieth-century Tropical Africa has been the extensive migration of Africans to urban enclaves established by Europeans, with consequent striking changes in the maps of population distribution, country by country. During the colonial period these major population movements were influenced by European economic interests and regulated and restricted in scale by Europeans. In the newly-independent states of Tropical Africa this situation has changed and is changing. The barriers and restrictions on urbanization have suddenly disappeared, with important consequences for the demography of urban areas and for their social and economic conditions.

Labor and population movements in Tropical Africa-- both during the colonial period and more recently--have been the subject of numerous sociological and economic studies. The extensive literature has been well reviewed in the first

---

\*

J.C. Caldwell, African Rural-Urban Migration: The Movement to Ghana's Towns, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1969, p. 5.

chapter of John Caldwell's recently published African Rural-Urban Migration: The Movement to Ghana's Towns. This subject is the recurring theme of the excellent collection of essays, edited by Horace Miner, in The City in Modern Africa. William Barber's essay in this symposium, though dealing primarily with the "two white settler territories" of Northern and Southern Rhodesia, draws conclusions which seem valid for most of Tropical Africa, whether Anglophone or Francophone:

In short, urban areas were constructed predominantly as European enclaves. As such, they represented the highest expression of the general settlement sought between the races during the colonial era--a settlement which called for the partitioning of land into racial zones. In the spheres assigned to them Europeans and Africans enjoyed special privileges that were denied to outsiders....

Much of the influence of the original non-economic constraints have survived subsequent modifications in the economic base. The terms of these social and political arrangements, in turn, have had a number of economic consequences: among them they restricted the geographical scope of the urban pattern. The development of towns has effectively been confined to zones apportioned for European ownership and occupancy, and, even more particularly, to those portions of the European land areas enjoying proximity to the main arteries of communication. At least in part, the stimulating effects on the economy that might otherwise have arisen from a more pervasive geographical spread of monetized activity have been precluded....

Of more far-reaching significance has been the effect of non-economic constraints on the manner in which economic life has been conducted within the urban complexes. As these complexes grew, more and more Africans were brought into contact with them as wage earners. The institutional setting, however, denied a permanent stake in urban life to those Africans

attracted to the towns. Their natural base was held to be the native areas from which they came and to which they were expected to return. The organization of the economy on this basis committed Africans--whether or not they would have been disposed otherwise--to a migratory pattern of employment....

A migratory pattern which relied on male workers whose dependents stayed behind to till the family plots minimized the claims on resources for housing an African work force....Debarred until the mid-1950s from acquiring title to urban building plots, most African families have been obliged to rely on accommodation provided in organized townships. These townships have been financed through a 'pooled rental' system, an arrangement whereby employers are billed a standard fee to cover the housing costs of African workers, without regard to the amount of space occupied. This procedure had been originally installed because of the prejudice against family men in hiring practices. But, inasmuch as the housing authorities set rentals with the expectation that profits from the housing of 'single' workers would subsidize losses on family accommodation, the books could only be balanced by providing space for four or five single workers for every family housed....

The system has required most urban Africans to keep 'a foot in two camps'--one his native district, the other in a wage earner's role outside it."\*

And in another study by Clyde Mitchell, a similar conclusion is emphasized: "From the beginning therefore the contract between employer and the African employee was a temporary one: hence the circulation of labour rather than its migration became its characteristic feature."\*\*

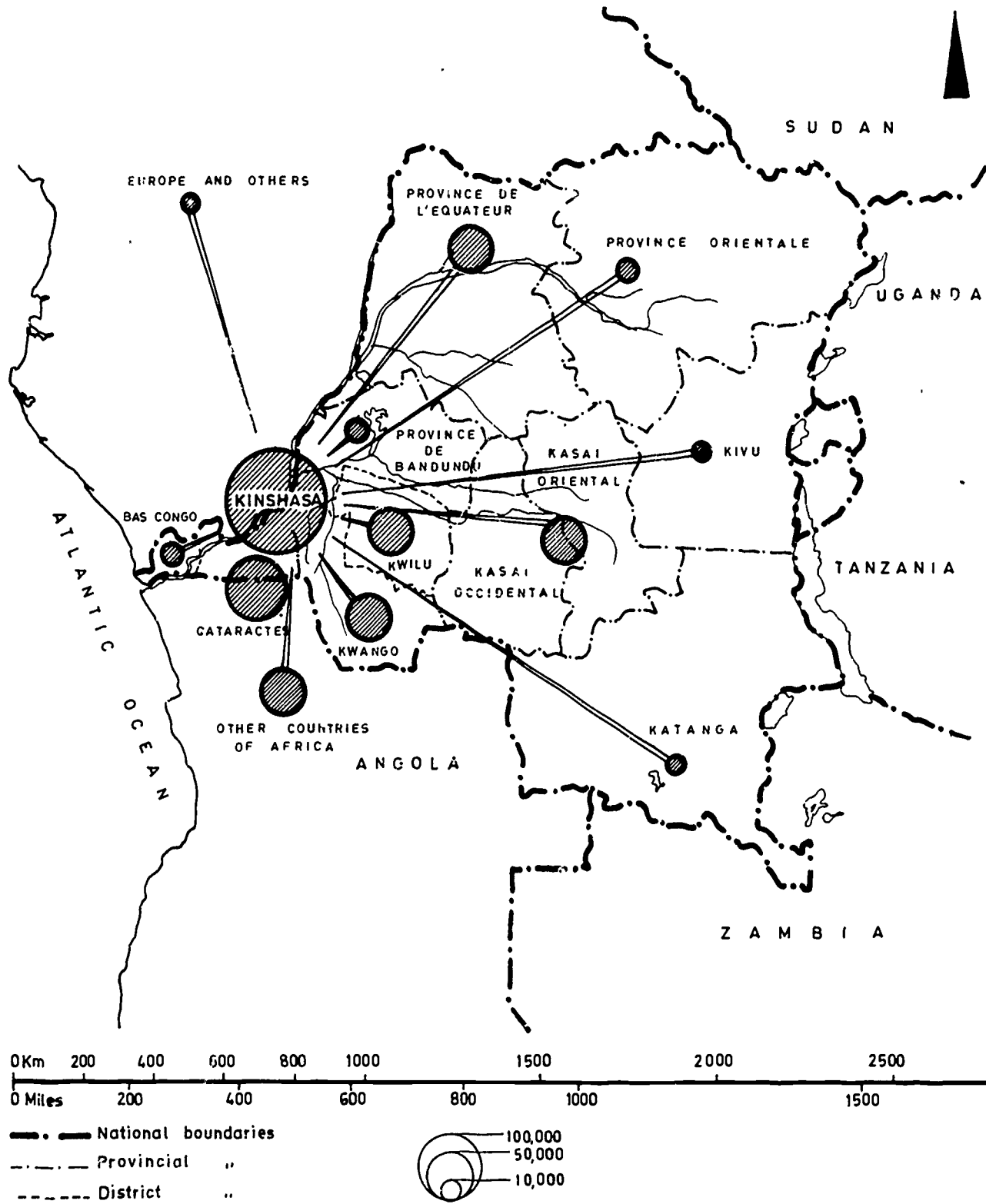
---

\* William J. Barber, "Urbanization and Economic Growth: The cases of Two White Settler Territories". The City in Modern Africa. London, Pall Mall Press, 1967, pp. 97-101.

\*\* J.C. Mitchell, "Wage Labour and African Population Movement in Central Africa". Essays on African Population. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 232.

MIGRATION TO KINSHASA

FIG. 3



URBANIZATION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

Under these arrangements an African labor force, transient and tribally heterogeneous, was continuously drawn into the urban enclaves often from vast distances and across international boundaries. Through legal restrictions on the ownership of land as well as through a variety of practices, agreements and covenants, migration was strictly controlled and regularized as a result of numerous colonial Commissions of Enquiry into the effects of labor migration (such as that of the Nyasaland Government in 1935 which drew attention to "the consequences of excessive migration"). The practices and conditions varied from territory to territory--the Belgians, for example, in the Congo in the cites indigenes and centres extra-coutumiers, appear to have made special efforts to stabilize their mining and plantation labor forces in urban settlements, and to reduce the incidence of circulating migration. But whatever the restrictions on population movement and labor recruitment, the common effect was to regulate the rate of growth of urban centers.

Other effects, still discernible all over the former colonial countries of Tropical Africa, were the physical and racial zoning of urban areas, the severe demographic imbalances in the African population composition (heavily weighted in favor of working-age males), the restriction of Africans to unskilled employment with sharp discontinuity in income distribution between the races, the low degree of

African involvement in commercial and service activities (dominated by Asians throughout East Africa), with the dominant tendency of the main racial and tribal groups "to remain closed social groups, the members of which interact with others only in the technical and economic nexus of commerce and industry."\*

In post-independence Africa this whole colonial urban system, with its restrictions and social and economic implications, is rapidly breaking down. The barriers to unrestricted urban immigration have suddenly dropped. Alien minorities (such as the Asians in East Africa, the "foreigners" in Ghana, the Kenyans in Uganda, white settlers everywhere north of the Zambesi) are under challenge either to their very presence or certainly to their former exclusiveness and privilege. New African urban elites have asserted their rights of residence in formerly European residential zones. Legal restrictions on African ownership of urban lands have disappeared overnight. Pressures for the "Africanization" of industrial and commercial management are universal. Policies for economic diversification, rapid educational advance, and social improvement are ubiquitous. In the last decade, the political transformation in Tropical

---

\*

Daryll Forde. "Social Aspects of Urbanization and Industrialization in Africa: A General Review". Paris, UNESCO, 1956, p. 48.

Africa has been astonishing in its rapidity. With the accelerating urban growth of the immediate postwar years already firmly established, the scene has been set in Tropical Africa for an urbanization phase of development of dramatic proportions.

"EXPLODING CITIES IN UNEXPLODING ECONOMIES"

The cities of Tropical Africa are already being swamped by the growth in population. Their prospects over the next decades are bleak in the extreme. In Ghana, for example,

the urban population almost doubled in the 27 years up to 1948 but came close to doubling again in the succeeding twelve years to 1960. This growth of the towns is evidence of their own natural increase and also of rural-urban population transfers...Between 1948 and 1960 immigration into the towns probably explained about three-fifths of their growth...But the existence of these population transfers should not blind us to the fact that the major force behind accelerating urbanization is a rising rate of national population growth, resulting from falling mortality and stable fertility. The real change between the intercensal periods was the climb in rural growth rates, a climb that occurred in spite of the fact that by 1948--1960 rural-urban migration was removing over a quarter of the rural population increase from the countryside. In fact the countryside was absorbing almost as high a proportion of total growth as it ever had and, in absolute terms, vastly more Ghanaians each year.\*

---

\*

J.C. Caldwell. "Population Change and Rural Transformation in Ghana". Symposium on Population and Socio-Economic Development in Ghana, Ghana Population Studies No. 2. Legon, University of Ghana, The Demographics Unit, 1968, pp. 139, 140.

Next to Latin America, Africa already has the highest rate of population growth. "However, in contrast to densely populated developing regions at a relatively advanced state of development, most of Africa is sparsely populated and still at an early stage of development. There is prospect of further acceleration of population in the near future."\* The present population growth rate for all of Tropical Africa is around 2.5 per cent annually, but many countries have already exceeded or are very close to an annual rate of 3 per cent. With high and constant fertility and declining mortality, the rate of growth is expected to increase to as high as 4 per cent for some countries, according to U.N. estimates, during the next decade, and become the highest rate of growth of the world's regions. "The present rate of population growth in Africa is about twice as high as that in industrial Europe in the nineteenth century...The recent experience of other developing areas suggests that Tropical Africa is in the early phase of rapidly accelerating population growth."\*\* And yet, there is apparently "less Governmental concern about population, less interest in limit-

---

\* R.K. Som, op. cit., p. 197

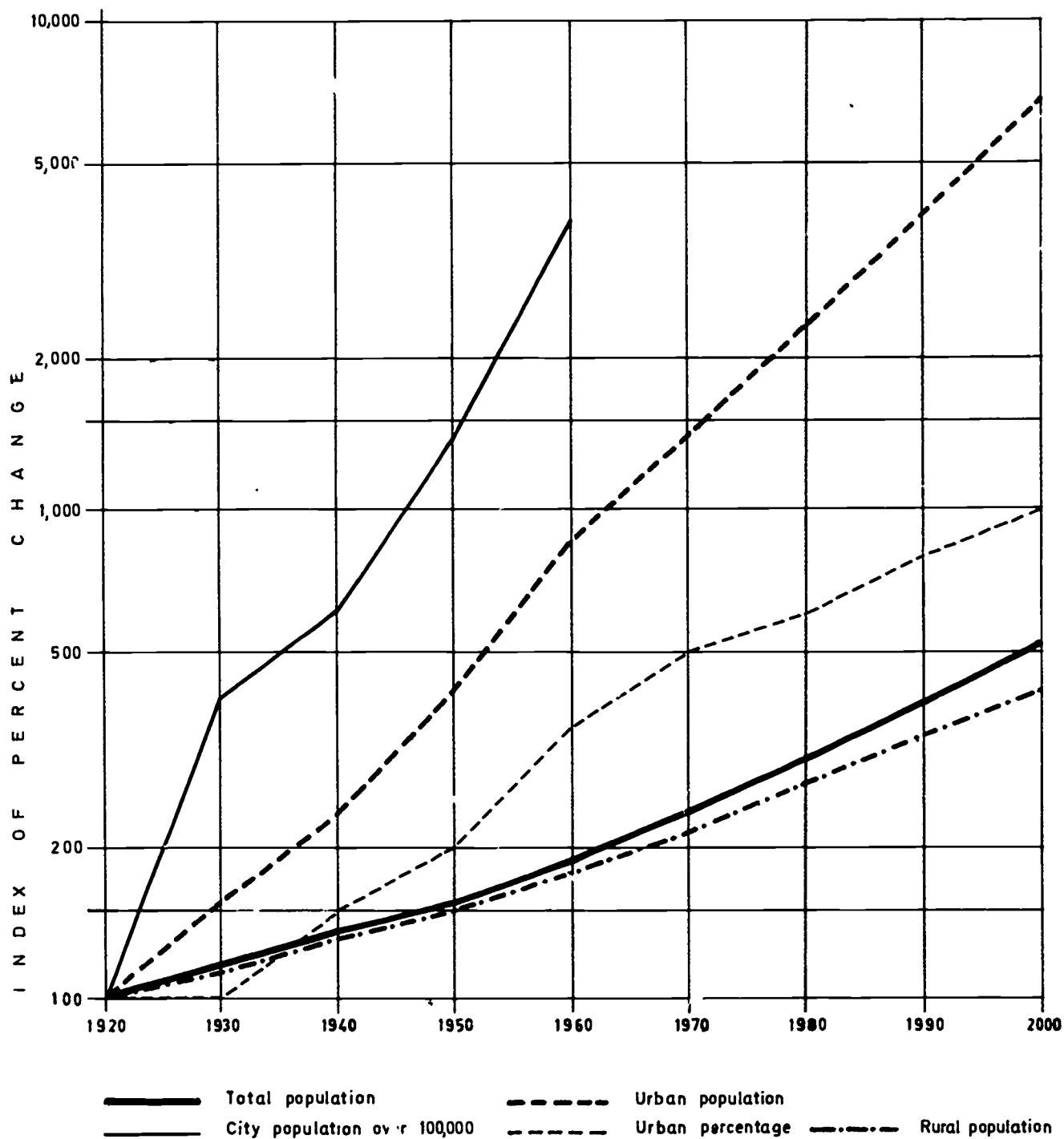
\*\* Ansley J. Coale. "Estimates of Fertility and Mortality in Tropical Africa" in The Population of Tropical Africa, p. 186.



# TROPICAL AFRICA

## POPULATION GROWTH AND PROJECTIONS 1920 - 2000

FIG. 4



URBANIZATION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL URBANIZATION SURVEY

ing fertility among women, and fewer family planning services in Sub-Sahara Africa than in any other part of the developing world."\*

Figure 4, showing the recent and projected growth of the population of Tropical Africa, has been compiled from data on past growth and population projections based on U.N. estimates of growth to the year 2000. These data are displayed in terms of indices of percentage change using the year 1920 as the base.

In 1920, the total population of Tropical Africa was 100 million, of which 1.6 million lived in urban areas and 98.4 million in rural areas--an urban proportion of 1.6 per cent.

By 1970 (according to these estimates, which differ slightly from those used by the Economic Commission for Africa) the total population was 236 million, of which 22.6 million lived in urban areas, and 214 million in rural areas--an urban proportion of still only 10 per cent.

By 2000, the total population of Tropical Africa is expected to be 524 million, with 105.6 million in urban areas, and 419 million in rural areas--an urban proportion of still only 20 per cent.

---

\*

Davidson R. Gwatkin. "Population and the Ford Foundation in Sub-Sahara Africa." (Unpublished paper), Lagos, Ford Foundation Office, July 23, 1970, p. 1.

In the eighty-year period from 1920, therefore, the total population will have increased over fivefold, the rural population just over fourfold, but the urban population will have multiplied by sixty-six (with a tenfold increase in the urban percentage).

If the eighty-year time span seems too great to be meaningful, the urgency of the situation can be emphasized by looking at the prospects for the next ten years alone, from 1970 to 1980, for the countries visited during this survey.

Within the next ten years, these nine countries will add some 50 million more persons to their total populations, at an average annual growth rate of 3.2 per cent. The population in settlements of 20,000 or more will increase more than twice as fast, adding approximately another 14 million to their total populations, at an average annual growth rate of 7. per cent. These estimated rates of growth of the total and urban populations of the major countries in Tropical Africa for the next decade would be the highest in the world. The figures for the individual countries may well be the subject of controversy among demographers, based on disputes over the reliability of official estimates employed in their computation. But there would be no dispute on the basic fact that the populations of these countries are now growing at an astonishingly high and accelerating rate. The growth of the urban population is at least twice as fast as

TABLE 2

Projected Growth of the Total and Urban Population  
1977-1980 - selected countries in Tropical Africa

Country	Total Population in millions			Urban Population in millions		
	1970	1980	% inc.	1970	1980	% inc.
Totals	158.1	208.7	32.0	18.8	32.7	73.9
Nigeria	66.1	87.6	32.5	10.1	17.7	75.3
Ghana	9.0	12.5	38.9	1.5	2.8	86.7
Congo- Kinshasa	17.4	22.4	28.7	2.2	3.6	63.6
Kenya	10.8	15.1	39.8	.9	1.7	88.9
Uganda	8.5	11.3	32.9	.2	.4	100.0
Tanzania	13.2	17.4	31.8	.7	1.4	100.0
Ethiopia	25.0	31.5	26.0	1.2	1.9	58.3
Zambia	4.2	5.9	40.5	1.0	1.7	70.0
Senegal	3.9	5.0	28.2	1.0	1.5	50.0

Note: These figures are based on estimates prepared by the Demography and Social Statistics Section, Economic Commission for Africa. They include for individual countries estimates of population growth through migration across national borders, an important factor in many African countries.

that of the total populations of the respective countries.

In Tropical Africa generally, the urban population is heavily concentrated in the larger cities: the percentage varies strikingly with the history, scale, and economic conditions of particular countries, but for Tropical Africa as a whole in 1970, the percentage of the total urban population concentrated in cities of 100,000 or more inhabitants was around 70 per cent. It is these cities which have borne, and are bearing, the brunt of this dramatic population increase. Tropical Africa has a relative scarcity of towns of intermediate size. The tendency to concentrate industrial development and the expansion of Government bureaucracies in the existing primate cities increases their magnetic power to draw ever-increasing numbers of rural migrants from the fields and forests of the African bush. The recent, relatively sudden, and staggering growth of these primate cities is shown--for a random sample of these major cities--in the accompanying graphs.

The plight of these cities, already characterized by huge deficiencies in the whole range of urban services, is dismaying. All display remarkable rates of population growth. Kinshasa, as perhaps the most spectacular example, doubled in size between 1960 and 1966, and has now reached 1.3 million with an annual growth rate of 11.8 per cent. If this rate of growth continues, and demographers in the Congo believe it will, Kinshasa will pass the 3 million mark within the next ten years. Almost overnight Kinshasa has become the

second largest city in Tropical Africa.

It is outstripped in size and rate of growth only by Metropolitan Lagos. In its existing congestion, environmental inadequacy and disorder, administrative and political complexity and confusion of responsibility for corrective action, Greater Lagos is already well on the way to becoming the Calcutta of Africa. The population of the Lagos metropolitan area--the continuous urbanized area including and extending inland from the densely-populated city of Lagos, otherwise known as Lagos Federal Territory--more than doubled between 1952 and 1962.

Greater Lagos by 1963 had passed the one million mark and is today the largest city in Black Africa, and the primate city of Nigeria, with Ibadan pushed to second position. Its rapid rate of growth has been due to a favorable conjunction of factors especially the advantages of its port-capital functions for industrial location. It shares these advantages with other port-capital cities on the West African coast like Accra-Tema, Abidjan and Dakar. However, unlike them Greater Lagos has a much richer hinterland and a more populous country on which to draw. Its population having jumped so rapidly from about 250,000 in 1950 to about 1.2 million in 1963, Greater Lagos has been increasing at an annual compound interest rate of 14 per cent. At this rate its population should be close to 5 million in another ten years. Even if, in the ten years after 1963, it increases at only half this rate, the population will be well over 2 million by 1973.\*

Green and Milone estimate that over 644,000 people migrated to Metropolitan Lagos from all over Nigeria (but mainly from the Western Region) in the eleven years from 1952 to 1963. By 1967, the population of the metropolitan

---

\*

Akin L. Mabogunje, op. cit., p. 319.

city had reached over 1.5 million, with an additional influx of about 309,000. These revolutionary changes in the population landscape of Nigeria exacerbated the existing problems of an already rapidly deteriorating urban environment in Lagos and posed well-nigh insoluble management difficulties in a situation of scarce resources:

In Metropolitan Lagos, chaotic traffic conditions have become endemic; demands on the water supply system have begun to outstrip its maximum capacity; power cuts have become chronic as industrial and domestic requirements have both escalated; factories have been compelled to bore their own wells and to set up standby electricity plants; public transport has been inundated; port facilities have been stretched to their limits; the congestion of housing and land uses has visibly worsened and living conditions have degenerated over extensive areas within and beyond the city's limits, in spite of slum clearance schemes; and city government has threatened to seize up admist charges of corruption, mis-management and financial incompetence. Moreover, although employment has multiplied in industry, commerce and public administration, there is no doubt that thousands of in-migrants have been unable to find work, and the potential for civil disturbances has increased....\*

This does not mean, however, that primarily rural areas have not been severely affected. Outside Metropolitan Lagos, a drain to it of some 750,000 persons from Western Nigeria in fifteen years has seriously depressed population growth-rates in the southern districts of Abeokuta and Ijebu provinces, and in Colony province. Here, since the great majority of the out-migrants have been under thirty years old, the average age of the rural populations from district to district has risen and, in spite of a high rate of natural increase, their numbers have become stationary or have even declined in some instances.\*\*

---

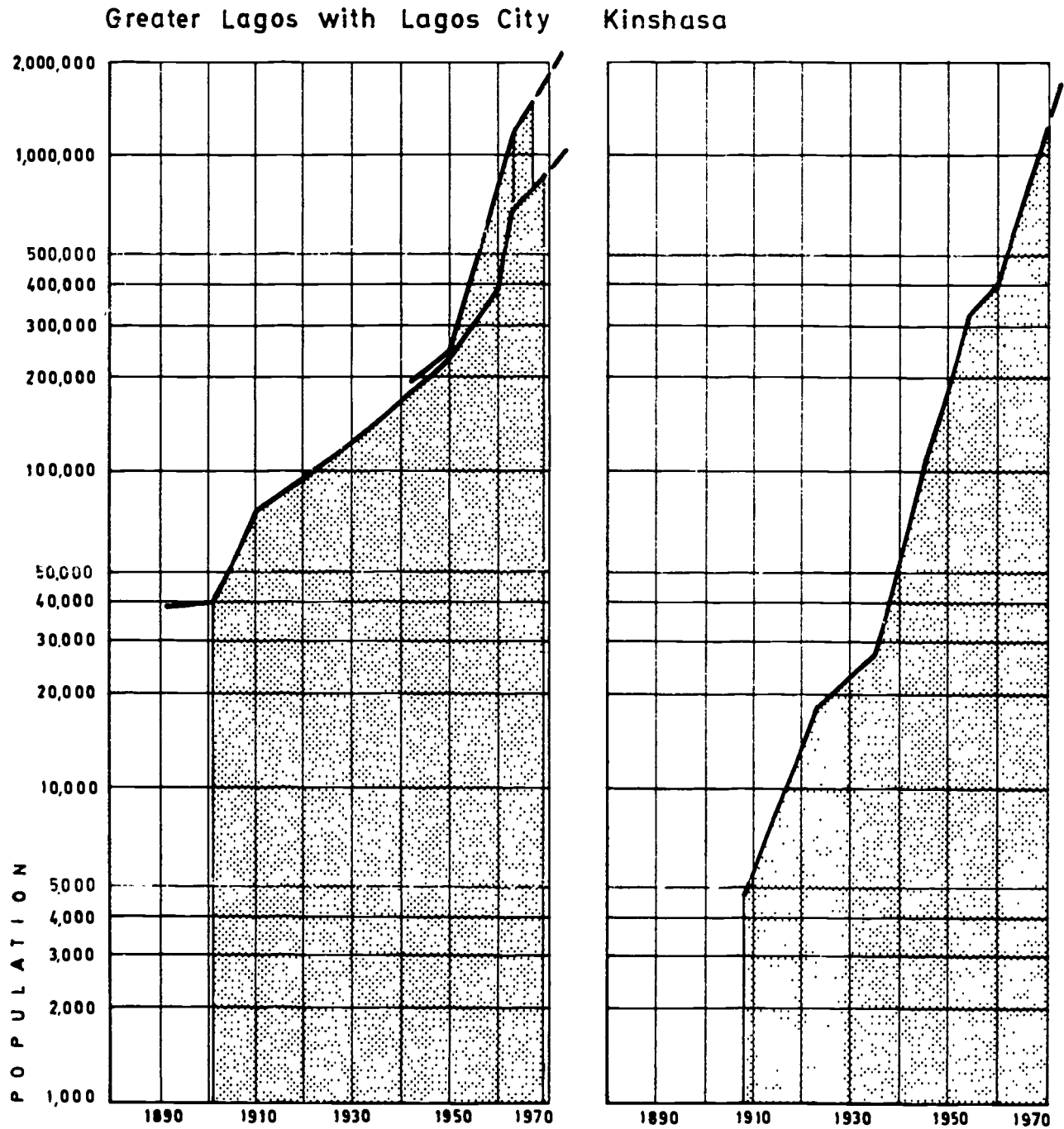
\* Leslie Green and Vincent Milone "Urbanization in Nigeria: a Planning Commentary." A report of the International Urbanization Survey, p. 14.

\*\*

Leslie Green and Vincent Milone, ibid., p. 10.

# POPULATION GROWTH SOME MAJOR AFRICAN CITIES

FIG. 5



Greater Lagos  
1950 = 250,000  
1967 = 1,500,000

Lagos City  
1901 = 41,000  
1969 = 842,000

Kinshasa  
1908 = 4,700  
1970 = 1,200,000

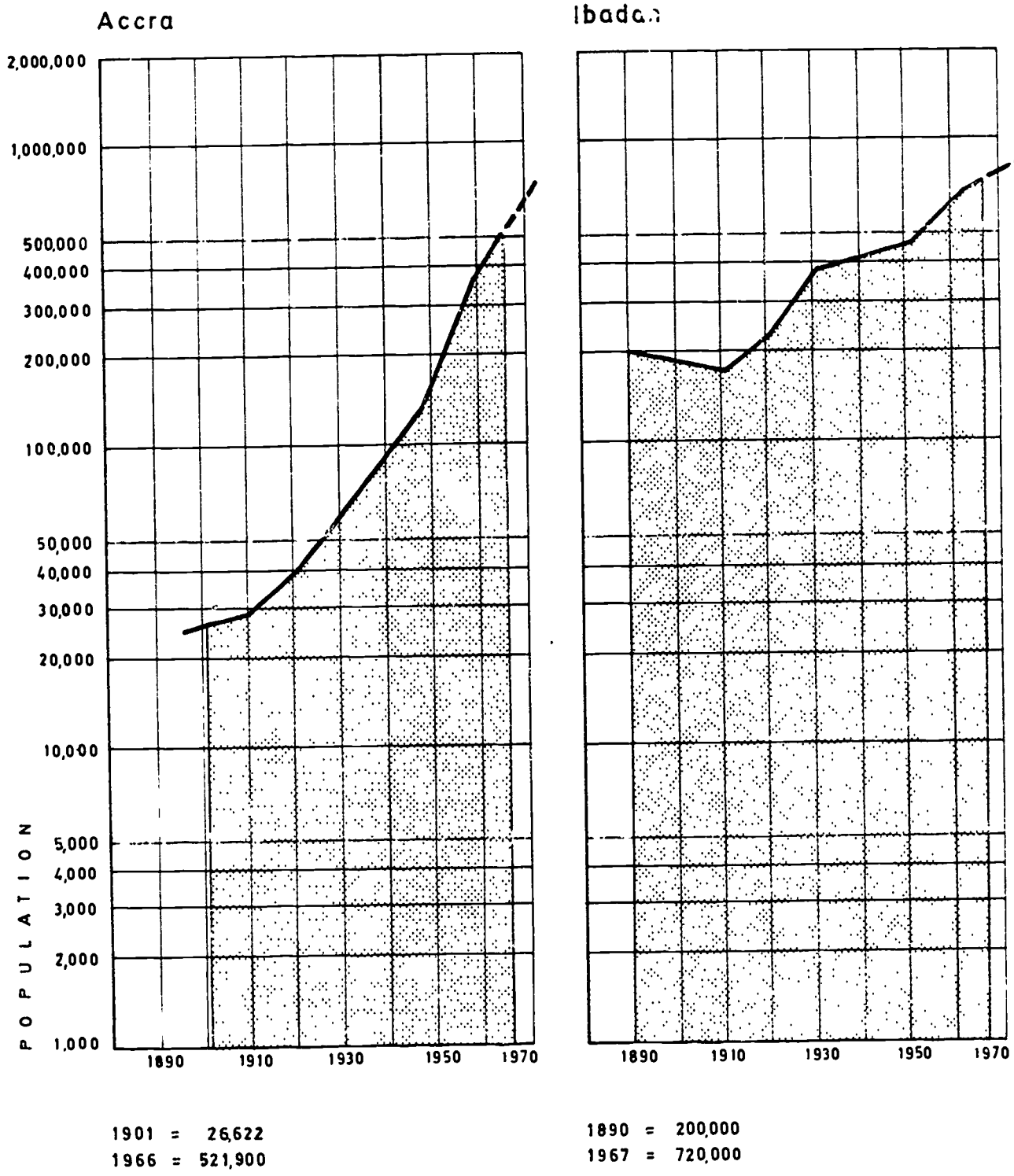
URBANIZATION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL URBANIZATION SURVEY



# POPULATION GROWTH SOME MAJOR AFRICAN CITIES

FIG. 6

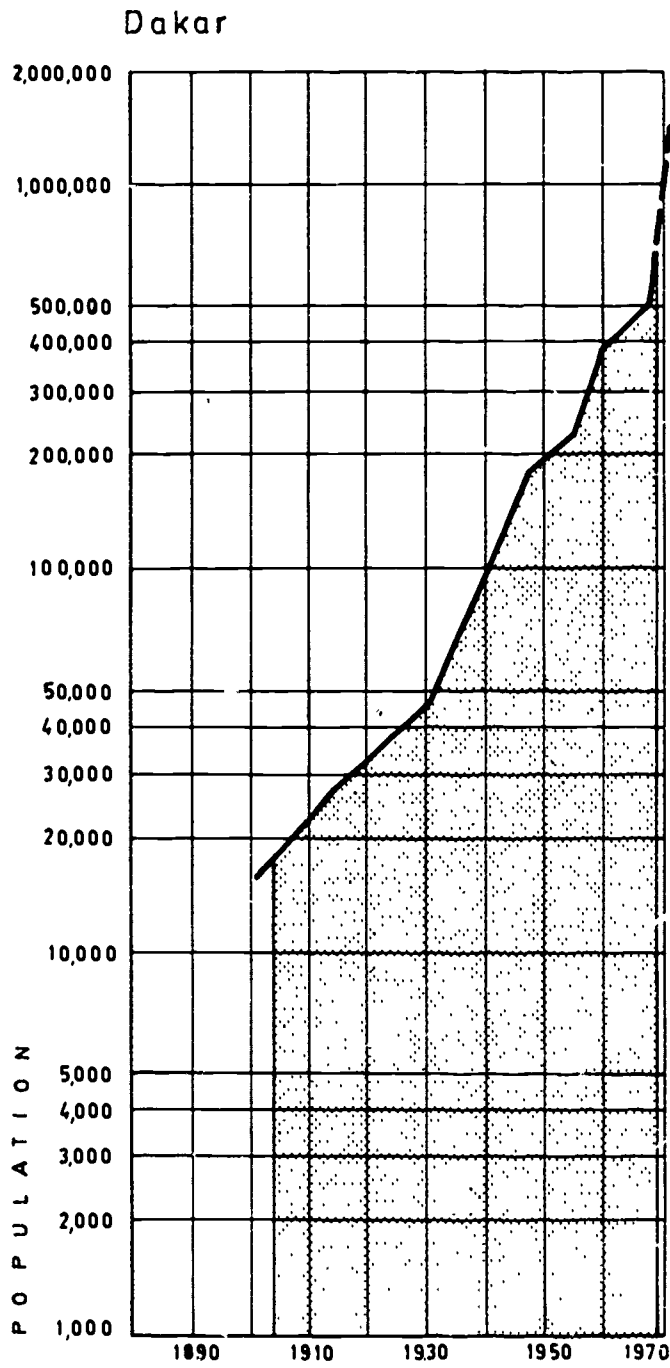


URBANIZATION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

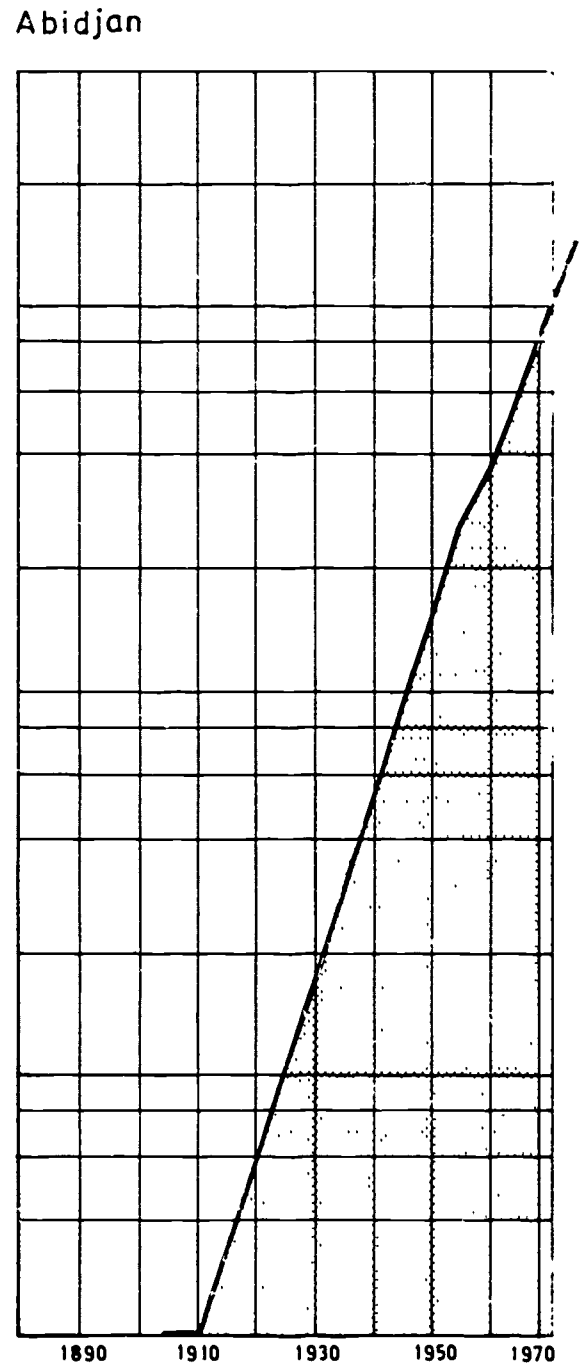
INTERNATIONAL URBANIZATION SURVEY

# POPULATION GROWTH SOME MAJOR AFRICAN CITIES

FIG. 7



1904 = 18,400  
1969 = 677,000



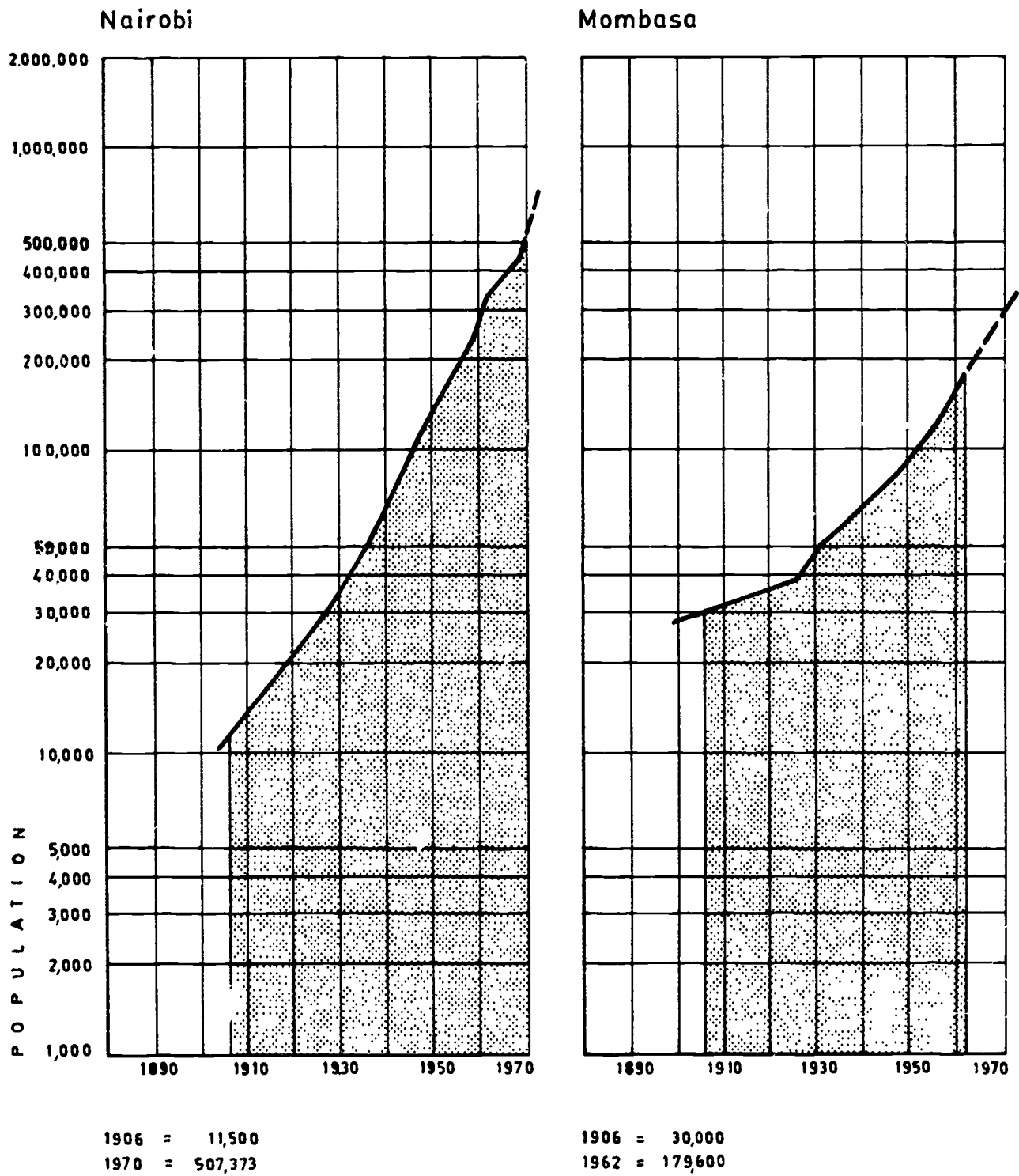
1910 = 1,000  
1968 = 400,000

URBANIZATION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL URBANIZATION SURVEY

# POPULATION GROWTH SOME MAJOR AFRICAN CITIES

FIG. 8

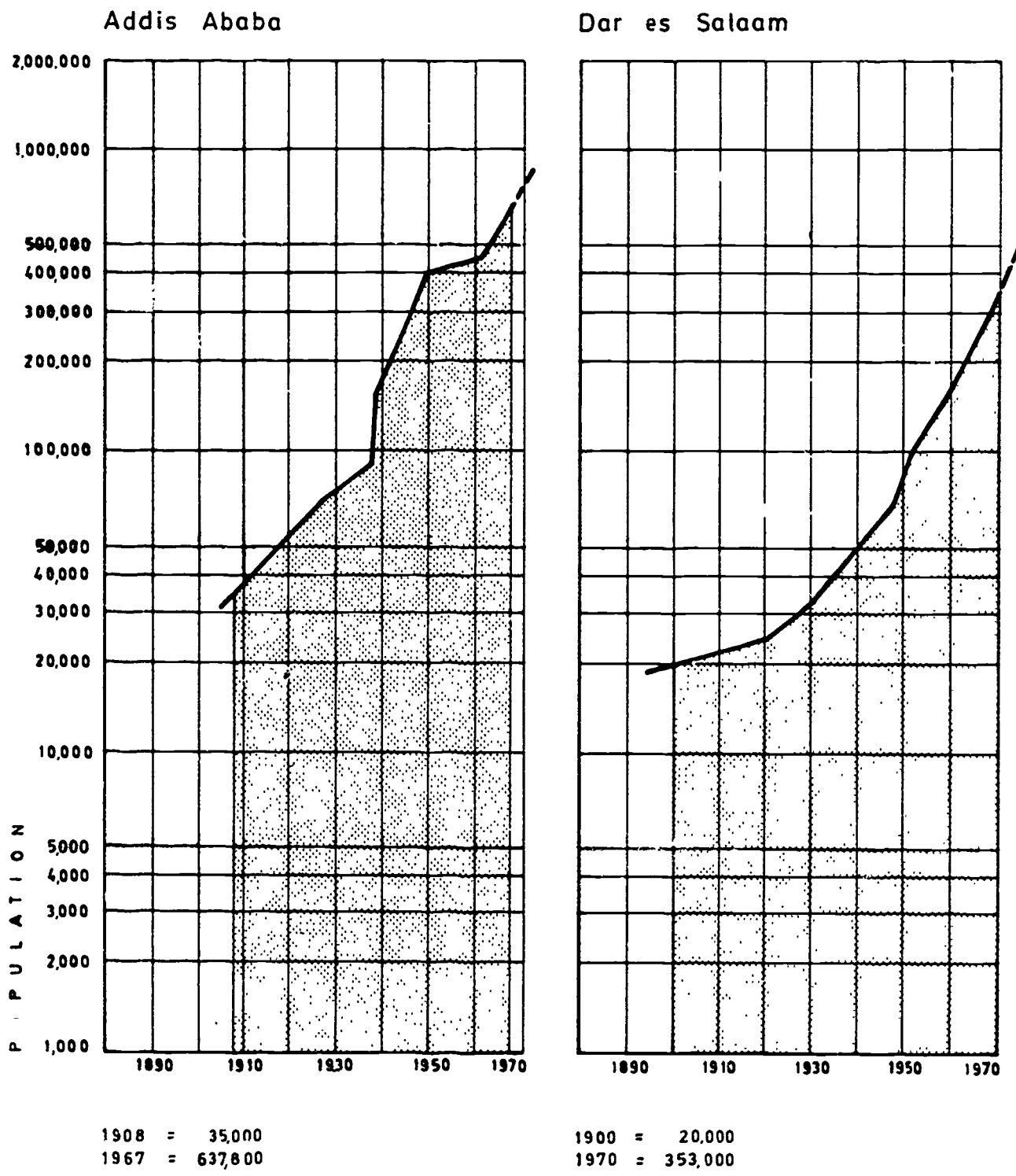


URBANIZATION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL URBANIZATION SURVEY

# POPULATION GROWTH SOME MAJOR AFRICAN CITIES

FIG. 9



URBANIZATION IN TROPICAL AFRICA

INTERNATIONAL URBANIZATION SURVEY

If Lagos and Kinshasa are the most spectacular examples in Tropical Africa of rapid population growth and urban chaos, this dismal situation is repeated in varying degree for city after city, and country after country, across the continent. In scale and plight, Lagos and Kinshasa merely represent the fast-approaching urban future of many other African cities.

Addis Ababa, already in great disorder and under severe population pressure, has now more than 600,000 inhabitants growing at 9 per cent per annum, and will pass the million mark by the early 1970s. Dakar, almost exactly the same size, is growing at between 6 and 8.5 per cent per annum (depending on varying estimates of Senegalese planners), and even by the lower estimate will reach 1,133,000 by 1980. Nairobi, now with a population of 507,000, appears to be expanding at about 6 per cent per annum, and at this rate will become a city of over one million by 1983, doubling its population in the space of thirteen years. In Kenya, the urbanization crisis may not yet have assumed the urgency and magnitude of that of other African countries, but the cloud on the horizon is growing and darkening ominously:

If current targets for economic growth are achieved and if the national population growth is reduced to 3 per cent per annum (through newly-instituted family planning programmes), just under 8 million people will be living in towns in Kenya out of a total population of 24--30 million by the year 2000...Such a rate of urban growth...would result in 8 times more people

living in towns in the year 2000 than there are in 1970. In other words, even if current standards are not improved, the existing urban fabric, houses, shops, factories, schools, water pipes and sewer lines, will have to be multiplied eight times in the next 30 years.

Nairobi and Mombasa will grow to be metropolises of over 3 million and over one and one-third million respectively; there will be 9 towns in Kenya with more than 100,000 inhabitants compared with 2 in 1970; and 45 towns with more than 10,000 population compared with only 9 in 1970.

The stark implication of these figures is that the 'urban explosion' in Kenya is much closer than most people realize.\*

This latter observation is valid for every country in Tropical Africa. In Tanzania, for example, with a 1970 urbanization percentage of less than 5 per cent for the country as a whole, the capital and single dominant city of Dar es Salaam grew between 1965 and 1967 at 11 per cent per annum. Its estimated 1970 population was 353,000. If the rate of 11 per cent per annum were maintained, Dar es Salaam would double in population every seven years reaching a population of over one million by 1985 and over three million by the year 2000.

"Although this may seem extraordinary" says the Second Plan for Tanzania, "it is not dissimilar to the population explosion experienced in urban centers of a number of

---

\* Kenya Government Town Planning Department. "Urbanization in Kenya." Nairobi, Ministry of Lands & Settlement, September 1970, p. 5.

TABLE 3

KENYA: Projections of Urban Population for Year 2000  
Under Given Assumptions of Population and Economic Growth

MODEL	Population Assumption		Economic Assumption				Implied Population Distribution				Urban Population Projection			COMMENTS	
	Total Year 2000 million	Demographic Basis	Total Annual Growth Rate of G.D.P. 1964-2000	Gross G.D.P. 2000 £	Agric. Prod. 1964 *6 £	Implied Non-Agric. Prod. 2000 £	Non-Agric. Gradient GDP Caput	Pop. million	Per Caput G.D.P. £	Pop. million	Per Caput G.D.P. £	% Non-Agric. Urban.	% of Non-Agric. Urban.		Projected Urban Population million
1 (Norbye)	24	Slowly declining birth-rate	7.3%	3,500M	670M	2,800M	6.2:1	14.3*	47	9.7*	292	40.4	80	7.76	Urban job formation not sufficient to absorb all Natural Population increase - Rural Population doubles. Steep urban/rural G.D.P./Caput gradient - Tendency to urban drift.
2 (Low Pop Growth)	16	Rapidly declining birth-rate	8%	4,423M	670M	3,753M	3:1	5.5	120	10.5	360	65.6	90	9.45	High Urban Income - High standard of development. Strong "Pull" to Towns. Towns absorb all Natural Population increase. Rural Population declines slightly.
3 (High Pop Growth)	30	Constant birth-rate declining mortality.	6%	2,260M	670M	1,590M	6:1	22.3	30	7.7	180	25.7	70	5.39	Low Urban Income - Low standard of development. Urban unemployment high - Agricultural areas overpopulated. Towns grow by "push" from rural areas.
4 (Low Econ Growth)	24	Same as Model 1	4%	803M	336M	467M	4:1	17.8	19	6.2	75	25.8	70	4.34	Economic Growth barely keeps pace with population growth. Average wealth per caput hardly higher in 2000 than 1964. Rural population triples. Urban standards mainly low income.
ACTUAL 1964	9.104	--	--	277M	112M	165M	5.8:1	6.5	17	2.6	64	20.5			

\* Definition of Urban - Towns of more than 2,000 inhabitants.  
 + Norbye's unemployed and underemployed split 50/50 between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.  
 X 7.3% is the overall rate of growth. Norbye uses 6.3% 1964-70; 7% 1970-85; 8% 1985-2000.  
 \* In this model of low economic growth a three-fold increase only in agricultural product is assumed.

Source: Safier, Michael (ed.). "Projections of Urban Population for the Year 2000". The Role of Urban and Regional Planning in National Development for East Africa. Kampala, Milton Obote Foundation, 1970. p. 43.

less developed countries".

In Zambia, the relatively small capital city of Lusaka doubled in population from 119,000 to 238,200 in the six years from 1963--1969. Its rate of growth, as revealed in the recently published Census of Zambia, is a staggering 16 per cent per annum. And at their current rates of growth all the Copperbelt towns in the north will double in size in well under ten years (See also pp. 24-25).

The most important cause of the shift of population to the urban areas is the increase in employment opportunities due to the rapid expansion of the economy. However, the increase in the number of employees is not enough to explain the considerable spurt in the population of the Copperbelt and Central Provinces. It appears that a number of persons working in the Copperbelt or in Lusaka were staying alone in 1963. Their families normally stayed in the villages. However, due to improved housing conditions, a large number of families came to join the breadearners in the urban areas.\*

The Zambian Census showed a remarkably high rate of mobility among the population as a whole: 21.6 per cent or more than one-fifth of the total population had moved into the district in which they were enumerated within the past year. It is difficult, however, to believe that the movement of families into urban areas is "due to improved housing conditions." This movement is more likely the result of the sudden dropping of restrictions on migration with the

---

\*

Republic of Zambia, Census of Population and Housing 1969, First Report. Lusaka, Central Statistical Office, August 1970, p. 4.



disappearance of colonial rule, and to the changing attitudes of the African to which reference was made earlier in this report. Two surveys, made in 1967 and 1970, showed that in those three years, the population of the squatter colonies and shanty towns ringing the modern capital of Lusaka increased from 40,000 to 98,000, and the number of ramshackle huts from 6,980 to 19,954. Apart from the extensive urban slums in the central city of Lusaka, these colonies with conditions of extreme environmental squalor, form 25 per cent of the population of this modern African capital, and represent the fastest-growing ingredient in the city's composition. Similar observations could be made for the rapidly-expanding Copperbelt towns.

By far the most intensive demographic analysis, with the clearest and most detailed projections of the likely scale and characteristics of urbanization and rural-urban migration, is that for Ghana. This is due to the sustained and excellent work of Professor Caldwell and his talented Ghanaian associates in the recently-established Demographic Unit at the University of Ghana. Based on a series of assumptions regarding the rate of fertility in Ghana, Caldwell estimates the likely growth of the total Ghanaian population as follows: from 6.7 million in 1960, it will grow to 20 million (assuming a 2 per cent reduction per annum in fertility); or to 32 million (assuming constant fertility); or to 30 million (assuming constant fertility but no foreign

immigration), by the year 2000.

By the Ghanaian definition of "urban areas"--settlements with 5,000 or more inhabitants--its urban-share of total population had increased from 7.9 per cent in 1921, to 13.0 per cent in 1948, and to 23.1 per cent by 1960.

Between 1948 and 1960, the proportion of the population living in urban areas rose by just under one percentage point each year. From what was known of subsequent urbanization, as well as trends in other comparable countries, it seemed a reasonable guess that between 1960 and 2000 the proportion of population living in urban areas would rise by a percentage point each year, thus reaching 48 per cent in 1985 and 63 per cent in 2000. Not all this population, of course, will be in present-day cities. A very considerable fraction will continue to live in villages which will grow first to small towns and later to larger ones. Many town dwellers will practice, then as now, agriculture.

The various projections vary somewhat but the total picture is clear enough especially if we concentrate on the 1960--85 period, already more than a quarter past, and pay more attention to the 'no foreign immigration' projections and perhaps to the 'constant' and 'fertility declining by 1 per cent per annum' projections for the years immediately ahead.

Total population growth is likely to be around 3.5 per cent per year and it is probable that within a generation the majority of Ghanaians will live in towns. During the quarter century following 1960, urban population is likely to multiply by five thus adding six million people to the towns; during the same time rural population will increase by little more than one-and-a-half times but even this will add three million to those in the countryside.\*

Based on these detailed projections (which are shown

---

\* J.C. Caldwell. "Population Change and Rural Transformation in Ghana", op. cit., pp. 152, 155.

in Tables 4 and 5), Caldwell demonstrates the size that the two main cities of Accra and Kumasi could reach "if they continued to make up the same fraction of all urban population as they did in 1960." Using Caldwell's pessimistic and probably realistic assumptions about fertility, Accra would reach (from 338,000 in 1960) a population of between 1.5 and 1.7 million by 1985, and between 3.3 and 4 million by 2000. Kumasi (181,000 in 1960) would reach a population of between 833,000 and 887,000 by 1985, and between 1.7 and 2.1 million by 2000.

Given this scale of growth, and there seems no reason to doubt Caldwell's careful analysis, the urban future of Ghana defies the imagination. A recent planning report from Ghana using a more conservative and optimistic judgment of the likely rural-urban split by the year 2000 puts the point even more dramatically: "Assuming simply that Ghana's population may be evenly divided between the countryside and the towns and cities by the end of the century, the urban environment must be increased five to eight times over what it is now, or stated differently, the maximum increase would be equal to an additional seventeen cities, each the size of Accra now--with an estimated 750,000 inhabitants."\*

Faced with these startling demographic projections for

---

\*

Faculty of Architecture, University of Science and Technology, Tamale/Kumbungu Survey, Kumasi, Ghana, 1970, p. IX.

TABLE 4

GHANA: Population Projections, 1960-2000

Index	Constant fertility		Fertility reducing by 1% per annum *		Fertility reducing by 2% per annum *	
	With immigration	Without immigration	With immigration	Without immigration	With immigration	Without immigration
(a) Total Population (in thousands)						
1960	6,727	6,727	6,727	6,727	6,727	6,727
1970	9,748	9,329	9,697	9,281	9,648	9,235
1980	14,279	13,267	13,730	12,752	13,233	12,287
2000	31,916	28,918	26,413	23,841	22,341	20,084
(b) Multiplication						
1960	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
1970	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4
1980	2.1	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.8
2000	4.7	4.3	3.9	3.5	3.3	3.0
(c) Densities (Persons/sq. Mile)						
1960	73	73	73	73	73	73
1970	106	101	105	101	105	100
1980	155	144	149	138	144	133
2000	347	314	287	259	243	218

Notes: \* Fertility declines from 1965 and ceasing when the gross reproduction rate is 1.5

Source: J.C. Caldwell. "Population Prospects and Policy", in Walter Birmingham, I. Neustadt and E.N. Omason, A Study of Contemporary Ghana, Vol. II, Some Aspects of Social Structure. London, Allen and Unwin, 1967. pp. 170-171.

TABLE 5  
GHANA: Projected Urbanization, 1960-2000

Index	Constant fertility		Fertility reducing by 1% per annum		Fertility reducing by 2% per annum	
	With immigration	Without immigration	With immigration	Without immigration	With immigration	Without immigration
Average annual rate of growth of total population:						
1960-1985	3.9%	3.5%	3.6%	3.2%	3.3%	3.0%
1985-2000	4.2%	4.2%	3.2%	3.1%	2.4%	2.1%
Proportion of Population in urban areas(a):						
1960	23	23	23	23	23	23
1985	48	48	48	48	48	48
2000	63	63	63	63	63	63
Urban population (thousands):						
1960	1,551	1,551	1,551	1,551	1,551	1,551
1985	8,329	7,667	7,800	7,174	7,339	6,744
2000	20,107	18,218	16,640	15,020	14,075	12,653
Multiplication of urban population since 1960:						
1985	5.4	4.9	5.0	4.6	4.7	4.3
2000	13.0	11.8	10.7	9.8	9.5	8.2
Average annual rate of urban population growth:						
1960-1985	7.0%	6.6%	6.6%	6.3%	6.4%	6.0%
1985-2000	6.0%	6.0%	5.1%	5.1%	4.4%	4.3%
Rural population (thousands):						
1960	5,175	5,175	5,175	5,175	5,175	5,175
1985	9,023	8,306	8,449	7,771	7,950	7,305
2000	11,809	10,700	9,773	8,821	8,266	7,431
Multiplication of rural population since 1960:						
1985	1.7	*1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.4
2000	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.4
Average annual rate of rural population growth:						
1960-1985	2.1%	1.9%	1.9%	1.6%	1.6%	1.4%
1985-2000	1.8%	1.8%	1.0%	0.9%	0.3%	0.1%
Ratio of total population to rural population:						
1960	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
1985	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9
2000	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
Average annual rate of growth of ratio of total to rural population:						
1960-1985	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
1985-2000	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%
Possible city population(b):						
Accra: 1960	338	338	338	338	338	338
1985	1,825	1,656	1,690	1,555	1,589	1,453
2000	4,390	3,984	3,618	3,312	3,208	2,872
Kumasi: 1960	181	181	181	181	181	181
1985	977	887	905	833	851	778
2000	2,352	2,138	1,938	1,773	1,719	1,538

Notes: (a) According to definition whereby the proportion of urban population rises by one percentage point per year after 1960.

(b) Not projections but an illustration of the size of each of the two cities if they continued to make up the same fraction of all urban population as they did in 1960.

Source: J.C. Caldwell. "Population Prospects and Policy", in Walter Birmingham, I Neustadt and E.N. Ombor. A Study of Contemporary Ghana, Vol. II. Some Aspects of Social Structure. London: Allen and Unwin, 1967. pp. 184, 189-191

country after country in Tropical Africa, the prevailing notion of Africa as a relatively empty continent with remarkably low population densities is misleading. Certainly Africa in general has the lowest average population density of the world's continents. But there are wide variations in density between the three sub-regions of which Tropical Africa is composed, between individual countries, and between different localities within each country. If Caldwell's predictions for Ghana are correct, Ghana--which already has one of the highest average densities in Tropical Africa--will increase its density per square mile by four times by the end of the century. In every country population growth is, or should be, a matter of urgent concern. "Ultimately" as Caldwell says "the most crucial question is which of the projected population paths is the society likely to follow. Is there any possibility of the fertility level of Ghana, or indeed of any tropical African country declining in the near future? Are there built in social attitudes, religious beliefs and the rural economy resistances to fertility limitation which appear at present to make a restriction of family size particularly improbable?"\* Concern with family planning in Tropical Africa may be growing\*\* but the con-

---

\*J.C. Caldwell. "Population Change and Rural Transformation in Ghana", op. cit., p. 155.

\*\*

Davidson R. Gwatkin, op. cit., p. 1.

clusion at present is inescapable that programs of population control, on their present scale, are unlikely to have more than a marginal effect on the bleak demographic situation outlined in this report.

#### THE RURAL-URBAN RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between the rapid urban growth of major cities and rural and agricultural development in Tropical Africa needs emphasis, though this is a complex subject that requires much more detailed investigation than is possible here.

Unlike the historical experience in Europe, North America and, more recently in Japan, the rapid growth of industrial cities and administrative centers has not been preceded by the decisive changes in agricultural structure, productivity, and food production which created the essential surplus necessary for urban growth. There is little evidence in Tropical Africa of the "beneficent spiral in Japan at the turn of the century by which the farmer, free of feudal dues and doubling his productivity, paid the land tax which helped to finance industry, grew the food that fed the cities and then purchased back from them the bicycles

and sewing machines of the new industrial era."\* In Africa, demographic urbanization has not only run far ahead of industrial development, it has outpaced the vital development of agriculture needed to feed and sustain the mushrooming cities. This is partly a byproduct of the colonial development of these cities as an overseas offshoot of European economies. In Hoselitz's terms, these cities are "parasitic" rather than "generative".

The classic case of the 'parasitic' city has usually been thought of as the tightly-organized and self-contained colonial enclave which skims the cream of the indigenous system's able-bodied man power and orients the bulk of its activity abroad....In the extreme case of 'parasitic' urbanization, the growth of cities might even provide a better index of economic deterioration than of economic progress. Circumstances are at least conceivable in which cities were swollen by refugees from rural distress--refugees who might have fled from a breakdown of law and order or who have been pushed out of agriculture by failure to gain access to land.\*\*

This is a fair description of much of urban growth in Tropical Africa, initiated under colonial regimes and now accelerating under independence, with which the new African states now have to contend. The demand stimuli radiating from these urban enclaves have not yet been widely diffused into the agricultural economy. Many parts of Africa still have to organize post-tribal systems of food production

---

\* U.N. Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, op. cit., p. 18.

\*\*

William J. Barber, op. cit., p. 108.



for the market.

The relative lack of dynamism in the rural areas makes the prospect of any sizeable surplus to transfer to other sectors very unlikely. The level of rural unemployment rises and small farms are further subdivided. Migrants from the countryside are not so much released by rising productivity and attracted by urban opportunity as squeezed out by rural poverty and the belief that urban life could hardly be worse. Nor does a rural population a little above subsistence level provide much of a market for the manufactured goods of a new industrial sector.\*

Large areas of Tropical Africa--particularly major parts of Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zambia, the Congo basin, and the Francophone countries of West Africa--have difficult, inhospitable environments for agriculture development, marked by poor soils, aridity, or dense tropical forest and the tsetse fly. Tribal systems of common land ownership and shifting cultivation are ubiquitous. Nevertheless, without a technical revolution in agriculture, the prospects for the production of the surplus needed to support generative urbanization based on a growing rural market for consumer goods, and for balanced and integrated national development, seem grim in most, if not all, countries of Tropical Africa. As Barber correctly states "when students of a generation hence seek to understand the phenomena of urbanization in this part of Africa, they will be well advised to begin their studies with the course of events in the agrarian

---

\*

U.N. Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, op. cit., p. 18.

sector."<sup>\*</sup>

This essential agricultural revolution is, however, partly frustrated by the very pace and volume of urban growth. The flood tides of rural-urban migration have long exceeded the capacity of the cities to provide productive employment. Urban unemployment rates are everywhere high, and rising sharply. The "services sector" is grossly inflated by the under-employed in all cities: "It is made up in the main, of all the myriad hangers-on and odd-job men who live on the rim of starvation in the rundown slums and miserable fringe settlements of the great urban jungles."<sup>\*\*</sup> For the most part, these are the unmarried male migrants in the normally economically-active age groups who are needed in the countryside to create, organize and staff the agricultural revolution. What is more, in this vicious circle, the highest rates of worklessness and under-employment in most countries are in the agriculture sector, and this is partly the cause of their migration to the city and their swapping of "a rural for an urban misery". However, in the census reports of country after country, the evidence is clear concerning the fundamental relationship between the

---

\*

William J. Barber, op. cit., p. 123.

\*\*

U.N. Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, op. cit., p. 22.

population composition of urban and rural areas. In the city, the population is heavily-distorted in favor of single males in the economically active age groups: in the countryside, it is distorted in favor of the economically inactive old, and women and children. This point is the subject of widespread comment among demographers and economists. Urban growth on the scale witnessed in Tropical Africa has the effect of drawing away, often into urban unemployment or jobs of marginal productivity, the more active and potentially more progressive younger males who could be contributing, in a better organized and dynamic rural system, to the increase in farm productivity essential for national development. While the trends of rural-urban migration are clearly irreversible in the immediate and intermediate future, one of the major development issues is that of the retention of a higher proportion of the more vigorous and active age-groups on the land.

The basic problem, then, is not only the present plight of the cities, but also the often unrecognized relationship between urbanization and national development as a whole. A requirement in all these countries is that of evolving a coherent strategy of development in which positive, controlled, generative urbanization is fully integrated with progressive rural development.

There are few signs in Tropical Africa that a broad view of the role of urbanization in national development is

emerging. The countries concerned, do not seem yet to appreciate the urgency of formulating and implementing national policies required to correct the present imbalances caused by present trends to excessive headlong, uncontrolled urbanization.

#### THE AFRICAN URBAN EXPERIENCE

The conclusions of the above brief discussion of the urbanization experience in Tropical Africa can be summarized as follows:

1. Though Tropical Africa is still overwhelmingly rural and is the least urbanized of the world's continents, the urban population of these thirty-five countries had already reached 26 million by 1970, and is increasing at least twice as fast as the high rate of growth of the total population.
2. The major motive forces behind this rapid urban growth are the accelerating rate of total population growth--now among the highest in the world--and the poverty and lack of dynamic development in the rural areas.
3. There is a high degree of concentration of the urban population in major cities; there are relatively few intermediary towns; and for large

areas of Tropical Africa, there is a lack of organized, nucleated settlements at the village level.

4. Apart from the special case of parts of West Africa, where there is an indigenous African urban tradition, the urban settlement pattern is the product of an export oriented European colonial impact on the primitive tribal economies, which covered vast inhospitable territories at very low population densities.
5. The colonial exploitation of an undeveloped continent was based on ports, and on penetration of the interior with rail and road communications oriented to these ports. These single "lines of rail" still form the dominant man-made geographical feature of most African countries. They are the basis for the development of European-initiated urban enclaves and for major population redistribution and concentration. Urbanization in Tropical Africa is essentially a recent, twentieth century phenomenon.
6. During the colonial period, the growth of the major cities was regulated through racial zoning, the specialized nature of the colonial economies, and by strict control of migration.

7. In the postwar period and particularly since independence, political and economic change and the revocation of a whole series of former restrictions on land ownership and migration have fostered a sudden and dramatic acceleration in the rates of urban growth.
8. The brunt of this population growth is being borne by the primate cities, all of which are exhibiting spectacular rates of population increase, a commensurate and dramatic deterioration of the urban environment, and a widening range of social, economic and managerial problems.
9. These, however, are "exploding cities in unexploding economies", and remain essentially parasitic in nature, unsupported by the development of the agricultural surplus needed to sustain progressive national development and urban growth on this scale.
10. The flood of rural migrants into the cities, largely into situations of urban unemployment or marginal employment, drains the countryside of the economically-active males needed to create the essential technical revolution in agricultural productivity.
11. In these circumstances, Tropical Africa displays in a marked degree all the characteristics of

unbalanced, uncontrolled urbanization; these are the signs of economic deterioration rather than of economic progress.

12. Demographic projections indicate that Tropical Africa is likely to continue to urbanize at an astonishing rate, that the major cities will continue their striking and untrammelled growth, and that the firmly-established trends of rural-urban migration are irreversible in the immediate and intermediate future.
13. One of the long-range development problems in Tropical Africa is that of replacing a colonial geography of exploitation with a new "voluntary geography" of national development, controlled urbanization integrating progressive rural development and seen as a positive beneficial force in national progress.

These conclusions would, of course, need to be adapted, modified, and extended to meet the special circumstances and conditions of individual countries. Against the broad canvas of Tropical Africa as a whole, however, they do appear to have a general validity for the special purposes of this report. It should also be emphasized that they reflect an attempt to set urbanization within a development

framework, rather than an attempt to encompass fully the sociological and economic processes of urbanization in Africa. Little reference, for example, has been made in the above discussion to the growing body of literature on the sociology of the African city, and in particular, for example, to the most important work of Epstein for the Copperbelt, Southall and Gutkind for East Africa, or Little, Marris and Lloyd for West Africa. Epstein has produced a brilliant and succinct summary of this sociological research on African urbanism which, with comments by a series of scholars, provides a most useful indication of the present state of sociological research and discussion on the African city.\* This is an essential background for any discussion of the development problems posed by rapid urbanization in Tropical Africa, but an examination of this academic literature must lie outside the scope of this report.

#### THE POLITICS OF URBANIZATION

If urbanism and large-scale population agglomeration are relatively recent experiences for almost all African countries, the political experience of government is, of course,

---

\*

A.L. Epstein. "Urbanization and Social Change in Africa" in Breese, Gerald (ed.). *The City in Newly Developing Countries*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1969, p.246f.



still more recent. Of the thirty-five countries of Tropical Africa, only the two special cases of Ethiopia and Liberia have any lengthy history of independent African government. Four countries in Tropical Africa (Rhodesia, Mozambique, Angola and Portuguese Guinea) are still subject to white minority rule and are not relevant to this discussion. The remaining twenty-nine countries all attained independence from colonial rule in the 1955--1965 decade and, indeed, all except Ghana in the latter half of this decade. For many of these countries this brief acquaintance with sovereignty has been marked by acute political crisis and instability, produced by the contending forces of tribalism and succession, and by the struggle to attain and maintain national unity against the forces of immature political factionalism. The search for national unity has been well described in a recent paper by David and Audrey Smock\* and in numerous political commentaries and analyses of individual states, which describe the emergence throughout Tropical Africa, in a variety of ideological forms, of the one-party state.

The important and obvious point relevant to this report is that the turbulent political climate since independence in most African countries has scarcely been favorable--

---

\*

David and Audrey Smock, "The Search for National Integration in Africa", unpublished paper, Accra, 1970.

even had the practical experience of government existed-- for the formulation and implementation of orderly and systematic strategies of national development. Indeed, in the circumstances, the amount of development planning that has been completed in these countries is surprising. It perhaps illustrates the curious but fundamental dichotomy in the nature of government that characterizes so many newly-sovereign developing countries: on the one hand, the government-in-practice of charismatic but largely inexperienced politicians reacting daily, urgently, and perhaps pragmatically but often inconsistently to a constant succession of perceived political crises; and, on the other, a sort of government-in-academic-exile of administrative and technical planners busily producing plans and policies that assume consistent, long-range, action in conditions of political calm.

The period since independence has, as we have seen, been one of marked urban growth and rural-urban migration. The response to the crises created by this sudden urbanization has essentially been short-term and political rather than one of systematic development planning. The critical factor in terms of politics has been the growing and potentially explosive crisis of urban unemployment.

This intractable problem of employment was one of the central themes of discussion at the important Kericho Conference in Kenya in September, 1966, and the collected

papers of this conference are replete with analyses, and optimism, about the relationship between rural development and the reduction of urban unemployment. Central to these analyses, and to the perception by African leaders of the development situation in the countries which they inherited at independence, is the concept of the dual economy with a modern and a traditional sector. Harbison, in his paper at this conference, provides a convenient summary of this familiar concept:

The modern sector consists of government activities including education, medium and large-scale commerce, manufacturing, construction, public utilities and transportation, as well as plantations, and commercial cash-crop agriculture. The modern sector is a market economy with wage earners, entrepreneurs, and salaried government personnel. Its growth can be measured relatively easily in monetary terms. The traditional sector lies for the most part outside the market economy, and includes subsistence agriculture, small-scale traditional construction, primitive transportation, petty trade and barter, as well as some family-sized craft and cottage industries. Although money may be used here and there as a medium of exchange, the traditional sector is generally considered to be a non-monetized sector....

The modern sector, while predominantly urban, includes modern agriculture: the traditional sector, while mostly rural, includes a wide variety of petty barter trade and traditional crafts in the urban areas....

Unemployment in the modern sector is open and visible. People are seeking work for wages and salaries and are unable to find jobs. The numbers of jobless may be counted by a "labour force survey" which asks people whether or not they are "employed". Wages and salaries are relatively high in all activities in the modern sector and act like magnets in attracting labour. The concepts and means of measurement of employment in the modern sector are understood by economists who are familiar with the workings of advanced economies. But, in the traditional sector, labour surpluses take

the form of disguised unemployment or presumed under-employment. Quantitative estimates are little more than "educated guesses". Indeed the definition of what constitutes employment is hazy. In analyzing the labour force of the traditional sector, one is dealing with the unknown.

As long as surplus labour is contained within the traditional sector, it tends to be overlooked by economists, planners and politicians. When it becomes visible and overt in the modern sector, it turns into an explosive economic and political problem.\*

Development economists have, of course, examined this dual economy, and have long emphasized that capital intensive industrialization in the modern sector cannot possibly meet the ever-rising need for jobs. And certainly the low levels of industrialization throughout Tropical Africa, the rapid pace of total population growth, of rural-urban migration, and of the development of all levels of education, far exceed the capacity of the modern sector to provide adequate employment opportunities. In Nigeria, for example, it has been estimated that the expanding modern sector "cannot absorb more than one-third of those who would aspire to find employment in it."\*\* In Tanzania, for every 250,000 people entering the labor force, only about 23,000 jobs in modern sector employment are available. And in Kenya, the annual

---

\*

F.H. Harbison, "The Generation of Employment in Newly Developing Countries" in Sheffield, James R., ed., Education, Employment and Rural Development, Nairobi, East African Printing House, 1967, p. 174.

\*\*

F.H. Harbison, ibid., p. 181.

output of primary school leavers is 150,000 for whom there are only 15,000 places each year in secondary schools, and about 40,000 jobs in the economy. The dismal arithmetic of unemployment is repeated for country after country.

This whole problem is complicated, of course, by rural-urban migration....The deplorable over-crowding, under-employment, and visible unemployment of city-dwellers is obvious to all. And even if the movement of people from rural to urban areas could be stopped, the natural increase of population in the cities would generate a labour force far in excess of probable employment opportunities. On the basis of common observation and simple arithmetic, the labour surplus problem in most developing countries has reached frightening proportions and promises to become even worse in the years ahead.\*

It is mainly in these terms that the growing crisis of urbanization is perceived politically in the countries of Tropical Africa. And reinforcing this immediate political concern with the urgent problem of urban unemployment is a broader ideological concern with taking development to the people, with a more equitable geographic distribution of social benefits of economic growth, with "fighting the forces of ignorance, poverty and disease in the rural areas where most of our people live." As the Minister of Regional Administration for Uganda put it, "the common man could justifiably criticize his Government if all investment were concentrated in one particular area of the country. Every part of the country is entitled to its just share of the

---

\*

F.H. Harbison, ibid., p. 182.

investment which is being made in that country...Developing countries are desperately short of capital, and you must realize that such countries cannot afford to spend huge sums of money in urban areas on extravagant infrastructure."\*

Given this dual political concern, the anti-urban (or more precisely, anti-migration) attitudes of African politicians are unmistakable. "Back to the land" exhortations are a prevailing theme of political speeches. President Nyerere's Arusha Declaration is an extensive elaboration of this. Though mainly relevant to the special ideological situation in Tanzania, this Declaration has a wider significance in its indication of the political attitudes to urban development shared by most African politicians. For this reason the specific section of the Arusha Declaration dealing with urban development is worth extended quotation: President Nyerere declares:

Our emphasis on money and industries has made us concentrate on urban development. We recognize that we do not have enough money to bring the kind of development to each village that would benefit everybody. We also know that we cannot establish an industry in each village and through this means effect a rise in the real incomes of the people. For these reasons we spend most of our money in urban areas and our industries are established in towns.

Yet the greater part of the money that we spend in the

---

\*

J.S.M. Ochola, "Opening Address". In Michael Safier, ed., The Role of Urban and Regional Planning in National Development of East Africa, Kampala, Milton Obote Foundation, 1970, p. 4.

towns comes from loans. Whether it is used to build schools, hospitals, houses or factories, etc., it still has to be repaid. But it is obvious that it cannot be repaid just out of the money obtained from urban and industrial development. To repay the loans we have to use foreign currency which is obtained from the sale of our exports. But we do not now sell our industrial products in foreign markets, and indeed it is likely to be a long time before our industries produce for export. The main aim of our industries in 'import substitution'--that is, to produce things which up to now we have had to import from foreign countries.

It is therefore obvious that the foreign currency we shall use to pay back the loans used in the development of the urban areas will not come from the towns or the industries. Where, then, shall we get it from? We shall get it from the villages and from agriculture. What does this mean? It means that the people who benefit directly from development which is brought about by borrowed money are not the ones who will repay the loans. The largest proportion of the loans will be spent in, or for, the urban areas, but the largest proportion of the repayment will be made through the efforts of the farmers.

This fact should always be borne in mind, for there are various forms of exploitation. We must not forget that people who live in towns can possibly become the exploiters of those who live in the rural areas. All our big hospitals are in towns and they benefit only small section of the people of Tanzania. Yet if we have built them with loans from outside Tanzania, it is the overseas sale of the peasants' produce which provides the foreign exchange for repayment. Those who do not get the benefit of the hospitals thus carry the major responsibility for paying for them...Again, tarmac roads, motor cars, electric lights, water pipes, hotels and other aspects of modern development are mostly found in towns. Most of them have been built with loans, and most of them do not benefit the farmer directly, although they will be paid for by the foreign exchange earned by the sale of his produce....

There are two possible ways of dividing the people in our country. We can put the capitalists and feudals on one side, and the farmers and the workers on the other. But we can also divide the people into urban dwellers on one side, and those who live in rural areas on the other. If we are not careful we might

get the position where the real exploitation in Tanzania is that of the town dwellers exploiting the peasants.\*

The essence of the Arusha Declaration is the statement that "the foundations of socialism must be built in the rural sector." And, whether or not they would agree with all the views of President Nyerere, there can be few African politicians who would not support this statement. Rural development programs have top priority in the national development plans everywhere in Tropical Africa, and this political decision accords fully with expert advice from what Mr. Musakanya, Minister of State in Zambia, calls the "swarm of expert advisers concerned with the good welfare of our country."

One of the motivations behind the political concern for the rural areas is the widespread belief, constantly reiterated in plans and speeches, that rural development will have the effect of braking the present accelerating trends of rural-urban migration and thus help to solve the growing crisis of urban unemployment. This firmly-rooted conviction among politicians was expressed in the Times supplement on Kenya of October 20, 1970, expressing the views of "the Kenya Government":

---

\*

Julius K. Nyerere, "The Arusha Declaration and TANU's Policy on Socialism and Self-Reliance", in Svendsen, K.E. and M. Teisen, ed., Self-Reliant Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Publishing House, 1969, p. 193.



There is still a steady drift of people from the rural areas to the towns. The labour force is growing faster than it can be absorbed by either the new industries or by agriculture. Rural development is one of the answers to this vicious circle. Make the rural areas more prosperous and the steady flow of people to the towns could be reduced to a trickle.

Similar statements, with this somewhat desperate optimism, could easily be quoted from the recent speeches of former President Busia and his colleagues from Ghana, of President Kaunda from Zambia, of President Obote in Uganda, of President Senghor from Senegal, of President Mobuto for the Congo. The theme everywhere is: develop the rural areas and thereby arrest urban growth; send the migrants back to revitalized rural areas and thus solve the problem of urban unemployment and the attendant evils of rising urban crime rates, proliferating slums and squatter settlements, and the increasing congestion and deterioration of the urban environment.

On the other hand, few economic planners, demographers, manpower experts, or urban planners appear to share this political optimism or to believe that rural development programs (though vital in themselves to national progress) will have more than a marginal influence on the present surge of migrants to the major cities. Caldwell's views in relation to Ghana are given earlier in this report, and this point is discussed in two papers for Kenya by Gerhart and Laurenti. Laurenti, for Kenya, detects a positive side to the growing concern over rural-urban migration. Not only has this concern encouraged a more comprehensive view of the economic/

social web that links urban and rural areas, it has also supported the necessary allocation of more resources to rural development and, most importantly, "is bringing to many the realization that the broad flow of people to the urban centers is an inevitable process that has occurred in every developing society as newer technologies exert their impacts--a process that can only be marginally influenced by attempts to reduce rural/urban economic and social differentials."\*

Harris and Todaro in an important paper on urban unemployment in East Africa list and analyze six policy alternatives which have constituted the political response to this problem in the East African region:

- "1. Immediate and direct employment creation either by government fiat (as in the case of Kenya's 'Tripartite Agreements' of 1964 and 1970 by some 'voluntary' agreement among employers, trade unions, and government.
2. The expansion of urban employment opportunities directly and indirectly through accelerated programmes of industrial investment and growth....

---

\* Luigi Laurenti. "Urbanization Trends and Prospects," in *Urbanization in Kenya, A Report of the International Urbanization Survey*, p. 7.

3. Attempts [as those of Tom Mboya with the Kenyan trade unions] to prevent the urban wage from rising too rapidly in the absence of full wage flexibility.
4. Increased rural investment in the form of extension services and settlement schemes designed to make rural life more attractive.
5. Moral exhortations [as in Kenya by President Kenyatta, and generally in Tropical Africa] for the urban unemployed 'to return to the land'.
6. Enforced 'back to the land' programmes of the Tanzanian variety" [by which individuals in urban areas must hold a card and residence permit, to show they are presently employed. If they cannot produce such a document they are subject to being returned forcibly to their home (rural) areas]. \*

For Tropical Africa as a whole, one would need to add to this list such essentially short-term political responses to the unemployment crisis as the Aliens Order of December

---

\* John R. Harris and Michael P. Todaro. "Urban Employment in East Africa: An Economic Analysis of Policy Alternatives". Discussion Paper No. 71. (unpublished paper). Nairobi, Institute for Development Studies, University College, September 1968.

1969 in Ghana, which sought to remove from the country "the huge alien population of Nigerians, Malians, Upper Voltarians" and people from Dahomey and the Ivory Coast who appear to have been mainly petty traders, transport workers, and unskilled laborers in urban areas; the compulsory recruitment into the Nigerian Army of the openly-unemployed on the streets of Lagos and Ibadan; the pressure on Kenyans in Uganda, particularly in railway and plantation employment; the pressure on Asians throughout East Africa; and the emphasis everywhere on "Africanization" at all levels of employment and administration.

Harris and Todaro conclude their economic analysis of the six alternative policies for East Africa by arguing that "the best policy (given the apparent political infeasibility of reducing relative urban wages) would be some combination of industrial expansion....and migration restriction". They conclude, in relation to the latter, that "Tanzania's recent experiment is a step in the right direction". But they appreciate that, in relation to urbanization, governments and politicians are caught in a real political dilemma.

Neither eliminating minimum wage legislation nor placing physical controls on migration is likely to be politically feasible though the latter policy may be more feasible. The alternative, however, is to continue to suffer substantial and growing levels of open unemployment in urban areas.

The long run implications of this phenomenon (i.e. the loss of potential output, and perhaps more importantly, the proliferation of social and political unrest) are now becoming painfully clear to the governments of

East Africa. Several attempts to come to grips with the issue have been made in recent times. However, unless the inter-relationships between rural-urban earnings differentials, job creation, and migration are fully appreciated, policies directed towards only one aspect of the problem are likely to make a minimal lasting impact on urban unemployment.\*

The basic point which this discussion has sought to emphasize is that the political perception of urbanization in Tropical Africa tends to be dominated by concern with urban unemployment (and its social and political consequences) as the major, visible and explosive byproduct of the acceleration of rural-urban migration which has been one of the most striking features of the postwar period, and particularly the period since independence.

The difficulties inherent in the immediate post-independence emphasis on industrialization and on the development of all levels of education (particularly higher education) are now becoming acutely apparent, since it is increasingly understood that the modern sector cannot possibly absorb all the new aspirants for employment. Apart from a whole series of ineffective, but politically necessary, stop-gap measures to deal with this dilemma, there has been a marked and more fundamental shift in thinking, coinciding with a deep ideological motivation, towards rural development, regional planning, balanced development, land policy,

---

\*

John R. Harris and Michael P. Todaro, op. cit., p. 21.

growth centers, organizing the countryside, and so forth-- all basically intended to reverse, divert, arrest, or regulate urbanization.

Political attitudes to urbanization seem essentially negative. Laurenti, however, in his discussion of Kenyan urbanization, detects an "increasing sophistication about migration patterns," particularly among planners and administrators if not politicians which "should have a healthy and widening influence on policy discussions and decisions." There are signs of seeking a new approach to urbanization in other countries of Tropical Africa as well, evidenced particularly by the growing emphasis on spatial planning.

Politicians also are showing signs of being forced to think in a longer-term and more integrated perspective of national development. With the growing awareness among politicians of the ineffectiveness, beyond giving temporary relief, of the stop-gap measures now being employed to deal with urban problems (which are in essence problems affecting the total society) opportunities may be opening up in Tropical Africa generally for a new and more rational political approach to urbanization based on more positive views of the role of towns and cities in the national development processes as a whole.

Finally, it must, of course, be observed that the new politics of independence--compressed into less than a decade for most countries--have powerfully contributed to the

creation of this African urban dilemma.

Not only, and inevitably, have former colonial restrictions on migration and urban residence disappeared overnight, but independence everywhere has been accompanied by an urban construction boom concentrated in the capital cities. The rapid proliferation of government bureaucracies and parastatal organizations has led to frantic construction of new government office blocks, accompanied by the development of symbolic independence buildings, party headquarters, parade grounds, conference centers, parliament buildings, new hotels and airports, all of which characterize the new capitals in New Africa. For sound political as well as economic reasons, industrialists have concentrated their new factories and investments in these capitals, thereby increasing urban dominance and primacy. Higher education has brought towering new universities, symbolic of the new priorities of independence, competing with one another in their architectural grandeur. New urban elites have been created and thrive in this post-independence urban boom.

Not surprisingly, one of the consequences has been to further the urban population growth rates of the major cities, already stimulated in such countries as the Congo and Nigeria by refugees from bitter political troubles in regional areas of the countryside. The reckoning in urban unemployment, in rising crime rates, expanding shanty towns

on the urban fringe, and deteriorating urban services, is now just being recognized.

Rapid urbanization has meant trouble for African politicians. The evidence suggests that many African leaders are recognizing the need for a more systematic policy response to the urgent issues raised by rapid urbanization. The question is whether technical planners can help develop politically-feasible and probably essentially long-range alternative policies to meet this political need. But failing the development of a new functional approach to urbanization as an integral and inevitable aspect of national progress over a longer term perspective, it seems that governments will continue to react with stop-gap measures to the immediate, short-term crisis of urban unemployment and its consequences, with which urban growth in Tropical Africa has become strongly identified in the minds of politicians.