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URBAN POPULATION GROWTH RATES IN AFRICA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LESOTHO

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Rapid urban growth rates in Africa cause a great deal of concern among policy makers and planners because rapid urbanization constrains the government's effort to bring about socio-economic development and creates urban problems such as overcrowdedness, unemployment, scarce housing and limited health facilities. In this paper, current urbanization trends in Africa are discussed with special reference to Lesotho. Factors leading to these trends are highlighted and possible solutions to reverse the trends are suggested.

The Demography Unit, Department of Statistics, welcomes studies on population and related issues from any member of the University and the community at large for consideration for publication in this series. We look forward to receiving your contributions.

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1. Introduction

Over the past half a century the African continent has experienced a high rate of urbanization, far higher than that ever recorded in the history of the developed countries (United Nations, 1980a, 1980b). This high rate of urbanization has made it impossible for African governments to carry out socio-economic development programmes to keep up with the demands of the population, resulting into socio-economic problems such as overcrowdedness, unemployment, scarce housing and strained health services (Mabogunje, 1968; Ross, 1973; United Nations, 1980a). Consequently many of these governments have shown keen interest in research related to the process of urbanization hoping that findings emanating from such research would help them to formulate appropriate policies aimed at alleviating the socio-economic problems existing in urban areas and affecting the socio-economic development of the nations as a whole (ECA, 1977).

This paper aims at discussing current urbanization trends in Africa with special reference to Lesotho. Factors leading to these trends are highlighted and possible solutions to reverse the trends are suggested.

1.1. Sources and Reliability of Data

In Africa, there is a serious lack of adequate data on socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the continent. The area of urbanization is not an exception to this handicap.

However, over the past three or so decades some data on urbanization and other socio-economic characteristics have become available from censuses and sample surveys for most countries on the continent. But their reliability varies from country to country, and they suffer from the unstandardized definition of what constitutes an urban area. This hinders researchers from carrying out comparative studies with confidence. Further, the quality of data is sometimes affected by underreporting, reclassification of urban areas and continued change of urban boundaries.¹ But withstanding their limitations, available data are useful for studying the trends of urbanization.

1.2. Measures of Urbanization

A number of measures are used to indicate the pattern and trend of urbanization (Mabogunje, 1968; Arriaga, 1970; United Nations, 1974). But for the purpose of the present paper, a few

1. In some instances an officially defined urban area (urban proper) includes urban settlements which have spilled out into the countryside due to population expansion. In such instances the population of the official urban area is less than the population in that urban agglomeration. Alternatively, the official urban area may include rural villages. In this case the population may be more than that in the urban agglomeration. Therefore, comparability is reduced when some countries use one definition and others the other.

simple indices will be provided. These are:-

1. The proportion or percentage of people living in places defined as urban areas, i.e.
$$Up = \frac{Fu}{Pt} \times k$$

Where Up represents proportion of urban population

Fu represents population in urban areas

Pt represents total territorial or national population, and

k is a factor of 1 or 100

2. The proportion or percentage given can be refined by analysing the urban population by size of urban area. For example, proportions can be provided for the urban population living in urban areas of 20,000 and more people, 100,000 and more people and 500,000 and more people.

2. The process of Urbanization in Africa

Africa is the least urbanized region among the world's major regions (see Table 1). Most of its urban areas are of recent origin created after colonial contact, especially after the first World War (Hanna and Hanna, 1977; Morrison et al, 1972; Heisler, 1974; United Nations, 1980a; United Nations, 1980b). This does not mean, however, that urban settlements have not existed in Africa for over a thousand years. Urban areas such as Kano, Timbukutu and Oyo in West Africa, Bulawayo, Safala and Zimbabwe in Southern Africa; Mogodishu and Mombasa in East Africa; and Alexandria, Algiers and Tripoli in North Africa are known to have

TABLE 1

Population Growth Rates and Proportion of Population Urban,
1970-75

Area	Population in 1975 ('000)	Growth Rates (1970-75)	Proportion of Popu- lation Urban, 1975 (%)
World	3,967,864	1.89	39.2
More Deve- loped Regi- ons	1,131,684	.86	69.3
Less Develo- ped Regions	2,836,180	2.71	27.2
Eastern Africa	114,498	2.74	12.2
Middle Africa	45,310	2.27	23.2
Northern Africa	98,185	2.74	39.5
Southern Africa	27,853	2.70	45.8
Western Africa	115,469	2.58	18.4
Latin America	324,092	2.71	60.2
Northern America	236,841	.90	76.4
East Asia	1,006,380	1.65	30.5
Other East Asia	56,456	2.15	48.5
South Asia	1,249,793	2.53	22.9
Europe	473,098	.60	67.6
Oceania	21,308	1.95	71.7
USSR	255,038	.99	60.3

existed in the continent in pre-colonial times as important centres of religion, trade and administration (see for example Mabogunje, 1968; Hance, 1970; Hanna and Hanna, 1971; Morrison et al, 1972; Hull, 1976 and United Nations, 1980a).

Low urbanization in this continent is usually explained in terms of (i) its late exposure to the external world (reflected by a high percentage of people in subsistence farming), (2) its relatively poorly developed exchange economy and limited services which are urban based, (3) its numerous small sized states, (4) its fragmented market and population patterns, and (5) its large number of states which are landlocked (Hance, 1970).

Presently, however, Africa's rates of urban population growth are among the highest in the world, averaging about 6 per cent but sometimes in excess of 8 per cent per annum (Table 2). Although rates of natural increase (the difference between births and deaths) are quite high in African urban areas compared to other parts of the world, rural-urban migration accounts for a larger part of the growth of urban population (usually over one half). This is confirmed in a majority of African countries if we compare national natural rates of increase (Table 3) which we assume approximate urban rates of natural increase, and the rates of urban growth in Table 2 (See also Figures 1 & 2). Therefore, rural-urban migration in Africa has become a point of great concern to planners and policy makers, especially since rapid urbanization is associated with socio-economic and political problems such as unemployment, over-crowdedness and political unrest, scarce housing, strained public services, deterioration of sanitary conditions, and consequent poor quality of life. This

TABLE 2

Percentage of Urban Population, Urban Annual Growth Rates, and Number of Cities of over 500,000 in Africa*

Area	Urban Population				Percentage of Urban Population				Number of Cities of over 500,000	
	As percentage of total population		Average Annual Growth Rate		in largest city		in Cities of over 500,000 persons			
	1960	1980	1960/70	1970/80	1960	1980	1960	1980	1960	1980
NORTHERN AFRICA										
Algeria	30	61	6.1	6.4	27	12	27	12	1	1
Egypt	38	45	3.6	3.0	38	39	53	53	2	2
Libya	23	52	8.0	8.2	57	64	0	64	0	1
Morocco	29	41	4.2	4.5	16	13	16	29	1	5
Tunisia	36	52	3.8	3.8	40	31	40	31	1	1
WESTERN AFRICA										
Ghana	23	36	4.6	5.2	25	35	0	48	0	2
Guinea	10	19	6.1	6.1	37	80	0	80	0	1
Ivory Coast	19	38	7.3	8.2	27	33	0	33	0	1
Liberia	21	23	5.6	5.6	-	-	0	0	0	0
Mali	11	20	5.4	5.4	32	34	0	0	0	0
Mauritania	3	23	15.8	8.6	-	39	0	0	0	0
Niger	6	13	7.0	6.8	-	31	0	0	0	0
Nigeria	13	20	4.7	4.9	13	17	22	57	2	9
Senegal	23	25	2.9	3.3	53	65	0	65	0	1
Sierra Leone	13	25	5.5	5.6	37	47	0	0	0	0
Togo	10	17	5.6	5.6	-	60	0	0	0	0
Upper Volta	5	9	5.3	4.1	-	41	0	0	0	0
MIDDLE AFRICA										
Angola	10	21	5.1	5.8	44	64	0	64	0	1
Cameroon	14	35	5.6	7.5	26	21	0	21	0	1
Chad	7	18	6.8	6.7	-	39	0	0	0	0
C.A. Republic	23	41	5.3	4.9	40	36	0	0	0	0
Congo P.R.	33	37	2.6	3.2	77	56	0	0	0	0
EASTERN AFRICA										
Burundi	2	2	2.4	2.6	-	-	0	0	0	0
Ethiopia	6	15	6.1	6.9	30	37	0	37	0	1
Kenya	7	14	6.6	6.8	40	57	0	57	0	1
Madagascar	11	18	5.1	5.2	44	36	0	36	0	1
Malawi	4	9	6.6	6.2	-	19	0	0	0	0
Mazambique	4	9	6.6	6.8	75	83	0	0	0	0
Rwanda	2	4	5.3	5.9	-	-	0	0	0	0
Somalia	17	30	5.3	5.1	-	34	0	0	0	0
Sudan	10	25	6.9	6.8	30	31	0	31	0	1
Tanzania	5	12	6.3	8.3	34	50	0	50	0	1
Uganda	5	12	6.3	7.0	38	52	0	52	0	1
Zambia	23	38	5.4	5.4	-	35	0	35	0	1
SOUTHERN AFRICA										
Lesotho	2	5	7.5	7.8	-	-	0	0	0	0
R. South Africa	47	50	2.8	3.1	16	13	44	53	4	7
Zimbabwe	13	23	6.8	6.4	40	50	0	50	0	1

* This information was available only for the listed countries and based on national definitions of what is "urban".

Source: World Bank, 1980. pp. 148-149

TABLE 3

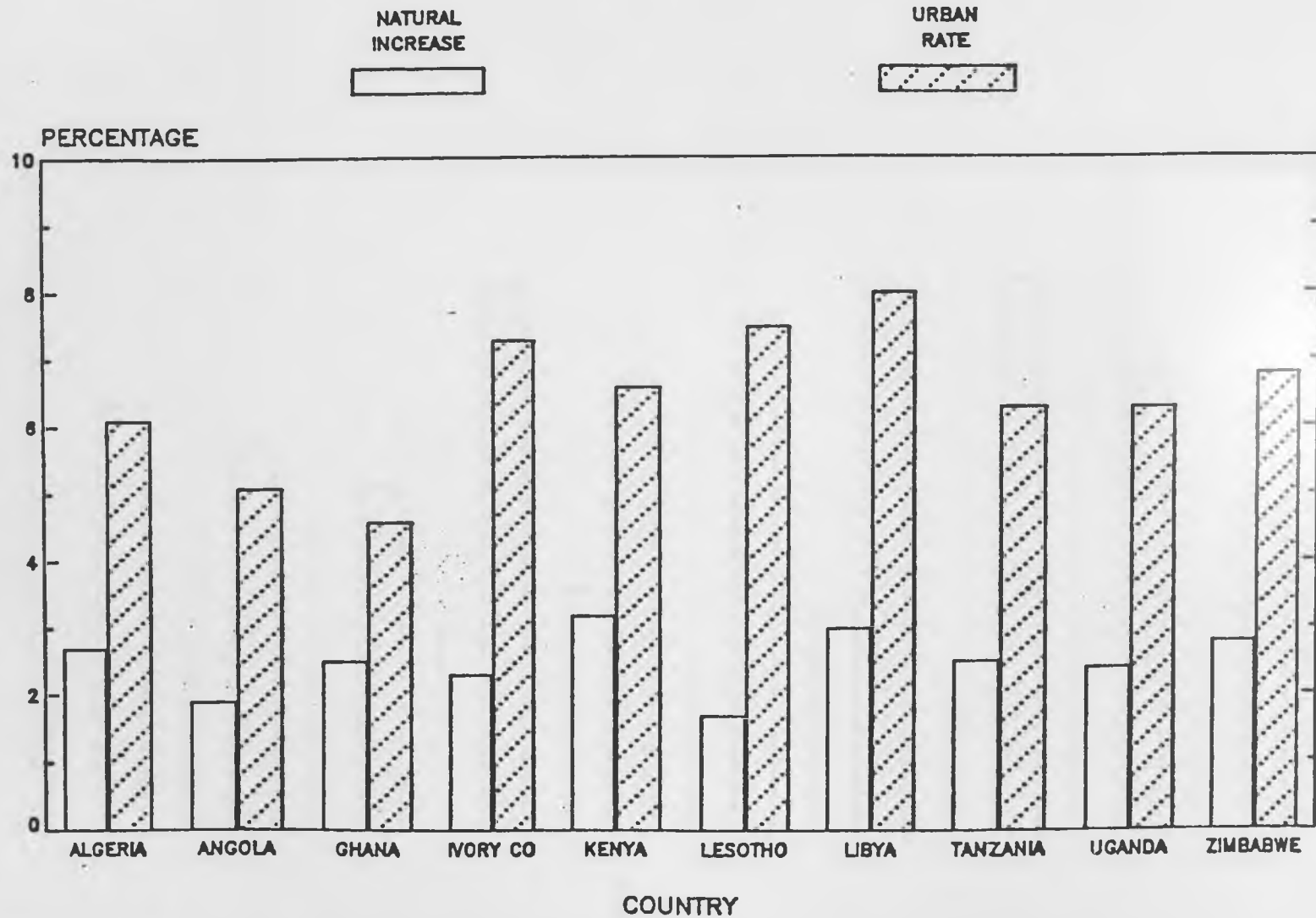
SOME NATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS *

Area	Crude Birth Rate Per 1000 Population		Crude Death Rate Per 1000 Population		Rate of Natural Increase (%)	
	1960	1978	1960	1978	1960	1978
NORTHERN AFRICA						
Algeria	50	48	23	14	2.7	2.4
Egypt	45	37	19	13	2.6	2.4
Lybia	49	47	19	13	3.0	3.4
Morocco	52	45	23	13	2.9	3.2
Tunisia	49	42	21	12	2.8	3.0
WESTERN AFRICA						
Benin	51	49	27	19	2.4	3.0
Ghana	49	48	24	17	2.5	2.1
Guinea	47	46	30	21	1.7	2.5
Ivory Coast	50	50	27	19	2.3	3.1
Liberia	51	51	25	18	2.6	3.3
Mali	50	49	27	22	2.3	2.7
Mauritania	51	50	27	22	2.4	2.8
Niger	52	51	27	22	2.5	2.9
Nigeria	52	50	25	18	2.7	3.2
Senegal	48	49	27	22	2.1	2.7
Sierra Leone	47	46	27	19	2.0	2.7
Togo	51	50	27	19	2.4	3.1
Upper Volta	49	48	27	22	2.2	2.6
MIDDLE AFRICA						
Angola	50	48	31	23	1.9	2.7
Cameroon	43	42	27	19	1.6	2.3
Chad	46	44	29	21	1.7	2.3
C.A. Republic	42	42	26	19	1.6	2.3
Congo P.R.	46	45	27	19	1.9	2.6
Zaire	48	46	24	19	2.4	2.7
EASTERN AFRICA						
Burundi	48	47	27	20	2.1	2.7
Ethiopia	51	49	28	25	2.3	2.4
Kenya	51	51	19	14	3.2	3.7
Madagascar	47	45	27	19	2.0	2.6
Malawi	53	52	27	20	2.6	3.2
Mozambique	46	46	26	19	2.0	2.7
Kwanda	51	51	27	19	2.4	3.2
Somalia	57	48	29	20	2.8	2.8
Sudan	47	45	25	18	2.2	2.7
Tanzania	47	48	22	16	2.5	2.2
Uganda	45	45	21	14	2.4	3.1
Zambia	51	49	24	17	2.7	3.2
SOUTHERN AFRICA						
Lesotho	40	40				
R. South Africa	39	38	23	16	1.7	2.4
Zimbabwe	47	48	15	10	2.4	2.8
			19	14	2.8	3.4

* This information was available only for the listed countries and based on national definitions of what is "urban".

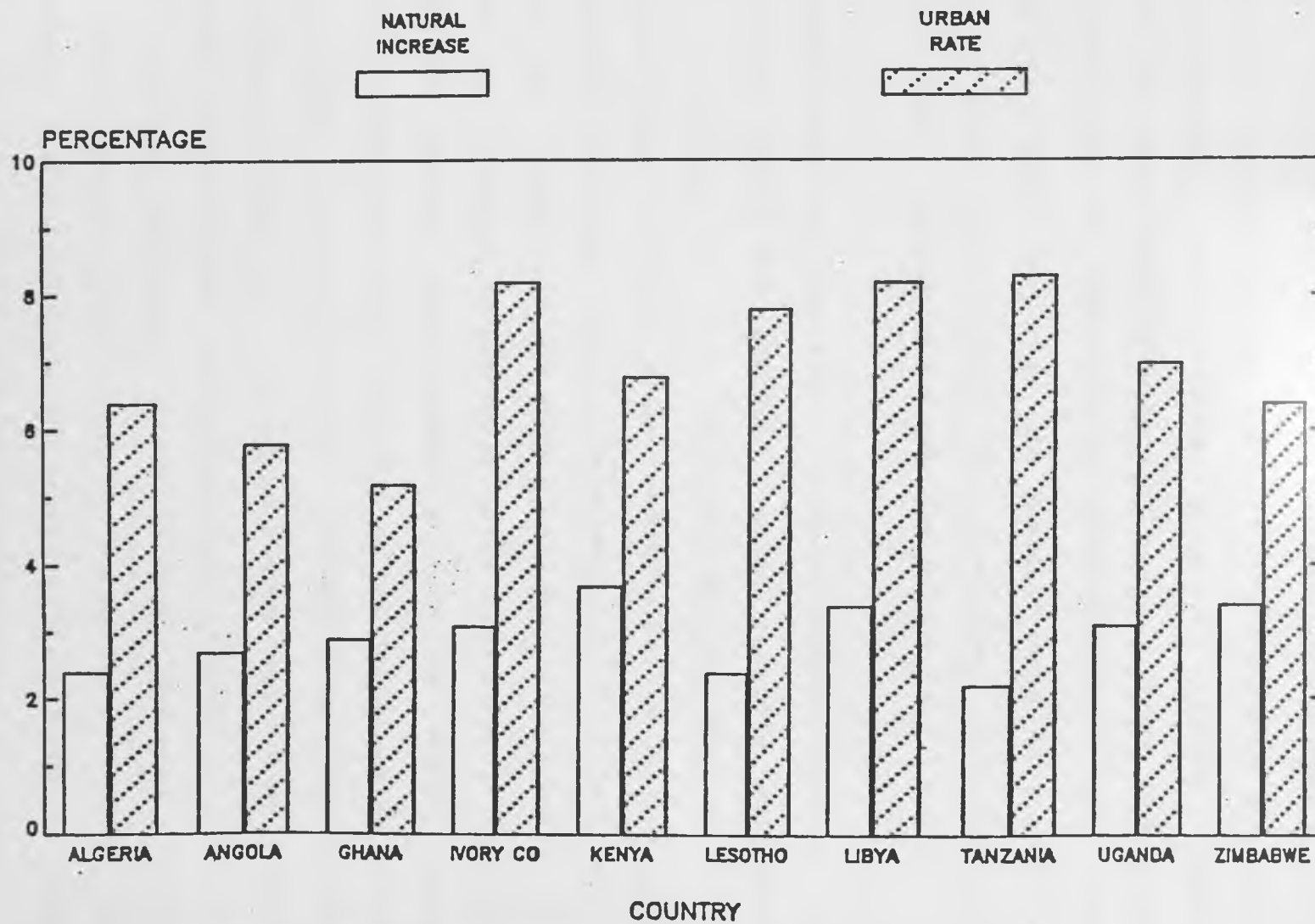
Source: World Bank, 1980, pp. 144-145

FIG. 1: URBAN & NATIONAL GROWTH RATES, SELECTED COUNTRIES, 1960



SOURCE: TABLES 2 & 3.

FIG. 2: URBAN & NATIONAL GROWTH RATES, SELECTED COUNTRIES, 1980



SOURCE: TABLES 2 & 3.

is made even more so by the stagnant or marginally growing economies of African states (World Bank, 1984).

During the pre-colonial period, urban centres grew as a result of political, religious and economic factors (Mabogunje, 1986; Hance, 1970; Hanna and Hanna, 1971; and Hull, 1976). For example, in Western Africa, Bornu, Timbukutu, Oyo and Ibadan developed as important religious and/or administrative centres of empires (e.g. the Empire of Bornu). In Eastern Africa a few urban areas such as Mmengo in Buganda existed as administrative centres of kingdoms, but most of the urban areas such as Mombasa, Sofala, Tanga and Zanzibar were trade centres situated on important trade routes which developed as a result of contacts with sailors from the Middle East and the East. In Southern Africa, the ruins of Zimbabwe are another example of pre-colonial urban centres serving Kingdoms, while in North Africa, the oldest cities on the African continent such as Alexandria, Rabat, Constantine, Algiers, Tunis, Carthage and Tripoli are known to have existed although overall, there were few towns before the colonial period.

During the colonial era new urban centres, used mainly as administrative, manufacturing, mining and trading centres, developed into urban centres and into more modern urban areas where exotic settings grew and surpassed or intermingled with traditional ones. These include such urban areas as Dakar in Senegal, Conakry in Guinea, Accra in Ghana, Abidjan in Ivory Coast and Lagos in Nigeria (West Africa); Brazaville in Congo People's Republic, Yaounde in Cameroon and Kinsasha in Zaire (Middle Africa); Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, Nairobi in Kenya,

Kampala in Uganda, Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, Zomba in Malawi and Lusaka in Zambia (Eastern Africa); Salisbury in Zimbabwe and Pretoria and Johannesburg in South Africa (Southern Africa); and urban areas such as Alexandria, Tunis Algiers and Cairo (Northern Africa) which experienced substantial expansion and modernization.

However before World War 1, the growth of urban population in Africa was low. A steady increase ensured between the first and second World Wars, and the rate of increase of urban population shot up dramatically after the second World War. This situation prevails up to today. For example, Bamako in Mali grew from 5000 people in 1910 to 38,000 in 1945 and then to 150,000 in 1964 (Hanna and Hanna, 1971), an annual growth rate of about 6 per cent between 1910 and 1945, and about 7 1/2 per cent between 1945 and 1964. The expansion in urbanization during this period is largely attributed to the creation of manufacturing industries, commerce, mining and services which increased employment opportunities that led to increasing rural-urban migration. Many of Africa's major urban areas were therefore developed in recent decades. Many new cities are industrial, commercial, mining and servicing complexes linked to Western economies.

Presently, three major regions can be identified in Africa by degree of urbanization. Namely South Africa, Northern Africa and Tropical Africa (which includes the rest of Africa). South Africa has the highest percentage of urbanization followed closely by Northern Africa, and Tropical Africa is the least

urbanized. But within Tropical Africa, West Africa is the most urbanized largely because it includes numerous indigenous urban communities and it had earlier contact with the Western world than Middle, Southern (excluding South Africa) or Eastern Africa. Middle Africa follows in urbanization, while Southern and Eastern Africa are the least urbanized because (in addition to the factors mentioned above) they include most of the least developed countries in Africa, such as Ethiopia, Lesotho and Somalia, and countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda whose people prefer dispersed settlement patterns to urban agglomerations.

Regardless of tempo of urban growth, the growth of urbanization in Africa has been dominated by the capital urban areas. In most of the countries, the annual rate of growth of the capital urban area has been higher than that of the rest of urban areas in the country. This is a result of the concentration of national administrative, industrial and commercial activities in the largest urban areas which are seen as national symbols of development. The dominance of capital urban areas is shown by the percentage of the total urban population found in the largest urban area in each country (Table 2). In 1978 all the largest urban areas in each country in Africa were capitals except in Benin, Malawi, Morocco and South Africa (United Nations, 1978) and out of the seven cities with over a million people in Africa, five were capital cities. This concentration is more pronounced in the least urbanized nations of Tropical Africa.

Finally, although there are many factors in an urban area

such as the cost of living and lack of sufficient accommodation which may bring about individualism, urban residents do not sever their origins. They visit home regularly, send remittances to relatives and give hospitality to relatives and friends when they visit or migrate to urban areas. Therefore, African urbanization has a significant influence on rural areas, while the rich African culture prevalent in the rural areas also influences patterns of living of urban Africans.

3. Urbanization in Lesotho

In Lesotho, all district headquarters and other settlements of rapid population growth and with facilities which tend to encourage people to engage more in non-agricultural activities are defined as urban. It is quite apparent that the second half of the definition leaves a great deal of room for subjective definition of urban areas by both local and government officials.

This classification gives an urban percentage of 7% of the de jure population in 1966 and about 11% in 1976 (Table 4). Maputsoe and Thaba-Tseka were not included as urban in 1966 as they were then regarded as rural areas. Their inclusion in 1976 gives a contribution of about 15% to the total urban population, and 37% to the increase in urban population between 1966 and 1976. Thus demonstrating the importance of reclassifying former rural areas as urban in the process of urban growth.

Out of the total urban population, 55% are found in greater Maseru area (i.e. the area consisting of Maseru, Morija and Roma

urban areas). Yet these centres consisted of only 47% of the urban population in 1966 (excluding Maputsoe and Thaba-Tseka population) and 38% in 1966 if Maputsoe and Thaba-Tseka are included. Therefore, the gravity of rapid urbanization in certain areas of the nation is well demonstrated.

In different forums in the past, government officials in Lesotho and prominent members of the community have expressed their concern regarding rapid growth in urban areas. For example in a Workshop on Population Planning for Development, held in 1982, the participants expressed concern "at the massive rural exodus and the shifting of population from highlands to the lowlands which will ultimately result in serious congestions in the urban centres and overcrowding of the part of the country which is most suitable for crop production" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1982, p. 103).

Similarly, the National Conference on Population Management as a Factor in Development including Family Planning made a number of

Table 4. Urban Population by Urban Centre in Lesotho, 1966 and 1976

District	Urban Centre	Population In 1966	Population In 1976	Percent Annual Growth Rate
Butha-Buthe	Butha-Buthe	5656	7472	2.8
Leribe	Hlotse	4135	6297	4.2
Leribe	Maputsoe	(11333)*	15823	3.3
Leribe	Peka	3694	4577	2.1
Berea	TY	6687	8589	2.5
Maseru	Maseru	28333	55031	6.6
Maseru	Morija	2482	4915	6.8
Maseru	Roma	2965	5668	6.5
Maseru	ThabaTseka	(2996)*	4427	3.9
Mafeteng	Mafeteng	5715	8278	3.7
Mohale'Hoek	M. Hoek	3971	5276	2.8
Quthing	Moyeni	3650	3528	-0.3
Qachas'Nek	Qachas'Nek	3275	4837	3.9
Mokhotlong	Mokhotlong	1051	1484	3.4
Lesotho	Total	71,614*	136,202	6.4

* These figures have not been added in the total because the population of Maputsoe and Thaba-Tseka were rural in 1966.

Source: 1976 Population Census, p.4.12

resolutions including the following:-

Recognizing the effects of the present high rural-urban migration in Lesotho and its adverse effects on the welfare of the people, both young and adult, and also on the successful implementation of development programmes, this conference resolves that a vigorous programme be launched to curb this rural-urban migration and such a programme should include:-

- (a) Establishing schools in rural Lesotho which provide education at least to secondary level;
- (b) Re-establishing boarding facilities in all schools to provide secure accommodation to children who have to leave their families (parental care) to go to school;
- (c) Establishing cottage industries at village level to keep the rural population where they are but still developing. (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1979, p.5)

These statements, brief as they are, clearly indicate the great concern expressed by a number of prominent people in the community regarding the process of urbanization, migration and their social and economic consequences.

4. Components of Urban Growth

Rapid urban growth in Africa is a result of:

- (i) high fertility (births) and declining mortality (deaths), and
- (ii) migration.

Although in the more developed regions of the world urbanization is associated with low fertility, the relationship between urbanization and fertility is not clear in Africa. In some areas, urbanization is related to high fertility, while in others urbanization is related to relatively lower fertility than

in the rural areas. But even in the latter case, urban fertility is high, about twice or more as high as fertility rates in developed regions. On the other hand, although data on mortality in Africa is more inadequate than that on fertility, available evidence indicates that mortality is generally lower in urban than in rural areas. This is due to more improved sanitation, better supply of health facilities, and better socio-economic conditions in urban areas. Consequently, high fertility levels and declining mortality lead to a high rate of natural increase in urban areas.

Apart from natural increase, rapid urban growth is due to migration and, in some cases, to reclassification of formerly rural areas as urban areas. While the latter's effect is minimal, in most cases, the former is an important factor affecting urban growth in Africa to the extent that its contribution usually exceeds that of natural increase.

4.1 Fertility, Mortality and Urbanization

A number of studies have indicated that mortality is lower in urban than rural areas. This is attributed to the following factors:-

1. Expansion of more health programmes, facilities and services in urban than in rural areas (see for example Orubuloye and Caldwell, 1975).
2. More improvement in urban than rural socio-economic conditions in the form of, for example, better housing and related sanitation, higher income, higher education and better nutrition. Mortality differentials by socio-economic status are observed in both urban and rural areas by, for example, education, occupation and income. Those with higher education, higher occupational status and higher income have lower

mortality than those in less favourable conditions (Sembajwe, 1973, 1980, 1981; Cantrile, 1975; Caldwell, 1979). The poor and uneducated are ignorant and/or less able to pay for medical care, clean housing and nutritious food.

Therefore, it may be expected that with socio-economic development, and as the socio-economic conditions prevailing in urban areas spread to the rural areas, the living conditions of the population of Africa will improve. In the short run, however, the dramatic rapid growth of urban areas may cause the socio-economic conditions of urban areas to stagnate or even to decline.

In the case of fertility, urbanization as part of the process of socio-economic development has been indicated by a number of studies to be associated with lower fertility (Caldwell, 1968; Egero and Henin, 1973; Sembajwe, 1973, 1981, 1983; Page, 1975; Okore, 1980). However, in certain instances it has been pointed out that in the initial stage of fertility change, urbanization and some other socio-economic indicators are associated with increasing fertility due to improved health conditions which lead to high fecundity and consequently high fertility before new aspirations and the desire for fewer but high quality children set in to reduce family size (Page, 1975; Sembajwe, 1980). Therefore, presently and for the next decade or so urbanization may be associated with high fertility, declining mortality and high rates of natural increase. These high rates of natural increase combined with high rates of migration will indeed add greatly to pressures on African governments to provide more expanded social services and larger investment margins in economic development projects, especially those which provide

urban centred employment. Yet these very pressures will make it impossible for the governments to keep up with the demands.

4.2 Migration and Urbanization

As already stated, migration from rural to urban areas usually contributes over one half of annual urban population growth rates in a majority of African countries. Although in some cases rural-urban migration may be a healthy integral part of the process of socio-economic development (when it facilitates the efficient allocation of labour), in Africa migration to urban areas is often so high that it leads to

- (1) excessive supply of labour in urban areas and, consequently, unemployment;
- (2) the drain of labour from rural areas (when able-bodied persons, especially youths who are school leavers and usually males, leave their villages in search of urban jobs with better income returns) which results in labour deficits in rural areas, especially during the agricultural peak season, and low food and cash crop production; and
- (3) a reduction in the quality of urban socio-economic facilities and services, such as the quality of urban housing and health services (Ominde, 1968; Caldwell, 1969; Addo, 1972; Rempel and Todaro, 1972; Cleason and Egero, 1973; Byerlee, 1974; Todaro, 1978).

During the colonial period, the imposition of head or hut taxes normally forced males to migrate to areas of wage

employment, especially urban areas (Heisler, 1974; Byerlee, 1974). Later with the expansion of western type of education, many school leavers joined the stream of rural-urban migrants in search of jobs which yield incomes commensurate to education and modern social amenities (Little, 1965; Byerlee, 1974; Todaro, 1978). Although the public service, commercial and industrial sectors have expanded over time, they have not been able to keep up with the rapid increase of population in urban areas. This has led to increasing unemployment. There is, therefore, a general requirement for the African governments to devise policies which are geared towards reducing rural-urban migration and its consequent social and economic problems.

5. Implications of Rapid Urbanization and Recommendations.

Rapid urban growth in Africa, as in other developing regions of the world, demands a large share of resources for socio-economic development. For example, substantial efforts and resources are required to overcome unemployment, scarce and poor housing, inadequate poor services and declining quality of life. Such problems will become more pressing in the next two decades or so if the current high rates of urban growth are maintained. To prevent an insurmountable growth of these problems, the following steps are necessary:

- (1) National policy makers should formulate appropriate policies geared at controlling the growth of urban areas regardless of size.
- (2) National planners should plan and implement

development projects aimed at improving rural socio-economic conditions up to the standard of those prevailing in urban areas so that rural settlements can be attractive areas of residence. For example, projects for clean water supply, good quality housing, electrification and diversification of rural employment (for example by setting up small scale industries) might be appropriate.

(3) Family planning programmes for informing the entire population about the usefulness of sufficient birth spacing, and for providing the means to do so should be expanded. At a later stage when the desire for large families declines, family planning programmes in collaboration with public programmes such as that on the health delivery system, will be useful sources of advice on and sources of methods for family limitation.

(4) It should be emphasised that in order to formulate meaningful policies and make good plans related to these issues, there is a need for intensive collection of adequate and reliable data, and research on urbanization and the components of its growth in each nation. There is little research on urbanization and the problems related to urbanization; and due to this lack of appropriate research, it is difficult to determine when urbanization is too high, when the rate of urban growth is optimum, and what size of urban

area is manageable.

- (5) Similarly, it is useful to understand the determinants of mortality, fertility and migration, and the consequences of future trends in these variables for urbanization. It is when these trends and their consequences are known that we can predict trends of urbanization.

6. Conclusion

Africa's rates of urban population growth are among the highest in the World, averaging about 6 per cent per annum, but sometimes in excess of 8 per cent per annum. Despite the fact that rates of natural increase in Africa's urban areas are higher than those prevailing in developed countries, rura-urban migration is identified as responsible for a large part of the growth of urban population. The evidence presented in this paper confirms this conclusion.

Since rapid urbanization creates socio-economic and political problems, it is in the interest of all national governments to devise policies and strategies which can reverse undesirable trends in the process of urbanization and make it compatible with national capability to generate socio-economic development. In the previous sections, some of the actions likely to be useful in this regard have been suggested.

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