

Committee III  
Human Beings and the Urban Environment:  
The Future Metropolis

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**THE METROPOLIS AND TROPICAL AFRICA**

by

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In 'The metropolis in its national and regional context' Denis Dwyer has provided a most valuable paper of immense scope. He has very clearly outlined recent urbanization and counter-urbanization trends in North America and Europe, drawing attention to the work of Brian Berry and Peter Hall. When he turns to consider the less developed countries, he rightly challenges Hall's proposition that a universal set of 'stages of growth' can be recognized, though strangely he does not refer to Berry's thesis of 'divergent paths' spelled out in The Human Consequences of Urbanization.

It is certainly open to debate whether the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are following a path earlier trodden elsewhere, are missing out stages, or are following a distinctive and divergent path. I doubt, however, that such debate is the most helpful way to investigate world urbanization, or to speculate about 'the future metropolis'. I strongly agree with Denis Dwyer on the need to disaggregate and differentiate: this is something which all sciences must do where necessary, but in respect of which geography has a particularly important contribution to make. However, I should take the disaggregation further than he does, and ask why the discussion should be based on a crude dichotomy between developed and less developed countries. To see the world in binary terms may assist intellectual argument<sup>2</sup>, but it generally distorts reality. This applies to a wide range of phenomena conventionally discussed in terms of developed and less developed countries, but especially to urbanization when the proportion of the total national population living in cities occupies a spectrum from under ten per cent to

over ninety per cent. Many Latin American countries occupy a position on this spectrum far closer to most of Europe than to most of Africa or south Asia.

As with the level of urbanization so also with the character of the cities the conventional division may not be the most appropriate. Is there any evidence that the Latin American metropolis has more in common with that in India than with that in southern Europe? Denis Dwyer himself points out that the less developed countries will soon have two-thirds of the global urban population. Is it not then time to stop considering 'the Third World city' as a distinct phenomenon, especially since some observers go so far as to suggest that it constitutes a special case of metropolitan growth deviating from a norm provided by Europe and North America?

I might take as my 'text' the final sentence of Denis Dwyer's paper: "urbanization and metropolitan formation... assume different forms and meanings depending upon historic, economic, social and cultural conditions." I am so much in agreement with this that I feel even a binary framework for discussion should be adopted only where it is demonstrably the most appropriate one. Far more often we should think in terms of a spectrum - an appallingly wide one with respect to all aspects of prosperity and poverty or development and underdevelopment - or in terms of a series of culture realms. I am greatly encouraged by the fact that the latter approach has been adopted for the greater part of this meeting on the future metropolis.

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Since tropical Africa constitutes the main omission from the published programme in terms of culture realms, the remainder of this paper will attempt partially to fill that gap. This region can certainly serve to illustrate the diversity of urban experience among less developed countries and the merits of further disaggregation - at least to sub-continental level and perhaps even further. It is also of particular interest in terms of the future, for to a larger extent than anywhere else in the world the character of the future metropolis in tropical Africa is still to be determined. Here more than anywhere else we have 'metropoli in the making', being shaped by decision-makers at every level from the highest ranking bureaucrats to the squatter settlers in a disused quarry, and including decision-makers thousands of miles away as well as on the spot.

#### The City in Tropical Africa

In 1960, around the time of independence for most African countries, 'the tropical African metropolis' would have been almost a contradiction in terms, for no city had a population much exceeding half a million (Table 1). There were pre-colonial as well as colonial cities in the region, but nothing remotely comparable to the long-established metropolis of Cairo to the north of the Sahara. In most countries far fewer than ten per cent of the population lived in an urban environment (Table 2). The situation is now rapidly changing, however, and it might be said that it is over the past twenty years that the metropolis has become a worldwide phenomenon with tropical

Table 1

Population Growth in Tropical African Cities

	Estimated population in thousands		
	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1980</u>
Lagos	600	1600	3000
Kinshasa	500	1400	2700
Addis Ababa	500	850	1300
Ibadan	500	750	1100
Khartoum	400	650	1100
Accra	400	750	1100
Dakar	400	600	950
Nairobi	300	520	900
Harare	300	400	800
Luanãa	250	450	750
Abidjan	220	600	1200
Dar es Salaam	180	380	800

All figures are for the whole urban agglomeration.

Sources: Diverse.

Table 2

Levels of Urbanization in Selected African Countries

	Urban % of total population	
	<u>1960</u>	<u>1980</u>
Cameroon	7	23
Ghana	12	28
Ivory Coast	8	28
Kenya	6	14
Malawi	3	8
Mali	4	12
Sierra Leone	6	17
Sudan	6	14
Tanzania	4	10
Zaire	10	25
Zambia	17	36

The urban population is that in towns over 20,000.

Sources: Diverse (and sometimes conflicting).

Africa as the last major region for its emergence.

This process has been occurring throughout the post-colonial period at a remarkably rapid rate. Many cities have been doubling in size every ten years, through a combination of massive net in-migration and high rates of natural increase together with some engulfing of formerly rural settlements. In Nigeria no reliable census data exist, but the population of Lagos has probably reached four million while there are more than one million in Ibadan and possibly that number in Kano. Elsewhere there is only one true metropolis per country, Kinshasa in Zaire having over three million inhabitants and at least eight other national capitals now exceeding one million. The overall level of urbanization is in the process of surpassing that in South Asia, and also that in China. In certain individual countries, such as Burundi and Rwanda, it remains as low as five per cent; but for tropical Africa as a whole it has reached twenty to thirty per cent, and in Zambia it now exceeds forty per cent - though divided between Lusaka and several Copperbelt centres rather than concentrated in a single metropolis.

There is some evidence that the growth rate of the largest cities is now slowing somewhat in relative terms, but the absolute annual increment to their populations is as large as ever, and United Nations projections for the year 2000 include figures of 8.4 million for Kinshasa, 5.6 million for Addis Ababa, 5.1 million for Khartoum, 4.9 million for Nairobi and 4.6 million for Dar es Salaam.<sup>3</sup> Even cities such as Bamako in Mali and Mogadishu in Somalia are by then expected to have over a million inhabitants.

### Common Characteristics

Are further generalizations possible for these tropical African metropolises, beyond their recent emergence as such and their continuing rapid growth? With regard to functions most are very similar, serving as the administrative and commercial capitals of newly-independent nation states. Most of them also have the largest concentration of manufacturing in the country, but industrialization has certainly not provided the basis for urbanization in tropical Africa in the way that it has in parts of Latin America and East Asia, as well as in more 'developed' regions at an earlier date. It does not follow from this that metropolitan growth in tropical Africa is either 'a special case' or 'parasitic', for throughout most of history cities have existed largely to provide services rather than to manufacture goods, and many such services are of far greater benefit to mankind than many manufactured goods. However, even the service functions of the cities are now expanding more slowly than the population, and this provides real cause for alarm. Tropical Africa is perhaps exceptional in experiencing rapid urban growth at a time of general stagnation in the economy, with no sign, unfortunately, that this is a mere temporary phase.

One result of this situation is rapidly increasing levels of unemployment and underemployment, though these concepts are not easily applied in this region, especially since the economy of every city incorporates an 'informal sector' of growing relative importance involving much self-employment. Even more critical is the low income of the great majority of the population, including many who work for long hours. In part, this is a basic characteristic of tropical Africa in general rather than



specifically of its cities, and although average incomes are falling in real terms they are still not as low as in most rural areas. However, the poverty is such as to influence profoundly the whole character of the African metropolis. Of course, average incomes mask huge disparities, and while this is a characteristic shared with cities in say Latin America or the Middle East here the high and middle income groups are so small that the notion of 'the urban poor' as a special category is quite inapplicable.

Some indication of the low level of material well-being is provided by surveys of housing conditions. In Dar es Salaam for instance only 27 per cent of dwellings in 1976 were made of 'permanent materials', only 12 per cent had piped water within the building, and 40 per cent had no access to piped water at all, while only 20 per cent were linked to an electricity supply. Perhaps even more significantly the situation had deteriorated over the previous decade, and this has undoubtedly continued. Kinshasa is another city in which the vast majority of the inhabitants live in flimsy dwellings and must make long journeys to fetch water. In Lagos the buildings are generally more substantial, but overcrowding is even more extreme with an average of more than four people per room.

These situations reflect not only the low incomes of individual households but also the very limited funds of most metropolitan authorities. In every case these funds are used less equitably than they might be, and it would be hard to defend the share allocated to facilities for the elite in a city such as Kinshasa. However, even after a

thoroughgoing redistribution, the provision of adequate housing and public services for the majority of even the present city dwellers within the foreseeable future would be quite impossible. Meanwhile, as numbers rise rapidly basic needs for shelter, water, school places and health care (as well as the food and fuel which all households must provide for themselves) continue to increase day by day. Of course, many of these needs are inadequately met in most rural areas also: the horrors which are particular to urban environments, and which are intensifying with metropolitan growth, are the lack of refuse disposal and sewerage systems in nearly all the areas where most people live.

The general income differential between urban and rural areas largely explains the massive net in-migration to most African cities, though numerous other factors are also involved, including both perceived attractions and social conditioning especially among school-leavers.<sup>8</sup> The role of migration in urban growth has been such that the great majority of adults in most African cities are rural-born, and most of these retain strong ties with their area of origin. Visits are made in both directions, and even those who have committed themselves to a lifetime of work in the city generally intend to return 'home' eventually. This inevitably affects the extent of their involvement in the social and political affairs of the city, and helps to explain the lack of some features characteristic of the metropolis elsewhere.

However, one feature of the metropolis found in extreme form throughout tropical Africa, and intensified by continuing in-migration, is ethnic or cultural heterogeneity. Not only does every African city reflect the meeting of African and alien

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cultures, with migrants from other continents still playing highly significant - positive and negative - roles in the urban economy and society, but it also a meeting ground for people of diverse African cultures. The term 'meeting ground' is used in preference to 'melting pot', for there is much evidence that ethnic consciousness is heightened rather than diminished by movement into the cosmopolitan city.<sup>9</sup> The number of people who consider themselves Nairobian rather than Kikuyu or Luo is still very small.

Associated with ethnic identity are kinship ties and the continuing significance of the extended family. These features are both cause and consequence of ongoing ties with the rural homelands, while they also influence many aspects of life within the metropolis - including the search for both housing and work.<sup>10</sup> The continued rapid growth of the cities despite a desperate shortage of housing and income-earning opportunities inadequate to sustain life is made possible only by the practice whereby those who have a dwelling and a job are expected to provide shelter and food for many months for kinsfolk who come to join them. The relatives are increasingly only tolerated rather than welcomed, but there is little sign of the system breaking down, and as long as it lasts it helps to spread the wealth and the privilege so highly concentrated in the proto-metropolis of each country in the colonial and early post-colonial periods.

The high rate of net in-migration also affects the demographic structure of each city, though the heavy preponderance of males over females associated with eastern and south-central Africa in the past has now been much reduced. A high concentration of young adults, and increasingly rural school-leavers, among the

migrants, together with out-migration of the elderly, produces an age structure which differs sharply from that for the nation as a whole, and this contributes to the intensity of economic activity within the city. It also means a potential for very high natural increase of population, with birth rates generally above the national average and with death rates far below - due to a combination of few elderly people and health care facilities superior to those in most rural areas. In almost every African city the relative importance of natural increase in total population growth is increasing, and the under-fives account for 15 to 20 per cent of the inhabitants. It is of course their ideas and attitudes that will most profoundly influence the African metropolis of the future, and these must include attitudes towards the rural areas.

Meanwhile, the continuing rural orientation of many of the adult city dwellers<sup>"</sup> has many implications. Two examples will illustrate the range of these. Since many regard their stay as only temporary, and since some are putting savings into a house in their rural home area, the demand for housing in the African metropolis is predominantly for rented accommodation. Self-built squatter housing improved and consolidated over time by owner-occupiers, so widespread in Latin American cities, is much less in evidence in most tropical African cities, where the most common pattern is for private landlords to erect relatively large structures with each room let to a different tenant household. A second implication is a softening of the urban-rural dichotomy which is so stark in some other parts of the world. In some respects tropical Africa provides extreme cases of 'urban bias' in government policies, but although political power is often

highly concentrated in the metropolis it is rarely exercised by people whose whole experience is thus confined. In economic terms too there are counter-mechanisms, including remittance flows to the rural areas on a very substantial scale.

There is much dispute on how far the metropolis in tropical Africa is a centre of exploitation and a channel for harmful neo-colonial relationships, and how far it provides a spearhead for beneficial external influence and generator of positive economic, social and political change. There is widespread agreement, however, that its relationships with its rural hinterland are intense; and in this respect even many relatively small cities, of a quarter-million to half-million inhabitants, are playing a truly 'metropolitan' role within the nation-states of which they are the political, cultural and commercial capitals.

### Contrasts and Convergence

All these generalizations should really be qualified in various ways, for the "historical, economic and cultural differences" mentioned by Denis Dwyer produce substantial contrasts among cities even within tropical Africa.<sup>12</sup> Although both indigenous and alien cultures have contributed to the present character of each city, the balance between these may differ sharply. Lagos is an urban centre of indigenous origin, and this has profoundly influenced its character however great the colonial contribution to its twentieth-century growth.<sup>12</sup> By contrast, Nairobi was a wholly colonial creation, for in 1890 its site was a no-man's-land between Masai and Kikuyu territory, with a greater density of lions than of people. European

influence was totally dominant, Asian influence subsidiary, and African influence a poor third despite greater population numbers, until Kenya gained its independence in 1963.

Again polarity can be overdone, and many African cities occupy intermediate positions between Lagos and Nairobi. In Accra the indigenous component was rather smaller than in Lagos, while Dar es Salaam was not as totally alien as Nairobi. Kinshasa could be regarded as intermediate even between Accra and Dar es Salaam in this respect.<sup>14</sup> Conversely, the continuum could be extended in both directions, for Ibadan is a truly indigenous city in which European influence has never been more than marginal,<sup>15</sup> while a name change from Salisbury to Harare has not altered the fact that Zimbabwe has inherited a capital city designed by Europeans totally in terms of their own interests.<sup>16</sup>

The contrasts are sometimes presented in terms of a western/eastern Africa polarity, but this too is an oversimplification. Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital in eastern Africa, is to a large degree an indigenous city, though with a variety of external influences; while Dakar, the Senegalese capital in the extreme west, still shows extremely strong French influences.

Yet another complexity is provided by the fact that some of the largest cities of tropical Africa have dual origins, and retain a markedly dual physical structure even today. In Kano a colonial city was set up adjacent to an ancient walled city, and there is a remarkable balance of power between the two. In Sudan the capital city is often known as 'the three towns', for it comprises indigenous Omdurman to the west of the Nile as well as ex-colonial Khartoum and Khartoum North across the river. In both these cases there is sharp differentiation even within one metropolis.

Examples of differentiation among these cities are provided by migration and demography, by economic structure and employment, and by housing, with links of course among all of these. During the colonial period men far outnumbered women among the migrants to such cities as Nairobi and Harare (then Salisbury), and most stayed only a short period in the city, whereas long-term family migration was common in Accra and Lagos. Even today the sex ratio is much higher in the former than the latter, as is the rate of return migration. Addis Ababa, meanwhile, is quite distinctive in having a majority of females in its population.

Nairobi and Harare may again be taken as examples of cities in which nearly all economic activity was until recent years conducted on a large scale, and in which a newly emergent 'informal sector' has only recently been officially recognized. In Accra and Lagos, by contrast, small scale indigenous enterprise has always been an important part of the urban economy. There is, for example, no Nairobi or Harare equivalent to the vigorous activity of the market women of the West African cities - which historically preceded the establishment of the large-scale sector. There are also contrasts in the extent to which we can recognize two distinct sectors rather than a continuum.

With regard to housing also there is a very clear distinction in Nairobi and Harare between planned residential areas, with much housing built by government, and with further sharp contrasts reflecting former racial segregation, and areas of illegal squatter housing.<sup>17</sup> In Lagos and Accra there is much less government-built housing, and also little squatter settlement strictly defined. In both cities most housing is privately owned on a legal basis, with far more of a continuum with regard to the quality of the

buildings and the extent of planning for entire neighbourhoods.

The differentiation extends to the morphology of each city as a whole. In Nairobi there is a very clear division between residential areas and functional areas, with the latter subdivided into very distinct administrative, commercial and industrial zones, all reflecting colonial planning ideas which an authoritarian government was able to implement to the full. The physical planners now have to decide whether such a clear-cut structure should be retained as the city grows into a major metropolis. In Lagos a much greater mixture of land uses is found both in the central core and within the sprawling suburbs. This is due in part to a restricted site, but its origins as a part-indigenous and part-colonial city have also contributed. The physical form of Ibadan is different again, the whole central area reflecting Yoruba cultural norms while various colonial elements form appendages to this. However, here too, as in Nairobi and Lagos, decisions must be made with regard to how far future metropolitan growth can appropriately build on the existing physical structure.

With respect to all these aspects of the African metropolis the dominant trend since Independence has been convergence. In Kenya, in Zambia, and now in Zimbabwe the trend is towards the long-term family migration previously more characteristic of Ghana and Nigeria. Small-scale enterprise is expanding in Nairobi, together with intermediate-scale enterprise such as fleets of mini-buses, while the share of large-scale enterprise in the total economic activity of Ibadan is rising. In many ways Westernization is proceeding in cities of indigenous origin while those of European origin are beginning to be Africanized.



The convergence increasingly permits some generalization about the metropolis in tropical Africa, but of course this does not apply to current trends when these may be diametrically opposed. Furthermore, even if the balance between, say, large-scale and small-scale activity is similar in two cities, the relationships between the two are unlikely to be the same if small preceded large in one city but followed it in another.

#### National Urban Systems

The scope for generalization even within tropical Africa is also limited with regard to the theme of urban primacy, or centralization and decentralization at the national scale, raised in Denis Dwyer's paper. Research undertaken over a twenty-year period has indicated no clear and consistent trend. Naturally, an increasing proportion of the urban population in each country lives in cities above each size threshold as urbanization proceeds, and as more cities cross the threshold: but this does not mean that the largest cities are growing the fastest, or that primacy in population terms is intensifying.

However, evidence from censuses, adjusted for boundary change, does suggest that in the majority of African countries the high degree of primacy inherited from the colonial period has been at least maintained. The primate city has generally grown somewhat faster than most other urban centres, and in absolute terms new urban growth has been highly concentrated - following the previous pattern. In Nigeria, where the urban population was formerly very widely distributed, and where there was really no primate city at the time of Independence, Lagos has rapidly come to assume that position, while the pre-eminence

of Kinshasa within Zaire has somewhat increased, but in neither of these cases are accurate population data available.

There is far stronger evidence of increasing primacy with regard to other indicators, such as the annual wage bill, power consumption, and municipal expenditures. Wealth is certainly becoming more concentrated spatially, as well as socially, in most countries, though it might be argued that the same is true of urban poverty - or at least destitution - with a wider spread of income and well-being in most of the metropoli than in most other urban centres. In most countries there is also evidence of extreme, and increasing, primacy in terms of interaction within the national urban system. This is especially true where functions have been transferred to national capitals not only from London and Paris but also from sub-regional foci such as Dakar and Nairobi.

There are conflicting views on how much primacy matters, and the issue cannot be resolved here. It is doubtful whether serious diseconomies have yet arisen in tropical Africa from sheer size, except perhaps in the cases of Lagos and Kinshasa, but if present trends continue unchecked they will soon arise in several other metropoli. And even now countries such as Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Kenya and Tanzania may have reached the point at which more dispersed urban growth would be advantageous in terms of efficiency, quite apart from equity considerations. Once equity is considered the case for greater dispersal becomes very much stronger, especially in ethnically divided countries where the location of the primate city in the traditional territory of one group tends to give great advantage to members of that group.

The future development of the national urban systems will be influenced by many aspects of government policy, most of which are impossible to predict even for one country let alone a sub-continent. Until the 1970s very little explicit attention was given to the matter in most countries. but the Vancouver Habitat conference of 1976, and preparations for it, helped to bring it to the notice of governments, while the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, located in Nairobi, is particularly well placed to keep it before those of African countries. Even today, however, the influence of governments is mainly indirect, arising from ad hoc decisions on the allocation of resources. Many development plans have made a brief reference to the desirability of some dispersal of urban development, and in countries such as Kenya a series of growth poles away from the capital have been designated, but nowhere has this yet had a serious impact on metropolitan growth.

In Nigeria changes within the federal structure have had significant consequences. The shift from three Regions to first twelve and now nineteen States has brought increased centralization in some respects and some decentralization in others. The establishment of the twelve-State structure, along with the 1967-70 civil war, certainly contributed to the rapid emergence of Lagos as Nigeria's dominant metropolis; yet elevation to the position of State capital has brought cities such as Ilorin, Jos and Maiduguri closer to metropolitan status and has prompted the preparation of ambitious plans even for smaller centres such as Owerri.<sup>18</sup>

The most important government actions designed explicitly to modify national urban systems have been the designation and construction of new capital cities in several African countries. Nigeria is again of particular interest, along with Tanzania, since these are the countries in which the national administration is being shifted out of the main existing metropolis. In Tanzania it was decided in 1973 to move the capital from Dar es Salaam to the more centrally located provincial town of Dodoma, to escape the powerful foreign influence in the port city, to 'bring government nearer to the people', and to boost the economy of what is almost the poorest part of the country.<sup>15</sup> It was hoped that the growth of Dar es Salaam would thus be restrained, and that Dodoma would become a modest metropolis of about 350,000 people by the year 2000. In fact, the desperate state of the Tanzanian economy has slowed the project greatly, and even by 1984 only a small proportion of the administration had moved.

In Nigeria the decision was made two years later, and there a brand new site was selected, near to the small town of Abuja. Again this represents a shift from the chief port to the centre of the country, but an added factor was the location of Lagos within the territory of one of the three main ethnic groups of the country and the preference for an ethnically-neutral site. Furthermore, the extreme congestion of Lagos and the constraints on its growth provided by a site among lagoons and swamps helped to justify the move.<sup>20</sup> The plans for Abuja were much more grandiose than those for Dodoma, and far more rapid growth was anticipated, with the population expected to reach one million by 1995, reflecting

the far greater size of Nigeria in population terms and the funds provided by oil exports. Harsher economic conditions in the 1980s have brought some restraint, but even so Abuja is growing very rapidly and several of the federal government offices have already moved there. It is not yet clear how far Abuja will become a multi-functional metropolis rather than a largely administrative city comparable to Brasilia or Canberra, but this is at least possible. Unlike Brasilia, it lies close to the centre of gravity of the country's population, and between the politically dominant north and the economically dominant south. For many Nigerian entrepreneurs it may soon prove to be a more attractive location than Lagos.

The new capitals of Botswana, Mauritania and Rwanda, all formerly administered from outside the national territory, are all relatively small, as is Lilongwe which is now emerging as Malawi's capital in place of tiny Zomba as well as taking over some functions from Blantyre. Dodoma now seems likely to grow only slowly over the next two decades. But at Abuja a new metropolis is being created extremely rapidly, and this provides a very exciting challenge to all the decision-makers involved. It could be a city which combines the best features of a variety of indigenous Nigerian urban traditions with the best of what the world outside has to offer; alternatively, it could be an architectural and social disaster, as costly in human as in financial terms. It is not for outsiders to predict, or even to advise unless invited to do so, but it will be fascinating to watch the outcome of this massive experiment and we can at least hope that positive aspects will outweigh the negative. Meanwhile, Lagos must cope with growth which will be only slightly curtailed by the Abuja development.

Conclusions

Attempting to steer a course between overgeneralization and excessive equivocation, the concluding section of this paper will start with a number of brief propositions regarding the emerging metropolis in tropical Africa. The first few are indisputable facts, but the remainder are subjective judgments which may well be challenged.

1. Tropical Africa's largest cities are growing very rapidly, with natural increase at or above the national average combining with continuing net in-migration from smaller towns and rural areas. Little deconcentration of any type has yet occurred.

2. The economic base to support this metropolitan population growth is very limited, but so is the economic base for rapidly growing populations in most rural areas. Rapid urban growth is occurring in countries with very low per capita incomes, and in the early 1980s with stagnant economies in many cases.

3. This metropolitan growth is creating intense problems of urban management, as housing provision, water supplies, sewerage systems and so on, as well as employment opportunities, fail to keep pace with population numbers.

4. Even so, material well-being is still generally greater in the cities than in the rural areas, and continuing migration is a rational response to this. The cities offer strong attractions to young people from the rural areas, though there are often advantages for older people in a return movement.

5. At present there is no sharp divide between the 'urban' and the 'rural' population. Just as traditional Yoruba life often involved frequent movement between town and countryside, so many Kenya families are now deeply involved in both. This

applies to the metropolis as well as to smaller towns, and applies to all social classes.

6. For many African urban dwellers the advantages of maintaining strong links with their rural areas of origin outweigh the disadvantages, and justify both high expenditures on transport and temporary separation from other family members. For some families, however, continued involvement in both urban and rural areas is not just a matter of preference but is in fact a strategy for survival.

7. Strong kinship ties, and the institution of the extended family, greatly assist this ongoing urban-rural linkage; and these constitute one of many elements in African culture which should be preserved in the face of the pressures of Westernization especially when this is not accompanied by Western standards of living. Indeed, the greatest hardship is now experienced by those whose extended family ties have been broken.

8. The maintenance of strong urban-rural links becomes progressively more difficult as cities expand, especially when travel budgets are severely constrained. Far more urban residents can keep contact with rural areas within easy reach from five scattered cities of one million people each than from one city of five million. In a giant metropolis a smaller proportion of the urban workforce can travel in daily from rural homes, and a larger proportion of the urban dwellers are likely to have come from areas too remote for even occasional contact.

9. At the same time, several smaller cities can provide services for the majority rural population more effectively than one giant metropolis. Of course urban centres of any size

may exploit surrounding rural populations more than they assist them, but with appropriate social and political structures it should be possible to ensure that positive influence predominates, providing rural dwellers with access to markets for their produce, goods which they require, and services such as the specialized education and health care facilities which cannot be spread through the rural areas.

10. A relatively dispersed urban system rather than intense concentration in a single metropolis may assist the development of a well integrated national economy; and also normally aids the political process of nation building by ensuring that urban growth is not excessively concentrated within the territory of one ethnic group. Meanwhile, the maintenance of strong urban-rural ties also contributes to this integration process.

In most tropical African countries, therefore, there are economic, social and political arguments in favour of an urban system which includes several moderate-sized cities rather than just one giant metropolis (and which also includes many well-dispersed smaller towns). The arguments derive both from the conditions within the largest cities and from the broader national perspective.<sup>21</sup>

The above propositions point towards policies involving some degree of acceptance and positive response to metropolitan growth in tropical Africa, but also some resistance to and deflection of this growth. Efforts should be made to ensure that the inevitable urban growth of future decades is less concentrated in both time and space than in the past twenty years. It should then be less traumatic than the current experience of Lagos and Kinshasa, and more beneficial in



national terms. These efforts would require in most countries a substantial shift in resource allocation away from the metropolis, despite its own desperate needs and the many political pressures opposing such a shift.

The whole distinction between 'urban' (even 'metropolitan') and 'rural' should also be no sharper than necessary, and should certainly not be imposed on African countries from outside. Deliberate efforts can be made to ensure that some aspects of urbanization as a social process extend not only to non-metropolitan centres but also into the countryside, and that many people, and especially many families, can continue to span the divide seeking the 'best of both worlds'. In this scenario there would be no sharp boundary to each individual urban centre, as well as no rigid restriction of 'urban' phenomena to the totality of such centres and much movement in and out of them.

All of this must depend on improved communications, for, as Denis Dwyer noted, the need for contact is the primary reason for agglomeration: but in this respect at least tropical Africa can surely avoid passing through the same stages as other parts of the world. The latest technology, which is permitting the dispersal of urban activity described by both Brian Berry and Peter Hall for Europe and North America, is not always more costly than that which it displaces; and tropical African countries must include among their new acquisitions of the 1980s and 1990s affordable forms of communications technology which will assist them to avoid excessive metropolitan growth. The scenario depends on continuing mobility on the part of millions of people, but no more than has already been demonstrated. It demands increased mobility and flexibility on the part of those in both

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state and private sectors who determine the spatial pattern of economic activity and employment opportunities.

I agree wholeheartedly with Denis Jwyer that there should be no question of Latin America, Asia and Africa automatically following a European and North American path with regard to urbanization, but neither should there be any question of a single alternative path. Latin America in particular is already far more urbanized than tropical Africa, but it would be no more appropriate for this model to be followed. There is probably no single model that would suit even the whole of tropical Africa, the forms of urbanization most appropriate for the coming decades differing from country to country.

However, we can generalize to the extent that in so far as the giant metropolis is in any case a technological anachronism in the late-twentieth century world, tropical Africa should avoid it as far as possible, and decision-makers should urgently seek ways of doing this while there is yet time. The desperate material poverty of the region makes this difficult, for costs are involved in avoiding agglomeration; but in other ways Africa's material poverty, together with its cultural richness, makes it both possible and all the more essential. <sup>Few of the decision-makers</sup> in Accra or Nairobi are yet totally committed to these metropoli in the making, and few can view the prospect of concentrations of many millions with equanimity even with the most optimistic assumptions of economic improvement. The aim for most African countries must be a metropolis modest in size, closely integrated both with a system of dispersed smaller urban centres and with the people who remain in the countryside, and culturally distinctive.

## Notes and References

1. B.J.L.Berry, The Human Consequences of Urbanization, London, 1973; republished as Comparative Urbanization, London, 1981.
2. H.Brookfield, Interdependent Development, London, 1975, p.53.
3. United Nations, Patterns of Urban and Rural Population Growth, New York, 1980, pp.125-8. Unfortunately, this source also includes some nonsense figures, such as 3.4 million for Ado-Ekiti in Nigeria yet a mere 1.8 million for Abidjan.
4. This discussion concentrates on the metropoli as urban settlements, and does not attempt to cover such issues as class structures and urban politics. The best study of these topics for Africa is R.Sandbrook, The Politics of Basic Needs: urban aspects of assaulting poverty in Africa, London, 1982.
5. As noted on p.17 of Dwyer's paper. Even mining has led to substantial localized urban growth in tropical Africa only on the Copperbelt of Zambia and Zaire.
6. As stressed in ILO, Employment, Incomes and Equality: a strategy for increasing productive employment in Kenya, Geneva, 1972.
7. J.O.C.Onyemelukwe, "Urban slums in Nigeria", Journal of Environmental Management, 13, 1981, 111-25.
8. See W.A.Hance, Population, Migration and Urbanization in Africa, New York, 1970; and J.I.Clarke and L.A. Kosinski (ed.), Redistribution of Population in Africa, London, 1982. The most useful case study is probably still J.C.Caldwell, African Rural-Urban Migration: the movement to Ghana's towns, London, 1969.
9. W.J. and J.L.Hanna, Urban Dynamics in Black Africa, New York, 1981
10. This theme is explored very fully for West Africa in M.Peil, Cities and Suburbs: Urban life in West Africa, New York, 1981.

11. M.H.Ross and T.S.Weisner, "The rural-urban migrant network in Kenya", American Ethnologist, 4, 1977, 359-75.
12. The contrasts are examined at length in A.M.O'Connor The African City, London, 1983.
13. A.L.Mabogunje, Urbanization in Nigeria, London, 1968, chapter 10.
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17. A.Hake, African Metropolis: Nairobi's self-help city, London, 1977.
18. E.Y.Galantay, "The planning of Owerri, a new capital for Imo State, Nigeria!"; Town Planning Review, 49, 1978, 371-86; G.I.Nwaka, "Owerri: development of a Nigerian State capital", Third World Planning Review, 2, 1980, 233-42, and Galantay response, 243-4.
19. A.M.Hayuma, "Dodoma: the planning and building of the new capital city of Tanzania", Habitat International, 5, 1981, 653-80.
20. Nigeria, Report of the Committee on the Location of the Federal Capital of Nigeria, Lagos, 1975.
21. The arguments on this issue are effectively discussed for less developed countries in general in A.Gilbert and J.Gugler, Cities, Poverty and Development, Oxford, 1981, chapter 8. The case for promoting secondary city growth is presented much more fully than is possible here in D.A.Rondinelli, Secondary Cities in Developing Countries, Beverly Hills, 1983.



Table 3

## Cities with over 4 Million Inhabitants

	Number of Cities		
	1980	2000	2025
World	38	79	144
Less Developed	23	59	123
South Asia	11	23	41
East Asia	7	14	26
Latin America	6	12	22
Africa	1	12	36

Source: World Bank, The Urban Edge, '8 (6), 1984, p.4.

In 1980 tropical Africa still had no cities with more than 4 million inhabitants. A recent World Bank forecast is that by the year 2025 there will be 36 cities of that size on the African continent, just a quarter of the world's total, and this must include at least 25 in tropical Africa.

The more immediate situation at the national level is exemplified by Kenya, whose cities and towns accommodated 2 million people up to 1980. Between 1980 and 2000 an extra 5 million urban dwellers are expected. These might be highly concentrated in Nairobi, causing it to grow from 1 million towards 4 million, or efforts could be made to spread as many as possible among smaller centres. The numbers involved are broadly similar in Tanzania, Sudan, Ghana and Ivory Coast, despite the diversity in their economic circumstances.

