New Approaches to African History

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New approaches to African history is designed to introduce students to current findings and new ideas in African history. Though each book treats a particular case, and is able to stand alone, the format allows the studies to be used as modules in general courses on African history and world history. The cases represent a wide range of topics. Each volume summarises the state of knowledge on a particular subject for a student who is new to the field. However, the aim is not simply to present reviews of the literature, it is also to introduce debates on historiographical or substantive issues, and may argue for particular points of view. The aim of the series is to stimulate debate, to challenge students and general readers. The series is not committed to any particular school of thought.

Africa Since 1940

The Past of the Present

Frederick Cooper

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Contents

distancing themselves from social and political action. They could take the form of a volatile popular culture, especially among young men and women in cities, often with a sharp hostility to the powers that be, sometimes shaping their own world of musical, artistic, and religious expression, sometimes falling into drugs and criminality. What these forms of cultural expression signified politically within African states is hard to judge, but some of them had an effect outside. African music, above all, has had a great influence in Europe and the United States – it is at the core of "world music" – and visual artists like Cheri Samba have been shown in prestigious museums in Europe. Whereas in the 1960s, it was the creation of new nations and the development of an articulate cultural expression of politically independent peoples which captured the world's imagination, in the 2000s it is fragments of oppositional culture that are most readily transmitted abroad.

5 Development and disappointment: social and economic change in an unequal world, 1945–2000

No word captures the hopes and ambitions of Africa's leaders, its educated populations, and many of its farmers and workers in the postwar decades better than "development." Yet it is a protean word, subject to conflicting interpretations. Its simplest meaning conveys a down-to-earth aspiration: to have clean water, decent schools and health facilities; to produce larger harvests and more manufactured goods; to have access to the consumer goods which people elsewhere consider a normal part of life. To colonial elites after the war, bringing European capital and knowledge to Africa reconciled continued rule with calls for universal progress. To nationalists, a development that would serve African interests required African rule. After independence, new rulers could claim a place for themselves as intermediaries between external resources and national aspirations. But African rulers were in turn subject to criticism for sacrificing development for the people to personal greed.

The development concept, some have argued, allowed for an internationalization of colonialism, as the one-to-one relationship of metropole to colony was transformed into a generalized economic subordination of South to North, of Africa and Asia to Europe and North America. New actors entered into trade relationships and provided capital and foreign aid: the US, the USSR, and Scandinavian countries, as well as international agencies like the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. Development became international in the most literal sense, as a process negotiated between sovereign nation-states, legally equal but in fact distinguished into those who gave and those who received.

The idea that human populations could evolve and progress was a very old one – that states should intervene to shape such a process much less so. Colonizers' assertions of the benefits of "opening" Africa to commerce through railway construction and health campaigns were precedents for the state project of development. The colonial initiative of the 1940s (chapter 2) was still new, particularly in its stated goal of improving the standard of living of Africans and its insistence that states should do what markets could not.

By the late 1940s, the field of economics was in general becoming more activist – advising governments how to stimulate as well as regulate economic growth – and it spawned the subdiscipline of "development economics." Early theorists argued that poor economies needed a "big push" to give them the infrastructure, the quality of workforce, and concentration of capital to compete in world markets. Development economists were sought after by African governments and aid agencies. The field gave intellectual sustenance to the idea that poor regions could look to their future without overthrowing the international order. But even before the new development economists had consolidated their place in the establishment, they were challenged by economists who used similar scholarly tools to make an opposite argument: that the world economy, far from being a source of progress for all who participated in it, made the rich richer and the poor poorer.

At their most radical (the "dependency school" prominent in Latin America in the 1960s and in Africa from the 1970s), these arguments called for poor countries to distance themselves from world markets. Radical and orthodox versions overlapped to the extent that both agreed on the importance of using resources to build *national* economies. Many agreed that new industries needed protection from outside competition so that the national economy would develop mutually supporting sectors, avoiding a situation where foreign companies picked off the best niches and left everything else to stagnate.

Development economics provided an effective language with which African governments and nongovernmental organizations could appeal to rich nations and international organizations for aid in the form of grants and low-interest loans. The stress on state planning coincided with many politicians' distrust of groups within their countries that could provide a base for counter-organization, farmers' associations and labor unions in particular. The developmentalist state, in its post-colonial as much as its colonial manifestation, was thus a peculiar entity: it exercised initiative, yet it suppressed initiative too, and it above all encouraged citizens to *think* of the state as the prime mover for raising the standard of living.

The irony of the period 1960–73 is that post-colonial regimes, intent on establishing the autonomy of the nation, reinforced the externally dependent economy of the colonial era. Africa's small-scale farmers of the 1940s and 1950s were a model of modest expansion, adapting kinship and clientage and other forms of social relations within indigenous societies to channel labor and other resources into export agriculture. In the best endowed regions, a class of moderately wealthy farmers became a force

for further investment in transport, marketing, and banking, and they used their political influence to obtain spending on education and other services for their regions. Like Nkrumah, many rulers of the 1960s feared that such farmers would be the nucleus of conservative opposition to their populist, state-centered visions of the future, and they wondered if small-scale agriculture would really get the country over the economic hump that decades of colonialism had created. They had a point, both because of the limitations within agriculture and because of blockages in national and global economic structures. Let us first consider agriculture.

The promise and limits of peasant production

Peasants had a big place in the major rise in per capita GNP through 1975 (figures 1a–1c). In Kenya, the lifting of the ban on Africans growing coffee in 1951 led to a spurt of growth that changed the nature of the colonial economy. Peasant output rose at an average of 7.3 percent per year between 1954 and 1964, and the smallholder became the backbone of an economy once dominated by white settlers. This economy for a time proved dynamic: GNP per capita rose almost 30 percent in the decade after independence in 1963, even as population soared. African planters similarly displaced white settlers in the coffee and cocoa sectors of the Côte d'Ivoire, and this colony became

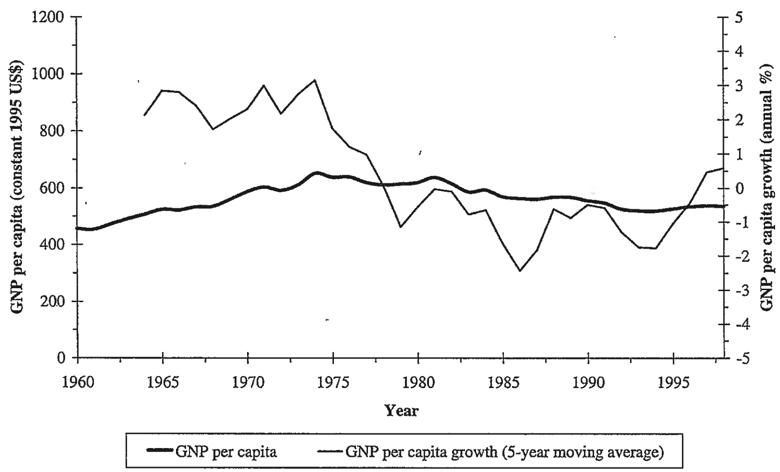


Figure 1a GNP per capita and GNP per capita growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960–1998.

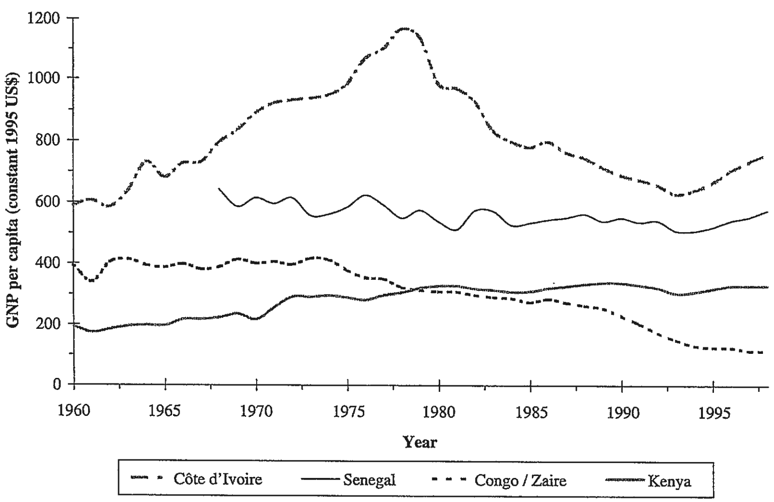


Figure 1b GNP per capita in selected African countries, 1960–1998

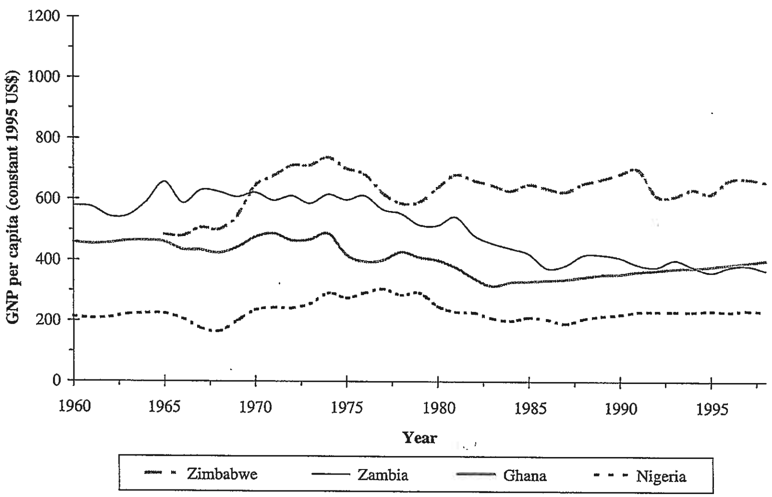


Figure 1c GNP per capita in selected African countries, 1960–1998. *Sources* (for figures 1a–1c): World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000).

the economic star of French West Africa; after independence in 1960, it doubled its real per capita GNP in twenty years. When Zimbabwe finally rid itself of white rule in 1979, marketed output from peasants went in a decade from 10 percent of total production to over 50 percent. The stalwarts of earlier peasant agriculture – Yoruba cocoa farmers in Nigeria and Chagga coffee planters in Tanganyika – increased their output, income, and political influence in the 1950s.

Such success stories, nonetheless, were based on crops that were produced in many parts of the world. The favorable prices of the post-war years weakened by the late 1950s and early 1960s and badly hurt the economy of Ghana; the more drastic fall in the 1980s cut the Côte d'Ivoire's GNP per capita in half, erasing the impressive gains of the two previous decades. Overall, Africa's coffee and cocoa farmers were producing three times as much in 1998 as in 1958, but their share of the world market remained about the same (figures 2.a and 2.b).

One of the virtues of peasant agriculture was its flexibility. Using family labor, producers could increase or decrease export crop output while insuring their own food supply. African peasants were able to survive low world prices because they engaged in "self-exploitation," making use of the unpaid labor of women and children to maintain production even when sales prices could not have justified paying hired labor a market wage. In the relatively prosperous zones, farmers – and their wives and children – kept their options open: members engaged in food production, export crop production, off-farm wage labor, off-farm enterprises. Many used earnings not just to reinvest in the agricultural enterprise but also

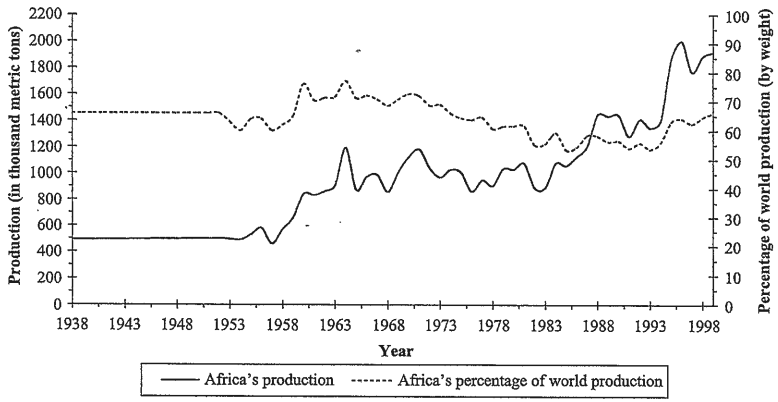


Figure 2a Africa's cocoa production, 1938–1999

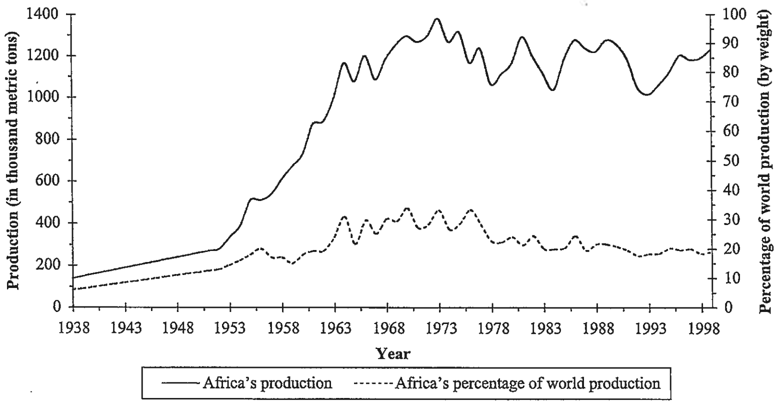


Figure 2b Africa's coffee production, 1938–1999. *Sources* (for figures 2a and 2b): Food and Agricultural Organization, *FAOSTAT*; UNESCO, *General History of Africa VII* (London: Heinemann, 1993), pp. 348–49.

to pay children's school fees or to participate actively in local politics, in the hope that more career options would open up.

In much of the world, agricultural expansion has been a brutal process, dependent on the dispossession of rural people by an elite capable of managing land and labor to maximize profits. In much of Africa, however, agricultural relations entailed what Sara Berry calls "exploitation without dispossession." In cocoa production, for instance, family labor was indeed exploited, as was the labor of immigrants seeking to move into the cocoa zone, but there was no rigid line between a planter class and an agricultural laborer class. Berry argues that employers in such circumstances found labor hard to discipline and hence lacked the coordination to make full use of productivity-enhancing inputs like fertilizer and irrigation. Claims to land could only be sustained with community support, making it harder for a distinct planter class to emerge. None of this was an obstacle to productive agriculture, or indeed to considerable inequality in the resources for agriculture and pastoralism, but it did stop short of transformation into the kind of ruthless capital accumulation and continuous pressure to enhance productivity characteristic of capitalist agriculture in Europe, North America, and parts of Asia and Latin America.

It is easier for a scholar to say that incremental improvements in small-scale farming may be the best that can be done in African circumstances than it is for a new state to accept such limitations. African leaders wanted a farming sector that was economically strong and politically weak and feared they would get exactly the reverse: that cocoa or coffee producers, well networked among themselves, would constitute a political challenge without delivering the "modern" agriculture that the leadership sought. This helps to explain some of the apparently self-destructive tendencies of both the colonial and post-colonial eras. Colonial states in the 1940s and 1950s spent vast sums of money on centrally-directed agricultural schemes, such as the cotton and rice systems of the Niger valley in what is now Mali or the "ground nut scheme" to grow peanuts on a vast tract of land in Tanganyika, using wage labor and heavy war surplus equipment. Later, Kwame Nkrumah and Sékou Touré tried to create state-run collective farms, which – like the colonial ventures – failed. So, too, did schemes like the Tanzanian government's "villagization" which made farmers live in clusters and devote time to collective fields, where they could both provide services and be observed, all under the pretense that this represented the essentially cooperative nature of African society.

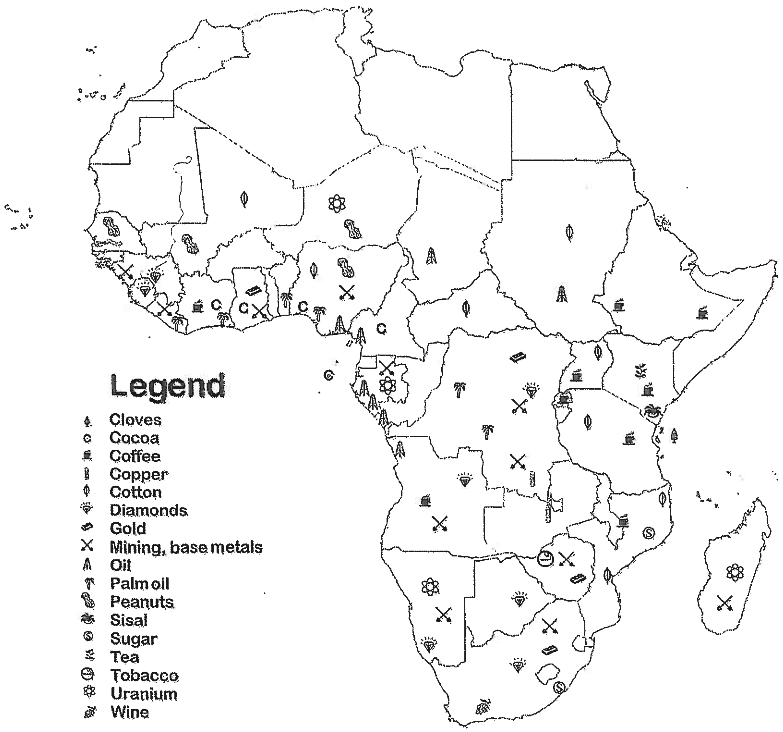
Colonial governments after the war used marketing boards to take much of the earnings of the commodities boom out of farmers' hands, creating stabilization funds to support farmers in case prices declined. Nationalist parties in the Gold Coast, Nigeria, and elsewhere fought the marketing boards, but once in power kept them in place, this time emphasizing the importance of using agricultural income in an activist fashion rather than as a hedge against market fluctuations. Schools were at the heart of many governments' programs. From Nkrumah onward, rulers not only emphasized social services, but industrialization as well: to use cocoa revenue to find alternatives to cocoa. Nkrumah took over the colonial project to build a huge dam over the Volta River which would produce the electricity to transform Ghana's abundant bauxite into aluminum. That thousands of Ghanaians lost their land to the lake behind the dam was to be offset by a claim that they would be relocated into areas where they could begin "modern" farming.

Such state-run projects soaked up vast amounts of capital and required continued intervention from foreign experts and skilled workers, as well as inputs of foreign goods, while producing a disappointing revenue stream. For a time in countries like Ghana, Nigeria, and the Côte d'Ivoire, cocoa or coffee revenues remained buoyant enough to make possible a measure of state-centered growth in a variety of industries, the rapid Africanization of the bureaucracy, the expansion of the educational system, and the provision of other services. State-centered development perpetuated a tendency of colonial states: to appear as distant, extractive, and imposing. And the centrality of tariffs, as opposed to other kinds of taxes, to state revenue perpetuated the quality of the colonial state as a gatekeeper, policing the intersection of internal and external economies. This is a point to which I will return.

So far, I have been writing about countries with strong cash crop sectors. Some regions which should fit this picture – good land not too far from ports – do not: Liberia, Guinea, parts of Congo/Zaire. In areas of marginal rainfall or other environmental difficulties, adding new crops to old ones, feeding a growing population, and maintaining larger cattle herds could severely strain resources. Deforestation, accelerated by the use of wood fuel in the face of the scarcity and high cost of alternatives, had particularly deleterious ecological effects. In the 1970s, the prolonged drought in the Sahel, the large region south of the Sahara, was a warning of ecological danger, and wide droughts have been repeated in parts of eastern and southern Africa as well. Ecological problems are rarely purely "natural"; the confining of growing populations of Africans to "reserves", in parts of southern Africa where white settlers had appropriated extensive land, caused profound degradation in many areas. Worst of all were war zones, where insecurity compounded environmental vulnerability and produced devastating famines. A million people may have died in Ethiopia in 1984–85 in a famine induced by government oppression and civil strife. The food supply in the war zones of southern Sudan has been dangerously meager since the 1970s.

The late colonial era witnessed often heavy-handed efforts of agricultural experts to counter allegedly neglectful African practices with scientific conservation practices. Such interventions have produced as much conflict and uncertainty as "improvement." Ecological history reveals evidence of thoughtful adaptation by African farmers to environmental stress, and scholars debate the relative merits of different approaches – indigenous, foreign or cooperative – to insuring "sustainable" agriculture.

Parts of the countryside witnessed large-scale labor migration (discussed later in this chapter). The loss of labor power from migration can disrupt the farming cycle, particularly in regard to clearing land, but the money sent back by migrants is critical both to survival in the worst areas and to breaking out of low-intensity agriculture in zones of more potential. In colonial and post-colonial Kenya, urban wage labor was a crucial source of capital for agricultural improvements, since banks and other sources of credit did not supply the majority of farmers. Since young men were the most likely to migrate, the effect on women was above all to increase not only their work load but also their vulnerability, for their fate depended on remittances a man chose to send back, on his not finding a "city wife," and on his staying healthy. In some arid areas near the Senegal River, remittances make up to 20–50 percent of family budgets. A newly endowed mosque or an expanded herd tended by relatives could be the sign of a successful migrant laborer in France; the unsuccessful one leaves only misery. In South Africa, the dependence of rural women on the insecure urban earnings of men worsened in the 1950s and again in



Map 4 Resources for export production

the 1970s as expulsions of women from cities under apartheid regulations exacerbated the pressure on land. Such areas were no longer regions for the social reproduction of a workforce; they were dumping grounds.

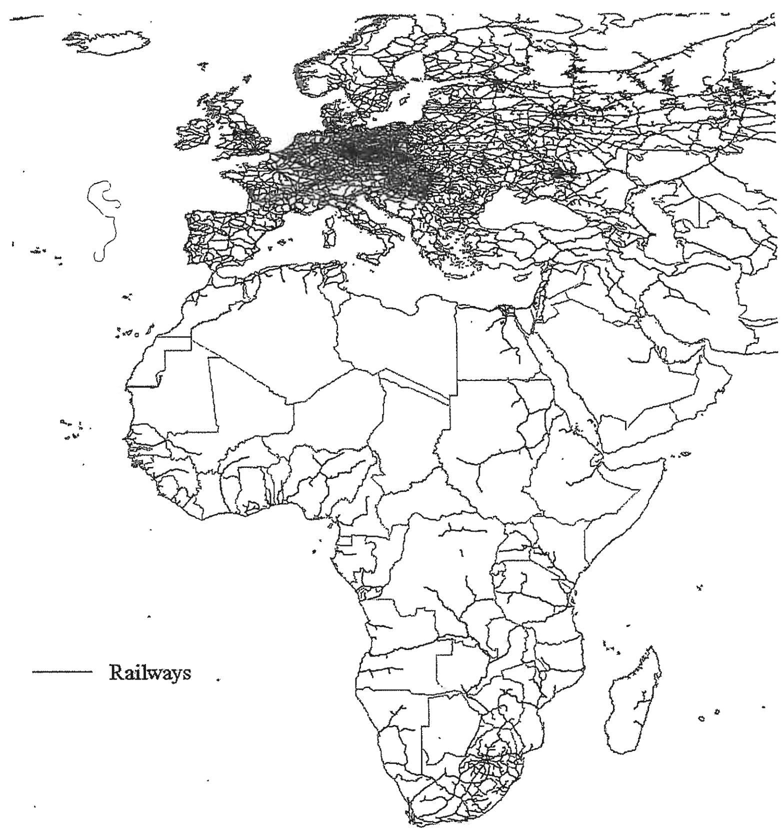
The industrialization that never was

The cure for a colonial economy dependent on sales of a narrow range of agricultural or mineral products and on purchase from outside of manufactured goods seemed – to economists and political leaders in the 1950s and 1960s – to be industrialization. It didn't work out so simply.

Africa has long had great difficulty in attracting capital, given its spread-out population divided by colonial and post-colonial borders, the continent's generally low income levels, and the uncertainties of labor force development among people whose long and bitter experience encouraged them to avoid subordination to an employer by keeping other options open. The mining industry – in gold, copper, and other minerals – has been the biggest exception, but only in South Africa and, to an extent, in Southern Rhodesia did it spawn broad regional industrial development. Even in the early 1950s, French and British officials were noticing that private overseas investment was not following in the wake of their public development investments. African political leaders thought that independence would make a decisive difference; they could build their own industries.

And to an extent they did. States used tariff barriers, taxing imported finished products heavily and inputs lightly, to get investors to manufacture products within their borders. Much investment in the 1960s was import substitution industrialization (ISI), relying on transnational corporations headquartered in the United States, Europe, and Japan. States also founded parastatal corporations in sectors that they hoped would stimulate a wide range of private activity or else built industries that they hoped would constitute the core of a socialist economy. But in either case, the constraints were severe: industry demands technical knowledge as well as finance, and that is highly concentrated in the world economy. Transnational companies often bargained to keep competitors out, and state-owned industries were given protected markets, so that ISI usually meant that producers were sheltered and inefficient, and that citizens were stuck with products more expensive and of lower quality than available on the world market. Continual importation of machinery and supplies was necessary for industry to function. The economics of industrialization in countries with small markets and little infrastructure were bad enough; the politics were worse, for politicians were tempted to use protected industries to enrich themselves and their clients and to distribute relatively well paying jobs.

Industrialization nonetheless had its moment: between 1965 and 1973, industry expanded twice as fast as GDP. Much of this was in mining, but manufacturing, albeit from a low base, grew at nearly 7 percent per year between 1960 and 1980. This was concentrated in food processing and textiles. Except for South Africa, where industrialization stretched back to the nineteenth century, it was concentrated around a few centers: in Zimbabwe and in Kenya, near Nairobi. But after the oil shocks, growth declined, and by 1980 it was negative: Africa was slowly deindustrializing. Only Mauritius, a tiny country, imitated the South East Asian pattern of the 1980s, producing textiles for export markets. Nigeria, Botswana, Kenya, and for a time Zambia could build industry to service a significant mining or agricultural economy, but they were vulnerable to the loss of demand for their usual exports. By the 1970s, world manufacturing capacity was excessive; Africa was in a bad position to make



Map 5 Railways

either ISI or export industrialization competitive. South Africa, even after apartheid, had difficulty exporting manufactured goods and becoming a pole of regional economic activity, and it remains vulnerable to declining prices for gold. Building an industrial center requires more than cheap labor or even natural resources: Good communications, reliable electricity and water, linkages among firms, skilled labor, and management capacity are all factors which tend to encourage industrialization where it is already advanced and where states are capable of delivering consistent services. Even a glance at a railway map of Europe and Africa (map 5) suggests the enormity of the gap between a densely networked region and a zone (with the single exception of South Africa) of limited connections, mostly directed toward evacuation of products rather than regional interaction.

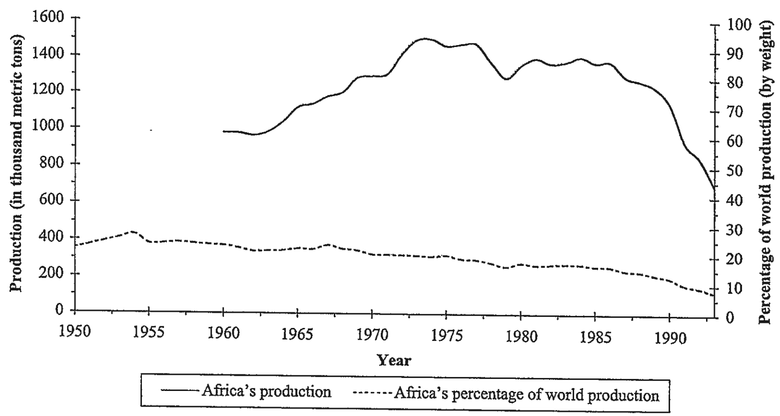


Figure 2c Africa's copper production, 1950–1993. *Sources*: Economic Commission for Africa, *Economic Bulletin for Africa* (New York: United Nations, 1961), pp. 53, xiv; UNCTAD, *Yearbook of International Commodity Statistics* (New York: United Nations, 1984, 1995).

So investment outside of agriculture has focused above all on mining. A copper boom brought wealth to Northern Rhodesia and Zaire in the post-war decade and at times thereafter; gold enriched South Africa over many decades, and boomed in the late 1970s. Other minerals have had their moments: iron ore in Liberia; bauxite in Guinea and Ghana; uranium in Niger and Gabon. These moments have only rarely been sustained and even more rarely have they had effects beyond the mining enclaves and the labor reservoirs which supplied them. Multinational mining corporations play off the diverse locations of supplies around the world and sometimes the substitutability of products; mining enclaves in Africa are vulnerable to state incapacity and disorder. Even gold has been an unreliable source of export income, and two of the world's leading copper producers, Zambia and Zaire, experienced, from the 1970s, plunging prices, declining output, and growing unemployment (see figure 2c). The hopes of mineworkers, once the vanguard of labor stabilization, for a new sort of life fell along with the copper prices and national policies built on mine revenue.

Industrial investors have many options worldwide, and Africa is risky. The degradation of infrastructure since 1980 has made those obstacles higher: deteriorating roads; unreliable electricity; few telephones; workers with inadequate education and health protection; and arbitrary regulatory and judicial systems. Outside of South Africa, investment per capita in Africa dropped from $80 in 1970 to $73 in 1997. Meanwhile, the idea

of a more self-reliant industrialization, using "appropriate technology" and concentrating on product lines based on domestic supplies of raw materials, has been more hope than strategy.

Economics beyond borders

Another solution for Africa's economic ills that has repeatedly been proposed is unification: increasing the size of markets. Colonial borders reshaped the varied spatial linkages that African trading groups forged long ago. Official and unofficial appropriations take place at borders. The most ambitious experiment to transcend this problem was the common market and common services arrangements among Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, begun under the British and continuing in altered forms until 1977. This experiment had its accomplishments, but it couldn't overcome the rigidities of the state system, including leadership rivalries (especially after the eccentric and repressive Idi Amin became dictator of Uganda in 1971) and differing ideologies (self-reliance and socialism in Tanzania and Africanized capitalism in Kenya). Given the unevenness of physical and human resources in the region, the common markets produced conflict: the tendency of industries to locate in Nairobi, the best equipped city, was unacceptable to Kenya's partners, and issues of favoritism in transport services proved equally divisive. The East African Community broke up amidst acrimony.

The more modest goals of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have led to common action particularly in banking and remains promising for the future. But the most concrete results have come from a more compromised sort of cooperation, that is cooperation between the former French colonies and their former master. The common currency (the CFA franc) has been pegged to French currency and supported by France. This injected external discipline into financial policy in the region, since printing more money when the till ran empty has not been an option, and these states have been less troubled by inflation than others. Yet the CFA franc gives considerable power to France, and its decision to devalue the franc by half in 1994, although regarded as overdue by most economists, brought home the fact that crucial decisions were being made in Paris. Meanwhile, former French colonies have since independence tried to generalize their relationship with France into one with the European common market (now the European Union) that gives their goods privileged access to European markets.

As Senghor predicted in 1956, the form of decolonization chosen by France – devolving power to individual territories and weakening supraterritorial federations – left each territory with limited resources and created a vested interest among political elites in keeping countries separate (chapter 4). African economies are at least as likely to compete as to complement each other's strengths; all are trying to get narrow ranges of goods into the same "developed world" markets; all want to buy the same manufactured goods from Asia or Europe. Intraregional trade in Africa as a percentage of total trade is much less important than in Europe.

Unofficial cross-border trading networks (smuggling) may well be doing more to create regional trading relations than official efforts, albeit with high transaction costs. Smuggling is not necessarily incongruent with state interests, since officials sometimes take the lead in undercutting, for a price, their own trade regulations.

African leaders have not been insensitive to these problems. The UN-associated Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) conducted studies and issued reports that provided alternative ways of thinking from those coming from the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Leaders met in Lagos in 1980 and in Khartoum in 1988 to work toward an African Economic Community, with concrete steps along the way to promote regional integration and cooperation toward basic goals, including the alleviation of poverty and the providing of critical needs. In the midst of anti-apartheid struggles, South Africa's free neighbors created the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) to provide an alternative to doing business with South Africa. However, international cooperation assumes that state leaders are disinterested advocates of African or at least national interests, and many are anything but.

Difficult economic conditions sharpened interstate rivalries. There have been numerous border closures and expulsions of aliens – Ghanaians from Nigeria, Burkinabé from Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambicans from South Africa. Those expelled were often following the paths of migrant labor and regional trade that their fathers took during the colonial era. Most notorious was Ghana's expulsion of 100,000 aliens, mostly from Nigeria or Burkina Faso, in 1968. In the 1990s, the Côte d'Ivoire government's campaign for "ivoirité" aimed at excluding from full participation in national life people who came, sometimes generations back, from Burkina Faso or Mali. Anxieties about unemployment and trade competition – and the propagation of xenophobic images – have been behind this exclusionary version of citizenship.

If the Africa of sovereign nations has become uneasy with its own history of migration and regional trade, the internal conflicts of some states have spilled across the borders of others. World news has become saturated with pictures of refugees streaming from Rwanda, the eastern part of Congo/Zaire, the southern Sudan, Liberia, or Sierra Leone. There is a grim reality behind these images. The UN estimates that 6.3 million Africans have fled their countries and taken refuge elsewhere in Africa (with smaller numbers in Europe); another 10 million have been displaced by conflict within their country's borders.

Africa's place in the wider world is paradoxical, particularly when journalists and scholars write – often glibly – of global interconnection as the hallmark of our age. Africa's interconnections are old, but in some ways its linkages with the rest of the world have been diminishing. Its share of world trade fell from over 3 percent in the 1950s to less than 2 percent in the 1990s, 1.2 percent if one excludes South Africa. Africans have the use of one telephone line per 100 people (one per 200 outside of South Africa), compared to 50 in the world as a whole. Foreign aid has declined to a minuscule .23 percent of donor country GNP, but in Africa this still represents over 13 percent of GNP, vastly higher than in any other "developing" region; governments like Tanzania and Mozambique would close down overnight without donor support.

Modest accomplishment and devastating failure

Africa's economic disasters have been very disastrous, and they have befallen the best as well as the worst endowed of its territories, such as mineral-rich Zaire, victimized by predatory governments and the looting of diamonds and gold by networks organized by its neighbors, allies as well as rivals. Then there are the oil-producing states, which in some ways became caricatures of state-centered development. They were spigot economies. Nigerians, Gabonais, or Angolans turned on the tap, their governments collected massive rents, and the oil companies collected massive profits; few indigenous workers were employed. With so few linkages to the domestic economy, oil production represented the extreme of what troubled African economies anyway: extroversion, a relationship between outside corporations and a state elite that guarded the interface between national resources and world markets. The revenue could of course have been used to diversify productive resources, but it was more likely used in symbolically important projects, as oil-fed officials built roads and schools in home villages or prestige projects in capital cities. Indeed, states did little to encourage development that might have produced a business class autonomous from it. In Nigeria oil ruined cocoa – a product which had the virtue of involving thousands of Nigerians in production and marketing – and over time Nigeria became more dependent, not less, on oil exports for government revenue and foreign exchange (figure 3).

But it would be misleading to dismiss the development era as without accomplishment, even if not a single African state achieved the often-stated goal of autonomy and economic security for the mass of the population. Statistics reveal that for the most part African states were able to achieve modest growth in per capita income in the period 1950 to

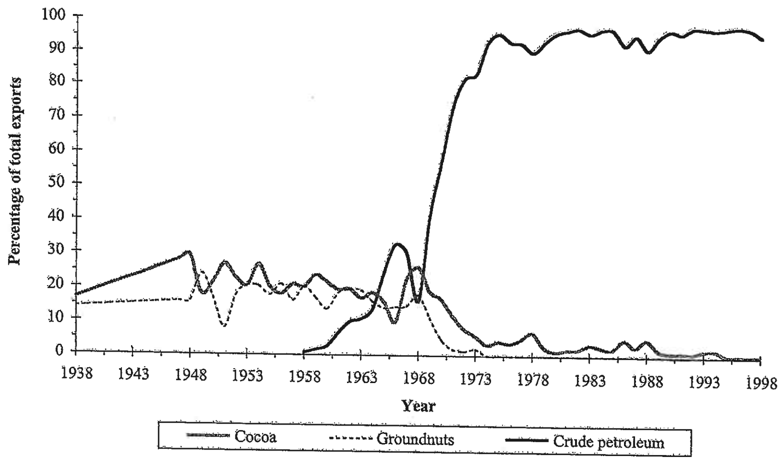


Figure 3 Commodity dependence in the Nigerian economy, 1938–1998. *Sources*: Food and Agricultural Organization, *FAOSTAT*; Economic Commission for Africa, *African Statistics* (New York: United Nations, 1962), p. 70; UN, *Yearbook of International Trade Statistics* (New York: United Nations, 1951); International Monetary Fund, *International Financial Statistics Yearbook* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 1979, 1999).

1975, albeit at rates lower than in the already wealthy regions of the world. Between 1950 and 1975, per capita GNP in Africa as a whole grew by an average of 2.4 percent a year, Sub-Saharan Africa trailing North Africa somewhat (see figures 1a–1c). Agricultural output grew in absolute terms in the 1960s, but only kept pace with population growth. The variation within Africa, however, is notable. Ghana's GNP per capita grew at 1.9 percent per year in the 1950s, but turned negative (−0.7 percent) in the 1960s, as the cocoa sector all but collapsed. Kenya grew slowly in the 1950s, then at an impressive rate of 3.2 percent in the 1960s. Zambia's mineral economy did well in both decades – 2.7 percent annual growth in the 1950s, 3.2 percent in the 1960s. Botswana, Cameroon, and a number of other countries – unlike Senegal and Ghana – grew quite modestly in the last decade of colonial rule and quite rapidly in the first decade of independence. Rwanda and some other countries failed to grow in either decade.

Then came the 1970s. The oil price peaks of 1973 and 1976, the subsequent downturn in demand for tropical products, and the rise of world interest rates sent Africa into a tailspin. Whereas in the decade before 1976, GNP per capita from Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole grew nearly 20 percent, in the next decade it fell 20 percent, and as of 1996 was

only a little ahead of 1966. In Zambia, where the copper market collapsed (see figure 2c), GNP per capita fell 36 percent in ten years and stagnated for another ten. It was a terrible decade for Tanzania, for Ghana, and for Senegal. Oil producers moved, although far from steadily, in the opposite direction. The malaise would prove to be long-lasting. All low-income countries in the world suffered after 1973, but East and South East Asia recovered substantially in the 1980s (until their own short-lived crisis in the late 1990s). It has only been in the late 1990s that African exports have picked up and then to modest and varied growth rates (figure 1a). Roughly half of Africans live in what experts consider absolute poverty.

GNP figures tells us only so much. National income could go to a wealthy elite or big corporations, and much of what people consume may be grown and even exchanged outside of visible and measurable market transactions. Indeed, if the official figures for production in a country like Zaire were valid, it isn't clear how so many people, particularly in urban areas, could have remained alive. The versatility of small-scale farmers and traders remains an unacknowledged and uncounted fact of African life, just as the obstacles they have had to overcome remain unappreciated.

But other statistics reveal that something important happened in the late colonial and early independence years: major improvements in health and education. In the early colonial years, Africa lost population. The taming of epidemic diseases (but not endemic ones like malaria or sleeping sickness) as well as lowered infant mortality and higher birthrates turned the post-war decades into years of burgeoning population growth, as rates of population growth moved from about 1 percent at war's end to 3 percent in the 1960s (figures 4a and 4b). The modernization project required better networks of health facilities, and some independent African governments, like Tanzania's, made a strong effort to bring clinics to rural areas. In Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, life expectancy rose from 40 to nearly 52 years between 1960 and 1990, and infant mortality fell from 284 per 1,000 live births to 175 (figures 5a–5c). Whereas 27 percent of Africans had access to safe water in 1975, 40 percent did so in 1990.

Once considered underpopulated, Africa is now seen as the opposite. The issue is in fact complex, and high population growth reflects not just the accomplishments of modern medicine, but their limitations: childhood mortality is still so high that families needing assurance that a young generation will survive have more children than experts consider optimum, and the importance of diversifying options – given the risks of farming, wage labor, or any other survival strategy – also encourages larger families. Improved health care would, in the long run, lower population growth, as would increased schooling and job opportunities for young women; all areas where early independent governments made considerable, but insufficient and unsustained progress.

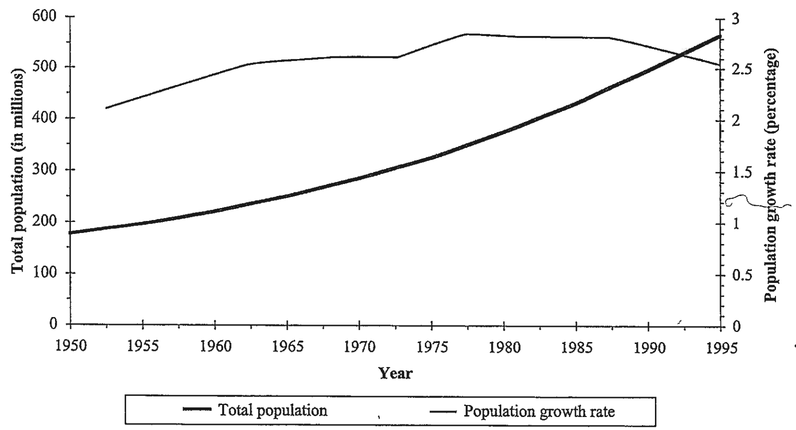


Figure 4a Total population and population growth rate in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1950–1995

The economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s had powerful effects on welfare beyond the stagnation of GNP. Efforts to build health and sanitation facilities in many countries lost ground. In some countries, there are fewer physicians per capita now than in the 1970s. Preventable

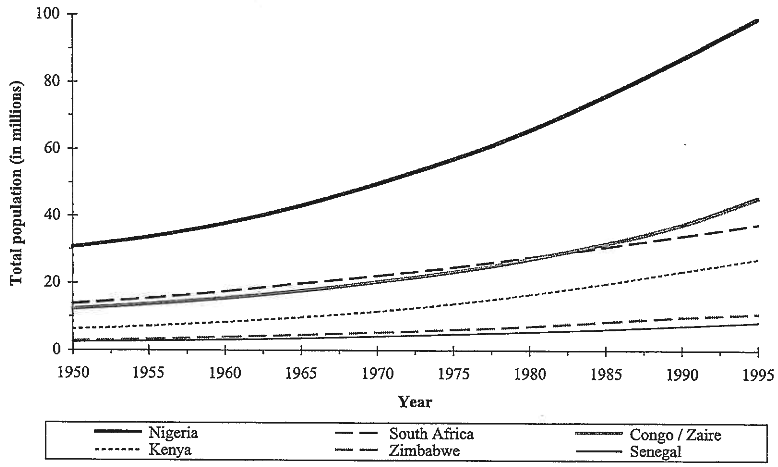


Figure 4b Total population in selected African countries, 1950–1995. *Sources* (for figures 4a and 4b): Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects: The 1998 Revision* (New York: United Nations, 1999), pp. 18, 448–49.

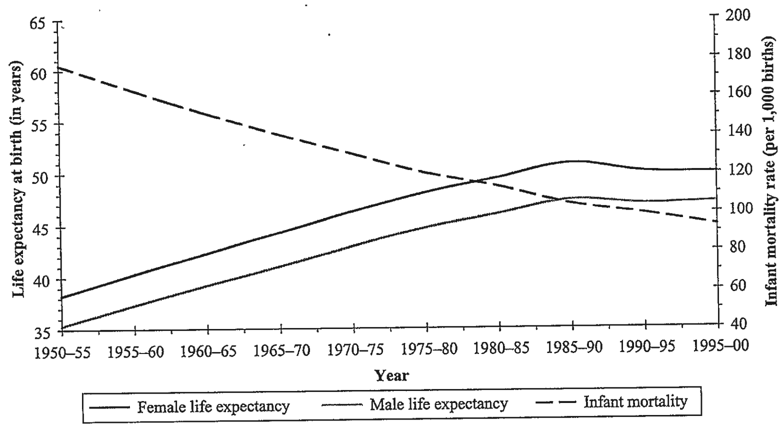


Figure 5a Life expectancy at birth and infant mortality rate in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1950–2000

and curable diseases are still killing people, particularly children. Nearly 3,000 children a day die of malaria, and large numbers die of diarrhea.

The inability of African health systems to cope with their challenges became strikingly clear with the emergence of the AIDS epidemic in the

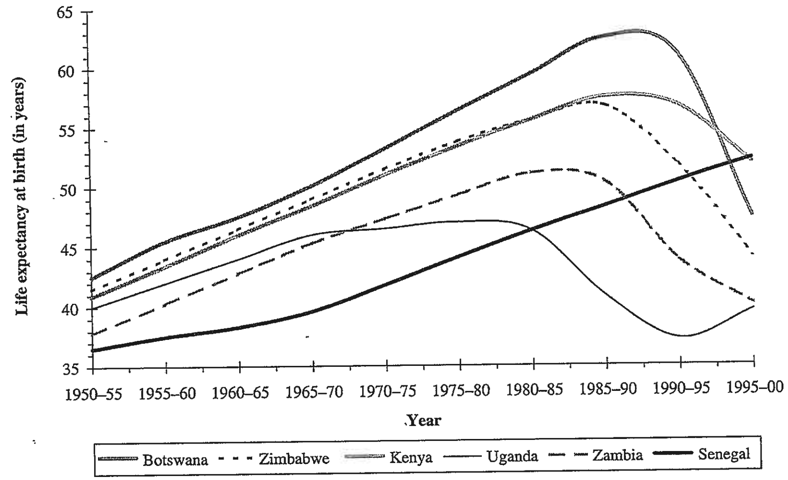


Figure 5b Life expectancy at birth in selected African countries, 1950–2000

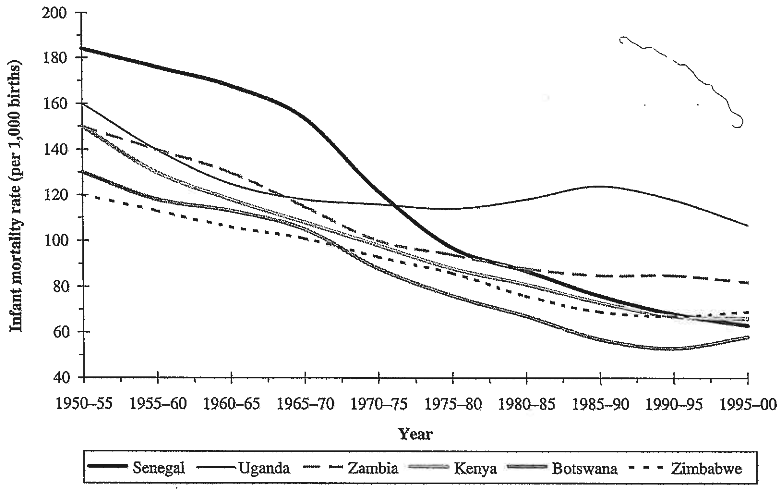


Figure 5c Infant mortality rate in selected African countries, 1950–2000. *Sources* (for figures 5a–5c): Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects: The 1998 Revision* (New York: United Nations, 1999), pp. 18, 552–59, 580–81.

1980s. AIDS is not a uniquely African scourge, but its extent and its particular pattern reflect post-1970s African conditions. Of all the deaths from AIDS worldwide, 83 percent have occurred in Africa. South Africa has the largest number of people living with AIDS in the world, over 4 million, and in the southern region generally one adult in five is infected. From the mid-1970s to 1999, it claimed nearly 14 million African lives – a holocaust equal in magnitude (but over fewer years) to the slave trade. An estimated 12 million children have been orphaned; skilled work forces have been particularly affected; and every worker who becomes sick has children, brothers, wives, and other relatives who also suffer. In Kenya, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda, and Malawi, life expectancy has been in steep decline since 1985, falling from the fifties to as low as forty, wiping out much of the gains since the 1960s (figure 5b).

The incidence of AIDS in Africa follows a distinctive pattern: most cases appear to be transmitted by heterosexual contact rather than by homosexual contact or shared needles. Around 55 percent of HIV-infected Africans are women, whereas in the United States and Europe, women account for 20 percent of infections. Heterosexual transmission has something to do with the importance of migration – especially male labor migration – across much of the continent; and the high rates of HIV infection (25 percent) in a relatively prosperous country like

Botswana suggest that a more active exchange economy can produce more infections. But the pattern of the epidemic also reveals the failure of governments to provide routine health care and adequate nutrition. HIV infection is rendered more likely by poor basic health: inadequate nutrition, endemic diseases, and lack of treatment for curable venereal infections. Now, a panicked international medical establishment intervenes in Africa to try to contain AIDS, but part of the cause of this pattern of infection lay earlier in the shortfalls and reversal of an effort to provide basic medical care and nutrition.

Education was arguably the most important priority of new African governments. In the 1950s, before formal independence, transitional governments in Nigeria made "universal primary education" a key element of their platform. Fifty years later the promise remains unfulfilled, but the effort was impressive, as it was in most African countries, where it often was the largest item in the state budget (as high as 20 percent). When Kenya became independent, for example, 900,000 students were in primary school; thirty years later, there were 5.5 million. In Africa as a whole, primary enrollments went from 43 percent of the population in 1960 to 77 percent in 1997, secondary from 3 percent to 26 percent, university from practically nil to 4 percent (table 1 and figures 6a–6d). Adult literacy rose from 27 percent in 1970 to 45 percent in 1990 (table 2). Universities entered the colonial imagination quite late: after World War II British and French officials thought they could get away with one university each (Ibadan, founded in 1948 and Dakar, in 1957) for their West African colonies. But universities quickly became a national project. Most African states have at least one; Nigeria has many. Nevertheless, Africa's educational attainments remain among the world's lowest, an honor shared with South Asia. In both areas, women's access to education lags behind that of men.

Table 1 *Education: Gross enrollment rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960–1997 (percent)*

	Primary			Secondary			Tertiary		
Year	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1960	54.4	32.0	43.2	4.2	2.0	3.1	0.4	0.1	0.2
1970	62.3	42.8	52.5	9.6	4.6	7.1	1.3	0.3	0.8
1980	88.7	70.2	79.5	22.2	12.8	17.5	2.7	0.7	1.7
1990	81.9	67.6	74.8	25.5	19.2	22.4	4.1	1.9	3.0
1997	84.1	69.4	76.8	29.1	23.3	26.2	5.1	2.8	3.9

Source: World Bank, *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000), p. 106.

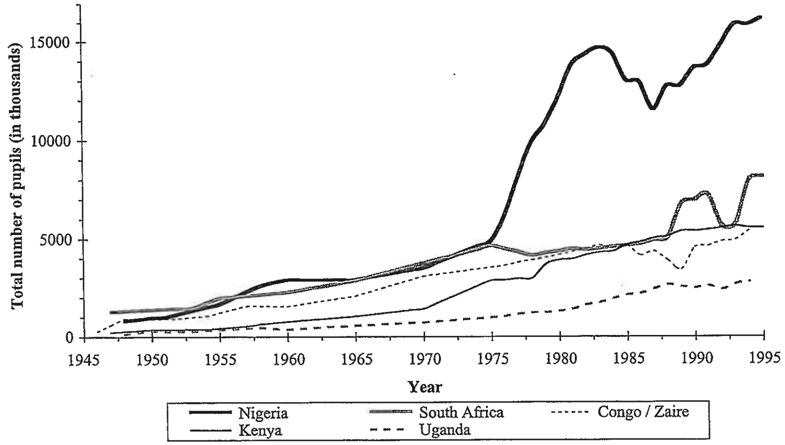


Figure 6a Primary education: total number of pupils in selected African countries, 1946–1995

Again, the budget crisis of the 1980s affected schools. Government spending per pupil has declined around 20 percent since then. Primary enrollments often stagnated after 1980, but show signs of recovery. Teachers' plummeting salaries force them to do other work; sometimes

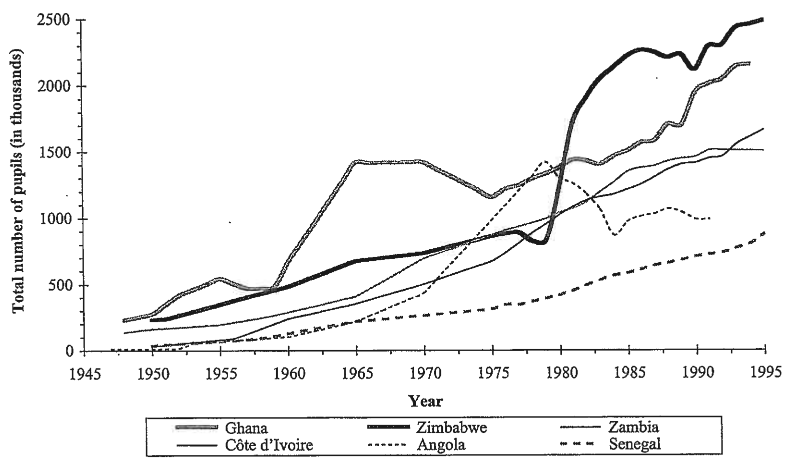


Figure 6b Primary education: total number of pupils in selected African countries, 1946–1995

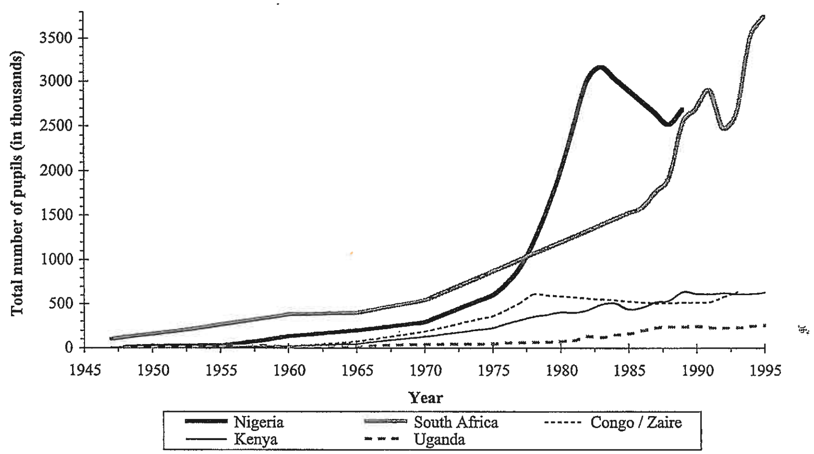


Figure 6c Secondary education: total number of pupils in selected African countries, 1946–1995

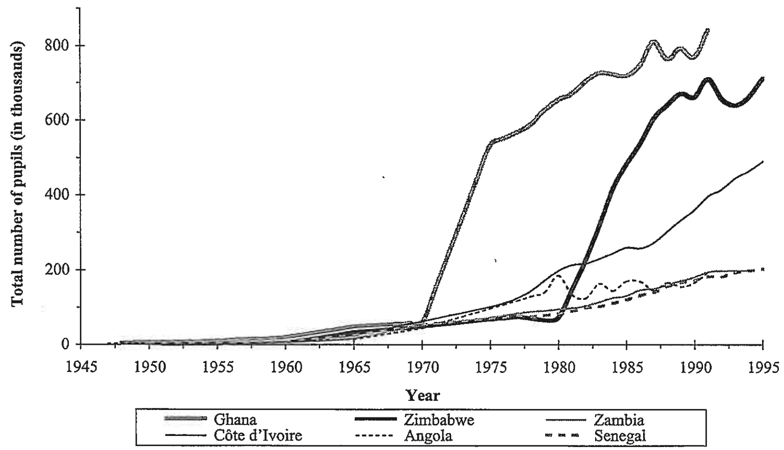


Figure 6d Secondary education: total number of pupils in selected African countries, 1946–1995. *Sources* (for figures 6a–6d): United Nations, *Statistical Yearbook* (New York: United Nations, 1949–50, 1952, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1960); Economic Commission for Africa, *A Survey of Economic Conditions in Africa* (New York: United Nations, 1968); World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1998); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Statistical Yearbook* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1999).

Table 2 *Literacy rates in selected African countries,* c.*1960–1998 (percentage of males and females aged 15 and above)*

Country	c.1960[a]		1970		1980		1990		1998	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Congo/Zaire	49	14	35	11	48	21	62	34	71	47
Côte d'Ivoire	8	2	25	6	34	13	44	24	53	36
Ghana			43	17	58	31	70	47	79	60
Kenya	30	10	56	26	70	43	81	61	88	74
Nigeria	25	6	31	10	45	22	60	38	70	53
Senegal	10	1	23	6	31	12	38	19	45	26
South Africa	41	40	72	68	78	75	82	80	85	84
Uganda	44	26	51	22	61	31	69	43	76	54
Zambia	53	30	64	32	72	47	79	59	84	69
Zimbabwe	48	31	66	49	78	62	87	75	92	83

[a] All are 1962 except Senegal 1961, South Africa 1960, Zambia 1963.

Sources: World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000); United Nations, *Demographic Yearbook* (New York: United Nations, 1960, 1963, 1964, 1970); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Statistical Yearbook* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1980), pp. 44–46.

they go unpaid. Class sizes have increased – to 75 in Dakar, for instance – and facilities have become degraded. Many schools don't have blackboards and most lack books. Studies of schooling in rural Mali and Togo reveal the discouragement of students and parents and declining enrollments: too many primary school graduates cannot get jobs, and families can no longer put so much faith in education. Nevertheless, self-help efforts are organized at the village level to promote schooling, sometimes with results that credit the effort more than the accomplishment.

The sudden effort to promote secondary and university education in the 1950s and 1960s gave Africa a substantial class of people conversant in literature, science, and technology, and with ambitions to know more. Many of them came from very modest backgrounds. In the early twenty-first century, education of sufficient quality to lead to professional opportunities has increasingly become a privilege for the children of those already in such a position.

The economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s has thus had powerful effects. In the 1940s, the leading colonial regimes had decided that development required a healthy, skilled, and educated workforce, capable of sustaining itself without the resources of "backward" villages. African governments backed education for other reasons, above all as the substance and symbol of national progress. Rural and urban citizens devoted enormous effort to insuring that at least some would get schooling. The reversals of the 1980s are a step away from development goals – putting in place a workforce capable of attracting investors and making production efficient and predictable – and they have undermined the hope for a better future that sustained Africans through the humiliations of colonization and the sacrifices of freedom.

The crises of the 1970s and 1980s also left Africa with a burden that makes the new situation more difficult to escape: debt. Most African regimes tried as long as they could to reduce expenses while continuing politically necessary expenditures, such as paying off clients and providing visible services to political constituencies, and carrying out a measure of productive investment. It didn't work. By 1980, many countries faced huge and mounting indebtedness to international banks (which had been all too willing to lend in an earlier era) and to organizations like the IMF. They were having to devote an increasing percentage of export revenues to debt repayment, leaving little for necessary imports, let alone for investment. Uganda devoted 5 percent of its exports to debt service in 1980, and 66 percent around 1990; Kenya's debt service went from 16 percent of exports to 34 percent, and Côte d'Ivoire's from 25 percent to 60 percent. Facing bankruptcy, many countries appealed to the IMF for further loans to enable them to stretch out payments. The IMF imposed stern conditions, known as structural adjustment.

IMF economists blame the crisis on bad policies of African governments. African leaders stand accused of technical mistakes – for example, of overvaluing their currencies, which discourages exports and encourages imports – and of misguided social policies. Above all, they were accused of creating too many sinecures in the civil service and state-owned businesses, paying urban wage workers too much, and setting agricultural prices too low. Officials are accused, sometimes accurately, of "rent-seeking" behavior: establishing restrictions on doing business, then collecting bribes for exceptions or allocating monopolies to friends and relatives. The remedy for this is held to be the market: shrink government; remove regulations; lower trade barriers; and let the market work its magic, especially by stimulating agricultural production and exports.

Critics say that this formula does more to insure that African countries focus on repaying debt than on rebuilding basic economic structures. They wonder if the IMF approach has less to do with saving the continent than with writing it off. Perhaps financial leaders have concluded that Africa has little to offer to a capitalist world economy and that it is essential to delegitimate its high demands. Defenders of the IMF claim some success where IMF prescriptions have been followed, in Ghana and Uganda most notably, while the critics claim that this success is defined in self-fulfilling terms – that budgets have shrunk and debts have ceased to mount – while evidence that market-oriented policies are improving social welfare or building structures capable of sustaining growth is lacking. Further, the critics argue that if a major cause of difficulties was the overpayment of urban workers in relation to rural farmers, the precipitous decline in urban wages – greater than that of farmers' incomes – since 1980 should have resulted in economic advance. But the record of the low-wage 1980s was worse than that of the "high"-wage 1960s, which suggests that the so-called urban bias was a wrong target from the beginning. And while advocates of structural adjustment claim that privatization of state corporations and deregulation has given corrupt politicians less room for rent-seeking, critics argue that faced with shrinking resources politicians will cut necessary services and useful investments first and politically useful rents last, so that IMF policy has undermined the salaries of teachers and health care professionals and set back the development of a workforce able to develop their skills over a lifetime, but it hasn't stopped corruption. The World Bank has more recently urged combining financial rigor with a return to basic priorities, notably education, health, and the quality of government. Whether reform will merely push African states to export more of the commodities that already saturate world markets or help African states make more serious structural changes remains in question.

The argument takes on a special meaning if one remembers the debates in the 1940s and 1950s over "stabilization." The IMF program is an attempt to reverse a way of thinking that has been powerful since the 1940s, when colonial officials and leading international organizations argued that labor was a *social* phenomenon, that efficient and predictable contributions to production demanded that workers be able to live decently and support families who would be socialized into the world of work and urban life, that a working class with a future would serve the long term needs of capital and the state better than an army of the miserably employed – even if the latter could be made to work for lower wages. In this sense, the IMF argument was indeed for an end to the development idea. It elevated the immediate logic of markets above a social or political logic. But Africa's rulers, by not making the most of the development era, allowed themselves to become so vulnerable to outsiders' changing policies.

The misery of the poor urban worker or the impoverished farmer was multiplied in the war zones. The civil wars in Sudan and Somalia, the destructive predation of rebel gangs in Sierra Leone, Angola, and Mozambique, and the pointless combat of militias led by rival politicians in Congo-Brazzaville destroyed what infrastructure there was, made farming and commerce dangerous activities, and destroyed jobs as well as factories. But not everybody lost – and that was part of the problem. In Angola, Sierra Leone, and parts of Congo, civil conflict, whatever its root causes, took on a new dimension because certain groups gained access to diamond-rich areas and established smuggling networks to get the diamonds out and arms and consumer goods, including luxury items, in. Young men, some still children, whose alternatives have been extinguished by the violence and devastation, see enlisting in the fighting force as a sensible course; even those abducted into rebel armies had little alternative but to remain. In Congo/Zaire, government forces have also acted as a predatory network; in Angola, oil exports pay for government armies while diamonds bankroll the rebels, and neither side offers a way out to the people caught in between (see chapters 6 and 7). Such wars are run via specific networks, and the people who command them have much to lose from peace.

Africans have been told, by the most expert of the experts, what to do: that they should industrialize, or that they shouldn't; that they should maximize exports or build a balanced national economy; that they should minimize the role of the state or improve its functioning. They have not been in an equivalent position to tell rich countries what to do, although the allocation of a small percentage of industrial country GNP, the writing off of debt, or the favorable admission of primary products into European and North American markets would have big effects in Africa. African economic problems have long been coproductions; they have been shaped by the interaction of very different sorts of systems, horrifically so in the era of the slave trade, and with more mixed effects in the post-World War II era. Sharing of responsibility for the consequences is another story: to talk about "African" economies as if they were truly African, while international financial institutions and transnational corporations are "givens" to which Africans much adjust, is to stifle thinking about economic change from the start. At the same time, African governments have not been much better than western ones at listening to what small-scale cocoa farmers in Ghana or market women in Nigeria or the people who mysteriously supply Kinshasa with food have to say about economics. They might have learned a few lessons.

Cities, countryside, and beyond

The African continent – however much the image of "tribes" has figured in outsiders' perceptions of it – can look back on a long history of movement: trade diasporas, religious pilgrimages, kingdoms incorporating their neighbors, the movement of expanding lineages into new regions, and labor migration, coerced and voluntary. The movement of people accelerated in the post-war era. Meanwhile, colonial officials, national leaders, and social scientists have tried to think through how the changes in people's lives could be analyzed. What was not in doubt was that this was an era of change; and that fact itself captured many imaginations, from street artists in Kinshasa to scholars in Cambridge.

Some intellectuals and scholars, outside and inside Africa, thought of themselves as part of a dynamic of "modernization." Modernization seemed like a complete package of transformations: nuclear families would replace extended ones, rigid social hierarchies would give way to openness and to individual achievement. Other African intellectuals saw modernization as "westernization" and as a danger to a uniquely African way of life. Still others thought Africans could adapt and change without become western. Meanwhile, ordinary people were trying to live their lives: to use resources that were new and others that were old, to struggle against the oppressiveness of the new by using the old and against the oppressiveness of the old by using the new. What they were producing did not fit a pre-packaged modernity, nor did it constitute "tradition" or "community." People were fashioning and refashioning forms of connections and association.

By the early 1950s, anthropologists were introducing concepts like "social situation," "social field," and "social network" to emphasize that Africans did not live within a bounded universe, but created new

patterns of social and cultural relations as they moved into different sorts of places. Africans were not merely molded by being "urbanized"; they were bringing something to the city as well and weaving together city and country in different ways.

More recent scholarship has emphasized the vibrancy of urban social and cultural life: the wide range of associations that people formed among themselves; the importance of new patterns of leisure and consumption; the vitality of sociability and conversation in tea houses and bars; and the creativity of musicians, especially in a city like Leopoldville, which by the 1940s spawned a recording industry and influenced music throughout Africa and elsewhere in the world.

Africa certainly became a much more urban continent in the post-war years. As late as 1960, 15 percent of its people lived in cities. By 1975, this had passed 20 percent and by the early 1990s 30 percent. And given that the population had grown by over two and a half times, that meant a lot of people living in cities. In 1960 (see figure 7a), some countries were much more rural than others; by 1990, most African countries had substantial urban populations, in some a majority. Major cities were mushrooming (figure 7b).

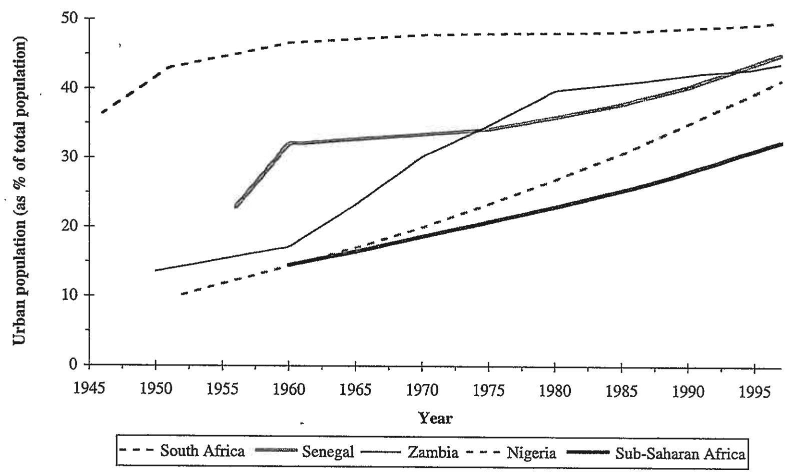


Figure 7a Urban population as a percentage of total population for selected African countries and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1946–1997. *Sources:* World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1998); William H. Hance, *Population, Migration and Urbanization in Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 238; United Nations, *Demographic Yearbook* (New York: United Nations, 1948, 1951, 1960).

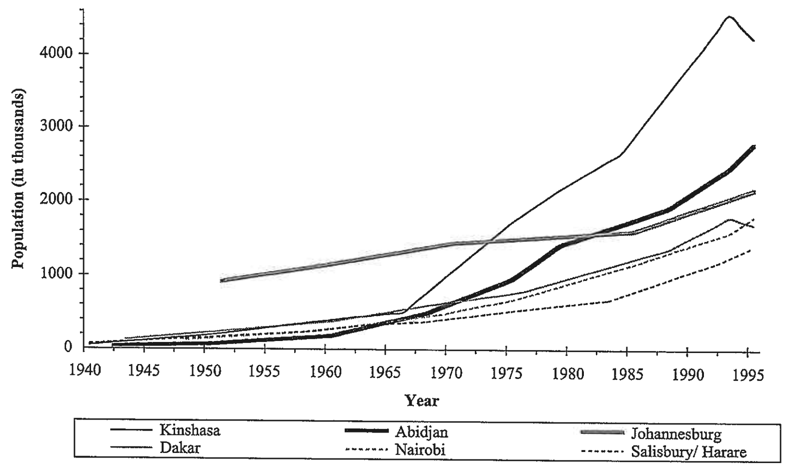


Figure 7b Population of selected African cities, 1940–1995. *Sources:* John Hance, *Population, Migration and Urbanization in Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects: The 1996 Revision* (New York: United Nations, 1997); World Bank, *World Development Indicators* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2000); United Nations, *Demographic Yearbook* (New York: United Nations, 1986, 1991, 1993, 1996).

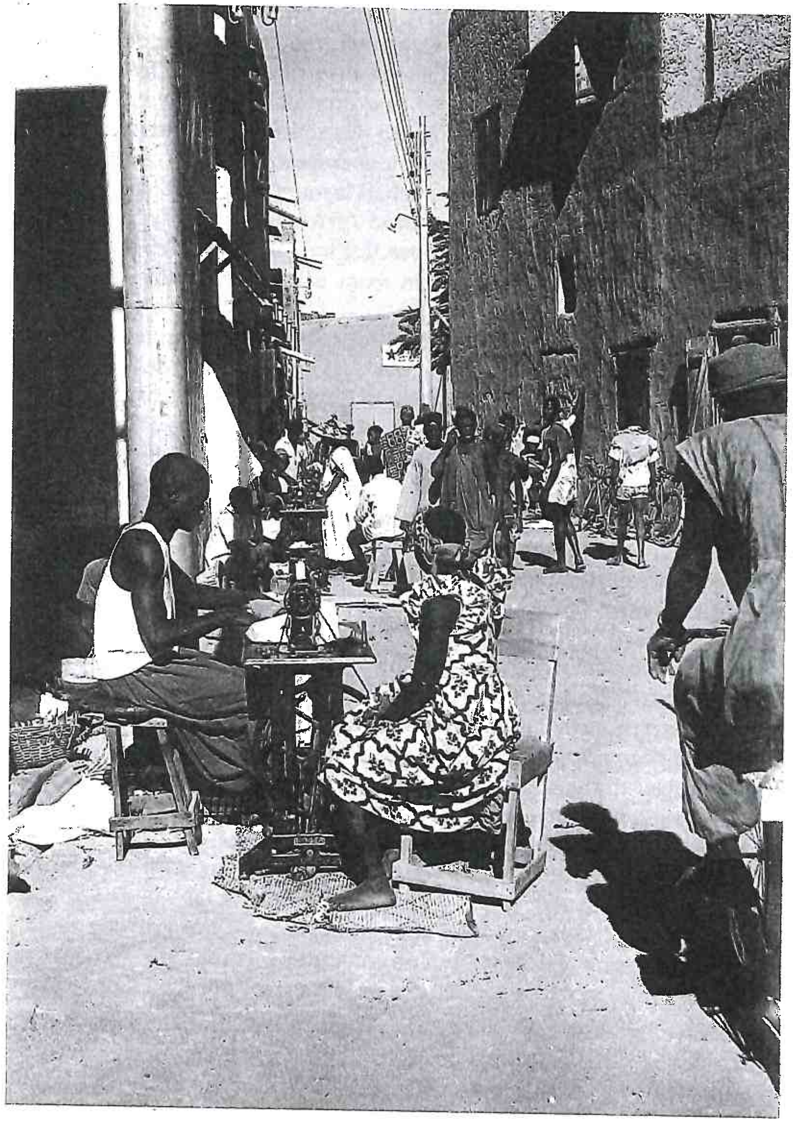
How can one think of the changes in urban life in the post-war decades? The gap between what French scholars call the "legal city" and the "real city" is a place to start: a distinction between the regulated, controlled space of planners' imagination versus the lived realities of city-dwellers. Pre-war colonial cities were supposed to be nodes of government administration and symbols of imperial power; they were more often rude and haphazard. Africans were supposed to be temporary residents with only a few exceptions: the old Yoruba cities; old trading cities along the coasts with established urban elites; and certain South African cities where the historic presence of an African population was grudgingly acknowledged. In reality, Africans had been making their own cities for many years (chapter 2), and while the housing they built was usually insufficient and low-quality, settlements sprang up where they were not supposed to be and women entered spaces that were supposed to be for males. The city was not the bastion of white society that colonial officials imagined, nor was it the haven of the "detribalized" native that they feared, for what appeared chaotic to Europeans was often the fruit of well-organized networks of rural-urban connection. Most urban-dwelling Africans in the 1940s were rural born, and cities were disproportionately male spaces even if women had inserted themselves far more than intended.

After the war, French and British officials imagined a different sort of city, segregated more by class than by race and above all expressing their desire to concretize and symbolize the incorporation of Africans into a "modern" urban space, organized in accordance with the best ideas of sanitation and urban planning. There was much new construction, and this proved the model for the post-independence fashion in the building of downtown high-rises, grid-like urban layouts, and wide streets. Colonial regimes at times forcibly removed Africans from downtown neighborhoods to rebuild them in proper fashion. Sex ratios moved toward equality, both as women moved in from rural areas and as more and more urbanites were urban born.

Serious struggles took place in the 1940s and 1950s over restrictions on residence. Where center-city space was coercively modernized, periurban settlements – in Dakar, in Mombasa, in Lagos – spread outwards, sometimes on the basis of land that was simply occupied, sometimes on the basis of complex understandings between older and newer residents. The struggles were most severe in white-dominated cities in southern Africa. In Johannesburg, South Africa, in the late 1940s, where urban industry was expanding much more rapidly than housing, up to 90,000 people organized to occupy vacant land and build shack settlements, confronting authorities with a fait accompli. The state, especially from the 1950s onwards, removed Africans from other squatter areas or locations, where they had constructed too rich and threatening an associative life, and attempted to sort people into different sites within a racially defined urban space. Migrant men, meanwhile, were shuttled in and out of single-sex hostels on the mines and in Johannesburg.

If the space of the real city proved to be quite different from that of the legal or the planned one, so too did the kind of life Africans built for themselves within these spaces. Colonial thinking in the 1950s emphasized "stabilization" of urban labor. The reality, from then until the present, was that the regulated, relatively secure, unionized jobs were a minority, and by the 1960s, this kind of employment was not growing rapidly in most of Africa. In 1988, in International Labour Office estimates, "modern" wage workers constituted only 8 percent of the labor force.

Most people toiled in small-scale agriculture, but what was growing most rapidly was what colonial regimes had once feared and labelled as detribalized or floating populations. By the 1970s, there was a new name: urban informal sector. This wasn't specifically urban, for it referred to people moving into and out of cities, it wasn't literally informal, since a variety of relationships – from apprenticeship to Islamic brotherhoods to control by local power-brokers – regulated it, and it wasn't a sector, because people within it interacted closely with those in regulated employment, and state officials could exploit it precisely because these



7 Tailors working in a street, Mopti, Mali, 1962. Artisanal production and small-scale marketing remained the backbone of the "real" economies of urban Africa, even when colonial and post-colonial planners thought in terms of state-dominated economies or modern corporations.

8 Modernizing the African family; a nurse lectures mothers on infant feeding in a clinic in Lagos, Nigeria, 1959. To colonial officials – and many nationalists – women were the key to transforming African culture; if they could be taught lessons in child rearing and household management and were properly supervised, they would raise a new generation of Africans adapted to modern life.

activities were outside the law. The term refers to a domain outside state regulation, a world of small and often transitory workshops, of traders working in the streets, of illegal activities. An estimated 60 percent of urban jobs are "informal." Where official economies all but collapsed, as in Mobutu's Zaire or Sékou Touré's Guinea, the informal economy was what kept people alive.

In some ways the "illegal" city, whether in Mathare Valley outside Nairobi or Pikine outside Dakar, was better organized, because the legal insecurity of tenure required cultivating relationships with state officials. The informal economy delivered low-cost services, and in that sense it "worked", and some observers thought it was a model which the overregulated, corrupt, and inefficient legal sector should emulate. But it worked in particular ways. Such activities were organized more on the basis of relationships than routines. They were a sign that the project which independent states had taken over from their predecessors – of building a seemingly rational, modern economy, of making that economy and society truly national, truly incorporative of all its citizens – had failed, and that an Africa of less visible and more personal connections had emerged in its stead.

The stabilization concept had a particular gender ideology implicit in it: that of the male breadwinner, with wife at home. The worker would learn the ways of industry; his wife would be taught modern homemaking and childrearing. Trade unionists often drew on such notions to claim wages sufficient to support a family. But even where wages improved – or when, as in French Africa after 1956, workers received family allowances for each child – the effects of male wages were not necessarily as anticipated. As Lisa Lindsay has shown in regard to the "stabilized" railwaymen of Nigeria, better wages did not support a nuclear family so much as reinforce the notion of the "big man" who used his resources to make himself the center of a wider kin grouping. This might be polygynous, but more likely it involved the wage owner's contribution to a wider network of kin, whom he helped in a variety of ways and whom he expected to contribute to his social, and perhaps political, stature. Women did not necessarily adapt to roles assigned them; railway wives, using their own resources and those of their husbands, frequently followed the Yoruba pattern of engaging in marketing, which brought them not only into intense participation in the market but also into close association with other women. There were many variations on such patterns in West Africa, some involving cooperation between husband and wife, others considerable autonomy between spouses.

Stabilized labor never did conquer the labor market. The circulation of workers between villages and cities or workplaces was made possible by kinship groups wider than the individual family, and migration strengthened this extended family. People used family connections to find jobs in cities and to preserve access to farmland at home. Families – even husbands and wives– could thus have more than one residence and often live apart. Families had to think strategically about placing members in different locations. While kinship solidarity could help people cope with the precariousness of wage labor, and in the best situations lead to decent incomes from a combination of salaries, farm earnings, and trade, the risks were severe, above all to women and children. The ill-health or desertion of a male wage-earner could set a rural family spinning downward into poverty, or the breakup of family bonds in a city could leave children without support networks and with no state services to help. Child beggars, "parking boys," very young hawkers, and youthful petty criminals are a feature of every African city, as are youth gangs.

Most important is the historical sequence: to railway families of Nigeria or the mine families of Zambia stabilization and relatively high wages in the 1950s and 1960s seemed to offer new possibilities over the life cycle, giving a worker and his family the hope of living off of a pension and trade income late in life. But by the 1980s in both cases, men's wages and pensions eroded. The advance of "modernization" proved to be short-lived. What saved many – but not all – such families from penury was the continued viability of kinship and other forms of personal connection. Moreover, in cities from Accra to Dar es Salaam, the strong presence of women in "informal" economic activities, once the precarious flip side of men's privileged position in formal wage employment, became increasingly vital to family survival. The male wage-earner, despite the dreams of post-war colonial officials and African planners and trade unionists, has not led the African family into a 'modern' prosperity. Women and children have been hit hard by the reversals on Africa's economic pathway, while the persistence and diversity of social ties in African communities have softened, if only partially, the pain of an unrealized project of social change.

Decolonizing gender?

Women remain the bedrock of food production: scholars claim that they do 90 percent of hoeing and weeding, 90 percent of processing food and hauling water and firewood, and 60 percent of the harvesting and marketing of food. In some areas, but far from all, women in the early colonial era extended their role in agriculture into cash crops and, for a time at least, acquired better access to cash, especially as younger men's roles in warfare, hunting, and porterage were undercut. Women's centrality to both agricultural production and household reproduction accentuated the pressures on them, especially from male elders, to leave out-migration to the more dispensable young males. Elder males guarded their power in village and kinship politics, while younger ones had more rapid access to the ways of the new order.

African and European gender biases intersected in slotting men into education and thus placing them in a privileged position as more roles in "modern" society opened to Africans after the war. While men's advantage in access to schooling persists to this day, the extent of the gap has slowly diminished (see table 1). Women's roles in crop production and food marketing are being complemented by a significant presence in teaching, health care, and other professional roles, a source of anxiety for "big men" as well of vital sustenance for the entire society.

The political openings of the 1940s and 1950s had ambiguous effects on women. Women participated actively in nationalist movements in places as varied as Tanzania and Guinea. In local politics in West African cities, women often played a political role stemming from their importance in marketing: female market leaders had a large and important constituency. But in other ways, politics in the 1950s became more of a male domain as it became an open, public one. Because men were predominant in "formal" employment, trade union leadership was virtually all male. Party politics might define certain roles for women, but in no case were women the top leaders, and in some cases as African men entered formal hierarchies, they saw their own status in relation to how "their" women maintained a respectable and deferential position. Susan Geiger, for instance, describes the importance of women in "performing nationalism" in Tanzania during the 1950s – playing a public role in rallies and organizing – but when it came to governing, the largely uneducated female activists were marginalized and their organizations subordinated to the national party.

Later, as more women became educated and professional, explicitly feminist movements developed in such countries as Senegal and Kenya, and forced public debate on issues of particular concern to women. Many have fought uphill battles against formidable male backlash. A Zimbabwe Supreme Court decision in 1999 declared that the integrity of African cultural norms outweighed constitutional provisions against discrimination and meant that women could not claim equal rights of inheritance to men. Legal efforts to restrict polygyny or to make men responsible for the children they have fathered by "outside wives" have run up against male legislators' refusal to surrender the prerogatives of the "big man." There have been advances, however. The post-1994 South African government has firmly advocated gender equality, and 30 percent of South African legislators after the 2000 elections were women and eight were ministers. That makes it all the more notable that in Africa as a whole, women are only 6 percent of legislators, and half of African cabinets have no women at all.

State regulation of reproduction became an acute issue at key moments. Before World War II, colonial states had sought to "retraditionalize" marriage, in order to strengthen the ability of indigenous elites and courts to regulate marriage and inheritance. In the 1950s they often stressed "modern" marriage, regulated by state law, hopefully producing the kind of monogamous household that would insure that children went to school and grew up to contribute to the market economy. Independent states sometimes acknowledged the intrinsic value of "customary" forms of marriage and inheritance, but insisted that those who chose other arrangements should be regulated by formal laws. But there has been another reaction, too, at the core of state power. The "big man" concept has far from died out; indeed, given the importance of building networks of clients to political leaders, the place of the patriarch in politics has been strengthened. Big men do not necessarily want to be constrained by the nuclear emphasis of "modern" marriage, and in Kenya and elsewhere have fought against legal regulations that might prevent men from doing what they wanted to do. Women have become adept at using kinship and

informal social relations partially to redress the bias toward husbands in the bureaucracy and courts.

During the controversy over female circumcision in Kenya in the 1930s, many men spoke in the name of Kikuyu women. Whatever Kikuyu women thought did not enter into the political arena. That is no longer the case. Women's organizations have developed in many African countries, and feminists hold meetings and work with allies outside of Africa. Issues like polygyny, genital mutilation, child custody and support, property rights, and inheritance are the subject of political mobilization within Africa, not just do-good intervention from outside. That has changed the politics of reproduction. But gender equality remains a long way off.

Religion in the age of progress and crisis

The relationship of religion to politics is often ambiguous. Around 1950, many Africans were worshiping in established Christian churches and trying to turn Christian universalism into an ideology of liberation and human progress. The Muslim brotherhoods of Senegal, having reached an accommodation with the French, were now forging relationships with the leaders of political parties. Leaders like Houphouët-Boigny and Kenneth Kaunda emphasized in different ways their Christian beliefs; Houphouët-Boigny, near the end of his life, built at enormous expense a basilica in his home town modeled on St. Peter's. Others, like Nkrumah, channeled Christian messianic imagery into a cult of the leader and his modernizing mission. Still others, Mobutu for instance, cultivated a reputation as men well connected with sorcerers.

But in other cases, prophets and cult leaders gathered followings that were highly personal and antagonistic to secular authority, be it that of Africans or Europeans. In Northern Rhodesia, the cult led by Alice Lenshina, known as "Lumpa," developed after 1953 from a mission station but broke away from Christian doctrine as much as mission organization, claiming it was building an instant millennium on earth and trying to separate itself from all other institutions. With some 65,000 followers living at the edge of the Copperbelt, the Lumpa church clashed with the leading nationalist movement, the UNIP of Kenneth Kaunda. After independence in 1964, Lenshina's attempt to control autonomous Lumpa villages challenged UNIP's desire to make clear its authority. The result was one of the bloodiest episodes of post-colonial state repression of the 1960s; some 700 Lumpa died and Lenshina was jailed for over a decade. Other newly independent countries cracked down on what they considered dangerously autonomous cults: the same worry that colonial regimes had about such activity.

9 The arrival of pilgrims from the Mouride Brotherhood at the holy city of Touba, Senegal, 1956. Although Mourides have migrated to cities in Europe and North America, their Islam is less universalistic than other versions. They focus the connection of the hierarchy of religious leaders (marabouts) to the founder of the brotherhood, Ahmadu Bamba, and his city of Touba.

What of religion in an era of crisis and decline? Perhaps the most important new trend, unevenly present from Angola to Kenya, was the proliferation of evangelical Protestant churches, some following American leadership but all emphasizing a direct relationship of individual to God. In Kenya, the more orthodox Christian denominations challenged the increasingly authoritarian regime of Daniel arap Moi, but the increasingly numerous evangelicals spoke of salvation and had relatively little to say about the inequities of the regime. Such churches both reflected and accentuated growing disillusionment with the national project. Building African or Kenyan or South African society was not the point; their concerns were salvation and another sort of community.

African Islam is as varied as African Christianity. The brotherhoods of Senegal tie their members, Mouride or Tijaniya *talibés*, into a religious hierarchy and network of connections closely linked to political and economic elites. This is not fertile soil for fundamentalist Islam; the social roots of Islam are too deep in local soil to be open to a universalist purism.

Originally a rural movement, Mourides moved into Dakar by 1945 and began to dominate the central marketplace. By the 1970s, the Mouride traders' diaspora was extending to Paris and New York. Transnational without being westernized, Mourides remained closely linked to a hierarchy of marabouts in Senegal itself. Mourides were once hostile to education, but by the 1970s Mouride student associations were strong in the University of Dakar. The marabouts had considerable influence on political parties, but also maintained a certain distance from the Senegalese state. Across the continent, in a part of Sudan where migrant men frequently go to Saudi Arabia in search of wage labor, such migrants return aware of a fundamentalist Islam that is more universalistic than the seemingly parochial Islam with which they grew up. What westerners consider to be sectarian appears in these Sudanic villages to be cosmopolitan.

As Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar comment, religious discourse has much to say about "manifestations of evil said to infest the main institutions of Africa's governance." This had led to critiques of human rights' abuse, as in the National Council of Churches of Kenya's attack on the Moi regime in Kenya in the 1980s, but it can also take the form of accusations that greedy or repressive politicians and businessmen are engaging in witchcraft or other occult practices. The discourse about abuses of state power is not dissimilar from the discourses of jealousy within kinship groups. Leaders may play on this discourse, claiming themselves to have access to dark powers, mixing claims to serve the public good with intimations of occult powers to get things done. But witchcraft accusations are not simply a critique of power and greed. The vertical linkages (see chapter 7) between leaders and followers produce much jealousy, and attempts to use spiritual means to gain influence on top or to project it toward the bottom are part of the maneuvering surrounding patronage systems.

Religious discourse often justifies patriarchy, but many of the cults, Christian and otherwise, that have flourished in post-war Africa have been led by women prophets. Parishioners in more conventional churches are disproportionately female. Spirit possession cults in a number of contexts allow a woman "possessed" by a spirit to make demands that would be seen as offensive to gender norms if she was in a non-possessed state.

Men and women alike are facing forces that seem more difficult than ever to control, and the fragmentation of religious and spiritual life is indicative of a situation where people's needs are great, their means compromised, and the solutions far from obvious. The 1950s and 1960s can no longer be seen as a time of giant steps forward in a linear advance of history, but as a very special moment when a solution, political independence, was visible. In subsequent years, cultural and spiritual institutions had to cope not only with the difficulties of survival, but with the pains of disillusionment.

Conclusion: on blame and debt, on credit and trade

The continued poverty, the high indebtedness, the deteriorating infrastructure, and above all the absence of any clear trajectory towards a better future in Africa in the 1980s and 1990s have given rise to a blame game. Some argue that the damage colonialism did was permanent and that neo-colonial structures remain in place. Others blame African governments for turning development into a get-rich scheme for rulers and for unsound policies, too distrustful either of the pro-market wisdom of the experts or of the wisdom which peasants brought to environmental and community concerns.

One can also redefine the temporal boundaries of the question to say that what is being tested is not "colonial" or "post-colonial" economic policy, but the consequences of the development era, 1940–73. Arguably, both late colonial and African governments had real achievements after the stagnation of the previous decades: progress in building schools, roads, hospitals, and port facilities; progress in bringing Africans into positions in civil service and private employment where they could contribute more than menial labor and where they could help a younger generation advance. The blame, some would say, lies in the world economy that turned so decisively against Africa in the 1970s and the policies of the IMF and other international institutions that made it impossible for Africa to "develop" its way out of its limitations. Perhaps development did not go far enough, and an outside world which had long treated Africa as a zone of extraction did not devote sufficient resources to giving the continent a chance to find a different vocation.

But no, others argue, Africa benefitted from the favorable market conditions of the post-war era, and if it had left things to the market, it would have had better results than obtained by state-centered development in the 1950s and 1960s. And no, still others say, the developers did too much: their solutions were too dependent on technology and capital, too centered on a male-oriented formal economic sphere. These are counterfactual propositions, and one must ask what the imagined alternative was. Africans never had the choice of simply entering "the market"; they were up against real markets, some of them controlled by giant foreign firms like the United Africa Company or Union Minière or De Beers, which concentrated capital and power and had no interest in widening the narrow channels of African economies or building the institutions needed to build a diverse and self-sustaining society. Would the fate of Africa's

millions of small farmers have been better if they had been left alone to bargain with the multinational giants, and how would those farmers' children have fared without self-conscious efforts to equip them with skills for new careers and access to a wider world? And would a "community" left in splendid isolation have been a force for collective fulfillment or for the reinforcement of the power of local patriarchs over young men and women of all ages? Such questions do not have neat answers; indeed, they point to the importance of asking more precise questions, moving beyond a stark choice between pro-market and pro-state policies, between an authentic and bounded African community and an opening to the world economy.

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6 The late decolonizations: southern Africa 1975, 1979, 1994

The most important holdouts against the abdication of imperial power in the 1950s and 1960s were colonies with substantial white settlement. But despite the sustained efforts of settlers in Rhodesia and South Africa to retain power and the determination of the Portuguese government to retain colonies, their ultimate fate was determined by the regional and world-wide process which rendered empire indefensible. Take Rhodesia. In order to maintain white rule, Rhodesian settlers gave up their place in an empire that was intent on devolving power to black majorities. The unilateral declaration of independence in 1965 kept in place colonial institutions – a bureaucracy and police apparatus that enforced white landownership and racial segregation – but cut them off from imperial power. When African political movements, well aware of the rights Africans now had elsewhere, turned to guerilla warfare, the state fought back, but it faced a regional problem – armed groups finding sanctuary in now-free neighboring territories – and a global one, economic boycotts and isolation. In the end, colonialism could not be maintained without imperialism, not least because white Rhodesians vitally depended on their sense of participation in "European civilization" and in the comforts, securities, and opportunities of a worldly bourgeoisie. However divided and uncertain the guerilla movement, it won the international battle to be identified with self-determination and progress.

South Africa's 15 percent white population, with its long history, was more entrenched. But the white Nationalist government did crack by 1994, and for much the same reasons: although armed rebels could be killed, jailed, and exiled, its cities could not be made secure, and its white citizens could not participate in the western world of which they felt themselves to be privileged members. The revolutions in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Angola, and Mozambique dashed the South African government's strategy of supporting a "white" southern Africa as a buffer against a "black" Africa to the north. South Africa had the wealth and military might to harrow its neighbors, and it caused much death and dislocation, but it remained isolated in Africa and despised around the world until it conceded