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MARTIN, C. J. - ARTICLES and speeches (1963 - 1970)

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Martin, C. J. - Articles and Speeches (1963 - 1970)

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Program of African Studies
Northwestern University
Seminar on Contemporary Africa
February 4, 1963.

Topic: The Demography of Tropical Africa

Speaker: C. J. Martin, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

For the purpose of this paper tropical Africa embraces all the countries in the mainland continent South of the Sahara, excluding South Africa. The other countries of the continent excluded are those bordering the Mediterranean, Spanish Sahara, the islands of the Indian Ocean other than Zanzibar and Sudan. The area remaining has often been referred to colloquially as "Black Africa".

Demographic information is not new in the world. Numbers of population have been collected by different groups and nations for many thousands of years. Examples include the counting of the fighting men of the tribes of Israel mentioned in the Old Testament, while the birth of Jesus Christ took place at the time of the Roman Census. Most of these counts were associated with the collection of taxes or the assessment of military strength.

Estimates by Explorers

No such historical information exists for tropical Africa. To the best of my knowledge no records have been found which give the numbers of any of the different tribes of Africa even as recently as the Medieval period. Explorers throughout history have made estimates which have been used by demographers and by others to calculate changes of population over time. Working back from census figures to explorers' guesses can be interesting but can give very erroneous results.

In Lord Hailey's "An African Survey", Revised 1956, he makes some comments about the level of population in Africa in the 18th and 19th centuries. He says, "For the continent as a whole, estimates of 150 million or more appeared during the eighteenth century, but in the early part of the nineteenth century the evidence of explorers as to the relative sparseness of population in the countries they had traversed resulted in the figure being drastically reduced to a range varying between 28 and 41 million. After the middle of the century, however, the publication of the reports of H. M. Stanley's journeys led to a substantial increase in the estimate, figures up to 180 million or more being adopted; that generally accepted in 1882 was indeed as high as 205 million. Estimates made at different times between 1903 and 1936 returned once more to the lower figure and varied between 126 and 150 million; that given in the Statistical Year Book of the League of Nations for 1934 was 145 million." 1/

Other examples of these guesses relate specifically to East Africa. Stanley in 1878 estimated the population of Uganda proper at about some 780,000. In 1879 this estimate had risen to 5 million. Later in the century, in 1897, Sir Arthur Harding estimated the population of Kenya Protectorate at 2.5 million, but Portal thought that the population could not be more than 450,000.2/ This wide range shows the value that can be placed on the figures. Such a remark is no reflection on the people who made the estimates. Their governments wanted to have population totals and there was no scientific way available to make them.

Additional to the explorers' estimates for East Africa, the time series of guesses for the Belgian Congo is illuminating. In the late nineteenth century the Belgian Congo population was believed to be in the order of 40 million but shortly before 1910 the official estimates reduced this figure to 15.5 million. In 1933 the Belgian Congo adopted a figure of 9¼ million and in 1935 that of 11 million. Comparable changes in the estimates for French Equatorial Africa have been quoted in "An African Survey".3/ This downward movement of figures affected public opinion. There were outcries in Europe against what was considered to be a bad policy for the native population and it was stated that the granting of concessions resulted in a very high death rate among the population. Whether this allegation was true or false the methods of obtaining the figures gave no accurate basis for the conclusions. The conclusions were most likely true but this example shows again the importance of having accurate figures on which to base policies.

In the immediate post-war years a greater interest was aroused in population estimates and the Statistical Office of the United Nations started to publish in its Demographic Year Book annual analyses of the results of population censuses and population counts. The estimates were reduced compared with the earlier totals. The revised figures, as presented, show an increase of about 1.2% p.a. over the 31 year period ending in 1951, the increase in the later years being higher at 1.4% p.a. The last estimate of rate of growth for tropical Africa was in the order of 2.1% p.a.4/

Government Methods of Estimation

Early methods of estimating population throughout tropical Africa had basic similarities irrespective of the metropolitan power in charge of the territories. The British territories will be considered first and most of the examples will be taken from East Africa. Similar systems were in force in the West African territories also.

Population totals in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda were calculated by the same basic method, which was the use of taxation records. Direct taxation of the African was by means of a poll tax which has had to be paid by every adult male except for those who have been exempted on account of age, blindness or other infirmity. The tax was collected by District Commissioners and tax registers were prepared by African officers called

"hut counters". The registers included columns for women and children, sheep, goats, cattle, etc. but rarely were all the details completed. Frequently the information referred to adult males only. It was not possible from these records to obtain an accurate estimate of population although in theory the registers provided the best source. Because of their weakness, the territories of Kenya and Tanganyika adopted different methods of calculation based entirely on the number of poll tax payers. In Kenya the number of poll tax payers was obtained from the registers and it was assumed that this total represented 49% of the adult population. In other words, adult females represented 51%. There are dangers in using such refined percentages. If only the person who designed this formula had used 50%, any semi-literate person would have been able to have multiplied by two. The use of 49% and 51% resulted in many arithmetical errors which, when accumulated into a territorial picture, gave large errors. The second stage in the calculation was to assume that the child population represented 37% of the total population. This was the basis of estimation of population up to 1948. For Tanganyika the method was more simple although the principle was the same. The factor used was $3\frac{1}{2}$ dependents for every male poll tax payer. This multiplication factor was used for every district and estimates were published for districts and provinces but any errors in poll tax figures gave much bigger errors for the total population. In Uganda a system of birth and death registration has been in operation for a long time, as far back as 1904 in Buganda. A census was taken in 1931 as a base figure and increases in population were calculated from vital registration data. When checked against the 1948 census returns the estimates were not much better than those which came from the poll tax collection system. 5/

In the French territories a fairly similar method was in use. If anything it was a little better controlled. Local registers of Africans in tribal areas were developed for use in the levying of taxes, the recruitment of labourers and more recently for registering for voting. Local authorities were instructed to prepare lists of all persons but the registration was always more complete for adult males, to whom it was originally limited. For a long time estimates of population were obtained by adding up the numbers in the registers.

Another method recommended to obtain population information for the vast areas of French Africa was that estimates might be obtained by finding the average number of villages per square kilometer, the average number of households per village and the average number of persons per household. This method was not dissimilar to that in operation in Tanganyika. By 1910 village headmen in western and central Africa were generally required to keep books with the names of taxable persons and, in theory, details of their dependents. But in the view of French authors who have written on the subject, the district officers changed the figures in the light of what appeared to them to be reasonable. Compilation of this information was done at local levels but final estimates were made at the centre. 6/

The collection of demographic information in what was the Belgian Congo was made differently. The authorities developed a highly efficient and integrated system for the registration and control of the indigenous population and, as was customary in Africa, demographic information was a by-product of the administrative registration system. In 1910 a royal decree prescribed the registration of all adult males by the chiefdoms in which they lived. In 1922 a continuous registration of the African population was instituted and the periodic review of these records was ordered. In 1929 new regulations were issued and a complementary series of demographic enquiries for certain areas was instituted at the same time. The scheme was reorganized yet again in 1933 and in general these regulations required that each individual, male or female, adult or child, be given a separate card. These cards, filed by villages, were kept at the headquarters of each chiefdom. Each card showed certain information about the individual; sex, date of birth or age and number of wives and children, where applicable. Different cards were used for males and females and by counting separately these two types of cards it was possible to obtain a quick count of the population by sex. An analysis by adult and child was also made easy since the corner of the card for adults was clipped. Personal identification cards were issued to all adult males and tax payments, periods of employment and changes of residence were recorded on them. It was not until 1959 that similar identification cards were issued to females. The registration card of a person leaving his home area for a short period was put in a special file and if the person became a resident of another area the card was supposed to be sent to the new residence. Registration of births and deaths was compulsory but its completeness is open to question. Annual estimates of the population were obtained by totalling these cards, while a 3% sample study was made each year to obtain more details of demographic characteristics.7/

This system, which I have examined at first hand, since the Governor-General of the Belgian Congo asked two of his senior representatives to discuss with me a full census of the Congo in the 1950's, is an adaptation of the European system. It was expensive to operate and also difficult to control in urban areas. But the system was well administered and the information for the Congo was possibly the best in tropical Africa.

This extremely short summary of the general methods used in tropical Africa shows that good information resulting from registration records in Africa was extremely scanty. Certain countries held censuses in the nineteen-thirties but often they were only reassessments of poll tax records. In Kenya no effort was made at a census in 1931 but in Uganda the best census in tropical Africa at that time was undertaken, although it was mainly a count of people who turned up at the market place since the local headmen were told to parade their populations at appointed times.

Census Taking

After the Second World War the question of better census material was raised in many quarters. A census properly instituted and executed is the biggest administrative operation any government can undertake, since successfully accomplished it gives a cross-section of the population at a point in time. Such a flashlight photograph, since censuses are usually taken at night, has its weaknesses but it does give many details. The following is a short description of the organization of census taking in British East Africa and in French West Africa.

The 1948 census in British East Africa was the first one taken in Africa where enumerators attempted to visit each hut and record details of the population sleeping there the night before the count. To undertake the census it was necessary to have basic planning data. Because of the lack of knowledge concerning the East African territories, a questionnaire was draften and circulated to all District Commissioners. A rather detailed form with some 35 questions was despatched with the request for completion. It was realised that some of the data would be inaccurate but other information, such as the number of hut counters, tax collectors, teachers and literate government servants available to act as enumerators, could be given by nearly all the districts consulted. From the questionnaires returned, a preliminary plan was prepared and then the District Commissioners were visited and the questionnaires checked with them. It was interesting to observe the different answers which were given during an oral discussion compared with the written answers on the questionnaires. Personal visitation was the only way to arouse interest. After the visits a revised plan was made and then the schedule of questions was constructed. It is surprising how often the design of a form for the collection of information is ignored until just before the census takes place. This prevents adequate training and the proper planning of the census. Once the form had been drafted it had to be tested. It was tested by means of pilot surveys and the demographers found that ambiguous answers were received to what appeared to them to be very simple and unambiguous questions. As a result of the pilot surveys, it was finally decided to undertake a group enumeration by hut. This term means that any one tribe residing in the hut was enumerated on one line of the census form. The form itself was extremely simple, with separate sections for males and females and separate lines for each tribe. For each sex there were questions on the total number sleeping in the hut on the night before the count, their marital condition and their age division by five broad groups. The form was so designed that in towns it could be used also for individual enumeration where required.

The next stage was the drafting of instructions and this was quite a tedious process since all the draft instructions had to be tested in the field. The most difficult question was that dealing with age, since most elderly Africans have no idea of age and are quite as happy to consider themselves as 17 years as 70 years of age. The African can understand the

difference between a newly born baby, a small infant, a child and an adult but any other differences are extremely difficult for him to understand. Also the use of historical events which was used as a means of identifying periods of time can result in very vague and inaccurate answers. The information on age is possibly the worst of all data.

Once the instructions were completed supervisors were recruited for training at a central school. They were trained for some two to three months. They then formed pilot teams and had to carry out small censuses themselves and when their training was completed to the satisfaction of the head of the school they returned to their districts to train the enumerators.

The enumerators, totalling some 25,000, were chosen mainly from school children. It was found that the school children were more interested in the task and people were more prepared to give answers to school children than to adults, since they thought the children would not remember what they were told. Where school children were used, official headmen acted as guides.

Many administrative mechanisms were brought into operation to ensure that the census was complete, e.g. all forms were numbered and special batches were sent out to each area. Each area had to return the same number of forms with the same numerals on them or account for any losses. The reasons given for losses were quite interesting, from being eaten by rats to being blown away by a whirlwind. The method ensured no duplication. The forms when returned were checked and the analysis then began.

A sample census, which was a new innovation in Africa, was undertaken after the general census, using the best enumerators. Its purpose was to collect characteristics and in total some 14 sub-groups were included on the form. The enumeration was an individual one with one line for each person. Questions ranged from sex and race to birthplace and occupation with questions for women on the number of children they had borne. This last series of questions, while most important in trying to get some first estimates of population growth, raised many difficulties because the women, if they were old, had forgotten, or were not prepared to mention dead children, because of taboo, or only wished to give the names of their children rather than the numbers. By constant repetition and checking, it was possible to get an approximation but no one who has done this work in Africa, whether he be a doctor or a demographer, can honestly say that all children have ever been included. There was an equal danger that women would not say they were barren since barrenness was a disgrace. Because of this danger the sample census forms were redesigned to ask a specific question as to whether a child had ever been borne to the woman. The sample census took up to three months to complete. Since the questions in the general census were repeated it was possible to check the accuracy of the general census replies in the areas where the sample census was taken. Also by sampling techniques, estimates could be made for the country. The estimates were quite satisfactory for total numbers and for distribution by sex but the age analysis appeared to be better in the sample census than in the general census. 8/

In the British West African countries general census methods were used but possibly not as elaborate ones as in East Africa. In the French West African countries the greater emphasis has been on multi-purpose sample surveys. The countries of the French expression have not been so interested in collecting basic census data but rather in carrying out special demographic enquiries. In 1950 a law called for investigations of all aspects of population trends in metropolitan France and overseas departments and territories, and this law was interpreted by a number of research workers in French institutes as authority to undertake enquiries of a more scientific character.9/ A number of special studies were made and this experience was put together in a handbook of demography written by Blanc for the CCTA in 1957. 10/ It gives details of the methods used in French territories and emphasises particularly the sample study aspects, but unlike the sample studies in British territories many of them were part of sociological surveys.

Some further examples of West African censuses are given in the essay of Mansell Prothero on "Post War West African Censuses". Having described the system in the British territories, he states, "In the sample census of French Guinea (now the Republic of Guinea) 16 statisticians, medical and administrative officers controlled the work of 108 enumerators while in the sample census in the Ivory Coast there was an even higher proportion of 6 senior supervisors to 30 enumerators. Sample units were chosen by random selection and were stratified according to the ethnic and economic characteristics of the selected population." He added that the scope of the schedule used in French Guinea was more specific than that used in the Ivory Coast but both schedules were more extensive than those used in the 1950 Rhodesian census and the 1948 East African census. In French Guinea and the Ivory Coast vital statistics for the previous twelve months were also recorded.11/

New Proposals

It can therefore be seen that in the decade after the War a great advance had been made in demography collection. Previously, demographers were not interested in Africa since there was little information, but as more information was collected on a scientific basis, they considered that a more systematic appraisal of the information was needed and that better guides should be prepared for its use.

The study of population relies fundamentally on information on births, deaths and migration as well as total population figures at a point in time, and population theory tries to find out the underlying causes and reasons for changes. Although there can be population theory without population knowledge, theories are more often attempted when there is some information available against which to test theory. In demography one can make some useful estimates for the future since, if there is no wide-scale migration, it is known that there can be no more people aged 45 in 20 years time than are aged 25 years now and with the calculation of death rates, expectation of life and other demography indices, new patterns of population development can be drawn up.

For assisting demographic research a number of conferences were held in the 1950's in Africa and on Africa. In Brazzaville in 1956 a WHO Conference on Health and Vital Statistics was held at which experts from all areas met and discussed the minimum information to be collected. It was decided at this conference that information on sex, age groups, tribe or race and relation to head of household were the most important characteristics of the population. Among other recommendations it was proposed that sample studies should be carried out at regular intervals. 12/ The results of this conference were discussed in Lorenco Marques in 13/ 1957 while in 1959 an African Meeting was held in Paris under the auspices of the International Population Union.14/This meeting noted that a great deal of attention was being given to the making of models of African demography, and that many people were assuming that the patterns of African demography would follow those of Europe and Asia, but it was emphasised that although models were helpful they were no substitute for the accurate collection of demographic data. The need for sample studies and for multi-purpose surveys were other recommendations which came from this meeting.

One new proposal which has received almost universal approval but which has not been put into operation in many areas to date is a plan originally placed before the International Statistical Institute in 1953 and before the World Population Conference in Rome in 1955.15/In studying demography it is important to observe that the census statistics and the vital registration statistics for most underdeveloped countries are extremely bad and that there is certain information vital for studies of population which can only be collected by censuses while other information can best be assembled by adapting census methods. Sample censuses are of no value when detailed information for small areas is required but excellent when information for large areas is needed. Birth and death registration is not easy to start and where it has been in existence for some time it has not shown any serious improvement. Continuous questioning of the African population can result in very inaccurate information being collected and census questions have to be kept to a minimum. Because of the dangers of different answers being given at different times, data should be collected which allows independent analyses to be made. The suggestion made in the paper was that information should be collected from sub-groups of some five thousand persons by means of annual censuses at which time each hut would be visited, a card completed for each family and details of each individual entered on that card. The location of the hut and the name of the household would be given for identification purposes. After visiting each hut an estimate of the total population would then be obtained. A registration system would commence in the area at the time of the census and at least monthly visitations to each area would be made to ensure that all births and deaths were recorded. At the end of a suitable period, preferably not less than twelve months, the population would be censused again, the same cards used for this purpose and the whereabouts of inhabitants noted. The birth and death registration books would be studied to see who had been omitted and infants recently born included on the cards and checked with the registration books. This system should continue for a number of years.

What would be the value of such a system? It would allow general particulars of each person to be obtained as well as fertility histories and vital events, while the organization of the birth and death registration would give similar types of information. Many useful rates could be calculated from the information collected.

Results

What does all this information mean when it has been collected? There has only been interest in population totals when they have appeared to be reasonable but unfortunately there is little information available to decide what is reasonable. The experience of Africa over the generations and centuries has been different from many other countries and therefore to take the experience of Japan in 1931 or even India today, assuming that those statistics are satisfactory, can give very biased results. There is no reason to throw out information collected because it does not fit the supposed pattern. For East Africa, the Royal Commission to East Africa of 1953-55 accepted my estimates of the possible increase from 1931-48 which were of the order of 1% in Tanganyika, 1.4% in Uganda and 1.9% in Kenya. 16/ There is so much conjecture in the calculations that I made that I am the first to say that these are subject to considerable error. In the rest of Africa the same must be said of any of the estimates which have been provided.

Even at a point in time differences in estimations occur. The difference between the estimated population of East Africa from the tax registers which I described and the population surveys of 1948 was an increase in population of 25% for the same date. This was not unexpected because of the methods used earlier to estimate population but there was significance in the figures, since the increase in numbers was of women and particularly of children, which meant that there were hardly any more tax-payers, but a large number requiring social security and welfare measures. The censuses of the last few years in East Africa have shown differing population growths since 1948. The Tanganyika census of 1957 showed an increase of 1.75% p.a., the Uganda census of 1959 showed an increase of around 2.5% p.a., the Zanzibar census of 1958 showed a figure of under 1.5% p.a. while the preliminary figures for Kenya show an increase of over 3% p.a.

Figures of 3% and over must be considered with suspicion. The counting of population at the same time as political development is taking place through party politics, with demographic information becoming vital for a political power struggle, makes the collection of accurate data almost impossible. When the new age distribution is available for Kenya it may well be that a better assessment can be made but it is possible that in each region the enumerators added a few extra people, believing that no other area would do this. The purpose was to ensure that the area of interest would receive a larger number of representatives in parliament. There is now an inflationary factor as a result of politics where previously there might have been an underenumeration factor due to suspicion. If the Kenya figure

of over 3% were correct it would mean that the calamities which have affected that country have been of no real significance and that the Mau Mau revolution and its aftermath of semi-starvation and the droughts of 1960 and 1961 had no effect on birth and death rates. This is unlikely. Since a birth rate of 50 per thousand of the population in a fairly stable community is high, it would mean that the death rate was less than 20. High annual increases of this nature rarely go with underdeveloped conditions since it is not likely that with bad living conditions infantile mortality will be falling. If infantile mortality is high, general death rates must be high especially where child populations account for up to 45% of total population. Either Kenya is healthy and prosperous with low death rates and high birth rates or it is not prosperous, is poor and backward, in which case the death rate must be fairly high. For that reason figures of much over 2% p.a. may be false for Africa as a whole. It is possible that in certain especially healthy areas 2.5% per annum might be a true figure but sometimes migration will have an influence there. It is not only in East Africa that inflated results have been seen. In Eastern Nigeria there has been an argument on the census figures. Censuses have left the domain of of administrative routine and academic research and become a focal point in political power politics.

Towns

I have mentioned briefly the question of towns. Often the censuses made have been solely of town populations, the assumption being that the surrounding countryside was not of interest. The urban population in Africa has received an attention out of all proportion to its numbers. Throughout tropical Africa the population living in towns is less than 10% and in East Africa less than 5% of the total population. In the paper on "The Towns of Tropical Africa" in "Essays on African Populations" the author shows that Northern Rhodesia with 18% and Zanzibar with 17% lead in urban populations. Southern Rhodesia and Uganda have slightly more than 10% while Nigeria, the Belgian Congo and most of the French West African territories have between 5% and 10%.17/ The urban population has been studied in social surveys and in special censuses. The French demographers have devoted most of their time to studies of urban groups. The census of 1953 in Tanganyika applied to Africans in towns only and not to those in rural areas. It is considered that this emphasis was necessary to allow for planning but the special attention on urban centres has made them more attractive and this has resulted in a migration from rural areas which in its turn has aggravated the problem.

The rate of growth in towns is not easy to estimate, partly because in many places the physical area of the town has grown, but in East Africa an attempt was made to study their rate of growth. The best attempt was in Tanganyika where between 1948 and 1957 there were three censuses. The rate of growth between these two periods was between 6 and 8% for nearly all towns of more than three thousand people.18/ Of course there were some exceptions where very small towns had grown quickly for specific reasons.

From the experience of Tanganyika and similar experience in Zanzibar and the other East African territories, it is possible that a figure of some 6 to 8% is a normal rate of growth for towns in Africa.

There are certain areas of Africa which have high densities of population but this is not due to any sudden population explosion. These areas in East Africa are usually in mountainous regions such as around Mt. Kilimanjaro, Mt. Kenya, Kigesi, Mt. Elgin and Tukuyu in the southern part of Tanganyika. In these areas the population has lived in the mountains and has always had a good rainfall which has been helpful in preventing famines. They have been cut off from the rest of society and therefore have not been in such great danger of being decimated by epidemics. They have also been able to safeguard themselves in their mountain retreats from tribal wars. The result of all these conditions has been a slow but positive rate of annual increase. In many parts of Africa, particularly on the arid plains and where sleeping sickness has been prevalent there have been periods when the populations have been reduced to half of their previous number or even less. It is most unlikely that until recently the population of Africa changed very much, a statement true of Europe until the eighteenth century. Those small areas having a positive rate of increase have grown in numbers until at present there is a fairly high density and there may be a high rate of growth but it has not come over night; it is the result of a favourable trend for a long time.

Future Rates of Increase

The rates of increase in Africa are high but are not as high as in other parts of the world. They are subject to change like the estimates of population used in Pakistan and India. It is possible that the rate of growth is between $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2% p.a. throughout most of the African continent but what does this mean as far as individual areas are concerned? There are certain areas such as I have described earlier where a regular positive rate of growth means a high density of population and now a high rate of natural increase, but there are many other areas of Africa where considerable proportions of the population die at an early age, often from famine or malnutrition. If the development plans and programs now being put forward by nearly all African territories are to have any effect on the rural population one of the best indicators of their efficiency would be a fall in the infantile mortality rate and in the general death rate. The infantile mortality rate is possibly one of the best indices of good living conditions and in East Africa it can be said to vary from 300 to 100 per thousand live births. The reasons for the differences are sometimes cultural as well as climatic; in some areas a child is expected to accept a gruel made from bananas for the first two days and not be breast fed until after that. This can result in a fairly high death rate. In other areas, extreme changes in temperature bring on pneumonia, while malaria is still endemic. If the example of Ceylon means anything, there will be a continual fall in death rates in the next generation, but it will not come from marvellous changes in curative medicine. It is very likely to come, as in Western Europe in the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from better hygiene, clean, piped, water supplies and similar public health measures. All these measures will result in a fall in the infantile mortality rate and will result, if there were no change in the birth rate, in an upsurge of the population. It is likely, however, that there will be an increase in birth rates. Little is known about the miscarriage rate in Africa, but it is believed that the heavy manual labour which is the lot of most African women does not make for easy childbirth or for large families. If the efforts of African countries to develop the housewife tendencies of the African woman are successful then a higher birth rate can be expected. The extent of this is not known but even if it added 5% to the birth rate it would be important. A birth rate of over 45 per thousand and a death rate of 15 per thousand would give an increase of 3% p.a. In the next generation this could become even greater since the child population will remain a high proportion of the total. A large percentage of children in a population is normally not an indication of high fertility but of high mortality, and since mortality will drop first among the infants, the number of children as a proportion of the population might well grow. This has its problems since a large proportion of children means a higher dependency ratio, if the African territories follow Western patterns, and more children go to school and are kept out of the labour market. It is therefore not going to be easy for the income per head of many of these areas to increase rapidly since at the same time as the proportion of children is growing, the labour force as a proportion of total population may be declining.

It is considered by the medical profession that if an African manages to live through his first few years of life where the dangers are greater, he might well continue to live till well over 50 years of age. The expectation at birth is possibly not as high as 45 years for most of the African territories but the death rate will not be affected in the next few years by a large proportion of elderly people. The best estimate of the number of people over 60 years gives from 10 to 15% compared with much higher figures in Europe. This example of an emerging population with a high proportion of children, a small number of elderly people, with a falling death rate but fairly high birth rate means that Africa may show a population explosion in the next 30 years. The actual time will depend on the area but this large increase will not continue for ever since the very aging of the population will result in a higher death rate in later years. But a problem will exist and for that reason improved demographic researches should be made. Research should be of a continuing nature and in teamwork between scientists of each social discipline. There is need for teams consisting of anthropologists, economists, formal demographers, sociologists and medical workers who will make integrated multi-purpose sample surveys and who will be able to collect information which will be valuable for many purposes, which will be able to be correlated each with the other so that something will be known about certain areas of Africa. It is true that knowledge will be limited in area in the beginning but later research can be expected to cover large geographical areas.

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"CRISIS IN PLANNING"

Note on the Conference at Brighton, England

by C. J. Martin

Since 1945 more than 1,200 development plans have been prepared, over 125 central planning offices have been established by governments, around 100 training centers giving courses in planning have been created at one time or another, thousands of advisers have been sent from the more developed countries to give technical assistance to the less developed areas and countless books dealing with planning advice and experience have been written. With nearly 25 years of effort, planning should have gained in stature and have received a secure place of importance in the development sphere. The last thing to expect would be a state of crisis.

The announcement of a conference to be held at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex at the end of June 1969 to consider "The Crisis in Planning" came therefore as a jolt. A crisis has been defined as a state of affairs in which a decisive change for better or worse is imminent, and it could be inferred that the Conference would be held at a moment of truth, at a turning point in the affairs of planning. To discuss this latest addition to a long list of existing world crises, some 100 experts from 25 countries gathered to discuss papers written on all aspects of planning. Many disciplines and interests were represented although the majority claimed a basic allegiance to economics. In fact, some of the economists claimed ex cathedra that the term development planner was synonymous with that of economist. Since engineers, agriculturists, transport and social specialists were sparsely represented, few voices were raised in protest.

The Conference opened with a paper by the Prime Minister of Trinidad on the purpose of planning and, being a politician, he held that planning was fundamentally political, a great help in providing discipline and keeping people in step. Politics is often called "the art of the possible" and during some of the discussions I began to wonder whether the claims being made for planning might not give it the unenviable title of "the art of the impossible." Dudley Seers, in his usual provocative manner, provided a paper on the prevalence of pseudo planning. The Troika of politician, planner and administrator were presented again but some felt that the chariot did not move forward smoothly - if at all - because no one had trained the horses to work in harness.

Why should there be a division into politician, planner and administrator? No one at the Conference defined the real work of these three supposed experts. Seers emphasized that planning was often a question of who met whom and where, and he asked whether in one planning document the aspirations of politician, planner and administrator could be dealt with adequately. Planning is not writing plans but providing strategy and priorities and moreimportantlyensuring that action is taken to implement policy. This requires improvement in the machinery of planning and

the machinery of government. Some participants thought that the planner was trying to do too much too quickly, that he was overambitious and expected too much from others.

There was criticism of the overall planning framework, the creation of medium-term plans and the whole field of pseudo planning because the rational use of resources and the organization of systems to accomplish these aims were beset by many ogres trying to prevent success. But could it be that the aims and methods of many planners are at variance with those who have the final say in the determination of policy or who are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of proposals? In the march forward who is the one out of step? Do most planners understand the problems involved in running a government; are they capable of handling day-to-day crises; and, to paraphrase the words of Rudyard Kipling, can they keep their heads when all about them are losing theirs and blaming it on them?

Discussions on individual countries raised the usual questions of difficulties facing planners throughout the world. Politicians make impulsive decisions, coordination is difficult to achieve, technical ministries do not consult with the planning group and the planner is left out in the cold. Proposals were made to improve coordination and suggestions were made to improve methods of planning but fundamentally it is all up to the planner for he is the coordinator and that is his major function. To do this successfully he must persuade others that he serves a useful purpose. He may also have to spend more time learning how to make friends and influence people than how to make models.

I was surprised at the little criticism of the basic information available to planners. Information is the life blood of planning and without such economic intelligence much of planners' guesswork is not any better than that of others. Many planners seem to accept without question any information they can obtain from any source and some revel in emphasizing that they have no knowledge of how it was collected. One eminent participant emphasized that many economists go through economic courses at universities without receiving any training in the collection, analysis and interpretation of basic economic data, yet these are the material from which their plans, forecasts and evaluations should be made.

What type of training is needed for planners, administrators and even for politicians? This was the subject of one study group. A review of the kind of courses available for young planners showed that some of these courses had little relevance to the practical type of work planners had to do and that it was unfortunate that the academic experience of some teachers was of little value in knowledge transference to the budding planner. More case studies were needed and more practical experience of government and project work was essential before the young planner became really valuable.

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In discussions on planning, too many people seem to be interested in strategy and too few in tactics. This difference with another world of practical planning has always interested me. In warfare planning has its importance but soldiers know, as Napoleon said, that the art of war is the art of execution. The main way to learn that art is by experience. But in economic planning an economist can become a strategist soon after taking a degree but without any knowledge or experience of fighting an economic battle. Possibly this preoccupation with strategy is another reason why the war against poverty is taking so long to win.

Why is the planner often ignored or left out of policy decisions? Could it be that others do not understand what he is trying to do? Could we learn from the early Christian fathers who in their own way were faced with a similar situation? They wanted to alter the way of life of the people, change their beliefs, give them different objectives and they wanted converts. But they did not think everything from the old way of life was wrong. Being very practical people, they built on and adjusted existing systems such as transferring pagan holidays and other institutions and giving them Christian names and associations. Maybe there is something here for the economic planner to follow.

No short account can do justice to the results of ten days of discussion. The flavor was familiar to all planners: an exposition of the past, a picture painting of the present and a forecast of the future. The results which had been achieved were applauded, the failures were understood. No one dealing with planning could have left the Conference without being a little chastened about the difficulties ahead and the gaps in the guidebooks. The map appeared blurred, the signposts somewhat misleading, the quoted mileage inaccurate and there were even questions about the authenticity of the north arrow. If the Conference demonstrated the need for humility on the part of the planners, it also stressed the importance of innovation, rethinking, adaptability and cooperation with other disciplines in the development tasks of the 1970's.

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