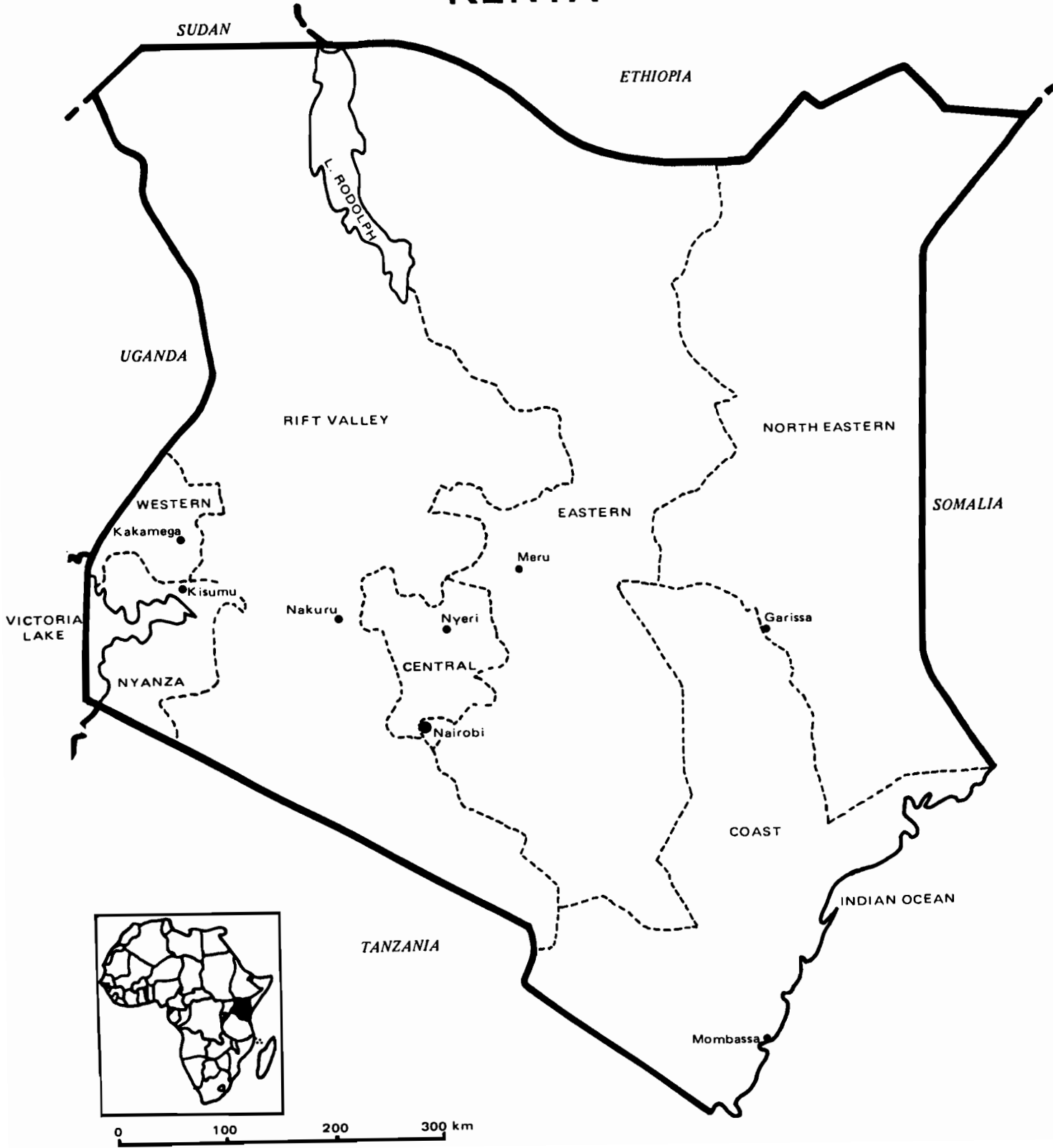


**KENYA**

**Zibeon S. Muganzi**

**SEPTEMBER 1979**

# KENYA



## K E N Y A

The major sources of demographic data for Kenya are censuses, vital registration and sample surveys. The last two are conducted to help in studying the population characteristics in detail. Censuses thus form the major source of data for estimating population size. Although some surveys incorporating population data have been carried out in the country, they have been limited in their demographic analysis and therefore have been less useful in estimation of the country's population size.

1. Pre-Second World War estimates

Estimates of Kenya's population size exist as far back as the 1870s with the coming of the explorers. However, the estimates before 1948 (when the first national colonial census was taken) were mere guesses based on observations and impressions of the administrators.

Kenya's first official population estimate was made in 1897 by the resident Governor, Sir Arthur Hardinge, who put it at 2.5 million. Between 1902 and the outbreak of the First World War, the population of Kenya was variously quoted as either 4 million or 3 million and between the wars the official estimates of the African population showed steady increase from 2 549 300 in 1925 to 3 413 371 in 1931. The means by which these estimates were constructed were obscure but were undoubtedly based principally on the Hut and Poll Tax records which were defective in two ways : no account was taken of the male tax defaulters from the registers and secondly the number of dependents per adult male were based on little more than guesswork.

All the censuses taken in 1911, 1921, 1926 and 1931 were confined to non-Africans. However the 1931 census was extended to include the African population of Nairobi and Mombasa and as many natives as possible residing on non-native premises and farms. The total number enumerated was 70 448 or 2.4% of the estimated total African population of Kenya.

In all, the available evidence points to a very obscure and confusing demographic posture of the country before the first census in 1948. It is not possible therefore to give a precise estimate of the population before this date.

## 2. The 1948 Census

A 1945 proposal to hold a complete census of the East African territories was effected in 1948 when the first national census covering the whole population was carried out in all three countries.

The Kenyan 1948 census however had its own problems. For example, it was conducted in three stages : the non-African population was enumerated in February and that of the African population in August. The last stage involved the Northern Province including Samburu district where only limited samples of the population were undertaken. These factors cast much doubt on the population estimates as derived from the census. The reported figure of 5.4 million for the whole country could as well have been an underestimate as was proved later by the 1962 census.

The errors were attributed to omission of areas, double counting of population and mistakes due to inability of enumerators to understand their work. Added to this was the problem of the lack of enough enumerators and limited communications especially in the rural areas. The nomadic nature of the population further complicated the situation.

However, the 1948 census remains a historic landmark in the census history of Kenya. Of the reported 5 407 599 total population 5 252 753 were classified as Africans, and 154 846 as non-Africans.

## 3. Inter-censal estimates 1948-1962

During the 1950s, annual estimates of the African population of Kenya were based on an assumed rate of growth of 1.5% per annum. In 1961 estimates were revised in the light of both the results of censuses of Tanzania and Uganda and of a re-examination of the fertility and mortality data obtained in Kenya in 1948. The revised rate of growth of 2.25% per annum gave a total estimate of 7 155 000 compared to the previous one of 6 453 000 given by the 1.5% rate of growth.

The low population totals were attributed to two factors, partly to the low estimation of the 1948 census but mainly to the under-estimation of the rate of growth which was assumed to be in the region of 2.8% instead of 2.25%. The 1962 census figure of 8 365 942 showed indeed that these two estimates were under-estimated by 1.2 million or 30%.

## 4. The 1962 Census

The 1948 census was reckoned as a major feat taking into account the problems encountered in recruiting and training the enumerators. The later censuses were therefore staggered. These problems also cropped up in the course of the second national census which was held in August 1962. It gave a total population of 8 636 263 million including 2 629 persons in transit. Ethnic breakdown indicated a

total African population of 8 365 942; 176 613 Asians, 55 759 Europeans and 34 048 Arabs. 3 901 persons were classified as others. Compared to the 1948 results, the population had nearly doubled. The growth rate for the inter-censal period 1948-1962 was estimated at 3.2% from census data, which was higher than had been assumed.

Like the 1948 census, the 1962 census was conducted in stages thus allowing the infiltration of the same errors of the last census. The Northern Province census was conducted on a de jure basis. Furthermore, the estimation of African population of Turkana, Samburu, Marsabit and Isiolo districts was based on sample counts rather than complete enumeration.

These factors reduced the reliability of the data for the Northern Province and therefore those of the whole country. Also it would seem the number of some of the tribes in the North Eastern parts of the country were exaggerated in this census.

Other problems also persisted during the census. It is documented that some districts experienced extraordinary rains during the census night and most roads were rendered impassable. Politically, it is argued, the timing of the census was wrong. Kenya's independence was round the corner. Many administrative changes were taking place with the resignation of many colonial administrators. These changes, as was later realised, made the verification of some of the results from certain districts very difficult as the new personnel were in no position to account for the various mistakes.

One other serious problem revealed by the 1962 census was the incompetence and dishonesty on the part of some enumerators, who entered wrong and sometimes fictitious information on the schedules. Re-enumeration in certain areas had to be carried out to verify the results.

Despite these problems, the 1962 census was considered to be one of the most thorough and successful population censuses hitherto held in East Africa.

#### 5. The 1969 Census

The first post-independence census planned and administered by the Kenyan government was held on the night of 24th-25th August 1969. Results from this census returned a total population of 10 942 705 of which 10 753 202 (98.25%) were Africans. A 3.3% inter-censal rate of growth was also calculated, all indicating a rapid increase of population.

The 1969 census differs from the two previous ones in that for the first time, an attempt was made to enumerate the population on a de facto basis throughout the country. A sample census of 10% of the rural population was also simultaneously carried out in order to secure more detailed data on certain variables, unlike in 1962 when it was taken weeks later.

The 1969 census was also the first one in which the enumeration areas were clearly delineated by maps. Although this census could be said to have been national in scope and coverage, the issue of the Northern Province remained. The nomadic nature of the population presented the problem of underestimation. Another factor influencing the 1969 results was the General Elections held countrywide two months after the census.

Apart from these few problems, the 1969 census was well planned, receiving maximum publicity and the results were not in much dispute with the projected figures. The 1969 figures have since been used for planning in the country.

The fourth round of census is expected to be conducted throughout the country on the night of 24th-25th August 1979. According to the available projections by the Central Bureau of Statistics and the Population Institute at the University of Nairobi, the population is expected to be in excess of 15 million (15 427 000) by this time. The estimations for the other years made by the Central Bureau of Statistics are as follows :

Table 45

KENYA - EVOLUTION OF THE POPULATION FROM 1970 TO 1980

DATE	BASED ON A SERIES*	BASED ON B SERIES*
1970	11 247 000	
1972	12 091 000	
1974	12 935 000	
1975	13 413 000	
1976	13 853 000	13 842 000
1977	-	14 314 000
1978	14 348 000	14 806 000
1979	-	15 313 000
1980	-	15 877 000

\* A - SERIES - Assumes decline in age-specific fertility rates leading to a fall in total fertility rate from 7.6 in 1969 to 6.9 in 1980

\* B - Assumes no change in age-specific fertility rates through 1980.

The United Nations data sheet 1978 also provides population estimates for Kenya, 14.8 million, which is in close agreement with the above projections based on the B-Series.

## 6) Sample Surveys

Post-census surveys have been used to a limited extent in the estimation of population size in the country. Of the three national censuses so far held in the country, post-census surveys were carried out only in 1962 and 1969. These surveys were conducted to obtain more detailed information on general population characteristics i.e. mortality and fertility. It should however be noted that during the 1962 census, sample surveys were conducted in some parts of the country to verify the results.

Apart from the above surveys, the Central Bureau of Statistics in the Ministry of Economic Planning has since 1972 embarked on a series of National Demographic Sample Surveys in order to be able to obtain information on general population characteristics, fertility, mortality and migration, which would be comparable to those obtained in the census of 1969.

So far four of these surveys have been conducted. The results from these surveys still give enough evidence of the country's high fertility with a rising total fertility of 8.0 (1978) and rate of growth of 3.5% (1978). These indices point to an ever increasing total population, a point to be confirmed by the results of the forthcoming national census.

Though not so useful, in the estimation of population size, these surveys nevertheless provide very useful demographic data.

## Conclusion

We have pointed out that prior to the 1948 national census, the country's population estimates were made by various administrators either from Poll Tax lists or from observed number of huts. We have also shown that these population estimates were in most, if not in all cases, underestimates of the country's population size as the census later proved.

We have further indicated that of the three censuses so far held in the country, i.e. 1948, 1962 and 1969, only the last one gave estimates which agreed with other sources available at the time. Analysis of 1948 and 1962 census results proved them to be underestimates. This was attributed to various factors, among which, lack of enough enumerators, natural hazards, poor communications, dishonesty on the part of the few enumerators and the underestimation of both the early censuses and the inter-censal growth rates. However, indications from the results of these censuses are that Kenya's population is growing very rapidly. Even most of the work on Kenya's population by Professor Ominde, Director of the Population Studies and Research Institute at the University of Nairobi, tends to confirm this threatening rate of population growth, said to be one of the highest in the world. With a present rate of growth of more than 3.5%, the country's population is expected to be more than 15 million in 1979, the time of the next census.

Vital Registration and Sample Surveys are still in experimental stage as sources of data for population estimation in the country. The former is urban-based and is yet to attain national coverage. The latter is limited in coverage to certain areas only. However, with increased government involvement, they will form very useful sources of demographic data.

Other useful non-conventional sources of data that could be useful in updating the population estimates would be the electoral lists, voter's cards and the identify cards' registers that will be available after this year's General Elections. But above all, the pending 4th round of National Census will be very useful in updating the data. We may also add that, with the establishment of the Population Institute at the University of Nairobi headed by Professor Ominde, more detailed information not only on Kenya's population size but also on its growth and distribution will be available. Emphasis will be on the major determinants of population namely : fertility, mortality and migration. With such information available, proper planning of the economy will be carried out to sustain the rapidly increasing population.



---

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- 1.- **BLACKER (J.G.C.)**, "Estimation of vital rates from census data in Kenya and Uganda", in "Population in African Development", 1971, Editions Ordina, Liège
- 2.- **COWARD (D.J.)**, "Civil Registration Organisation in Kenya", in "L'accroissement de la population et l'avenir économique de l'Afrique", 1974, the Population Council, New York, pp. 48-61
- 3.- "Demographic Baseline Survey Report 1973", July 1975, Central Bureau of Statistics, Nairobi
- 4.- **KUCZYNSKI (P.R.)**, "Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire, vol. 2", 1949, Oxford University Press, London, pp. 120-168
- 5.- **LORIMER (F.)**, "Demographic Information on Tropical Africa", 1961, Boston University Press
- 6.- **MARTIN (C.J.)**, "The East African Population Census 1948 : planning and enumeration", Population Studies, vol. III, n° 3, December 1949
- 7.- **OMINDE (S.H.)**, "Population of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania", 1975, CICRED Series, Nairobi
- 8.- "Population Census 1962 vol. I", 1970, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Nairobi
- 9.- "Population Census 1962 vol. III", 1966, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Nairobi
- 10.- "Population Census 1969 vol. IV", 1978, Ministry of Economic Planning, Nairobi
- 11.- "Statistical Digest", vol. X, n° 3, September 1972, Central Bureau of Statistics, Nairobi
- 12.- **VAN SWANENVERG (R.M.A.)**, **KING (A.)**, "An Economic History of Kenya and Uganda 1900-1970", 1975, Macmillan, London
- 13.- "1978 World Population Data Sheet", March 1978, U.N., New York

**Groupe de Démographie Africaine**

IDP\_INED\_INSEE\_MINCOOP\_ORSTOM

**POPULATION SIZE  
IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES :  
AN EVALUATION**

Volume I

Paris  
1986

## **Le groupe de Démographie africaine IDP - INED - INSEE - MINCOOP-ORSTOM**

est un organisme de liaison non officiel entre les statisticiens, démographes et autres techniciens qui s'intéressent aux questions de population dans les pays d'Afrique.

Il effectue des travaux de synthèse ou méthodologiques à partir des données recueillies ou des techniques mises en oeuvre dans ces pays ; il rend compte des travaux qui y sont réalisés dans le domaine de la démographie et d'une manière générale s'efforce d'informer les personnes intéressées par toute question ayant trait à la démographie africaine.

### **PUBLICATIONS DU GROUPE**

- « Démographie africaine », bulletin de liaison :
  - n° 0 2<sup>ème</sup> trimestre 1971 à n° 28 septembre-décembre 1978 (poursuite de cette publication à Yaoundé - IFORD)
  - numéros spéciaux 1 à 13.
- « Études et documents », prolongement des numéros spéciaux du bulletin de liaison.
- « Afrique Noire, Madagascar, Comores - Démographie comparée » tomes I et II - INSEE, INED, DGRST, Paris 1967.
- « Les enquêtes démographiques à passages répétés » Application à l'Afrique d'expression française et à Madagascar - Méthodologie - ORSTOM, INSEE, INED, Paris 1971.
- « Sources et analyse des données démographiques » - Application à l'Afrique d'expression française et à Madagascar - INED, INSEE, MINCOOP, ORSTOM, - Paris 1973-1977.
  - 1<sup>ère</sup> partie : Sources des données
  - 2<sup>ème</sup> partie : Ajustement de données imparfaites
  - 3<sup>ème</sup> partie : Analyse des données (tomes I et II).
- « Le traitement informatique des enquêtes statistiques » - Groupe de démographie africaine, INSEE - Paris 1978.
- « Le recensement des nomades mauritaniens » - Yves PACCOU - Paris, 1979.
- « Recensements africains - 1<sup>re</sup> partie : Monographies méthodologiques » - Paris, novembre 1980 et février 1981.
- « Recensements africains - 2<sup>e</sup> partie : Synthèse méthodologique » - Paris, octobre 1981.
- « Les structures par sexe et âge en Afrique » - Gilles ROGER, Dominique WALTISPERGER et Christine CORBILLE-GUITTON - Paris, 1981.
- « L'évaluation des effectifs de la population des pays africains », tome I, Paris, janvier 1982.
- « L'évaluation des effectifs de la population des pays africains », tome II, Paris, octobre 1984.
- "Contribution à l'analyse des données démographiques imparfaites des pays africains" - Rémy CLAIRIN - Paris, octobre 1985