

# Urbanization and Social Problems in Africa

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**RÉSUMÉ.** La plupart des études sur l'urbanisation en Afrique restent confinées dans une des nombreuses variantes des concepts néo-évolutionnistes qui tous concluent que le développement est un phénomène linéaire. Cependant la réalité a attesté que ces hypothèses sont erronées. En Afrique au Sud du Sahara, l'urbanisation prouve que la corrélation établie entre le progrès technique et économique d'une part, et les aspects démographiques d'autre part est négative. Ce qui caractérise la population africaine c'est une croissance rapide et des mouvements migratoires de toutes sortes dus à de forts taux de natalité et une baisse régulière du taux de mortalité. La tendance est donc à une croissance du phénomène d'urbanisation et à une baisse voire une stagnation du taux de croissance de la population rurale. Dans certains pays africains, cette tendance connaît actuellement des bouleversements extraordinaires dus aux assauts combinés de la sécheresse, de la famine et des guerres. Les causes des formes spécifiques d'urbanisation en Afrique comprennent la manière par laquelle l'Afrique a été intégrée dans l'économie mondiale, le type de modèles de développement suivis et la crise généralisée du système économique des formations sociales pré-capitalistes qui s'en est suivie. Ces variations conduisent à de divers problèmes sociaux dans les milieux ruraux et urbains. Cependant, dans les deux cas, il y a une détérioration alarmante des conditions de vie. L'exode rural a conduit à une baisse de la productivité dans l'agriculture et à des changements dans la structure de la population rurale: vieillissement de la population, stagnation du taux de mortalité et dans certains cas, chute du taux de natalité. Dans les zones urbaines se développent de sérieux déséquilibres entre l'offre et la demande d'emploi, ce qui a conduit à un taux élevé de chômage, un manque d'emplois qualifiés et des infrastructures économiques et sociales inadéquates.

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An examination of the abundant literature on the phenomenon of urbanization in Africa south of the Sahara<sup>1</sup> shows a negative correlation between two of its aspects: technical and economic progress on the one hand and demographic characteristics on the other. Within the dominant conventional analysis, urbanization is sometimes viewed as a consequence of economic growth; at other times, however, "hyper-urbanisation" is regarded as one of the major obstacles to the economic and social development process inasmuch as it results in a marked polarity between town and country and inevitably leads to the "marginalisation" of a growing sector of urban society. As a phenomenon which is both quantitative (expansion of urban areas and growth of the urban population) and qualitative (health and educational status, housing and working conditions of city-dwellers), urbanization in Africa is among those conditioning the economic and social development process. We shall thus examine its causes by looking at the dynamics of the

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1 Here we had access only to documentation relating to urbanization in general and urbanization in Africa south of the Sahara.

African population, the social problems to which it gives rise and the outlook for the future.

### **The Dynamics of the African Population**

The African population is characterized by rapid growth and by migratory movements of many kinds. An analysis of how the African population has evolved and of its movements among various habitats is therefore essential if we are to understand this process.

#### ***Evolution of the African population***<sup>2</sup>

The population of Africa south of the Sahara has grown rapidly since 1930, and even higher rates of growth are forecast between the years 2010 and 2030.

A projection of the African population (in millions of inhabitants)

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Year	1930	1950	1980	2010	2030
Total population	130	178	389	954	1430
Rural population	122	159	271	419	470
Urban population	8	19	118	535	960

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In only a century, between 1930 and 2030, the African population will have increased rather more than tenfold, from 130 million to 1,430 million, with annual growth rates of over 3 per cent (3.1 per cent to barely 4.0 per cent). Thus, the following rates will be observed between 1980 and 2010: 3.94 per cent in Côte d'Ivoire; 3.77 per cent in Congo; 3.55 per cent in Nigeria; 3.35 per cent in Zaire, but just under 3 per cent in Ethiopia.

This high natural rate of growth of the population of Africa south of the Sahara can be explained by high and rising birth rates everywhere - between 43 and 55 per thousand - and by the steady drop in general mortality rates (between 9.5 and 27 per thousands) and infant mortality rates (between 136 and 185 per thousand) in a number of countries. These divergent trends in birth rates, general mortality and infant mortality rates, which have been brought about by progress in medicine and hygiene, are undergoing drastic changes caused by the combined effects of drought, famine and war in a number of African countries.

The fertility rate, which varies substantially from one country and one habitat to another, lies between 160 and 204 per thousand. Although it is declining in urban environments in certain countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, it tends to rise in other towns such as Senegal.

On the other hand, the rate of growth of the rural population is slower. In one country, from 1930 to 2030, it will have increased just over threefold,

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2 The population figures quoted have been taken from World Bank and United Nations studies, cited in *Express Afrique*, November, 1983, pp. V-XXX.

from 122 million to 470 million, and, unlike the urban population, it will grow very slowly between 2010 and 2030.

Whereas the urban population accounted for only 6 per cent of total population in 1930, 11 per cent in 1950 and 43 per cent in 1980, it will account for 56 per cent of total population in 2020 and 65.75 per cent in 2030. Between 1950 and 1980, the urban population of Africa south of the Sahara increased by 550 per cent. Whereas in 1950 there were only one city with 1 million inhabitants and 31 towns with over 100,000 inhabitants, in 1980 Africa South of the Sahara already possessed 12 cities with over 1 million inhabitants, 161 towns and cities with 100,000 to 1 million inhabitants and nearly 2,700 localities with 5,000-100,000 inhabitants.

In the year 2010, three African cities - Kinshasa, Lagos and Abidjan - will have over 10 million inhabitants each and 77 others will have more than 1 million inhabitants. The average rate of urbanization will be 56 per cent compared with 30 per cent in 1980 and 65.75 per cent in 2030. In some countries, however, urbanization rates higher than 70 per cent will be observed from 2010 onwards: Djibouti 87 per cent, Gabon 85 per cent, Botswana, Congo and Mauritius 85 per cent, Benin 77 per cent, Namibia and Senegal 75 per cent, Côte d'Ivoire 74 per cent, Nigeria and Cameroon 71 per cent). On the other hand, urbanization rates will be low (less than 15 per cent) in other countries: Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, Niger, Ethiopia and Kenya.

As can be seen, the statistical data highlight the rapidity of the rate of overall demographic growth, the extent of the phenomenon of urbanization and the slow or even stagnating rate of growth of the rural population. These different trends raise questions as to the causes of the population explosion and the imbalance between the rates of growth of the rural and urban population, and as to the true nature of the urbanization which is under way in Africa south of the Sahara.

If we are to answer these questions now and in the years to come, we should look beyond classical theories of cause and effect explaining them exclusively from the ideological viewpoint of high rates of natural growth and population migrations. Likewise, the many forms taken by these migrations should be reanalyzed from a more human perspective, taking account of the actual living conditions of the migrants before and during the migrations.

### ***Migrations***

Since the beginning of time, African population have migrated:

- voluntarily, in search for material or spiritual well-being, either to seek work (agriculture, pastoral nomadism, long distance or short distance trade, fishing, craft and industry) or for religious reasons (revealed and syncretist religions, etc.);
- or because of natural disasters (famine, floods, drought, etc.) or

those caused by human agencies (the slave trade, wars, expulsions, failures of rural development policies, etc.).

To these migrations should be added those which take place between areas of origin and places of work: seasonal migrations of all kinds and various other short-term migrations.

Recent studies have shown that traditional migratory movements have been complemented or supplanted by others of new kinds, both within and between African countries. These include the movements that have developed between certain African countries and those of their former colonizers, and those which draw nationals of North African and Middle Eastern origins to African countries of immigration such as Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Gabon and Cameroon.

Like traditional migrations, the new migrations also intersect with movements from north to south and vice versa predominating. This is due not only to physical factors, but also to colonial development models, which usually assigned the coastal countries to the production of a single crop for export and transformed the land-locked countries of the interior into reservoirs of menial labour.

In addition, national wars of liberations in the former Portuguese colonies and in southern Africa have, since 1970, helped to increase the volume and step up the pace of migration between African countries. Finally, migrations caused by economic and political factors since the accession of most African countries to independence should be added.

The first of these, which can be observed in nearly all African countries, is the maintenance of colonial development structures, and sometimes compounded the incapacity of African leaders to remodel these structures taking into account the socioeconomic and political options they recommend. In this connection, suffice it to note the extent of such phenomena associated with population trends, both in countries which have opted for liberalism (Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Cameroon, etc.) and in those that favour a planned development model (Ethiopia, Tanzania, etc.).

Secondly, massive population movements have occurred under the combined thrust of urbanization and industrialization in some countries, and the implementation of major regional development projects (building of new ports and towns, hydroelectric dams or roads and railways).

Finally, for nearly ten years now, many populations have been forced to leave their places of origin and live elsewhere by wars of liberation (Namibia), civil war (Angola, Mozambique, Chad, etc.), drought and famine (Ethiopia, Chad, etc.), not to mention all the forced displacements caused by massive expulsions (from Nigeria to Ghana, Niger, Benin, Togo and Cameroon, from Chad to the Central African Republic, Cameroon, etc.).

From all of the foregoing it can be seen that African countries are familiar with both internal migrations (within different countries in Africa south of

the Sahara) and international migrations (between different African countries and between African countries and those of other continents).

Internal migrations may take the form of rural-urban migration, migrations between rural areas (intra-rural), migrations between urban centers (inter-urban) and migrations of city population to rural areas (urban-rural), although the last three types are uncommon in Africa, African countries are more familiar with the first type (rural-urban migration) which has more marked consequences for towns and rural areas. Thus, according to World Bank statistics, 3.4 million persons migrated from the country to the towns in Africa south of the Sahara in 1980. This exodus, which is steadily increasing, will in the long term contribute to a stagnation, or even a decline, in the growth of the rural population in a number of countries, including Cameroon, Benin, Mauritania, Botswana, Mauritius and Gabon.

International migrations depend on a number of factors: the respective geographical locations of countries, their ecology and climate and their levels of development. Certain countries, for instance Angola, Zaire, Cameroon, the Côte d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe and Congo, attract large numbers of immigrants, while others - Ethiopia, Rwanda, Kenya, Chad, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, etc. are countries of emigration.

According to United Nations projections, 42 million Africans, or 4.4 per cent of the population in 2010, will have left their own country for another one on the continent between 1980 and 2010. Even today, however, we may still wonder whether - in the light of the events which led to the expulsion of 2 million immigrants from Nigeria in January 1983 and the aggravation of the situation of refugees in Africa - international migrations will not be a factor in the deterioration of relations between a number of countries of the continent in the years to come. A study of the dynamics of the African population should therefore include the living conditions of migrants, whether "illegal immigrants" or refugees from war or famine.

### **The Social Problems of Urbanization**

These problems affect both rural areas and urban centers. The integration of African countries into world systems of production and exchange has contributed to the dislocation of African societies. Rural areas are those most affected, since "push factors" are created forcing rural population to leave for other countries or for towns and cities. In the Sahelian countries, however, emigration and the rural urban exodus have developed more in response to the crisis in the ecosystem and to the complex of "pull factors" generated by the urban areas which attract rural dwellers away from the countryside.

#### ***Social problems in the rural areas***

The crisis in the rural areas which leads to emigration and the rural exodus will become increasingly serious as the structure of the rural population changes and its productivity falls. The change in the structure of the rural

population takes the form of a tendency towards ageing due to the departure of the younger inhabitants, to the stagnation in the level of mortality and to the drop in the birth rate in certain rural areas of Africa.

The decline in agricultural productivity will above all affect food production, which does not benefit from the same technical, technological and scientific inputs as export crops. This decline will also increase food dependency in the countries of Africa South of the Sahara, where imports of food-stuffs are steadily increasing everywhere. As can be seen, because the rural areas are being emptied of their populations and those that remain are becoming impoverished and often find it hard to obtain the right food, their living conditions (health, work, habitat) are deteriorating like those of city-dwellers.

#### ***Social problems in towns and cities***

The population of towns and cities is on the increase owing on the one hand to rising birth and fertility rates and falling general and infant mortality rates, and on the other to the growth in the rate of foreign immigration (in a number of African cities) and the rural exodus. Here, too, population growth is accompanied by a change in demographic structure. The urban population is not only getting younger but is also beginning to contain more women than men.

Since the industrialization process and the creation of employment in the other sectors of the urban economy are inadequate to cope with urbanization and the growth in the urban population, serious imbalances are arising between labour supply and demand. The level of unemployment, already high, is rising steadily everywhere. Another aspect of these imbalances, which is also observable everywhere, is the chronic shortage of skilled labour and the over-supply of unskilled labour seeking work in towns and cities. This is due to the inadequacy of training and education systems and the high level of wastage which results; with many dropouts<sup>3</sup> who can work neither on the land nor in industry which is highly capital-intensive. This situation is partly responsible for the development of the informal sector and the phenomenon of disguised underemployment in African cities. This affects urban settlement patterns.

Urban settlement patterns are characterized by a growing segregation between "integrated" and spontaneous or "marginalised" urban areas. This spatial segregation is the result of unsuitable and contradictory African housing policies, with an increase in luxury housing for speculation purposes, inadequate numbers of low-cost dwelling (although their number is on the in-

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3 "Dropouts" are young people who, for various reasons, have not been able to continue their studies in the second cycle of secondary education.

crease), the absence of social housing projects and the mushrooming of spontaneous settlements, despite the evictions and the precarious living conditions from which their inhabitants suffer.

Intense demographic pressure on living space, lack of economic and social infrastructure in low-income neighborhoods, the haphazard maintenance of existing infrastructures, lack of employment and the high cost of living in African cities are largely responsible for the deterioration in urban living standards and the increase in delinquency and in strife between different urban communities. In many countries, in fact, the growing frequency of all forms of crime and the aggravation of poverty (of which the indigenous population sees itself as the victim) give rise to xenophobia and favour its development, often sharpening the conflict between the various "foreign" communities and the "indigenous" or "national" population. This xenophobia is all too often used against the "foreigners" by political leaders (as in Ghana in 1969 and Nigeria in January 1983 and 1985, etc.), either to conceal their failures or economic difficulties or for purposes of winning elections.

Expulsions lead to certain phenomena which are likely to develop with the worsening of the economic crisis in the countries of immigration, creating both in the countries of return (or origin) and in those of immigration (or host countries) new problems of adjustment or readjustment which are worth identifying and analyzing. Special attention should also be devoted to the other problems leading to these expulsions or arising out of them.

#### ***Theories and practices of urbanization in Africa***

It is mainly at the economic level that the disequilibria provoked by urban growth give the most cause for concern and explain the imbalances mentioned earlier. Basically, they may be studied from four angles, namely:

- (a) the disparity between high levels and paces of urbanization and levels and paces of industrialization far lower than those found in other regions which are equally urbanized;
- (b) the financial imbalance created by the immobilization of the vast resources necessary for the organization of essential services for high concentrations of population which are not always production centers;
- (c) the breakdown in the socioeconomic structures of rural areas;
- (d) the lowering of the living standards of the population, which is aggravated by the appearance of new items on city-dwellers' budgets (transportation, rent, superfluous consumption induced by the prevailing market economy, etc.).

Because the two processes of industrialization and urbanization in Africa are not the outcome of any kind of historical experience, they are at variance with the prevailing conception that development, being linear, should take the same form in all regions of the world.

It remains to be proved whether the large amounts of capital invested in

public services represent unproductive expenditure and whether they might have been used for more directly productive purposes.

As for the disintegration of the rural areas, this may be neither the consequence of urban growth nor the result of the dissemination of urban values. It is determined above all by the contradiction between rapid population growth and the maintenance of unproductive forms of land ownership and settlement<sup>4</sup>. The system of ownership of modern means of production and of land utilization is not very productive as far as the peasants are concerned, but productive enough to be in the interests of the major possessors of modern means of production. This contradiction displays the same features as urban industrialization in that there is a community of interest between the ruling classes in urban and rural areas.

*"The imbalance is thus not merely one of level but lies in the differential impact of industrialization on rural and urban societies, decreasing or increasing their productive capacity and facilitating exchanges between the two levels"*<sup>5</sup>.

Finally, even if urban per capita incomes, though low, are higher than rural incomes, the level of superfluous consumption induced by the prevailing market economy in cities is higher. This consumption is accounted for mainly by imported goods. The galloping inflation which is endemic in African countries thus places a heavy burden on the incomes of both urban and rural workers.

It can already be seen from the foregoing that urban growth and economic and social development are linked. Nevertheless, a theoretical analysis of the interplay of urban growth and economic and social development in Africa has given rise to certain ideological interpretations, the most important of which is the neo-evolutionist.

From the theoretical point of view there are three schools of thought - with many variants - regarding urbanization in "underdeveloped" countries:

- first, urban growth is an automatic consequence of economic growth;
- secondly, the acceleration of urban growth in developing countries impedes or favours economic and social development;
- Thirdly, the "underdeveloped" countries are dualist societies, i.e. rural/urban, agricultural/industrial and traditional/modern.

However, all these schools of thought inevitably arrive at the same ideological conclusion: development is a linear phenomenon, or, to put it more

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4 M. Castells - *La Question urbaine* (Paris, F. Maspéro, 1973), p. 61.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 87.



precisely, a well-trodden path followed by any society with the smallest trace of enterprise<sup>6</sup>. The first school of thought takes as its starting point an empirical assumption as to the level of technological and economic development and the demographic characteristics of "underdeveloped" countries and takes urban growth to be the outcome of economic growth, the level of technological and economic development being regarded as the initial stage of the economic and social development process.

First, it should be remarked that, since economic growth is a quantitative concept differing from one country to another, it cannot be equated with economic and social development, which is both quantitative and qualitative. Next, the assumption on which the neo-evolutionist analysis is based takes no account, at all, of the fact that "urban growth in developing countries has accelerated at a rate higher than that in industrialized countries, without being accompanied by economic growth"<sup>7</sup>.

The second school of thought, although more differentiated, applies the scheme for the analysis of economic growth in industrialized countries no less mechanically to countries with a different historical context, namely that of dependence. The correlation between urban growth and industrialization cannot be linear, especially since the impact of industrialization may be stronger in certain societies with a low level of urbanization at a given period in their evolution. If such examples can be found in nineteenth-century Europe, contemporary Africa has had no experience of this kind.

The third and last school of thought, known by the name of the "dualist theory", which contrasts the town with the country, agriculture with industry and tradition with modernity, is the most refined and most widespread form of neo-evolutionism and the one that has done the most damage inasmuch as it rests to some extent on social reality as regards forms of social relationships and expressions of culture. But "this reality is the reflection of a single structure in which effects on one pole are produced by the specific way in which it is linked with the other"<sup>8</sup>. In other words, the causes lie in a generalized crisis of the economic system of pre-capitalist social formations in Africa south of the Sahara.

And, as has been shown, "once broken, the traditional agricultural production circuit could not be repaired when falling or fluctuating prices resulted in unemployment"<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, at the present stage of social penetration of the world social system by Africa, it is not possible for "two different com-

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6 This is the viewpoint elaborated by W. W. Rostow in *The Stages of Economic Growth* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1960).

7 • Castells, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

9 P.A. Baran: *Economie Politique de la Croissance* (Paris, F. Maspéro, 1954).

mercial systems to function in parallel or for an economy of exchange to develop at the same time as a market economy"<sup>10</sup>. In other words, the entire world production system is organized with reference not to the interests of African societies but to those of the dominant societies. In these circumstances it is perfectly logical for the internal economic system of the dominated countries to be fragmented. This lack of cohesion is merely a consequence of an international economic network which is perfectly coherent.

It is therefore impossible to study in depth urban growth and economic and social development in Africa south of the Sahara as isolated internal phenomena. An understanding of these phenomena has to be explained by the notion of dependence.

### **The Outlook for the Phenomenon of Urbanization in Africa**

How will this model of growth and dependent economic and social development evolve in the future? To find the reply to this question we shall briefly examine the attempted solutions that have been designed and implemented with a view to tackling the problems posed by urban growth and so promoting economic and social development. Any answer to our question must also take account of the following alternatives: either the current model will be retained, with all its implications, without the various African countries ever being able to master it, or the African countries must at some time in their development work out another model whose design and application will require them to take a different attitude with regard to the developed countries and whose consequences will be just as important. Some solutions have, however, already been tried out.

#### ***Solutions already envisaged***

Efforts to find solution range from coercion (expulsions, return of migrants to their country or region of origin) to the improvement of the rural living environment and the creation of new towns.

Coercive measures have had very limited effects over time and have in some cases increased the spatial spread of urban growth and created serious problems for countries. In Dakar and Abidjan, for example, expulsions have led to the spontaneous creation of new neighborhoods which are continuing to develop, and to the construction of new housing which is, if anything, favouring speculation in real estate and social segregation.

By contrast, although the expulsion of "foreigners" from Ghana in 1969 resulted in the disorganization of certain economic sectors of the country (commerce and agriculture), it permitted a modest revival of agriculture in Togo. The expulsion of foreigners from Nigeria in 1983 and 1985 con-



10      Castells, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

tributed to the deterioration of relations between that country and nearly all the other countries of the continent.

As for the measures to create new towns in Ghana, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Cameroon and other countries in order to open up certain regions and to relieve congestion in big cities, although these are justified from an economic and social point of view, their revitalizing effects cannot yet be fully measured either because projects for next capitals are still under study or because the heavy costs of constructing the new towns that are already in existence tend rather to increase the dependence on the industrialized countries of the countries which have to bear the burden. Moreover, the phenomenal growth of a new town, such as San Pedro in Côte d'Ivoire, has not helped to slow down the rate of growth of Abidjan, nor has the growth of other new towns in Africa halted that of the major cities.

The idea of creating a new capital, inspired by the example of Brazil, has made headway in a number of countries, including Nigeria, Tanzania and the Côte d'Ivoire. This is a fundamental political act which might have considerable political and economic repercussions in certain countries, since it is likely to be considered "authoritarian" and in contradiction with vested interest born of speculation in real estate in congested capitals. It would also make developed States an easy prey for developing countries over long periods, since the construction of a new capital places a heavy burden on their financial resources and requires large-scale mobilization of foreign capital.

Solutions to improve the rural living environment by modernizing housing, opening up rural areas, providing electric lighting in the larger villages, creating recreation centers in these localities, etc., have been attempted in countries such as Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. Although they deserve to be nurtured despite their heavy cost, it has to be admitted that they have not yet succeeded in halting the rural exodus. It is more important to resolve the crisis which is undermining traditional structures and which is aggravated by the state of dependence of African countries, than to improve the rural living environment without any mechanisms for self-regulation and autonomous reproduction.

Given the inconclusiveness and inadequacy of these experiences, one may expect that African towns will still continue to grow and to attract large populations. In fact, the weight of the past is such that most African countries have not envisaged any solution outside the context of dependence. This attitude appears to be strengthened by the difficulties facing those who, albeit timidly, have followed other courses alien to dependence and opposed to it.

Finally, there is every reason to believe that the gap between the rate of industrialization and that of demographic growth will continue to widen in Africa south of the Sahara, inasmuch as the former depends on developed countries and the latter is explained by the steady drop in mortality and the

substantial rise in the birth rate following the marked advances made in health in Africa.

***Conditions favorable to the mastery of social problems associated with urbanization in Africa***

The other alternative we have mentioned, namely the formulation of a new model of urban growth and economic and social development for Africa south of the Sahara, is a political one. Nevertheless, the contribution of research to a project of this kind may be beneficial, since researchers can examine historical precedents and everyday reality in order to throw light on the limitations of projects, new options and their possible repercussions.

Research should also take account of the conditions under which the current model of urban growth and economic and social development in Africa south of the Sahara will continue to develop. Since the phenomena studied are closely linked with those of industrialization and the agricultural revolution and not merely with the epiphenomenon of the demographic explosion, any attempt to implement a new model must take account of the following:

(a) if the crisis in the rural world is to be resolved, industrialization must above all help to improve rural productivity. However, in the Third World in general and African countries in particular, "industrialization has never been envisaged to serve the advancement of agriculture"<sup>11</sup>. Here industry is parasitic in the sense that it grows fat by feeding on the rural world, from which it derives both its human resources (it obtains its labour force from rural migrants) and its financial advantages (tax relief, internal terms of trade unfavorable to the peasants, etc.), without making any return to support the take-off of agriculture;

(b) in order to integrate those who are ideologically referred to as the "urban marginal population" the production of luxury goods for the local market must be abandoned, since it largely rests on the contribution of a docile labour force which is easily recruited among this population;

(c) finally, although mutual assistance should be promoted among the dominated countries in general and African countries in particular, the aim should not be limited to technology transfer which serves the agricultural revolution, since such a transfer brings in its wake an imbalance in the relations between those who dominate and those who are dominated. The objective should rather be to promote creativity in the fields of technology and scientific research.

It is with these conditions and on these new foundations that the relations

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11 S. Amin - "Development auto-centré, Autonomie collective et Ordre économique international nouveau: Quelques Réflexions", in *Africa Development*, 1978, Vol. III, No. 1, page 18.

between industrialized and developing countries must be envisaged, without the new model of urban growth and development necessarily being regarded as autarkic.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude these reflections on the social problems created by urbanization in Africa, it seems to us that these problems are linked not only with demography and the area covered by towns, but with the overall development of Africa and its relations with "developed" countries.

Thus, despite the fact that African countries are becoming aware of the seriousness of the problems posed by urbanization, and despite the efforts to find lasting solutions, it is to be expected that African cities will still continue to grow and to absorb large populations.

However, among the solutions to the problems so far proposed, that of the neo-althusians is to be rejected for two reasons:

(1) the ratio of population to natural resources is far from homogeneous for African countries as a whole;

(2) So far, all experiences made with birth control in Africa south of the Sahara so far have ended in total failure because they fail to take socio-cultural factors into account.

Each country should therefore implement its demographic policy which it considers most appropriate to its objective situation. In the final analysis, all African countries should autonomously fix a number of clear objectives and the modalities of implementing these objectives before deciding on a line of action which would influence the current world economic order.