

Groupe de Démographie Africaine

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

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	I
Algeria by M. MAZOUZ	1
Benin by C. ADJAHOUTONON & J.P. TOVIESSI	13
Botswana by G.S. FINCH, E. JORGENSEN & P.O. WAY	23
Burkina Faso by N. DAKUYO & H. LOUGUE	37
Burundi by S. BARANDEREKA & A. BERCIU	49
Cape Verde by C. CONIM	71
Central African Republic by D. PANTOBE	91
Comoros by F. TALLON	115
Congo by R. MFOULOU	123
Gabon by M.D. FRANCOIS	141
Ghana by L. GOARNISSON	155
Lesotho by D. TABUTIN & E. VILQUIN	173
Libya by K.V. RAMACHANDRAN	183
Mauritania by G. NOEL	199
Sao Tomé and Príncipe by N.A. MORGADO	217
Senegal by A. SADIO	227
Sudan by K.V. RAMACHANDRAN	237
Tanzania by M.P. THIRIAT	253
Tunisia by C. TARIFA	275
Uganda by M.P. THIRIAT	299
Zimbabwe by L. GOARNISSON	315
Conclusion by F. GENDREAU & L. GOARNISSON	335
Authors	395
List of Tables	399
List of Figures	409
List of Maps	413
Contents of Volume I.	417

BURKINA FASO

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B U R K I N A F A S O**I. INTRODUCTION**

Burkina Faso, until recently Upper Volta, a continental country situated within the expansive loop of the river Niger, covers an area of 274,000 km². Its most southern point is 500 km from the sea. From a climatic point of view, it is situated entirely within the Sudanese zone.

The physical existence of the country has suffered from the vicissitudes of colonial history within the great Upper Senegal-Niger zone. Indeed, after the colonial invasion of Upper Volta by France in 1897, it was joined to Upper Senegal and Niger and was only instituted as a colony in 1919. After 13 years of existence, the decree of September 5th 1932 of the General Governor of French West Africa (AOF) put an end to Upper Volta as from January 1st 1933 and divided the territory between Mali (formerly French Sudan), the Ivory Coast and Niger. The true reasons of this suppression were due to the fact that the colonial power considered Upper Volta as a reservoir of men which would enable the economic expansion of the Ivory Coast and the development of the hydro-agricultural unit of the Office of Niger in Mali.

The decree of September 12th 1947 repealed the decree of September 5th 1932 by re-establishing the colony of Burkina Faso as it existed in 1932.

The Republic of Upper Volta, which was formed on December 11th 1958, became independent on August 5th 1960.

II. DATA SOURCES**1) Historical Estimates**

The historical estimates are those before 1960. Provided by the national archives, they are the result of population enumerations which were carried out by the authorities (administrative censuses) in order to determine the basis for per capita tax assessment. Those taxable (men and women from 15 to 59 years of age) were accurately counted; on the other hand, those not taxable, and in particular children, were underestimated. These censuses were carried out at variable periods (three to five years) and they were not simultaneous, which restricted the validity of the totals made without updating.

Based on the data from Tables XXX III to XL of the AOF statistical yearbook [2], Table 54 shows the evolution of the native population of the colony of Upper Volta between 1909 and 1960.

These estimates and the mean annual rates of growth which can be deduced are to be considered with a great deal of caution; for the period 1909-1960 the annual rate of growth was 0.4%. For shorter periods, the rates vary incoherently showing the poor quality of the data, combined with depopulation for certain periods:

- Famines between 1914 and 1916,
- Repression after the 1916 Bwaba revolt,
- Flights to Ghana to escape poll tax and forced labour.

In 1960, the survey concluded that the administrative census was underestimated by 23%. Simultaneously, the Ghana census and estimates in the Ivory Coast added 200,000 people to the absentees listed in Upper Volta. This assumes a growth rate for the population of Upper Volta of 0.5% over 50 years.

TABLE 14 - BURKINA FASO - POPULATION TRENDS ACCORDING TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE CENSUSES OF 1909 TO 1960

YEAR	POPULATION RECORDED BY THE CENSUS	MEAN ANNUAL GROWTH RATE (%)
1909	2 770 467	+ 5.3
1914	3 579 200	+ 4.6
1916	3 919 100	- 6.5
1920	3 050 000	+ 1.0
1921	3 080 600	+ 0.4
1926	3 147 339	- 1.0
1931	3 000 165	+ 0.1
1948	3 067 500	+ 1.3
1949	3 108 482	+ 1.2
1955	3 339 476	+ 1.6
1960	3 360 000	

2) Recent Estimates

Recent estimates are those dating from Independence and are taken from various surveys (Table 15).

a) Demographic Sample Surveys

Several demographic sample surveys have been carried out in Burkina Faso (or Upper Volta as it was still called at the time), on all or part of the territory; the 1960-61 Survey, the Demographic Surveys of the town of Ouagadougou in 1961 and 1968, the Mossi Survey in 1973, the National Survey on Migration in 1974-1975, the Post-Censal Survey in 1976, the Study of Migrants at the Ivory Coast Border in 1975.

TABLE 15 - BURKINA FASO - CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEYS AND THE CENSUSES CONDUCTED SINCE 1960

PERIOD	NATURE OF OPERATION	AREA COVERED	ORGANIZATIONS IN CHARGE	AUTHORS	SURVEY METHOD USED	OBJECTIVES
1960-61	Population Survey	Whole Country	INSD	R. CLAIRIN	Two stage sampling Retrospective Interviews	-State of the population -Mortality -Fertility, Natality -Migration
1961-62	Survey	Two of Ouagadougou	INSD		Census	-State of the population -Migration -Fertility
1968	Survey	Two of Ouagadougou	INSD	G. PLANES A. COUREL	Sample Survey	-State of the population
1973	Survey	Mossi and Bissa Areas	ORSTOM	JL. BOUTILLIER A. QUESNEL J. VAUGELADE	Repeated Survey	-Study of Migration trends
1974-75	Survey	Whole country	CVRS INSD	J. GREGORY V. PICHET S. COULIBALY	Sample Survey Retrospective Interviews	-Study of international and internal Migration its Causes and effects
1974-77	Survey	Whole country	ONPE assisted by PNUD and ILO			-Study on Employment and training in Burkina Faso
1975	General Population Census	Whole country	INSD		Census	-State of the Population -Nuptiality -Migration
1976	Post-enumeration Survey	Whole country	INSD		Sample Survey	-Mortality -Natality, Fertility -Migration

* The 1960-1961 survey was carried out at a time marked by a determining political change (accession to independence), in a country where there was very little documentation about the population, uniquely provided by the administrative enumerations.

The 1960-1961 survey therefore had numerous objectives: estimation of the population, distribution according to the usual demographic characteristics, estimation of the standard ratios and quotients, knowledge of the ethnic, social and economic variables of the population. The overall population size was estimated by the survey to be 4,460,000 inhabitants.

* The demographic objectives of the 1961 and 1968 surveys in the town of Ouagadougou were standard.

* The 1973 Mossi survey focussed on the migratory movements of the Mossi and Bissa country which grouped together a resident population of 2,575,000. It was a 'repeated' survey, that is to say, it studied the evolution of those who had undergone a former survey (the 1960-61 survey). It estimated the population of active men who had migrated for work, to be 215,000.

* The aim of the 1974-1975 National Survey was to study the migrations at a national level from the point of view of their volume, their direction, their characteristics, their causes and their effects.

* The Survey on Employment and Training (1974-1977). This was the first of its kind to be carried out in Burkina Faso. Its aim was to give a more precise idea about the reality of employment and training in the country.

* The 1976 Post-Censal Survey, carried out, as its name shows, at the end of the census, was intended to provide data concerning mortality, natality, fertility and migration, but the analysis of these results is disappointing and this survey only really offer interesting information as far as fertility is concerned, which appears to be, on the whole, stationary compared to that recorded in 1960-1961.

b) The General Population Census

TABLE 16 - BURKINA FASO - DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESIDENT POPULATION BY DEPARTMENT, IN 1975

DEPARTMENT	POPULATION	DENSITY INHAB/KM2
Centre	944 706	43
Centre-East	404 602	36
Centre-North	632 285	29
Centre-West	788 962	30
East	407 215	8
Hauts-Bassins	582 810	13
North	530 192	43
Sahel	354 079	10
South-West	357 592	20
Volta-Noire	635 760	19
Total	5 638 203	21

Only one demographic census on a national scale has been carried out in Burkina Faso until now. This census, which was conducted between December 1st and 7th 1975, enumerated:

- 5,638,203 residents (present and absent)
- 334,715 emigrants (people who had lived in the compound visited, but who had been settled abroad for at least six months).

All these inhabitants and emigrants (a total of 5,972,918) form the 'administrative population'. This definition is indeed not very common, but is essential in the case of Burkina Faso, a country where the emigrants are of considerable economic and social importance.

The distribution of the population by department shows extremely varying densities; the departments of the Centre, Centre-East, Centre-North, Centre-West and North have relatively high densities, over 30 with 100 inhabitants/km² in places. The ground has grown poorer in these areas and they have become the seat of an intense emigration towards the Ivory Coast and the lesser populated areas of the country.

3) Comparison of the Different Sources

a) The data obtained by comparing the results of the 1960-1961 survey and the 1975 census are seen to be consistent with the natural increase resulting from the 1960-1961 survey which was set at 1.8% (birth rate 50 per 1,000, death rate 32 per 1,000).

TABLE 17 - BURKINA FASO - POPULATION SIZE AND ANNUAL GROWTH RATES 1960-1975

POPULATION	1960	1975	ANNUAL GROWTH RATE (%)
Résident Population	4 349 600	5 638 203	1.7
Administrative Pop.	4 460 000	5 972 918	2.0

b) The 1960-1961 survey, the 'Mossi' survey, the 1974-1975 survey and the 1975 census all also gave estimates for population growth. The 1974-1975 migration survey and the population census dealt with both internal and international migration, covering the whole of the country. The number of international emigrants thus varied as follows:

- 1960-1961 survey 110,400
- 1974-1975 survey 336,022
- 1975 survey 334,715

It can be seen that the number of emigrants increases considerably. This represents only a part of the phenomenon.

In fact, the estimate for the emigrants in 1975 should be considered with caution and should not be interpreted as the total number of nationals living abroad but as an estimate of the number of nationals living abroad whose return to their native land is probable. The total number of nationals living abroad can be estimated at one million, 700,000 of whom in the Ivory Coast, according to the national censuses of the countries of destination.

c) Population forecasts were elaborated after the 1975 census from the following hypotheses:

- The resident population was supposed to increase at a rate of 1.72% per year. This annual rate of growth corresponds to that obtained between 1960 and 1975.
- The administrative population was presumed to increase at a rate of 2.06% per year. That is to say the rate of natural increase in 1975.

Projection of the present trends leads to a net emigration between 1975 and 1990 of 500,000 people. This is insufficient considering the labour force requirements in the Ivory Coast, the country which is presently the main importer of labour from Burkina Faso. The latter will remain a country which exports its labour force, unless political or economic events severely modify the situation.

TABLE 18 - BURKINA FASO - POPULATION TRENDS FROM 1960 TO 1990

(in thousands)

	1960	1975	1980	1985	1990
Resident Population	4 350	5 638	6 145	6 696	7 297
Administrative Population	4 460	5 973	6 621	7 339	8 136
Emigrants	110	335	476	643	839

III. CRITICAL STUDY OF THE DIFFERENT SOURCES AND CONCLUSION

Two kinds of population have always been considered in the various studies of the population of Burkina Faso: the 'de facto' population and the 'de jure' population. The 1960-1961 survey and the 1975 census are the two sources which can be compared. Although the 1960-1961 survey gave quality results for the population size and the different important variables of the population, it was not however able to give results concerning the different geographical administrative areas, (regional or local). Furthermore, although the survey gave good results for the ethnic groups, this variable was ignored in the 1975 census, at a time when the

ethnic variable should on the contrary have been given importance because of the development of literacy in the national languages.

Whatever the procedures covering the national territory, the Sahel of Burkina Faso has not undergone any specific investigation and errors must certainly have slipped in (despite the precautions taken), due to the nomadism which influences the definitions adopted concerning residence. The same error has therefore been repeated a priori and will persist until a specific survey has been specially devised for this area.

Moreover, the risks of omission and double counts cannot be excluded in a country of such great mobility. Errors may also have arisen over the definition of the concepts used.

There is therefore still a vast amount of work to be done to improve the concepts, in particular to take better account of the economic activities of individuals and to define the areas of internal migration more clearly. However, the main concern should be the human factor: the training and supervision of field workers and enumerators should be improved.

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