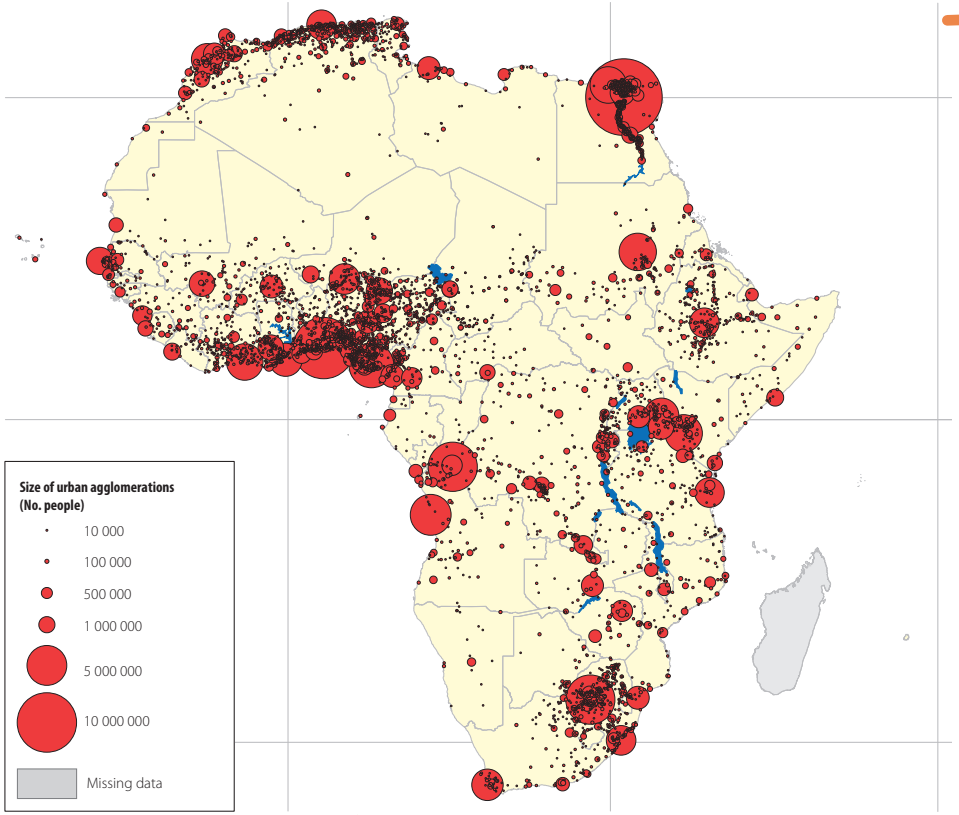
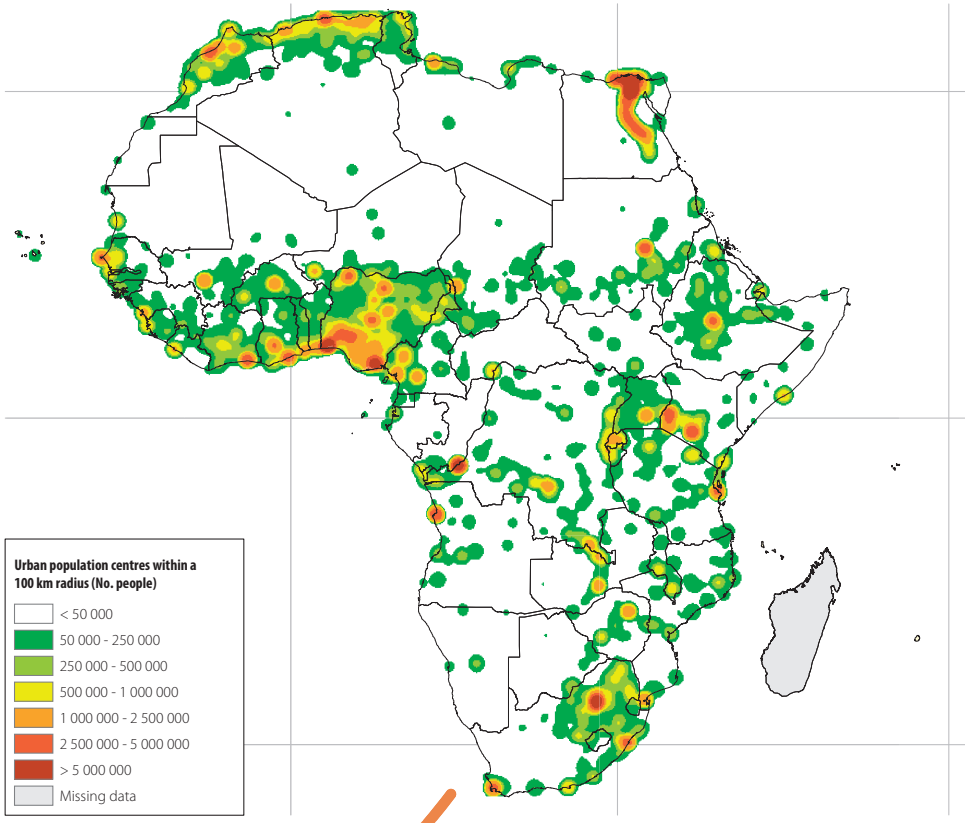
M7. Population of urban agglomerations of over 10,000 inhabitants

Source: eGeopolis 2016



M8. Urban population centres within 100km radius

Source: eGeopolis 2016



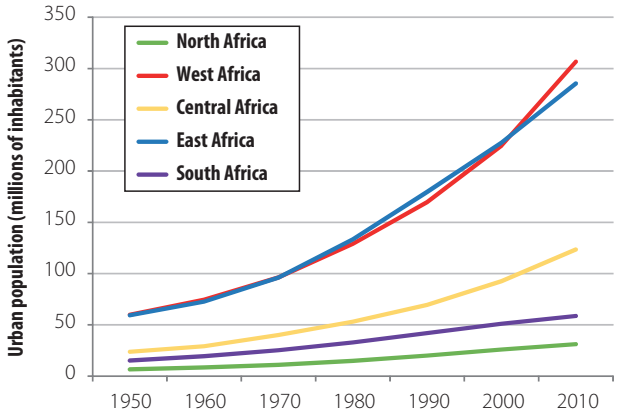


Fig. 4. Urban population growth by regions (1950-2050)

According to the regional division of the United Nations

Source: eGeopolis 2016

MEGACITIES AND ARCHIPELAGOS: AN EMERGING URBAN FRAMEWORK

The extraordinary urban growth that characterises the whole of Africa is producing dense networks of towns that constitute urban archipelagos. But the limitations of intermediate urbanisation, despite the emergence of small towns in rural areas, are hampering territorial development and the diversification of local economies.

• The emergence of vast urban clusters

Huge urban clusters are developing on the African continent. In the Nile Valley in Egypt, Cairo, with a population of almost 15.7 million people in 2010, is the biggest metropolitan area on the continent. On the Mediterranean coast, a highly urbanised coastal strip stretches from Tripoli in Libya (1.9) to Agadir in Morocco (0.8) and includes several large cities: Algiers (3), Rabat (1.8), and Tunis (1). In West Africa, urban population density is high from the Gulf of Guinea coast to the Sahel region. Nigeria is still by far the most urbanised country, with the major cities of Lagos (10.5), Onitsha (6.3), Kano (3.1) and Ibadan (2.4). Large cities are located throughout the rest of the region: Abidjan (4.3) in Côte d'Ivoire, Accra (3.6) and Kumasi (2.2) in Ghana, Bamako in Mali (2.3) and Dakar in Senegal (2.6). In the Ethiopian Highlands, a dense urban network has developed around the capital Addis Ababa (3). In the Great Lakes region, Kampala in Uganda (1.7) and Nairobi in Kenya (4.4) are large cities that are connected via networks of small and medium-sized towns and regional capitals resulting in a conurbation in western Kenya with 3.9 million people on the border with Uganda. In the northern part of South Africa and in the extreme south of Mozambique, an urban network has developed around Johannesburg (7.2), stretching towards Bloemfontein in the interior of the country and to Durban (3) and Maputo (1.9) on the coast.

In addition to these dense urban clusters, corridors of urbanisation are emerging between Lake Chad and the Ethiopian Highlands, along the Bantu line between the borders of Cameroon and Nigeria and the Great Lakes, as well as along the railway line and roads leading to the mining regions of the Copperbelt, from Pointe-Noire in the Republic of the Congo to Lubumbashi in DRC, crossing Zambia and Zimbabwe before reaching the Indian Ocean at Beira in Mozambique. Finally, more isolated large cities such as Cape Town in South Africa (3.3), Luanda in Angola (5.2) and Khartoum in Sudan (4.5) result in polarisation in their surrounding regions.

• Between macrocephaly and multipolar frameworks

Urban networks are strongly marked by their past. Precolonial urban frameworks were developed by large urban civilisations turning their back on the coasts, without the constraints of state boundaries. North Africa developed its urban network within the Mediterranean trade area (Arabs, Ottomans, Persians, etc.). The urban systems from the colonial period then adopted a "comb-like" structure oriented perpendicular to the coasts, with a main town that was most often a railway terminus and a port for exports, which subsequently became the capital. Nowadays, urban networks have become so dense that this spatial structure is less and less clear. Current trends are marked by the proliferation of thousands of small settlements that emerge from the large rural towns under the pressure of population growth, the densification of road networks and the tightening of state administrative procedures.

Africa has a wide range of different urban frameworks, for which the hierarchy of cities and the degree of concentration is assessed according to the index of primacy. In North Africa, urban frameworks are relatively balanced, with the exception of the megacity of Cairo. Two contrasting types of urban frameworks are seen in sub-Saharan Africa.

First, the network is polarised or even crushed by a large city inherited from the colonial period, which has often become the state capital (Liberia, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania; Angola, Central African Republic; Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, etc.).

Second, the national urban network is dominated by several large cities originating in the urban frameworks inherited from the past. Ghana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde and Cameroon have bicephalous urban systems. Elsewhere, two or three large cities dominate the country (Equatorial Guinea, Chad, Congo; Kenya, Malawi, South Africa). Nigeria stands out for having one of the lowest indexes of primacy (1.7) due to the presence of Onitsha and Kano. In all cases, macrocephaly is reflected in national urban systems by a relative lack of medium-sized towns.

• Bottom-up urbanisation and connected urban archipelagos

Far from being contradictory, the dynamics of large cities and small towns are in fact connected since a large proportion of small settlements proliferate on the outskirts of cities. This trend results in an urban network organised in archipelagos benefitting from the increasing importance of major roads, as seen in the Gulf of Guinea, throughout Nigeria, the Ethiopian Highlands, the Nairobi-Kampala corridor, the Great Lakes and South Africa.

Emerging Africa is currently one of large cities that are connected to global urban networks. But this connection will only drive development if it is accompanied by a rebalancing of urban frameworks. The limitations of intermediate urbanisation remain a major obstacle to the densification of urban-rural linkages, the essence of rural economic diversification. This "reappropriation of territories" in response to a metropolisation process that has become difficult to manage is the key to a new development model. The future development of urban networks will therefore depend on the densification of rural areas that are the scene of in situ, emerging urbanisation processes capable of providing states and regional entities with a robust urban framework and domestic economy, as long as public policies take into account the reality on the ground and not just the capital cities.

GLOSSARY

Urban framework: all hierarchically organised cities and their areas of influence within a given territory.

The index of primacy: calculated by dividing the population size of the rank 1 city by that of the rank 2 city.

Megacity: a very large metropolitan area with several million inhabitants. The UN set the population threshold at 10 million people (Cairo and Lagos for Africa).

Macrocephaly: the excessive size of one or several cities at the top of the urban hierarchy in a given territory.

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