

## REGIONAL ASPECTS OF THE 1969 UGANDA CENSUS.

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### *Introduction*

Starting on the 18th of August 1969, the third complete Census of Uganda was carried out. The enumeration proceeded well, and was completed in four days, less than time expected, due to a sufficient number of enumerators and a co-operative population. The success was aided greatly by the declaration of a curfew on Census night. All places of public entertainment were closed, and special passes issued to employees in essential services and others who needed to be out on census night. Consequently, the Census was completed overnight in all towns and urban areas, and in the areas along Lake Victoria where the population is dense and highly mobile. As a result, it is felt that the 1969 Census is probably the most complete of the series of three that was started in 1948.

Late in October provisional results were released, which gave the total population for the country as 9,526,000. The total population and a breakdown by Districts are given in Table 1, along with comparable figures for 1959.<sup>1</sup>

These provisional results are considerably higher than had been anticipated, and they imply an average annual rate of growth of 3.8% since 1959. The previous growth rate, based on the period 1948-1959, was 2.5% per annum; projections based on the latter rate yielded an estimate for the 1969 population of 8,367,000. The difference between that estimate and the provisional Census results is over 1.1 million persons — a rather staggering discrepancy. If these results are accurate, they imply a population of 30 million for Uganda in the year 2000, and a Kampala population of over 4 million in the same year.

It was anticipated, of course, that the simple projection of the previous growth rate would yield a low estimate, as it assumes that no demographic changes have occurred since 1959. In fact, the 2.5% rate was an average for the intercensal period — which implies that by 1959 the rate was in fact 2.7-2.8% per annum. We would assume a further increase in this rate, as more improvements in communications, transportation, and health proceed as part of Uganda's development. These changes could reasonably be expected to have raised the average natural growth rate to about 3.0% per annum for 1959-69. This, however, accounts for an increase of about 2,500,000, which is 75% of the recorded increase, but leaves almost 750,000 persons not accounted for. While immigrants are undoubtedly a portion of this extra increase, it is difficult to accept that all of the discrepancy is attributable to immigration.

## UGANDA CENSUS 1969

TABLE I

UGANDA POPULATION BY DISTRICTS, 1959  
AND PROVISIONAL 1969

District	1959	1969 Provisional	Average Annual Percent Increase	
			1959-69	1948-59
Acholi	286,846	465,417	5.0	2.6
Ankole	531,335	855,155	4.8	2.6
Bugisu/Mbale/Sebei	366,980	485,950	2.9	2.7
Bukedi	400,432	518,922	2.6	1.6
Bunyoro	191,402	348,031	6.2	1.4
Busoga/Jinja	677,410	944,942	3.4	2.5
East Mengo	612,640	844,098	3.3	3.6
Karamoja	172,397	283,356	5.1	2.9
Kigezi	494,488	642,300	2.7	2.0
Lango	354,311	505,218	3.6	2.6
Madi	50,737	89,998	5.9	2.7
Masaka	443,877	641,403	3.7	3.0
Mubende	216,756	335,599	4.5	1.4
Teso	457,875	568,327	2.2	1.1
Toro	349,354	571,006	5.0	2.7
West Mengo/Kampala	544,672	847,132	4.5	3.1
West Nile	385,019	579,383	4.2	2.3
Total	6,536,531	9,526,237	3.8	2.5

*The Possibility of a Relative Undercount in 1959*

Higher-than-expected Census results are not uncommon in the currently developing world. The thrust of development brings with it many changes, and the major demographic effect of these is to accelerate population growth by rapidly lowering the death rate. Development also brings with it improved Census reporting and coverage, so that some of the apparent increase in population between censuses is due to a reduction in the relative undercount compared to the previous census. This phenomenon is so common that it has become a standard response when new results appear to assume that the high recorded increase is not genuine population growth. However, caution should be used in applying the explanation to Uganda prematurely, as the immediate assumption of an undercount may mask other important changes that are also likely to have occurred.

Unfortunately, the demographic complexity of Uganda, coupled with some incomplete and inadequate data, make it impossible at this point to untangle the variables and come to clear and definite conclusions.

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At this point, without more detailed data and analysis, it is virtually impossible to distinguish between decreased death rates, increased immigration, higher birth rates and an undercount in 1959.

Nonetheless, certain patterns appear that are consistent with the previous census. Most of the districts along Lake Victoria show high rates of growth, being the favoured ones for wage employment and high agricultural productivity. Teso district continues to show the lowest growth rate; even so, it has doubled over the past ten years. Kigezi district's rate of growth is also low, but more likely due to out migration, as it showed one of the highest rates of natural increase in 1959.

The largest increases in growth rates are shown in the northern districts. Here the possible explanations are many, and these are the areas that are most likely to have been undercount in 1959. While most migrants in the past have gone to the Lake area, it may now be that the northern area is receiving more immigrants. Some refugee settlements have been established there and although the official numbers in them are small relative to the total growth, the existence of settlements probably attracts other, non-identified refugees.

*Boundary changes.*

Three counties of Mubende which contained more Banyoro than any other group have been transferred to Bunyoro district. Three counties from West Mengo were also transferred to Mubende. Since they were exactly corresponding to county boundaries, whatever data are available at the county level can be adjusted to reflect the boundary changes. This is possible only for limited items, however; thus, rates of natural increase cannot be properly adjusted, although the actual rate of intercensal increase can be established.

However, the aim of the adjustment was to create more homogenous districts; hence many generalised characteristics and rates can be taken to apply to the newly-created areas. The exception to this will lie with the new Mubende district, which would be more like West Mengo. Interestingly enough, the unadjusted 1959 figures for Mubende were indeed more like those of West Mengo than Mubende. This suggests that the characteristics of Bunyoro in counties that have now been transferred differ from those in Bunyoro district; a possible alternative — and a more likely one — is that there was some effective difference in the level of execution of the census in 1959.

It must be stressed that the results given here are provisional and allow only the briefest analysis. We must await the more detailed results before a clearer picture of population movement and growth can emerge.

NOTE.

The format for these provisional results is somewhat different from those given by the Uganda Government Statistics Division. I have combined the urban areas with the Districts in which are contained; also, the Districts of Bugisu and Sebei have been combined. These are now two separate Districts, but only one existed in 1959. Hence no separate vital rates are available for projecting the two Districts separately and it has been necessary to treat them as one unit. Between 1959 and 1969 there was also a shifting of boundaries which involved Bunyoro, Mubende, and West Mengo Districts. The figures for 1959 in this paper are based on the new boundaries—in most cases exact figures could be calculated; where estimates have been made they are so noted.