



## The Demography of Guinea

### Introduction

Since the sudden attainment of independence in 1958, demography and politics have been very closely interlinked in Guinea. In great measure this results from the Guinean government's own belief that the nation's progress can best be measured in demographic terms since conventional economic indicators such as the per capita GDP reveal little of the true state of wellbeing of the people. Certainly the level of infant and child mortality is widely accepted as a basic measure of societal welfare. Unfortunately, however, the unique circumstances of modern Guinea have been such as to make demographic indicators especially problematic. The belief was that so long as the national population total continued to reflect a brisk rate of annual growth then all would be well. This was because such growth must depend upon some combination of falling death rates or rising birth rates, both factors which would indicate that the population was healthy, well-nourished and self-confident.

Since the early 1960s when these ideas were formulated three basic problems have emerged. The first problem was that the model made no allowance for longterm, unbalanced migration. Yet the years since independence have seen the emergence of massive streams of emigration unmatched by any marked immigration. A significant proportion of the total population has voted with its feet to abandon the country for one of the six neighbouring countries with largely unpoliceable land frontiers. The second difficulty lies in the apparent failure to achieve a major victory in reducing death rates especially amongst young children. The third problem relates to the original equation of population size and population growth with international power and internal progress. Once people have become accustomed to thinking in these terms, which in themselves represent a natural extension of traditional African beliefs, it becomes extremely difficult to initiate any reversal in the evaluation of growth or in policies designed to promote growth.

### Baseline Data

In 1954-1955 the colonial government carried out the first large scale demographic survey in the French speaking African territories in Guinea. It is of interest to note that Guinea was chosen as the site for the first of a long series of surveys because it was believed to have the greatest potential for rapid economic development of any of the

French territories in tropical Africa. In many areas, such as regional fertility differentials, the results of this meticulous survey of some 300,000 persons still provides the best, or indeed the only demographic data available for Guinea.

According to the administrative enumerations undertaken by the French authorities prior to 1955, the population had increased from 2.12 million in 1945, to 2.25 million in 1951, to 2.29 million in January 1952, to 2.236 million in 1953, and to 2.435 million in 1954. The average annual rate of natural increase is estimated to have risen to 1.2 per cent during the 1940s from only 0.5 per cent during the 1930s (Conde, 1976). During the preparatory work for the 1954-1955 demographic sample survey, as a result of the examination of sample villages, it was considered necessary to revise the administrative estimate for 1954 upwards raising the de facto population from 2.435 to 2.501 million. This 6 per cent increase would suggest that the previous administrative enumerations had been remarkably accurate.

Estimates based on the demographic sample survey gave the territory as a whole a de facto population of 2.57 million with an overall density of just over 10 persons per square kilometer. There were also some 80,000 persons who were absent more or less temporarily from the territory but resident there.

Although the 1954-1955 survey was a model of its kind, the data could not be used without some adjustments of the reported rates, and the demographers did not agree as to the precise nature of the revisions needed. The French statisticians accepted a rate of natural increase of 2.2 per cent calculated on the basis of the difference between an estimated crude birth rate of 62 per mille and a crude death rate of 40 per mille (Ministere de la France d'Outre-Mer, Service des Statistiques, no date). Even by the standard of other tropical African countries both of these rates were high. Indeed the birth rate is one of the highest ever reported for an entire nation. From his very detailed analysis of the results of the demographic sample survey, using the techniques for the analysis of imperfect data which he himself had developed, Brass found the birth rate to have been exaggerated by the inclusion of children over the age of one possibly because they were still unweaned (Brass, 1968). He estimated the birth rate to be 46 and the death rate to be 37 per mille which would have given a growth rate of 0.9 per cent. This lower estimate does not appear to have been taken into account by any of the agencies of the United Nations, or of the

Guinean, French or American governments in their later estimates. Certainly, the fact that Brass's analysis was published in an English language technical text by Princeton University Press did not help to make it accessible to those most closely concerned in Guinea itself. It is probably not an accident that the results of the survey itself were published in Paris in an undated text. Access to the detailed tabulations of the survey was but one of the many facilitative resources denied to the newly independent government by a French government chagrined by the Guinean preference of 'freedom in poverty to riches in slavery'. Indeed after the vote rejecting the proposed Franco-African Community the French government stopped all technical, economic and financial aid with immediate effect, withdrawing all French administrative personnel and much physical plant and routine documentation from the country (Camara, 1976). Twenty years later, many of Guinea's continuing problems still have their roots in this abrupt and little anticipated break.

The crude vital rates from the demographic sample survey do not give a very vivid indication of the conditions of life for the bulk of the people in Guinea on the eve of independence. It is more revealing to know that there were 223 infant deaths for every thousand births and that only a little more than two-thirds of all children born survived to celebrate a second birthday. An average group of mothers aged 40-44 at that time would have had 5 to 6 children 43 per cent of whom were already dead. The country overall was extremely youthful with some 40 per cent of the total population under the age of fifteen.

#### The Demography of Guinea since Independence

The lively debate over the demographic experience of Guinea since independence centres upon two crucial areas: emigration/desertion and mortality levels. On the one hand are the 'depopulationist' group headed by the emigré demographer Julien Conde. They paint a picture of unrelieved disaster with the countryside depopulated by the out-migration of young men and agricultural production falling and death rates rising as a direct result of a dearth of food consequent upon governmental mismanagement (Conde, 1976). On the other hand are the group of observers who are much more sympathetic to the Guinean government and its aims. Whilst admitting that disturbances associated with the abrupt attainment of independence and with subsequent precipitate policy changes as cultural revolution has succeeded cultural revolution have created setbacks, this group of friends of Guinea, of which Suret-Canale is the most notable member, would argue that considerable progress has been made

on all fronts and is reflected in demographic trends (Suret-Canale, 1970; Adamolekun, 1976). Claude Riviere could formerly have been classified with this group, but more recently as his own experience in Guinea has become more distant his comments have become more critical (Riviere, 1971; 1975; 1976 (a) + (b); 1977).

It is important to note that the Guinean authorities have not always placed themselves amongst those who take an optimistic view of the country's demographic progress. It might have been anticipated that a startlingly high infant mortality estimate of 351 per mille would have originated with the regime's detractors but in fact this is the official figure cited in the Annual Report of the General Inspectorate of Health and Population issued in 1967. In the same year it was also noted that the traditional pre-harvest seasonal food scarcities still occurred at a time of peak agricultural activity.

The Guinean government has made a consistent effort to found its economic planning upon a firm base of economic data. Thus each time that a development plan has been in preparation there has been a flurry of demographic activity (Table 1). This is the more remarkable as there is also a great emphasis, especially in the rural areas, on planning from the grass-roots up in which the local revolutionary bodies (Pouvoirs Revolutionnaires Locals = PRLs) decide upon their own priorities for self-help projects. (There is a revealing description of this process and of some of the difficulties associated with it in the texts prefacing the 1973-1978 Five Year Plan). Such a method of planning actually requires less demographic data than a more centralized system. One could compare the Guinean attitude with the Chinese government's lack of interest in national population totals. In Guinea, however, there are a number of reasons for needing to know population figures as well as a range of ways in which such data are, or could be, made available on a regular basis.

Although political representation is on an area rather than a direct population basis, administrative and political divisions do take population numbers into account. All adult members of the populace of both sexes are expected to be members of the Parti Democratique de Guinee (PDG) and to pay an annual subscription. Figures on the number of party members should be readily capable of conversion by a constant multiplier to population totals, although it should be noted that in the context of party membership an adult is defined as being someone over

Table 1

## Demographic Data and Development Planning in Guinea

<u>Date</u>	<u>Demographic Activity</u>	<u>Population in Millions</u>	<u>Development Planning</u>
1954-5	Demographic Sample Survey	2.57	
1958	(Independence)	2.75 (revised to 2.895)	
1959	Final Results of Demographic Sample Survey published	2.8 (January)	
1960	Census of Conakry National enumeration	2.96	Three Year Plan 1960-1963
1961	Statistical services re-organized		
1962	Vital statistics regulations introduced, enumeration of Conakry, National enumeration	3.14	
1963	Education statistics prepared Labour force statistics prepared	3.36	
1964	Reform of vital statistics office Special edition of statistical bulletin	3.5	Seven Year Plan 1964-1971
1967	Enumeration of de facto population Infant mortality estimate	3.78 dj 3.53 df	
1969		4.2 dj 3.7 df (Riviere)	
1972	National administrative census	5.143 dj 3.643 df	
1973			Five Year Plan 1973-1978
1974	Policy Statement at World Population Conference, Bucharest.		
1975			Target 1980 Exercise 1975-1980
1977	Administrative census	4.527 df?	

the age of seven. Whilst the necessity to produce one subscription per party member might encourage an under-reporting of numbers, the fact that the village shops are assigned scarce and rationed goods on the basis of the population of the areas they serve should counter-balance this tendency. The head-tax was abolished in 1977 with the result that one not altogether bias-free source of population data disappeared. Birth, marriage and death certificates are received from the PRL president; he presides over the administration of justice in disputes concerned with birth, marriage, death, divorce, public fights, minor thefts, succession problems and land disputes. He also supervises the distribution of supplies and of mail. In the muslim areas, the PRL headquarters serves as the mosque and in many cases it is the PRL president who presides over the Friday worship. PRL members meet once a week at the party headquarters to participate in a session of political education.

The PRL president is also responsible for the upkeep of the population register. Births are apparently regularly entered, but the recording of deaths and marriages is less consistent. In the public mobilization which followed the invasion of 1970, many of the PRL executives erected population signs, such as "Population - 1,780 men; 1,997 women; 3,777 militants" (New York Times, 6.11.1971). Whereas in many African countries the problem of establishing a civil registration system lies at the village level, in Guinea, owing to the political structure, the problem at the village level is largely resolved, what remains unresolved is the question of how to co-ordinate the material from the village registers into national totals.

In 1964 the Direction de la Statistique Generale published an unique issue of the Bulletin Special de Statistique. This included three generally compatible but separately derived sets of demographic data. The first set consisted of the application to a revised 1958 base population of 2.895.700 of an accumulated annual rate of increase of 3.0 per cent to give a 1963 total of 3.357.000. The new adoption of the 3 per cent increase rate reflected the government's belief that the downward trend in mortality had been accelerated as a result of its preventive health programmes. (However the actual numbers of births and deaths given for the years 1958-1963 in the Bulletin were clearly derived from the application of a crude birth rate of 70 and a death rate of 40 to the population totals which implied a startling rise in fertility rather than a decline in mortality).

The second data set was based on the estimates of a UNESCO

expert who used the estimated population of 3.336 million to prepare a 'theoretical age distribution'. He also noted that a rate of natural increase of 2.4 per cent corresponded to a probable expectation of life at birth of 42.5 years, which seemed most compatible with the mortality situation in Guinea. The rate of 2.7 per cent 'generally used' in Guinea would imply that the average life expectancy had already reached 50 years which could not easily be reconciled with the crude death rates commonly adopted of 30 to 40 per mille.

The third set of data centred on the population total of 3,139,728 found by the administrative enumeration in August 1962. This figure was certainly high enough to justify an upward revision of the rate of natural increase previously accepted. Unfortunately none of the estimates clearly specified whether the de facto or the de jure population was being discussed. Whatever the actual situation, in preparing the Seven Year Plan of 1964 the government assumed that the total population was approaching 3.5 million at an annual rate of approximately 3 per cent, and considered that the characteristically youthful structure of the population together with a further decline in mortality would result in continuing rapid growth.

The administrative enumeration of May 1967 revealed a de jure total of 3.78 million. The de facto population was apparently 250,000 less according to Suret-Canal, the former Director of Guinea's Institut National de Recherche et Documentation. Claude Riviere, the former head of the social science faculty of the Institut Polytechnique (now the University) in Conakry, reported a de jure population of 4.2 million with 0.5 million emigrants for early 1969. The figure of 4.2 million was also cited by President Sekou Toure at a press conference early in 1971.

On December 30, 1972 a further administrative census found a total population of 5.143 million (Table 2). Contrary to Conde's (1976) report, reason suggests that this total must have included emigrants. A December 1972 de jure population of 5.143 million and a de facto population of 1.5 million less is very broadly in line with the 1969 reported totals of 4.2 de jure of which 0.5 million were emigrants, and a 1967 official statement of 3.78 de jure of whom 0.24 were emigrants.

The United Nations Population Division estimated the 1975 (de jure ?) population as 4.146, and the average annual rate of growth during 1970-1975 as 2.38, deriving from a 1970 death rate of 22.9 and birth rate of 46.6 (United Nations, 1979). Whilst the assumption of a decline in mortality is reasonable, although the rate of decline may

Table 2 A

## Guinea 1972 Administration and Population

<u>Administrative Region</u>	<u>Number of Divisions</u>	<u>Number of PRLs</u>	<u>Number of Public Servants &amp; Wage Earners</u>	<u>Number of Traders</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>Population Total</u>
Beyla .....	12	322	851	493	4.926	192.212
Boffa .....	6	227	907	4	5.238	121.134
Boké .....	9	133	3.698	450	10.444	178.574
Conakry .....	9	111	44.390	4.169	94.914	525.671
Dabola .....	4	140	744	100	3.535	83.070
Dalaba .....	8	186	753	283	4.942	149.637
Dinguiraye .....	6	236	372	124	3.380	107.162
Dubréka .....	6	278	3.047	253	7.249	145.322
Faranah .....	9	334	905	278	5.915	135.466
Forécariah .....	7	173	1.228	265	5.977	132.184
Fria .....	3	55	1.187	244	6.404	54.393
Gaoual .....	6	130	842	75	3.603	129.693
Gueckédou .....	7	496	1.243	933	10.814	173.915
Kankan .....	10	434	2.273	1.603	19.675	264.684
Kérouané .....	4	122	641	343	2.232	44.850
Kindia .....	8	413	3.958	1.923	17.234	224.396
Niss'dougou .....	11	628	1.625	787	14.080	177.607
Koindara .....	5	110	1.006	134	3.404	88.427
Kouroussa .....	8	252	660	110	4.695	121.333
Labé .....	13	210	1.800	943	14.713	418.643
Macenta .....	8	358	1.777	850	10.054	167.740
Mali .....	7	168	892	144	5.617	193.973
Mamou .....	3	333	1.983	596	10.054	184.633
N'Zérékoré .....	8	297	2.754	1.376	24.040	290.743
Pita .....	7	271	754	311	6.615	206.034
Siguiré .....	12	357	860	490	8.175	253.753
Télimélé .....	11	206	568	127	6.365	130.981
Tougué .....	6	136	643	94	4.806	112.295
Yomou .....	4	116	501	147	4.752	72.670
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>222</b>	<b>7.482</b>	<b>82.865</b>	<b>17.703</b>	<b>323.852</b>	<b>5.143.284</b>

Source : Administrative Census of 30 December 1972

The original table has a note to the effect that adults not classified were peasants, farmers, herdsmen and artisans.



Table 2 B

## Guinea: Population Density by Regions 1959 - 1972

REGIONS	AREA (sq km)	POPULATION			AVERAGE POP. DENSITY PER km <sup>2</sup>		
		1959	1963	1972	1959	1963	1972
Beyla	17,452	141,500	170,000	192,212	8.11	9.74	11.01
Boffa	6,003	66,199	90,000	121,134	11.03	14.99	20.18
Boké	11,053	85,750	105,000	178,574	7.76	9.50	16.16
Conakry	308	78,388	172,000	525,671	254.51	558.44	1706.72
Dabola	6,000	32,448	54,000	83,070	5.41	9.00	13.85
Dalaba	5,750	101,729	105,000	149,667	17.70	18.26	26.03
Dinguiraye	11,000	50,079	67,000	109,162	4.55	6.09	9.92
Dubrèka	5,676	83,154	86,000	145,322	14.65	15.15	25.60
Faranah	12,397	74,154	94,000	135,466	5.98	7.58	10.93
Forécariah	4,265	64,800	98,000	132,184	15.20	22.98	30.99
Fria	n.a.	n.a.	27,000	54,398	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Gaoual	11,503	71,818	81,000	129,693	6.24	7.04	11.27
Gueckédou	4,157	118,926	130,000	173,915	28.61	31.27	41.84
Kankan	27,488	157,662	176,000	264,684	5.74	6.40	9.63
Kin	8,828	110,448	152,000	224,396	12.51	17.22	25.42
Kissidougou	8,872	127,975	133,000	177,607	14.42	14.99	20.12
Kouroussa	16,405	84,200	93,000	121,338	5.13	5.67	7.40
Labé	7,616	257,155	283,000	418,648	33.77	37.16	54.97
Macenta	8,710	114,500	123,000	167,749	13.15	14.12	19.26
Mali	8,800	122,817	152,000	193,973	13.96	17.27	22.04
Mamou	6,159	81,700	162,000	184,633	13.26	26.30	29.98
N'Zérékoré	10,183	211,209	195,000	290,743	20.74	19.15	28.59
Pita	4,000	125,300	154,000	206,064	31.32	38.50	51.52
Siguiri	23,377	154,771	179,000	253,758	6.62	7.66	10.80
Télimélé	8,155	110,211	147,000	190,981	13.51	18.03	23.44
Tougue	6,200	69,840	75,000	112,295	11.26	12.10	18.11
Youkounkoun	5,500	54,816	55,000	88,427	9.97	10.00	16.11
TOTAL	245,857	2,751,549	3,360,000	5,413,284	11.20	13.67	22.00

Source: Administrative Censuses.

be greater than that which has been achieved in Guinea, the assumption of a decline in fertility resulting from a desire to limit total family size would appear to be implausible. These estimates are apparently based upon the application of set regional formulae which take no account of the special circumstances of individual countries.

The most recent Guinean data come from the administrative census of September 1977 which found a population total of 4.527 million (Table 3). Even if it is assumed that this figure is net of emigration, which is not customary in the presentation of such figures in Guinea, it still represents a puzzling fall from the 1972 de facto total of 4.643. At this point in time it is not possible to evaluate the 1977 data which could reflect an incomplete data gathering operation, a marked upsurge in emigration or the inaccuracy of the 1972 data. The Guinea government's eagerness to secure accurate population data can be judged from the fact that a full demographic census for February 1981 is already in preparation with the assistance of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. The first request for United Nations assistance with a full demographic census was in fact made as early as 1971.

#### Population Distribution

Clearly one of the most important questions concerning the distribution of Guinea's population relates to the proportion of Guinea's citizens who are resident outside the country. In theory it should be possible to total up the number of Guineans resident abroad through an examination of the censuses of neighbouring countries. In practice the proportion of resident non-nationals is a politically sensitive issue in many West African countries and data on specific nationalities is rarely available. The problem is further compounded in the case of ethnic groups which span international boundaries since the census-taker has no means of knowing the nationality of the respondent who may have very cogent reasons for wishing to conceal it.

Conde (1976) has presented a table which he claims is based on survey data from neighbouring countries. This shows a total of 2.3 million Guineans resident abroad in 1975 with 0.9 million resident in the Ivory Coast and a further 0.7 million resident in Senegal. Extreme as this claim may be, it should be realised that the figure of 1.5 million Guineans resident abroad in 1972 was given by the President himself when announcing the results of the 1972 administrative census. There can be few countries in the world which would claim to have almost 30 per cent of their citizens resident outside the country.

Like the colonial government before it, the Guinean government is strongly disturbed by the continuing movement of the population towards Conakry. Indeed, on several occasions there have been attempts to prevent such migrations by the use of force as in the January 1963 decree and the police sweeps of 1965. Despite these countermoves it is estimated that the population of Conakry itself has grown from 26,000 in 1945, to 78,000 in 1958, 197,000 in 1967 and 233,000 in 1977. In 1967 it was estimated that less than 10 per cent of the country's population lived in urban centres of more than 10,000 inhabitants, in 1977 the urban population was estimated at more than 25 per cent of the total (Table 3).

Despite the government's emphasis upon equality and participatory democracy there is still, in Guinea as in Tanzania, a gap between urban and rural living standards which is further re-enforced by the emphasis upon 'self-help' in rural development projects. As elsewhere in Africa, young people who hold some kind of educational diploma are rarely willing to remain in the rural areas. This is still true despite the very great emphasis which has been placed upon creating an educational system which is relevant to rural conditions and integrates the pupils into the broader, productive, social context. The Guinean authorities actually favour an increase in the rate of growth of the population because they believe that the more rapid the rate, the younger the average age of the population and the easier it is to keep alive the youthful spirit of constant revolution. Currently the plan is that rural development will be based upon 'socialist cooperative societies which should emerge from our schools located in rural centres. Indeed, after a course lasting twelve to thirteen years, most students at our Centers for Rural Education (Centres d'Enseignement Revolutionnaire) should form socialist cooperatives' (Horoya, 14.6. 1973). The idea is that production brigades formed at school should continue as socialist cooperatives whose example will in turn inspire the farmers to form cooperatives of their own.

#### Mortality

Very little is known of post-independence mortality levels in Guinea. Conde (1976) has argued that all the available social and economic statistics indicate a significant deterioration in the level of living between 1955 and 1975. He claims that food production per capita and numbers of medical and paramedical personnel per capita have declined; that medical supplies are insufficient; that the sanitary infrastructure has deteriorated and that the mobile preventive health teams have disappeared. On these grounds he argues that mortality levels have actually risen during

Table 3

## Guinea: 1977 Administration and Population

Ministry of Rural Development	Numbers of			Population		
	Regions	Arrond- issements	PRL	Rural	Urban	Working Total
Conakry	4	31	301	647,575	232,641	880,210
Boké	4	31	247	318,558	114,442	433,000
Kindia	4	47	372	440,684	158,316	599,000
Faranah	5	48	353	479,675	172,325	652,000
Labé	6	55	394	555,455	199,539	755,000
Kankan	5	53	404	417,142	49,858	567,000
N'Zérékoré	5	47	338	471,584	169,416	641,000
Total	33	317	2,409	3,330,673	1,196,537	4,527,210

Source: Administrative Census 28, September, 1977.

## Guinea Basic Educational Statistics 1957-1978

	Years	Boys	Girls	Total	Schools	Classes	Teachers
1st cycle	1957-58	33 000	9 500	42 500	287	450	843
	1967-68	100 200	44 200	144 400	1 560	3 730	3 894
	1977-78	157 200	80 800	238 000	2 370	5 266	5 626
2nd + 3rd cycle	1957-58	2 179	360	2 547	9	27	58
	1967-68	24 321	4 797	29 118	252	882	1 086
	1977-78	62 068	23 708	85 776	319	1 587	3 206

Source: Government of Guinea.

the past two decades.

Conde's evaluation rests both upon too rosey a view of the past and upon too grim a view of the present. In 1953 outside Conakry there were in fact "only four maternity clinics, three dispensaries, and four buildings with hospital facilities" (Houis, 1953:57). Although there are continuing supply problems immunization programmes do continue. In 1977 mobile teams vaccinated 123,269 children against measles which was identified as the most serious fatal disease amongst Guinean children by the Division of Medical Sciences of the United States National Research Council in 1966. At the close of 1978 there were 45 maternal and child health centres in the country. More disturbing than a lack of medical facilities or personnel are the recorded mortality rates within the medical facilities. In 1977 at the Donka maternity in Conakry the number of infant deaths was equivalent to a quarter of all births and there were 55 maternal deaths per 10,000 births. Fuller information on mortality levels will probably not be available until the multi-round demographic survey planned for 1982-1983. Calculation of mortality levels from census data affected by heavy emigration might prove very misleading.

Taking all the available evidence into account a reasonable estimate of the crude death rate would be 24 per mille (the United Nations estimate for Upper Volta is 26). In a stable population with a crude birth rate of 50 this would be compatible with an expectation of life at birth of 40 years (Coale and Demeny, 1966: Model 9).

### Fertility

Since the 1954-1955 Demographic sample Survey there have been no new national fertility data for Guinea. A few small-scale sociological surveys, mainly in Conakry give no reason to believe that fertility is falling, although there does appear to be some delay of marriage amongst the very small group of women with secondary education (Table 3(b)). The government believes that fertility has risen, and it is almost certainly true that, in those regions which were formerly afflicted by disease induced sub-fertility, fertility levels have risen (Lestrangle, 1950).

In terms of attitudes towards fertility, a 1979 United Nations Fund for Population Activities' mission reported that whilst male party officials were strongly opposed to the idea of birth control, party women said that they wanted to space their children 'so that they could be well cared for, and half would not be lost'. Since independence Guinea has been distinguished for its genuine commitment to raising the status of women so that they are able to participate fully in national development. This commitment is the more striking since Guinea retains a strong Muslim

tradition. Marriage laws have been reformed: polygyny has been virtually outlawed, the legal age of marriage for females has been raised to 17, unilateral male divorce has been curbed and widows' rights have been protected. Girls' access to education has been greatly increased, and working women are legally protected and receive equal wages with men. As long as the bulk of the population is still engaged in semi-subsistence agriculture then the value of most protective or anti-discriminatory legislation remains more symbolic than practical.

The really striking feature of women's participation in Guinea is in the political sphere. There are 8,000 special committees composed solely of women at the village and city-ward levels; a quarter of the members of the National Assembly are women; women occupy positions at every level of the PDG and are present in strength in the trade unions, cooperative organizations and market associations. Anyone who believes that raising the status of women will, in itself, lower fertility levels should look very seriously at the Guinean case for in Guinea women and the government have united to create radical changes in women's status without any apparent effect upon fertility to date. There is evidence of some opposition to women's emancipation exemplified by Riviere's (1977:222-3) comment that "rapid changes in the status of women have created certain psychological and sociological problems such as struggles for power, bourgeois ambitions, a distaste for so-called women's work, sexual freedom, and aberrations in interpreting emancipation". One area of dispute centres on women's sexual freedom and from that debate new attitudes towards fertility may ultimately emerge.

In the meantime, Derman's anthropological study carried out in the Fouta Djalon in 1966-67 shows how the traditional pronatalist values of village society have survived all the changes which followed independence. Today the prestige of substantial demographic expansion of the lineage remains strong even in those areas which have been most strongly affected by technological change and agricultural mechanization (Riviere, 1976).

#### Conclusion

In print, in a yearbook or another official publication, a population total appears to constitute a known fact. In the case of Guinea it is necessary to delve deeper.

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