

## NATIONAL URBANIZATION STRATEGY AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ZAIRE

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**ABSTRACT** Like most former European colonies, Zaire has retained a colonial structure in both its economic and urban systems. The paper argues that maintaining such systems is inappropriate for the country's economic development. Considering that the urban population is increasing fast and that the existing urban system is skewed in favor of one city, Kinshasa, the paper makes the following points:

- (1) Urbanization strategy should be linked with industrialization strategy. The latter should be designed according to the spatial distribution of the existing resources.
- (2) It is necessary to improve conditions in urban centers, which will house the majority of the Zairean population in decades to come. The establishment of autonomous local governments is a way of insuring the efficiency of cities and towns.

**Key Words:** Urbanization; Industrialization strategy; Local Government.

### INTRODUCTION

This paper deals with the urbanization phenomenon and the resulting urban problems in Zaire. A feasible scenario for regional development, considered as a way of bridging regional strategy and industrialization strategy, is suggested and the necessary conditions for the betterment of urban life in Zaire are discussed.

The people of Zaire have never wanted the existing system of cities; it was progressively established during the colonial era, and served more or less efficiently the interests of the colonial economy. The disruption of that economy, symbolized by the political independence, and the (failed!) attempts by the Zairean governments to create new structures have resulted in a series of contradictory movements between fixed and mobile factors of production. Cities and towns, losing their colonial shapes (Lukumwena, in prep.), survive in spite of declining economic bases, but their fixed infrastructures have not diversified fast enough to match the tremendous movements of people pushed out of rural areas by the crisis affecting the agricultural sector (Kalala, in prep.) and attracted by the various political and economic "advantages" of Kinshasa, the capital city.

Rebuilding the Zairean economy implies the building of new urban centers and metropolises and the death of some others, in legal and administrative as well as in physical terms. However, as demonstrated by several experiences in the Third World [small towns programme in Malaysia (Choguill, 1989), new capital city in Nigeria], the life of any community is determined by its economic base and urban communities involve by their sole extence complex problems that arise from fac-

tors such as their size, location, and population composition. Establishing the system of cities that will support a new outward-manufacturing-oriented industrial strategy that we want, is a multidimensional process involving political, administrative, and economic reforms as well as a change in the mental attitudes of the urban dwellers and the people expected to rule and manage those urban communities.

## SPATIAL PROBLEMS IN ZAIRE

After decades of economic policies focusing on fast industrialization, it appeared in most less developed countries (LDCs) that rapid population growth, the concentration of the population and economic activities in big cities, and the corollary problems involved, such as inadequacy of housing and other basic services and urban poverty, were major issues that needed to be addressed. Several Third World governments realized then the importance of spatial planning and started carrying out national urbanization policy programmes. The debate on whether the observed proportions of urban population and urban growth rates in LDCs were at tolerable levels resulted in a clash between optimists and pessimists. For the pessimists, LDCs are unable to cope with the infrastructure requirements of rapid urban growth and should limit the growth of their big cities. For the optimists, inspired by the experience of developed countries, city growth is still a central force raising living standards through its impact on output and diffusion of innovations; LDCs should then favor an open city approach (Mera, 1973) while adopting policies concerning employment, housing, public services, and urban finance, that improve efficiency in urban areas as well as reduce urban poverty (Linn, 1983). A consensus was reached on the conclusion that the spatial distribution of people and economic activities cannot be discarded from national economic program (Evans, 1989; Renaud, 1981; Alonso, 1972; United Nations, 1968).

The new policy, often called National Urban Development Strategy or, simply, National Urbanization Strategy, adopted by many LDCs was considered as a way of dealing with rural-urban disparities. Its main objectives were the alteration of the pace and direction of rural-urban migration and the redistribution of the urban population from big cities to small towns.

Zaire has never adopted a formal urban development strategy (*per se*), but the same complaints that, "Kinshasa is too big," that prompted the government to adopt coercive measures to send unemployed people back to their rural homes, or that, "rural-urban disparities are at an intolerable level and should be corrected," can be heard in many circles. Three characteristics give to spatial problems a particular resonance in the country:

(1) Low income combined with high regional income disparity. Although a large country (2,345,000 km<sup>2</sup>) with abundant natural resources, the Republic of Zaire is, by international standards, a low-income country. With a total population estimated at 34.5 million in mid-1989, the Gross National Product per capita is as low as US\$ 260 for 1989, compared with \$ 120 for Ethiopia, \$ 2,960 for Gabon, \$ 20,910 for the USA and \$ 23,810 for Japan. The average annual growth rate of

GNP per capita for the period 1965–89 was negative (–2.0%). As an indicator of regional inequalities, the maximum-minimum ratio of regional income disparity was 4.1 in 1957 and 6.4 in 1970 (Bezy et al., 1981).

(2) Low population density. The Republic of Zaire is underpopulated: the average population density is 12 people/km<sup>2</sup> and as low as 7.5 in rural areas. There are, however, some regions with a density of more than 40 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>: Mai-Ndombe, Kinshasa, the suburban areas of Kananga, Lubumbashi, Kisangani, Mbuji-Mayi, and certain rural areas of eastern Kivu and Haut-Zaire (Bukavu, Goma, Bunia).

(3) The concentration of people in some regions and the ethnic heterogeneity give to regional disparity a political dimension. Six times bigger than Japan, Zaire is a mosaic of more than two hundred ethnic groups. It is well-known that regional disparities can lead to political unrest, and Zaire has had her tribal and ethnic turmoils in the thirty-one years of her existence.

Zaire is a mineral economy in the sense that extractive industries are the main component of the national production. Mineral products such as copper, cobalt, diamond, and zinc, extracted in the provinces of Shaba, Kasai and Haut-Zaire are usually exported as raw materials and the revenue from those exports represents two-thirds of the total export revenue of the country. The agricultural sector consists of a "food agriculture," which, using traditional methods, produces food-stuffs, mainly cassava, maize, and peanuts, and an "industrial agriculture" which provides the local industrial sector and foreign countries with raw materials, such as cotton, palm-oil, rubber, coffee, and timber.

In 1956, the total population was 13 million of which 78% lived in rural areas and the natural rate of population growth was 2.3%. In 1980, the proportion of rural population decreased to 66% and the natural rate of population growth increased to 3.1%. These facts prove that the urban population is increasing rapidly. The annual rate of increase in the population of the five big cities is as high as 10%. Kinshasa, the capital, was inhabited by 2,653,558 people in 1984, compared with 476,819 in 1960 (550% increase in 24 years). The distribution of the population shows that there are four poles of population concentration in Zaire (Fig. 1); these four poles are economically unequal and are not integrated to one another by their infrastructure. The four poles are: Pole I, the economic region of Kinshasa, (including Kinshasa, the province of Bas-Zaire and part of the province of Bandundu and Kasai Region, with 47.7% of the total population; Pole II, the region of Great Lakes and the province of Haut-Zaire, with 29.1% of the total population; Pole III, the province of Equateur and Mai-Ndombe, with 10.6% of the population; and Pole IV, the province of Shaba, with 12.6% of the population.

Pole IV is the main mineral region and is linked to Poles I and II by rail. But there is no reliable transportation between Poles III and IV, even if Kinshasa can be reached from Pole III by ship on the Zaire River. The structure of the Zairean economy has not changed since the colonial period: mineral extractive industries in Pole IV and concentration of light industries in Pole I. The transportation network was built to help export the minerals in Pole IV through the main African ports: Lobito, in Angola, from Dilolo, Dar-es-Salaam, in Tanzania, from Kalemie; South African and Mozambican ports from Sakania; and Matadi, the

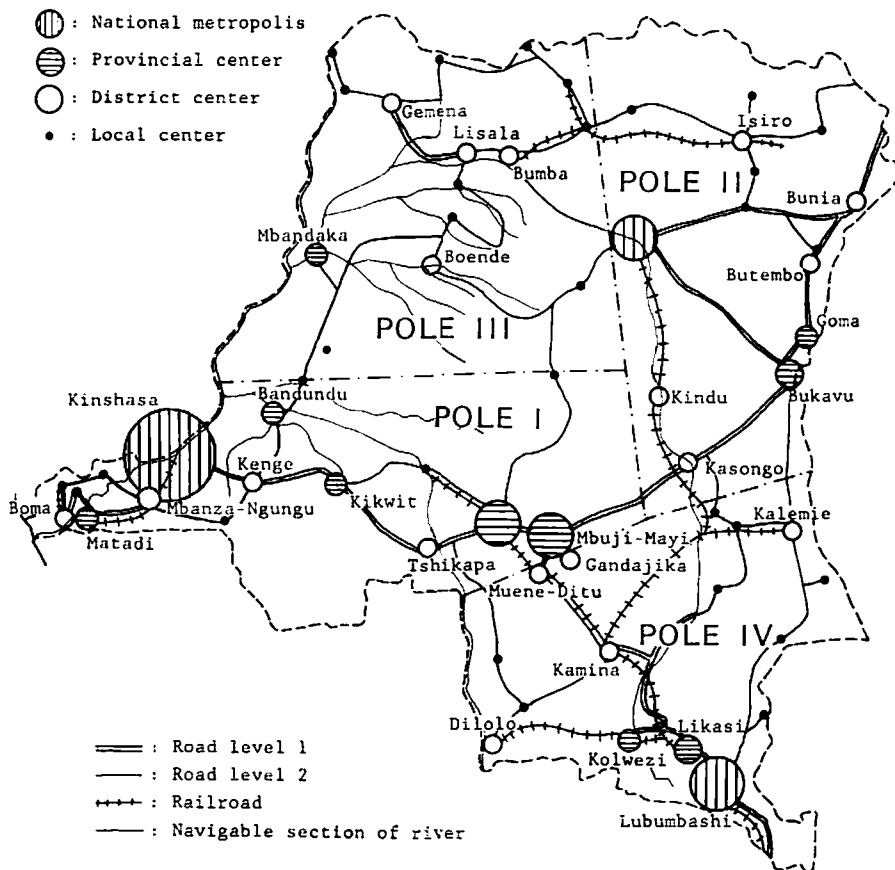


Fig. 1. Spatial structure of Zaire.

Source: Republic of Zaire, Ministry of Public Works and Urban Planning 1982. Aménagement du Territoire. Esquisse d'un Schema National.

principal port of Zaire. A short and old-fashioned railway exists in the north, linking Isiro and Bondo with Bumba so that agricultural products of that region, cotton, coffee, and palm-oil, can be transported to Kinshasa by ship, and then to Matadi by road or railway (Fig. 1). The industrial Pole I is the location of light industries, ranging from agroindustries to car assembly plants, textiles, chemicals and metallic industries.

Because Zaire is a large country, regional disparities, especially the unequal distribution of investments, have naturally been given a high profile by the government because of their political sensitivity. Secessions and other bloody unrests have erupted in the mineral provinces and the highly populated areas of Kivu and Bandundu. It is generally considered that Kinshasa is already "too big," that economic activities and people should be decentralized. This claim still needs to be proved, but the evidence of fast urbanization and urban concentration is a fact. Let me first present the general data concerning the process of urbanization in

Table 1. Urbanization Indicators-Zaïre (%).

Indicators	1950	1960	1970	1980
Per cent urban population	19.10	22.30	30.30	34.20
Average annual rate of:				
-rural population growth	1.98	0.94	2.25	2.16
-urban population growth	3.93	5.09	4.04	4.42
-total population growth	2.38	2.02	2.83	2.99
Urban-rural population growth differential	1.95	4.15	1.79	2.26
Components of urban growth <sup>a</sup> :				
-rural-urban migration	39.40	60.30	30.00	32.40
-natural increase	60.60	39.70	70.00	67.60
Share of the largest city in total urban population	8.00	14.00	...	28.00

Source: Davis, K. 1976; World Bank 1986.

<sup>a</sup>: Calculated by the author.

### Zaire (Table 1).

The proportion of the urban population in the total population, has steadily increased from 19.1% in 1950 to 34.2% in 1980. The country is thus on the path of replacing the traditional rural order with an urban order. In 1980, one Zairean citizen out of three lived in an urban center, here considered as an agglomeration of 20,000 people or more. There is no indication that this trend will be reversed or will slow in the near future. The average growth rate of the urban population is more than double that of the rural population. Urban areas will thus absorb a large proportion of the country's population. Because the tempo of urbanization is so fast in a country plagued with economic problems, it is important to look at the components of urban growth. Theoretically, two factors are believed to make for city growth: rural-urban migration and natural increase. Table 1 shows that, except for the period 1950-60, natural increase has been the primary factor for urban growth in Zaire. In 1980 the aggregate urban growth rate was as follows: 67.6% by natural increase and 32.4% by migration from the rural areas. The fact that rural-urban migration outweighed natural increase in the 1950s is certainly due to the political situation of the period. Proindependence movements that started in the mid-1950s brought crowds of people who objected to administrative regulations that limited intercity or interregional mobility towards large cities. The political struggle took place in the cities where people believed the benefits of the independence could be maximized. However, because most rural-to-urban migrants were young people in their most fertile age, the relative contribution of migration to urban growth was reduced because migration also increased the urban population.

Another important phenomenon is the high level of concentration of people and economic activities in the capital city of Kinshasa. After the depression years from 1929 to 1934, and especially after independence, the city experienced rapid population growth (Fig. 2), resulting in a process of urban spread that is still out of control. The city's occupied area has increased from 2,331 ha. in 1950 to 17,922 ha. in 1975. By its feature as a principal entrepot of the colonial economic system, Kinshasa attracted rural migrants from the north by steamers linking Kisangani (former

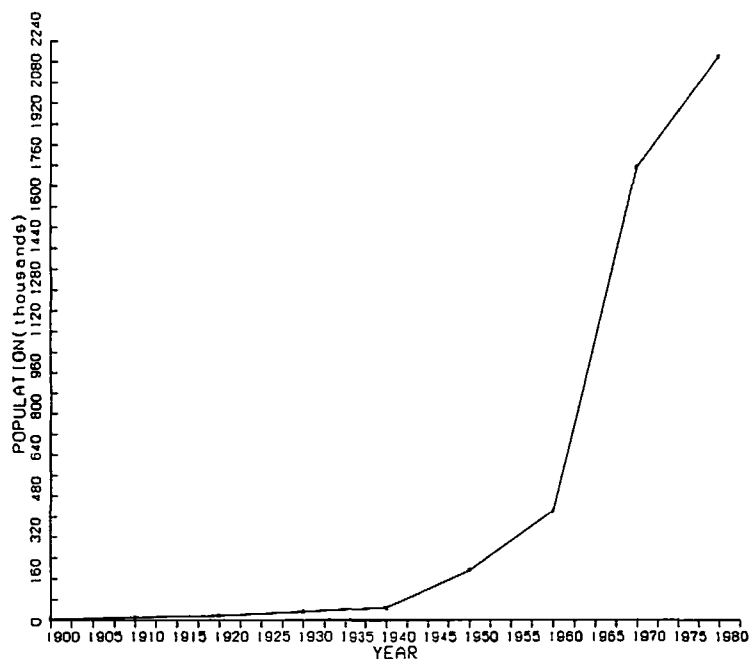


Fig. 2. Growth of the population of Kinshasa.  
Source: Hance, W. A. 1970. United Nations 1986.

Stanleyville) and Kinshasa, and from the neighboring provinces of Bas-Zaïre and Bandundu. The proportion of the city's population to the total urban population is 28% in 1980 compared with 14% in 1960, whereas the second and third cities, Lubumbashi and Mbuji-Mayi, make up 7 and 5% of the total urban population, respectively.

The dominance of Kinshasa is, however, even more pronounced in economic terms (Table 2). The province of Shaba (former Katanga) produces 88% of the mining industry output (representing 26.5% of GDP), 30% of the manufacturing sector output and 33.5% of the transport sector, but Kinshasa dominates the manufacturing, construction and commercial sectors. Furthermore, in 1970, Kinshasa

Table 2. Distribution of GDP and population by province-1970 (%).

PROVINCES	AGRI	MINE	MANF	CONS	TRAN	CCE	SERV	POP
KINSHASA	0.9	0	42.5	42.2	25.9	37.4	17.0	6.1
BAS-ZAIRE	12.6	0	17.7	23.9	8.7	5.0	8.6	6.9
BANDUNDU	14.2	0	0.5	4.8	5.6	5.1	5.9	12.0
EQUATEUR	17.4	0	1.5	3.5	5.6	4.9	12.2	11.2
HAUT-ZAIRE	18.6	0.9	3.1	1.9	8.1	7.7	12.9	15.6
KIVU	14.1	3.2	2.2	0.4	5.4	6.0	10.7	15.5
SHABA	10.2	87.9	29.5	18.0	33.5	20.3	23.5	12.7
KASAI-ORIENTAL	5.4	6.6	1.5	3.0	2.0	5.1	4.4	8.7
KASAI OCCIDENTAL	6.5	1.4	1.5	2.3	5.2	8.5	4.8	11.3

Source: de Saint Moulin, L. 1973, La répartition du PIB par région, *Zaire-Afrique*, 73.

accounted for 20% of total employment, 30% of wages paid to Zairean nationals, 19.5% of public revenues, and 24% of public expenditure. In 1978, 91% of bank term deposits were made in Kinshasa. From 1969 to 1976, Kinshasa received 35.6% of all investment projects carried out under the Investment Act. In 1975, half of the oil products and 72% of the national electric energy were consumed in Kinshasa, and 45% of the households receiving clean water in the country were found there. In addition, the largest university of the country and 11 other higher education facilities are located in the city, attracting as many as 12,000 students, a half of the total number of college students of the country.

The rapid growth of Kinshasa has not occurred without costs. In 1969, 60% of the city population were reported to live in areas classified as "slums and squatter areas." The high cost of living, high rate of unemployment, and insufficient provisions for public services have prompted public authorities as well as many scholars to believe that Kinshasa is "too big" and that decentralization is necessary. However, this is a delicate issue because policies that affect the location of people and firms have long-term effects and can be very costly if they lead to a less than optimal allocation and less efficient spatial distribution of resources.

With regards to the points just raised above, I would like to argue that:

- (1) Urbanization is a consequence of economic development; thus as income per capita rises, it is expected that more people will concentrate in urban areas.
- (2) However, an economy may not be able to develop without concentrating resources in particular regions in the initial stages.
- (3) A spatial strategy, or urbanization strategy, is, therefore, necessary in order to cope with the problems that the initial concentration may bring about.

In Zaire, as in many other LDCs, there are some additional arguments to be made:

- (1) The rapid process of urbanization that is taking place does not accompany any improvement in the level of income per capita.
- (2) The direct consequences of the above are numerous and lead to the existence of inefficient cities in terms of size, pricing of transportation and other public services, which are highly subsidized because with low income, residents cannot pay for those services at their market prices.
- (3) The integration of urbanization strategy with industrialization strategy namely, a regional policy is even more important in Zaire than in some developed countries. The urbanization strategy should lead to a spatial structure in accordance with the needs of the industrial strategy.

The objective of remainder of this paper is, therefore, to focus on this regional policy and to discuss the prerequisites of a successful urban policy, i.e., enhancing the efficiency of existing and possibly new cities. The premise is that, in Zaire, too, an urban order will replace the existing rural order.

## URBANIZATION STRATEGY AND INDUSTRIALIZATION STRATEGY<sup>(1)</sup>

As a former colony, Zaire has been assigned the task of providing the country's ruling manufacturing industry with raw materials. The existing transportation net-

work is a clear indication of this (Fig. 1). The manufacturing sector is clustered in two regions : Kinshasa and the province of Bas-Zaïre produce necessary consumer goods (soap, beer, etc.) and the province of Shaba produces similar goods especially for the giant mining enterprise GECAMINES and its employees.

For Zaïre to grow, what kind of industrial strategy is appropriate, considering the country's stock of natural, financial and human resources and the conditions prevailing in the world economy? The urgent objective for the Republic of Zaïre is to reduce the level of economic dependency on foreign imports and to increase its economic self-reliance. An "outward-oriented industrialization" strategy is necessary, which consists of more local processing of raw materials for export while increasing the proportion at which domestic consumption of elementary goods such as food, clothing, housing, and medicine, is satisfied by local supply. The debate over import-substitution versus export promotion has been settled by the empirical evidence that "outward-industry-oriented" economies have experienced a faster structural change in output, export, and employment, better performance in factor use and overall efficiency, and higher GNP growth rates (Chenery & Syrquin, 1975 ; Chenery et al., 1986). The truth is that only export can yield the necessary earnings to avoid both what Julius Nyerere, the former President of Tanzania, called, the "import strangulation," and what I label, the "debt trap." Furthermore, it is a necessity to locally supply primary goods such as food, clothing, and construction materials.

It is evident from an economic standpoint that the first component of this strategy involving the local processing of raw materials would lead to a concentration of industrial units and, consequently, of people. The determining factor of location is transportation cost, i.e., those locations that minimize transportation costs should be selected. Because the mineral raw materials are concentrated in the province of Shaba, and Zaïre is a quasi-land-locked country with Matadi and its extensions Muanda and Banana as the only exit from national territory, the industrial belt public authorities have dreamed of for a long time should be established along the passage Lubumbashi-Kananga-Kenge-Banana, following the already existing high voltage line from Inga to Shaba. This passage would be the focal settlement of industries like petrochemicals and machinery, taking advantage of relatively cheap electric energy from Inga and the spread effects of the necessary infrastructure projects to be carried out (see Fig. 3). The questions concerning the size, ownership, technology (capital- or labor-intensive) of the production units to be created should be answered taking account of the following precise and objective criteria: (1) scale economies; (2) competitiveness on the world markets; (3) necessity to speed the process of internal capital accumulation.

These three criteria actually imply tradeoffs: there is a trade-off between efficiency and equity in determining the size and level of spatial and/or industrial concentration. In designing the technology to be used there is a trade-off between the factor endowments (capital is rare while land and labor are abundant) and the technological threshold set by the leading players in the international markets. The trade-off between national capital and foreign capital has led many African governments in the euphoric years that followed political independence to legally and politically discriminate foreign capital while economically they could not survive without



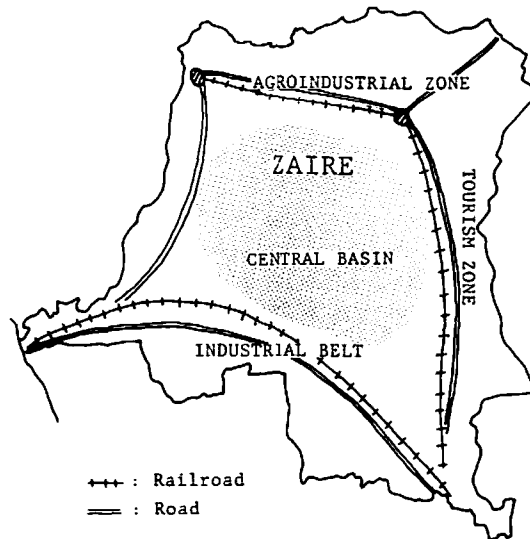


Fig. 3. Potential spatial structure of Zaire.

capital inflow. The Zairianisation experiences of the early 1970s are one illustration. Kupanhy (in prep.), presents a feasible scenario for the development of the manufacturing industry. It is important to note that in today's highly competitive world markets, entry is not easy, nor is it free. As Kuphany stresses, the African market, while not large, would be a practical test field to gain both technological and marketing skills. The production of light but highly value-added parts for cars, electrical appliances, new electrical appliances that suit African cooking are feasible.

The perverse effects likely caused by such a concentrated industrial base would have to be counter-balanced by the location in the agriculture-based North, Northwest and East of resource-based manufacturing industries destined to both local consumption and export. Agroindustry (textiles, food industry, and rubber) would be the leading economic sector of those regions. The products would be shipped using a network of well-planned roads leading to the airports of Kisangani, Goma, Gbadolite and to the South (Fig. 3). Transportation costs have to be minimized to guarantee the success of this plan. The Central Basin surrounded by the cities of Ilebo, Kindu and Boende would be an ideal location for a science city and a new capital city, two projects the country would certainly need in the long-term. The region of Great Lakes along the borders with Zambia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda is already a valuable asset for the tourism industry that needs to be upgraded with investments in roads, accommodations, and attraction spots.

The suggestions sketched above constitute what I consider as a probable regional policy for the development of Zaire. The premise is to benefit from existing natural resources with the establishment of industries based on them. Labor force, a highly mobile resource in Zaire, would certainly move where employment oppor-

tunities would be created. New urban centers can be created, just as the factory-towns of the Copperbelt, Kolwezi, Likasi, Kipushi, and Lubumbashi were born when the extraction of mineral resources began in Shaba. To take advantage of agglomeration economies, spatial concentration would be unavoidable. Given the large size of the country, transportation would be a tremendously significant constraint, especially because capital is limited and the choice between investing in directly productive activities, i.e., industrial projects and investing in social overhead capital, i.e., social infrastructure projects would pose a difficult problem.

There may be alternative strategies if one considers the multiple constraints, especially external ones, the country is facing. However, it is necessary to consider industrial and urbanization strategies as integral. It is not a question of relocating people because people will move where employment opportunities exist as stated above. But when people concentrate in geographically limited urban areas, there will be many problems of agglomeration diseconomy, such as congestion of public services and pollution. They will outweigh agglomeration benefits even at smaller city size. These problems concern urban management, urban public finance, and urban planning (land use control and urban transportation planning).

#### PRECONDITIONS FOR EFFICIENT CITIES IN ZAIRE<sup>(2)</sup>

Unlike some West African countries where large urban centers had existed long before the Europeans' arrival, Zairean cities, like Kinshasa, were created by the colonial rulers on the sites of traditional commercial nodes. Zairean cities can be classified according to their functions as follows (Fig. 1): (1) a primary city, Kinshasa, with the morphology of a typical colonial port town of which the economic base is commerce, transportation and manufacturing; (2) administrative centers, necessary nodes to the administration of a widely dispersed rural population, economically depend on agriculture and small-scale retail commerce; and (3) factory-towns of the Copperbelt (Lubumbashi, Likasi, Kolwezi, Kipushi, Mbuji-Mayi) and along the Kinshasa-Matadi railroad (Kwilu-Ngongo, Kimpese, Lukala), for which economic activity is centered on a particular firm in the town. This classification is a consequence of the colonial settlement pattern and, of course, has to be altered as I advocated above.

The management of urban centers in Zaire is closely linked to the political history of the country. From a strongly centralized colonial administration, characteristic of any colony, independent Zaire has evolved as a strongly centralized state in spite of some decentralization attempts. The consequences of so many years of a centralized power translated into the general belief among the people that government is synonymous with centralism, that budget is the matter of the central government only. Two additional historical factors complicate the situation. First, for the majority of Zairean people, political independence meant the abandonment of all administrative regulations imposed by the colonial power, even those concerning city life, such as traffic signals, land use controls, and land taxes. There was no national elite with a consistent view about how the country should be managed when the Belgian administrators suddenly left the country in

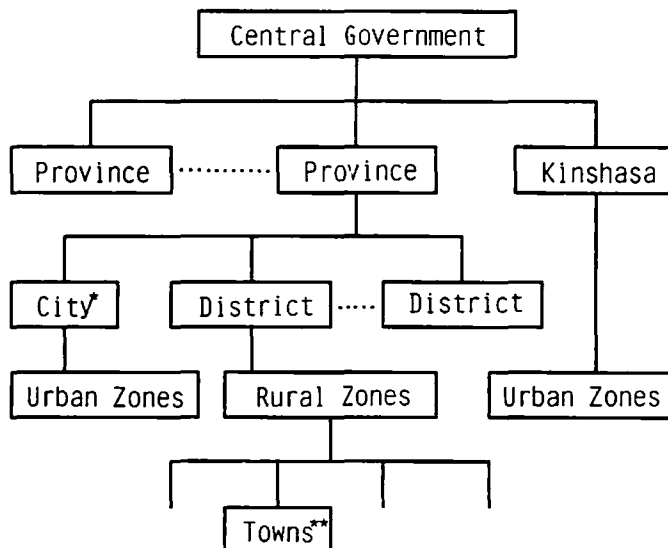


Fig. 4. Administrative structure of Zaïre.

the troubled days of July 1960, two weeks after the cessation of the colonial status. Second, after five years of a civil war that affected two thirds of the country, the government of President Mobutu established a one-party political system with no clear ideology. The ideological vacuum led to a one-man power and the pre-eminence of the party over the state. The city mayor became the party local leader instead of being the city manager. The results: no real local elections, no local budgets, no local projects. At any level of administration, any project had to be financed either by the central government budget or by a special grant from the President's office.

The country is administratively structured as presented in Figure 4. It is clear that cities and other small towns are not given a high profile in the administrative structure of the country. The objective of the central government did not change even after the colonial period. It was to rule all the nation from above. Legislative, executive, and judiciary powers are monopolized by the central government and the administrative power is limited to a few levels of province, district and zone. Towns are included in large rural zones, thus they are not managed as independent entities, while the city of Kinshasa, although a province in the administrative structure, is politically so important that its autonomy is diluted by the central government's influence. Provinces are administrated by governors appointed by the President; the members of the provincial assemblies are designated by the Central Committee of the Party with the presidential sanction. At the district level, the district chiefs are appointed by the President and there are no district councils. Only urban zones have councils of which members are elected but actually have no real power and the zone chief is also appointed by the President from the members of the council. In such an administrative system, urban planning is not considered as the task of a local executive body and a city council

with legislative power. Collection and disposal of garbage, construction regulations, provision of local public services such as education, health, and sewerage, are out of control of the city managers.

To my knowledge, the last attempt to decentralize was a 1982 Presidential Ordinance establishing "administratively decentralized entities," i.e. "urban zones" and "rural zones." The 1983 Finance Act followed, guaranteeing fiscal resources to above areas and thus, at least theoretically, providing them with the means to live on their own budgets. Under the terms of the 1982 Ordinance, a city ("ville") was defined as the capital of every province, any urban center with more than 100,000 inhabitants, or any urban center designated as a city by a presidential ordinance. However, the attempt was not successful and three years later, in 1985, most of these entities were labeled by the government "economically non-viable."

The economic, political and cultural dominance of Kinshasa over other cities and regions has resulted in the concentration of the most capable administration officials in the capital. In addition, the non-existence of fiscally and politically autonomous local governments has created a real atrophy of the existing administrative bodies. The argument usually advanced by the ruling government is that because the country is multiethnic, the risk of political division can only be avoided by keeping the nation united through a centralized administration system. However, maintaining the unity of the nation does not mean keeping its cities and towns unplanned, under-financed and dependent on the mood of the central government. Planning for the coming urban order is not only a necessity but also a prerequisite for the betterment of the life of urban residents. I am not saying that urban planning should be favored over rural development. Both must go hand in hand. Rural centers are small in size, dispersed over a large area, dependent on agriculture or fishing. The efficient location and allocation of public infrastructure is a very tough issue in such areas because of low population densities and dispersion of residential locations. No one would expect congestion or pollution to reach high levels in the rural areas. Urban centers, on the other hand, are places where people are concentrated within a bounded area, with high population densities, and multiple activities. They are prone to congestion and other environmental and social disamenities.

Urban management is then a necessity for the Republic of Zaire. In order to fulfill this necessity, two factors have to be considered: the training of skilled public workers and the willingness of the central government to favor the establishment of autonomous local governments. The way the second factor will be settled in the on-going process of political reforms in Zaire will certainly determine the political as well as economic future of the country. As illustrated by the subdivision of the province of Kivu into three different provinces in 1989, it is obvious that the present administrative structure is not fully representative of the ethnic diversity of the country. Diversity in unity is a popular slogan in Zaire; the time has come to put the slogan into practice. I am not advocating the creation of administrative clusters on the ethnic or tribal lines. On behalf of the principle of local autonomy, I argue for the necessity of redefining the country's administrative structure that takes account of the local economic, social and political realities. The failure of the 1982 experience proves that this aspect was not given the importance it

deserves. An alternative to the existing structure should be guided by the following principles: (1) establishment of politically autonomous local governments at the district ("prefecture" or "county") level, and the city and town level; (2) integration of legislative and executive powers at the local government; (3) provision of financial and human resources to insure the viability of local governments. These principles, though simple and well-known, are not easy to put into practice. The 1982 and 1983 Ordinances failed first because they were unilateral measures taken by the President without any parliamentary examination, second because while technically rather acceptable, they did not deal with the political reforms necessary to guarantee their success. I advocate a structure centered on these local governments, however, with certain limits. First, the risk of "secessionism," leading the country into another 1960-65 style breakup cannot be ruled out; thus as a safeguard, "governors" nominated by the central government and confirmed by the central legislative bodies would "supervise," not govern just like the so-called "prefets" in France, to insure that no racial, tribal, or ethnic discrimination will take place in the local governments, public services, and private and public firms. Governors will also serve as intermediaries between the central and local governments in the collection of statistical data on population, health, education, economic opportunities, and transportation, and in the matters of national security and public order, and judicature as well as emergency (the need of such a transitory body has been advocated in Japan by Oita Prefecture Governor Hiramatsu). Second, in the present situation, it is difficult to think of precisely delimited local governments in the rural areas because of the fluidity of the rural world due to the common ownership of land and other elements specific to those communities. The question of how rural communities should be organized is beyond the scope of this paper.

It is a pressing need that every urban agglomeration recognized as city or town be run by an elected mayor under the control of an elected city/town council with legislative attributions defined by a Local Government Act. No matter the initial economic viability of small cities, it is important that every city be given the legal and financial means to govern itself. On the other hand, the central government has the obligation to organize the training and equitable allocation of skilled people for public office that include tax and budget experts, urban planners, health and education officers, and environment experts.

## CONCLUSION

After African countries acquired their independences, no new social group really replaced the colonial rulers to dominate city life for various sociological and political reasons. As any map of Africa will show, European interests were concentrated along the coasts, leaving the inner countries less urbanized and less developed. The natives of those regions left behind fought back to gain political power by serving in the military. Every African country exhibits this kind of sociological dichotomy: a relatively developed coast of which residents were at the time of political independence well educated above the national average, and an interior

which the colonial power used as a base for military recruitment. The successive coups d'état that took place in Africa have transferred the political power from the coast to the interior. The new political leaders have not, however, proved to have enough of the inspiration that African cities needed to regenerate.

African countries have urban communities that are rapidly expanding to replace the rural order that has existed for centuries and the Republic of Zaire is no exception. We need to organize the politics of those urban centers. The task is certainly cumbersome for many reasons such as low income, and rapid population growth. A city is a place where ethnic groups gather, each one losing parts of its specificity, and the result of that mixture is a new urban culture. I do not believe that any ethnic group will succeed to dominate the city life of Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, or Kananga. However, I do hope that efficient elected local governments can act as catalysts to create a new "instinct for improvement" that characterized American cities at the end of the 19th century.

#### NOTES

- (1) In this paper, industrial strategy is conceived in a broad sense, i.e., a strategy that integrates all the economic sectors of agriculture, manufacturing, and services.
- (2) Some of the facts contained in this chapter may have been altered by the political reforms taking place in Zaire since April 1990.

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