Chapter 2. The Society and Its Environment

An akuaba (fertility doll) (Asante)

GHANA, FORMERLY THE BRITISH colony of the Gold Coast, lies on the West African coast, just north of the equator. Its warm, humid climate is typical of the tropics. Ghana covers an area of approximately 239,000 square kilometers, much of it drained by the Volta River system. The population speaks languages that belong to the Kwa and Gur subfamilies of the Niger-Congo language group and is divided into more than 100 linguistic and cultural units. Ghana's population, as in most sub-Saharan African countries, consists of urban and rural workers, herders, traders, and fishermen. Matrilineal, patrilineal, and double-descent systems of social organization as well as villages and chiefdoms contribute to the national mosaic.

The precolonial social systems to which Ghanaians belonged consisted of both non-stratified and highly stratified societies. Virtually without exception, however, their organizing principles were based on locality, kinship/family, and clan structures. This is still true in the mid-1990s. Chiefs, who may be influential on the national level, were and still are selected from senior members of the lineages that are considered to have been among the founders of the community or ethnic group. Membership in a chiefly lineage carries some prestige.

Ghana's precolonial social order, in which kinship, lineage, and locality provided the framework of social, political, religious, and economic organization, has been undergoing profound change since before the colonial era. The modernization of Ghanaian economic, social, and political life intensified with independence in 1957. Fundamental to this change were improvements in communications and infrastructure, urbanization, the growth of the export and cash-crop economy, and the expansion of Western education. To accelerate the pace of modernization, the Education Act of 1960 made formal instruction both free and compulsory, but attitudes toward change varied from group to group. For example, in certain areas, especially in the north, compulsory education was not welcomed because it took children away from homes that depended on their labor in the fields. Although the benefits of education are understood today, the percentage of female enrollment in secondary and tertiary institutions of

higher learning has remained disproportionately low in relation to the number of women in the general population.

As Ghana's population swelled from about 6.7 million in 1960 to 8.5 million in 1970 to an estimated 17.2 million in 1994, the central government found it increasingly difficult to bring about improvements in the standard of living at the same time that population growth threatened to outstrip food production and economic growth. The issue of effective family planning also required attention and resources, and the presence of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) alarmed the medical community and the Ghanaian population alike. Although the ancestral extended family served as an effective mutual aid group in the rural areas, many village communities lacked modern amenities. In urban centers, housing shortages continued to be a major problem.Women's associations, such as the National Council on Women and Development, became a force for change, demanding educational and economic opportunities denied under indigenous and colonial rulers.

In the 1980s, the governing Provisional National Defence Council tried to address the nation's education problems by introducing a system that emphasized vocational and technical training for all students. A rural electrification program was also initiated. At the same time, village- and community-based primary care organizations enhanced child-care and nutritional programs aimed at illiterate mothers and those who held traditional notions about marital relations. Although it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs in the short term, at least some major problems have been recognized and steps have been taken to deal with them. The success of such programs, however, depends on the extent to which indigenous and modern institutions and cultural values are balanced and, especially, on the manner in which conflict is resolved.

Physical Setting

Location and Size

Ghana, which lies in the center of the West African coast, shares borders with the three French-speaking nations of Côte d'Ivoire to the west, Togo to the east, and Burkina Faso (Burkina, formerly Upper Volta) to the north. To the south are the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean.

With a total area of 238,533 square kilometers, Ghana is about the size of Britain. Its southernmost coast at Cape Three Points is 4° 30' north of the equator. From here, the country extends inland for some 670 kilometers to about 11° north. The distance across the widest part, between longitude 1° 12' east and longitude 3° 15' west, measures about 560 kilometers. The Greenwich Meridian, which passes through London, also traverses the eastern part of Ghana at Tema.

Geographical Regions

Ghana is characterized in general by low physical relief. Indeed, the Precambrian rock system that underlies most of the nation has been worn down by erosion almost to a plain. The highest elevation in Ghana, Mount Afadjato in the Akwapim-Togo Ranges, rises only 880 meters above sea level.

There are, nonetheless, five distinct geographical regions. Low plains stretch across the southern part of the country. To their north lie three regions—the Ashanti Uplands, the Akwapim-Togo Ranges, and the Volta Basin. The fifth region, the high plains, occupies the northern and northwestern sector of the country (see fig. 4). Like most West African countries, Ghana has no natural harbors. Because strong surf pounds the shoreline, two artificial harbors were built at Takoradi and Tema (the latter completed in 1961) to accommodate Ghana's shipping needs.

The Low Plains

The low plains comprise the four subregions of the coastal savanna, the Volta Delta, the Accra Plains, and the Akan Lowlands. A narrow strip of grassy and scrubby coast runs from a point near Takoradi in the west to the Togo border in the east. This coastal savanna, only about eight kilometers in width at its western end, stretches eastward through the Accra Plains, where it widens to more than eighty kilometers, and terminates at the southeastern corner of the country at the lower end of the Akwapim-Togo Ranges.

Almost flat and featureless, the Accra Plains descend gradually to the gulf from a height of about 150 meters. The topography east of the city of Accra is marked by a succession of ridges and spoon-shaped valleys. The hills and slopes in this area are the favored lands for cultivation. Shifting cultivation is the usual agricultural practice because of the swampy nature of the very low-lying areas during the rainy seasons and the periodic

blocking of the rivers at the coast by sandbars that form lagoons. A plan to irrigate higher elevations of the Accra Plains was announced in 1984. Should this plan come to reality, much of the area could be opened to large-scale cultivation.

To the west of Accra, the low plains contain wider valleys and rounded low hills, with occasional rocky headlands. In general, however, the land is flat and covered with grass and scrub. Dense groves of coconut palms front the coastline. Several commercial centers, including Winneba, Saltpond, and Cape Coast, are located here. Although Winneba has a small livestock industry and palm tree cultivation is expanding in the area away from the coast, the predominant occupation of the coastal inhabitants is fishing by dug-out canoe.

The Volta Delta, which forms a distinct subregion of the low plains, extends into the Gulf of Guinea in the extreme southeast. The delta's rock formation—consisting of thick layers of sandstone, some limestone, and silt deposits—is flat, featureless, and relatively young. As the delta grew outward over the centuries, sandbars developed across the mouths of the Volta and smaller rivers that empty into the gulf in the same area, forming numerous lagoons, some quite large, making road construction difficult. To avoid the lowest-lying areas, for example, the road between Accra and Keta makes an unusual detour inland just before reaching Ada and finally approaches Keta from the east along the narrow spit on which the town stands. This notwithstanding, road links with Keta continue to be a problem. By 1989 it was estimated that more than 3,000 houses in the town had been swallowed by flooding from the lagoon. In addition, about 1,500 other houses were destroyed by erosion caused by the powerful waves of the sea.

Ironically, it is this flat, silt-composed delta region with its abundance of water that supports shallot, corn, and cassava cultivation in the region. Moreover, the sandy soil of the delta gave rise to the copra industry. Salt-making, from the plentiful supply in the dried beds of the lagoons, provides additional employment. The main occupation of the delta people, however, continues to be fishing, an industry that supplies dried and salted fish to other parts of the country.

The largest part of the low plains is the Akan Lowlands. Some experts prefer to classify this region as a subdivision of the Ashanti Uplands because of the many characteristics they share. Unlike the uplands, however, the height of the Akan Lowlands is generally between sea level and 150 meters. Some

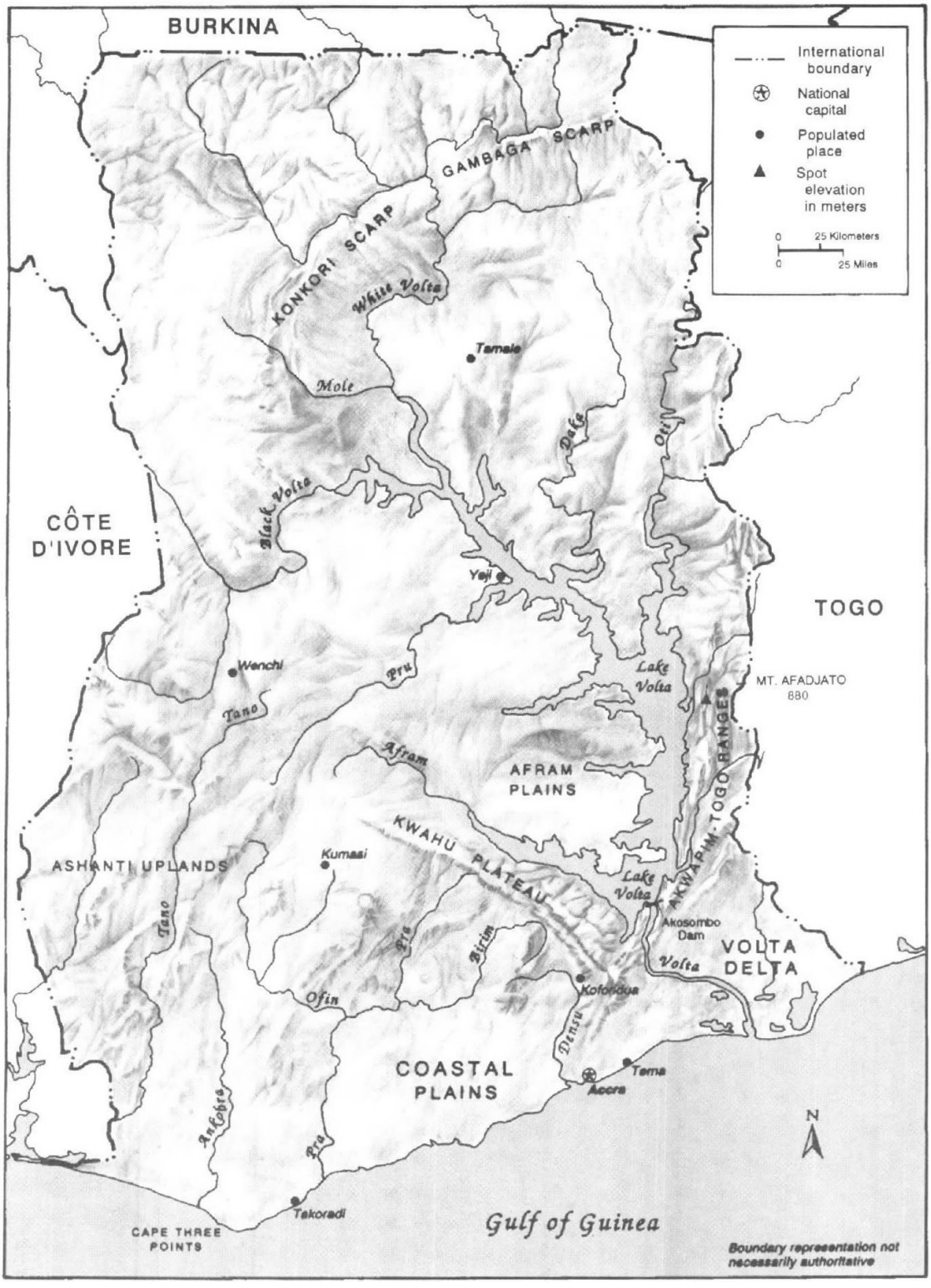


Figure 4. Topography and Drainage

ranges and hills rise to about 300 meters, but few exceed 600 meters. The lowlands that lie to the south of the Ashanti Uplands receive the many rivers that make their way to the sea.

The Akan Lowlands contain the basins of the Densu River, the Pra River, the Ankobra River, and the Tano River, all of which play important roles in the economy of Ghana. The Densu River Basin, location of the important urban centers of Koforidua and Nsawam in the eastern lowlands, has an undulating topography. Many of the hills here have craggy summits, which give a striking appearance to the landscape. The upper section of the Pra River Basin, to the west of the Densu, is relatively flat; the topography of its lower reaches, however, resembles that of the Densu Basin and the area is a rich cocoa and food-producing region. The valley of the Birim River, one of the main tributaries of the Pra, is the country's most important diamond-producing area.

The Ankobra River Basin and the middle and lower basins of the Tano River to the west of the lowlands form the largest subdivision of the Akan Lowlands. Here annual rainfall between 1,500 and 2,150 millimeters helps assure a dense forest cover. In addition to timber, the area is rich in minerals. The Tarkwa goldfield, the diamond operations of the Bonsa Valley, and high-grade manganese deposits are all found in this area. The middle and lower Tano basins have been intensely explored for oil and natural gas since the mid-1980s. The lower basins of the Pra, Birim, Densu, and Ankobra rivers are also sites for palm tree cultivation.

Ashanti Uplands

Comprising the Southern Ashanti Uplands and the Kwahu Plateau, the Ashanti Uplands lie just north of the Akan Lowlands and stretch from the Côte d'Ivoire border in the west to the elevated edge of the Volta Basin in the east. Stretching in a northwest-to-southeast direction, the Kwahu Plateau extends 193 kilometers between Koforidua in the east and Wenchi in the northwest. The average elevation of the plateau is about 450 meters, rising to a maximum of 762 meters. The relatively cool temperatures of the plateau were attractive to Europeans, particularly missionaries, who founded many well-known schools and colleges in this region.

The plateau forms one of the important physical divides in Ghana. From its northeastern slopes, the Afram and Pru rivers flow into the Volta River, while from the opposite side, the Pra,

Birim, Ofin, Tano, and other rivers flow south toward the sea. The plateau also marks the northernmost limit of the forest zone. Although large areas of the forest cover have been destroyed through farming, enough deciduous forest remains to shade the headwaters of the rivers that flow from the plateau.

The Southern Ashanti Uplands, extending from the foot of the Kwahu Plateau in the north to the lowlands in the south, slope gently from an elevation of about 300 meters in the north to about 150 meters in the south. The region, however, contains several hills and ranges as well as several towns of historical and economic importance, including Kumasi, Ghana's second largest city and former capital of the Asante (also seen as Ashanti—see Glossary) empire (see The Precolonial Period, ch. 1). Obuasi and Konongo, two of the country's gold-mining centers, are also located here. The region is the country's chief producer of cocoa, and its tropical forests continue to be a vital source of timber for the lumber industry.

Akwapim-Togo Ranges

The Akwapim-Togo Ranges in the eastern part of the country consist of a generally rugged complex of folded strata, with many prominent heights composed of volcanic rock. The ranges begin west of Accra and continue in a northeasterly direction, finally crossing the frontier into Togo.

In their southeastern part, the ranges are bisected by a deep, narrow gorge cut by the Volta River. The head of this gorge is the site of the Akosombo Dam, which impounds the river to form Lake Volta. The ranges south of the gorge form the Akwapim section of the mountains. The average elevation in this section is about 450 meters, and the valleys are generally deep and relatively narrow. North of the gorge, for about eighty kilometers, the Togo section has broader valleys and low ridges. Beyond this point, the folding becomes more complex and heights increase greatly, with several peaks rising more than 610 meters above sea level. The country's highest point, Mount Afadjato, is located in this area.

The ranges are largely covered with deciduous forests, and their higher elevation provides a relatively cooler, pleasant climate. Small-scale subsistence farming is typical in the ranges. In addition to the cultivation of rice and other staples, coffee plantations are found in the Togo section of the ranges.

Volta Basin

Occupying the central part of Ghana, the Volta Basin covers about 45 percent of the nation's total land surface. Its northern section, which lies above the upper part of Lake Volta, rises to a height of 150 to 215 meters above sea level. Elevations of the Konkori Scarp to the west and the Gambaga Scarp to the north reach from 300 to 460 meters. To the south and the southwest, the basin is less than 300 meters. The Kwahu Plateau marks the southern end of the basin, although it forms a natural part of the Ashanti Uplands.

The basin is characterized by poor soil, generally of Voltaian sandstone. Annual rainfall averages between 1,000 and 1,140 millimeters. The most widespread vegetation type is savanna, the woodlands of which, depending on local soil and climatic conditions, may contain such trees as Red Ironwood and Shea.

The basin's population, principally made up of farmers, is low in density, especially in the central and northwestern areas, where tsetse flies are common. Archaeological finds indicate, however, that the region was once more heavily populated. Periodic burning evidently occurred over extensive areas for perhaps more than a millennium, exposing the soil to excessive drying and erosion, rendering the area less attractive to cultivators.

In contrast with the rest of the region are the Afram Plains, located in the southeastern corner of the basin. Here the terrain is low, averaging 60 to 150 meters in elevation, and annual rainfall is between 1,140 and about 1,400 millimeters. Near the Afram River, much of the surrounding countryside is flooded or swampy during the rainy seasons. With the construction of Lake Volta (8,515 hectares in surface area) in the mid-1960s, much of the Afram Plains was submerged. Despite the construction of roads to connect communities displaced by the lake, road transportation in the region remains poor. Renewed efforts to improve communications, to enhance agricultural production, and to improve standards of living began in earnest only in the mid-1980s.

The High Plains

The general terrain in the northern and northwestern part of Ghana outside the Volta Basin consists of a dissected plateau, which averages between 150 and 300 meters in elevation and, in some places, is even higher. Rainfall averages between 1,000 and 1,150 millimeters annually, although in the northwest it is

closer to 1,350 millimeters. Soils in the high plains are more arable than those in the Volta Basin, and the population density is considerably higher. Grain and cattle production is the major economic activity in the high plains of the northern region. Since the mid-1980s, when former United States President Jimmy Carter's Global 2000 program (see Glossary) adopted Ghana as one of a select number of African countries whose local farmers were to be educated and financially supported to improve agricultural production, there has been a dramatic increase in grain production in northern Ghana. The virtual absence of tsetse flies in the region has led, moreover, to increased livestock raising as a major occupation in the north. In fact, the region is the country's largest producer of cattle.

Rivers and Lakes

Ghana is drained by a large number of streams and rivers. In addition, there are a number of coastal lagoons, the huge man-made Lake Volta, and Lake Bosumtwi, southeast of Kumasi, which has no outlet to the sea. In the wetter south and southwest areas of Ghana, the river and stream pattern is denser, but in the area north of the Kwahu Plateau, the pattern is much more open, making access to water more difficult. Several streams and rivers also dry up or experience reduced flow during the dry seasons of the year, while flooding during the rainy seasons is common.

The major drainage divide runs from the southwestern part of the Akwapim-Togo Ranges northwest through the Kwahu Plateau and then irregularly westward to the Côte d'Ivoire border. Almost all the rivers and streams north of this divide form part of the Volta system. Extending about 1,600 kilometers in length and draining an area of about 388,000 square kilometers, of which about 158,000 square kilometers lie within Ghana, the Volta and its tributaries, such as the Afram River and the Oti River, drain more than two-thirds of the country. To the south of the divide are several smaller, independent rivers. The most important of these are the Pra River, the Tano River, the Ankobra River, the Birim River, and the Densu River. With the exception of smaller streams that dry up in the dry seasons or rivers that empty into inland lakes, all the major rivers in the country flow into the Gulf of Guinea directly or serve as tributaries to other major rivers. The Ankobra and Tano are navigable for considerable distances in their lower reaches.

Navigation on the Volta River has changed significantly since 1964. Construction of the dam at Akosombo, about eighty kilometers upstream from the coast, created vast Lake Volta and the associated 768,000-kilowatt hydroelectric project. Arms of the lake extend into the lower-lying areas, forcing the relocation of 78,000 people to newly created townships on the lake's higher banks. The Black Volta River and the White Volta River flow separately into the lake. Before their confluence was submerged, the rivers came together in the middle of the country to form the main Volta River. The Oti River and the Daka River, the principal tributaries of the Volta in the eastern part of the country, and the Pru River, the Sene River, and the Afram River, major tributaries to the north of the Kawhu Plateau, also empty into flooded extensions of the lake in their river valleys. Lake Volta is a rich source of fish, and its potential as a source for irrigation is reflected in an agricultural mechanization agreement signed in the late 1980s to irrigate the Afram Plains. The lake is navigable from Akosombo through Yeji in the middle of the country; a twenty-four-meter pontoon was commissioned in 1989 to link the Afram Plains to the west of the lake with the lower Volta region to the east. Hydroelectricity generated from Akosombo supplies Ghana, Togo, and Benin.

On the other side of the Kwahu Plateau from Lake Volta are several river systems, including the Pra, Ankobra, Tano and Densu. The Pra is the easternmost and the largest of the three principal rivers that drain the area south of the Volta divide. Rising south of the Kwahu Plateau and flowing southward, the Pra enters the Gulf of Guinea east of Takoradi. In the early part of the twentieth century, the Pra was used extensively to float timber to the coast for export. This trade is now carried by road and rail transportation.

The Ankobra, which flows to the west of the Pra, has a relatively small drainage basin. It rises in the hilly region of Bibiani and flows in a southerly direction to enter the gulf just west of Axim. Small craft can navigate approximately eighty kilometers inland from its mouth. At one time, the Ankobra helped transport machinery to the gold-mining areas in the vicinity of Tarkwa. The Tano, which is the westernmost of the three rivers, rises near Techiman in the center of the country. It also flows in a southerly direction, but it empties into a lagoon in the southeastern corner of Côte d'Ivoire. Navigation by steam launch is possible on the southern sector of the Tano for about seventy kilometers.

A number of rivers are found to the east of the Pra. The two most important are the Densu and Ayensu, which are major sources of water for Accra and Winneba, respectively. The country has one large natural lake, Lake Bosumtwi, located about thirty-two kilometers southeast of Kumasi. It occupies the steep-sided caldera of a former volcano and has an area of about forty-seven square kilometers. A number of small streams flow into Lake Bosumtwi, but there is no drainage from it. In addition to providing an opportunity for fishing for local inhabitants, the lake serves as a tourist attraction.

Climate

The country's warm, humid climate has an annual mean temperature between 26°C and 29°C. Variations in the principal elements of temperature, rainfall, and humidity that govern the climate are influenced by the movement and interaction of the dry tropical continental air mass, or the harmattan, which blows from the northeast across the Sahara, and the opposing tropical maritime or moist equatorial system. The cycle of the seasons follows the apparent movement of the sun back and forth across the equator.

During summer in the northern hemisphere, a warm and moist maritime air mass intensifies and pushes northward across the country. A low-pressure belt, or intertropical front, in the airmass brings warm air, rain, and prevailing winds from the southwest. As the sun returns south across the equator, the dry, dusty, tropical continental front, or harmattan, prevails.

Climatic conditions across the country are hardly uniform. The Kwahu Plateau, which marks the northernmost extent of the forest area, also serves as an important climatic divide. To its north, two distinct seasons occur. The harmattan season, with its dry, hot days and relatively cool nights from November to late March or April, is followed by a wet period that reaches its peak in late August or September. To the south and southwest of the Kwahu Plateau, where the annual mean rainfall from north to south ranges from 1,250 millimeters to 2,150 millimeters, four separate seasons occur. Heavy rains fall from about April through late June. After a relatively short dry period in August, another rainy season begins in September and lasts through November, before the longer harmattan season sets in to complete the cycle.

The extent of drought and rainfall varies across the country. To the south of the Kwahu Plateau, the heaviest rains occur in

the Axim area in the southwest corner of Ghana. Farther to the north, Kumasi receives an average annual rainfall of about 1,400 millimeters, while Tamale in the drier northern savanna receives rainfall of 1,000 millimeters per year. From Takoradi eastward to the Accra Plains, including the lower Volta region, rainfall averages only 750 millimeters to 1,000 millimeters a year.

Temperatures are usually high at all times of the year throughout the country. At higher elevations, temperatures are more comfortable. In the far north, temperature highs of 31°C are common. The southern part of the country is characterized by generally humid conditions. This is particularly so during the night, when 95 to 100 percent humidity is possible. Humid conditions also prevail in the northern section of the country during the rainy season. During the harmattan season, however, humidity drops as low as 25 percent in the north.

Population

Ghana's first postindependence population census in 1960 counted about 6.7 million inhabitants. By 1970 the national census registered 8.5 million people, about a 27 percent increase; the most recent official census in 1984 recorded a figure of 12.3 million—almost double the 1960 figure (see table 2, Appendix). The nation's population was estimated to have increased to about 15 million in 1990 and to an estimated 17.2 million in mid-1994. With an annual growth rate of 2.2 percent for the period between 1965 and 1980, a 3.4 percent growth rate for 1981 through 1989, and a 1992 growth rate of 3.2 percent, the country's population is projected to surpass 20 million by the year 2000 and 35 million by 2025.

Increasing population is reflected in other statistical representations as well. Between 1965 and 1989, a constant 45 percent of the nation's total female population was of childbearing age. The crude birth rate of 47 per 1,000 population recorded for 1965 dropped to 44 per 1,000 population in 1992. Also, the crude death rate of 18 per 1,000 population in 1965 fell to 13 per 1,000 population in 1992, while life expectancy rose from an average of forty-two years for men and forty-five years for women in 1970–75 to fifty-two and fifty-six years, respectively, in 1992. The 1965 infant mortality rate of 120 per 1,000 live births also improved to 86 per 1,000 live births in 1992. With the fertility rate averaging about seven children per adult female and expected to fall only to five children per adult female by the

year 2000, the population projection of 35 million in 2025 becomes more credible. A number of factors, including improved vaccination against common diseases and nutritional education through village and community health-care systems, contributed to the expanding population. The rise in the nation's population generated a corresponding rise in the demand for schools, health facilities, and urban housing.

The gender ratio of the population, 97.3 males to 100 females, was reflected in the 1984 figures of 6,063,848 males to 6,232,233 females (see fig. 5). This was slightly below the 1970 figure of 98 males to 100 females, but a reversal of the 1960 ratio of 102.2 males to 100 females. The fall in the proportion of males to females may be partly attributed to the fact that men have left the country in pursuit of jobs.

Also significant in the 1984 census figures was the national age distribution. About 58 percent of Ghana's population in 1984 was either under the age of twenty or above sixty-five. Approximately 7 million people were represented in this category, about 4 million of them under the age of ten and, therefore, economically unproductive. The large population of young, economically unproductive individuals appeared to be growing rapidly. In the early 1990s, about half of Ghana's population was under age fifteen. If the under-twenty group and those above the age of sixty are regarded as a dependent group, the social, political, and economic implications for the 1990s and beyond are as grave for Ghana as they are for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

Population Distribution

Population density increased steadily from thirty-six per square kilometer in 1970 to fifty-two per square kilometer in 1984; in 1990 sixty-three persons per square kilometer was the estimate for Ghana's overall population density. These averages, naturally, did not reflect variations in population distribution. For example, while the Northern Region, one of ten administrative regions, showed a density of seventeen persons per square kilometer in 1984, in the same year Greater Accra Region recorded nine times the national average of fifty-two per square kilometer. As was the case in the 1960 and 1970 figures, the greatest concentration of population in 1984 was to the south of the Kwahu Plateau. The highest concentration of habitation continued to be within the Accra-Kumasi-Takoradi triangle, largely because of the economic productivity of the

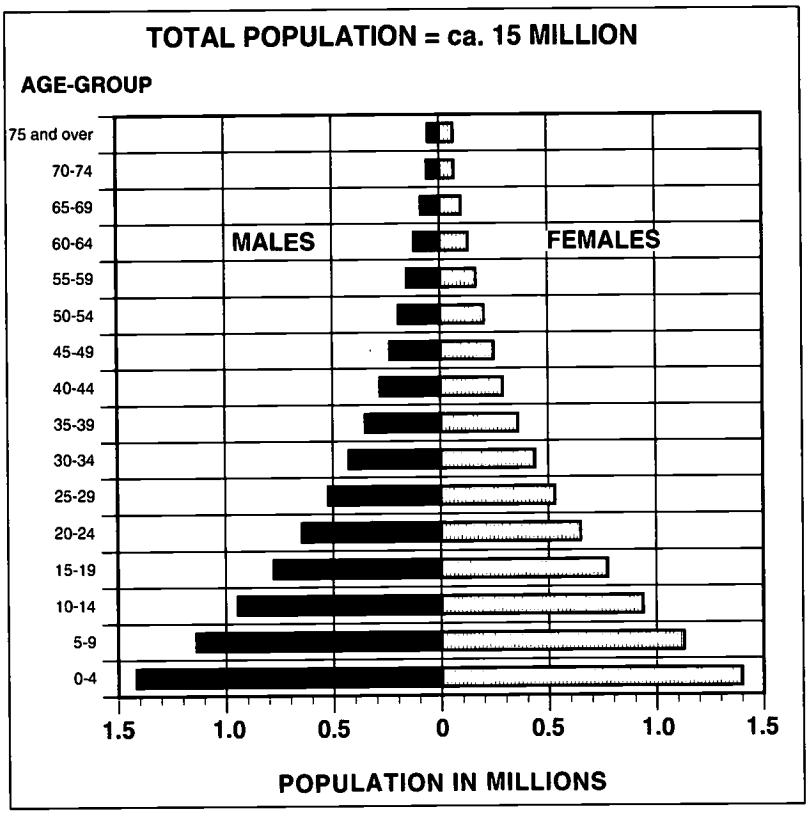
region. In fact, all of the country's mining centers, timber-producing deciduous forests, and cocoa-growing lands lie to the south of the Kwahu Plateau. The Accra-Kumasi-Takoradi triangle also is conveniently linked to the coast by rail and road systems—making this area an important magnet for investment and labor (see fig. 10).

By contrast, a large part of the Volta Basin is sparsely populated. The presence of tsetse flies, the relative infertility of the soil, and, above all, the scarcity of water in the area during the harmattan season affect habitation. The far north, on the other hand, is heavily populated. The eighty-seven persons per square kilometer recorded in the 1984 census for the Upper East Region, for example, was well above the national average. This density may be explained in part by the somewhat better soil found in some areas and the general absence of the tsetse fly; however, onchocerciasis, or river blindness, a fly-borne disease, is common in the north and has caused abandonment of some land. With the improvement of the water supply through well-drilling and the introduction of intensive agricultural extension services as part of the Global 2000 program since the mid-1980s, demographic figures for the far north could be markedly different by the next census.

Another factor affecting Ghana's demography is refugees. At the end of 1994, approximately 110,000 refugees resided in Ghana. About 90,000 were Togolese who had fled political violence in their homeland beginning in early 1993 (see Relations with Immediate African Neighbors, ch. 4). Most Togolese settled in the Volta region among their ethnic kinsmen. About 20,000 Liberians were also found in Ghana, having fled the civil war in their country (see International Security Concerns, ch. 5). Many were long-term residents. As a result of ethnic fighting in northeastern Ghana in early 1994, at least 20,000 Ghanaians out of an original group of 150,000 were still internally displaced at the end of the year. About 5,000 had taken up residence in Togo because of the strife.

Urban-Rural Disparities

Localities of 5,000 persons and above have been classified as urban since 1960. On this basis, the 1960 urban population totalled 1,551,174 persons, or 23.1 percent of total population. By 1970, the percentage of the country's population residing in urban centers had increased to 28 percent. That percentage



Source: Based on information from Eduard Bos, My T. Vu, Ann Levin, and Rudolfo A. Bulatao, *World Population Projections, 1992-93 Edition*, Baltimore, 1992, 238.

Figure 5. Estimated Population by Age and Gender, 1990

rose to 32 in 1984 and was estimated at 33 percent for 1992 (see table 3, Appendix).

Like the population density figures, the rate of urbanization varies from one administrative region to another. While the Greater Accra Region showed an 83-percent urban residency, the Ashanti Region matched the national average of 32 percent in 1984. The Upper West Region of the country recorded only 10 percent of its population in urban centers that year, which reflected internal migration to the south and the pattern of development that favored the south, with its minerals and forest resources, over the north. Urban areas in Ghana have customarily been supplied with more amenities than rural locations. Consequently, Kumasi, Accra, and many towns within

the southern economic belt have attracted more people than the savanna regions of the north; only Tamale in the north has been an exception. The linkage of the national electricity grid to the northern areas of the country in the late 1980s may help to stabilize the north-to-south flow of internal migration.

The growth of urban population notwithstanding, Ghana continues to be a nation of rural communities. The 1984 enumeration showed that six of the country's ten regions had rural populations of 5 percent or more above the national average of 68 percent. Rural residency was estimated to be 67 percent of the population in 1992. These figures, though reflecting a trend toward urban residency, are not very different from the 1970s when about 72 percent of the nation's population lived in rural areas.

In an attempt to perpetuate this pattern of rural-urban residency and thereby to lessen the consequent socioeconomic impact on urban development, the "Rural Manifesto," which assessed the causes of rural underdevelopment, was introduced in April 1984. Development strategies were evaluated, and some were implemented to make rural residency more attractive. As a result, the Bank of Ghana established more than 120 rural banks to support rural entrepreneurs, and the rural electrification program was intensified in the late 1980s. The government, moreover, presented its plans for district assemblies as a component of its strategy for rural improvement through decentralized administration, a program designed to allow local people to become more involved in planning development programs to meet local needs (see District Assembly Elections, ch. 4).

Family Planning

A survey carried out between 1962 and 1964 in rural areas of the country and among the economically better-off urban population indicated the nature of the problem with population control in Ghana. The survey showed that rural families favored a total of seven or eight children and that the actual number of children in the better-off urban family ran between five and six. In neither case was there much interest in limiting the size of the family, although the urban group stated that it would recommend a maximum of three or four children to newly married couples.

The Ghanaian government has long shown an active interest in the population question. It was a cosponsor of a resolution

on population growth and economic development in the 1962–63 session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and was the first sub-Saharan country to sign the "World Leaders' Declaration on Population" in 1967 that called attention to the population question. In 1969 it issued a general policy paper, "Population Planning for National Progress and Prosperity," that included provisions for family planning services. Subsequently, in 1969, it carried out a mass publicity and education campaign on family planning and during late 1970 sponsored an awareness week designed to encourage acceptance of family planning.

Some family planning services have been available since 1966, when the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana was formed. In the early 1990s, branch offices of the organization were still functioning in regional capitals out of which field officers (usually women) organized community awareness campaigns. In addition to the obvious family planning activities, the Planned Parenthood Association and the United States government furnished technical and financial support to the government's effort to control population expansion. This support included aid for the demographic unit of the Sociology Department of the University of Ghana in the collection of data on attitudes toward population control and on family planning practices during the 1970s. The aid program also funded pilot projects that incorporated family planning education into basic health services and that provided training of medical and paramedical personnel.

Although many adult Ghanaians have at least some knowledge of family planning, data from the 1980s suggest almost no change in attitudes and practices from the 1960s. For example, most Ghanaian women still prefer large families and probably see their child-bearing abilities as a form of social and economic security (see The Position of Women, this ch.). In Africa, where the infant mortality rate is generally high, large families ensure that some children will survive. It is, therefore, not surprising that Ghana's population continues to grow rapidly in the 1990s.

In an effort to regulate the effects of rapid population growth, the government launched a substantial public education program for women in the late 1980s that continued into the 1990s. In numerous newspaper articles and at community health centers, the campaign stressed child nutrition and immunization and the spacing of births. Although family plan-

ning had been incorporated into basic women's health services, no attention was given to the role of men in family planning until the beginning of the 1990s when a campaign to control the spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) addressed male promiscuity and the practice of polygamy (see Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, this ch.). Because of government efforts and increased aid from the United States, some increase in the use of contraceptives and modern methods of birth control has occurred during the early 1990s. As is to be expected, family planning is more likely to be practiced among women who live in urban areas with greater access to family planning services and whose level of education is junior secondary school or above.

Ethnic Groups and Languages

In 1960 roughly 100 linguistic and cultural groups were recorded in Ghana. Although later censuses placed less emphasis on the ethnic and cultural composition of the population, differences, of course, existed and had not disappeared by the mid-1990s (see fig. 6). The major ethnic groups in Ghana include the Akan, Ewe, Mole-Dagbane, Guan, and Ga-Adangbe. The subdivisions of each group share a common cultural heritage, history, language, and origin. These shared attributes were among the variables that contributed to state formation in the precolonial period. Competition to acquire land for cultivation, to control trade routes, or to form alliances for protection also promoted group solidarity and state formation. The creation of the union that became the Asante confederacy in the late seventeenth century is a good example of such processes at work in Ghana's past (see The Precolonial Period, ch. 1).

Ethnic rivalries of the precolonial era, variance in the impact of colonialism upon different regions of the country, and the uneven distribution of social and economic amenities in postindependence Ghana have all contributed to present-day ethnic tensions. For example, in February 1994, more than 1,000 persons were killed and 150,000 displaced in the northeastern part of Ghana in fighting between Konkomba on one side and Nanumba, Dagomba, and Gonja on the other. The clashes resulted from long-standing grievances over land ownership and the prerogatives of chiefs. A military task force restored order, but a state of emergency in the region remained in force until mid-August.

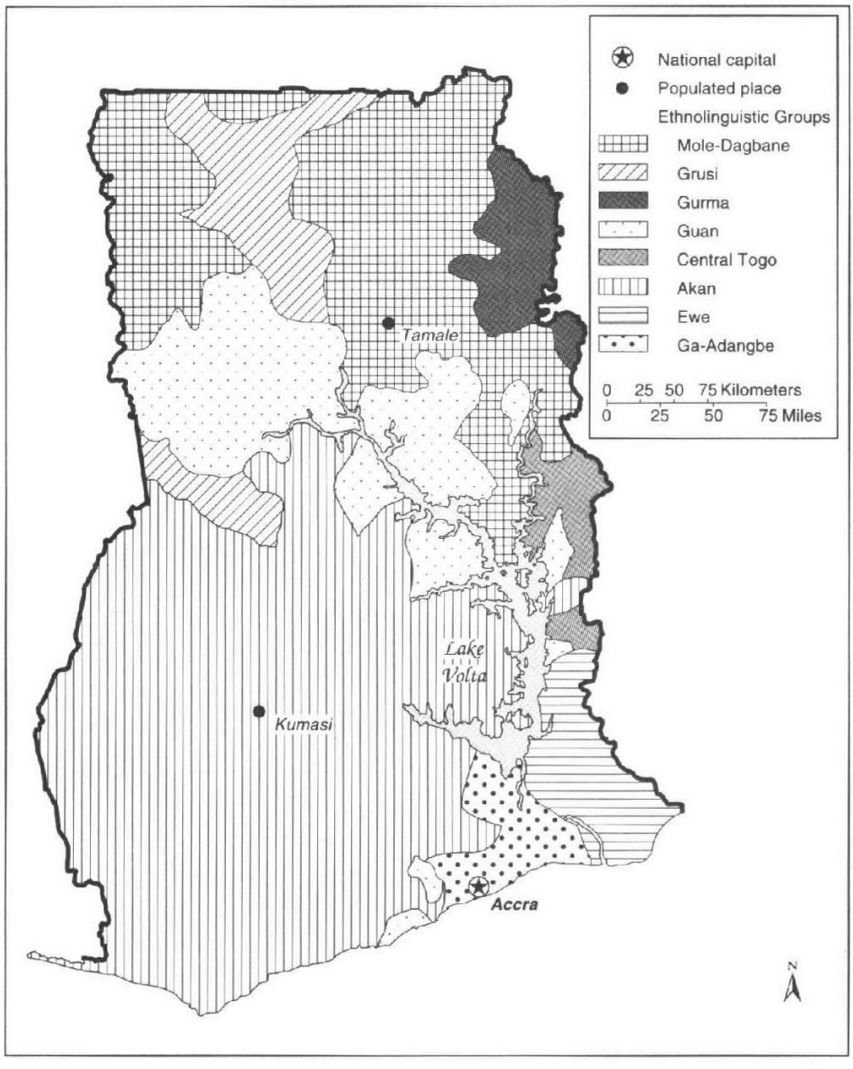


Figure 6. Principal Ethnolinguistic Groups

Although this violence was certainly evidence of ethnic tension in the country, most observers agreed that the case in point was exceptional. As one prolific writer on modern Ghana, Naomi Chazan, has aptly observed, undifferentiated recourse to ethnic categories has obscured the essential fluidity that lies at the core of shared ties in the country. Evidence of this fluidity lies in the heterogeneous nature of all administrative regions, in rural-urban migration that results in interethnic

mixing, in the shared concerns of professionals and trade unionists that cut across ethnic lines, and in the multi-ethnic composition of secondary school and university classes. Ethnicity, nonetheless, continues to be one of the most potent factors affecting political behavior in Ghana. For this reason, ethnically based political parties are unconstitutional under the present Fourth Republic.

Despite the cultural differences among Ghana's various peoples, linguists have placed Ghanaian languages in one or the other of only two major linguistic subfamilies of the Niger-Congo language family, one of the large language groups in Africa. These are the Kwa and Gur groups, found to the south and north of the Volta River, respectively. The Kwa group, which comprises about 75 percent of the country's population, includes the Akan, Ga-Adangbe, and Ewe. The Akan are further divided into the Asante, Fante, Akwapim, Akyem, Akwamu, Ahanta, Bono, Nzema, Kwahu, and Safwi. The Ga-Adangbe people and language group include the Ga, Adangbe, Ada, and Krobo or Kloli. Even the Ewe, who constitute a single linguistic group, are divided into the Nkonya, Tafi, Logba, Sontrokofi, Lolobi, and Likpe. North of the Volta River are the three subdivisions of the Gur-speaking people. These are the Gurma, Grusi, and Mole-Dagbane. Like the Kwa subfamilies, further divisions exist within the principal Gur groups.

Any one group may be distinguished from others in the same linguistically defined category or subcategory, even when the members of the category are characterized by essentially the same social institutions. Each has a historical tradition of group identity, if nothing else, and, usually, of political autonomy. In some cases, however, what is considered a single unit for census and other purposes may have been divided into identifiable separate groups before and during much of the colonial period and, in some manner, may have continued to be separate after independence.

No part of Ghana, however, is ethnically homogeneous. Urban centers are the most ethnically mixed because of migration to towns and cities by those in search of employment. Rural areas, with the exception of cocoa-producing areas that have attracted migrant labor, tend to reflect more traditional population distributions. One overriding feature of the country's population is that groups to the south who are closer to the Atlantic coast have long been influenced by the money economy, Western education, and Christianity, whereas Gur-

speakers to the north, who have been less exposed to those influences, have come under Islamic influence. These influences were not pervasive in the respective regions, however, nor were they wholly restricted to them.

Language Diversity

More than 100 languages and dialects are spoken in Ghana. In view of these linguistic and associated cultural differences, and, as a result of the country's colonial past, English has become Ghana's official language. It is used for all government affairs, large-scale business transactions, educational instruction, and in national radio and television broadcasts. In fact, the constitution of 1969 required that members of parliament speak, read, and understand English. In an effort to increase "grassroots participation" in government and to encourage non-English speakers to run for elective office, however, the 1992 Consultative Assembly on the Constitution recommended that the ability to communicate in English no longer be required of future members of parliament. In the mid-1980s, the Ministry of Education also encouraged teachers to use local languages for instruction during the first six years of formal education. These changes, however, have not lessened the importance of English in Ghanaian society.

Although Fante-Twi (a major Akan language), Ga, and Ewe are the most important Kwa languages spoken in the south, three subdivisions of the Gur branch—Mole-Dagbane, Grusi, and Gurma—dominate the northern region. Hausa, a language of northern Nigeria which spread throughout West Africa through trade, is also understood by some inhabitants in the northeastern part of the country. In northwestern Ghana, among the Dagari-speaking people and around frontier towns in western Brong-Ahafo, various dialects of the Mande language are spoken. Akan, Ewe, Ga, Nzema, Dagbane, and Hausa are the country's principal indigenous languages and are used in radio and television programming.

The literary tradition of northern Ghana has its roots in Islam, while the literature of the south was influenced by Christian missionaries. As a result of European influence, a number of Ghanaian groups have developed writing systems based on Latin script, and several indigenous languages have produced a rich body of literature. The principal written Ghanaian languages are the Twi dialects of Asante, Akwapim, and Fante. Other written languages are Nzema, Ewe, Dagbane, Ga, and

Kasena (a Grusi language). Most publications in the country, however, are written in English.

Major Ethnic Groups

On the basis of language and culture, historical geographers and cultural anthropologists classify the indigenous people of Ghana into five major groups. These are the Akan, the Ewe, the Guan, the Mole-Dagbane and related peoples of the north, and the Ga-Adangbe.

The Akan Group

The Akan people occupy practically the whole of Ghana south and west of the Black Volta River. Historical accounts suggest that Akan groups migrated from the north to occupy the forest and coastal areas of the south as early as the thirteenth century. Some of the Akan ended up in the eastern section of Côte d'Ivoire, where they created the Baule community.

When Europeans arrived at the coast in the fifteenth century, the Akan were established there. The typical political unit was the small state under the headship of an elder from one of the seven or eight clans (see Glossary) that composed Akan society. From these units emerged several powerful states, of which the oldest is thought to be Bono (also called Brong). As a result of military conquests and partial assimilation of weaker groups, well-known political entities, such as Akwamu, Asante (also seen as Ashanti—see Glossary), Akyem, Denkyira, and Fante emerged before the close of the seventeenth century. Asante, for example, continued to expand throughout the eighteenth century and survived as an imperial power until the end of the nineteenth century, when it succumbed to British rule (see The Precolonial Period, ch. 1).

The coastal Akan (Fante) were the first to have relations with Europeans. As a result of long association, these groups absorbed aspects of British culture and language. For example, it became customary among these people to accept British names as family names.

The primary form of Akan social organization is the extended family or the *abusua*—the basic unit in a society based on matriclans (see Glossary). Through the exogamous matriclan system, local identity and individual status, inheritance, succession to wealth and to political offices, and even basic relations within the village community are determined. Every lineage (see Glossary) is a corporate group with its own

identity, group solidarity, exclusive property, and symbols. The ownership of a symbolic carved chair or stool, usually named after the female founder of the matriclan, became the means through which individuals traced their ancestry. These lineages have segmented into branches, each led by an elder, headman, or chief, but a branch, although it possesses a stool, is not an autonomous political or social unit. Possession of a ritually important stool is seen as vital, not only to the existence of each *abusua* but to the matriclan as a whole.

Despite the matrilineal focus of Akan societies, most traditional leadership positions are held by men. Male succession to inherited positions is, however, determined by relationship to mothers and sisters. Consequently, a man's valuable property is passed on not to his children, but to his brother or his sister's son. A man may also be expected to support the children of a maternal relative, whether deceased or alive, an expectation that may conflict with the interests of his own children. Matrilineal (see Glossary under "matrilineage") succession to property has been the cause of much litigation. There have been instances of wives and children turning to the courts for redress. In 1986 the government passed a number of laws that sought to bring the traditions of inheritance in line with changes that had occurred in the country. These laws, which included the Intestate Succession Law, the Customary Marriage and Divorce (Registration) Law, the Administration of Estate (Amendment) Law, and the Head of Family (Accountability) Law, recognized the nuclear family as the prime economic unit. Provision was made, however, for the identification of collective properties that belonged to the extended family.

Notwithstanding the 1986 legislation, the matriclan system of the Akan continued to be economically and politically important. Each lineage controlled the land farmed by its members, functioned as a religious unit in the veneration of its ancestors, supervised marriages, and settled internal disputes among its members (see Traditional Religion, this ch.). It was from the lineages and the associations they cultivated that the village, town, and even the state emerged. The Akan state, therefore, comprehended several kin-based units, one of which, usually the most prominent lineage, provided the paramount chief, who exercised at least some authority over incorporated groups. Every one of the incorporated groups, lineages, or territorial units had some autonomy under its own headman, chief, or elders. In any case, all chiefs were subject to

removal from office if they acted in any manner that alienated a substantial number of people, especially influential ones.

The relative homogeneity of Akan cultures, languages, and authority structures has not led to political unity; the most important conflicts of the Akan in precolonial and colonial times, for example, were with other Akan groups. This is understandable if the state is seen as the arena of political life and as a set of institutions concerned with power, especially for internal regulation, and for the defense of its component members. The development of the Asante Empire, for example, was largely at the expense of the independence of the surrounding Akan, who were quick to reassert their autonomy, especially after 1896, when Asante was defeated and its king, the *asantehene* (king of Asante), was exiled to the Seychelles by the British. In the struggle for independence and in the period since then, political alignments have followed local interests rather than any conception of Akan ethnic unity.

The Ewe

The Ewe occupy southeastern Ghana and the southern parts of neighboring Togo and Benin. On the west, the Volta separates the Ewe from the Ga-Adangbe, Ga, and Akan. Subdivisions of the Ewe include the Anglo (Anlo), Bey (Be), and Gen on the coast, and the Peki, Ho, Kpando, Tori, and Ave in the interior. Oral tradition suggests that the Ewe immigrated into Ghana before the mid-fifteenth century. Although the Ewe have been described as a single language group, there is considerable dialectic variation. Some of these dialects are mutually intelligible, but only with difficulty.

Unlike the political and social organization of the Akan, where matrilineal rule prevails, the Ewe are essentially a patrilineal (see Glossary under "patrilineage") people. The founder of a community became the chief and was usually succeeded by his paternal relatives. The largest independent political unit was a chiefdom, the head of which was essentially a ceremonial figure who was assisted by a council of elders. Chiefdoms ranged in population from a few hundred people in one or two villages to several thousand in a chiefdom with a large number of villages and surrounding countryside. Unlike the Asante among the Akan, no Ewe chiefdom gained hegemonic power over its neighbor. The rise of Ewe nationalism in both Ghana and Togo was more of a reaction to the May 1956 plebiscite

that partitioned Eweland between the Gold Coast and Togo than to any sense of overriding ethnic unity.

Substantial differences in local economies were characteristic of the Ewe. Most Ewe were farmers who kept some livestock, and there was some craft specialization. On the coast and immediately inland, fishing was important, and local variations in economic activities permitted a great deal of trade between one community and another, carried out chiefly by women.

The Guan

The Guan are believed to have begun to migrate from the Mossi region of modern Burkina around A.D. 1000. Moving gradually through the Volta valley in a southerly direction, they created settlements along the Black Volta, throughout the Afram Plains, in the Volta Gorge, and in the Akwapim Hills before moving farther south onto the coastal plains. Some scholars postulate that the wide distribution of the Guan suggests that they were the Neolithic population of the region. Later migrations by other groups such as the Akan, Ewe, and Ga-Adangbe into Guan-settled areas would then have led to the development of Guan-speaking enclaves along the Volta and within the coastal plains. The Guan have been heavily influenced by their neighbors. The Efutu, a subgroup of the Guan, for example, continue to speak Guan dialects, but have adopted (with modifications) the Fante version of some Akan institutions and the use of some Fante words in their rituals. As far as the other Guan subgroups are concerned, the Anum-Boso speak a local Ewe dialect, whereas the Larteh and Kyerepong have customs similar to Akwapim groups.

Constituting about a quarter of the Guan, the Gonja to the north have also been influenced by other groups. The Gonja are ruled by members of a dynasty, probably Mande in origin. The area is peopled by a variety of groups, some of which do not speak Guan. The ruling dynasty, however, does speak Guan, as do substantial numbers of commoners. Although neither the rulers nor most of the commoners are Muslims, a group of Muslims accompanied the Mande invaders and have since occupied a special position as scribes and traders.

The Gonja founded one of several northern kingdoms (see The Precolonial Period, ch. 1). In the eighteenth century, they, like their neighbors, were defeated by the expanding Asante Empire. Gonja became part of the British Northern Territories after the fall of Asante. Even though long-distance commerce

Fishermen offer their daily catch for sale on a beach near Accra
Courtesy James Sanders

led to the development of major markets, the Gonja continued to be subsistence farmers and migrant workers.

The Mole-Dagbane and Related Peoples of the North

Apart from the Guan-speaking Gonja, the Kyokosi or Chokosi (an Akan-speaking fragment), and the Mande-speaking Busanga in the northeasternmost part of Ghana, the ethnic groups to the north of the Black Volta speak Gur or Voltaic languages of the Niger-Congo language family. Three subgroups of Gur languages—the Mole-Dagbane (sometimes called Mossi-Grunshi), Gurma, and Grusi—are represented in this region. Of the three Gur subfamilies, Mole-Dagbane is by far the largest, being spoken by about 15 percent of the nation's population. Its speakers are culturally the most varied; they include the Nanumba, Dagomba, Mamprusi, Wala, Builsa, Frafra, Talensi, and Kusase.

For centuries, the area inhabited by the Gur has been the scene of movements of people engaged in conquest, expansion, and north-south and east-west trade. For this reason, a considerable degree of heterogeneity, particularly of political structure, developed here.

The structure of many small groups, varied as they are, suggests that most Gur-speakers once lived in small, autonomous communities and that the links among these communities were provided by kinship ties, which in their larger extensions cut across community boundaries, and by intermarriage. The salient figure was not political but ritual—it was the priest (*tendaana*; a Mole-Dagbane term) of the earth cult and shrine.

Although primarily a religious figure, the *tendaana*'s influence was keenly felt in kin-group and community decision making.

In some cases (for example, that of the Talensi), an independent community or chiefdom was aware that others like it shared the same culture and social structure, and there were occasional common rituals that brought independent communities together. In other cases (for example, the Dagaba), political and cultural boundaries were not sharp, and there was no sense that an ethnic group included some communities and excluded others, although shifting distinctions were made based on various cultural traits. In the case of the Dagaba, the most important or recurrent of these distinctions seemed to be, and in the mid-twentieth century continued to be, whether inheritance was exclusively determined in the patrilineal line or, at least in part, followed the matrilineal line.

In a few cases, some Mole-Dagbane people developed societies of larger scale under a ruling dynasty. These included the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gonja, who, like the Akan to the south, were known to have founded centralized states. Rulers of the centralized Mole-Dagbane societies were believed to be related to those of the Mossi kingdoms of Burkina and the smaller Nanumba kingdoms of Ghana. Historical research suggests that migrants imposed their rule on peoples already settled in the area. In some cases, these migrants extended their rule to other groups, at least for a time. Thus, many of the Gurma-speaking Konkomba were subject to Dagomba control. The ruling groups still maintain a clear sense of their own identity and some cultural and linguistic peculiarities, but in general they speak the local language.

The Ga-Adangbe

The Ga-Adangbe people inhabit the Accra Plains. The Adangbe are found to the east, the Ga groups to the west, of the Accra coastlands. Although both languages are derived from a common proto-Ga-Adangbe ancestral language, modern Ga and Adangbe are mutually unintelligible. The modern Adangbe include the people of Shai, La, Ningo, Kpone, Osudoku, Krobo, Gbugble, and Ada, who speak different dialects. The Ga also include the Ga-Mashie groups occupying neighborhoods in the central part of Accra, and other Ga-speakers who migrated from Akwamu, Anecho in Togo, Akwapim, and surrounding areas.

Debates persist about the origins of the Ga-Adangbe people. One school of thought suggests that the proto-Ga-Adangbe people came from somewhere east of the Accra plains, while another suggests a distant locale beyond the West African coast. In spite of such historical and linguistic theories, it is agreed that the people were settled in the plains by the thirteenth century. Both the Ga and the Adangbe were influenced by their neighbors. For example, both borrowed some of their vocabulary, especially words relating to economic activities and statecraft, from the Guan. The Ewe are also believed to have influenced the Adangbe.

Despite the archaeological evidence that proto-Ga-Adangbe speakers relied on millet and yam cultivation, the modern Ga reside in what used to be fishing communities. Today, such former Ga communities as Labadi and Old Accra are neighborhoods of the national capital of Accra. This explains why, in 1960, when the national enumeration figures showed the ethnic composition of the country's population, more than 75 percent of the Ga were described as living in urban centers. The presence of major industrial, commercial, and governmental institutions in the city, as well as increasing migration of other people into the area, has not prevented the Ga people from maintaining aspects of their traditional culture.

The Central Togo

The Central Togo groups are found to the north of Ewe country in the Akwapim-Togo Ranges. These groups are sometimes called the Togo remnants, on the assumption that they represent what is left of a once more widespread people who were absorbed either by the Akan or by the Ewe. Although some of the Central Togo groups are indigenous to the area, many are believed to have come to the mountain location for refuge from the numerous wars that were fought after the end of the seventeenth century by the Gonja, Asante, Dahomeans, and Akwamu. The refugees found protection and land and, therefore, settled in the ranges. Descent and inheritance seem to be patrilineal, and each group is autonomously organized under a chief.

The traditional mode of economic activity among the Central Togo people was the cultivation of rice, but today a substantial number of the people are engaged in cocoa farming. More than any Kwa or Gur group, the Central Togo people define themselves as Christian. A relatively high level of literacy and

school attendance and a high proportion of professionals and technical workers characterize the Central Togo groups.

Social Organization and Social Change

The essential characteristic of the Ghanaian social system is its dual but interrelated nature. Even though the majority of the population still lives in rural areas and observes ancestral customs and practices, the process of modernization associated with urban life has, nonetheless, affected all Ghanaians' social behavior and values. Peoples, ideas, goods, and services flow constantly between urban and rural areas, blurring the distinction between so-called traditional and modern life. Relationships within traditional society are based on family membership, inherited status, and ancestral beliefs. In modern society, relationships are determined by achieved status, formalized education, membership in professional associations, and ethnic affiliation. Contemporary society, however, is grafted onto traditional roots, and although traditional social relationships have often been partially transformed to fit the needs of modern life, they continue to endure. The result is that, even those who live primarily in the modern urban setting are still bound to traditional society through the kinship system and are held to the responsibilities that such associations entail.

Traditional Patterns of Social Relations

The extended family system is the hub around which traditional social organization revolves. This unilineal descent group functions under customary law. It is a corporate group with definite identity and membership that controls property, the application of social sanctions, and the practice of religious rituals. Many local variations exist within the general framework of the lineage system. In some ethnic groups, the individual's loyalty to his or her lineage overrides all other loyalties; in other groups, a person marrying into the group, though never becoming a complete member of the spouse's lineage, adopts its interests.

Among the matrilineal Akan, members of the extended family include the man's mother, his maternal uncles and aunts, his sisters and their children, and his brothers. A man's children and those of his brothers belong to the families of their respective mothers. Family members may occupy one or several

An example of domestic architecture of the Kasena people at Nakong, far northern Ghana Courtesy life in general *(Brook, Rose, and Cooper Le Van)*

houses in the same village. The wife and her children traditionally reside at their maternal house where she prepares her food, usually the late evening meal, to be carried to her husband at his maternal house. Polygamy as a conjugal arrangement is on the decline for economic reasons; but where it has been practiced, visitation schedules with the husband were planned for the wives.

For the patrilineal and double-descent peoples of the north, the domestic group often consists of two or more brothers with their wives and children who usually occupy a single homestead with a separate room for each wife. Also, the largest household among the patrilineal Ewe includes some or all of the sons and grandsons of one male ancestor together with their wives, children, and unmarried sisters.

Irrespective of the composition of the family in either matrilineal or patrilineal societies, each family unit is usually headed by a senior male or headman who might either be the founding member of the family or have inherited that position. He acts in council with other significant members of the family in the management of the affairs of the unit. Elderly female members of matrilineal descent groups may be consulted in the decision-making process on issues affecting the family, but often the men wield more influence.

Family elders supervise the allocation of land and function as arbitrators in domestic quarrels; they also oversee naming ceremonies for infants, supervise marriages, and arrange funerals. As custodians of the political and spiritual authority of the unit, the headman and his elders ensure the security of the family. These obligations that bind the group together also grant its members the right of inheritance, the privilege to receive capital (either in the form of cattle or fishing nets) to begin new businesses, and the guarantee of a proper funeral and burial upon death. The extended family, therefore, functions as a mutual aid society in which each member has both the obligation to help others and the right to receive assistance from it in case of need.

To ensure that such obligations and privileges are properly carried out, the family also functions as a socializing agency. The moral and ethical instruction of children is the responsibility of the extended family. Traditional values may be transmitted to the young through proverbs, songs, stories, rituals, and initiations associated with rites of passage. Among the Krobo, Ga, and Akan, puberty rites for girls offer important occasions for instructing young adults. These methods of communication constitute the informal mode of education in the traditional society. It is, therefore, through the family that the individual acquires recognition and social status. As a result, the general society sees the individual's actions as reflecting the moral and ethical values of the family. Debts accrued by him are assumed by the family upon a member's death, and, therefore, his material gains are theirs to inherit.

Land is ordinarily the property of the lineage. Family land is thought of as belonging to the ancestors or local deities and is held in trust for them. As a result, such lands are administered by the lineage elders, worked by the members of the kinship group, and inherited only by members of that unit. Although sectors of such land may be leased to others for seasonal agricultural production, the land remains within the family and usually is not sold. However, it is not unusual for a man to set aside a portion of his acquired property as "reasonable gifts" for his children or wife, as has been the case, particularly, among matrilineal groups. For such gifts to be recognized, tradition requires that the presentation be made public during the lifetime of the donor, allowing the recipient to hold the public as witnesses should the gift be contested afterward, especially following the death of the donor.

A network of mutual obligations also joins families to chiefs and others in the general community. Traditional elders and chiefs act for the ancestors as custodians of the community. Thus, in both patrilineal and matrilineal societies, and from the small village to the large town, the position of the chief and that of the queen mother are recognized.

The chief embodies traditional authority. Chiefs are usually selected from the senior members of the lineage or several lineages that are considered to be among the founders of the community or ethnic group. Chiefs have extensive executive and judicial authority. Decisions on critical issues, such as those made by family elders, are based on wide discussions and consultations with adult representative groups of both sexes. Traditionally, legislation has not been a primary issue, for the rules of life are largely set by custom. Discussions are usually focused on the expediency of concrete actions within the framework of customary rules. Decisions, when taken by chiefs, are normally taken by chiefs-in-council and not by lone dictatorial fiat. The legitimacy of traditional authority, therefore, has usually been based on public consensus sanctioned by custom.

Although chiefs or other authority figures might come from designated families or clans, the interest of the common people is never ignored. Where the process of selecting as well as of advising chiefs is not given directly to the populace, it has often been vested in representatives of kin or local residence groups, elders, or other types of councils. Among the Akan, for example, the *asafo* (traditional men's associations, originally fighting companies—see Glossary) have played important roles as political action groups to protect the interests of the common people. The priests of some local shrines also acquired substantial authority that helped balance the powers of local chiefs. It was such checks and balances within the traditional scheme of authority relations, especially among the Akan, that led the British anthropologist, Robert S. Rattray, to refer to the traditional political structure as a "domestic democracy."

Social Change

Needless to say, contact with Europeans, Christians, and Muslims as well as colonialism greatly affected and modified indigenous customs, institutions, and values. A good example of this process is the office of local chief. British influence has been present for generations, and by the time of independence in 1957, the British had exercised substantial political authority

over certain southern regions for more than a century. The office of the chief, traditionally used to manage the affairs of the village community and the ethnic group, was retained by the British as one of the most important agencies through which the populace received colonial instructions. As the architect of the British colonial policy of indirect rule, Frederick Lugard argued in his *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* that the preservation of the office of the traditional chief was cost-effective because it presented the appearance of continuity in the changing political environment. As was the case in many British colonies in Africa, traditional chiefs in Ghana were allowed to hold court in matters relating to traditional customs. They also controlled some local lands for agricultural production, even when the timber and mineral resources were exploited by the colonial government.

Chiefs continued to be appointed by their own people during colonial times, but native administrators became increasingly accountable to the colonial government. Inevitably, the presence of other colonial agents, such as the small but effective colonial police and the resident commissioners, influenced the power of chiefs. Also, with the abolition of slavery, the imposition of colonial taxes, and the establishment of bureaucratic and judicial procedures, the social relationships that had existed in the precolonial period between chiefs and people were altered—at times radically and always permanently. Some individuals and groups lost power, while others gained influence as the British abolished some traditional functions and established new ones.

A combination of factors affected customary notions about the exercise of power—colonial rule, Christianity, the money economy, and Western-style education. Christian missionaries established the first Western schools (see Education, this ch.). Products of this formal school system became the new elite class of literate graduates who functioned as intermediaries between the indigenous people and the colonial power and, later, the world at large. Freed from lineage property as the sole means of attaining wealth and social status, the new elite developed new forms of social institutions and patterns of interaction. Such modes of behavior associated with modernization and urbanization and acquired through formal education and the formal market economy introduced certain value systems that were distinctly different from those within the traditional culture.

Of course, Western knowledge, technology, and organizations were not uniformly introduced throughout the country. They appeared first and in most concentrated form on the coast or in the Gold Coast Colony, where European influence was greatest and where many schools were established compared with Asante and other northern regions. Consequently, the coastal and southern peoples were the greatest beneficiaries of the new economic and social opportunities and, conversely, suffered the greatest social upheaval—especially in conflicts between the Western-educated Africans and their traditional chiefs. Traditional society adapted with particular swiftness to life in urban areas, in part because of the concentration of economic development and social infrastructure in such areas. The pace of change intensified in 1952 when Kwame Nkrumah, the first African-born prime minister of the Gold Coast, introduced the Accelerated Development Plan for Education (see The Education System, this ch.).

The impact of the urban region on rural, traditional life has been great. Migrations by Ghanaians from rural areas to urban centers either by those in search of work or for the pure enjoyment of urban conditions greatly increased after 1969 (see Population Distribution, this ch.). The result was a decline in rural agricultural productivity and an increased dependence on urban wage-earners by extended family relatives. What has been described as "rural dependency on the urban wage-earner" was acceptable to those within the traditional system, who saw the individual as socially important because he continued to function in a matrix of kin and personal relationships and obligations, because his social identity could not be separated from that of his lineage, and because the wealth or positions attained could be shared by, or would benefit, all members of the extended family. Such a position, however, contradicted the Western view of the individual as a free and separate social agent whose legal obligations were largely contractual rather than kin-based and whose relationships with other people depended on individual actions and interests. The very difficult economic conditions of the 1970s brought even more pressure to bear on the relationship between traditional and urban values; nonetheless, the modern and the traditional societies continued to exist side by side, and individuals continued to adapt themselves to the requirements of each.

Urban Society

In 1960, 23.1 percent of the population of Ghana resided in urban centers. The figure rose to 28 percent in 1970, 32 percent according to the 1984 census report, and an estimated 33 percent in 1994. The census figures show that while a majority of Ghanaians still live in rural areas, larger towns and cities continue to attract more immigrants than small ones. There is a high correlation between both the economic well-being of the individual and his or her educational level, and the tendency to migrate. A large number of migrants come from areas immediately adjacent to urban areas. Urban populations are therefore multiethnic in character. Even in this multiethnic urban environment, however, ethnic associations play important social roles—from the initial reception of new migrants to the burial of urban residents.

Formed by people from the same village, district, region, or ethnic background, ethnic associations in urban centers function like extended families in which membership entails obligations and benefits. Apart from the obvious assistance that such associations may render—such as introducing newcomers to the urban environment, organizing credit unions, or helping with weddings and funeral activities—associations may also contribute to the development of their home areas. For example, urban residents from towns and villages in the Kwahu Plateau area are known throughout Ghana for their mutual aid societies. Through their fund-raising activities, Kwahu associations have contributed to school building construction, rural electrification, and general beautification projects in their villages.

In urban centers, the degree of traditionalism or modernism demonstrated by an individual is determined to a large extent by the length of residency in an urban setting; by the level of education and, therefore, the degree of Westernization; by living habits; by the nature of work; and, in some measure, by religious affiliation. For analytic purposes, one scholar has divided Ghanaian urban residents, especially those in the upper ranks of urban society, into groups according to occupation. Within these groups are individuals who, on the basis of their education, professional standing, and participation in the urban milieu, are accorded high status. They include professionals in economics, politics, education, administration, medicine, law, and similar occupations who constitute the elite of their respective groupings.

View of central Accra along Kwame Nkrumah Avenue
Courtesy Embassy of Ghana, Washington
A main thoroughfare in Cape Coast
Courtesy James Sanders

Taken as a whole, however, such elites do not compose an upper class. The individuals who constitute the elites come from different social and ethnic backgrounds and base their power and social status on a variety of cultural values. Most of them continue to participate in some aspects of traditional society and socialize with members of their own or other lineage groups. Most important, they do not regard themselves as an elite group.

The working class constitutes the rank and file of the various trade union groups. The majority of them have completed the Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination. Some have secondary and technical educations. Unions have been politically active in the country since the 1960s. During the 1970s, members of the Trade Union Congress, the umbrella organization of workers, and the nation's university students joined together to call for political changes. In the 1980s, however, long-standing good relations with student organizations suffered when certain trade union groups attacked demonstrating university students. The primary function of the Trade Union Congress as a mutual aid group is to conduct negotiations with the government in an effort to improve the conditions and the wages of workers. Apart from such joint actions within the unions, the lives of working people in urban centers, like those of their elite counterparts, revolve around friends, family, and other mutual-aid networks.

Family life in more affluent urban areas approximates Western behavior in varying degrees. Decisions in the urban family are increasingly made by both parents, not just one. As children spend increasing amounts of time away from home, more of their values come from their peers and from adults who are not members of their lineage. Social activities organized by schools have become more important in the life of urban children and have reduced sibling interaction. As a result, a greater amount of socialization is taking place outside the kin group and immediate family. This contrasts with rural society in which family and lineage remain the most significant institutions.

As a result of weakening lineage ties in urban centers and of population movements that separate more and more individuals from kinsmen upon whom they would ordinarily depend for assistance, companionship, and entertainment, many urban residents have turned to voluntary-membership clubs and to organizations composed of people with shared interests

rather than inherited links. Popular examples of such clubs are the Ghana Red Cross Society, the Accra Turf Club, and the Kristo Asafo (Christian Women's Club). Other organizations such as the Ghana Bar Association, the Registered Nurses Association, the Ghana Medical Association, and the Ghana National Association of Teachers address professional concerns.

The Position of Women

Women in premodern Ghanaian society were seen as bearers of children, retailers of fish, and farmers. Within the traditional sphere, the childbearing ability of women was explained as the means by which lineage ancestors were allowed to be reborn. Barrenness was, therefore, considered the greatest misfortune. In precolonial times, polygamy was encouraged, especially for wealthy men. Anthropologists have explained the practice as a traditional method for well-to-do men to procreate additional labor. In patrilineal societies, dowry received from marrying off daughters was also a traditional means for fathers to accumulate additional wealth. Given the male dominance in traditional society, some economic anthropologists have explained a female's ability to reproduce as the most important means by which women ensured social and economic security for themselves, especially if they bore male children.

In their *Seven Roles of Women: Impact of Education, Migration, and Employment on Ghanaian Mothers* (1987), Christine Oppong and Katherine Abu recorded field interviews in Ghana that confirmed this traditional view of procreation. Citing figures from the Ghana fertility survey of 1983, the authors concluded that about 60 percent of women in the country preferred to have large families of five or more children. A statistical table accompanying the research showed that the largest number of children per woman was found in the rural areas where the traditional concept of family was strongest. Uneducated urban women also had large families. On the average, urbanized, educated, and employed women had fewer children. On the whole, however, all the interviewed groups saw childbirth as an essential role for women in society, either for the benefits it bestows upon the mother or for the honor it brings to her family.The security that procreation provided was greater in the case of rural and uneducated women. By contrast, the number of children per mother declined for women with post-elemen-

tary education and outside employment. With a guaranteed income and little time at her disposal in her combined role as mother and employee, a woman's desire to procreate declined.

In rural areas of Ghana where non-commercial agricultural production was the main economic activity, women worked the land. Coastal women also sold fish caught by men. Many of the financial benefits that accrued to these women went into upkeep of the household, while those of the man were reinvested in an enterprise that was often perceived as belonging to his extended family. This traditional division of wealth placed women in positions subordinate to men. The persistence of such values in traditional Ghanaian society may explain some of the resistance to female education in the past.

In traditional society, marriage under customary law was often arranged or agreed upon by the fathers and other senior kinsmen of the prospective bride and bridegroom. This type of marriage served to link the two groups together in social relationships; hence, marriage within the ethnic group and in the immediate locality was encouraged. The age at which marriage was arranged varied among ethnic groups, but men generally married women somewhat younger than they were. Some of the marriages were even arranged by the families long before the girl attained nubility. In these matters, family considerations outweighed personal ones—a situation that further reinforced the subservient position of the wife.

The alienation of women from the acquisition of wealth, even in conjugal relationships, was strengthened by traditional living arrangements. Among matrilineal groups, such as the Akan, married women continued to reside at their maternal homes. Meals prepared by the wife would be carried to the husband at his maternal house. In polygamous situations, visitation schedules would be arranged. The separate living patterns reinforced the idea that each spouse is subject to the authority of a different household head, and because spouses are always members of different lineages, each is ultimately subject to the authority of the senior men of his or her lineage. The wife, as an outsider in the husband's family, would not inherit any of his property, other than that granted to her by her husband as gifts in token appreciation of years of devotion. The children from this matrilineal marriage would be expected to inherit from their mother's family (see Traditional Patterns of Social Relations, this ch.).

The Ewe and the Dagomba, on the other hand, inherit from fathers. In these patrilineal societies where the domestic group includes the man, his wife or wives, their children, and perhaps several dependent relatives, the wife is brought into closer proximity to the husband and his paternal family. Her male children also assure her of more direct access to wealth accumulated in the marriage with her husband.

The transition into the modern world has been slow for women. On the one hand, the high rate of female fertility in Ghana in the 1980s showed that women's primary role continued to be that of child-bearing. On the other hand, current research supported the view that, notwithstanding the Education Act of 1960, which expanded and required elementary education, some parents were reluctant to send their daughters to school because their labor was needed in the home and on farms. Resistance to female education also stemmed from the conviction that women would be supported by their husbands. In some circles, there was even the fear that a girl's marriage prospects dimmed when she became educated.

Where girls went to school, most of them did not continue after receiving the basic education certification. Others did not even complete the elementary level of education. At numerous workshops organized by the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) between 1989 and 1990, the alarming drop-out rate among girls at the elementary school level caused great concern. For this reason, the council called upon the government to find ways to remedy the situation. The disparity between male and female education in Ghana was again reflected in the 1984 national census. Although the ratio of male to female registration in elementary schools was fifty-five to forty-five, the percentage of girls at the secondary school level dropped considerably, and only about 17 percent of registered students in the nation's universities in 1984 were female. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) figures published in 1991, the percentage of the female population registered at various levels of the nation's educational system in 1989 showed no improvement over those recorded in 1984 (see table 5, Appendix).

Despite what these figures might suggest, women have risen to positions of professional importance in Ghana. Early 1990s data showed that about 19 percent of the instructional staff at the nation's three universities in 1990 was female. Of the teaching staff in specialized and diploma-granting institutions, 20

percent was female; elsewhere, corresponding figures were 21 percent at the secondary school level, 23 percent at the middle school level, and as high as 42 percent at the primary school level. Women also dominated the secretarial and nursing professions in Ghana. When women were employed in the same line of work as men, they were paid equal wages, and they were granted maternity leave with pay.

For women of little or no education who lived in urban centers, commerce was the most common form of economic activity in the 1980s. At urban market centers throughout the country, women from the rural areas brought their goods to trade. Other women specialized in buying agricultural produce at discounted prices at the rural farms and selling it to retailers in the city. These economic activities were crucial in sustaining the general urban population. From the mid-1970s through the early 1980s, however, urban market women, especially those who specialized in trading manufactured goods, gained reputations for manipulating market conditions and were accused of exacerbating the country's already difficult economic situation. With the introduction of the Economic Recovery Program in 1983 and the consequent successes reported throughout that decade, these accusations began to subside (see Economic Recovery Program, ch. 3).

The overall impact of women on Ghanaian society cannot be overemphasized. The social and economic well-being of women, who as mothers, traders, farmers, and office workers compose slightly more than half of the nation's population, cannot be taken for granted. This was precisely the position taken by NCWD, which sponsored a number of studies on women's work, education, and training, and on family issues that are relevant in the design and execution of policies for the improvement of the condition of women. Among these considerations, the NCWD stressed family planning, child care, and female education as paramount.

Religion and Society

The religious composition of Ghana in the first postindependence population census of 1960 was 41 percent Christian, 38 percent traditionalist, 12 percent Muslim, and the rest (about 9 percent) no religious affiliation. A breakdown of the 1960 population according to Christian sects showed that 25 percent were Protestant (non-Pentecostal); 13 percent, Roman Catholic; 2 percent, Protestant (Pentecostal); and 1 percent, Inde-

Woman pounding cassava to make foo foo, *a starchy staple of the Ghanaian diet Courtesy* life in general *(Brook, Rose, and Cooper Le Van)*

pendent African Churches. The 1970 population census did not present figures on the religious composition of the nation.

The percentage of the general population considered to be Christian rose sharply to 62 percent according to a 1985 estimate. Whereas the Protestant (non-Pentecostal) sector remained at 25 percent, the percentage of Catholics increased to 15 percent. A larger rise, however, was recorded for Protestants (Pentecostals)—8 percent compared with their 2 percent representation in 1960. From being the smallest Christian sect, with a 1 percent representation among the general population in 1960, membership in the Independent African Churches rose the most—to about 14 percent by 1985. The 1985 estimate also showed that the Muslim population of Ghana rose to 15 percent. Conversely, the sector representing traditionalists and non-believers (38 and 9 percent, respectively, in 1960), saw dramatic declines by 1985—to 21 and about 1 percent, respectively. This shift, especially the increase in favor of the Independent African Churches, attests to the success of denominations that have adjusted their doctrines to suit local beliefs (see Syncretic Religions, this ch.).

Religious tolerance in Ghana is very high. The major Christian celebrations of Christmas and Easter are recognized as national holidays. In the past, vacation periods have been

planned around these occasions, thus permitting both Christians and others living away from home to visit friends and family in the rural areas. Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, is observed by Muslims across the country. Important traditional occasions are celebrated by the respective ethnic groups. These festivals include the Adae, which occur fortnightly, and the annual Odwira festivals of the Akan. On these sacred occasions, the Akan ancestors are venerated. There are also the annual Homowo activities of the Ga-Adangbe, during which people return to their home towns to gather together, to greet new members of the family, and to remember the dead. The religious rituals associated with these festivities are strictly observed by the traditional elders of the respective ethic groups.

Christianity and Islam in Ghana

The presence of Christian missionaries on the coast of Ghana has been dated to the arrival of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. It was the Basel/Presbyterian and Wesleyan/Methodist missionaries, however, who, in the nineteenth century, laid the foundation for the Christian church in Ghana. Beginning their conversions in the coastal area and among the Akwapim, these missionaries established schools as "nurseries of the church" in which an educated African class was trained. Almost all major secondary schools today, especially exclusively boys and girls schools, are mission- or church-related institutions. Although churches continue to influence the development of education in the country, church schools have been opened to all since the state assumed financial responsibility for formal instruction under the Education Act of 1960.

Various Christian denominations are well represented in Ghana. The Volta region has a high concentration of Evangelical Presbyterians. Many Akwapim are Presbyterians, and the Methodist denomination is strongly represented among the Fante. The Roman Catholic Church is fairly well represented in Central Region and Ashanti Region. Although no official figures exist to reflect regional distribution of the various denominations, it is generally agreed that the southern part of the nation is more Christian, while the north is more Islamic.

The unifying organization of Christians in the country is the Christian Council of Ghana, founded in 1929. Representing the Methodist, Anglican, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Evangelical Presbyterian, African Methodist Episcopal Zionist, Christian

Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran, F'Eden, and Baptist churches, and the Society of Friends, the council serves as the link with the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical bodies. The National Catholic Secretariat, established in 1960, also coordinates the different in-country dioceses. These Christian organizations, concerned primarily with the spiritual affairs of their congregations, have occasionally acted in circumstances described by the government as political. Such was the case in 1991 when both the Catholic Bishops Conference and the Christian Council of Ghana called on the military government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) to return the country to constitutional rule. The Roman Catholic newspaper, *The Standard,* was often critical of PNDC policies.

In the north, Islam predominates. Islam is based on what Muslims believe are the divine revelations received in seventh-century Arabia by the Prophet Muhammad. His life is recounted as the early history of the religion, beginning with his travels from the Arabian town of Mecca about A.D. 610. His condemnation of the polytheistic practices of the people of Mecca caused him to become an outcast. In A.D. 622 Muhammad was invited to the town of Yathrib, which became known as Medina (the city) through its association with him. The move, or hijra, known in the West as the hegira, marks the beginning of the Islamic Era and the Islamic calendar, as well as the inauguration of Islam as a powerful force in history. In Medina, Muhammad continued his preaching, ultimately defeated his detractors in battle, and consolidated his influence as both temporal and spiritual leader of most Arabs before his death in A.D. 632.

After Muhammad's death, his followers compiled those of his words that were regarded as coming directly from God into the Quran, the holy scripture of Islam. Other sayings and teachings as well as precedents of his behavior as recalled by those who knew him became the hadith ("sayings"). From these sources, the faithful constructed the Prophet's customary practice, or sunna, which they endeavor to emulate. The Quran, hadith, and sunna form a comprehensive guide to the spiritual, ethical, and social life of the faithful in most Muslim countries.

The God preached by Muhammad was previously known to his countrymen. Rather than introducing a new deity, Muhammad denied the existence of the pantheon of gods and spirits worshipped before his prophethood and declared the omnipo-

tence of God, the unique creator. Muhammad is the "Seal of the Prophets," the last of the prophetic line. His revelations are said to complete for all time the series of revelations that were given earlier to Jews and Christians. Islam reveres as sacred only the message, not the Prophet. It accepts the concepts of guardian angels, the Day of Judgment, resurrection, and the eternal life of the soul.

The central requirement of Islam is submission to the will of God (Allah), and, accordingly, a Muslim is a person who has submitted his will to God. The most important demonstration of faith is the *shahada* (profession of faith), which states that "There is no God but God (Allah), and Muhammad is his prophet." *Salat* (daily prayer), *zakat* (almsgiving), *sawm* (fasting), and hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) are also required of all Muslims.

The spread of Islam into West Africa, beginning with ancient Ghana in the ninth century, was mainly the result of the commercial activities of North African Muslims (see The Precolonial Period, ch. 1). The empires of both Mali and Songhai that followed ancient Ghana in the Western Sudan adopted the religion. Islam made its entry into the northern territories of modern Ghana around the fifteenth century. Mande or Wangara traders and clerics carried the religion into the area. The northeastern sector of the country was also influenced by Muslims who escaped the Hausa jihads of northern Nigeria in the early nineteenth century.

Most Ghanaian Muslims are Sunni, following the Maliki version of Islamic law. Sufism, involving the organization of mystical brotherhoods (*tariqa*) for the purification and spread of Islam, is not widespread in Ghana. The Tijaniyah and the Qadiriyah brotherhoods, however, are represented. The Ahmadiyah, a Shia (see Glossary) sect originating in nineteenth-century India, is the only non-Sunni order in the country.

Despite the spread of Islamism (popularly known as Islamic fundamentalism) in the Middle East, North Africa, and even in Nigeria since the mid-1970s, Ghanaian Muslims and Christians have had excellent relations. Guided by the authority of the Muslim Representative Council, religious, social, and economic matters affecting Muslims have often been redressed through negotiations. The Muslim Council has also been responsible for arranging pilgrimages to Mecca for believers who can afford the journey. In spite of these achievements, the

council has not succeeded in taking initiatives for the upgrading of Islamic schools beyond the provision of basic Quranic instruction. This may explain the economic and technological gap between Muslims and non-Muslims. The Ghanaian Ahmadiyah Movement, which has established a number of vocational training centers, hospitals, and some secondary schools, is an exception.

Traditional Religion

Despite the presence of Islam and Christianity, traditional religions in Ghana have retained their influence because of their intimate relation to family loyalties and local mores. The traditional cosmology expresses belief in a supreme being (referred to by the Akan as Nyame and by the Ewe as Mawu). The supreme being is usually thought of as remote from daily religious life and is, therefore, not directly worshipped. There are also lesser gods that take "residency" in streams, rivers, trees, and mountains. These gods are generally perceived as intermediaries between the supreme being and society. Ancestors and numerous other spirits are also recognized as part of the cosmological order.

For all Ghanaian ethnic groups, the spirit world is considered to be as real as the world of the living. The dual worlds of the mundane and the sacred are linked by a network of mutual relationships and responsibilities. The action of the living, for example, can affect the gods or spirits of the departed, while the support of family or "tribal" ancestors ensures prosperity of the lineage or state. Neglect, it is believed, might spell doom.

Veneration of departed ancestors is a major characteristic of all traditional religions. The ancestors are believed to be the most immediate link with the spiritual world, and they are thought to be constantly near, observing every thought and action of the living. Some ancestors may even be reincarnated to replenish the lineage. Barrenness is, therefore, considered a great misfortune because it prevents ancestors from returning to life.

To ensure that a natural balance is maintained between the world of the sacred and that of the profane, the roles of the chief within the state, family elders in relation to the lineage, and the priest within society are crucial. The religious functions, especially of chiefs and lineage heads, are clearly demonstrated during such periods as the Odwira of the Akan, the Homowo of the Ga-Adangbe, or the Aboakyir of the Efutu

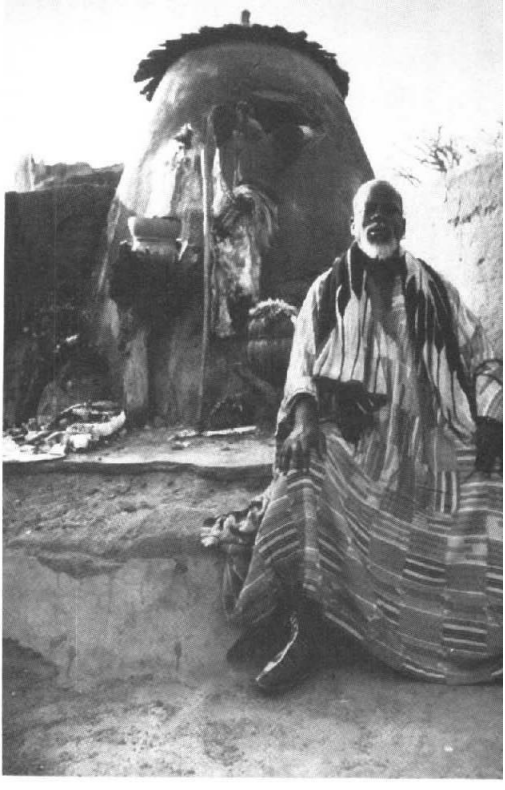
(coastal Guan), when the people are organized in activities that renew and strengthen relations with their ancestors. Such activities include the making of sacrifices and the pouring of libations.

The religious activities of chiefs and lineage heads are generally limited to the more routine biweekly and annual festivities, but traditional priests—given their association with specific shrines—are regarded as specialized practitioners through whom the spirits of the gods may grant directions. Priests undergo vigorous training in the arts of medicine, divination, and other related disciplines and are, therefore, consulted on a more regular basis by the public. Because many diseases are believed to have spiritual causes, traditional priests sometimes act as doctors or herbalists. Shrine visitation is strongest among the uneducated and in rural communities. This fact, however, does not necessarily suggest that the educated Ghanaian has totally abandoned tradition; some educated and mission-trained individuals do consult traditional oracles in times of crisis.

Syncretic Religions

The rise of Apostolic or Pentecostal churches across the nation partly demonstrates the impact of social change and the eclectic nature of traditional cultures. These establishments, referred to by some as separatist or spiritual churches or cults, combine traditional beliefs in magic and divination with elements of Christianity. The major emphasis of the cults is on curative and preventive remedies, chants, and charms, such as "holy water," designed to ward off the power of witches and malevolent forces. Cults also offer social activities in addition to their religious and medical roles. Some have rival drum societies and singing groups that are highly popular among the young and women. To their adherents, these cults seem to offer a sense of security derived from belonging to a religious group that is new yet maintains the characteristics of traditional forms of occult consultation. The increasing popularity of these churches (Independent African and Pentecostal) is reflected in figures for membership, which rose from 1 and 2 percent, respectively, in 1960, to 14 and 8 percent, respectively, according to a 1985 estimate.

Although freedom of religion exists in Ghana, a Religious Bodies (Registration) Law 2989 was passed in June 1989 to regulate churches. By requiring certification of all Christian reli-



A tendaana, *or priest of the land, in front of his shrine in far northern Ghana (Talensi area) Courtesy* life in general *(Brook, Rose, and Cooper Le Van)*

gious organizations operating in Ghana, the government reserved the right to inspect the functioning of these bodies and to order the auditing of their financial statements. The Ghana Council of Churches interpreted the Religious Bodies Law as contradicting the concept of religious freedom in the country. According to a government statement, however, the law was designed to protect the freedom and integrity of genuine religious organizations by exposing and eliminating groups established to take advantage of believers. The PNDC repealed the law in late 1992. Despite its provisions, all orthodox Christian denominations and many spiritual churches continued to operate in the country.

Health and Welfare

In precolonial Ghana, as in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, traditional priests were important in providing treatment for the sick. The role of village priests in the medical sphere reflected the belief that unexplained illness, misfortune, and premature death were caused by supernatural agents. In the treatment of illness, therefore, the usual process was for the priest to use divination to determine the source of the malady and to suggest sacrifices to appease the causal agents before herbal medicine was prescribed for the patient. Since the intro-

duction of Islam in Ghana in the fourteenth century, Muslim clerics have also been known to provide spiritual treatment and protection in the form of charms and amulets derived from Quranic beliefs.

The role of the village priests, who provided medical advice and sometimes treatment for the sick, has often been stressed over that of the herbalists, who served their communities solely as dispensers of medicinal herbs. Recent scholarship, however, has shown that villagers in the premodern era understood illness and misfortune to originate from both natural and supernatural sources. Even after a spiritually caused ailment was identified and the proper rituals performed, the final cure was usually via the application of medicinal herbs—a situation that made knowledge of the medicinal value of plants and herbs important. Herbal medicine was used in the treatment of diarrhea and stomach pains, for dressing wounds, as an antidote for poisons, and to stabilize pregnancies. Traditional healers continue to be relied upon, especially in the rural areas where modern health services are limited.

The medical value of traditional remedies varies. While the medicinal properties of herbs cannot be denied, in some cases herbs may be harmful and may result in severe infections or even death. It was for this reason that an association of traditional healers was formed in the 1960s with its headquarters at Nsawam in Greater Accra Region. The Traditional Healers' Association has tried to preserve the integrity of traditional medicinal practice. Its members have also attempted to assure the government, through the Ministry of Health, that the dispensation of herbal medicine has a role to play in modern medical practice in Ghana.

Western medicine was first introduced into the Gold Coast by Christian missionaries and missionary societies in the nineteenth century. Missionaries were almost the sole providers of modern medicine until after World War I. Important missionary medical facilities in Ghana today include Catholic-affiliated hospitals in Sunyani and Tamale, the Muslim Ahmadiyah facilities at Efiduasi-Asokori, and a Presbyterian hospital at Agogo in Eastern Region.

Attempts by the central government to expand Western medical care in the country were given serious consideration during the tenure of Frederick Gordon Guggisberg (1919–27) as governor of the Gold Coast. As part of his ten-year development program, Guggisberg proposed town improvements,

improved water supply, and the construction of hospitals. It was during his era that Korle Bu, the first teaching hospital in the Gold Coast, was completed in 1925.

Since the end of World War II, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have provided financial and technical assistance for the elimination of diseases and the improvement of health standards. A shortage of medical specialists exists, however, and local facilities for training medical personnel need to be expanded and updated. As a consequence, many Ghanaians in the immediate post-World War II period continued to rely on traditional doctors and herbalists.

Despite efforts to improve medical conditions in the decades following World War II, the first postindependence census of 1960 did not provide data on the medical situation in Ghana. There was still no regular system for gathering medical statistics by the mid-1960s and no suggestion that one would be developed by 1970. During that period, available figures were gathered from scattered samplings and were collected on a haphazard basis or were the summation of hospital records and United Nations projections. Thus, only partial information about the total health situation was available. Records from the 1984 census and newspaper reports on seminars conducted on health-related issues, especially since the mid-1980s, now make it easier to evaluate national health.

Health Care

Ghana has the full range of diseases endemic to a sub-Saharan country. According to WHO, common diseases include cholera, typhoid, pulmonary tuberculosis, anthrax, pertussis, tetanus, chicken pox, yellow fever, measles, infectious hepatitis, trachoma, malaria, and schistosomiasis. Others are guinea worm or *dracunculiasis*, various kinds of dysentery, river blindness or onchocerciasis, several kinds of pneumonia, dehydration, venereal diseases, and poliomyelitis. According to a 1974 report, more than 75 percent of all preventable diseases at that time were waterborne. In addition, malnutrition and diseases acquired through insect bites continued to be common.

WHO lists malaria and measles as the leading causes of premature death in Ghana. Among children under five years of age, 70 percent of deaths are caused by infections compounded by malnutrition. Guinea worm reached epidemic

proportions, especially in the northern part of the country, in 1988–89. Cerebral spinal meningitis also spread in the country and claimed a number of victims in the late 1980s. All these afflictions are either typical of tropical regions or common in developing countries.

To improve health conditions in Ghana, the Ministry of Health emphasized health services research in the 1970s. In addition, WHO and the government worked closely in the early 1980s to control schistosomiasis in man-made bodies of water. Efforts have been intensified since 1980 to improve the nation's sanitation facilities and access to safe water. The percentage of the national population that had access to safe water rose from 49.2 in 1980 to 57.2 percent in 1987. During that same period, the 25.6 percent of the population with access to sanitation services (public latrines, rubbish disposal, etc.) rose to 30.3 percent. According to WHO, however, many of the reported sanitation advances have been made in urban areas and not in rural communities where the majority of the population lives.

On the whole, however, Ghana's health conditions are improving. The result is reflected in the decline in infant mortality from 120 per 1,000 live births in 1965 to 86 per 1,000 live births in 1989, and a rate of overall life expectancy that increased from an average of forty-four years in 1970 to fifty-six years in 1993. To reduce the country's infant mortality rate further, the government initiated the Expanded Program on Immunization in February 1989 as part of a ten-year Health Action Plan to improve the delivery of health services. The government action was taken a step farther by the Greater Accra Municipal Council, which declared child immunization a prerequisite for admission to public schools.

Modern medical services in Ghana are provided by the central government, local institutions, Christian missions (private nonprofit agencies), and a relatively small number of private for-profit practitioners. According to the United Nations, about 60.2 percent of the country's total population in 1975 depended on government or quasi-government health centers for medical care. Of the available health facilities represented in the 1984 census, about 62.9 percent were still described as government and quasi-government institutions. Mission hospitals represented a large percentage of the remainder, while private hospitals constituted less than 2 percent of modern medical care facilities (see table 4, Appendix).

The medical system in Ghana comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health, which is also charged with the control of dangerous drugs, narcotics, scientific research, and the professional qualifications of medical personnel. Regional and district medical matters fall under the jurisdiction of trained medical superintendents. Members of the national Psychic and Healers' Association have also been recognized by the government since 1969. Over the years, all administrative branches of the Ministry of Health have worked closely with city, town, and village councils in educating the population in sanitation matters.

Many modern medical facilities exist in Ghana, but these are not evenly distributed across the country. Ministry of Health figures for 1990 showed that there were 18,477 hospital beds for the estimated national population of 15 million. World Bank (see Glossary) figures showed that in 1965 there was one physician to every 13,740 patients in Ghana. The ratio widened to one to 20,460 in 1989. In neighboring Togo, the doctor-to-patient ratio of one to 23,240 in 1965 improved to one to 8,700 in 1989; it was one to 29,530 in 1965 and one to 6,160 in 1989 for Nigeria, whereas in Burkina, the ratio of one to 73,960 in 1965 worsened to one to 265,250 in 1989. These figures show that while the doctor-patient ratio in Ghana gradually became less favorable, the ratio in neighboring countries, with the exception of Burkina, was rapidly improving.

The ratio of nurses to patients in Ghana (one to 3,730 in 1965), however, improved to one to 1,670 by 1989. Compared to Togo (one nurse to 4,990 patients in 1965 and one to 1,240 in 1989) and Burkina (one to 4,150 in 1965 and one to 1,680 in 1989), the rate of improvement in Ghana was slow. The improvement in Nigeria's nurse-to-patient ratio from one to 6,160 in 1965 to one to 1,900 in 1989 was exceptional. A rapidly growing Ghanaian population was not the only reason for unfavorable ratios of medical staff to patients; similar population growth was experienced in neighboring West African countries. Insofar as the Ghana Medical Association and the various nurses associations were concerned, better salaries and working conditions in Nigeria, for example, were significant variables in explaining the attraction of that country for Ghanaian physicians and other medical personnel. This attraction was especially true for male and, therefore, more mobile medical workers, as shown by the arguments of various health workers'

associations in 1990 during demonstrations in support of claims for pay raises and improved working conditions.

Ghana adopted a number of policies to ensure an improved health sector. These included the introduction of minimum fees paid by patients to augment state funding for health services and a national insurance plan introduced in 1989. Also in 1989, the construction of additional health centers was intensified to expand primary health care to about 60 percent of the rural community. Hitherto, less than 40 percent of the rural population had access to primary health care, and fewer than half of Ghanaian children were immunized against various childhood diseases. The training of village health workers, community health workers, and traditional birth attendants was also intensified in the mid-1980s in order to create a pool of personnel to educate the population about preventive measures necessary for a healthy community.

Since 1986 efforts to improve health conditions in Ghana have been strengthened through the efforts of Global 2000 (see Glossary). Although primarily an agricultural program, Global 2000 has also provided basic health education, especially in the northern parts of the country where the spread of guinea worm reached epidemic proportions in 1989. Reports on the impact of Global 2000 on health have been positive in other ways as well. For example, participating farmers have significantly increased their agricultural output—a development that has contributed to a decline in malnutrition. Also, the number of cases of guinea worm had dropped significantly by early 1993.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)

In March 1986, the first case of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) was reported in Ghana. In January 1991, a more detailed report on AIDS in Ghana appeared in which 107 human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) positive cases were said to have been recorded in 1987. Three hundred thirty-three people were identified as HIV positive by the end of March 1988, and there was a further increase to 2,744 by the end of April 1990. Of the April 1990 number, 1,226 were reported to have contracted AIDS. According to WHO annual reports, the disease continued to spread in the country. During 1991 the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital reported about fifty AIDS cases each month.

Although the reported figures were far below the number of known cases in East Africa and Central Africa, they were still alarming for a medical system already overburdened by traditional health problems. Seminars and conferences held to discuss the disease included the 1990 annual conference of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences. The conference theme was the impact of international prostitution and the spread of AIDS. The Ministry of Health, with funding from WHO, had also set up surveillance systems to track the AIDS virus as part of its medium-term (1989–93) plan. According to the program, a countrywide sample of both high- and low-risk groups had been identified for testing at regular intervals to measure the prevalence of the disease. A thirty-member National Advisory Council on AIDS was established in late 1989 to advise the government on policy matters relating to the control and prevention of AIDS in the country. The Ministry of Health lacks adequately trained personnel and information management systems to combat the disease.

Because of the continued spread of infection and improved reporting, the country recorded 12,500 AIDS cases by the end of 1994, placing Ghana second only to neighboring Côte d'Ivoire, where more than 16,600 cases of AIDS were recorded, in the West Africa subregion. Of the Ghanaian AIDS cases, about 8,000 were people aged fifteen to forty-five; the remainder were mostly children aged five to ten. At the same time, Ghanaian health officials estimated the number of HIV positive cases at about 300,000. The incidence of HIV positive and AIDS cases was highest in Ashanti Region.

The most-affected age-group in Ghana is young working adults. Some 70 percent of the total infected population is female; on the basis of this finding, the Ministry of Health anticipates a significant increase in HIV-positive births in the future. Considering the gravity of the problem, in February 1994 the National Parliament recommended that a select committee on education and health be established to study and make recommendations for measures to control AIDS. In the meantime, radio, television, and billboard advertisements are being used as part of a national AIDS awareness program.

Social Welfare

In precolonial Ghanaian societies, it was normal for individuals to receive economic assistance from members of their extended families—including paternal and maternal uncles,

aunts, grandparents, and cousins. The practice of expecting assistance from family members grew out of the understanding that the basis of family wealth derived from land and labor, both inherited from common ancestors. Even as individuals sought help from extended family members, they were in turn required to fulfill certain responsibilities, such as contributing labor when needed or participating in activities associated with rites of passage of family members. It is because of this mutual interdependence of the members of the family that anthropologist Robert S. Rattray defined the extended family in Ghana as the primary political unit. Today, the same system of welfare assistance prevails in rural areas, where more than two-thirds of the country's population resides.

Legislation for the provision of a modern national social security system went into effect in 1965. Further legislation was passed in 1970 to convert the system into a pension plan to provide for sickness, maternity, and work-related injury benefits. Government welfare programs at the time were the responsibility of the Department of Social Welfare under the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (now the Ministry of Mobilization and Social Welfare). As the national economy was reformed, the Workers' Compensation Act of 1986 was passed to guarantee wages to workers in the private sector while they were undergoing treatment for work-related injuries.

These plans, however, applied only to individuals employed in the formal sector of the economy. With about two-thirds of the country's population residing in rural areas, and with most urban residents engaged outside the formal economy, the traditional pattern of social security based on kin obligations still functions. In rural areas, individuals continue to turn to members of the extended family for financial aid and guidance, and the family is expected to provide for the welfare of every member. In villages, towns, and cities, this mutual assistance system operates within the larger kinship units of lineage and clan. In large urban areas, religious, social, and professionally based mutual assistance groups have become popular as a way to address professional and urban problems beyond the scope of the traditional kinship social security system (see Urban Society, this ch.).

According to a 1988 newspaper report, housing has become a major problem for city dwellers. The report indicated that former governments largely ignored the problem, thereby allowing the situation to reach an alarming state. The result is

an acute shortage of affordable rental housing for urban workers and students, who have to pay exorbitant rents. This shortage in turn has resulted in working husbands' leaving their families in their home villages and returning only when their work schedules allow them time to visit.

The introduction of the "Rural Manifesto" of 1984 was an attempt by the PNDC administration to address a general development problem that included urban housing. According to the1984 plan, many services, such as the provision of pipeborne water, banking facilities, and electricity, were to be introduced to the rural areas, thereby making such locations attractive to workers and others who might otherwise migrate to towns and cities. Because the implementation of these services, especially rural electrification, began in earnest only in the late 1980s, the plan's impact on rural-urban flow was as yet uncertain in the early 1990s.

Education

The dominant mode of transmitting knowledge in the precolonial societies of the Guinea Coast was through apprenticeship as smiths, drummers, or herbalists. By observing adult skills, or through proverbs, songs, and stories, children learned proper roles and behavior. Also, at various stages in life, especially during the puberty rites for young adults, intensive moral and ethical instruction from family or societal elders was given. The purpose of that "informal" education was to ensure that the individual was able to satisfy the basic traditional or communal needs, such as motherhood for women, and hunting, long-distance trading, or farming for men. It was also important that the religious sanctions associated with the various professions and stages in life be understood because the traditional society saw close relationships between religious and mundane activities.

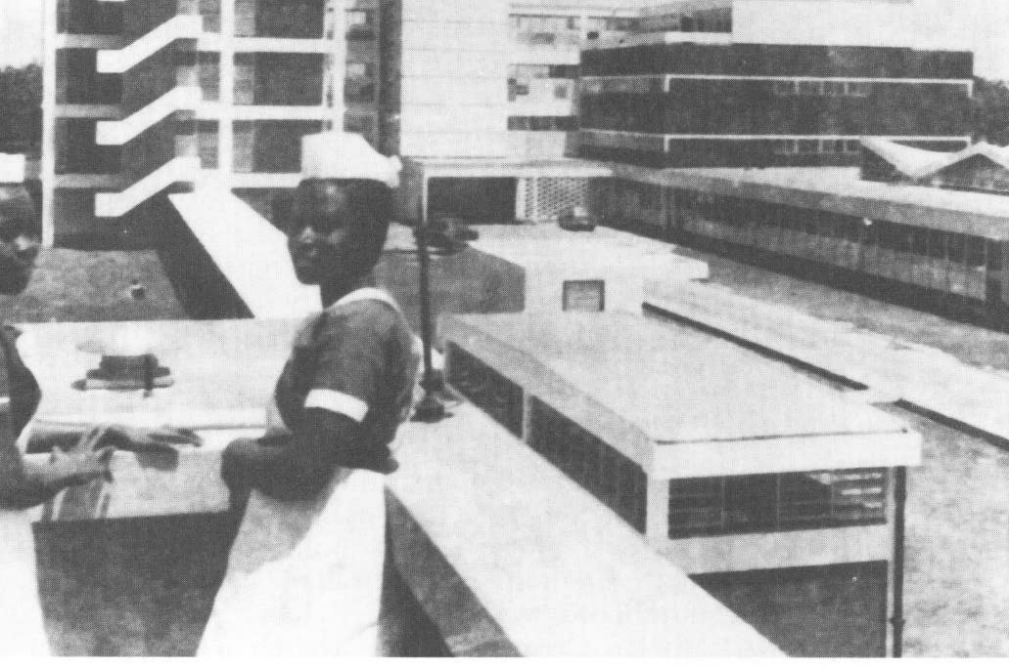
Western-style education was introduced into the Gold Coast by missionaries as early as 1765. Many of these institutions, established by Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries, were located in the south of the country in what became the British Gold Coast Colony (see Christianity and Islam in Ghana, this ch.). In 1852 the British colonial government instituted a poll tax to raise money to support public schools, but the measure became unpopular and was abolished in 1861. Mission schools continued to spread, however, and by 1881 more than 139 had been established with an enrollment of about 5,000 students.

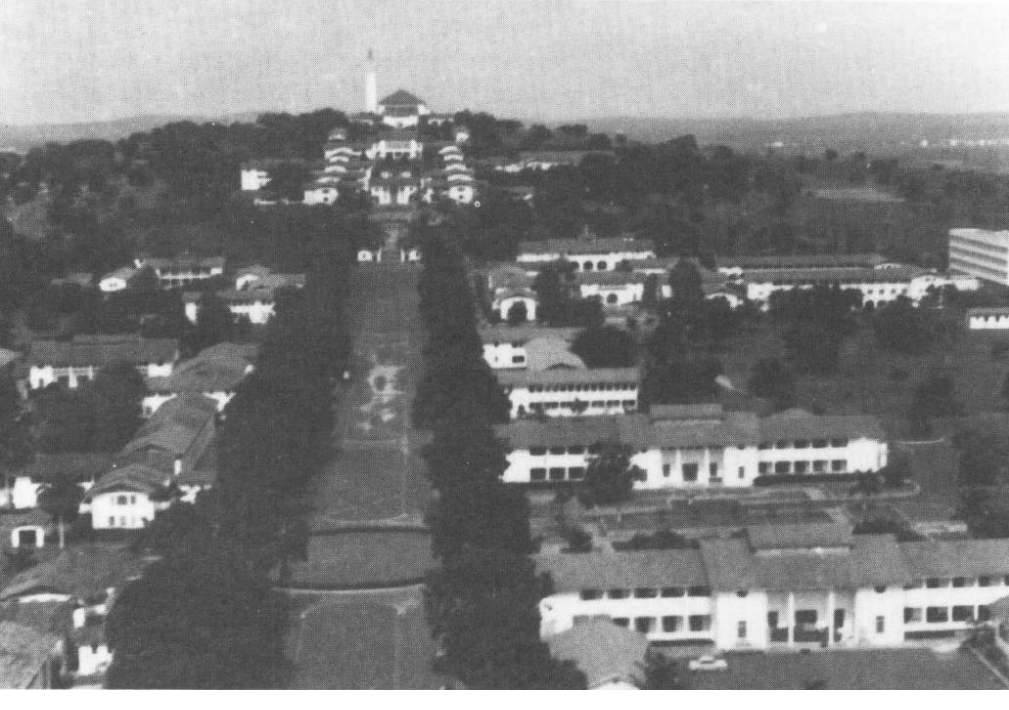
A board of education was set up in the 1880s to inspect schools and to standardize their management. Grants were established for private schools that met government standards, and the government devised regulations for the recognition of new schools. Primary education was emphasized until limited secondary education was introduced in the early 1900s.

After World War I, the development of education was given additional impetus under Governor Guggisberg. His education policies stressed the need for improved teacher training, equal education for girls, a greater emphasis on vocational training, and the establishment of secondary schools. In the governor's ten-year development plan, which was announced in 1919, education was given a special place, partly because of his goal of replacing Europeans with educated Africans in many administrative positions within the country. The policies were not fully implemented, especially at the secondary and vocational levels, but the Achimota School, a first-class secondary school designed to train Ghanaians for the lower levels of the civil service, was established in 1927. Although English remained the principal language of instruction in the school system, vernacular languages were also allowed in the primary schools, and the publication of textbooks in these languages began in earnest.

Stimulated by nationalist ideas of political and economic self-determination from the 1930s through the 1940s, popular demand for education reached such proportions that the combined efforts of the colonial government and the missions could not satisfy it. The result was the opening of hundreds of schools by local groups and individuals. The Convention People's Party (CPP) promise of free instruction during the 1951 election campaign was made in response to an increasing demand for education. Whereas some parents in the northern regions of the country resisted enrollment of their children, many in the south encouraged formal instruction because it was regarded as a virtual guarantee of acquiring white-collar jobs and wage-earning positions. Western education was accepted more readily in the southern sector of the country because Christian missionaries had been in that area longer than they had been in the north. The purpose of the CPP's free and compulsory education policy was to make formal education available to all at minimum cost.

In 1952 the CCP-led government drew up the Accelerated Development Plan for Education. The program, which became a reality in 1961, was designed to provide an education for





Korle Bu Hospital in Accra
Courtesy Embassy of Ghana, Washington
The University of Ghana at Legon
Courtesy Embassy of Ghana, Washington

every child aged six and above. To achieve this goal, the central government took responsibility for teacher training and funded schools through the Ministry of Education. Since this time, a considerable portion of the national budget has been spent on educating the population. Various attempts to shift the cost to students and parents, especially at the university level, have met great resistance.

The Education System

The country's education system at the beginning of the 1993–94 academic year comprised primary schools, junior secondary schools, senior secondary schools, polytechnic (technical and vocational) institutions, teacher training colleges, and university-level institutions.

In 1990–91, the latest year for which preliminary government statistics were available, 1.8 million pupils were attending more than 9,300 primary schools; 609,000 students were enrolled in about 5,200 junior secondary schools; and nearly 200,000 students were enrolled in some 250 senior secondary schools (see table 5, Appendix). In the mid-1980s, teachers on each of these levels numbered approximately 51,000, 25,000, and 8,800, respectively. In addition, 1989–90 enrollment in Ghana's approximately twenty-six polytechnic schools totalled almost 11,500 students; the teacher corps for these schools numbered 422. Education is free, although students have recently begun to pay textbook fees. The Education Act of 1960 foresaw universal education, but the constraints of economic underdevelopment meant that by the early 1990s this goal had not been realized. On the primary level, instruction is conducted in the local vernacular, although English is taught as a second language. Beyond primary school, however, English is the medium of instruction in an education system that owes much to British models.

Before the introduction of reforms in the mid-1980s, students at what was then the middle-school level took either the Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination and terminated their studies, or, at any time from seventh to tenth grade, the Common Entrance Examination, which admitted them to secondary or technical study. With the traditional six years of primary education, four years of middle schooling, and a seven-year secondary education (five years of preparation toward the Ordinary Level Certificate and two years of Advanced Level training) before entering degree-granting

institutions, the average age of the first-year university student in Ghana was often about twenty-five.

Most students, however, did not continue formal instruction after the first ten years of education. Of the 145,400 students completing middle school in 1960, for example, only 14,000 sought secondary education. In 1970 only 9,300 of the more than 424,500 leaving middle school were admitted into secondary schools. Ministry of Education data for the 1984–85 academic year showed that of the 1.8 million students completing ten years of primary and middle schooling, only 125,600 continued into secondary schools, while fewer than 20,000 entered vocational and technical institutions. That same year, approximately 7,900 students were enrolled in the universities.

Although the government provides free tuition to all children of school age, and notwithstanding the fact that schools can be found all across the country, 1989–90 government statistics showed that more males continued to be enrolled in schools than females. In the first six grades of the educational system, only 45 percent of the students enrolled were female. The percentage of females in the school system decreased to 33 percent at the secondary school level, to 27 percent in polytechnical institutions, and to as low as 19 percent within the universities. Disparities in the male-female ratios found in the schools had not improved significantly by 1990–91. The emphasis on male education doubtless reflects traditional social values, which view the reproductive abilities of women as their primary role in life, while men are valued as breadwinners and, therefore, in need of education to compete in the contemporary economy (see The Position of Women, this ch.).

Despite a number of committee reports and proposals for educational reform, until mid-1980 the education system continued to place emphasis on traditional academic studies. Proponents of reform argued that the country's development needs required an education system that, beginning at the middle-school level, placed equal emphasis on training students in vocational and technical skills. It was further suggested that reforms could contribute to reducing the number of students who dropped out of school for lack of interest in traditional academic studies.

Partly as a result of earlier proposals for reform and partly in keeping with the government's economic reform program, fundamental change in the educational structure of the country was undertaken in the mid-1980s. The overall goals were to

make curricula at all levels more relevant to the economic needs of the country, to reduce the length of pre-university instruction, and to improve the quality of teacher preparation. Increased enrollment in primary schools and a reduction in the rate of illiteracy were also to be pursued. The reforms were to be implemented in two phases: those for primary and middle schools were to be introduced in 1987–89, and those for secondary schools and the universities, in 1990–93.

The much-discussed changes in education became a reality in 1987 when all seventh-grade students, who otherwise would have entered the traditional first year of middle school, were instead admitted into new junior secondary schools (JSS) to begin a three-year combined training program in vocational, technical, and academic studies. The JSS system was a radical change in the structure of education in the country. It replaced the four-year middle school and the first three years of the traditional five-year secondary school system. After three years at the JSS, three years further training would be available in senior secondary schools (SSS), after which students could enter polytechnic institutions or the universities.

Pioneers in the JSS system sat for the first Basic Certificate of Education Examination in 1990. In this same year, seniors of the old middle-school system took the last Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination. Supporters of the JSS argued that the system would attract more students into technical, vocational, business, and agricultural institutions. It was also suggested that those students who did not gain admission into the SSS would be better equipped to enter the job market. Results of the first SSS certificate examination, announced in May 1994, however, showed that only 3.9 percent of students received passing marks. This poor showing was attributed to lack of textbooks, equipment, and trained teachers, and to inadequate time to prepare for the examination. Despite loud protests from students and parents, reform of the education system remained on course.

In addition to revamping middle-school education, changes were also introduced on all other educational levels. Fees for textbooks and supplies were instituted, primary curricula were revised, and food and housing subsidies were reduced or eliminated in secondary schools and the universities. In the early 1990s, however, the government appeared to be moving slowly in implementing further proposed reforms, such as new curricula in secondary schools and restructuring of the universities.

In the early 1990s, higher education was available at three institutions—the University of Ghana (located principally at Legon outside Accra), founded in 1948 as the University College of the Gold Coast; the University of Science and Technology at Kumasi, opened officially in 1952 as the Kumasi College of Technology; and the University of Cape Coast at Cape Coast, founded in 1961. In 1989–90 enrollment at all three institutions totalled 9,251, of whom 19 percent were female. In addition, large numbers of Ghanaians went abroad for university education, as they had in the past.

In anticipation that the new JSS and SSS structures would increase the number of students seeking advanced technical training, two more universities were proposed. The specialist institutions or colleges at Winneba, which offered post-secondary teacher training in such subjects as art, music, and physical education, were to be upgraded into an independent university college or were to be given associate relations with the University of Cape Coast. In September 1993, the University of Development Studies at Tamale opened. Designed initially to train agricultural specialists, it will eventually also offer degrees in health and development studies.

Problems in Education

At least two major educational issues faced Ghana in the early 1990s—the effort to shift part of the expense of education onto students, especially in the universities, and the future of the JSS innovation. Since the introduction of the Accelerated Development Plan for Education in 1952, the central government has shouldered much of the financial burden of education. In 1972, for example, about 20.1 percent of the total central government expenditure was spent on education. This figure rose to 25.7 percent in 1989. Compared with Nigeria, where only 4.5 percent and 2.8 percent of the total government expenditure was spent on education in 1972 and 1989, respectively, the Ghana figure was high even among its peers.

Efforts by the central government to shift the cost of education onto students, particularly at the university level, have been challenged. But despite the many demonstrations that were organized by the various student representative councils and the National Union of Ghanaian Students, the government resolved in the latter part of the 1980s to make university students pay for their boarding and lodging through loans. This policy, among others, was the cause of the unsettled rela-

tionship between university students and the government that characterized the early 1990s. In March 1993, an especially serious confrontation occurred in Accra between university students and police over the proposed charges. Such protests notwithstanding, the Ministry of Education proceeded with the changes for university funding on grounds that they were in line with the nation's Economic Recovery Program introduced in 1983 (see The Economic Recovery Program, ch. 3).

The introduction of the JSS system was also problematic. It had been agreed upon after the Dzobo Committee, chaired by N.K. Dzobo of the University of Cape Coast, reported in 1974 that the nation's educational establishment needed overhauling. In fact, this committee afforded education specialists and the public the opportunity to respond to a 1972 Ministry of Education proposal for the introduction of junior secondary schools. Despite the favorable evaluation of the Ministry of Education proposal by the Dzobo Committee, the proposed changes in the structure and content of primary and secondary education were never implemented, perhaps because of the difficult economic situation of the country in the mid-1970s.

When the JSS system was implemented in 1987, it was hailed by its supporters as the answer to the country's educational, social, and economic problems. Detractors, however, condemned it because of the limited time allowed for the development of necessary infrastructure, such as the provision of workshops, before the system went into effect. As a community-sponsored program, the JSS became a source of endless irritation to parents and guardians who had to contribute to building and equipping JSS workshops. There was also the concern that the JSS system would ultimately lead to an unfair distribution of educational resources because wealthier communities were likely to provide better facilities than those in poorer areas. Finally, it was argued that the JSS program did not challenge students enough because, unlike the former Middle School Leaving Certificate Examinations, all students writing the Basic Certificate of Education Examination conducted for the JSS received certificates of participation. The validity of these arguments, as well as the long-term impact of the new structure and content of education on the nation's development, remained to be demonstrated in the early 1990s.

Adult Education

A mass literacy campaign was started in 1951 as part of an overall community development program. The primary aim

was to teach adults to read and write in their own languages as well as in English. Efforts continued during the 1950s and the 1960s, and in the 1970s an extensive literacy campaign was launched under the direction of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare using mass education teams. Literacy classes for adults were also conducted by local units of the Peoples' Education Association, a voluntary organization founded in 1949. This group, which included teachers, graduates, students, and interested persons, had branches throughout the country. Despite such organizational efforts, it was estimated by the United Nations in 1970 that about 70 percent of the nation's inhabitants above the age of fifteen (57 percent of males and 82 percent of females) were illiterate. The 1970 figure was a 5 percent improvement over an estimated 1960 adult literacy rate of 25 percent.

Responding to the continued high level of illiteracy in the country, the government established the Institute of Adult Education in 1970 at the University of Ghana. The Institute was to furnish resident tutorial staff drawn from universities, colleges, and secondary schools to teach a wide range of classes in different parts of the country. The Institute also organized an annual New Year School attended by leading educators, government officials, and numerous social welfare organizations. At such times, the achievements of the Institute as well as the future direction of adult education in Ghana were assessed.

During the 1989 New Year School held at the University of Ghana, for example, the relationship between adult education and economic development was emphasized in a speech read by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, the head of state. Also in 1989, reliable press reports held that the adult literacy rate in Ghana was about 40 percent of the total population; of the 60 percent of the population that was illiterate, 57 percent was female. Even though the 1989 figure was an improvement over that of 1970, the National Council on Women and Development still expressed concern and described the low percentage of literate adult females as alarming. The council attributed female illiteracy to high dropout rates in the elementary schools and called on the government to find ways to enforce compulsory education in the country (see The Position of Women, this ch.). Despite such calls for educational improvement, there was little reason to believe that the situation with respect to literacy had changed significantly by the mid-1990s.

As part of an effort to improve the overall awareness of women's education, various nursing and para-medical associations organized drama troupes as a means of instructing illiterate as well as rural women about the importance of nutrition, of child care, of family planning, and of sending their children to school. In the early 1990s, the impact of such activities on the nation's literacy rate could not yet be assessed.

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Information on the geography of Ghana appears in a variety of sources. E.A. Boateng's *A Geography of Ghana*, published in 1966, is probably the most valuable. Basic archaeological data are in publications by Timothy F. Garrard, Kwaku Effah-Gyamfi, David Kiyaga-Mulindwa, Merrick Posnansky, Peter L. Shinnie, and L.B.Crossland. Kwamina Dickson's *A Historical Geography of Ghana* and James Anquandah's *Rediscovering Ghana's Past* are recommended as good reconstructions of Ghana's past.

Ethnographic information on the peoples of Ghana may be found in the works of Robert Sutherland Rattray, Kwabena J.H. Nketia, Kwesi Yanka, Kofi Abrefa Busia, Minion Morrison, Margaret J. Field, Jack Goody, and Marion Johnson. For more recent information, see M.E. Kropp Dakubu's *The Languages of Ghana.*

Much of the recent literature on Ghana describes changes in traditional society as it adjusts to the contemporary world. These often focus on the position of chiefs in relation to the modern state. Kofi Abrefa Busia's *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*, A. Adu Boahen's *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, and Kwame Arhin's *Traditional Rule in Ghana: Past and Present* are among the most impressive. Also significant is Peter K. Sarpong's *Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture.* An extensive bibliography on the cultural environment of the country can be found in E.Y. Amedekey's *The Culture of Ghana: A Bibliography.*

Population figures on Ghana and other statistical information can be found in the *Quarterly Digest of Statistics* published by the Government of Ghana, Statistical Service. The same office also published the *Preliminary Report on the 1984 Census.* For complete bibliographical information on the country's census figures, see *Population of Ghana: An Annotated Bibliography,*

1980–1988, published by the Regional Institute for Population Studies at the University of Ghana. Excellent sources on women and on economic and social developments include the works of such scholars as Claire Robertson, Christine Oppong, Mason Oppenheim, and Gwendolyn Mikell. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)