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WHERE HAVE ALL THE YOUNG MEN GONE? EVIDENCES AND EXPLANATIONS OF CHANGING AGE–SEX RATIOS IN KAMPALA

Sandra Wallman and Valdo Pons

For decades, combinations of colonial policy and economic need in sub-Saharan Africa, east and south, created patterns of migration such that more men than women ended up in towns. (See generally Pons, 1969: 45, 60, and, for Kampala, Southall and Guttkind, 1957: 28.) The imbalance is said to contribute to the breakdown of traditional values and the instability of family life in towns. These processes are held accountable for commercial and 'casual' sex becoming the norm in urban Africa, and so, of course, for persistent epidemics of sexually transmitted diseases, now including HIV.

The underlying assumptions of this received wisdom are that unregulated sexual behaviour is not uncommon in urban Africa, and that the extent of risky sexual practice is significantly affected by sex ratios. Both these assumptions are questionable, but they are not at issue here. Our discussion centres on marked changes in the sex ratio itself—both in Kampala and in the 'parish' of Kamwokya II within Kampala, which is, in respect of age and sex composition, typical of the city as a whole.

Uganda census data show that between 1969 and 1991 the urban population grew substantially—although only half as fast as those of Nairobi and Dar es Salaam (O'Connor, 1988: 92). Kampala's numbers rose from 330,000 to 775,000, and Kamwokya's from 5,600 to 12,000. In the same period there was a marked fall in the overall sex ratio and so a decrease in the surplus of adult men over adult women; and there developed, also at both levels, a significant excess of girls/young women over boys/young men.

The last observation is especially perplexing. Is it peculiar to Kampala because 'caused' somehow by Uganda's turbulent recent history? Or is it an effect of economic changes or mortality patterns affecting the continent as a whole? And, most crucially in this era, what bearing does it have on patterns of sexual behaviour and rates of STD/HIV infection?

THE RESEARCH SETTING

This analysis is one strand of a multi-disciplinary, multi-layered study

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of the informal economy of health in African cities (Wallman *et al.*, 1996). Its object was to map constraints on and the effects of the decisions of women faced with symptoms of illness 'serious enough' to warrant treatment outside the home. Population structure and change were not its focus, but they became significant to one of its central questions—'What kind of urban system is this?' We need to know what treatment options are recognised in the research area, which kinds of people use which ones, and how the resources necessary for treatment seeking are defined and mobilised (Wallman and Baker, 1996). The urban system is the geographic context in which all this happens; it provides the conditions of possibility within which day-to-day decisions inevitably are made (Wallman, 1996).

The official size of Kamwokya II is 0·5 km^2. Formal estimates put its population density at 23,000 per km^2, at least fifteen ethnic groups are represented among the permanent residents, and it is mixed by economic prosperity and status. This heterogeneity shows in patterned variation within the area. Non-residents are drawn to it as an entertainment centre with a good market and lively trades in brewing, tailoring, furniture-making, etc., and new residents by virtue of its increasing respectability and desirability as a place to live. The residents' own relation to it varies with gender: most men come and go, most women stay put; more women than men are 'around' in the daytime (*ibid.*).

KAMWOKYA II RE. KAMPALA

In the 1991 census the sex–age ratios and population pyramid of Kamwokya II mirror those of Kampala, and for present purposes they serve as a proxy for the city as a whole. Figures published for both areas in 1991 and 1969 are given in Table 1[1]. They show that in the earlier years the ratio for Kamwokya II was higher than that for Kampala city, whereas by 1991 it was virtually the same. In both cases, overall sex ratios have fallen consistently and females now outnumber males to a small extent.

Males made up 55 per cent of the total population of Kampala in 1969, yielding the overall ratio of 126, but there are important differences between age groups. Kamwokya's profile in 1969 is similar but more 'migrant-like': it has slightly fewer children under 15 years and a greater excess of adult men. It is mainly the excess of men in the age group 20–34 that leads to Kamwokya II having a higher sex ratio overall.

We should note that the 1969 figures include Asians and Europeans and that the age–sex profiles of the races differed. But these proportions were never large, even in Kampala, and by 1991 are not specified at all:

[1] The 1980 census published no breakdowns by age, so could not be incorporated in this discussion.

TABLE 1. *Age-specific sex ratios for Africans in Kampala city and for Kamwokya II, 1969 and 1991 (census)*

	1969		*1991*	
Age	*Kamwokya II*	*Kampala*	*Kamwokya II*	*Kampala*
0–4	83	96	92	97
5–9	82	88	82	88
10–14	99 } 94	94 } 94	65 } 75	73 } 76
15–19	98	101	79	68
20–24[a]		148	92	93
25–29	} 201	172 } 163	111 } 106	113 } 107
30–34		181	127	128
35–39		201	158	136
40–44	} 226	153 } 185	153 } 185	143 } 140
45–49		203	156	145
50–54		132	140	117
55–59	} 146	209 } 139	168 } 129	123 } 108
60–64		108	79	75
65–69		126	80	88
70–74	} 132	93 } 106	54 } 58	57 } 67
75+		103	48	57
Total	138	126	97	95

NOTE *a* Data for Kamwokya II in 1969 are available only in fifteen-year age groups above the age of 20.

the census now classifies only by citizenship. 'Others' not belonging to specified African countries we have glossed as non-African. On this basis (and for good historical reasons) the non-African tally for Kampala was down from 37,300 to 5,500 (less than 1 per cent of the total) and had small effect on age–sex ratios. Since in Kamwokya II non-African residents are even more rare, the rest of this account refers only to the African populations of both areas.

The age-specific sex ratios for both areas and both years are set out in Table 1. Three points are significant. (1) In both years the two profiles are similar except that Kamwokya II shows slightly greater extremes in the excess of men over women. (2) As the excess of men over women has *decreased* over time so the excess of girls/young women has *increased.* (3) In the older age groups (65+) an excess of men in 1969 has been replaced in 1991 by an excess of women.

Comparing the two census results shows that the excess of girls/young women has both arisen and increased in the last two decades. In Kampala in 1969 the sex ratios for Africans in the 10–14 and 15–19 year age groups were at or close to parity; in 1991 they are well below parity. And whereas the 1969 figures show 148 males per 100 females age 20 to 24, by 1991 there were only 93 men per 100 women in that

age group—virtually the same as in Kamwokya II. It is likely that its figures for 1969 would also mirror Kampala's had they been subdivided in the same way.

VARIATIONS WITHIN KAMWOKYA II BY SUB-AREA AND PLACE OF BIRTH

These ratios are not uniform across the areas they refer to. Age–sex ratios in Kamwokya II (and presumably in Kampala as a whole) vary appreciably by sub-area and by birthplace. On both counts the differences reflect the fact that the population is made up of migrants who distribute themselves unevenly across the cityscape.

We used various data to set up a typology of sub-areas within Kamwokya II, each comprising between three and nine census enumeration areas. Their labels (listed below) imply styles of livelihood and are largely self-explanatory. Cross-tabulations with residents' home areas suggest that incomers 'select' their sub-area by reference to the economic and social style of their ethnic/regional origins.

Area A Migrant area
B Market area
C Permanent house residential area
D Inner core
E Residual area

Three elements of difference or similarity between them are salient.

(1) Area A has a smaller proportion of children under 5 years (15·3 per cent) than the other four areas. Area D has the highest proportion (18·5 per cent), followed by B (17·8 per cent), E (17·5 per cent) and C (16·3 per cent). These differences are not large but are related to others.

(2) Area A, the Migrant area, also has the highest overall sex ratio, with 110 males per 100 females. The most marked contrast is with area B, the Market area, which has an overall ratio of 81 and is the only area in which females outnumber males in all age categories except 40–59 years. Focusing on the 20–39 year groups, area A has the largest excess of males, area B, as already noted, is unbalanced in the opposite direction, and area C, the Permanent house area, is closest to parity.

(3) In the matter of the sex composition of those under 20 years of age, girls/young women outnumber boys/young men in virtually all areas. But the extent of the imbalance differs appreciably according to age. In each area the proportion of both boys and girls in the 5–9 year category falls markedly from a higher level under 5 years. Then the proportions tend to rise, but there are differences in the rates at which males 'catch up' with females. In area B the sex ratio remains consistently low as we climb the age ladder; in area A the sex ratio rises above parity between 20 and 25 years; in areas D and E it does so between 25 and 29 years; and in area C it does so only between 30 and 34 years.

These differences must be the result of differential patterns of in-migration or different counterflows of out-migration—both, in some sense, effects of relations between the economy of Kampala and its

TABLE 2. *Kampala: population by ethnicity/citizenship and sex (1991 census)*

Region	*Ethnicity*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*%*	*Sex ratio*
Central Kampala	Baganda	217,071	252,148	469,219	60·6	86
Western	Banyankole Bahima	20,175	18,821	38,996	5·0	107
Western	Batoro Batuku Basongora	13,961	14,037	27,998	3·6	99
Eastern	Iteso	12,764	12,660	25,424	3·3	101
Eastern	Basoga	13,232	11,756	24,988	3·2	113
Western	Bakiga	11,947	9,359	21,306	2·8	128
Northern	Acholi Labuor	10,352	9,846	20,198	2·6	105
Western	Banyoro Bagunga	8,407	9,368	17,775	2·3	90
Eastern	Bagisu Bamasaba	6,242	5,922	12,164	1·6	105
Northern	Langi	6,069	6,009	12,078	1·6	101
Rwanda West	Banyarwanda	5,270	6,737	12,007	1·6	78
Northern	Alur Jonam	6,225	5,456	11,681	1·5	114
Northern	Lugbara Aringa	5,398	4,279	9,677	1·2	126
Western	Bafumbira	6,001	3,574	9,575	1·2	168
Eastern	Iteso	12,764	12,660	25,424	3·3	101
Other Ugandan		23,857	19,346	43,205	5·6	123
Non-Ugandan		10,254	7,696	17,950	2·3	133
Total		377,225	397,016	774,241	100	95

surrounding areas. This provokes two questions. Where do the young migrants come from? And what do they do in Kampala?

Where do the migrants come from?

We know that the populations of Kampala and of Kamwokya II are ethnically very heterogeneous and that, for Kampala at least, overall sex ratios vary appreciably from one ethnic group to another. Table 2 shows, for example, that the resident Banyarwanda, Banyoro/Bagungu and Baganda have lower sex ratios[2] than the Bafumbira, Bakiga and Lugbara/Aringa; and Table 3 that the age-specific sex ratios of

[2] Even in the 1950s there were *parts* of Kampala in which Ganda women outnumbered Ganda men (Southall and Guttkind, 1957: 28). But note that some informants now suggest that non-Ganda women see advantages in 'passing' as Ganda, and their doing so may affect census figures.

TABLE 3. *Kamwokya II: age and sex by place of birth (Kampala or elsewhere)*

	Males		*Females*		*% of both sexes born in Kampala*	*Sex ratio among in-migrants*	
Age	*born in Kampala*	*born elsewhere*	*born in Kampala*	*born elsewhere*			
0–4	845	135	913	152	86·0	89	
5–9	409	153	467	217	70·3	71	
10–14	275	200	360	366	52·9	55	
15–19	237	408	214	607	30·8	67	
20–24	143	718	173	767	17·5	94	
25–29	93	732	95	649	12·0	113	110
30–34	55	550	67	410	11·3	134	
35–39	23	351	36	201	9·7	175	
40–44	18	216	11	110	8·2	196	183
45–49	6	133	15	71	9·3	187	
50–54	8	84	8	59	10·1	142	
55–59	3	37	5	19	12·5	195	134
60–64	2	24	3	30	8·4	80	
65–69	1	11	3	12			
70–74	1	5	2	11	15.9	61	
75–79	1	3	1	8			
80+	0	9	5	15			
Total	2,120	3,769	2,378	3,704	37·6	100	

Kamwokya II residents born outside Kampala vary in the same way as those of the total population.

Age-specific ratios for ethnic groups or migrants from different regions were not available, but from birthplace by age and sex (Table 4) it is possible to compare age-specific sex ratios for people born in different regions. Because each ethnic group tends to be associated with a particular region (added by us to the census figures in Table 2), evidence for variation of age–sex ratios by region of origin supports the likelihood of ethnic specialisation in the urban economy.

Tables 3 and 4 show considerable differences in overall sex ratios between people born in Kampala and the four regions of Uganda. For Central Region and Kampala the overall ratios are well below parity, as are all but three of the age-specific ratios. (The exceptions may well be quirks due to small numbers.) The overriding fact is that females born in Kampala and Central Region outnumber males at virtually all ages. The pattern for those born in Western, Eastern and Northern Regions is sharply different. All three regions show low sex ratios in the younger age groups—up to 19 years for the Western and Eastern Regions and up to 24 years for Northern Region, with men outnumbering women thereafter (Table 4). This implies steady patterns of migration to Kampala from the three regions which result in more adult men than

TABLE 4. *Age-specific sex ratios for Kamwokya II residents according to region of birth: 1991 census*

	Place of birth					
Age	*Kampala*	*Central Region*	*Western Region*	*Northern Region*	*Eastern Region*	*Total*
0–4	93	113	75	71	71	92
	} 91	} 88	} 75	} 77	} 65	} 88
5–9	88	72	75	83	61	82
10–14	76	54	53	45	59	65
	} 89	} 59	} 66	} 67	} 60	} 72
15–19	111	62	74	77	62	79
20–24	83	80	111	121	68	92
	} 88	} 85	} 111	} 132	} 90	} 101
25–29	98	90	112	146	116	111
30–34	82	86	154	192	163	127
	} 76	} 95	} 152	} 203	} 217	} 138
35–39	64	112	147	225	353	158
40+	75	74	182	252	290	142
All ages	89	79	106	133	104	97

adult women but fewer boys/young men than girls/young women being resident in town.

The younger cohorts in Kamwokya II

This section combines data from Table 3 with census data on school attendance and the activity status of boys and girls in four age groups.

Age group 5–9 years. In 1991 the 5–9 year olds numbered approximately 1,250, of whom 70 per cent were born in Kampala. Girls made up 55 per cent of the total, giving a sex ratio of 82 (the same as in 1969). But the sex ratio among in-migrants was even lower at 71.

The proportion of the two sexes attending school is also 55 per cent. The absolute numbers of school-going girls are, however, higher than the numbers of school-going boys—378 girls as against 311 boys. By the same token, there were more girls *not* at school—312 girls and 255 boys.

It is conceivable that differential infant mortality contributed to this disparity, but more likely that the imbalance is a product of sex-selective tendencies in migration even at this low age.

Age group 10–14 years. The total (1,205) age 10–14 is only slightly lower than the number aged 5–9 years; 53 per cent were born in Kampala. Girls make up 60·5 per cent, yielding a sex ratio of 65 as against 99 in 1969—clearly a significant change over time. And among in-migrants the sex ratio is down to 55 compared with 65 in the total cohort. The number of girls was slightly higher than in the 5–9 year age groups and the number of boys appreciably lower.

Eighty-two per cent of boys and 74 per cent of girls are now attending school. Owing to the larger absolute *number* of girls, the number of girls at school (539) was still higher than the number of boys (391), and twice as many of them were *not* at school (190 against 85). It is in this age category that the sex divergence in school-going begins to show.

Some idea of what children who were *not* at school were doing can be drawn from evidence on 'activity status' and other census data on those returned as having occupations. Of the eighty-odd boys aged 10–14 not at school, thirty were reported as employees or self-employed, thirty as household workers, and the balance (excluding students) fell in small miscellaneous categories. Compared with this, of the 190 girls not at school, fifty-nine were reported as employees or self-employed, 103 as household workers and the balance (again excluding students) were counted in various 'informal' categories (unpaid family workers, etc.). Scanty as these data are, they point to the earlier involvement of girls in gainful employment or household work (23 per cent) as compared with boys (13 per cent).

Age group 15–19 years. There are 1,467 young people in this category, a substantial increase over the number of 10–14 year olds, but less than a third were born in Kampala. The sex composition is beginning to change: 56 per cent of this age group are female, yielding a sex ratio of 79, well down on the 1969 ratio of 98. But again the sex ratio among in-migrants is (at 67) appreciably lower than among the Kampala-born.

School attendance of the two sexes at this age is 48 per cent for males and 29 per cent for females (both, incidentally, substantially more than for the African population of Kampala in 1969, when the comparable figures were 31 per cent and 16 per cent). The absolute number of males at school (311) is now well in excess of female students (241) but there are still more girls in the population, so many more of them are out of school than boys.

Of the 322 young men not at school, 231 were recorded as employees or self-employed and thirty-six as household workers. Of some 460 young women not classified as students, 154 were employees or self-employed and 355 were recorded as household workers: at this age the percentage of young women in gainful employment or doing household work was 62 per cent, against 41 per cent of males.

The occupations recorded for this age group are still mainly menial—75 per cent of males and 88 per cent of females are 'service workers' or in 'elementary occupations'. But other occupations begin to appear: for example, 21 per cent of the boys appear as craftsmen or machine operators, and small numbers of both sexes are counted as clerks or technicians.

Age group 20–24 years. There are 1,822 men and women in this age group. In terms of numbers it is the 'peak' age, but the proportion of Kampala-born has dropped to 17·5 per cent. Women make up 52 per cent of the numbers, yielding a sex ratio of 92, similar to Kampala in 1991 (ratio 94), and now also the same as the sex ratio among in-migrants. It is worth noting (from figures not reproduced here) that

according to the 1991 census it is at age 22–23 that sex parity is reached in the population of Kampala as a whole.

Census 'activity status' figures for these 20–24 year olds record 21 per cent of the men and 9 per cent of the women as students. Roughly 72 per cent of the men and 34 per cent of the women are employees or self-employed in approximately equal proportions. The balance of the women (48 per cent) are mainly 'household workers'.

The figures still show majorities of men and women with menial jobs. There are, however, substantial numbers for whom occupation was 'not stated': 230 of a total of 872 men; 582 of a total of 948 women. If we compare these with 'activity status' figures, we may assume that most of the women for whom no occupation was stated were household workers. For men we can only guess that some were recorded as employees or self-employed without a specific occupational classification.

EXPLANATIONS

These notes serve to highlight the sheer numbers of factors affecting the development of age–sex ratios. Nevertheless, three points are clearly demonstrated. First, there is a complex pattern of ratios on the ground, and micro-local factors affect the distribution of people by age and sex, even *within* Kamwokya II. Second, the age–sex ratios for Kamwokya II and for Kampala have changed, and have changed in much the same way between 1969 and 1991. And, third, there are important variations in sex ratios according to region of origin, with appreciably different profiles for people born in the Western, Eastern and Northern Regions on the one hand and those born in Kampala and Central Region on the other.

Two very different levels of explanation can be applied to these data: one is *what local people say*; the other is *what the historical record suggests*.

First level of explanation: what local people say.

1. Girls/young women, sometimes as young as 8 or 9 years, are sent to town to do housework in the homes of their kin or of other families.
2. Girls/young women who drop out of village school are more likely than boys to go to town to trade.
3. Young boys are more likely to be sent back to their villages—i.e. their fathers' villages—than are young girls.
4. Orphan girls are more readily assimilated into town homes than are orphan boys—the girls are more useful.
5. Some girls working in town are paid very poor wages, if any, and are commonly 'abused by the bosses', i.e. by the adult men in the home. So it is not unusual for them to break away but to stay in town rather than venture back to their villages.
6. Boys (and their parents) often consider education to be more important for them than for girls. But, as town schools are more expensive than village schools, they may be sent back to the less

expensive village schools for their education even if the education is of poorer quality.

7. School fees in town are high and girls are often in a better position to make a little money on the side than are boys. Schoolgirl prostitution exists, though some informants claimed that it is not as widespread now as it was some years ago.

8. Young men complain that life in town is harder for them than for girls. There are various elaborations on this: parents at times treat their girls better than their boys (giving them more money) in order to 'keep them', to dissuade them from accepting money from men, and while schoolboys do have relationships with schoolgirls they have difficulty in maintaining a steady relationship because the girls are tempted away by approaches from older men with more money.

9. Many people return to their village after some years in town. Some informants consider that a woman is likely to return earlier than her husband in order to produce crops to feed the family.

10. The assumption that the two wars and AIDS may be factors affecting sex ratios in town is widespread among local people. But with frequent movement back and forth between Kampala and the countryside it is difficult to see a direct connection, or to envisage which way any cause–effect links would operate. In any case the young men 'missing' in the urban demographic pyramid are largely not of the age groups most vulnerable to either disaster.

11. AIDS may, however, have a different and indirect connection. It is 'common knowledge' that adult men search out and value young girls as sexual partners on the grounds that the risk of STD/HIV infection is lower with them than with older girls and adult women. This explanation implies a particular demand niche for young girls in the urban economy which may allow disproportionate numbers of them to survive in town.

12. Finally, it was also suggested to us that the proportions of men and women in town may be skewed by their different involvement with 'dual residence'. People living partly in town may see advantages in declaring themselves rural rather than urban—or vice versa. Informants seemed to think that men would be more likely to see advantages in claiming residence in their 'home area' outside Kampala. They say the reverse is probably true for women.

We cannot know what weight is to be attached to any of these explanations, but none of them is contradicted by our own or others' research findings. It must be true, however, that the changes in Kampala's population structure between 1969 and 1991 in some way reflect changes in Ugandan society and the economy over the same period.

Second level of explanation: Uganda's recent political and economic history

Table 5 summarises the main political events affecting options and constraints in Uganda's economy. It shows the sequence from a peak of prosperity in the 1960s, through the 'bad' *magendo* and *mafuta mingi* years, to the economic and social stability of the recent period.

TABLE 5. *Recent history of Uganda*

	Political sequence	*Economic overview*
1953–55	British–Kabaka conflict	Steady state
1962	Independence	Economic boom
1966	Kabaka–Obote crisis →	Obote I era Political but not economic turmoil until Amin
1971	Amin *coup* →	Amin era
1972	Asians expelled	Turmoil develops quickly
1978	Invasion by Tanzanian army	Economic disaster by late 1970s
1979	Collapse of Amin →	Obote II era
1979–85		'Struggle to live', *magendo*, *mafuta mingi*. Theft, fraud, rip-off, corruption in the formal economic sector; simultaneous rapid development of the informal sector
1985	Collapse of Obote's army →	Museveni era (the present)
1986	RC system established NRA in Kampala	Clampdown on corruption. 'Formal' economy fades out completely; only the 'informal' left

This relative stability has been achieved with, and partly through, an informal economy which allows individuals to achieve a 'living wage' despite the collapse of formal employment (Obbo, 1991; Wallman *et al.*, 1996). And the structure of opportunity for making a living by alternative means draws more girls/young women into town, and encourages them to stay there once arrived, than it attracts or keeps their male age mates.

CONCLUSION

Our conclusion has two strands. (1) Among possible explanations of changing age–sex ratios in present-day Kampala, new elements in the structure of opportunity for making a living dominate. (2) Among the likely effects of these changes, their relevance to patterns and rates of HIV infection is crucial. They are addressed in turn.

Economy.

The perceived absence of young men in Kampala is relative rather than absolute. A declining sex ratio among young adults in Kampala is caused less by young men 'going' than by increasing numbers of young women coming to and staying in areas like Kamwokya. One persuasive explanation of the turn-round is economic: over recent years the formal economy, once the employer of men, has collapsed, and compensatory developments in the informal economy have tended to favour women.

This explanation can be only preliminary: systematic comparison with other sub-Saharan cities has not been possible. Lower overall sex ratios are widely reported for urban Africa, but in publications of

TABLE 6. *A comparison of age-specific sex ratios for Kampala 1991 and Nairobi 1989*

Age	*Kampala 1991*		*Nairobi 1989*	
0–4	97		102	
5–9	88		96	
10–14	73	76	88	87
15–19	68		78	
20–24	94		125	
25–29	113	107	161	151
30–34	129		195	
35–39	136		203	
40–44	144	140	245	226
45–49	146		263	
50–54	118		287	
55–59	125	108	255	251
60–64	96		170	
65–69	91		163	
70–74	58		120	
75–79	72	67	112	120
80+	50		71	
All ages	95		131	

SOURCE of Nairobi data: Kenya population census, 1989, vol. II.

promising title which we have followed up, they are either not sub-set by age or not related to the formal–informal economy shift, or both. (See e.g. Antoine & Nanitelamio, 1991).

On present evidence, therefore, we can neither confirm that Kampala's situation is the result of unique local events or that it is part of more global trends across the continent. Quite the contrary: a *partial* comparison with Nairobi—i.e. only of 'formal' census data on the two cities—suggests that both possibilities pertain. Table 6 demonstrates the anomaly: Nairobi's sex ratios for age groups under 20 years are similar to those for Kampala—justifying the assumption that the stronger pull of the urban informal economy applies also in the Nairobi case. But above age 20 Kampala's ratios are markedly lower than those for Nairobi. Here our suggestion would be that the relative strength of Nairobi's formal employment sector continues to draw to it large numbers of unaccompanied men, much as it did in colonial times. This difference between the two economies is echoed in their demographic profiles and so accounts for Kampala's age–sex ratios being out of line.

HIV/AIDS.

The opening of this article mooted the relevance of a skewed age–sex ratio to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Two

particular associations between them are made by residents of Kamwokya seeking to explain the demographic shift. (See 'What local people say' above.)

The first is not explicit. Having experienced untimely deaths of young men from AIDS as well as in the two recent wars (Table 5), it makes sense for ordinary people to see the change as a loss of numbers (as our title implies), rather than in terms of the male–female ratio at particular ages. They infer that there is a surplus of young women *because* so many young men have died. In fact, as we have noted, the young men 'missing' are largely not of the age of those who have died in wars or the epidemic.

More explicit, and closer to our own explanation, is the 'sugar daddy' connection. There is a popular assumption that young girls are less likely to be HIV-infected than older women. On this basis, it is said, older men are especially prone to consider them desirable sex partners and will 'entice' them with gifts and money. Whatever its provenance, this explanation supports the differential economic opportunity argument, and it implies young women's extra vulnerability to sexually transmitted disease—including HIV. As long as sex work is prime among their options in the informal economy, one effect of their economic advantage is extra vulnerability to fatal disease.

On this point, unofficial/local and official/global understandings of the link between too-many-young-women and HIV incidence in Kampala concur. 'Official' calculations of HIV prevalence in 1988, sub-set by age and sex (Mann *et al.*, 1992), show substantially the highest risk among women in the age categories 15–19 and 20–24 years—exactly those overrepresented in the populations of Kampala and Kamwokya II in 1991.

We must not impute simplistic cause and effect: the complexity of factors involved is amply demonstrated by the details of this discussion. But the echo of one finding in the other, of the lay/local in the official/global, is persuasive. Closer investigation of it would clarify the possibilities for livelihood and 'the ecology of risk' among vulnerable groups in Kampala and elsewhere (Barnett and Blaikie, 1992; Wallman, 2000).

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ABSTRACT

In the second half of the twentieth century the population of Kampala grew substantially and the long-remarked surplus of men over women began to level out. These general trends are equally evident in other African cities, but important differences show up when the balance of age cohorts *within* the male and female populations is considered. Thus in Kampala, along with population growth and a declining overall sex ratio, censuses show a growing excess of girls/young women over boys/young men. The article reviews these population data and two levels of (unenumerated) explanation for them. The first is extrapolated from Uganda's recent history; the second from observation and narrative in one densely populated parish. The argument is that changes in the age–sex ratio follow from change in the map of work options in Kampala. The disappearance of young males stems from the collapse of the formal economy, once the employer of men, and the developments in the informal economy which favour young women. This conclusion is supported by census data from Nairobi, where the formal employment structure remains relatively buoyant, and the comparable age–sex ratios are less extreme. The health policy relevance of the Kampala trend is underlined by official calculations of increasing HIV/AIDS incidence among teenage women. As long as sex work remains dominant among their options in the informal economy, one effect of their economic advantage is extra vulnerability to fatal disease.

RÉSUMÉ

Au cours de la seconde moitié du XX^{ème} siécle, la population de Kampala s'ést considérablement accrue et l'excédent d'hommes par rapport aux femmes, depuis longtemps remarqué, a commencé à se résorber. On observe ces mêmes tendances générales dans d'autres villes africaines, mais des différences importantes apparaissent lorsque l'on considère l'équilibre des cohortes d'âges *au sein* des populations masculines et féminines. Ainsi à Kampala, outre une croissance démographique et un rapport géneral hommes-femmes en baisse, les recensements officiels montrent un excédent croissant de filles/jeunes femmes par rapport aux garçons/jeunes hommes. L'article examine ces données démographiques et deux niveaux (non énumérés) d'explication de ces données. Le premier est extrapolé à partir de l'histoire récente de l'Ouganda; le second à partir d'observations st des récits recueillis dans une commune très peuplée. L'argument est que les variations du rapport âge-sexe découlent d'une variation du paysage des options de travail à Kampala. La disparition des hommes jeunes provient de l'effondrement de l'économie officielle, autrefois génératrice d'emplois masculins, et de l'évolution de l'économie non officielle qui favorise les femmes jeunes. Cette conclusion est corroborée par les données de recensement de Nairobi, où la structure de l'emploi officiel demeure relativement soutenue et les rapports âge-sexe comparables sont moins extrêmes. La pertinence de la politique de santé de la tendance de Kampala est soulignée par des chiffres officiels indiquant une augmentation des cas de VIH/SIDA chez les adolescentes. Tant que le travail du sexe restera une option dominante de ces adolescentes au sein de l'économie non officielle, une conséquence de leur avantage économique sera une plus grande vulnérabilité aux maladies mortelles.