

# Future of the Tree

Towards growth and  
development of Kumasi

**Edited by**

**Kwasi Kwafo Adarkwa**

# Historical Development, Population Growth and Present Structure of Kumasi

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## Introduction

Kumasi, both as the capital of the Asante State and the current Ashanti Region, has undergone several political, cultural, physical and demographic changes over the last hundred and ten years (1900-2010). Historical antecedents of the City have been of definitive significance in consolidating the rich cultural heritage of the City. Its history serves as the starting point in providing the exegesis of the population and physical growth. Thus, the strategic location of Kumasi as well as its rich forest and other natural endowments engineered the City's role as a transit point and a powerful commercial hub for the people in the northern part of the country. These formed the basis for Kumasi's growth as a sovereign traditional administrative capital with unequivocal presence in the socio-economic and political development of Ghana over the period of its existence. The current metropolitan demographic and physical structure of Kumasi depicts an interplay of strong historical, commercial and political factors. This chapter is therefore an attempt to present the historical development, demographic and physical structure of Kumasi.

## History of Kumasi

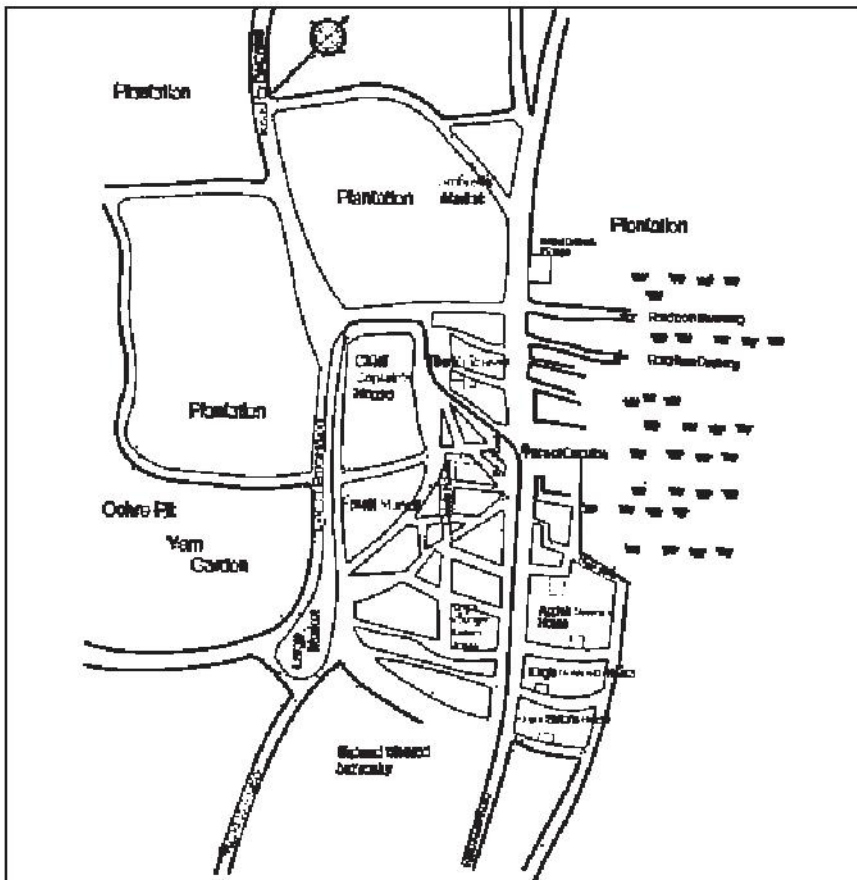
### Pre-1900

Kumasi was founded in the late 17th century by *Asantehene*, (King of the Asante state) Osei Tutu on the advice of Komfo Anokye, his senior priest. Sited at the crossroads of the Trans-Saharan trade routes, its strategic location contributed significantly to the growing wealth of the town. Over the duration of its existence, a number of peculiar factors have combined to transform Kumasi into a fitting political capital of the Greater Asante Union and the now Ashanti Region. The main causal factors included the unquestioning loyalty to the monarchy, a high regard for the supernatural and the town's growing wealth, derived in part from the lucrative trade in slaves and other items such as gold, weapons and farm implements. The kingdom's leadership instituted an elaborate political structure and deployed a myriad of ceremonial traditions and domestic norms as a way of maintaining the Union's complex polity and sustaining allegiance. Also introduced to support this evolving socio-political structure was a range of cultural artefacts, regalia and other forms of symbolism, many of which have survived to this day and which

have faithfully served to ensure continued obeisance to the traditional aristocracy. The richness of ancient Kumasi culture is evidenced in the fact that many of the southern tribes of Ghana still model their ceremonial practices, funerals, dirges and institutional symbols on ideas originating in ancient Kumasi.

The kingdom's enormous wealth was flaunted in the dress code of the aristocracy and further demonstrated in the use of gold dust currency *sika futuru*, as legal tender (Korboe and Tipple, 1995). In those times, the office of *Asantehene* commanded power and loyalty comparable in modern times to that ascribed to the Zulu crown of modern South Africa. Asante's society was, in those early years of the Union, stratified in a strict manner, with office-holding (*nana*) and non-office-holding (*non-nana*) families.

By 1817, the urban area of Kumasi covered a relatively dense area of just two square kilometres, with a resident population of some 1000-15,000, and another 100,000 or so in the peripheral farms and villages (Abloh, 1972). Other accounts of that era describe a town on a rocky laterite hill with clean, straight and wide streets, and with professionally-constructed accommodations, apparently surrounded by dense forest (Tipple, 1997). An "artistic impression" of Kumasi's structure at the time as captured by T. E. Bowdich, an European Missionary, is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.1** - *The Town of Kumasi (1817)*

**Source:** *Bowdich, 1819*

In spite of its growing power and wealth, the Asante monarchy constantly felt threatened by the colonial power (Britain) and determined to ward off British expansionism at all cost. Eventually, in a bold bid to reinforce Asante hegemony, the Asantes beheaded Sir Charles McCarthy in 1824, and succeeded in creating fear among the foreigner population. An additional measure to protect the kingdom's culture was the introduction of strict controls on the numbers of migrant settlers - especially those of northern/ Islamic origin.

Over time, internal feuding and racketeering within the ranks of the political élite served to destabilise the kingdom, emboldening the colonial administration and facilitating Britain's expansionist intentions. In 1874, Asante was eventually conquered by a British invasion led by Sir Garnet Wolseley. In 1896, all remaining dissent was eventually quelled with the razing of the town by the British (Tipple, 1987). The destruction of the physical town was reinforced by the building of a fort on the highest point of the original settlement and the thorough plundering of the empire's sacred sites (the royal mausoleum at Bantama) as well as other ritual grounds, see Figure 3.2. These actions emphatically terminated the Asante kingdom's territorial ambitions. To remove all potential dissent against the reforming colonial government, *Asantehene* Prempeh I (alias Kwaku Dua III) was arrested and strategically exiled to the Seychelles. For an empire founded on supernatural tenets, whose fortunes were perceived to be controlled by the spirits of its incumbent and interred kings, the disruption of its advancement could hardly have been more drastic.

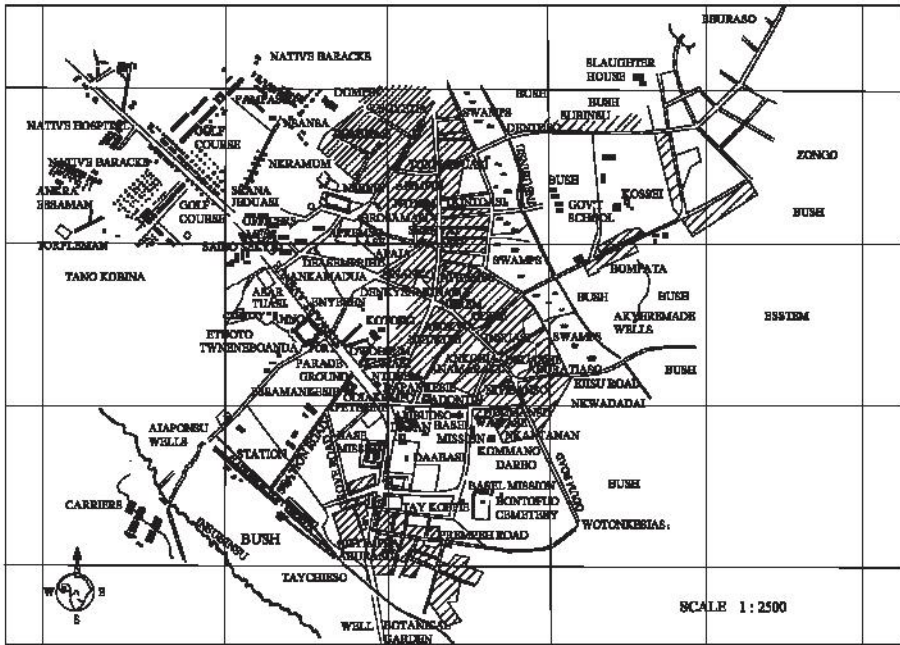
### 1900-1920

Following the conquest of Asante, the colonial administration moved swiftly to entrench its authority by establishing a strong military presence, building a prison (see Figure 3.2), prohibiting slave trading and the practice of pawning humans as collateral. In short, the colonial administration took steps to systematically alter the socio-economic constitution of the now defunct capital. The British also established measures to improve on the hitherto insanitary conditions by imposing a 75-foot grid-iron configuration on the town's physical layout and prescribing a bucket latrine for each plot. However, because Kumasi was set within dense forest, the site of the original, razed town was chosen as the most convenient place on which to rebuild the City.

Together with the vacuum created by the subduing of the Asante people, the opening in 1903 of the railway linking the town to the coast was actively exploited by the coastal Fante merchants who flocked to Kumasi in the first decade of the twentieth century (Korboe and Tipple, 1995). The presence of the fort is reported by Abloh (1972) to have played a significant role in facilitating the in-migration process as commercial transactions could now be conducted in relative security. Kumasi quickly established itself as a major commercial centre. Within a few years, Kumasi had taken on the role of an inland port - a sub-regional transshipment centre for exports as varied as cocoa, rubber, cola, cattle and sheep as well as a wholesaling

centre for imported Western goods. Currently, there is an inland port at Boankra in the Ejisu-Juaben which is about 15km from the Kumasi Metropolitan Area. Though not very functional, the location and growth of Kumasi had a greater role to play in its planning and implementation.

The brisk trade and cocoa boom of the era encouraged the mercantile class to develop imposing commercial buildings throughout the central area previously occupied by old-style compounds as shown in Figure 3.2. Up until then, Kumasi's compound houses had followed the rural mode, with each compound taking the form of three or four detached structures. By 1915, Kumasi's appearance was well and truly transformed, with streets now aligned in compliance with the prescribed grid-iron layout (Tippie, 1997). The compound form was transformed into one compact block with several wings. This was seen as being more responsive to the urban environment, specifically the higher value of urban land. Other important features of urban development during the period included the construction of various public offices, two hospitals and a military barracks on the outskirts of the old settlement. Official residences were also built on sprawling (often half-acre) sites in the Ridge, removed from and elevated above what the colonial officers perceived to be dangers posed to their health by the local populace.



**Figure 3.2 - Kumasi Survey Plan (1910) Showing Old Native District**

**Source:** Town and Country Planning Department, KMA

By 1920, itinerant traders (many of foreign and Islamic origin, whose numbers had been carefully controlled by the Kumasi aristocracy prior to the British conquest of 1896) had freely joined in the distribution of food commodities. Hitherto, most of the foodstuffs found in Kumasi's markets had been produced and sold directly by the local peasantry. In addition to its commercial status, Kumasi was now providing

much Western-style employment at the lower levels of administration, banking and construction.

Thus, Kumasi was subjected to an unprecedented pace of social and economic transformation during the first two decades of the twentieth century. This had significant consequences on the City's architectural landscape and its cultural and religious infrastructure (Korboe and Tipple, 1995). A major consequence of the deliberate transfiguration of Kumasi was to make social stratification considerably more diverse and sophisticated, with the creation of additional ranks such as the clerical, trading and peasant categories within the earlier and simpler non-office-holding rank (Korboe and Tipple, 1995). The active evangelisation of the City and the concurrent promotion of Westernised education by various Christian missions further added to the restructuring of society. Indeed, so swift and deep was the impact of the British action that Kumasi was hardly recognisable to Prempeh I on his return from exile in 1924. By now baptised an Anglican, and bearing the alias of Edward Prempeh, the *Asantehene* was himself a culturally transfigured man.

### 1920 to 1940s

An interesting feature of this era, with far-reaching consequences, was Britain's decision to restore land ownership to the golden stool. Though the colonial authority could have chosen to impose a land tenure system based on English land law, poor environmental sanitation and the high incidence of malaria encouraged the British to opt for ruling through the local people who evidently had a higher capacity to survive malaria. As a result, most of the land was returned to the chiefs who quickly rebuilt the central area on the old site once the Asante Confederacy had been restored in 1936. Thus, only the central area, within one square mile of the Fort, and the land 100 yards either side of trunk roads were taken over as Crown Land. The remainder of the City area, and all of Asante, was left in its original tenure system (see Chapter 4 for detailed discussion on Kumasi's land tenure and policy).

A range of major public works improvements undertaken during the inter-war period served to stimulate ever-increasing levels of private investment. In 1925, Wesley College was opened. In the same year, a sprawling new Central Market was established at Kejetia as the most important market outside Accra. In the early 1930s especially, the transport network witnessed further enhancements. The railway from Sekondi to Takoradi was extended to Accra, a railway station was commissioned in the newly drained valley to the west of the town centre and a central transport terminal was built. Many of the local roads were upgraded and new ones were built to link Kumasi up with Accra, Cape Coast, Obuasi, Sunyani and other important urban centres. Kumasi was now fully transformed into the crossroads of the motor-car and rail transport systems.

A new electricity supply station and a one-million-gallon per day water works further enhanced Kumasi's attraction to the local élites as well as to visitors. The opening of a large indoor meeting place (Prempeh Assembly Hall) atop the Zongo Hill added grace to the impressive skyline. Cocoa money, Lebanese commercial

capital and the introduction - during that great decade - of European building standards combined to produce some substantial two - and three-storey compound houses in the City, especially along the major roads and in Ashanti New Town which overlooks Kejetia Market. These houses provided accommodation both for the investors' own use and for renting. The re-establishment of the kingdom also encouraged rural Asantes to develop houses in Kumasi for use during state festivals and other ceremonies. Slum clearance activities were undertaken in some of the Islamic zongos and the Kingsway area. Evidently, this era (the 1920s/30s) was a watershed in the development of the modern City.

Throughout that period up into the forties, the City's prosperity continued to encourage a steady influx of migrants from other parts of the colony and beyond. Kumasi's layout was significantly transformed and the physical structure became largely defined by ethnic affiliations, with people from each major migrant group carving out exclusive neighbourhoods for their companies. Thus, Ewes from the east of the colony congregated in Anloga, Fantes occupied what is now known as Fante New Town, and migrants arriving from the northern parts of the colony and from present-day Burkina Faso consolidated their presence in an increasing number of zongos and in Aboabo.

Soon after the Second World War, efforts were made to implement the 1945 plan drawn by Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew. The plan had redesignated Kumasi the "Garden City of West Africa" and provided for a central area ringed by low density suburbs (albeit of tiny houses) for war veterans and the growing literate and skilled local population whose efforts were essential to the running of the colony. An industrial area was planned stretching south from the centre along the railway line to Sekondi-Takoradi. The built-up area was to be penetrated by green spaces along the many shallow river valleys.

## Post-1950

According to Abloh (1972), the City of Kumasi had almost reached an area of 25 sq. Km by 1950. Today, the City proper occupies about 40 sq. km within a wider metropolis of about 250 sq. km. The pattern of development since then has been characterised by infilling - mainly with housing (both public and private) for the growing population. In addition, there are some half dozen educational institutions of national significance (including the University of Science and Technology now known as the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology). The centralised Ministries, the Central Post Office, the General Hospital (Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital more commonly referred to as "Gee"), the Central Police Station, the Sports Stadium, the National Cultural Centre, the Zoo, and the now refurbished Golden Tulip Hotel - Kumasi (formerly the "City Hotel") add up to the list of development initiatives. Catering Rest House, state-owned bus and coach stations and various factories, many of which eventually collapsed in the dark decade spanning between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, could also be mentioned.

By independence in 1957, Kumasi was a very attractive City, as the 1945 plan had envisaged. Large parts of the City were now covered in lush vegetation of colourful flamboyants, various shrubs and well tended grass lawns (Korboe and Tipple, 1995). It was indeed a City of which the peoples of the newly independent nation were proud. Under the directorship of Dr. Kyerematen, the Cultural Centre quickly assumed national importance and bustled with life and activity. During this period, it was quite impossible to visit Ghana as a genuine tourist without seeing Kumasi, the *Asantehene's* palace and the traditional dances and other activities routinely hosted by the Cultural Centre. *Nana Asantehene* was once again a very important personality, automatically presiding over the National House of Chiefs.

At the national level, the political temperature had been rising steadily with the commencement of preparations towards the pre-independence elections. Pitched directly against Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) in the contest for political control was the United Party (UP) headquartered in Kumasi. As campaigning intensified, tensions rose with occasional incidents of violence.

Once the CPP had won the elections, the first President, Nkrumah took various measures to stifle the opposition, driving many politically active Asantes into exile. Nkrumah attempted further to reduce the power and influence of the *Asantehene* and other chiefs by taking away their control over lands. The depth of loyalty to the traditional system of chieftaincy-based local government, however, prevented Nkrumah from achieving more than token success.

## Culture

Kumasi remains Ghana's cultural capital, though it has lost a good deal of its earlier glory. The once famous Cultural Centre, with a reputation well beyond the national borders, now shows only glimpses of its cultural superiority. The unique culture is manifested at the key stages of the life cycle - such as child naming, marriage and funerals. One can also mention the attempt at traditional music, dance and dirges at such gatherings as some of the traces left of Kumasi's cultural heritage. Recent efforts to rejuvenate the City, through a plethora of radio stations, "community information centres" and the promotion of traditional music have met with little success in terms of restoring the City's cultural glory. There are still a few traditional "fetish" priests and priestesses who provide spiritual succour to significant numbers within the metropolis and beyond. These are mainly located at the peripheries of the City along the major roads. The downward trend in culture has been attributed to several factors including rapid urbanization, the unwavering appeal of western and global religions and the continuous in-migration of people with different cultural backgrounds as well as inter-marriages among different ethnic groups within the metropolis.

In terms of traditional leadership, the incumbent Asantehene, **Otumfo** (Official title of Asantehene) **Osei Tutu II**, installed a little over a decade ago (in April 1999) has so far demonstrated the capacity to provide efficient leadership to modernise and reform the chieftaincy institution and to redeem the kingdom's lost glory. This



he has demonstrated over the years through his establishment of an educational fund and handling of chieftaincy and land management issues. He is currently the Chancellor of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and has thus been involved in the administration of the institution.

Again, the King's relationship with corporate entities operating within the City in particular and the region as a whole has also been remarkable, giving a new meaning to the cultural modernisation of the City's economy. There is also a functional and socio-cultural relationship between Manhyia which is the traditional office of the Asante King, and the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA) for the effective governance and administration of the City.

## Population Trends and Dynamics

The growth of Kumasi into its present metropolitan structure has been commonly expressed in terms of its population size and physical characteristics. Historical records portray Kumasi as a significant socio-economic destination with enormous presence in the nation's socio-economic and political development. This has over the years served as an attractive factor for the movement of people to the City. This is further buttressed by Kumasi's strategic central location which makes it a transit point for migrants from both the northern and southern parts of the country. There equally exist diverse ethnic groups with their vastly different cultures. Thus Kumasi's population depicts a relatively heterogeneous population.

The population of Kumasi as a town has increased over the years from about 3000 in 1901 to 1,634,898 in 2010 as a metropolitan area (see Table 3.1). With a growth rate of 7.9 percent per annum, the City recorded its major population growth between 1948 and 1960.

The above is a significant manifestation of the transit role that the metropolis plays in absorbing the movement of people from the south to the north and vice versa. In support of the above assertion, the Millennium Cities Initiative (2010) opines that Kumasi has been the crossroads between the northern and southern sections of Ghana since its establishment as the heart of the Ashanti Empire, around the turn of the eighteenth century. The City is easily accessible by road and has a large transient and immigrant population from all parts of the country, as well as from neighbouring West African countries. Some of these people (immigrants) either stay permanently in the metropolis or finally move to their intended destination. When they decide to stay in the City, the slum areas in the metropolis (Race Course, Mossi Zongo, Asawasi, etc) which mostly offer low cost housing are found to be the residences of these in-migrants.

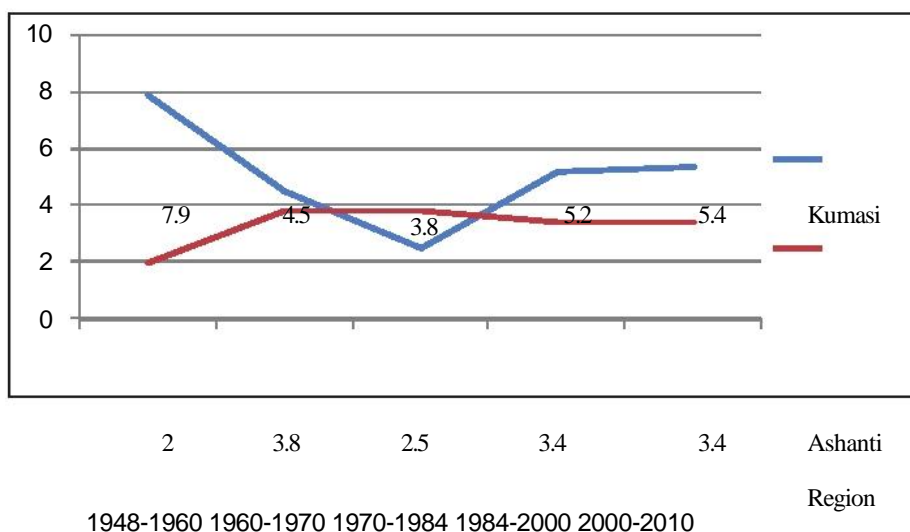
**Table 3.1 - Population and Migration Rates of Kumasi 1901-2010**

Year	Kumasi Town/ City	Kumasi Metropolis	In-migration Rate
1901	3,000 <sup>a</sup> #	N/A	N/A
1911	18,853#	N/A	N/A
1921	23,694#	N/A	N/A
1931	35,829#	N/A	N/A
1944	45,133#	N/A	N/A
1948	71,436#	N/A	26.5*
1960	180,642#	218,175#	60.8*
1970	260,286#	346,336*	53.1*
1984	N/A	469,628*	62.2*
2000	N/A	1,170,270*	48.6*
2010	N/A	1,634,898 <sup>c</sup>	N/A

**Notes**

- a The local population had been dispersed after Kumasi's razing by the British.
- # Compiled from Tipple (1987:4)
- \* Compiled from the Census Report of Ghana Statistical Service (2002, p. 42; and 2005a, p. 130).
- c Projected by the Millennium Cities Initiative (2010). MCI's population projections are based on the 2000 census and rely on an exponential growth function and a growth rate of 3.34 percent. Using this growth rate, the MCI population projection for 2007 (1,478,869) is the same as that in the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly's reports. However, other KMA documents, such as the -Development Plan for Kumasi Metropolitan Area (2006-2009), use a different population growth rate (5.4 percent) and show divergent population figures.

N/A - Data are not available. For the in-migration rate for 2010, the data is yet to be released.



**Figure 3.3 - Population Growth Rates of Kumasi and the Ashanti Region (1948-2010)**

**Source:** Ghana Statistical Service (2005a, p. 130)

\* Growth rate for Kumasi for the 2000 and 2010 censal period is yet to be released by the Ghana Statistical Service

## Population Distribution within the Sub-metropolitan Areas of Kumasi

The distribution of population within the 10 sub-metropolitan areas is skewed towards the Manhyia, Asawasi, Old Tafo, Oforikrom and Asokwa sub-metropolitan areas. Arguably, most of the slum communities in the City are located in these sub-metros. The Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly's website ([www.kma.gov.gh/kumasi-metro/page/5102](http://www.kma.gov.gh/kumasi-metro/page/5102)) estimates that there are a total of twenty eight slum communities in the metropolis. It must be noted that slum communities accommodate most of the migrant population who represent a sizeable proportion of the population of the metropolis. UN-Habitat (2003), mentions that rural-urban migration is a factor for population expansion within the metropolis. In Kumasi, this phenomenon is particularly pronounced because of the transit role played by the City on account of its central location in the country. Slum development in the metropolis has also been closely linked to the relatively high migration rate within the City ([kma.ghanadistricts.gov.gh](http://kma.ghanadistricts.gov.gh) retrieved on 24/05/2011).

**Table 3.2 - Population Distribution for the Sub-Metropolitan Areas**

Sub-Metro	Population			
	c2010	*2000	#1984	#1970
Suame	160,310	114,751	46,049	33,960
Subin	141,070	100,979	40,523	29,884
Asokwa	170,845	122,292	49,076	36,192
Asawasi	183,595	131,418	52,738	38,893
Oforikrom	174,445	124,869	50,110	36,954
Kwadaso	164,904	118,039	47,369	34,933
Bantama	141,671	101,409	40,695	30,012
Manhyia	229,093	163,986	65,807	48,531 Old
Tafo	178,850	128,022	51,375	37,888
Nhyiaeso	90,115	64,505	25,886	19,090
<b>Total</b>	<b>c1,634,898</b>	<b>*1,170,270</b>	<b>*469,628</b>	<b>*346,336</b>

### Sources:

\* Compiled from the Census Report of Ghana Statistical Service (2005).

c Data for 2010 was projected by the Millennium Cities Initiative (MCI, 2010).

# Data for these years (1984 and 1970) was estimated from the Census Report of Ghana Statistical Service (2005). The ratios of the population for the sub-metros in the year 2000 were used in estimating for their respective populations for the 1984 and 1970 censal years.

## Household Sizes

The Millennium Cities Initiatives (2010) estimates a total of about 320,560 households within the metropolis with an average household size of 5.1 (see

Table 4.3). These households range from single member households to more than fifteen-member households. Generally, there is the gradual dissociation from the traditional extended family system to the nuclear family system which is undermining the desire for larger household sizes. Large household sizes have been culturally preferred in Ghana to serve as source of social support to individual family members. Nonetheless, rapid urbanization as well as the adoption of western lifestyle has recently been cited as one of the factors leading to the current desire for smaller households.

**Table 3.3** - Household Size of Kumasi

Household Size	1970	1984	2000
1	22.6	21.1	23.3
2	12.2	13.7	14.8
3	10.4	12.7	12.9
4	9.1	11.9	12.1
5	7.7	10.5	10.5
6	6.1	8.7	8.5
7	4.7	6.5	6.8
8	3.4	4.7	5.1
9	2.2	3.2	3.3
10	3.8	5.7	1.9
15+	0.9	1.3	0.8

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2005)

### Ethnic Grouping in Kumasi

According to a research by the Center for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE) in 2007, Akans are the dominant ethnic group in Kumasi representing 78.4 percent of residents. These are made-up of Ashantis, Fantes, Akyems, Akuapims and other Akan ethnic groups. The Ga-Dangmes are the least ethnic group representing 0.4 percent of residents. Minority ethnic groups made up of ethnic groups from the northern part of Ghana as well as nationals from countries within the sub-region represent 4.6 percent which forms the "others" category of ethnic groups in the City (see Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4** - *Ethnic Composition of Kumasi*

Ethnic Group	Percentage Composition
Akan	78.4
Ewe	5.4
Ga-Dangme	0.4
Mole-Dagbani	11.2
Others	4.6

**Source:** *Center for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, 2007 (p. 8)*

## Structural Changes Due to Historical Development and Population Dynamics

Until recently, a Master Plan drawn for Kumasi in 1962 had been the principal document guiding land use and development control since its adoption. The main features of this included an as-yet-incomplete ring road around the then built-up area and plan to extend out around and beyond the many villages close to the City. The plan also made provision for industrial, commercial and ranked residential areas (Tipple, 1997). The minimum plot size for the high-cost Class A areas (e.g., Danyame, Mbrom, Nhyiaeso, and Ridge) was set at 1,860 square metres with maximum plot coverage of only 10 percent, producing net densities of 5.4 plots per hectare at the maximum. Obviously, such standards of consumption are not only extremely wasteful of prime land but also contribute to urban sprawl, with cost implications for the extension of urban services. For Class B areas, plot sizes started from 450 sq. m., with a prescribed 30 percent maximum plot coverage. Only modern (Western) materials were permitted for construction in Class A and B areas. At the time, Class C comprised mainly the peripheral villages created through the inevitable process of urban expansion. Initially, traditional materials such as atakpame (mud) and wattle-and-daub were permitted for construction in these areas. The minimum prescribed plot size was 370 sq.m, with a maximum coverage of 60 percent, thereby legitimising compound houses in these areas.

However, the provisions of the plan implied a level of control over development which the City authorities have never possessed, partly because of under-funding, but mainly because land allocation remains under the control of the *Asantehene* through dozens of sub-chiefs. The effects of the unique land tenure system are twofold. First, access to land is relatively equitably distributed in spite of increasing commercialisation of the City's land. This implies that, people local to the area have rights of use at much lower levels of payment than non-locals; and second, there are hardly any low-income squatters in Kumasi. Virtually everyone who uses so-called stool land has the permission of the local chief. If anyone attempts to pre-empt the system, (s)he is quickly removed. However, the official town planning map is not rigidly followed in this process. Thus, though developments do not conform to

planning law, and are unauthorised in that sense, their occupation of the land is authorised and does not constitute squatting.

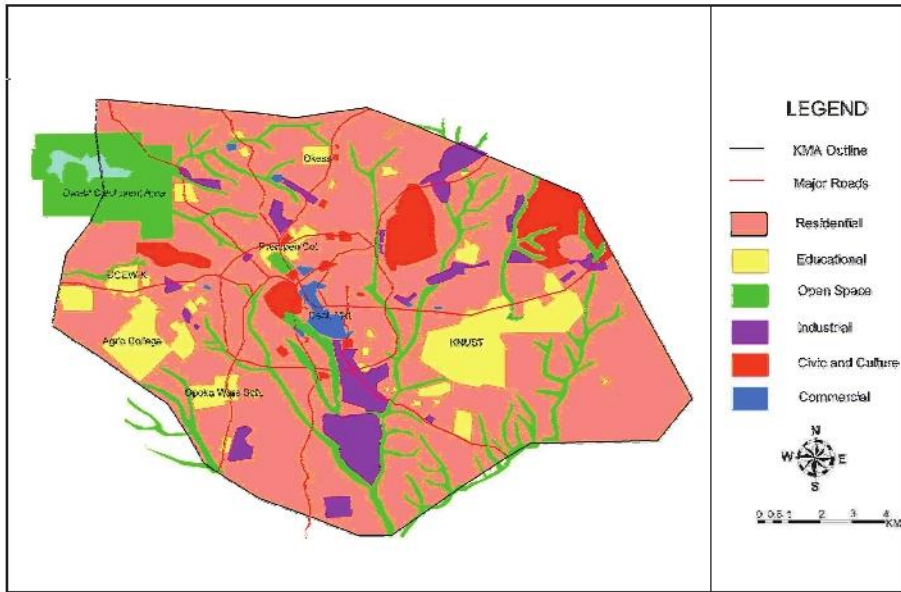
Over the period spanning between 1977 and 1986, the state of Kumasi's infrastructure was unquestionably horrendous. Water and electricity supplies became increasingly erratic; and waste management almost collapsing. The current situation shows a somewhat improvement in infrastructure though a lot is desired in this direction (See Chapter Nine).

## Structure of the Modern City

The structure plan of Kumasi drawn in 2007 by the Metropolitan Town and Country Planning Department (see Figure 3.4) has contributed in shaping the current structure of the City. Built on the ruins of the razed town of a few square miles in the 1900s, the current metropolitan area of Kumasi has assumed a size of approximately 250 square kilometres and it is fast expanding to engulf the neighbouring districts such as Ejisu-Juaben, Atwima Nwabiagya, Kwabre and Bosomtwe Atwima Kwanhuma. With its status as Ghana's second City and capital of the Ashanti Region (one of ten administrative regions); Kumasi continues to provide social and economic services to many towns and villages in the region and beyond.

The City's centrality has been a significant factor in defining its role as a major market for agricultural produce from the hinterland. Kumasi's strategic location has also endowed it with the status of the principal trucking terminal, and assured its pivotal role in the vast and profitable distribution of goods across the country. The impact of these on the structure of the City has been the creation of a strong commercial centre covering Kejetia, Adum, Asafo and parts of Bantama.

At the time of its reconstruction in the early 1900s, the fort (with its elevated position) occupied the most central location (Adum). Today, most residents would probably consider the area immediately west of the Central Market as the real centre of the City (Kejetia). Thus the current Central Business District (CBD) has largely been maintained over the past century or so.



**Figure 3.3** - *The Current Structure of Kumasi*

**Source:** KMA, 2011

However, there is a significant amount of sprawl. Apart from the CBD and the adjoining city area comprising approximately 30 sq. km. (bounded by the ring road), much of the rest of the metropolis is built to relatively low densities, evidenced by undeveloped plots, uncompleted buildings and market gardens.

The City centre is formed mainly of shops retailing Western goods, increasingly imported from the Far East. The Central Market at Kejetia vies with one at Onitsha (in Nigeria) for the position of West Africa's largest open-air market. Also located within the central area are the railway station (the northern point of the Accra-Kumasi-Takoradi rail triangle) and several major road transport terminals, both inter-city and long-distance. Given Kumasi's location at the crossroads of the national transport network, the City centre tends to be quite congested, and the main road adjoining the Central Market was once reported to be the busiest pedestrian crossing nation-wide. In relative terms, offices occupy only a small proportion of space in the CBD. Table 3.6 presents the trends of the City's land use structure over the period spanning between 1995 and 2010 as captured by the Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD) of the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA).

**Table 3.6 - Land Use Structure of**

Land	1995		2000		percentag Chang	2005		2010		percentag Chang
	Are (km <sup>2</sup> )	percentag	Are (km <sup>2</sup> )	percentag		Are (km <sup>2</sup> )	percentag	Are (km <sup>2</sup> )	percentag	
Residenti	109.	43.	109.	43.	0.	110.	44.	11	44.	1.
Industria	10.	4.	10.	4.	2.	10.	4.	10.	4.	-
Commercia	6	2.	6	2.	0	6	2.	6	2.	0
Educationa	43.	17.	43.	17.	0	43.	17.	43.	17.	-
Civic and	18.	7.	18.	7.	0	18.	7.	1	7.	-
Open	28.	11.	28.	11.	-	28.	11.	27.	10.	-
Circulatio	33.	13.	33.	13.	0	33.	13.	3	13.	2.
Total	25	10	25	10	-	25	10	25	10	-

**Source:** Town and Country Planning Department of Kumasi Metropolitan

\*



Along the principal streets of Class A and B areas, multi-storey (often two, but also some three and four-storey) buildings are common. With time and the increasing demand for urban land, some Class C areas are beginning to be taken over by high-cost buildings, though mostly of low-rise villa designs. A significant proportion of the financing for these houses has come from expatriate remittances. This assertion has been corroborated by Diko and Tipple (1992) who argue that most Ghanaian expatriates invest in housing construction while overseas and these houses are mainly constructed in unserviced primary lands at urban fringe locations that support their long-term construction horizons and where land is relatively cheap and free from disputes. Apart from the older former colonial government sector (comprising Danyame and Nhyiaeso) where the already built-up plots have retained their original palatial standards, plot sizes for all other parts of the City are consistent and average between 700 and 1,000 sq. m.

There are three major industrial estates. The sole formal estate (of large industries) located along the Asokwa-Ahinsan-Kaase stretch is home to about ten timber milling and plywood manufacturing firms, producing mainly for European markets. Another dozen or so large millers are scattered around other parts of the City. In fact, Kumasi has been described as the heart of the Ghanaian timber industry. Within the Ahinsan industrial area are also a Coca Cola bottling plant and two major breweries; one linked with Heineken of Germany and Amstelbrouwerij of Holland, and the other linked with Guinness of the United Kingdom.

The second estate, at the famous Suame "Magazine", is composed of several hundreds of small engineering-based industries, repair workshops, scrap yards and spare parts shops. The third estate was situated at Anloga, with about 700 wood-working businesses. These comprised mainly small millers and furniture manufacturers whose products are patronised by clients from Accra and abroad (Korboe et al, 1999). These businesses have currently been relocated to the Sokoban Wood Village to make way for the construction of a proposed Oforikrom-Asokwa by-pass, a project supposed to divert traffic away from the CBD and to complete the "proposed ring road".

Across Kumasi, the landscape is dotted with small tracts of undeveloped land tilled as subsistence/ market gardens. Though each one is typically small, these together take up a significant proportion of the land area, and give the City a peculiar, semi-rural countenance. Residential land is usually allocated in a contiguous manner. The development of these plots is however not contiguous with predictable implications in terms of urban sprawl.

In terms of spatial distribution of population, Kumasi is not particularly segregated. While there certainly are areas that are easily distinguishable as low-income (e.g.'s: Anloga, Asawasi, Mossi Zongo) or high-income (e.g., Ridge, Nhyiaeso, TUC), the overwhelming majority of neighbourhoods (e.g., Asafo, Fante New Town, Dichemso) are noticeably mixed in terms of residents' incomes. Made possible by a combination of large compounds, the joint inheritance culture and the tenacious extended family system, low and middle-income households co-

habit in a significant proportion of the City's housing - particularly in the multi-storey compounds.

## Housing

The modal situations with regard to housing are renting and multi-habitation in poorly serviced compound houses (see Chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of housing in Kumasi). About 75 percent of the City's households live in compound houses. The mean room occupancy rate ranges between 3.3 (Malpezzi et al, 1990) and 4 persons (Korboe, 1992a, 1992b; Tipple and Korboe, 1995). Three in four households occupy one room only and any rental search that takes less than six months is exceptional. Residential mobility is low - 10 years at the mean (Malpezzi et al, 1990). Contrary to claims by the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing (and in spite of the low level of consumption), effective demand is low in Kumasi. Among the first-generation migrant population, many householders were quite content to rent in the City, preferring to build in their rural hometowns instead (Korboe, 1992b; Tipple and Korboe, 1995). This trend is gradually changing among the working class who are now beginning to put up their own houses at the peripheral areas of the metropolis. For the foreseeable future, housing demand in the City is likely to be mainly for cheap single-room rentals in multi-occupied properties rather than for the kind of exclusive owner-occupier housing being promoted by the government.

Most of Kumasi's so-called residential areas serve very mixed functions in practice: petty commercial and light-industrial activities are carried out in virtually all areas zoned by the planning authority as "residential". Sinai (1998) notes that, 24 percent of Kumasi's households actively conduct income-generation activities from their homes, and Afrane (1990) also found that 76 percent of informal sector enterprises are home-based. The City's housing sectors are not easily classified by income, all groups being represented in most areas. In parallel with this observation, self-contained out-houses (traditionally occupied by domestic servants) are increasingly being let to middle-income households. Only in the highest-cost suburbs do élite households continue to reserve their out-house accommodation for chauffeurs, gardeners, cooks, cleaners and watchmen.

The urban compound has many utilitarian qualities that make it an important housing option for a predominantly low-income City. First, and assuming similar construction materials and plot sizes, construction costs are considerably lower for a room in a compound than for an equivalent room in a villa. Second, the compound facilitates the communal lifestyles associated with the poorer segments of Ghanaian society. Sutherland (1981: 84, 85) notes that "despite the ... tensions that result in such cramped physical conditions, it is a noteworthy feature ... that there is a considerable degree of cooperation ... and a higher [level of] social harmony within the [compound] neighbourhood than in other housing sectors". Clark (1984) found similarly when she lived as a participant observer in other Kumasi compounds (see also Intsiful, 1989; Middleton, 1979; Peil and Sada, 1984).

Through cooperation and sharing, multi-habitation provides partial opportunities for mitigating the harsh impact of poverty. Third, the fact that rooms in compounds are typically accessed through the semi-private courtyard rather than directly from the street presents a measure of built-in physical security. In spite of these positive qualities of the urban compound, however, the evidence from recent housing surveys (e.g., Tipple et al, 1997a, 1997b; Sinai, 1998, UNCHS, 2011) points to a growing preference among new owners (typically non-poor) for the more modern villa house form. This is likely to impose further pressures on the City's low-income housing stock.

Focused studies on housing in Kumasi (Korboe, 1992b, Tipple et al, 1997a, 1997b) indicate that the main motivation for house-building is to bequeath property to one's dependants. A result of this cross-generational view of property is that Kumasi does not have a housing market in the regular sense of the expression. That housing is not normally sold, but simply handed down and occupied through inheritance, impacts in a remarkably high level of social consolidation, with house-owning families being particularly well integrated into the social system.

## Conclusion

From the foregoing, Kumasi has grown rapidly over the last century in terms of its population and physical expanse. At an estimated population growth rate of 5.4 percent, and a housing growth rate of 8.6 percent per annum, the City remains the fastest growing metropolis in Ghana. Kumasi's historical antecedents, socio-cultural dominance and its strategic location supported by its economic significance, have been cited for such rapid expansion. Nonetheless, the City's rapid development is having adverse effects on its traditional and cultural superiority. Thus, the need to ensure the City's historical and cultural dominance alongside its rapid expansion is of relevance to current development management practices of the City.

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