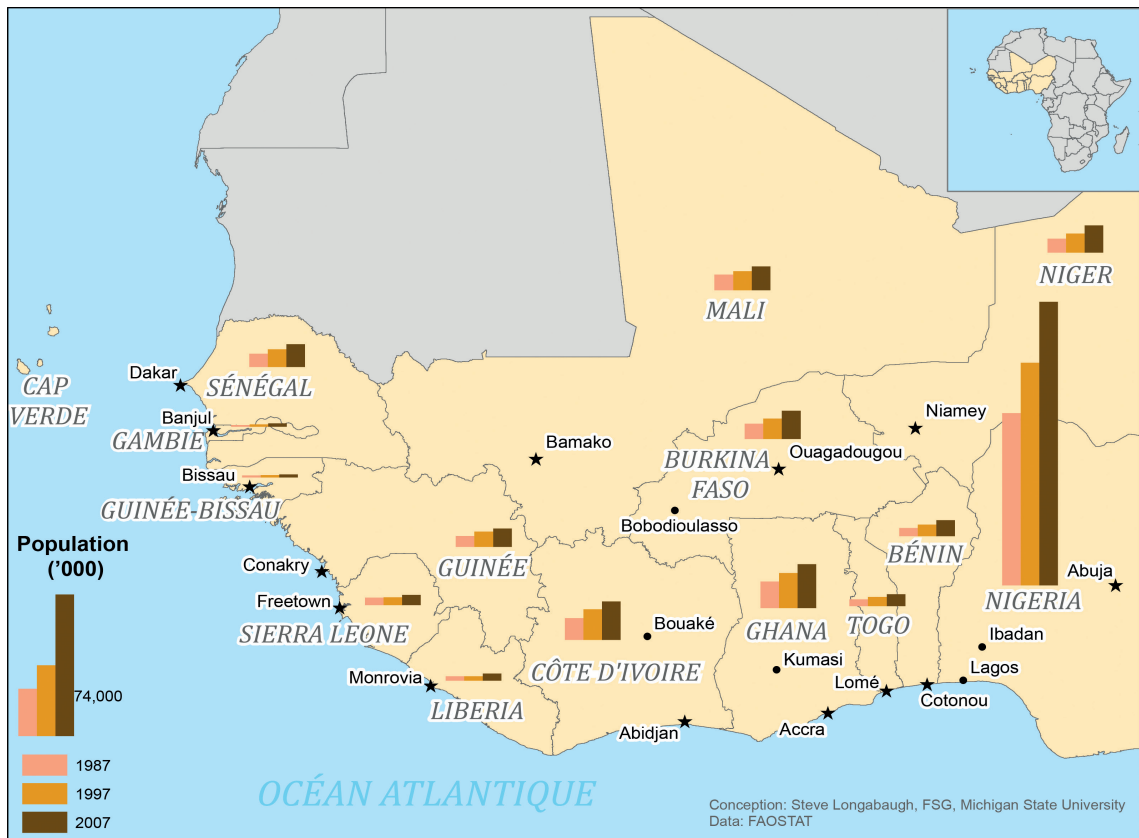


Figure 2.1 Population growth patterns in West Africa



Source: Longabaugh, 2012; Data: FAOSTAT

large countries. Small countries tend to show the strongest dichotomy between metropolitan areas and small towns and cities. Large countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and especially Nigeria have several large secondary agglomerations and intermediate cities.

Urbanization rates tend to be higher in countries that have experienced stronger economic growth, a correlation also found by the World Development Report 2009 (World Bank, 2009b). However, the direction of causality is not entirely clear. Urbanization can be seen both as a consequence of, and an engine for, economic growth (Allen *et al.*, 2009).¹⁰

¹⁰ Only three countries showed fast increases in their urbanisation rates despite sluggish or negative growth between 1970 and 2000: Liberia, Sierra Leone and Niger. For the first two countries this is mainly attributable to the armed conflict, while Niger had a far lower urbanisation rate at the end of the colonial period than the other countries in the region (Allen, *et al.*, 2009)

Moreover, the type of urbanization can affect outcomes in terms of overall growth and poverty reduction. Recent evidence based on the analysis of cross-country data sets and long-term panel data from Tanzania suggests that migration into secondary towns has a much larger effect on poverty reduction than migration into metropolitan areas, but a somewhat lower impact on overall economic growth (Christiaensen *et al.*, 2013). Several factors explain the higher incidence of urbanization into secondary and rural towns on poverty reduction, such as the higher likelihood of finding employment (given higher demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour), lower migration costs and the ability to maintain and exploit closer social ties with the areas of origin. This is consistent with the literature on the positive role of rural nonfarm activities in poverty reduction. Rural towns, which mediate the flow of inputs, goods and services between rural hinterlands and large urban centres are seen as the most effective generators of nonfarm