



World-Historical Dataverse: ADDRESSING PROBLEMS OF MISSING DATA

AFRICAN POPULATION IN THE ERAS OF SLAVERY AND COLONIALISM, 1650-1950

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Purpose: Estimate continental African populations by region and by decade, 1650-1950, using a combination of empirical, statistical, and simulation techniques.

Background: African continental population rose from 300 million in 1950 to 1.0 1 billion in 2010. Commonly cited estimates suggest that African population was 100 million in 1900 and 60 million in 1650. This implied steady population growth is overestimated for three reasons: 1900-50 growth rates were lower; negative effect of export slave trade 1650 – 1900; negative effect of additional enslavement within Africa 1780-1900.

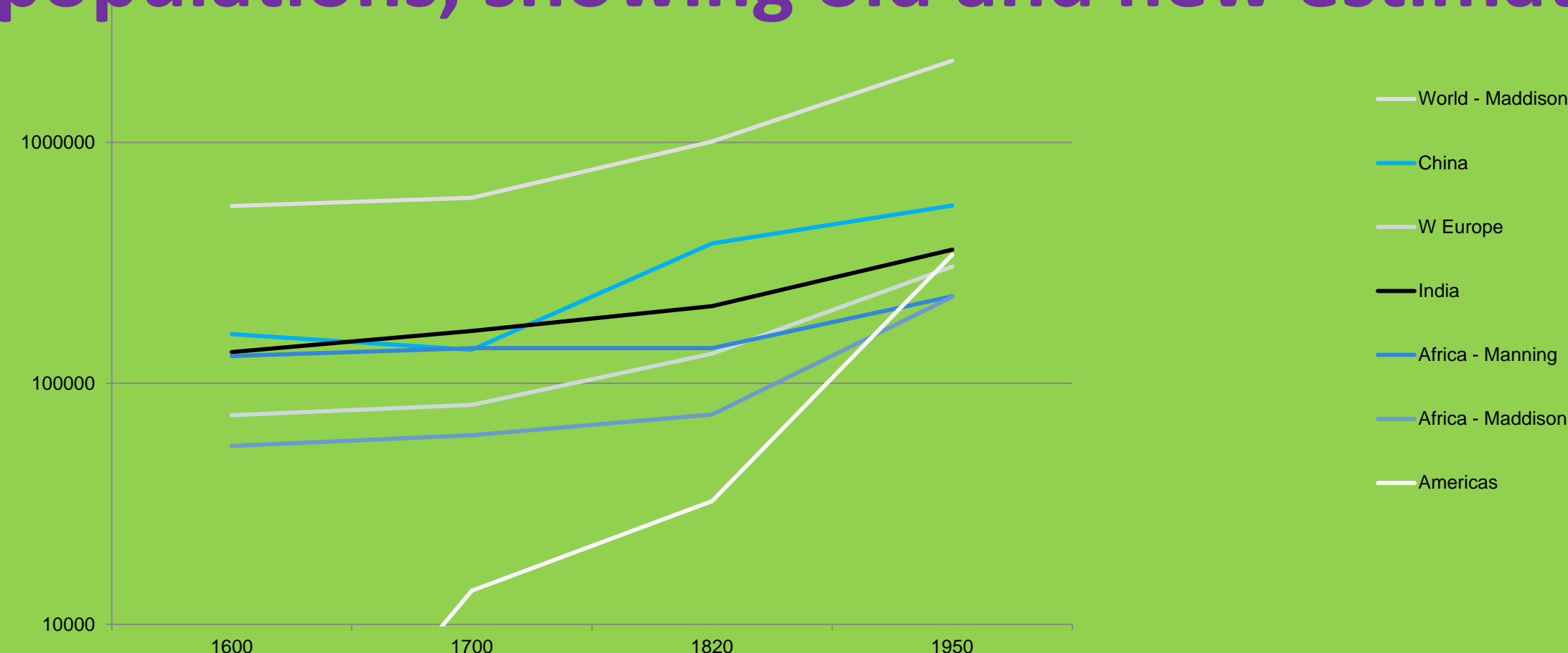
1900 – 1950 population: identify appropriate crude growth rates. Using growth rates based on those documented for tropical India, revised estimates show an African continental population of 140 million in 1900.

1650 – 1790 population: simulate impact of export slave trade. (1) Known Atlantic slave trade volumes (Eltis); statistical modeling of missing data (Sharpnack); (2) estimated slave trade volumes across Indian Ocean and Sahara (Manning) ; (3) deterministic modeling of continental population as influenced by export of captives (Nickleach and Manning).

1790 – 1900 population: simulate impact of export + continental slave trade.

Same techniques as for 1650-1790 plus estimates of additional levels of continental enslavement and mortality (Nickleach and Manning).

Continental populations, showing old and new estimates for Africa



African Regional Populations, 1650 - 1950

