Centro Latinoamericano de Demografía

CELADE

Documentos para Seminarios

REGIONAL ECONOMIC SPECIALIZATION AND POPULATION REDISTRIBUTION AS MECHANISMS OF AFRICAN UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Joel W. Gregory

DS/28-20
Junio, 1978
200

Seminario sobre Redistribución Espacial de la Población, organizado por el Area de Población y Desarrollo dentro del marco del Programa de Cooperación e Intercambio CELADE/CANADA, Agosto, 1978.

I N D E X

INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to promote thinking about the similarities and differences between various experiences in Latin America and Africa for the CELADE Seminar on Development Planning and the Spatial Redistribution of Population. The paper itself, however, is limited to a consideration of a few aspects of regional economic specialization and the redistribution of population in Africa. Examples are drawn from West Africa. While a more general overview of the subject would certainly be useful, a major international research project would be required. Furthermore, the limited discussion which I propose may help to identify more precisely <u>some</u> of the basic theoretical and policy issues. This paper is organized around two questions. First, to what extent has regional economic specialization occurred within West Africa and what are its causes? Second, what are the implications of this regional specialization for migration? In conclusion, the outlook for the immediate future is considered.

I. REGIONAL ECONOMIC SPECIALIZATION: ITS EXTENT AND ITS CAUSES

Within West Africa[1] there exist zones of distinctly different types of economic activity. While these differences can be "explained" in a number of ways, I propose an analysis of the dynamic relationship between international capitalism and African pre-capitalist economies. My hypothesis is that the penetration of capitalism in the 19^{th} and 20^{th} centuries has accentuated the regional division of labor in Africa and aggravated the spatial disparities in terms of wage employment opportunities. Furthermore, these disparities are not only the result of capitalist penetration, but also contribute to the growth of capitalism. This self-nourishing mechanism, the capitalist regionalization of the West African political economy, is an essential feature of the imperialist reshaping of the sub-continent, and is a neccesary element in the exploitation of the vast majority of West Africans by the neo-colonial elite and by international capital. After a description of regional specialization in West Africa, I shall then present some of the basic elements of a theoretical analysis of regional specialization in underdeveloped economics.

1/ In this paper, West Africa refers to the semi-circle of countries stretching along the Atlantic Coast from Mauritania to Cameroun, and the row of Sahelian countries stretching from Mauritania to Chad. This would include 17 countries: Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroun, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger and Chad. The Cape Verde Islands are also economically linked to this region.

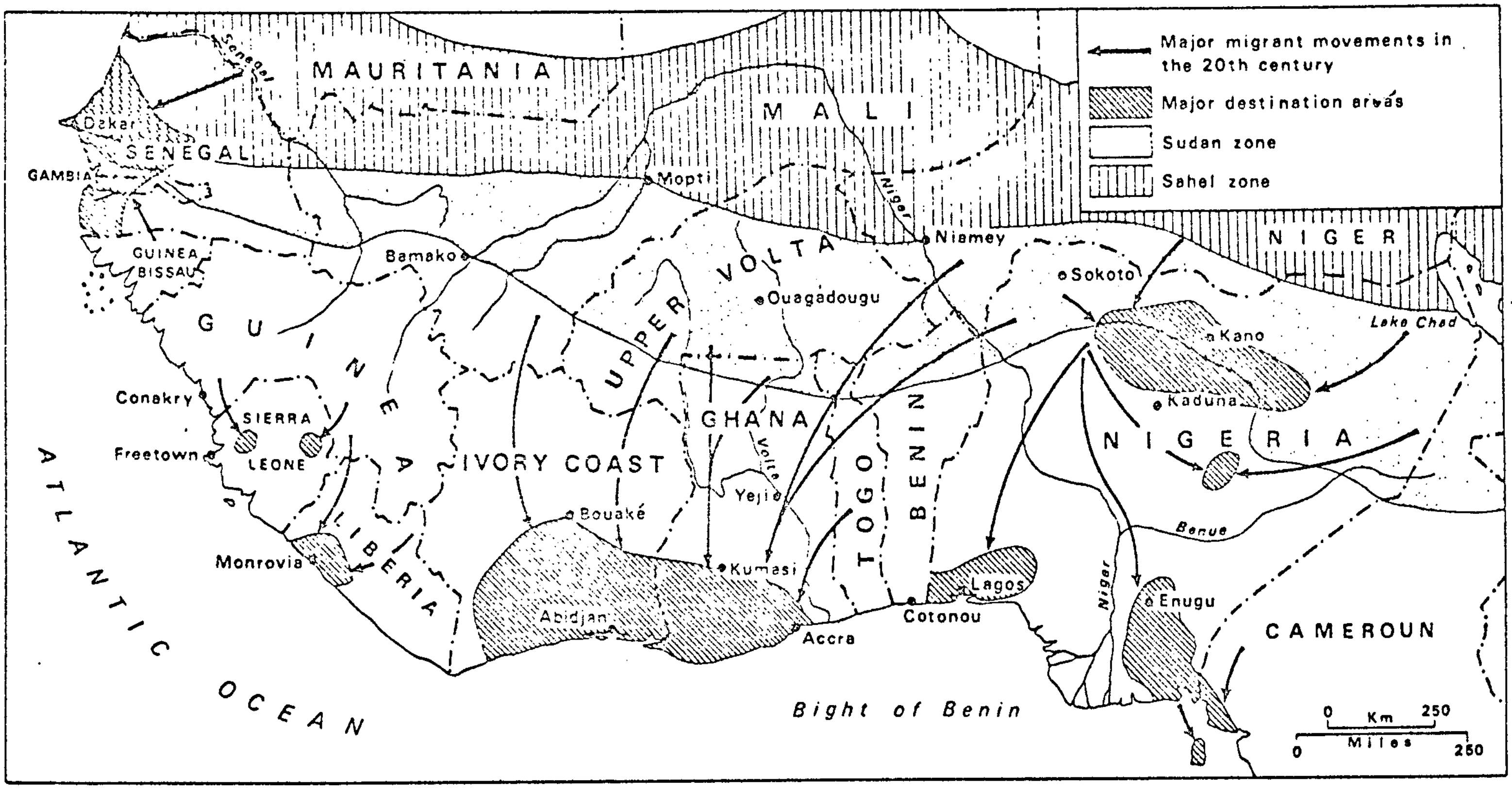
1. The "map" of regional specialization and how it got that way

The regional division of labor has profoundly reshaped the West African political economy. Prior to the Atlantic slave trade of the 17^{th}, 18^{th} and 19^{th} centuries, the economy of the region was spatially organized around the markets of the empires, kingdoms and other political units of pre-colonial Africa; these empires and kingdoms were predominantly (but not exclusively) concentrated in the interior, and in particular, in the transition zone between the coastal areas and the Sahara. The West African economy was linked to the Maghreb and the rest of North Africa by trans-Saharan trade routes, giving added importance to the market network of the interior of West Africa. Colonial penetration, on the other hand, took the domination of the coastal people as its starting point, and moved into the interior in earnest around the time of the formal partition of Africa at Berlin in 1884. The domination of the coastal people, and the reorienting of external trade towards the Atlantic was one of the important effects of the slave trade.[2/]

The coastal starting point of invasion and conquest explains, in part, the heritage of commercial and industrial concentration in the coastal cities of west Africa: Dakar, Conakry, Abidjian, Accra, Lagos and Douala (among others). These cities were (and still are) the sites for the local officie on international commercial companies, who import manufactured goods and export locally-produced agricultural products. These urban trading activities are intimately linked to commercial agriculture, which is itself spatially concentrated in certain regions of West Africa. Coffee and cocoa

---

2/ See, for example, A.G. Hopkins, An Economic History of West Africa (London: Logman, 1973), pages 78-123.



Source: R. Mansell Prothero, "Migration Streams in the Sahel: an Overview," Paper presented at International Conference on the Economic Development of Sahelian Countries, Montréal, October, 1977.

are coastal products, produced under varying land-tenure arrangements, of the forest zones of Ivory Coast, Chana and Nigeria. The growth of "indigenous" capitalist cocoa production in the Gold Coast, for example, has been documented by Polly Hill.[3/] Cotton and peanuts are the two principal crops grown for sale in the Sahelian zones of Senegal, Gambia, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger and Chad. Their production, however, is limited to certain areas within these countries. Furthermore, a small minority of peasant producers benefit from the greatest amount of inputs for these products.

The limited areas where commercial agriculture has developed have not been determined by historical "accident", but rather by the "success" which the marketing and processing companies have had in stimulating and dominating the production of cocoa, coffee, cotton, peanuts, etc. This success is determined, according to our analysis by the strength of the alliances which are forged between the international bourgeoisie, and the national elite "comprador" on the one hand and the dominant class in the agricultural regions (the "kulaks") on the other. Where this alliance is the most successful, the production of crops for the international market (whether by capitalist or pre-capitalist farmers) is the most advanced. The commercialization of all these products is handled through large non-African agro-industrial firms, with the exception of cocoa which is marketed in Ghana and Nigeria through a state-controlled intermediary for international capital. In all cases, a virtual monopoly on marketing exists.[4/]

3/ The Migrant Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana (London: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

4/ For a discussion of the cotton monopoly in Upper Volta, see Joel Gregory, Underdevelopment, Dependency and Migration in Upper Volta, (Ithaca, New York: unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell University, 1974), pages 37-74.

Industrial production in West Africa is primarily of two types: import-substitution and (partial) processing of local agricultural products or minerals (iron ore in Mauritania, bauxite in Guinea and petroleum in Nigeria). The linkages between these two types of industrial production are weak. The inputs, for example, for import-substitution manufacturing (beer, textiles, bicycles, cigarettes, etc.) are, to a large extent, imported. A few examples illustrate this situation: local grains are rarely used in brewing; local dyes are not used in textile manufacturing; the parts for bicycle and motorbike assembly plants come from Europe (even if the iron ore and rubber are conceivably produced in West Africa); tobacco and paper are frequently imported for cigarette production; etc.. The import-substitution sector is much more advanced in the four principal coastal growth poles of Dakar, Abidjan, Accra and Lagos; the other major cities of the region each have a basic number of such establishments. The processing of agricultural and mineral products in the region is usually only partial, with final transformation occuring in Europe or elsewhere. This processing is carried on according to the logic of transportation costs, and therefore frequently occurs in a city within the region of production.5/

If one were to draw a map of the West African economy, and if zones of important capitalist production were represented in black, the coast would be practically outlined in black, with black spots diminishing as one went further inland. Notable exceptions would include the large black area for the agricultural region of Northern Nigeria, and the mining zone in Northern

---

5/ For a more detailed discussion of industrial patterns in West Africa, see Samir Amin, L'Afrique de l'ouest bloquée (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1971), especially chapters I and III.

Mauritania. This spatial configuration of West African capitalism is, in reality, no different from what one observes elsewhere in Africa, or in Latin America and Asia; in fact, similarly "spotted" maps could be drawn for Europe in, say the 18^{th} or 19^{th} centuries. Liberal economics offers a partial "explanation" of this spatial configuration through its study of economics of scale, location decision "theory", urban systems, etc.[6/] An important element, however, is missing in the liberal explanation: why does the development of capitalism in some regions lead to underdevelopment in others?

Before moving on to a consideration of this important question, however, the role of "development planning" needs to be underlined. The regional specialization which has occured in West Africa, according to our analysis, is more a result of the logic of the expansion of capitalism than it is a result of conscious development planning. Urban and regional development planning is more appropriately studied, in the West African context, as a response to capitalist penetration rather than as a strategy for development.[7/] Furthermore urban and regional development planning most frequently compliment the objectives of capitalism, and therefore contribute to underdevelopment.

6/ An excellent reader offering a range of liberal interpretations of regional economics is John Friedmann and William Alonso, editors, Regional Development and Planning, Cambridge, Massachusetts, M.I.T. Press, 1964, especially part II.

7/ Obviously this rather severe judgement needs to be qualified; certain more aggressive governments in West Africa have, on occasion, sought to initiate development strategies in terms of their own analyses of economic priorities. Guinea and Guinea-Bissau are two examples which merit further study. For a review of certain regional planning programs see Salah El-Shakhs and Robert Obudho, editors, Urbanization, National Development and Regional Planning in Africa, New York: Praeger, 1974.

Urban and regional development projects feed capitalist penetration in al least two ways. First, there are projects which provide public sector infraestructural investment to prepare additional zones of capitalist development. These include the creation of industrial parks (as at Tema in Ghana or at the new port of San Pedro in Ivory Coast) and the creation of irrigation systems for commercial agricultural production (the various rice producing schemes in West Africa come to mind). A second way in which such projects compliment the objectives of capitalism is the vehicule they provide for the further intrusion of foreign public capital (foreign "aid"). The capital investment required in West Africa, even for modest projects, usually far surpasses the capacities of the national budgets (with the exception of oil-rich Nigeria). Foreign "aid" fills in the gap, and with the initial capital comes a lot of advisors and technology which invariably remain longer than the length of time it takes for the capital to return to the donner country, with interest. The Regional Development Offices (O.R.D.) in Upper Volta are an eloquent example of a regional development strategy which has opened the door to massive foreign public sector intervention in tandem with private sector interests; expatriate technicians from Europe and North America advise government officials on how to produce cotton and other commercial crops for sale to European and North American corporations.

Finally, it should be stressed that these urban and regional development chemes are justified politically and economically as a means for responding to the onverconcentration of (capitalist) development activities in a single zone or in a limited number of zones. The historic distortion of the West African economic space which is the result of capitalist penetration is thus used as the reason for further expansion of capitalist activities. At the same time the transformation of the economic space is only partial, in that an essential ingredient of the transformation is the simultaneous preservation of reservoirs of cheap labor.

2. Elements of a Marxist dependency theory of underdevelopment

A number of Marxist authors have addressed themselves, directly or indirectly, to the question of blocked capitalist development. I shall summarize and elaborate on a few aspects of this alternative explanation of capitalist development and underdevelopment at the periphery. Including the seminal work of Latin Americanists such as Gundar Frank,8/ various non-liberal social scientists have attempted to put together an analysis of underdevelopment. The starting point for this analysis, which could be called Marxist dependency theory, or imperialism, is the incremental falling of the rate of profit on capital which is caused by the fact that the industrial reserve army of labor does not guarantee a "sufficient" surplus labor force for more than a limited period of time within a given capitalist national economy (or a social formation). In order for the capitalist

8/ André Gundar Frank, Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution, New York: Monthly Review, 1970.

9/ Three recent books which have greatly influenced my own thinking on these questions are Claude Meillassoux, Femmes, greniers et capitaux, Paris: Maspero, 1975; Pierre-Philippe Rey, Capitalisme négrier: la marche des paysans vers le prolétariat, Paris: Maspero, 1976; and Jean-Pierre deGaudemar, Mobilité du travail et accumulation du capital, Paris: Maspero, 1976.

means of production to reproduce itself and generate new profits for capital, the labor force must increase in size and in quality, according to Marxist theory. Within a limited economic space (a national or regional economy), the eventual shortage of labor, will drive up wages well beyond the subsistence level, the level at which profits for capital are highest. These relative and absolute shortages of labor are, according to Marxits, the source of crisis and contradiction within the capitalist economic system.

One way for capitalism to avoid the incremental falling of the rate of profit is to find a way to economize on wages paid, or to decrease the proportion of variable capital, in Marxist terminology.[10] An ingenious and effective method for reducing the proportion of variable capital is the utilization of "cheap labor" from economies which are, in terms of capitalist production less developed. Three major forms of this strategy are the inexpensive extraction of primary resources at the periphery, the export of certain industries from the center to the periphery and the use of temporary immigrant labor from the periphery at the center.

Colonialism, the political and military manifestation of European imperialism, was particularly active in the first half of the 20th century in Africa, in its efforts to secure the cheap labor necessary for increasing capitalist profits, and to secure raw materials for industrial capitalism in Europe and, eventually, North America. European capital was able to continue its process of accumulation through the effective colonial control of a

---

10/ Another obvious way is to drive down real wages, through non-violent and violent means. Successfull labor unions in capitalist national economies are usually able to resist(at least in part) this alternative strategy which capital uses to increase profits.

vast reservoir of African labor, first for the cheap extraction of minerals and industrial agricultural products, then also for the establishment of certain industries (including the so-called "run-way" industries).11/ Neo-colonialism, characterized by the economic alliance of African national elites and international capital as well as by the military alliance of African and European nation-states, has preserved these forms of exploitation and has witnessed the development of intercontinental temporary migration of unskilled workers to Europe.

For Marxist, the symbiotic relationship of capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production is an essential aspect of imperialism, and in particular, for the (primitive) accumulation of capital under extremely advantageous conditions.12/ These conditions are made possible under imperialism by the remplacement and the maintenance of labor by pre-capitalist sectors, while the capitalist sector is obliged to pay only a subsistence wage. In other terms, this particular mechanism of the contemporary world economy can be expressed as the difference between central capitalism (or "integral" capitalism) and peripheral capitalism (or imperial capitalism). In central capitalism, both a direct and an indirect salary are paid to the worker, a direct salary to pay for the reconstitution of the labor power on a day to day basis, and an indirect salary to pay for the

---

11/ So-called because while "run-away" industries are fleeing high l labor costs, they are also "running towards" cheap labor, expanded markets, etc....

12/ Luxembourg, Rosa, quoted in de Gaudemar, Mobilité du travail, cf. footnote 9, pp. 229-239.

periods of inactivity (unemployment insurance, health insurance, etc.) and for the cost reproducing the labor force (costs of schooling for the young, retirement pensions, etc.). In peripheral capitalism, and indirect salary is not necessary; the pre-capitalist sector provides the means to maintain the labor force when it is not needed by the capitalist sector, and to rear new workers as well as to provide for old workers when they are physically incapable of further productive activity.13/ Imperialist capitalism, seen in these terms, does not, as Marx supposed, destroy all pre-capitalist modes of production, but rather (under certain historical conditions and at certain periods of capitalist expansion) seeks to preserve pre-capitalist modes of production in order to perpetuate the extremely advantageous situation of (primitive) accumulation.14/

This preservation of pre-capitalist production, within a larger dominating capitalist world economy, is the essence of underdevelopment. Pre-capitalist social systems are rendered dependent: self sufficiency is no longer possible, but simultaneously capitalist development is blocked ((at least temporarily) by the perpetuation of pre-capitalist sectors within the economy. Expressed in other terms, this is the situation which Frank described as neither developed nor underdeveloped, but rather under-developed.15/

13/ Meillassoux, Femmes, greniers et capitaux, cf. footnote 9, pp.152-157.
14/ Ibid., pp. 147-148. Also, Rey, Capitalisme négrier, cf. footnote 9, p. 45.
15/ André Gundar Frank, "The Development of Underdevelopment", in Imperialism and Underdevelopment, Robert I. Rhodes, editor, New York:Monthly Review Press, 1970, pp. 4-16.

This brief theoretical discussion sheds light on the situation o regional economic specialization within West Africa. The spatial concentration of certain economic activities (industrial transformation and import-substituting industrialization, capitalist agriculture, commercial peasant agriculture, etc.) corresponds to the spheres in which industrial and merchant capital not only dominate but also are directly involved in production and exchange. The zones of peasant agricultural and craft production for self-consumption and for exchange with other peasant producers is a sphere dominated by capital, in that the population is often obliged to sell its labor, but where the labor force is natured and maintained within a pre-capitalist system of social relations (no wage labor). These two sectures of the economy co-exist in social and structural terms and they frequently have distinct spatial aires. Within West Africa, the cities and the coastal agricultural regions are predominately zones of capitalist production; in the interior whil there are zones of capitalist agriculture and commercial peasant agriculture, a pre-capitalist rural economy is the rule. These zones of pre-capitalist production, according to Marxist dependency theory, will evolve but will not, in the near future, become zones of capitalist production. In effect these areas are to be maintained as reservoirs of cheap labor for the neighboring capitalist zones. Migration, as described in the next section of the paper, is the mechanism which moves labor from zones of pre-capitalist production to zones of capitalist production (and oftentimes back again), is one of the essential features of the reproduction of the capitalist labor force, and is the most important form of labor mobility at the present stage of peripheral capitalism in West Africa.

II. IMPLICATIONS OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC SPECIALIZATION FOR MIGRATION

In West Africa various patterns of migration have developed since the penetration of capitalism. Not surprisingly, the most important movements are between zones of pre-capitalist production and zones of capitalist production. Two spatial forms of migration are particularly important: movement from rural areas in the interior towards rural areas nearer the coast, and movements from rural areas to urban centers. A third form of migration which is not discussed in detail in this paper but which is increasingly important in the West African context, is intercontinental migration to Europe, and in particular to the countries of the European Economic Community. Many of the movements are temporary, for a few months or a few years; some, however, are more permanent. A few examples illustrate these types of movements. These examples are limited by the lack of precise statistics on migratory patterns; with the exception of Upper Volta, and perhaps Ghana, existing national data on migration are very fragmentary.[16] The maps on the following page shows the geography of the major migratory stream in the 20th century; the arrows shown on the map, however, should also be drawn to show return flows as well as the relative importance of the various migratory currents.

16/ A national migration survey has just been completed in Upper Volta;see Sidiki Coulibaly, Joel Gregory and Victor Piché, Enquete nationale sur les mouvements migratoires en Haute-Volta: une vue d'ensemble Ouagadougou, C.V.R.S. et I.N.S.D., 1978. In Ghana the 1960 and 1970 censuses furnish fairly accurate data on life-time migration.

Major international rural to rural flows include those from the western Sahel to the peanut and rice-producing regions of Senegal and Gambia, from the central Sahel (and in particular from Upper Volta) to the coffee, cocoa and banana regions of Ivory Coast and Ghana, from Nigel to peanut and palm oil regions of Nigeria. Within Senegal, Upper Volta, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria there also exist major rural to rural movements; the streams are primarily towards regions of capitalist agriculture, but sometimes are from a zone o peasant "subsistence" production to a zone peasant commercial pro - duction.17/

Rural to urban movements are also international as well as internal. Abidjan and Accra are particularly noteworthy for their high proportion of non-Ivorian and non-Ghanaian populations. Several other West African coas - tal capitals also have large "foreign" -born populations: Dakar, Lagos and Dinala. The other major urban centers of West Africa, which are also grow - ing at impressive rates (5 to 10 percent, or more, per annum since 1960, in most cases), experience the greatest part of their migratory gains from rural origins within the same nation-state.

Much of the migration from rural origins to rural and urban destinations is temporary. 18/ The distinction between what is temporary and what is

---

17/ Certain of these movements are studied in Samir Amin, editor, Modern Migrations in Western Africa, London: Oxford University Press, 1974; both the introduction by Amin and several specific chapters deal with this form of migration. Two forthcoming issues of African Perspectives Leiden, The Netherlands, will also deal with questions of African migra tion, including the important movements to rural areas of Senegal to Gambia.

18/ Recent literature on West African migration indicates that there has been a decline in short-term and seasonal migration, and an increase in longer-term migration. See, for example, J.K. Hart, "Migration and the Opportunity Structure: A Ghanaian Case Study" in Amin, Modern Migra - tions, ibid, p. 330; also O.R.S.T.O.M., Les migrations de travail Mossi Ouagadougou, 1975, p. 26. The theoretical interpretation of this chan- ge would emphasize the increasing integration of migrant labor into the capitalist mode of production.

temporary and what is permanent, however, is a question without a precise answer. In terms of the theoretical framework which is presented in the preceding section of this paper, any migrant who spends most of his or her unproduction life (youth, old age, periods of unemployment) in a zone of pre capitalist production is a temporary migrant who provides an ideal form of cheap labor for the zones of capitalist production. What is important for capital is to maintain zones where the indirect costs of labor are assumed by units of production, and of reproduction, which are outside the sphere of cost paid on by capital. Temporary migration, even if it is "long terms",is one way in which to minimize or to eliminate these costs.

Capitalism is confronted by a two-sided challenge in terms of migration in West Africa. Peripheral capitalism must guarantee itself a supply of labor which is abundant (or over-abundant, the "industrial reserve army" in Marxist vocabulary) in order to keep wages low. Yet peripheral capitalism must also asure itself that the vast majority of its labor force is maintained and reproduced by the non-capitalist sectors of the economy if the maximum accumulation of capital is to be realized. This challenge is essentially a contradiction: the labor force must simultaneously be attracted and repelled from the capitalist sector.

Historically, in the early period of colonial penetration (1875 to 1945) the problem of "attraction" is crucial. The techniques employed by the colonial state, in the service of private capital, are, ironically,mechanisms of "repulsion" from the pre-capitalist sector: per capita head tax, military recrumenent and the use of surplus recruits for "public" works, and forced labor. These mechanisms have both direct and indirect effects: young households members are sent off to earn tax money in cash agriculture, domestic service, etc.; young recruits build roads, railroads, and ports, clear and work plantations, etc.; and other young villagers flee the forced recrutement to work in agricultural and urban employment in neighboring colonies. The flight of young Africans from French West Africa to Gold Coast and Nigeria is particularly noteworthy. In the late colonial period (1945 to 1960) and the neo-colonial period (1960 to the present) the mechanisms of attraction begin to function more effectively, and the role of heavy-handed political and military intervention is replaced by the "invisible" hand of capitalist spatial specialization, as described in the first part of this paper. The impoverishment of the pre-capitalist zones (especially the imposition of cash cropping and the deterioration of food cropping) and the growth of wage employment in the capitalist zones "attract" young members of the labor force from the former to the latter.[19/] the current supply of migrant labor is furnished through the functionning of mechanisms which are no less "obligatory" than those employed previously; the direct role of the colonial state has merely been replaced by the less direct role of the neo-colonial economy.

The other side of the challenge for peripheral capitalism is the maintenance of a labor supply which is, at least in part, furnished by <u>temporary</u> migrants. The labor supply itself must be abundant. But if peripheral capitalism is to reproduce its particularly advantageous position, and thereby avoid paying indirect wages to a substancial portion of laborers, migrants must circulate between the capitalist and pre-capitalist

---

19/ Bibliographic reference on this subject can be found in a more detailed case study which I wrote on Upper Volta, "Underdevelopment, Dependency and Migration in Upper Volta", in <u>Politics of Africa: Dependence and Development</u>, Timothy Shaw and Kenneth Heard, editors, London, Longman, 1978.

sectors, thus leaving to the latter the cost of unemployment as well as the cost of childbearing and old-age. Temporary migration also guarantees that the vast majority of migrants come without "dependants", leaving their support to the pre-capitalist sector.20/ The "repulsion" of laborers from the capitalist to the pre-capitalist sector, after a period of employment, is a complex process, and is "unsuccessful" in a substantial number of cases; certain migrants come and stay. Several mechanisms, however, insure the "repulsion" of a part of the migrant labor force. These include exceedingly low wages and cyclical unemployment.21/ The necessity to return to the place of origin to bring back money, to marry or to see one's spouse, to furnish labor in times of particular need, etc., also insure that a portion of migrant laborers will return to their place of origin.22/

20/ Temporary migration is, to be sure, but one form of "cheap labor" for capitalism. Another form of "cheap labor" is provided, without migration, by the coexistence of pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production within the capitalist zones. A family is thus called upon to support itself through subsistence wage labor in the capitalist sector and subsistence agriculture, for example, in the pre-capitalist sector. This is, in fact, one principal source of labor for peripheral capitalism in the cities of the Sahel, in certain cities of coastal West Africa (Ibadan being an excellent example) and in most of the zones of capitalist agriculture, where food "gardening" is a necessity not a hobby.

21/ The unfavorable conditions of employment for migrant labor in West Africa is documented in several studies. See, for example, Raymond Deniel, De la savane a la ville, Parfs, Aubier-Montaigne, 1968, p.108

22/ The particular case of the pass system in South Africa needs to be mentioned as an example of repressive state intervention to insure a circulation of cheap African Labor between the bantustant and the townships on the one hand and the white capitalist zones on the other.

Migration, and circulating migration in particular, is therefore an effective mechanism for insuring a low-paid and abundant labor force for West African peripheral capitalism. The regional specialization which is the handiwork of imperial, colonial and neo-colonial history is the basis for a spatial economic system which demands a constant redistribution of the population. Part of this redistribution is permanent, part of the population movement is temporary.

III. CONCLUSION: THE OUTLOOK FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

In the face of regional specialization and massive migration, West African governments are increasingly looking for ways to counteract polarization of "modern" economic activities and "overconcentration" of population. Migration policies, like regional development policies, are primarily a series of responses to the expansion of peripheral capitalism rather than a dynamic set ot strategies based on explicite social and economic goals. The power of the state to modify migratory flows is several limited by the inertia of ongoing capitalist development. Efforts to reduce or to slow down migratory streams are constrained by the decisions of foreign private and public capital. The spatial location of most capital investments is determined not by what is good for the national economy and for the well-being of the mass of the population; but rather by what is most profitable; for me even to make such and observation is an exercise in underlining the obvious. What is particular the peripherical capitalism and therefore to the West African situation, however, is important to remember: first, the vast majority of capital is foreign-controlled and second, the preservation of pre-capitalist sectors and zones serves the interest of international capital.

The outlook is not favorable, or at least it is not favorable for the majority of West African people who live with one foot in capitalist employment and one foot in pre-capitalist agriculture or cattle-raising.

The West African economy is increasingly integrated into the world economy and the national elites are increasingly led into alliances of common interest with international capital. Only a narrow margin for manouvering is left if any government of West Africa were really interested in counteracting the exploitative goals and the pernicious effects of regional specialization and the proletarization of peasant labor trough migration.

I would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this paper: Suzanne Biron, Christopher Bonéza, Juan Fernández, Danielle Gauvreau, Marianne Kempeneers, Victor Piché and Jean Poirier.

CENTRO LATINOAMERICANO DE DEMOGRAFIA
CELADE

Edificio Naciones Unidas
Avenida Dag Hammarskjöld
Casilla 91, Santiago, CHILE

300 mts. Sur y 125 Este de la Iglesia
San Pedro, Montes de Oca
Apartado Postal 5249
San José, COSTA RICA