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THE SAHEL REGION :  
SPLENDOUR YESTERDAY, FAMINE TODAY  
WHAT WILL HAPPEN TOMORROW ? \*

By

*Hector GAMBAROTTA \*\**

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this essay is to help identify the causes of the *social* problem generated by the drought which periodically affects the Sahel region, to assess its effects and to discuss the character of the alternative solutions advanced by government institutions and international organizations.

The vast literature on these subjects (see the bibliographical research of Joyce and Beudot (1976) and that of the Sahel Documentation Center (1977) ) is evidence of the interest which they have aroused and also of their complexity, since so many factors – natural, political, social and economic – are involved. Our research will be confined to presenting a *general* synthesis of the problems affecting the Sahel region, mainly from an economic perspective. This approach presupposes the adoption of a wider framework covering other relevant aspects of the question based on the other research papers programmed in the IFIAS project *Drought and Man*.

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What follows is my entire responsibility and does not necessarily express the views of the people and institutions mentioned above.

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\*\* *Visiting lecturer IDEP, Dakar, 1977.*

In the first part of this study I shall outline the historical background of West African societies; PART II will describe the evolution of African agriculture and the economic conditions of the Sahel countries over the past twenty years; PART III will attempt to assess the economic and social impact of the drought; and the fourth and last part will analyse possible scenarios for the future of the region.

## I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The economic history of the Sahel-Sudan region can be divided into three main periods. The pre-colonial phase, which extends up to the 16th century, is characterized by the economic and social progress of the communities in the region, in spite of the limitations imposed by the natural environment. The second period reaches to the beginning of the present century and marks the outset of the region's dependence on an economic order imposed from outside: a dependence which inhibited its potential for autonomous development. The last period, which ends with the accession of the countries of the region to political independence, is that of economic occupation, with the development of the type of agricultural activities, still predominant today.

### i) *The Pre-colonial Phase*

At a very early stage – in the 7th century, Arab travellers described the population inhabiting the region and their accounts provide the richest source of available information (1). They reveal the existence of an elaborate social organization and a high level of economic activity along the two great rivers: the Niger and the Senegal.

The towns in the Sahel-Sudan region, which had contacts with the outside world through the trans-saharan trade in which they exchanged their gold against goods from Europe and the Arab world, constituted, at the time, an important link in world trade (2). Despite the importance of trans-saharan trade, the very basis of accumulation was rural activity and the mode of appropriation of the surplus produced in the context of that activity determined the internal social hierarchization.

The primary importance of agricultural commodities as essential goods made land the fundamental means of production and led to the development of an essentially agro-pastoral type of social formation. Agricultural activity in these social formations was limited by its level of technological development and the prevailing natural conditions, but it served a fundamental objective, namely to ensure the reproduction of these societies. The choice of crops, animal husbandry, the practices of crop rotation and nomadism were hence man's response to his environment; an imperfect response in the final analysis, but one whose rationality was dictated by the need to ensure the continuity of the development of productive forces in those social formations.



The specific facts of history demonstrate that, even though climatic problems (above all, long periods of drought) arose during that phase, they did not constitute a sufficient obstacle to bring about a systematic deterioration in the economic and social life of the communities or to make it necessary to abandon the human settlements (3). The successive changes of political regimes were mainly the consequence of economic and social factors without any strong connexion with natural phenomena (4).

Climatic changes had only short-term effects and a limited impact; thus they did not give rise either to large-scale migration or to protracted famines. It seems that this was due to the existence of a social organization which confronted the natural environment by defining *autonomously* the structure of its agrarian production. On these matters Cissoko (1978) notes that:

*« With the 16th century, a period of great prosperity, the Niger Bend attained its heyday. It was the centre of one of the strongest state organization that West Africa had ever seen... Leo Africanus, at the beginning of the 16th century, describes in great detail this great economic activity of the Bend. According to the Tarikhs of Timbuktu, the country was rich, the population dense and healthy and famine could not break out. Under the circumstances, unless there was a disaster of long duration, it was possible rapidly to deal with small periodic food shortages. Indeed, the Tarikhs do not mention food shortages in the 16th century, but epidemics of «plague»... The epidemics of the 16th century do not seem to have been very devastating or to have undermined the economic and demographic strength of the Niger Bend... » (5).*

Nor is there any evidence in the available sources of any catastrophic effects of climatic phenomena. A dense population grouped together in towns like Gao and Timbuktu, which in their period of splendour had more than 100,000 inhabitants, would in view of the sanitary conditions of the times, have been devastated by famines and recurrent epidemics. Moreover, political and social stability, flourishing commercial activities and the high degree of organization of production are not characteristics of societies at the mercy of natural phenomena. That is why not only is there no strong historical evidence of devastating famines and epidemics, but the very nature of these peoples, their achievements and their progress allow us to assert that the climatic variations were «surmountable» in a group of social formations which autonomously defined their modes of accumulation.

Some researchers, who approach the subject from the climatological angle (6), claim that the Sudano-Sahelian empires reached their

heyday thanks to a long period marked by exceptionally favourable weather conditions. They consider the climate as being the decisive factor which «explains» the progress of the social organization, and base their argument on a highly artificial set of assumptions and evidence derived from indirect and incomplete analyses. They establish a climate/society correlation which seems entirely «mechanistic», ignoring the relevance of intrinsic factors in the dynamics of the development of any social formation.

In fact, this period of growth and apogee of the communities in the region was interrupted, not by climatic alterations, but by external political factors, namely the Moroccan invasion of 1591 which led to the fall of the Songhai Empire and which marked the end of the «great empires of the Western Sudan», a process that was accelerated by the European penetration of the continent.

It is important to point out that it was these changes, induced by forces *external* to the communities and not by *internal* events, which halted the development of the productive forces in the region. It seems that considering only internal factors, the local social forces were in a position to continue the process of growth, since they were achieving significant social and economic goals (7).

Lastly, it should be noted that it is not our purpose to present an idealistic vision of this phase for, in fact, problems common to all developing social formations in their early stages of accumulation did arise during these years. Our aim is rather to show that the natural environment did not constitute an insurmountable obstacle for the dense populations, who were able to settle in that geographical space and to ensure their production.

Certainly, it is not possible to evaluate this period with criteria derived from the analysis of the European experience (8). The rise and decline of the West African «empires» has to be placed in the context of its *own* history while considering the specificity of the African social environment. It is in this sense that we identify a period of *splendour*: the magnificence of the epoch is not related to the comparison with other social formations, it is rather a concept derived from historical evolution proper to the communities living in the region, which in the centuries to come were deprived of the possibility of controlling their social organization: the destruction of the *original* economic and social forces marks the beginning of a process during which the region was unable to ensure a sustained development of the forces of production.

## ii) *The Colonial Blockage*

The coming of the European to the West African coast, the invasions from the North and the decadence of the Arab world are the historical facts which determined the decline of the great empires. But it

was the first of these factors which was to have a major long-term effect and was to be decisive in the economic and social desintegration of the region.

The European presence imposed a transformation of the links which these communities entertained with the outside world: this transformation was reflected in the emergence of a new predominant commodity (the slave) and the resulting geographical reversal in the development of the productive forces. The previously predominant commodity (gold), which had formed the link with the outside world, had made it possible to occupy the hinterland of the continent along the line of the great rivers; during the new phase, although gold continue to be an element in trade, it lost its predominant role to the slave trade which, being imposed on the communities from outside, tended to undermine their unity.

The expansion of the slave trade drastically changed the nature of accumulation through its destabilizing and distorting effect both at the socio-political and the economic level. The draining of the population which followed generated political instability within these communities, through the ensuring conflicts to dominate this trade: among other things, it gave rise to armed confrontations, specific manifestations of the struggle for alliance with the Europeans. The forced modification of the social hierarchies blocked the process of accumulation which could no longer continue along the lines that had been predominant during the apogee of the empires, and priority was given to exchange rather than production (9). Cissoko (1969) calls the beginning of this phase «the age of the countries at war», the social scene being essentially characterized by instability and insecurity.

The imposition of this «new economic order», by undermining the very bases of the development of the productive forces, gave rise to a historical break which marked the beginning of the region's subordination to the interests of the colonial powers, who henceforth placed the laws of the world capitalist development above the interest of the local communities.

Analysing this process, Amin (1971b) points out:

*«Reduced to the role of supplier of slave labour for the plantations in America, Africa lost its autonomy. It began to be shaped according to foreign requirements, those of mercantilism ... The processes of integration of the peoples and construction of large communities which were developing in the pre-mercantilist period were stopped. Instead there was fragmentation, isolation and an incredible tangling up which, as we know, are at the root of one of the most serious of contemporary handicaps» (10).*

The reduction in the supply of manpower seems to have been the most serious immediate consequence of the expansion of the slave trade. In view of the level of development attained by these communities, a *necessary* condition for the continuation of the process of accumulation was population growth. Although it is practically impossible to evaluate exactly the extent of the labour drain induced by the slave trade, the fact that the most cautious estimates confirm a stagnation of the total population between the middle of the 17th century and the middle of the 19th century gives some idea of the situation.

Agricultural production suffered directly from the consequences of the population drain. Cissoko (1969), in his analysis of economic activity, stresses that:

*« Agriculture which provided a living for almost all the population ceased to produce enough... Hence the Western Sudanese agriculture did not experience any technical progress... The general insecurity, moreover, slowed down productivity... The shortage of manpower aggravated by the slave trade accentuated the stagnation of the Western Sudanese agriculture » (11).*

Food shortages and epidemics ceased to be an exceptional and a typical phenomenon and became a permanent reality. The climatic fluctuations had a more serious impact on these communities, subjected as they were to a process of domination which prevented them from structuring their organization in relation to their own priorities.

The routes opened up by the slave trade also had negative effects on the evolution of the nascent local industry: the gradual inflow of European manufactured products deprived such activities as the textiles industries which had achieved a certain level of development of all possibility of growth.

The colonial blockage, although having a different impact on each of the communities in the region (12), was generally marked by the fact that it gave rise everywhere to what Rodney (1972) identifies as «the loss of development opportunity». This blockage of development was to constitute, for more than four centuries, a fundamental limitation on the future progress of the region. Throughout this epoch, the region was subordinated for the sole purpose of supplying cheap and malleable labour for the production activities of the colonial powers in other regions of the world. This dominant activity did not generate any internal force of social progress; on the contrary, it promoted the deterioration and destruction of local productive activity at a key historical moment: that in which the bases of the world capitalist system were being established.

Africa in general and the Sudan-Sahel region in particular were forcibly integrated into the world system, and lost their autonomy without having the possibility of choosing another path before being ruthlessly subjected by the colonial power.

iii) *The Exploitative Development (mise en valeur) of the Region*

The gradual economic occupation of the territory, with a view to maximizing the surplus extracted from the colonies, led to the development of export-oriented agriculture, disregarding other valid principles of resource allocation directly related to the nature and limitations of the environment.

Despite their negative effect on the productivity of the soil, groundnuts and cotton constituted the main sources of agricultural expansion in the region. The deterioration of the natural milieu went side by side with an arbitrary administration of the local population.

The labour force was compulsorily placed at the disposal of the colonial authority, a fact that only accentuated the process of disintegration of social unity within the local communities which, until then, had been precariously maintained. Forced migration, the compulsory occupation of land with the consequent change in the use of the soil, the establishment of new forms of organization of production are all manifestations of the development of mercantile relations.

The expansion of export crops gradually led to the superposition of two different farming methods: one based on the extraction of surplus and the other geared to the maintenance and reproduction of the direct producers. The fact that production destined for the maintenance of individual producers was transferred to lower-quality land with scarce rainfall and the conversion of these producers into wage-labour, forced the population frequently to resort to trade in order to obtain food, thus creating some uncertainty with regard to subsistence, since the supply was then subject to the fluctuations of the market dominated by the colonial power. Dispossessed of the object of their labour (the land) and compelled to become integrated in a subordinate role (as wage-earners) within the new organization, the local population experienced a gradual deterioration in their living conditions (13).

Furthermore, the increased urbanization in the coastal areas created a pole of attraction and a distorting factor with regard to the regional distribution of production. Since the pattern of demand in the urban areas was appreciably different from that prevailing in the rural areas, the peripheral agricultural zones embarked on a production geared to the market (particularly meat and vegetables) replacing the traditional subsistence output: the effect of this process was a further deterioration of the soils and an increasing uncertainty as to the availability of food in the countryside.

Even when the «development» of the region by the colonial forces was carried out according to the same general rules which characterized the process on the African continent as a whole, it had certain specific features which even today continue to affect the evolution of the countries comprising the region. The most important of these is that the

French colonies in West Africa, although totally occupied militarily in the 19th century were only at a later stage exploited economically (14). This time-lag in comparison with the neighbouring British colonies (Gold Coast and Nigeria) was specifically reflected in two apparently distinct phenomena: the absence of development of basic infrastructure and the lack of participation by local social forces in the spread of capitalist forms of production among other strata than wage-earners.

The last years of the colonial period -- i.e. between the Second World War and independence were marked by a change in the mode of exploitation of the labour force in the rural areas. That process involved abandoning practices based on large production units, and the transfer of production to family units. The atomization of the producers and the imposition of a particular type of crop by the colonial authority gave rise to the emergence of a dependent peasantry, which had no possibility to extended reproduction, both because of the small size of the farms and the low prices received for the sale of its products. The Comité d'Information Sahel (1974) summarizes the end of this phase as follows:

*« Hence, on the basis of the implicitly accepted principle that the labour force reproduces itself automatically in the preserved agricultural communities, the neo-colonial policy encouraged family production of export crops from the fifties onwards... Thus we see more and more clearly the emergence, on the one hand, of regions in which cash is obtained from the sale of an agricultural commodity; and on the other hand, more remote areas forming a hinterland in which money comes from the sale of labour power »* (15).

Finally, it has to be noted that political independence entailed the subdivision of the region without taking into account the economic basis on which the new political entities were going to develop. The various States created at the end of the colonial period were the product of a unilateral decision by the metropolitan countries, and this political partition was in itself to constitute an obstacle to the development of these countries because it imposed artificial boundaries on the local communities thus weakening them.

## II. ECONOMIC POLICY AFTER INDEPENDENCE: THE SUPPOSED ADVANTAGES OF THE INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

The heritage of the colonial period, particularly the type of criteria used to allocate resources, has had a decisive influence on the evolution of African agriculture in the past twenty years; but it is equally true that after Independence, the maintenance of a highly distorted mode of specialization of production has aggravated economic and social problems.

The theory of «comparative advantages» has frequently been used as an argument to prove the rationality of the structure of world production and, hence, to justify the specialization of the Third World countries in the production of raw materials. These «comparative advantages», defined by the colonial powers, determines the path of specialization of African agriculture and were not, in their essence, reconsidered after political independence in most of the countries.

In the case of the Sahel, it is clear that after Independence, groundnuts and cotton continued to be considered the most «advantageous» crops, thus accepting the role assigned by the prevailing international division of labour and proposed by the centre to the periphery.

### i) *The General Framework of African Agricultural Activities*

The generalization of a common phenomenon brought about by colonial policy i.e. single-crop farming constitutes the predominant feature of African agriculture. This practice has led to the deterioration of the soil and has prevented the majority of the people from enjoying a minimum level of subsistence. The deterioration of human and natural resources is a result of an ecologically inadequate land exploitation system. Economic activity is placed in a perspective which gives priority to profit without envisaging the irreversible consequences for the environment which, in the long run, prevent an extended reproduction at a rate required to ensure a minimum level of living for the local people.

In the period 1961-1970, the average annual rate of growth of African agricultural output was 2.9 per cent, as against 0.8 per cent in the period 1970-1975. If we consider the average annual rate of growth for food production per capita, which was 0.4 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively, for the two periods mentioned above, we can see more clearly the actual stagnation in agrarian production (16).

This sluggish evolution *appears* to be a consequence of a given international division of labour and a given structure of social relations of production, rather than the effect of short-term problems. Hamid and Gakou (1977) have noted in their analysis of the issue that:

*«In no way can the crisis which African agriculture has been undergoing for years be explained simply by climatic conditions. Indeed, this crisis has affected countries, like Kenya, which were not stricken by the recent droughts, just as it has the Sahel countries which were badly hit. Furthermore, there was a food crisis in the Sahel even during periods when climatic conditions were good. And finally, during the drought in the Sahel, it was almost exclusively the food crops which were affected» (17).*

Owing to the predominance of export crops, African agriculture was affected by the trend towards a deterioration of the terms of trade from which the Third World countries suffered during the 1950s and 1960s, thus reducing the expected inflow of foreign exchange. This relative fall in the income of agricultural producers was accentuated by

the fiscal policies practised in most of the countries and by the price determination policies followed by governments, which tended to adjust prices paid to the producers to a rate lower than the *nominal* increase in prices on the international market and appropriate the difference (18).

The incomes structure grew progressively unfavourable to agrarian producers, eliminating any incentive to increase productivity and preventing any increment in the rate of accumulation. The weakened position of the agrarian producers enabled governments to implement economic policies which tended towards the extraction of the surplus generated by agricultural production and its transfer to the urban occupational groups (19).

Despite the clear indicators pointing towards the exploitation of the agrarian producers, the unsatisfactory results of the agricultural sector were frequently attributed, by the supporters of the principle of «comparative advantages», to another set of factors, namely, the absence of sufficient technical progress in rural activities, the disproportionate population growth and the constraints of the natural environment, all factors pointing to a severe «lack of modernization».

To consider this set of factors as the *cause* of stagnation is to place the analysis of the issue at a superficial level.

In fact, the degree of technical progress is a *consequence* of the type of production relations existing in a social formation. The level of technology (e.g. lack of mechanization, little use of chemical inputs), and its manifestations (e.g. low yields, uncertain harvests) are rooted in the structure of production prevailing in these countries.

Population growth has been regarded as a cause of underdevelopment on the pretext that in the Third World any improvement in productivity is counteracted by the population explosion. Amin (1971b) has made two fundamental criticisms of this argument and shown that in general terms it is not valid. Firstly, the relation between natural resources and population is by no means unfavourable in the Third World and still less in Africa. Secondly, it is the process of marginalization of the population, triggered off by the current economic system, and *not* population growth which engenders unemployment and poverty. The apparent population pressure is the result of a system of exploitation of natural resources which compels the rural labour force to migrate to the urban centres (20).

The argument concerning the limitation of natural resources only takes account of present yields and volumes of production, but not of the potential that would be offered by the natural milieu as a result of the transformation of the modes of exploitation. Agronomic experts have indicated on numerous occasions how «appropriate» technologies can increase the efficiency of resource use.

Rather than being a sequel of the «lack of modernization» – supposedly rooted in the inability of the local population to undertake «efficient» decisions – the increasing impoverishment of the lower strata of the agrarian masses is a direct consequence of a «double-squeezing» dynamics exercised by the urban classes and the international economic system on rural activities.



The «urban bias» in economic policies (21) in African countries reflects the power structure. Bureaucratic elites, using their key position in decision-making, under the pretext of efficiency, allocate scarce resources so as to strengthen their own position within the economic structure. Small agrarian producers and rural workers are confronted with a bureaucratic machinery, which manipulates financial as well as real flows according to patterns dictated by the interest of the dominant social groups.

The international economic order imposes its own dynamics of *unequal* exchange, bringing about a framework of international economic relations where the *uneven* distribution of power precludes underdeveloped countries from reaching a position in which they would be capable of negotiating the conditions of trade on a world level. (22).

The two components of the «double squeezing» dynamics cannot by any means be considered independent of each other; they rather appear to be *complementary* in the composition of the *power* structure which dominates the political scene of African social formations, and they sustain each other.

The main characteristic of the «double-squeezing» dynamics, can be summarized by the conclusions reached in the study carried out by Hamid and Gakou (1977), which examines the economic evolution of Africa over the last 25 years:

*«Progress in this sector (agriculture), both for Africa as a whole and for the countries taken individually, has been rare. Productivities, quantities produced, areas cultivated, production techniques, in short, all those factors which make it possible to gauge the progress made, have varied very little» (23).*

Bearing in mind the nature of the «double-squeezing» dynamics, let us concentrate on the evolution of the Sahelian economies after Independence.

## ii) *The Economic and Social Situation of the Sahel countries 1960-1970*

For the Sahel countries (24) as a whole, GDP increased at an annual average rate of 2.6 per cent during the decade, the GDP per capita reaching US Dollars 125 by the end of the period. The primary sector contributed 49 per cent to total output in 1960, falling to 37 per cent in 1970 – indicating a stagnation of rural production. The share of the industrial sector rose from 15 to 20 per cent during the same period, while the public sector maintained an average of 15 per cent (25).

These figures show the persistence of the production structure inherited from the colonial era. In fact, government policies followed an «outward-oriented» strategy which reinforced the situation of economic dependency. This pattern constitutes a common feature for all the economies of the region.

The «outward-oriented» development strategy implemented by the State in the countries of the region was reflected in the fact that priority was given to export activities in the agricultural sector. This does not mean that governments gave preference to rural activity over urban activity but that, *within* the former, it was the export crops which were the most favoured. This explains, for example, the promotion of groundnut cultivation in Niger and cotton cultivation in Chad, as well as the granting of greater technical assistance and credit facilities for groundnut cultivation, which was already well established in Senegal. To sum up, those rural activities which had clearly emerged as foreign exchange earners during the colonial era were the most favoured by the official agricultural policy.

As a consequence of this strategy international trade has played a key role in the evolution of the Sahel economies. Imports and exports together amount to an average of 40 per cent of the GDP for the region as a whole: in this connexion, the Mauritanian economy appears as the most «open» to the outside world, the sum of imports and exports reaching 77 per cent of GDP in 1970 (26). The export of primary commodities is predominant in all countries of the region (27). Food imports represent on average 30 per cent of the region's purchases from abroad.

The international trade accounts of the Sahel countries showed a growing deficit throughout the period. This was a result of the stagnation of the value of exports, due not only to their relative price fall on the world market but also to a reduced volume of supply and to the continual increase in the value of imports, which reflected the current inflationary trends in the world economy.

The external dependence of these economies, highly vulnerable as they are to fluctuations in world demand, was reflected in a balance of payments crisis. The relative fall in the world price of their main export commodities – particularly groundnuts and cotton – led to a deterioration of the terms of trade in all the countries of the region, except Upper Volta. It is worth noting that these price trends become even more unfavourable when comparing the prices received for the region's exports with the index of manufactured goods on the world market, a relation that shows even more acute signs of deterioration than the terms of trade. In other words, the importing of capital goods – which eventually could accelerate the process of accumulation in the region – has become more costly: here again, we have to stress the lack of realism in the principle of «comparative advantages» in view of the current evolution of the world economy.

The excessive growth of imports over exports led governments to rely even more on foreign aid and financing as a means of covering the deficit in the trade account of the balance of payments. This led to a gradual increase of the external debt and its growth rate and allocation were determined on the basis of the priorities established by the governments of the region as well as the constraints imposed by donors and creditors.

The causes of the stagnation in the volume of exports must be explained here, because this stagnation is apparently contradictory if one considers the fact that the development strategies followed during these years was basically «outward-oriented». In order to analyse this issue, it will be necessary to examine the evolution within the agricultural sector.

Agricultural activity is the occupation of more than 80 per cent of the total working population of the region; wage-earning labour is negligible since the dominant mode of exploitation is the family organisation of production. Estimates made in the middle of the period show that out of a total of 270 million potentially arable hectares, only 17 per cent had actually been farmed, the most noteworthy case being that of Chad, which has 48 per cent of the potentially arable land of the region but only farms 6 per cent of its 129 million hectares of agricultural land (28).

Three types of activity can be distinguished, food crops, exports crops and animal husbandry, their spatial distribution depending not only on the quality of the soils and the frequency of rainfall, but also on the incentives offered by the market and government agricultural policies.

Animal husbandry is largely a nomad activity, since the export crops occupy the best agro-pastoral zones, while food crops – pushed by activities developed in order to supply urban markets – have increasingly been shifted to the ecologically least favourable areas (29).

The fragmentation of production units – a consequence of the policy applied during the final years of colonial domination – weakened the position of the peasants within the social structure. Small producers have seen their incomes systematically reduced during this period, not only as a result of the already mentioned fall in world prices, but also because of the policy practised by the State on domestic relative prices and the taxation structure.

The prices actually paid to the rural producers were adjusted in absolute terms below the current levels of domestic inflation (30), whereas rural activity was more heavily taxed than urban activity. These trends affecting income distribution deprived the peasant of all possibility of improving his own levels of productivity and, in fact, entailed a fall in productivity by inducing the «excessive» use of the land, which actually constituted the sole means of maintaining incomes at minimum subsistence level. Survival rather than efficiency became the dominant attribute of peasant behaviour.

This behaviour is by no means «irrational», but results from the fact that confined as the peasantry is to a marginal role in society, conservation of the environment does not enter into its economic calculation, which is centred on the dilemma of *survival*. It is the marginalization of the peasantry by the social system, and not the behaviour of the peasantry in itself, which appears as the ultimate cause of the destruction of the environment.

The State tended to allocate the surplus extracted from agriculture mainly to the financing of its current expenditure, the largest proportion of which consisted of Civil Servants' wages and salaries (31).

The emergence among the social forces of a bureaucratic elite engaged in the public administration is the main *new* element in the social structure of the region after the accession to political independence. Mirroring the consumption patterns of the colonial rulers, these elites introduced alien forms of behaviour into the social formation which involve the disruption of the local economic structure.

The consolidation of the bureaucratic elite has reinforced the tendency to extract surplus from the productive sectors. The power structure developed through this dynamics puts pressure on the rural social groups which at the end – owing to their weakness – are made to contribute most to this transfer of resources. It is the order imposed by the bureaucratic elite which guides policy. Diop (1972) points out that :

*« The post-colonial period is too recent to have brought many changes to this society. But while it has not been fertile – only one class, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, emerged in the first decade after independence – it brought if not order, at least its order, into the interplay of social classes » (32).*

By giving rise to the emergence of relatively high-income groups in the urban areas, the formation of the elite has generated a multiplier effect in consumption expenditure which, because of its composition, has above all entailed an increase in imports, thus widening the gap of the external sector.

The evolution of the social structure in the countries of the region has on the whole been uniform. Growing disparities between urban and rural groups, creation of a bureaucratic elite, incomes policy discriminatory towards the peasants leading to their increasing impoverishment, these were the salient features of the social process during the 1960s, in a context where expatriate control of key economic activities continued unchallenged.

Taking into account the external sector bottleneck, a result of the evolution of prices in the world market and the character of domestic incomes policies, the growth potential of local industry has been reduced to a minimum. Industry, dominated by foreign capital (nationally owned firms being virtually non-existent and State participation minimal) is geared to the processing of primary commodities (agricultural products and minerals) and its multiplier effect is rather limited. This is explained by the fact that the repatriation of profits and the tax concessions granted to foreign capital make it possible to transfer this part of the economic surplus (profits) outside the region, whereas the total wages paid by this sector have only a relatively small effect. It is sufficient to point out in this respect that the industrial sector of Senegal (the most advanced country of the region in economic terms) had created 13,000 wage-jobs by 1960 out of a total of 135,000 created in the *urban* areas, the figures for 1968 are 17,000 and 125,000 respectively (33).

Bearing in mind the extent of migration to the urban centres, the low capacity of the industrial sector to absorb manpower led to an enormous increase in irregular activities, which make up what is called the *informal* sector of the urban economic structure. This is the sector where

small-scale artisans operate near subsistence level, taking advantage of the «inadequacies» of supply in the *formal* sector which is unable (qualitatively and quantitatively) to satisfy the total demand for goods and services.

The efforts made to attract foreign capital – reflected in legislation highly favourable to its installation – and the attempts made by the State to launch new activities have not been as successful as expected, and manufacturing activities experienced little growth during the period under consideration.

To sum up, it can be said that the evolution of the economies in the region during the 1960s is characterized by the «double-squeezing» dynamics dominating the economic process: growing dependence on the outside world and the wider disparities in income distribution demonstrate that there exists a clear pattern of exploitation of the lower strata of the population.

The drought at the beginning of the 1970s took place in an economic and social context dominated by stagnation, dependence and marginalization, where the increasing impoverishment of the rural environment had been strongly induced by a discriminatory set of policies which forced an inadequate use of natural resources from a long-term perspective.

The Sahel countries typical producers of raw materials (agricultural and mineral products), with a precarious industrial sector and a type of accumulation based on the surplus generated by agriculture, are a striking example of underdevelopment. An overall analysis of the Sahelian economies demonstrates that the areas most exposed to «climatic disaster» form part of a wider system which, in addition to more or less serious short-term problems, is subject to a set of mechanisms which tend to aggravate the consequences of any variations in natural conditions.

The disintegration of these social formations is uni-directional: it prevents the transfer of surplus from the «rich» to the «poor» areas, and conversely, accentuates the extraction of economic surplus from the «poor» areas.

### III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DROUGHT IN A CONTEXT OF UNDER-DEVELOPMENT AND DEPENDENCY

Although the statistics available for the 1970s are by no means complete, they do highlight the economic and social impact of the drought. Loss of human lives, generalized under nourishment, massive migration and growing impoverishment of the peasants, were the direct and immediate consequences. A marked decline in the contribution of agriculture to the GDP, a considerable drop in per capita income and an aggravation of the foreign sector situation were the manifestations of the crisis at an overall level. No statistics can give an approximate idea of the level of the *tragedy* and might even make it appear as though it were a problem that could be handled with the same kind of policy measures as those applied in advanced countries to overcome «natural disasters».

The number of human lives lost as a direct consequence of the drought has been estimated between 100,000 and 200,000 – Berg (1976) and Brun (1975). Under-nourishment (process rather than a temporary phenomenon) is very difficult to assess and, consequently, the conclusions reached by the various studies concerning the extent of this problem are divergent (34) however, they do agree on the fact that it constitutes one of the major sequels to the worsening of climatic conditions.

One of the most important consequences of the drought, in an environment like the Sahel which has no material means at its disposal for dealing with it, has been the large-scale migration from the zones most affected by the phenomenon to the urban centres and even outside the region. This process, largely irreversible, entails the gradual impoverishment of the migrants, who, having no resources other than their labour power – and usually having no specialization to ensure them a reasonable remuneration in the town – add to the already large urban unemployed with no certain prospect of work. In his research on the demographic consequences of the drought, Cadwell (1975) points out:

*« The major demographic response to the drought has not been death but migration... Migration from the north to the south occurred in every Sahel country... An unprecedented number of nomad family groups moved southward from their normal area of seasonal cyclic movement into the towns of the savannah or even the better watered areas nearer to the coast » (35).*

Migration is the only possibility for survival, bearing in mind the absence of specific material aid in the disaster area at the time when the drought set in. For the migrant, moving to the town, leaving behind the region which was his permanent living environment is a last resort and he will do so only after having vainly sought other solutions (36) : he is thus compelled to abandon a way of life that had been preserved for generations.

This rural-urban migration is not a new phenomenon in itself, nor an unprecedented short-term manifestation but the aggravation of a structural trend generated by the prevailing economic order. The natural catastrophe merely accelerates the rate of migration, making the phenomenon perceptible even to a casual observer long before the establishment of refugee camps.

The problems created by migration to urban centres – unemployment, overcrowded housing, deterioration of sanitary conditions – increase at an exponential rate during a disaster period, and it is on the basis of these manifestations that one finds brandished once again the neo-Malthusian argument that population growth is the cause of all the economic and social ills of the region.

The large-scale movement of population from the rural to the urban areas induces substantial transformations in the income distribution structure. The direct impact of the drought on distribution is the loss of their capital by the nomadic herdsmen and hence their flow of future incomes. Distorted prices for foodstuffs, the immediate consequence of

drought in the disaster area, considerably reduces the purchasing power of the local population, while at the same time the monopolization of these assets by a minority entails a shortage of supply on the market.

Owing to the scarcity of reliable data, it is not possible to make an overall estimate of the transformations that have occurred in income distribution; however, it is possible to make a qualitative approach. On these lines Berg (1976) notes:

*« The distributive impact of drought and inflation has been partly in the direction of widening differences in income and wealth, partly in the direction of income levelling. Until 1975, rural-urban income differentials were widened, though this may not have been so in Mali and Upper Volta. Also, and this has not previously been stressed, income differentials between those in the «formal» and «informal» sectors undoubtedly widened as immigration increased in urban areas and returns to labour in that sector tended to become more depressed, while statutory minimum wages, applicable only in the «formal» sector, increased substantially. Finally, income differentials between countries tended to widen, as a consequence of the differential geographical incidence of the drought » (37).*

The crisis which started in the rural areas later extended to the urban centres and only certain traditional social forms – such as the «extended family» – explain why the effects were not further multiplied. Traditional social and family organizations, by providing a «system» capable of absorbing migrants in the urban areas and by the remittance of incomes to the rural areas, have at least partly helped to limit the negative impact by generalizing the reduction in the standard of living thus avoiding total collapse. A social structure which, judged by «modernizing» criteria, would be defined as «backward» has an active function to fulfill in a crisis situation.

The impact on the rural areas differed according to zones and type of activity. At an overall level, livestock production appears to have been affected within «tolerable» limits, since the total cattle stock of the region was reduced by 23 per cent between 1972 and 1974. This aggregate indicator, however, conceals the fact that the heaviest losses were concentrated in specific areas and affected the weakest producers (e.g. in Chad cattle stock was reduced from 4,7 million to 2,7 million heads between 1972 and 1973) (38). Again production also showed a marked decline with a considerable fall in yields per hectare. Average yields were reduced by nearly 40 per cent for the region as a whole, and the massive drop in output affected every country in the region without exception (39).

The drastic reduction of cattle stock and the heavy fall in grain yields combined to produce a dramatic food shortage in the disaster areas, reducing the availability of foodstuffs to nearly 50 per cent below «normal» levels.

In contrast to the decline in food output, it is striking to note the maintenance of yields and absolute levels of production for export-crops (mainly groundnuts and cotton), which did not suffer from the

effects of the drought to the same extent (40). This relatively favourable evolution of the export-crops is due to the fact that they occupy the lands with the best agro-ecological conditions and that the producers have at their disposal a better government-run assistance program.

Imports of foodstuffs and foreign aid in the form of commodities become necessary in order to overcome acute shortages. Inflationary trends in international grain markets made it unavoidable to resort to aid as the only means to mitigate the devastating effects of the drought.

In 1976, the Sahelian countries experienced a new serious drought and once again they found themselves in a very difficult situation. Foreign aid again appeared to be a solution to short-term problems and more than 400,000 tons of cereals were received (41) from different sources. Chad's deficit was estimated at 48,700 tons of grain, in Mali it was put at the level of 132,500 tons, in Mauritania 52,000 tons, in Senegal 180,000 tons and in Upper Volta 65,000 tons, the figure for Niger not being established. A simple calculation shows that, once again, the population of these countries was suffering from food shortages and although not of the magnitude as those experienced in the previous drought, they were at least serious enough for the situation to be qualified as a very precarious one.

The recurrence of the drought and the persistence of serious economic and social problems makes it self-evident that famine and the process of pauperization triggered off in the Sahel by natural calamities has a *specificity* arising from the prevalent character of the social formation. Wiseberg (1976) observes how natural disasters have different effects in different social situations:

*« The ruination of corn and soyabean crops in Iowa and Nebraska means higher food prices for most Americans, hardship for farmers and suffering for the poorest strata of US citizens; and, given the precarious world food balance, it means higher world prices for foodstuffs and less food aid to be distributed abroad. But it does not mean widespread starvation in the midwestern United States. By contrast, drought, flood, or pestilence for farmers who live on the margin in Africa, Asia and Latin America means increased malnutrition or death... » (42).*

It is a given organization of society that causes drought to be transformed into a series of irreversible processes. The high degree of vulnerability of the ecosystem (43) is derived not only from adverse climatic conditions but also from the «double-squeezing» dynamics which amplifies the effects of the drought.

That is why the future of the region will depend not only on the recurrence of such a natural phenomenon as drought but also and above all on the choice of development strategy in the Sahel countries, insofar as this strategy defines the nature of the insertion of the region into the world economy and the type of social relations of production which prevail internally.



#### IV. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND THE FUTURE OF THE SAHEL

Looked pragmatically, the approach adopted in this document could be seen as a purely intellectual exercise about the tragedy of a people without any immediate operational value. However, this approach allows us to evaluate possible alternative scenarios for the future of the Sahel on the basis of the history of the region and the evolution of the social and economic structure of the countries after Independence. It places the programmes, submitted with the view to transforming the region, in the context of the *actual* problems faced by the people in these countries.

##### i) *Food Production and the International Division of Labour (44)*

The international economic situation over the past few years, especially since the first oil crisis has highlighted the strategic importance of ownership and control of natural resources for the balance of power on the world scene.

The dramatic alteration in the international prices of basic commodities at the beginning of the 1970s has forced a fundamental revision of the assumptions on which the analysis of the future evolution of the world economy were based.

Food production and distribution have been amongst the issues considered crucial in the restructuring of the international division of labour. The explicit abandonment of a *policy of surpluses* of grains by the United States – notably after the massive sale to the Soviet Union in the early 1970s – indicated that the foodstuffs markets had become radically different from the situation which had prevailed since the end of the War: there was a rapid movement away from a structure dominated by excess supply towards one characterized by the pressure of demand.

The rather bleak prospects of a long-term global collapse on the world scene having been abandoned, meaningful discussion about the future has shifted away from the possibilities of ensuring a sufficient world food production towards the *alternative* costs of achieving such a level of output. At present the main issue appears to be the definition of a new basis for the world-wide allocation of food production resources.

In the last few decades, cattle production has been developed in the advanced countries making intense use of grains as a feeding input ; encouraged by a favourable grain/meat price relation, producers structured this activity in such a way as to make it extremely sensitive to any alterations in relative prices. The favourable trend in grain prices which occurred during the 1972/1973 *commodity boom* made it clear that profitability in cattle production was jeopardized by the new situation of world grain markets. The price relation beef/feeding grains drastically changed: between 1971 and 1974 it dropped by nearly 30 per cent (45).

Price trends showed the lack of rationality involved in the resource allocation for meat production, since, as noted by Herrera et al (1976) :

*« Because of the strong preference for animal products in many developed countries and some underdeveloped countries, animals are fed with cereals that could be used for human consumption. From a global point of view, this procedure is irrational, since the efficiency of conversion of forage by animals into animal protein is very low (15 per cent on average). To produce protein in this way is a luxury that can hardly be justified given the current world food situation » (46).*

Given the conditions of the markets since the beginning of the 1970s, the transfer of animal husbandry to the vast zones of natural grazing land in the Third World, was seen not only as a global necessity but also as a requirement for the advanced countries who needed to reduce the cost of maintaining their labour force (meat being a wage-good of primary importance in their economies).

This transfer would considerably increase total food production yields and would eventually present a profitable channel of expansion for international capital. The restructuring of meat production on a world level is seen as a possibility of increasing profits at a time when the international economy is suffering an acute crisis.

In the early 1970s transnational capital seeking investment opportunities took a new look at agricultural activities « agribusiness » appeared to be a real alternative for expansion.

ii) *Alternative Roles of the Sahel Region in the Future International Economic Order*

What function can be attributed to the Sahel in a future scenario in which the efficiency of agricultural production will be a more decisive criterion of resource allocation than at any other stage in the history of the world economic system, and in which it seems probable that in the determination of their strategies the world powers will give high priority to the allocation of food production?

Paradoxically enough for the supporters of the thesis of « natural disaster » as the main cause of famine and poverty in the Sahel, the region has the *real* alternative of eventually being converted into a centre of large-scale meat production.

The meat production potential of this geographical region has been stressed in a large number of studies. Furthermore, the Comité d'Information Sahel (1974), listing the investments already made by large corporations with the view to developing animal husbandry in the region, makes the point that:

*« The big agro-industrial firms are not wasting their time in the Sahel: in the last few years they have undertaken to develop intensive stock-breeding in the very territories where the livestock has been decimated by the drought and the population forced to take refuge in shanty towns and other concentration camps » (47).*

One necessary pre-condition for the expansion of meat production under the control of large corporations in the region would appear to be «large-scale evacuation» of the local population, reproducing a typical feature of the expansion of livestock production in other parts of the world (e.g. Argentina, the United States, or even Ireland). Through this sort of «transformation» as Meunier (1975) points out:

*« ... it is hoped to be able to provide, through setting up fattening ranches on a large scale, a real chain of industrial production of meat. But no aid is planned for a genuine reconstruction of the livestock formerly owned by the traditional herdsmen » (48).*

The development of cattle production under the control of foreign capital is likely to accentuate dependency and, bearing in mind the dominance of foreign capital, there can be no doubt as to the direction in which the transfer of surplus produced in the Sahel will be channeled. It is in this context that our analysis of the historical background of the region appears particularly relevant.

A new international division of labour in food production, involving a reallocation of cattle production, will mean the conversion of the Sahel economies to the role of meat exporters and in the process reproducing a pattern of accumulation on the same pattern as that observed during the colonial period. Throughout that era, the main purpose of the European presence in the region was the extraction of surplus and the organization of production aimed at maximizing that surplus. The long-term effects of such a policy are clear: deterioration of the natural environment and impoverishment of the rural population.

The fact that the region will be converted into a large-scale producer of food at some future date does not in itself mean that the local population will effectively participate in the consumption of this production, since distribution patterns within the capitalist system are not determined by the nature of the commodities produced. Nor does this option imply an automatic improvement in the standard of living of the rural population; on the contrary, past experience has shown that there is every likelihood of stronger dependence and that its effects will become worse. The reason for this is that the aim of locating meat production in these countries is to reduce costs and take advantage of the possibility of exploiting cheap labour and idle natural resources.

Nevertheless, such an expansion of transnational capital is not the only possible scenario for the future evolution of the region. The option for a self-reliant development strategy would seem to be viable, bearing in mind the historical experience of the pre-colonial period. It is therefore of interest to establish a parallel between those societies and contemporary reality in the Sahel countries. The first noticeable contrast concerns the degree of regional integration, whereas the early communities were linked with each other by strong political and economic ties, the present States are failing to integrate even their national economies.

The «outward-oriented» development strategy followed by present governments has led to yet another contrast, with regard to the structure of production. In the early period, the decisive factor in the alloca-

tion of resources in agriculture was the provision of sufficient food for the local population.

The main characteristics of a self-reliant strategy can be described as an effective «delinking» from the present international economic order based on a broad alliance within the Third World aiming, on a «collective» basis, to achieve a more equitable international economic framework *and* the implementation of a domestic economic policy which would ensure the satisfaction of the basic needs of the population.

Obviously, for local social forces to impose a strategy based on such principles is by no means an easy task. Apart from any retaliatory measures which might be expected from the advanced countries, the recurrence of the drought phenomenon is a major obstacle to the implementation of a self-reliant strategy since, in the short-term, the devastating effects of climatic alterations leave the highly vulnerable societies of the region without the possibility of allocating resources with a set of criteria based on their interests in building a more equitable system.

The contradictions between short-term objectives (overcoming the crisis precipitated by drought) and long-term goals (achieving a less vulnerable economic and social system) limit the possibility of defining a development strategy aimed at removing the basic constraints caused by the «double-squeezing» dynamics.

It is the urgent need to solve the acute problems, aggravated by the drought, which makes it appear unavoidable to resort to foreign aid and to undertake measures suggested by the donor countries without taking into account that this recurrent practice impedes the *real* solution of the dilemma.

### iii) *Alternative Programmes Proposed for the Future Development of the Region*

Having described the two «polar» scenarios for the future of the region (increased dependence or a self-reliant strategy), let us concentrate on actual programmes put forward to overcome backwardness in the Sahel countries. The review of these programmes is made with the sole purpose of establishing which of the two alternatives the authors emphasize, rather than evaluating them from the point of view of feasibility or accuracy of approach.

It is practically impossible to survey the whole spectrum of «recovery plans», since every international organization and government agency of the advanced countries – almost without exception – has proposed its own alternative. Hence, our analysis will be restricted to those proposals which have attracted most interest, either because of the importance of the organization that presented the study or by the impact they are already having on the development of the region.

These programmes generally fail to give a clear picture of the actual steps that will have to be taken in order to implement their recommendations. In this respect, the remark made by Giri (1976) is relevant:

*« It is surprising to note the multiplicity of measures of all kinds which are proposed in the various studies considered, and also the lack of any order of hierarchy for these measures; sometimes the experts' conclusions give the impression that all things need to be done, and straight away. The orders of priority do not always clearly emerge... » (49).*

The lack of clear priorities has a major consequence in the kind of message these programmes put forward: bearing in mind the urgency of the problems, one is confronted with approaches that, in view of the magnitude of the task to be undertaken, tend to offer solutions whose implementation would depend heavily on the «magnanimity» of advanced countries. The USAID (1976) proposal clearly stresses the key role to be played by foreign aid:

*« Concessional assistance to the area will involve not only a high proportion of grant assistance and local currency financing, but in the initial years of a Sahel development program, it will also be necessary that a large part of the recurring costs of a newly broadened program be financed by external sources until such time as production increases permit the Sahel governments to provide this financing themselves » (50)*

According to this proposal, until the end of the present century, about US Dollars 17 billion have to flow to the region on concessional conditions in order to put it in practice. This figure represents at least one fifth of the wealth likely to be generated in the region during that period.

No specific consideration is given to the *control* of the allocation of this large amount of capital resources. Thus one has to assume that the *usual* conditions on the use of aid by recipient countries will apply. In these circumstances, achieving a «modernized» agriculture means the acceptance of a well-defined model of rural development based on an intensive use of techniques suggested by donors.

This «modernized» agricultural sector is expected to insert itself smoothly within the framework of the international division of labour as envisaged by the advanced countries. To this end the detailed MIT (1974) document notes that:

*« Since it is inevitable that economic development will give rise to a rapid growth of import demand this underlines the need for export development. In turn export growth will require an agricultural development of livestock for the world market » (51).*

The MIT programme acknowledges that within its framework:

*« ... the number of people (and families) who can be directly employed in agriculture and have a reasonable income in this example of an agricultural strategy is less than half of the total*

*at present and will decrease as higher activity levels are introduced into the agricultural production system. Labour intensive production systems may absorb some of the imbalance. Welfare camps can be established but ultimately some meaningful employment will be required for millions of people » (52).*

Hence a clear pattern emerges; the solution involves an accentuation of the trends triggered off by the «double-squeezing» dynamics: migration towards the towns and marginalization of the rural population even in a context that supposedly ensures output growth.

The SCET International (1976) establishes that there is no constraint in the equation production/consumption for the Sahel countries, if one takes into account the potentialities of the region (53), but that problems do exist in implementing a programme capable of mobilizing the necessary resources to develop agriculture. Its recommendations, however are left at a general level and are related more to what «ought» to be done rather than «how» to go about the actual process of implementing the proposals which, in the final analysis will have, once again, to rely on foreign aid (54).

The FAO (1973) aim, expressed during the peak of the crisis, that:

*« ... It is important that the longer term assistance programmes for the Sahelian zone should not simply serve to shore up the traditional economic systems and maintain the status quo, but should help to bring about a rational change-over to appropriate new systems. There must be special efforts to associate the northern Sahelian peoples more closely with the mainstream of national life and to open up new opportunities and new ways of life for them » (55).*

appears, «translated» into ordinary language to support the view that economic variables and not human beings are the key factors in decision-making: an economic rhetoric dominates the programmes offering solutions, in which the *adaptive* factor is the local population which has to accommodate itself to a dynamics imposed by «economic laws» dictated by capitalist rationality. Very few «new» ideas are found in the proposals, which approach the problem with a *developmentalist* mentality treating the Sahelian social formations as units which have to undergo «modernization». Very little attention, if any, is paid to local forms of organization, and hardly any effort is made to try to extract lessons from them in order to develop creative alternatives based on the experience of the people.

But even when the FAO stresses the need to open up new opportunities and new ways of life for the local population, its list of priorities and suggested programmes appear contradictory because, while including projects directly related to the improvement of rural commodities (e.g. development of agricultural «artisanat» at village level, establishment or strengthening of pastoral services and rural development services) it also puts forward proposals based on the «modernization» approach (e.g. investigation into the scope for feed-lots and ranches) (56). In this way,

it paves the way for a series of plans stressing the need for introducing sophisticated technology.

The various action programmes (e.g. MIT, USAID, SCET) even when they did not result in articulated plans, did nevertheless establish the framework in which possible alternatives for the development of the region were and are discussed. They can be said to have conditioned character of the debate about this issue; in this sense, they fulfilled an extremely important ideological role, they defined the criteria according to which the problem of the drought and the future of the region are evaluated. Any alternative framework of analysis, leading to a different strategy, has to face comparison with these apparently complete studies.

As stressed by Giri (1976), the problem has a *political* facet of primary importance which must be borne in mind when analysing it. This political aspect of the issue appears more clearly in the assessment of what *actually* is occurring in the economic process of the Sahel.

At present, a policy-making structure is consolidating in the region, consisting on the one hand, of CILSS (Permanent Inter-State Committee for Action Against the Drought in the Sahel) made up of the eight Sahelian countries (57) and, on the other, the Club des Amis du Sahel, composed of donor (advanced) countries.

Long-term food self-sufficiency is the declared objective of the Sahelian governments and the Club du Sahel members have agreed that any development strategy for the region must ensure the fulfilment of that target. However, donor countries stress the point that «food self-sufficiency cannot be seen as the *unique* objective of the development strategy (58).

And they emphasize:

*« Exporting, particularly agricultural products, either raw or upgraded by an industrial transformation, in order to be able to import equipment goods and production factors is an absolute imperative for the Sahel » (59).*

A summary of on-going projects in the region (Table I) gives an idea of where the main efforts are being made. The set of programmes seems to concentrate on structural transformations, the building up of new production systems and the marketing of food products by establishing new forms of organization.

TABLE I

## MAJOR PROJECTS IN THE SAHELIAN REGION

- CHAD**
- Strengthening Government's marketing organization and building up adequate grain service. US Dollars 5 million (FAO technical assistance, Dutch financing)
  - Various rural development, agricultural and water resources development. US Dollars 10 million (French funding)
  - Lake Chad Basin development (supported by UNDP and other donors)
  - UNDP country program devoting 40 per cent of programmed resources to activities related to the minimization of the effects of future droughts.
- MALI**
- UNDP country program where 61 per cent are devoted to activities that will contribute directly to the long-term solution of problems related to the drought situation.
  - Multi-donor program for the development of the River Niger basin (with other Sahelian countries). (This project is facing delays in the implementation even when financing seems available - notably after the acceptance of OPEC Special Fund to provide US Dollars 5 million)
  - Improving water quality for nomad provision, as well as the sedentary population. (UNICEF support with Danish financing)
  - Selingue Dam construction and other rural and industrial projects. US Dollars 7.3 million (French financing)
  - Sikasso water supply project for improving town's water supply. (Completed with British funding) US Dollars 1.8 million
  - Grain storage project. US Dollars 0.2 million (British funding)
  - Food security program for the improvement of transport and storage facilities (German funding) (Part of a wider Sahelian project)
  - Construction and improvement of rural roads (UNSO with Dutch funding) US Dollars 14.7 million
  - Senegal river basin development (Multi-donor) more than US Dollars 240 million have been provided so far for studies and investment.



TABLE I (cont.)

- MAURITANIA**
- Intensification of drilling and well-construction in the South East area. US Dollars 1.1 million
  - Preparation of pastoral legislation which will govern the use of grazing areas and water points (Netherlands and FAO Fund-in-Trust program)
  - Protection of grazing land from bush fire (still at its preliminary stages)
  - Ensuring the availability of animal feeds in view of the threat of the drought against livestock population. (Preliminary stages; government seeking funding between US Dollars 4.5 million to 12.5 million)
  - Launching of a program to control cattle diseases; total cost estimated at US Dollars 0.6 million
  - UNDP country program devoting 43 per cent of resources to drought related problems
  - Fisheries development. US Dollars 2.2 million (Japanese funding)
  - Development of underground water resources, palm tree protection and improvement of health US Dollars 2.0 million (French funding)
  - Development of irrigation systems (various donors)
  - Participation in Multi-donor program of the Senegal River Basin development.
- NIGER**
- Hydrological research (Danish funding US Dollars 0.4 million for the period 1973–1977. A loan of US Dollars was granted in 1971, of which US Dollars 0.9 million was used for water supply)
  - Hydrology and hydrogeology, groundnut cultivation program, rural health, US Dollars 7.0 million (French funding)
  - Technical and financial co-operation. US Dollars 26 million (German assistance)
  - Expansion of transport capacity. US Dollars 1.8 million (Japanese funding)
  - Agricultural and health projects US Dollars 3.5 million (Dutch funding)
  - Participation in the development of the River Niger Basin
  - UNDP country program devoting 40 per cent to drought related problems.

**TABLE I (cont.)**

<b>SENEGAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Drought related programmes. US Dollars 4.8 million (French assistance)</li> <li>– Technical and financial cooperation. US Dollars 24.6 million (German assistance)</li> <li>– Fishery development (outboard engines and pilot operational vessels). US Dollars 1.3 million (Japanese funding)</li> <li>– Small-scale irrigation activities. US Dollars 1.7 million (Dutch funding)</li> <li>– Development of water resources of the Senegal and Gambia rivers</li> <li>– UNDP country programme devoting 27 per cent of resources to activities promoting long-term solutions to drought-related problems</li> </ul>
<b>UPPER VOLTA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improvement of water supply (1973). US Dollars 3.4 million (Danish funding)</li> <li>– Project for use of domestic animals as a tractive force in farming. US Dollars 1.2 million (Danish funding)</li> <li>– Volta River basin development, dam construction at Bagre and other social and rural projects. US Dollars 3.8 million (French assistance)</li> <li>– Technical and financial co-operation. US Dollars 34.5 million (German assistance)</li> <li>– UNDP country programme devoting 33 per cent of resources to drought-related projects.</li> <li>– Multi-donor programme for the control of onchocerciasis.</li> </ul>

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**Note :** The figures (unless otherwise stated) refer to 1977.  
The list does not represent a *complete* survey of projects.

**Source :** UNDP (1978).

Hence, it is mainly the *economic* structure which is affected by the programmes without a clear perception of how the people will adapt to those structures. Even when CILSS states that:

« *The human factor — is essential to the revival of the Sahel, therefore it is necessary,*

- *to carry out research on the pastoral society (traditional use of the soil, motivations, behavioural reaction to innovations, etc)*
- *to have this society participate in initiating necessary, indispensable change » (60).*

one gets the impression, when examining the actual steps that are being taken to change the situation in the Sahel, that the participation of the local people is not seen as a pre-requisite for the implementation of the projects. There emerges a sort of managerial approach in the decision-making structure, lacking a definite concern about the need for integrating the direct knowledge of the rural population in the planning process.

There is no doubt that the Sahelian region will in the future enlarge its food production. What is uncertain is the *actual* participation of the majority of the population in the consumption of the increased output, and this uncertainty becomes even more relevant in view of the persistence of the «double-squeezing» dynamics behind the programmes so far undertaken.

## NOTES

1. See Cuoq (1972)
2. Vilar (1976)
3. The references of Arab travellers — see Cuoq (1972) stress the deep-rooted nature and the continuity of the human settlements.
4. This does not mean that there were no confrontations for the occupation of the best-quality land; e.g. Dieng (1975) notes:  

*« These rivers (the Niger and the Senegal) which were very rich in fish spared the riparian people from famine due to floods and locusts. They were used as water ways. Their valleys are propitious for stockraising, agriculture, fishing, hunting and crafts. They have always attached herdsmen and nomads who very often fought against the crop farmers. The Fulanis, the Moors and the Tuaregs have attempted several times to control the areas which are favourable to stockraising ».* (Page 38).
5. Page 812–813. (Translated by Jean Hughes)
6. See Nicholson (1976) where she discusses these approaches.
7. For example Okafor (1953) notes that towards the last years of this period progress was being made in the spread of an «authentic» written local language.

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8. See Dieng (1975) for a critique of the «Euro-centrism» approach to African history.
9. See Rodney (1972).
10. Pages 10 and 13.
11. Pages 8 and 9 (Translated by Jean Hughes).
12. See Barry (1972).
13. This process did not have more serious consequences because of the particular type of access to the land enjoyed by the farmers in the region, which limited proletarianization and created conditions necessary for the transformation of the model of exploitation of the rural labour force which was to take place in the last years of the period. See Amin (1971b).
14. See Amin (1973), pages 32 and 33.
15. Page 23. (Translated by Jean Hughes).
16. Source FAO.
17. Chapter II, Page 42.
18. See Young (1971).
19. The coastal hinterland relation which was unevenly defined during the colonial period in some of the countries (e.g. in West Africa) is by this process exacerbated.
20. Neo-malthusian theory regards the prevailing system of production as a parameter without considering whether a reversal of the organization would not upset the balance between foodstuffs and population.
21. This concept is developed by Lipton (1977). Even when used within a different framework from the one followed in this paper, its argument is presented showing the imbalances of economic policies in underdeveloped countries.
22. The argument developed by Emmanuel, Amin and many others are assumed to be known by the reader, so it is only presented here as a «plain» statement.
23. Page 52 (chapter II).
24. The figures presented for the Sahel countries include Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta.
25. The figures in this section are taken from FAO and UNCTAD.
26. The «open» character of the economies becomes more apparent if one adds the fact that trade accounts have been systematically showing a deficit.
27. For 1973, 88.5 per cent of Chad's exports were cotton and meat products ; 73.2 per cent of Mali's exports were cotton and live animals ; 97.9 per cent of Mauritanian exports were iron ore and fish products ; groundnuts products constituted 41.6 per cent of the exports of Senegal. Niger and Upper Volta also show a high proportion of agricultural exports.
28. These figures rather than showing a constraint of the natural resources point towards the possibility of increasing agricultural activities.
29. Thus food production is the activity most exposed to climatic alterations.
30. See Hamid and Gakou (1977).
31. Wage-structures in the government sector tend to mirror differentials established during the colonial period.
32. Page 15. (Translated by Jean Hughes).

33. Amin (1971a).
34. For an assessment of the impact of the drought on nutrition see Escudero (1977).
35. Pages 13, 28 and 29.
36. See the interviews with local people reproduced in Laya (1975).
37. Page 33.
38. FAO.
39. FAO.
40. FAO.
41. UNDP (1978).
42. Page 104.
43. Garcia (1977) defines the *vulnerability* of an ecosystem as the combination of two internal forces: inertia (resistance of the system to deviations from conditions of equilibrium) and elasticity (maximum possible fluctuations in a given structure without the ecosystem losing its capacity to recover the same conditions of equilibrium). Consequently the vulnerability of a system is very great when this system has a low inertia and elasticity. The Sahel fulfil the conditions for being considered a system with a very great vulnerability.
44. Since other parts of the Drought and Man Project deal extensively with the issues of this section, the subject here is presented only taking into consideration its most relevant aspects for the purpose of this research.
45. FAO (1977).
46. Page 68.
47. Page 165. (Translated by Jean Hughes).
48. Page 129. See also Bonte (1975).
49. Page 29.
50. Page 27.
51. Page 52, Annex I.
52. Page 237, Volume II.
53. Pages 13–17.
54. Pages 33–36.
55. Page 2.
56. Pages 10 and 11.
57. The six already mentioned plus Cape Verde and The Gambia.
58. See Club des Amis du Sahel (1976) pages 2 and 3.
59. Club des Amis du Sahel (1976) page 2.
60. Page 8, Richard et al (1974).

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## RESUME

L'auteur se propose d'identifier les causes des problèmes sociaux créés par les périodes de sécheresse qui affectent la région du Sahel, d'en analyser les effets et de passer en revue les différentes solutions proposées par des institutions étatiques et des organisations internationales.

Cette étude est l'une des plus fouillées qui aient jamais été publiées en langue anglaise. L'auteur a procédé à un tour d'horizon historique des sociétés Ouest Africaines. Il qualifie l'ère précoloniale qu'il établit du début du VII<sup>ème</sup> siècle avec les premiers récits des voyageurs Arabes jusqu'au XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle, de période de «splendeur» non pas dans un sens comparatif avec des normes occidentales mais dans le sens des sociétés organisées travaillant la terre, produisant suffisamment pour sa consommation et entretenant des relations culturelles et commerciales avec d'autres groupements avec le commerce lointain florissant, l'or étant échangé contre des produits en provenance de l'Europe et du monde arabe. C'étaient des sociétés qui vivaient en harmonie avec leur environnement ce qui fait que les aléas climatiques n'ont jamais eu les résultats désastreux que connaissent les sociétés contemporaines. D'emblée l'auteur rejette la thèse très répandue des incidences climatiques sur le développement de ces sociétés. Il prévoit les premières causes de déclin avec l'arrivée des Européens sur les Côtes d'Afrique de l'Ouest, les invasions par le Nord et la décadence du monde arabe des facteurs qui ont précipité l'éclatement des grands empires.

Dans un deuxième volet l'auteur analyse le «blocage colonial» causé par l'esclavage, le dépeuplement de l'Afrique, la perte de l'autonomie, l'introduction des cultures de rente aux dépens des cultures vivrières etc. Pendant quatre siècles dit-il le développement bloqué allait être l'apanage de cette partie de l'Afrique dont le rôle essentiel était de fournir de la main d'œuvre à bon marché pour les activités de production des puissances coloniales dans les autres régions du monde.

La période de la «mise en valeur coloniale» devait amener la migration forcée, l'occupation brutale des terres, l'intensification des cultures de rente telles l'arachide et le coton qui étaient devenues les principales sources d'expansion agricoles. L'urbanisation incontrôlée devait créer un pôle d'attraction et un facteur de distorsion.

La situation ne s'est pas améliorée avec l'indépendance. Pour cette deuxième partie de l'étude l'auteur parle de la spécialisation déséquilibrée de la production qui a aggravé les problèmes économiques et sociaux. Il rejette la théorie des avantages comparatifs à l'échelle mondiale, constatant que le rôle attribué au Tiers-Monde était celui d'un assujétissement aux impératifs des pays du Nord. Il constate une stagnation dans l'agriculture, conséquence directe de la division internationale du travail et d'une structure prédéterminée des rapports de production plutôt que des effets climatiques.

La détérioration des termes de l'échange a eu pour effet de déstimer l'accroissement de la productivité freinant ainsi le taux d'accumulation.

Dans une dernière partie l'auteur passe en revue les propositions des différentes organisations nationales et internationales et les programmes d'action envisagés, notamment ceux de la FAO, de l'USAID, du CILSS etc.



# TRANSFERT DE CONNAISSANCES EN AFRIQUE : HISTOIRE ET ENSEIGNEMENTS POUR LE FUTUR

Par

V. ALTARELLI HERZOG

## I. INTRODUCTION \*

L'accroissement de la dépendance socio-économique, culturelle et technologique que les pays du Tiers-Monde continuent à éprouver a amené un nombre croissant de ceux-ci, ainsi que des instances internationales à envisager de nouvelles formes de coopération.

Il apparaît à beaucoup que « le courant vertical qui prend naissance dans les pays industrialisés et va en direction des pays en développement doit être restructuré et de nouvelles formes d'échanges horizontales entre pays en développement doivent être promues » (1)

Pour les pays du Tiers-Monde, cette prise de conscience n'est pas nouvelle. Dès 1973 à Alger la quatrième conférence des pays non alignés avait souligné l'impératif d'intensifier les échanges mutuels parmi les membres du mouvement. Trois ans plus tard, la conférence de Colombo déclarait cet objectif prioritaire vus les maigres progrès enregistrés et en 1976 au Mexique, « le groupe de 77 » étudiait les moyens pratiques de sa réalisation.

Cette coopération entre nations du Tiers-Monde est devenue un impératif historique né de la nécessité d'instaurer un Nouvel Ordre Economique International (2) et des échecs que le dialogue Nord-Sud a enregistrés.

Dans le domaine de la technologie notamment, la stratégie envisagée pour « briser le carcan de la dépendance technologique » serait :

- une renégociation des bases juridiques du transfert de technologie vers le Tiers-Monde « à des conditions équitables et raisonnables » ;
- un renforcement des échanges et des liens technologiques entre pays du Tiers-Monde en vue d'une réduction de la dépendance technologique.

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\* Cette étude a été réalisée dans le cadre d'un projet de recherche-action mené par ENDA-T.M. sur les échanges d'expériences Sud-Sud.

Une première version de cette recherche a été présentée au séminaire : « Echanges d'expériences en matière de développement à la base et technologies combinées » organisé par ENDA-T.M. en décembre 1978. Nous remercions ENDA-T.M. pour nous avoir permis de mener à bien cette recherche et d'en publier les résultats.

Nous remercions Monsieur Alioune SALL pour les critiques et suggestions qu'il a bien voulu apporter à une première version de cette étude. Les erreurs et les omissions ne relèvent que de nous.

La question concernant la première partie de cette stratégie, à savoir les perspectives d'arrangements équitables, a été déjà longuement débattue et l'on trouvera ailleurs des analyses fort intéressantes à ce sujet (3).

La question que nous voudrions aborder ici concerne plutôt la deuxième partie de la stratégie énoncée plus haut : notamment la mise sur pied de politiques visant à encourager le transfert de connaissances et de technologies Sud-Sud.

Pour dégager quelques éléments pertinents en matière de transfert, nous avons mené une étude historique comparative du transfert de connaissances de deux techniques agricoles en Afrique, à savoir le maïs et le manioc (4).

La recherche entreprise ne se veut pas une contribution à la connaissance «Scientifique» de l'histoire de ces deux cultures.

Nous voudrions plutôt, dans la perspective d'un accroissement des échanges de connaissances, analyser la nature de ces transferts dans le passé ; nous examinerons le cheminement dans le continent de ces cultures nouvelles, les responsables de l'introduction et leurs motivations, ainsi que les effets de l'introduction de technologies nouvelles afin d'en tirer un certain nombre de leçons qui pourront aider à l'élaboration de politiques appropriées en matière de diffusion d'innovations aussi bien planifiées que spontanées.

Mais il faut préciser qu'au stade actuel, la recherche entreprise est loin d'être achevée et les pages qui suivent doivent être considérées comme un rapport intérimaire.

Nous avons choisi d'étudier la diffusion du maïs et du manioc pour plusieurs raisons :

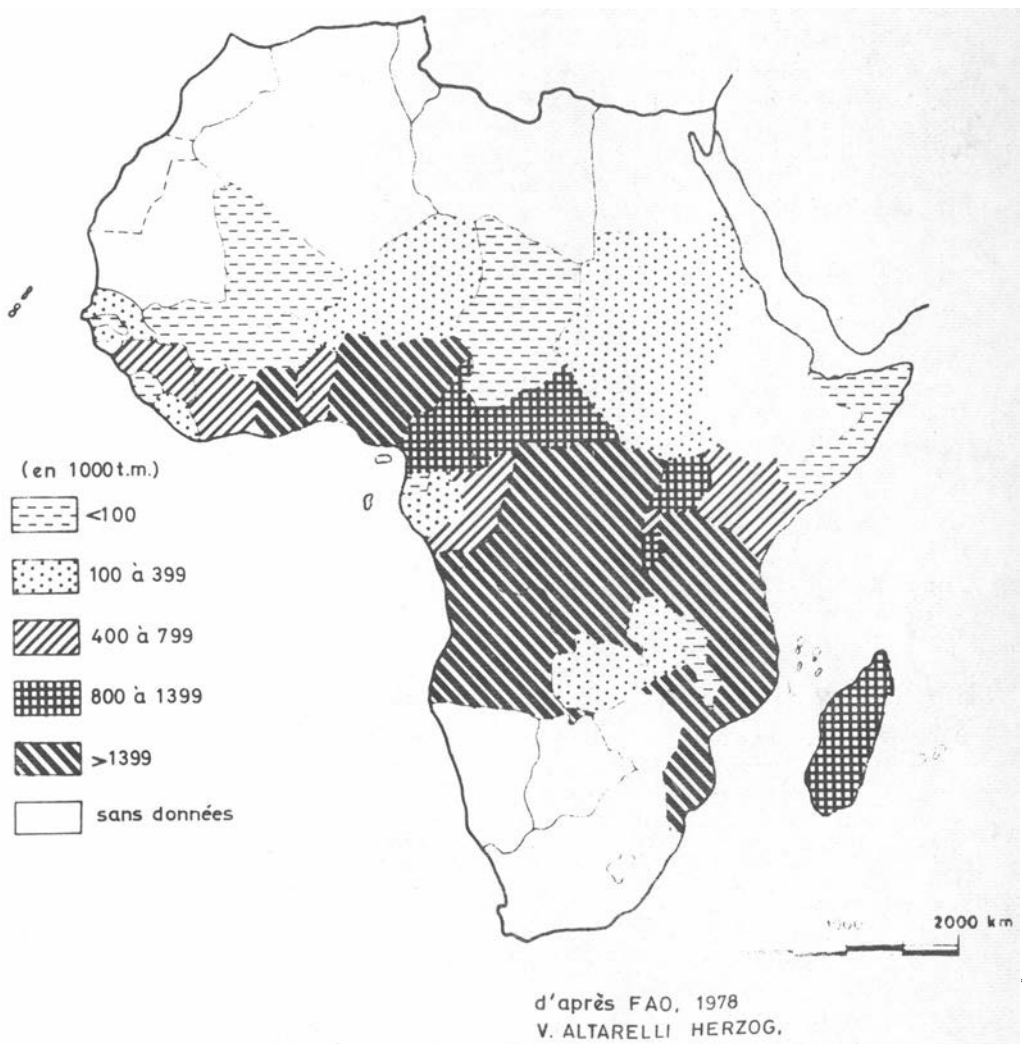
1) D'abord leur importance dans la production et le régime alimentaire de plusieurs peuples en Afrique (cf. Carte 1 et 2). Même s'ils n'entrent que peu dans le commerce extérieur (5), ces deux produits comptent pour beaucoup dans l'alimentation. En fait, en 1975, le maïs comptait pour 38 % de la production céréalière (et 26 % des surfaces cultivées en céréales) et le manioc pour 56 % de la production de racines et tubercules en Afrique (FAO, 1976).

2) Ensuite les comparaisons qu'elles permettent : en effet, ces deux cultures ont connu historiquement des aventures différentes tenant aussi bien à leur cheminement qu'aux motifs de leur acceptation par les populations autochtones. Elles fournissent donc un matériel très riche quant aux enseignements qu'on peut tirer surtout en ce qui concerne les conditions écologiques et socio-culturelles pouvant aider (ou empêcher) la diffusion de certaines cultures. Comme l'on verra, ces enseignements sont corroborés par des études plus récentes.

Quelques remarques préalables s'imposent d'emblée. D'une part, il existe des théories et des interprétations différentes et contradictoires au sujet de l'introduction de ces cultures (ainsi que d'autres) en Afrique.

Les hypothèses les plus communément répandues sont que le maïs et le manioc sont des plantes originaires de l'Amérique du Sud et qu'elles étaient inconnues en dehors de l'Amérique avant les voyages de COLOMB.

## PRODUCTION DE MANIOC EN AFRIQUE (1977)



En ce qui concerne le maïs, elles ont été rejetées par quelques auteurs, mais pour notre part nous les acceptons car les arguments avancés et les preuves exhibées n'ont pas été convaincantes (6). Cela n'exclut pas, par ailleurs, la possibilité de contacts précolombiens entre l'Afrique et l'Amérique du Sud.

D'autre part il faut souligner qu'à l'état actuel des connaissances, l'histoire de l'introduction de ces cultures en Afrique est nécessairement fragmentaire et cela va se refléter dans le texte qui suit.

## II. LE CHEMINEMENT DU TRANSFERT DES CONNAISSANCES

Quel a été en Afrique le cheminement dans le transfert des connaissances relatives aux cultures du maïs et du manioc ?

Les données dont on dispose sont fragmentaires et on n'a pas de preuves solides sur l'étendue de ces cultures.

Toutefois leur diffusion semble avoir connu des vicissitudes différentes selon le produit et le point d'introduction ; tracer donc une historique de leur diffusion nous est paru important surtout pour donner une idée des comportements différentiels.

Nous commencerons par une description de la diffusion du maïs ; celle du manioc sera traitée en deuxième lieu.

### A. *Le cas du maïs*

Bien qu'il soit difficile de mesurer l'importance du maïs en Afrique avant le 17<sup>ème</sup> siècle, du fait de manque de documentation, deux phénomènes paraissent néanmoins certains :

- a) son extension différenciée selon la variété ;
- b) une multiplicité de routes de pénétration.

Une route de diffusion concernerait le maïs à grain dur d'origine Caribéenne et d'Amérique Centrale (PORTERES, 1955) (7). Ce type de grain, rapporté après les voyages de COLOMB, se serait répandu autour de la Méditerranée et aurait rejoint l'Égypte pendant le premier quart du XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Ensuite, par la voie du Nil et du Bahr-el-Gazal, il se serait diffusé au Sud jusqu'aux régions aux alentours du Lac Tchad sans pour autant arriver sur la côte ; il aurait rejoint aussi l'Éthiopie vers 1620.

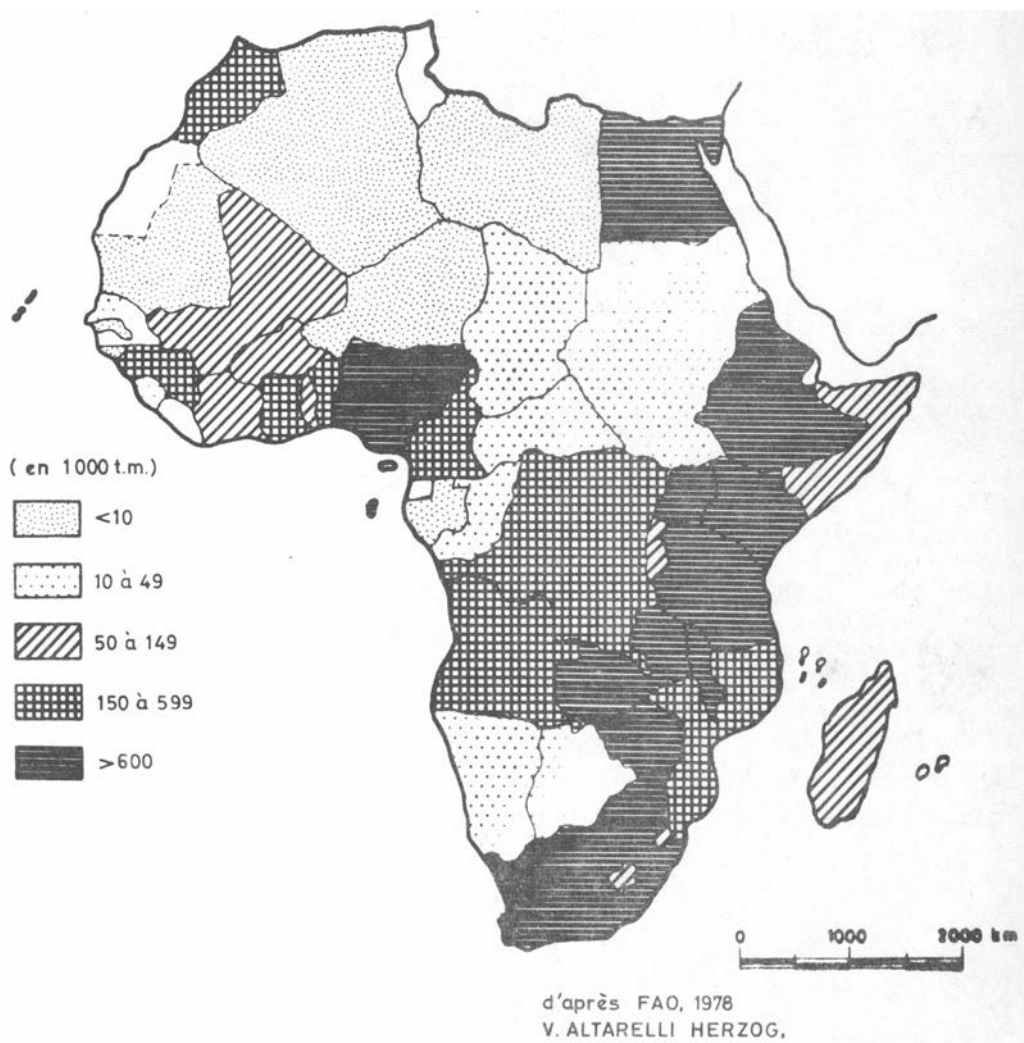
Le maïs à grain tendre, par contre, originaire du Brésil aurait été introduit en Afrique de l'Ouest dans plusieurs endroits de la côte, correspondants aux sièges des comptoirs, qui à leur tour auraient joué le rôle de relais de diffusion (MIRACLE, 1965).

Son introduction se situerait à des périodes différentes selon la localisation des comptoirs.

— C'est ainsi que sur la Côte de Guinée, son introduction aurait eu lieu entre 1500 et 1550. Il est difficile de déterminer sa diffusion en Afrique de l'Ouest au XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle ; des auteurs portugais le signalent sur la côte depuis le Fleuve Gambie jusqu'à l'île de São Tomé.

Ainsi BOSMAN (1705) et BARBOT (1732), qui avaient visité la Côte de Guinée à la fin du XVII<sup>ème</sup> siècle, nous décrivent le maïs comme une culture vivrière entre le Libéria et le Delta du Niger mais surtout entre

# PRODUCTION DE MAÏS EN AFRIQUE (1977)



la Côte d'Or et le Dahomey. DAPPER (1656), un écrivain hollandais du XVII<sup>ème</sup> siècle qui avait réalisé un ouvrage de compilation des 68 travaux sur l'Afrique disponible à l'époque, indique l'importance du maïs sur la Côte d'Or, São Tomé, le Cap-Vert mais pas entre le Cap-Vert et le Libéria.

L'hypothèse d'une adoption tardive du maïs à l'intérieur du pays, bien que probable, ne peut pas être documentée. En fait on ne connaît pas l'étendue de la culture du maïs à l'intérieur du pays dans le XVI<sup>ème</sup> et XVII<sup>ème</sup> siècle. On souffre ici d'un manque de documentation car les explorations systématiques de l'intérieur du pays – et donc les chroniques de voyage – n'eurent lieu qu'à partir du XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle (8).

Ce n'est en fait qu'en 1788 – quand l'intérieur du continent fut ouvert aux explorateurs – que des chroniques de voyage décrivent le maïs comme la culture principale de l'empire Bornu (à côté du Lac Tchad) et la deuxième en importance à Cashna, probablement Katsina au Nigéria. (Association for Promoting..., 1791, p. 200 et suivantes).

Mungo PARK (1902) remarquait la présence du maïs pendant son voyage depuis le fleuve Gambie jusqu'au Niger en 1795–97 mais il ne fournit pas des indications précises quant à son importance dans le régime alimentaire des indigènes (9).

– La diffusion du maïs dans le bassin du Congo et en Angola aurait eu lieu aussi vers la deuxième moitié du XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle, à partir de l'estuaire du Congo.

L'introduction du maïs au Congo a dû avoir lieu relativement tôt, probablement peu après 1493 ; cette culture a dû connaître une diffusion très rapide, surtout dans le bassin du Congo et en Angola. Selon TORDAY (1925) le maïs était, en fait, déjà une culture vivrière chez les Bushongos (10) avant 1600 et il était très apprécié par les autochtones (11).

Plusieurs récits de voyageurs indiquent l'importance du maïs dans les régions de la côte de l'Angola, de l'estuaire et dans le bassin du Congo tout au long du XVII<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

L'importance du maïs ailleurs que dans ces pays n'est pas enregistrée jusqu'au XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle. En 1878, MONTEIRO (1878) le cite comme la deuxième production en Angola du Nord et Du CHAILLU (1861) remarque sa présence sur les côtes du Gabon en 1856 (mais pas à 200 milles à l'intérieur). Selon la tradition orale des Azande le maïs se serait répandu après 1830 dans la région au nord du bassin du Congo, notamment dans l'extrême nord ; aujourd'hui il n'est pas très important dans cette région mais il l'est par contre plus au Sud (DE SCHLIPPE, 1956) (12).

Parmi les Logos, une tribu au sud-est des Azande, le maïs avait remplacé le mil et le sorgho avant la fin du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle mais il cédait sa place en importance au manioc et à la patate douce après la période coloniale grâce à leur résistance aux criquets pèlerins (MIRACLE, 1965).

– L'introduction du maïs en Afrique de l'Est aurait été plus tardive qu'en Afrique de l'Ouest ; de fait les chroniques de voyage en Afrique de l'Est du XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle (13) ne le signalent pas parmi les composants du complexe agricole local, sauf peut-être à Monomotapa.

Pendant le siècle suivant, le maïs semble avoir été introduit en Afrique de l'Est sporadiquement (à Zanzibar et Pemba ainsi qu'à Quoilá), mais il ne semblerait pas avoir été devenu une culture vivrière importante (MIRACLE, 1965, p. 49). Il était connu à la Réunion vers 1690 et de là à Madagascar et au Mozambique vers le début du XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle où il devint en 1798 un produit vivrier (MIRACLE, 1965). Avec les explorations du XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle le maïs semble avoir été introduit partout en Afrique de l'Est sauf en Ouganda où il ne fut introduit qu'entre 1863 et 1900. Au Kenya, le maïs était une importante culture vivrière pendant la première moitié du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle seulement sur la côte et dans la partie Sud-Est du pays. Ce n'est qu'au XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle qu'il y devint une culture vivrière de base et se transforma en culture de rente partout dans le pays.

### B. *Le cas du Manioc*

Comme le maïs, le manioc aussi connût plusieurs routes de pénétration en Afrique.

— Il fut probablement introduit d'abord sur la Côte de Guinée depuis le Cap-Vert jusqu'à São Tomé, mais malgré son introduction précoce, contrairement au maïs, il ne semble pas que le manioc se répandit sur cette partie de la côte. C'est seulement au XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle qu'il devint une culture vivrière importante à São Tomé, à Príncipe et Fernando Po et à Warri sur la côte.

En fait, dans sa description de la nourriture de base au Libéria, au Ghana et au Dahomey, Bosman (1705) ne le cite pas parmi les cultures importantes.

BARBOT (1732) dans ses voyages sur la Côte Guinéenne trouve que le manioc est une culture mineure en Sierra Leone et le retrouve seulement à Owurri (ou Warri) dans le Delta du Niger à l'Est du Bénin.

Ce n'est qu'au début du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, avec la « colonisation » du Golfe de Bénin (surtout entre l'estuaire du Volta et du Niger) par les « Brésiliens » que la diffusion du manioc connut un essor rapide dans cette région et se diffusa au Nigéria du Nord et après la première guerre mondiale, au Bénin et au Ghana ; après 1930, on le retrouva sur l'ensemble de la Côte.

— Le manioc fut introduit également dans le royaume du Congo vers la deuxième moitié du XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle, mais par contre sa diffusion à l'intérieur du continent fut relativement rapide (JONES, 1959).

Ainsi le manioc fut adopté au nord de l'Angola où il devint très tôt une culture vivrière, selon les témoignages de ANGELO et de CARLI (1814) (14) et de DAPPER (1686) (15).

A partir du royaume du Congo le manioc fut adopté par les Bushongos entre 1600 et 1630 et il y serait devenu vite une culture vivrière importante, au moins dans la partie orientale du royaume (TORDAY et JOYCE, 1911).

Le manioc fut ensuite adopté, semble-t-il, par plusieurs tribus de l'empire Baluba : les Bena Kalundwe (une tribu qui formait le noyau de cet empire) auraient reçu leur nom pour les quantités de manioc qu'ils cultivaient (16).

L'adoption de cette innovation par les Bena Kalundwe semble eu lieu plus tard (vers 1885) mais d'autres tribus du même empire (les Balunda par exemple) avaient déjà acquis cette technique agricole (JONES 1959).

Vers le début du XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle le manioc aurait été adopté par les Bisa (17) parmi lesquels il devint rapidement une culture vivrière et les Bemba (18) chez qui, par contre, il restait une culture secondaire par rapport au mil (JONES, 1959), p. 66–67).

– Une autre route de diffusion depuis la côte aurait intéressé la région forestière du bassin central du Congo ; ici sa diffusion aurait été plus rapide et plus massive que dans la région de savane (JONES, 1959, p. 69).

– On connaît peu de choses sur la diffusion du manioc dans les régions qui devaient devenir plus tard l'Afrique Equatoriale Française. Cette culture semblerait avoir été introduite très tôt sur les côtes du Gabon ; s'être répandue au Cameroun du Sud et en Guinée Espagnole sur les rives de l'Ogoué et sur la côte du Moyen Congo ; et de là peut-être avoir pénétré à l'intérieur. Il était cultivé à Bangui, capitale de l'Ubangui-Shari au moins en 1840 et à Bambari 300 km N.E. vers 1890 (JONES, 1959, p.68).

Les explorateurs et les voyageurs du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle trouvèrent la culture de manioc implantée un peu partout.

Ainsi Du CHALLU (1861) retrouvait le manioc pendant ses explorations effectuées entre 1855–59 dans la zone forestière du Gabon de l'Est et de l'Angola du Nord.

Entre 1853–55, les frères LIVINGSTONE (1866) dans leurs voyages depuis Sesheke sur le Zambèse à Luanda décrivaient le manioc comme une composante principale du complexe agricole surtout dans la vallée Barotse et en Angola du Nord. En 1869, dans son «Dernier Journal», David LIVINGSTONE (1875) signale avoir marché à travers «des milles de manioc» dans la région de Kasango à l'Ouest du Lac Tanganyika.

STANLEY (1891) lors de son voyage sur le Congo (1876–77) découvrait que la prédominance du manioc s'arrêtait vers la bordure Est de la forêt (19) où il était remplacé par le plantain et le maïs.

– On ne connaît pas exactement la date de l'introduction du manioc en Afrique de l'Est, mais comme pour le maïs, elle eut lieu beaucoup plus tard qu'en Afrique de l'Ouest.

Il semblerait que le manioc fut introduit à l'île de la Réunion en 1738–39 et de là à Madagascar (JONES, 1959, p. 81).

Son introduction sur les côtes au Tanganyika et au Kenya aurait eu lieu vers 1740.

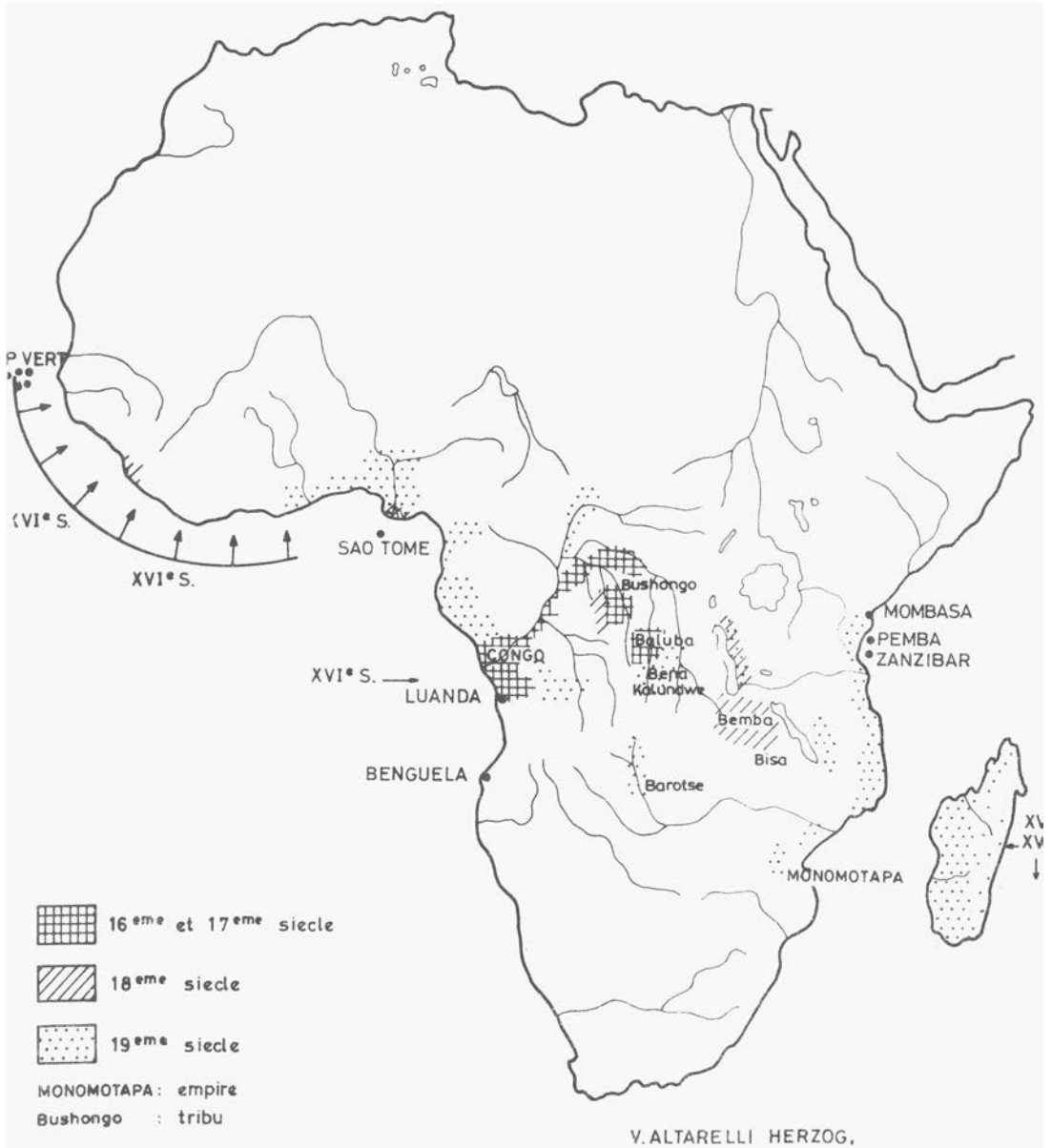
Mais le manioc ne semble pas s'être diffusé à l'intérieur : selon les récits des explorateurs vers 1850 le manioc n'était pas très répandu en Afrique de l'Est sauf sur la côte et aux abords du Lac Tanganyika.

Aussi le manioc fut introduit en Ouganda dans la deuxième moitié du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle et en 1878 STANLEY n'en trouvait qu'en Ouganda et sur la partie Sud du Lac Victoria.

Avec l'occupation Allemande et Anglaise, le manioc fut largement encouragé pour sa capacité de résistance aux acridiens et comme une réserve contre la famine.



## AIRES APPROXIMATIVES DE DIFFUSION DU MANIOC EN AFRIQUE



### III. LES VECTEURS DU TRANSFERT

L'étude de l'introduction de la diffusion du maïs et du manioc en Afrique nous a amené à distinguer deux types de vecteurs : exogènes et endogènes (20).

Cette distinction peut être utile pour l'élaboration de toute politique visant à un renforcement du transfert des connaissances.

D'une part les motivations du transfert, ainsi que la rationalité qui le sous-tend, varient selon le type du vecteur.

Par ailleurs, la nature peut aussi être à la base du comportement différentiel – dans le temps et dans l'espace – d'un transfert.

Enfin la forme d'intégration d'une innovation dans un système socio-économique donné peut aussi dépendre du type de vecteur.

Quels étaient donc les vecteurs clés de la diffusion du maïs et du manioc en Afrique ? Ici aussi on est obligé de distinguer les zones géographiques.

Pour l'Égypte, les vecteurs exogènes du maïs auraient été les Turcs lors de leur conquête du pays (PORTERES, 1955).

En Afrique de l'Ouest, par contre, les vecteurs exogènes du maïs furent très probablement les Portugais.

Cette thèse on la retrouve chez DAPPER (1686) qui attribue l'introduction du maïs en Afrique aux Portugais. En se référant à la «Côte d'Or», il écrivait :

*«D'abord on y cultive le riz et le maïs Turc appelé Mays par les Indiens que les Portugais introduirent des Indes de l'Ouest (où il est abondant) à l'Île de São Tomé et puis à la Côte d'Or. Maintenant, il y en a beaucoup dans cette région et il y pousse à profusion»* (DAPPER, 1686, p. 463).

BOSMAN (1705), en se référant à la Côte de Guinée, nous indique : «on m'a raconté qu'avant l'arrivée des Portugais les noirs ne le connaissaient pas» (p. 300).

Ce sont aussi les Portugais qui furent les vecteurs exogènes du maïs dans le royaume du Congo.

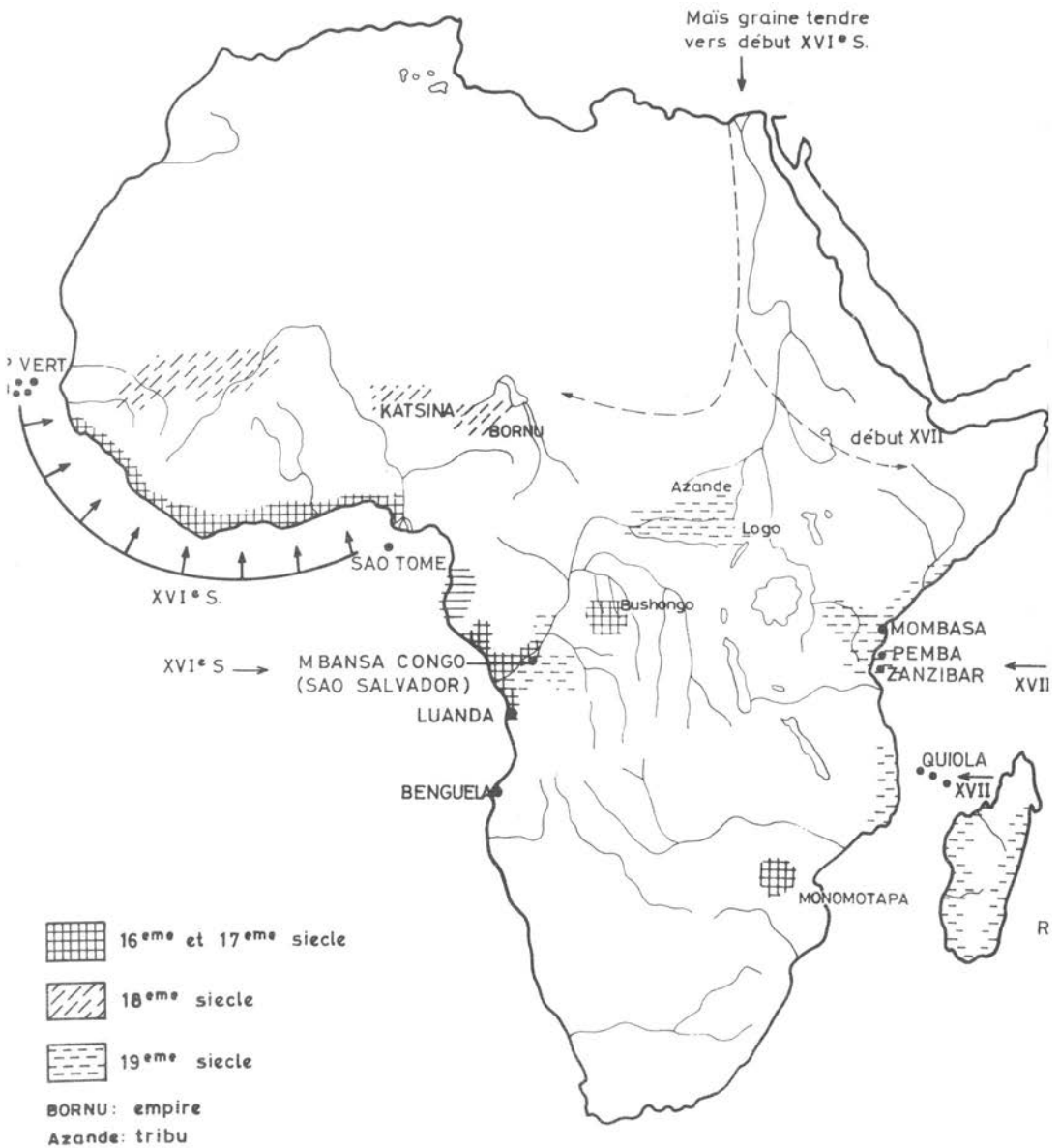
Duarte LOPEZ disait en 1591 que le maïs était connu dans le royaume du Congo comme Mazza Mamputo, qui selon PIGAFETTA signifie la graine de Portugal, Mamputo étant l'adjectif signifiant Portugais en langue locale (21).

Une autre indication de l'introduction portugaise du maïs dans cette région vient du nord de l'Angola où on nous dit qu'en 1600 le maïs était appelé Masimporto.

A l'appui de la thèse de l'introduction portugaise du maïs en Afrique de l'Ouest, il ne manque pas d'auteurs qui ont avancé des raisons économiques.

Les raisons, MIRACLE (1965), en se basant sur une documentation fouillée (22), les retrouve dans la minimisation des coûts dans la traite des esclaves dont la demande dans le nouveau monde s'était accrue à partir de 1517. La minimisation des coûts donc, qui imposait que la denrée de base pour nourrir les esclaves soit facile à stocker et à transporter et qu'elle soit près de leur zone d'origine, serait la raison principale de la diffusion de cette innovation en Afrique de l'Ouest et Centrale.

# AIRES APPROXIMATIVES DE DIFFUSION DU MAÏS EN AFRIQUE EN AFRIQUE



V. ALTARELLI HERZOG,

De fait, l'approvisionnement de cette denrée de base ne pouvait guère se faire à partir de l'Europe : les bateaux venant d'Europe, pour se rendre ensuite dans le nouveau monde, étaient chargés de « marchandise de traite » et d'autres produits essentiels pour les entrepôts et garnisons européens en Afrique.

Par ailleurs, les racines, tubercules et le plantain, les féculents qu'on trouvait en Afrique de l'Ouest, ne pouvaient pas faire la concurrence aux céréales car ils ne pouvaient pas être couverts en farine.

Parmi les céréales cultivées localement (riz, mil et sorgho), le riz, brisé par les Européens, devait ravitailler leurs comptoirs et garnisons ainsi que les bateaux qui y faisaient escale. Cela ne devait presque pas laisser de surplus car le riz était cultivé seulement sur une petite partie de la côte (23). En ce qui concerne le mil et le sorgho, il s'agirait plutôt de coût comparatifs : la zone côtière étant essentiellement tropicale, les rendements du maïs sur la côte devaient être plus importants ; encourager la culture du mil et du sorgho dans les savanes de l'intérieur ne devait pas être rentable car il fallait y ajouter le coût du transport jusqu'à la côte.

Voilà autant de raisons économiques qui justifieraient l'introduction du maïs en Afrique de l'Ouest.

Les arguments que MIRACLE utilise pour appuyer sa thèse sont les suivantes :

- Les Iles du Cap-Vert n'étaient probablement pas habitées avant leur découverte par les Portugais en 1456.

- Le maïs était cultivé au moins dans l'île de Santiago entre 1535 et 1550.

- Santiago était un des plus importants entrepôts de l'Afrique de l'Ouest à l'époque.

- Et John BLAKE affirmait qu'à cette époque les bateaux des esclaves « avaient accès aux ports de la Guinée du Nord pour acheter du maïs pour nourrir les esclaves » (24).

« Ceci suggère que les Portugais avaient de bonnes raisons pour diffuser la culture du maïs du moment que le commerce des esclaves devint lucratif » (MIRACLE, 1965, p. 44).

L'introduction tardive du maïs en Afrique de l'Est pourrait expliquer la multiplicité des vecteurs exogènes : les Portugais d'une part à Pemba et Zanzibar et au Mozambique ; les Français, semble-t-il, à la Réunion ; des marchands Arabes en Ouganda depuis Zanzibar après 1850. Il est probable que les commerçants Arabes l'aient introduit à peu près à la même période dans d'autres parties de l'Afrique de l'Est.

Ce sont encore des raisons économiques qu'on avance concernant l'introduction arabe du maïs en Ouganda et ailleurs en Afrique de l'Est : notamment la nécessité de nourrir les porteurs Africains de caravanes qui effectuaient le commerce avec l'intérieur (EHRlich, 1956).

Et, sans qu'on puisse le démontrer en s'appuyant sur une documentation sérieuse, il n'est pas exclu que ce soient des raisons similaires qui ont présidé à son introduction par les Français (25).

Comme pour le maïs, les vecteurs exogènes du manioc furent les Portugais : ils l'auraient en fait introduit en Afrique de l'Ouest et Centrale presque à la même période que le maïs (siècle XV) (JONES, 1959) ; PORTERES, 1950 / MIRACLE, 1965).

Il fut introduit probablement pour les mêmes raisons qu'on a évoqué pour le maïs, mais il ne fut utilisé pour nourrir les esclaves que depuis l'estuaire du Congo car son adoption sur la Côte de Guinée eut lieu plus tard, comme l'on a déjà vu.

En Afrique de l'Est les vecteurs externes du manioc furent aussi les Portugais sur les côtes de Tanganyika et au Kenya ainsi qu'au Mozambique.

L'introduction tardive du maïs et du manioc en Afrique de l'Est par les Portugais s'expliquerait par le manque de stimulants économiques, le commerce d'esclaves avec l'Amérique étant approvisionné par les ressortissants de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et Centrale (26).

«Nulle part au Mozambique, Tanganyika ou Kenya on avait entretenu les mêmes types de relations féodales qui existaient entre le roi du Congo et le roi du Portugal. Le Monomotapa qui fut baptisé et devint vassal du roi de Portugal en 1629 était un petit roi et les ruines retrouvées par LIVINGSTONE à Zumbo témoignaient de l'existence d'un comptoir plutôt que d'un royaume «Chrétien»» (JONES, 1959, p. 82).

Encore des raisons économiques auraient poussé les Français à introduire le manioc à l'Île de la Réunion vers 1739 : à savoir nourrir les esclaves qui travaillaient sur les plantations à sucre de l'Île.

En fait le Gouverneur de la Bourdonnais«... y introduisit avec beaucoup de difficultés la culture du manioc. Il dû employer toute son autorité pour obliger la population à cultiver cette plante... Il publiait un décret selon lequel chaque habitant devait planter 500 pieds de manioc pour chaque esclave qu'il possédait...» (C. GRANT, 1801, cité par MIRACLE, 1965, p. 48).

Pendant la colonisation, les puissances coloniales auraient imposé la culture du maïs notamment en Afrique de l'Est ; mais surtout celle du manioc partout où ils s'installèrent du fait de sa résistance aux acridiens et comme réserve contre la famine. Elles peuvent être considérées donc comme des vecteurs exogènes secondaires.

Si l'on se tourne maintenant du côté des vecteurs endogènes, la tradition orale des Bushongos nous apprend que l'introduction du manioc fut l'œuvre d'un chef, Samba Mikepe (ou Shamba Bolongongo). Avant qu'il devienne roi, il avait beaucoup voyagé et probablement visité la cour de San Salvador (27) où il apprit les coutumes de la cour.

«Pendant son règne, la récolte des Bushongo fut complètement détruite par une invasion de criquets pèlerins et il y avait un danger imminent de famine. Mais ils furent sauvés par Samba Mikepe qui leur apprit l'utilisation du manioc qui ne pouvait pas être détruit par les criquets» (TORDAY, et JOYCE, 1911).

La légende des Bena Kalundwe attribue l'adoption du manioc à l'œuvre d'un chef : Tambo Kanague. Pour contrer les famines qui sévissaient périodiquement chez les Bena Kalundwe, il aurait envoyé des émissaires chez les Balunda pour obtenir des boutures de manioc et il semble qu'il l'aurait imposé à la population entière (JONES, 1959, p. 65).

Cette culture y devint populaire grâce à sa disponibilité pendant une bonne partie de l'année.

Si l'on croit JONES (1959, p. 67), l'adoption du manioc par les Bemba et les Bisa aurait été plutôt un effet d'imitation des tribus avoisinantes, la décision aurait été prise collectivement surtout grâce aux qualités inhérentes du manioc : sa disponibilité et sa résistance aux acridiens.

D'autres vecteurs d'innovations internes sont évidemment les migrants : la diffusion du manioc à partir de la Baie du Bénin au XXème siècle surtout vers l'intérieur peut leur être attribuée.

#### IV. LES RAISONS DU COMPORTEMENT DIFFERENTIEL DANS LE TRANSFERT DE CONNAISSANCE : QUELQUES ENSEIGNEMENTS POUR LE FUTUR.

L'étude comparative de la diffusion du maïs et du manioc a révélé, indépendamment des vecteurs, des comportements différentiels ; les motivations sous-jacentes seront analysées ci-dessous dans la mesure du possible.

Pourquoi le maïs, par exemple, aurait-il connu une diffusion rapide sur les côtes de Guinée et dans le bassin du Congo tandis que le manioc introduit à la même époque dans ces régions avait progressé dans la dernière mais très tardivement sur les côtes de Guinée ?.

A quoi peut-on attribuer la diffusion rapide du manioc à partir du royaume du Congo ?.

Pourquoi une diffusion encore plus rapide dans le bassin du Congo qu'ailleurs dans cette région de l'Afrique Centrale ?.

Quels facteurs pourraient enfin expliquer une adoption aussi tardive de ces deux produits en Afrique de l'Est ?

C'est autour de ces questions que la première partie de ce chapitre sera axée.

Cela nous permettra de dégager, à un niveau plus abstrait, un certain nombre de facteurs dont il faudra tenir compte dans toute politique visant à accroître le transfert de connaissances et de techniques.

Le rôle des facteurs «immatériels» dans le transfert des connaissances sera brièvement esquissé dans une deuxième partie.

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Un premier élément d'explication de la diffusion rapide du maïs sur la côte de Guinée et en Afrique Centrale est sans nul doute l'environnement physique (sol et climat) qui convenait à sa culture. Il est probable en fait que les rendements du maïs à l'époque comme aujourd'hui étaient meilleurs que pour les cultures pré-existantes.

Un deuxième élément est constitué par le substrat technologique pré-existant. En fait la similarité du maïs au mil et sorgho (28), aussi bien dans l'apparence que dans le type de travail nécessaire pour le cultiver et le transformer, ne demandait pas un apprentissage de techniques supplémentaires.

Etant donné la gamme restreinte du complexe agricole pré-existant (29) le maïs y apportait un complément non négligeable.

En plus, facile à stocker et transporter, il pouvait être très utile dans les déplacements (pour les voyages aussi bien que pour les guerres). En fait la tradition orale des Bushongos nous apprend que le maïs était très apprécié par les populations de l'intérieur pour cette raison (TORDAY, 1928).

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La diffusion tardive du manioc sur les côtes de Guinée montre d'autre part comment l'environnement physique est une pré-condition nécessaire mais non suffisante, à elle seule, pour l'adoption et la diffusion d'une innovation.

Le manioc nécessite en fait un processus de transformation relativement élaboré si l'on veut éliminer le danger provenant de l'acide prussique qu'il contient.

Nous postulons que l'absence de cette maîtrise technique dans un premier temps et le manque de possibilité de sa transmission furent les entraves principales à son adoption sur la côte de Guinée.

En fait l'absence de noyaux de colonisation portugaise sur cette côte (30), l'orientation historique de la région vers l'intérieur (31) et probablement aussi un peuplement des régions côtières relativement épars furent autant d'entraves à un transfert de la technique de la transformation du manioc.

A partir du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, mais surtout au XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, un affaiblissement des liens avec le monde arabe, un peuplement côtier accru mais surtout un renouveau des échanges culturels avec les «Brésiliens» expliqueraient l'adoption massive du manioc dans cette région.

En fait la colonisation par les «Brésiliens» du Golfe du Bénin apportait la connaissance de la transformation du manioc en farine – le gari de l'Afrique de l'Ouest.

La diffusion du gari et de la culture du manioc à partir des centres côtiers de colonisation «Brésilienne» vers l'intérieur connut son essor le plus rapide à partir du début du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle et il se dispersait au Nigéria du Nord, au Bénin et au Ghana.

La diffusion du manioc à partir du royaume du Congo ne devait pas rencontrer les mêmes obstacles que sur la côte de Guinée.

Les Portugais en fait avaient établi plusieurs types d'échanges (commerciaux, politiques et religieux) avec le royaume du Congo (32).

Cela avait permis, entre autre, le transfert de la technique de transformation du manioc très tôt. En fait, en 1667–68, l'on observait que les habitants de Luanda utilisaient «les racines de manjoza, comme l'on fait au Brésil et le maïs indien, qu'ils transforment en petits gâteaux» (ANGELO et DE CARLI, 1814, p. 157).

De plus, le royaume du Congo avait acquis une certaine réputation auprès des populations environnantes et il était devenu un noyau culturel important à partir duquel de nouvelles idées et des produits nouveaux se diffusaient à l'intérieur du continent.

De la tradition orale des Bushongo (33), trois éléments intéressants pour nos propos ressortent.

L'introduction et l'adaptation du manioc étaient associées dans la mémoire collective à une période d'emprunts très importante à la culture du royaume du Congo, perçue comme étant supérieure.

La mise en culture et la transformation du manioc ne rencontrèrent pas d'obstacles majeurs car ils ne demandaient pas un apprentissage technique supplémentaire ; au début, on l'utilisait comme légume (coupé et bouilli comme le plantain) et seulement plus tard, à la fin du XVIème siècle, les indigènes apprirent à le transformer en farine.

Le manioc apportait donc une variété nouvelle à leur complexe vivrier traditionnel (mil, plantain et ignames) et pouvait être inclus dans leur complexe agricole sans apprentissage technique supplémentaire.

Enfin, la légende fait ressortir que sa résistance aux criquets pélerins avait été la raison principale pour son adoption par les Bushongo.

Par contre, sa disponibilité pendant la saison de soudure serait, selon la légende, la justification principale de l'adoption du manioc par les Bena Kalundwe ainsi que les Bemba et les Bisa (TORDAY, 1911).

Dans bien d'endroits le maïs devait être remplacé par la suite comme culture vivrière par le manioc à cause de la résistance de ce dernier aux acridiens et sa disponibilité pendant la période de soudure. Ce remplacement d'abord spontané fut ensuite encouragé, voir imposé, par presque toutes les puissances coloniales.

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Des raisons écologiques et culturelles à la fois expliqueraient aussi la diffusion rapide du manioc et du maïs dans la région du Bassin Central du Congo.

Les raisons sociales et culturelles que l'on vient d'évoquer pour le reste de la région seraient aussi valables ici. Mais, quel pourrait être l'élément différenciateur ?

Si l'on accepte l'hypothèse du peuplement de cette zone par les Bantous qui provenaient d'environnements plus secs (34), la diffusion rapide du manioc et du maïs dans le Bassin du Congo, ne s'expliquerait-elle par l'adaptation de ces cultures à l'environnement de forêt ?

En fait l'agriculture Bantou était axée avant le déplacement de ces peuples sur un complexe vivrier de savane à pluie modérée ; le mil et le sorgho, (des cultures par excellence d'un environnement semi-sec) n'étaient plus aptes à leur nouveau environnement de forêt équatoriale.

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L'adoption très tardive du maïs et du manioc en Afrique de l'Est peut être attribuée à des facteurs tenant à la fois à l'écologie et à l'organisation socio-économique des populations locales.

En Afrique de l'Ouest, la diffusion du maïs et du manioc était associée à un environnement de forêts et de savanes humides ; or le couvert végétal de la majeure partie de l'Afrique de l'Est est une savane arborée.

Le plateau Masai essentiellement sec (35) aurait été donc une barrière à la diffusion de ces produits ; le caractère guerrier des tribus Masai et Wagogo – qui habitaient les bordures du plateau Tanganyika – aurait renforcé l'obstacle physique. A l'Ouest, l'organisation économique des Bahima, à prédominance pastorale, (qui se trouvaient au Nord du Tanganyika jusqu'à la région du Lac Albert) aurait formé une barrière à la transmission de ces mêmes cultures provenant du Congo. Ces barrières devaient être percées plus tard par les interventions coloniales.

Enfin, des facteurs d'ordre physique et socio-économiques sembleraient avoir entravé la diffusion du manioc au Congo du côté de la Rift Valley. Le climat tempéré des collines qui entouraient la Rift Valley et l'organisation économique des tribus locales, à prédominance pastorale, sembleraient avoir été les obstacles essentiels à sa diffusion ici.

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Malgré les spécificités des cas que l'on vient d'examiner parmi les éléments qui ont encouragé ou entravé les transferts en question, quelles seraient donc les « constantes » ?

A part l'environnement physique bien sûr, les facteurs d'ordre économiques et socio-culturels qui nous paraissent les plus intéressants seraient :

– l'organisation sociale et économique des groupes ainsi que leur substrat technologique ;

– associée à ce dernier, la capacité de transformation interne et d'auto-centrage du groupe en question qui déterminerait les possibilités de réintégrer les apports extérieurs ;

– l'introduction d'autres innovations techniques en aval ou en amont de la technique à transférer ;

– l'ancienneté des habitudes d'emprunt et des emprunts eux-mêmes.

Aussi bien dans ce qui favorise que dans ce qui décourage les transferts, l'on retrouve donc, inextricablement mêlés, divers éléments constitutifs de l'environnement au sens large.

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Une étude de cas récente (PILGRIM, 1976) sur l'adoption massive au XXème siècle du maïs, d'abord comme culture vivrière et ensuite comme culture de rente, dans le district de Kericho au Kenya semble confirmer un nombre de conclusions auxquelles nous avons abouti.

En fait, parmi les facteurs qui avaient facilité l'adoption du maïs dans le district, PILGRIM trouve «le rôle critique joué par l'environnement dans les premiers temps de l'implantation de la culture du maïs» (PILGRIM, 1976, p. 366).

Il remarque aussi que d'autres innovations techniques encouragèrent l'adoption du maïs : notamment l'introduction de la charrue en fer et surtout des innovations dans la transformation (moulin à eau et moulin à bras en fer) (36) et le stockage (construction de cabanes) du produit même.

Cependant il remarque que «la réussite du maïs... fut due en grande partie au fait qu'il existait déjà une tradition d'élevage... ce qui permit d'utiliser les boeufs comme bêtes de trait» (Ibidem, p. 365).

Etant donné la nature des renseignements dont nous disposons, nous ne pouvons pas développer aussi amplement qu'on le souhaiterait le rôle, pourtant important, des facteurs immatériels dans le transfert des connaissances. Nous nous contenterons de donner quelques exemples de comportements différentiels dans l'adoption.

Ainsi la tradition orale des Bushongo nous apprend que malgré l'introduction rapide du manioc et une connaissance approfondie de sa transformation à partir du XVIIème siècle, le manioc n'était pas un produit vivrier pour les Bushongo de l'Ouest et du centre au moins jusqu'au XXème siècle tandis qu'il le devint parmi les Bushongo de l'Est (TORDAY et JOYCE, 1911).

La tradition Bemba et Bisa nous suggère que l'adoption du manioc avait eu lieu pour des raisons utilitaires, notamment sa disponibilité pendant la période de soudure. Pourtant le manioc devint une culture vivrière importante chez les Bisa mais pas chez les Bemba. Ceux-ci lui préfèrent leurs graines traditionnelles car le manioc «a la réputation de remplir vite l'estomac mais de s'y fondre aussi vite une fois dedans» (RICHARDS, 1939 cité par JONES, 1959, p. 66).

En plus sa préparation et sa transformation demandaient une planification de plusieurs jours à l'avance — ce qui n'était pas pour plaire aux Bemba (Ibid, p. 94).

Un troisième exemple nous vient de l'Afrique Equatoriale ; en 1899 le manioc était très peu utilisé par les populations riveraines du fleuve Ngounie au Gabon et malgré les efforts entrepris par les administrateurs coloniaux pour encourager sa culture, les autochtones cultivaient les bananes de préférence (cela peut-être à cause du goût ou pour les mêmes raisons évoquées par les Bisa et les Bemba.

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## V. LES EFFETS SOCIO-ECONOMIQUES DU TRANSFERT

Nous avons jusqu'ici traité des modalités du transfert et des facteurs qui facilitent ou entravent ce transfert. Mais au-delà de ces éléments tout transfert de connaissance s'inscrit toujours dans une société déterminée. Certes, nous avons remarqué au passage comment les choix de techniques avaient été influencés par l'organisation sociale pré-existante. Toutefois, ces choix, à leur tour, entraînent toute une série de modifications qui, en définitive, vont remodeler le visage de la société.

L'analyse des implications sociales du transfert de connaissances est un sujet délicat qui justifierait une étude particulière. Il n'est pas dans nos intentions de l'entreprendre dans le cadre de ce travail, il s'agit surtout d'essayer de broser les mécanismes généraux qui semblent s'instaurer.

On ne peut certes pas mesurer tous les effets du transfert à partir de la seule documentation existante mais plusieurs textes mettent l'accent sur les conflits engendrés par ces transferts et, sans qu'on puisse déterminer l'acuité de ceux-ci, il n'en reste pas moins que sous cet angle tout au moins, l'on devrait être vigilant dans toute politique de transfert.

Ainsi : «plusieurs des Kipsigues (dans le District de Lumbwa) les plus évolués possèdent une charrue, et comme la tribu n'a d'autre régime foncier que le système communautaire, ces Kipsigues qui possèdent la charrue ont tendance à cultiver des surfaces très étendues (en maïs), ce qui réduit la quantité disponible pour le pâturage... On remarque un conflit d'intérêt de plus en plus prononcé entre l'agriculteur Kipsigue et le berger Kipsigue» (Rapport du commissaire du district de Kericho, 1934 dans PILGRIM, 1976, p. 366).

Par ailleurs le transfert est, de par sa nature, un processus différentiel : d'une part les innovations sont adoptées par ceux qui sont à même de prendre un risque économique et sociale et d'en payer le prix.

Ainsi, dans le district de Kéricho, l'adaptation différentielle aux innovations «dépendait plus directement de la taille des terres possédées et du nombre d'ouvriers agricoles employés» (PILGRIM, 1976).

L'adaptation à l'innovation d'autre part est souvent une source d'accumulation de capital pour les innovateurs.

Déjà au XVIIIème siècle BARBOT remarque les énormes profits réalisés par les paysans de la côte guinéenne qui avaient adoptés la culture de maïs qu'ils revendaient «aux forts Européens et aux bateaux d'esclaves» (BARBOT, 1732, p. 197).

PERISTIANY (1939) indique que chez les Kipsigues «dans chaque communauté, un ou deux individus fortunés possèdent une charrue qu'ils louent aux autres à un tarif très élevé et réalisent de gros bénéfices» (37).

Le plus souvent ces processus différentiateurs se retrouvent renforcés par un soutien institutionnel important.

«L'accès aux nouvelles techniques (38) avait par conséquent tendance à aller de pair avec des facilités exceptionnelles d'accès aux capitaux initiaux, avec une protection administrative et judiciaire ainsi qu'avec des possibilités d'instruction» (PILGRIM, 1976).

PILGRIM (1976) avait remarqué une concentration accrue de capitaux et de terres, engendrée par le transfert et arrive même à lui attribuer l'apparition de différentes classes à l'intérieur de la population.

Ce phénomène d'ailleurs est très général.

Des études plus récentes menées pour le compte de l'UNRISD (1974 a, b ; 1976 a, b ; 1977) sur les transferts de connaissance aboutissent aussi à considérer ce risque présent jusqu'à nos jours. Elles vont même plus loin : dans quelques cas en fait les innovations semblent avoir causé un accroissement de la tendance à la dissolution des systèmes agraires traditionnels et, par conséquent, une marginalisation et prolétarianisation accrue de la majorité des populations rurales (39) (UNRISD, 1974 a 1976 b).

On peut alors se demander si, toutes proportions gardées, hier comme aujourd'hui ce ne sont pas les mêmes groupes qui ont profité des transferts. Si l'on veut travailler en tout cas dans la perspective d'améliorer le sort des catégories les plus défavorisées, ce qui est présent dans tous les discours sur les transferts, on ne pourra pas manquer d'être attentif à ces problèmes.

## VI. EN GUISE DE CONCLUSION

L'introduction du maïs et du manioc en Afrique ne sont que deux exemples parmi beaucoup d'autres transferts de connaissances (40).

Cette étude, comme on l'a souligné à plusieurs reprises, ne prétend pas être exhaustive. Il y a néanmoins des éléments clés qui ressortent d'elle : nous voudrions en rappeler ici quelques uns pour les implications qu'ils pourront avoir dans une politique visant à l'accroissement du transfert de connaissances.

Il s'agit notamment des motivations du transfert et ses conséquences et du problème de la maîtrise technique et sociale du transfert.

L'on affirme souvent qu'une technologie n'est pas neutre ; cette étude montre que le transfert en soi-même n'est pas neutre non plus : il est plutôt le résultat d'un nombre d'éléments socio-économiques pré-existants et peut avoir des répercussions importantes à l'échelle mondiale.

Ainsi l'introduction du maïs et du manioc en Afrique semble avoir répondu à des besoins économiques bien précis des vecteurs exogènes et, à l'occurrence à renforcer, comme dans bien d'autres cas, la dépendance de l'Afrique.

Même si les perspectives d'échanges ne sont pas les mêmes, dans une politique de transfert comment faire en sorte que de nouvelles formes de dépendance ne viennent pas s'instaurer à côté des anciennes ou bien tout simplement les remplacer ?

Un autre élément qui ressort de l'étude est l'importance du substrat technologique pré-existant dans le groupe même au sein duquel l'on veut opérer le transfert.

En général les techniques importées ne sont opérationnelles qu'en moyennant un flux complémentaire de «savoir-faire». Il y a plusieurs façons de transmettre ce savoir-faire. L'on peut le distiller de manière telle que «les recours aux détenteurs des techniques se transforment en liaison permanente». Ceci entraîne d'une part une dépendance ultérieure de la nation aussi bien des groupes «récepteurs» à l'échelle nationale et à l'échelle locale. Ce type de transfert peut engendrer d'autre part soit l'inhibition du développement de la technologie locale (41), soit même des déperditions du patrimoine technologique d'un peuple (42). Malheureusement, c'est ce qui semble s'avérer dans la plupart des cas.

N'y aurait-il pas une autre façon d'opérer le transfert ? Dans ce scénario la technologie serait perçue comme élément médiateur entre les groupes humains concernés et les besoins qu'elle devrait servir.

Dans ce deuxième modèle, on prendrait en compte le substrat technologique du groupe même au sein duquel le transfert va s'opérer ainsi que la capacité interne d'autocentrage du groupe en question.

Cela pourrait aider à réintégrer les apports extérieurs dans un système économique et socio-culturel donné et dans un deuxième temps, en libérant les forces créatrices latentes, les améliorer (43).

Dans cette orientation le transfert tiendra compte des acquis et des aspirations des groupes, décroîtra la dépendance au niveau local aussi bien que national ; de surcroît on assistera à un enrichissement du patrimoine technologique national plutôt qu'à sa déperdition.

La maîtrise technique par les groupes ne peut pas par ailleurs se dissocier de la maîtrise sociale.

Les quelques études plus récentes qu'on vient de recenser montrent aussi les contradictions qui peuvent exister entre la transplantation réussie d'ensembles agricoles nouveaux (ou perfectionnés) et l'amélioration problématique du niveau de satisfaction des besoins sociaux qui visent, en théorie, ces transplantations.

On constate en général une transplantation apparemment réussie sur le plan technique ; par contre dès qu'on regarde au-delà du simple transfert d'un ensemble de connaissances techniques les apparentes réussites semblent se transformer bien souvent en échecs, et cela indépendamment de la période historique où ces exemples de transfert ont eu lieu.

Cela met en tout cas en cause les certitudes qui semblaient conférer d'une manière un peu aveugle au transfert des connaissances un rôle de premier plan dans le développement des économies des pays du Tiers-Monde.

Au fond le transfert se révèle être non pas une question de transplantation d'un savoir-faire de certaines couches privilégiées à d'autres dans un autre pays tout en laissant intactes les structures de production et de consommation ainsi que les rapports de productions et les types de formations sociales dans lesquels ils s'inscrivent.

La question cruciale ne serait-elle pas plutôt de comment se servir du transfert pour une utilisation et une organisation plus rationnelle des ressources nationales en vue d'une production sociale destinée à servir les intérêts des couches les plus défavorisées et d'une transformation des rapports sociaux qui libéreraient les forces créatrices latentes ?

Le défi pour les pays du Tiers-Monde dans ce cas ne serait-il pas d'étudier les modalités qui permettraient de passer d'une politique de transfert à une politique de maîtrise (sociale et technique) par et pour les groupes humains moins nantis ?

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## FOOTNOTES

- (1) «The Kuwait Declaration on Technical Cooperation amongst Developing Countries». Kuwait, 31 May – 3 June 1977. Déclaration élaborée par un groupe d'experts dans le cadre des travaux préparatoires de la Conférence des Nations Unies sur la Coopération Technique entre les pays du Tiers-Monde à Buenos Aires en 1978.
- (2) Le Nouvel Ordre Economique International (NOEI) s'articulerait autour d'un relèvement des prix des matières premières renforcé par une réduction de la dette extérieure et d'un accroissement des liens horizontaux entre pays du Tiers-Monde. Pour une analyse détaillée du NOEI, cf. S. AMIN (1978).
- (3) Cf. notamment Langdom (1975), surtout le chapitre III, Atta Mills (1977), Amin (1978).
- (4) Compte tenu du rôle primordial de l'agriculture dans les économies du Tiers-Monde, nous avons choisi des exemples de transfert dans le domaine agricole.
- (5) En 1975, l'Afrique exportait 9 % de sa production totale de maïs (FAO, 1976); le manioc n'apparaissait même pas dans le chapitre exportation de la FAO.
- (6) Ainsi STONOR et ANDERSON (1949) ont douté de l'origine américaine du maïs et ont suggéré une origine indigène ou pré-colombienne du maïs en Asie. Ces thèses ont été recusées par MANGELSDORF (1954) qui a exhibé des preuves incontestables sur son origine américaine ayant prouvé que le maïs y était cultivé depuis 6000 ans. L'hypothèse de l'introduction pré-colombienne du maïs en Afrique par les Arabes, avancée par JEFFREY (1953 - 1954) a été rejetée, preuves à l'appui, par WILLET (1962).
- (7) Pour cette route on ne dispose pas des mêmes éléments que pour les autres : ici on se contentera de la signaler seulement.
- (8) Pour une interprétation des raisons économiques qui auraient poussé l'exploration de l'intérieur du continent à l'époque cf. Suret Canale (1973, p. 222 et suiv.).
- (9) Un rapport similaire nous est donné par MOLLIEN (1820) qui avait visité la même région ainsi que le Fouta Djallon.
- (10) Le royaume des Bushongos se trouvait entre les fleuves Kasai et Sukuru.
- (11) MIRACLE (1965) remarque par contre que Jan VANSINA, en analysant la tradition orale Bakuba, suggère que le maïs fut introduit dans le royaume Bushongo vers 1630 (sous le règne du Shyaami a Mbul a Ngoon).
- (12) Pour une liste exhaustive des variétés actuelles de maïs chez les Azande, cf. DE SCHLIPPE, 1956, pp. 52 - 53.



- (13) Notamment de CABRAL en 1501 et de BARBOSA en 1501 - 16.
- (14) Ils visitèrent Luanda et ses environs en 1667 - 68.
- (15) Selon lequel la région du fleuve Bengo se distinguait quand à la production du manioc.
- (16) Kalundwe (Lululdu : manioc et ka = diminutif) signifierait le peuple du manioc.
- (17) Habitants l'île Cilubi dans le Lac Bangwelu.
- (18) Les Bemba occupaient la section nord-est de la Rhodésie du Nord.
- (19) Il délimite ce changement vers les chutes Panga sur l'Aruwimi. (STANLEY, 1891).
- (20) De par leur nature et origine, les renseignements dont nous disposons sont très biaisés en faveur des vecteurs exogènes dont nous connaissons beaucoup plus. Seules les quelques traditions orales disponibles nous renseignent, d'une façon fragmentaire d'ailleurs, sur les vecteurs endogènes ; cela ne nous permet malheureusement pas de saisir tout le temps les mécanismes et la dynamique interne du processus de diffusion.
- (21) Selon PIGAFETTA le maïs n'était pas apprécié par les Portugais qui le considéraient bon seulement pour les porcs : «Vi è il Maiz che è il pui vile de tutti que dassi a porci... al Maiz dicono Mazza Mamputo cioè grano di Portugalò, appollande essi Mamputo Portugalò» (PIGAFETTA, 1884, cité par MIRACLE, 1965, p. 45).
- (22) Notamment les récits de BARBOT (1682) et de ATKINS (1737) qui parlent du maïs comme nourriture des esclaves. BARBOT affirmait aussi que les paysans Ouest-Africains qui cultivaient le maïs réalisaient de gros profits en le vendant aux bateaux d'esclaves et aux forts européens ; Jean-Baptiste LABAT (1728) nous dit que le maïs composait la denrée principale de base des esclaves sur le fleuve Sénégal.
- (23) «L'Oriza Globerrima (la variété rizicole locale) n'avait atteint au XVIème siècle le littoral atlantique qu'entre le fleuve Sénégal et Axim (Gold Coast)». (PORTERES, 1950, p. 492).
- (24) J. BLAKE (ed.), «Europeans in West Africa 1450 - 1560», cité par MIRACLE (1965).
- (25) Ce fut sans doute le cas pour le manioc.
- (26) Les esclaves de la côte de l'Est, en nombre nettement inférieur, étaient destinés à l'Inde, la Perse et l'Arabie.
- (27) Capitale du Royaume du Congo.
- (28) Ceux-ci faisaient partie du complexe agricole pré-existant (PORTERES, 1950).
- (29) Il s'agissait surtout de mil, sorgho et riz pour la côte de Guinée, mil, ignames et plantain pour le bassin du Congo. Pour une description des complexes culturels africains, cf. PORTERES, 1950.
- (30) Les Portugais avaient des forteresses comptoirs à São Jorge da Mina sur la Côte de l'Or et à Sao Joao d'Ajuda au Dahomey et quelques comptoirs en Sénégal-Gambie ; les échanges qu'ils entretenaient avec les indigènes furent éminemment commerciaux.
- (31) Les royaumes et empires qui s'étaient succédés – Ghana, Mali, Gao – étaient des civilisations de l'intérieur, tributaires culturellement et commercialement du monde arabe et musulman ; il s'était donc établie une dépendance culturelle des populations riveraines vis-à-vis de celles de l'intérieur, considérées supérieures (Cf. Suret-Canal, 1973).

- (32) Dom HERIQUE avait même visité la cour de Lisbonne.
- (33) Etablie par E. TORDAY et T. A. JOYCE (1911).
- (34) Pour une description de ces migrations, cf. A. MOELLER, (1936).
- (35) Il recouvre le Nord-Est de la Tanzanie et le Sud du Kenya.
- (36) La méthode traditionnelle de mouture de l'éleusine qui consistait à frotter la graine entre deux pierres étant moins apte à écraser le maïs car ce dernier a une consistance différente.
- (37) G. PARISTIANY — «The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis», Londres, 1939, cité par PILGRIM, op.cit.
- (38) Déjà associées comme l'on a vu à une stratification sociale.
- (39) BORDHAM (1970), Frankel (1971) et Yapa (1976) aboutissent à des conclusions similaires.
- (40) On aurait pu tout aussi bien étudier l'introduction de nouvelles variétés d'arachide ou de riz ou encore d'autres produits.
- (41) Ce phénomène a été très bien analysé par VAISTOS (1974).
- (42) Pour une analyse historique d'un type de déperditions technologiques, cf. El Amami (1977).
- (43) Par ailleurs ce processus — emprunt, absorption, recentrage en fonction des capacités locales et améliorations ultérieures — a caractérisé l'histoire technologique de l'Occident en général et de l'Europe Médiévale en particulier. cf. notamment Patel (1975) et Singer et al (1954).

## SUMMARY

Although it is widely maintained that increased «South-South» cooperation in the field of technology transfer can reduce substantially the technological dependence of Third World countries, little is known about the possible mechanisms and implications of such transfer.

A historical study of technology transfer in Africa seems to shed light on diffusion patterns, the different vectors of innovation and the motivation behind them, the factors impeding or facilitating transfer, and certain socio-economic implications.

In the first place a detailed comparative analysis of the introduction of maize and manioc in Africa reveals that the timing of the introduction of each crop in different areas depended on the location and importance of the trading posts (which played the role of diffusion relays). Moreover, the penetration points and diffusion paths varied widely from one location to another, and endogenous and exogenous vectors can be identified for each crop.

The distinction between endogenous and exogenous vectors has important implications as it throws light on the motivations for the transfer and their rationality, on the space and time behaviour of the transfer and on its integration into a pre-existing socio-economic system.

For instance, the introduction and diffusion of maize on the west coast of Africa by the Portuguese was prompted by the need for grain to nourish slaves during their journey to the Americas, while the diffusion of manioc was due largely to its resistance to pests and its usefulness as a reserve against famine.

Several factors seem to have facilitated the adoption and spread of the innovations considered. The most important of these are the pre-existing technological base of the populations concerned; their capacity to absorb, transform, adapt and reintegrate newly introduced technologies; the existence of forward and backward linkages to other technological innovation; and an established tradition of borrowing and absorbing external knowledge.

Technological independence at the local and national level can only be achieved if these factors are taken into account and if technology is viewed as a means for responding to specific needs of distinct groups. Neglect of these factors may lead to the inhibition of local technological development or to the loss of indigenous technological know-how.

In the past, as at present, technology transfer has been an instrument of domination and surplus extraction to the detriment of Third World countries. For instance, by helping to sustain the slave trade and by providing foodstuffs to the indigenous population – thus enabling them to produce more for their colonial masters – the introduction and diffusion of maize and manioc contributed to the development of African dependency.

At the micro level, as more recent studies have shown, technological transfers have tended to provoke conflicts and set in motion processes of increased socio-economic differentiation; often they have led to marginalization and proletarianisation of the rural masses.

The crucial question is then how to utilise technological transfers to obtain more rational utilisation of national resources in order to aid the poor and to transform the actual social structure. The challenge is the transition from a policy of «transfer» to one of the control of technology by and for the social groups concerned.

# THE CRISIS IN PLANNING : WHAT LESSONS FOR NIGERIA? \*

By

*Anyaegbunam W. OBI \*\**

## I. INTRODUCTION

National development planning is often taken to be the most critical instrument of government policy available to currently less developed countries (LDCs). Indeed, much of the optimism leading to the declaration of the United Nations' «First Development Decade» can be said to have rested on high expectations about the possibilities of achieving rapid transformation of the economies of the poor countries through development planning, with massive foreign aid from the rich. While optimism with respect to foreign aid has since long ago turned into bitter cynicism, disillusionment regarding the possibilities of effective planning in LDCs is a more recent phenomenon. Recent development literature has sought to develop some insights into the wider, non-economic dimensions of the problem of poor plan performance in these countries. The purpose of this paper is to critically examine some of these insights, and draw some conclusions with respect to planning in Nigeria. The first part of the task is carried out in the next three sections, while the conclusions are discussed in the final section.

## II. THE CRISIS IN PLANNING

To the economist, the theoretical case for development planning is as formidable as it is familiar. But even for the non-economist, the idea of trying to influence present economic activity, in order to make the future different from what it otherwise might be, should not be difficult to accept. Given the intolerable conditions of socio-economic existence found in most LDCs, a heavy burden of credibility indeed lies with whoever would argue that unregulated markets should be left to determine at their own pace the rate of human progress in those countries. If one is going to manipulate the present with an eye to future outcomes, then a purposive strategy — a plan — is needed in order to minimize the incidence of costly and avoidable errors.

The most common type of plan adopted in LDCs is the medium-term, comprehensive plan, i.e., one lasting typically four to six years and embracing both the private and public sectors of the economy. It usually seeks to present a set of centrally coordinated and internally consistent policies which is felt would best achieve a set of specified targets framed within some broader social goals of the government.

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But in spite of the high level of technical sophistication that has been attained in the production of such plans, and notwithstanding the near-axiomatic status of the theoretical case for planning, considerable disenchantment has in recent years been expressed about the practical results of decades of planning in LDCs, and even the feasibility of effective planning there has been called into question. Whether it is in plans abandoned mid-stream, in targets grossly unfulfilled, or in plan documents retained mainly as window dressing, the experience with planning in many LDCs has been one of disappointed expectations. Dudley Seers has spoken of plans that turned out to be «little better than fantasies», adding that «it is indeed quite a puzzle how some *plans* ever came to be produced so lacking in political and administrative reality are they, considering the high calibre of the people working on them» (1). Another commentator has remarked that planning «in the less developed world typically involves a rhetorical commitment to socialist objectives, a technical commitment to «neutral» policy tools, and the practical achievement of capitalist results» (2).

Following a thorough and extensive survey of the relevant literature, Tony Killick has recently argued, quite convincingly, in our view, that the main source of poor plan performance in most LDCs is «the naivety of the implicit model of government decision-making incorporated in the planning literature» (3). Ordinarily economists are wont to blame purely economic and institutional factors for plan failures. Among the commonly mentioned culprits are shortage of competent personnel to undertake feasibility studies as well as those to supervise on-going projects; poor statistical data; and bureaucratic inefficiency, including the problems arising from the wrong location of the planning machinery within the institutional set-up of the government. But, while not discounting the importance of such factors, many economists seem increasingly to be coming to an acceptance of the fundamental nature of political factors as the root cause of the «crisis» in planning. Lack of support for the plans on the part of the major political actors, rivalry among the latter, and their preference for «qualitative» over analytical thinking have been mentioned in this connection. But unfortunately, as Killick notes, most proposals for reform have continued to be of an administrative or organizational nature, probably on the presumption that it is futile to advocate jettisoning the political system itself.

This immediately raises the question as to why one should expect such reforms to be attainable in the very same political environment held responsible for past failures, given that the administrative and institutional deficiencies cited are inherent parts of the political system. But more importantly, the aforementioned political factors do not seem to get to the root of the problem. Why, for instance, do politicians not find it in their own interest to support development plans which are supposed to be a means of improving the rationality of decision-making? Could it be that there is a fundamental conflict between certain critical assumptions of these plans and the actual *modus operandi* of the politicians?

### III. REALISM VERSUS CONVENIENCE IN PUBLIC SECTOR

It is a well-known fact that hardly any formal and in-depth studies of the behavioural patterns of households, firms, and, in particular, governments, are carried out within the discipline of economics as conventionally defined. Yet this is not as a result of any legitimate necessity for a division of labour between economics on the one hand, and other branches of the social sciences, on the other. Given the increasing complexity of social phenomena, about which no one discipline could possibly encompass the total reality, the practical necessity for inter-disciplinary and even intra-disciplinary specialization cannot be gainsaid. But the fact is that behavioural assumptions regarding households, businesses, and governments constitute the basic building blocks in virtually all aspects of economic analysis; hence, formal investigations into these behavioural patterns should fall squarely and properly within economics. That economists have been willing to leave such investigations to others, while being satisfied to get along with convenient but naive assumptions is, as an eminent «think tank» economist has noted, largely the result of intellectual laziness (4).

The economist in question, who was discussing the role of economists in public policy-making in the United States, lamented specifically the frequent tendency by economists to make the «naive assumption that the government is a monolithic entity devoted only to the public welfare and knowledgeable about how to attain it». The consequence of this, he added, is that «it has caused us to neglect the all-important problems of acceptability and implementation in making recommendations for public policy» (5). Since most development economists share a common intellectual tradition as other orthodox economists, it is hardly surprising that the same assumption of a monolithic and omnipotent government has been found to be implicitly embodied in most development plans. By «combing the literature for hints and inferences», since writings on development planning are virtually devoid of systematic discussions of «the implications of planning for political systems and vice versa, even though authors often claim that a plan is essentially a political document», Killick arrives at the following summary of what has been called the «rational actor» model of politics:

*governments (are) composed of public spirited knowledgeable, and role-oriented politicians; clear and united in their objectives; choosing those policies which will achieve optimal results for the national interest; willing and able to go beyond a short-term point of view. Governments are stable, in largely undifferentiated societies; wielding a centralized concentration of power and a relatively unquestioned authority; generally capable of achieving the results they desire from a given policy decision. They are supported by public administrations with ready access to a very large volume of relevant information which can be processed efficiently (6).*

It seems hardly worth the effort to state that plans implicitly based on this model are not likely to receive much real support from real-life politicians, civilian or military, in most LDCs. It may be added parentheti-

cally here that the tendency of economists, consciously or unconsciously, to resort to extreme assumptions about social behaviour may have been partly encouraged by the «Positivist» contention that the validity of a theory is not to be judged by the realism of its assumptions but by its ability to predict well (7). This claim, which was never quite convincing on methodological grounds, would be even less useful as a practical defence for the «planners'» model above; the large discrepancy between actual and intended outcomes is what the crisis in planning is all about.

#### **IV. TOWARDS A MORE RESPONSIVE POLITICAL ECONOMY**

It has already been noted how, even though accepting that political factors are at the root of the crisis in planning, many economists still propose solutions that are essentially administrative or organizational in nature. This situation leads Killick to wonder whether it might not be that «the concept of development planning is one that could not, with the best will in the world, be built into the process of government because «politics isn't like that» (8). But we would rather simply argue that what is needed is for proposals embodied in development plans to be adapted to the specific environment in which they must be applied. In other words, if the crisis in planning has arisen largely from the attempt by economists to re-shape the world of government in their own image, what is needed is not to jettison the concept of development planning as such, but to re-shape the planning process to fit the world of government. The problem then is to determine how best to incorporate the realities of governmental decision processes in a given political system into the planning process.

The ideal solution to the problem for public policy raised by the economists' tendency to make naive behavioural assumptions would be for economists themselves to develop appropriate tools for the serious study of the relevant patterns of behaviour. This, however, would at best be a long-term solution. A short-term solution would seem to be to adopt a «task-force» approach in dealing with complex national policy issues. Here, a group of social science specialists armed with a variety of insights from their different disciplines, contribute simultaneously to the solution of a given problem. This approach, in principle, sounds eminently reasonable; in fact, it would be difficult to think of a better substitute for the ideal but unattainable state of a single expert possessing multi-disciplinary omni-science. But as a practical matter, it is doubtful whether this approach, even though it would obviously be effective in areas such as foreign policy, can fully resolve the crisis in planning.

It will be generally agreed that as far as development planning is concerned, there exists among the various branches of the social sciences considerable vertical distances in terms of both the interest shown in the subject matter and the level of abstraction embodied in the analytical tools designed for dealing with it. In these circumstances, a group of specialists operating at different analytical wavelengths would simply be talking at cross-proposes, and thereby probably compounding the element of fantasy in development planning. What is left then is the purely pragmatic approach whereby the development planner himself looks at the research findings of other social scientists with respect to governments and decision processes, selects whichever he believes to be most appropriate to his particular environment, and designs his plan proposals accordingly.



## V. IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING IN NIGERIA

To apply the foregoing pragmatic approach to Nigeria, consider, in contrast to the «planners» model, the following generalizations based on the conclusions of political scientists and sociologists who have studied governments and decision processes in less developed countries, but which conclusions are not necessarily meant to apply over the entire spectrum of these countries: (a) that «far from being monistic, society is marked by considerable differentiation and severe tensions caused by differences of religion, caste, tribe, language, regional origin, education, and rather extreme inequalities of income and wealth», (b) that given a fragmented society in which politics are an arena for competition between rival interests, political actors will tend to promote particular rather than general interests. Given also the desire to obtain the intrinsic rewards of holding office, policies may be formulated as a means of holding office, rather than it being that office is sought in order to pursue preconceived policies and (c) that given a situation of very incomplete knowledge about the workings of the economy, particularly about the extent to which the actual repercussions of given policies may deviate from the intended effects, politicians will prefer to be vague about economic objectives or even to deliberately disguise their true objectives (9).

The above, and the fact that «governments' effective range of choice will be constrained by the capacities and preferences of public agencies», lead to the conclusion that:

*Decision making in the face of major social divisions becomes a balancing act rather than a search for optima; a process of conflict-resolution in which social tranquility and the maintenance of power is a basic concern rather than the maximization of the rate of growth or some such. Indeed, one of the further implications of the foregoing is that economic objectives including development, are likely to come lower on the pecking order of government concerns than the case for development planning implicitly assumes. The maintenance of government authority and social peace will tend to be the dominant themes, with the adoption of a development objective conditional on the extent to which it furthers these higher priority, «non-economic» concerns. Yet another implication is that consistency is not necessarily to be taken as a norm of the rationality of government policies, for the maintenance of authority and the balancing of competing groups may well force governments to twist this way and that, simultaneously or sequentially pursuing apparently contradictory policies (10).*

The foregoing generalizations may, for convenience, be referred to as the «competitive» model of politics. That they are more relevant and applicable to the Nigerian situation than the «rational actor» model will not be disputed by many. Events in the country since independence, including several rigged census and election counts, and culminating in a

bitter and protracted civil war, which events need not be elaborated here, speak for themselves about the degree of social fragmentation, and the propensity of political actors to engage in the politics of *aggrandizement* and sectionalism. Regarding the preference of politicians for «qualitative» over analytical thinking, Father O'Connell has noted the «anti-chrematistic biases» of segments of the «political class» in the country (11). As for the military who have been in power since just before the civil war, their understandable tendency to place the «peace and unity» of the country above everything else is also common knowledge.

What are the implications of these conclusions for planning in Nigeria? This question can only be answered against the background of some understanding of the scope and purposes of planning in the country. Systematic planning of the Nigerian economy started in 1946 with what was intended to be a ten-year «Colonial Development and Welfare Plan». With the introduction of a federal system of government in 1954, this was replaced by the 1955-60 Plan, later extended to 1962. But these were all essentially «colonial» or «public sector» plans.

Comprehensive planning, using a well articulated system of national accounts, started with the First National Development Plan, 1962-68. This plan called for a capital investment programme of about N2.4 billion, of which the Federal Government was to be responsible for 63%. This compares with a figure of about 30% for the central government's share of planned investment in 1954, at the beginning of federalism. The 1962-68 Plan was abandoned in 1966 at the onset of the political crisis leading up to the 1967-70 civil war. The war was followed immediately by the Second Plan, 1970-74, which was in turn succeeded by the Third Plan, 1975-80. The latter had a planned investment programme of N30.00 billion, later raised to N42.00 billion, as compared to N3.0 billion for the Second Plan. The Federal government was to undertake 69% and 78% of planned investment in the two plan periods respectively.

The above figures clearly indicate that there has been a sharp and steady increase in the extent of the central government's control of the planning and management functions of the economy since the institution of federalism in the country. What the figures do not show, however, is the considerable difference or intended difference in the quality of federal control of the economy as between the First Plan, on the one hand, and the Second and Third Plans, on the other. Although the Federal government's share of planned investment under the First Plan increased from what it was just before political independence in 1960, even a cursory examination of the Plan document leaves little doubt that the intended role of the central government was to be, as it was in the 1950s, essentially that of coordinating – rather loosely, one might say – the activities of the three Regional governments. In fact, the 1962-68 Plan was in reality three separate National (Regional) Development Plans, each pursuing its own set of basic priorities. The Federal Plan was a loose overlay consisting largely of projects such as the Kainji Dam and Niger Bridge projects which because of either their strategic or geographical nature, or their financial cost, could not be undertaken by the regions.

With the Second Plan, however, the envisaged role of the central government shifted dramatically towards that of a command post in a «command» economy. The First Plan had seen itself as the first in a series

of such plans which would «within a reasonable period of time» enable Nigeria to «be in a position to generate from a diversified economy, sufficient income and savings of its own to finance a steady rate of growth with no more dependence on external sources for capital or manpower than is usual to obtain through the natural incentives of international commerce» (12). The Second Plan, by contrast, explicitly stated the need to go beyond this objective of its predecessor in order to «occupy the commanding heights in the quest for purposeful development» (13), and recognised «the possibilities of using planning as a deliberate weapon of social change by correcting defects in existing social relations in various spheres of production, distribution, and exchange» (14). This plan also for the first time enunciated the five «National Objectives», the first of which was to establish Nigeria as «a united, strong, and self-reliant nation». These objectives, and the recurrent theme of national self-reliance, were re-iterated in the Third Plan.

The «rational actor» model of politics implicit in this new role for the Federal government is unmistakable. The tone clearly suggests the existence of an identifiable and unquestioned single locus of national sovereignty capable of articulating and implementing the collective aspirations of the country. But doubts about the practical viability of this approach begin to suggest themselves once one starts looking at the bold projections which it has inspired. Whereas the level of investment expenditure actually achieved at the end of the Second Plan was less than N2.00 billion, a target of N42.00 billion was set for the Third Plan ending five years later. Even allowing for underspending due to inadequate «executive capacity» — the factor blamed for the failure of the Second Plan, and which was expected to be the limiting constraint during the Third Plan and beyond — an effective target of anywhere around N25.00 billion would still be staggering in comparison with the N2.00 billion which could not be realised for the Second Plan.

The Third Plan document made it clear that it was the comparatively large foreign exchange earnings from crude petroleum that was being relied upon to make possible the stupendous leap from a frustrated expenditure target of N2.00 billion to one of about N25.00 billion within five years. Since the only use of foreign exchange is for the purchase of foreign human and non-human resources, and in view of the great emphasis on the need for self-reliance, the present author was constrained elsewhere to inquire into exactly what a programme of «development through self-reliance» would mean for a country such as Nigeria. The analysis, within the framework of the so-called foreign exchange «gap» model of growth and development, concluded that despite the rhetoric of self-reliance, the present pattern of industrial development in the country was likely to lead to heightened external dependence (15).

What all this suggests is that the very bold conceptions of Nigeria's Second and Third Plans, inspired as they are by an implicit acceptance of a «rational actor» model of politics, are untenable. To the extent that the «competitive» model is more valid for the country, it would follow that State and Local governments would be much more effective than the Federal government as centres for articulating and implementing the aspirations of the citizens of the country. The implication for planning is that

the present attempt at centrally controlled and directed comprehensive planning should be abandoned in favour of a decentralized system based on drastically increased state and local government autonomy.

This call for decentralized planning is of course by now no longer new. Recently, for example, Professor S. Aluko has suggested that State and Local governments be given increased direct access to national resources to enable them provide for their citizens various amenities ranging from secondary highways to higher education. Exclusive federal responsibilities should be limited strictly to strategic services such as defence, inter-state highways, and postal services: the states, «singly or jointly, should be debarred from engaging in economic and social activities only when they threaten the security and continued existence of the federation». «National integration slogans by the functionaries of the Federal government» he added, «should not be used as a smokescreen to stifle the states and the local governments» (16). But Aluko reaches these conclusions as a result of «evidence that increasing economic inefficiency has arisen pari-passu with such centralisation» (17), referring to the trend already mentioned toward increased Federal control of the economy. What is remarkable, therefore, is that this «common-sense» conclusion is supported by our own finding based on a more systematic and explicit attempt to apply a model of politics. For, as Leys has stated, «any useful conceptualisation of the planning process must start from a model of politics» (18).

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## FOOTNOTES

- (1) Duddley Seers : «The Prevalence of Pseudo-Planning» in M.Faber and D.Seers (eds) *The Crisis In Planning* Chatte & Windus for Sussex University Press, 1972, Vol. I, p. 19.
- (2) B. Van Arkadie «Planning in Tanzania» in Faber & Seers (eds) *The Crisis in Planning* Vol. II, p. 111.
- (3) Tony Killick «The Possibilities of Development Planning» *Oxford Economic Papers*, July 1976, p. 162.
- (4) Charles Hitch «The Uses of Economics» in *Research for Public Policy : Brookings Dedication Lectures*, Washington D.C. Brookings Institution, 1961, p. 107.
- (5) *Ibid*, p. 107.
- (6) Killick, pp. 166 and 171.
- (7) M. Friedman *Essays In Positive Economics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953; Ch. 1.
- (8) Killick, p. 165.
- (9) *Ibid*, pp. 172–76.
- (10) *Ibid*, p. 176.

- (11) J. O'Connell «The Political Class and Economic Growth» *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, March 1966, p. 132.
  - (12) Federal Government Nigeria *First National Development Plan 1962–68*, p. 5.
  - (13) *Second National Development Plan, 1970–74*, p. 32.
  - (14) *Ibid*, p. 37.
  - (15) A. W. Obi «Development Through Self-Reliance: Theory, Policy Implications, and the Possibilities for Nigeria», *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies* (forthcoming).
  - (16) Sam Aluko «Lessons From Three Decades of Development Planning and Strategies for the Future Economic Planning in Nigeria» paper presented at the National Workshop on Planning Strategy for the 1980s; Ibadan, January 1978, pp. 8–9.
  - (17) *Ibid*, p. 7.
  - (18) Colin Leys, «A New Conception of Planning?» in Faber and Seers, Vol. I, p. 60.
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## RESUME

La nécessité d'une théorie pour la planification pour le développement dans les pays les moins développés est presque axiomatique. Cependant, on a récemment manifesté beaucoup de désillusion quant aux possibilités d'une véritable planification dans ces pays, désillusion due aux résultats décevants de plusieurs décades de planification. La littérature récente sur le développement a cherché à mettre à jour quelques concepts dans les dimensions plus larges et non économiques de ce problème. Le but de cet article est de faire une analyse critique de ces concepts et de tirer des conclusions par rapport à la planification au Nigeria.

# NIGERIA : CLASS STRUGGLE AND FOREIGN POLICY 1960 – 78

By

Aaron T. GANA \*

## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, like most African countries today, is a creation of Western imperialism. Its historical evolution as a state dates back only to 1861, the year when the British Government, at the instance of British Trading Companies along the coast, annexed Lagos and declared it a Crown Colony. The abolition of Slave Trade in 1807 had compelled the European Commercial bourgeoisie to turn to «legitimate» trade in such commodities as palm oil and ivory and by 1826 twelve British ships were reported to be in Bonny River at one time (1). The hinterland was not penetrable until after 1830 when it was discovered that river Niger (from which the country's name was derived), entered the Bight of Biafra. The seventy years that followed saw the gradual but steady incorporation of this vast expanse of land and people into the world capitalist system. Like many other colonial territories this incorporation took place in two stages. First there was the penetration of private commercial capital into the hinterland conducted, first, by individual European traders and companies and later (1886–1900) by the chartered Royal Niger Company. Following the balkanization agreement of 1884 among European powers, Britain empowered the latter to «administer, make treaties, levy customs and trade in all territories in the basin of the Niger and its affluents (2).

## POLITICAL EVOLUTION

This phase of capitalist penetration was followed logically by the imposition of the colonial political super-structure, for in 1900 the British took over control of the territory from the Royal Niger Company, and proclaimed the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. In 1906 the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was proclaimed and eight years later (1914) came the historic amalgamation of the two protectorates endowed with the name of Nigeria. In 1939, partly as a response to the needs of the skeletal administration already established and partly due to a recognition of some fundamental differences among the major cultural components of the unit, the Southern protectorate was split into two – the Western region and the Eastern region, constituting half the total land mass as well as the people, was left intact. The evolution of Nigeria into statehood was to consolidate these administrative boundaries into political

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\* *I am greatly indebted to Professor James Mittelman of Columbia University for his comments on an earlier version of this paper, and more importantly for exposing me to this exciting way of looking at phenomena.*

boundaries within which distinct political organizations were to develop. With approximately two hundred and fifty ethnic groups spread over the entire territory, it is not difficult to understand why conflict organizations (to use Professor Nordlinger's category) sprang up along the ethnic dividing lines. At Independence there were three major political parties: the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) based in the Eastern Region even though it had strong tentacles in the Western Region; the Action Group (AG) based in the Western Region; and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) whose stronghold and appeals were in the Northern Region.

## CONSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION

The constitutional evolution itself tended to have contributed in no small measure to the regionalization of politics as the British sought to protect the North with its traditional institutions. Thus the Macpherson Constitution of 1954, in spite of minor adjustments prior to and after independence, established not only the structural and the institutional frame-work within which political competition was to take place but indeed dictated the pattern of the competition. For by strengthening the periphery (the regions) at the expense of the center (the state) the constitution, drawn up by Nigerians but with the colonial overlords as active participants favourably disposed to maintaining the hegemonic position of the North, established a system which approximated more a confederation than a federation. The tenuousness of this structure coupled with the regionalization of the political parties have made analysis of Nigerian politics susceptible to the distributionist analysis in comparative politics. Hence such analytically obfuscating concepts as communalism, tribalism, ethnicity have been employed in the analysis of Nigerian politics, as is the case with many new states. Thus, Post and Vickers, in their recent analysis of the crises of the civilian regime assert that «political action at this juncture of Nigeria's history was determined by the ideology of tribalism rather than class consciousness» (3).

## CLASS FORMATION

The proceeding paragraphs are intended to give an overview of the historical processes that have produced not only the political entity known as Nigeria but much more importantly, for our purpose, the determinate social formation at the time that overt colonial control terminated. By 1960, the year of Nigeria's independence, Nigeria's future evolution was to a considerable extent determined, in the sense that Marx conceived of the evolution of human society when he declared:

*Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please, they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past* (4).

For by this date the dominant mode of production was decisively capitalist, even though primitive modes of production existed symbiotically, albeit, in the rural areas. The determinate social formation was therefore capitalist, even though interspersed with feudal formations in the North

and West and «primitive» social formations in the East and the so-called pagan areas of the North. Thus, contrary to the prevailing view on social formations in contemporary Africa, classes had developed in most African societies that experienced colonial rule, similar in characteristics to the classes that emerged during the formative stages of European capitalism. Even in pre-colonial Africa, classes existed, for social classes «are not a given with which certain societies are blessed and which other, more retarded societies lack. Social classes describe relations between producers and those in control of their production» (5).

## FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

One of the overt manifestations of political independence is a country's involvement through its institutionally designated leaders, in the global system of States. This involvement is achieved through a country's foreign policy defined as «a coordinated strategy with which institutionally designated decision makers seek to manipulate the international environment in pursuit of certain objectives through moralizing principles to guide their pursuit» (6). In conventional analysis the Foreign policy of a country is the result of the interplay of domestic and international environment within which states must operate. What goals or objectives are identified as national goals depends, according to this view, upon the structure of the domestic political process (7), the nature of the society – whether it is a «consociational» or a «conglomerate» society (8) – and upon the international constellation of forces or, what in the literature, is called the international environment. A third, but less important variable is the idiosyncratic variable according to which actions of individual statesmen are influenced considerably by their perception of the objective domestic and international environment. The conclusions from such methodological assumptions are obvious. Foreign policy is by and large an extension of the domestic political process. National goals and objectives are selected in the national interest – itself a most elusive concept – and are modified, at times dropped, as the realities of the international environment – political and economic – delimit what is theoretically feasible and what can be achieved in the concrete situation within which statesmen operate. The theoretical inadequacies of this approach are legion, but space would not permit our treatment of them here. Suffice it to say that it lacks methodological rigor and hence obfuscate rather than explain the phenomena it treats.

Most analyses of the foreign policies of the new states have followed this tradition. Thus most studies of Nigeria's foreign policy focus on the so called domestic origins (determinants), one of which was the tenuous political structure negotiated prior to independence in which «three large regions with one conservative and less developed region not only large and more populous than the rest of the federation but also holding a «political veto» over the more developed and radical ones» (9). This structure violated a sacred principle of federalism, according to which

*there should not be any one state (in the federation) so much more powerful than the rest as to be capable of vying in strength with many of them combined. (For) if there be such a one,...*



*it will insist on being master of the joint deliberations; if there be two they will be irresistible when they agree, and whenever they differ, everything will be decided by a struggle for ascendancy between the rivals (10).*

In the specific Nigerian context, the Northern preponderance over the rest was a major source of conflict which was reflected in the conservative posture of Nigeria's foreign policy, a posture incommensurable with her resources — material and human — since these are major variables in the foreign policy equation.

A second domestic determinant of Nigeria's foreign policy in these analyses, was the differential incorporation of the regions into the modernization process — what within our analytical framework we would see as differential incorporation into the evolving capitalist system. There was also the problem of dual personality presented by each regional unit where, «instead of being an ethnic or linguistic unit, each consisted a «regional nucleus» occupied mostly by a dominant ethnic group». This fostered regionally or ethnically based parties. Thus, goes the argument,

*The unique clustering of ethnic groups on a dominant minority basis within the regions; the excessive political power and autonomy enjoyed by the regions and the uneven character of the economic and political development of the various regions as well as the various ethnic groups were significant elements in the background of inter-regional and inter-tribal political tension and animosities in post-independent Nigeria. Their net effect was to distort and bedevil Nigerian politics and in turn the formulation of foreign policy (11).*

Of course these analyses do not ignore the economic factors in foreign policy. They admit that the structure and nature of a country's economy as well as its external economic and financial relationships are important in both its domestic politics and its foreign policy behaviour. However the economic factors are «national» not class in nature. They relate to the domestic economy only, not the interests of any one particular group. Thus, for Nigeria, it was the fact that Nigeria's economy was tied to the economy of its former colonial master that dictated the foreign economic policies of its leaders. And again it is the national interest that was uppermost in their minds in the formulation of those economic policies. Thus goes the myth about the domestic determinants of Nigeria's foreign policy. Its international environment strand produces parallel conclusions. A corollary to the domestic variables thesis, it shares its assumptions by stressing that external constraints combined with the domestic variables to produce what emerged as Nigeria's foreign policy. The explanation for Nigeria's international behaviour in these analysis is aptly summed up in Idang's conclusions:

*First, because of her unique federal structure and her ethnic and cultural diversity, Nigeria could not help projecting into the building of her foreign policy the same caution and verbal compromise that characterize her domestic politics. Second, a revi-*

*sionist or radical foreign policy... would, by tipping the balance or power against some tribal and cultural groupings, intensify tribal jealousies and inter-group tension... Third, Nigeria's own history of gradual political development... proved to her foreign policy elite the importance of discussions and negotiations in all inter-group relations. Fourth, because of her leaders' preoccupation with rapid economic development and political stability, ideological and aggressive policies that could detract from the task of achieving these goals were carefully avoided... (emphasis mine) (12)*

Thus like most analyses that deal with the «form» rather than the «essence», Nigeria's foreign policy is divested of its class dynamics and endowed with a quality independent of its class origins. The result is an analysis that confuses cause with effect and mistakes one for the other. Whilst one cannot deny the importance of these domestic as well as external «determinants», it would be preposterous to assign them the degree of determinate quality these analyses do.

### **MATERIALIST METHODOLOGY**

Our position in this analysis is that an accurate understanding of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence cannot be fostered by focusing on the structural variables of its domestic and international environment. Rather we must turn to materialist methodology to lay bare the contradictions that produce the specific policy orientations of the Nigerian political class. Only then can we pose the right questions which will lead to an understanding of Nigeria's domestic politics in general and its foreign policy in particular. Our point of departure then is to briefly discuss materialist methodology as founded by Karl Marx.

It would be recalled that Marx's great contribution to philosophy and hence Social Science, was his «turning Hegel, (who was «standing on his head») right side up» (13). Hegel had postulated that the material concrete world is but a reflection of ideas in conflict, that ideas are the cause not the effect of reality. Marx put it the other way round, showing that ideas are but reflections of the material concrete world. In what is generally known today as dialectical materialism, he posits the laws of motion, according to which every concrete situation contains within it the dynamics of its own evolution. This view of reality, this way of looking at things «as moments in their own development» (14) enabled him to treat things within a relational model, which treats the internal relations of a social category such as capital, as well as its inter-connections to other social entities. It is this that enabled Marx to conceive of social change in terms of a *continuum* in which the present «becomes part of a *continuum* stretching from a definable past to a knowable (if not always predictable) future», in which «tomorrow is today extended», as a «coming to be of what potentially is, as the further unfolding of an already existing process taken as a special temporal relation» (15). Thus the dialectics as a method is not only a way of seeing things but an approach to the study of problems «which concentrates on looking for relationships not only between different entities but between the same one in times past, present, and future» (16). In his critique of Political Economy, he tells us that:

*In the study of economic categories in the case of every historical and social science, it must be born in mind that as in reality so in our mind the subject... is given and that the categories are therefore but forms of expressions, manifestations of existence and frequently but one-sided aspect of this subject (17).*

In this statement Marx is making an important distinction between a subject and categories used to represent it, a recognition of the fact that our knowledge of the real world is mediated through the construction of concepts in which to think about it. It is to underline the fact that our contact with reality in so far as we become aware of it is contact with a «conceptualized» reality. Thus by the methodological procedure of abstraction from reality or, to borrow Paul Sweezy's restatement of it – the method of «successive approximations» which consists in moving from the more abstract to the more concrete in a step-by-step fashion, removing simplifying assumptions at successive stages of the investigation so that theory may take account of and explain an ever wider range of actual phenomena», we can arrive at a scientifically valid theory (18). «In the analysis of economic forms» he wrote, «neither microscopes nor chemical reagents are of use. The force of abstraction must replace both» (19). It is the explanatory power of this «force of abstraction» that endows it with the scientific quality which Marx and Engels claim for it. And we believe with them, that dialectical materialism is the only mode of analysis that can enhance our knowledge of man and his creation – society with all its artefacts.

In this study we want to analyse Nigeria's foreign policy since independence. We posit that an understanding of Nigeria's foreign policy can only be fostered through an analysis of its class origins. The central conceptual category for our analysis would therefore be the class-struggle as conceived in Marxism.

It is generally not appreciated that Marx was not the first student of society to recognize class-struggle as a phenomena of class society. Plato, for instance, was one of the first to observe that societies at least those with which he was familiar are divided into antagonistic classes. «Any city, however small» he declared, «is in fact divided into two: one the city of the poor, the other, the rich; these are at war with one another» (20). Here Plato had his finger on the central theme of dialectical materialism – the struggle of opposites which is inherent in all class societies. In his own statement of the matter, Marx makes class struggle the one major characteristic of all societies where class distinction exists:

*The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Freeman and slave, patrician and Plebeian, lord and serf, guild - master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes... The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but*

*established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses however this distinctive feature, it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great battle camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat (21)*

Of course Marx's observation was made in reference to nineteenth century Europe; at a time when capitalism was at its ripe stage; when England, about which Marx's analysis was mostly concerned, manifested the class structure that he so vividly portrayed in his analysis. The two-class Marxian model cannot apply to most of contemporary Africa. But this is not to deny the existence of antagonistic classes either, as the theories of social and cultural pluralism claim. True, the social structure of most African societies today presents a «fairly complex kaleidoscope», and Nigeria is no exception. However we contend that in so far as the historical incorporation of Africa and its precapitalist systems into the evolving capitalist mode of production produced a «complex system of class relations» our understanding of these societies can only come through an analysis of the political struggle between the classes, for «the separate individuals form a class only in so far as they have to carry on a common battle against another class, otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors» (22). Thus social class as a category cannot but remain «a theoretical concept» until actualized in the political struggle. It should be emphasized that our conception of social class is not merely juridical but derives from Marx's notion of what constitutes a class, when he wrote:

*In the social production of their existence men inevitably enter into definite relations which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material sources of production. (emphasis mine) (23).*

In other words, we conceive of class in this analysis not in the bourgeois interpretation of ownership of the means of production by a group but in the broader sense of an individual's class position as a function of the social relations of production; that is, relations of man to man (rather than man - thing relationship) within the production system. In essence this is to make an important distinction between the direct producers of surplus value and those who control the disposal of this surplus, which may or may not, but in our context does include, juridical ownership of the means of production. We argue that it is this relation of production that constitutes the class dynamics and that class struggle is its political manifestation. As Marx puts it

*The combination of capital had created for this mass (workers) a common situation, a common interest. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle of which we have noted only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interest it defends*

*becomes class interests.* But the struggle of class against class is a political struggle. (*emphasis mine*) (24).

It is a political struggle because it involves «the instruments of political power of one class over another», in this instance the state apparatus. Thus class struggle manifests itself most dramatically in the contest for the control of the state apparatus most especially in a dependent relationship within the global capitalist system. As Lewis Lorwin puts it «since the power of the ruling class is always concentrated in the organization of the state, the oppressed class must aim directly against the mechanism of the state. *Every class struggle is thus a political struggle*, which in its objectives aims at the abolition of the existing social order and at the establishment of a new social system» (25). This is because, of all the organizations within a given society only the state possesses the instrumentalities of coercion and whoever controls it certainly controls his destiny. An added reason for this in the underdeveloped states of Africa is the crucial role of the state as «the factor of cohesion of a social formation and the factor of reproduction of the conditions of production of a system that itself determines the domination of one class over the other» (26). Thus the state, whilst claiming a certain degree of autonomy, in its actions remains, and in a class society cannot but remain the protector of the economically and socially dominant class. The central thesis of this analysis is that the general international posture of the various regimes in Nigeria since independence and the specific policies pursued to articulate this posture was the result of the internal class contradictions.

In discussing the class structure of most post-colonial states in Africa and elsewhere one cannot ignore the historical circumstances that produced it. For as Magubane rightly points out «the analysis of the distinctive features of Africa's integration into the world (capitalist) economy is fundamental for the study and specific features of its class structure». The colonial state produced its own class structure but, there is no gainsaying the fact that «the historical specificity of imperialism in Africa lays in the fact that although it integrates Africa within the world capitalist economy, it did not create in Africa a wholly capitalist social milieu» (27) And for Nigeria, as for most of Africa, this means there was no «national bourgeoisie» because, unlike their European predecessors they (the African bourgeoisie) «lack both the historical maturity of their metropolitan counterpart and the latter's objective economic base» (28). It is to create the economic base which they lack that makes the control of state coercive apparatus their primary objective in the struggles that characterized post-independent Nigeria.

## **NIGERIA'S CLASS STRUCTURE**

As pointed out earlier, Nigeria's class formation was a function, first of British imperialism in its colonial phase and, secondly, of the critical role assumed by the state after formal independence was proclaimed. At independence the class structure consisted of the petty bourgeoisie — those who as in many African states, «led the independence struggle and came to control the state apparatus, thus becoming a *ruling class albeit* in a subordinate place to the international bourgeoisie» (29). Of course this

class includes elements from the remnants of feudal social formations in parts of the Northern and Western Regions but it was made up primarily of the lower stratum of the intelligentsia – teachers, lawyers, doctors, civil servants and petty traders. Next to the petty bourgeoisie in rank was the commercial bourgeoisie – small in size but sufficiently articulate in their support of the nationalists. They were closely followed by the proletariat and their closest ally – the lumpen proletariat, the army of unemployed – many of them unemployable-primary school graduates who had deserted the villages for the towns in search of the «new life» promised by the nationalists during the mobilization phase of the independent struggle. At the bottom rung of the ladder peasants who constituted (and still constitute) the largest single and homogeneous class. One of our hypotheses in this study is that by the time colonialism was abruptly terminated, the British had groomed a stratum of the petty bourgeoisie to take over from the erstwhile colonial administrators. Indeed their last few years were spent in the training of some of these successors to the «throne» to ensure that Nigeria was «safe for democracy». «More or less consciously» wrote Basil Davidson «the British and the French were eager to hand their power to elites who would keep the African world safe for capitalism, *above all their own* capitalism» (30). As in most colonies where independence came without revolutionary struggle, the British were correct in their judgement as to the «safety» of Nigeria for Western capitalism. In no area of Nigeria's post independence politics was this demonstrated than in the foreign policy posture of the coalition government that took over the reins of power from the British on October 1, 1960.

#### **FOREIGN POLICY : Principles and objective.**

The Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa made his maiden foreign policy statement in the Federal House of Representatives on August 20, 1960, a few months before formal independence was proclaimed. In it he outlined the general principles that would constitute the cornerstones of Nigeria's foreign policy under his leadership. First, Nigeria would follow an independent policy, «founded on Nigeria's interest», and «consistent with the moral and democratic principles on which our constitution is based». The policy would, on each occasion, «be selected with proper *independence objectivity*» (emphasis mine). Nigeria would apply for membership of the United Nations and the Commonwealth, he told the House, for Nigeria would benefit «from the free interchange of ideas and consultation between members of the Commonwealth and from their experience within the framework of the United Nations». However, his government would have «a free hand to select policies which it considered to be most advantageous for Nigeria». On the ideological bifurcation of the world into East and West, he declared, «We consider it wrong for the Federal Government to associate itself, as a matter of routine with any of the power blocs». Nigeria would not «blindly follow the lead of anyone». On Pan-Africanism his strong commitment to functional Pan-Africanism was unmistakable. His government would adopt:

*clear and practical policies with regard to Africa. It will be our aim to assist any African country to find a solution to its problems and to foster the growth of a common understanding among all nations and especially among the new nations of this continent (31).*

These themes were further elucidated and amplified in the Prime Minister's address to the General Assembly of the United Nations on October 7, 1960. Noting with pride Nigeria's admission into both the U.N. and the Commonwealth, he deprecated the ideological polarization of the world and reaffirmed his country's determination not to «align herself as a matter of routine with any particular bloc». In what appears to be an attempt to establish the philosophical basis for the declared policy of non-alignment, he asserted:

*One great advantage which we new nations have is that the accession to independence makes a clean cut with our past and presents us with the opportunity to enter the field of international relations untrammelled by prior commitments. It is probably the one occasion in the life of a nation when it is possible to choose policies for their inherent qualities of goodness (32).*

On his return home he reiterated his stand to his country men and stressed that Nigeria «as a country will not join either the Western or Eastern or any other bloc». In response to some critics of his government's conservative approach to African unity he again stressed that Nigeria's approach would be gradualistic functionalism. «To talk of a political union first» he warned, «before the necessary understanding and before knowing exactly what our problems are, ... is too premature ... It is unrealistic to expect countries to give up the Sovereignty which they have so recently acquired, and I am quite sure that it is wrong to imagine that political union could of itself bring the countries together; on the contrary *it will follow as the natural consequence of co-operation in other fields*» (33). (emphasis mine).

This then, sums up the foreign policy posture of the Balewa regime. As can be inferred, Nigeria was to pursue an independent policy in its interaction with the global political system. No sooner were these principles of action enunciated however, that the regime found itself embroiled in internal wranglings over the specific application of the principles. This was due, we argue, primarily to the secondary contradictions of the alliance of the petty-bourgeoisie of the then Eastern Region represented by the NCNC party and elements of the feudal «barons» in the North represented by the NPC party. It was an alliance of factions of the Northern and Eastern bourgeoisie fostered by a common disdain for the ambitious leadership of the Yoruba dominated Action Group party of the then Western Region. This marriage of convenience in the face of a common enemy was to suffer serious setbacks within the first few months of independence as the contradictions within the coalition began to unfold in the struggle for the control of the state machinery became more intense (34).

We contend that these struggles produced the incoherence that characterized the Balewa Regime's foreign policy positions on various international issues. As Idang put it quite succinctly «...his (Balewa's) foreign policy postures were nothing but a wretched bundle of compromises obviously intended to placate all political groupings during the seminal years immediately before and after independence» (35).

It is our contention that it was through these postures that the Balewa regime, and the military successor regimes, in spite of their occasional anti-imperialist policies, ensured, Nigeria's integration into global capitalism. To illustrate this point we shall select for analysis some major policy issues in the three phases of this progressive consolidation of the capitalist mode of production and its attendant social and political order.

### **THE CONSOLIDATION OF NEO-COLONIALISM:**

The most glaring example of a policy inconsistency between principles and actual policies pursued after formal independence was proclaimed, was the decision to sign a defence pact with Britain early in 1961. Called the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact, the agreement provided for military training for Nigerian officers, the acquisition of weapons «necessary for the defence of Nigeria» and the supply of military personnel to Nigeria. In introducing the motion in Parliament of November 19, 1960, Alhaji Ribadu, the Defence Minister, assured members of the house that nothing in the Pact derogated from the full sovereignty and independence of action of Nigeria. In exchange for these facilities, Nigeria would provide Britain «with facilities for tropicalisation trials of aircraft both above land and sea and overflying and airstaging facilities» (36) — a euphemism for a military base in Nigeria. Needless to say that the majority of the members of the House supported the provisions of the pact. After all they shared the Prime Minister's sentiments when, in the independence broadcast he declared: «We are grateful to the British whom we have known first as Masters then as leaders and finally as partners, but always as friends» (37). It was to reciprocate British «friendliness» that the government agreed to go into a defence alliance, notwithstanding the principle of non-alignment as a cardinal principle of its foreign policy. To Balewa and his ministerial colleagues however, this was no violation of that sacred principle. It was in Nigeria's national interest, for after all, Nigeria's commitment to the United Nations required it to have «forces trained and equipped in the modern way» and this was merely a step towards the realization of that modest goal! Unfortunately for the government the articulate public led by the opposition party would not listen to the rhetorics of the situation. In an unprecedented march on the Federal House of the Nigerian students, together with other mobilized groups, prominent among which were the lumpen-proletariat, broke the barricade and entered the chamber where the Representatives were debating the Pact and overturned the tables as the members escaped through the windows in panic. It was a gallant demonstration of student power the like of which has never been seen since. In the midst of this hostility Britain unilaterally offered to rescind the Pact, to save the Balewa Government the embarrassment of having to capitulate before an unarmed but potentially violent mob.



If the Defence Pact was the overt expression of the British attempt to consolidate its neo-colonial grip on Nigeria, the structure of the Nigerian economy provided a subtle means of achieving its objectives without the publicity that bedeviled the former. Through its domestic economic policies designed to build, through state involvement, a national bourgeoisie, the Balewa regime opened Nigeria's doors to international capital. This was made possible not only by the dependent nature of the economy but much more decisively, by the series of investment policies evolved by the receding colonial power as part of the bargain for independence – to ensure that British capital in particular and Western capital in general would find a most hospitable climate for exploitation. As far back as 1952 the Aid to Pioneer Industries Ordinance was passed, according to which an industry declared a pioneer industry would be protected from foreign competition through a number of measures. One of these was to relieve the industry from payment of company or profit tax for a period ranging from three to six years depending on the amount of fixed capital expenditure of the company. In the same year, the income tax (Amendment) Ordinance which allowed companies, both public and private, to write off from profits, for purposes of computing taxable income, a large amount of their capital investment in fixed assets during the early years of trading. The effect was to allow such companies to amortise their capital quickly and to build up liquid reserves at an early period thereby facilitating further investment. Then followed the 1956 policy statement titled «Opportunities for Overseas Investments in the Federation of Nigeria» which outlined what would be Nigeria's post-independence policy on industries set up in any part of the country, and detailed a number of inducements and safeguards. Similar ordinances were subsequently passed, for instance, the Industrial Development (Import Duties Relief) Ordinance (1957 and 1958), the Customs Duties (Dumped and Subsidized Goods) Ordinance 1958, all designed to attract Western Capital (38). To assure foreign investors that the Government was not in accord with group calling for nationalization of foreign industries after independence, the Minister of Finance declared in the 1958/59 budget speech:

*...we are in earnest in our determination to do all in our power to attract investment which we so badly needed. As a further measure of our earnestness in this matter...the rate of the company tax is to be reduced from nine shillings to eight shillings in the pound and it will be possible to carry forward losses indefinitely instead of for only ten years as at present. (my emphasis) (39).*

By independence the guidelines for Nigeria's foreign economic policies had been established. The ideology of free enterprise had been imposed and the state was to play a critical role in the progressive intensification of the integration of the economy into global capitalism. By January 1966 when the army stepped in to prevent the convulsive class struggles that characterized Nigerian politics since the federal elections of December 1964, Nigeria was trailing closely behind Ivory Coast as Africa's most promising bastion of capitalism. Western capital was clearly dominant in all sectors of the economy except in the distributive trade where a small

merchant class had developed in alliance with the foreign managerial bourgeoisie. In the currently dominant petroleum industry all but one of the companies prospecting for oil are from western countries of advanced capitalism. The only exception is a Japanese company – The Japan Petroleum Company – but the distinction between Japan and the West in this respect is, to all intents and purposes, an academic distinction.

In the area of external trade the government's trade policies were consistent with the undeclared goal of making Nigeria safe for capitalism. As the table below shows, 86% of Nigeria's exports in 1965 went to the west whilst 73% of her imports came from the same markets. As with trade, so it was with aid, with the Balewa regime refusing at first any form of contact with the East to the extent of denying passports to Nigerians who wished to travel to the Eastern countries. Indeed countries to which Nigerians could travel were listed in the passport and these excluded the Soviet block – the clearest evidence of «non-alignment».

**Table I**

**The Direction of Nigeria's Trade**

*a) Principal Buyers of Nigeria's Exports*

	1960		1963		1965	
	Annual Value in Fm.	Per Cent of Total Exports	Annual Value in Fm.	Per Cent of Total Exports	Annual Value in Fm.	Per Cent of Total Exports
United Kingdom	79.9	48.1	74.0	39.1	101.5	38.5
EEC	51.3	30.9	69.1	37.0	96.3	36.6
U.S.A.	15.9	9.6	17.4	9.5	26.2	9.9
Japan	2.5	1.5	2.4	1.3	3.2	1.2
Others	16.2	9.8	22.0	13.1	36.1	13.8
Total	165.8	100.	184.9	100.	263.3	100.

*b) Principal Suppliers of Imports to Nigeria*

	1960		1963		1965	
	Annual Value in Fm.	Per Cent of Total Exports	Annual Value in Fm.	Per Cent of Total Exports	Annual Value in Fm.	Per Cent of Total Exports
United Kingdom	91.4	42.3	70.8	34.1	85.0	30.9
EEC	31.7	14.7	41.3	21.2	56.4	20.3
U.S.A.	11.6	5.4	17.9	8.1	33.1	12.2
Japan	27.8	12.8	25.9	12.4	25.6	9.6
Others	53.4	24.8	51.7	24.2	75.2	27.0
Total	215.9	100.	207.6	100.	275.3	100.

Source: *The Review of Nigeria's External Trade, Lagos, Federal Office of Statistics.*

## FOREIGN POLICY UNDER THE MILITARY

If Balewa's foreign policy succeeded in preparing Nigeria for capitalist exploitation, Gowon's successor regime, initially facilitated the consolidation of the gains made by capital under Balewa. Of course the Nigerian Civil War exposed the hypocrisy of the west and could have served as the catalyst for a revolutionary foreign policy. However, the accession to power by the military had also enhanced the power of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie in the determination of state policies. With the vacuum created by the displacement of the civilian governing class, the senior cadres of the state bureaucracy, especially its administrative component, assumed the role of the political class in dictating the direction of Nigeria's external relations. Capitalising on the political inexperience of the military, they became the single most powerful fraction of the petty bourgeoisie and used their newly found power to strengthen their international connections. Under General Gowon, Nigeria's foreign policy moved from a clearly pro-western position to a slightly more anti-western posture. The civil war had forced the decision-makers to diversify Nigeria's external relations. However, the fruits of western capitalism on Nigerian soil, even during the armed struggle, were too sweet to lead them to a rejection of the system. Indeed, none of them ever thought that the struggle itself was rooted in the system and no sooner was the «enemy» (i.e. Biafra) liquidated than they embarked on policies that were geared towards greater involvement of the state in the development of capitalism, and through this, the consolidation of their own links with the international bourgeoisie that dominated the economy.

## ANTI-IMPERIALIST MOVES

In February 1972 the Government announced the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree which sought to transfer ownership of certain categories of business enterprises to Nigerians. The objective was to «ensure that Nigerians had a greater share in the growth of the economy» (40). It was the first time that the growing commercial bourgeoisie succeeded in using state power for their class interest. The decree also paved the way for further demands on the state for the nationalisation of foreign businesses by the small group of revolutionary intellectuals, students and workers. However, the policy-makers never intended to scare foreign investors. On the contrary the decree was promulgated to assuage the growing unrest within the indigenous commercial bourgeoisie who founded themselves increasingly losing out of their foreign counterparts in an economy in which fortune could be made overnight if one knew the rules of the game.

Phase two of the decree brought businesses with higher share capital within the purview of the decree but instead of complete ownership of such business by Nigerians, the decree stipulated that not less than 60% equity interest should be owned by Government or private Nigerian citizens. These include huge supermarket complexes, financial institutions such as the banks and Insurance, mining and quarrying, construction, wholesale distribution of imported goods etc. These are enterprises the Government considered as of strategic importance to the economy. All

other businesses not categorized under either of these schedules should, according to the decree, have 40% Nigerian participation. The first phase was expected to be completed by March 1976 whilst the second phase was scheduled for realization before the end of 1978. In practice, however, the decree opened up vast opportunities for the bureaucratic bourgeoisie to establish its economic base in alliance with the commercial bourgeoisie. As the report of the Enterprises Promotion Board – the body charged with the implementation of the decree has shown, there were two principal failures: downright evasion and dishonesty on the part of foreign investors whose businesses were affected by the decree (41).

These evasions were not without the knowledge of those who were charged with the implementation of the provisions. Indeed there is evidence to suggest that evasions were encouraged by these elements in exchange for kickbacks. Thus a network of alliance has developed between many foreign investors and the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. The result has been a non-antagonistic struggle within the bureaucracy for the control of those structures of state power that facilitate enhanced opportunities for the accumulation of wealth. Indeed one student of this phenomenon has argued that the increased involvement of the state, under the military, in the development of capitalism has produced such intense struggle within the bureaucracy that it led to the coup that ousted General Gowon. As she puts it: «The tendency towards monopoly of power and advantage within the state leads to suspicion and hostility from the out-groups of civil servants and military officials who are not privy to decisions» (42). Whether or not Gowon's deposition was the result of such struggle within the military – bureaucratic alliance needs further empirical research. What is obvious, however, is that by its active participation in the economy which required it to move against fragments of foreign capital, it opened up the Pandora's box for greater demands on it in the interest of the commercial bourgeoisie as well as providing the opportunities for fragments of the petty bourgeoisie including the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, to establish its economic base through shareholding in the indigenized businesses.

## ANTAGONISTIC STRUGGLES

Most of the class struggles that characterized post independent Nigerian politics were non-antagonistic. This is because they have occurred as a result of secondary contradictions within the classes. They have been struggles concerned primarily with the «manner of disposal» of the surplus value, rather than with changing the system. It is true that the control of the state was the objective of the various fractions of the ruling bourgeoisie but the purpose for such control was to ensure that each fraction received what it considered its fair share of the surplus. Whilst these non-antagonistic struggles were going on the proletariat failed to mobilize in opposition to the ruling class. In spite of sporadic confrontations with the state, the proletariat never developed revolutionary consciousness. In 1964 it succeeded in paralysing the economy through a general strike and forced the Government to capitulate in its proposals for wage increases that the unions considered unacceptable to the working class. Once the Government struck a bargain with the union leaders, however, the workers

relapsed into their «economistic» mentality. Nigerian workers, like their counterparts in advanced capitalist countries, have yet to see themselves as a class locked in an antagonistic battle with its exploiting class. The most recent manifestation of antagonistic class struggle was the peasants' confrontation with the military government of Western Region in December 1969, during which they rejected the taxes proposed by the government. Most of the studies done of the violent attack on government and functionaries reveal a consciousness on the part of the peasants that they had been exploited by the ruling class for too long. It is instructive to note that the workers failed to join in this struggle and in due course the peasants put down their arms as the government capitulated. Thus one can conclude with Shivji that «in non-revolutionary situation much of the class struggle is latent and even unidentifiable as such at any particular moment. Talking about class struggle at such times is really registering the fact of class struggle ex-post facto» (43). Yet these struggles have shaped to a considerable degree Nigeria's foreign policy.

#### **MURTALA MOHAMMED: Revolution or Reform**

Most analyses of Nigeria's foreign policy since the military came into power have noted a progressive movement towards militant anti-imperialism. The most spectacular of this posture was Nigeria's support for the MPLA in Angola, shortly after General Murtala assumed power in 1975. It was under his leadership also that a more rigorous implementation of the indigenisation decree was pursued. His reaction to President Ford's letter to African Heads of State endeared him to the revolutionary groups within the country and it has been suggested that had he lived, he might have transformed the Nigerian society and made Nigeria unsafe for capitalism. The fact that his assassins accused him of going communists is cited as evidence for Western imperialist involvement in his assassination.

From the little evidence at our disposal however, the claim that Nigeria, under Mohammed, would have witnessed a structural revolution cannot be substantiated. One glaring example is his warning to the Constitution Drafting Committee charged with the responsibility of drawing up a new constitution for Nigeria, that members should avoid introducing any ideology into Nigeria. «Past events», he told the committee, «have... shown that we cannot build a future for this country on a rigid ideology. Such an approach would be unrealistic... until our people or a large majority of them have acknowledged a common motivation» (44). Of course, ideology for him and others within the ruling class, means socialism, which is anathema to all the bourgeoisie.

There is certainly no doubt that Mohammed did a lot within the short period of his leadership. Externally he carved a new image for Nigeria, an image which certainly led some western powers to wonder whether the new direction is not decidedly anti-west. Yet in retrospect, the difference between Balewa in 1965 and Mohammed in 1975 is a difference in degree not in kind. Both represented the interests of international capital in spite of the latter's anti-imperialist posture. Mohammed's successor has assured Nigerians that he would not deviate from Mohammed's programme. If what was contained in the 1977/80

budgets is any guide, it confirms what Nigeria's former Ambassador to the United States told his audience in his address to the Annual Colloquium of the Nigerian Students Union in the Americas in which he observed that what distinguishes the present regime from its predecessors is not a fundamental change in Nigeria's foreign policy but «the manner in which our interests have been perceived and the manner in which our policies have been executed» (45). It has never been the intention of the ruling class to disengage Nigeria from global capitalism. This much is clear from Obasanjo's 1978/79 budget speech (46). Thus progressively the state has become «the factor of social formation and the factor of reproduction» of classes. And foreign policy has been one of the instruments for the actualization of this role.

### CONCLUSION:

Nigeria today remains a valuable prize for western capitalism. The British, by inculcating in their successors, the bourgeois values of freedom- especially political freedom - have succeeded in making Nigeria safe not so much for democracy as for capitalism. The neo-colonial state that has emerged since independence has, through its bureaucracy, acted at the behest of the international bourgeoisie using fragments of the ruling class, thus validating Poulantza's thesis that «the capitalist state best serves the interests of the capitalist class only when the members of this class do not participate directly in the state apparatus, that is to say when the ruling class is not the *politically* governing class» (47). Nigeria does not as yet have a capitalist class, but the ruling class has, since 1966, ceased to be the politically governing class. The bureaucracy, which we regard as a fragment of the ruling class constitutes a «specific social category» as Marx and Engels saw them because they function according to a specific internal unity. As Poulantzas puts it:

*Their class origin – class situation – recedes into the background in relation to that which unifies them – their class position; that is to say, the fact that they belong precisely to the state apparatus and that they have as their objective function the actualization of the role of the state. This in turn means that the bureaucracy as a specific and relatively «united» social category is the «servant» of the ruling class, not by reason of its class origin...or by reason of its personal relations with the ruling class but by reason of the fact that its internal unity derives from its actualization of the objective role of the state. The totality of this role itself coincides with the interests of the ruling class (48).*

This raises the vital question of the relative autonomy of the state from fragments of the hegemonic class. In the specific situation of present day Nigeria, the state is subordinated to the military component of the hegemonic class understandably because this fraction monopolizes the state instruments of coercion. It is the subordination of the state to this fraction that facilitates the military-bureaucrate alliance in the formulation of Nigeria's foreign policy, whose primary objective remains making Nigeria safe for capitalism. There are signs however, that this alliance may not

last much longer. Antagonistic class struggles, though non-revolutionary at the moment, continue to surface periodically as workers seek to alter the system of exploitation from which they see no way out. With the increasing number of revolutionary intellectuals and labour union leaders, it may not be long before the process of disengaging the Nigerian economy from global capitalism is set in motion. The recently concluded program of transition from military to civil rule, which ensured the enthronement of the right-wing faction of the bourgeoisie is evidence of the military's determination to integrate Nigeria's economy into global capitalism. As Terisa Turner rightly observes:

*Workers and peasants have so far demonstrated their capabilities to resist oppression. What is required is that they organize themselves to transform the system which exploits them (49).*

The task of transforming the system «which exploits them» is a formidable one, given the new face of imperialism in Africa. But as the Iranian revolution has demonstrated, guns are ineffective where revolutionary consciousness is attained by the exploited class. Herein lies the hope for the transformation of the Nigerian social system.

## NOTES

- (1) James S. Coleman *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1971) p. 41.
- (2) Dame Mergery Perham: Quoted in Coleman, *Ibid*.
- (3) Kenneth Post and Michael Vikers: *Structure and Conflict in Nigeria* (London Heinemann, 1973) p. 6.
- (4) Karl Marx: Quoted in *Monthly Review* No. 6 (November 1975) p. 46.
- (5) Bernard Magubane: «The Evolution of the Class Structure in Africa». In Peter C. W. Gutkind & I. Wallerstein eds. *The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa* (Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications 1976) p. 171.
- (6) Wolfram F. Handrieder: «Compatibility and Consensus: A Proposal for the Conceptual Linkage of External and Internal Dimensions of Foreign Policy». In Wolfram F. Handrieder ed. *Comparative Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays* (New York, David McKay Co. Inc. 1971) p. 242.
- (7) «Consociational» refers to societies with crosscutting cleavage.
- (8) Henry A. Kissinger: «Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy», in Harold K. Jacobson and William Zimmerman: *The Shaping of Foreign Policy* (New York Athert Press, 1969) p. 141.
- (9) Idang op.cit. p. 36.
- (10) J. S. Mill: Quoted in Idang op.cit. p. 36.
- (11) *Ibid*, p. 38.
- (12) *Ibid*, p. 18.
- (13) Bertell Ollman: *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*: (New York, Cambridge University Press) p. 54.
- (14) *Ibid*, p. 52.

- (15) Ibid, p. 18.
- (16) Ibid, p. 52.
- (17) Karl Marx: Introduction to *The Critique of Political Economy*, p. 302.
- (18) Paul M. Sweezy: *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York Monthly Review Press, 1970) p. 11.
- (19) Karl Marx: Quoted in Sweezy p. 12.
- (20) Plato: Quoted in Oliver C. Cox: *Caste, Class and Race*: (New York Monthly Review Press 1970) p. 152.
- (21) Karl Marx: Quoted in Cox op.cit., p. 154.
- (22) Karl Marx: Quoted in Isaa G. Shivji: *Class Struggles in Tanzania* (New York Monthly Review Press 1976) p. 7.
- (23) Ibid, p. 6.
- (24) Karl Marx: Quoted in Shivji op.cit., p. 7.
- (25) Lewis L. Lorwin: Quoted in Cox, op.cit., p. 155.
- (26) Nicolas Poulantzas: «The Problem of the Capitalist State», in Robin Blackburn, ed. *Ideology in Social Science: Readings in Critical Social Theory*. (New York: Pantheon 1972) p. 24.
- (27) Magubane: op.cit., p. 177.
- (28) Shivji, op.cit., p. 21.
- (29) Ibid, p.23.
- (30) Davidson: Quoted in Gutkind, op.cit., p. 187.
- (31) This and the preceding quotations are from Sam Epelle (ed.) *Nigeria Speaks: Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa – Speeches made between 1957 and 1964* (London Longmans 1964) p. 60 – 3.
- (32) Ibid.
- (33) Quoted in Idang, op.cit., p. 9.
- (34) Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe leader of the banned NCNC party claimed later that his party went into alliance with the Northern People's Congress to avoid a north-south confrontation. This has, however, been disputed by those who are familiar with the personal animosity between him and Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the banned Action Group, which ruled out an alliance between them.
- (35) Idang, op.cit., p. 15.
- (36) Alhaji M. Ribadu, Minister of Defence: Quoted in Claude S. Phillips, Jr. *The Development of Nigeria Foreign Policy* (North Western University Press 1964) p. 43.
- (37) Idang, op.cit., p. 49.
- (38) Ekundare, E.O. «The Political Economy of Private Investment in Nigeria» in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 10, 1, 1 (1972) p. 41.
- (39) Ibid.
- (40) Businesses affected are those whose share capital is less than 15,000 U.S. Dollars.
- (41) Alan Hutchison: «Tension between Indigenization and Foreign Investment» in *African Development*, (December 1976) p. 1283.



- (42) Terisa Turner: «Multinational Corporations and the Instability of Nigerian State. *Review of African Political Economy* (January – February 1976) p. 66.
- (43) Shivji, op.cit., p.8.
- (44) General Murtala Mohammed: *Selected Speeches of General Murtala Mohammed* (Yaba. Pacific Press 1976).
- (45) E. O. Sanu: «Nigerian Foreign Policy Through The Looking Glass» in *Federal Nigeria* (Embassy of Nigeria – Washington October–November–December 1976, Vol. 1, No. 1) p. 4.
- (46) West Africa, April 11, 1977 p. 695–7, April 10, 1978 and April 9, 1979.
- (47) Nicolas Poulantzas in Blackburn ed. op.cit., p. 246–9.
- (48) Ibid, p. 246–7.
- (49) Terisa Turner: *Review of African Political Economy* No. 5 (January – February 1976) p. 79.

## RESUME

L'objet de cet article est d'analyser la politique étrangère Nigériane en fonction des tensions politiques internes et des luttes de classes. Après une brève ébauche de l'histoire pré-coloniale et la constitution de l'état contemporain l'auteur procède à une élaboration de ses concepts théoriques. Une telle démarche est plausible car selon l'auteur le Nigéria était déjà à l'aube de son indépendance «un pays où le mode de production dominant était déjà capitaliste malgré le fait que certains modes de production primitifs coexistaient en symbiose». L'état était déjà ancré dans un faisceau de liens de dépendances économiques quoique dans certaines régions il existait des poches de production d'auto-subsistance. Les antagonismes qui en ont résulté ont jusqu'à présent été examinés à la lumière des conflits tribaux plutôt que dans le cadre des différences de classes. L'auteur s'évertue à offrir une analyse plus précise de la structure de classes dans le Nigéria post-colonial et des intérêts particuliers de la bourgeoisie nationale (et ses fractions). Il explique qu'à des stades historiques marqués par des régimes différents, (Tafawa Balewa, Gowon pendant la guerre civile et le régime militaire de Murtala Mohamed) les principes fondamentaux de la politique étrangère coïncidaient avec les intérêts politico-économiques de la classe dirigeante, malgré les déclarations des responsables politiques (citons un exemple parmi tant d'autres : «Le Nigéria ne s'associerait jamais à bloc quelconque, que ce soit de l'Est ou de l'Ouest»; cette déclaration fut faite au moment de l'indépendance mais un an après le Nigéria adhéra au pacte de défense mutuelle anglo-Nigériane). Si l'on examine de près ces antagonismes ne sont rien d'autre que l'expression des contradictions secondaires à l'intérieur des classes. L'auteur emploie alors cette expression malheureuse de «luttes non antagoniques», qui dit-il, ont influencé la politique étrangère du Nigéria rendant celui-ci encore plus dépendant.

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