

Migrating into unemployment and poverty : some consequences of the Urban Revolution in Nigeria

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One of the most pressing problems in Nigeria, no less than in Africa today is the dramatically increasing rate of urban growth. Before the second world war Nigeria experienced a normal population growth which averaged some 1.8 percent per annum. This era was also characterised by its own pattern of population movements. Except for the « old » towns in Western Nigeria, there were few others to move to and most people moved from one rural area to another. The census of 1952 showed that Ibadan with a population of 459,196 was not only the biggest city in Nigeria but also the biggest native city in Tropical Africa. The second largest town was Lagos with a population of 267,407 persons followed by Kano with 131,316.

1. — ONE DECADE OF URBAN EXPLOSION (1952-63)

Of all Nigerian cities, however, Lagos showed the earliest sign of explosion. Between 1952 and 1963, it increased from 267,407 to 834,625 giving an annual growth rate of 9.4 percent between the censuses². Within the same decade, it spread beyond its city boundaries to form a metropolitan complex which reached beyond the million mark. It thus headed what has since assumed the character of an urban revolution spreading to other parts of the country.

At the same time as Lagos was growing, other towns and cities were springing up fast all in response to the new industrialism and urbanism originating from and oriented towards the metropolitan centres of Europe and America.

For example, in Northern Nigeria Kaduna rose from 42,647 in 1952 at an annual rate of 10.6 percent to 129,133 in 1963. Within the same period i.e. between 1952 and 1963, Kano grew at an annual rate of 7.6 percent to reach 295,422 and Zaria at 5.5 percent per

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annum to 166,170. In other words the population of Kano - Kaduna - Zaria, complex including an outlying extension in Jos, grew to 685,186 persons at a combined annual rate of 7.6 percent.

In eastern Nigeria, Port Harcourt grew at an annual rate of 10.5 percent from 1952 to reach 179,563 in 1963. During the same period, Aba grew at the rate of 7.6 percent annually to 131,003, Enugu at 7.4 percent per annum to 138,457 and Onitsha at 7.0 percent annually to 163,032. In other words the closely knit network of towns stretching from Port Harcourt to Onitsha registered a combined annual growth rate of 8.2 percent between 1952 and 1963.

Apart from these new towns and cities which can be said to have grown at a phenomenal rate, others mainly old or traditional towns which registered modest annual increases between 1952 and 1963 include Ibadan (3 percent) Maiduguri (4.8 percent) Ilorin (4 percent) Katsina (5 percent) Sokoto (5.9 percent) Benin (5.8 percent) and Calabar (4.5 percent). During the fifteen year period between 1952 and 1967 the town and cities in the close-settled zones of the North, South-East and West including Lagos received, according to Green, « an estimated influx which easily surpassed in volume the total migrant population of the entire country as reflected in the 1952-53 census..... All told, between 1952 and 1967, townward migration accounted for between 6 and 8 percent of the country's rural population recorded in the 1952-53 census, and the proportion of Nigerians living in settlements of at least five thousand inhabitants rose from 19 percent to a conservatively estimated 25 percent (3). The theoretical explanation and stages involved in this urban revolution has been fully discussed elsewhere by the present author (4). In this paper we intend to discuss two of the basic causes of urban unemployment; the aim being to understand the nature of the problem in order thereby to suggest approximate solutions.

II. — RURAL DISORGANISATION AS MAIN CAUSE

Demographic urbanisation of the sort which we have briefly outlined using the Nigerian experience has an important implication for socio-economic development.

First it brings about a systematic depopulation of the rural areas. In the rural hinterland of Lagos for example, the huge exodus of the most productive age-groups to the metropolitan area is having a depressing effect upon the rural districts of the state which are now generally characterised by derelict oil mills, empty houses and general deterioration. The general depression and poverty in the rural areas of Western Nigeria which among other things, led to the peasant revolt of 1968 has been discussed elsewhere (5). This exodus, first of labour migrants and later of psycho-social migrants which resulted in the first instance from the clash of civilisations causes further disor-

ganisation and poverty which in turn constitutes push factors from rural to urban areas. The literature on rural-urban migration has in general not sufficiently stressed the push factors in the process. Rather it has tended to emphasise the pull elements. We agree with Amin's observation that conventional economic theory of migration is purely tautological with nothing much to offer. A good example of such an economic explanation is that given by Todaro which attempts to explain migratory phenomena by assuming that the motivation to migrate is the function of two variables viz the gap in real income between town and country as well as the probability of being employed in the city (6). According to Amin, « The model in effect would only have explanatory value if (1) the cause of migration which he (Todaro) considers and attempts to quantify (i.e. the attraction of high urban income, taking into account the probability of getting a stable job) were really the basic cause and (2) if the ascertained differences of income were independent of the migration itself » (7). If Todaro's model were correct, migrants would be drawn indifferently from all « poor » rural areas alike. They should also be recruited from all the individuals who constitute their population. As we already pointed out in a publication nearly a decade old, however, the reasons people leave the rural community are not always economic (8). Migration could be labour or else psycho-socially motivated. The former explains rates only while the latter explains rate and incidence. In either case a situation of culture contact and learning is assumed and this explains why migrants are not drawn indifferently from all « poor » rural areas or from all individuals in the population. A recent contribution to the literature of rural-urban migration which shares our concern with the push elements in the process is that of Amin. In order to explain the differing rates and incidence of migration as between different rural areas, he devised a typology of the latter. He distinguishes three types of rural areas in West Africa namely : (1) those organised for large scale export production. Such areas have already entered the capitalist phase implying private appropriation of land and the availability of wage labour. (2) Those formed as a result of colonial economic policies which many West African governments continued to follow after independence. Rural areas in this category serve as reserves which supply salaried labour and finally (3) rural areas which are not as yet part of the system or to be more precise those which are still only marginally so and serve mainly as auxiliary reserves. « Rural areas of the first type » he says, « are no longer (traditional). Those of the second have the appearance but are not really so, (tradition) here being disrupted by the function imposed on them as suppliers of labour. Only those of the third type are still truly traditional. Migratory flow takes place exclusively from the second type towards the first, whereas the third does not yet supply migrants even though the « real income » may be particularly low » (8). One exemplification

of this model can be found in Northern Nigeria in the area surrounding the close-settled zone. Immediately surrounding this core area is the peripheral belt of type I rural area. This area has a population growth rate equal to the rate of natural increase but many parts of it suffer heavy net losses of population to the core area and to southern Nigeria. Surrounding the peripheral belt is a fringe area akin to type 2 rural area in Amin's typology. From this fringe area, a net exodus of people takes place mainly to the peripheral or type I belt and to the core areas. Beyond the fringe is a relatively isolated belt of poor villages with somewhat stable population reminiscent of type 3.

In other words, type 2 rural areas are most disorganised socio-culturally speaking. Accordingly the push factors are greatest. Serving as Labour suppliers pure and simply at the initial period, they reach a point much later when labour migration tends to be replaced with psycho-social migration.

The effect of either or both of these migration processes is to make type 2 area suffer from a continuous loss of the virile portion of its population i.e. those within the 15-49 age group leaving the very young and very old. Also characterising this area to a lesser or greater extent is conflict of norms arising from culture contact. These factors, added to those of widespread economic depression in the area, constitute push factors. One point to note, however, is that the migration which results is both a cause and an element in rural poverty and the consequent disparity between rural and urban areas. It is inadequate to treat it only as an effect by unduly stressing the pull factors in the process as Todaro does.

Type 3 rural area is relatively isolated. Incomes (whether money or real) are extremely low. In other words, residents in this area ought, by Todaro's model, ought to be most attracted by the high urban wages and therefore most disposed to migrate. Research evidence abound all over Africa to show that this is not so (9). In other words poverty measured in terms of money and real wages is not the most important element in migration. The explanation of course which Todaro's model fails to appreciate is that type 3 rural area is least socio-culturally disorganised. To put it in Amin's words, the area is still outside the capitalist nexus.

III. — ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF PARASITIC CITIES AS SECOND CAUSE

One of the most interesting aspects of Nigeria's development, or, shall we say, underdevelopment is the parasitic nature of her exploding towns and cities. By and large, the geometric growth rates referred to in the first part of this paper, has progressed side by side with increasingly depopulated and impoverished rural areas resulting from rural disorganisation (10). This situation is aggravated by the lack

of a comprehensive and integrated government policy on urban and regional planning. Rather than control urbanisation, government has through its policy of industrial location become a major factor in increasing rural-urban disparities. By 1965, for example, 32 percent of Nigeria's total manufacturing plants were concentrated in Metropolitan Lagos. Another 50 percent was shared by the urban centres of Kano, Zaria, Kaduna and Jos in Northern Nigeria ; Port Harcourt, Aba and Onitsha in Eastern Nigeria ; Ibadan and Abeokuta in the West ; Benin and Sapele in the midwest. At about the same period (1964) as much as 39 percent of the trade by road between Northern and Western Nigeria began from Kano and as much as 71 percent ended in Lagos (11). While the very idea of concentration of commerce and industry impedes even development, the situation is worsened by the fact that Nigerian capital towns and cities, like their counterparts elsewhere in Tropical Africa, function very much as liabilities rather than development assets (12). Their economies are usually export oriented and where not built directly on the coast, most of them are situated on railway lines which run parallel to each other from the coast inland. In these positions they serve as ideal points for collecting and storing raw materials from the hinterland for onward transmission to the metropolitan centres in Europe and America. This export orientation has many implications. First, it places severe restrictions on the ability of the economy to expand by limiting the type of possible industries to those based on import substitution catering only for the needs of the small urban elite. Although in their later stages of development, these cities develop a culture of their own which marks them off from the way of life characteristic of the outlying rural districts and smaller towns, the economic problems arising from their export oriented strategy multiply. Central among these problems is growing unemployment and poverty, treated in the next section, in the midst, so to say, of plenty. Apart from the narrow range of investment opportunities allowed for in an export oriented economy, unemployment is also induced by the tendency on the part of businessmen to select production techniques which are capital intensive in order to be able to compete.

This unemployment problem inherent in the parasitic and export oriented nature of our new towns and cities is not usually known to migrants. Having been « pushed » out of the rural area, they keep pouring into the urban area wanting to join in the gold rush of trying to make it into what looks to them the regulated modern sector.

IV. — URBAN UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY

The result of the rush for a place in the city discussed in the last section is large scale urban unemployment and under-employment. Despite the considerable costs incurred in migration and the severe

hardship experienced by the urban unemployed, new migrants keep pouring in. The Nigerian labour force survey of 1966-67, for example, showed that the rate of unemployment in urban areas was 8 percent as against an overall rate of 1.7 percent. That is to say that unemployment is mainly an urban problem although underemployment was observed to be equally rampant in both urban and rural areas (13). In terms of absolute numbers, a national unemployment rate of 1.7 percent worked out to be roughly 410,000 unemployed people. Falae feels that if a rough estimate of 20 percent underemployment rate were added, the potential number that could be mobilised to make greater contribution to the Gross National Product would be about 5.3 million people (14).

Broken down in terms of age, sex and educational qualifications, the sample survey showed conclusively that most of the unemployed were young people. It showed that 69.8 percent of the unemployed in 1966-7 were between the ages of 15-23 although the same age group constituted only 25 percent of total labour force. The survey also showed that 17 percent of the unemployed fell within the ages of 24-29 which meant that the age cohort of 15-29 accounted for 87 percent of the unemployed. The incidence of unemployment was higher among males than among females.

The age-male-urban bias to unemployment in the 1967 sample survey also tended to characterise the 1970 employment exchange data. Despite the latter's inadequacies (15), the data again showed that 84.2 percent of those registered in the labour exchange as unemployed were primary school leavers. Applicants with educational qualifications of « secondary and above » accounted for only 15.8 percent. From this distribution can be inferred the fact that the bulk of the unemployed are in their teens and early twenties. Also nearly a third of the unemployed in June 1970 were reported to be concentrated in Metropolitan Lagos while 13.5 percent were in the city of Ibadan, 4 percent each in Jos and Port Harcourt, 1.2 percent in Abeokuta, 1.5 percent in Akure and less than one percent in Oshogbo. It is clear from these figures that even when we say that the rate of unemployment in urban areas is 8 percent as against an overall of 1.7, there is still a lot more to be said i.e. that considerable variations exist in unemployment between one urban area and another and that the primate city, in this case Lagos, plus a few other urban centres which were noted at the beginning of this paper as exploding virtually contain all the unemployed. By contrast, traditional urban centres like Oshogbo, Akure and Abeokuta have relatively little share in the problem of unemployment.

The real impact or poverty implications of unemployment for the individual and family can be made out from the findings of Callaway (16). From a sample labour force survey of households in three representative sections of Ibadan city undertaken in October 1964

he found that « Over one quarter (28 percent) of the total male labour force in households visited are unemployed (17). That is, they have not earned sufficient during the previous nine months to cover personal food costs — so far as this fact can be established from close inquiry about sources of income and support. Of these male unemployed, three quarters (78 percent) are school leavers. Almost all of these unemployed school leavers have had full primary schooling many have completed the secondary modern course of three years; three are withdrawals from secondary grammar schools; two have earned West African School Certificates; two have passed through trade schools. *Several are married and are being supported by relatives with help from wives earnings.* The median age of these unemployed school leavers is 19. Some 53 percent are less than 20 years of age; 35 percent are between 21 and 25; the rest are over 25. The distribution between 15 and 25 is fairly even. How long have these school leavers been unemployed? Some 35 percent have been seeking work in the city for less than one year; 21 percent for between one and two years; 26 percent for between two and three years. A comparison between the dates of leaving school and of arriving in Ibadan shows that, particularly with those coming from outside the province, there is often a delay of a year or more before «migrating» (emphasis mine). This extended reference brings out the magnitude and implications of unemployment more clearly than can be inferred from national estimates. For example to say that 1.7 percent of the labour force is unemployed looks too good for us to describe unemployment as a social problem. So too is saying that 8 percent of the urban labour force is unemployed. On the other hand Callaway's assessment of the problem at the grass root, that is at the level of the household gives a more realistic picture. To discover that over one quarter of the male labour force in households is unemployed shows the gravity and urgency of the problem. A situation in which the earnings of some 2,100 is spread out to provide for the needs of 4,450 persons is not an easy one especially when those being cared for are not just the very young and very old and/or disabled but also able-bodied unemployed school leavers sometimes remotely connected, if at all, with the household. A condition of steeply rising prices and stagnant, sometimes falling, monetary and real income such as we have lived through since the end of the civil war puts the family on the verge of starvation. At this point, the family is unable to afford the more nutritious but expensive items of food. This increase the risk of disease at a time when medical care is inadequately provided for and expensive. The resulting poor health affects the productivity and income of the working members of the household. This vicious circle can be elaborated particularly as it affects the further education and training in skills of members of the household. While families are thus at a breaking point, new migrants arrive.

The poverty implications of migration for the individual migrant is no less gloomy. As we have been told, a number of the urban unemployed are married and are being supported by their relatives and wives earnings. The hardship would be considerably minimised had it been easy to find work. It is a different thing altogether to have to depend on this help for one, three or so years during which time the migrant remains unemployed roaming for a job. Although he remains optimistic, his supporters, tend to lose hope after a year or so of joblessness. The latter's reactions from about this time depend both on the nature of relationship with migrant as well as their aspirations for him.

The fathers of migrants, especially if they are farmers, are usually anxious to liberate their sons from the insecurity, low returns, hard-work and inferior status to which they imagine themselves condemned. Such fathers feel insulted if anyone advising them suggested that their unemployed sons should return home and take to farming. In other words, many farming fathers are prepared to finance their unemployed sons in towns years if possible. On the other hand, parents relatives and wives are not usually so patient. They soon lose hope and exert pressure on the unemployed either to return or else accept lesser job alternatives. In many cases migrants resist the call back preferring to face the threats of out backs, sometimes complete withdrawal, of financial support from relatives which in turn plunges them into more object poverty, severe hardship, and discontent. Thus is emerging a group which one may call the « urban poor » made up of frustrated urban unemployed and probably unemployables in most African towns with special reference to the primate cities.

V. — PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

From what we have said, it may be inferred that the problem of unemployment and poverty in urban areas is mainly a function of the « other oriented » strategy of development which seems to be the rule rather than the exception among the countries of Tropical Africa. This strategy has produced parasitic urban centres fed from mass exodus from the disorganized countryside which in turn widens rural-urban disparity thereby sustaining the vicious cycle. These new towns and cities which have been variously described as « parasites », « enclaves », « islands » etc. were from the beginning outwardly oriented and have remained so partly because their establishment and functioning were attached to alien interests and foreign capital. These parasitic cities have not become the driving forces of inner economic development because they embody a kind of international division of labour which has in nearly every case caused disjointed economic structures. One common form of such disjunction is the development of primary commodities and export sector vis-a-vis manufacturing. This lopsidedness by limiting the number of industries, restricts employment

opportunities. There is another sense in which the export orientation of the urban « islands » has been dysfunctional. Being outward oriented their relationship with the hinterland or outlying districts has remained uni-directional. The cities serve only as assembly and storage points for raw materials from the hinterland. The result is a non-integrated economy which, in most countries, manifests itself in the coexistence of export and subsistence economies and in distorted sectoral structure. It is this distortion which explains the paradox of geometrically deteriorating rural areas side by side exploding cities. It explains the problem of rural exodus and, what goes with it, urban unemployment. Given this understanding, we may suggest that one solution to the problem of rural exodus and, by extension urban unemployment is self-sufficient development strategy. Central to a self-centred policy is industrialisation of the type that reaches beyond mere import substitution and which is located not always in the city but at a point where costs, including labour, grind to a minimum. In other words industrialisation should be carried to the countryside where it is profitable to do so and geared to maximising the use of the country's resources and, manufacturing possibly for export with the attendant gains in diversification, by-products, and balance of payments. This will reduce the distortion of the economy by increasing the sectoral and rural-urban balance and interaction which will in turn reduce rural exodus and increase urban employment and mobility opportunities.

Apart from rapid industrialisation and proper industrial location, a second way to combat the twin problem of rural exodus and urban unemployment and its attendant evils of poverty and crime is through the development of capitalist agriculture. Central to this kind of agriculture is a system of very large holdings. Such holdings make the use of modern agricultural machinery (whether owned or hired) and the building of modern storage facilities economical. It is our view that talking about the introduction of technically oriented junior high schools where agricultural education will be given, spending billions of naira on fertilisers for distribution to peasant farmers, telling school children to « Take To Farming to boost food production » (18) is sidetracking the problem. As one Director of education once said, « if pupils have evidence at home that subsistence agriculture is a life of ill-required drudgery, agricultural teaching at school however good (and, if we may add, a clarion call on school children to take to farming however loud) will not have much meaning (19).

Our third and last recommendation for reducing urban unemployment is universal education. In discussing progress in basic education in Africa as it relates to unemployment Callaway distinguished three stages « In the first stage », he says, « only a relatively small proportion of school age children attend school; perhaps no more than 10 to 30 percent. The second stage comes when some 50-80 percent or more receive elementary schooling. The third stage is reached when

nearly the entire population has passed through primary education and is literate (20).

In the first stage primary school graduates even without going further to secondary vocational, or suchlike higher institutions are usually able to find jobs, usually clerical in nature, and earn a regular income outside farming. In the second stage, the number of school leavers has been multiplied considerably while the number of jobs has increased only slightly if at all. This results in unemployment. What is not realised in stage 2, which Nigeria can be said to be passing through is that the purpose of education has changed from what it was in stage 1. That is, from being a privileged training for a few nearly all of whom attain clerical and leadership positions in the modern sector, the emphasis has shifted to meeting the claim for all of equality of opportunity. Our view is that universal education which is embodied in stage 3 can help solve the problem of urban unemployment to the extent that it reinforces the emphasis of stage 2. That is, universal education will facilitate public acceptance of the fact that all people including farmers need preparation for their tasks through exposure to formal education. Once this idea is accepted, the need-dispositions of school leavers will change considerably and formal education as such will cease to be looked upon as a passport to clerical and non-farm occupations.

It may be necessary to point out in conclusion that these policy recommendations, which we have barely mentioned for brevity sake but each of which can take a monograph should it become necessary to go into details, are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are complementary and should be applied simultaneously for rapid results.

FOOTNOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Census Superintendent : *Population Census of Western Region of Nigeria 1952* (Lagos : Government Printer, 1953).
2. Imoagene, Oshomba, « Some Sociological Aspects of Modern Migration In West Africa », « *Modern Migrations in West Africa* » edited by S. Amin (London : OUP 1974) 343-357.
3. Green, L. & Milone, V. *Urbanisation In Nigeria : A planning commentary*. (New-York : An International Urbanisation survey Report to the Ford Foundation, 1972) p. 9.
4. Imoagene, O. « Psycho-social Factors in rural-urban migration », *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies* 9, 3 (Nov. 1967), 375-336.
— « Some Sociological Aspects of Modern migration in West Africa », *Modern Migrations in West Africa*, *op. cit.*

5. Imoagene, O. « Status Consciousness and peasant revolt in Western Nigeria » *Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 2 », 1 (March 1975).
6. Todaro, Michael, T., « A Model of Labour Migration and Urban Unemployment in less Developed countries », *American Economic Review* 59 (1959) 138-148.
7. Amin, S., « Introduction », *Modern Migrations in West Africa*, op. cit., p. 90.
8. Imoagene, O., « Psycho-social factors In Rural-Urban migration », op. cit.
9. Sabot, R.H., « Urban migration in Tanzania » paper presented to the 11th International Seminar on Modern Migrations in West Africa held in Dakar, Senegal 25th March to 6th April 1972. Sabot has shown that in Tanzania the « poor » Masai do not migrate whereas the farmers of the riche region of Kilimanjaro migrate a great deal. Also, Samir Amin has in his Introduction to *Modern Migrations in West Africa* shown that the Basari of Eastern Senegal are among the poorest people in the region but they do not migrate whereas the Serere whose income monetary and real is much higher do.
10. Todaro, Michael, T., « A Model of Labour Migration and Urban Unemployment in less Developed countries », op. cit.
11. Hay, A. & Smith, R., *Inter-regional trade and money flows in Nigeria, 1964*, (Ibadan, NISER, 1970).
12. The contribution of West African cities to the development of the region has been treated fully by the present author in a lengthy chapter titled, « Urbanisation and Development in West Africa », in *Introduction to Sociology*, edited by F. Olu. Oke-diji (London : Longmans Forthcoming 1975).
13. According to the labour force sample survey, about 20 percent of the agricultural work force and 18 percent of non-agricultural workers were working less than the specified minimum hours in 1966-67.
14. Falae, O. « Unemployment », *Manpower & Unemployment Research in Africa* 5, (April 1972).
15. Labour exchange data is of limited usefulness in Nigeria because they cover only applicants who personally register in the labour exchange offices that are located only a few big towns. In other words the figures do not cover the bulk of non-literate migrants many of whom are not aware of those centres, and the bulk of the unemployment who do not bother to register as such. The inadequacy of the figures can also be illustrated from the fact that two of Nigeria's twelve states (North-eastern and North-western) have no labour exchange offices at all whereas in six others they are located only in the capital towns.
16. The labour force survey of households reported here covered a total population of 4,450. Of this number some 46 percent (2,047) were younger than fourteen years of age. From the remaining 54 percent or 2,403, were subtracted those attending school full-time e.g. secondary modern and grammar schools and other post primary education institutions. Also subtracted were those who were either disabled or too elderly to work although a few of the latter were involved in small trading enterprises, small craft industries and/or farming. These eliminations left some 2,100 or 47 percent of the population in the households visited within the labour force and therefore included in the sample. For more details, reference should be made to Callaway, A., « Education Expansion and the Rise of Youth Unemployment », *The City of Ibadan* edited by P.C. Lloyd (Cambridge Univ. Press 1967) 191-211.
17. Callaway defines the unemployed man as one « who is over the age of 14, who is not continuing his education full-time, who is neither incapacitated nor elderly (over an approximately 60 years of age), and whose earned income during the previous nine months was insufficient to meet personal (not family) imputed food costs » *Ibid.* p. 199.
18. « To boost food production — TAKE TO FARMING — Gowon urges school children », *Daily Times*, No 20, 878 (March 19, 1975) p. 1.
19. Eedle, J.H. « Education and Unemployment », paper presented to an International Seminar organised by the International Committee of the National Council of Teacher Service, London : Sept. 1972, *Man Power and Unemployment Research in Africa* 6, 1 (April 1973) 39-55.
20. Callaway, A., « Unemployment Among African School Leavers », *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 1, 3 (1963) 351-371 ; 354.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article, l'auteur discute un des problèmes les plus brûlants de l'Afrique contemporaine, à savoir l'explosion démographique urbaine consécutive à l'exode rural et ses conséquences sur le chômage, le sous-emploi et la pauvreté dans les villes, en s'appuyant sur l'exemple du Nigéria.

Soulignant l'insuffisance de l'explication économistique de théories traditionnelles concernant la migration milieux ruraux/milieux urbains, notamment la disparité criante de revenus villes/milieux ruraux et la probabilité de trouver un emploi rémunérateur et stable en ville, l'auteur, tout en retenant cette motivation, la situe cependant parmi d'autres facteurs. Ainsi, pour lui, deux causes essentielles expliquent le phénomène de migration et le chômage urbain qu'il nourrit.

La première concerne la désorganisation de milieux ruraux due à ce que l'auteur appelle « push factors », comprenant à la fois la motivation économistique décrite plus haut et les facteurs psychosocio-culturels résultant du conflit de normes dû au contact des cultures.

La deuxième concerne l'origine et la fonction des villes africaines, créées pour la plupart par la colonisation pour servir des points de relais d'une économie extravertie. Il en est résulté des villes Parasites, vivant d'export-import, avec une capacité de reproduction autonome marginale, si pas nulle. Dans ces villes, tout tend à couper l'élite minoritaire de la majorité de la population : la naissante industrie de substitution, au service de la minorité privilégiée, utilise, soi-disant pour des raisons de concurrence et de rentabilité, des techniques « capital-intensive » ; le développement d'une culture soi-disant urbaine éloigne l'élite de la masse...

Dans ces conditions, toute migration des milieux ruraux vers les villes, si faible soit-elle, est de nature à gonfler le chômage urbain, le sous-emploi et causer davantage de pauvreté en ville.

Comme solution, l'auteur recommande l'abandon de la stratégie de développement extraverti, l'adoption de la stratégie de développement autocentré, basée sur une industrialisation rapide jouissant d'une localisation appropriée, une agriculture de type capitaliste et un système d'éducation universelle.