Some Economic Interpretations of Migration

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INTRODUCTION

For many years economic development was considered as a process of gradual change in the structure of the economy i.e. in the changing significance of different economic sectors. Increasing productivity, and therefore production, in agriculture induced a shift of labour towards the more industrial and urban sectors. In the latter productivity increased even more rapidly as a result of applied technological innovations in production processes and a greater specialisation in the division of labour tasks. Increasing incomes allowed for more capital accumulation, which in turn paved the way for further expansion of industry and agriculture. Forward and backward linkages in different industrial activities and the expansion of skilled labour in numerous branches were other growth inducing factors. Industrial sectors showed far higher growth rates in comparison to agriculture and thus were considered the prime movers of growth. At a later stage and a higher level of ongoing income growth and capital formation, the service sector (banks, transport, trade, communication etc.) gained importance and allowed for an ever expanding complex of commercial, industrial and agricultural interdependences. During this process a shift in labour absorption in the three main sectors (agriculture, industry and services) took place. Labour utilisation in agriculture was gradually diminished in favour of the other two sectors. And in actual fact among all the industrialized countries agriculture as a source of labour absorption has little significance, and absorbs far less than 10% of the total labour force. Industry and the service sector have since long taken over the role of large sectors of labour utilisation.

One must of course hasten to add that these broad technical characteristics of economic development do certainly not imply a smooth, rational and harmonic sequence of events. From a humanitarian point of view, the process of economic development in its first stages meant misery and exploitation of many in the interest of a small class of powerful people, the capitalists. A second point that should not be overlooked is the submission of overseas territories and peoples who then became the suppliers of labour, agricultural and mineral raw materials, necessary for western capitalist expansionism. In fact, this last event has very much contributed to actual stagnation and obstacles in what is, nowadays, referred to as 'third world countries'. However, from an economic point of view the process of economic growth can be put in the above technical terms of changing sectors, labour transfers from one sector *and* one region to the other, technical innovations and capital formation.

As far as labour is concerned, economists have long neglected changes in labour use in the different sectors. The reason for this is that they were primarily interested in the 'most growth inducing production factors' of which capital formation was thought to be the most effective. The popular Harrod-Domar model of the 1950's, that was widely used as a first model applied to 'developing countries', assumed a uniform, causal and mechanical relationship between growth of total national income and the rate of savings i.e. capital accumulation. It is a good illustration of the importance assigned to capital as a production factor.

However, the discouraging record of growing urban unemployment and growing imbalances in rural-urban income and job opportunities, witnessed in the last twenty years, has forced economists to reconsider their rigid adjustment models of efficient allocation of the production factors between sectors leading to, in the end, equal sectoral marginal productivities.

The aim of this paper is to provide a short description of the changes in the approach and the interpretation of labour transfers between sectors and regions (which is in fact what labour migration is about) in economic development theory. We will point out some striking changes in the explanations given by economists of the phenomenon of migration since the 1950's. Furthermore we shall attempt to determine whether these academic studies have led to a more effective migration policy as pursued by the governments of the underdeveloped countries.

THE LEWIS-FEI-RANIS LABOUR-SURPLUS MODEL

In 1954, W. A. Lewis wrote an influential article in which he stressed the existence of 'disguised unemployment' in agricultural areas (Lewis 1954). Labour could be drawn from agriculture without diminishing agricultural production. This assumption is therefore equivalent to the acceptance of a marginal productivity of labour equal to zero. A part of the agricultural labour force could be transferred to the urban, industrial sector without losses in agricultural production. This may even cause a rise in the per capita output. This assumed situation is crucial in the analysis of interrelations between the capitalist, industrial sector on the one hand and the traditional, agricultural, subsistence sector on the other hand. Wage levels in the industrial sector are assumed to be linked to what labour earns in the subsistence agriculture. According to Lewis, farmers will not leave their farms unless wages are at least equal to the average product on the land. In fact, in order to compensate for costs of travel and to induce labour to leave the rural areas, capitalist wages will have to be somewhat higher than average subsistence earnings (Lewis assumes a 30% higher wage in the expanding and labour demanding sector). In this situation, the supply of labour from rural areas is considered perfectly elastic. The next step in his argument is to emphasize that the driving force in economic development is the use of surplus capital for investment in capital goods and to enlarge producing capacity in the urban sector. This in turn will lead to the absorption of more labour and ultimately, to a structural change in the utilisation of labour within different sectors. The growth of the capitalists' profits is of crucial importance in this process.

As the capitalist sector expands while the wage-price ratio is assumed to remain constant, profits in the hands of capitalists will rise and will be used as capital for new investments, thus attracting more 'surplus labour' from agriculture. Finally when all surplus labour has been absorbed, industrial wages will begin to increase. This *permanent* transfer of labour to the urban sector gave rise to ever expanding manufacturing activities.

To sum up: the movement of labour is explained by the prevailing characteristic of rural labour, that is the phenomenon of 'disguised unemployment' in agriculture. In this approach which was in later years formalized and extended by Fei and Ranis (1961), labour movements of this kind were considered to be positive and therefore desirable, since they fulfilled a stimulating role in the process of economic growth. Later, however, the simplicity of the 'model', the high aggregative level of factors involved, and the underlying assumption as well, were challenged by numerous authors, some of which we shall discuss.

Firstly its central concept, disguised unemployment in agriculture, proved to be of little or no applicability to most rural conditions. Its acceptance in economic development theory stems mainly from the defective knowledge of actual working practices and the organization of agricultural life. In reality, even shortages of labour in certain areas at certain times of the year appear in spite of underemployment of manpower at other times in the year in the same areas. There is now evidence that seasonal labour bottlenecks have in some places limited further expansion of agricultural production (Johnson 1969, Luning 1967 and Cleave 1970). These studies provide more insight in the heterogeneous character of rural labour and prove quite convincingly the inadequancy of the use of too aggregative variables.

Secondly, 'model-economists' have neglected the considerable amount of time sometimes spent on non-farm activities such as crafts, trading and maintenance activities. In a study of three villages in Nigeria, Norman (1969) found that even in the peak month, farmers still spent 31% of their time in off-farm employment activities. Obviously a simple measurement of time spent in the fields without taking into consideration other activities, incorporated in agriculture, leads to a premature conclusion of disguised unemployment. As to the organisation of work to be done, economists should pay more attention to the results of sociological field studies [1]). Miracle and Berry (1970), in their study of migrant labour and economic development have done so, concluding that the nature of the effects of outmigration of a part of the village population depends on a set of factors such as: the length of absence, the agricultural possibilities, the division of labour among various groups (men and women, young and older people) and the importance of non-agricultural activities (livestock, fishing, hunting, handicraft production).

All this points to the dangers of simplistic and highly aggregative models, in trying to explain the role of labour movements.

A third actual deviation from the conditions of the Lewis model, is the much greater gap between urban and rural income levels. The urban wage did not remain constant 'until all surplus labour was attracted' but on the contrary rose sharply in relation with rural earnings *before* rural surplus labour was absorbed. In reality, as a result of minimum wage policies of governments and trade union pressure, urban wages have increased notwithstanding stagnation in agricultural incomes and a considerable urban unemployment. Apparently, instead of 'market forces' determining wage levels, these are set by so-called institutional, and in fact political factors.

[1]) For example J. Gugler (1968) who provides a survey of studies in which possible effects of outmigration on agriculture are linked to forms of labour organization in the villages.

A last but very important actual deviation from the Lewis-Fei-Ranis-model is the inflow of wage labour to the modern sector to such an extent as to become 'more than it can handle'. Contrary to what the model predicted exceedingly high rates of unemployment have occurred in the industrial urban sectors. One possible explanation may be that initially the industrial sector, which was based on import substitution, experienced substantial growth of output during the process of replacing imports, but has now reached a saturation point.

In a condition of stagnating homemarkets (due to insufficient purchasing power among the masses), lack of forward and backward linkages in the existing industrial structure and failure to obtain competitive advantages in export markets, it is unlikely that the investment level remains high enough so as to absorb a large part of the supply of labour. Besides, capital funds in the hands of capitalists do not 'automatically' guarantee the latter's willingness or ability to reinvest 'in such a way as to absorb available surplus labour'. (see Berry 1970: 280).

As a follow up of the above mentioned model, the study of migration by economists has evolved along two broad lines in the last decade or so:

1. Studies that continued to analyse labour movements in sectoral terms, recognizing the interactions between sectors in the products and factors markets and seeking an understanding of the changing role of each sector in employment and output as growth proceeds. But in contrast to the Lewis-Fei-Ranis model, actual macro studies try to disintegrate their variables and adapt their equations (indicating sectoral interdependences) to real circumstances in underdeveloped countries.

2. A large number of studies using regression techniques to analyse the prime determinants of migration flows. This partial (or limited) approach, which does not consider the macro economic context in which migration takes place, often distinguishes push and pull factors influencing the *individual* decision to migrate.
   We shall summarize these different approaches in the next sections.

SECTORAL MODELS

a. *The Harris-Todaro model*

This two sector model studied the unemployment problem in Kenya and started from assumptions radically different from the Lewis type (Harris and Todaro 1970).

They assume an institutionally determined wage rate in urban areas and a rural wage determined by labour supply and demand conditions in those areas. This is in fact a direct reversal of the Lewis assumption. Moreover the effect of the 'parametric' urban wage on the rural individual's migratory behaviour is of crucial importance. No assumption of *surplus* labour is made since 'few if any economists would seriously argue that a general labour surplus exists in Tropical Africa, the area to which this paper is most directly related' (Harris and Todaro 1970:126).

The aim of the model is to analyse the extent to which migration proceeds in response to urban-rural differences in *expected* earnings [2]) as perceived by the individual. It will continue as long as the expected urban real income exceeds real agricultural product and acts as an equilibrating force between the modern, manufacturing goods producing urban sector and the traditional, agricultural rural sector. Migration comes to a stillstand if the situation is reached of a zero disparity between expected urban and rural earnings. The essence of the model is that the concept of expected urban wage is an instrument of explaining the occurence of both urban unemployment and rural urban migration at the same time. When one additional job is created in the industrial sector at the minimum wage level, the expected wage will rise and consequently more rural-urban migration will be induced. Moreover, in a situation of growing income differentials (given the downward inflexibility of urban wages) the rising rate of urban unemployment may never actually be able to exert any migration dampening force. On the contrary, continued and accelerated rates of urban directed migration can and will continue to exist, simultaneous with high levels of urban unemployment. Thus the main determinant of migration (indeed the only one) is the expected wage differential as perceived by the individual. Since this tends to rise in actual situations an equilibrium in the labour of the two sectors will not occur.

In view of the above reasoning, it is perfectly understandable that the authors suggest an income- and wage policy, diminishing wage disparities, as the most effective 'anti-migration' policy. There appears to be no strictly urban solution to the urban unemployment problem. Rural development is essential.

This view, of course, implies that here, in contrast to the models of the 1950's, migration as such is interpreted this time as a negative and undesirable phenomenon, which enforces imbalances between sectors, and creates urban unemployment. However, seen from the individual decision-maker's point of view, it is the rational outcome of considering the various rural and urban labour opportunities, given the wish to maximize expected future income. Although in later years, some authors have supplemented the original Harris-Todaro model on many points, they did not question the fundamental concept of the urban-rural expected income differential.[3])

Others however, have criticized the model on several points (Byerlee 1972; Gaude, 1976; Adepoju 1977). In particular the assumption of a calculating individual who is aware of income opportunities and job offers in both the rural and urban areas is found to be rather unrealistic. Gaude reminds of a study carried out by Speare (1971) which concludes: 'potential migrants have only a somewhat hazy notion of the concepts of costs and benefits. The majority of them do not do any calculations at all' (Gaude 1976:45). Warriner (1970) indicates that the decision to go to town is taken irrespective of the employment situation in urban areas. Secondly, within the framework of this *closed* economy model, an increase in rural agricultural output would result in more rural outmigration since, as a consequence of their assumption of a fixed urban wage rate, agricul-

[2]) Expected earnings are defined by a) the difference in real income between rural and urban areas and b) the probability of a new migrant obtaining an urban job.

[3]) For a survey of modifications of the Harris and Todaro model see: J. Gaude 1976: 38-44 and M. Todaro 1976:36-46.

tural terms of trade will fall, thus deteriorating the relative position of the rural areas. Consequently the policy suggestion of rural development projects is obviously not consistent with the premises of the model. This shows the methodological danger of using a closed economy assumption. Furthermore, according to Byerlee (1972) the downward-inflexible and therefore distorted urban wage rate, assumed in the model, may be supplemented by other distortions which occur in real circumstances. Food prices may rise, as a result of additional demands of new migrants in town (and induce price subsidies by the government) creating the danger of more inflation and further distortion of prices.

A fundamental shortcoming of the model is the assumption that the 'income differential' variable is the *sole* determinant of migration flows, in contrast to numerous migration studies which reveal other non-economic factors such as population pressure, lack of medical provisions in rural areas, the feeling of cultural isolation, new aspirations, new needs of urban goods and lack of educational opportunities. However one could agree with Todaro that many of these 'non-economic' factors can be reduced to the economic factor of 'income maximalisation' since many are linked to the income concept.

The next critical point concerns the notion of probability of finding a job which is presented as an objective concept, equal to the ratio of those employed to the total active urban labour force.[4]) Gaude (1976) among others, has pointed to the influence of subjective individual factors, given the poor knowledge of the actual unemployment ratio, in most cases. Therefore the subjective probability may be higher than the objective one calculated in the model, resulting in a larger flow of migrants than the model predicted. Byerlee, Tommy and Fatoo, in their migration study on Sierra Leone (1976) drew the important conclusion that 'the level of urban unemployment does not have much influence on migration'.

A last critical remark concerning the Harris-Todaro approach deals with the partial character of the model. Labour demand and wage levels in both urban and rural sectors enter the model as given, exogenous variables.

However, as was pointed out by Gaude (1976) wage disparities themselves should be explained and the *causes* of disparities and the lack of sufficient job opportunities in agriculture should be linked to actual migration flows. Therefore, he suggests that migration should be linked to technology and income distribution aspects in both urban and rural areas. As we shall see later, this plea for an extension of the theoretical framework, in which migration is analysed, may be considered as a step towards the Marxist approach of migration.

b. *Multi-sectoral analyses*

As we have seen above, earlier models consider only a few key interactions between the modern and traditional sector on a highly abstract, theoretical level, not seldom with unrealistic assumptions. One explanation for this may be found in their 'source of inspiration' i.e. the historical socio-economic development

[4]) Todaro even provides a numerical value of the 'elasticity of rural-urban migration' with respect to (changes in) the urban employment opportunities, indicating the number of new migrants to be expected from the creation of one more urban job (Todaro 1976:44).

pattern of north-Atlantic society which after all were thought to be the 'example to copy' for the underdeveloped countries. The trend in model building during the past few years is to generalize the framework by introducing a whole range of items into a model exploring agricultural and non-agricultural output, employment and income distribution interactions.

Leaving the *two* sector approach of Harris and Todaro (which will never be of use other than for partial analyses) we arrive at the *three* sector study of Oshima (1971) dealing with interrelations in an economy consisting of 1. a capital intensive non-agricultural sector 2. a labour intensive non-agricultural and 3. a labour intensive agricultural sector. He argues a necessary *shift* in development theory from growth in the capital intensive (urban) sector which was indeed the panacea of the development efforts in the 1950s and 1960s, to the labour intensive sectors, stressing the importance of the *structure* of demand and more equal distribution of incomes as factors generating rural employment. Employment will be increased if lower income groups see their purchasing power rise, because their income elasticity for products of small scale, labour intensive sectors is high. This being in contrast with relatively high incomes of wage and salary earners who show high elasticities for output of the capital intensive and import sector in which relatively little employment is involved.

In order to study African labour market interactions, Eicher and Byerlee (1972) have suggested a *four* sector scheme (rural agricultural, rural non-agriculture, urban large scale and urban small scale sector). Migration is interpreted as the outcome of interrelations at work in the system. Byerlee (1973) endeavours to incorporate migration into an analysis of various agricultural development strategies. The effects of these strategies are dependent on the interactions of the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in the *product* markets of consumer goods, investment goods and goods for intermediate use on the one hand and in the *factor* markets of capital and labour on the other hand. The model consists of a dynamic, macro-economic framework built on a input - output matrix and is supplemented with an employment - income model, which provides details on the non-agricultural labour market, migration and income distribution. The author applied his model to the 'significant features' of the Nigerian economy and claims that it is a 'powerful medium for evaluation of the impact of agricultural policies on output, employment and incomes in all sectors of the economy'.

One of the main conclusions of his policy-oriented study is that for Nigeria the model projects a favorable growth of GNP, but increasing unemployment and wider income disparities if current policies are continued. In order to reach a more equitable distribution of income and to significantly reduce migration from the agricultural sector, the necessity of 'a balanced strategy of food and export promotion' (Byerlee 1973:46) is stressed.

The models mentioned sofar treat migration as an aspect of the overall process of economic development. In fact, it was the worrying, growing magnitude of migration that induced economists to incorporate the phenomenon into macroeconomic (mis)allocation models.

Apart from this approach, numerous descriptive case-studies have emerged, treating the migrants' characteristics, the process of migration and the determinants and effects of migration. To these we will turn in the next section.

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES

The level of explanation of regression equations depends heavily on the choice and the number of the explanatory variables. In fact, the formulation of the independent variables, which explains the variation in the rate of migration, often taken as the dependent variable, is in itself a reflection of a migration theory. In the case of the Harris-Todaro approach, their choice of the 'expected income differential' as the main explanatory variable can be considered as a 'micro function' with only one variable, denying or at least underestimating the explanatory relevance of other variables.

Furthermore, using regression techniques, applied to census or sample survey data, involves some statistical difficulties and traps which should warn us of superficially interpreting regression parameters. For example, in real circumstances, wages and employment both affect and are affected by migration, whereas in the regression analysis, the one is considered to be independent of the other. Another problem arises when measuring the independent variables. Accurate income data in particular are difficult to obtain, especially for rural incomes and the variety of applied concepts (per capita incomes, average earnings in the industrial or government sector, or, as to the rural incomes, only cash earnings or the agricultural average output per member of the labour force) further complicates a comparison of regression results.[5])

A further shortcoming of these regression studies is the assumed homogeneity of the dependent variable, that is, the aggregate 'rate of migration', defined as the proportion of a population that is absent from their place of origin over a specified period of time. In reality however, different forms of migration can be distinguished. For example, in Africa, migration must be classified in temporal and spatial dimensions to include: 1. seasonal migration, 2. short term migration (2-5 years), 3. long term or permanent movements, 4. rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-rural (return migration) and urban to urban migration. Most recent African sample survey studies concentrate on rural-urban migration.

Despite these difficulties, the various case studies on African countries show similar conclusions in respect of the characteristics of migrants, the determinants and the consequences of migration.

Characteristics: The typical African migrant is young, the majority falling in the age bracket 15-25 years. Furthermore, one notes a high proportion of men, although according to Caldwell (1968) the number of women is on the increase during the last years. The level of education of migrants is higher than the average of the total home population. According to Sabot and Barnum (1976), this selection of educated persons increases over time, taken into account the growing number of secondary school leavers among rural to urban migrants. One of their important conclusions drawn from the extensive Tanzania study was that 'the rate of urban migration increases with the educational level of the rural

[5]) See: J. B. Knight (1972:204).

population. In fact the probability of finding a job is greater for rural residents the more education they have since employment opportunitites for the less educated have fallen relative to the educated' (Sabot and Barnum 1976:77).

The economic characteristics of migrants show less conformity. On the basis of previous studies on rural migration from densely populated areas the following conclusion was drawn: urban migrants stem from poor, landless households (Elkan 1969). Caldwell in his work on Ghana found however, that migrants came from households above the average village wealth. Moreover, with the educated forming a rising proportion of migrant streams and with rising unemployment rates, it is safe (according to Todaro 1976) 'to assume that sons and daughters of the better-off rural families will consitute a rising proportion of future migration streams'.

Concerning the *determinants* of migration, the conclusion is frequently drawn that people primarily move for economic reasons. The response to existing income differentials is very often indicated (Caldwell 1969; Beals, Levy and Moses 1967; Sabot and Barnum 1976; Essang 1974). Apart from this economic determinant, a well-known motive for migration is the search for further (secondary) education. Rempel and Callaway (1967) in their studies on Kenya and Nigeria found that over half of the total number of urban migrants were school leavers without any previous occupation. In this case, migration is interpreted as an investment in human capital. For this interpretation to hold, present earnings in agriculture must of course be less than future potential incomes in jobs for which more education is required.

OTHER MIGRATION FACTORS

A non-economic variable often mentioned is the assistance given by relatives and/or friends already present in town. They, in practice, provide food and housing and can inform the new migrants of possible employment opportunities. This hospitality which in itself functions as a guarantee to the urban settler's (land) rights in his village of origin (Elkan 1967) may result in a process of 'chain migration' with cumulative, accelerating migration streams as more chains are formed. Yap, too, in an extensive survey of internal migration in underdeveloped countries confirms that the presence of urban contacts influences the decision to migrate (Yap 1975:21). Distance is considered to have a negative effect since the further the village is from the major urban centres, the larger the percentage of the rural population which has never migrated. In his consideration of the underlying motivations of rural-urban migration Gugler (1969) stresses the importance of the economic factor, but states that in future developments of labour migration the quality of social relations within the extended family and villages 'will not be a negligible influence'.

Other non-economic explanations of migration may be found in the 'custom of migration'. This custom, once formed, can develop into a kind of prestige, especially among the young in the village. The wish to escape social und cultural 'imprisonment' is also cited as a possible non-economic factor at work.

To sum up, one may conclude that nowadays, there is a consensus of opinion that the *occurrence* of migration in Tropical Africa finds its roots in economic factors (rural-urban income had employment differentials), but that the *rate* of migration must be explained by social and cultural factors prevailing in village and households relations. For this reason, recent migration studies aim to provide 'an integrated set of data' which includes information on farm management, division of labour tasks and households expenditure patterns.[6])

Concerning the *effects* of rural-urban migration, a change in interpretation can be observed. Previous studies have often regarded short term *seasonal* migration as a socially beneficial process. Workers could be (temporarily) reallocated from low-productivity to high-productivity areas and in doing so, could enjoy an increase in money income. This process of *circular* migration, in accordance with the seasonal 'dovetailing' of agricultural production especially in the savannah, region, is considered an 'adapting mechanism' in the allocation of production factors and resulted in higher total national income. E. J. Berg, for example, writes: 'The migrant labour system (in West Africa) continues to benefit both the labour exporting villages and the recipient areas' (Berg 1965:161). An explanation for this is that the climatic zones in West Africa are so ordered that the slack season in the savannah regions corresponds with the time of peak agricultural labour demands in the cocoa and coffee regions of the forest zone. Berg's point of view is supported by Beals and Menzenes (1970:109) who acknowledge that 'temporary migration improves the allocation of resources and has contributed significantly to the growth of output in Ghana'.

However with increasing unemployment in urban areas, growing competition among school leavers and the closing of international boundaries the short term migrants have come to be replaced more and more by permanent migrants who cannot risk losing their jobs by seasonally going back to their villages. These later developments, which in fact account wholly for the spectacular growth of towns in Africa, are viewed far less optimistically. It is the size of the migration flows of recent years that has given rise to pessimism. But the empirical knowledge of the *effects* of rural to urban migration is still very inadequate since most sample survey studies are restricted to the determinants of migration.

In dealing with the effects, it is appropriate to distinguish possible benefits to the migrant as an individual on the one hand, and the impact on both the 'supplying' village economy and the host areas on the other hand. With regard to the former, Yap (1975) mentions substantial income gains for migrants in Kenya within one year after migrating, when compared with their former earnings in rural areas. The informal sector (within the urban economy) seems to have an assimilation function since it employs many young workers and new migrants. Some who start in this sector move to the formal sector (banks, industry and government) at a later phase of their urban life. But others, partly because of disappointment in city life or because of failure to find a suitable job, return to their villages. Caldwell's study bears this out when he found that in Ghana, return migration after the age of 45 increased sharply (Caldwell 1968).

Information on individual benefits is scanty. But our knowledge of the real impact of migration on the village economy and that of the urban areas is even more insufficient. The effects of migration on rural village economies may be

[6]) See: D. Beyerlee, J. Tommy and H. Fatoo (1976) and K. de Jonge, J. van der Klei, H. Meilink and R. Storm (1976).

analysed in terms of changes in agricultural production, productivity, consumption and expenditure patterns. The length of absence (thus the type of migration) and the social organization of labour tasks between different groups in the village are of key importance. Skinner (1965) has argued for Upper Volta, where Mossi men carry out most of the agricultural activities, that output is likely to fall if the men stay away for a period longer than the dry season. In contrast there are the observations of Miracle and Berry (1970) who reveal that in societies such as the Chokwe in Angola or the Zande of the Sudan where women do most of the agricultural work (except land clearing once every few years), men may leave the villages for a period of about three years without adversely affecting agricultural output at home. R. Dorjahn (1971) in a study on the effects of labour migration on Mano and Sabo villages in Liberia, remarks that people remaining in the villages worked harder in order to compensate for absent labour. The absence of labour may also reduce available labour for non-agricultural activities, such as cattlebreeding, the production and maintenance of handicrafts, huts, roads, wells and fences. The activities of co-operative working groups or paid agricultural labour may prevent a decline in food and/or cashcrop output. The effect of migration on available per capita food supplies can be positive, since the migrant does not consume food, the production of which he has helped to realize.

Remittances and food sent back by the migrants may relieve village life. However, the way in which the money which is sent home, is used, be it for consumption goods or investment capital in agriculture, is not yet well documented. As for the effects on the host economy, it is frequently emphasized that, apart from labour demands, new migrants increase the demand for food, clothing and shelter and public amenities such as water and medical and educational facilities. And this in turn results in overcrowding of urban settlements, shortages, rising prices and mounting social and political tensions.

THE MARXIST APPROACH

In apparent contrast to the various 'sectoral and regression' approaches is the 'political economy' interpretation of migration as advanced by Marxist writers. We shall not attempt to discuss all the numerous arguments within the group of Marxist authors, but merely try to summarize the main lines of thought in the Marxist economic interpretation of migration in Africa. Marxists find partial studies of migration, in which certain aspects of the phenomenon, for example the push or pull determinants, are analysed in isolation of the socio-economic context, completely faulty and inadequate. In their eyes the main shortcoming of the 'conventional' approach is that it a priori assumes the factors of production (labour, capital and natural resources) as given and geograpically distributed unequally, the latter itself also being taken a priori (Amin 1974). Furthermore the individual-centred cost benefit approach prevents one from coming to grips with the 'real' causes of migration since it leaves out the modes of production and the organization of society. However, and this is the essential Marxist criticism, the allocation of the factors of production is not automatically a given, natural point of departure, but on the contrary, the result of basic development choices. According to Amin: 'It is in the overall strategy of economic development that the ultimate cause of migration lies' (Amin 1974:89). Amin, who has difficulty finding any merit whatsoever in the 'conventional' economic theory of migration, states with much assurance: 'The conventional theory of migration is purely tautological and does not teach us anything. Mathematical sophistication cannot cover up the weakness of the theory. It is prevented from the beginning from seeing the essential facts, which lie behind individual motivations' (Amin 1974:90f).

Alternatively, Marxists point to the necessity of analysing the system, determine its rules and its needs before examining how men conform to it. It is evident (to Marxists) that the functions fulfilled by men, depend on the system and change to adapt to the needs of the system (Amin 1974:91). Consequently, for them the problem of migration boils down to the transformation and subsequent disruption of underdeveloped economies as a result of their integration into the colonial capitalist system.

It is this imposed integration that has generated the export-oriented strategy of development, limiting the expansion of home industries to those based on import substitution, resulting in the adaption of modern capital-intensive production techniques and reducing the amount of labour that can be employed. It is also responsible for the dual character of their economies emphasizing the enclave modern export sectors at the cost of other sectors and regions. This type of strategy prevents the necessary improvements in the purchasing power of the mass of the population (those in the lower income brackets) in order to induce the demand for local products (thus developing industries producing for the local market) and strengthens the dependence relations (and implicit capital transfers) with the industrialized countries (T. Szentes 1973:240). Migration must be interpreted as the outcome of an imposed process of proletarization, its only function being the provision of cheap labour to the host areas. Conclusion for Marxist writers: there is no possible solution to the isolated problem of migration as such, unless it is seen in relation to the whole strategy of development. Reductions in migration flows can, in their view, only be realized through fundamental changes in the development strategy towards one that makes (African) countries more self-sufficient and less dependent of the rich world and one that develops an autonomous, integrated and multi-sectoral economy.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

After this brief review of some approaches and interpretations of migration, it is time to assess whether these different studies have yielded a number of useful (migration) policy recommendations. Unfortunately, despite the large number of African migration studies, very few policy suggestions have been put forward. Many academic writers do not seem to share the viewpoint that 'migration studies in Africa should be tailored to the needs of society: they have to be relevant and policy-oriented' (Adepoju 1977:217). Yet some of them have produced policy recommendations that can be summarized as follows:

An anti-migration policy that aims to reduce migration flows through government control regulations and restrictions, including special permits needed to enter towns, is generally considered socially and economically undesirable. 'Moral exhortation' such as practised by the governments of Kenya and Tanzania to enforce back-to-the-land movements, has been unsuccessful, because the individual calculations, even if in contrast to government (social) considerations, rightly point in the direction of towns. It is widely agreed that the fundamental issue is the existence and probably widening disparity between urban and rural income and employment opportunities (Todaro 1971, Byerlee 1976, Sabot and Barnum 1976, Gaude 1976).

Some of the authors provide possible *explanations* for these rural-urban differentials: the urban biased development strategy, for a large part financed through the taxation of export crops. As noted by Byerlee in his Sierra Leone study, the government in the 1969-73 period extracted the agricultural surplus to a large extent, since prices paid to farmers for export crops (ginger, coffee and cocoa) were only less than half of the world market prices. Surplus extraction in favour of towns have in the past significantly retarded agricultural output growth and have been responsible for further rural-urban imbalances (Byerlee 1976). Similar observations have been made by Young for Zambia (C. Young: 1971): 'It is not just that the urban areas were enriching themselves faster than the rural areas, but that they were enriching themselves at the expense of the rural economy. Farmers were delivering an increasing amount of produce, and in return receiving a diminishing real income' (Young 1971:94).

Nevertheless, one should not be too surprised at this state of affairs, as the process of economic development of the now industrialized countries (including the socialist ones) was characterized by the same feature and indeed proved to be a very efficient way of developing new industries, thus further encouraging the growth of various sectors in the economy. The crucial point is that, although government officials and western economic advisers have practiced the same old policy instruments in the underdeveloped countries, the outcomes have been considerably different. It was hoped to realize a process of rapid industrialization leading to a network of numerous and different branches of industrial, commercial and agricultural activities expanding to other regions of the countries involved. This process of differentiated sectors related to each other with numerous forward- and backward linkages has not materialized in the third world economies. Although there has been growth of manufacturing output (sometimes even quite spectacularly) the spread effects to other sectors and regions have been very insufficient.

Both marxist and non-marxist writers have drawn attention to this idea of the missing links in the structure of the underdeveloped economies and it can be regarded as the main explanation of rural-urban imbalances in income and employment opportunities. But in explaining these 'missing links' both groups show substantially different approaches. For Marxists, disrupted economies of underdeveloped countries must nowadays be viewed as the logical, inherent outcome of the expanding system of world capitalism, whereas non-Marxists rather stress more partial, technical elements of the 'misallocated' economies. The latter group speaks of 'distorted' factor prices, indicating that urban labour has been *overpriced* as a result of government minimum wage policies, trade union pressure and the salary structure for government officials, inherited from the colonial period. As a result, urban wages were set at levels far above those of the average rural incomes. In later years urban wages increased at a much faster rate than (strongly) fluctuating rural earnings.

Moreover, the price of capital has been *underpriced,* due to a whole range of policy devices such as overvalued exchange rates, tax rebates, licensing agreements and low duties on imported capital goods. These policy measures, as the 'logical' instruments of a strategy of rapid industrialization with the expansion of import-substitution industries, have stimulated capital-intensive production techniques, thus encouraging capital-labour substitution in the production processes. They have accentuated the unequal income distribution for the different social groups, as well as for different regions within the country. The high degree of disparity in the income distribution entails a distorted pattern of demand towards imported luxury goods by a minority of the population depressing the far more important and home industry stimulating demand of the majority of the people. Moreover, the practice of Western donor countries to insist on tying considerable proportions of their aid to the importation of capital equipment from their own countries, has further strengthened the capital bias in the development strategies. Given the high degree of capital-intensity in the urban sector, employers are able to offer relatively high wages for their limited number of labourers and trade unions can justify wage demands on the basis of rising levels of labour productivity. Besides, employers are not very reluctant to yield to these demands, because of the small proportion of total production costs the current wage bill stands for in the capital intensive manufacturing sector. These circumstances have further reinforced the urban bias in development patterns.

Concerning the solution of the substantial imbalances, Marxists point out the necessity of a fundamental change in overall development strategy, while the 'orthodox' writers discuss more partial policy measures:

Creation of more urban jobs. This policy is found to be inadequate since the creation of more jobs in the modern sector would attract many more new migrants than the number of additional jobs created. The supply curve of urban labour is highly elastic, since the size of the rural labour force relative to the urban one is much larger. The outcome would be an increase in rural-urban migration flows and a relative increase in urban unemployment rates.

Increase of food prices in town. This would augment incomes of farmers, provided that the increment is not 'taxed away' in favour of the so-called stabilization funds of the marketing boards, and would consequently narrow rural-urban differences and stimulate food production. However this policy measure implies an increase in the cost of living for a large segment of the urban population, especially the lower income groups, since their expenditure on food as a proportion of their total income is very high. For political and social reasons, governments often keep prices artificially low through subsidies on food in towns. The finances needed are in most cases obtained by taxing the export crops of the farmers. It is unlikely that powerful urban pressure groups, in particular trade unions, are willing to accept a real decrease in money earnings to the benefit of the rural agricultural masses.

Changes in the educational system. Many writers have observed that investment in education (as a family decision) can bring substantial returns once a job is obtained in town. Therefore, a policy of changing the relatively high urban returns to education is suggested. This would imply a reorientation of curricula to rural vocations and a shift from conventional, formal education to farming-oriented and adult educational programmes.

Intensive agricultural and rural development programmes. This policy is widely agreed as the most necessary line of action and includes a whole set of proposals: rural settlement schemes, extension services, location of industries (agro-based processing industries) in rural areas, decentralisation of government administration, schemes for labour intensive rural works (feeder roads, dams, irrigation etc.) and the provision of electricity, piped water, clinics etc. in rural areas. However programmes of this type require a complete reversal of the views of the central government and foreign agencies which are still biased towards the urban areas.

Conclusion: the above summary of migration interpretations in economic theory illustrates that essentially, the problem of excessive rural to urban migration touches upon a whole range of socio-economic development issues. The discussion of possible explanations and solutions *should* therefore include a reconsideration of the character and determinants of the applied development strategy.

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