

THE STEP FUNCTION OF MIDDLED-SIZED TOWNS IN MIGRATION PROCESSES

"IN WEST AFRICA.

The hypothesis reevaluated in the study of three urban centres  
in a plantation area in Togo.

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Abstract :

This study deals with a demographic survey of three middle-sized towns in Togo, in a plantation area : Atakpamé, Kpalimé and Badou. It is based on a sample of seven districts randomly selected in the three cities, and forming a total population of 10 420 persons in 1979. The 1979 survey is a second round of the 1970 census, completed in 1984 by a migration survey of a sub-sample of in-migrants.

The paper aims at checking whether these three middle-sized towns carry out a traditional step function for migrants. We have tried to define the role of these towns in the migratory process and mainly to answer to the following question : what is their role in the settlement of the population and in its spatial redistribution ?

The towns under study seem to suffer from a relative demographic decline, as do most middle-sized towns in Togo. The growth of these centres is mainly due to a high natural increase which over-compensates a more or less important net out-migration. These towns attract large numbers of in-migrants whose geographical origins extend beyond the regional or even national borders, but as they prove incapable of settling this population, they become in turn out-migration centres, for both native and newly arrived inhabitants. For the migrants, they often represent only one stage in their migrations.

The population redistribution in which these step towns are involved shows the existence of migratory patterns much more complex than a simple flow drained by the capital. Urban-rural migration is by no means a marginal phenomenon, and the migrant's place of origin represents a constant reference pole in migratory paths.

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In the numerous studies devoted to the phenomena of urbanization in Black Africa, attention was drawn particularly to its most spectacular aspects. For instance, the period of rapid urban growth which has been observed in these countries for about forty years was emphasized by paying particular attention to the expansion of the great metropolises. However, the studies concerning the growth of the small and middle-sized towns remain much less frequent.

The trend of urban research reveals the concerns shown by governments and more generally by the urban élite which consider that the disproportionate and too rapid growth of the capitals raises problems linked to the increase in unemployment and poverty, to the proliferation of shantytowns, to the shortage of urban equipment ... along with the underlying threat of social unrest and of political instability (1). However, one can point out the recent interest shown in the studies on the dynamics of the middle-sized towns due to its significance for the policies of regional development and town and country planning (2).

In the literature on urban growth in Black Africa, one often finds the concept of "relative or absolute decline" of middle-sized towns which is often considered as the consequence of the macrocephaly of urban networks in many African countries (3). This observation which must be tested leads one to ask the following questions about the role of middle-sized towns in the process of urbanization : can they become poles of attraction for the settlement of the population ? what is their role in the spatial redistribution of the latter ? what is their position in the migratory process ?

This communication aims to study these questions thoroughly starting from the case study of three towns in a plantation area in Togo.

The phenomenon of urbanization in Togo is a good illustration of the situation prevailing in most countries of Black Africa : the urban network is linked decisively to the colonial spatial organization with the establishment of a network of administrative units. Moreover, Togo is an example of urban macrocephaly with middle-sized towns characterized by a declining population growth. The literature on the role of the middle-sized towns in the process of urbanization in Togo suggests that they are reduced to the role of migration relay centres to the advantage of the capital (4).

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(1) SIMMONS (A) - 1983

(2) One can mention in particular the study launched in 1983-84 by the Commission of the European Communities on : "the middle-sized towns in West Africa : their role and functions in the regional and national development" (see : Commission des Communautés Européennes - 1984)

(3) MARGUERAT (Y) - 1972 and 1978  
VENNETIER (P) - 1976

(4) For instance : "The middle-sized towns are step towns in the migrations from the rural zones to the capital which is the objective to reach" (AYASSOU (K) - 1983);  
"In fact, the middle-sized towns play in these migrations mainly the role of step towns in the migration stream towards the capital" (NYASSOGBO (G.K.) - 1981).  
(present author's translation)

This paper aims at checking whether such a role is adequate to account for the phenomena observed in three towns situated in a plantation area, namely towns integrated into a type of economic structures which result directly from the model of colonial development observed in many other African countries. We shall try to define the role of these towns in the migratory moves and more precisely to answer the following question : what is their role in the settlement of the population and its spatial redistribution ?

If these towns in fact play the role of step centres for migrants, we must then define with accuracy the spatial configuration of the migration streams to which it corresponds. Thus, it will be possible to challenge the model of migration progressing from rural zones to towns of successively increasing size and up to the great metropolises, and to show the existence of more complex patterns.

First of all, it is necessary to give a brief presentation of the national and local situation and of the methods of observation used (1).

## 1 - THE STUDY AREA AND THE METHODS OF OBSERVATION.

### 1-1- The national territory : Togo (map 1)

Togo which is situated along the Gulf of Guinea is a narrow belt of land of 56,600 km<sup>2</sup> which does not exceed 55km on the coast and spreads over 600 km from north to south. This territorial configuration gives rise to a diversification of soils, climates, vegetation and hence of agricultural productions.

The population amounted to 2 700 000 inhabitants according to the 1981 census. Its growth rate is significant, amounting to about 3 % per year since 1960. This population is divided into more than 40 ethnic groups.

The regional geography is governed by the opposition between the north and the south, as in most countries bordering on the Gulf of Guinea. Even if the public authorities have endeavoured to favour the development of the North for about fifteen years, the South (Maritime region and Plateaux region) continues to be the centre of the main economic activities. This opposition results from a dependent economy whose origins date back to the colonial period.

The colonial economic policy based on cash crops (cocoa, coffee) was implemented in the Plateaux region. Until 1962, cocoa and coffee ranked first among exports. Since then, they have been replaced by phosphates which are mined in the Maritime region.

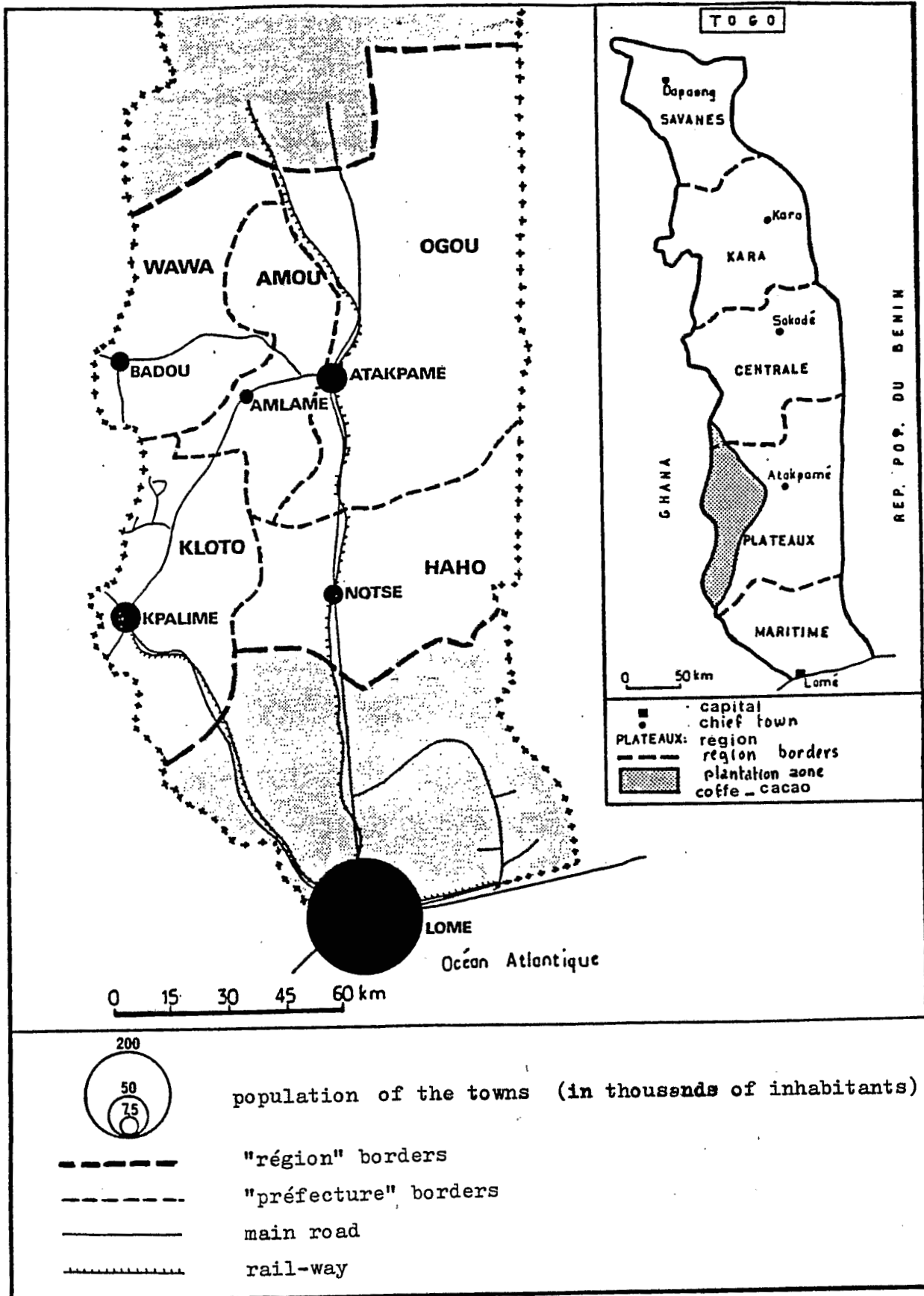
The national economy is also characterised by the "transit function" of Togo which contributes to the dynamism of the trading sector and is beneficial mainly to the southern part of the country.

Most industries were set up in the Maritime region and particularly in the port capital, Lomé. The administrative, political, economic and cultural functions are concentrated in this capital, thus resulting in a concentration of the population. In 1981, the population of Lomé was

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(1) The work presented here comes from a thesis : DUPONT (V) - 1984.  
On the same subject, see also : DUPONT (V) - 1985, DUPONT (V) and  
DUREAU (F) - 1986.

Map 1 - The "Région des Plateaux" in Togo.



370,000 , thus representing 13.6 % of the national population and 54.4 % of the urban population (1).

Compared to this macrocephalous capital, the demographic influence of the interior towns remains minor ; in 1981, only 11 % of the whole national population lived in the interior towns. Moreover, the population growth of the middle-sized towns has decreased from an average of 4.3 % per year between 1960 and 1970 to 3.2 % between 1970 and 1981. This percentage, as compared to the growth rate of the whole population of the country seems, therefore, to be rather moderate.

1-2- The towns under study : Atakpamé, Kpalimé and Badou in the Plateaux region. (map 1)

Apart from the fact that they belong to the same territorial administrative unit, namely the Plateaux region, Atakpamé, Kpalimé and Badou display common features : they are deeply integrated into the plantation economy which is the prevailing mode of production in the western part of this zone. The long-standing development of the cash crops has led to a high level of monetarisation in the region and facilitated the building up of a complete infrastructure at different levels such as tarred roads, health centres and schools.

The rural plantation zones are densely populated. Their economy which provided people with paid jobs attracted the population of the Kara region (Kabyé, Losso), of the Central region (Cotocoli, Tchamba) and of the Maritime region (Ouatchi, Ewé). These different communities have supplemented the already numerous local groups (Ewé - the dominant group-, Ahlon, Akposso, Akébou, Adélé, Ana, Fon ... ) and the resulting diversity observed in the western part of the Plateaux region has also had repercussions on the towns.

During its prosperous period from 1950 to 1965, the plantation economy gave a boost to the economic development of the three towns and particularly to commercial activities. At Kpalimé and Badou, they also benefitted from the vicinity of Ghana, but since 1960-61, the closing of the frontier together with the monetary and the tariff problems between the two countries affected the economic life (2). The deterioration of cash crop economy from 1965 has seriously impaired the economic dynamism of these three towns. Kpalimé and Atakpamé remain rather important inter-regional markets and Badou remains only a regional market. Atakpamé which is situated at a cross-roads between the north/south and east/west lines of communication allows it to play the role of a transit centre.

These towns are also administrative centres and chief towns of prefecture; moreover, Atakpamé serves the function of regional chief town. Though the administrative functions of Atakpamé and Kpalimé date back to the colonial period, Badou was promoted to chief town only in 1974.

However, the three towns play no significant industrial role, their production and processing activities depend on the small scale sector.

(1) According to the official definition, the 21 chief towns of prefecture are considered as towns in Togo. The term "middle-sized towns" or "Interior towns" includes all chief towns of prefecture with the exception of the capital, Lomé. The data used come from : BOURAIMA (N), MARGUERAT (Y) - 1983.

(2) GU-KONU (E.K.) - 1978 and 1982-83

The size of these towns must be evaluated in relation to Togo as a whole. In 1981, Kpalimé ranked fourth among the Togolese towns with a population of 27,669 inhabitants and Atakpamé ranked fifth with a population of 24,377 inhabitants. The population of Badou amounted to 7,536 inhabitants and this centre is a small market town dominated by the rural environment. Their population growth which shows the decline of their past dynamic commercial activities considerably decreased from the first intercensal period (1960-1970) to the second one (1970-1981) : from 5.8% per year to 2.8 % for Atakpamé (1) and from 4.8 % to 2.9 % for Kpalimé. At Badou, the population growth was already very low, amounting to 0.9 % per year from 1960 to 1970 and 1.3 % per year from 1970 to 1981.

Although the three towns selected in this study seem to be special at the national level due to their integration into the plantation economy, they remain representative of the Togolese middle-sized towns as a whole concerning their moderate and declining population growth.

### 1-3- Data and methods of observation.

This study is based on two complementary surveys conducted in the three above-mentioned towns (2).

#### - The 1970/1979 two-round survey.

The first survey was conducted by P. VIMARD (ORSTOM) in 1979. It consisted of a data collection which brought up to date the 1970 census. It concerned a sample of seven urban districts randomly selected in the three towns, each one being the subject of an exhaustive survey. This sample represented a population of 10,420 persons in 1979.

#### - The 1984 migration survey.

In addition to the 1970/1979 two-round survey, we conducted a migration survey in 1984 on a sub-sample of 354 in-migrants selected from the population register of the second round survey. This sub-sample concerned the cohort of the households which migrated into the town in 1978-1979 (3) and was composed more precisely of the heads of household and of their members who were 15 or over in 1979. The survey aimed both at :

- defining the situation of these in-migrants in 1984;
- arranging interviews on the biography of the in-migrants who were still present in 1984. These interviews concerned all the heads of household (or their spouses) : 24 of them were carried out.

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(1) However, part of the urban growth at Atakpamé could be observed outside the official urban boundaries in the suburb of Agbonou whose population increased by 11 % per year from 1970 to 1981.

(2) For further information on the methodology of the surveys, see : VIMARD (P) - 1980, pp. 23-50; and DUPONT (V) - 1984, pp. 47-124.

(3) Except for Badou, where the sub-sample concerned the 1975-1979 in-migrants, due to the limited number of the sample.

## 2 - THE ROLE OF THE MIDDLE-SIZED TOWNS IN THE SETTLEMENT OF THE POPULATION.

We shall now study the role of the three towns of the Plateaux region in the settlement of the population and try to determine whether they are poles of attraction, out-migration centres or step towns. To this end, we shall first evaluate to what extent these towns are likely to attract migrants and define their places of origin. Then we shall consider the departures from these towns in order to evaluate to what extent the latter are likely to transform migrants into permanent residents and to keep the native population within the town.

### 2-1- A considerable in-migration (table 1)

In-migration largely contributes to the population of the three towns in the Plateaux region. Thus, the non-natives represent the majority of the urban population. One can also evaluate the urban attraction exerted from 1970 to 1979 through the percentages of in-migrants observed in the de jure population in 1979 : 48 % in the urban districts surveyed for Atakpamé, 39 % for Kpalimé and 30 % for Badou.

But, these high in-migration rates are not adequate to define these towns as genuine poles of attraction.

The 1970/1979 two-round survey in the Plateaux towns shows that, despite a highly dynamic natural increase ( 3 % per year on average), the population growth estimated from the sampled urban districts remain low ( 1 % per year on average (1) ), suggesting a net out-migration which varies to a greater or lesser extent depending on the town ( -2 % per year on average). This situation leads to question the ability of these towns to keep their in-migrant and native populations.

### 2-2- A large and diversified in-migrant recruitment area.

(tables 2,3 and 4)

The places of origin of the in-migrants in the middle-sized towns under study prove to be geographically extensive and diversified as far as the type of settlement in the place of origin is concerned.

The prefecture of the town and the Plateaux region rank high among the places of origin of the in-migrants. But all the regions of Togo - the rural zones and all other towns including the capital - and the bordering countries (Ghana, Benin) are still found in the in-migrant recruitment area.

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(1) The annual growth rates evaluated from the 1970/1979 two-round survey are lower than the intercensal growth rates observed from 1970 to 1981. While the latter are calculated from the raw data of the censuses, without taking account of the coverage errors, the second round survey allows us to evaluate the omission rate in the population surveyed in the 1970 census and then to correct it. Moreover, the 1981 census being considered of higher quality than the previous one, one can assume that the coverage error is lower in 1981 than that observed in 1970. Hence, the intercensal growth rates must be considered as maximum evaluations and those calculated from the two-round survey must be considered as minimum evaluations.

Table 1 - In-migration indicators (sample districts)

Indicators (as a percentage of the 1979 de jure population)	ATAKPAME	KPALIME	BADOU	3 TOWNS
% of the 1970-1979 in-migrants	48.4	39.8	29.9	42.9
% of the 1978-1979 in-migrants(annual rate)	9.1	8.4	5.5	8.5
% of non-natives in the whole population	55.4	56.4	39.7	54.8
% of non-natives in the population of 15 and over	76.8	74.9	57.3	74.6

Source : 1970/1979 two-round survey

Table 2 - Place of last residence of 1970-1979 in-migrants.  
(distribution in percentages for place known)

Place of last residence	Place of residence in 1979			
	ATAKPAME	KPALIME	BADOU	3 TOWNS
village of the prefecture	18.1	29.6	21.2	23.4
Plateaux region ( - prefecture)	18.2	9.5	24.6	14.7
Lomé	16.1	14.4	8.2	14.9
Maritime region (- Lomé)	4.5	9.9	14.4	7.4
Central region	19.6	7.8	7.2	13.7
Kara region	10.7	7.4	3.8	8.9
Savanes region	4.9	1.0	-	2.9
Ghana	3.1	13.3	11.5	8.1
Benin	2.8	3.5	6.7	3.3
other foreign countries	2.0	3.6	2.4	2.7
Total (place known) (number of people)	100.0 ( 2 230 )	100.0 ( 2 012 )	100.0 ( 208 )	100.0 ( 4 450 )
Source : 1970/1979 two-round survey non defined place of last residence : 20 cases				



Table 3 - Birthplace of non-natives  
(distribution in percentages for place known)

Birthplace	Place of residence in 1979			
	ATAKPAME	KPALIME	BADOU	3 TOWNS
village of the prefecture	14.0	29.5	20.6	22.0
Plateaux region ( - prefecture)	19.5	6.9	19.5	13.2
Lomé	8.5	6.8	1.1	7.3
Maritime region ( - Lomé)	10.0	13.8	26.6	12.7
Central region	22.2	12.3	6.0	16.4
Kara region	13.4	12.3	8.9	12.8
Savanes region	2.9	0.6	-	1.6
Ghana	4.3	10.4	9.2	7.6
other foreign countries	5.2	7.4	8.1	6.4
Total (place known) (number of people)	100.0 ( 2 599 )	100.0 ( 2 862 )	100.0 ( 282 )	100.0 ( 5 703 )
Source : 1970/1979 two-round survey				

Table 4 - Place of last residence of 1970-1979 in-migrants  
according to the settlement type in the zone of origin.  
( distribution in percentages for place known)

Place of last residence	Place of residence in 1979			
	ATAKPAME	KPALIME	BADOU	3 TOWNS
Lomé	16.1	14.4	8.2	14.9
middle-sized towns in Togo	43.3	22.1	23.6	32.8
rural zones in Togo	32.7	43.1	47.6	38.2
foreign countries	7.9	20.4	20.6	14.1
Total (place known) (number of people)	100.0 (2 230 )	100.0 ( 2 212 )	100.0 ( 208 )	100.0 ( 4 450 )
Source : 1970/1979 two-round survey non defined place of last residence : 20 cases				

The population of these towns is still characterized by the former migration streams which have shaped the ethnic profile of the urban populations whose diversity is partly linked to the history of the population settlement in the region along with the high attraction exerted by the plantation economy on the Kabyé and Losso of the Kara region, the Coto coli and the Tchamba of the Central region and the Ouatchi of the Maritime region.

2-3- A low rate of urban settlement among the population.  
( tables 5, 6 and 7 )

In order to make a more complete study of the dynamics of the middle-sized towns, it is necessary to evaluate to what extent these urban centres are likely to incite the migrants and natives to settle permanently and to determine the duration of urban residence as well as the destinations of the out-migrants.

In the urban districts surveyed, the frequency of out-migration (1) is high in all the towns : in the de jure population in 1970, 60 % of out-migrants on average are considered to have moved between 1970 and 1979. Though these towns attract a quite considerable number of in-migrants, they are also out-migration centres and are characterised by a high population turnover.

Moreover, the differential intensity of out-migration between the natives and the non-natives of the town shows not only that these middle-sized towns find it hard to keep the excess of their natural increase, but especially that they are unable to keep the newly-arrived city dwellers. For these migrants, the town under consideration is only a step in their migratory moves.

The 1984 migration survey on the future of a cohort of former in-migrants shows more clearly that the capacity of the middle-sized towns for settling population is low. For instance, at Kpalimé, 78 % of the 1978-79 in-migrants left within the five or six years following their arrival in town, and at Atakpamé the percentage amounts to 68 %. These migrants lived for an average of 3.2 years at Kpalimé and for 3.4 years at Atakpamé before leaving again. At Badou, 77 % of the 1975-79 in-migrants left within the period from five to nine years following their arrival in town. All of them have resided there for less than 7 years. These data show unambiguously that all these migrants consider that the towns of the Plateaux region play the role of step centres and correspond only to a short stage in their migratory paths.

The main places of destination of the out-migrants can be summarized as follows : a little more than one third leaves for the Plateaux region, one fourth for the capital and the remaining part for the other Togolese regions and foreign countries (particularly Ghana and Benin). Within Togo, all types of settlement are observed in the places of arrival of the out-migrants ranging from the rural zones to the middle-sized towns and the capital. The striking element lies in the significance of urban-rural migration which is by no means a marginal phenomenon at the level of the three middle-sized towns concerned.

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(1) out-migration towards the zones outside each town under consideration.

Table 5 - Out-migration indicators. (sample districts)

Indicators (as a percentage of the 1970 de jure population)	ATAKPAME	KPALIME	BADOU	3 TOWNS
% of the 1970-1979 out-migrants	64.4	57.3	58.3	60.3
% of the 1970-1971 out-migrants(annual rate)	8.7	7.6	7.9	8.1
% of the 1970-1979 out-migrants among the natives	58.4	50.2	44.2	52.7
% of the 1970-1979 out-migrants among the non-natives	70.7	65.8	77.4	69.0

Source : 1970/1979 two-round survey

Table 6 - Place of destination of 1970-1979 out-migrants  
according to the settlement type in the destination zone.  
(distribution in percentages for place known)

Place of destination	Place of residence in 1970			
	ATAKPAME	KPALIME	BADOU	3 TOWNS
Lomé	20.8	33.4	11.3	25.4
middle-sized towns in Togo	38.0	20.4	27.3	29.0
rural zones in Togo	31.5	28.8	48.1	32.0
foreign countries	9.7	17.4	13.3	13.6
Total (place known) (number of people)	100.0 ( 1 886 )	100.0 ( 1 908 )	100.0 ( 443 )	100.0 ( 4 237 )

Source : 1970/1979 two-round survey  
non defined place of destination : 517 cases

Table 7 - Place of destination of 1970-1979 out-migrants .  
( distribution in percentages for place known )

Place of destination	Place of residence in 1970			
	ATAKPAME	KPALIME	BADOU	3 TOWNS
village of the prefecture	15.6	20.1	22.3	18.3
Plateaux region ( - prefecture )	20.1	10.5	28.2	16.6
Lomé	20.8	33.4	11.3	25.4
Maritime region (- Lomé)	7.9	6.2	14.0	7.8
Central region	15.7	2.8	1.1	8.4
Kara region	8.3	7.9	9.3	8.2
Savanes region	1.9	1.7	0.5	1.7
Ghana	3.1	5.0	8.1	4.5
Bénin	3.3	6.7	5.2	4.5
other foreign countries	3.3	5.7	5.0	4.6
Total (place known) (number of people)	100.0 ( 1 886 )	100.0 ( 1 908 )	100.0 ( 443 )	100.0 ( 4 237 )
Source : 1970/1979 two-round survey non defined place of destination : 517 cases				

The analysis of the different streams of migrants who arrive in or leave the urban districts surveyed, reveals that these centres are more akin to "step towns" than genuine and dynamic poles of attraction. The fact that they find it hard to hold onto the native urban population and to transform the migrants into permanent residents shows the weaknesses in their economic systems.

It is now necessary to see what types of migratory paths correspond to the spatial redistribution of the population which is operated through these towns. We need to specify the meaning of the term "step town" which is applied to these centres in order to reveal the high turnover of the urban populations studied and the inability of the towns to hold onto the migrants. The term "step town" usually refers to serial migration which means movements "to large cities as a final place of destination by a series a shorter, intermediate migrations to cities or areas of successively larger size" (1). This model of step migration was shown by some authors as one of the main dynamic aspects of the contemporaneous spatial economy in the industrialized countries in the 1930 's (2). Therefore, it is necessary to check whether the position held by the three Togolese middle-sized towns in the migratory paths corresponds to the role of "step town" in the traditional and "western" sense or rather to a more complex and original role yet to be defined.

### 3 - THE POSITION HELD BY THE MIDDLE-SIZED TOWNS IN THE MIGRATORY PATHS.

We are particularly interested in the migratory paths which affect the Plateaux towns and in questioning the models to which they correspond and the underlying logic, which will allow us to better understand the significance attributed by the migrants to settlement in a middle-sized town.

#### 3-1- The traditional models revised.

The study of the migratory moves shows first the existence of processes which bring into question the significance of certain traditional migration models such as the gravity model and that of step migration.

##### 3-1-1- The size effect and the distance effect.

In the migration gravity models, the significance of the migration streams between two areas is governed by a direct proportional effect of the population size in the zones of arrival and of reception and by an inverse proportional effect of the geographical distance between both zones.

However, the spatial distribution of the migration streams observed shows that the distance effect cannot be limited only to a simple decrease in the potential attraction of a place in inverse proportion to the geographic distance. More generally, the geographical distance does not seem to be an essential element in the spatial structuring of West Afri-

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(1) Multilingual demographic dictionary, English Section, Second Edition adapted by Etienne Van de WALLE; UIESP, Ordina Editions, Liège, 1982, p. 94.

(2) WEIGMAN (H) - 1926 and 1932.

See also the presentation made by PONSARD (C) - 1958, pp. 45-49.

can populations.

Concerning the size effect, if the population potential characteristic of each region or zone can account for some tendencies in the migration streams such as, for instance, the significance of the rural places of origin and destination of the migrants towards or from the Togolese towns, it proves also to be inadequate to account for the entire spatial configuration of the migration streams. Therefore, the migrations which affect the middle-sized towns under study cannot be limited to processes which may be governed mechanically by the factors of distance and population size.

### 3-1-2- Step migration.

Another traditional model must also be confronted with african reality : the model of step migrations progressing gradually from rural zones to towns of increasing size. From this perspective several lessons can be drawn from the case study.

In the three Togolese towns under study, it is obvious that the recruitment of in-migrants is not limited to rural areas or to towns of a smaller size, but it takes in towns of a larger size, including the capital city.

The study of the urban in-migrants' biographies also shows that, if multiple migrations are commonly observed, there is no standard path for migrants which would progressively lead from rural zones to towns. One or more rural stay are often observed after urban residence. Moreover, migrations towards the native village or former places of residence are frequent. One must also recall the considerable influence of rural destinations among out-migrants from the Plateaux towns, which shows the significance of urban-rural migration which is too often underestimated.

We have also evaluated the migration balance between the urban districts surveyed in each town and the different exchange regions or zones (rural and urban) during the 1970-1979 period. Although, for the sample as a whole, the net out-migration in relation to the total migration stream increases with the level of urbanization of the migration zone, it should be noticed that the number of migrants moving from the urban districts to the rural zones is greater than the number moving from the rural zones to these urban districts. Thus, the usual "rural exodus - growth of urban centres through in-migration" model is not observed in these Togolese towns. The population redistribution in which the three towns are involved shows the existence of migratory patterns much more complex than a simple flow drained by the capital. Although, for the whole sample, the net out-migration towards Lomé is the highest, the Plateaux region, other regions in Togo and even the rural zones and the foreign countries (except for Ghana) also take advantage of these migratory exchanges quantitatively. While being step towns, the three towns of the Plateaux region are not however just a stage on the road to the capital.

The term "step town" applied to the three middle-sized towns under study must not be considered exclusively in its usual meaning, that is to say as a step for migrants who are natives of rural zones or of small towns and who are on their way to the metropolis. The term "step town" must be broadened in order to reveal the specific nature of the migration processes observed here. The "europo-centric" model of step migration as

is confirmed by other studies (1) has proved to be too simplistic to account for the facts observed in West African countries.

The interviews carried out with urban in-migrants show that the relevance of the traditional model of step migration is challenged by the cultural context of the spatial mobility. As will be shown in a more detailed manner below, the space as seen by the individuals is organized by referring constantly to the place of origin and by the migration area of the community to which the migrant belongs.

### 3-2- The birthplace : constant reference pole in the migrant's life space.

The relevance of birthplace in the migrants' movements and more generally in their life space is shown in many ways.

When one observe the in-migrants' movements before they arrive in the middle-sized towns, we frequently notice one or several stays in the birthplace.

The survey gives other data concerning the significance of return migrations (not necessarily final) towards the native village (or town) in the migratory moves. For instance, among the in-migrants who arrived in the town from 1970 to 1979, there are, according to the town, 11 % to 18 % of individuals who were born in their town of in-migration.

The analysis of the destinations of the out-migrants according to their ethnic group also shows that the migrants are closely related to their traditional ethnic zone. Whatever the ethnic group may be, the native geographic and cultural area always seems to be a privileged destination for the out-migrants. These preferences partly shape the pattern of distribution of the out-migrant streams from the three Togolese towns.

The in-migrants' projects also reveal the reference position held by the place of origin in their migration area. Therefore, a quasi-general desire to return to the native village (or town) when old, or at least to its environs (to the chief town on which the village depends, for instance) is observed, which does not exclude other moves before this return. If they are only intentions, these projects show quite clearly that the urban residence is considered by most migrants as a temporary residence and that the native village is idealized and appears as the out-come of any migratory path.

One must emphasize that migration never means that those who migrate to the town break away completely from their place of origin; on the contrary, they maintain numerous social and economic relations with the latter, as is shown by the interviews carried out with the urban in-migrants.

Therefore, the in-migrants always pay rather regular visits to their family; they also return to their place of origin for the traditional feasts or for the agricultural work. They often even own a house and/or lands in their native village and others have investment plans which shows that they intend to return to it some day.

The relationships maintained between the urban in-migrants and the relatives who remained in the village or in the native country are also characterized by transfers in money or in kind.

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(1) DUREAU (F) - 1985

The widespread associations of natives also attest to the fact that the urban in-migrants are attached to their place of origin.

The birthplace is considered by the migrant throughout his or her life and the migratory path. As far as the migrant is concerned, his place of origin remains his pre-eminent place of social reproduction, the land of his ancestors, of his community, where the family and religious ceremonies as well as marriage take place. Therefore, certain migrations towards the birthplace can be accounted for in this way and can be explained in the context of social reproduction. A stay at the native village can also play the role of a "regenerative" stage particularly if an urban migration fails and before a new one is begun.

The migrant's place of origin is part of his cultural capital which binds him to his basic community and organizes his space by representing a constant reference pole in his life space. Taking account of the migrant's birthplace allows us to place him within the social group to which he belongs. Therefore, the last theme studied in this paper will concern the role of collective logic in the migratory strategies.

### 3-3- The collective logic of the migratory strategies.

The collective character of the migratory strategies can be observed at different levels ranging from the distribution of places of origin of the urban in-migrants to the type of integration into the urban zone.

Though the place of origin of the in-migrants in the middle-sized towns under study has proved to be diversified, it does not exclude an urban attraction exerted in specific directions, which evidences the existence of migratory channels.

In the towns of the Plateaux region, one can see that traditional migration streams corresponding to ethnic migration channels are preserved. The origin of some of these channels dates back to the colonial period along with the compulsory movements of populations which were subjected to forced labour. Such is the case of the Kabyé and the Losso peoples from the densely populated massifs of the Kara who were mobilized to build roads between their region and the Plateaux and were urged to settle in the plantation zone of the latter. This migration stream which was initially prompted and controlled by the colonial authority has been self-maintained, and thus having repercussion on the towns of the region.

The type of integration of the urban in-migrants also shows the collective character of the migratory strategies. The family and ethnic solidarities play a great role in the migrants' integration into the urban zones. On his arrival, the migrant can generally rely on family, ethnic and occupational relations or on relationships with natives from the same village. Thanks to his circle of relations, the in-migrant gets initial information on the possibilities of occupational integration into the town and he profits from a primary system of reception and accommodation and he is often given assistance to find dwellings, and possibly a job or an apprenticeship. This system of spontaneous reception and mutual assistance is considered by some authors as an indirect factor in rural exodus (1). These systems of reception and the underlying network of relations contribute to the preservation of migratory channels.

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(1) NYASSOGBO (G.K.) - 1975



The case of children or adolescents who are received by families having in-migrated to the town so that they can pursue their studies or serve their apprenticeship is a good example. The duty of family solidarity directly leads to chain migration between the place of origin of the family and the town which strengthens the network of relations between these two poles. In this connection, one cannot but underline the significant role played by networks of relations in maintaining new migrations.

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Migration towards the middle-sized towns under study cannot be understood without referring to the community to which the in-migrant belongs: thus the middle-sized towns fit into collective networks of migrations since the urban migration does not mean that the migrant breaks away from the place of origin, but it takes part in the reproduction of the community in an extensive and divided area.

## CONCLUSION

The three middle-sized towns under study do not seem to be able to stabilize the migrants they receive or to keep their own native city dwellers. Though they do not succeed in attracting on a permanent basis the migration streams towards the capital, their role in the migratory processes is not limited to being step towns for the benefit of Lomé or other coastal metropolises. They are centres for the redistribution of the population, step towns in the more complex migratory paths where the migrant's place of origin constitutes a constant reference pole.

Some lessons drawn from the analysis of the migration and whose significance goes largely beyond the Togolese case study and extends to West African populations (1) must be recalled. One can mention that the model of step migration from rural zones to towns of increasing size is not confirmed, that the native locality is decisive in the structuring of individuals' migration area and that the collective logic has a great influence on migratory strategies.

As a conclusion to this case study, we will try to enlarge its terms of reference and to suggest some avenues of research in the field of the dynamics of middle-sized towns.

Although, in the Plateaux region, the impact of the function of the towns as step towns is decisive in their dynamics, one can question the importance of this function in the process of urbanization in the country. What is the role of the step towns in all the migration streams towards the capital since the excessive influence of the latter characterizes the Togolese urban system ?

The in-migrants who remain for a time in one of the middle-sized towns before going the capital might become marginal within the population of Lomé and the majority of the in-migrants towards Lomé might come

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(1) See study by F. DUREAU (1985) on the processes of migration and urbanization in the Ivory Coast.

directly from their native place (1).

One should also check whether the middle-sized towns lose a larger number of people to the capital than the rural zones in order to determine to what extent the step towns exert a limited stabilizing effect on the population or on the contrary, an accelerating effect on migratory moves.

The answer to these questions which requires going beyond this case study in order to analyse all the migration streams in the country would allow us to evaluate more effectively the role played by the middle-sized towns and particularly their ability or inability to become poles of attraction for the settlement of population.

This last question raises others which are essential for the formulation of policies of regional planning and of restoration of a balanced urban system. What effects can the public policies of equipment and investment in the middle-sized towns have on migration? Is it possible to create urban centres by injecting capital from outside or rather shouldn't it be necessary to act through a policy of rural development? Aren't the middle-sized towns, like those in the plantation area studied above, the product firstly of a local dynamic subjected to the influences of national (and supranational) policies? In that case, injections of capital into the towns may have few stimulative effects on the urban economic activities and therefore, few positive repercussions on the attraction and stabilization of the population in the middle-sized towns, while operations in the agricultural field could, due to their impact on the local rural economy, have more influence on the development of the towns which depend on it.

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(1) As for migration, the population census carried out in Togo in 1981 should allow us to make an interesting study based on the question relating to the place of residence two years before the census (at the time of the 1979 elections) which can be correlated with birthplace and place of residence in 1981.

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