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Neo-Colonialism in West Africa by Samir Amin

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« relativise » l'approche de S. Amin en mettant en relief les insuffisances des analyses néo-keynesiennes et marxistes qui, selon lui, tendent à ignorer ou à négliger les secteurs qui ne relèvent pas d'une rationalité conventionnelle.

D'autres articles non monographiques prennent en considération certains problèmes particuliers liés aux migrations. Oshomha Imoagene étudie l'émergence d'une culture urbaine spécifique et le développement des migrations « psychosociales » liées à l'attraction de cette culture urbaine. Dans un ordre d'idées tout à fait différent, Khisna Ahoja-Patel indique la diversité et la portée des mesures gouvernementales organisant l'emploi des non-nationaux.

Ces études globales ou thématiques sont complétées par des études de cas par pays ou région. Les migrations internes « nigérianes » font l'objet de trois contributions portant sur la relation des migrants avec leur région d'origine, les changements des types de migration et les rapports entre les mouvements de population et la pénurie de terres. L'importance des migrations de Togolais et de Voltaïques vers le Ghana et les difficultés politiques qu'elles soulèvent justifient amplement les deux articles qui leur sont consacrés : les effets de l'expulsion des travailleurs migrants sur l'économie ghanéenne, l'impact des migrations sur la société villageoise dans les zones de départ et d'arrivée. Les problèmes posés par la présence d'une importante main-d'œuvre voltaïque en Côte-d'Ivoire ont fourni la matière à deux articles qui émanent de chercheurs travaillant dans les pays intéressés et qui présentent des points de vue comparatifs qui ne sont pas dénués d'intérêt. J. W. Gregory, de son côté, présente une analyse très complète des migrations rurales-urbaines en Haute-Volta, qui met en relief les carences de la politique officielle dans ce domaine. Enfin on trouve dans ce volume d'autres études portant sur les relations hommes – femmes et les migrations des Zarma du Niger, l'émigration sarakhollaise du Guidimaka mauritanien

vers la France, les migrations des Wolof-Mourides au Sénégal.

La valeur et la diversité de ces différentes contributions appellent cependant trois réserves. La première tient à l'absence de données démographiques globales sur les phénomènes de migration. La deuxième est que, malgré les observations de S. Amin, les analyses présentées demeurent très largement conventionnelles. La troisième est d'ordre strictement typographique. On souhaiterait, en effet, que les textes (et les résumés) en français soient édités avec davantage d'attention pour éviter les très nombreuses fautes que nous avons notées.

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Samir AMIN, *Neo-Colonialism in West Africa*, Penguin African Library, 1973 and Monthly Review Press, 1973, 298p.

The works of Samir Amin are well-known to students of African political economy and, thanks to recent translations of two books from French to English, will find a larger audience. In addition to *Neo-Colonialism in West Africa*, Amin's *Accumulation on a World Scale* appeared in 1974 (Monthly Review Press), and a translation of *Le développement inégal* is apparently forthcoming. Moreover, the book under review provides, and updates to about 1970, capsule summaries of Amin's earlier writings on the Ivory Coast (*Le développement du capitalisme en Côte-d'Ivoire*), Mali, Guinea, and Ghana (*Trois expériences africaines de développement*). Also included are economic analyses of Senegal, Mauritania, Dahomey, Togo, Upper Volta, and Niger, thus covering all of francophone West Africa, with comparative notes on Ghana and Gambia.

Those seeking systematic data on the post-independence economic evolution of these countries are advised, however, at least to supplement Amin's book with other available sources of greater reliability: the two International Monetary Fund *Surveys of African Economies* devoted to West Africa (volumes 3 and 6, 1970 and 1975), along with an excellent 1975 study directed by Elliot Berg on *The Recent Economic Evolution of the Sahel* (University of Michigan, Center for Research on Economic Development). Amin's work does offer some possible advantages over these others. It is more historical (though rather haphazard in presentation), it includes otherwise unpublished data on Guinea and Mali (though of extremely dubious reliability in the case of the former), and it is guided by an explicit and critical theory (though one must turn to other writings by Amin to find the theory explicated).

In theoretical perspective and prolific output, Samir Amin has become Africa's counterpart to Latin America's André Gunder Frank among the radical anti-imperialists. This variant of neo-Marxism entails a deterministic commitment to a number of propositions, among them: (1) underdevelopment is not a condition but a process of subordinate incorporation into the world capitalist system which creates unequal and perverse structural relationships (dependency or "the development of underdevelopment"); (2) all contacts between capitalist and Third World countries are intrinsically exploitative for the latter and necessary for the economic vitality of the former; (3) development must be "autonomous" or it is mere extraverted growth, which is not dynamic and cannot be sustained; (4) development cannot be dependent by definition, but an autonomous capitalist path is precluded in the Third World due to the penetration of foreign capitalist (neo-colonial) interests; therefore (5) development can only occur in the Third World if it is organized on socialist, inward-looking lines over large regions. Space does not permit a meaning-

ful critique of this perspective here, but its analytical utility for students of Third World political economy is far from having been convincingly demonstrated. Indeed, even the trend of current neo-Marxist in the radical anti-imperialist position (see, e.g., recent writings by Michael Barratt Brown, Immanuel Wallerstein, Bill Warren, Jean-Pierre Olivier, E. A. Brett, and many others). For example, and no liberal could have put it better, Barratt Brown contends that Amin, Frank, *et al.* "have been so anxious to insist on the lack of independence that they have missed the fact of development." (*The Economics of Imperialism*, Penguin, 1974, p. 276) Amin's interpretation of the Ivory Coast, the only country among those surveyed in *Neo-Colonialism in West Africa* to have experienced sustained economic dynamism, is a case in point. In the face of massive and continuing evidence to the contrary, Amin renews his prediction of collapse in Ivory Coast every few years. The rationale for this prediction, it must be pointed out, is not based upon empirical analysis but on *a priori* conviction. Amin's own analysis is that, despite some problems to be sure, the Ivorian economy is becoming more diversified, "growth has continued," the "balance of payments does not seem in too bad a state," and "public finances also continue apparently sound." But, he insists, the Ivorian growth rate "seems bound to decline," and, like Senegal (!), "Doubtless in the future it will run into the same problems as [neo-] colonial development comes to a halt." (pp. 172-77, my emphasis)

It is difficult to decide which experience Amin has distorted the more, but the notion that the contemporary state capitalist and broadly based economic development of Ivory Coast is "merely a reproduction" (p. xvi) of earlier and ephemeral export drives in colonial Senegal, Gold Coast, and Belgian Congo is simply obdurate or obtuse. Sustained economic growth (twenty-five years now at an average rate of 7-8%), fundamental structural changes (within the economy as a whole as well as within vir-

tually every sector), improved social and economic well-being on a wide scale and throughout most of the country, and increasing national (especially state) control over the processes and content of "development" are undeniable in the Ivory Coast. Undeniable also are the growing inequalities among Ivorian residents and the continuing reliance upon foreign capital and foreign manpower. This pattern of development is far from ideal, and dynamic continuity is not assured but such criteria, and they are Amin's, are irresponsible in an imperfect and uncertain world. The progressive aspects of Ivorian development are no mirage and illustrate that, contrary to Amin's dichotomy, dependency and development are not necessarily incompatible. (See my forthcoming *Neo-Colonialism as a Development Strategy*.)

On other points, however, Amin is often most perceptive. His analyses of public finances under neo-colonial conditions are, in many respects, exemplary. He was an early proponent of the need for priority to food production in West Africa whose views went unheeded, and at great human cost. He has, equally, emphasized the importance of economic integration in West Africa (though he holds a naively voluntaristic conception of this complex problem) and eloquently traced the absurdity of balkanization, especially for the Sahel: "it can never be sufficiently stressed that the overriding obstacle to development is the division of this area into nine states." (p. 273) In spite of some serious interpretive mistakes, which derive from theoretical inadequacies, Amin's book is instructive reading on the failures of liberal policy, unfortunately more numerous than the successes in West Africa.

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E. A. ALPERS, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa. Changing Patterns of Internal Trade to the Late Nineteenth Century*, London: Heinemann, 1975, xviii + 296p.

The geographical range of this study extends from Zanzibar to the Zambezi, and inland from the coast to Zambia; ranging chronologically from the arrival of Portuguese in pursuit of "Christians and spices" in 1498, until the first intimations of the British anti-slavery Crusade in the middle nineteenth century. Although it assesses the significance of both the Arab, Swahili and the Portuguese systems in East Africa, the primary emphasis is upon the latter, particularly the area covered by the provinces of Niassa, Cabo Delgado and Moçambique. This area was woven by Portuguese, Swahili, Yao and Makua into the Indian Ocean economic system from the early sixteenth century, but derived little benefit from such early contacts, lapsing in the twentieth century into one of the poorest and most backward areas in the most stagnant of European empires. It has long remained *terra incognita* for students of African history, and, indeed, of African affairs, only arousing the interest of the outside world when it became the battlefield upon which first Salazar and then Caetano sought to assert Portugal's civilizing mission. The Makonde, Makua-Lomwe, Yao and Maravi of the area derived little benefit from Portuguese rule, and provided the backbone of Frelimo's successful campaigns.

Except where it impinged upon individuals such as Livingstone or Johnston, or upon British imperial designs during the Scramble, Portuguese East Africa has interested few Anglophone scholars – C. R. Boxer being the major exception. Even in Portuguese, most of what purports to be history relates to the conquests of the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, with Africans merely providing an opportunity for displays of Lusitanian heroics. Similarly, with the honourable exceptions of Rita-