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The Social (Soft) Science of Social \*  
Administration and The 'Population'  
Factor In African Development Studies,

WORKING PAPER VTT

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## SUMMARY OF THE PAPER

The science and art of social administration is indeed a strategic area for those scientists, who want to promote social change and transformation in Africa. Whether 'social administration' is indeed an art or a science is of little consequence. What needs to be emphasised is that since World War II, when the girdle for making finance capital palatable was passed on or inherited by the United States of America, 'public' or 'social' administration has grown on the continent. It has grown to such an extent that it has become very vulnerable to undue influence from the 'world' social democratic 'population' lobby in international research affairs. If the subtle nuances of the propaganda of this world academic lobby are indeed accepted by African scholars, this will mean that the 'whims' and fashions of market forces will serve as the basic index, not only for academic excellence, but for directing social control, no matter how informal, over the biological reproduction of human society in Africa.

It is therefore imperative that the explication of such issues as the population explosion be examined against the empirical historic backdrop of the 'un-natural' circumstances that have underpinned the social disorganisation of African labour power for the last 100 or so years. Finance capital in its post-colonial and modern phases, aims to complete that disorganisation, by dissolving this labour power, that European colonialism had only partially decomposed.

The atomisation of social sciences on the continent, can therefore be best understood not in terms of general petty-bourgeois careerism, and one-up-manship, but within the general processual context that the under-girded the decomposition of African labour power. This atomisation has created a thick fog around internationally branded debates between world-class political scientists, demographers, anthropologists, economists etc, with each discipline having indigenised specialised western social science paradigms to the extent of knowing more and more of the collective European unconscious and less and less about concrete social realities in Africa.

What Africa needs is a scientific prognosis for reorganising African labour power and production to correct the havoc of capitalist market forces which has been institutionalised in the administrative logic of both the colonial and the post-neo-colonial state.

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THE SOCIAL (SOFT) SCIENCE OF SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND THE 'POPULATION FACTOR' IN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

'Administration is like a medicinal drug excellent in homeopathic portions but fatal - to freedom at least - in large doses. But the need for it in some degree cannot be denied even by the man who rejects government'.<sup>1</sup>

'To reform a man, you must begin with his grandmother'.<sup>2</sup>

'You paint the horizon for me with things that almost blind my eye, so that I cannot distinguish what should be done from what should not. Shall I order you to proceed or order to desist? I let you guide me yesterday and what did I reap'?<sup>3</sup>

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BY WAY OF INTRODUCING THE PRINCIPAL ABSTRACT OF THE PAPER : BEYOND THE SOCIAL ENGINEERING FEATS OF INTERNATIONAL REFORMIST SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

That branch of the sciences that is encapsulated under the general rubric of population studies, demography etc. is one that has excited many contradictory emotions in the trans-African social science community. Social scientists, immersed in the modernization paradigm, and preoccupied with the whole business of bringing about some sort of demographic transition so that Africa catches up with Europe, have at various moments in the post-colonial era, readily invoked the ghost of the Reverend Thomas Malthus. Indeed the spectre of famine that still haunts most of the continent seems to have added some scholastic legitimacy to the call for more population control, i.e. some national policies to either forcibly or gently coerce African working households to have less children. Despite the heat that has been generated by the scholastic debate on the population factor in African development studies largely centring on the pros and cons of a numerically 'big' population relative to a given territorial social formation's

resource capacity to sustain equitable food production and consumption, there has been little in the way of diagnostic analyses firmly based on the principles of historical materialism.

Unfortunately, however, African scientists have as yet to independently focus on the dimensions and dynamics of the population factor in Africa. At one extreme of the spectrum of scholarly opinion making on the subject, we have an almost mindless echoing of the admonitions emanating from such august bodies as the World Population Council, or from the various Population Study Groups of the World Bank; at the other extreme of the spectrum amongst left-wing ideologues, when the subject of population has been alluded to, the result has not been any reflective inquiry, but rather the mutual exchange of invective and extended epithets couched in terms of the au fait concerns at various euro-centric centres of learning and research, e.g. 'technicist', 'Althusserian', 'Poulantzian', ultra-leftist, Trotskist etc.

Without having to delve too much into the various social descriptions of the population factor scattered in monographs, U.N. documents, conference papers, and other ephemera of the trans-African intellectual community, it would not be uncivil or arrogant to point out at this early stage of this very general discourse, that the heat that has been generated in the debate has stemmed from the indigenisation of Western European idealism, rather than from considered materialistic analyses of the problem. A form of Machism has developed in the African intellectual community, so that instead of the social sciences becoming an instrument for social transformation, the indigenisation of social science discourse has bred a species of muddled idealism based on

phrase mongering. And nowhere is this more evident in such a field of academic endeavour as 'population studies', where social scientists have foisted Malthusianism upon the whole general rubric of development studies, by the transfer of biological concepts. As Lenin once pointed out, 'the transfer of biological concepts in general to the sphere of the social sciences is phrase mongering'.<sup>4</sup>

In order to demonstrate this point further, and the dangers of Machism, with particular reference to the study of the reproductive behaviour of human beings, Lenin cited the following from Marx:

"Herr Lange (On the Labour Question, etc. 2nd ed), Marx wrote to Kugelmann on June 27 1870', sings my praises loudly, but with the object of making himself important. Herr Lange, you see has made a great discovery. The whole of history can be brought under a single great natural law. This natural law is the phrase (in this application Darwin's expression becomes nothing but a phrase) 'struggle for life', and the content of this phrase is the Malthusian law of population or rather, overpopulation. So, instead of analysing the 'struggle for life' as represented historically in various definite forms of society, all that has to be done is to translate every concrete struggle into the phrase 'struggle for life', and this phrase itself into the Malthusian 'population fantasy'. One must admit that this is a very impressive method - for swaggering, sham-scientific, bombastic ignorance and intellectual laziness"<sup>5</sup>

The sensitivity of the population issue, can hardly be denied in a continent such as Africa, where even before the signing of the Treaty of Berlin in 1884, many people on the continent, had ceased to be effective historical actors in shaping their own daily lives. It therefore appears to us at this juncture of the much talked about 'African crisis', that if intellectuals are to provide the much needed strategic solutions to the continent's manifold problems, the immediate task for those researchers intent on bringing about an amelioration in the lives of the people through some form of administrative action, should

not be 'the indigenisation' of imported social technologies, and their refinement into accurate indices or instruments for measuring the depth of human suffering. How long will the continent's starving millions continue to suffer, while waiting for some economic demographer to give the administrators accurate mortality statistics for each territorial unit?

The possibility of the trans-national African social science community being able to come up with strategic solutions indeed seems to be very bleak at the moment. Archie Mafeje has gone a long way in accounting for some of the reasons for such a prognostication. If we read him correctly, the so-called 'pragmatic' or policy-orientated research has been of limited utility, precisely because of the national exceptionalism, that has underpinned much intellectual effort on the continent:

"it is important to bear in mind that every government has its own intellectual wing, whether this comprises of advisors of all sorts, ideologues or of genuinely committed scientists. Whoever these might be they cannot be exonerated from the consequences of their recommendations or scientific projections".<sup>6</sup>

Mafeje goes on to give an historical explication for the ineffectiveness of the trans-African social science community in terms of African intellectuals having fallen 'victim' to divergent colonial traditions - British, French, Belgian, Portuguese, German, and Italian. But Mafeje we contend has been too kind to his professional brethren, and the edge of his powerful tour de force is somewhat dissipated in some very poignant existential rhetoric centred round the question whether intellectuals in Africa can really justify their existence.



Thus, he boldly and cheekily ejaculates on the whole talk of the need expressed in some circles for the professionalisation of social sciences:

"What is it that a political scientist can do which a socially aware politician cannot do? What is it that a sociologist can do which socially committed cadres cannot do? If these be the sciences then the question may be raised : what kind of technology or even scientific software can they generate which the ordinary, politically conscious citizen is incapable of?"<sup>7</sup>

#### The Pitfalls of Mechanistic Revolutionary Fatalism

Archie Mafeje's very important broadside into the very core of the very diffuse and disparate trans-Africa social science 'community' raises more questions than it answers, and there is nothing essentially bad about that; it is therefore surprising that the raising of important social-cum existential questions, has sometimes been regarded, as a living manifestation of Trotskyism. The point really then if African scientists ~~have~~ to make a contribution to the enhancement of life-sustaining strategies and values, they can no longer restrict the expenditure of their intellectual labour power to the recovery of euro-centric labelling machines, and typological detailing of social phenomena. The issue of whether social science should be professionalised/indigenized, etc. therefore begs many basic as, opposed to superstructural questions. For even if we become micro-anthropologists, and fluently articulate the various African modes of production, we still have to find the most appropriate typology for social action to solve the African crisis, and in that whole exercise, it would indeed be the height of scholastic folly if by the year 2000 A.D. African scholars gathered somewhere under the African sun came to the unanimous conclusion that there was not one crisis in the years 1980-1990 but

56 crises. The issue of the professionalisation or even the indigenisation of European scholastic habits of mind is really secondary to the more fundamental and crucial question of what is to be done about the material conditions that presently threaten the sustainability of African labour power. That question is more objective than the detailing of the self-perceptions and collective angst of the trans-African petty-bourgeoisie, and describing that as solid primary research based on primary sources.

In saying all that we are not trying to under-estimate the power of the petty-bourgeoisie on the continent at least in the short run. The former have the capacity to consciously or unconsciously conspire against the collective and common good of Africans. The petty-bourgeoisie in Africa is not a useless class; they are no longer paper tigers screaming negritude or Black Power at Imperialism and at the same time they are not about to transform into the national bourgeoisies in the bantustans of U.S. finance capital. Believing that because of some future date in the I.M.F. calendar for the African Revolution, when all Africans will have adequate housing, social services etc., and the market relationship will have been indigenised, phraseology, and based on the correct Marxist-Leninist-Maoist texts, is nothing short of reactionary and misleading and in the long run will operate against the common good.

For if the classical texts are closely examined, it is clear that it was the rise of a newly prominent social stratum in Europe - the bourgeoisie, that produced intellectual as a noun. There is nowhere where it is stated that the petty bourgeoisie was solely defined in

terms of the ability to read and write. That latter phenomena, has therefore been a product of revolutionary fatalism, by certain romantic African anti-capitalists in search of class suicide.

Marx wrote in The German Ideology, expounding his new thesis that the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class:

"The division of labour, which we already saw above ... as one of the chief forces of history up to now, manifests itself also in the ruling class as the division of mental and material labour so that inside this class one part appears as the thinkers of this class (its active, conceptive ideologues, who make their main livelihood out of cultivating the class's illusion about itself) while the others' relation to these ideas and illusions is more one of passive receptivity, since they are the active members of this class in reality and have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves. Within this class, this cleavage can even develop into a certain opposition and hostility between the two parts, but given any practical collision endangering the class itself, this passes away of itself, where upon there also vanishes the appearance that the ruling ideas were not the ideas of the ruling class and had a power distinct from the power of this class".<sup>8</sup>

What, then is the import of Marx's new thesis<sup>9</sup> for African development studies in general. What is its import as a principle of the proletarian science he popularised rather than as an audio-visual diagram? And even more importantly how can the principle above aid in the building up of an African proletarian science, firmly based on Africa's own experience in the world economy and division of labour, in short African historical materialism.

The process of historical abstraction from the general laws of human development, has however been complicated by a rigid faith in a kind of teleonomic stages of growth paradigm, perceived solely from the assemblage point of European social thought. Despite profuse glibness

on the primacy of political economy as a guiding method for "developmental social science" that is meant to uplift the masses, problems of method even at the most inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary African research agency, have been conflated into varying levels of colligation. By colligation we mean the inter-weaving of selective observation, statistical well aimed logic, empirical statements and idealistic value judgements into an audio-visual image, an opinion or a story. And in such a situation wherein colligation takes precedence over method, even the end purpose of statistical methods becomes lost. We have been told that

"statistical methods are developed primarily for the biological and physical sciences where data are drawn from experiments. However, the data in econometric study are drawn from the actual outcomes of the economic process and not from experimental observations".<sup>10</sup>

But of course, even within such a well expressed warning about the differences between the physical sciences and the social sciences, it would still be important to reiterate that economic processes are not the natural processes that are found in the biological and physical sciences. In Africa, therefore this fact that the economic processes that have even brought about the individual indigenous technical expert, have not been natural must always be clearly stated to avoid confusion over the cause and effect of social phenomena.

For Europe, it is widely recognised that the intellectual or expert as a social type seems to come into historical prominence with the beginnings of the bourgeois era. Has Africa undergone an autonomous bourgeois era? Has Africa undergone an autonomous bourgeois era, if she has not undergone one, we need to ask whether it is desirable that this should be done? But even more crucially,

why have intellectuals as a social type come into historical prominence in Africa, with the beginnings of the post-colonial era? In Europe, the ruling classes had their ideologues and thinkers, who made "their main livelihood out of cultivating the class's illusion about itself" source or imposing their set of illusions on all of society. For whom is the African social science community cultivating illusions for, and what sort of illusions have been indigenised?

If professionalisation of the social sciences is directed at the import-substitution/indigenisation of political software packages, then indeed before indulging in phrase-mongering about science and technology, we need to appreciate the difference between doing and thinking in a world ruled by the dictates of capital. Hal Draper has expressed it very bluntly in the following:

"... the same reasons that produce the political inaptitude of the capitalist class also make it less likely than other ruling classes to provide its own intellectual rationalizers from its own ranks: capitalists qua capitalists are interested in profits, not philosophy, and in cotton-spinning as against theory spinning. It leaves far more room than ever before for the assignment of ancillary duties to professional specialists: in the one case, professional politicians; in the other, professional ideology fabricators. Thus on the highest level of the system it introduces a division of labour between those who stuff moneybags and those who stuff heads. This appears as the difference between doing and thinking".<sup>11</sup> (Emphasis not in original).

failure to appreciate such a difference likely to lead either to a form of revolutionary fatalism or naive petty bourgeois idealism that will complete the neo-colonial project through the corporatization of indigenous African technical expertise.

In no other field of intellectual endeavour has so much faith been placed in the co-optation of African intellectuals into the grand social engineering project of reducing the continent's birth rate. We therefore find a leading African intellectual writing:

"As for the strategy of co-optation this has been particularly important in relation to the role of the westernized elite in Africa's political and economic destiny. This westernized or semi-westernized elite has exercised disproportionate influence in the fortunes of African societies. Whether or not African countries move in the direction of conscious population policies is partly dependent upon the triumph of the westernized intellegentsia in policy making".<sup>12</sup>

Controlling the size or growth rate of the population is potentially one of the most powerful forms of government intervention, and it can only therefore be a moot question whether it can be included in the conscious social policy of any African government. We will not therefore attempt to answer this question, since the paper is written in a frankly exploratory vein, which nevertheless will attempt to go beyond the suspended cognition that the "overpopulated, underdeveloped countries of Africa must take measures to control population growth, and initiate a systematic exploration of the subject centred around the problem of the social relations of production and consumption of the African labour force? For social administrators then, the question is whether 'population growth' is a social cost, brought about by the dynamics of externally generated capitalist production? At the micro-level of the social administrator, the acceptance of the 'population factor' will call for some kind of social cost and benefit analysis of relationships underlying demographic behaviour patterns and phenomena which are essentially non or extra-market. Furthermore and equally more important, is the fact that different classes place different valuations on these extra-market phenomena, hence the unending academic

controversies. K. William Kapp, has from his work in the Philippines already pointed out, the dangers of economism in dealing with any social cost and benefit analysis:

"Contemporary positive economic theory has long confined itself to the analysis of phenomena for which market processes provide seemingly unambiguous criteria of observation and measurement. Viewed from another perspective, one might also say that social costs and social benefits represent serious difficulties for the interpretation of positions of equilibrium as social optima and as a basis of "Welfare" and investment criteria for the formulation of public policies and development programmes".<sup>13</sup>

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF HOW FINANCE CAPITAL (IMPERIALISM)  
SOCIALLY DISORGANISES AFRICAN LABOUR POWER

"Seldom has there been in history a period presenting so many evidences of social disorganisation as does the world of today. The contemporary social order is beset by disintegrating forces from within and by hostile intrusions from without. In large areas of Europe and Asia the recently existing social orders have been destroyed. The remaining areas of peaceful order have been contracted to the western hemisphere".<sup>14</sup>

Too much intellectual energy can be expended in primary exercises of reviewing, and demonstrating in footnoted detail the sins of omission and commission of the educated and 'semi-educated intelligentsia' that have become such a fetish in the writings of Professor Ali Mazrui. Even the more secondary project of attempting to delineate their collective angst and plotting out the various social science modalities that would lead to the so-called western educated intelligentsia recovering some form of social praxis or action, would be a futile exercise, if we do not unequivocally state that real intellectual action should be directed at the recovery of scientific principles that will restore the organic links between production and consumption,

It is therefore crucial that instead of just describing in a Pan African Domesday Book, the territorial and local evidence for the social disorganisation of African labour power, we begin to generate systematic strategies that go beyond social pathology and left-wing idealism about the withering away of market forces.

The appropriate unit of analysis for studying the dynamic process for the effects of the penetration of the capitalist mode of production, and the dissolution of labour power will of course always remain a bone of contention for those analysts who lavish in pettyfogging practice in the name of value free science. Despite much of this pettyfogging demographic analyses, beyond local reconstitution studies and village base-line population surveys, most historical demographers have accepted the post World War II African nation states and their legal subdivisions as appropriate units of aggregation and analysis. Demographic research has entailed the collection and compilation of routinely generated statistics by government clerks employing the measuring concepts and standards inherited from the colonial system, which process has virtually enforced the adoption of state-territorial units as the pragmatic unit, or as a first step to making pan-African projections and trajectories. But this first step has not provided a way out of the academised circular patterns of European empiricism. The result has been an excessive preoccupation with national comparisons. Class and regional variations have been treated as residual categories in the conventional lead and lag framework in indigenised Western social science, which is implicitly premised on a cultural diffusionist assumption: lower classes and backward regions lag behind their



superiors, but will, the grace of market forces permitting, eventually follow the example of the educated elite, and the middle income countries, that have as yet to descend into the hell of living in the Fourth World.

The Dynamism of Capitalist Penetration, as the Basic Cause for the Social Disorganisation of African Labour Power

The main issue about understanding the effects of capitalist penetration on value creating social relations of production, is no longer about their violent or non-violent nature of the historical moments of such penetration. Even if some clever African world-class economists were to construct a software package, to show that capitalist market forces are essentially benevolent, and a matter of individual choice or attitude on the part of the poor, we are confident that he would only fool those international robber barons, who don't have to make any sense continental African trends, by racking their grey eminence, but just want their pound of flesh and pint of blood in their quest for profits.

Regardless of how we attempt to specify at what particular level in the societal control of resources, modes of production are articulated, i.e. household or national, district etc., we have to come back to the conditions for the dissolution of labour power, as Emile Verduyninck reminded us in his study of the life of Ghanaian fishermen:

"The attempt to theorise the process of articulation between capitalism and pre-capitalist modes of production, concluded with the need to return to the connection between the gaining of control over the production process by capitalism and the coming into existence of a class of 'free' propertyless workers. Undoubtedly the dissolution

of labour, i.e. a process of history which dissolves the various forms in which the worker is a proprietor, or in which the proprietor works' (Marx 1973:497), is a necessary condition for capitalism to attain the ascendancy. The mass of individuals has to be placed in the position of people who own nothing but their labour power, and who confront all objective conditions of production as their non-property, as alien property of which they might acquire some in exchange for their labour power".<sup>15</sup>

There of course could arise some semantic debates concerning Vercrujisse's use of scientific imagery, and the chemical metaphor of dissolution i.e. 'reduction from the solid to the fluid form; liquefaction', and some would prefer the more ecological and rustic metaphor of the decomposition i.e. 'the action or process of decomposing, separation or resolution (of anything) into its constituent elements; disintegration; putrescence'.<sup>16</sup>

One could indulge in extensive phrase mongering round the two words, dissolution, and decomposition but one thing that is certain is that even those members of the trans-African intelligentsia who argue for the need of a Capitalist revolution in Africa and the attendant creation of 56 modes of national bourgeois accumulation, because under a socialist mode of production, there is nothing to share, must soon come to the realisation, that their acquired technical expertise can only be of careerist or monetary value if it can do the dirty job of stuffing Africans with the illusions of utopian capitalism. Radical theorising of the conditions that have to be fulfilled before autonomous and independent capitalist revolutions break out all over the nation-states of the continent, is no longer a question of misguided intellectuals playing around with cerebral concepts, while Africa burns.

Vercrujisse wrote concerning the prospects for a capitalist revolution in post colonial nation-states of Africa:

"In Africa, the continent where our present interest lies, no significant differences seem to present themselves on the general level. The limited needs for wage labour that initially existed under colonialism were met there as elsewhere, by separating the peasant from his land and the artisan from his tools and workshop. If the outcome of this process has been quite dissimilar in many parts of Africa, this is because it has so far been both impossible and unnecessary (perhaps even undesirable) to prevent those who at some time have been uprooted from finding alternative means of subsistence. Given the fact that it is through non-equivalent exchanges that the colonies could best serve the interests of metropolitan capital .... it was necessary for subsistence farming and the 'informal' secondary and tertiary sectors to continue to exist in order to make a substantial contribution to the reproduction of labour.

The consequence has been that even where territories were conquered by a colonial power and peasant cultivators and herdsmen were violently dispossessed of their land rights (notably in Kenya, Southern Africa and the Rhodesians), some resources remained open for the wage labourers to return to, on a seasonal or annual basis. In other words, the coming into existence of a working class in Africa has not been accompanied by a large-scale removal, once and for all, of the jobless and property-less to areas of labour demand, as was the case in Europe, but rather by a system of cyclical migration.

The balance that was struck in this way between the supply of a sufficient amount of labour at low wage rates on the one hand, and the partial but continuing dependence of labour on subsistence production on the other, was so precarious that the (post-)colonial state, unlike the bourgeois state in Europe did not apply force and coercion in the initial stages of the dissolution of labour. Given that the process of dissolution in Africa, far from being completed, is artificially suspended as it were, this has meant that the need to apply extra-economic coercion is always present. At the same time, by being able to draw on subsistence agriculture and on the so-called 'informal sector' as a potential source of labour, the system ensures the continuous availability of a vast reserve army of labour".<sup>17</sup>

It can therefore be a moot point how capitalist administrative

technologies which in the first place were geared to the production of surplus labour and the minimisation of the cost to the capitalist state for the reproduction of that labour, thereby contributing to the population explosion, could now be turned on their heads to consciously limit the birth rates of the continent's working households. Fortunately most proposals for population control still remain at the level of international technical slogans, and have as yet to penetrate micro development planning projects. It is nevertheless timely, to sound some caveats about the general tendencies in post-colonial Africa, of Capital's struggle to translate political questions into administrative issues; and through the agency of elements of the trans-African intelligentsia, to create corporatist 'national' political economies, in which state planning, will deepen the institutionalisation of the anarchy of market forces, and designed to become just one of the many devices for the further balkanisation of the continent's territorial productive capacities.

The (post-) colonial state in Africa, has failed to ensure continuity in colonial strategies for the social disorganisation of labour power of working households. Therefore the chances of the neo-colonial 'state' in Africa becoming a vehicle for a bourgeois revolution are indeed very slim, or even non-existent. That the failure of the (post-) colonial state, to deepen the decomposition of African labour power, which had been left uncompleted by colonialism, has been most evident in the more non-violent forms of coercion - which are usually described by the term social control. In the contemporary project of finance capitalism, the trans African intelligentsia has a very clear cut role - that of providing, not even their own

local executive bourgeoisies, with the instruments for social control, but providing these instruments to the paymasters of monopoly finance capitalism in Washington, London, and Brussels.

This becomes clear if we examine for a while some of the historic objectives of the colonial state. One of the most important, and on which there exists abundant literature in Southern Africa, was the dislocation of pre-colonial production relations through the expropriation of land, and the 'evacuation' of peasant masses to designated areas (both economically and politically) placed for the demands of colonial production. This process of the depopulation of the productive lands, and overpopulation of the labour-reservoirs was objectively determined by the basic (human or otherwise) needs of colonial production, and had to be fulfilled and administered by the state, with the various metropolitan centres of anthropology, African studies etc., providing the software packages to scientifically legitimate the whole process. The colonial state is itself therefore a social organisational structure of capitalism's economic and political designs, hence the absence of a 'national' base for the control of territorial capacities for production and consumption in a systematic fashion. The very same state continues its existence into the post colonial epoch, with the old capitalist production relations still operative and with more sophisticated strategies in view of the centralisation and globalisation of economic activity by international monopoly finance. The neo-colonial state is thus born with a wooden spoon in its mouth, in that it is contracted and entrusted with the tasks of correcting and policing some of the combustible social forces that are its earlier creation without the power to tinker with the operative capitalist relations of

production.<sup>18</sup>

The above characterisation of the colonial state is not meant to construct some world-systems conspiracy theory about caucasian people's habits of mind and their collective unconscious, but rather to demonstrate empirically some of the general laws for the accumulation of capital, which cannot be understood through generalised references to abstracts of social development in Europe.

We have referred elsewhere to the administrative origins of Zimbabwe's current population problem.<sup>19</sup> In the latter we referred to the years 1930-1945, as period during which the general economic laws for the accumulation of capital did not function (through reasons monetary economists are still debating), and as a result an administrative machinery for more efficient regulation of the social and economic life of the indigenous population of the country was put into place. It matters little whether the Prime Minister, then happened to be a medical scientist, who though he started off as a strong adherent of the Eugenics movement, was actually, to die a liberal, in the post U.D.I. era, and to be denied a 'state' funeral by Ian Douglas Smith. In The Political Economy of Hunger we wrote, in the section entitled 'Defunct Labour Reserves and The Material Origins of Hunger 1930-1945:

"It has now been established that administrative measures up to 1930 were aimed at circular migration, the ideal being that only single male workers would migrate to urban centres; they were expected to return later in life or at times of unemployment; and that the system was rationalised as ideologically necessary to protect whites and to keep rural societies intact'.<sup>20</sup>

It is therefore that administrative technology for keeping rural societies intact that lends so much weight to the need to understand the social and administrative historiographies of African countries, before launching fire-fighting operations for capital, by for instance dreaming about the indigenisation of capitalist social relations of production, when the mass of working households are still actively involved in resisting this encroachment through various violent and non-violent collective modalities. But having plenty of babies never did constitute an active, and conscious programme for fighting settler colonialism, despite the fact that Dr. Hastings Banda at one time or another denounced the Nyasaland Government's attempts to popularise birth control.

The important thing to note is that in colonial Zimbabwe the administrative strategies for keeping 'rural society' intact, dichromatically aligned the decomposition of African labour power, to the protection of the social consumption of the white population, which had become very vulnerable to the anarchy of international agrarian commodity markets.

Thus while marketing legislation, was passed to depress the value of agricultural commodities originating from the labour reserves, and tighter regulations for the control of the 'free' flow of labour from these reserves enacted and African voluntary organisations placed under strict surveillance, the years 1930-1945 also witnessed the introduction of State pensions for the white population and other related social security provisions. It is our contention that there is nothing exceptionally aberrant or irrational about

such a strategy, that calls for phrase mongering about 'the settler mode of production'. What took place in colonial Zimbabwe was entirely consistent with the general laws of capitalist accumulation. The late Kwame Nkrumah once referred to the settler administration of Southern Rhodesia as a manifestation of a 'fossilised form of neo-colonialism'.<sup>21</sup> Should we then in post-colonial Zimbabwe be talking about a post-neo-colonial state? Whatever we do decide, post-colonial or post-neo-colonial, lest we fall into some form of Zimbabwean national statistical exceptionalism, we need to clearly examine the forms of agrarian labour arrangements, both coercive and non-coercive for the decomposition of African labour power, simultaneously for guaranteeing the social consumption of the white settler population. These institutions ranged from simple, commercial transactions at the village grinding mill to many far more complex written and unwritten contracts in which labour was tied in with land, credit and other relations. Not only have these institutional arrangements governing rural labour deployment been closely linked with cyclical and seasonal changes in agricultural productivity, but they are also a key to interpreting trends in income distribution and the quality of working life of the poor in Zimbabwe.<sup>22</sup> They indeed can also be employed to present an objective explication of contemporary population problems. Zimbabwe during the great Depression is an important African case study of the social administration of agrarian capitalism because of the wealth of empirical data relating to this period. And as Gillian Hart has emphasised concerning forms of agrarian labour arrangements in the course of general capitalist development:



"The key lies in a clearer understanding of mechanisms of both labour management and social control, and the ways in which they interact with one another. In particular, many different types of labour tying arrangements entail the selective extension of 'privileges' to particular workers while simultaneously excluding others. These exclusionary mechanisms can in principle operate so as to ensure effort. (...). In addition they are closely associated with the exercise of power and social control in rural society. Viewing agrarian labour arrangements in this way allows for a more powerful analysis of dynamic processes. It also helps to resolve important problems confronted by the prevailing theories".<sup>23</sup>

Within such a framework, then, and given the trajectories of agrarian capitalism across the continent, the shrill call for African governments to somehow do something to regulate the birth rates of the territorial populations, can be understood as a very sophisticated form of social control by international monopoly capitalism. 'Social control' in the context of the celebrated 'population factor', can be used to refer 'in general to the ways in which those who control the means of production attempt to exercise power in non-labour spheres over those with little or no access to assets'.<sup>24</sup>

Gillian Hart in the seminal article we have cited above goes on to make the important observation, concerning the apparent transitions in social control measures, that these social and political relations between workers and employers should not be treated as simply "vestiges of 'traditional'" patronage networks, or even of extra-economic coercion that can be expected to wither away once every one is homo-economicus i.e., when commercialization and market rationality become hegemonic. Instead, she emphasises, they are often "crucial elements in strategies to maintain and reinforce positions of economic dominance over the long run".<sup>25</sup>

These social control measures were also instrumental in the accumulation of a social surplus by the various forms of taxation and other measures adopted to minimise the social costs of labour reproduction borne by the colonised population group. Practically then, during the colonial era, the drastic administrative fiats depressed the value of labour towards zero and below zero. And following the logic of capitalist development, the post colonial state is supposed to curb the growth of 'unproductive' labour power through birth control legislation and other devices. However, the declining value of labour power on the market might instruct biological reproduction and therefore the reproduction of the aggregate value for the social self reproduction for sustenance under the regime of market forces in neo-colonial Africa. (See pg 16) The various population programmes peddled by World Bank and other 'soft goods' salesmen are therefore not really inconsistent with historic colonial socio-economic administrative strategies, in their form and content, but are repackaged policies of market forces in the era of finance imperialism.<sup>26</sup>

What is required at the present conjuncture of the African crisis are not detailed national demographic profiles and national comparisons, but rather a larger contextual administrative studies framework within which population changes and social changes can be objectively understood, without the African analyst falling victim to statistical propaganda. Gillian Hart has suggested some of the preliminary elements of such a framework.

".... those who control the means of production must not only devise ways of mobilizing the labour of others and insuring work discipline; in addition they confront the

problem of exercising social control. By the same token, those with little or no access to productive assets are not simply passive units of labour supply. Their efforts to secure a livelihood are part of a larger struggle in which they forge social and political relations with other direct producers and with those on whom their livelihood depends. While the particular forms those struggles assume are shaped by historically-specific conditions at the local level, they are facets of class and power relations at the level of the political-economic system as a whole and can only be understood within this larger context".27

Beyond Statistical Prolegomena Emanating from the Statistical Mind of Imperialism on the Population Question and Against African Monism

'The root of the evil is the predominance which opinion obstinately assigns to the role of the precious metals in circulation and exchange'.28

"There is nothing of the marvellous in what I am going to relate", said the dismal man; "there is nothing even uncommon in it. Want and sickness are too common in many stations of life to deserve more notice than is usually bestowed on the most ordinary vicissitudes of human nature. I have thrown these few notes together, because the subject of them was well known to me for many years. I traced his progress downwards, step by step, until at last he reached that excess of destitution from which he never rose again".29

North-Western European Social Democracy as a positive academic social movement is presently entering very deep and unsafe waters over the whole issue of describing and measuring African poverty and suffering. At least that is the impression that can be gleaned from the latest culturally pluralistic offerings from the International Labour Organisation's World Employment Programme. Joel Greer and Erik Thorbecke are informing us that it is possible to measure food poverty. It is indeed a great puzzle why they think that this should indeed be translated into the fancy equations that constitute their statistical smorgasbord, if to begin with they themselves are not quite sure what this food poverty means in terms of its

basic causative factors. Joel and Erik, are just a drop in the ocean of European social scientists who have fished in the terra incognita that constitutes the African continent. It is therefore hardly surprising that in the year that Band-Aid, hit celluloid screens, and many band-aid solutions were thought up in Washington D.C., that the clearest definition of food poverty one can glean from this beautifully packaged book is:

'Food poverty is a normative, arbitrary and inexact concept. It is an attempt to measure whether individuals consume enough food or have the means to consume food-to enjoy a minimum desirable level of physical health. The causal links from food consumption and mental well being are only imperfectly understood by nutritionists and the medical profession and, in any case, are subject to interpersonal variability - even within a relatively homogeneous population. Further compounding the problem is the difficulty of measuring actual food consumption'.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the humble confession of ignorance, the conclusion in this very elegant statistical smorgasbord is:

"... Maize is grown more efficiently by small farmers than large farmers and if the government does not actively promote land reform, it should recognise and facilitate the effective parcellisation of large farms which occurred. Increasing the price of maize combined with appropriate complementary measures could be an important first step in revitalising Kenya's agricultural sector'.<sup>31</sup>

We have heard of how the technical efficiency of North American mid-western agriculture came about through the careful manipulation of the corn/hog ratio. It would be very interesting for a social researcher one day to discover what is really behind the corn/human, or maize/people ratio, that is supposed to cure Africa of food poverty.

Should we be at this state phrase-mongering about food poverty,

or should we be talking about the poverty of ideas emanating from world-class labour economists advising social workers in Africa on how best to socially organise African labour power? This poverty of strategic thought is constantly displayed in the social democratic naivety that capitalism is not essentially bad, and that if the price is right, then everything else will work out just fine.

The basic social ignorance of the forces that have decomposed African labour power, even in Kenya, to force households to grow maize in the first place totally escapes the very otherwise ordered framework of the joint essay. Let it not be misunderstood that we are quibbling about the use of the English concepts, food and the more abstract term poverty or even decomposition, for as David Knight has written concerning the use of words in science:

"Vocabularies are only a part of a language, as we all know if we have ever tried to write French or German, or even to translate them, with nothing but a dictionary; or if have ever received a letter written this way. And yet French and German are very close to English in structure and vocabulary; the problems are much greater when one is faced by the complications of the verb 'to go' in Athabaskan languages, or the inclusive and exclusive 'we' of Malay language. It is these characteristics and not the coincidences of vocabulary, that establish relationships between languages, just as it is homologies in structure and not external similarities that establish classes in biology. It is therefore necessary to understand the grammar and syntax of the language, and not enough to collect words - only if as with Cornish, one knows the affinities of the language one can get anywhere with a vocabulary alone".<sup>32</sup>

We will not attempt to decompose the coincidences of vocabulary from the natural (hard) sciences and that from the social (soft) sciences, but one certainly comes across many quirks and oddities in this piece de resistance from Messrs Greer and Thorbecke:

"A simple conclusion which can be drawn from the decomposition of total poverty is that even though the bulk of the - food, poor households and individuals are found in Eastern, Nyanza and Western Provinces, Central and Eastern Provinces are relatively much better of in terms of food deprivation than are the other four provinces. This is because the amount of poverty in a province depends not only on its severity of poverty but also on its share of total population".<sup>33</sup>

But surely, what has to be decomposed is it the biological, physical, regional 'manifestations of poverty'? Or is it more crucial that effort be directed not at decomposing the basic causal factors embodied in the market relationship.

The six point matrix that underpins the inquiry into food patterns, and 'food poverty seems to rest on the suspended cognition that in Kenya, the following social phenomena were observed:

1. The average Kenyan family is large and numbers seven. Large families in Kenya have lower farm operating surpluses, total consumption and food consumption per adult equivalent. Poor households have more children than "non-poor households";
2. Most Kenyan small holders don't have much money as they spend more on food and "there is little difference between poor and non-poor households";
3. "Non-poor households" have on average more land;
4. Small holders of all categories planted roughly equal acreages of maize and marketed the same. (Our two professors unanimously agree that the "shares of total crop production and of maize sold and the rate of adoption of hybrid maize) is in a partial way a measure of 'modernisation' or 'transition' to farming for the market";
5. Small holders who are educated do better than those who have

not had formal education, but the Kenyan educational system, because of high drop-out rates is socially producing enough 'small farmers';

6. Only 20 percent of household heads could find employment off the farm, so that there exists "a large unsatisfied demand for employment" etc.<sup>34</sup>

There is therefore nothing that is exceptional about such happenings under the African sun as far as socio-economic descriptive trajectories go, so that the recommendations concerning the increased production of maize are surprising, and it is never clear how high unemployment in Kenya affects nutrition, and other facets of social reproduction. What would have been of more value in a study of this nature would have been a careful examination of the structural changes in the domestic economies, of Kenya without imposing a priori categories. If 'taste' is such an important variable, there is required clear theoretical statement of the origins of 'individual preferences' in not only with respect to food, but also with respect to collective economic action, and the non-market allocation mechanisms that operate through the territorial social economy.

What is the best unit of analysis for studying changes in African social economy. Can the analyst use the household as a unit of analysis and at the same time articulate the complex inter-relationship between non-capitalist modes of production and the more hegemonic capitalist mode of production and consumption that permeates African social realities. What does the scientist have to do or contribute

to territorial efforts to recompose labour power? These are only some of the questions that are raised by the mensuration techniques used in social science in Africa.

Jane I. Guyer made a bold first attempt to seriously review the whole 'concept' of household and community in African studies.<sup>35</sup>

If we agree that individual choice in Africa is socially determined, it matters little that the English word economy can be traced to the Greek word that pertained to house management at first and then came into theological use, and by 1592 in England meant:

"Organisation, like that of a household in a product of art, in the mind of body, nature of society".<sup>36</sup>

From Jane Guyer we learn of the state of the arts and sciences in the use of 'household' and 'community' in African studies in North America and Europe by 1981:

"Issues relating to household and community are of central importance in social scientific research on contemporary Africa and the experience of its peoples in the twentieth century. Early anthropological theory categorised African social organisation, for comparative purposes, with that of indigenous America, New Guinea, and other classless and early state systems. Most of these other peoples are now minority populations in colonised state, politically and economically marginal. Only in Africa have advancing capitalism and non-peasant, relatively weakly stratified, highly flexible forms of social organisation been forced into a long-term working relationship with one another over such a vast area and such a wide variety of conditions".<sup>37</sup>

Jane Guyer's very suggestive review of the state of the art congratulates "African Students", when she writes:

".... the increasing use of terms like "household", and



"community" constitutes a relatively new departure. They are classic analytical concepts in the study of peasant societies and carry with them the implications of a local social structure and tradition of life within a wider stratified political and economic system under a state form of government".<sup>38</sup>

But Ms. Guyer, seems to balk off at the prospect of asking to what extent any academic progress has been made in finding the appropriate analytical tools for recovering the organic links in historic African labour processes between production and consumption. Karl Marx long ago emphasised that the distinction between production and consumption is purely a marketing definition, and that the labour process itself should be seen as an organic whole:

"A change in distribution changes production, e.g. concentration of capital, different distribution of the population between town and country etc. Finally, the needs of consumption determine production. Mutual interaction takes place between the different moments. This is the case with every organic whole".<sup>39</sup>

It is however very doubtful whether the way in which the concept of household has been used by those engaged in African 'development studies', has done anything to enhance the abstract organic wholeness of labour processes, hence the preoccupation in 'basic' as opposed to applied studies, with 'attitudinal surveys, taste' etc. Jane L. Collins has suggested in her studies in the Andes, where like in Africa, the indigenous population has not been wiped away, that in fact the 'emphasis on the household' as the basic unit of analysis in "studies of Andean peasant economy (and perhaps of peasant economy in general) has been misplaced".<sup>40</sup> Her objections could well be valid for Africa if we substituted African for Andean in the following:

"First a household-oriented approach imposes a Euro-centric analytic grid on Andean reality. Despite the long history of domination by the West, social relationships in many

parts of the Andes have not yet been assimilated to the norms of Western society. Second, viewing the household as a basic unit of social structure with a long Andean tradition obscures the fact that integration into wage and commodity markets is creating a new emphasis on the independent nuclear-family household as larger networks of kin and community are broken down.<sup>41</sup>

Ms. Jane Guyer, sidesteps and neatly dodges some of the issues through a rather subjectivist ploy, when she ejaculates:

"I will not deal with the concept of the family at any length here because it is not generally used as a key analytical concept. The terms "nuclear" and "extended" family are used in contexts where precise definitions of components of social structure or decision-making units are not at stake. The main body of literature in which it is used consistently is demography, where the major questions relate to that other aspect of development in Europe : Behind the particular conditions of different cases lie three major patterns : high mortality and high fertility low mortality and low fertility, and the transition from one to another".<sup>42</sup>

But the question of 'reservations' about the tools of historical materialism, as opposed to the "more precise and nuanced" answers coming from mainstream anthropology, is really of secondary importance for African science. As Jane L. Collins emphasises, "... the issue of whether we should speak of households" in the African environment" is not just one of semantics or definition because from a strictly materialist rather than an idealist assemblage point:

"The emergence of the independent nuclear family household as a conceptually and materially important unit and the undermining of broader networks of relationships are at the heart of major processes of economic change. The exact nature of the transition is shaped, in various contexts, by the nature and degree of integration into the cash economy".<sup>43</sup>

More seriously, Collins sounds out a general warning, which can only be ignored at our own conceptual peril,

"The proclivity of the Western-researcher for "finding" the household in the Andes is not simply a conceptual error, but reinforces the creation of the household as an independent unit. An outsider who views Andean social structure through a European grid sees units that resemble, in their surface form, the nuclear-family household in Western society. It is all too simple to assume that the two units are products of similar historical processes and embody similar structural principles. To do so only leads to a misunderstanding of the social relationships that are involved; it also informs theory and policy with the notion that the household is important. When Western social scientists see "Western" social institutions in other environments their findings may unintentionally support neo-colonial efforts to "modernize" the society. Science not only mirrors the society from which it emerges, but recreates these mirrored images in other societies to which it turns its attention".<sup>44</sup>  
(Emphasis Added)

She goes on to suggest that if quantitative and qualitative concepts of modes of production and their articulation can become useful tools of analysis the perspective adopted by the analyst should presume that the critical variables to be considered in any setting are the following:

- i) the forces of production + resources, productive knowledge, technology and the technical division of labour
- ii) the social relations of production + relationships that provide access to resources, deploy labour to productive enterprises, and transfer surplus to non-producers.<sup>45</sup>

The use of the 'household', especially in demographic studies from which international advice to African countries to curb their population growth has in fact been based on hunches as a prominent British demographer recently confessed:

"In the heyday of modernization theory, the predominance of nuclear households in such societies as India and Bangladesh was interpreted quite incorrectly, as evidence

of erosion of the 'traditional' joint family and a shift towards the 'modern' nuclear family form. Although modernization theory, with its image of social change proceeding from traditional to modern Western institutional forms is no longer widely accepted, we as social scientists remain poised in anticipation of dramatic change in family structure in developing societies. We await the demise of the joint family system, reversal of intergenerational wealth flows, the collapse of patriarchal authority structures and an end to gerentocracy. At present there is a tendency to infer such change from the fertility declines that are taking place in many developing countries. Fundamental change in family structure may, indeed be occurring; however, it is important to emphasize that we owe our anticipation and inferences largely to interested theory rather than empirical observation".46

It is not for us here to trace the dramatic moments in the growth of Western social knowledge up to the present pregnant moments about something happening in reproductive behaviour. The next section will turn to developments in the fledgling HARD science of political/administrative studies, from whose training grounds, it is hoped and expected that decision-making structures will emerge, that will affect a demographic transition in Africa, and also the actual implimentors and forgers of these changes so dearly desired by Western social scientists.

SOME CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE ON-GOING DIALOGUE BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

"But the seers who could only see were fiascos, and when the land where they lived was invaded by a conquering people they were as defenceless as everyone else".

.....

"Don Juan said that being a lowly ignorant Indian living hand to mouth, not only did he believe every word, he thought a good fairy had touched him. He promised to pay the foreman anything he wished. The foreman named a large sum, which had to be paid in instalments.

Immediately thereafter the foreman himself took Don Juan to

the house, which was quite a distance from the town, and left him there with another foreman, a huge, somber ugly man who asked a lot of questions. He wanted to know about Don Juan's family. Don Juan answered that he didn't have any. The man was so pleased that he even smiled through his rotten teeth".

.....

"He said that not to seek order was one of the great mistakes that the ancient seers made. A deadly consequence of that mistake was their assumption that the unknown and the unknowable are the same thing. It was up to the new seers to correct that error".<sup>47</sup>

In the concrete African social science jungle, demographic studies and political science have only transgressed each other's respective choice of developmental path, or crossed swords over and round the rather pedestrian 'problematic' of why people move at the micro-level of rural/urban migration, and vote with their feet at the more macro-territorial level. More practically minded people have also attempted to describe the role of the 'state', in all this, and advise on what the administrators should do to ensure, that this 'free labour', goes to where it is required by post-colonial agents of international finance capital.

It would not be within the scope of this, the penultimate segment of this article to detail this very important dialogue between demography and politics, which has up to now provided some sort of unity of concern on the whole general agenda of the 'African crisis', wherein the more general topics of birth rates, the food crisis, democracy inevitably stick out like sore thumbs. Even from just the point of natural curiosity, at least the current dialogue between demographic and political science has given those African scholars who have always insisted on the adoption of multi-

disciplinary approaches to social studies, much to talk and write about.

In the midst of the scientific bonhomie that has been generated, however we are told by certain British writers that Arthur Lewis could have saved much soul-searching by Western 'development economists' about the creation of labour surpluses, if he had not in his post-1954 writings forsaken his own original pathbreaking and seminal, empirical observations, wherein he had noted concerning his own native environment of the British West Indies:

"Thus, the owners of the plantations have no interest in seeing knowledge of new techniques or new seeds conveyed to the peasants, and if they are influential in government, they will not support proposals for land settlement, and are often instead to be found engaged in turning peasants off their lands (of Marx on "Primary Accumulation"). This is one of the worst features of imperialism for instance. The imperialists invest capital and hire workers; it is their advantage to keep wages low, and even in those cases where they do not actually go out of their way to impoverish the subsistence economy, they will at least very seldom be found doing anything to make it more productive. In actual fact the record of every imperial power in Africa in modern times is one of impoverishing the subsistence economy, either by taking away the people's land, or by demanding forced labour in the capitalist sector, or by imposing <sup>48</sup> taxes to drive people to work for capitalist employers".

But just because Sir Arthur, did not state who was doing all these terrible things, in terms of pointing his finger at definite administrative structures and personnel in the British Commonwealth colonial civil service, and preferred instead to talk of processes, now that it has become fashionable to make references to 'the problematic of the state, the latest generation of that great school of British social engineering, the Manchester School, are now engaged in spinning econometrical yarns that purport to show that 'the Lewis model

has nothing to say at the theoretical level about the causes of migration".<sup>49</sup>

What has really changed concerning the dissolution of labour power in the neo-colonial world? Is it purely a question of finding the appropriate metaphors or models for describing the social and economic dynamics of the penetration of capitalism?

But one would expect that Mr. Charles Perrings, from the work he has conducted on mine labour and the expansion of mining capital in Central Africa, should have been clear about the causative factors of migration, and that even "Ravenstein's central proposition, that proposition that 'migration arises from the desire in most men to better themselves materially' cannot willy-nilly be applied to all contexts, when labour has been 'freed' through force, and that coercion in terms of the sjambok management technology and other subtler forms of coercion on colonised people, in fact ensure that there has never been, and there will not be unlimited supplies of labour. Perrings attempts to apply the soft-headed package of neo-liberal theories, that has been applied by eminent World Bank economists and their fellow travellers, and strollers in the matter of marketing strategies, to the very sensitive area of labour reproduction. In a similarly simplistic fashion, he is suggesting that the 'state' in African countries should not concern itself with how labour power reproduces and deploys itself.

Thus our thoroughly modern Robinson Crusoe, having been unable

to identify imperialism with the state in Sir Arthur's discreet account of capitalist exploitation under Pax Britannica, sets out from the no-man's land of his econometrical meanderings armed with the following assumptions:

'Indeed, the term "the state" stands only as a proxy for the whole raft of cultural, ideological, legal and political institutions which bear on the distribution of the social product in any real society. The argument of this paper - that the generation of an excess supply of labour in the non-capitalist sector may be explained by state intervention which reduces the income in that sector - extends to the distributional effects of all such institutions primarily concerned with income transfers. From this it follows that state support for capitalist enterprises must have costs in terms of the increased unemployment of resources produced elsewhere (depending upon the limits imposed by the technology of the system). The higher the level of support for one sector, the greater, will be the costs imposed on some other sector. Hence state support for the capitalist sector generates both the income differentials and the excess supply of labour in the non-capitalist sector which prompt the decision to migrate in a Todaro model. In the particular case of a technologically non-innovative economy, ..... intervention by the state in the distribution of the product in favour of capitalist processed (always regarded as the growth sector in underdeveloped countries) is sufficient to force the unemployment of resources, including human resources generated in the non-capitalist sector'.<sup>50</sup>

Of course Mr. Perrings never does get round to telling us what exactly is a 'technologically non-innovative economy', i.e. whether it is something induced by the historic combination for his whole raft 'of cultural, legal and political institutions which bear on the distribution of the social product". For Perrings, income indeed becomes a proxy for value, so that the whole point that the very logic of the capitalist state depresses the value of labour power escapes him. And of course 'human resources' also being social products can be controlled and deployed like any other commodity.



Eventually however, through historicist use of the phrase 'non-capitalist sector', Mr Perrings convinces himself that in an under-developed economy it is 'state intervention' that depresses the value of labour power and actually leads to population expansion through a range of 'imposts in the non-capitalist sector:

'Population expansion is not argued to reflect a Malthusian spree of procreation in response to rising real incomes. In part this is because it is empirically very hard to sustain a Malthusian explanation of the link between labour surplus and changes in per capita real incomes. The existence of labour surplus is most evident in precisely those economies where real incomes in the non-capitalist sector have been most depressed over time. This is not to deny that more or less independent changes in public health have had major effects on the supply side of the labour market, but to suggest that they do not provide a sufficient explanation of the existence of a structural excess supply of labour in the dualistic economies. It is certainly not an adequate counter to the claims of Arrighi *et al* that a labour surplus has historically been generated in the non-capitalist sector by a range of imposts on that sector".<sup>51</sup>

In a like manner, wherein 'social costs' are not a focal point for class struggle Mr. Perrings, turns his attention to the so called 'informal sector', whose character is unspecified i.e. whether it is non-capitalist or subsistence, but that just that in a his model it represents the sink into which the surplus population generated in the non-capitalist sector can be 'costlessly' dumped. In further trying to portray the penetration of capitalism, as an orderly and non-anarchical process, Mr. Perrings goes on to ruminates:

"... the logic of the system suggests that the informal sector will be treated as a costless human sink until it proves otherwise. This is directly analogous to the supposition that the dumping of pollutants into the natural environment will not generate environmental externalities. It is certainly the case that the emergence of the informal sector has been associated with very significant externalities, but like all

externalities', these have been dealt with in an ad hoc manner when they have become too obvious to be ignored'.<sup>52</sup>

In the above scenario, capitalism is thus presented as a type of original state of nature and the labour process which brings about the so called 'informal sector' as the externality. At another time and place, maybe in the academies of Ruritania, Mr. Perrings ruminations might have been at best amusing, but the whole problem of 'population expansion' and what sorts of questions are posed by those claiming to be engaged in the search for solutions to world economic problems is a very serious matter. The institutions of the market place are imperfect, and yet they are the institutions of the real world through which social policy is transformed into action. It is therefore important that greater emphasis be placed on an understanding of these imperfections rather than the designing of pie-in-the sky blue prints. It does certainly seem that Western empiricism is becoming even subtler and richer in nuances, which situation can only lead, to a very debilitating form of technical fideism.

The sources of Mr Perrings ruminations fortunately for us in Africa have a relatively short pedigree. The central and centripetal notions that have underpinned the metaphysical gyrations and other mental acrobatics of Western social scientific and paradigmatic projections in World Bank funded social studies, have been manufactured in the intellectual cess pools of Washington D.C. In the latter world finance capital's progressive intellectual workers have at various moments in the development of that august institution, tried to run away from the geometrical and arithmetical relationship

between food and population growth, and the factor of 'state intervention'. The latter has especially created many problems centring on how LEVIATHAN the enemy of the common good at all the imposts or levels at which human resources for production and consumption, are deployed or controlled, all the way from the national territorial planning ministry down to the level of the housewife in a working household, can best be identified. The many World Bank funded research projects on administration or even demography have thus far not made any progress in sorting out some of the problematic manifestations of such a situation; it is therefore quite evident that the nature and final objectives of the theories or terms of reference of most World Bank funded research have remained the same and have not gone beyond technical fideism, and 'resource-centred' phrase mongering.<sup>53</sup> What is often forgotten as Louis Masuko emphasises is that:

"The nature of the population problem is embodied in the production-consumption structural deficiencies, that are natural in developed capitalist societies and post (neo-colonial) states. The distribution of products in any capitalist social formation is determined by the anarchy of the market place. The 'informal' sector is not even a social and economic category, but just a reflection or manifestation of the incompatibility between the prevailing industrialization strategies in Africa, and the quantitative growth of urban populations, without a corresponding qualitative improvement in the social consumption of working households, both in the rural and urban areas".<sup>54</sup>

#### Whither Political Science In Debates On The Political Economy of Demographic Transition In Africa?

African science in general is beset with many problems of establishing the social identity of the very diffuse and disparate manufacturers of ideas who are dotted all over the continent from Cape to Cairo.

Thandika P. Mkandawire has beautifully expressed this concrete reality:

'There is no continent in which the presence of expatriate scientists is as pronounced as in Africa. It is thus still regarded as quite legitimate to write on African countries without any reference to local scholarship or, where the work of local researchers is used, without proper attribution of one's findings to these sources, especially if they are in the form of some obscure mimeographed publication.<sup>55</sup>

Be that as it may, there are however very serious problems besetting intellectual life on the continent, and these can never be solved by the carrying out of national territorial manpower surveys, in order to code all scientific skills. The latter would only create the need to use more powerful computers with the capacity to digest the heavy collective curriculae vitae of the continent's working intellectuals. At the contemporary conjuncture in the processual development or underdevelopment of African science, too much is at stake to base policy advice on quotations, dogmas and desire. An African doctor no longer needs to have at some time in his life majored or mastered in political science, public administration, development administration, public international law etc. to be seen to be talking the facts when he is quoted as saying that 'the economic situation in the Southern Region has worsened during the past year, and that 1986 has been a difficult year for the organisation. (WHO)..... He said that last year had been a difficult year because of the civil conflicts in some member states adding that there have also been outbreaks of diseases and major natural disasters within the region and elsewhere in the world'.<sup>56</sup> The seriousness of the present African situation regardless of how it is dated by demographic radio-carbon instruments, warrants that scientists

who participate in political science even as a hobby, stop quibbling about the application of the term civil society and whether the kids should start learning civic science from Grade I level, or at university level as 'development studies'.

The fundamental problem in African political science are about the different perceptions that operate in specific opinion-making societal structures, and the academic exercises of labelling these exercises with the more universally general rubric of political economy. The problem is therefore not basically about the existence of different perspectives, but what socio-historic forces have shaped the particular perspectives. Attempting to understand this from the assemblage point of Swedish social democracy or any other form of technical import substitution will not enable even the most sanitized of African political analyst to capture - such social moments that are strictly outside the confines of his laboratory, but nevertheless are involved in creating history. Even if one day the silent debate on whether administration is a learned science or a taught arts subject, is resolved not much would have been achieved. The general rubric of administration is too specific an activity on which to base assumptions about the effects or impact of capitalist development in Europe, let alone Africa. These effects have largely been transmitted through the medium of specific historical processes wherein the social technologies of western science have been imposed on African countries and transformed a-priori as the proper modes for scientific inquiry. There has hardly been a World Bank publication that has not made reference to certain things which either happened or did not happen in the transition from

feudalism to capitalism in Europe which should be copied by Africans. But even such useful comparative analyses by political scientists with an historical bent, or historians with a political bent have done little for the autonomous development of science in Africa. These analyses usually stop their counter-factual projection in 1648, which was just a moment in Europe's history (i.e. the signing of The Treaty of Westphalia) when at their own form of The Treaty of Berlin, the merchant bankers and pieds podreux of Europe decided to divide the loot amongst themselves by creating nation states. 1648 therefore rather than the 1950s constitute the beginning of the modern 'period' in world history.<sup>57</sup>

Why is it important that African political scientists must worry the line about modernity, and what at all does it have to do with the problem of on-going dialogues, between political science and demographic arts or sciences? In the first collective attempt by African political scientists to define their social identity, in the post-modern era of European social science theorizing about Africa, published by a progressive English publishing house, we note a certain amount of technical fideism in the following appeal for the 'decolonization of modernity':

"It is not the proper responsibility of political science to visualise let alone seek to unbound, the legal and geopolitical boundaries of the modern order. And modernity, as Mazrui has observed, is here to stay : the task is to decolonise it. The principal discipline for this task is political science. But to be able to do this, first of all political science must decolonize its own frameworks - must liberate itself from tyrannies of intellectual import-substitution".<sup>58</sup>

And yet within the same call to arms to decolonize modernity by

investing social resources in political science, Professor Egite Oyovaire, tells us that there existed the factorisation of politics in the whole 'tyranny of received ideas'<sup>59</sup> and almost within the same breath he admonished:

"Nigerian political science has been hurried too early into scientism".<sup>60</sup>

What we are quibbling about is not oral-historiographical points of grammar, syntax, hyperbole or even semantics, but the very liberal assumptions that underpin the Professor's anguish. How on earth does the imperative for political science from the 'tyrannies' of intellectual import substitution, reconcile or transform itself with the acceptance of the 'modernity software package' which includes population control programmes?

In fact, Szymanski has told us somewhere, using impeccable sources that in ~~that~~ that green house for liberal ideas and fronts about Africa (the U.S. Agency for Development, U.S.A.I.D.) 'population control' forms a significant part of AID activities; they do this he tells us because the "official theory of development" argues that a rapidly growing population undermines not only economic growth measured in G.N.P. terms, but also that collective social consumption in the form of education, health services, social welfare etc. will be adversely affected in the long run if not extinguished.<sup>61</sup> There has therefore been implicit conditionality clauses written into many Ford Foundation, U.S. Aid, Rockefeller Foundation research programmes. These programmes, Szymanski tells us have nothing 'liberal' about them, but are deliberately designed to develop an "awareness of the population issue among government officials,

educators and other community leaders.<sup>62</sup>

How does one go about decolonising this type of modernity, while accepting the prevalent myths of such 'modern frameworks' about such issues as 'professionalism', science and technology etc. and without purging the aura of technical fideism that still hovers around development studies in Africa?

Political science discourse in particular and social science discourse in general can make some humble progressive steps by desisting from 'one sector chauvinism' and the factorisation of social reality just for heuristic or analytical convenience. Attention must be directed to the issue of professionalism, beyond the conventional understanding of "professionalism" which has usually meant the formation of rambling intellectual associations, fighting over the largesse or loot from 'interested' external observers. There is instead the imperative need to question the long standing liberal assumption that if enough terra incognita are mapped out, expert knowledge will in itself lead to the evolution in the long run of viable social technologies for the solution of African problems. This very liberal position on the development of science and technology, misses the fundamental historic point that the social and cultural forms of professionalisation in any society regardless of its level of 'technical modernity' precede as a matter of process, precede any significant development in knowledge itself. Who is an "Expert" in Africa, when did the phenomenon appear? In order to defenestrate technical fideism from scientific frameworks, this 'expertise' must be held up to both historical and philosophical scrutiny.



'Expert' knowledge and truth lie at the heart of modern academic enterprise. The subject therefore needs to be analysed historically in order to raise further questions about assumptions and expectations, the meanings and ambiguities behind how 'experts' know; what is it that they call truth or empirical data; and why the public should believe in them?

Attempting to 'decolonize' modernity, without having clear answers to some of the questions posed above will just be an incremental exercise in an already bad situation. Instead of 'modernity' being 'de-colonized', and instead of the development of a vibrant and autonomous political science and technology, all that would result from such a visionary project would be a sureit of biologicoo-energeticist labels tacked on to ready-made conclusions on the African crisis manufactured at metropolitan centres of learning and research, without any concrete empirical detail being added.

Blind and pragmatic acceptance of 'modernity' just because Professor Mazrui has observed that is is here to stay in Africa, will do very little to prepare African scientists in the struggle against international capitalism's social engineering projects in Africa. The popularity of 'management science' and 'population control' in World Bank, U.S. AID, Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation, project files are not accidents of history. Neither is there anything modern about them, even if located within a "political-economy framework" that cleverly colligates economic and political facts. Even if in the year 2000 A.D. African scientists 'political or otherwise' would have achieved state power in the 56 nation states

of Africa, only in the most romantic vision of society can it even be imagined or dreamed that such an élite, regardless of their disciplinary speciality, will serve the 'public interest'. For as Jackson has emphasised, concerning the real world:

"In practice, the goals, prejudices and perspectives of the élite are challenged through continual political action. To change these might mean to change the whole structure of society and the goals of all organizations which support their structure. It is therefore, naive to assume that improvements in the delivery of public services and policies are simply a matter of improving the information supplied to policy makers, improving communications within the organisation, and existing control mechanisms. ....

The distribution of information within an organisation is closely associated with the distribution of power. Attempts to change these distributions, in the name of improvements in the implimentation process will not go unchallenged".<sup>63</sup>

#### SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

If political science and all other administrative studies in Africa that are oriented towards the generation of public and social opinion about the constitution of an academic agenda that will in the long run generate concrete strategic inventories for the sustenance of life-sustaining values, it is important to reiterate certain points raised above.

First, African technical expertise should guard against the dangers of being transformed into the ultra-modern fetishes of international market fideism. Second, it should be empirically understood that this technical fideism, is a direct product of the injection of massive doses of capital (human and financial) into the training of high-level human labour resources. Movements of Western capital, with the express intent of creating intellectual superstructures,

have by and large been concentrated to the period 1945-1973, which were indeed the doyen years of 'the modernizing' elite that would revive capitalism, with their respective doses of 'Negritude' and African 'Initiative'.

Thirdly, scientists, in Africa continue to be marginalised from autonomous and historical social developmental forces, not because they do not create sufficiently powerful audio-visual images/imagery, or that they are not paid-up members to some trans-African professional association.

Fourthly, project-mongering round the need to indigenise capitalist social technology is a very dangerous exercise. It is dangerous because at the end of the tunnel, will only be the further decomposition/dissolution of the value of African labour power. This is so because the historic forces that triggered off the decomposition of this labour power were not natural forces, but social forces that can be structurally identified. This is why there has always been resistance to the penetration of capitalist social relations of production into territorial social orders. This epic resistance to this seemingly abstract process of imperialism (finance capital), has not been premised on idealism or on some muddled anti-technological millennial ideologies.

Fifthly, the mega formulae used in executive African scientific practice, stripped of the razzmataz, can be seen to have not thus far generated any strategic inventories. On the contrary, they

have been the problem, and have led to a veritable epidemic of iatrogenic social and economic pathologies.

Sixthly, it is crucial that the present attempts to depoliticise population studies, by attempting to technicise them and sociologising them into 'the technical extension' components of aided research programatics on Africa, should be resisted at all ideological levels of scientific practice.

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