

PEASANT TRANSFORMATION : A QUEST FOR
A SOCIALIST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY (A CASE STUDY OF CHIPATA
DISTRICT OF EASTERN PROVINCE)

BY

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Abstract

This study examines Zambia's regional development planning attempts to construct an egalitarian socialist society. Specific attention is focussed onto whether the growth centre strategy - officially adopted by the Third National Development Plan (TNDP, 1979-1983) - is an adequate strategy to institute socialist peasant transformation.

For comparative purposes, ~~the~~ rural development strategies are selected for analysis. Namely, the Peasant Farmers' Scheme - first introduced by colonial authorities - and the Lima Programme, introduced in 1979 as a component of the Integrated Rural Development Programme. These two are analysed with respect to their impact on the land tenure, the organisation of peasant farming and, the distribution of rural resources. A case study of Chipata district in Zambia's Eastern Province is undertaken.

The study concludes that as yet Zambia possesses no effective regional development strategy to carry out peasant transformation. Both the growth centre strategy and its related peasant component, the Lima Programme, are not adequately equipped to transform colonial inherited relations of rural production along the envisaged socialist relations of production. Attention and research is urged, in the end, onto the alternative strategy of agropolitan development.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation has been submitted neither in part nor in whole, for any other degree in this or any other university. Where this dissertation is indebted to others, acknowledgement has been made.

Signed:

Candidate: *MMA*.....

Supervisor: *P. D. M. K. C. S. S.*

IN DEDICATION TO:

Mam'khulu, Mama no 'Ncane;
Manyamande, Ntomb' ezinhle,
Niwe nagingqika nema nami;
Soze sinethezeke senabe nathi,
Sohleka siqethuke ngemihlane,
Singeqiwa gundane nesethu;
Thokola themba ...

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To all the above and many others, may I say :

" Naze nangiweza "

Introduction

Regional development planning in Zambia has been using medium-term strategies (of up to five years), to effect rural socio-economic and spatial transformation of the inherited colonial structure. The objectives of particularly the Second National Development Plan (SNDP, 1972-1976) and the Third National Development Plan (TNDP, 1979-1983) have been to lay the basis of the establishment of a socialist society in accordance with the Humanist philosophy.

Since the introduction of development planning some three decades ago, the spatial strategy which has been employed has been that of, or which bore considerable influence from, the growth centre strategy. Its variants have come and disappeared bearing different names. Colonial development planning between 1948 and 1963 called it development centre strategy; during the First National Development Plan (FNDP, 1966-1970) it manifested itself as the 'technocratic view' and, it was implemented as the Intensive Development Zone strategy by the SNDP. It was, however, the TNDP which formally adopted and used the name growth centre strategy as an instrument for regional development planning.

The experience of Zambia's post-independence regional development has, however, been that of :

- increasing urban-rural and intra-rural income inequalities;
- stagnating and even declining rural employment;
- stagnating or declining agricultural production;
- persisting rural-urban migration and;
- the slow rate of adoption of technical means of production and farm management practices by peasants.

The above development process can hardly be welcomed as setting the material conditions necessary for transforming the inherited colonial spatial structure. Furthermore, the same development process postpone and render the realisation of peasant socialist transformation both a remote and difficult possibility.

Following this observation, it is of interest therefore, to investigate both the theoretical and experimental evidence and relevancy of the growth centre strategy (within and outside Zambia), which ought to have presented TNDP planners with the rationale to embrace it as a suitable strategy for rural socialist transformation.

Aims of the study

The aim of the study is to critically examine the growth centre strategy as an instrument of instituting a development process consistent with Zambia's socialist objectives of rural development. Such an examination will focus upon :

- (i) an analysis of the theoretical framework of the growth centre strategy;
- (ii) a comparative analysis of the Lima Programme and the Peasant Farmers' Scheme, with their specific impact on :
 - the land tenure;
 - the organisation of peasant farming; and
 - the distribution of peasant resources.
- (iii) undertake a case study of Chipata district of the Eastern Province.

Scope of the study

The study directs its attention mainly onto the social forces and relations of production which either emerged or were consolidated in post-independent rural Zambia. The examination is conducted within the context of non-capitalist path of development whose objectives, the TNDP planners said, is to create a classless society.

Though the study brings forth what it projects as an alternative strategy, no comprehensive and indepth presentation of the agropolitan development strategy will be made. The intention is merely to draw adequate discussion and research towards this strategy.

Methodology

This study is mainly theoretical and descriptive. It relies, to a significant degree, on secondary data obtained from published government sources and from the University of Zambia. The little primary data there is was collected from field work conducted in Chipata district. Almost all of it was gathered through unstructured interviews with heads and officails of various government departments.

Special mention ought to be made to the way in which this study is indebted to studies by Hedlund(1980,1981), Kay(1965), Priestley(1978), and Cowie(1979).

Description of chapters

Chapter One

A critical theoretical analysis is made of the growth centre theory and regional development strategies in Zambia.

Chapter Two

Provides a historical analysis to both forces and the processes which emerged and are responsible for Zambia's regional development problems. Particular focus is directed onto the development of the country's mining and agriculture sectors.

Chapter Three

Presents a comparative analysis of the Peasant Farmers' Scheme and the Lima Programme. The comparison is mainly within a conceptual framework.

Chapter Four

Presents a case study of Chipata district. Attention is focussed on social relations and forces of production which emerged as a result of or the encouragement of the Peasant Farmers' Scheme. Similar attention is given to how the Lima Programme is first, making attempts to undermine and reverse colonial inherited social relations and forces of production and, finally, the extent to which the Lima is forging a process of socialised peasant production.

Chapter Five

The study introduces the agropolitan development model for discussion, critical research appraisal and adoption as potential alternative for peasant transformation.

Chapter Six

Concludes by way of presenting a summation of main arguments and ideas which ran and flowed throughout each chapter of the study.

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework

1.1 The problem

Zambia's policy makers have, for some time, declared their commitment to the transformation of the inherited colonial socio-economic structure. The objectives of which is for the establishment of a classless society, in accordance with the philosophy of Humanism. With specific reference to the rural areas, regional development planning has so far been unable formulate, impliment and sustain a development strategy with the capacity to institute peasant transformation.

Third National Development Plan(TNDP,1979-1983) planners took bold steps, when they declared socialist development planning as the principal instrument of socio-economic development. Following that, the growth centre strategy was adopted to spearhead regional development(TNDP:80-81).

The crucial question which has arisen is whether the growth centre strategy is able not only to spearhead regional development, but also whether it is capable to take the lead in bringing about socialist tranformation of rural Zambia, particularly the peasantry.

1.2 Growth centre strategy

The doctrine of regional development planning has come to be closely identified with the growth centre notion largely due to the latter's acceptance of, what Friedmann and Weaver (1979:125,175) called, its 'common appeal'.

The growth centre theory evolved out of a confrontation between proponents of balanced and unbalanced economic growth in the 50s and 60s. Perroux - the theory's acknowledged father - added to and popularised the influence of the theoretical arsenal of the unbalanced growth doctrine, when he stated that growth does not appear everywhere at the same time (Hansen, 1981:16). The underlying rationale for the strategy was that, given limited resources : "it would be inefficient and ineffective to attempt to sprinkle developmental investments thinly over most of the national territory ... key urban centres should be selected for concentrated investment programmes that would benefit from economies of scale and external economies of agglomeration" (Hansen, 1981:327).

Concerning possible conflicts between rapid growth and equitable distribution of income, advocates of unbalanced growth responded by stating that: "a poor country anxious to develop would be well advised not to worry too much about the distribution of income ..."(Johnson, 1962:153).

Initially, the theory was conceived as non-spatial and related more to inter-industry relationships and multiplier effects over economic space (Weaver, 1981:81; Hansen, 1981:18).

Subsequent contributions were made ~~which~~ further entrenched the growth centre strategy as one of the main frameworks of regional development doctrine. Myrdall (1957) and Hirschman (1958) introduced a spatial aspect to the theory. They demonstrated how polarised growth, once started on a growth point, develops and is accelerated by socio-economic forces which attract most of human and material resources from surrounding areas to the growth point.

They nevertheless differed on the relative strength to which 'spread and trickle effects' transmitted to the outlying areas could muster against 'backwash' effects. Myrdal emphasised the relative strength of the 'backwash' effects while Hirschman was optimistic that, in the long-run, the 'spread' effects would dampen polarised growth.

Boudeville (1966) is credited for comprehensively, and in a systematic analysis, transforming the growth centre theory into: "a concept applicable in geographical space" (Weaver, 1981:61). While Friedmann (1966), is said to have developed the theory into an applied model of regional development planning (Hansen, 1981:19).

A summarised discussion of the theoretical tenets of the growth centre model is but sufficient for our purposes. As more extensive and detailed elaborations have already been undertaken elsewhere (see Moseley, 1974; Kuklinski, 1972; Hansen, 1967, 1972; Darwent, 1969; Darkoh, 1977; Conroy, 1973; Friedmann and Weaver, 1979).

Basic premises of the growth centre model possibly derive from the following central prepositions :

- (i) that growth or industrialisation in a national economy proceeds from one, two or a few regions, while remaining regions are left lagging behind and relatively being backward (Lo and Salih, 1981:124);
- (ii) that thereafter, this integrative process of growth or industrialisation gets transmitted in wave-like impulses by 'factor and product market mechanisms' throughout the outlying relatively backward regions (Waterson, 1976:16); and
- (iii) that there exists a strong tendency of growth within regions to be spatially concentrated, simultaneously occurring within the process of inter-regional polarisation (Lo and Salih, *ibid*).

Because the growth centre model is, to a large extent, closely associated to the promotion of urban development, rural development has, by implication, almost always been preceded by urban development. It is also implicit that a considerable amount of development resources should, necessarily, tend to be concentrated in urban centres (Waterson, ibid:16).

The onset of growth, according to the model, is engineered by growth of a number of firms which, subsequently, influence the direction and rate of development which will be taking place within their immediate localities. These leading growth-propulsive firms - characterised by their "high technological level to generate and transmit innovations" (Waterson, ibid:17) - constitute what is called an industrial complex. The industrial complex is supposed to transmit growth impulses throughout its immediate and distant localities which form its 'sphere of influence'.

Growth centres link urban and rural areas by providing points where goods and services are collected and distributed. To the extent to which growth centres collect and distribute goods and services, they are then called service centres. The latter are hierarchically structured in sizes which depend on the volume and importance of their service functions within a regional space.

In a summary then, the process of regional development is said to proceed hierarchically from 'production-oriented' to 'service-oriented' centres and, thereafter is : "diffused to the hinterlands of the region ... through the product and factor markets" (Waterson, ibid:18).

The growth centre model has not passed without theoretical, empirical and ideological criticisms. A summary of these is provided below.

1.2.1 Critiques of the growth centre strategy

The pervasive and contagious pessimism which today confronts the growth centre model almost equals the enthusiastic acceptance with which the model was received some two decades ago. It should be recalled that it was Myrdall (1957) who earlier cautioned and expressed reservations, if not complete cynicism, about the model's capacity to spread developmental effects to hinterland areas. Empirical evidence from a number of studies seems to have vindicated his position (Hansen, 1981:32).

The growth centre strategy is charged as having never displayed conceptual clarity, with the result that serious misgivings have been expressed about its validity as a theory (Friedmann and Weaver, 1979:173; Hansen, 1972; King, 1974; Lasuen, 1969). It is alleged that the strategy has failed to

operationally assist in identifying the location of potential urban areas which can become growth centre and, has not been of assistance to specifically indicate types of investments likely to ensure the success of urban centres selected as growth centres. Moreover, the strategy failed to show how growth should be measured, or to indicate parameters to be used as indicators and how to use growth centres to help in the spatial allocation of investment resources (Friedmann and Weaver, 1979:173; Hansen, 1969:69).

Ideological criticism against the strategy has come from Latin America, where experience with the strategy has produced frustration and rejection. Latin American countries (and this apparently applies to most underdeveloped countries) were claimed to be in possession of weak, or lopsided, if not altogether non-existent propulsive firms to form an "industrial complex", the Schumpeterian entrepreneurial class, improved product and factor market mechanism, concentrated and commercialized settlement structures.

The absence or inefficient operation of the above factors, which are indispensable to the success of the growth centre strategy, has meant that these countries must in some way or another acquire them. Their importation, distribution and control of which is largely by the transnational companies (TNCs) was, according to Conroy (1973), subservience to international capitalism and underdevelopment.

(which is the source of growth) is mostly located outside
:"both the national core region, and the underdeveloped
regional economy ", this strategy cannot be success-
fully realised; and

(vi) that so much depends on the growth centre's ability
to attract labour to imagine designated rural growth
centres successfully drawing adequate and appropriate
labour and capital from competition with urban centres.

Strongly worded charges against the strategy have come from
Friedmann and Weaver (1979) and Corragio (1972). The latter
has suggested that the strategy has merely served as an
instrument of: " implanting new points of capital expro-
piation and dominance in the dependent space economy
(thus extending) the spatial pattern of underdevelopment "
(Weaver, 1981:83).

It is indeed remarkable that Friedmann, who has been credited
as having significantly contributed to the development of
the growth centre strategy, should turn against and reject
the strategy. He and Weaver, in their critical review of the
strategy, bluntly stated that " the doctrine (of growth
centre) is quite useless as a tool of regional development"
(Friedmann and Weaver, op cit:175).

A number of strategies have been advocated as alternatives
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