

UNFPA Project No.: GLO/79/P83

WEP 2-21/WP.119

WORLD EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME RESEARCH

Working Paper

POPULATION AND LABOUR POLICIES PROGRAMME

Working Paper No. 119

CIRCULATION AND PROLETARIANISATION

by

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September 1982

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ISBN 92-2-103248-5

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Preface

Circular migration has long been a major phenomenon in agricultural areas throughout the world. Yet its extent is masked in censuses and most household surveys, whereas longer-term migration has been given considerable emphasis. Correspondingly, policies have concentrated on those movements that have been identified in the data. Moreover until fairly recently, the attention given to the massive scale of seasonal and other forms of short-term population mobility has been scanty, even in critical analyses of the labour process in the contexts of agrarian transitions, industrialisation and urbanisation.

This situation deserves to be rectified, for unquestionably the social and economic aspects of these short-term movements are worth as much attention as that correctly given to the dimensions and circumstances of international migration. That circular migrants are exposed to hardships, degradation and extreme forms of exploitation is widely acknowledged. But - perhaps because by definition they have no fixed point of reference and are rarely in unions - relatively little effort has been devoted to remedying the worst abuses to which they are habitually exposed or to improving their access to adequate incomes and reasonable working conditions. Critical exposure of the reality of the process of circulation must remain the first objective if this situation is to change significantly.

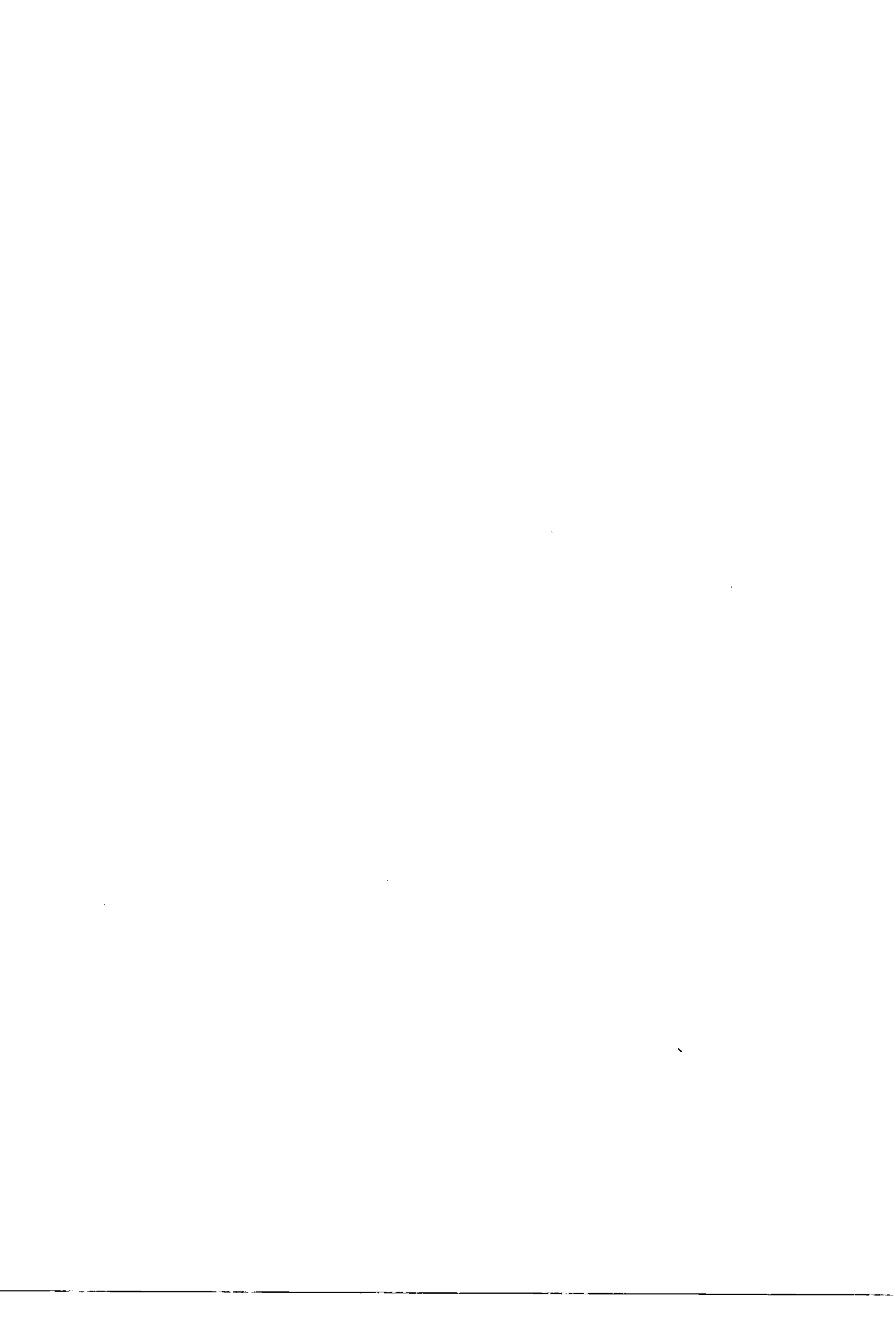
The following paper focuses on one complex aspect of circular migration - the link between circulation and the transition to production based predominantly on wage labour. A version was delivered at the Tenth World Congress of Sociology in Mexico City in August 1982. It represents a small contribution to an on-going research project on short-term population mobility, and as such, it is very much a preliminary attempt to provide a theoretical perspective in which to situate circular migration analytically. A complementary paper has attempted to consider various forms of population mobility conceptually.¹ Both are equally important tasks for integrating circulation into demographic and economic analyses of underdevelopment.

¹ G. Standing: Conceptualising territorial mobility (Geneva, ILO, 1982).



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I. Introduction

Labour circulation is a reflection of the dynamics of socio-economic change, in itself merely one form of migration or population mobility. It should be approached in terms of its relationships to the process of socio-economic transition, not as a descriptive phenomenon. Without wishing to erect a straw man, there has been a tendency to treat circulation in a trivial way. Repeatedly, pages are devoted to showing that many villagers migrate more than once, as shown in place x and in place y, that those who first migrate when young are more likely to migrate again than those who first migrate when older, that many migrants retain links with their villages and like their families, and that Benito, a 22 year old labourer, sends chocolates to his mother every third month.

At the other extreme have been those who see circulation as merely a transitional "stage" in the penetration of international capitalism. In contrast to the first approach which tends to lead to a set of pseudo-policy prescriptions - such as a preference for policies to facilitate circulation over long-term rural-urban migration - the highly abstract "holistic" approach tends to miss contradictory tendencies that make circulation a theoretical problem.

Having flirted with the shadow of two straw men, the focus of this paper can be briefly stated as the relationship between labour circulation and proletarianisation. The basic premise, rather forcefully stated in the interest of brevity, is that migration is a necessary part of the process of proletarianisation. Circulation is an inherently unstable and destabilising part of that process, but being necessary does not mean it will act in ways required to ensure proletarianisation. An implicit assumption of the paper is that short of revolutionary political change proletarianisation is an integral part of the transition from a relatively stagnant (economically non-advancing) structure of production and distribution to one in which capital accumulation can accelerate.

Before turning to more specific topics, a few words on conceptual issues are required. Proletarianisation is itself an awkward concept, either dismissed as a rhetorical word outside "scientific" vocabulary or

bandied about without much attempt to translate it into a viable analytical concept. Attempts are being made elsewhere to grapple with it, but for present purposes it will suffice to define it as the process by which the mass of the working population become "free" in the classic double sense, free of the means of production and free to sell their labour, and - which is where conventional discourse typically breaks off - a process by which workers come to have the necessary attributes, attitudes, commitment, tastes and consciousness required of a surplus-producing wage labour force.¹ In particular, if accumulation is to occur on a large scale in industrialising environments the capitalist control of the labour process is required, and for that workers must be induced to internalise behaviour required of efficient wage labourers. This brings into consideration such characteristics of wage labour as: (i) job stability and labour turnover; (ii) absenteeism; (iii) intensity of work effort, or the workers' "effort bargain" for any wage rate; (iv) the socially accepted, or tolerated, duration of work; (v) the mechanisms of labour force stratification and control; (vi) the mobility of workers in terms of task flexibility; (vii) the acquisition, refinement, application and reproduction of skills; and (viii) the class and other forms of consciousness of workers.

In a pre-capitalist social formation the process of proletarianisation is bound to involve conflict and one can interpret many of the brutal régimes in industrialising countries as involved in trying to secure that transitional process. This is not a digression, for intrinsically proletarianisation involves a series of contradictory developments, and it is the contradictions inherent in labour circulation that this paper will attempt to stress. But we must be careful to avoid any deterministic, teleological reasoning. At the most abstract level, proletarianisation involves the uncertain conflict between two main groups. The first consists of those trying to squeeze surplus out of the direct producers, using diverse mechanisms of control and relying on other changes in the labour process, as well as encouraging political developments

¹ I have attempted to discuss this elsewhere. See, e.g., G. Standing: Unemployment and female labour (London, Macmillan, 1981), Chapter 1.

facilitating such changes. The second group consists of the exploited and potentially exploited mass of the population. Anybody who bothers to take account of history can see that this conflict was the reality of the past history of industrialised countries and is the reality of current history in industrialising countries. And it is odd to spend time pontificating on the sending of chocolates by a temporary sojourner or on how many times the average circulant circulates, when circulation is a central feature of that historical process.

Nothing stated so far should be taken as suggesting that the process of proletarianisation is one in which one class consciously sets out to secure a clearly-defined control of another or that the outcome is smooth or predictable. But those are the inherent tendencies of transitional situations. Besides the gross brutality of régimes seeking to secure capitalist industrialisation, by forcibly suppressing the protests and struggles of those being "freed", in the double sense noted earlier, more subtle techniques have been used. Overbriefly, these are: (i) techniques to erode traditional social relations of production and distribution; (ii) techniques of direct coercion in the labour process; (iii) manipulation of the forms of worker remuneration; (iv) manipulation of the social and detailed division of labour; (v) the generation of a relative surplus population (unemployment, etc.); (vi) the destruction or erosion - or as some social scientists would put it, the disarticulation - of social and kinship support mechanisms among direct producers; (vii) the use of paternalistic labour relations; (viii) the inculcation of appropriate attitudes to productive labour by means of schooling and related institutions; and (ix) ideological and legal "superstructural" support, including religious dogma and civil law.

Arrayed against this battery of mechanisms, history attests to the dogged resistance and reluctant behavioural adaptation of the mass of the population subjected to the pressures of proletarianisation. Through the conflicts, there has always been an underlying current of pressure, response and mutual adaptation.¹

¹ This is implicit in what is one of the finest analyses of the creation of an industrial proletariat. E.P. Thompson: The making of the English working class (London, Penguin, 1963). Those familiar with the continuing debate will appreciate that the notion of "agency" is bothersome.

Having schematically hinted at what should surely be regarded as the core of analyses of the labour process, it suffices to note that it seems regrettable to divorce the analysis of the mobility of people as workers from that dynamic context. That is not stated polemically, but as a reaction to the tendency to analyse migration, and circulation in particular, in the classic case study format, whereby two tendencies emerge with monotonous regularity. The first is heavy reliance on observations of a few households or individuals, focusing on "soft" attitudinal data, as if attitudes simply determined behaviour or that practices indicate or reflect preferences, or that behaviour yields outcomes consistent with it. That methodological quagmire is remarkable. The second tendency is that of formulating the questions to be asked, and the interpretations to be put on the data collected, on the basis of casual ad hoc reasoning. One easily emerges with a shopping list of hypotheses that are banal and rarely linked to a theoretical perspective reflecting an identified problem.

To escape from a quagmire one must first recognise that one is in one. That is my only justification for preparing what is a modest paper with a forceful statement of a theoretical "position". The following sections are related to that position, the intention being to suggest how labour circulation involves a series of unstable contradictions that link it to proletarianisation, both negatively and positively.

II. Circulation Preserving/Undermining Pre-capitalist Relations of Production: First Contradiction

First of all, temporary migration has been a "safety valve", a means of preserving forms and social relations of production in rural areas, often reflecting a mode of production under stress.

In Melanesia, to give a simple example, village youths go to work in an urban area as a rite of passage, allowing village elders to retain control over production and avoiding disruptive competition between young male workers; temporary migration has helped prolong a form of communal production based on surplus appropriation and distribution by

elders.¹ More generally, such temporary migration, being selective of young men and of those with skills and aptitudes that are in some sense "marginal" to existing labour requirements, is liable to deprive rural areas of leaders in any struggle to change traditional forms of exploitation or prevent the encroachment on living standards by new forms.

Safety valve circulation may reflect population pressure on resources, a growing inability to meet the demands of landlords and other exploiting elements or a growing inability to reproduce productive forces (e.g. maintaining land quality through proper use of fallow periods, avoiding excessive interplanting, etc.). It may also reflect landlords' attempts to squeeze out more surplus to meet growing revenue requirements.

Similarly, temporary movements may reduce household "under-employment", allow higher per capita product and thus allow taxes or rent to be paid from remittances without the household having to sell assets or supply labour to kulaks, landlords or estates. In short, one or more members migrate to obtain monetary income to relieve temporary or longer-term stress.² In India, indebtedness has induced families to send wives and daughters to towns to earn money through prostitution to help them retain land.³ In Thailand, village girls flock to work for a few months or years as masseuses and prostitutes in Bangkok to help maintain rural households.⁴

¹ Although the latter deduction is not made, this role of temporary migration has been noted in several studies. See, for example, J. Grant and M. Zeleniez: "Changing patterns of wage labour migration in the Kilege area of Papua New Guinea", in International Migration Review, summer 1980, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 228-229.

² J.S. Migdal: Peasants, politics and revolution: Pressures towards political and social change in the Third World (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 118-121.

³ M.K. Pandhe (ed.): Bonded labour in India (Calcutta, Indian School of Social Sciences, 1976), p. 52.

⁴ P. Phongpaichip: Rural women of Thailand: From peasant girls to Bangkok masseuses (Geneva, ILO, forthcoming).

In central Peru it is reported that short-term migration helped maintain rural petty commodity production and "occupational multiplicity" by strengthening reciprocal ties of labour obligations between geographically split "household confederations".¹ And in Kenya, among other countries, remittances from temporary migrants have helped preserve low-income rural households and small-scale landholders by slowing the growth of indebtedness and the loss of land.

However, such examples emphasise the inherent contradictions of safety valve migration. One should not be too categorical, but whereas temporary migration may originate as a means of preserving certain productive relations, it becomes disruptive. First, it accelerates the decay of feudal or other traditional social relations by undermining the perceived legitimacy of existing obligations. Migrants have been agents of change in their villages, exposure to an alternative environment teaching them that modes of exploitation to which their families had grown accustomed are neither just nor inevitable. Even in Melanesia returning youths have resented the elders' control and grown impatient of waiting for acquisition of elder status. In Venezuela, many peasant union leaders were those who had spent time in city life.² Pressures from return-migrants may lead to revolutionary action or, more commonly perhaps, oblige the authorities to make changes.

Such migration may accelerate the demise of landlordism by inducing defensive reactions on the part of landlords. If out-migration threatens their source of rent or related revenue and induces them to "tighten the screws" of labour control, as an attempt to prevent the absence of workers during the harvest, that will erode the legitimacy of conventional social relationships, in so far as new forms of exploitation are added without compensating rights. That in itself will stimulate the desire to

¹ G.A. Smith: "Socio-economic differentiation and relations of production among rural-based petty producers in central Peru, 1880-1970", in Journal of Peasant Studies, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1979.

² J.D. Powell: "Venezuela: The peasant union movement", in H.A. Landsburger (ed.): Latin American peasant movements (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1969), p. 83.

migrate. If, conversely, landlords make concessions to discourage out-migration, barriers to migration will be lowered. That can be illustrated by the classic series of changes in rental forms. The shift from labour services to produce rents and from either to cash rents increases the opportunity for all or some members of the tenant's household to absent themselves from the land. For the changes enable rent to be paid from the earnings from wage labour circulation while some members remain to produce the family's basic subsistence and rural security.

Conversely, temporary out-migration also allows landlords and other controllers of means of production to dispense with reciprocal obligations impeding their efforts - or deterring them from making efforts - to transform pre-capitalist productive relations, such as loans to tie over the slack season or the implicit guarantee of employment throughout the year.

So far, emphasis has been laid on the disruptive effect of temporary migration on basically feudal social relations of production. Yet this applies just as much with petty commodity, or smallholder, production. One factor is the tendency for seasonal circulation to give way to temporary circulation that is not seasonal in character and to longer-term out-migration.¹ These changes reduce labour availability at critical seasonal periods, leading to a deterioration in the ability to reproduce means of production and maintain levels of output. The Miskito of Nicaragua provide an example.² In the 1960s fishermen travelled to plantations or shrimp-packing plants to supplement their traditional subsistence income. But commercialisation led to longer-term migration, remittances being sent to enable the family to hire wage labour. So, gradually productive relations in the villages changed.

¹ J. Nelson: "Sojourners versus new urbanites: Causes and consequences of temporary versus permanent cityward migration in developing countries", in Economic Development and Cultural Change, 1976, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 721-757.

² B. Nietschmann: "Ecological change, inflation and migration in the Far West Caribbean", in The Geographical Review, Vol. 69, No. 1, pp. 1-24.

Even temporary out-migration can disrupt those relations of "balanced reciprocity" that abound in village communities. It is possible that circulation will be perceived as a personal means of preserving a set of reciprocal relations and traditional lifestyles. But what an individual desires need not have much correspondence to what transpires. Thus, exchange labour in Malaysian kampongs has been based on the expectation that those involved will need the input of others later and be able to rely on it; temporary out-migration reduces the flexibility of that schema, leading to a substitution of wage labour and land under-utilisation.

Another element in this contradiction is that whereas temporary out-migration of young men may reflect the inadequacy of local income-earning opportunities and the need to supplement household incomes, it may lower household incomes. Such circulation leaves aged rural labour forces and households in which women and children have to assume a much greater work burden.¹ This impairs the ability of families to meet formal and informal obligations and cuts them off from some reciprocal relationships. How and to what extent disruptive changes occur depends on the network of productive relations among smallholders, an avenue of enquiry that deserves to be explored.

III. Circulation and Class Differentiation

Characteristic of transitions to capitalist production and proletarianisation is the process of class differentiation, in which income differentiation gives way to that based on the ownership and control of means of production. Again, the pattern of circulation may reflect a desire by the majority to reduce differentiating tendencies, but the actual implication is to accelerate them. The following notes try to indicate the main ways by which this can be expected.

¹ Too many studies of circulation that have stressed its "positive" nature have neglected the impact on the "women left behind". For a valuable study done for the ILO, see E. Gordon: "An analysis of the impact of labour migration on the lives of women in Lesotho", in Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 17, No. 3, April, 1981, pp. 54-76.

First, temporary out-migration from rural communities reflects attempts to maintain or to improve living standards. Yet, the poor are less likely to obtain high-income jobs and more likely to be obliged to use what income they do obtain to cover consumption, whereas members of richer households who migrate temporarily will do so to strengthen their family position in the rural areas.¹ Those acquiring relatively high incomes will make technological innovations and expand commodity production, thereby differentiating themselves from those who cannot do so.

Second, remittances may appear to be equalising, information often indicating that low-income households receive transfers more often, that low-earning migrants send a greater proportion of their income back, that most remittances are small and that remittances are predominantly for consumption. But these conceal other changes they induce. First, "attitudinal" responses on what was done with particular sums of money sent or brought back are not reliable guides to the impact of transfers on spending and investment.² Second, even if most remittances are small, that is consistent with a few large transfers, and it is those that strengthen a minority's position in the production process. Third, even if poorer households are more likely to remit, the net flow may be negligible as their initial costs of travel and job-search represent a higher proportion of the income they obtain.

Fourth, and most difficult to document though perhaps important, investment by wealthier landholders is not only stimulated by actual remittances but by their availability, if needed.³ This reduces risk, encouraging land purchase, technological change and the use of hired labour.

¹ M. Lipton: "Migration from rural areas of poor countries: The impact on rural productivity and income distribution", in World Development, Jan. 1980, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 4.

² G. Standing: Income transfers and remittances: A module for migration surveys (Geneva, ILO, 1982).

³ A.R. Water: "Migration, remittances and the cash constraint in African smallholder economic development", in Oxford Economic Papers, Nov. 1973, Vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 435-454.

Fifth, there is the facilitating factor of "pooled transfers" through migrant organisations. In some places, these have helped develop rural infrastructure and stimulated commercial production, enabling some petty producers to become capitalist employers.¹

Sixth, for richer households remittances and the benefits of temporary out-migration are partially concealed in the form of improved skills, marketing information, contacts, access to commercial credit, etc., all of which strengthen the strong.

Circulation has tended to start as a seasonal phenomenon, but gradually the dominant factor becomes the nexus of opportunities in the areas to which the migrants go. When recently interviewing village leaders in northern Kelantan in Malaysia I found that initially men went to Singapore and urban areas in Malaysia in the slack season, returning for the padi harvest and transplanting seasons. But once circulation became an established pattern men went away whenever informed of opportunities, regardless of the need for their labour in their kampong. One apparent result was growing land underutilisation among smallholders. With chronic land fragmentation and tiny parcels one might expect land sales, land being rented out and land consolidation. But my impression so far is that other factors have checked those developments.

Once temporary migration becomes oriented to the needs of the destination labour market rather than the needs of the community of origin it encourages differentiation by weakening the poorer rural households, depleting them of family labour and forcing them to buy consumer goods they previously produced. Often labour shortage is scarcely visible, initially the only signs being that poorer households are precluded from new opportunities or forced to abandon secondary occupations. For some, production becomes more fragile, so that the first crisis, such as a bad harvest, drought or period of heavy rain,

¹ In Nigeria migrants to towns join "improvement unions" to promote their home village development, exhibiting "village patriotism". A. Adepoju: "Rural-urban socio-economic links: An example of migrants in South-west Nigeria", in S. Amin (ed.): Modern migrations in West Africa (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 135.

leads to ruin. Whenever petty commodity producers have to concentrate on one or two activities and neglect complementary activities they are on their way to joining the proletariat. The absence of one or more household members may allow exploitation to continue and preserve subsistence levels for a while, but typically it leads to inattention to repairs, inadequate land preparation and related forms of neglect, reducing yields and incomes. Thus in parts of Africa, male out-migration has left households vulnerable, for the absence of labour has meant dilatory bush clearance and soil erosion, seriously impairing the indigenous shifting cultivation.¹ Ironically, such tendencies may be worsened by limited labour-saving innovations made to offset migration or as a result of small remittances. If they cannot afford complementary inputs, the introduction of one new input may disturb the sensitive ecological balance in the traditional cultivation. Enforced adaptation reduces household income and labour reserve, reducing the capacity to cover financial or labour contingencies without resort to moneylenders and hired labour. That in turn increases their precariousness and pauperisation.

The relatively affluent can take advantage of their neighbours' plight, aided by remittances. They may draw them into debt and eventual disposition, reduce their opportunity for commodity exchange through their ability to sell at lower prices or because they can oblige the poorer, more dependent villagers to buy from them. Some smallholders will be forced to lease land to them, often to become temporary out-migrants. A variant of that occurs in Mexico, where despite restrictions on land transfer under ejido, smallholders have leased their parcels to sharecroppers and migrated in search of wage employment.²

¹ See, e.g., L. Cliffe: "Labour migration and peasant differentiation: Zambian experiences", in Journal of Peasant Studies, April 1978, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 332-333; E.P. Skinner: "Labour migration and its relationship to socio-cultural change in Mossi society", in Africa, Oct. 1960, Vol. 30, pp. 373-401.

² K. Finkler: "From sharecroppers to entrepreneurs: Peasant household production strategies in the ejido system of Mexico", in Economic Development and Cultural Change, Oct. 1978, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 103-120.

Differentiation is also affected by the incidence of migration, though few studies have stressed its class nature. It may be that temporary out-migration is relatively high for landlord or commercial big-farmer groups, with sons and daughters going for schooling or training, and also high for the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat (those with a tiny land parcel, obliged to work for wages to provide a subsistence income), the former being mainly rural-urban, the latter more often intra-rural. Conversely, those in "medium circumstances" may be most likely to make permanent moves.¹ Interestingly, a recent ILO survey in the Indian Punjab suggested that smallholders had a higher rate of "permanent" rural emigration than landless households.² In Ecuador the distribution of out-migration was observed to be bi-modal, the suggestion being that the high rate in the very large landholder category was education-linked, and thus temporary, while the high rate among those with from 2.5 to 5.5 hectares was longer-term, coming from households under stress.³ An Argentinian study also suggested the long-term out-migration was greatest from the "middle-classes" (sic).⁴

If middle-income groups have high long-term out-migration and others strengthen their position or survive by short-term circulation, the pattern may be explained by differentiating pressures within the

¹ This was what Lenin observed in late nineteenth century Russia. V.I. Lenin: The development of capitalism in Russia (Moscow, International Publishers, 1960), pp. 182-183.

² A.S. Oberai and H.K. Manmohan Singh: Causes and consequences of internal migration: A study in the Indian Punjab (ILO, forthcoming).

³ P. Peek and P. Antolinez: Labour migration in the Sierra of Ecuador: Causes and incidence (Geneva, ILO, Aug. 1980; mimeographed World Employment Programme research working paper; restricted); also, P. Peek and G. Standing (eds.): State policies and migration: Studies in Latin America and the Caribbean (London, Croom Helm, 1982).

⁴ R.W. Wilke: "Towards a behavioural model of peasant migration: An Argentine case study of spatial behaviour by social class level", in R.N. Thomas (ed.): Population dynamics of Latin America: A review and bibliography (Massachusetts, University of Massachusetts Press, 1971).

rural community and the tendency of the middle peasantry to experience most a sense of decremental deprivation, arguably a powerful motivator to rebellious action or its passive alternative of migration.¹ Rather than sink into the rural semi-proletariat they migrate.²

Indicating a related phenomenon, a village study in Bangladesh reported that sons in low-income households were more likely to leave altogether than those in richer households, and to do so at an earlier age, depleting their households of needed labour.³ Such findings may only be indicative of strains and currents of change induced by migration, but it is likely that circulation from higher-income households is more purposeful and planned as a long-term course of domestic expansion, while that from lower-income groups is more a matter of distress and necessity.

IV. Circulation and Rural Wage Labour Growth

Paradoxically, labour circulation typically occurs in response to the lack of rural income-earning opportunities but leads to a growth of such opportunities in the form of wage labour. Rural proletarianisation reflects the erosion of pre-capitalist social relations and the growth of class differentiation, definitionally. But intra-rural circulation also influences the shift to wage labour. In areas of in-migration it weakens the middle and lower strata of the peasantry, those who survive by judiciously combining petty agriculture, craftwork and wage labour. If cut off from wage labour opportunities many will be forced into debt, to give up land and other means of production and join the rural proletariat or migrate to join it elsewhere.

¹ G. Standing: "Migration and modes of exploitation: Social origins of immobility and mobility", in Journal of Peasant Studies, Jan. 1981, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 173-211.

² It is worth noting that methodologically, cross-sectional data make it hard to state unequivocally that specific groups have high propensities to move, partly because they have only identified individual moves, partly because data on class status are not collected, and partly because a change of class status may well precede actual migration.

³ M.T. Cain: "The household life-cycle and economic mobility in rural Bangladesh", in Population and Development Review, Sept. 1978, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 421-438.

Migrants have commonly displaced family workers, often allowing some to pursue schooling and often paid wages from remittances. Moreover, where social relations of production are custom-bound landlords and capitalist farmers have often been able to resort to wage labour efficiently through using seasonal migrants. To transform petty producers into a proletariat that can be manipulated to produce a sizeable surplus, there must be a period in which new forms of exploitation and oppression - represented most by the depersonalisation and formalisation of labour relations - are internalised by workers. In effect, pauperisation is a necessary prelude to proletarianisation. And for that reason alone, employers tend to use seasonal or other migrant workers who have already been reduced to "proletarian consciousness".¹ There are many examples in which capitalist enterprises have sought migrant labour rather than use available local workers.² As such, migrants have been used as an indirect disciplining factor on those not yet "ready" for regular wage labour, while the local population's expectations and aspirations are reduced and reoriented. In this phase the local population may exhibit signs of incipient proletarianisation through mass alcoholism, anomie, high labour turnover, etc., and as such be scarcely exploitable. Migrants can be subjected to much greater control, having no strong support system or close ties of class solidarity. As noted with respect to the harsh super-exploitation of migrants in Gujarat,

"Even under the blatantly capitalist mode of production it is difficult to see that such anonymous and ruthless treatment could be meted out to people who are part and parcel of the local society and who previously were partners in a labour system with feudal overtones." [3]

¹ This is not the same as class consciousness, whereby the proletariat identifies itself as a "class for itself".

² For example, J. Breman: "Seasonal migration and co-operative capitalism: The crushing of cane and of labour by the sugar factories of Bardoli, South Gujarat", in Journal of Peasant Studies, Oct. 1978, Vol. 6, Nos. 1 and 2, pp. 41-70, and Jan. 1979, pp. 168-209.

³ Ibid., 1979, p. 185.

One could go further, for often temporary migrants facilitate a transition to wage labour production that would be impossible or slowed in their absence. Even so, migrant labour is unstable, for supply depends on the existence of a surplus population, and estates once dependent on such workers are vulnerable to their withdrawal.

V. Circulation and the Social Division of Labour

In petty commodity production both the detailed and social division of labour are restricted by its kinship orientation and are also flexible, mainly based on conventional age-sex role complementarities within households or "household confederations", however loose the kinship community structure. Survival is ensured by "occupational multiplicity" and a set of structured reciprocities, including simple forms of exchange labour, gang work, age sets and so on. The managerial-authority structure is essentially an internal household or community process, and notably in a feudal setting production and distribution take place within essentially isolated units. All this changes with proletarianisation.

In particular, capitalist control requires artificial or institutional barriers to divide the labour force, imposing heterogeneity where the tendency of the labour process is towards homogeneity (the collectivisation of the mass of workers). This is epitomised by the terms "divide-and-rule" and labour force stratification. Secondly, the capitalist need for a committed low-cost labour supply implies a very different household or family division of labour, between those available as wage labour and those doing reproductive work. A breakdown in the flexible domestic division of labour and in the occupational multiplicity of individual workers create a workforce more dependent on wage labour and thus more resigned to the labour relations imposed on wage workers.

How does circulation relate to this process? Perhaps foremost is the relation to the sexual division of labour, notably where men are drawn into migrating into wage labour, leaving women as well as children and the elderly with greater burdens in domestic production.¹

¹ This has sometimes led to changes in inheritance customs, as in central Peru. Smith, 1979, op. cit., p. 299. Preliminary research in Malaysian kampongs affected by heavy short-term male out-migration suggests that Muslim inheritance has been modified to give equal shares to women. The proportion of work done by women has increased in recent years.

The most well-known examples of migration-induced redivision of labour are in sub-Saharan Africa. In Ghana, Zambia, Tanzania and elsewhere, male long-term circulation has meant vast rural areas being devoted to the reproduction of labour power while urban areas concentrate on commodity production.¹ Rural women have been pushed more into the domestic economy. In some rural areas, in-migration of wage labourers has contributed to the displacement of women in productive tasks, forcing them to concentrate on domestic work. Other aspects will be noted later, but it is worth stressing that not only does this pattern of circulation increase the oppressed state of women, cutting them off from access to cash and increasing their dependence on men; it also increases the oppressed state of men who have more responsibility for household income, and come under more pressure from wives and other relatives to labour regularly and servilely.

The sexual division of labour is also inter-related with the sex selectivity of different types of population mobility. The development of industries based on process labour has led to the absorption of young, single women, drawn from the countryside into new areas of urban-industrial expansion. Contrary to a still surprisingly common image, in numerous countries women make up the majority of short-term and longer-term migrants, very commonly moving in search of wage labour, having been marginalised in the labour process in their areas of origin and drawn into the sort of unstable low-wage process-type jobs for which their oppressed upbringing makes them peculiarly suitable, from the point of view of capitalist accumulation. Such women migrants are particularly utilised in "static" jobs with low costs of labour turnover, should they remain in them only for short periods. In Malaysia electronics and textile companies have sent buses, lorries and even planes into the countryside to recruit young girls for such jobs, providing them with basic accommodation. There and elsewhere migration accentuates the sexual division of labour in the industrial sectors.

¹ See, e.g., N-K. Plange: "'Opportunity cost' and labour migration: A misinterpretation of proletarianisation in northern Ghana", in Journal of Modern African Studies, Dec. 1979, Vol. 17, No. 4, pp. 655-76; Cliffe, 1978, op. cit.; P. Raikes: "Rural differentiation and class formation in Tanzania", in Journal of Peasant Studies, April 1978, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 308-10; Gordon, 1981, op. cit.

Age selectivity of migration also affects the social division of labour. As circulation and other forms of migration are selective of the young, the rural labour force becomes increasingly aged, which impedes technical change and makes rural petty commodity production more fragile in its ability to adjust to adversity. This is particularly so once circulation based on seasonal labour requirements gives way to other forms of short-term or longer-term migration.

Circulation has also played its role in fostering an ethnic or racial division of labour, with some racial group in the rural areas supplying short-term labour to urban-industrial or estate areas in which another racial group makes up the core of the labour force.¹ Commonly, ties develop between specific villages and a type of job in a specific industry or establishment, with groups of workers separated into almost isolated cells in the workplace.² Often this involves communal migration.³ It is not uncommon for the incoming group to receive sub-subsistence wages, on the expectation that their subsistence needs will be met through an implicit subsidy from their rural family. Such stratification allows a process of "co-exploitation", by which part of the surplus acquired from the lower strata of wage workers is transferred to higher strata, and by which the immediate, perceived interests of the different strata of the labour force are divided. An illusion is fostered that one group benefits from the relative disadvantage of another; it is an illusion because ultimately this mechanism enables capital to exploit all strata of the proletariat more effectively, while weakening their collective bargaining position.

¹ See, e.g., N.E. Whitten: "Jungle Quechua ethnicity: An Ecuadorian case study", in H.I. Safa and B.M. DuToit (eds.): Migration and development: Implications for ethnic identity and political conflict (Paris, Mouton, 1974), p. 163; P. Peek and P. Antolinez: "Migration and the urban labour market: The case of San Salvador", in World Development, April 1977, Vol. 5, No. 4, pp. 291-302.

² This is observed in an interesting study of migration from two Peruvian villages. J. Laite: Industrial development and migrant labour (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1981), p. 45.

³ See, e.g., J.A. Kirchner: Sugar and seasonal labour migration: The case of Tucuman, Argentina, Research Paper No. 192 (Chicago, University of Chicago, Department of Geography, 1980), p. 6.

Migrants contribute to the social redivision of labour by filling jobs for which there is little upward occupational-income mobility. Such jobs do not require a stable committed labour force because there are no returns to on-the-job experience or large recruitment, induction or training costs. This is illustrated by a study in Santiago where male migrants entered jobs with little upward mobility potential and where they seemed to experience much less upward mobility than non-migrants, even controlling for schooling differences. It was suggested that:

"The influence of migrants at the bottom may have a structural effect on the process of mobility in Santiago; the low-status migrants take over the lower-status positions in the city while the native urbanites move up the occupational ladder." [1]

Such tendencies divide groups by area of origin, each identifiable by manner of dress, accents, racial mix, habits or type of schooling.

Migrants also comprise a large component of the so-called "informal sector", whose role in accumulation has been blurred by the rhetoric about its growth potential. Part of it consists of activities by which those involved - commonly temporary and longer-term migrants - subsidise urban-industrial labour costs by providing cheap means of subsistence, such as low-cost food channelled from migrants' home areas.²

A quite different practice is the use of migrants in sensitive positions of intermediate authority. This reduces confrontation between workers and employers, redirecting potential resentment to such intermediary categories. In Peru migrants were used in such jobs as being less likely to identify with local workers doing manual work.³ In

¹ D. Raczynski: "Migration, mobility and occupational achievement: The case of Santiago, Chile", in International Migration Review, Summer 1972, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 196.

² It may also supply wage goods or involve of subsidiary activities done for capital, such as repair work or the provision of spare parts, allowing capitalist enterprises to acquire more economic surplus, indirectly.

³ Smith, 1979, op. cit., p. 309.

Gujarat distinctive groups of seasonal migrants were used as mukadams and others as lower categories, though employers stressed past diligence in their selection.¹ But there, as elsewhere, recruitment was based on spreading the geographical source of seasonal workers, as a means of reducing the likelihood of collective action to improve working conditions and pay.

The hiring of seasonal migrants as labour brokers or supervisors enables employers to avoid supervisory costs and makes it easier for them to assume a paternalistic role without resort to coercion or the acquisition of an authoritarian image. That impedes the development of class consciousness, with workers identifying their discontent with the strictness of the intermediaries. In some cases it is a migrant group that acts as co-exploiter, in others local workers, such as former craftsmen undermined by the development of productive forces.² The place of migrants may vary even within industries, perhaps by size or type of firm. In Manila, small sub-contractors in the construction industry rely on a pool of circulatory migrants, typically from the foreman's rural district.³ Small and medium sized companies delegate recruitment to the foreman, but large contractors find this practice risky in case the foreman and workers develop close ties, which they can prevent by drawing labourers from different areas.

What emerges is a picture of various possibilities, any migration-related division of labour being the outcome of a process of adjustment based on the nature of previous productive relations and the specific needs of capital. But if there is no predetermined pattern, that does not mean migrants are not used to stratify and control the labour force in the interests of accumulation and proletarianisation.

¹ Breman, 1979, op. cit., pp. 186-87.

² This is the classic case Hobsbawm identified. E.J. Hobsbawm: "The labour aristocracy in 19th century Britain", in E.J. Hobsbawm: Labouring men: Studies in the history of labour (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964).

³ A.W. Stretton: Circular migration, segmented labour markets and efficiency (May 1982; draft paper for forthcoming ILO symposium), p. 6. See also Stretton's earlier work.

VI. Circulation and the Detailed Division of Labour

The detailed division of labour is the division of work tasks within production. With the transition to capitalist production its defining characteristic is that workers are separated from the conception and creation of the output, "stripped of their independence and specialised to such an extent as to be reduced to mere supplementary partial processes".¹ The role of migration in that process deserves to be stressed.

In agriculture, as in industry, migrants have made it easier for landlords and employers to reorganise work tasks, if only because local workers wedded to traditional methods have resisted changes in routine and skill use, often responding to changes by reducing their "effort bargain", striking or resorting to sabotage. It is also apparent that migrant landholders, being less attached to local farm techniques sometimes evolved over centuries, have been relatively innovative, introducing mechanisation and modern inputs that have drastically altered the division of labour. They in turn may force local landlords into defensive innovations so as to survive.

In urban-industrialised areas, capitalist growth has tended to occur - and to do so most easily - in new urban areas rather than in established cities where traditions and guild-like restrictions have impeded progressive changes in the detailed division of labour.

Migration concentrates workers with similar skills, and as capitalist development relies on the concentration of labour power it necessarily involves an "urban bias", aided by State policies, whether this involves a mass rural-urban relocation of people or a mix of migration and circulation.² But most crucially, migration and perhaps most of all circulation, has weakened labour relations impeding changes in the division of labour. Any increase in the detailed division of labour implies restricting workers' subjective involvement in production. If

¹ K. Marx: Capital (New York, International Publishers, 1967), Vol. I, p. 338.

² Peek and Standing, 1982, op. cit., for analyses of such policies.

aware of this workers will reduce work commitment, and if the growing division of labour also reduces potential job mobility, workers will be less inclined to refine skills. Workers experiencing a decline in mobility potential while in a job can be expected to feel a strong sense of deprivation and frustration. As a corollary, migrants will be less affected, be least resistant to changes in productive techniques and, as some evidence suggests, have a greater belief in workers' ability to rise in status.¹ Accordingly, employers introducing new techniques entailing a more vertically integrated structure of increasingly "static" jobs will prefer migrant workers.

However, circular migration is unsatisfactory for employers to the extent that the labour supply is liable to be withdrawn at short notice, should incomes fall or type of work deteriorate. And circular migrants may not stay long enough to gain even limited skills to give a reasonable return to employers.² They may do so in certain industries, notably construction, and it is in these that most temporary migrants are to be found. Even there, it is doubtful whether use of circular migrants is consistent with a "cumulative acquisition of skills".³ Circulation can facilitate some skill development because the security of rural residence permits a worker to have some commitment to a precarious job, as is the case in construction. But it seems more likely that skill development

¹ For instance, a study in a Paris car factory found Breton migrants had such beliefs much more than city-born workers. A. Touraine and O. Ragazzi: Ouvrier d'origine agricole (Paris, L'Ecole des hautes études, 1961).

² For example, Textor's early study of pedicab drivers in Bangkok, found very few learned new skills. R.B. Textor: "The northeast samlor driver in Bangkok" in UNESCO: The social implications of industrialisation and urbanisation (Calcutta, UNESCO, 1956).

³ M. Chapman: "Policy implications of circulation: Some answers from the grassroots", in G.W. Jones and H.V. Richter (eds.): Population mobility and development: Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Monograph No. 27 (Development Studies Centre, 1981), p. 78. This conclusion is drawn from Alan Stretton's work in Manila. In five Malaysian kampongs I visited in April 1982, all with heavy temporary out-migration of men into construction jobs, all village headmen were convinced that most workers returned having gained no skills. Data from the pilot household survey supported that view.

is limited by circulation, even if migrants return to an industry fairly regularly. A fluctuating labour supply can be expected to encourage a more refined detailed division of labour, so as to use workers with limited skills.

VII. The Inculcation of Tastes, Aspirations and Habits

"Like the diversion of the population from agriculture to the towns, non-agricultural migration is a progressive phenomenon. It tears the population out of the neglected, backward, history-forgotten remote spots and draws them into the whirlpool of modern social life. It increases literacy among the population, heightens their understanding, and gives them civilised habits and requirements." [1]

Migrants have been agents of change through stimulating the "taste" for industrial commodities, and various observers have favoured circular migration as a means of getting "faster development and modernisation".² In helping to homogenise social tastes they have enlarged the home market, standardising consumption, thus benefitting mass production routines of large-scale industry. Agriculturally, return migrants - or migrants sending alternative consumer goods back to their families - have weakened smallholder production by reducing tolerance for traditional staple diets that were both cheap and relatively available. Once lured into a commercialised diet, such communities adopt new subsistence "norms" that are hard to reverse.³

¹ Lenin, 1960, op. cit., p. 576.

² S. Goldstein: Circulation in the context of total mobility in Southeast Asia (Honolulu, Papers of the East-West Population Institute, No. 53, Aug. 1978), p. 45; G. Hugo: Population mobility in West Java (Yogyakarta, Gadjah Mada University Press, 1978).

³ Anecdotally, in my research in Guyana in 1977-78 it intrigued me that villages had grown accustomed to imported condensed milk, the taste for which had apparently been spread by return migrants; a government attempt to expand dairy farming floundered because of the unwillingness to shift back to ordinary milk.

The standardisation of "tastes" extends to cultural matters, encouraging such phenomena as bi-culturalism, where it seems likely that a loss of identity would be associated with a passive response to exploitation and oppression. Yet this does foster national integration through homogenising sub-regional cultures. Arguably, return migrants, having had contact with "modern" values of smaller family size, also internalise lower fertility norms, thereby reducing population growth in their villages.¹

Yet most crucially, migrants have been agents for rural proletarianisation through a demonstration effect on the work habits of other workers. In areas previously dominated by pre-capitalist modes of production, compulsion and such devices as head taxes and restrictions on non-wage activities have typically been used to secure an "unlimited supply" of wage labour, partly because monetary incentives in themselves are ineffectual in such communities. However, such pressure has its costs, and if workers can be induced to respond to "modest" incentives or out of a desire to acquire more consumer goods, profits rise and the detailed division of labour can be extended more easily, simply because costs of supervision and of coercion are reduced while workers are attuned to a higher effort-bargain. Migrants make that shift in tactics more feasible. In spreading the taste for commodities, they have a demonstration effect on work habits, strengthening the response to monetary incentives and fostering a sense of work regularity, a sense of time in work (a point made famous in a celebrated essay of E.P. Thompson), and a sense of acquisitive individualism.

As long as there is a reasonable chance of realising them, rising aspirations for "modern" commodities will encourage workers to become a disciplined, surplus-generating proletariat. But therein lies a basic contradiction. For as a means of proletarianisation the stimulation of tastes and aspirations risks exacerbating the crisis in the labour process. Without suggesting that migrants are revolutionary in themselves, a

¹ See, e.g., A. Simmons, S.D. Briguets and A.A. Laguian: Social change and internal migration: A review of research findings from Africa, Asia and Latin America (Ottawa, International Development Research Centre, 1977).

point to which we will return, the stimulation of unrealisable aspirations can foster a sense of deprivation and frustration uniting workers in opposition to existing class relations. There is another contradictory element, which is that to the extent migrant workers in urban-industrial areas retain rural links they may also retain rural values and lifestyles inimical to effective proletarianisation. This would lead to greater coercive authority being used in the industrial labour process, which even if migrants accept it has costs.

VIII: Circulation and the Industrial Labour Reserve

Justifiably, Marx described migrants as "the light infantry of industrial capital", a reserve to be flexibly deployed wherever labour is needed to expand production. The need for a relative surplus population for proletarianisation is considered elsewhere.¹ But basically, the labour reserve can be divided into four components - the "stagnant", "floating" and "latent" categories identified by Marx and what is best described as the "employed reserve".² Migrants fit into all four but mainly the latter three.

First, the latent reserve comprises those in rural areas who are potential migrants and others outside the urban-industrial labour force, such as "housewives", who would enter it if required. That they are not in the active labour force does not prevent them from having effects associated with a labour reserve, notably helping to reduce urban-industrial wage rates, without imposing costs on the urban-industrial infrastructure in terms of services, housing and related amenities. And when needed, a latent labour reserve can be converted into a floating reserve. To give a classic example, in early 19th century England the rural population's mobility was restricted by the Speenhamland system of poor relief, maintaining a reserve of impoverished workers in villages and restraining movement into the new industrial towns. When new strata of urban-industrial workers were

¹ Standing, 1981, op. cit.

² On Marx's categories, see Capital, op. cit., Vol. 3, pp. 640-642.

required, the 1834 Poor Law opened the floodgates of rural emigration by making life so intolerable that rural paupers migrated to any job on offer.¹

Latent labour reserves exist in smallholding communities experiencing "contrived stagnation" in the interest of accumulation elsewhere.² The classic case of a regressive decay designed to maintain and enlarge a latent labour supply was the creation of "native reserves" in South Africa from the late 19th century onwards.³ But in modified form this phenomenon has characterised most transitions to industrial capitalism, with a gradual conversion of a latent reserve into a floating or stagnant surplus population.

The floating reserve consists of the open or job-seeking unemployed and those intermittently employed, whose wage labour is interspersed with spells of unemployment or labour force withdrawal. This category encompasses those available to replace wage labourers who are attuned by experience to wage work. Circular migrants are a prominent group in the floating reserve, as are permanent migrants, those such as the *torrantes* in Chile whose life-style is almost nomadic labour. In some cases, too rarely considered, dispossessed peasants move to towns in the wake of changing agrarian relations but remain part of the rural labour reserve. Such patterns persist in southern Europe and elsewhere, a good example being the *bóias-frias* in Brazil.⁴ These constitute a rural labour force of mainly urban dwellers, highly exploited as seasonal workers on estates and doing casual urban jobs at other times of the year.

¹ E.J. Hobsbawm: The age of revolution: 1789-1848 (London, Abacus, 1977), p. 188.

² This is the pivot of my analysis of migration in Guyana. G. Standing: "Contrived stagnation, migration and the state in Guyana", in Peek and Standing, 1982, op. cit., pp. 251-319.

³ See, e.g., B. Magubane: "The 'native reserves' (Bantustans) and the role of the migrant labour system in the political economy of South Africa", in Safa and Du Toit, 1975, op. cit., pp. 225-267.

⁴ D. Goodman and M. Redclift: "The Boias-Frias: Rural proletarianisation and urban marginality in Brazil", in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1977, pp. 248-264.

The employed labour reserve is also strongly related to circular migration. This consists of extra workers hired where the scale of production and detailed division of labour allow a complementarity between the mass of workers but where the absence of just a few can affect the productivity of all. In eras of proto-proletarianisation, when wage labour commitment is limited, the employment of a reserve can be used to compensate for high absenteeism and labour turnover or erratic work intensity on the job. Indeed, pools of surplus workers may be hired for a nominal fixed cost, being paid mainly on a piece-rate basis, so earning little or nothing if "permanent" workers are on the job or during slack business periods. In large enterprises such surplus workers may be employed on a temporary, probationary basis for many months or even years before being shifted into regular posts. In the interim, they are subject to a gradual induction process of proletarianisation, while visibly posing as a threat to other workers' jobs and incomes.

Migrants in this reserve are liable to retain links with rural areas, from where they receive a "subsidy" and to where they visit as a respite from the life of insecurity to which they are exposed. The long period of induction may weaken those links or, if not, enable employers to "weed out" those committed to industrial wage labour. This was a feature of the sugar factory work force in Gujarat.¹ There, many more seasonal migrants were hired than could be fully employed, at little extra cost; the surplus, all desperate for income, helped the mukadams increase their authority and allowed flexible adjustments to production schedules. In the textile industry in Bombay, high absenteeism (no doubt due to low wages and poor work conditions) has led to the practice of keeping a "Badli pool" of surplus workers, accounting for perhaps 20 per cent of total employment.² Most are

¹ Breman, 1979, op. cit.

² Ambekar Institute for Labour Studies, An inquiry into the effects of demographic characteristics of work behaviour (Bombay, ILO, 1980; mimeo.).

migrants with ties with their villages, returning once or more a year.¹

Finally, there is the stagnant reserve, in which migrants can be expected to be less prominent. This encompasses the endemically unemployed, those reduced to a state of being unable to retain work, and those perceived as or actually "unemployable" (in the short-run), doing what in Jamaica is aptly called "scuffling". This is the lumpenproletariat, in part comprising those unable to come to terms with new social and material relations, forced by repeated failure in the labour market into vagabondage, prostitution, crime, alcoholism, and long-term social illnesses. Many are part of the surplus population but scarcely part of the labour reserve.

Some have claimed migrants make up a large part of this group, using such epithets as "marginal mass" to describe them.² However, there are good reasons for supposing that most migrants avoid this category, reasons making them relatively exploitable and thus relatively likely to be employed. Often migrants are "super-exploited", paid wages below the cost of reproducing labour power, partly because they are single individuals, partly because they are expected to get part of their subsistence from rural family production. Highlighted in southern Africa, this has been a widespread practice.³ It has occurred even where circular migration has originated as a means of realising surplus for landlords.

¹ In Kingston in 1974 I found one multinational with average daily absenteeism of about 20 per cent, for which account had been taken through the hiring of probationary workers, most being migrants.

² A. Quijano: "The marginal pole of the economy and the marginalised labour force", in Economy and Society, Vol. 3, No. 3, Nov. 1974, pp. 393-428; A.G. Frank: Capitalism and underdevelopment in Latin America (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1969); inter alia. One analysis described migrants as "a large lumpenproletariat", claiming that "the mass of rural migrants is not absorbed into urban-industrial employment". Safa, in introduction to Safa and Du Toit, 1975, op. cit., p. 6.

³ H. Wolpe: "Capitalism and cheap labour power in South Africa" in Economy and Society, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1972, p. 434; M. Legassick and H. Wolpe: "The Bantustans and capital accumulation in South Africa" in Review of African Political Economy, No. 7, Sept.-Dec. 1976, pp. 87-102.

With super-exploitation the migrant is paid just enough to survive the period of wage labour.¹ Some argue that for this to persist migration must be circular.² But as long as the migrant is insecure and retaining rural ties, the duration of migration has no limit. Indeed, super-exploitation could persist through support from relatives working in the ubiquitous urban informal sector. But whether at the expense of the rural or urban poor, the process is unstable. First, it prevents the rural community from fulfilling its role of providing social security for the old and sick.³ It also undermines the rural economic base of reproduction and accumulation by withdrawing surplus. With the outflow, rural incomes will fall to the point that mass migration can be expected despite a lack of urban opportunities. More of the latent reserve will join the active surplus population, and the pool of urban unemployed may grow beyond that needed as a labour reserve, and pose a threat to the process of accumulation. But that does not mean migrants themselves will be at the forefront of social unrest.

Historically, migrants have been exploitable because they are not integrated into urban society, often lacking work permits or social security cards and in a weak bargaining position. For example, migrants in Rio de Janeiro receive few social benefits because they have no work cards, for which they need a birth certificate, usually unknown in rural areas; some employers have insisted on workers not having a work permit so as to avoid paying social security contributions.⁴

¹ This wage Meillassoux called "salaire d'appoint", labelling the difference between that and the cost of reproducing labour power as interest ("rente de travail"). C. Meillassoux: Femmes, greniers et capitaux (Paris, Maspero, 1975).

² T.J. Gerold-Scheepers and W. van Binsbergen: "Marxist and non-Marxist approaches to migration in Tropical Africa", in W. van Binsbergen and H.A. Meilink (eds.): Migration and the transformation of modern African society, African perspectives, 1978, No. 1, (Leiden, Afrika-Studiecentrum), p. 26.

³ D. Clarke: "Social security and age subsistence: Parts of the predicament in Zimbabwe" in South African Labour Bulletin, Vol. 3, No. 5, 1977.

⁴ J. Perlman: The myth of marginality: Urban poverty and politics in Rio de Janeiro (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1976), p. 158.

Elsewhere, migrants have been hired as pseudo-apprentices.¹ Ignorant and in a precarious position, they have received little or nothing - some even paying for the privilege - and been expected to receive subsistence from rural or urban relatives.

Migrants have relatively low wage aspirations and expectations, partly due to their age, schooling and family status, but also because their sense of deprivation reflects rural incomes and work intensity whereas the aspirations of urban workers is in terms of the incomes of the urban labour aristocracy and bureaucracy. There is some evidence that migrants not only take low-income jobs but avoid lengthy unemployment through their lower aspirations and expectations.² If so, it cannot be presumed that high urban unemployment will deter rural-urban migration; for many urban jobs urban residents may be virtually excluded.

IX. Concluding Remarks

As with most forms of migration, circulation is a progressive phenomenon in the sense that it undermines previous forms of oppression and exploitation while facilitating the growth of new forms.

Contrary to the hopes of such observers as Fanon, migrants have proved the least revolutionary element of the emerging working class.³

¹ E. le Bris: "Migration and the decline of a densely populated rural area: The case of Vo Koutime in Southeast Togo" in Binsbergen and Meilink, 1978, op. cit., p. 122; inter alia.

² See, e.g., G. Standing: "Aspiration wages, migration and urban unemployment" in Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 14, No. 2, Jan. 1978, pp 232-248.

³ For Fanon's view, see F. Fanon: The wretched of the earth (London, MacGilldoon and Kee, 1965) p. 104. Hobsbawm suggested that rural migrants in Latin American cities would not identify with working-class politics but would follow a populist leader, showing the pervasive influence of their experience of patronage and personal dependence. E.J. Hobsbawm: "Peasants and rural migrants in politics", in C. Veliz (ed.): The politics of conformity in Latin America (London, Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 60-61.

For migrants the move itself is in a personal sense revolutionary, the exploitation of urban wage labour, with its relative freedoms, contrasting with escape from patriarchal or feudal constraints. Their reference group continues to be the village population they leave behind, not the urban middle class; this is most likely when short-term circulation is involved.

However, even there contradictions arise. First, those migrants forced by economic crises to return to their "home" areas are marginal there, separated from the social nexus and very liable to challenge social and work relations of production there, whatever those may be. Second, there is the "second generation" effect. Wherever migrants settle and raise their children the latter will grow up in conditions of super-exploitation and relative deprivation but without the sense of potential mobility experienced by their parents. They will then be more openly discontented. Third, though migrants may have low unemployment, their presence may swell the open unemployed and lumpenproletariat by displacing others. This may create a mass of urban unemployed, without rural roots to placate them.

Arguably, a protracted period of dislocation precedes proletarianisation. But this fosters a crisis if the growth of a "marginalised" population can be pacified only with increasing brutality or transfers. Such a surplus population, without access to means of production or a regular subsistence income, threatens the fabric of capitalist accumulation and may act as a vanguard of class opposition. Whether the class position of this mass of workers justifies optimism for effective opposition to exploitation and degradation is a matter of some importance.

Selected Publications of the Population and Labour Policies
Research Programme¹

1. General Material on the Research Programme

ILO: World Employment Programme: Population and development - A progress report on ILO research with special reference to labour, employment and income distribution (Geneva, April 1982), 4th edition, Reference WEP 2-21/PR.7. (*)

This report includes a full bibliography. This publication (3rd edition, summer 1981) is available in French. (*)

2. Books and Monographs

R. Anker: Research on women's roles and demographic change: survey questionnaires for households, women, men and communities with background explanations (Geneva, ILO, 1980). (*)

R. Anker and M. Anker: Reproductive behavior in households of rural Gujarat: Social, economic and community factors (New Delhi, Concept Publishing Co., 1982). (***)

R. Anker, M. Buvinic and N. Youssef (eds.): Women's roles and population trends in the Third World (London, Croom Helm, 1982). (***)

R. Anker and J.C. Knowles: Determinants of fertility in developing countries: A case study of Kenya (Liège, Ordina, 1982). (***)

R.E. Bilsborrow: Surveys of internal migration in low-income countries: Issues of survey and sample design (Geneva, ILO, 1981). (*)

---: Surveys of internal migration in low-income countries: The need for and content of community-level variables (Geneva, ILO, 1981). (*)

S. Braganca et al.: The simulation of economic and demographic development in Brazil (Geneva, ILO, 1980). (*)

M.G. Castro, L.M. Fraenkel et al: Migration in Brazil: Approaches to analysis and policy design (Brussels, Ordina, 1979). (***)

W.J. House and H. Rempel: The Kenya employment problem (Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1978). (***)

A.S. Oberai: Changes in the structure of employment with economic development (Geneva, ILO, 1978). (**)

---: Demographic and social information in migration surveys: Analytical significance and guidelines for data collection (Geneva, ILO, 1981). (*)

---: Migration, production and technological change: Analytical issues and guidelines for data collection and analysis (Geneva, ILO, 1981). (*)

P. Peek and G. Standing (eds.): State policies and migration: Studies in Latin America and the Caribbean (London, Croom Helm, 1982). (***)

G. Pyatt and A. Roe: Social accounting for development planning, with special reference to Sri Lanka (Cambridge University Press, 1977). (***)

¹ Availability code: * available on request from ILO, Population and Labour Policies Branch; ** available for sale from ILO Publications; *** available for sale from a commercial publisher.

- M. Rasevic, T. Mulina, Milos Macura: The determinants of labour force participation in Yugoslavia (Geneva, ILO, 1978). (**)
- G.B. Rodgers, M.J.D. Hopkins, R. Wéry: Population, employment and inequality: BACHUE-Philippines (Farnborough, Saxon House, 1978). (***)
- G.B. Rodgers and G. Standing (eds.): Child work, poverty and underdevelopment (Geneva, ILO, 1981). (**)
- G. Standing: Labour force participation and development (Geneva, ILO, 1978). (**)
- : Income transfers and remittances: A module for migration surveys (Geneva, ILO, 1981). (*)
- : Migrants and the labour process: A module for migration surveys (Geneva, ILO, 1981). (*)
- : Unemployment and female labour: A study of labour supply in Kingston, Jamaica (London, Macmillan, 1981). (***)
- G. Standing and G. Sheehan (eds.): Labour force participation in low-income countries (Geneva, ILO, 1978). (**)
- G. Standing and R. Szal: Poverty and basic needs (Geneva, ILO, 1979). (**)
- M. Todaro: Internal migration in developing countries (Geneva, ILO, 1976). (**)

3. Articles

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