

LIBERIAN STUDIES  
JOURNAL



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A referee journal that emphasizes the social sciences and humanities, the LIBERIAN STUDIES JOURNAL is a semiannual publication devoted to studies of Africa's oldest republic. The annual subscription rate is \$20.00, \$12.00 for students and \$20.00 for institutions, and includes membership in the Liberian Studies Association, Inc. All manuscripts and related matters should be addressed to The Editor, Liberian Studies Journal, Department of Political Science, University of the South, Sewanee, TN 37375. Subscriptions and other business matters should be directed to The Executive Secretary, Liberian Studies Association, P. O. Box 1043, Oak Park, Illinois 60304. The views expressed herein are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the Liberian Studies Association, Inc.

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ISSN 0024-1989

## Migration and Fertility: The Case of Liberian Women

Konia T. Kolehlon

Scholars and policy makers have expressed concern over the high rate of population growth in less developed countries (LDCs) following World War II. A noteworthy aspect of the population growth in LDCs during this period has been the impact of internal migration. While rural-urban migration in particular has played a significant role in urban population growth in LDCs (Yap, 1975) and in Africa (Byerlee, 1974), the role of hinterland to coastal migration has been equally significant, especially in West Africa (Zachariah and Conde, 1981). Because migrants from the rural, hinterland region account for a substantial percentage of the urban population in LDCs, it is important to study the fertility of migrants relative to nonmigrants, since the level of fertility of migrants may influence to some extent the future natural increase in the area of destination.

Merrick (1974) points out that internal migration affects fertility behavior in two major ways: (1) through selectivity with respect to differential fertility behavior between migrants and nonmigrants in both areas of origin and destination and (2) through changes in sex and age distributions in the areas of origin and destination. If the area of origin is characterized by higher fertility than the area of destination, Merrick (1974) notes, such a migration pattern can do one of three things: increase fertility in both areas, reduce any fertility differentials, or reduce (prevent) any fertility decline that may be in progress in the area of destination. And if the area of destination is characterized by lower fertility than the area of origin, return migrants may serve as catalysts for diffusing low fertility ideas, values, and practices into the area of origin. This may be possible if the return migrants have internalized the fertility values and behavior of the area of destination.

This study examines the relationship between migration status and fertility among a subsample of Liberian women, within a society-wide context. Liberia, like most developing countries, has experienced substantial growth in population during the post WWII years. The population of Liberia increased from about 824,000 in 1950 to about 1,575,000 in 1974 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Country Demographic Profiles - Liberia, 1982). The pattern of internal migration in Liberia is quite similar to that of other West African countries. That is, the major area of in-migration in most West African countries is the capital city and/or the coastal area and the major area of out-migration is the interior, hinterland region (Zachariah and Conde, 1981). In Liberia, Zachariah and Conde (1981) find that the principal area of in-migration is Montserrado County, along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, and the major area of out-migration is Loffa County, in the Northern hinterland. Of the 303,000 persons born in Liberia and enumerated outside their county of birth in 1974, 214,000 (70.6 percent) were found in Montserrado County (Srivastava, 1981).

The point that we are trying to emphasize here is the maldistribution of population in Liberia and the implications that this may have on regional population growth and the economic well being of the country. With a land area of about 37,743 sq. miles, the 1974 Liberian population of about 1.5 million would yield a population density of about 15.4 persons per sq. miles, which is lower than the average for West Africa. But, the reality of the situation was that in 1974, about 71 percent of Liberia's population was living on 48 percent of the land in

the triangle of Montserrado, Loffa, Bong, and Nimba counties. Stated another way, the population density of the most densely populated county, Montserrado, increased from 95 persons per sq. mile in 1962 to 173 persons per sq. mile in 1974 (Srivastava, 1981). Moreover, in his assessment of the spectacular growth of central places<sup>1</sup>, Hasselman (1982) projects that as a percentage of the total Liberian population, the population of central places will increase to about 72 percent by the year 2000, from a low of 19 percent in 1962. As such, by the year 2000, over 70 percent of Liberia's population may be residing in central places, alias urban areas (Hasselman, 1982).

In addition to other concerns, the maldistribution of the Liberian population may have implications for the future level of fertility of coastal areas if the fertility of migrants is significantly different from that of nonmigrants. Hence, the need to examine some of the fertility implications of migration in Liberia. The study will examine two inter-related issues. First, it will examine the differences, if any, in the socioeconomic characteristics of migrant and nonmigrant women. Secondly, it will examine whether differences (or lack thereof) in socioeconomic characteristics of migrant and nonmigrant women lead to differential fertility between the two groups.

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The migration-selectivity hypothesis (Macisco and Weller, 1969; Hendershot, 1971) provides the basic conceptual framework for this study. The hypothesis assumes that migrants are for the most part positively selected; that is to say, the migration process is largely selective of persons (including women) who possess socioeconomic characteristics, prior to migration, that would result in relatively low fertility, even in the area of origin. The few migrants who are negatively selected would eventually become socialized, especially if they migrated at an early age, into the culture of the area of destination (alias urban areas) and exhibit behavior, especially fertility behavior, similar to or slightly lower than that of the urban nonmigrants. The hypothesis assumes that urban fertility is generally lower than rural fertility because the urban milieu presumably attaches great social, psychological, and economic costs to having large families (Macisco and Weller, 1969). In short then, either as a result of positive selectivity or socialization and consequent adaptation to urban values, migrants are expected to have lower fertility than nonmigrants in the area of destination. However, Hendershot (1971) cautions that the selectivity hypothesis may be more characteristic of migration during the earlier stages of modernization than during the later stages. This is because, according to Hendershot (1971), during the later stages of modernization, migration is less difficult and therefore less selective. On the contrary, Goldstein (1973) argues that recent migrants in LDCs, with greater exposure to education, communication, and other modernizing influences, may be more innovative and hence more likely to adopt new behavioral patterns, including patterns of lower fertility.

It should be noted that research findings on the selectivity hypothesis and on migrant/nonmigrant fertility differentials in LDCs have been somewhat inconclusive. While some studies (Goldstein, 1972; Findley, 1977) have provided empirical support for the selectivity hypothesis, other studies have found that contextual factors (Anker, 1977) or ethnicity (Clignet and Sween, 1978) have a greater impact on fertility than migration and/or socioeconomic status. While most studies of migrant/nonmigrant fertility differentials in Latin America show, on the whole, that the fertility of migrants to urban areas is higher than that of the natives (Zarate and Zarate, 1975), the fertility of migrants is found to be lower than that of nonmigrants in Bombay, India (Vasaria, 1969); Manila, Philippines (Hendershot, 1971); and in the urban areas of Thailand (Goldstein, 1973). The somewhat inconclusiveness of research

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findings on this topic in LDCs, among other reasons, point to the need for research in more diverse settings in LDCs on this topic.

In addition to having a possible independent effect on fertility, migration status is associated with other characteristics of migrants, that tend to affect fertility more directly. Some of these other characteristics of migrants include age at marriage/migration, education, work status/occupation, aspirations for upward social mobility, price and costs of children, and openness toward modernizing attitudes (Findley, 1982). This study will control for two socioeconomic characteristics that may confound the relationship between migration status and fertility; namely, female education and female work status/occupation. The basis for expecting the socioeconomic indicators of education and work status/occupation to have a depressing effect on fertility are as follows. Education may depress fertility indirectly by increasing the age at first marriage, increasing the cost of children and lowering the cost of fertility regulation (Easterlin, 1975; Cochran, 1979). Furthermore, education has been shown to be positively related to contraceptive use (Knodel et al., 1980) and education is generally assumed to be related to the adoption of modern lifestyles and attitudes which may include the desire for smaller families. Regarding work status/occupation, it is generally assumed that since individuals migrate largely for economic reasons, migrant women would be more likely than nonmigrant women to be in the labor force. Secondly, it is assumed that occupations which are incompatible with childbearing/childrearing may have a depressing effect on fertility. However, it has been noted that it may not be the incompatibility between occupation and the maternal role that reduces fertility; but rather, the degree of approval/disapproval of domestic roles for women (Hass, 1972), the degree of work commitment (Safilios-Rothschild, 1972), and normative conflicts (Mason and Pelan, 1981) may be the more critical aspects of occupation that lead to reduction in fertility. Moreover, it should be noted that research findings on Liberia show that while wage working women generally tend to have a lower fertility than nonwage working women, women in professional and technical occupations generally tend to have higher fertility (Kollehlon, 1984). Hence, controlling for education and work status removes their "contaminating" influences on the migration-fertility relationship.

Additionally, in light of the assumption(s) of the migration-selectivity hypothesis, it can be argued that certain features of migration in West Africa and Liberia, in particular, may militate against the operation of the selectivity hypothesis. For example, the retention of close ties and frequent visits among migrants and nonmigrants through frequent visits (Carter, 1969) and migration along ethnic lines (Gugler, 1969), may all tend to work against the operation of the selectivity hypothesis. In addition, those concepts of migration in Liberia assume considerable importance in the research findings which show that Mexican and Turkish migrants with urban residents of similar background and socioeconomic status tend to have a greater reduction in fertility than similar migrants who reside in more rural areas.

In light of such competing assumptions regarding the fertility of migrants relative to nonmigrants, the two important questions that we wish to pursue in this study are:

- (1) Do migrant women have higher, lower, or similar levels of education and work status/occupation as nonmigrant women?
- (2) And if so, do differences in education and work status/ occupation, if any, lead to differences in fertility between the two groups of women?

We pursue these questions by examining cross-sectional data on a subsample of migrant and nonmigrant Liberian women, a population for which very little is known in the demographic literature. While the findings of this study, based on rather crude measures, may not provide definitive answers, they will provide some insights into these important questions.

The data for this study come from a ten percent sample of the Liberian population, collected during the 1974 census. This study focuses on a subsample of migrant and nonmigrant, native-born Liberian women, in the conventional child-bearing ages of 15 to 49. Thus, the actual sample size for this study is 35,944 women. Hinterland to coastal migration, which is the characteristic feature of migration in West Africa (Zachariah and Conde, 1981), has not received as much attention in the demographic literature as rural to urban migration. Hence, the present study focuses on this particular pattern of internal migration in Liberia. Moreover, it can be argued that rural to urban migration in Liberia is somewhat similar to hinterland to coastal migration in that both patterns generally characterize population movement from less to more developed areas. In this sense then, hinterland to coastal migration is in many ways a rough substitute for rural to urban migration. This should, however, not convey the impression that hinterland and ruralness are as synonymous as coastal and urbanness. Clearly, there are urban areas in the hinterland and coastal regions of Liberia just as there are rural areas in both regions. But, it seems that urban areas in the coastal region, especially Monrovia, are characterized by a greater degree of urbanism than most urban areas in the hinterland region.

The dependent variable is fertility and the independent variable is migration status. Age, marital status, education, work status, and occupation are used as control variables. Following now are the operational definitions of these concepts as derived largely from the (1977), with minor modifications.

The dependent variable, fertility is measured in terms of cumulative fertility or children ever born. The question regarding the number of children ever born was asked of all women, ten years of age and over, regardless of their marital status. It required counting the number of children who were at home, away from home, and who had died.

In measuring migration status, a "birthplace" definition has been developed in this study. In this definition, nonmigrants are classified as those women who were born in a hinterland or coastal region of the country and were found residing in the same region during the 1974 census. Those women who were found in 1974 to have changed residence from the hinterland to the coast and/or vice versa since birth are classified as migrants. The four counties - Bong, Nimba, Loffa, and Grand Gedeh - are combined to constitute the hinterland region. Similarly, the five counties along the coast - Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Maryland, Sinoe, and Cape Mount, as well as the territories within each - are combined to constitute the coastal region (see Figure 1 on the next page).

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Figure 1: (Map of Liberia, showing the political subdivisions of the country).

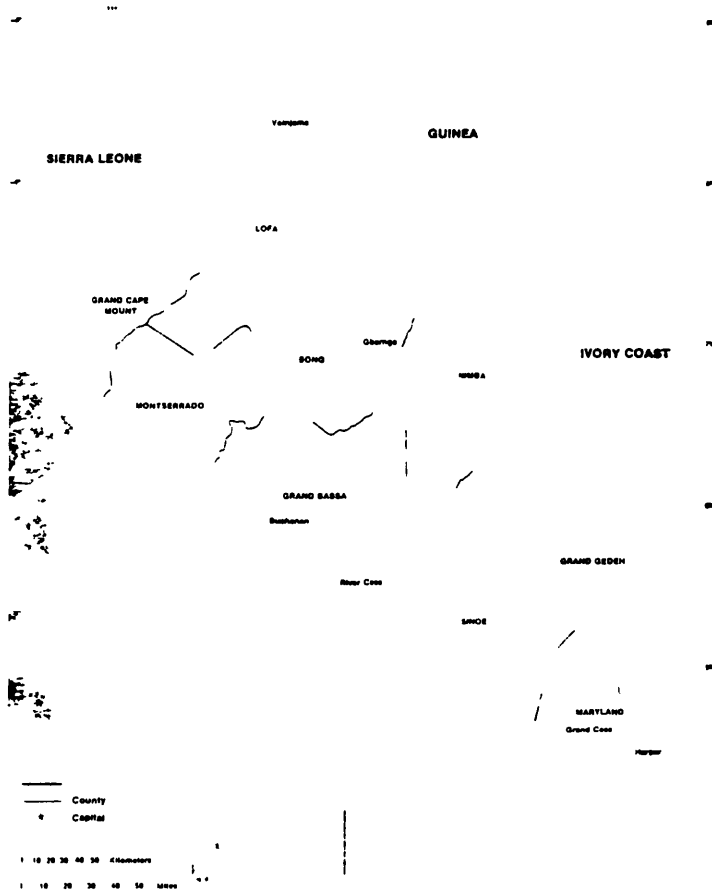


Figure 1. Map of Liberia showing the political subdivisions of the country. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Country Demographic Profiles - Liberia.

As of 1984, four additional counties have been created by the military government, making a total of thirteen counties or political subdivisions.

The four categories of this variable are:

- (1) Hinterland Nonmigrants: refer to women who were born in the hinterland region and were found residing in the same region in 1974 during the census.
- (2) Hinterland to Coastal Migrants (Hinterland Migrants): refer to women who were born in the hinterland region, but were found residing in the coastal region during the 1974 census.
- (3) Coastal Nonmigrants: refer to women who were born in the coastal region and were found residing in the same region during the 1974 census.
- (4) Coastal to Hinterland Migrants (Coastal Migrants): refer to women who were born in the coastal region, but were residing in the hinterland region during the 1974 census.

The age of a person is recorded in complete years, and refers to their age on their last birthday at the time of the census. Whenever the age of a person could not be remembered accurately, estimates of age were made with such practices as number of rice farms or annual crops sown or number of times farms were made since the occurrence of an important event. The use of broad age categories such as 15-24, 25-34, and 35-49 will minimize some of the errors in the measurement of age. Marital status is classified under four subcategories: (1) never married, (2) married, (3) widowed, and (4) divorced/separated.

The variable education is measured on the basis of the answer to the question: "What is the highest grade completed?" The answer categories range from zero grades/years of school completed through and including 17 grades/years of school completed.

The variable, work status, as used in this study, is a combination of work status and economic activity. The variable consists of two broad categories - working and not working - following the Liberian census. The working category consists of four subcategories - paid employees, employers, self-employed, and unpaid family workers. Those considered not working are classified into the subcategories keeping house (housewives), students, retired, and others.

And finally, the variable occupation refers to the kind of work a person did most of the time during the 12 months preceding the census date. It is measured by asking the respondents the question: "If working, what type of work do you do?" The various categories of this variable are coded using 1969 International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) codes.

The analysis will proceed in the following order: first, before directly testing the hypothesis of the study, we will compare the migrant and nonmigrant women with respect to education and work status in order to ascertain as to whether migrant and nonmigrant women differ in these socioeconomic characteristics. Small cell counts preclude an examination of occupational differences among the women. Secondly, the study will examine education-fertility and work-fertility differences, if any, for the migrant and nonmigrant subsamples. As one may recall, a consideration of migrant/nonmigrant educational and work status differences relative to fertility attempts to answer a basic question: Do migrant women differ from nonmigrant women in their fertility patterns; and if they do, is it because they are migrants, or is it because they have higher, lower, or similar levels of education and/or work status? Finally, using the multiple classification analytic technique<sup>2</sup>, we will examine, in a more definitive

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way, whether there exists fertility differences between migrant and nonmigrant women, and whether such differences are related to differences in the socioeconomic characteristics of the two groups of women. The multiple classification analysis (MCA) enables us to simultaneously control for a number of sociodemographic variables which may have an effect on fertility and/or migration status.

It should be pointed out here that some of the variables used in this study have limitations. These limitations may have implications for the research findings; as such, the reader should consider the findings as tentative and suggestive, in light of these limitations. A notable limitation has to do with the variable migration status. Because the Liberian census considered only the respondent's current (1974) residence, not birthplace, as rural or urban, it has not been possible to provide a measure of rural to urban migration or vice versa. The length of residence definition of migration used by the Liberian Census (1977) obviously leaves much to be desired. Such a definition lumps together women of different sociodemographic characteristics and does not distinguish hinterland from coastal migrants. While the "birthplace" definition (derived from data on region of birth and 1974 residence) helps to distinguish hinterland from coastal migrants, it also has some limitations. A comparison of places of birth and current residence, which are many years apart, grossly underestimates the number and nature of moves taking place during the period. Like the length of residence definition, the birthplace definition of migration does not consider the age at migration, which may have important implications for migrant socialization.

Clearly, there is bound to be some errors in the variable age, since many Liberians, especially those born to illiterate parents, do not know their exact age. But, procedures used by the Liberian census, noted earlier in the operational definition of age, and the use of broad age categories in this study should minimize some of the errors in the measurement of age (see Kolehon, 1982 and the 1977 Liberian census publication for a detailed discussion of the quality and limitations of the 1974 Liberian Census data).

The basic hypothesis of the study, derived from the conceptual framework, may be stated as follows: Migrant women (both hinterland to coastal and coastal to hinterland) will exhibit higher levels of education and work status and lower levels of fertility than hinterland and coastal nonmigrant women. In the analysis that follows, the variable, education, has been trichotomized for crosstabular analysis into: (1) No grade completed (zero grade completed); (2) Primary (one through eighth grades/years of school completed); and (3) High school and over (nine through 17 grades/years of school completed). It should also be noted that due to space limitations in the tables that follow, we refer to hinterland to coastal migrant women briefly as hinterland migrants. Similarly, coastal to hinterland migrant women are briefly referred to as coastal migrants.

The percentage distribution of educational attainment in Table 1 generally shows that, partly consistent with the research hypothesis, migrant women show slightly higher percentages of educational attainment than the hinterland and coastal and nonmigrant women. Consistent with the research hypothesis, coastal to hinterland migrant women (Coastal Migrants) exhibit higher levels of educational attainment than the coastal and hinterland nonmigrant women. While hinterland to coastal migrant women tend to have a slight educational advantage over the hinterland nonmigrant women, coastal nonmigrant women have an educational advantage over the hinterland to coastal migrant women. While these findings tend to lend some support to the migration-selectivity hypothesis, in that migrants tend to be more

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AMONG BIRTHPLACE MIGRANTS  
AND NONMIGRANTS, CONTROLLING FOR AGE: LIBERIA, 1974

Age & Educational  
Attainment

	Migrants						Nonmigrants					
	Coastal		Hinterland		Total		Hinterland		Coastal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>15-24</b>												
No Grade.....	(185)	62.3	(1311)	76.3	(1496)	74.2	(5553)	87.7	(4440)	74.1	(9993)	81.1
Primary.....	(90)	30.3	(303)	17.6	(393)	19.5	(719)	11.4	(1046)	17.4	(1765)	14.3
High School & Over.	(22)	7.4	(105)	6.1	(127)	6.3	(58)	0.9	(509)	8.5	(567)	4.6
N.....	(297)	100.0	(1719)	100.0	(2016)	100.0	(6330)	100.0	(5996)	100.0	(12,325)	100.0
<b>25-34</b>												
No Grade.....	(192)	84.6	(1188)	92.3	(1380)	91.1	(5622)	98.2	(4097)	89.9	(9719)	94.5
Primary.....	(21)	9.3	(53)	4.1	(74)	4.9	(74)	1.3	(225)	4.9	(299)	2.9
High School & Over.	-	-	(46)	3.6	(60)	4.0	(29)	0.5	(236)	5.2	(265)	2.6
N.....	(213)	93.9	(1287)	100.0	(1514)	100.0	(5725)	100.0	(4558)	100.0	(10,283)	100.0
<b>35-49</b>												
No Grade.....	(147)	84.5	(659)	95.2	(806)	93.1	(4783)	99.3	(3769)	91.4	(8552)	95.7
Primary.....	-	-	-	-	(31)	3.6	(25)	0.5	(169)	4.1	(194)	2.2
High School & Over.	-	-	-	-	(29)	3.3	-	-	(187)	4.5	(194)	2.2
N.....	(147)	84.5	(659)	95.2	(866)	100.0	(4808)	99.8	(4125)	100.0	(8940)	100.0

-Fewer than 20 women.

NOTE: Because cells with fewer than 20 women have been deleted from the analysis, the subtotals in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 may not add up to the total number of respondents.

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highly educated, on the whole, than nonmigrants, a word of caution is in order. It is not possible to tell from the census data used in this study whether the migrant women had higher educational attainment prior to or after migration. It would seem logical to assume that since high schools and other institutions of higher learning are more numerous in the coastal than in the hinterland region, most of the coastal to hinterland migrant women may have obtained higher education prior to migration, if they migrated at an older age (for example, after age 20). Similarly, most of the hinterland to coastal migrant women probably obtained their higher education after migration, especially if they migrated at an early age (i.e., before age 20). However, the fact remains that whether education was obtained prior to or after migration, migrant women generally seem to have a slight educational advantage over their nonmigrant counterpart.

In considering work status, no hierarchy is assumed among the various categories, although it seems readily apparent that employers and especially paid employees in a developing country represent a group who tend to have slightly more education, income, and greater participation in the modern sector of the economy. In other words, while there may be some exceptions, women who are employers and paid employees would generally tend to have a higher socioeconomic status than the self employed, unpaid family workers, and housewives. Again, the data in Table 2 tend to provide partial support for the research hypothesis, which maintains that a higher percentage of migrant women will participate in the labor force than coastal and hinterland nonmigrant women. Obviously, the numerous empty cells among the migrant category do not permit any meaningful assessment of the hypothesis. But, an examination of the Total columns for hinterland and coastal migrants on the one hand and for hinterland and coastal nonmigrants on the other (Table 2), shows that within each age category, the percentage of migrant women in the category employer/paid employee is slightly higher than that of nonmigrant women. Equally noteworthy, however, is the finding showing higher percentages of migrants than nonmigrants out of the labor force, largely as housewives (keeping house). Apparently, with respect to labor force participation (work status), migration in Liberia seems to be selective of both high and low participants.

These findings, showing higher percentages of labor force participation by migrants, are consistent with the findings of similar studies in Chile (Elizaga, 1965); India (Zachariah, 1966); and Puerto Rico (Macisco et al., 1970), all of which find higher rates of labor force participation for migrants than for metropolitan natives. The general explanation for these findings, which may apply equally in the case of the Liberian data, is that people (including women) migrate largely for economic betterment, and as such, migrants would be more likely than nonmigrants to participate in the labor force (see also a similar finding by the Liberian Population Growth Survey, 1972). Despite the comparability in findings, there is a difference between the present study and the others cited earlier. The women in this study - whether they are migrants or nonmigrants - are mostly married. No information is available on the marital status of the women in the studies just cited. The point that is being emphasized is that the employment status of the women, whether migrants or nonmigrants, could be determined solely or largely by the economic positions of their husbands, rather than by migration status. Unfortunately, individuals, rather than couples or families, constitute the unit of analysis in this data set; and, as such, it is difficult, if not impossible, to match the characteristics of each married woman with the characteristics of her husband. In summary, we find that migrant women, on the whole, tend to be better educated than nonmigrant women. Regarding work status, the findings tend to show that female migration in Liberia is selective of both high and low (or non) participants in the labor force.

Do higher levels of educational attainment and labor force participation translate into fewer births for migrant women relative to nonmigrant women, as the migration-selectivity hypothesis implies? Let us find out by examining the mean number of children ever born to

TABLE 2

 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORK STATUS AMONG BIRTHPLACE MIGRANTS AND  
 NONMIGRANTS, CONTROLLING FOR AGE: LIBERIA, 1974

 Age & Work  
 Status

	Migrants						Nonmigrants					
	Coastal		Hinterland		Total		Hinterland		Coastal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
15-24												
Employer & Pd.												
Employee.....	-	-	(43)	2.5	(47)	2.3	(25)	0.4	(131)	2.2	(156)	1.3
Self-Employed ....	-	-	(37)	2.2	(47)	2.3	(785)	12.4	(328)	5.5	(1113)	9.0
Unpaid Family Wkr. .	-	-	(23)	1.3	(33)	1.6	(830)	13.1	(366)	6.1	(1196)	9.7
Keeping House .....	(166)	55.9	(978)	56.9	(1144)	56.7	(2588)	40.9	(2460)	41.0	(5048)	41.0
Student .....	(60)	20.2	(256)	14.9	(316)	15.7	(573)	9.1	(1037)	17.3	(1610)	13.1
Retired & Others ..	(47)	15.8	(382)	22.2	(429)	21.3	(1529)	24.2	(1673)	27.9	(3202)	26.0
N.....	(273)	91.9	(1719)	100.0	(2016)	99.9	(6330)	100.1	(5995)	100.0	(12325)	100.1
25-34												
Employer & Pd.												
Employee .....	-	-	(50)	3.9	(63)	4.2	(41)	0.7	(207)	4.5	(248)	2.4
Self-Employed ....	-	-	(47)	3.7	(64)	4.2	(1037)	18.1	(448)	9.8	(1485)	14.4
Unpaid Family Wkr. .	-	-	(27)	2.1	(39)	2.6	(891)	15.6	(387)	8.5	(1278)	12.4
Keeping House .....	(164)	72.2	(908)	70.6	(1072)	70.8	(3071)	53.6	(2733)	60.0	(5804)	56.4
Student .....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(29)	0.6	(45)	0.4
Retired & Others .	(20)	8.4	(242)	18.8	(261)	17.2	(669)	11.7	(754)	16.5	(1423)	13.8
N.....	(184)	80.6	(1274)	99.0	(1499)	99.0	(5709)	99.7	(4558)	99.9	(10283)	99.8
35-49												
Employer & Pd.												
Employee .....	-	-	(35)	5.1	(46)	5.3	(45)	0.9	(201)	4.9	(246)	2.8
Self-Employed ....	(25)	14.4	(48)	6.9	(73)	8.4	(1025)	21.3	(523)	12.7	(1548)	17.3
Unpaid Family Wkr. .	-	-	(24)	3.5	(42)	4.8	(804)	16.7	(418)	10.1	(1222)	13.7
Keeping House .....	(101)	58.0	(440)	63.6	(541)	62.5	(2418)	50.2	(2400)	58.2	(4818)	53.9
Retired & Others .	(20)	10.9	(145)	21.0	(164)	18.9	(519)	10.8	(577)	14.0	(1096)	12.3
N.....	(146)	83.3	(692)	100.1	(866)	99.9	(4811)	99.9	(4119)	99.9	(8930)	100.0

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migrant and nonmigrant women, controlling first for education. While the pattern is not fully consistent throughout, the data exceptions, that fertility is somewhat inverse. permit, it can be noted that among both migrant and nonmigrant women with high school or more education generally the fertility differential is smaller. Controlling for education does not lead to a significant difference in fertility between migrant and nonmigrant women. With some exceptions, coastal migrants demonstrate a small but consistently higher fertility than hinterland migrants. The fertility pattern for hinterland migrants does not reveal any consistent pattern.

then for work status. Tables 3 and 4 show, with some exceptions, that fertility is somewhat inverse. Those with some high school or more education generally have a smaller fertility differential relative to those with less than high school education. Migrants demonstrate a small but consistently higher fertility than nonmigrants. The fertility pattern for hinterland migrants does not

With some exceptions, Table 4 shows that migrant women who are employers/paid employees generally tend to have a slightly lower fertility than the other women, excluding students, the retired, and others. We also find that controlling for work status tends to slightly reduce the fertility differential between migrant and nonmigrant women. In short, while migrant women (especially coastal migrants) tend to be of higher socioeconomic status than nonmigrants, a finding which is consistent with the research hypothesis, the fertility of migrant women is not lower than that of nonmigrant women, a finding which is inconsistent with the research hypothesis. The use of contingency tables for multivariate analysis, while possible, is restricted, especially with the number of variables considered in this study. Thus, in part to overcome the problem of sample shrinkage as well as to provide more definitive answers to our research questions, we employ multiple classification analysis, a variant of multiple regression.

In reconsidering the research hypothesis, first, the hypothesis is tested on migrant and nonmigrant women in and out of the civilian labor force (Table 5). Next, the hypothesis is tested on only migrant and nonmigrant women who are in the civilian labor force (Table 6). Clearly, there is a difference in finding in the former and latter testing of the hypothesis. In other words, the results of the multiple classification analysis show that when the hypothesis is tested on migrant and nonmigrant women in and out of the labor force, there is very little (or no) difference in the fertility of migrant and nonmigrant women. When the hypothesis is tested on only women in the labor force reveals the same results. In Table 6, we find coastal nonmigrants to have the highest fertility, followed by coastal migrants (3.5), when all of the other variables are held constant.

Before interpreting these findings, the reader should note that the definition of the labor force (Table 6) may have been different in the 1962 census, it seems that women who were working on the farm were considered unpaid family workers, which put them into the "working" category (or made them members of the labor force). In the 1974 census, such women were apparently classified as "others," and hence, were not considered members of the labor force (see Srivastava, 1981).

As is evident by now, the findings do not fully support the research hypothesis. Partly consistent with the research hypothesis, we find that coastal nonmigrant women have the highest fertility while hinterland migrant women have a lower fertility. But, contrary to the research hypothesis, the fertility of coastal migrants to the hinterland is higher than that of hinterland nonmigrants. Obviously, the existence of a small fertility

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TABLE 3

MEAN NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN (CEB) BY MIGRATION STATUS,  
FOR AGE AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT:  
LIBERIA, 1974

Education	Mean Number of CEB					
	15-24		25-34		35-49	
	N	X	N	X	N	X
<b>Coastal Migrants</b>						
No Grade.....	(185)	1.6	(192)	3.7	(147)	4.7
Primary.....	(90)	0.9	(21)	3.6	—	—
High School & Over..	(22)	1.8	—	—	—	—
Total N.....	(297)		(213)		(147)	
<b>Hinterland Migrants</b>						
No Grade.....	(1311)	1.5	(1188)	3.5	(659)	4.5
Primary.....	(303)	0.6	(53)	3.8	—	—
High School & Over..	(105)	0.6	(46)	2.5	(20)	3.9
Total N.....	(1719)		(1287)		(679)	
<b>Hinterland Nonmigrants</b>						
No Grade.....	(5553)	1.3	(5622)	3.4	(4783)	4.5
Primary.....	(719)	0.5	(74)	3.3	(25)	4.2
High School & Over..	(58)	0.9	(29)	2.6	—	—
Total N.....	(6330)		(5725)		(4808)	
<b>Coastal Nonmigrants</b>						
No Grade.....	(4440)	1.3	(4097)	3.4	(3769)	4.7
Primary.....	(1046)	0.6	(225)	3.9	(169)	5.7
High School & Over..	(509)	0.6	(236)	3.2	(187)	4.9
Total N.....	(5995)		(4558)		(4125)	

— Fewer than 20 women.

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TABLE 4  
 MEAN NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN TO BIRTHPLACE MIGRANTS AND NONMIGRANTS,  
 CONTROLLING FOR AGE AND WORK STATUS:  
 LIBERIA, 1974

Age and Work Status	Migrants						Nonmigrants					
	Coastal		Hinterland		Total		Hinterland		Coastal		Total	
	N	X	N	X	N	X	N	X	N	X	N	X
15-24												
Employer, Pd.												
Employee.....	—	—	(43)	1.0	(47)	1.2	(25)	1.5	(131)	1.3	(156)	1.4
Self-Employed....	—	—	(37)	1.9	(47)	1.9	(785)	1.5	(328)	1.4	(1113)	1.4
Unpaid Family Wrkr..	—	—	(23)	1.8	(33)	1.4	(830)	1.3	(366)	1.5	(1196)	1.4
Keeping House.....	(166)	1.9	(978)	1.6	(1144)	1.7	(2588)	1.6	(2460)	1.6	(5048)	1.6
Student.....	(60)	0.4	(256)	0.2	(316)	0.3	(573)	0.3	(1037)	0.2	(1610)	0.2
Retired & Others.	(47)	0.9	(382)	1.1	(429)	1.1	(1529)	0.8	(1673)	0.9	(3202)	0.9
25-34												
Employer, Pd.												
Employee.....	—	—	(50)	2.7	(63)	3.0	(41)	3.2	(207)	3.2	(248)	3.2
Self-Employed....	(20)	4.7	(47)	3.9	(64)	4.1	(1037)	3.6	(448)	3.6	(1485)	3.6
Unpaid Family Wrkr.	—	—	(27)	3.7	(39)	3.6	(891)	3.4	(387)	3.6	(1278)	3.5
Keeping House.....	(164)	3.8	(908)	3.6	(1072)	3.6	(3071)	3.5	(2733)	3.5	(5804)	3.5
Student.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(29)	1.5	(45)	1.4
Retired & Others.	(20)	2.2	(242)	3.1	(261)	3.1	(669)	2.7	(754)	2.8	(1423)	2.8
35-49												
Employer, Pd.												
Employee.....	—	—	(35)	3.9	(46)	4.2	(45)	4.7	(201)	4.7	(246)	4.7
Self-Employed....	(25)	4.7	(48)	4.8	(73)	4.7	(1025)	4.6	(523)	5.0	(1548)	4.7
Unpaid Family Wrkr..	(20)	5.8	(24)	5.3	(42)	5.5	(804)	4.5	(418)	5.3	(1222)	4.8
Keeping House.....	(101)	4.9	(440)	4.5	(541)	4.6	(2418)	4.7	(2400)	4.8	(4818)	4.7
Retired & Others.	(20)	3.7	(145)	4.2	(164)	4.1	(519)	3.5	(577)	3.9	(1096)	3.7
Total N.....	(643)		(3685)		(4381)		(16,850)		(14,672)		(31,548)	

— Fewer than 20 women

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TABLE 5

MULTIPLE CLASSIFICATION ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN EVER BORN TO ALL WOMEN  
 BY MIGRATION STATUS, CONTROLLING FOR EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT,  
 WORK STATUS, MARITAL STATUS, AGE, AND  
 AGE SQUARE: LIBERIA, 1974

<u>Migration Status</u>	N	Unadjusted Mean	Eta	Adjusted <sup>a</sup> Mean	Beta	Adjusted <sup>b</sup> Mean	Beta
Hinterland Nonmigrants	16,870	2.9		2.8		2.8	
Coastal Nonmigrants.....	14,678	2.9		3.0		2.9	
Coastal Migrants.....	698	3.0		3.0		3.0	
Hinterland Migrants.....	3,698	2.6		2.6		2.8	
			.03		.04		.02
Grand Mean =	2.87						
Multiple R =	.425						
Multiple R <sup>2</sup> =	.181						
Statistical Significance =	.001						
<sup>a</sup> Adjusted for Educational Attainment, Work Status, and Marital Status							
<sup>b</sup> Adjusted for Educational Attainment, Work Status, Marital Status, Age, and Age Square.							

TABLE 6

MULTIPLE CLASSIFICATION ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN EVER BORN TO EMPLOYED WOMEN  
 BY MIGRATION STATUS, CONTROLLING FOR EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT,  
 OCCUPATION, MARITAL STATUS, AGE AND  
 AGE SQUARE: LIBERIA, 1974

<u>Migration Status</u>	N	Unadjusted Mean	Eta	Adjusted <sup>a</sup> Mean	Beta	Adjusted <sup>b</sup> Mean	Beta
Hinterland Nonmigrants	5,483	3.2		3.2		3.3	
Coastal Nonmigrants.....	3,009	4.1		4.0		3.8	
Coastal Migrants.....	120	3.5		3.5		3.5	
Hinterland Migrants.....	334	3.2		3.3		3.3	
			.06		.06		.04
Grand Mean = 3.35							
Multiple R = .422							
Multiple R <sup>2</sup> = .178							
Statistical							
Significance = .001							
<sup>a</sup> Adjusted for Educational Attainment, Occupation, and Marital Status							
<sup>b</sup> Adjusted for Educational Attainment, Occupation, Marital Status, Age, and Age Square.							

sociodemographic variables, suggests that migration status accounts for fertility differentials independently of the sociodemographic variables controlled for in this study. However, the inevitable question that these limited data do not permit us to answer is: What is it about migration status that account for the differential fertility? One can only speculate in a more general way by suggesting that differences in some other characteristics of migrant and nonmigrant women (i.e. differences in age at migration/marriage and income) not considered in the present study, may account for the small fertility differential. Or perhaps, the greater availability of medical/health facilities in the coastal region, a factor not considered in the present study, may account to some extent for the higher fertility of coastal women (whether they are migrants or nonmigrants). Access to better medical/health facilities may enhance greater child survival.

The similarity in the fertility of migrant and nonmigrant women when those in and out of the labor force are considered (Table 5) seems to result in part from the more general categories that are used to denote women in the labor force. For example, the category of paid employees lumps together diverse groups of women, some of whom have high fertility (i.e., clerical, professional, technical and administrative workers) while others have somewhat lower fertility (i.e., sales and production and related workers). Such general groupings present an average fertility that may conceal considerable variations in occupation-specific fertility.

In summary, the research findings show that while migrant women generally tend to be better educated and a slightly higher percentage of them participate in the labor force as employers/paid employees, this small advantage in socioeconomic status does not result in lower fertility for all migrant women. Although the fertility of migrant and nonmigrant women is somewhat similar when work status and other sociodemographic variables are controlled, additional controls for occupation shows coastal nonmigrant women to have the highest fertility, followed next by coastal migrant women to the hinterland. In short, these findings tend to provide, at best, only partial support for the migration-selectivity hypothesis. While migration appears to be selective of women with slightly higher socioeconomic status, contrary to the hypothesis, the fertility of migrant women is not consistently lower than that of nonmigrant women. These findings are interpreted as suggesting that the small fertility differentials between migrant and nonmigrant women, net of the sociodemographic variables controlled for in the study, may be due to migration status and/or other variables not explicitly considered in the study.

The cross-sectional nature of these data and the limited number of variables considered limit our interpretation of the findings. But, in the absence of other available data, it is useful to speculate. It would seem that migration is not likely to have a depressing effect on fertility in Liberia; at least, not in the near future. In other words, migration status is relatively unimportant in terms of explaining variations in fertility. Migration status accounts for at most only about four percent of the variance in the dependent variable, fertility. Liberia is an interesting case study that merits further study with more refined data.

Further studies on migration and fertility, for example, should consider including information that would permit a comparison of the fertility of migrants and nonmigrants prior to and after migration. Furthermore, age at migration/marriage, type of migration (individuals or families), other communities lived in, rural or urban origin and destination of

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migration, socioeconomic characteristics of the husbands of married women, duration of marriage/migration, labor force experience prior to and after migration/marriage, earnings/income, family size preference, the timing of births, and length of time in the labor force are all important variables that should be included and analyzed in future studies of migration and fertility

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Hasselman (1982) defines central place as one "characterized by health, educational, social, and technical functions (in varying sizes) which sustain the social and economic activities of the population."

<sup>2</sup>Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) is a form of multiple regression that is appropriate when nominal (categorical) independent variables are used and the dependent variable is measured at the interval or ratio level of measurement. Its chief advantage over the usual dummy variable regression technique is that it provides coefficients expressed as deviations from the grand mean instead of deviation from a constant term based on a composite sum of means of the excluded subclasses. The MCA technique also provides useful summary measures such as Eta, which indicates the ability of the predictor, using the categories given, to explain variation in the dependent variable; Beta which provides a measure of the ability of a predictor to explain variation in the dependent variable, after adjusting for the effects of all other predictors; and R<sup>2</sup>, which is the proportion of the total variance in the dependent variable accounted for by all the predictors in the model.

To facilitate interpretation, in Tables 5 and 6, the deviation of births from the grand mean for each category of the independent variable is added to the grand mean; this addition directly gives the mean number of children ever born (see Andrews et al. 1973 for a full discussion of this analytic technique).

<sup>3</sup>In Tables 5 and 6, please see superscript a or b for the variables that have been controlled. Since an earlier analysis of these data showed that age does not bear a linear relationship with births, age square is entered into the model in order to adjust for the lack of a linear relationship between age and births (number of children ever born).

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Taking up the Slack: Female Farming and the "Kru Problem"  
in Southeastern Liberia

Mary H. Moran

This paper consists of three sections. The first lays out a framework for viewing the incorporation of African subsistence agriculture into broader economic systems dominated by cash and wage labor, beginning from the indigenous sexual division of labor. The second part will apply this approach to a historical case, that of the eighteenth and nineteenth century "Kru Mariners" of southeastern Liberia to see if a new reading from this perspective can clear up a "Problem" in historical research. Finally, I will turn to the development implications of the belief system which has generated both the "Kru Problem" and extensive problems for African female farmers.

In all known societies there is some division of labor by sex, although the *content* of that division seems almost infinitely variable (Ortner and Whitehead, 1981). Sexual segregation of tasks, combined with patriarchy, or the differential valuation of men over women, results in greater value being assigned to male labor than to female labor. In cash economies this greater value is expressed in the higher wages and salaries attached to predominantly male occupations, even when performed by women, and in the generally higher cash incomes of men worldwide.

It is important to keep this "gender sensitive" nature of Western economies (and of all economies) in mind when examining changes in subsistence systems as they come into contact with broader markets. Western economic forms bring with them a sex-segregated occupational structure divided into "men's" and "women's" jobs with different levels of value that may or may not conform to local practice. I will argue that, under conditions where cash economies are coming into contact with local-level subsistence farming systems, differences in the sexual division of agricultural labor will account for at least some of the variation in how specific communities integrate food production with opportunities for earning cash. Specifically, the *least* amount of change in existing patterns of subsistence farming is to be expected where female labor inputs into agriculture are the highest, because male labor will command the highest price on the wage market.

Boserup suggested something also these lines in 1970, when she compared women's agricultural production in Africa and Asia. I will rest my case on the basis of comparisons to a fairly limited portion of the world. There is a clear difference there in the division of labor between male and female participation in agriculture. Jane Guyer's work on Cameroon has shown how a sex-segregated division of labor for crops and agricultural tasks has developed (9-53). In a careful reconstruction of the division of labor, such as melon seed and certain crops, Guyer shows that men's primary role is in competition, while women's role is in growing vegetables, provided the bulk of daily food needs are met. Men's agricultural production clearly contributed to the diet. Beti men were able to turn their full attention to growing cocoa as a cash crop beginning in the 1920s. Beti women meanwhile continued to produce a "nutritionally adequate and culturally acceptable diet" on their own (Ibid:353). The Beti have thus accommodated their farming system to the demands of cash cropping by shifting men from one prestigious activity to another while leaving women's work virtually the same as in pre-colonial times. In contrast, among the Yoruba of Nigeria, where men had produced yams as the

staple crop, "cocoa cultivation immediately subjected food to the effect of prices on male labor" (Ibid). Guyer cites a 1951 survey which found that only 32% of the food consumed by cocoa farming households was home grown (Ibid:353). In this case, male labor which was removed from subsistence to cash crop production was replaced by a dependence on foodstuffs purchased in the market.

From the example of the Yoruba, I will now turn to the opposite end of the continuum, an agricultural system in which almost all labor inputs are female. I will attempt to illustrate how an altered view of women's relationship to agricultural production can also alter our view of historical process. Specifically, I will present a new reading of the "Kru Problem" which has bedeviled historians of the upper Guinea Coast for some time now. This "problem," as articulated by Brooks (1972), revolves around the twin issues of why African wage workers on European trading and military vessels during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries were drawn from a relatively restricted part of the southeastern Liberian coast and *who* these workers, known as "Krumen" or "Krooboyes" actually were.

Recent attempts to understand the ethnic complexity of this region of the Guinea Coast (d'Azevedo, 1962; Holsoe and Lauer, 1976; McEvoy, 1977) have made the second aspect of the Kru Problem somewhat less problematic. The southeastern Liberian forests are inhabited by speakers of Kwa languages, specifically, Bassa, Grebo, "Kruan," and Krahn, and are linguistically related to the eastern Kwa of Nigeria (Duitsman, 1982-83:28). Migration into the area south of the St. John River seems to have occurred sometime during the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, probably from the east. d'Azevedo claims that the cultivation of upland dry rice, the staple crop in the region, was an adaptation of savannah grain complexes brought into the tropical forest by Mande speakers from the north which reached the Kwa area as little as one hundred years ago. Before that, he postulates, the Kwa were probably forest hunters and gatherers, possibly supplementing these activities with the casual cultivation of root and tree crops (1962:521). European sources from as early as the fifteenth century, however, report the purchasing of rice along the southeastern coast (Davis, 1968). Whatever the date of its introduction, upland dry rice is cultivated by the slash and burn or swidden method today and reportedly was in the early nineteenth century as well.

The characteristic forms of social and political organization in the southeast, however, do in some ways resemble those of the autonomous hunter-gatherer band. Access to fallow land and areas of virgin bush is regulated by patrilineally ascribed membership in "towns" (Grebo; *wodo*) of between 200 and 500 people. A town's claims to land often conflict with those of other towns and, while open warfare has been abolished by the Liberian state since the early twentieth century, court cases over land disputes are still common today. Loose federations of towns known as *dakwe* (singular, *dako*) appear to be the largest political units operative in the southeast, although the component towns retain the right to enter into treaties or, in the past, warfare, with other towns and *dakwe* on their own and with no recourse to a centralized authority. Named patrilineal clans, which cross-cut town, *dako* and even language lines, operate as the only integrative mechanism on the regional level. McEvoy notes that amid all the structural complexity and competing levels of identification, a distinct "Kru" and later "Grebo" identity emerged only as a result of overseas labor migration and life in ethnic enclaves in Freetown, Monrovia, Accra, and Lagos, *outside* the southeastern Liberian homeland (1977:68-69). Thus the question posed by Brooks in 1972, "Who are the Proper Kru?," appears to have been answered. The "Kru" of European accounts were men drawn from diverse southeastern towns and *dakwe*, speaking diverse languages and having competing loyalties, who took on the identity of "Kruness" as part of the experience of labor migration.

## TAKING UP THE SLACK

The first part of the "Kru Problem" however, remains unsolved. On all the long coastline of West Africa, why did Europeans so early come to rely on labor recruited from the hundred miles or so between the St. John and Cavalla Rivers, a region of low population density, few desired items of trade (excluding labor), and no port cities? That this area also corresponds with the region of Liberia in which women's agricultural labor inputs are the highest is, I will argue, no accident but rather the crucial evidence in finally resolving the "kru Problem."

The most extensive discussion of the topic is by Brooks, who has compiled almost all known references by Europeans to the people they called "Krumen" (1972). Martin has since supplemented this account with oral histories given by elderly southeasterners who went "down the coast" to labor in Ghana and Nigeria in the early twentieth century (1982). "Krumen" first appear in the historical record as translators, surfboatmen, and deck hands aboard British naval and merchant vessels in the late eighteenth century.

By 1809, according to Thomas Ludlam, former governor of Sierra Leone, they were employed at every factory between Sierra Leone and their Liberian homes and were found on other parts of the coast in groups of 15 to 40. By the 1830s, many were employed on the cocoa plantations of Fernando Po and their shore work during the Niger Expedition of 1833 may have spread their reputation and led to further work. By 1848 they were employed as far south as Calabar. Demands for their labor increased as British merchant activities developed in the Niger Delta, and steamships transported laborers . . . The picture is somewhat hazy, but it appears that the bulk of Kru laboring activities was concentrated in the Oil Rivers and Lagos up to the First World War and gradually shifted up the coast to Ghana where Krumen had been employed early in the century in the gold mines and later worked in Accra, Sekondi, and even Kumasi (Martin, 1982:3-4).

Early Kru laborers worked both on slave ships and on those plying the "legitimate trade," apparently protected from being captured and sold themselves by a distinctive facial tattoo or "Kru mark" (Brooks, 1972:6,34). Martin has estimated that during the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, the number of men drawn from the southeast coast for labor abroad was as high as 15,000 to 20,000 per year (1982:4). It must be kept in mind that these laborers were taken from an area with one of the lowest population densities in West Africa (d'Azevedo, 1962). Men generally signed up on two-year contracts, "resting" at home between trips for a few years before signing up again. Some of Martin's informants had made as many as fifteen such journeys during their working lifetimes. For men in both the coastal and the interior communities of the southeast, periodic labor migration was "a part of growing up" (Martin, 1982:4) and a significant part of adulthood as well.

Brook's careful documentation contains extensive evidence of a kind of "Kru mystique" that developed among Europeans during the nineteenth century. Southeastern Liberians were lauded as "the most intelligent and industrious people on the coast" (Brooks, 1972:21), and their praises were sung by everyone from Richard Burton to Mary Kingsley. The Kru were preferred above all other native workers and participated in most of the great nineteenth century journeys of exploration, including David Livingston's Zambezi expedition (Ibid:23, n. 68). Laird recorded the typical European compliments in his 1837 *Narrative of an Expedition Into the Interior of Africa by the River Niger*. "Kru never desert their employers in danger or distress; they are constitutionally brave and are easily kept in order: they are the life and soul of the trade on the coast; without them, the cargoes could not be stowed nor could ships be

manned: (cited in Brooks, 1972:13). These glowing comments are all the more unusual when one considers that other contemporary West Africans were being described in less complimentary terms by European powers just gearing up for colonial conquest.

There is also the puzzling demographic question of why workers had to be recruited from a sparsely populated area and transported by ship to work in Nigeria, then as now the most densely populated region in Africa. Martin notes that the Kru were willing to work for lower wages than "local Africans," and the use of migrant labor seems to have been a strategy used by Europeans to keep wages down all along the coast (Hopkins, 1973:225,231). In reading the contemporary accounts, it becomes easy to speculate that Kru men got an early "jump" in the coastal labor market, established a reputation for trustworthiness and hard work, and made themselves indispensable to European employers. But this is not an explanation; that Europeans hired Kru because they expected to hire Kru may account for the later phases of the labor recruitment system, but certainly not for its origin. For that, I would argue, we must turn to the agricultural base of the communities from which Kru labor was drawn and compare it with those of neighboring African peoples from among whom Europeans might also have recruited labor. In particular, the work of those *not recruited* for migrant labor, namely, women, in subsistence agriculture must be considered.

The Kwa-speaking southeastern region of Liberia differs from the northwest Mande and West Atlantic-speaking area in several significant ways. d'Azevedo (1962) has characterized northwestern Liberia, Sierra Leone, and southern Guinea together as the "Central West Atlantic Region" or "Poro Cluster," after the distinctive secret societies, drawing attention to similarities of ritual and political organization, kinship, and long-standing patterns of interaction. Those criteria upon which the boundaries of the Poro Cluster have been drawn do not appear south of the Saint John River in the Kwa-speaking area. Carter and Mends-Cole note that the technology of rice cultivation also varies from northwest to southeast; "In the Mande and Mel (West Atlantic) speaking areas, rice is planted by broadcasting and hoeing. In parts of the Kruan (Kwa) speaking area, rice is planted by drilling, with a flat-bladed hoe or stick, a small hole into which rice seeds are dropped . . . This difference may indicate that rice cultivation in these areas has had a different origin from the rest of the country" (1982:35). More significant, however, is the variation in the sexual division of agricultural labor:

Generally, the tasks of brushing, burning, and clearing are male tasks while planting, weeding, and harvesting are female tasks. There is variation, both regionally and within individual households and communities in the actual division of labor. Male labor inputs into rice cultivation tend to be higher in the northwestern section of the country . . . where men may assist with planting and harvesting. Female labor inputs are higher in the southeastern section where women may do everything except felling the largest trees and the burning (Ibid:37).

Carter and Mends-Cole conclude their survey of Liberian agriculture with the statement, "Men are dependent upon women for the production of the rice which they consume. A man cannot make a rice farm without a wife, but a woman can make a rice farm without a husband" (Ibid:37). This tropical forest grain complex differs from both the savannah grain systems to the north and the forest tree and tuber complex to the east, both of which utilize greater inputs of male labor.

Considering the fact that European cultural constructions of gender and accompanying notions of the appropriate division of labor by sex would have clearly precluded the hiring of women as deckhands and , even if they had been available, what we have is a clear

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"fit" between European demand and an unfettered supply of male labor coinciding in the southeastern Liberian communities. Before the advent of the migrant labor system, southeastern men seem to have been occupied with hunting, warfare, and the intense but brief period of demand for their labor at the beginning of the agricultural cycle (for felling large trees and burning the field before planting). All these activities contributed both to the quality of the diet and to the quality of life in the southeast, but their decline or reduction in scale did not seriously interfere with dry rice production. The demands of the agricultural system on women's labor, on the other hand, was continuous throughout the cycle. Cultural constructions of gender in the southeast cast women as household providers, associate them strongly with both nurturing and powerful aspects of the control of food, and identify them as primary breadwinners (Moran, 1985: n.d.). Men, on the other hand, are cast as warriors, locked in struggles for prestige with other men. Male contributions to the domestic unit seem to have consisted of providing the physical structure, or house, protection from attack, and the provision of gifts and luxury items. The possibility of southeastern households being dependent on the wages brought home by male workers is unlikely in view of the European accounts. Kru migrants seem to have demanded payment in trade goods such as cloth and manufactured items, rather than cash, and all available evidence indicates that the bulk of these articles were turned over to town elders rather than contributing to the support of individual household (Brooks, 1972:59-67). It is clear that both the cultural expectations and actual division of labor in southeastern Liberia was quite amenable to the periodic absence of adult men.

This simple correlation between availability and the labor recruiting practices of a past century might stop here if the same way of thinking that gave us the "Kru Problem" was not also operating among agricultural planners in Africa today. For many years now, Africa has been recognized as, to use Boserup's words, "the home of female farming *par excellence*" (1970). Although census figures clearly indicate that two-fifths to over one-half of all those sub-Saharan Africans economically active in agriculture are women, this has *not*, in Safilios-Rothschild's words, "led to a redefinition of agriculture as an equally female and male domain" (1985:300). Safilios-Rothschild attributes this stubborn ignoring of the fact that women are primary breadwinners to

a system of beliefs that tends to minimize the importance of women's involvement in agriculture as seasonal and auxiliary farm labor and does not challenge . . . the validity of the belief that women economically active in agriculture are not independent farmers or co-farmers with their husbands . . . These beliefs, in turn by blocking the potential reorientation of ongoing agricultural development programs to include women farmers eventually lead women to depend on men for cash since they cannot render subsistence agriculture profitable (1985:300-301).

Safilios-Rothschild cites the case of Lesotho, where about half of all adult men are away from the country at any one time, working as migrant laborers in South Africa. Although it is widely known that 60% to 70% of all rural households are female headed, women are not considered independent farmers by either the national government or expatriate development planners (1985:302). Assumptions about migrant husbands returning home seasonally to assist in farming or making long distance decisions about crops and field rotations continue to guide agricultural policy although neither is confirmed by survey data (Ibid:303). Safilios-Rothschild has characterized this persistent set of beliefs as "The Myth of the Absentee Male Farmer" (Ibid:302).

This myth permeates most accounts of the process by which cash economies penetrate subsistence systems in Africa. Men are said to be "pulled" or "pushed" off their subsistence farms, either by colonial taxation or the lure of cash to purchase consumer items, leaving behind helpless, hapless women to "take up the slack" in agricultural production. If men stay away too long, the women also are "pushed" off the land and into petty trading, prostitution or some other "informal sector" activity (Handwerker, 1973:198). What they are clearly unable to do, according to these accounts, is maintain themselves as subsistence farmers without the labor of a man. The widespread acceptance of this scenario among Africanist historians, economists, and development planners seems in no way to contradict the fact that everyone "knows" Africa to be a "female farming area." In this view, female farming becomes a result, not a determining factor, of male participation in the wage sector and represents an intermediate step between the roles of "farm wife" and "urban housewife/petty trader." The implication here is that female farmers are involuntary, relatively recent arrivals on the economic scene, representing a temporary "adaptation" to capitalist penetration and destined to soon fade into urban opportunity structures as they find the going too rough alone on the farm. The persistence of this view and its incorporation into the agricultural policies of many African nations (resulting in programs designed to make farming "more attractive" to men) has been challenged by a few dissenting voices from the literature on Women in Development, complaining about the "invisibility" of female farmers (Brain, 1976; Fruzzetti, 1985; Safilios-Rothschild, 1985; and others).

I recently encountered this model of economic change most forcefully in an anonymous review of a manuscript, in which the reviewer stated the following:

the author may have reversed the situation of female farming when she states that 'a woman's ability to provide for herself and her children leaves men free for long- or short-term labor migration . . .' (p. 109). Could it not also be the case that labor migration has forced women to assume a greater agricultural role than they traditionally would have? (anon. 1985:5).

This is a classic statement of what I have called the "taking up the slack" model of female farming in Africa. What I have attempted to do in this paper is demonstrate that the history of Kru labor migration from southeastern Liberia makes no sense *without* assuming a subsistence base largely independent of male labor. *Without* understanding the sexual division of labor operative in southeastern communities, the question of "Why the Kru?" is indeed, a "problem," even a paradox. *With* an understanding of the female labor inputs in agriculture, the restricted area of labor recruitment can be seen as representing that area where male labor was most "free" or available. Both to the northwest, in the Poro area and to the east in the yam belt where Europeans had the most need of hired workers, sexual divisions of labor allocated a greater subsistence contribution to men. The fine reputation that Kru workers enjoyed with Europeans was primarily based on their "loyalty;" that is, their willingness to work out the duration of their contracts. Might this dedication to the job not be seen as based on the security of knowing they were not needed at home rather than on some cultural or psychological peculiarity of the Kru?

What I have hoped to make here is not just a "chicken and egg" argument about which came first, female farming or male labor migration? Rather, I have hoped to demonstrate the implications of beginning uncritically from one position or the other. In the process, an historical "problem" has been shown to be not a problem at all and the relationship between women's agricultural production and male availability for wage labor becomes the new "problematic" for further research.

## TAKING UP THE SLACK

*Acknowledgments.* Some of the information used in this paper comes from fifteen months of fieldwork with the Glebo of Cape Palmas during 1982-83. Research was supported by a Graduate Fellowship from the National Science Foundation and a Hannum-Warner Alumnae Travel Fellowship from Mount Holyoke College. Special thanks to Jane Martin for her valuable contacts in the region. This paper was originally presented at the 1986 meetings of the Northeastern Anthropological Association in Buffalo, New York, and I am grateful to Jane Szurek and other colleagues for their helpful comments. A second reading was given to my colleagues in the Kellogg Seminar on Issues of Food and Agriculture at Colgate University, where more valuable suggestions were offered. Jordan Kerber and Teresita Martinez-Vergne provided both editorial and substantive advice, while I alone am responsible for any errors.

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Crisis in the Liberian Economy  
1980-85:  
The Role of Endogenous Variables

Togba-Nah Tipoteh

The overriding feature of a crisis is that it at once blocks the continuation of pre-crisis growth and provides possibilities for renewed growth in the post-crisis period. Due to increasing production cost conditions, the path to significant growth is blocked during a crisis. However, the malfunctioning of the economy provides useful information to the scientific observer as to the sources of the crisis. This information is useful in the sense that it provides an awareness of opportunities for getting out of the crisis. These beneficial opportunities manifest themselves in the form of relatively lower production cost conditions. Thus, the key to getting out of the crisis lies in learning correctly from failures in the economy and applying the lessons, taking advantage of new cost-reducing opportunities.

In the face of persistent crises in African economies, it has become commonplace for African governments to give overwhelming primacy to exogenous variables in their identification of the sources of crises in their respective economies (UN/ECA, 1984). In their analysis of the current crisis and its 'causes', African governments identified the drought and the global economic environment as the 'causes' of 'the current crisis'. The academic support for the African governments' position considers the exogenous variables as forces which make for 'limited economic space for manoeuvre' in national socio-economic decision-making (Van Arkadie, 1986). African governments, however, are considered by their academic support group to be rather committed to the goal of socio-economic development, but it is this 'limited economic space' that renders it 'extraordinarily difficult' for these governments to 'manoeuvre' in the midst of persistent crises.

While the controlling role of exogenous variables manifested mainly in the form of multinational corporations in underdeveloped countries, multinationals with endogenous variables (e.g. local elites) (Vernon, 1971; Tipoteh, 1974; Hymer, 1976), the overdependence on exogenous variables tend to downplay the relevance of endogenous variables in with and control over states in underdeveloped countries. It is essentially in some space in which the states can manoeuvre. It is observed that a state's ability to manage its economy can be observed in a relatively small space, there is room for significant manoeuvre to operating within prevailing socio-economic conditions. For structures or institutions (including new structures). By its very nature, a state registers its interest openly in operating within existing structures.

It has been shown (Lower, et. al., 1966; Tipoteh, 1978) that the pre-coup Liberian state exhibited some interest in growth, through its utilization of the relatively narrow space for manipulating endogenous variables. However, the pre-coup state lacked an interest in development, as development was indeed inimical to its interest and the interest of those exogenous forces with whom it collaborated (Tipoteh, 1982, 1984).

After experiencing double-digit growth rates in the 1950s, the Liberian economy began to grow less strongly in the 1960s, with growth rates still high but remaining in single digits. Income distribution remained highly skewed with less than one percent of the population accounting for over 50 percent of the national income. It was this phenomenon of high growth in the face of a highly skewed income distribution that became commonly known as "growth without development" (Clower et. al., 1966). Throughout the 1970s, the distribution of income remained highly skewed, but growth dwindled to medium pace (around 5 percent) in the mid '70s and declined further with the passage of time, although growth did pick up slightly in 1978 and 1979. By 1980, a negative growth situation had become characteristic of the Liberian economy.

The unemployment situation was also worsening. From unemployment rates of less than 25 percent in the 1950s, relatively more and more people became unemployed with the passage of time. Unemployment rates grew to 30 percent and higher in the 1960s. During the 1970s, unemployment rose to 40 percent and continued to rise. On the eve of the coup, there were slightly more people unemployed than those who were employed in the monetary sector. Due to high and rising consumer prices, working people experienced declining real wages. During the 1970s, agricultural real wages fell by over 50 percent, while real wages in the mining sector declined by nearly 40 percent. The real incomes of civil servants decreased by a third during the seventies. In Monrovia, the capital city, some 60 percent of the working people earned wages below the official poverty line of \$125 established for an urban family of four persons during the 1970s.

With low and falling real wages, the food situation became particularly critical, especially when one considers that over a third of one's wages was being spent on food. Thus, when the government proposed to increase the price of rice, the principal staple, by 33-1/3 percent in 1979, there was a mass uprising in opposition to such a proposal. Government response to the uprising resulted in the state massacre of over 200 unarmed persons on April 14, 1979.

While the perennial crises in the pre-coup Liberian economy had been characterized by "growth without development", on the eve of the coup, the general socio-economic situation had become worse, as the economy had stopped growing. When the military government violently seized state power in 1980, it promised growth and development for the Liberian economy through improved management and institutionalized social justice. The purpose of this brief paper is the examination of the Liberian economy during the period 1980-1985 to determine the extent to which the military regime of Samuel K. Doe achieved/did not achieve its officially stated objectives of growth and development. Against this purpose, the prospects for recovery in the Liberian economy will be explored.

The military regime will be evaluated in terms of its performance in the implementation of the 1981-1985 National Socio-Economic Plan (MPEA, 1981). In the examination of the government's performance, principal attention will be paid to endogenous variables which affect the engine of growth and influence the prospects for development within the context of the Liberian economy. The focus will be on the observation of endogenous variables which fall in the areas of the rule of law and the choice of public economic and financial managers.

The Liberian economy continues to be of a mixed nature dominated by private sector activities. Essentially capitalistic, the engine of growth in the economy has been the productive

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investment activities of the private sector. Motivated principally by profit, the private sector in Liberia is dominated and controlled by foreign private interests, based mainly in the United States, West Germany and Sweden.

Liberia, like other Third World countries, is of interest to foreign private investors principally because of the high profitability situation that emanates from the availability of relatively low priced labour. Central to the availability of cheap labour is the general practice of state repression of workers to ensure their ineffectivity in organization as well as in labour/management negotiations. Thus, if the state can manage to have industrial relations "under control", foreign investors usually would consider the internal situation in the host country to be stable and a positive factor for investment.

While the repression of workers does produce "stability" for attracting foreign investors, it is essentially a negative factor in any drive to achieve development. The benefits from growth tend to spread to disadvantaged or poor groups as the relative power position of these groups is strengthened within the dynamics of the social structure. Such relative power position becomes strengthened through the effective participation of the poor in decision-making that affects them. In other words, democracy--the effective participation of the people in decision-making--is absolutely essential for the attainment of development.

While the repression of workers is incompatible with the drive for development, democracy is compatible with both growth and development. However, the general case in the Third World is the utilization of the state-repression option for achieving growth.

Given the capitalist nature of the Liberian economy, our evaluation of the government in terms of its interest/lack of interest in growth will focus on the delineation of endogenous variables which are crucial for facilitating the flow of private foreign investment to Liberia. As growth is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for development, the evaluation method with respect to growth is clearly relevant for considerations related to development. Additionally, what will figure prominently in the evaluation method with relevance for development is the indication of endogenous variables which relate to the building of democratic institutions in Liberia.

In terms of the structure of this paper, the presentation of the post-coup state's declared objectives and policies will be made, immediately following this introductory section. This will be a summary of the essential features of the 1981-85 National Socio-Economic Plan. Upon observing data on the economy during the Plan period, the government's policies are then examined in light of the experience. Finally, the prospects for economic recovery will be discussed within the context of an analysis of what went wrong in the process of plan implementation.

The official policies of the Liberian government with respect to the management of the economy can be seen in the 1981-85 National Socio-economic Development Plan. In the Plan, the principal socio-economic conditions confronting the people are identified as follows: mass unemployment; low productivity; low food production; highly skewed income distribution; foreign domination of the commercial sector; high dependence on foreign technical, professional and managerial manpower; high illiteracy; high infant mortality; inefficient management of the public sector, including public corporations; and the rural-urban population drift.

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The Plan identifies four major structural problems as largely accounting for the dismal socio-economic conditions of the Liberian people. These structural problems include the following: falling international prices for Liberia's exports; high oil prices; a relatively declining agricultural sector in the face of a slump in the iron ore sector; and the lack of effective mass participation in mainstream socio-economic activities.

It was not envisaged that the implementation of the Plan would result in the elimination of all the above problems. Rather, the Plan was designed to minimize the problems, placing top priority on integrated rural development characterized principally by agricultural production in general and food production in particular.

With the principal focus being placed on agricultural development, the specific planned agricultural sector objectives became identified as follows: Diversification of agricultural production; effective mass participation of subsistence farmers in agricultural modernization; higher farmers' incomes, increased rural employment and strong purchasing power; equity in income distribution and security in land use; agricultural development as the base for self-sustained rural development; and generating income through the development of agricultural enterprises.

The Plan recognizes the importance of urgently strengthening the mechanisms for implementing rural development projects. The Plan pays particular attention to the effective utilization of research within a unified agricultural extension system as principal means of diffusing agricultural innovations. With the iron ore sector, the leading sector in the economy, facing a slump, the Plan places emphasis on the agricultural sector in the expectation that it would become relatively more important in terms of its contribution to gross domestic product (GDP).

Policies related to the revival of the iron ore sector centered around the three iron ore mining concessions--the Liberian American Swedish Minerals Company (LAMCO), Bong Mining Company (BMC) and the National Iron Ore Company (NIOC). The government obtained the assistance of the World Bank in the study of the iron ore sector for the purpose of identifying efficiency generating areas. Also, the government expressed strong interest in the expansion of LAMCO into the western area near Yekepa in Nimba County and promoted the finalization of talks with respect to Guinea's use of LAMCO's rail facilities for a considerable amount of money over a long term. In 1980, the Guineans expected to spend some \$500 million on the Liberian side of their Mifergui Project. Furthermore, the rehabilitation of NIOC was put into motion under the Plan.

Energy policies under the plan emanate from the experiences related to high oil prices facing the Liberian economy, particularly the iron ore sector, at the time. These policies are directed at two principal points: (a) the identification and use of alternative energy sources, and (b) efficiency in the utilization of existing energy sources. The exploration for petroleum is part of the Plan, as the discovery of petroleum in commercial quantities could result in the reduction of the oil bill in the national economy. The identification and use of wood gasification, gas engines and wood fired steam power plants are considered crucial under the Plan. Efficiency considerations for energy speak of the need for urgent improvement in management and the expansion of hydro-electric facilities to benefit from economies of scale.

The Plan calls for the urgent increase in efficiency not only in the management of the Electricity Corporation, but within all of the other public corporations. With some 20 million dollars being used to subsidize highly inefficient public corporations, certainly public sector efficiency considerations became critical under the Plan.

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However, for the success of the planning process, the Plan considers as most crucial the effective participation of the Liberian masses in the planning as well as the implementation of all plans which affect them individually and collectively. The Plan calls for the replacement of the elitist top-bottom planning system by the bottom-top planning system. During the late 1970s, the Rural Development Task Force under the direction of the late Dr. Cyril Bright, evaluated the national planning system and correctly concluded that the top-bottom planning which existed at the time was not promotive of development. Thus, the Task Force called for the introduction of the bottom-top planning system as a means of ensuring the effective participation of the people in decision-making that affects them. In this regard, the Plan calls for government to motivate community groups and provide technical assistance in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of self-help projects.

The vexing problem of mass unemployment receives special attention under the Plan. Government assistance to community self-help projects and the self-employed is considered to be promotive of productive employment generation. Furthermore, investment incentives are to be used in encouraging foreign and local private investors to provide additional employment opportunities through establishing new ventures and expanding and diversifying existing business activities. Under the program of investment incentives, particular encouragement would be given to those export-oriented activities which maximize the utilization of local human and natural resources.

In general terms, the Plan seeks to promote the recovery of an economy in deep recession mainly through encouraging productive investments, efficiency in the private and public sectors, stimulating the socio-economic activities of communities and the self-employed, and giving some priority status to export activities that depend largely on the use of local resources. In a dynamic context, as all planning should be viewed, the Plan seeks modestly to steer the economy away from an outward-looking posture into an inward-looking perspective, in which the utilization of local resources for local use would figure prominently.

Planning is one situation, while plan implementation is quite another. The general situation in Africa is a wide divergence between a national development plan and plan implementation (Ayoade, 1983; Tipoteh, 1985). What are the principal achievements in the Liberian economy during the period under the Plan. To what extent do the results reflect plan implementation: What follows immediately below is an effort at responding to the above questions.

The Liberian economic real GDP growth for the 1981-83 period decline essentially means that post-coup real GDP levels (see T

more clearly through a presentation on the performances of the various GDP components. The iron ore sector, with the largest sectoral contribution (30 per cent in 1980) to GDP, experienced a decline in its real GDP share from 28 per cent in 1981 to 24 per cent in 1983. The contribution of agriculture, forestry and fishing to real GDP increased from 15 per cent to 18 per cent during the 1981-83 period, approximately the same as the pre-coup contribution of 17 per cent. During the above period, the contribution of the manufacturing sector remained constant at 7 per cent. For the same period, the production of public services, in terms of its contribution to real GDP, remained constant, at 15 per cent, considerably above the pre-coup contribution of 10 per cent.

in a state of deep recession. The average rate of decline in the economy is moving farther below pre-coup real GDP levels (see T

approximately -4.5 percent. This persistent decline in production values can be seen more clearly through a presentation on the performances of the various GDP components. The iron ore sector, with the largest sectoral contribution (30 per cent in 1980) to GDP,

experienced a decline in its real GDP share from 28 per cent in 1981 to 24 per cent in 1983. The contribution of agriculture, forestry and fishing to real GDP increased from 15 per cent to 18 per cent during the 1981-83 period, approximately the same as the pre-coup contribution of 17 per cent. During the above period, the contribution of the manufacturing sector remained constant at 7 per cent. For the same period, the production of public services, in terms of its contribution to real GDP, remained constant, at 15 per cent, considerably above the pre-coup contribution of 10 per cent.

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TABLE 1: SECTORAL ORIGIN OF GDP AT CONSTANT FACTOR COST  
1978 - 1983  
(IN MILLION \$)

Economic Activity	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
	<u>59.9</u>	<u>62.8</u>	<u>63.0</u>	<u>49.4</u>	<u>56.0</u>	<u>56.5</u>
Rubber	(21.9)	(20.2)	(21.0)	(21.3)	(22.6)	(25.2)
Forestry	(21.2)	(23.3)	(23.0)	(12.3)	(10.6)	(9.3)
Other	(16.8)	(19.3)	(19.0)	(15.8)	(22.8)	(22.0)
	<u>93.3</u>	<u>99.1</u>	<u>111.0</u>	<u>104.3</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>85.9</u>
Iron Ore	(88.3)	(94.2)	(106.0)	(98.6)	(91.8)	(80.3)
Other	(5.0)	(4.9)	(5.0)	(5.7)	(8.2)	(5.6)
	30.7	33.0	26.0	23.6	21.2	21.6
Electricity and Water	7.9	8.4	8.3	7.9	8.0	8.0
Construction	22.0	20.0	15.0	14.0	13.0	12.8
Trade, Hotels and Restaurants	30.2	31.0	25.0	23.0	20.7	19.8
Transportation	43.0	44.0	35.0	33.4	30.0	30.6
Financial Institutions and						
Real Estate	28.0	30.0	30.0	30.2	27.2	28.5
Other Services	20.0	21.0	17.0	16.0	14.4	14.6
Producers of Government Services	36.9	39.6	39.6	50.4	47.8	47.8
Imputed Bank Charges	-4.0	-4.5	-3.7	-4.3	-4.4	-4.5
GDP at Constant Factor Cost	368.2	384.4	366.2	347.9	333.9	321.6
Annual Rate of Growth (%)	3.9	4.4	-4.7	-5.0	-4.0	-3.7

Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs

## CRISIS IN THE LIBERIAN ECONOMY

The balance of trade position of the review. There was a higher than doubling of million to \$45 million. While export earnings million in 1984, registering a 4.1 percent incr imports from \$411.6 million in 1983 to \$400 m annual value of imports has been declining at

during the period under  
ving from \$16  
to \$445  
in the value of  
average  
1985).

Money

The money situation in the Liberian economy continues to be characterized principally by capital flight. On the eve of the coup, private sector liquidity (M2rec) stood at \$175.6 million, but by the end of 1984, it had dwindled to \$139.3 million (ibid; also see Table 2). United States dollars in circulation decreased by over 50 percent from 1980 to 1984, moving from \$10.5 million to \$4.2 million. During the above period, Liberian coins in circulation rose from \$11.6 million to \$31.3 million. From 1983 to 1984 alone, Liberian coins in circulation increased by 44.4 percent while demand deposits went up by 13.9 percent (ibid).

Public finance in the economy has been placed in a state of huge budget deficits (see Table 3). For the FY 1980/81, the government's budget deficit stood at \$72.2 million. By FY 1981/82, the deficit had increased by almost 50 percent to \$100.5 million. In FY 1982/83, the deficit declined but remained high at \$67.9 million. For the FY 1983/84, the budget deficit was still high at \$42.4 million. During each of the above fiscal years, the deficits formed one-third, nearly a half, a quarter and a sixth of government revenues, respectively. The FY 1983/84 deficit is almost equal to the level of funds (approximately \$50 million) that the Liberian government could not account for in FY 1984/85. Revenue performance has been poor in the face of bustling expenditures, with the exception of development expenditure. The development segment of the budget has dwindled from \$54.9 million in FY 1980/81 to \$15.4 million in FY 1983/84, representing a fall in its share in total expenditures from 20 percent to 8 percent.

With the high deficits, government debt remains considerably high as well. The total external public debt outstanding in 1980 was \$537 million, nearly 50 percent for nominal GDP. Now total external public debt outstanding is more than doubled to approximately 1.3 billion dollars (\$921 million in 1983), representing over 125 percent of real GDP. Since FY 1980/81, debt repayment has been rising at an average annual rate of 15 percent. During FY 1982/83 to FY 1984/85, debt repayment increased by some 31 percent, moving from \$71.4 million to \$93.5 million. Debt repayment as a percentage of government revenue rose from 14 percent in FY 1980/81 to 36 percent in FY 83/84 and that percentage is expected to increase.

A critical examination of the policies and practices of the Liberian government during the period 1980-85 will provide information on the extent to which it was interested/not interested in the growth and development of the Liberian economy. First, let us examine the policies and practices with respect to investors. Then the impact of these policies and practices on Liberians generally will be examined.

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TABLE 2: RECORDED MONEY SUPPLY AND  
PRIVATE SECTOR LIABILITY  
DECEMBER 31, 1979 - DECEMBER 31, 1983  
(IN MILLION \$)

	December 31, 1979	March 31, 1980	December 31, 1982	December 31, 1983	Change Absolute	1982-83 Percentage
<b>Recorded Money Supply</b>						
(M <sup>1</sup> Rec.)	80.2	84.6	63.2	75.3	12.1	19.1
Liberian Coins in Circulation	(11.0)	(11.2)	(15.8)	(19.8)	(4.0)	25.3
Demand Deposits	(69.2)	(73.4)	(47.4)	(55.5)	(8.1)	17.1
Quasi Money	82.2	91.0	64.2	67.7	3.5	5.5
Time Deposits	(37.4)	(42.9)	(25.8)	(27.5)	1.7	6.6
Saving Deposits	(44.8)	(48.1)	(38.4)	(40.2)	1.8	4.7
Private Sector Liquidity (M <sup>2</sup> Rec.)	162.4	175.6	127.4	143.0	15.6	12.2

Sources: National Bank of Liberia and Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs

## CRISIS IN THE LIBERIAN ECONOMY

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF GOVERNMENT REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

Item	1980/81 - 1983/84			
	(In Million \$)			
	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83	1983/84 <sup>1)</sup>
Revenue	217.9	250.1	258.0	247.0
Recurrent Expenditure	203.5	247.1	201.5	180.5
Development Expenditure <sup>2)</sup>	54.9	63.1	53.0	15.4
Debt Repayment <sup>3)</sup>	31.7	40.4	71.4	93.5
Overall Surplus/Deficit	-72.2	-100.5	67.9	-42.4

Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs

1/ Budget Figures

2/ Excludes expenditure financed by foreign aid

3/ Includes principal and interest

There was the realization in the Plan of the crucial importance of reviving investments in the iron ore sector, the economy's leading sector, in the drive to revive the economy from its state of deep recession. Furthermore, the encouragement of potential investors to engage actively in productive investment activities in the economy was considered as vital under the Plan. In practice, however, foreign investors, who accounted for the bulk of the investment in the iron ore sector have not been impressed by the antics of the Doe regime. It became a normal state of affairs for members of the military junta to conduct raids into the operational areas of iron ore mining companies, terrorizing both Liberians and foreigners. The junta members issued orders related to employment, dismissals and detentions. Furthermore, junta members, engaged in the confiscation of properties and funds, some of which took the form of regular "protection" money. At corporate board meetings, major board members confided in some Liberian civilian board members, saying that the regime had gone berserk and foreign investors would seek at best to hold on to what they have or scale down their involvement rather than contemplate expansion. In terms of luring potential investors to invest, the National Investment Commission (NIC) was officially charged with the implementation of such function. However, junta members seeking access to the public relations budget of potential investors, took over major portions of NIC's activities. The junta members ended up attracting an array of foreigners with bogus investment proposals, mainly of the prefinancing variety that called for enormous government guarantees.

There are several other internal factors which continue to have a dampening effect on productive investment in the Liberian economy. In general terms, one observes the Liberian government with a notorious record of non-productive spending continuously depriving the relatively much more productive private sector of productive investment resources. With an addition to inefficiency and corruption, the Doe regime places overwhelming emphasis on recurrent or non-productive public expenditures. Given an employment service not based on merit, in the face of a public sector employment increase from some 18,000 employees in 1979 to approximately 56,000 employees in 1982, and the conspicuous consumption activities of high public officials, the Doe regime has to literally rob the private sector in order to survive. But in its efforts at survival, the Doe government strangulates the economy severely.

Through fiscal policies, private individuals and corporations are squeezed further into giving funds through some form of taxation to the government. The Doe government's monetary policy is then directed at channeling commercial bank deposits increasingly towards the Central Bank (i.e. National Bank of Liberia). When the funds reach government's revenue through fiscal policy measures, they end up largely in inefficient recurrent government spending and corruption. Some \$50 million of public funds for 1985 remain unaccounted for. When the funds turn up in the National Bank through monetary policy, they are largely illegally squandered by the government to cover some recurrent public expenditures. Thus, the Doe government, as thief, robs the private sector of bank deposits (potential investment funds) and funds intended to be sent abroad to finance foreign trade, a vital part of which covers payments for productive inputs. As if to say that such mismanagement of the economy were not enough, the Doe government increased the quantity of Liberian coins in circulation during the period 1980-84 from \$11.6 million to \$31.3 million. In effect, the Liberian government, by its money creation actions, is saying that although it is not promoting productive investment, upon which money creation is based, it can create its own money on sheer air. Although the Plan calls for merit-based employment to provide efficient managers, particularly financial managers, for the economy, the Doe government, in practice, remains one that is characterized by considerable inefficiency and corruption.

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The reaction of investors and potential investors to the activities of the Doe regime has taken on many forms. Generally, all of the main sectors of the Liberian economy have experienced significant decline that is unexplained by external factors (e.g. unfavourable export prices). Internal factors mentioned above have played key roles in explaining the decline. Specific investment activities have been withdrawn in some areas. Foreign (i.e. US) private participation in the iron ore sector has rolled back. Firestone Plantations Company has closed down its southeastern Liberia operations. LAMCO has retrenched half of its work force. In terms of bank deposits, there has been a massive decline. Commercial bank deposits, which stood at over \$140 million in 1979 dwindled to nearly \$110 million by 1984. During the 1980-84 period, US dollar bills in circulation decreased from \$10.5 million to \$4.2 million.

According to the Plan, effective mass participation in decision-making is most essential for development. Initially, the Doe regime sounded its lack of interest in the democratic participation of the Liberian people in decision-making by setting a ban on political activities that lasted for four years. The lifting of the ban in July 1984 was a mere pretense at liberal rule, for immediately following the lifting, the Doe regime launched an unprecedentedly severe repression of opposition groups. Then there is the ban on strikes which began in 1980 and remains in force.

With the violent emergence of the Doe regime came a collapse in the rule of law. Interference in 'decisions' of the judiciary by the military junta became commonplace. When Head of State Doe did not approve of a decision made by the highest court in the country, he ordered the Court to change its decision and his order was carried out. From time to time, there are window-dressing legal cases to appease human rights campaigners momentarily; however, these appeasement acts form the special case rather than the general case.

There is no effective freedom of speech and press. Newspapers are frequently closed down and their editors detained illegally. One newspaper, \_\_\_\_\_ has been shut down several times, with the accompanying detentions of its editors, and there has been an act of arson committed at its office facilities. The Press Union was banned, but even with the lifting of this ban, journalists continue to face considerable repression.

Even the clergy has been singled out for threats from the Doe regime. Frequently, the Clergy, mainly the Liberian Council of Churches, comes under fire from the government, on account of its frequent actions in the cause of democracy.

With the Doe regime bent on the perennial harassment of business institutions, massive repression of workers, excessive inefficiency, runaway corruption and promoting the breakdown of legal institutions, it displays a lack of interest in effectively managing the revival of productive investment, and thus growth in the Liberian economy. As for development, the record of the Doe government is particularly dismal, as its campaign of terrorization of the people is directed at robbing Liberians of any form of democratic participation in decision-making related to the production and distribution of goods and services.

From the outset, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) began assisting the Doe government in efforts geared at the recovery of the economy. After some four stand-by arrangements with the Doe regime, the IMF decided to stop assisting Liberia in the face of a breakdown in the government's expenditure control. Apart from IMF advice, there was considerable advice coming from Liberian economic managers. In addition to the Plan, two national commissions (Tarr in 1981 and Jeffy in 1985) pointed out the perennial inefficiencies in public sector management and made recommendations for significantly reducing such inefficiencies.

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What seems to emerge from this examination of the Liberian economy during the period 1980-85, is the lack of real government interest in improving the economy. Of course, the Doe government says that it seeks improvement for the economy, but on the basis of its actions it demonstrates a lack of interest in the recovery of the Liberian economy. In the midst of the Doe government's lack of interest in economic recovery, the fact that the regime has taken action to place the economy under international receivership should be viewed as a most desperate act for regime-survival.

One can understand the constant turning of the Doe regime to international sources for its survival when one views the erosion of the regime's social base. Starting out with massive popular support largely because of mass dissatisfaction with the overthrown first republic government, the Doe regime now has a particularly narrow social base. Persistent state repression by the government of all major social groups in Liberia have rendered the regime almost baseless in social terms.

The masses of Liberians opposed to the Doe regime turned out in their hundreds of thousands to vote in the October 1985 elections. Reliable i observers at the polls reported that the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL), Doe's party, received no more than 25 percent of the votes cast. Thus, it was reliably observed that some three-fourths of the voters were opposed to the Doe regime.

Upon whom then does the Doe regime depend for its survival? Locally, the regime depends upon a portion of Doe's ethnic group (Krahn), relatively few government officials, elements from the conservative wing of the True Whig Party (TWP), opportunistic elements of the pre-coup opposition to TWP rule now operating as the United People's Party (UPP), and business people in close business partnership with Doe and some of his officials. Within the ranks of his ethnic group, Doe has set up an élite military force trained by the Israeli military to protect the Liberian head-of-state. The Liberian military remains heterogeneous, with dwindling loyalty to Doe, the Commander-in-Chief.

Externally, the most crucial support for the Doe regime comes from the US government. Non-military assistance from the US government to the Doe government has increased from \$13.4 million per annum to \$75.5 million per annum during the 1980-85 period (USAID, 1984). For the same period, military assistance from the US government to the Doe government rose from \$1.4 million a year to \$16.2 million a year (ibid). In the absence of any large local social base for the Liberian government, it is essentially this enormous support of the US government which ensures the perpetuation of the state repressive apparatus upon which the Doe regime's survival rests. As the Doe government rules by armed repression rather than unarmed persuasion, US government support remains indispensable for the survival of the grossly inefficient, highly corrupt and violently u Liberian regime.

What went wrong? Why were not the essential aspects of the Plan implemented, especially with respect to the appropriate adjustment of endogenous variables relevant for promoting growth and development? Granted that exogenous forces do have controlling influence over the Liberian economy, the government's limited economic space was certainly large enough to prevent its senior armed officials from raiding the Chase Manhattan Bank and the Bong Mining Company not to mention raids on numerous firms of significance for the growth of the economy. It is definitely not the military nature of the par sa that led to the lack of confidence by investors in the military regime. Far from that, as it is well known that foreign capital expands under civilian as well as military governments. What is of critical

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importance to foreign investors is that the government, be it civilian or military, declare its 'rules of the game' and proceed to 'playing the game' under the rule of law. Such 'sticking to the rules of the game' is essential for building confidence among foreign investors in the economy and facilitating meaningful investment planning. In fact, foreign investors in Liberia were constantly pleading with the military regime to put an end urgently to the lawlessness. Instead of stopping its lawless activities the government proceeded to utilizing its 'limited space' to harass foreign investors as well as terrorize vast segments of the Liberian people.

Given the crucial importance of investment to the recovery of the economy, numerous cabinet sessions were held where the negative manipulation of endogenous variables was brought to the attention of the head-of-state and the rest of the military junta. As a matter of form, these cabinet sessions would be followed by a statement from the head-of-state's office calling for a cessation of lawlessness, especially on the part of senior members of the junta. Upon being called upon by the Press Union of Liberia to explain publicly the reasons for the lack of recovery in the economy the Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs in September 1980 cited some explanatory exogenous variables (e.g. unfavourable prices for Liberia's exports), but also mentioned the important role of negative state manipulation of endogenous variables, in the forms of lawlessness and violations of basic human rights, as being most crucial in hampering economic recovery. The response of the head-of-state to the Minister's remarks was a public threat to execute him and any other persons making such statements.

After constant plugging in cabinet meetings and through numerous direct interventions with the head-of-state to stress the utmost importance of utilizing the merit approach to the choice of public service personnel, particularly those in the area of public sector economic and financial management, the head-of-state appointed a cabinet committee on the selection of public corporate managers. This committee, headed by the Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs, submitted its recommendations, during the latter part of 1980, presenting a list of competent (based on education and experience) managers. The head-of-state, with his closest civilian advisors, proceeded to ignoring the recommendations and subsequently appointing managers on the basis of personalized (i.e. ethnic ties, family ties, personal loyalties to head-of-state, to close advisors and to senior junta members) decision-making. This was done when public corporations were being subsidized by government at the tone of some 20 million dollars per annum. Furthermore, nearly all top government officials in the area of financial management sought to cater to the head-of-state and by-pass cabinet coordination of public financial decision-making as the principal means of ensuring self-preservation. At the same time, the head-of-state, with the assistance of his closest civilian advisors, frustrated efforts directed at establishing an efficient civil service by directly appointing people at all levels of the civil service, effectively making these people not civil servants but political appointees. Such appointments resulted in further losses in efficiency in the public sector in times when improved efficiency was (and remains) most vital for economic recovery and growth.

Such anti-growth responses on the part of the head-of-state appear to be indicative of irrational behaviour to one who lacks the correct understanding of the nature of top government decision-making in the history of the Liberian state. Top government decision-makers in Liberia, like other human beings, seek to maximize their respective utilities (i.e. satisfaction), subject to their individual incomes and wealth. The principal difference between these top decision-makers and other Liberians is that the government officials behave as if state resources were the same as individual resources for them (the decision-makers). Therefore, the Liberian state becomes a set of institutions through which government officials have access to public resources for the maximization of their respective utilities. Decision-making under such a state is inherently counter-developmental, as the nature of the decision-makers' utility maximization processes marginalizes increasingly large numbers of people. Growth related actions are taken by this state only to the extent that they are consistent with the maximization

of the decision-makers' respective utilities. To observe a Liberian government's interest/lack of interest in growth and development, one has to examine the specificities with respect to the utilization of the Liberian state's resources and also in terms of the nature of the government's relationship with foreign investors. A brief observation of the Liberian state in the post-war period will suffice for the purpose of this paper.

The Tubman, Tolbert and Doe administrations of post-war Liberia differ from one another in the nature of the utilization of state resources by public officials for private gain and also in terms of their respective relations with foreign capital. In the case of the Tubman administration, state resources not only built up Tubman's personal wealth, but they were utilized in a way that maintained a regime survival-oriented minimum social base while ensuring the development of growth related linkages with foreign capital. Through the implementation of regime survival policies, the Tubman administration managed to obtain the loyalty of the military in the midst of worsening mass poverty and state repression of the opposition.

In the concentration of the hegemonic elements of the Tolbert administration on using state resources to build up the Tolbert family wealth position, relatively little interest was assigned to building upon Tubman's social base. Essential to the survival of the True Whig Party (TWP) was the fact that, , new administrations took actions to strengthen the social base upon which the previous TWP administrations depended. In terms of the Tolbert administration, its actions led to the eroding of Tubman's social base. While its social base had been eroded, the Tolbert administration insisted on the intensification of state repression to levels that were unsustainable by Tolbert's social base. Furthermore, state repression under Tolbert differed from that of Tubman not only in quantitative terms, but also qualitatively. During the Tubman era, the violent aspects of state repression were limited to relatively few persons. It was under Tolbert that post-war violent state mass repression was introduced as seen in the mass killings during the April 14, 1979 popular rice-uprising. By the time of the uprising, Tolbert's social base had become considerably lowered to the point where he could not count on the loyalty of most people in the military. Thus, Tolbert had to evoke the mutual defense pact between Guinea and Liberia to arrange for Guinean soldiers to come on Liberian soil to help in 'keeping the peace'.

Other forces worked to narrow Tolbert's social base. The falling living standards which confronted the vast majority of Liberians contributed to the alienation of most Liberian people from the social base of the Tolbert regime. Furthermore, such alienation, the increasing organizational capacity of poor people and Tolbert's own utility maximization posture created a space for the beginning of Liberia's first experience at mass-based national politically organized opposition to the Liberian government, with the launching of the Movement for Justice in Africa of Liberia (MOJA-Liberia) in 1973.

As far as the Tolbert administration's relations with foreign capital were concerned, they were not as favourable as those that existed under Tubman. The way in which the Liberian government approached the renegotiation of foreign concession agreements gave foreign investors the impression that significant arbitrariness had now entered into the government's investment-related decision-making and this bothered the investors. Furthermore, in the building of his own business empire, the Mesurado Group of Companies, Tolbert utilized some business tax measures which led to the scaling down of the investment plans of some major commercial houses in Liberia.

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While the anti-*inv* largely non-violent e. . t uprising, viole Intensified robberies, all influences on i

-growth actions of the Tolbert government were for actions during the April 14, 1979 have become the rule under the Doe regime. of firms by soldiers, widespread armed absence of the rule of law, are negative er know what 'rules of the game' to follow.

Like T base. The 19 than depend o social base i alienated by T elements are joined in their support of Doe by the opportunistic segment of the pre-coup opposition to the Tolbert government. The erosion of Doe's social base spans many elements in the military to the point where some military recruits have had to come from his ethnic group in Côte d'Ivoire.

ions which result in the narrowing of his social ect that Doe sought to build a mass social base rather events have turned out, Doe's narrow and dwindling nts of the TWP, particularly those who were lation activities. These conservative TWP

In terms of the personal wealth accumulation activities of the current administration top officials, they continue to use relatively very scarce state resources, displaying conspicuous consumption life-styles while most government employees work for no pay for 3-4 months on the average. While some of the state's resources continue to be used in building up the private business activities of top government officials, such a situation receives the support of those foreign commercial business people who serve as their business partners. As these foreign commercial capitalists are of relatively low importance in terms of investment, their joint-venture (with government officials) activities do not have any significant positive input on growth.

Thus far, the junta's personal wealth schedule remains inelastic vis-a-vis growth in the economy. Therefore, each of the top decision-makers in the government builds up his personal fortunes whether there is growth or no growth. Irrespective of its anti-growth actions, the government continues to receive enormous financial backing from the U.S. government and it is essentially this backing that protects the top decision-makers personal wealth maximization posture. A recent IMF staff report (Christensen, 1986) identified over 7 billion dollars private African accounts in Swiss banks, in 1984, with one-third of that amount being accounted for by Liberian deposits. Of course, while one realizes that some of the deposits are of a pre-coup character, one cannot help but mention that these deposits exist when Liberia's debt is 1.3 billion dollars and external reserves for the Liberian economy at the end of 1984 stood at 1.71 million dollars.

Multinational corporations operative in Liberia and the United States government have their own respective reasons for tolerating the general situation in the Liberian economy. Multinationals view profitability in terms of a world scale. Therefore, low to negative profitability situations in some parts of the world are allowed as long as average profitability is favourable. The United States government has its strategic interests also on a world scale and as long as its tax payers are willing to pay for keeping a 'friendly' government in power, that government will be supported by the government of the United States of America.

In terms of the contemporary world, such management on a world scale is rather unstable. In the face of worsening objective conditions confronting masses of peoples in underdeveloped countries, such as Liberia, there is a tendency for the oppressed to organize and

rise up to struggle for their interests as manifested in democracy and development. Such mass political movements pose serious threats to the interests of the allies of the oppressive government. When realized, these threatening acts are of an increasing cost-nature to multinational corporations and their respective governments. Thus, governments in underdeveloped countries, like Liberia, are potentially dispensable and that dispensability becomes a reality as soon as mass actions for democracy and development become too costly for the multinationals. In this regard, United States Congressional investigations have revealed the involvement of the United States government and US multinational corporations in overthrowing governments. Examples cited in the investigations cover several countries, including the well-known cases of Zaire (Congo-Leopoldville at the time), Ghana, Guatemala and Chile.

Citations on anti-growth state manipulation of endogenous variables in the midst of the operability of the controlling exogenous variables could continue. However, one would still be left with the most crucial question of what is to be done. In the case of Liberia, how can economic recovery be achieved over the medium term, covering the balance of the 1980s? What comes out clearly from the analysis of the nature of the post-coup Liberian state, as done in this paper, is that the correct approach to economic recovery is not economic in character. Given the nature of this Liberian state, assembling massive financial assistance and organizing major foreign investment for infusion into the Liberian economy do not at all form the necessary condition for economic recovery and growth.

Thus, the solution to the problem of how to put an end to the current deep recession in the Liberian economy is essentially non-economic. The non-economic solution centers around the replacement of the current anti-growth Liberian government with one that is growth-oriented. While the role of exogenous variables are most crucial for the removal of the regime, endogenous variables are also of critical importance in this regard. The relevant exogenous variables are those related to actions by US multinational corporations and the United States government that can facilitate the downfall of the Liberian regime. In terms of the endogenous variables, reference is being made here to actions that could be taken to render the Liberian government ungovernable to the point of its demise. With the removal of the regime, free and fair elections could be held to usher in a new government.

Assuming that the non-economic solution to the problem of ending the deep recession will be forthcoming, what then are the economic measures which could be taken to bring about recovery in the Liberian economy during the medium term? Well, the essential features of the 1981-85 National Socio-Economic Plan remains, relevant. Therefore, the implementation of the Plan remains at the very top of the economic recovery agenda. Of course, some adjustments will have to be made to the Plan in the light of new realities. Not only will more emphasis have to be placed on the utilization of the merit approach to the choice of government economic and financial managerial personnel as well as to the operation of the civil service, much attention will have to be paid to the training of the vast majority of public sector employees to transform them into productive personnel. With the considerable retrenchment (nearly 10,000 persons) which has taken place in the midst of massive open urban unemployment (rate of more than 50 per cent), employment creation should remain a high priority in the Plan.

As it takes time, most times more than the medium term, to initiate new major investment projects, principal emphasis will have to be directed towards the rehabilitation and expansion of existing investment projects. Although some investment activities have suffered on account of adverse world market conditions for Liberian exports,

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other such activities have declined because of the dismal internal political situation and the grossly inefficient management of the national economy. Through the favourable manipulation of endogenous variables, investors could be encouraged to restore at least those investment activities which were terminated due to problems generated within the Liberian economy. The key to medium-term recovery would then be the efficient management of the national economy so as to facilitate the rehabilitation and expansion of existing major productive investment activities.

The Liberian government launched an economic recovery programme earlier this year, covering the fiscal years 1986/87 to 1988/89. In launching this programme, the government announced its determination to exercise strict fiscal discipline, a similar announcement made five years ago only to be followed by gross fiscal indiscipline, as mentioned earlier in this paper. In the face of the near collapse of the economy, some professionals have been appointed to head the Ministry of Finance, the National Bank of Liberia (the Central Bank) and the Budget Bureau (under the Office of the head-of-state). However, these appointments must necessarily be viewed as cosmetic, the usual appeal to the United States gallery, barely directed at the top of the inefficient public sector management iceberg. Nearly all public sector managers remain personalized appointed (by head-of-state) personnel with a largely inefficient support staff that works under a very low morale situation, as they receive their respective monthly salaries at an average of once in every three to four months. Such a situation spells recession deepening rather than economic recovery.

### Conclusion

The examination of the Liberian economy during 1980-85, as contained in this paper, points to a persistent deep recession, exhibiting an average annual growth rate of -4.5 per cent, with stagnation in all of the major sectors of the economy. While exogenous variables continue to have the dominant and controlling influence on the Liberian economy, this paper has identified the essential anti-investment, thus anti-growth, nature of the manipulation of endogenous variables, as manifested in actions taken by the hegemonic elements of the Liberian state.

In taking actions, these hegemonic elements of the Liberian state are motivated principally by the maximization of their respective utilities subject to income and wealth constraints. Within their respective utilities, personal income, and wealth accumulation figures prominently. At the end of 1984, huge amounts were found in private Liberian accounts in Swiss banks while the external reserves for the Liberian economy stood at 1.71 million dollars. The United States, the principal supporter of the current Liberian regime, continues to maintain the economy with the highest per capita assistance flow in sub-Saharan Africa, irrespective of the nature of the investment posture of the Doe government. Thus, the Doe regime, true to its nature, persists in its personal income and wealth accumulation in a way that is essentially anti-investment, hence anti-growth.

The negative growth experience in the Liberian economy necessarily means that the living standards of the people have been worsening. Specifically, these living standards have been cut in half since 1980. Mass retrenchments in the public and private sectors, large public sector salary reductions ranging from 16.67 per cent to 25 per cent and the general deterioration of public social services are characteristic of the worsening situation faced by the people. Furthermore, the struggle for development through the building of democratic institutions is confronted with unprecedentedly stiff state repression in the midst of the absence of the rule of law, as a general case. The military regime itself was installed illegally as a 'civilian' government after losing the October 1985 national elections.

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The prospects for recovery in the Liberian economy are negligible to non-existent under the current regime. The chances for replacing the present government depend largely on the capacity of the Liberian people to render the illegal government ungovernable and the extent to which multinational corporate support of the Liberian state becomes cost-prohibitive.

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A PERSONAL MEMORIAL  
Charles Dunbar Sherman  
1917-1986

Garland R. Farmer

I begin this only hours after learning that "Charlie B", whose friendship I have treasured for 40 years, has left us. I want to try to \_\_\_\_\_ to the young, whose memories of him should not be solely of the diminished Charles of recent \_\_\_\_\_ ng of the man whose imprint on Liberia was second only to that of President Tubman during the nation's most progressive period. I like to think that these personal, if incomplete, recollections may some day inspire one of his own numerous, diverse and far-flung progeny to do some research, to add weight and depth to my belief that he was one of Liberia's most imaginative, most creative and most productive sons. At the end, I fear, also among its least appreciated.

Lacking Charles' eloquence, which could be soaring, I will not try to evoke all that which bound me to him across 40 years in time and thousands of miles of space. Instead, I will, here and there, let many of his own words speak for me. While I feel no need to dwell on shortcomings that have been amply expanded upon over the years, neither do I seek to beatify him.

However imperfect, here was one who, by dint of his own efforts, his own ability and character and intelligence, reached the very brow of the summit, only to find it occupied by a colossus not yet ready to be displaced. Then, because he was neither perfect nor supreme, he became the target of those who, unable to rise to his level, contrived to reduce him to theirs. It is one more tribute to Charles that these efforts did not destroy him, though they dimmed his luster and brought a neglect which, through that which follows, I hope to remind, particularly his family, was unmerited and unworthy.

In 1965, Charles told the World Alliance of the YMCA (of which he was completing 10 years as its first African President):

Unprejudicial knowledge of human history, at once profound and \_\_\_\_\_ ng, may in the long run be worth more than billions of dollars in material aid. Memory is perhaps man's most prized possession.

My memory of Charles dates from late 1947 or early 1948. He was in the U.S. as one of the "Tubman scholarship" recipients, a memorable group of young men who \_\_\_\_\_ lent the expertise they acquired on those \_\_\_\_\_ to President Tubman's \_\_\_\_\_ of Liberia from a 19th-century backwater to a mid-\_\_\_\_\_ nation. We met in Washington, D.C. where he was attending American University and I was at the \_\_\_\_\_ of State, assistant desk officer for Liberia.

At this distance in time, it is hard to say what it was that attracted one to him, but even among that outstanding "scholarship crowd", who all went on to leave important marks on Liberia (and, most, to become my personal friends), he stood out: a lively and engaging intellect, a quick wit, a bearing which always made him seem taller than his actual height, a "style" which would become both a trade mark and a stigma. Whatever it was, I was not alone in

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seeing it: He had just been selected to be the first African to serve as an intern in President Harry Truman's White House, and, shortly before, had been the first black African to graduate from the renowned Wharton School of Finance.

In 1961, Charles wrote to a young Liberian who was agonizing over his future:

<p>The great struggle in which we are engaged in Africa will demand of a small country such as Liberia men of unqualified integrity, ability. It is a serious weakness of character to happen and things will be different elsewhere if different place...Creative thinking and Should you make a record, it will be a great are.</p>	<p>unsurpassed some miracle will chance to get into a to a given spot. matter where you are.</p>
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Charles' "given spot" was Liberia and his record was truly "great and good." That he fell short of his own expectations is hardly surprising; they were so high. Still, one cannot help wondering what his role might have been had his stage been larger.

He did not, of course, escape the notice of President Tubman, that consummate judge of men, who pushed him ahead of the crowd, through a series of increasingly responsible positions: Liberia's first "Government Economist", soon "Economic Advisor, R.L." and then "Financial Advisor", the first Liberian to fill the post that had come to symbolize a diminution of Liberia's nationhood. (I do not seek occasion to use the word "first" so often in speaking of Charles' life; it just falls into place naturally, undeniably.) Albeit often in the shade of older figures—Gabriel Dennis, William Dennis, Christian Cassell—Charles was "present at the creation", in the years 1948-1957, of that historic burst of change in Liberia's economic, social and political life—welcomed by some, opposed by others—that marked the early Tubman Presidency. For example, the bitterly-contested concession of the Bomi Hill iron ore deposit to the Liberia Mining Company, the nation's first step into the most dynamic, prosperous, and creative twenty five years of its history.

<p>Returning from America imbued with the generous liberal bias and high ideals that marked so the scourge of Liberia M became one some even "nationalistic" strength: his creatively to</p>	<p>ersities, he was at first, strange as it sounds today, estors, including Lansdell Christie, who, as founder created Liberia's great iron ore industry, and who Many dreaded the'r negotiations with him; as "unreal'stic", "ideal'stic", or at Charles gave frst evidence of a great , to analyze ely, and to respond</p>
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<p>He with his first equipment in and hastened great boxes reality had to large for the to put less emphasis on a proud but vain self-sufficiency and more on cooperation and partnership.</p>	<p>Charles' evolution from theory to reality commenced re: a dry cleaning plant. He bought the the specifications, p to shelter. When the to pass, a horrible ree times too nce and expertise,</p>
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## GARLAND R. FARMER

By 1957 when he was made Secretary of the Treasury, his experience had deepened and his vision broadened; he was ready for the myriad and unceasing negotiations with international organizations--the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, with the then-omnipresent Export-Import Bank, and with government and private representatives from America, Germany, Israel, Italy, Spain, Sweden and on and on, who were daily to be found in his waiting room. (Anyone who ever spent time in the waiting room of the old Treasury building on Lynch Street will never forget the experience. Wobbly, uncertain straight chairs with frayed and failing cane bottoms--and never enough of them for all those in attendance. A gaping hole in the wooden floor in front of his secretary's desk. A climb up worn and squeaking stairs, past the door of his Number Two, a man of unimpeachable honesty and monumental stubbornness, who considered his main job was to report, in an unforgettable high, piping voice, all he had seen and heard each day when he showed up, umbrella in hand, each evening at the Executive Mansion.)

The ground-breaking of the Treasury's new Broad Street building, on Sept. 13, 1959, was, for Charles, both a personal triumph and a milestone in Liberia's new era. His words, however, were cautionary as he called on Liberians to finance more of the country's future, to avoid new and expensive foreign obligations:

In the years to come, as far as is possible, and as quickly as their resources permit, our Treasury should seek money for development from the Liberian people....however, it would be dangerous if only a few people give this type of support to Government. We must avoid a situation in which all of the people become financially obligated to only a few of the people.

The years ahead will be years of high adventure...through which we can only move successfully if all the people are prepared, capable and willing to make a contribution...

Above all, at the peril of our very existence we must never forget, not even for once, that no man will long support or give his allegiance to any political or economic institution or system in which he does not feel he has a vested interest

I re-read those words with a renewed sense of Charles' great insight and perspective, and with a profound regret at what came from the failure to give effect to them.

He later saw that "vested interest" somewhat differently when, shortly after the Treasury Building was put into use in December, 1961, it became impossible to get into the elevators because of the idle visitors, especially young boys, enjoying the new thrill of being whisked nine stories above the street in a matter of seconds. One day after he and I were blocked, for the second or third time, by quicker and more determined young bodies, he scolded one of the brasher boys, saying he had no right to ride for pleasure, keeping out those who had to go to work. Not in the least abashed, the boy asked, "Ain' you say this place belong to Liberian people?" "Yes, of course, and so it does." "Well, I am Liberian people, so I can ride when I want." Defeated by such logic, we waited another quarter hour or more before the Secretary could get to his 8th floor office. I heard him tell that story many times, always leaving me with the sense that he had seen the ghost of his own young self in that boy: secure in his own worth, unimpressed by authority, taking advantage of any new experience life put in his way.

Charles' career reached its zenith in the years of 1957 through 1964, perhaps '65. The face of Monrovia was transformed, symbolic of what was happening throughout the country: the

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Ducor Hotel, then the new T , the Executive Ma The Mano and Nimba iron ore mines commenced on a Bong was in full construction. lectric power spread through Monrovia and beyond. New highways, new schools, new clinics were built. All these changes were inspired and fostered by President Tubman, but financing them was Charles Sherman's job.

He was constantly on the move, sharing in Liberia's prominent role at international conferences, especially those related to the wave of independence in Africa (his eyes always realistically open, as when faced with the then-widely-promoted idea of a "United States of Africa": "What is Liberia supposed to do, become another black star on Kwame Nkrumah's flag?"). There were meetings of boards of directors, negotiations with all manner of lenders and investors. At home, perversely, he had to contend with second-guessers, competitors and critics of all stripes. The more prominent his role, the bigger the target he offered.

It is instructive that when he held the eyes and ears of Liberia--as when he dedicated the Treasury Building in December, 1961, a few days after the first shipment of Mano ore, a few days BEFORE (as his critics made sure everyone noticed) the ground-breaking for the new Executive Mansion--he spoke mainly of African liberation and the context in which it could bring real and lasting benefit to Africans:

Freedom is an ultimate value from which there can be no reference; it is absolute. However, freedom is not a static condition; once it exists the action of people who live within its framework can well commence to work for its destruction.

It is...necessary that the type of unity declared by African Governments as desirable and the means of achieving it should have a binding and unbending reference to the maintenance of freedom and liberty...the shibboleth, 'the greatest good for the greatest number', is a positive expression of desirable truth. Nevertheless, such an expression should be accompanied by an exposition of the method by which the 'greatest number' is able to reveal, or permitted to register its conception of what is good. If 'greatest good' is to be defined by a self-imposed minority, freedom is then compromised in its own name.

This concern for the reality, as opposed to the appearance, of freedom was spoken at a time when Charles' own success, his national and international prominence, his own controlled but well-known ambitions were earning for him the attention of the envious, the resentful, the obstructive. Many of us found him more often distant, brooding, abrupt. Looking back, one wonders that such moods were not more pervasive, that he was ever able to relax, to joke, to enjoy himself, his family and friends as he so often did.

Consider:

Like many Liberians--more than most foreign commentators have recognised--Charles had roots deep in two societies, in two cultures, in two families. The frustration and, at times, insecurity inherent in this condition left their marks. Yet, I have sometimes heard an urbane, cosmopolitan, self-assured Charles hold some international group spellbound with tales of the way in which a boy must run to avoid the leopard when he returns to his village after dark, or how to swim a river to avoid the crocodile. Few who saw him could reconcile the Charles who presided at Bendu over his mother's traditional memorial service with the sophisticate one had lunched with in London or New York only days before. How many today, Liberians or others, can fully comprehend all that was demanded, of body and spirit, to bridge so wide a gulf?

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Just as these two, often conflicting, currents influenced his thought and action throughout his life, so, later on, did the real, if informal, "checks and balances" system which marked so much of Liberian public life. At the Treasury, he had to be constantly alert not only to that gossipy, but essentially harmless, Number Two but also of a more inimical presence in the auditor's department, one who had "home town" access to the President. Charles could never know what kind of report, based more often than not on incomplete information or misunderstanding, would have to be explained, or denied, or countered.

Beyond the Treasury, there were the real and presumed rivalries, with the Vice President and various others for succession to the Presidency; with still others for succession to his own job; with Steve Tolbert for any business of Charles' which the latter might covet. (I recall especially the ugly days when Steve was pushing Charles out of the soap business, a business which Charles had first proposed to Steve and from which he was eventually ousted.)

Then, there were the foreign "advisors", in Liberia at the behest of the World Bank, the IMF, USAID or other "benefactors"; he had to resist a multitude of actions and policies proposed by these outsiders which he felt would destroy the confidence which Tubman's policies had instilled in lenders and investors.

He correctly analyzed the \_\_\_\_\_ within which Liberia's future had to be assured in a newspaper article on Feb. 7, 1963:

People must first feel a sense of security, a freedom from fears and a belief in the future before they embark upon activities which may not benefit them immediately but will enrich the future.

He found it hard, even impossible, to get the foreign advisors and the Liberians who worked with them to understand how fragile a thing was the confidence which they were endangering. It was when the tax collectors and auditors replaced the dreamers and builders that there began the \_\_\_\_\_ of international investor confidence in Liberia which has continued to this day. Despite the innumerable \_\_\_\_\_ of new projects \_\_\_\_\_ on page one of the \_\_\_\_\_, it is impossible to name a single major, new investment in Liberia since he left the Treasury twenty years ago.

These problems were \_\_\_\_\_ by the personal attacks of those who increasingly preyed on and fed a \_\_\_\_\_ that came with age and long-held power to an ever-more-isolated President. There were the P.R.O's (Public Relation Officers), especially the ones operating in Charles' home base of Cape Mount. More menacing still were the "Security" services, who came to find their own futures more certain and better rewarded as the tales they carried grew in \_\_\_\_\_. I vividly recall a "overthrow plot" reported to have been hatched at Klay between Charles, Richard Henries (of all people!) and other names certain to arouse Presidential fear. For weeks, Charles was unable to see the President to refute the report. His sister, Clavenda, ultimately got to the President and, pleading on her knees, succeeded in arranging a meeting at which Charles was able to prove that on the date when he was supposed to be plotting at Klay, he had been on \_\_\_\_\_ business in Beirut.

Charles became, unexpectedly and \_\_\_\_\_, vulnerable with the advent of the first "Austerity Program" imposed by lenders on a Liberia obliged to slow down, to take a breath, to consolidate. A distant, impatient, \_\_\_\_\_ and ambitious Secretary of the Treasury could be tolerated so long as he produced the money. Not so, one suddenly having to cut back, to say "No" and to try to explain arcane financial dilemmas.

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The strain of trying to function while protecting himself became insupportable. I remember hours in the autumn of 1966 as he agonized over a letter sent and the resignation accepted. I Auditors swarmed over his office, his but of wrongdoing might turn up, but didn't about him sifted out to Geneva, where he went to see him in December. I found an u being abandoned by those who had courted uncertainty about how he would now earn a imprisonment on trump charges when Islands, where I by a sense of before, an of arrest and

I told him of the rumors I had heard realistically about what was possible in the expect foreign investors, even a company if, in so doing, they would earn the enmity of obliged to deal regularly. jackals, confusing the sorrow as when I received it me after that visit in Las P Embassy (the unexpected been easily disproven), the Harvard Advisory ( for his frustration of their anti-business proposals with that he had sold out to business), and on to some of his more persistent and ignoble local critics. I wrote back, trying to deal with all his nts with me. On December 30, 1966, he responded, thanking me and saying:

I am leaving for home this evening, amidst rumors that the President sent six mansion cars to my farm and arrested four of my farm boys...It appears that the checking and auditing at the Banks and at the Treasury by Whitney Murray proved a fizzle so our friend is finding a new welcome program.

I am not fazed because my mind is made up to take the worst. I shall not surrender my soul to any man under any conditions whatsoever.

It is hard now to believe that, at the time, we thought such torment and uncertainty was the worst that fate had in store for him. No nightmare of 1966 ever hinted at the post coup Stockade, its beer-carton mattress and the repeated sessions of fifty lashes to the bare back.

Well, he returned to Liberia where even that day's meager worst did not occur. He spent months wondering about Africa, renewing and making contacts, writing insightful analyses on the prospects for African economic cooperation, trying to put together a new future based on the extraordinary experience of the previous twenty years. But, for better or worse, Liberia was his "given spot" and he returned to it, scaling his ambitions down from Africa, from Liberia to Cape Mount County.

There were so many projects, memos and plans and contacts that went into every sort of activity, most ambitiously into the oil palm project in Cape Mount. In its early years came ed drought, fires spreading from nearby slash-and-burn farm neighbors. Later, to protect himself from the resentful, unforgiving Tolberts. I witnessed some of

## GARLAND R. FARMER

his activities at closer hand; for example, the little West African Stores installation at Mano, always more a pest than a profit center for him, but never abandoned, never disregarded. He sought the Senatorial toga as armor against the political attacks on him. But finally, there came a prolonged fight to save the West African Agricultural Corporation, which slipped, piece by piece and year by year, from him--and nothing that now-less-closely-involved friends like me could do to help, though we tried. (Where were those fabled fat Swiss bank accounts when he was grasping at every faint hope to save the project? More real in Monrovia's gossip factory than in Zurich, perhaps?)

Yet, there were still myriad projects afoot at the very end. The last sparks of that eventful life burned bright, if sadly much less bright than before.

Precisely because the end was not so brilliant as the zenith (is it ever?) is the best reason to recall other examples of his clarity and prescience:

For example, when, in speaking to the IMF meeting in 1965, he foresaw:

...in developing countries, repayment of principal and interest, as well as the difficulty in finding sufficient resources domestically to meet required governmental contributions, serve as a brake on the flow of needed external loans. Vicious circles develop when the servicing of existing obligations can be assured only through financing expansion of the economic base..

Does that make you think of Brazil, or Mexico...or Liberia in 1987?

And, once more, that sense of place, that devotion to his "given spot" showed itself at the dedication in 1964 of the Tubman Center of African Culture at Robertsport (another of his brainchildren):

A symptom of cultural rootlessness, particularly among the foreign trained, is the absence of strong, positive sentiments which are the basis of fixed values in a society. Sentiments are formed over a long space of time and involve gradual conditioning. It is possible that such values, when strongly implanted or deeply rooted in human behavior, can cause a man to prefer death to surrender; loss to compromise; pain to pleasure; abstention to satisfaction. It is therefore not possible to evolve a noble society in which men have no values in which they strongly believe.

These words were delivered, remember, in the presence of a President whose favor was rapidly being lost to him, amid all the rumor-mongering and complaints against a tightening austerity.

In 1971, I was the sole outside witness to the ultimate demonstration of Charles' own devotion to certain values, and I have wondered since that day what he and Liberia would have been had his personal ambition prevailed over his sense of what could best serve those values.

He and I and his grandson, who was two or three years old then, had gone to Roberts Field the day after President Tubman's funeral to see off a close mutual friend. As we watched the passengers board the plane, a man of tribal origin approached and asked his permission to

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organize a demonstration against the Tolberts: "We can't see those people in that place. They no good. We want you for President." Charles declined the suggestion, good- firmly. Then another man, better-educated but still of modest circumstances, ca request. Then a third and a fourth. All turned down, despite the urgency, ev ion, in their voices and manners. Ruefully, wistfully, he looked at the little boy: " e my grandson there? What kind of Liberia would I leave for him if I led Libe h of Sierra Leone, letting the Generals overthrow the Government, so the Colone s can ov row them, so the Sergeants can overthrow the Colonels?"

Well, Liberia didn't take time for Generals and Colonels. Those simple men may have seen rightly what would have been best for the country, but like so many others, before and after, they underestimated Charles' devotion to certain values, something for which he paid dearly but something which his family and his countrymen should remember and respect, even as I do and will.

Charles Sherman received much from Liberia, and gave much to it. He wanted, desperately at one time, to give more, but Liberia never asked for it...except, perhaps, through the voices of those men at Roberts Field?

Yekutiel Gershoni,

(Boulder and London, 1985,) Westview Press, pp. xiii, 134. Paper \$22.50(?)

This book has so many \_\_\_\_\_, one hardly knows where to begin. It is basically a descriptive rehash of general information on Liberian history, with no \_\_\_\_\_ of recent published and unpublished work, or of older studies on Liberia.

The author, Yekutiel Gershoni, sets out ambitious goals, but only surveys the issues he claims to investigate. In the preface, he states that he will examine why the Liberian elite adopted attitudes borrowed from white colonial administrators and what the processes were that led to two distinct communities in Liberia. The book intends to trace the development of the relations between the \_\_\_\_\_ and indigenous Liberians, how the settlers coped with the European partition of West Africa, and the ways that Africans reacted to the increasing control of the Liberian settlers.

These goals are only superficially fulfilled, and with no new information or insights, while ignoring much well-known writing on Liberia. The first chapter on the founding of Liberia and early history is a summary of the work of Abeodu Jones with some references to archival sources. Throughout the book Gershoni ignores the prior works of J. Gus Liebenow, George Brooks, Ronald David, Tom Shick, Ibrahim Sundiata, and M. B. Akpan.<sup>1</sup> This last omission is ironic. Although the notes on the author claim that "Dr. Gershoni analyzes for the first time the developments that led the \_\_\_\_\_ into practicing 'black colonialism'..."(xi), Akpan's work on Black imperialism and colonialism predates Gershoni and he is not credited at all. In addition to these published works, the \_\_\_\_\_ consulted are quite dated and more recent ones such as that of Shick and this reviewer were not examined.<sup>2</sup>

The results of these omissions are evident throughout the text. In chapter one, in describing African migrations and movements into the area now known as Liberia, Gershoni cites only an anthropologist, without using any historical sources. The weakness of this is evident when he can suggest that the peoples of eastern Liberia neither traded with nor mediated between Africans and Europeans(2). If he had used Brooks, Davis or Sullivan, he could not have made such a statement.

When discussing the Liberian economy, he jumps from the earliest days of the settlements to the late nineteenth century in just one paragraph(15). Population estimates are given, with no dates or decades, and no sources(30). One wonders from whence this information came. The chapter on the domination of the hinterland uses archival materials and one article, never \_\_\_\_\_ ng the work of Liebenow on administration and political domination.

Because of the lack of published materials on Liberian indigenous history, the last chapter on African reactions to Liberian expansion in the hinterland arouses the interest of the reader. This section too is a disappointment, however. Gershoni looks in some detail at the responses of three different groups to Americo-Liberian domination: the Vai, Glebo, and Gola. In these cases, he relies heavily on the research of Svend Holsoe, Jane Martin, and Warren D'Azevedo.<sup>3</sup> There is no original research in this section, even though this is also the subtitle of

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the book. The author does not refer to any other ethnic groups' responses. If one were going to survey previous work and make comparisons, then the author should have included research and writing on other groups as well.

The work of Davis and this reviewer, and even Jones, include much evidence on the length and strength of Kru resistance to Liberian rule. Since this was such a major response throughout the nineteenth, and most of the twentieth century, it should have been included. Even with the three examined, the comparisons and conclusions are weak. Gershoni looks at traditional cultures, contact with Europeans and later the settlers, and the extent of westernization/modernization of the three. He does not consider the effect of the economy at all. Without examining the pre-settler economy and economic activity in the nineteenth century, he cannot come to any real conclusions. Both the Vai and Gola were less westernized than the Glebo, yet their responses differed greatly. Both the Glebo and Gola resisted the government, and within these groups, there were varied responses. In the case of the Kru, there was long-term contact with Europeans and exposure to western economy and lifestyles, yet they resisted and fought the government. If the author had examined the basis of the various groups' economies, how they were affected by contact with the settlers, events of the nineteenth century and international recession and prosperity, then the variety and patterns would make more sense. When larger ethnic groups, or subdivisions within them, chose to ally with or oppose the settlers, it had more to do with how they saw their best interest, what they had to gain or lose, and how they interpreted their chances for independence, economic and political, in the future.

This book may satisfy the general reader (and apparently satisfied the non-Liberianist editors) but it is weak, unoriginal, and misleading.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>J. Gus Liebenow, Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege (Ithaca, 1969); George Brooks, The Kru Mariner in the Nineteenth Century: A Compendium (Newark, Del., 1970); Ronald W. Davis, Ethnohistorical Studies of the Kru Coast (Newark, Del., 1970); Tom Shick, Behold the Promised Land: A History of Afro-American Settlement in Nineteenth Century Liberia (Baltimore, 1980); Ibrahim Sundiata, Black Scandal (Philadelphia, 1980); M. B. Akpan, "Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule over the African Peoples of Liberia, 1814-1964," Canadian Journal of African Studies, VII (1973), 217-236.

<sup>2</sup>Tom W. Shick, "The Social and Economic History of Afro-American Settlers in Liberia, 1820 to 1900," University of Wisconsin, 1976; Jo Mary Sullivan, "Settlers in Sinoe County and Their Relations with the Kru, c. 1835-1920," Boston University, 1978.

<sup>3</sup>Svend Holsoe, "The Cassava-Leaf People: An Ethnohistorical Study of the Vai People with a Particular Emphasis on the Tewo Chiefdom" (Boston University, 1967); Jane J. Martin, "The Dual Legacy: Government Authority and Mission Influence among the Grebo of Eastern Liberia, 1834-1910" (Boston University, 1968); Warren L. D'Azevedo, "A Tribal Reaction to Nationalism," Liberian Studies Journal, Part 1, Vol. I, No. 2 (1969); Part 2, Vol. II, No. 1 (1969); Part 3, Vol. II, No. 2 (1970); Part 4, Vol. II, No. 1 (1970-1971).

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Hassan B. Sisay,

. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985 pp, 202. \$11.75.

The description of this work given by the press is that it is a "...history of Liberia from the founding of the Republic of Liberia in the 1820s to the present." The book's title indicates a diplomatic history within some framework of big-small nation theory. Neither is correct, the book is primarily centered around a description of U.S.-Liberian relations between 1923 and 1947.

There are some summary chapters on the beginnings of Liberia and on relations following 1947, but these are quite incomplete and sketchy at best. A more descriptive title might be that of the 1975 dissertation from which this book primarily comes: "United States Policy Toward Liberia, 1923-1947." Curiously, this work is not listed in the bibliography, nor is Christopher Williams' germane 1976 dissertation, "United States Relations with Liberia, 1940-1960."

The strength of Dr. Sisay's book is its extensive research using primary resource materials, especially U.S. documents from government and presidential papers sources. The narrative of the development of U.S.-Liberian relations is anchored in these sources. Sisay depends a great deal on the veracity and honest reporting of the U.S. mission representatives in Monrovia. One wonders how accurate they were in some instances, but it is difficult to find materials to check on these characters from the Liberian perspective.

The documents from the League of Nations provide a clearer perspective on the problems of the Liberian slave and pawning scandal, and Sisay uses them well.

Dependence on these documents, however, has given Sisay's book the unevenness and idiosyncrasy inherent in the reports of missions in the field. There are excruciating details on some incidents, a lack of any mention of other important matters. Detail on President Barclay's visit to the U.S., but large jumps in time without comment (e.g. 1947 to 1954 on p. 151). Indeed, the most frustrating problem in a close reading of the book is the lack of time sense in the narrative. I found this problem particularly acute in chapter III where the author jumps back and forth between the 1870s, 1890s, and twentieth century references.

Perhaps the key to a great many of Sisay's problems in this book is the lack of a clear thesis or hypothesis. There is little theme to the book. Thus we find a series of well documented chapters but some are very specific (Chapter IV on the Stevenson Restriction Plan) and others very broad and sweeping (Chapter X, 22 pages on 1947 to the present). Some chapters are more on the internal development of Liberia, others more heavily on foreign affairs. We never really know what point of view Sisay is taking in relation to the basic relationship pattern between the U.S. and Liberia.

Toward the end of the book Sisay tries to deal with this dilemma (p. 178) by giving four phases of American-Liberian relations. Yet he prefaces these by saying "There are obviously strong reasons to support both interventionist and non-interventionist theories..." Later in the same paragraph, "In only one period can it be said that U.S. self-interest dominated the decision making process in Washington." Phase four, incidentally goes from 1933 to the present. Some order might be brought to the text if these phases were the basis of the book's organization from the beginning rather than stated at the end only.

## BOOK REVIEW

Fundamentally, Sisay is pretty good when dealing with documents, especially in the period of the 1920s and 1930s. He is not so good at analysis or drawing conclusions. He uses secondary sources to substantiate alternative interpretations or uses gross generalities. (Though I.K. Sundiata's 1980 is not used at all.)

I should also note that there is a great deal of sloppiness in the presentation of this book. Errors in the text and the documentation run throughout. For example, page 17 places Senegal on the border with Liberia. Page 7 says Congress gave the Colonization Society \$100,000 in 1819, page 178 gives the sum as \$4,100,000. In Chapter XI the text denotes Schmoke's view but fn 6 cites Bixter as the source. In Chapter X, fn 9 is an "Ibid" to fn 8 which has two sources cited.

Symptomatic of this persistent problem is a speech of President Tubman quoted on page 149. The speech is said to have been given on January 5, 1951, it was 1961. The location is given as "Kolahun Lofa County, in Voinjama." Kolahun is spelled with a "u", and though the source he uses confuses the place, Sisay passes on this confusion. Kolahun is one town, Voinjama another, Loffa (the spelling in the source) is the county (though in 1961 it was still part of the Western Province, not yet a county). Within the extensive quote are several transcribing errors: Sisay doesn't indicate where he stops quoting and paraphrases; he Americanizes the British spelling in the original text (laborers for labourers, rigors for rigours); he changes some punctuations; he uses "infested" instead of the text's "infected"; and he fails to indicate breaks in the quote. These are all "picky" mistakes, but they cumulatively bring into question his scholarship throughout.

One last word. It seems to me we should be getting past the point where every book on Liberia has to give a history of the nation before getting to the subject of a more specific nature dealing with the nation. There is enough scholarship out there on Liberia to allow the writer to forgo this obligation and concentrate on the particular aspects of the Liberian story.

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Jeffrey C. Stone, editor,  
Aberdeen, United Kingdom, March, 1984.

: Proceeding of a Colloquium at the University of

is a printed collection of the proceedings of a Colloquium held at the University of Aberdeen in Great Britain in March, 1984. Several of the pages are of interest to specialists on Liberian Studies, including those by J. Sullivan on the Kru Coast revolt, by M. K. Hendrix on fisheries on the Sierra Leone Peninsula, and several papers on continent-wide issues of petroleum, fisheries, law of the sea, international maritime transport and on broader geopolitical and cultural aspects of the relationships of man and the sea in Africa.

The book is necessarily very uneven, reflecting the variety of conference papers ranging from scholarly and thought-provoking essays, to rather abruptly truncated notes on some of the oral presentations. As at many such conferences, the disciplines represented run a gamut, including history, sociology, geography, international relations, agriculture, African Studies and so forth. Despite the diversity of disciplines and the uneven quality of the papers, the theme of the relationship of Africa and Africans to the sea is viable.

A thought piece by J. D. Hargreaves opens the Colloquium with introductory concepts regarding the role of the sea in African history and economy. Roy Bridges continues the theme setting with an essay, complete with maps, showing routes of access by sea, and to the sea. The second time, "Distribution of the Benefits from the Sea" begins with three Africa-wide theme setting essays on the coastline, on petroleum and on fisheries. The second is then expanded with papers focused on contemporary economic aspects of Africa's relation with the sea.

Several of the summaries of discussion gave hints that the conference was a lively one, with both constructive criticism and an occasional heated disagreement over such issues as the identity of the Swahili people, the relationship of underdevelopment to technological rejuvenation and the failure of some developing societies to be concerned with conservation.

Aberdeen University clearly has performed good service to African Studies in hosting the Colloquium and publishing the proceedings.

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## NEWS AND NOTES

### REPORT ON THE FIRST LIBERIA WORKING GROUP CONFERENCE IN BREMEN, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, OCTOBER 1986.

On October 4th and 5th, 1986, a motley congregation met in Germany's famous "Übersee-Museum" to attend a conference organized by a Germany-based association called the Liberia Working Group. Both international participation and the fact that many specialists on Liberia convened in Germany for the first time - in a country that has little historical background for such ventures - promised to make it an interesting event. The surprisingly large number of 45 participants comprised development experts, academics, students, and representatives of German companies in Liberia. Foreign guests accounted for a quarter of the assembly, including some reputable visitors from overseas. Among the Liberian participants, who live in exile in Germany or Holland, the most prominent guest was Dr. Togba-Nah Tipoteh, the former minister of Planning and Economic Affairs.

Most of the lectures and discussions were held in English and were of remarkable depth. They covered a wider topical frame than the motto of the conference had suggested: "Liberia's political and economic future after the elections and the coup attempt in 1985." The topics ranged from global macro-economic development issues to specific problems of atlas mapping in Liberia. Other contributions referred to Liberia's monetary problems, economic development, the military regime, and the role of the churches and of student resistance in political change. Lectures about deforestation and the iron ore sector illustrated the damage done to the country as a result of uncontrolled exploitation of resources by foreign companies. The question why basic foodstuffs have to be imported in spite of Liberia's vast agricultural potential was raised by two contributions on food production and supply.

More strictly development-related topics were treated in lectures about German development co-operation, women's programs and the health care system in Liberia. The ensuing discussions, which focussed on development issues and the present political situation in Liberia, were very animated.

While most of the lectures gave general overviews of Liberian political, economic and development problems, there were only a few case presentations giving insights below the macro-level. Analyses of constraints in changing local systems of food production and nutrition and of the neglect of women's economic roles in development projects constituted a warning against the fallacies technocrats may commit in development planning. Criticisms of external dependence in most development sectors, to an extreme degree in the national health system, provided the background for questions concerning the possibilities of truly self-reliant development under present political conditions and of the recollection of indigenous know-how as a starting point of development at the grassroots level.

There was general agreement that development efforts would only succeed as part of a comprehensive economic and political re-orientation. In the face of Liberia's present power structure and the support of the system by, above all, the USA, there is little hope that the country will enter the path to democracy and economic equality in the foreseeable future.

## NEWS AND NOTES

A conference reader containing most of the lectures (by Prof. Dr. K. Wohlmuth, Prof. Dr. G. Völker, Prof. Dr. R. Kappel, Prof. Dr. W. Stanley, Christina Saßkreutz, Veronika Fuest, Dr. N. Remmert, Dr. W. Korte) can be obtained from the Group, Grubenbacherstr. 40, D-6315 Mücke, FR of Germany. (Liberia Work Group, Paper No. 4, Bremen 1986, 166p, \$12.50)

Veronika Fuest

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