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The Evolution of the Labor Market

by Adhemar Byl, Washington*

By the term dual economy is generally understood the coexistence of two socio-economically and technologically different systems, each one obeying a different inner logic. The origin of such dualism is of a social rather than a political nature and the economic evidence of dualism expresses itself mainly in the coexistence of a traditional or subsistence sector and a market oriented modern sector. Nobody denies the presence of this dualism in West Africa, although it is also generally accepted that, in comparison to other parts of Africa, it is less pronounced in West Africa, especially in those areas in which economic growth is mainly based on the development of the agricultural sector.

From a historical and a static-economical point of view, the modern sector's labor market in West Africa was evolved through three historical stages, which reflect the West African worker's changing psychological reaction to the economic realities of his environment. There is first the primitive stage in which still very little interaction between the two sectors of the dual economy, the subsistence sector and the modernizing sector, occurs while the African laborer has a pronounced preference for his native environment. The second stage is a stage in which interaction between both sectors increases and in which the African laborer develops a preference for the modern sector and town life. The final stage of full integration of both sectors in a modern economy with one labor market is still relatively rare in Africa at present. Most of West Africa, which is here defined as the former AOF or French West Africa (Dahomey, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali [Sudan], Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta), the former mandate Togo, the former British West African countries (Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone), and independent Liberia is at present in the second stage. As the distinction between stages is based on the behavior of individuals in the dual market situation (the shape of the individual labor supply

curve) some individuals may still react as in stage one while the majority of their colleagues act already as in stage two.

This paper will analyze briefly the evolution from the primitive stage to the stage in which a preference for town life develops, and then analyze the available labor market data.

Population Density

Notwithstanding the fact that West Africa is more densely populated than South and Central Africa, except for Rwanda and Burundi, its average population density of less than 20 people per sq.km. is about the same as in North and East Africa and much lower than in other parts of the developing world such as South Asia (115 persq.km.) and the Far East (81). The population in West Africa is further very unevenly divided between the former AOF countries and the formerly British-ruled areas. Nigeria, with more than 60 people per sq. km., is almost as densely populated as France. Dahomey with the densest population in AOF (21) has still only one third of the population density of Nigeria and two thirds of the other three former British-ruled countries (Gambia, Ghana and Sierra Leone). Those territories also offered the most attractive new economic opportunities, especially Ghana, which attracts large numbers of migrants from all over West Africa, but mainly from Togo, Upper Volta and Nigeria.

Lord H a i l e y, in his "African Survey"¹, stressed the historic shortage of manpower in Africa and indicated that this was not at all known by the general public. He mentions that, when this fact was revealed in French West Africa, it had a decisively modifying effect on the views of that section of the French public which looked at the African colonies as an inexhaustible reservoir of recruits for the French Army². Arthur W. L e w i s in his article "Economic Development with Unlimited Supply of Labour" wrote "... there is an acute shortage of male labour in some parts of Africa ..."³ which indicated that in certain parts

* This article summarizes material which appeared in my article on "The Evolution of the Labor Market in French-Speaking West Africa", in *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv*, Vol. 97, No. 1, 1966, pp. 163-212. It has been brought up to date and its scope expanded to include not only former French West Africa and Togo, but also former British West Africa, Liberia and Portuguese Guinea.

¹ London, New York, Toronto, 1938, p. 603.

² See f.l. Arthur B e r g e r, "Frankreichs unerschöpfliche Menschenquelle", in: *Kampf um Afrika*, Berlin, 1938, pp. 65 ff.

³ Arthur W. L e w i s, o.c., *The Manchester School*, Vol. XXII, May 1954, p. 140.

of Africa "limited supply of labour" was and might still be a more useful assumption.

Migratory Movements

Notwithstanding that, hiring of labor in West Africa has historically presented less serious obstacles than in the rest of the African continent, mainly for four reasons:

- the people had been exposed longer than elsewhere to trade, markets, and money;
- the demand for labor for mining and manufacturing activities was less important, relative to population, than in other parts of Africa;
- West African economies were at an early stage transformed into cash crop economies in which peasants used hired labor (the labor force was thus led into a modern wage-earning way of life in mines and factories via working experience for wages on African farms);
- the presence of 2.2 mn Mossi in Upper Volta and several other smaller sociological groups in Mali, Niger and the north of Togo and Dahomey, all countries which can provide the necessities of life but which could not provide money income for many.

In addition, these Northerners are adaptable and hardy workmen, and their readiness to move southward to cities such as Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi in Ghana and to Abidjan in Ivory Coast gave rise to a rather elaborate system of migration and migratory labor that is still a vital and colorful part of the West African labor scene today⁴. Although originally these workers may have migrated mainly under outside pressure and later to fulfil the urge of their curiosity for the bright lights of the southern cities, at present they are well aware of the economic conditions in the coastal cities and of the wages they can expect. More Mossis tended to go to Ghana rather than to the Ivory Coast when the economic conditions, the wages and the political climate were good in Ghana, but they tended to go to the Ivory Coast especially the year after wages had been lower in Ghana than in Ivory Coast the previous year.

Because of the economic and social costs of migratory movements, stabilization of workers at their place of employment has been given serious consideration in some host countries, but has met with a certain degree of resistance on the part of the authorities of the countries from which they migrate. Historically, therefore, migration occurred according to a seasonal pattern and in Ghana the annual flow in each direction has exceeded 300,000 persons. Migration into southern Ghana, however, is rapidly losing its predominantly seasonal character. The main immigrant streams are no longer from the northern Savan-

nah countries but from Togo and Nigeria and this migration is usually not seasonal but on a long-term basis. According to the 1960 census of population Togolese and Nigerian immigration into Ghana made up 54 per cent of all foreign born people recorded and 57 per cent of all people of foreign origin. The population in southern Ghana which had not been born there consisted of 314,000 persons from coastal countries, 129,000 from northern countries and 189,000 from Ghana's own north.

The Non-Spontaneous Supply of Labor

Historically, when the colonial governments and expatriate firms needed labor for public works or private enterprise, because of the above mentioned supply situation, labor was difficult to find, although the demand was very small. It was generally accepted that the African worker was a "target worker", i.e., he offers his services in the modern sector only until he acquires a certain fixed target income such as money to pay taxes, or to buy a specific object. In those conditions, it was not possible to resort to wage increases to attract more work⁵. The effect was expected to be the opposite. As a result, coercion was used to attract additional labor supply. In the French-ruled areas, there were three main forms of coercion:

- labor taxes;
- a system of officially sponsored forced recruitment for private employers, called "authorized recruitment";
- labor battalions.

Employers and governments also tried a fourth policy to attract labor, namely, outright luring of non-spontaneous supply.

Forced recruitment also existed, and in a subtle form continues to exist in Liberia. Sierra Leone and other British-ruled areas have known compulsory portorage and compulsory labor for road construction and maintenance and repair of buildings. Employers in the rest of British West Africa, officially, did not resort to direct force to secure the labor they needed. In the early days of this century, imports of labor from Liberia to the former Spanish island of Fernando Pô gave rise to similar criticism as later imports of labor from Angola and Mozambique. At present most labor for Fernando Pô (Equatorial Guinea) is recruited under contract in Eastern Nigeria.

Direct Labor Tax

Direct taxation was a concept foreign to the indigenous peoples of Africa, except for northern

⁴ The French sociologist and cinematographer Jean Rouch studied systematically the movements of the Songhay groups from Niger to Ghana since 1941. (Migrations au Ghana [Gold Coast] Enquête 1953-1955, Paris, Société des Africanistes, 1956, p. 176). He also made an interesting movie, Jaguar (Films de Pléiade, Paris), about 4 migrants from Niger.

⁵ This is not "the phenomenon known as a backward-bending supply curve" (Charles Kindleberger, Economic Development, 2nd edition, Mc Graw-Hill, 1965, p. 106) but a unitary elastic or rectangular hyperbola shaped individual supply curve of labor. See Byl, White, "The End of Backward-Sloping Labor Supply Functions in Dual Economies", in: Cahiers Economiques et Sociaux, Vol. IV, No. 1, March 1966, pp. 33-42.

Nigeria, but has been introduced by European administrations all over West Africa. Africans were accustomed, however, to the performance of services to their chiefs, therefore, the French introduced a direct labor tax, payable in the form of a maximum amount of 12 days of unpaid labor for public works in the immediate vicinity of the village, redeemable in certain cases by a cash payment. It was abolished by an Act of April 11, 1946, and by the consolidated Labor Code of December 1952. In certain areas of Africa, such as Kenya, negative stimulants, such as the taking away of people's land or anything else that limits their subsistence income, have been used. The head tax can also be a considerable negative stimulant. Its rates and application to men and women above a certain age differed from district to district and from territory to territory.

Authorized Recruiting

A large number of firms in West Africa relied upon the Government and the chiefs for recruitment of their labor force. The French Government has officially acknowledged that such assistance was given up to about 1928 for some of the trading and agricultural enterprises and for companies operating forest concessions in the Ivory Coast. In Upper Volta this assistance was refused, however, owing to the demands previously made for forced labor for the railways. The British administration did never officially resort to direct force to secure the necessary labor for private enterprise, although, until about 1909, the Government Transport Department of the Gold Coast engaged in direct recruiting of labor mainly for privately owned mines. In 1906 the Chamber of Mines started cooperating with the political authorities and the chiefs for recruiting purposes and although no force was exerted, the fact that recruiting was done through the Political Officers and the Chiefs, left the impression that it was by government order that they were sent to the mines in the south. It is also perfectly possible that the chiefs exert certain pressures to have a good standing with the government and to pocket more recruitment fees which were paid by the employers to the chief. In the Portuguese territories, labor recruitment for São Tomé and Príncipe and South Africa aroused much criticism but there is no evidence that Portuguese Guinea suffered under those policies.

Labor Battalions

On October 13, 1926, the "Decree on Compulsory Labor—Madagascar", was adopted also in French West Africa and military conscripted labor thus became a practice there. It has now been abolished. There is no evidence of the use of this policy in other parts of West Africa.

Authorities, such as Berg and Lux⁶, justify on economic grounds certain forms of forced recruitment policies when they are only temporary measures designed to lead to spontaneous supply. Unfortunately, the worst employers usually needed the forced recruitment system most. They always reached further in the bush, thus trying to tap a new unspoiled source of supply

Due to cultural factors, Africans had to be psychologically prepared before they became potential suppliers of labor. Direct luring could exist in the creation of demand for an attainable good or in the stimulation of economic development through amelioration of transport facilities, thus bringing new markets within easier reach. An indirect form of luring commonly used was to talk or bribe chiefs into convincing their subjects to go to work in the modern sector. In 1906 the Gold Coast Chamber of Mines inquired about the possibilities or recruiting labor from the north. When the chiefs remained doubtful, the Chief Commissioner arranged for a party of some 30 young men to visit the mines. The party apparently enjoyed the trip and recruiting started. When the French-West African administration abused forced labor in the 1930 the flow of migrants to the Gold Coast increased and labor supply thereby became almost spontaneous.

The Spontaneous Supply of Labor

In West Africa, even earlier than in the rest of Africa, forced recruitment has gradually been replaced by spontaneous migration. By the end of World War II, when demand for labor increased considerably, a potential labor force was already in existence which needed little coaxing to come forward. This does not mean, however, that all recruitment has been abandoned. It has been mentioned above that manpower for Fernando Pô is recruited in eastern Nigeria and in Ivory Coast a Group Association of Employers for the Transport of Workers (SIAMO) was created in 1951 to recruit workers under contract in Upper Volta. This association operates in liaison with the Labor Inspectorate and Employment Office and is really meant to give workers maximum safeguards against unscrupulous employers. The true number of migrants from Upper Volta to the Ivory Coast is generally estimated to be around 100,000 per annum, of which rarely more than 20,000 are recruited. The rest is spontaneous supply which also escapes health, medical and other administrative formalities, which the African worker seems to distrust intensely. Recruitment is also often combined with a system of automatic transmission of part of the money earned to the tribal area.

⁶ André Lux, *Le Marché du Travail en Afrique Noire*, Louvain, Nauwelaerts, 1962, pp. 58-61. Elliot G. Berg, "The Development of a Labor Force in Sub-Saharan Africa", *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Chicago, Vol. 13, No. 4, July, 1965, pp. 304-312.

The most primitive target was an imposed target such as a tax burden (see above). There is, however, also a second type, namely the self-imposed target, which mostly consists of one or more goods the worker wants to buy. He may even be tempted to enlarge this target and therefore prolong his time in paid employment. This constant increase in wants through the demonstration effect of the environment which is sometimes called the "moving target", was often accompanied by a growing desire to spend at least a few months a year in town. But as during a number of months his wife or clan cannot do without him in the subsistence sector, the worker is limited in the latter pursuit. But also this is flexible. Some African tribesmen seem to lengthen the time spent in town in order to be able to bring more money home and thus to keep up with their more wealthy neighbors in the traditional environment. In certain cases the desire to go to the "bright lights" of the city was so great that it was sufficient to offer a worker something more than subsistence wages to make him work for a definite part of the year in town⁷. This something more has been invariably put at between 30 and 50 per cent more than subsistence by economists such as Arthur W. Lewis. If an African worker earns more than his target in the available time, he will be left with additional buying power, and, as he, like other human beings, has basically unlimited wants, he will find some object he can buy with this extra money. Only his cultural environment

⁷ For a theoretical treatment of this phenomenon of a perfectly inelastic individual supply curve of labor, see Byl, White, o.c., pp. 39-42.

obstructed those dormant wants from becoming real wants.

Agricultural production for the market constitutes a real alternative to wage earnings; subsistence agriculture does not, since it does not offer any possibility for earning money. West African agriculture for the market existed before jobs were available in mining and industry and this may explain why West African workers adapted quicker and easier than elsewhere to the new employment situation.

Labor Market Data Employment

The estimated actual number of wage earners in West Africa in 1966 was about 2.2 mn or less than 2 per cent of the total population and about 5 per cent of the active population. Recorded wage-earning employment figures, which refer only to major industries (more than 10 employees in Ghana and Nigeria, more than 6 in Sierra Leone), seem to indicate that employment, although smaller in absolute amount, accounts for a larger percentage of total population (2 per cent) in former French West Africa than in former British West Africa (1.5 per cent). When the figures have been adjusted, however, for the lack of coverage in British West Africa, then wage-earning employment in 1966 accounted for about 2.2 per cent of the total population in former British West Africa (Table 1). In Ghana, this percentage is three times higher than the West African average, and in Liberia (9.2 per cent) more than five times higher. This factor alone may account for part of the problems large

Table 1
West Africa: Number of Registered and Estimated Actual Number of Wage Earners,
in Selected Years, 1948-1966
(Population and wage earners in thousands)

Country	Registered wage earners ¹				Estimated actual 1966 number of wage earners	
	1948	1957	1962	1966	Total	As % of total population
Former French West Africa	257.3	447.4	496.8	545.2	546	2.0
Dahomey	(22.1)	(21.9)	(30.0)	(30.0)	(30)	(1.2)
Guinea	(.)	(97.0)	(90.0)	(90.0)	(90)	(2.5)
Ivory Coast	(80.2)	(164.0)	(194.0)	(221.2)	(221)	(5.7)
Mali	(33.7)	(34.8)	(18.8)	(38.0)	(38)	(0.8)
Mauritania	(2.7)	(4.5)	(19.9)	(16.0)	(16)	(1.5)
Niger	(7.9)	(12.2)	(16.8)	(23.0)	(23)	(0.7)
Senegal	(96.4)	(89.7)	(101.0)	(100.0)	(100)	(2.7)
Upper Volta	(14.3)	(23.3)	(26.3)	(27.0)	(28)	(0.5)
Togo	4.3	11.6	23.7	27.0	27	1.6
Former British West Africa	383.0	801.4	938.2	1,076.3	1,491	2.2
Gambia	(4.1)	(5.0)	(9.6)	(9.1)	(9)	(3.0)
Ghana	(130.9)	(277.4)	(356.2)	(367.2)	(580)	(7.3)
Nigeria	(210.0)	(475.6)	(518.8)	(600.0)	(800)	(1.4)
Sierra Leone	(38.0)	(43.4)	(53.6)	(70.0)	(102)	(4.2)
Liberia	30.0	69.0	91.8	100.0	100	9.2
Portuguese Guinea
Total	674.6	1,329.4	1,550.5	1,718.5	2,164	1.7

Main sources: EEC, Rapport sur la situation sociale dans les pays d'outre-mer associés à la Communauté Economique Européenne, Brussels, EEC Commission, September 1960; and National Annual Reports of the Labour Departments and Statistical Bulletins.

¹ French West African data are partly estimated or adjusted. In British West Africa, they are referring to establishments with at least six (Sierra Leone) and mostly even at least ten employees.

companies such as Firestone Liberia Ltd. have had in hiring the necessary manpower in Liberia.

Public sector employment⁸ accounts for more than half of total recorded employment in the whole of West Africa and for almost two thirds of total recorded employment in former British West Africa, but, if the adjusted actual number of wage earners is used, this percentage comes down to a bit less than 50 per cent. In Liberia it accounts only for 22 per cent of total employment.

Structure of the Wage-earning Labor Force

Wage earning in West Africa is still basically a man's world. Less than one per cent of the wage earners are women, mainly in jobs such as nursing. Industrial distribution of wage earners according to the UN code (see United Nations, Statistical Bulletin for Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa) shows that the major economic activity is government services, which occupies 25 per cent of all wage earners (Table 2). Agriculture, forestry, and fishing comes second with almost 16 per cent of all wage earners, and construction and public works third with almost 15 per cent; in other words, those three categories of economic activity employ some 55 per cent of all wage earners in West Africa. In former French West Africa almost 23 per cent of all wage earners are in agriculture, forestry, and fishing versus only about 10 per cent in former British West Africa. In Liberia, however, more than 43 per cent of all wage earners are in

⁸ Including employment in state-owned enterprises and government employment, not to be confused with employment in government services as in Table 2.

agriculture, forestry, and fishing, mainly on the Firestone plantations. Upper Volta has less than 1 per cent of its wage earners in agriculture, forestry, and fishing and more than 50 per cent in government services, which is a reflection of the extreme subsistence characteristics of this economy.

Wages and Prices

In the formerly French-ruled countries the minimum wages are guaranteed for both nonagricultural and agricultural employees and are known as the "Salaire Minimum Interprofessionnel Garanti" (SMIG). There is a rate for nonagricultural workers and one for agricultural workers. In some countries the latter is referred to as the "Salaire Minimum Agricole Garanti" (SMAG). The SMIG and SMAG apply primarily to private sector wages, but government workers are paid wages based on a scale which is essentially linked to SMIG rates. The country is usually divided in different wage zones and the SMIG and SMAG rates differ according to these zones, which generally means that minima are higher in urban than in rural areas. There is a clear tendency toward diminution of the number of wage zones and as of the middle of 1968 countries such as Niger, Ivory Coast, and Senegal had abolished all wage zones so that minimum wages are now equalized geographically there.

The respective governments set SMIG and SMAG rates after consultation with national wage committees, which are generally composed of representatives of employers, wage earners, and the government. The governments' general wage

Table 2
West Africa: Percentage Industrial Distribution of Recorded Indigenous and Nonindigenous Wage Earners in the Public and Private Sectors in 1966^a)

Country	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	Mining, quarrying	Manufacturing	Construction, public works	Electricity, gas, water . . .	Commerce banks, loans	Transport, storage, communications	Services		Total
								Private	Government	
Former French West Africa	22.8	2.6	9.5	8.9	1.2	11.7	8.7	8.3	28.4	100.0
Dahomey	(2.0)	(0.3)	(6.6)	(9.0)	(2.7)	(13.6)	(7.0)	(16.6)	(42.2)	(100.0)
Guinea	(27.8)	(4.6)	(4.7)	(5.0)	(4.4)	(18.9)	(7.4)	(3.9)	(23.3)	(100.0)
Ivory Coast	(41.4)	(1.2)	(12.1)	(5.9)	(.)	(6.6)	(9.0)	(7.6)	(16.2)	(100.0)
Mali	(1.0)	(.)	(8.3)	(19.4)	(.)	(26.7)	(12.6)	(3.4)	(28.6)	(100.0)
Mauritania	(3.1)	(24.4)	(1.9)	(8.7)	(.)	(10.6)	(.)	(.)	(51.3)	(100.0)
Niger	(.)	(.)	(5.8)	(14.6)	(.)	(8.8)	(4.0)	(17.3)	(49.6)	(100.0)
Senegal	(2.2)	(1.9)	(12.9)	(13.0)	(1.4)	(14.1)	(12.1)	(11.8)	(30.8)	(100.0)
Upper Volta	(0.8)	(3.8)	(3.8)	(18.9)	(.)	(9.5)	(5.3)	(7.6)	(50.4)	(100.0)
Togo	5.6	3.7	8.2	8.2	3.7	18.7	7.5	15.4	28.8	100.0
Former British West Africa	9.8	8.4	9.5	18.7	3.3	7.5	8.8	9.3	24.7	100.0
Gambia	(2.0)	(.)	(12.2)	(.)	(.)	(6.1)	(12.2)	(13.3)	(54.1)	(100.0)
Ghana	(16.1)	(6.6)	(9.0)	(18.0)	(3.7)	(7.5)	(7.0)	(4.9)	(27.2)	(100.0)
Nigeria	(6.0)	(9.2)	(10.2)	(19.4)	(3.2)	(7.5)	(9.6)	(12.5)	(22.3)	(100.0)
Sierra Leone	(4.3)	(14.0)	(6.2)	(19.4)	(2.2)	(8.4)	(13.1)	(7.1)	(25.2)	(100.0)
Liberia	43.3	9.4	4.8	6.9	.)	7.4	5.0	6.2	17.0	100.0
Total	15.7	6.4	9.3	14.7	2.4	3.1	8.6	8.9	25.0	100.0

Main Sources: UN, ECA, Statistical Bulletin for Africa and Review of Economic Activity in Africa 1950 to 1954, Supplement to World Economic Report 1953-54; National statistical bulletins or Digests of Statistics, Annual Abstracts of Statistics, Annual Reports of the Labour Departments and Economic Surveys; EEC, Statistical Office, Overseas Associates - Statistical Bulletin, especially 1965, No. 5 and February 1964, No. 2, Part I; EEC, Commission, Rapport sur la situation sociale dans les pays d'outre-mer associés à la Communauté économique européenne, September 1960; Great Britain, Colonial Office, Quarterly Digest of Colonial Statistics, especially Nos. 45, 37, 31, 25, 19 of 1960-1955 and Colonial Reports.

a) If data for 1966 were not available, data for the year closest to 1966 were used (Dahomey: 1965; Mali: 1963; Mauritania: 1965; Niger: 1965; Senegal: 1963; Gambia: 1964; Nigeria: 1962; Sierra Leone: 1962).

policy, the relations between employers and workers and the so-called "minimum vital" (which is the minimum cost of living based on budget surveys for low income employees) are the main factors taken into account in determining minimum wages. Actual money wages for industrial workers and occasionally even for agricultural workers are determined in most former French-ruled West African countries by collective bargaining agreements (conventions collectives) negotiated by committees of employees and employers presided over by representatives of the respective governments. The agreements specify wage rates for categories of unskilled and skilled workers and are generally patterned after the SMIG and SMAG rates. For employees not covered by collective agreements, wage rates are sometimes fixed by government decree or else based on the minimum guaranteed rates. Actual wages are generally above the minimum guaranteed

rates, and as changes in the latter generally involve changes in the former, most governments have tried to avoid minimum wage increases since independence and if they did grant increases, these were generally small. (Table 3)

Wages in Former British West Africa

In the former British West African countries, the legal framework for minimum wages existed for a long time but only in Gambia did the Governor in fact fix minima (varying from region to region) for unskilled workers before 1960. The minimum wage legislation introduced in July 1960 in Ghana was the first of its kind there. It fixed the national minimum wage at six shilling and sixpence, except for farm workers. At present the national minimum in Ghana is at 0.70 new cedi or almost US \$ 0.70. In Nigeria national minimum wage legislation came first into effect in 1964 after the

Table 3
Former French West African Countries and Togo: Minimum Wage Rates (SMIG and SMAG)
in Nonagricultural and Agricultural Occupations in Zone I and in the
Lowest Wage Zone at the End of Each Year from 1957-1967
(In CFAF per hour)

Country	Zone	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966/67
Dahomey	SMIG I	27.00	34.00	34.00	34.00	34.00	34.00	34.00	38.08	38.08	38.08
	L	18.00	23.80	25.80	25.80	25.80	25.80	25.80	26.65	26.65	26.65
	SMAG I	23.40	29.40	29.40	29.40	29.40	29.40	29.40	32.92	32.92	32.92
	L	16.10	21.30	21.30	21.30	21.30	21.30	21.30	23.85	23.85	23.85
Guinea	SMIG I	28.00	31.00	31.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00	36.00
	L	16.80	20.00	25.00	28.80	28.80	28.80	28.80	28.80	28.80	28.80
	SMAG I	24.00	27.00	28.00	28.00	28.00	28.00	28.00	28.00	28.00	28.00
	L	15.00	18.00	22.40	22.40	22.40	22.40	22.40	22.40	22.40	22.40
Ivory Coast	SMIG I	33.20	37.00	37.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	42.40	42.40	42.40	42.40 a)
	L	29.90	33.30	33.30	36.00	36.00	36.00	38.20	38.20	38.20	38.20
	SMAG I	25.00	26.00	26.00	26.00	26.00	26.00	26.00	26.00	26.00	26.00
	L	18.75	19.50	19.50	19.50	19.50	19.50	19.50	19.50	19.50	19.50
Mali	SMIG I	27.00	27.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00	32.00
	L	21.60	21.60								
	SMAG I	22.50	22.50	27.00	27.00	27.00	27.00	27.00	27.00	27.00	27.00
	L	18.00	18.00								
Mauritania	SMIG I	29.00	29.00	29.00	29.00	35.20	35.20	35.20	35.20	35.20	35.20
	L	21.00	21.00	21.00	21.00	30.25	30.25	30.25	30.25	30.25	30.25
	SMAG I	26.10	26.10	26.10	26.10	31.70	31.70	31.70	31.70	31.70	31.70
	L	18.90	18.90	18.90	18.90	27.25	27.25	27.25	27.25	27.25	27.25
Niger	SMIG I	21.00	21.00	23.00	24.00	24.00	24.00	27.00	27.00	27.00	27.00
	L				Zone abolished since October 1, 1956						
	SMAG I	17.50	17.50				24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00	24.00
	L										
Senegal	SMIG I	35.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	44.00	44.00	44.00	44.00	44.00	44.00 b)
	L	29.75	37.20	37.20	37.20	40.90	40.90	40.90	40.90	40.90	40.90
	SMAG I	30.35	34.70	34.70	34.70	38.15	38.15	38.15	38.15	38.15	38.15
	L	25.80	32.26	32.26	32.26	35.50	35.50	35.50	35.50	35.50	35.50
Upper Volta	SMIG I	23.00	23.00	23.00	29.00	29.00	29.00	29.00	29.00	29.00	29.00
	L	19.55	19.55	19.55	24.65	24.65	24.65	24.65	24.65	24.65	24.65
	SMAG I	20.00	20.00	20.00	25.13	25.13	25.13	25.13	25.13	25.13	25.13
	L	17.00	17.00	17.00	21.36	21.36	21.36	21.36	21.36	21.36	21.36
Togo	SMIG I	22.00	25.00	27.50	27.50	27.50	27.50	29.70	29.70	29.70	29.70
	L	14.25	16.25	17.90	17.90	17.90	17.90	19.33	19.33	19.33	19.33
	SMAG I		21.65	23.85	23.85	23.85	23.85	25.73	25.73	25.73	25.73
	L		14.10	15.50	15.50	15.50	15.50	16.74	16.74	16.74	16.74

Sources: France, Ministère de la France d'Outre-Mer, Service des Statistiques, Inventaire Social et Economique des Territoires d'Outre-Mer 1950 à 1955, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1957, p. 315; Institut INSEE Pour la Métropole et la France d'Outre-Mer, Annuaire Statistique de la Zone Franc 1949-55, Fascicule II, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1958, pp. 187-8; Synthèse de la Situation Economique de l'ex-Afrique Occidentale Française durant la période de 1948 à 1956, Rapport de la Chambre de Commerce d'Agriculture et d'Industrie de Dakar, pp. 70-87; EEC, Office Statistique des Communautés Européennes, Overseas Associates-Statistical Bulletin, 1965, No. 5; BCEAO, Rapport d'Activité, annually, National Statistical Bulletin of the countries in the Table and Togo, Ministère des Finances, de l'Economie et du Plan, Inventaire Economique du Togo 1964, Lomé, Service de la Statistique Générale 1958. Haute Volta, République de, Ministère du Développement et du Tourisme, Rapport Economique: Données Géographiques et Humaines pour 1959 à 1964, p. 45.

a) As of April 1, 1968, only one wage zone will continue to exist and as of July 1, 1968, the SMIG (and SMAG) are increased by 10 per cent; however, workers in the interior (Zone II) who benefited from the unification of their zone with Zone I, will benefit from the increase of 10 per cent of the SMIG (and SMAG) only as of September 1, 1968.

b) On June 13, 1968, at the end of tripartite conference between government, employees and trade unions, the President of Senegal announced that effective July 1, 1968, the SMIG (and SMAG) would be increased by 15 per cent (to CFAF 50.60 and CFAF 43.95) and the two existing wage zones unified into one.

famous Morgan report was submitted and discussed. It was put at N £ 10 per month for Lagos and at £ 5/4/0 for part of the North with four inbetween steps. Sierra Leone has a well-developed government-sponsored system for determining wages and working conditions in most major industries. The system operates either through Wages Boards (labor, management, government) or through Joint Industrial Councils (labor and management). Wage rates fixed by those Boards or Councils are legally binding for all employers in the industry, but, for wage purposes, the country is divided into three geographical areas in which wage levels differ with the cost of living. The wage rates for unskilled railway workers in Table 4 are hence, not only the minimum wage, but in fact the wage level for this category of work in the Freetown area. The other areas of the country have wage levels of up to 10 per cent below the Freetown level. Unskilled railway workers were selected because their wages were among the lowest, apart from agricultural workers.

Minimum wages among the former four British-ruled countries are at present highest in Nigeria, although it is not clear how much inflation will eat away from this apparent lead by the time the civil war in that country and its aftermaths are finally out of the way.

In Liberia minimum wages were introduced by law as early as 1944, when wages for workers in the nonagricultural sector were set at 3 cents per hour. They were raised 8 years later to 4 cents

per hour; by 1962 they had reached 10 cents and were raised to 15 cents per hour for the last time in 1963. Agricultural minima were then raised from 6 cents to 8 cents per hour.

It might appear from this analysis that wage levels are higher in Senegal and Ivory Coast than in the rest of West Africa. Without trying to analyze this fact in a short article of this nature, one should not forget that in general, the cost of living in former British West Africa was considerably lower than in the French-ruled areas and this fact continues to account for instance for the annual inflow of "strange farmers"⁹ from Senegal into Gambia.

In concluding this article I want to stress again that it is obviously impossible to give a comprehensive analysis of a complex situation in these brief lines. All that I hope to have left behind is the impression that first it is necessary to question anew some of the concepts which as Western economists we have thought to be general enough to understand the universe; second, that we should give increasing attention to psychological and sociological considerations in studying labor market behavior; and third, that the isolated problems of economics must be viewed in the light of history and that these historical developments must be lit by the generalizing insights of economic theory.

⁹ "Strange farmers" are Senegalese who come to Gambia to cultivate groundnuts and return home after the crop season is over.

Table 4
Former British West African Countries and Liberia: Minimum Hourly, Daily, or Monthly Wage Rates at the End of the Year, 1960-1967

Country	Unit	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967
Gambia (per day)	Sh.	5/8d	5/8d	5/8d	5/8d	5/8d	5/8d	5/8d	5/8d
Ghana ¹ (per day)	NC	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.70 a)
Nigeria ²	N£					(per month)	(per day)	(per hour)	(per month)
Zone I (Lagos)		—	—	—	—	10/0/0d	8/0d	1/0d	10/0/0d
Zone VI (lowest zone)		—	—	—	—	5/4/0d	4/2d	6/1/4d	5/4/0d
Sierra Leone ³ (per day)	Leones								
Unskilled railway workers (highest)		0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	.	.
Unskilled railway workers (lowest)		0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	.	.
Unskilled mine workers (highest)		0.78	0.78	0.85	0.88	0.88	0.95	.	.
Unskilled mine workers (lowest)		0.60	0.60	0.67	0.69	0.69	0.75	.	.
Agricultural workers									
General plantation section (highest)		—	0.71	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78
General plantation section (lowest)		—	0.45	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52
Livestock section (highest)		—	0.63	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Livestock section (lowest)		—	0.53	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60
Liberia (per hour)	\$								
Industrial		.	.	0.10	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15
Agricultural		.	.	0.06	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08

Sources: Gambia, Report of the Labour Department, annually or bi-annually; Ghana, Report of the Commission on the Structure and Remuneration of the Public Services in Ghana, 1967; Nigeria, "Articles of Agreement of the Negotiating Body on the Recommendations of the Morgan Commission on the Review of Wages, Salaries and Conditions of Service of the Junior Employees of the Governments in the Federation and in Private Establishments", U.S., Department of State, Airgram, July 2, 1964, partly reproduced in Paul O. Proehl, Foreign Enterprise in Nigeria: Laws and Policies, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1965, p. 115; Sierra Leone, Annual Report of the Labour Department, Freetown, Government Printer, annually; I.L.O., Labour Problems in Africa, Geneva, 1958, pp. 297-305 (French edition); Liberian data provided by the Department of Planning and Economic Affairs.

¹ Nonagricultural workers only; apprentices also included. As of July 1967, 1 NC = \$0.98.

² Introduced and unchanged since 1964 (Morgan Commission). 1 N£ continues to equal \$2.8.

³ Fixed wages rather than minimum wages. The range between highest and lowest for each category of workers shows differences in geographical locations (Area A, B or C) and/or in grade or seniority of the worker. Agricultural wages were for the first time regulated in 1961. 1 Leone = 10 sh.

a) Since the devaluation of July 8, 1967, for public sector only. For government employees this was further increased to NC 0.75 effective May 1, 1968.