Incorporation, Colonialism and Labour Supply in Southern Africa (1880-1940).

Introduction and Objectives

The question to which both the modernization theories in the 60s and the neoliberal politics in the 80s and 90s have not yet given an answer is to understand why the gap between centre and periphery and the stratification and polarization of the social classes, in terms of aggregated data at global level, doesn't reduce but rather seems to increase.

The dominant thought uses to affirm that Africa is marginalised, i.e. that the continent is integrated only partially in the global economy. The purpose of the South African president Thabo Mbeki, expressed in the presentation of NEPAD (New Partnership for African Development) to the heads of state at the G-8 summit in Canada in 2002, consisted of setting up a global "New Deal" for Africa with the aim to enhance the growth of the African GDP to 7% each year. The plan consists of reshaping the interstate relations:

> " the advantages of an effectively regulated integration represent the best perspective for a future economic prosperity and for the reduction of poverty... through the role of national authorities and private institutions in driving the globalisation agenda on a path of sustainability,.....if resources will be properly utilised, the economic growth, equitable and sustainable, of the continent as its rapid integration in the world economy could be achieved" (Mbeki, 2001).

In my opinion these assumptions are misleading. They represent an a-historical reiteration of a model of development based on comparative advantages that as history showed, in the case of Africa, have been responsible for the polarization between North and South and the increasing socio-economic stratification and deterioration of the latter. A more rapid integration of Africa in the world economy through export-oriented strategies, as requested by the Washington Consensus, has undermined its autonomous capability of development, during the colonialism, the "development project" as well as along the "globalization project" (McMicheal, 2001). In the last quarter of the 20^{th} century, African crises have been transformed to what has been called the African tragedy (Leys, 1994: 33-47) : in 1975, Sub-Saharan per capita GNP stood at 17.6% of the "world" per capita GNP, by 1999 this figure had fallen to 10.6% (Arrighi, 2002: 5-36).

In addition if we analyse the relation between trans-regional trade and GDP of African countries in the 1990, we notice that the contribution of the trans-regional trade to the GDP of Africa amounts to 45.6%, while only 12.8% in the case of the Europe, 13.2% in North America, 23.7% in Latin America and 15.2% in Asia (Cordelier, 1997: 23). Thus we realise that Africa is more integrated than any other region in the capitalist world-economy. What seems here to be important in analytical terms is to historicize this process, understand the nature of the incorporation and its forms, the economic, political and social forces that have driven this process and the transformation of the relations of productions in the pre-capitalist societies. The aim of this work is to analyse in historical perspective which have been, on one hand, the political and economical dynamics which have driven the process of integration of Southern Africa in the capitalist world economy and its relative process of colonisation, and on the other hand, we want to clarify the nature of the process of transformation of the pre-capitalist societies and of its mode of production.

This approach aims to articulate an analysis of the social, economical and political reality of the Southern Africa, by contemplating, the development/underdevelopment that the area has experienced since the forces of expansion of the capitalist world economy interacted with the region not as an aim *in se* but to understand the consequences of the impact on local social relations of production and property relations that pre-existed the process of interaction/collision with the *West*, conceived as an economical, political and cultural frontier in continuous expansion as in continuous contradiction between its parts.

The method I intend to use to pursue these objectives is based : a) on the analysis of the regional integration of the historical geographies of capitalist development; b) on the role of different agents (colonial governments and/or enterprises, state-companies, *settlers*) in shaping the dynamics and the functioning of the process of accumulation of capital; c) on the issue of labour supply : its importance or better its preponderance in the process of social production and reproduction of the local communities as well as its centrality in the process of accumulation of capital, its extraction, its recruitment, through coercive, legal, political and economical means.

This kind of approach aims to demystify and to repudiate the idea, largely present in the social sciences, according to which Africa would be a continent without history, immobile, without any autonomous dynamic of evolution as embedded in the "darkness" and "irrationality" of its traditions. The intention of the project is to analyse, and if possible to explain, the contradictions of capitalist mode of production and the consequences of these on pre-capitalist modes of production and in the bosom of classes and groups that ruled or that were simply subordinated to these.

In this complex and articulate picture our firm idea is that only through a geographically extensive conceptualisation of the vectors of the regional space of Southern Africa can we come to understand the interconnections between different areas, between places and people, which have ensured, since colonialism, that the process of "modernization" has been experienced and enacted in a multiplicity of ways producing different historical geographies of modernity (Lester, 2003: 1-20).

Because of the vastity of the task and the impossibility to analyse all the micro historical geographies, we will limit our enquiry to those fundamental and common dynamics that may be relevant in the region and that represent important factors in the process of social change.

Incorporation of Southern Africa in the Capitalist World-Economy

The majority of Southern African historians agree that the major historical transformation of the area is understood as the transition from self-subsistent, pre-capitalist African communities to peoples subordinated by capitalism and colonial/settler political authorities.

The periodization of this process must be traced back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century as a period which testifies the great change leading to the construction of colonial regimes dominated by the settlers.

Different attempts were made by Dutch and Portuguese merchants in the era of the *Informal Empire* to colonize Southern Africa, but these activities were circumscribed to the coastal areas.

Thus, despite of almost three centuries of colonial intrusion, Southern Africa remained largely and for most part of the nineteenth century under the control of its native population.

The extractive nature (piracy and plunder) of the merchant capital and the lack of financial and political forces didn't allow a further penetration/transformation.

As we have expressed in the introduction one of our starting points is the existence of a capitalist world-economy that has extended during the time through the incorporation of areas that were before located in an external arena. As Wallerstein has written:

"At a certain point both Europe and Africa (or at least large zones of each) came to be incorporated into a single social system, a capitalist world-economy, whose fundamental dynamic largely controlled the actors located in both sector of one united arena. It is in the reciprocal linkages of the various regions of the capitalist world-economy that we find the underlying determinants of social actions at a more local level". (Wallerstein, 1985: 35)

The main driving-force to the process of incorporation of other areas must be located in the compression of the margins of profit due to the endless accumulation of capital (value law), in the process of commodification of the production relations and in the continuous search for *spatial fixes*. In fact when new production relations are commodified, i.e. valued in market terms and distributed in pseudo-market conditions, the capitalist world economy experiences an expansion of the geographical places included in the international division of the labour. The extension of the world economy is strictly interlinked with the phases of growth and decline in the economic activity, in particular when the recession takes place the entrepreneurs have to be more creative reducing the labour costs and the management costs in relation to fix capital, as well as through relocation and outsourcing.

The incorporation of an area represents first of all the integration of its production processes in the interdependent network of relational and productive processes that constitute the world market (Martin and Wallerstein, 1979: 193-207).

The objective of the process of incorporation was to assimilate new external areas, new potential markets, restructure the productive activities of the incorporated area so that conform to and make them organically participative of the functioning of the capitalist world economy (Hopkins and Wallerstein, 1985: 763-779)

This process implied, on one hand, the transformation of the productive sphere in such a way as to create production activities integrated in the international division of the labour and ,on the other hand, the alteration in the sphere of the *governance* so as to structure state institutions that worked as an integral part of the interstate system.

Indeed neither represents a simple objective, for the transformation of production processes entailed the adaptation of the norms of management of the land, the relocation of the labour forces, the metamorphosis of the production relations, and ultimately the alteration of the social forces balances. Thus the incorporation means to convert the use of local resources (land, labour, subsoil) towards the production for the world market (Arrighi, 1979: 161-191).

Indeed the process is neither automatic and immediate or linear. In addition it lays not only on the role of external agents but depends also, on one hand, on the unwillingness/resistance of traditional political authorities to the transformation of production processes, and on the other hand on the material existence of the labour forces necessary to feed the process of accumulation of capital. We will look at the labour supply in the next section now we would like to analyse the combined political and economic penetration of the continent.

The political resistance to the process of incorporation has been overcome through a combination of two strategies: a) the foreign military intervention, in virtue of its superior strength, has, generally, curbed the resistance of the traditional authorities reluctant to the incorporation; b) the political strategy of *Indirect Rule* through which the colonial regimes substituted the disinclined political authorities with cooperant authorities[1].

The political and military domination was fuelled by two fundamental events: the *Scramble for Africa* and the mineral revolution in Southern Africa (discovery of extensive reefs in the region of Witwatersrand, which followed the discovery of diamonds fields in Kimberly in 1867).

The dates of these two events are so close that it's unavoidable to correlate these two phenomena in a dialectical framework. The Berlin Conference (1884-1885) ratified the partition of Africa between the main European political powers defining different and exclusive areas of economic influence (Ratcliffe, 1981: 3-31) . This was a period of compressions of the margins of the accumulation of profits engendered by an increasing inter-capitalist competition. The years between the 1848-1875, a period known as the *Age of Capital* (Hobsbawm, 1976) , created vast sums of money that looked for a profitable investment.

As Braudel has argued, all the major expansion in the sphere of trade and production of the capitalist world economy have engendered an over-accumulation of capital that was not able to find any profitability in the ordinary channels of investment; thus the *cores* of the world economy orientated, in order to redefine a new control over the world processes of accumulation, their energy towards a specialization in financial intermediation (Braudel, 1981). The surplus engendered was soon used up in two ways: a) to finance military expenditures that led to military interventions all over the world, including Africa; b) to create the credit needed to fuel the expansion of the chartered companies in Africa that were enlisted in the stock exchange of London. In the later part of the century, the financial ambitions of capitalists combined with the crosscurrents of imperial expansion produced a stream of

.

concession-hunters. The British South African Company, for example, gained full and exclusive access to the mineral resources of Northern (Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and the right to exploit them in whatever way it deemed necessary, receiving a *royal charter* in 1889; the Sena Sugar Estate (British capital), later substituted by the Mozambique Company, was granted a fifty years charter in 1897 and given full sovereign right over the resources and population of the Mozambican provinces of Sofala and Manica; The Nyassa Company (south African mining capital) was conceded a twenty-five years charter over the provinces of Nyassa and Cabo Delgado (Munslow, 1983: 28-30). A generation of military conquest by both settlers and colonial powers (Britain, Germany, Portugal, Belgium) had established political boundaries throughout the area. The Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902) represents the apex of the increasing inter competition in the area for the exploitation of mineral resources between the British imperialism and the Boers Republics and the African kingdoms; the Matabele war in 1893 broke the resistance of Ndebele; the defeat of Gungunjana and the Gaza state in 1895, Portugal could claim "ownership" of the Mozambican labour force and extend its political authority on the most part of the country. These military interventions in the area not only opened access to the resources of the area, but also facilitated control over labour. At the beginning of the century the map of Southern Africa was the outcome of a generation of rapid European conquest. Briefly outlined there existed the Union of South Africa (created by British authorities, including the former colonies of the Cape and Natal along with the Afrikaner Republics of the interior, and the African Kingdom that were integrated in it); the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola; the British colonies of Southern Rhodesia to which self-governing status was granted in 1924, Nyasaland (present day Malawi), Northern Rhodesia (under direct Crown control, and known as Zambia); the British high Commissioner Territories of Bechuanaland (Botswana today), Basutoland (known today as Lesotho) and Swaziland; South West Africa (today known as Namibia) previously a German colony from 1892 until the end of the First World war when the League of Nations gave a mandate to South Africa to administer the territory after the Versailles Treaty (Martin, 1987: 849-900).

The previous African political structures, ranging from highly centralized states/kingdoms (Zulu, Ndebele, Pedi, Kololo) to acephalous communities (Khoi-Khoi, San), that occupied the region were defeated. The removal over economic and redistributive relations was only one aspects of the process. Indeed the transition in the nature of the political power was not simply the diminution of the power of African political authorities and the rise of settler political power but it included the creation/imposition of political bodies that served to assure the necessary integration of the area in the global division of labour and to assure a mode of regulation of the social relations of production functional to the process of primitive accumulation.

This metamorphosis of the African political sphere was matched by a similar process of transformation in the productive realm. The new production processes that filled up the regional space altered completely the economical geography of the region, pivoted on the pole of the Transvaal mines. Most notable of the new production processes were the large-scale enterprises that stretched from diamond mining at Kimberley[2], to the collieries of Natal, to the gold mines of Witwatersrand and Rhodesia and onward on the Katangan Copperbelt. Settler farms and estate, especially in South Africa and Rhodesia, and Portuguese *latifundia*, similarly spread throughout the region, led to new production relations based, upon export oriented production. However the extension of political boundaries and the spread of companies that detained a sovereign control over the Southern Africa territories do not necessarily and automatically represent an expansion of the real political power. Indeed, the development of a process of primitive accumulation depended strictly upon the existence of a constant and stable labour supply and of a mode of regulation of the new social relations of production established through coercive means.

Production Processes and Labour Supply

Across the Southern Africa region new production processes had been implanted. The most important development took place in the mining, where the discovery and exploitation of the diamonds area in Kimberley and of the vast gold reefs in the Rand, were soon followed by the opening up of new mines throughout the region (Copperbelt and Katanga). The development of the mining industry made necessary the construction of an articulated network of infrastructures, roads, railways and ports that served the needs of the new production processes and linked the most part of Southern Africa. It spurred the commercialization of the agriculture for the need of huge amount of labourers of the mining industry to be fed. In reality the regional space became an inter-territoriality unit, an expanded ensemble of means of production subject to a singular policy making centre which controls establishments situated in several different national territories. According to F.Perroux:

"The organization of a nation on a one-by-one and separate basis goes against the technical and economical requirements, which are the direct and unavoidable consequence of the techniques used in the industry in the twentieth century. The conflict between the exigencies of the political and territorial organization of the social life people and the exigencies of the multi-national administration of the large scale industry is a continuing reality". (Perroux, 1959, in Arrighi and Saul, 1973: 105-106).

This assumption is relevant to our analysis in virtue of the fact that it underlines the nature of the regional space, as a space crossed by contradictions and cooperations, conflicts and agreements, not as a smooth space. Notwithstanding many differences between the mines in terms of location, grade, quantity, depth of the mined ore and the proximity to the labour supply, all of them faced the same problems. They operated in a regional economic system dominated by large, more profitable and more powerful companies, in addition high-scale production of gold needed access to capital and the relative necessity of a constant large supply of cheap labour.

The first few years of the mining have been known as the years of speculative capitalism (1890-1904). In Africa the scarce factor was not land, which was abundant, but labour, thus the companies because of the scarcity of labour, that didn't allow the process of primitive accumulation, retired themselves in the speculative sphere of the alienation of land and the exaction of tributes. As a short term solution to the shortage of labour, the companies started with the imposition of rents and other payments through the setting up of semi-feudal relations on the African tenants, in order to facilitate labour recruiting and to boost its own revenue. In 1902, the 69% of the total revenue of the BSA Company relied on this source (Burawoy, 1985: 13). At the beginning of the colonisation African tenants were allowed to stay on expropriated land because the dominant capitalist system relied upon the African supply of produces and any reduction would have seriously hit the mining interest.

The process of the accumulation of capital in the region, however, was circumscribed by the unique costs structure of the mining industry and by the competition between mine companies and between different employers (agricultural farmers and mine owners) in the different sectors.

The fundamental conditions of the accumulation of capital in the mining industry, i.e. the necessity of access to the market of capitals, advanced industrial technology to drill ore in the deep-level reefs and huge labour demand, engendered a progressive concentration of the ownership of the mines and a centralization of the productive activities. The joint stock companies acted as catalysts of exceeding capital investments and multipliers of the nominal value stimulating the transnationalization of capital. Between 1887 and 1913 the flow of capital that sustained the South African gold mining from abroad (Britain and Europe), in order to guarantee the demand of liquidity of the international system (gold currency), amounted to £125 million and only less then 15% of that investments were South African owned (Legassick, in Harris, 1975: 260)

However the low average grade of the gold (half that mined in Western Australia) and an international fixed price for gold represented structural constraints undermined the profitability of the mining business. The existence of the gold-standard before the 1914, pivoted on the role of the sterling, the price of sell of the gold was fixed, so the changes in the relative value of the gold in relation to other commodities determined a reduction in the purchasing power of the proceeds of the gold production, although it guaranteed that the output could be maximised indefinitely without jeopardizing profits (Richardson, Van Helten, in Marks, Rathbone, 1985: 77-98). The immediate consequence of the relative immobility of the price of the gold for the mine companies was the impossibility to discharge the increasing inflation of the factors of production (more technology as deep-level mining increased and more skills) on the consumer.

As the mining companies could not control critical elements in the gold price structure they were pushed to solve this contradiction stressing on the labour area as a crucial area to minimize the costs. Same attempts were made to reduce the shortage of labour by importing indentured labour from southern China. Although by the turn of the century thousands of Africans were working on the Southern African mines, between the 1903 and 1905 the South African Native Affairs Commission estimated a shortage of 300.000 labourers each year to match the necessary growth of the production forces and affirmed further that "natives looked for a wage employment only as a mere supplement to their subsistence means" (Wallerstein, Martin, Dickinson, 1982: 443). This meant that the strategy of the companies of minimisation of the costs through the maximization of ultra-cheap labour met two fundamental hindrances: the shortage of non-white labour supply and the economic African independence.

The labour shortages internal to South Africa and in the region have been portrayed as the outcome of the "deficiencies" of the "traditional" or pre-capitalist economies to adapt themselves to the growth of the opportunities of the market economy, retained "alien" and "unfamiliar" by the Africans tenants.

Both the pioneering works of C. Bundy and G. Arrighi respectively concerning the South African and Rhodesia peasantries in a historical perspective purpose a different explanation of the problem. According to their arguments there was a substantial more positive response of the African peasants to the opportunities the market economy than it is usually estimated and that an adapted, "flexible" form of the traditional subsistence method was providing viable alternatives for African to wage employment.

In the pre-colonial societies of the Southern Africa the access to land was regulated by kinship or tribal relations, the land could not be commercialized (sold and valued in market terms) and the producers drawn the most part of their means of subsistence from the "collective" ownership of the access to the land. However we must not describe these pre-capitalist societies as equalitarian, indeed there existed poor households that depended on the *patronage* of other more powerful, the men exerted the social control of the women, whereas the effects of the inequalities were mitigated or contained through mechanisms of kinship, *redistribution* and *reciprocity* (Polany, 2001).

For the lack of pressures of the population on the land and the rudimentary technology, the use of the land was extensive and the security of the subsistence could be guaranteed.

In addition the tendency in the pre-capitalist societies to allocate the surplus of the production toward immediate consumption and un-productive investments sustained and strengthened the social cohesion and preserved the security afforded by the traditional system.

However the prolonged period of sustained demand of the African produce, engendered by the South African and Rhodesian mines as well as by the Natal sugar plantations and Mozambique, and the participation in the money economy that this inevitably entailed, made this interaction necessary. The model of absorption of the surplus in the peasant society included, as a result of this interaction, new patterns of resources allocation towards consumption of goods as agricultural implements, coffee, sugar, clothes, paraffin etc.

Furthermore the initial success of the participation of Africans in the money economy raised the amount of the "subsistence wage" set up by the traditional mechanism and enhanced the wage that should be paid to attract African workers to the mines. Thus the African involvement in the labour market was discouraged and the shortage of labour for the mines and for large-scale settler farms increased.

This ulterior contradiction between the tendency to keep down the wages and the unwillingness of the African labourers to work in the mines increased the necessity of compulsory, legal and coercive forms of involvement of Africans in the wage employment.

The fact that scant labour was sold on the market was due to the fact that the effort-price for the participation in the produce market in order to earn money was lower than the wage employment in the mines. African resistance, in fact, lied on the diffused opinion between the Africans that produce

As a *share-cropper*, or labourer, was economically preferable to works, hard and for long period of time, with wages below the minimum standard in the emerging capitalist enterprises. The retention of the labour force in the pre-capitalist societies, especially in the rural areas, made necessary for the mines company to search out potential labour force in the fringes of the region. To avoid competition and reduce costs, the companies tried to impose a policy of collaborative monopsony to control the labour market, thus the South African and Rhodesian companies constituted, through the Chambers of the Mines, respectively the WENELA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) and RNLB (Rhodesian Native Labour Bureau). The former, constituted in 1896 by the Chamber of Mines, was to be the sole recruiter outside the border of Southern Africa – for East Africa, including the Portuguese colonies and British Commissioner. The articulation of the system of recruitment was extremely widespread, "its fingers point into Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, far into Tanganyika, into all the High Commissioner territories; Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland" (Davidson, 1952 in Magubane, 1979: 80). The RNLB recruited legally in Nyasaland between 1903-1910, illegally in Mozambique from 1903 and legally from 1914 within the Tete province and legally on the basis of a quasi monopoly in Southern and Northern Rhodesia (Van Onselen, 1976: 110-11).

However both this agencies of recruitment did not solve the problem of shortage of labour. Hindrances were posed on them by the fact that they operated in the framework of a regional economic system. So, especially for the Rhodesian mines, that were not in the conditions to compete with the salaries paid in the Witwatersrand, because of the different location of the reefs (deeper and more scattered) and because of different sizes of the investment and resources, it was difficult to prevent the flow of migrants labourers from going to South attracted by the centripetal forces of the Transvaal mines and their relatively higher wages. So besides this search out for external labour supply, a more coercive *native* policy and a more direct relation between the politics of production and the state politics were needed. A policy that as we could see in the next section aims at separating the African peasantries from their means of subsistence.

States Politics, Migrant Labour and Social Reproduction.

The process of accumulation of capital was severely curtailed by the lack of labour force and by the competing interests that pervaded the regional economic system. The requirements for reducing costs of labour tended towards an opposite logic: reductions in African wages made the mines less attractive. This contradiction emerged soon in the form of pressures on the colonial states by the social formations that constituted the base of the colonial regimes. Although there were many contradictions between large scale international capitalism (which controlled railways and transport facilities, the bulk of gold production and coal mining) and the emerging white rural bourgeoisie (national in character), for example in the pattern of investments (the latter preferred increased investments in the infrastructures, while the former had a predilection for restrictive policies), they also shared common interests. Both needed availability of a stable labour force. Both needed the reduction of the economic African peasantry autonomy.

The means used to mobilize labour force were numerous, articulated and coordinated: the imposition of taxes to force the sales of the means of subsistence and translate the discretionary character of the African participation in the money economy in a necessary one, the restriction of the access to the land, forms of indebtedness that to be extinguished required a seasonal participation of Africans to the mines or plantations or in the settlers estates works, forms of forced labour or *chibaro* as in the Portuguese colonies and finally legal discriminations in the allocations of provisions and grants in the form of implements, seeds and agrarian assistance only for the white capitalist agriculture. This in turn would have meant the disruption of the competitive position of African peasantry as regards to the emerging white capitalist agriculture. A plethora of draconian state regulations were imposed on African peasantries throughout all the regional system in the early twentieth century. In South Africa, the *Land Act* of 1913, forbade the purchase or the rent of land for African outside the "scheduled African areas" (native reserves and African locations that amounted to the 7.3% of the national land)[3] and also abolished the farming-on-the-half system that allowed the Africans who owned their own ploughs and oxen to cultivate and live on the white settler property in exchange for half the harvest. In 1922 the *Native Taxation and Development Act* forced all the Africans males between sixteen and sixty-five to pay a poll tax and a hut tax. The *Native Urban Areas Act* created separate locations for Africans (native reserves) and declared that Africans could not be granted the same place in urban life and industry as whites. The *Mines and Work Act* in 1911 reserved jobs only for white workers, while the *Industrial Conciliation Act* in 1926 explicitly excluded the Africans from the practices of collective bargain (Bundy, 1991 in Gentili, 1993: 49-80). These regulations reflected a racial division of the labour in the mines as in the urban areas. Through this legal frame-work the reserves were translated in a base of recruitment, a huge reserve of labour as the result of a deliberate policy of deprivation and uprooting as a halt to the development of African communities and at the same time extract and channel labourers to the urban areas and mines.

This pattern of control of the labour-force in South Africa was soon extended throughout the region. The Land Apportionment Act (1931) in Rhodesia, the Decree of August (1911) and January (1912) in Katanga, the 1897 *Regulamento* in Portuguese colonies which prescribed compulsory labour service and the Regulations of 1906-1907 in South-West Africa designed to restrict the peasants access to land and cattle in order to guarantee a steady labour supply. The policy of centralization of arable land, that represented one part of the overall strategy of destruction of the African political economies, increased the push of the Africans towards the reserves. The colonial support of the competitive position of the white capitalist agriculture took the form of preferential grants and subsidies of seeds, plants, technical innovation, new crops, boring water and financial assistance at subsidized interest rates. The colonial administrations instituted a discriminatory price policy for the sale of African produce which discouraged the participation in the produce market because it increased the effort-price, in terms of labour-time, that African would have had to bear[4]. This process conducted, by one hand, to an increased specialization and a more articulated division of the labour in the white capitalist agriculture; on the other hand it undermined the African self-sufficient political and economical organization. The Africans population pressure on eroded and less fertile lands increased and contributed to the soil erosion because it was subjected to intense and not-rotatory practices of cultivation. The discretionary and flexible character of the African peasantry participation to the wage employment, which recurred in times of droughts or crisis in the seasonal harvest, was transformed into a structural and necessary condition. Furthermore increased tax pressures imposed by colonial administrations in South Africa, Rhodesia and Mozambique, that had the aim to improve labour-force locally in order to bridge the gap between the long-term demand of labour necessary to develop long-term investments in agriculture as in industry, tended to push a significant number of peasants within the circuit of the regional economic system. The trans-national flow of migrant labourers was indeed fuelled by inter governmental agreements around the issue of labour recruitment aimed at extending the regional inter-connections that in turn strengthened the stability of the poles of accumulation in South Africa and Rhodesia.

The politics adopted in different places at different time with regard to the shove of migrant labourers in the regional economic system were determined by the different functions that different areas/people represented in the overall picture of the Southern African connection. Although the management of the labour force to the mines should remain in the mine companies hands, the South African and Portuguese colonial administration signed a *Modus Vivendi* (1901), that later led to the *Mozambique Conventions* (1909 -1928) (First, 1982: 217-222), to maintain a stable flow of migrant labour. Portuguese authorities used their control on labour supply to extract good deal with the South African government. It imposed on the Mozambican peasantry a period of forced labour, *chibaro*.

Its threat represented an important inducement to work to the mines, as signing a contract to work to the mines represented a legal exemption from *chibaro*. The Portuguese authorities realised surplus value receiving a fixed sum for every recruiter, paid in gold directly to Lisbon, and a wage's portion of every worker was placed in a bank in Mozambique and given to the worker at his return in the Portuguese colonies, in addition the 47,5% of the seaborne import traffic to the Johannesburg areas would pass through the port of Lourenco Marques (Magubane, 1979: 79-80). The Mozambique after this process became one of the largest reservoirs of mineworkers: in 1906 it furnished the 70% of the total labour force of the South African mines (Cohen, 1987: 89). Even though the policies adopted in different places at different periods hit people in different ways, according to the dominant requirements of the leading sectors of the region economy, the migrant labour was the common feature of the regional economic system.

It is difficult to find an area that has not been touched by the migrant system labour: Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana and Transkey have been deeply affected by labour requirements on regional scale (mainly towards South Africa); Northern Rhodesia and later Nyasaland were transformed by the conjunct actions of various governments and private agencies in reservoirs of cheap labour (mainly towards the Rhodesian mines).

The supreme objective of the colonial states was thus to secure the development of a capitalist mode of production without destroy the "traditional" modes of production but incorporating its members as single labourers. As Rosa Luxembourg argued continued expansion of capitalism rested on the incorporation of pre-capitalist modes of production, which were by no means automatically dissolved by the advance of capitalism (Luxembourg and Buckharin, 1972). The migrant labourers never lost contact with their area of origins, where they came back in periods of rest, refreshment, injury or when they were not any more able to work. The result was a process of semi-proletarianization in which the capitalists had to afford only the cost of maintenance of labour force (one person living wage in town or in a *compound*) while they outsourced the costs of renewal of the labour force on the rural household (on the labour of the women). It means that capitalists could pay wages under the minimum standard in virtue of the security of the role of the rural household in the social reproduction of the labour force. As the authors of *Roots of Rural Poverty* put it:

" elements of the pre-capitalist system were deliberately permitted to survive under capitalism... between the first decade of twentieth century in the south and the third decade in the north of Southern Africa, there were created variations of the "dual economy" which kept African families split but constantly moving between rural and urban "reserves" or settler estates". (Palmer and Parson, 1983: 4-5)

The set of arrangements (legal and political) in the single colonial states as well as between them separated the production *loci* from that of the social reproduction in which the logic of the migrant system assured the connection between "rural" and "urban" in a joint social structure.

The *worker-peasant* assured the connection between these two spheres and represented a way to make up to the growing inability of the rural households to sustain their social reproduction in consideration of the lost ability to reproduce their subsistence economy. In most social formations the processes of peasantization and proletarianization were strictly interconnected and combined "wage and hoe" for the reproduction of labour and of the household.

Once lost their ability to reproduce their subsistence economy, the African peasants could never again be self-sufficient. Their dependence from the wage employment was structural. After the use of military, legal and political means, the labour supply for the mines and capitalitist farms, which was inverse function of the economic African independence, was secured.

Once the capitalist agriculture had overcame the initial competitive difficulties in the produce market thanks to the extra-economic interventions, the "market forces" could operate "freely" and guarantee the labour supply, at a wage rate below what *chibaro* system had provided.

Conclusions

The development of the capitalist system was strictly intertwined with the racial discrimination. The economic, political and ideological motives that have structured the capitalist relations could not be separate. The ideological of racism is expanded and fed by the necessity of the capitalist logic to expand itself and to exploit areas that are subsumed to its rules.

The labour market must not be considered as the place were buyers and sellers of labour power meet as a result of the spontaneous activity of the market "laws", but must be conceived as a place where the national and international political and economic conflicts take place, it's a complex of political institutions for producing and distributing political and material resources, not a natural phenomenon. The system legalized a racial division of labour in the mines and urban areas as well as a sexual division of the labour in the rural household. The dependence of the areas that have been engaged in the regional migrant labour system weakened the social and political structure of the local economies. This set of forces severely altered the economical geography of the region making the space very instable and restructured and stratified the social structure that sustained this process. How these transnational processes will influence the class structure of the national African independencies as well as the social reproduction of the rural households is a question that we leave to others.

Notes

[1] This was evident especially in the British Protectorates and Natal where headmen and chiefs were appointed by the colonial administrations in order to diminish the administrations costs of the colonies and to have more subtle modes of penetration of the local communities.
2 Between these large companies the Rhodes Consolidated Gold Field of South Africa LTD, after a period of complex financial manoeuvring and of centralization of capital, came to control a good part in the deep level mining industry of gold.
3 This percentage was increased by the *Natives Land and Trust Act* in 1936 with the aim to solve the problem of the incapability of the African reserves to provide for the satisfaction of their minimum requirements.
4 In particular, the marketing organizations created by the Rhodesian colonial government as the *Maize Central Act* (1931) had the aim to create a two system price that undermined the African participation in the market produce. Other state regulations were the *Tobacco Marketing Act* or the *Sugar Industry Board* in the years 1930-1940.

Bibliography

Arrighi, G (2002). The African Crisis, *New Left Review,*15, may-june, pp.5-36.

Arrighi, G., Saul, J. S. (1973). *Essays on the Political Economy of Africa*. London/New York: Monthly Review Press.

Arrighi, G. (1979). "Peripheralization of Southern Africa, I, Changes in Production Processes", *Review*, III, 2, autumn, pp.161-191.

Bernstein, H., Campbell, B.K. (1985). *Contradictions of Capital Accumulation in Africa*. London: Sage Publications.

Birmingham, D. (1992). *Frontline Nationalism in Angola and Mozambique*. London: James Currey.

Braudel, F. (1981). *La dinamica del capitalismo*. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Bundy, C. (1991). "Challenging the past: South Africa in Historical Perspective", in Gentili, A. M. (1993), *Sud Africa: i processi di mutamento politico e costituzionale*, pp. 49-80. Rimini: Maggioli,

Bundy, C. (1979). *The Rise and the Fall of South Africa Peasantry*. London: Heinemann.

Burawoy, M. (1985). *The Politics of Production*. London: Verso.

Bush, R., & Szeftel, M. (1994). "Commentary: State, Markets and Africa's Crisis", *Review of African Political Economy*, n. 60.

Cohen, R. (1988). *The New Helots. Migrants in the International Division of Labour*. Aldershot: Gower

Coquery Vidrovitch, C., and **Moniot, H.** (1977). *L'africa Nera dal 1800 ai nostri giorni*. Milano: Mursia

Cordelier, S. (1997). *La mondialisation au delà des mithes*, Paris : La Decouverte.

First, R. (1976). *Black Gold, The Mozambican Miner, Proletrarian and Peasant*. Center of African Studies, Eduardo Mondlane University, Sussex: The Harvester Press,

Gutkind, P.C.W., Wallerstein, I. (1985). *The Political Economy of Contemporary Africa* (second edition). London/Beverly Hills: Sage.

Hobsbawm, Eric J. (1976). *Il Trionfo della Borghesia 1848/1875*. Bari, Laterza.

Hopkins, T. K., Wallerstein I. (1987).“Capitalism and the Incorporation of New Zones into the World-Economy”, *Review* X, 5/6, Su/Fall, pp. 763-779.

Johnston, F. A. (1976). *Class, race and gold: a study of class relations and racial discrimination in South Africa.* London : University Press of America.

Kay, G. (1975). *Development and Underdevelopment: A Marxist Analysis*. London: McMillan.

Kubicek, R. V., (1989). “Economic Imperialism in Theory and practice, The case of South African Mining Finance”, Review Article, J. J. Van Helten (1989) *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 15, n. 4,october.

Legassick, M. (1975). “South Africa: forced labour,industrialization and racial differentiation”. in **Harris,R.,** *The Political Economy of Africa*, New York/London: Wiley.

Leys, C. (1995). Confronting African Tragedy, *New Left Review*,I,212,July-August, pp.33-47.

Luxembourg, R., Buckharin, N. (1972). *The Accumulation of Capital – An Anti Critique Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital.* New York/London: Monthly Review Press.

Magubane, M. B. (1979) *The Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa*. London/New York: Monthly Review Press.

Marks, S., Rathbone, R. (1985). *Industrialisation and social change in South Africa : African class formation, culture, and consciousness, 1870-1930*. Harlow: Longman.

Marks, S., Atmore, A.(1980). *Economy and society in pre-industrial South Africa*. London: Longman,

Marks S., Trapido, S. (1987). *The politics of race, class and nationalism in twentieth-century South Africa*. London: Longman,.

Martin, W. G. (1987). “Incorporation of Southern Africa, 1870-1920”, *Review*, X, 5/6, pp.849-900.

Martin, W. G., Wallerstein I. (1979).“Peripheralization of Southern Africa, II: Changes in Household Structure and Labor-Force Formation”, *Review*, III, 2, Fall, pp. 193-207.

Martin, W. G., Wallerstein I., Dickinson T. (1980).“Household Structures and Production Processes” *Review*, V, 3, 1982, pp. 437-458.

Mbeki, T. (2001). *New Partnership for African Development* Mbeki, URL: http:// www.nepad.org [summer 2001].

McMicheal, P. (2000). *Development and Social Change*, California: Pine Forge.

Munslow, B. (1983). *Mozambique: Revolution and its Origins*. London/New York: Longman.

Palmer, R., Parson, N. (1983). *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa*. London: Heinemann.

Polany, K. (1974). *La grande trasformazione*. Torino: Einaudi.

Ratcliffe, B. M. (1981). "The Economics of the Partition of Africa: Methods and Recent Research Trends", *Revue Canadienne des Etudes Africaines*, vol. 15, n. 1, pp. 3-31.

Rodney, W. (1972). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications.

Simons, Jack & Ray (1983). *Class and Colour in South Africa*. International defense and aid fund.

Van Onselen, C. (1976). *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1933*. London: Pluto Press.